Feature article

Reader-response and stylistics approaches to literature in the Japanese EFL classroom

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Abstract

This paper describes how reader-response and stylistics approaches can be implemented in a language teaching context as a means of deepening learners' understanding and appreciation of literature and language. Supported by experience of teaching university literature classes, and by research in literature and language learning, a simple guide for designing and implementing a literary text analysis task to English language learners of varying proficiencies is explained. First, with lower to intermediate proficiency language learners in mind, key concepts and practical approaches from transactional reader-response theories will be presented to show how reading and discussing literary texts can be an active, collaborative and emotionally-engaging experience. Next, because of its focus on analyzing the linguistic features of a literary text, this paper shows how key concepts from stylistics, in particular Gricean pragmatics, can provide higher proficiency students with a framework for close, analytical, and evidence-based readings and discussion of a short literary text through concrete examples of discussion activities.

本稿は、言語教育の場において、読者反応アプローチと文体論的アプローチが学習者の文学・言語を理解・批評する力を深める手段としてどのように導入されうるのかについて述べる。大学での文学の授業の経験と、文学を使った外国語教育の研究に基づき、さまざまなレベルの英語学習者を対象とした文学テクスト分析のタスクを考案・実施するための概要が説明されている。まず、初級・中級用には、交流読者反応理論の重要な概念と実践法を紹介した上で、文学のテクストを読解・議論することが学習者にとってどのように能動的、協同的、かつ感情を引き込むような経験になりうるかを述べる。次に、上級用には、文体論的アプローチ（特にグライスの語用論）の重要な概念を用いて、学習者が短編のテクストを厳密に、分析的に、証拠に基づいて読解・議論できるようになるための枠組みがどのように確立されうるのか、ディスカッション活動の具体例を使って示す。

Key words: literature courses; reader-response; stylistics

The use of literature in the language classroom has a long history in Japan (Teranishi, Saito & Wales, 2015). The often-cited drawback of using literature as the medium through which language is taught and learned is the excessive focus on the grammar-translation method (Hagerman, 2009; Yamaoka, 2010). The main criticism of this method is that it does not support communicative language use, which is the current overarching objective of Japan's educational policy with regard to language learning in schools and universities (MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017). Extensive reading has a prominent place in many language classrooms (Bradford-Watts & O'Brien, 2007), but the use of ungraded literature has fallen out of vogue in most language classrooms in Japan (Teranishi et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, at the university level, at least, there are numerous advantages to the use of literature in the classroom. Among the benefits for the language learner is the building of linguistic, pragmatic and academic English competence, as it encourages the development

of analytical, discussion, and inferential skills (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016), and deepens understanding of indirect and figurative language. Students can be guided through discussions of literary texts using extant theoretical approaches, thereby developing their critical thinking skills as they engage with the language of the texts through various communicative tasks. Examples of literary theoretical approaches that could be used to discuss texts in language classrooms are Reader-Response Theory (Mart, 2019; Van, 2009) and New Criticism (Lynn, 2016, pp. 45-6). Stylistic approaches to the analysis and discussion of language and marked features of literary texts also offer potential benefits, not least because they can complement discussions framed by literary theory. Widdowson's (1976) work has greatly influenced the practice of teaching literature through stylistics in the classroom, and, in the same vein, this paper argues that stylistics has its place in the language-learning process, especially with students at the more advanced levels of language programmes.

To demonstrate how literature can be used to good effect to promote both collaborative and communicative language learning, this paper focuses on a single short story. In the following sections, we explain the fundamental (albeit simplified) tools provided by reader-response and stylistics approaches. We then introduce some scaffolded discussion activities designed to enable students with varying English proficiency levels to use the tools in a meaningful way. Moreover, we discuss the potential benefits for the university language learner using these scaffolded approaches. The basic method of scaffolding can be compared with training wheels for initially engaging students with the fundamental concepts of the theories, though the expectation is that by the end of the course, in terms of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), students would have gained the necessary skills to generate their own discussions of texts using the analytical tools to which they have been introduced. It is further argued that both approaches support learners' *self-efficacy* and *agency* in that overcoming the linguistic and intellectual challenges of applying a theory to a literary text can have positive implications in regard to achievement, motivation and autonomy (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002).

Self-Efficacy and Agency

Two central attributes of learners are efficacy (Bandura, 1997, p. 3) and agency (Vitanova, Miller, Gao & Deters, 2015, p. 3-4). According to Vitanova et al. (2015, p. 5), agency in the classroom involves three main characteristics: "the learner's ability to self-regulate, the socially mediated nature of sociocultural context and an awareness of one's own acts." Gao (2010, p. 27) elaborates on context, suggesting that it involves the source of learner strategy use and choice, the learner's will, and their knowledge. This definition of agency can be useful in terms of guiding the approach to reading and discussing short stories in the classroom from the perspective of the learner. Closely related to agency is self-efficacy which, according to Bandura (1997, p. 3), underpins human agency. Bandura's focus on "regulating one's own motivation; and applying metacognitive skills to evaluate the adequacy of one's knowledge and strategies" (1997, pp. 174-5) provides a useful backdrop for understanding the importance of a structured and carefully guided approach to learning and applying new theories when engaging in academic discussions of literary texts.

This paper begins with a brief synopsis of the short story "The Bread". It then provides, first, a guide to utilizing Rosenblatt's transactional reader-response approach to engaging with literature, and secondly it introduces a stylistics analysis, with a particular focus on the application of Grice's *Communicative Principle* and its four associated maxims (Grice, 1989).

Synopsis of "The Bread"

Wolfgang Borchert's "The Bread" is a short story about an aging married couple's late-night encounter in the kitchen. Each plays a role in deceiving the other, while both privately confront a time in their past when the husband was possibly engaged in adultery or some other form of deception. The couple have grown old and apart. They meet in their kitchen at 2:30 a.m. where the husband seemingly lies to his wife about having heard a noise. The wife humours her husband as he elaborates on his fabrication. The bread, which he has snuck in to eat, takes on an unwelcome significance for the wife because of its associations with past indiscretions, or even infidelities. Finally, she challenges him to eat four slices of bread, apparently in an effort to satiate his appetite and to make him feel ashamed.

Reader-Response Theory

What Is Reader-Response and Why Is it Useful?

Loosely defined, reader-response or reader-oriented theories represent a reaction against 19th century author- or biographically-centered approaches to criticism, and the text-exclusive approaches of the 20th century (in particular Formalism and New Criticism, and especially

Wimsatt and Beardsley's concept of the "affective fallacy"). Reader-response theories instead focus on the reader as a thinking, feeling, and individual subject, and on the reader's role in constructing not only textual interpretation, but even in co-creating the text itself. While there is some dispute regarding which texts are most central to its canon, there is nevertheless considerable agreement on reader-response's utility for engaging with and analyzing literary texts (Beach, 1993; Freund, 1987; Hall, 2015: Holub, 1984; Naji, Subramaniam, & White, 2019; Parkinson, & Reid Thomas, 2004), especially for language learners in EFL contexts (Mart, 2019; Van, 2009). For the purpose of this article and for reasons to be discussed in this section, the basic premises and relative strengths of Louise Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser's contributions to transactional reader-response theory are presented with suggestions for how aspects of this theory can be fruitfully applied to a university literature class for lower to intermediate level (CEFR A2 – B1) English learners.

Because of its intellectual complexity and diversity, two keys to incorporating basic premises and concepts from reader-response theory into a language and literature class comprised of lower to intermediate level students are *simplification* and *focus*. Based on our experience teaching university seminar courses that focus on applying literary theories to text analysis, we have found that most students seem less interested in developments and debates in multi-disciplinary intellectual history, and more interested in how selected concepts or approaches can help them deeply and concretely focus on engaging with literary texts beyond a standard written interpretation. First and foremost, students must understand that as readers they have active roles in co-creating textual meaning, and that neither the meaning nor interpretation of the text are static or singular. Implicit within this approach then is that their *engagement* with the text – which could include their understanding of the text's meanings or themes, their emotional responses to a particular character or event, associations or memories elicited by the text, or even how they picture the spatial, cultural or historical setting – will likely be different from how their peers engage with the same text. Their responses will be variegated and subjective, but they still must be based on content within the text (textual evidence), and they will need to provide explanations for *why* the text has triggered the response that it has.

In accord with the transactional approach, students would read the text collaboratively – pausing after words, sentences, paragraphs or sections – and practice communicating their reactions to their partners. A short story like "The Bread" works well for such a task:

1. It is short enough (769 words) to read together during class time;
2. The language difficulty is low enough (CEFR B1, IELTS 4-5) that students with A2-B1 proficiency will be able comprehend enough of the story's setting, mood, plot, tension, and characters to discuss their responses without much preparation time;
3. Its length allows students to read it multiple times, which is a prerequisite for a deeper engagement with its plot and themes.

The reading process as a transactional relationship between reader and text involves what Rosenblatt (1988) terms an "aesthetic stance," which means the reader consciously and reflectively takes into account the "sense, the sensations, images, feelings, and ideas that are the residue of past psychological events involving those words and their referents" (p. 5). For our purposes, students will attempt to communicate in English some of the feelings and images evoked by the text as part of the reading process.

One simple way to promote students as agentic readers participating in reading-as-action is to do the following:

1. The instructor reads the first paragraph of the short story aloud (helps students to become more familiar with pronunciation and prosody);
2. The students then verbally confirm understanding of the content with a partner;
3. Next, they anticipate what will happen in the following section and discuss why they believe this;
4. Finally, they communicate any identifiable emotions, associations or memories they experienced during the reading.

This process will repeat after each paragraph or section of the text as it is read aloud, and will involve students reflecting on whether or not their expectations were met as they proceed through the text. The goal of this approach to reading is, first of all, to confirm, adjust or correct the students' understanding of the content while practicing English communication. Secondly and significantly, it is a way of connecting the story with students' lives, namely with their experiences, memories, opinions, and even worldviews. The idea is to have students situate themselves in a dialogue with the

content of the text, and to embrace whatever affective or subjective responses they may have as worthwhile rather than dismissed as ancillary to an "academic" reading of literature. This approach, moreover, makes learner *agency* an explicit aspect of the activity, insofar as students are made aware of their ineluctable role in co-constructing textual meaning, and that their own affective and subjective responses to a text are points to be explored rather than discarded. Put another way, the *effects* of a text become the focus of discussion, as a literary text's "effects, psychological and otherwise, are essential to any accurate description of its meaning, since that meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of a reader" (Tompkins, 1980, p. ix).

Readers Responding in the Classroom

In line with this transactional approach to fostering students' reader-response engagement with literary texts, another possibility is to employ Iser's (1980) related notions of textual "indeterminacy" and "blanks" or "gaps." Once a text has been read collaboratively, ideally multiple times, and students have discussed at length their understanding and reactions to events, characters, and possibly even key themes, they will be prepared to engage in more creative and imaginative communicative activities that involve going beyond what the text actually says. Any literary text, be it a poem, short story, novel or otherwise, contains gaps that require the reader to make assumptions, connections, or interpretations as part of the reading process. While smaller gaps certainly exist within texts themselves (e.g., readers are not privy to every thought, gesture, or feeling a character may experience), they also exist as much larger information gaps that fail to explain the characters' pasts and futures (e.g., what experiences from their past might explain their current behavior). This collaborative and speculative information-sharing approach is often particularly well-suited for short stories, which often jump into a single event without much background provided, and then conclude without discussing the aftereffects of the event. For our purposes, "The Bread" is a good example of such a text. We are presented with a brief, although deeply illuminating, snapshot of the couple's marriage that hints at its problems and gives insight into their individual characteristics. That brevity pushes readers to speculate on what preceded and what precipitated the events in the story. Such glaring blank spaces within this fictional world present a rich source for creative speculation and inquiry on the part of the reader, yet it is still speculation that is tied to the evidence within the text, and therefore requires plausible textual justification. Furthermore, by developing an imaginative narrative that precedes or succeeds the events of the story, students are effectively interpreting and foregrounding what they consider to be the significant themes, meanings and messages in the text itself. For example, in order to speculate on why the wife might go looking for her husband when she wakes up in the middle of the night, students might imagine their past: has he been absent from the bed before? Why does she find it suspicious that he is not next to her? Where might he have been when he was absent from bed in the past? By formulating an imaginary narrative to the couple's history, readers are foregrounding possible key themes and meanings in the story: (dis)trust, (in)fidelity, and (dis)honesty in marriage, and relationships in general, to name a few. Such emotionally charged yet universally relevant themes can then form the foundation for more personalized reflections and opinions to be discussed by the students.

Table 1 shows examples, some of which have been adapted from Tyson (2011; 2015), for promoting reader-response engagement with "The Bread."

Table 1

Promoting reader-response engagement with "The Bread"

Personal-identification exercise	Personalizing key themes
• What emotional responses do you have to the characters? To the setting? • In what way do you sympathize, understand, or feel a connection with a character? • In what way does a character make you feel angry, cynical, or unhappy? • In what ways do you identify with a character or event in the story?	• Lie (what causes the lie, what does this tell us about the husband? The wife? Their relationship? Relationships in general?) • Truth (what is the importance of truth and trust? Is it sometimes better to lie?) • Love (her kindness and sympathy, supporting his lie, his feeling of guilt and sadness when the lie is exposed?) • Coldness vs. warmth – light vs. darkness?

Questions like these can be introduced to students at various stages of the reading process, and for various purposes. For example, one approach (also identified by Van [2009]) to raise awareness and deepen understanding of key textual themes, is to discuss generalized "personalizing key themes" questions even before the students begin reading the text. Discussing their opinions on these issues in advance better prepares students to be able to recognize how these issues are treated in the text. The result is that often their previous assumptions and opinions on things like love, lies, and truth are challenged and possibly revised.

A Stylistics Approach

What Is Stylistics?

Stylistics can be understood as the application of theories, often linguistic and pragmatic, to analyse the effects of texts on the reader (Short, 1996, pp. 1-10). Stylisticians might consider their approach to literature to be more scientific than that of their literary-critic counterparts. For instance, a stylistics approach can be used in support of our intuitions about a text and may also be used effectively to complement analysis conducted within the broad field of literary criticism (Short, 1996, pp. 2-3). The purpose of the following sections is to show how the introduction of a stylistics analysis into the language classroom can encourage a closer reading and guide readers to draw more from the language choices present in the text. With sustained practice of this kind of analysis, students are able to make gains in respect to self-efficacy as their confidence in understanding the writer's linguistic choices and their effects on the reader develops. Hence, the learner's linguistic and analytical competencies increase in unison.

Because of its relative straightforwardness and accessibility, pragmatics – the study of language as it is used in context – can serve as a profitable basis for stylistics analysis and discussion of texts. Moreover, in terms of language learning, the pedagogical merits of this approach to texts recommend it, since according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (n.d., p. 33), pragmatic competence is one of the main pillars of communicative language competence. It often, though not exclusively, focuses on spoken language. Hence, one reason for using literature in the language classroom is that, when it involves extended passages of dialogue, it can be used to help learners to develop pragmatic competence in the TL. There are a number of prominent pragmatic frameworks which could be used in the language classroom. These include Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995), Speech Act Theory (Leech, 1983; Searle, 1969), and the frameworks developed by Levinson (2000) and Horn (2007). Each of these frameworks has its merits in terms of the analytical findings it can produce. However, due to the balance between its relative simplicity and explanatory power, Grice's (1989) *Cooperative Principle* and its attendant maxims are the tools chosen for shaping the discussion activities introduced below.

Introduction to Grice's Cooperative Principle and Maxims

Grice defines the Cooperative Principle (CP) as follows:

> [..] a rough general principle which participants will be expected (*ceteris paribus*) to observe, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice, 1975, p. 45)

In short, the CP describes communication as a cooperative practice, whether participants are involved in a discussion, interview, argument or other speech event. The CP is intended to be understood as a norm or ideal view of communication and Grice did not mean for it to be taken as an absolute rule or law to be adhered to. Although originally developed as a framework for understanding spoken interaction, the CP has been used extensively to analyse a broad range of texts, including written texts.

Adherence to the CP varies depending on a range of factors, including the context, the participants and their relationship(s), and the amount of shared knowledge and common ground. These factors influence the behaviour of communicators, including the author/narrator of a text. Within Gricean pragmatics, the communicative behaviour of participants is interpreted in relation to four categories of maxim: quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Grice, 1989, pp. 26-7). See the Appendix for an explanation of these maxims and how they could be introduced in an accessible scaffolded way prior to their application to examples from the literary text.

Practicing Close Reading

One of the advantages of a stylistics approach to discussing texts is that it slows down reading by forcing the reader to think carefully about the marked features of the text and the effects they produce on the reader. Applying the tools of Grice's CP and the four categories

of maxim encourages a slower, analytical and systematic approach to reading certain passages of a text. Naturally, at the early stages of introducing students to a theory and having them practice it, the instructor must provide ample support, guidance and feedback by selecting appropriate passages for analysis, providing structured discussion questions, and offering constructive feedback. This is important in order that students' sense of self-efficacy is fostered and they are able to acquire agency to later identify, discuss and analyse passages with confidence, independently of the instructor.

There are many ways in which the instructor could approach this scaffolded approach to guiding the students in their analyses and discussions. One simple approach, which the authors have used in a literature-focused advanced-level course for CEFR B2+ students is to have students engage with different aspects of the theory by providing them with a range of questions, beginning with straightforward multiple-choice questions, moving to multiple-choice inference questions, and then finally having students discuss open-ended inference questions. Some fundamental questions which underpin the analysis of many passages are given below:

1. Who is the "speaker"?
2. Who is the audience?
3. Where are they?
4. Why are they communicating?
5. What are they communicating about?
6. When does the act of communication occur?
7. What maxims are involved here?
8. Does it involve an observance, flout, violation, infringement or opting out? Why?
9. What implicature(s) is generated as a consequence of this? [There could be more than one, some stronger than others.]

Example Discussion Questions for "The Bread"

In this section, sets of discussion activities, in the form of guided questions, are introduced for selected passages from the short story "The Bread". Before discussing passages from the story in groups, it is important to provide time for students to share their intuitions about the whole story to ensure the students have an adequate common understanding of the text.

Example 1.

When they went to bed at night, she always made the table-cloth clean. Every night. But now there were crumbs on the cloth. And the knife was lying there. She felt how the cold of the tiles crept slowly up her. <u>And she looked away from the plate</u>.

This excerpt helps to establish the current status of the relationship between husband and wife. Being relatively straightforward, it also enables the teacher to determine whether the students have grasped the fundamental ideas of the theory.

Q1. Why does the narrator tell us that she looks away from the plate?

a. She is upset that her husband has made a mess.
b. She is interested in what her husband is doing.
c. It is associated with her husband's past sexual indiscretions.

The teacher might ask the students to consider this sentence in relation to the maxim of relation and whether it is observed, flouted, or broken in another way. This and the main question might produce a range of answers. For example, as a straightforward observation, students might naturally select interpretation (a). However, other students might argue that, taking contextual factors into account, (c) is a valid interpretation of this apparently innocuous description, since we tend to look away from objects that we cannot bear to face for whatever reason. Both of these interpretations of the excerpt are valid and demonstrate an understanding of the theory.

Example 2.

"<u>I thought there was something here</u>," he said <u>and looked around in the kitchen</u>.

This passage continues on directly from Example 1. After presenting the question, the teacher might ask the students to consider which of the maxims are involved in the interpretation of the selected part of the passage.

Q2. How does the description of the husband looking around the kitchen affect our interpretation of his utterance?

a. It adds strength to what he is claiming.
b. It is not important.
c. It is a dramatic gesture which does not seem natural.

As with Q1 the character's way of looking, as described by the narrator, though apparently innocuous, can add substance to the reader's interpretation of the text. Option (a) depends on the husband observing the maxim of quality, option (b) appears to depend on there

being no relation between the description of the husband and what he says, while interpretation (c) leads to the identification of the husband's utterance as a violation of the maxim of quality; that is, an attempted deceit.

Example 3.
"I heard something, too," she answered and at the same time she thought that he really looked pretty old already, at night in his shirt, he really looked quite old.

Q3. How do you interpret the wife's utterance?

a. She accepts his explanation (she observes the maxim of quality).
b. She does not accept his explanation (she also violates the maxim quality).
c. She is being sarcastic (she flouts the maxim of quality).
d. She does not accept his explanation, but wants to avoid any conflict (possibly a kind of infringement).

Depending on the students' previous answers and the degree of established common ground between group members, their interpretations of the wife's utterance will vary. This may depend on whether they believe that (a) the husband is guilty of some misdemeanour, and (b) the wife is aware of this. Though the text is highly ambiguous the close reading provides an opportunity for students to contemplate the possibility of the husband's suspicious behaviour and possible infidelity. As such, any of the four interpretations can be argued for, therefore generating a potentially rich discussion.

Having provided students with a guided discussion of a series of interrelated, apparently marked characteristics of the text, the teacher might challenge the students by asking them to consider the narrator's representation of the wife's thought and its relation to her utterance:

Q4. How does the representation of her thought relate to your interpretation of her utterance?

This structured approach to discussing passages from the text can be repeated with a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions, with the balance shifting towards open questions after students have gained sufficient experience of analysing the text through the given tools. Hence, when the teacher judges that the students have sufficient pragmatic competence and linguistic proficiency, it would be appropriate to challenge them with more open-ended questions, such as those which follow Example 4.

Example 4.
"You can go ahead and eat four," she said and moved away from the lamp. 'I cannot take this bread all that well. Go ahead and eat one more. I can't take it all that well."

She saw how he bent deeply over the plate. He didn't look up. At that moment she felt sorry for him.

(i) "You can't eat just two slices," he said to his plate.

(ii) "Sure. In the evening the bread doesn't agree with me. Go ahead and eat! Eat!"

Q1. What can you infer from what the husband says (i) and how he says it?
Q2. Which of the maxims is involved in this example?
Q3. Which parts of the wife's utterance (ii) are interesting? Why?
Q4. Which of the maxims do you think are involved in interpreting it? Why?
Q5. Does she observe the CP and maxims? If not, in what way(s) are they 'broken'?
Q6. What additional information can you infer from her utterance?

Potential Benefits of the Stylistics Approach

As mentioned above, the approach described provides opportunities for learners to develop their communicative competence, especially in terms of pragmatic competence. Moreover, the close reading associated with this method encourages learners to deepen their understanding of the language and how linguistic choices generate certain effects on the reader, which guide and underpin our intuitive interpretations.

Conclusion

It has been argued that reader-response and stylistics approaches to discussing literary texts offers multiple benefits for the undergraduate language learner in terms of:

1. providing a semi-controlled environment for using academic English;
2. encouraging the development of analytical skills, discussion skills, and inferential skills;

3. building linguistic understanding;
4. developing pragmatic competence in English; and
5. deepening understanding of indirect / figurative language and texts characterised by such language.

Since this paper describes straightforward approaches to introducing learners to reader-response and stylistics and their use in facilitating engagement and framing discussions of literary texts, there is much room for further research. In particular, it would be interesting to collect feedback from students on their perceptions related to self-efficacy and agency as a result of using these recommended methods. Moreover, since it is argued, for example, that these guided approaches help to develop pragmatic competence in the learner, an instrument for measuring any such gains, and methods for addressing any observed shortcomings in the approaches, are potentially interesting avenues for further research.

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Appendix: Grice's Maxims

Each of the four categories of maxim (Grice, 1989, pp.26-7) is introduced below with an illustrative example of its application.

The Maxims of Quality

Do not say what you believe to be false.
Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(1) She's literally a walking Japanese dictionary.

It is probable that the recipient's interpretation of (1) would involve the judgements that the statement is false (the person referred to is not actually a walking dictionary), and that the speaker does not possess evidence for her being a dictionary.

(2) Boris Johnson has said he would "rather be dead in a ditch" than agree to extend Brexit.

Likewise, in (2) few people familiar with Boris Johnson took him at his word because his record of political maneuvering provides evidence to the contrary. A common interpretation of statements that appear to break one of the maxims of quality is that what is communicated counts as deceit. However, in both examples, rather than reaching this conclusion, we would assume that the CP is being adhered to and that the apparent breaking of the maxim is for rhetorical effect to emphasise the referents linguistic ability (1) and the politician's resolve (2) respectively. Such ostentatious breaking of one or more maxims to produce an effect beyond what is straightforwardly communicated are referred to as *flouts*. Further examples of how flouting the maxims can communicate information in addition to what is said are used to illustrate the remaining three maxims.

The Maxims of Quantity

Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of this exchange.
Do not make your contribution more informative than is necessary.

(3) A: "What are you doing?"
B: "Oh, I just tidied up the kitchen. You know just emptying the dishwasher, putting the dishes away in the cupboards, wiping the table, putting the caps back on the sauce bottles, cleaning the sink, washing up the pots and pans..."

(4) A: "What are you doing?"
B: "Reading." (Short, 1996, p.245)

In (3), rather than simply respond to A's enquiry by saying they were tidying up, the over-informative response flouts the maxim of quantity to emphasise just how much B has done, presumably in stark contrast to A's contributions to the household chores. The distinctly uninformative response of B in (4) [A can observe for herself that B is reading], when taken as a flout of the maxim of quantity, might lead A to interpret B's utterance as communicating their desire to be left undisturbed to concentrate on their book.

In each of these four examples, the additional information communicated is an implicature, to be inferred by the recipient (a listener or reader). As shown above, the maxims serve as interpretative tools that lead to inferences associated with what is not explicitly stated in a text. As Huang (2007) points out, inferences are "derived from the saying of what is said via the co-operative principle and its component maxims of conversation." Implicatures, then, are meanings that are inferred from the context of the utterance and the knowledge shared between narrator/speaker and narratee/hearer rather than what is said directly. The notion of meaning more than what we say is familiar to learners from their L1. However, related to self-efficacy, having the assurance to go beyond the surface meaning of an utterance in an L2 and infer this additional meaning, especially in a longer literary text, requires sufficient scaffolded practice with accessible and relatively straightforward examples.

The Maxim of Relation

Be relevant.

(5) A: What did you think of their presentation?
B: They were dressed very smartly.

Although the response of B in (5) does not appear to be a typically relevant answer to the question asked by A, when a comment on the content of the presentation or the style of delivery might be expected, assuming that the CP is adhered to and A interprets B's utterance as a flout of the maxim of relation, implicatures will be generated. Based on their own experience of delivering and attending presentations, students might infer that B has nothing good to say about the content and delivery; that is, for B it was a poor presentation.

The Maxims of Manner
Avoid obscurity
Avoid ambiguity
Be brief
Be orderly (Grice, 1989, p. 27)

(6) [Parents discussing preparations for their child's upcoming birthday party]
"I've arranged the prestidigitator." (Short, 1996)

(7) [A parent at the dinner table addressing his teenage children]
"I'm sorry to bother you, but if it is not too much trouble, would you mind awfully passing me the receptacle in front of you which contains the tomato-based condiment?"

"Prestidigitator", meaning magician, is clearly a very obscure choice of word to use in everyday conversation. In (7), the parent would like one of their children to pass the sauce, a simple request that they make in a very verbose way and in a register which makes the request somewhat ambiguous. By having students consider whether these constitute straightforward breaks or flouts of the maxims of manner, and subsequently exchange their opinions about the possible implicatures generated by these utterances, the teacher can confirm the students' comprehension and application of the theory, provide them with feedback and reinforce their self-efficacy, which is fundamental to agency. Students might interpret the speakers in (6) as taking pains to conceal the birthday party plans from their child, whilst the parent in (7) implicates their displeasure with their children for ignoring an earlier request for the tomato ketchup to be passed.

In the brief analyses of the above examples, the situational context of utterance is accessible and students can practice applying the theory in a controlled way, focusing on implicatures generated by flouts. However, the ultimate goal of having students practice the above analysis with short examples and longer literary texts is to develop their pragmatic competence as an essential part of their general communicative language competence. Further contextualised practice of applying the four maxims is therefore necessary so that students can gain proficiency in distinguishing among different breaks and observations of the maxims. These are as follows:

1. *Observations* are when we follow the maxims.
2. *Flouts* are when we break or exploit the maxims in a way we expect the hearer/reader to recognise in order to convey additional meaning, known as implicatures.
3. *Violations* occur when the maxims are broken in a way that is not intended to be recognised by the recipient, such as when telling a fib.
4. *Infringement* are when we unintentionally fail to observe a maxim, which could happen, for example, when inebriated
5. *Opting out* is when the speaker/writer openly refuses to communicate cooperatively, such as might be the case when a politician has been asked an awkward question.