

2019

# Proposing a Haptic Approach to Facilitating L2 Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Michael S. Burri

*University of Wollongong, mburri@uow.edu.au*

Amanda Ann Baker

*University of Wollongong, abaker@uow.edu.au*

William Acton

*Trinity Western University*

---

## Publication Details

Burri, M., Baker, A. & Acton, W. (2019). Proposing a Haptic Approach to Facilitating L2 Learners' Pragmatic Competence. *Humanising Language Teaching*, 21 (3), 1-15.

---

# Proposing a Haptic Approach to Facilitating L2 Learners' Pragmatic Competence

## **Abstract**

Pragmatic competence plays a critical role in successful communication. Pragmatics in the second language classroom has received substantial interest in TESOL, yet teachers often find the teaching of pragmatics challenging. Instruction generally tends to focus on grammar and vocabulary development, even though pragmatics is closely linked to the sound system (i.e., phonology) of the language. An effective method should combine attention to both pragmatic and phonological competence. We propose an integrated approach, drawing on haptic (movement and touch) pronunciation teaching techniques (Acton, Baker, Burri & Teaman, 2013) to facilitate study and uptake of pragmatics in the classroom. In part by mapping intonation and rhythm onto select prefabricated, high value language chunks - adding systematic gestures, movement, and touch - students' ability to respond more appropriately in social context should be significantly enhanced. The process described is accessible to most experienced practitioners. The paper concludes with recommended applications in various educational settings.

## **Keywords**

competence, pragmatic, learners', l2, haptic, proposing, facilitating, approach

## **Disciplines**

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

## **Publication Details**

Burri, M., Baker, A. & Acton, W. (2019). Proposing a Haptic Approach to Facilitating L2 Learners' Pragmatic Competence. *Humanising Language Teaching*, 21 (3), 1-15.

# **Proposing a Haptic Approach to Facilitating L2 Learners' Pragmatic Competence**

**Michael Burri, Australia, Amanda Baker, Australia, and William Acton, Canada**

Michael Burri is Lecturer in TESOL at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He has taught and conducted research in a variety of contexts in Australia, Japan, and Canada. His research interests include pronunciation teaching, second language teacher education, context-sensitive pedagogy, and non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) issues. Email: mburri@uow.edu.au

Amanda Baker is Senior Lecturer in TESOL and Academic Program Director of the Master of Education at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Her research interests include second language pronunciation pedagogy, oral communication pedagogy, second language teacher education and classroom-based research. Email: abaker@uow.edu.au

Bill Acton is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Director of the MATESOL at Trinity Western University, Canada. His research and publications have been in the general area of the role of the body in language learning and more specifically in haptic pronunciation teaching. Email: william.acton@twu.ca

## **Abstract**

Pragmatic competence plays a critical role in successful communication. Pragmatics in the second language classroom has received substantial interest in TESOL, yet teachers often find the teaching of pragmatics challenging. Instruction generally tends to focus on grammar and vocabulary development, even though pragmatics is closely linked to the sound system (i.e., phonology) of the language. An effective method should combine attention to both pragmatic and phonological competence. We propose an integrated approach, drawing on haptic (movement and touch) pronunciation teaching techniques (Acton, Baker, Burri & Teaman, 2013) to facilitate study and uptake of pragmatics in the classroom. In part by mapping intonation and rhythm onto select prefabricated, high value language chunks – adding systematic gestures, movement, and touch – students' ability to respond more appropriately in social context should be significantly enhanced. The process described is accessible to most experienced practitioners. The paper concludes with recommended applications in various educational settings.

## **Introduction**

The journey to higher proficiency is often marked by frustration for second language (L2) learners. Many emerge from classrooms, albeit with some exceptions (Yanagi & Baker, 2016), with a relatively good command of a formal academic-oriented speaking style which can nonetheless be woefully inadequate for every day conversational interaction. The breakdowns in communication that occur outside of the classroom frequently relate to lack of pragmatic competence. Not surprisingly, the development of communicative competence continues to be a primary objective of the modern L2 classroom. Achieving that on the part of both instructor and student requires varying degrees of understanding of language and conversational discourse. As proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), communicative

competence comprises four dimensions: (1) grammatical (phonology, syntax, vocabulary) competence; (2) sociolinguistic (appropriacy) competence; (3) discourse (cohesion and coherence) competence; and (4) strategic (compensatory strategies) competence.

In the contemporary L2 classroom, syntax and vocabulary receive perhaps the most attention; yet, those skill subsets alone are insufficient for genuine, multi-context communication. This paper describes a system for helping students further enhance their ability to communicate successfully focusing specifically on features of learners' pragmatic and related phonological competence.

### **Developing pragmatic competence**

Pragmatics is defined as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (Crystal, 1985, p. 364). Developing L2 learners' pragmatic competence is vital (Hilliard, 2017). Pragmatic rules of register (i.e., levels of formality) and politeness, embodied in speech acts (e.g., interactions with interlocutors) have become a basic requirement of the L2 curriculum. (For illustrations of pragmatics-centered classroom activities, see, for example, Hilliard, 2017; Siegel, 2016; Zeff, 2016).

Understanding the relationship between language and sociocultural context is pivotal to the development of pragmatic competence. For example, a functional perspective reflects the purpose of an utterance. The question *Would you mind if I close the window?*, for instance, could imply that it is cold in the classroom. The sociolinguistic dimension, in comparison, determines which language is appropriate to a particular social setting. As such, using the phrase *Turn that bloody noise down!* to express to your boss that the music in his office is overly loud would typically be considered inappropriate! Teaching learners how the language they are learning is intertwined with context is essential.

The requirement for instruction enhancing learners' pragmatic competence has gained increased attention in L2 teaching (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Research has demonstrated the value of explicit instruction in this area (Halenko & Jones, 2017). “Pragmatic skills” are understood to be highly desirable by learners (Yuan, Tangen, Mills, & Lidstone, 2015) in part because, as Lindeman, Litzenberg, and Subtirelu (2014) suggest, being able to use pragmatic strategies enhances their confidence in conversation.

Due to the cultural, social, linguistic, contextual, and behavioural nature of speech acts (Limberg, 2015), the teaching of pragmatics is a complex undertaking. From the learner's perspective, acquiring pragmatic competence can be challenging: an utterance can be “grammatically correct”, yet completely inappropriate, depending on the context in which the speech act is performed (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Simply acquiring explicit knowledge about pragmatics is not enough. To reach a level of pragmatic competence that allows them to participate, to interact successfully, learners need to be given ample opportunities in the classroom (and elsewhere) to in effect “automatize” that new knowledge. In achieving that the speaker no longer needs to focus much attention on the conceptualization, formulation or monitoring of her/his utterances (Thornbury, 2005). Automatization is considered a key process in achieving fluency and overall speaking competence in an L2 (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; McCarthy, 2010). One way to potentially enhance that automatization

process is through the use of kinaesthetic techniques which can serve as mediating tools (Loewen, 2015).

### **Phonological competence and pragmatic competence**

While comprehensibility and intelligibility are both situated in social context, a speaker's pragmatic competence is also perceived in relation to his or her use of tonal patterns, pauses and pitch use (Levis & Moyer, 2014). Over the past decade, pronunciation instruction has begun to feature more prominently in the L2 classroom (Thomson & Derwing, 2015), in part because research has shown that explicit pronunciation instruction can have a positive effect on L2 learner pronunciation (e.g., Couper, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Saito & Lyster, 2012). Thus, learners are receiving more instruction in the use of diverse features of pronunciation to enhance the intelligibility of their speech. A major problem, however, is that pronunciation is often taught in isolation from linguistic or social context. As Levis and Moyer (2014, p. 282) point out:

[pronunciation] has mostly been taught without reference to any kind of discourse context at all, linguistic or social, with features being illustrated and practiced at the sound, word and sentence level. We argue that this approach is fundamentally misguided insofar as it treats phonology in a decontextualized, disconnected way. It is also misguided because not only does pronunciation strongly influence intelligibility, it also conveys social meanings and thus has social consequences.

Teaching pronunciation linked to social context presents a serious challenge. Many teachers (understandably) experience anxiety or uncertainty about how to best do that (Baker, 2011; Foote, Holtby & Derwing, 2011), let alone develop pragmatic competence. Instructional resources for facilitating that integration are, however, becoming more available and accessible. For teachers to make that connection in the classroom, kinaesthetically-based instruction appears to be one potentially effective approach. The following section explores and then applies an extension of typical kinaesthetic-based pronunciation teaching: haptic pronunciation teaching (Acton, 2018).

### **Haptic pronunciation teaching**

Haptics has permeated modern society. The term “haptic” comes from the Greek “haptikos”, relating to the sense of touch; “haptics” is the technological application of touch and resultant body movement, fundamental to surgery, gaming, prosthetics, haptic cinema and smartphones, to name a few areas. The concept of haptic was taken up by Acton and incorporated into pronunciation instruction by combining movement (i.e., gestures) and touch to create a systematic haptic approach to L2 pronunciation teaching (Acton, Baker, Burri, & Teaman, 2013; Burri & Baker, 2016). In essence, the approach integrates sight, sound, movement, and touch to capture the attention of L2 learners and, at the same time, it enhances their language awareness in an exploratory sense. Systematic movement can also serve as a tool for modeling, feedback and correction. The basic premise of the approach is that teaching the sound system of English systematically should lead to enhanced uptake and retention of newly learned phonological features and vocabulary (Burri, Baker, & Acton, 2016).

The support from research for haptic pronunciation teaching (HaPT) as presented in this article comes from several sources: studies as to (a) the efficacy of using gesture to support L2 learning and teaching (e.g., Macedonia & Klimesch, 2014; McCafferty & Stam, 2008; Morett, 2014), (b) the impact of haptic technology on training and performance (e.g., Hamza-Lup & Stanescu, 2010; San Diego et al., 2012), and (c) reflective reports from teachers who have used aspects of the system over the course of the last decade. The “curriculum”, phonological processes, and most of the techniques of HaPT are relatively typical of pronunciation teaching today. What is different is the systematic application of gesture, further refined and enhanced by the use of touch in anchoring gestural patterns accompanying speech. Furthermore, comprising a coherent method applicable to almost all learners and proficiency levels, HaPT uses a well-defined repertoire of techniques, striving to make them more effective and “memorable” from the outset.

### **Bringing it all together: Haptic (assisted) pragmatic teaching**

The innovative nature of HaPT alone resonates with Levis and Moyer’s (2014) call “for an approach to pronunciation teaching that prioritizes social factors and intelligibility rather than nativeness. Whatever such an approach will ultimately look like, it will clearly not look like traditional pronunciation teaching” (p. 289). In addition, as Yates (2017) points out, pronunciation and pragmatics have not yet been brought together “in a way that is of real practical value for language teachers” (p. 227).

This paper is an attempt to bridge that gap. For example, intonation patterns with accompanying systematic gesture are mapped onto prefabricated “chunks” of language (see description below) that form speech acts (e.g., apologies, requests). Two functions of these pedagogical movement patterns (PMPs) are to foreground intonational features (pitch, volume, and stress) and to enhance attention to key stressed sounds and sound-patterns (Acton, 2018).

In exploring pragmatic competence, we have consistently observed that this approach helps learners become more expressive. They report gaining confidence in their oral ability to recall expressions that had been “haptically anchored” in class. Overall, both directly and indirectly the approach seems to be contributing to their pragmatic competence both through enhanced automaticity and general improved awareness of prosodic correlates of speech acts in context.

The following section describes several applicable features of haptic pragmatics teaching, followed by representative dialogue work to illustrate what this form of “haptic pragmatics” looks like in the L2 classroom.

### **Prefabricated language chunks and touchinamis**

Prefabricated Language Chunks (PLCs) – defined as a series of several words that are typically used together in a fixed expression – form the foundation or point of departure of haptic pragmatics teaching. That is similar to the notion of using template sentences (Gilbert, 2014) – or fixed utterances, also called chunks of language (McCarthy, 2010) – to enhance fluent oral output of L2 learners (Pang & Burri, 2018). From a phonological perspective, PLCs can also be considered thought groups or production groups. Intonation mapped on to these fixed pieces of language makes up an essential feature of the system. Intonation is typically defined as the “pitch or “melody” of the voice during speech” (Wennerstrom, 2001, p. 17); in other words, the rising or falling of the pitch of our voice when we speak. Pitch

movement can take place over several syllables or a couple of words. Invariably, intonation is intertwined with prominence (i.e., the stressed syllable in the most strongly stressed word in a PLC). That means that a pitch change occurs at the prominent syllable, and, as Brazil's work (1997) demonstrated, speakers can vary the placement of prominent syllables in a tone unit (such as a PLC) to change the meaning for discourse focus of an utterance.

Students are first introduced to a haptic intonation technique called the 'Touchinami' (Acton, 2018). 'Touchinami' is a word play that combines *touch* with *nami*, the Japanese word for wave (all three of us have extensive experience teaching English in Japan). In essence, a *touchinami* is a systematic gesture that combines movement and touch for learners to experience an intonational contour and prominence within or bounded by a PLC. The following is a link to two videos demonstrating several *touchinamis* L2 teachers can incorporate in their classrooms: <http://www.actonhaptic.com/videos/#/demovideos> (see Basic Intonation and Expressiveness videos). If a teacher lacks confidence in his or her ability to demonstrate the intonation patterns, the two videos can, of course, also be used for training students by having the class do the *touchinamis* with the videos played at the front of the classroom.

The English language contains a plethora of intonational patterns used to convey meaning. To keep it manageable for our learners, however, we usually focus only on the four basic and most common patterns. These are:

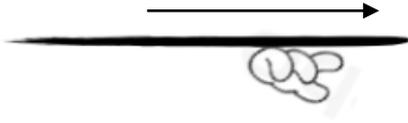
- Level
- Fall
- Rise
- Rise-Fall

With more advanced learners we usually include two more patterns: fall-rise (expressing scepticism, for example) and final fall (where the voice falls markedly, indicating that the speaker is finished talking, either with that conversational turn or the conversation itself).

These patterns can be viewed in the demo videos included in the website above. Regardless of the level of our students, we train them in the *touchinamis* by first demonstrating each one to the class. Next, learners do each PMP along with the teacher a few times while doing several example sentences (see below) out loud, simultaneously. This initial training phase occurs in a controlled environment, and is coupled with class discussions about how and in what (pragmatic) contexts to use the example sentences.

### **Level [L]**

A speaker typically uses level tone when she hesitates or thinks before responding. For example: "well...that's **possible."** Note that prominence is in bold and underlined. As demonstrated in the video above, it's on the prominent syllable or word where the speaker needs to touch his hands while saying the example out loud. The arrow shows the direction of the movement of the left hand while the hand included in the image represents the right hand where touch occurs. The annotation for this *touchinami* is [L] which represents level tone. The annotation letters are put in square brackets to clearly distinguish them from the rest of the text (for the use of this annotation system in role-plays, see Table 4 below). Along with doing the example a few times with the learners, providing images (see below) further facilitates the students' uptake of the intonational patterns:



### Fall [F]

The second *touchinami* is used for basic/declarative statements, at a comma or period, or in wh-questions. Examples include: “Nice to meet you” and “Where are you going?”



### Rise [R]

A rising *touchinami* is commonly used in basic yes/no questions, such as “Are you okay?”, or in a series of items, such as // “red, / green / and blue” //. The final word in the list, however, would end with an [F].



### Rise-Fall [R-F]

The fourth and last *touchinami* reflects enthusiasm, empathy and emotions. An example in the case of an emotional response or expression is: “It’s beautiful!” The *touchinami* can also be used to emphasize word stress when learning new vocabulary. In the word “pronunciation”, for example, the [R-F] touchinami foregrounds the stressed syllable *a*.



### Transitioning to speech acts

Having been oriented to the *touchinamis*, students are ready to work with speech acts (SAs). A speech act is defined as “[a]n action performed by the use of an utterance to communicate” (Yule, 1996, p. 134). Functions the speaker intends to convey may include apologizing, requesting, suggesting, ordering, offering, and reprimanding. Besides intention, speech acts can also be classified into five categories (LoCastro, 2003): (1) Declarations, (2) Representatives, (3) Expressives, (4), Directives, and (5) Commissives. A speech act may be longer than a PLC, but the underlying phonological principles of prominence and intonation still apply.

Much like the *touchinami* training sessions, we go through each speech act category with our students and have them map a PMP onto example sentences.

## Declarations

This speech act involves a change in the status or condition of an object or of the world as a result of an utterance. Example sentences are:

- War is **declared**.
- You're **out!** (umpire)
- I now pronounce you husband and **wife**.
- I **quit!**

The *touchinamis* associated with declarations are *Rise-Fall* and *Fall*, depending on the emphasis a speaker desires to add to the speech act. *War is **declared***, for instance, has falling intonation because it is a declarative sentence. *You're **out!***, alternatively, is an emphatic statement and therefore carries a rise-fall contour.

Rise-Fall



Fall



## Representatives

The second speech act comprises commitment to the truth of a given situation. This can involve statements of fact, descriptions, affirmations, conclusions, reports, and beliefs. These are all linked with a Fall. For instance:

- A dog **barks**.
- The earth is **flat**.
- Australia is hot and dry in the **summer**.



## Expressives

The third speech act involves expression of attitudes and feelings (emotional and physical). These are all linked with a Rise-Fall. Examples we use with our students are:

- I'm **truly** sorry!
- That **hurts!**
- **Thank** you!
- Congratul**ations!**



## Directives

An attempt to get the listener to do (or not do) something entails the fourth speech act. Actions that are included in this category are orders, requests, suggestions, recommendations, and warnings. For instance:

- Clean up your **room**.
- I don't recommend that **movie**. It's terrible.
- Could you open the **window**?



For *directives*, two *touchinamis* are used. *Clean up your **room*** is a declarative statement, and therefore has a falling pattern, whereas a basic yes/no question such as *Could you open the **window**?* is likely to carry a rising contour.

### Commissives

Commissives typically involve a commitment to a future action. This can entail a speaker promising, swearing, threatening, or pledging something. Examples are:

- I promise to do my **homework**.
- I won't screw it **up**!



As with *declarations* and *directives*, for *commissives* a speaker has two choices of *touchinamis* depending on the emphasis she wants to place on an utterance. The first example above is a simple promise with a falling pattern, while the second one is an emphatic pledge carrying a rise-fall contour.

Students are then given opportunities to experience these speech acts haptically and are provided with several 'cheat sheets' that include a variety of theme-oriented functions. The sheet below (see Table 1), as an example, contains speech acts that can be used when providing opinions in agreement-disagreement discourse. In essence, the sheet is a summary, which includes several speech acts, sample utterances, and associated *touchinamis*. The overview includes a list of the haptic PMPs. Throughout the course, this sheet serves as a reference point when we discuss, identify, and review speech acts before having the class engage in communicative tasks.

Table 1  
*Agreement-Disagreement Cheat Sheet*

<p><b>Expressing an Opinion</b>          In <b>my</b> view ...          Personally, I <b>think</b>...          It seems to <b>me</b> that <b>opinion</b>...</p> 	<p><b>Conceding an Argument</b>          Maybe you're <b>right</b>.          Alright, you <b>win</b>.          You've <b>convinced</b> me.</p> 
---	---

<p><b>Strong Agreement</b>  <b>Definitely.</b>  I couldn't agree <b>more</b>.  I <b>completely</b> agree.  I <b>agree</b>.</p> 	<p><b>Hedging</b>  I see your point, <b>but</b>...  Yes, <b>but</b>...  That's got some truth to it, <b>but</b>...</p> 
<p><b>Qualified Agreement</b>  That's somewhat <b>true</b>.  On the whole, <b>yes</b>.  I'd go along with <b>that</b>.</p> 	<p><b>Strong Disagreement</b>  I <b>disagree</b>.  On the <b>contrary</b>...  I <b>absolutely</b> disagree.</p> 

If speakers would like to express more strongly that they have reservations toward the interlocutor's agreement, they might place a slight rise at the end of this contour (see Table 2 below). Adding this *touchinami* is often necessary in contexts in which this slight intonational uptick (a slight rise) plays an important socio-cultural role (e.g., in Canada).

Table 2  
*Touchinami with Slight Uptake*

<p><b>Qualified Agreement</b>  That's somewhat <b>true</b>.  On the whole, <b>yes</b>.  I'd go along with <b>that</b>.</p>	
--	--

### Achieving automatization and pragmatics competence

Now that the learners have been engaged with “haptic” speech acts, they can practice these speech acts in a controlled learning environment (Baker, 2014). Role-plays using fixed dialogues are an effective, fun, and collaborative way to achieve this. At first we provide learners with a dialogue that includes: (1) prominence (in red); the *touchinami* (in square brackets); and (3) speech acts (in the right-hand column). Table 3 shows an example of such a dialogue.

Table 3  
*Haptic Dialogue*

Tom	[L] If you ask <b>me</b> ... [F] rats are great <b>companions</b> .	Expressing an opinion
Anne	[R-F] Rats are <b>dumb!</b>	Strong disagreement

Tom	[F] Perhaps you're <b>right</b> .	Conceding an argument
Anne	[R]* Could you say that <b>louder</b> ? (*[F-R] Could you say that <b>louder</b> ?!)	Expressing a directive

To make the dialogue more challenging, an additional feature can be added: emotion. Research has shown the importance of emotion in the classroom. Emotions are linked in research especially to self-esteem, affecting the L2 learning process (Aragão, 2011). Emotion is integral to verbal communication and can impact group dynamics and collaborative knowledge construction (Imai, 2010). From a communicative point of view, being able to use pitch to convey emotions in discourse, for example, is an important element that enhances a speaker's pragmatic competence. We divide pitch into three levels with each level being associated with several different emotions (in italics):

- High-pitch moods: *Excited, enthusiastic, surprised, terrorized*
- Mid-pitch moods: *Direct, business-like, confident, matter-of-fact*
- Low-pitch moods: *Mysterious, calm, strong, depressed, romantic*

The aforementioned dialogue (see Table 3) including emotions would then look as follows (see Table 4):

Table 4  
*Haptic Dialogue Including Emotions*

Tom	[L] If you ask <b>me</b> ... [F] rats are great companions.	Expressing an opinion	Mid-pitch: matter-of-fact
Anne	[R-F] Rats are <b>dumb</b> !	Strong disagreement	High-pitch: surprised
Tom	[F] Perhaps you're <b>right</b> .	Conceding an argument	Low-pitch: depressed
Anne	[R]* Could you say that <b>louder</b> ? (*[F-R] Could you say that <b>louder</b> ?!)	Expressing a directive	High-pitch: excited

After students have practiced a dialogue a few times (with PMPs), they can write their own dialogues. Generally, 4-6 lines are ideal for students to work on in pairs or small groups. We provide opportunities for guided practice with the goal of further developing our students' pragmatic competence. Reducing the involvement of the teacher at this stage is important, particularly since L2 instructors often focus on controlled techniques without moving to less restricted learning tasks (Baker, 2014; Burri, Baker, & Chen, 2017).

In our haptic pragmatics approach, the dialogue work is followed by spontaneous role-plays. Students are put into pairs and given a few current topics on which they need to agree/disagree while using the speech acts and associated *touchinamis*. Prompts we have used include:

- Celebrities earn too much money
- Homework is harmful
- Studying grammar is more important than practicing conversation skills
- Summer is the best season of the year

- Swimming in the ocean is better than swimming in a pool

If students struggle with the *touchinamis*, further scaffolding activities, such as asking and answering simple questions with the use of *touchinamis*, can be added. Overall, the underlying premise of this guided phase is for learners to automatize their use of speech acts.

Mapping *touchinamis* onto speech acts and practicing role-plays should be effective in enhancing both automatization and pragmatic competence. This approach draws on several automatization models (e.g., Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Gilbert, 2014; Thornbury, 2005), but the “mechanics” of how this is internalized and then becomes available for spontaneous production continues to be something of a mystery to researchers. What we have done, therefore, is expand some of these pedagogical notions by combining movement, touch, prefabricated language chunks, and intonation into teacher-friendly system that can be used to help L2 learners improve their pragmatic competence.

### **Implications for various educational settings**

Haptic pragmatics teaching, or at least certain features of it, can be used in almost any educational context. The setting in which we have used haptic pronunciation instruction most often is English for academic purposes (EAP). Students in EAP courses are often fatigued and it is not uncommon for learners to suffer from stress and anxiety. The kinaesthetic/tactile nature of the haptic approach is not only invigorating but often brings a welcome change to the somewhat monotonous EAP routine. From an L2 learning perspective, a teacher can use the *touchinami* PMPs to introduce and model prefabricated language chunks (PLCs) and speech acts that the students require to effectively engage in collaborative tasks and to deliver formal or informal presentations; two common speaking activities in academic preparatory courses.

To help learners become more comfortable and confident in using the PMPs, it is essential that students practice them outside class time. Haptic pragmatics teaching with its emphasis on communication being situated within a social context could also be used to help increase EAP students’ awareness of the differences between spoken and written discourse. Student could be given a written passage and asked to rewrite it into a dialogue. When creating the dialogue, students must identify the speech acts and accompanying emotions. As a final task, students could be asked to perform their dialogue – including the PMPs – to the rest of the class.

With lower level learners, a teacher can use the PMPs to introduce, model, and practice intonation patterns of relevant short utterances. These may include yes/no questions and simple declarative sentences. In applying the same techniques with school age children, instructors may or may not engage in much metacognitive discussion (explaining or even having learners mirror them as they perform the haptic PMP accompanying their speech or model utterance.) As for vocabulary work the R-F (rise-fall) *touchinami* is particularly effective to foreground the stressed syllable in a multisyllabic word. The students say a new word out loud and do the R-F PMP at the same time, touching hands on the stressed syllable. Word lists lend themselves well to this type of controlled practice.

The haptic approach requires trust and genuine concern for individual students, in part because the very social act of mirroring another’s gesture – or being required to – also mirrors or simulates intimate interpersonal engagement. Once that is established, haptic

pragmatics teaching helps create interpersonal connections, which is particularly important when teaching immigrant and refugee students. Some traumatized students may find the approach, specifically moving their bodies with more animation in public, to be a bit more challenging initially; however, along with the very controlled and mediated nature of the method, practicing and using PMPs over a few weeks should improve the learners' expressiveness and confidence.

Dialogue work is also particularly suitable for experiencing appropriate language in real-life, authentic situations. We usually create dialogue scenarios targeting language necessary for accomplishing normal everyday chores, as would be needed by newly arrived immigrants. When introducing the dialogue to the class, the teacher initially models the dialogue, has students "do" the dialogue with her (with accompanying gestures) and then gives the students ample time and opportunities to practice it. Pre-literate students can generally mirror the teacher without relying on the written dialogue.

In large English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, teachers often struggle with motivating all their students to communicate orally. The haptic approach is useful in this regard because the teacher can clearly see the students do the PMPs in class. Additionally, EFL teachers are frequently required to use textbooks that are issued by the local ministry. These books almost always include some sort of dialogue work the students are expected to practice or role-play. When working on a unit that contains a dialogue, a teacher and her students could jointly identify the *touchinamis* and then perform the dialogue together. If time constraints are an issue, the teacher could prepare the *touchinamis* ahead of time and once in class have the students mirror the dialogue work with using the PMPs.

The basic framework, using haptic-enabled pronunciation (especially prosodics such as intonation and rhythm) to enhance instruction in the pragmatic dimension of learners' emerging interlanguages, has been applied successfully in a wide range of classrooms and contexts.

## **Conclusion**

Being able to express something accurately and appropriately in the right context can be challenging for any L2 speaker. Equipping learners with these necessary skills is still, however, seldom addressed in the contemporary classroom. In this paper we proposed a haptic approach to teaching pragmatics, or complementing such work. If the use of all four *touchinamis* appears to be overwhelming to teachers (and their students) at first, we suggest that they begin with only one *touchinami* and map this one pattern onto a few simple speech acts. After introducing the pattern, teachers can then focus on the regular integration and dedicated classroom practice of just one PMP into instruction of a particular speech act before moving onto a subsequent PMP. Instructors are encouraged to expand their PMP repertoires gradually as opportunities arise in their regular speaking or vocabulary course work.

Anecdotally, the feedback we have received over the years from students and L2 teachers has been extremely positive. We are now in the planning stage of conducting research to further explore the degree to which haptic pragmatic teaching has an impact on learners' pragmatic and overall communicative competence. In the meantime, we encourage other teachers to trial at least some aspects of haptic pragmatics teaching in their own classrooms. It promises to be a moving and touching experience!

## References

- Acton, W. (2018). *Haptic-integrated clinical pronunciation research and teaching*. Retrieved from <http://hipoeces.blogspot.com.au/>
- Acton, W., Baker, A. A., Burri, M., & Teaman, B. (2013). Preliminaries to haptic-integrated pronunciation instruction. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (pp. 234-244). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.
- Baker, A. (2011). Discourse prosody and teachers' stated beliefs and practices. *TESOL Journal*, 2(3), 263-292. doi:10.5054/tj.2011.259955
- Burri, M., & Baker, A. A. (2016). Teaching rhythm and rhythm grouping: The butterfly technique. *English Australia Journal*, 31(2), 72-77.
- Burri, M., Baker, A. A., & Acton, W. (2016). Anchoring academic vocabulary with a "hard hitting" haptic pronunciation teaching technique. In T. Jones (Ed.), *Pronunciation in the classroom: The overlooked essential* (pp. 17-26). Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.
- Burri, M., Baker, A., & Chen, H. (2017). "I feel like having a nervous breakdown": Pre-service and in-service teachers' developing beliefs and knowledge about pronunciation instruction. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, 3(1), 109-135. doi:10.1075/jslp.3.1.05bur
- Baker, A. A. (2011). *Pronunciation pedagogy: Second language teacher cognition and practice*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University, GA.
- Baker, A. A. (2014). Exploring teachers' knowledge of L2 pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(1), 136-163. doi:10.1002/tesq.99
- Aragão, R. (2011). Beliefs and emotions in foreign language learning. *System*, 39(3), 302-313: doi: 10.1016/j.system.2011.07.003
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical basis of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47. doi:10.1093/applin/I.1.1
- Couper, G. (2006). The short and long-term effects of pronunciation instruction. *Prospect*, 21(1), 46-66.
- Crystal, D. (1985). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Foot, J. A., Holtby, A. K., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 1-22.
- Gatbonton, E., & Segalowitz, N. (2005). Rethinking communicative language teaching: A focus on access to fluency. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 61(3), 325-353. doi:10.3138/cmlr.61.3.325
- Gilbert, J. (2014). Intonation is hard to teach. In L. Grant (Ed.), *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching* (pp. 107-136). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Hahn, L. (2004). Primary stress and intelligibility: Research to motivate the teaching of suprasegmentals. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(2), 201-223.
- Halenko, N., & Jones, C. (2017). Explicit instruction of spoken requests: An examination of pre-departure instruction and the study abroad environment. *System*, 68, 26-37. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2017.06.011
- Hamza-Lup, F. G., & Stanescu, I. A. (2010). The haptic paradigm in education: Challenges and case studies. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 13(1), 78-81.
- Hilliard, A. (2017). Twelve activities for teaching the pragmatics of complaining to L2 learners. *English Teaching Forum*, 55(1), 2-13.

- Imai, Y. (2010). Emotions in SLA: New insights from collaborative learning for an EFL classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 278-292. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01021.x
- Ishihara, N. & Cohen, A. D. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Levis, J., & Moyer, A. (2014). Future directions in the research and teaching of L2 pronunciation. In J. Levis, & A. Moyer (Eds.), *Social dynamics in second language accent* (pp. 275-291). Boston, MA: De Gruyter.
- Lindeman, S., Litzenberg, J., & Subtirelu, N. (2014). Problematizing the dependence on L1 norms in pronunciation teaching: Attitudes toward second-language accents. In J. Levis, & A. Moyer (Eds.), *Social dynamics in second language accent* (pp. 171-194). Boston, MA: De Gruyter.
- Macedonia, M., & Klimesch, W. (2014). Long-term effects of gestures on memory for foreign language words trained in the classroom. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 8(2), 74-88. doi:10.1111/mbe.12047
- McCarthy, M. (2010). Spoken fluency revisited. *English Profile Journal*, 1, 1-15.
- McCafferty, S., & Stam, G. (Eds.). (2008). *Gesture: Second language acquisition and classroom research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Limberg, H. (2015). Principles for pragmatics teaching: Apologies in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal*, 69(3), 275-285.
- LoCastro, V. (2003). *An introduction to pragmatics: Social action for language teachers*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Loewen, S. (2015). *Introduction to instructed second language acquisition*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pang, W., & Burri, M. (2018). Teaching dialogic speaking strategies in a Canadian EAP program. In A. Burns & J. Siegel (Eds.), *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: Listening, speaking, reading, writing* (pp. 111-124). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saito, K., & Lyster, R. (2012). Effects of form-focused instruction and corrective feedback on L2 pronunciation development of /ɪ/ by Japanese learners of English. *Language Learning*, 62(2), 595-633.
- San Diego, J. P., Cox, M. J., Quinn, B. F. A., Newton, J.T., Banerjee, A., & Woolford, M.. (2012). Researching haptics in higher education: The complexity of developing haptics virtual learning systems and evaluating its impact on students' learning. *Computers & Education*, 59(1), 156-166.
- Siegel, J. (2016). Pragmatic activities for the speaking classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 54(1), 12-19.
- Tatsuki, D. H., & Houck, N. R. (2010). Pragmatics from research to practice: Teaching speech acts. In D. H. Tastuki, & N. R. Houck (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts* (pp. 1-6). Alexandria, VI: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2015). The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: A narrative review. *Applied Linguistics*, 36(3), 326-344. doi:10.1093/applin/amu076
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Wennerstrom, A. (2001). Intonation and evaluation in oral narratives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(8), 1183-1206.
- Yanagi, M., & Baker, A. A. (2016). Challenges experienced by Japanese students with oral communication skills in Australian universities. *TESOL Journal*, 7(3), 621-644. doi:10.1002/tesj.229
- Yates, L. (2017). Learning how to speak: Pronunciation, pragmatics and practicalities in the classroom and beyond. *Language Teaching*, 50(2), 227-246. doi:

10.1017/S0261444814000238

Yuan, Y., Tangen, D., Mills, K. A., & Lidstone, J. (2015). Learning English pragmatics in China: An investigation into Chinese EFL learners' perceptions of pragmatics. *TESL-EJ*, 19(1), 1-6. <http://www.tesl-ej.org/pdf/ej73/a4.pdf> (accessed March 9, 2018).

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zeff, B. B. (2016). The pragmatics of greetings: Teaching speech acts in the EFL classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 54(1), 2-11.

**Please check the Methodology and Language for Secondary course at Pilgrims website.**

**Please check the Teaching Advanced Students course at Pilgrims website.**

**Please check the English Course for Teachers and School Staff at Pilgrims website.**

**Please check the English Update for Teachers course at Pilgrims website.**