Pedagogy on teaching negotiation of speech acts: Accepting invitations and offers in L2 Chinese

Yufen Chang
Western Kentucky University

Yunwen Su
The Univeristy of Utah

Abstract

Pragmatic competence has long been considered an important aspect of second language learners' language ability, yet pragmatic instruction is rarely found in Chinese as a foreign or second language setting. This paper presents a 75-minute pragmatic lesson on accepting invitations and offers in Chinese using authentic and semi-authentic language materials. The effectiveness of the instructional unit was tested empirically with a small group of students, who did the same roleplay task both before and after the instruction as well as in interview to elicit their reflection on the learning process and comments on teaching materials. The students were able to sequence their production in a more target-like way after the instruction and provided positive feedback on the instructional unit. This paper also makes recommendations for how to develop teaching materials for pragmatics and incorporate pragmatic instruction into regular CFL/CSL curricula.

Keywords: Pragmatic instruction, second language Chinese, authentic materials, conversation

Introduction

Research in L2 pragmatics has shown that pragmatics is teachable and instruction in pragmatics is more effective than exposure alone (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Rose, 2005). However, pragmatic instruction is rarely found in Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) teaching (Ke, 2012; Wang, 2011). Whereas the importance of incorporating pragmatics lessons in CFL teaching has been recognized in recent years, neither teaching materials nor pedagogical models have been appropriately created for instruction (Li, 2016). With reference to models proposed for pragmatic instruction in other target languages, this paper presents a 75-minute teaching unit dedicated to raising students' awareness of the structural complexity and situational variation of acceptance sequences in L2 Chinese. The effectiveness of this teaching unit is empirically examined, and the use of authentic materials for CFL pragmatic instruction is discussed.

Acceptances are preferred responses to invitations, offers, requests, and suggestions (Schegloff, 2007) in that they commit the speaker to an action that is proposed by the hearer (Searle, 1976). This paper targets acceptances of invitations and offers in L2 Chinese, as they are not necessarily direct (Zhu, Li, & Qian, 2000), are often negotiated across turns (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994), and feature situation-specific sequential patterns (Tseng, 1996). Such being the case, acceptances of invitations and offers in Chinese can be challenging for learners from a language background with straightforward invitation-acceptance sequences (e.g. American English according to Wolfson, 1981).

Background

Pragmatic Instruction

In the field of pragmatic instruction, there are various models that have been proposed (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2006; Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2010; Shively, 2010). While these models differ in the procedures and techniques, they all include elements that (1) raise learners' awareness of intercultural differences regarding the target pragmatic features

(awareness-raising), (2) direct learners' attention to how the target pragmatic features are realized by exposing them to authentic input in the target language (noticing), and (3) engage learners in communicative practice using the pragmatic features under examination (practicing) (Félix-Brasdefer, 2006; Shively, 2010). In addition, providing students with explicit metapragmatic information in awareness-raising and noticing stages of instruction proves to be more effective than providing them with implicit target input only (see Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Taguchi, 2011 for reviews).

Most of the previous studies on instructional effects in L2 pragmatics, however, focus on speech acts within the turns (e.g. L2 Chinese requests in Li, 2012; L2 English requests in Takahashi, 2001, 2005; L2 English conventional expressions in Bardovi-Harlig, Mossman, & Vellenga, 2015). Very few studies have investigated the influence of instruction on the negotiation of speech acts across turns.

Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) found that telephone conversations between L2 German learners featured more target-like opening sequences after five weeks' explicit sociopragmatic instruction employing authentic materials informed by Conversation Analysis (CA) findings. Alcón-Soler and Guzmán-Pitarch (2010) conducted a six-week treatment study on L2 English refusals at the discourse level, utilizing Félix-Brasdefer's (2006) model that incorporated CA-based tools into teaching the negotiation of L2 Spanish refusals. Based on learners' retrospective verbal reports and performance in a roleplay posttest, they found that learners' pragmatic awareness had increased after instruction.

Utilizing the findings in the literature of L2 pragmatic instruction as the framework for designing the teaching unit, the current study chose Chinese acceptance to invitations and offers as the focus of the pragmatic lesson due to the scarcity of research on the negotiation of speech acts across turns. The pragmatic lesson presented in this paper incorporates the elements that have been found effective in pragmatic instruction— awareness-raising, noticing, practicing, and using authentic materials.

Acceptances and Acceptance Sequences in English and Chinese

The speech act of acceptances responds to an initiating act such as an invitation, offer, suggestion, or request. Although these all four initiating speech acts are *directives*, by which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something, invitations and offers should be distinguished from suggestions and requests. In addition to being *directives*, invitations and offers are also *commissives* in that they also commit the speaker to certain future actions (Hancher, 1979). For example, a party invitation involves food preparation from the speaker, and an offer requires the speaker to provide assistance, gifts, or food (Barron, 2000). In other words, an invitation or offer generates costs for the speaker but benefits the hearer, whereas a request or suggestion often benefits the speaker but generates costs for the hearer (Tseng, 1999).

This paper presents how to teach acceptances at the discourse level— acceptance sequences. Following Schegloff (2007), the paper defines an acceptance sequence as a coherent, orderly, and meaningful succession of actions that contribute to the accomplishment of accepting the addressee's proposal (an invitation or an offer). Acceptance sequences in English often consist of the initiating speech act (invitation or offer) and an immediate and unmitigated acceptance of it, as shown in (1) (Schegloff, 2007).

(1) Acceptance of an invitation: friends (Schegloff, 2007, p.30)

01	Clara:		Hello.
02	Nelson:		Hi.
03	Clara:		Hi.
04	Nelson:		Whatcha doin'.
05	Clara:		Not much.
06	Nelson:	→	Y'wanna drink?
07	Clara:	→	Yeah.
08	Nelson:		Okay.

Acceptances of invitations and offers in Chinese conversely have been observed to feature a less direct sequence of invitation-refusal

and insistence-acceptance (e.g. Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994; Tseng, 1996, 1999; Zhu et al., 2000). In Example (2), *B* refuses *A*'s invitation (line 02) twice before accepting it, whereas the inviter *A* insists multiple times (lines 03-04, and 06-07). According to Gu (1990), both *B*'s initial refusal and *A*'s insistence are culturally expected and mutually recognizable.

(2) Acceptance of a dinner invitation: A (female) is B's (male) prospective mother-in-law (recalled observation; Gu, 1990, p.252; gloss added by the researchers)

01 A: *Mingtian lai chi wanfan a.*
tomorrow come eat dinner SFP
'Please come for dinner tomorrow.'

02 B: → *Bu lai le, tai mafan.*
not come SFP too trouble
'Maybe not. It's too much trouble.'

03 A: *Mafan shenme ya. Cai dou shi xiancheng de.*
trouble what SFP dish all BE ready-made DE
'No trouble at all. Dishes are all ready-made.'

04 B: → *Na ye dei shao a.*
then still must cook SFP
'But you still need to cook them.'

05 A: *Ni bu lai women ye dei chifan.*
you not come we also must eat
'Even if you don't come, we need to eat.'

06 *Yiding lai a, bu lai wo ke shenggi le.*
must come SFP not come I then angry SFP
'You must come, or I'll be offended.'

07 B: → *Hao ba, jiu suibian yidian.*
ok SFP then simple a little
'Ok. Just simple dishes.'

Other researchers indicated that the refusal-before-acceptance sequence in Chinese invitational and offering discourse is contextual. Tseng (1996, 1999) found that the older age group employed the refusal-before-acceptance pattern more often than the younger age group, but immediate acceptance dominated her NS participants' production when the two interlocutors assumed a

familiar relationship regardless of their age. Cost of the invitation (investment of time, money, and effort) also matters: the higher the cost for the inviter, the more likely for ritual refusal(s) to precede acceptance. A close examination of Tseng's item and data showed that an invitation extended as a return for an earlier favor was more likely to be responded with the refusal-before-acceptance sequence when compared with an outright invitation. Yang (2008) suggested another possible motivation for pre-acceptance refusals: the invitee might not be sure whether the invitation is substantive or ritual and thus refuses the invitation to ascertain the real intention of the inviter.

Development of Instructional Materials

What is essential to pragmatic instruction is the use of authentic language samples (Bardovi-Harlig, Mossman, & Vellenga, 2014). Textbook content adapted or created for learning of grammar and vocabulary should not be included in a pragmatic lesson. Although materials of this type are typically prepared by native speakers of Chinese, native speakers' intuitions of pragmatic behavior can be unreliable (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Tao's (2005) examination of three major elementary spoken Chinese textbooks compiled in China, the US, and Great Britain, shows a severe lack of authenticity in the materials used in CFL teaching and assessment. This section is organized as follows. First, we identify sources for collecting authentic or semi-authentic conversational samples for the underrepresented target language of Chinese in L2 pragmatic instruction. We then demonstrate how to utilize these materials in designing an instructional unit focusing on the negotiation of acceptances.

Sources for Authentic and Semi-Authentic Conversations in Chinese

Corpora offer reliable sources for collecting authentic language samples. However, corpora of conversational Chinese either charge a fee[1] or disallow public use due to copyright issues[2]. Given

[1] CALLHOME Mandarin Chinese Corpus charges $1,000 and Chinese Annotated Dialogue and Conversation Corpus (CADCC) $2,000.

the challenges from using corpora for authentic conversational data, the researchers have identified three textbooks compiled with real-life conversation samples. Based on a corpus of 64 hours' natural conversations on various topics, *Working with Spoken Chinese* (Tao, 2011) is a pioneering exemplar of textbooks for advanced learners and an affordable resource for teachers. The textbook keeps major characteristics of spontaneous speech in its texts, e.g. turn organization, repetitions, delays, interruptions, and overlapping. In addition, it is supplemented with a companion website that offers audio clips and ancillary materials[3]. Two earlier corpus-based textbooks also provide a good source of authentic conversations: *Exploring in Chinese: A DVD-based Course in Intermediate Chinese* (Ning, 2008), and *Yuansheng Hanyu* (*Listen to it Right—Situational Chinese* edited by Meng, 2008), which are recommended by Xian, Wu, and Tao (2012).

Another source of authentic conversational data is from L1 and L2 Chinese pragmatics studies drawing on naturally occurring speeches (e.g. invitations in Yu & Wu, 2017; requests in Li & Ma, 2016; telephone openings in Hopper & Chen, 1996; Sun, 2004). However, often times the original conversations are not available, but rather the transcripts of the conversations are reported in research papers. Instructors can turn the transcripts into audio conversation samples and use them as listening stimuli for discussions that raise pragmatic awareness. A caveat to collecting conversation samples for teaching, such as final audio products, is that they are semi-authentic.

Clips from sitcoms, soap operas, films (Bardovi-Harlig, 2015) and reality TV shows (Ren & Woodfield, 2016) are good sources for pragmatic instruction as well. This type of resource is termed as authentic-scripted by Bardovi-Harlig (2015). Though different from natural running conversations, authentic-scripted conversations still retain important features of real-life unscripted conversations.

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[2] An example is the Lancaster-Los Angeles Spoken Chinese Corpus (LLSCC).
[3] The URL for the website is:
http://calper.la.psu.edu/publications/workingwithspokenchinese

Though conversations elicited by roleplays or other tasks are not naturally occurring speeches, they are still considered to be on the more authentic end of the authenticity continuum. According to Roever (2011), roleplays "elicit interactive, extended discourse, combine external and discourse-internal context, and allow some degree of standardization through the design of the roleplay situation" (p. 473). The elicited interactional performances resemble real-world interactions in many ways, especially turn construction (Bardovi-Harlig, 2010). Asking expert native speakers of Chinese to perform roleplays is an efficient way to collect instructional materials that serve the specific purpose of a pragmatic lesson. Note that the scenario prompts involved in roleplays should be based on real-life situations and roleplay participants should perform as naturally as possible.

With regard to the instructional unit created for this study, we used six semi-authentic conversations in both audio and written form. Two of the conversations were borrowed from the literature, and four elicited by roleplays (see Appendix A for their transcripts in Chinese characters with English translations). The conversations were all rerecorded at normal conversational speed (120 characters per minute) with minimal revision to remove unclear words for the purpose of the instruction.

The Pragmatic Instructional Unit

The 75-minute pragmatic lesson consists of one awareness-raising activity, three different noticing activities, and one production activity. The structure of the lesson is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1
Lesson Outline

	Purpose	Activity
Activity 1	Awareness-raising	Listen to NS-NS conversations and tell if the final outcomes are acceptances or refusals
Activity 2	Noticing pragmatic strategies	Discuss transcripts of NS-NS invitation/offer-acceptance interactions and identify the pragmatic strategies used by referring to metapragmatic information (a list of pragmatic strategies) provided by the teacher
Activity 3	Noticing context and sequential organization	Discuss transcripts of NS-NS invitation/offer-acceptance interactions and identify contextual variations of different acceptance sequences at the interactional level by referring to metapragmatic information (a chart of discourse patterns) provided by the teacher
Activity 4	Noticing and reviewing	Listen to, discuss, and identify inappropriacy in NS-NNS invitation/offer-acceptance interactions (transcripts provided) by reviewing information gained in the previous activities.
Activity 5	Production and consolidation	Construct invitational/offering conversations with a partner collaboratively according to the given situations and roleplay the latter.

The instruction began with the awareness-raising activity where the learners listened to four conversations between two native speakers of Chinese (Activity 1). For each conversation, the instructor played it up to the point where the initial response to the invitation/offer was given. Then the students were asked to predict whether the conversation would develop into a refusal or an acceptance. After the

students gave predictions, the instructor continued to play the recording and had the students check the accuracy of their predictions. The instructions for Activity 1 are shown in (3). Transcripts of the conversations were provided later for the students to check their answers. The purpose of the awareness-raising activity was to help students become aware that acceptances of invitations and offers in Chinese are often realized across turns and may include expressions of rejections.

(3) Activity 1A

1A. *Instructions*: You are going to listen to some invitational and offering conversations in Chinese. Please mark on the response sheet if you think the outcome of each conversation is an acceptance or refusal of the initial invitation or offer and briefly note down the reason.

Dialogue 1. Please circle: Acceptance/Refusal (Prediction) Acceptance/Refusal (Outcome)

Reason:

Dialogue 2. Please circle: Acceptance/Refusal (Prediction) Acceptance/Refusal (Outcome)

Reason:

Dialogue 3. Please circle: Acceptance/Refusal (Prediction) Acceptance/Refusal (Outcome)

Reason:

Dialogue 4. Please cirle: Acceptance/Refusal (Prediction) Acceptance/Refusal (Outcome)

Reason:

Following the awareness-raising activity were three noticing activities focusing on directing the learners' attention to the pragmatic strategies (Activity 2), context and sequential organization (Activity 3), and inappropriacy of each conversation (Activity 4). In Activities 2 and 3, students were provided with the transcript of the conversations and were asked to perform focused noticing activities that directed their attention to different aspects of acceptances of invitations and offers: pragmatic strategies and

sequential organizations. The layouts for Activities 2 and 3 are illustrated in (4) and (5).

(4) Activity 2

Instructions: Discuss with your partner B's responses in Dialogues 2 and 4 and fill out the following table.

Pragmatic Strategies		Dialogue 2
	01	A: 这次去香港很顺利，谢谢你。
	02	B: 你就别客气啦。
	03	A: 我顺便给你买了件衣服，你穿上会更漂亮了。
	04 05	B: 你干嘛要破费啊? 我衣服太多了，再说东西那么贵。
	06	A: 没象你想的那么贵。去一趟也得留个纪念。
	07	B: 你没少花钱吧?
	08	A: 还行。来，试试看。
	09	B: 不错，我很喜欢。
	10	那就谢谢啦。
	11	A: 你喜欢就行。
	12	B: 非常好。

(5) Activity 3

Instructions: Now read the transcripts of Dialogues 2 and 4 again. This time, focus on the sequential organization of both conversations. Consider the following questions: 1) How many times does A issue the offer or invitation in each conversation? In other words, is the conversation single-cycled or multiple-cycled? (one cycle = one offer/invitation + response pair); 2) Is the conversation's final outcome the same as B's initial response?

3A. Please circle the correct answer.

- Dialogue 2: Single-cycled/Multiple-cycled; Final outcome =/≠initial reponse
- Dialogue 4: Single-cycled/Multiple-cycled; Final outcome =/≠initial reponse

Sequence		Dialogue 4
	01	A: 明天请你吃匹萨，好不好? 你没有事儿吧?
	02 03 04 05	B: 明天啊… 好啊。 应该没事吧。 明天几点?
	06	A: 嗯…我们明天十点不是有课吗? 下课以后就去吧。
	07	B: 好。

Also in Activities 2 and 3, after the focused noticing practice, students were provided with metapragmatic information and were alerted to the fact that in native speakers' communication, the actual acceptances are often delayed. Specifically, the acceptances of a return-for-favor invitation or offer that is of high cost for the initiator (e.g. Dialogue 2) are more likely to be delayed than an outright invitation or offer of low cost (e.g. Dialogue 4). In addition, pre-acceptance refusals usually show the speaker's attempt to reject the hearer's return-for-favor intention (e.g. Dialogue 2, line 02) and/or the concern about the potential cost for the hearer (e.g. Dialogue 2, lines 04, 05, and 07), instead of the speaker's inability or unwillingness to accept the invitation or offer. Then, the instructor moved on to Activity 4 in which they were asked to listen to two conversations, read the transcripts, and identify and discuss inappropriacy in the dialogues by referring to the metapragmatic information they had just studied, as shown in (6).

(6) Activity 4

Instructions: You are going to read the transcripts of two invitational/offering conversations in which the responses are NOT quite appropriate in certain ways. Discuss with your partner and note down what the problems might be.

Dialogue 5:

Dialogue 6:

To consolidate the students' pragmatic knowledge on context-specific acceptance sequences in Chinese, in the last activity (Activity 5) they were provided with two scenario prompts and were asked to construct two invitational/offering interactions with a partner in front of the class. The description for Activity 5 is shown in (7). They were also encouraged to comment on their fellow classmates' performance.

(7) Activity 5

Instructions: You are now going to construct two invitational/offering conversations with your partner. Discuss with your partner and refer to the information that you got in the first three activities. You have 10 minutes' planning time and then you are going to roleplay the two conversations for us.

Scenario 1. 你生病了，很难受，坐公共汽车去医院看病。一个人让你坐在他的座位上，你接受了。

Scenario 2. 你的同学要参加一个中文演讲比赛，今天下午，你在他家帮他练习。练习完以后，他留你吃完饭。你接受了。

A Test Drive

The test drive is mostly exploratory so as to provide some empirical ground for forming hypotheses and suggesting improvement for future larger-scale research. We tested the materials with six L1-English-speaking students pulled out from third-year (n =2) and fourth-year (n = 4) Chinese classes at a university in the Midwest. Given the modest number of participants, the results of the test drive should be considered as tentative rather than conclusive.

To evaluate the efficacy of the unit, we collected and analyzed conversational data from a pretest and posttest. The pretest and the posttest, which were identical, composed of four roleplay scenarios (2 experimental items and 2 distractors; see Figures 1 and 2 for screenshots of the two experimental items), in which students talked with a native speaker of Chinese as the interlocutor. We also collected the learners' awareness data from an interview that was conducted after the posttest. The awareness data provided more insight into the students' perception of the pragmatic instruction that they had received. The experiment was carried out over a one-week span. The pretest was given on a Monday, the instruction was delivered on the Friday of the same week, and the posttest and the interview were elicited right after the posttest.

Figure 1. Screenshot of the first experimental scenario *Vase*.

English translation of the scenario prompt (not provided to participants):

You and Xiaohua are good friends. You just moved into a new apartment and invited your friend for a party. When Xiao Hua's comes, she brings you a very pretty vase.

English translation of the scenario prompt (not provided to participants):

You and Xiaohua are good friends. Today, you and another friend helped Xiaohua move to her new apartment. After the moving is done, Xiaohua treats you to dinner.

Figure 2. Screenshot of the second experimental scenario *Moving*.

Another two students in the fourth-year class served as the control group and took the pretest and posttest on the same days of the week as the experimental group, but they did not receive the instruction. An interlocutor, who was 26 years old, born and raised in Beijing, China, was recruited to elicit roleplay data in both the pretest and posttest. The second author delivered the pragmatic lesson and conducted the one-on-one interviews.

Results

A total of 32 roleplays were transcribed and analyzed, 24 from the experimental group (6 students × 2 scenarios × [pretest + posttest]) and 8 from the control group (2 students × 2 scenarios × [pretest + posttest]). The response sequences produced in the pretest and posttest experimental scenarios involving invitation and offer were coded based on the notions of adjacency pair and sequence expansion (Schegloff, 2007). A basic unexpanded form of an adjacency pair is composed of a first pair part and a second pair part. A first pair part refers to an utterance type that initiates some exchange, such as a question, request, invitation, and offer. On the other hand, a second pair part responds to the action of a prior turn, such as answer, rejection, acceptance, agreement, and disagreement. Sequences usually involve expansions of adjacency pairs. Expansions can precede, intervene in, or follow the base sequence of a single adjacency pair (termed as pre-, insert, and post expansions).

In the pretest that collected production data from 16 roleplays, 13 out of 16 roleplays (81%) contained immediate acceptance with or without post-expansions. The example in (8) consists of only one offer-response adjacency pair without post-expansions. Dan's acceptance (line 03) of the interlocutor's offer (line 02) is immediate in the next turn, followed by expressions of gratitude and explanation within the same turn.

(8) Vase ([-P, -D], outright; Dan: CH06pr, male; I: Interlocutor)

01	**I:**		*Ni de xin gongyu hen piaoliang a.* you DE new apartment very pretty A-SFP 'Your new apartment is really nice.'
02		F_b offer	*Wo zhe-r zhenghao you ge huaping, song gei ni ba.* I here just have CL vase give GEI you BA-SFP 'I happen to have this vase and I

want to give it to you.'

03	**Dan:**	S_b	→	*Hao.*
		yes		good
				'Good.'
04		gratitude	→	*Xiexie ni.*
				thank you
				'Thank you.'
05		explanation	→	*Wo gangcai mai le yixie hua-r, wo keyi fang zai zheli.*
				I then buy LE some flower I can put ZAI here
				'I just bought some flowers and I can put them in here.'
06	**I:**	SCT		*Ni xihuan jiu hao.*
				you like then good
				'Great that you like it.'

Note. F/S_b: first/second pair part in base adjacency pair; F/S_{ins}: first/second pair part in insert expansion; F/S_{post}: first/second pair part in post expansion; SCT: sequence closing third; SF: sentence-final particle; CL: noun classifier.

The example in (9) is also single-cycled in that it consists of only one invitation-response adjacency pair, in which the acceptance is immediate (line 03). However, a post-expansion initiated by Nick (line 04) is observed. Nick requested further information about where to have dinner, and his responses in lines 04 and 06 seemed to suggest that the invitation was accepted because of the interlocutor's selection of the restaurant, not because of the interlocutor's appreciation of his help.

(9) Moving ([-P, -D], return for favor; Nick: CH04pr; I: Interlocutor)

01	**I:**		*Xiexie nimen jintian bang wo banjia.*
			thank you (pl.) today help I move
			'Thank you for helping me move

today.'

02		F_b		*Zou, women yiqi chifan qu ba.*
		invitation		go, we together eat go BA
				'Let's go to have some food together.'
03	**Nick:**	S_b	→	*Dangran women keyi.*
		yes		of-course we can
				'Of course we can.'
04		F_{post}	→	*Ni yao qu na yi ge canguan?*
		request info.		you want go which one CL restaurant
				'Which restaurant are you thinking of going to?'
05	**I:**	S_{post}		*Women qu Beijing Tokyo ba.*
				we go Beijing Tokyo BA-SFP
				'Let's go to Beijing Tokyo.'
06	**Nick:**	SCT	→	*Dangran keyi qu.*
				of-course can go
				'Of course we can go there.'

In the post-test, production by the two students in the control group was almost the same as what they said in the pretest. On the contrary, the experimental group demonstrated significant changes in terms of sequential organization. Nine of the 12 roleplays (75%) produced by the experimental group featured acceptances delayed across turns. In Example (10), the same student Dan as in Example (8) delayed his acceptance (line 08) in the posttest with a refusal (line 03) of the gift by showing his concern for the potential cost for the interlocutor (*mafan* 'trouble'). Dan's initial refusal was part of the ritual with his ultimate acceptance expected.

(10) Vase ([-P, -D], outright; Dan: CH06po, male; I: Interlocutor)

01	**I:**		*Ni de xin gongyu hen piaoliang a.*
			you DE new apartment very pretty A-SFP
			'Your new apartment is really nice.'
02		F_{b1}	*Wo zhe-r zhenghao you ge huaping, song*

		offer		*gei ni ba.* I here just have CL vase give GEI you BA-SFP 'I happen to have this vase and I want to give it to you.'
03	**Dan:**	S_{b1} refusal	→	*A, bu yong bu yong, wo bu yao mafan ni.* A no need no need I no need trouble you 'Oh you don't need to. I don't want to trouble you.'
04	**I:**			*Mei guanxi.* no matter 'It doesn't matter.'
05				*Wo juede zhe ge huaping he ni de xin gongyu feichang pei.* I feel this CL vase with you DE new apt very match 'I feel the vase is a good match for your new apartment.'
06				*Fang zai ni jia li yinggai hui hen piaoliang.* put ZAI you home at must will very pretty 'It'll look very nice at your house.'
07		F_{b2} insistence		*Ni na qu ba.* you take go BA-SFP 'Please take it.'
08	**Dan:**	S_{b2} yes	→	*Hao, xie, hao de.* good thank good DE 'Good, good.'
09		gratitude	→	*Xiexie ni.* thank you 'Thank you.'
10	**I:**	SCT		*Bu keqi.* no polite 'Don't be polite with me.'

It is worth noting, nonetheless, that most of the pre-acceptance refusals produced by the learners in the experimental group (5 out of a total of 6) were non-target-like in that they reflected the speaker's inability or unwillingness to accept the invitation or offer as exemplified in (11). In the *Moving* scenario, Nick's initial refusal (lines 03-04) was based on his personal preference for taking a nap. Although in the end, he accepted the invitation (line 08), it sounded like he was persuaded and thus changed his mind.

(11) Moving ([-P, -D], return for favor; Nick: CH04po; I: Interlocutor)

01	**I:**			*Xiexie nimen jintian bang wo banjia.* thank you (pl.) today help I move 'Thank you for helping me move today.'
02		F_{b1} invitation		*Zou, women yiqi chifan qu ba.* go, we together eat go BA 'Let's go to have some food together.'
03	**Nick:**	S_{b1} refusal-alternative	→	*Keyi mingtian ma?* can tomorrow MA 'Can we do it tomorrow?'
04		refusal-explanation	→	*Wo xianzai tai lei, wo juede wo hui qu shuijiao.* I now too tired I feel I will go sleep 'I'm so tired that I kind of feel like taking a nap.'
05	**I:**	F_{b2} invitation		*Fanzheng ye yao chifan ma.* anyway also need eat MA-SFP 'You need to eat something anyway.'
06				*Zong bu neng e zhe duzi*

shuijiao.
all can not hungry ZHE belly sleep
'You don't want to nap while hungry.'

07 *Zou ba.*
go BA-SFP
'Let's go.'

08 **Nick:** S_{b2} → *Na hao ba.*
yes then good BA-SFP
'Ok then.'

In the posttest, we also found that the learners in the experimental group were more likely to delay acceptances of an outright offer than a return-for-favor invitation. Five of the six students showed delayed acceptances in the *Vase* scenario (an outright offer) whereas only one student did so in the *Moving* scenario (a return-for-favor invitation). The L2 Chinese learners' performance -- more use of delayed acceptances with an outright offer than with a return-for-favor invitation -- is opposite to what was found in L1 Chinese pragmatics. Production by L1 Chinese speakers features a higher use of the refusal-before-acceptance sequence in their responses to return-for-favor than to outright invitations or offers (e.g. Tseng, 1999).

Taken together, the students in the experimental group seemed to have learned that acceptances of invitations and offers in Chinese are often preceded by refusals and that they should wait for the inviter/offeror to insist. However, they did not seem to have acquired the fine details of the sequence. For instance, the learners were still unable to discern and create ritual refusals before acceptances, and they probably had not realized the contextual restraints for using such a sequence. A possible confounding factor is the use of semi-authentic conversations, which were elicited from native speakers by roleplays, as input in the experiment. The resulting interactions cannot be considered equivalent to real-world language use, as roleplays cannot establish context in the same way as the real world and no real-world stakes are involved (Bardovi-Harlig, 2010).

In other words, conversations elicited by roleplays may very likely lack the fine details in natural conversations that would help orient learners' attention.

The students' lack of native delicacy in their developing system for Chinese invitational and offering acceptances was captured in the interview data. Three of the six students related the *Vase* scenario to the routine formula of *You don't have to* in American English when accepting a gift. The students overall gave a positive feedback on the lesson, especially on the provided metapragmatic information. Nevertheless, they still found it hard to use the refusal-before-acceptance sequences in their responses to invitations and offers, particularly in a gift-giving situation. As indicated by the students, in the American culture, rejecting a gift, especially a gift as a token of appreciation, is very rude. Therefore, in the *Vase* scenario where they received a vase as a gift, they were at a loss what and how to respond. One important implication for future research is that the awareness-raising stage of the pragmatic lesson needs to incorporate activities that draw students' attention to the pragmatic aspects of both L1 and L2.

Reflections on Pedagogy of Pragmatics

This exploratory study shows that the learners improved the sequential organizations of their acceptances after the instruction towards the target norms. Reflecting on the proposed teaching unit and activities, there are a few things worth noting.

First of all, use of authentic materials is essential, as is made clear in the literature of pragmatic instruction. However, instructors need to keep in mind that using naturally occurring conversations as authentic materials does not mean that we should not make any changes. Bardovi-Harlig, Mossman, and Vellenga (2014) provide practical suggestions on how to prepare teaching materials by adapting transcripts of authentic conversations in corpus: conversational characteristics that are not the focus of instruction should be removed. Therefore, features like repetition or silence for word searching and back channeling can be eliminated. In addition,

there are different levels of authenticity in pedagogical materials, as was introduced earlier in this paper. Depending on the focus of instruction, instructors can use a combination of authentic and semi-authentic materials. For example, formulaic expressions used to realize specific speech acts can be located in naturally occurring conversations, but they can also be elicited from native speakers by well-designed experimental tasks like roleplay and oral discourse completion task. As for the organization of conversation, naturally occurring conversations always represent a much more complicated structure than elicited conversations. Nonetheless, instructors can still use elicited conversations if the instruction focuses on only one aspect of conversations (e.g. repair, refusal-before-acceptance), not the complete structure.

Second, pedagogical tasks should match real-life tasks in mode. When the target of instruction involves speech acts, audio or even visual input should be used. While engaged in focused noticing activities, the students in the present study often attended to prosodic and phonological features to help them make a decision. Transcripts can be provided but should always be accompanied by the audio input because real-life communication of the similar type happens in speaking but not on paper.

Finally, as discussed previously in this paper, the importance of pragmatic instruction has not been well-recognized in most current CFL curricula. One of the ways to implement pragmatics teaching is to integrate short lessons into the existing curriculum or to design materials for self-learning. The 75-minute classroom instruction lesson presented in this paper may serve as a model for helping students attune towards the pragmatic aspects of language, and specifically, how speech acts are negotiated across turns. In the long run, it is worth our time and energy to develop similar materials and activities for other speech acts and make them available online so that students can access the materials on their own. The L2 Spanish pragmatics learning website developed by Félix-Brasdefer provides a good example for pragmatics learning outside the classroom (http://www.indiana.edu/~discprag/). Above all, the position taken in this paper falls in line with that of Bardovi-Harlig and her

colleagues (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, & Reynolds, 1991): the real task of pragmatic instruction is not to teach students specific speech acts but to help them become aware of the pragmatic aspects of language in general.

Conclusion

The three-step pedagogical model of awareness-raising, focused noticing, and producing works as well in the teaching of L2 Chinese speech acts as in other target languages in the literature. Given the small number of participants, the present study is exploratory, and it is not possible to make generalizations. However, the results have suggested improved performance in acceptance sequences as a result of the instruction that students had received. The pedagogical model, means of collecting conversational data, and the students' retrospective verbal reports discussed in this paper all provide guidance for designing pragmatic lessons of not only Chinese, but also other less commonly taught languages. In the long run, we hope to build a complete curriculum for L2 Chinese pragmatics, using the instructional unit proposed in this paper as a starting point.

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Appendix A Transcripts of Conversations with English Translation

Dialogue 1 (NS-NS; adapted from Yu & Wu, 2017, pp. 14-15)

01 **A:** **小**仓，你来我家吧，你一个人在家干啥呢?
'Xiaocang, you come to my home. What are you doing at home?'

02 **B:** **收拾收拾家呢。**
'I'm cleaning my home.'

03 **A:** **呀，有**啥收拾的呢？快来吧。你中午吃啥呀？
'What's to clean? Quickly come over. What do you want to have for lunch?'

04 **几个朋友都在呢，你就**过来就行了么。
'Our friends are all here, so just come over.'

05 **B:** (0.2)

06 **你**们吃呗。
'Go ahead and eat.'

07 **A:** 过来吧，你一个人在家有事忙呢**？**
'Come over. You have something to be busy with at home?'

08 **B:** **没事倒是，收拾收拾家。**
'Nothing big. Just cleaning my home.'

09 **A:** **呀，你一个人**还能有多脏？收拾啥么**？**
'You yourself are at home. How dirty could it be? What's to clean?'

10 **B:** **啊，行行行行行行，行。**
'Oh, ok, ok.'

11 **A:** **啊，**过来吧哈。
'Ah, just come over.'

12 **B:** **啊，好好好。**
'Ah, good, good.'

Dialogue 2 (NS-NS; from Zhu, Li, & Qian, 2000, p.93)

01 **A:** 这次去香港很顺利。
'The trip to Hong Kong was very pleasant.'

02 谢谢你。

'Thank you (for your help at work.'

03 **B:** **你就**别客气啦。
'Don't mention it.'

04 **A:** **我**顺便给你买了件衣服，你穿上会更漂亮了。
'I bought a jacket for you, by the way. You will look even smarter in it.'

05 **B:** **你干嘛要破**费呀？
'Why did you spend so much money?'

06 **我衣服太多了，再**说东西那么贵。
'I have lots of clothes. Things are expensive (in Hong Kong).'

07 **A:** **没象你想的那么**贵。去一趟也得留个纪念。
'Not as expensive as you think. We need a souvenir of the visit.'

08 **B:** **你没少花**钱吧？
'You must have spent a lot of money.'

09 **A:** 还行。来，试试看。
'Not too much. Come on, try it on.'

10 **B:** **不**错，我很喜欢。
'Not bad. I like it every much.'

11 **那就**谢谢啦。
'Thank you, then.'

12 **A:** **你喜**欢就行。
'As long as you like it.'

13 **B:** **非常好。**
'Very well.'

Dialogue 3 (NS-NS; elicited by roleplay)

0 A **好久不**见啊，最近怎么样？
1 : 'Long time no see. How have you been lately?'
0 **B** 还行吧。你怎么样啊？
2 **:** 'I'm doing ok. How about you?'
0 **A** **就那**样呗。
3 **:** 'Just so-so.'

0 **那个，我**们都好久没打球了。
4 'Well, we have not played (basket)ball together for a long time.'
0 这个星期六约了几个朋友一起打球，咱们一起呗。
5 'I invited a few friends to play (basket)ball together this Saturday. Let's play together.'
0 **B** **你知道**吗，这周六我正好有一个会。
6 **:** 'You know what? I have a meeting this Saturday.'
0 **但是周三我**约了一个场地，咱们周三一起，你看怎么
7 样？
'But I reserved a court for this Wednesday. Let's play on Wednesday. What do you think?'
0 **A** **那，那行吧，行吧。**
8 **:** 'Well, ok, ok.'
0 **B** **到**时候，到时候我给你打电话，怎么样？
9 **:** 'I will call you then. How does this sound?'
1 **A** **啊，行。**
0 **:** 'Well, that'll work.'
1 **B** **那好，回**见。
1 **:** 'Ok then, see you later.'

Dialogue 4 (NS-NS; elicited by roleplay)

01 **A:** **明天**请你吃匹萨，好不好？你没有事儿吧？
'Let me buy you pizza tomorrow, ok? You won't be busy, will you?'

02 **B:** **明天啊**…**好啊。**应该没事吧。明天几点？
'Tomorrow…mm…OK. I shouldn't be busy. What time tomorrow?'

03 **A:** 嗯, **我**们明天十点不是有课吗？下课以后就去吧。
'Mm. Don't we have a class at ten tomorrow? Let's go after class.'

04 **B:** **好。**
'OK.'

Dialogue 5 (NS-NNS; elicited by roleplay)

01 **A:** **你怎么了？看起来很**难受，坐我这儿吧。
'What happened? You didn't look good. Take my seat.'
02 **B:** **那**，谢谢。
'Then, thank you.'
03 **A:** **没事儿**，**快坐吧。**
'Don't mention it. Sit down quickly.'
04 **B:** **你到哪里？**
'Where are you going?
05 **A:** **没事儿**，**我**马上下车。
'Don't worry about it. I'm getting off very soon.'
06 **B:** **我很不好意思。**
'I feel really sorry.'
07 **A:** **没事儿啦。**
'Don't mention it.'

Dialogue 6 (NS-NNS; elicited by roleplay)

0 1 **A:** 谢谢你今天帮我练习我的演讲。这个很有帮助的。嗯，晚上就在我家吃饭吧，就随便炒几个菜。
'Thank you for helping me practice my speech today. It was very helpful. Mm… Stay at my place for dinner tonight. I'll prepare some simple dishes.'

0 2 **B:** 嗯，帮助你之后，我的确很饿了。可是，是你自己炒菜吗**？**
'Mm. After helping you, I am feeling very hungry indeed. But, will you make the dishes by yourself?'

0 3 **A:** 对，我自己做。
'Yes, by myself.'

0 4 **B:** **可是你**，**我**记得你做的饭不太好吃。
'But you… I remember that dishes cooked by you were not very tasty.'

05 **A：** **那是以前，我**这几年都学习怎么做饭，所以我现在做的还不错。
'That was before. I have been learning how to cook these couple of years, so my cooking is not bad now.'

06 **B：** **所以你做**饭水平进步了。
'So, your cooking skills have improved. '

07 **A：** 对对对。
'Yep. Yep. Yep.'

08 **B：** **好啊，我会**试试。
'Okay. I will give it a shot.'