

A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF
COMMUNICATION DURING SOCIAL VISITS:
JAPANESE ESL STUDENTS AS ETHNOGRAPHERS
IN INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS RESEARCH

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines how native speakers of English, Japanese ESL students, and native speakers of Japanese communicate during social visits. It contributes to research in the field of interlanguage pragmatics by: (a) examining speech acts which have not been investigated extensively, (b) involving students as ethnographers in the data collection and analysis procedures, and (c) improving upon research methods used thus far.

Speech acts such as giving and receiving gifts, making compliments, offering and accepting food and beverages, making an excuse to leave, and expressing gratitude are examined cross-culturally in their full discourse context. The data include five interactions of Japanese ESL students visiting Americans, five of Americans visiting fellow Americans, and six of Japanese visiting fellow Japanese. These interactions were videotaped in the actual apartments or dorm rooms of the participants.

A descriptive, exploratory analysis of the transcribed data reveals particular areas in which Japanese ESL students should receive further training and practice. Some of these areas include: using more compliments in the opening segment of the interaction, responding politely to the offer of beverages in the hospitality segment, asking questions to develop or initiate conversation topics in the small talk segment, and taking the initiative to express gratitude in the closing segment.

One unique feature of the study is the involving of 31 ESL students in the data collection and analysis procedures in order

to test out pedagogical implications. The results show that Japanese ESL students at an intermediate level of proficiency are able to learn something about the cross-cultural pragmatics of a social visit by being their own ethnographers, but not without considerable guidance and assistance.

Methodology is central to the discussion. Clear advantages are seen in videotaping semistructured interactions in a natural setting and conducting retrospective interviews. A number of changes in the methodology are suggested for future studies, and additional questions for further research are presented. The study provides many insights for those involved in second language learning, teaching, or research.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss the background of interlanguage pragmatics research, the problems with the methodology of previous studies, and the significance of the present study. The research questions which have formed the basis for the present study will be presented, followed by a brief outline of the organization of the thesis as a whole.

1.1 Background of Interlanguage Pragmatics Research

Extensive research on the development of a learners' communicative competence in a second language has led to growing interest in an area of second language acquisition research known as *interlanguage pragmatics*. This relatively new area of research has been defined narrowly as the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of *speech acts* in a second language (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Investigations in interlanguage pragmatics have focussed primarily on comparing native speakers' and nonnative speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, refusals, and so on.

Speech acts have been claimed by some (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) to operate by universal pragmatic principles, but research has shown that rules governing speech acts vary considerably across languages and cultures. It is not enough for learners to know the linguistic rules of a second language, but they must also learn the sociocultural rules of appropriate use of the language. When they do not know these rules they may fall back

on pragmatic conventions in their first language (L1). This phenomenon is known as *pragmatic transfer* (see Kasper, 1992). Pragmatic transfer can be more serious than linguistic transfer because it may not only result in miscommunication, but may also reflect badly on the speaker and lead to national stereotyping (Thomas, 1983).

Pragmatic transfer is most serious in the case of *face-threatening speech acts* (Brown & Levinson, 1978), such as requests, refusals, complaints, expressing gratitude, and so on, where nonnative speakers (NNSs) are particularly at risk in offending the interlocutor or looking bad themselves. The problem with these speech acts is that even native speakers do not always agree on what sociocultural rules are conventional in their own language and culture, and their intuitions can be misleading (Wolfson, 1983b). This is one reason why speech act studies of this kind are so relevant: they provide data for language instructors and learners alike on how speech acts are used in various contexts.

1.2 Problems with Methodology in Previous Studies and

Significance of the Present Study

It has been pointed out, however, that if the data collection methods in speech act studies are inadequate then the validity of the findings may also be questionable (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). The study described here was designed to address this issue. The focus of the study was to compare how native speakers of English, native speakers of Japanese, and Japanese ESL students communicate during social times of visiting one another.

In this study, speech acts such as greetings and introductions, giving and receiving gifts, making compliments, offering and accepting food and beverages, starting a conversation and keeping it going, making an excuse to leave, and expressing gratitude were examined in their full discourse context.

Retaining the full discourse context is one thing that sets this speech act study apart from many studies where individual speech acts are examined out of context by collecting the data through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (Requests: Blum-Kulka, 1983; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Kasper, 1989; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Apologies: Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Gratitude: Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Refusals: Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). DCTs may not reflect what a person would actually say because they are generally written responses or oral responses initiated in a simulated setting. However, this study was conducted right in the home where the participant was visiting thus providing more natural and spontaneous data.

Some speech act studies also make use of natural data collected in the field by observation (Disagreement and Chastisement: Beebe & Takahashi, 1989a; Disagreement and Embarrassing Information: Beebe & Takahashi, 1989b; Corrections: Takahashi & Beebe, 1993; Compliments: Wolfson, 1989). As Beebe and Takahashi (1989a) have pointed out, field note-taking of natural interactions without knowing the speech context has its limitations in that the data are not comparable in terms of the relative social status of the interlocutors and the social situation, and so on. The present study was not a purely natural situation because the visits were set up and a few guidelines

were given to the hosts and guests so that there would be some comparability between interactions.

Other speech act studies have made use of role plays (Apologies: Olshtain, 1983; Gratitude: Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993). Role plays provide some context and structure while at the same time allowing for more natural and spontaneous responses. However, one drawback is that they often force subjects to play roles which they may not be familiar with (such as a business executive or university professor). This study allowed subjects to be themselves (a host or guest) in a context with which they were probably familiar (visiting people's homes).

Tape-recording seems to have been the dominant method of collecting role play data thus far, but this study made use of a video camera in order to sort out who said what and to provide details of nonverbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and so on.

Some speech act studies have combined DCTs with retrospective interviews to try and get at the reasons for the subjects' responses (Gratitude: Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Refusals: Robinson, 1992). In this study subjects were also interviewed immediately following their visit to get feedback from them about the interaction.

Finally, in all of the speech act studies referred to above, data were collected and analyzed by the researcher(s), and pedagogical implications may have been suggested but not tested out (see, for example, Olshtain & Cohen, 1989). In the present study an attempt was made to involve students as ethnographers in the actual data collection and analysis procedure to see how they

might benefit from a study of this kind and to train them for future pragmatic research endeavours of their own.

The use of the term "ethnographer", here and throughout this work, refers to a researcher who employs ethnographic techniques such as doing observations, transcribing, and looking for cultural (and linguistic) patterns in the observed behaviors. It does not purport to carry the full meaning of "ethnographer" in the holistic and technical sense of the word, which would involve intensive, detailed observation over a longer period of time. (For a discussion on what "pure" ethnography comprises, see Wolcott, 1985 and Watson-Gegeo, 1994.)

1.3 Research Questions

Gaining pragmatic knowledge in a second language is a vital part of developing communicative competence. However, how are language learners to acquire such knowledge and become proficient at using it appropriately? This is an all-important consideration for language instructors and students alike, but it is especially true in the case of college-age Japanese students who have studied English grammar for years in school but have difficulty communicating in English. This consideration has given rise to a number of research questions which have formed the basis for the present study:

1a. Without specific pragmatic training in language and culture, how well do Japanese ESL students interact in English during a social visit in an American home? How does the production of speech acts (such as greetings and introductions,

gift giving, making compliments, accepting the offer of food and beverages, starting a conversation and keeping it going, making an excuse to leave, and expressing gratitude) by Japanese ESL students compare with the illocution of the same speech acts by native speakers of English?

1b. How does the interaction of Japanese ESL students with Americans compare cross-culturally with the interaction of native speakers of Japanese during a social visit? Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer from their L1 coming into play in the interlanguage of the Japanese ESL students?

2a. How well do Japanese ESL students learn cross-cultural pragmatics by doing their own ethnographic research? What are the problematics and possibilities of such an approach?

2b. How might specific pragmatic training in the classroom have enhanced the learning process of Japanese ESL students? How effective would the textbook have been in preparing them for their visit?

3a. What are the advantages and disadvantages of collecting speech act data by videotaping semi-structured interactions in a natural setting and by conducting retrospective group interviews?

3b. How might research methods in interlanguage pragmatic studies of this kind be improved?

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

In Chapter One, the background of interlanguage pragmatics research, problems with the methodology of previous studies, significance of the present study, and the research questions were presented. In Chapter Two, we will look in more detail at relevant literature on interlanguage pragmatics and the advantages and disadvantages of methods used so far in speech act studies similar to this one. In Chapter Three, the methodology adopted for the present study will be described. In Chapters Four and Five, results will be reported in two parts: In Part I, the speech acts will be compared cross-culturally with particular focus on the interlanguage of the Japanese ESL students (Research Questions 1a and 1b) and in Part II, the pedagogical findings of the present study will be reported (Research Questions 2a and 2b). Finally, in Chapter Six, we will conclude by examining the methodology and making suggestions for future research (Research Questions 3a and 3b).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, we will take a look at the interlanguage pragmatic research relevant to the present study with a view to answering two pertinent questions regarding theory and methodology: (1) Why study speech acts?; and (2) What data collection methods should be employed? In the first section, we will take a brief look at the major theories behind speech act research. In the second section we will discuss at length the data collection methods used in speech act studies thus far and give rationale for the methodology chosen in the present study.

2.1 Theoretical Background of Speech Act Studies

2.1.1 Interlanguage Pragmatics and SLA

First of all, what is interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) and how does it relate to second language acquisition (SLA) research? *Interlanguage pragmatics* has been defined by Kasper (1996) as "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge" (p. 145). *Pragmatics* has to do with "contextualized language use" (Kasper, 1992, p. 204). According to Hatch, 1992, "the study of what speakers mean to convey when they use a particular structure in context is called the study of *pragmatics*" (p. 260). *Interlanguage* is the term coined by Selinker (1972) to refer to the developing language system of second language learners which is not synonymous with either their L1 or the L2 that they are in the process of learning (Ellis, 1985). Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) suggest that it

can be thought of as a continuum between the L1 and L2 along which learners traverse as they become more and more fluent in the L2. The rules that they follow may not be target-like yet, but their language is rule-governed and systematic at any given point along the continuum.

The interest in ILP stems from a growing focus in second language learning and teaching on the development of a learner's *communicative competence*, a term first used by Hymes (1972) to refer to a learner's ability to communicate based not only on the grammatical rules of a language, but also on the knowledge of when to say something and how to say it depending on the context. Canale and Swain (1980) broke this down further into a framework consisting of four components: *grammatical competence*, which means knowledge of the linguistic code; *sociolinguistic competence*, a term sometimes used interchangeably with pragmatic competence including comprehension and production of speech acts; *discourse competence*, which is the ability to produce a coherent text in various genres; and *strategic competence*, which refers to the ability to make oneself understood despite a lack in the other three components of communicative competence.

It has been pointed out that the bulk of ILP studies so far have focussed on L2 use rather than development, thus weakening the connection between ILP and SLA:

That those interested in ILP have devoted little attention to developmental issues is also in marked contrast to the prominent role played by pragmatics in communicative language teaching and testing. Approaches to language instruction and assessment should be informed by theory and

research on pragmatic development, but as yet ILP does not have much to offer to second language pedagogy. (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 149)

Kasper and Schmidt go on to say that most studies in ILP derive their theoretical underpinnings, research questions, and methodology from *cross-cultural pragmatics* rather than SLA, with the exception of those ILP studies that focus on the issue of pragmatic transfer which more closely aligns ILP with SLA.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, *pragmatic transfer* is the phenomenon where NNSS, attempting to communicate in the L2, fall back on their L1 pragmatic knowledge sometimes resulting in *pragmatic failure*, one of the main sources of cross-cultural communication breakdown ranging from the humorous to the serious (Thomas, 1983). Based on terms she appropriated from Leech, 1983, Thomas identified two types of pragmatic failure which Kasper (1992) then extended to describe two types of pragmatic transfer: *pragmalinguistic transfer* which occurs when learners transfer a linguistic form from their L1 to the L2, where it may not have the intended meaning, force or politeness value; and *sociolinguistic transfer* which occurs when second language learners comprehend or produce speech acts based on their own sociocultural perception of social status or distance, rights or obligations, the degree of imposition, and so forth. Numerous studies have focussed on finding evidence for this phenomenon and on determining what conditions might cause learners to transfer (for a review see Kasper, 1992).

Another issue which aligns ILP with SLA is the role that instruction plays in the development of sociolinguistic

competence. As will be seen in the next section, only a few studies have touched on this so far (e.g. Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; House, 1996). The literature on language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) has made it clear that, when acquiring pragmatic knowledge in their L1, children receive considerable input and training from parents and teachers. It is reasonable to suspect that instruction plays an important role in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge for adult NNSs as well. Porter (1986) discovered that small group interactions and pair work among NNSs in the classroom did not provide the kind of input they needed to develop their pragmatic competence. Instruction in pragmatics would especially be necessary in the EFL classroom setting where exposure to NS use of speech acts is limited, but it is also thought that pragmatic competence develops through noticing relevant features in the input (Schmidt, 1993). One of the unique focusses of the present study is to see what learners notice when engaged in speech act data collection and analysis as ethnographers.

As more attention is paid to these and other developmental issues, ILP will become much more closely aligned with the field of SLA and will have much more to offer in terms of pedagogical implications.

2.1.2 Speech Act Theory

The great majority of ILP studies to date have focussed on comparing NNSs' and NSs' comprehension and production of speech acts. The questions that need to be addressed here are: just what are speech acts, and why did they come to be investigated so

extensively?

Philosophers Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) were the first to identify and provide a detailed analysis of speech acts. This notion of *speech act* has been investigated in a number of different fields besides philosophy, such as: anthropology (Hymes, 1974; Gumperz, 1982); linguistics (Sadock, 1974); and child language (Ochs & Shieffelin, 1979), to name a few (Gass, 1996). These studies are based on the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a linguistic expression, but rather the performance of a certain kind of act through words (Blum Kulka et al., 1989) such as: greeting, requesting, refusing, thanking, and so on.

Hatch (1983) and Wolfson (1981) were among the first to encourage investigations into how second language learners use and acquire speech acts. Hatch pointed out that one speech act function can be expressed in a variety of different utterances or forms depending on context and that the basic meaning of the form may not always be what the speaker intends. (In fact, it may be opposite, such as in sarcasm.) For example, the utterance "Gee, it's hot in here." looks like a statement, but could be intended as a request to open a window. Nevertheless, utterances have been classified into a small set of functions which can be further divided into a number of sub-functions, and these have formed the basis for notional-functional syllabi in language teaching (van Ek, 1976).

What evolved were a number of empirical investigations into how speech acts were performed cross-culturally and cross-linguistically. As stated in the introduction, it soon became

evident that speech acts do vary across languages and cultures. Cohen (1996) describes the goal of speech act studies as follows: "to identify universal norms of speech behavior and to distinguish these from language-specific norms in order to better understand and evaluate interlanguage behavior" (p.21). He argues that the first concern of the researcher is to determine the set of strategies for realizing a particular speech act which he calls a *speech act set*. The second step would be to evaluate the learner's sociocultural and sociolinguistic ability to successfully plan and produce appropriate speech act sets in a second language. "Ideally," Cohen argues, "this information could then be used to prepare a course of instruction that would teach to the gaps in language knowledge" (p. 40).

However, as has been pointed out in the introduction, speech act studies are valuable only to the extent that the data collection methods used are a valid means of attaining the results. Methodology is central to our discussion of speech act studies and needs to be addressed at length.

2.2 Methodology Employed in Speech Act Studies

As stated in the introduction, interlanguage pragmatics is a relatively new field of inquiry, and there has been considerable debate recently as to which data collection methods, or combinations thereof, are most suitable for obtaining valid results. Since the early 1980s a wide variety of empirical studies have been conducted on nonnative speakers' (NNS) production of such speech acts as: apologies, requests, refusals, complaints, disapproval, disagreement, gratitude, compliments,

greetings and closings. These studies have employed a number of different methods: observation of natural data, discourse completion tests (DCT), closed or open-ended role plays, and verbal report or interviews. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages, and the researchers each have a certain rationale for choosing one method over another or for using a combination of methods to get at their particular research questions.

Some of the topics which have been focussed on in speech act production studies are: NNS's production of speech acts in their second language (L2) as compared with L2 native speaker (NS) data; evidence for transfer from NNS's first language (L1); and the effect of contextual variables (status, gender, degree of imposition, and so forth) on NSs' or NNSs' choice of means and linguistic forms to realize a certain speech act. In addition, there are some studies which were designed specifically to compare data collected by different methods. Only a few studies thus far were designed to focus on the development of NNSs' pragmatic competence and the role of implicit or explicit instruction.

In this section, we will review studies that have been done thus far under three categories: (1) studies which compare speech act data cross-culturally using one or more of the methods mentioned above; (2) studies which are designed explicitly to compare data collected through different methods; and (3) studies which are designed to focus on the development of pragmatic competence and the role of instruction.

2.2.1 Studies Using One or More Methods

It is now a well attested fact that variability in speech act data is sometimes induced by the particular method used to collect the data (see Kasper & Dahl, 1991). In reviewing 39 studies of interlanguage pragmatics, Kasper & Dahl place the various data collection methods on a continuum based on the degree to which they constrain participants' responses. They put the highly constrained methods such as the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and closed role plays on the left, followed by the less constrained open role plays, and then the unconstrained (except for observer effects) observation of authentic data on the right. However, as has already been pointed out, each method has its advantages and disadvantages for getting at a particular research question, and cannot be placed on a continuum in regards to its validity.

Let us examine each method in turn by taking a look at a few representative studies (see Table 2.1 and 2.2) which have employed one or more of these methods. Our particular focus will be on the researchers' rationale for choosing the method(s) they employed and/or their discussion of the limitations of the chosen method(s).

2.2.1.1 Discourse Completion Tests (DCT)

The Discourse Completion Test (DCT), originally designed by Levenston (1975) and first adapted to study speech acts by Blum Kulka (1982), has probably been the most widely used and most criticized method of collecting data in interlanguage pragmatics research thus far.

Table 2.1

Studies Using One or More Methods (a): DCT and Role Plays

| Study | Methods | Speech act | L1 | IL | Total n |
|---|--------------------------|------------|---------------|------|-------------------------|
| Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1986) | DCT(5) | Requests | Var. | Heb. | NNS= 172 NS=240 |
| Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss- Weltz (1990) | DCT (12) | Refusals | Japn. | Eng. | NNS=20 NS=40 |
| Takahashi & Beebe (1987) | DCT (12) | Refusals | Japn. | Eng. | NNS=40 NS=40 |
| Olshtain (1983) | Closed role plays | Apologies | Eng. Russ. | Heb. | NNS=27 NS=36 |
| Tanaka (1988) | Open-ended role plays | Requests | Japn. | Eng. | NNS-NS pairs= 4 |
| Houck & Gass (1996) | Open-ended role Plays | Refusals | Japn. | Eng. | NNS-NS pairs= 137 |

DCTs are designed to elicit the speech act under study. A short situation is described in which variables such as status, degree of imposition etc. can be manipulated. This is followed by a short dialogue with a blank left for the speech act in question. An example of an item designed to elicit a request might be as follows:

(1) You are a university student visiting your professor's office to ask him to read over your research proposal.

You: _____

Professor: Okay, I'll try to have it read by next week sometime. You can come and see me during my office hours

next Thursday, if you would like.

There are usually a number of items on one test (in Table 2.1 this is indicated in the parentheses under the methods column). DCTs are usually written, but may be administered orally, in which case it would be similar to a closed role play.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) used a DCT to compare request realizations of NNSs (at three levels of proficiency) and NSs of Hebrew in terms of length of utterance. In their results they described the phenomenon of "too many words", where high-intermediate NNS participants tended to be more long-winded (in writing) than native speakers in their request realizations.

The same DCT that Blum-Kulka and Olshtain employed was used many times over in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), a series of studies designed to compare requests and apologies cross-culturally over a wide variety of languages. In this particular study no rationale for choosing to use the DCT was given, but Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) give one of the reasons in their introduction to the project as a whole:

Ideally, all data should come from "natural" conditions....However, in CCSARP we were interested in getting a large sample, in seven countries, of two specific speech acts used in the same contexts....Moreover, we wished to compare speech acts not only cross-culturally, but also within the same language, as produced by native and nonnative speakers. These demands for comparability have ruled out the use of ethnographic methods, invaluable as they are in general for gaining insights into speech

behavior (p. 13).

The researchers make no remarks as to the limitations of using DCTs in collecting the data.

Another study which uses a written DCT exclusively in the data collection is a study of pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). In this 12-item DCT, they varied the type of stimulus to elicit a refusal and the status of the interlocutor. Evidence for negative L1 transfer in the written refusals made by Japanese speakers of English was found in the order, frequency, and content of semantic formulas chosen.

No rationale was given for choosing a DCT, but the researchers were careful to report that the word "refusal" was not used in the directions in order to avoid biasing the participant's response. In their conclusion, they acknowledge that "the data collection method--a written role-play questionnaire--is limiting and may bias the results" (p. 67). They also emphasize the importance of investigating the differences between natural speech and DCT responses.

In a second study using the same DCT, Takahashi and Beebe (1987) addressed the issue of how pragmatic transfer might be affected by the learning context (ESL or EFL) and proficiency level. Evidence for more pragmatic transfer in the EFL context was found. However, contrary to their expectations, it was not shown conclusively whether higher proficiency learners tend to transfer more on the pragmatic level or not.

Again, no rationale for choosing a DCT is given, but they do acknowledge the limitations of using written elicitation

techniques over natural spoken data. One would assume that their reason for choosing this method was to make it easy to manipulate the variables, learning context and proficiency level, and to compare the results.

Many other studies could be mentioned which have used DCTs as the primary data collection method. The DCTs differ in the number of items selected, number and type of variables investigated, and the number of subjects tested. The researchers seem to claim that being able to collect large amounts of comparable data in a short time is the main advantage of the DCT. The most obvious disadvantages of this method are that it is noninteractive in nature, the speech act is being examined out of context, and there is thus no guarantee that the written responses are truly reflective of natural speech. A fuller discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of DCTs will be reserved for the section on studies which compare data collection methods.

2.2.1.2 Closed and Open-ended Role Plays

According to Kasper and Dahl (1991), role plays share the advantage that DCTs have in that they are replicable, and therefore allow for comparative cross-cultural studies of NNS and NS data. Closed role plays, like DCTs, also have the disadvantage of being noninteractive in nature, but the advantage of open role plays is that they provide a richer data source allowing examination of the speech act in its full discourse context.

Olshtain (1983) used closed role plays to examine what

conditions might cause a second language learner to transfer sociocultural norms from their L1 when making apologies. The eight situations in the role plays varied in the seriousness of the offense and the status of the interlocutors, and they were designed to elicit an apology in reaction to a verbal cue without a reply from the receiver of the apology. In this respect, this method was not much of an improvement over the DCT because it was still noninteractive in nature.

Olshtain states the rationale behind choosing this method, as follows:

Although it may appear more desirable to obtain spontaneous data in a natural setting, it seemed to us that in order to arrive at a comparison of native and nonnative usage, we needed to construct well-defined situations which would allow us to focus on controlled responses (p. 237).

The researcher also wanted to use the same instrument as the one used in an earlier study by Cohen and Olshtain (1981) so as to be able to compare results between studies.

Tanaka (1988) used open role plays to examine the request realizations of Japanese ESL students interacting with NS friends or lecturers. The interactions were videotaped, and results seemed to show that requests can be strategically planned right from the beginning of the conversation and altered according to the interlocutor's response, thus emphasizing the need for more interactive data collection procedures such as the one used in this study.

Tanaka found numerous examples of Japanese ESL students' tendency to produce nonnativelike openings, requests, and

closings, some of which were attributed to transfer. However, since no data were collected for Japanese native speakers, nothing conclusive can be said about transfer effects. Kasper and Dahl (1991) emphasize the importance of including L1 NS controls, especially when the NNS participants are from the same L1 background as in Tanaka's study.

Houck and Gass (1996) used videotaped open role plays in their study of nonnative refusals. Their study is of particular significance here because of their emphasis on methodological issues right from the beginning of the article. They point out that in the observation of natural data contextual variables cannot be controlled and the occurrence of a certain speech act cannot be predicted. After examining other data elicitation methods such as DCTs and closed role plays, they make the following claim:

Of the common data elicitation methods, open role-plays are the closest to what we might expect to reflect naturally occurring speech events...making possible the close analysis of long interaction sequences of comparable data (p. 47).

The researchers go on to say that this is especially important in the case of speech acts such as refusals which often involve lengthy negotiations between interlocutors. In analyzing their data, they came up with three semantic classifications of refusals that were not identified in previous studies on refusals using less interactive methods: confirmations, requests for clarification, and agreement. They also make note of how certain gestures such as a raised eyebrow can function as a verbal "oh?", thus emphasizing the importance of videotaping the interactions.

Houck and Gass warn that open role plays do have their limitations: they are time-consuming to administer and analyze, and they are just role plays, leaving us with the question of the degree to which they mirror real interactions in a natural setting.

2.2.1.3 Observation of Natural Data

Studies which rely solely on the observation of natural data are few and far between in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (see Table 2.2). Perhaps one of the most impressive studies is the one by Wolfson (1989b) on compliments. From the early eighties, when speech act studies were just emerging, Wolfson (1981b) has argued that the most reliable method of collecting speech act data is to observe naturally occurring speech events. She claims to have gathered over 1000 examples of NNS and NS compliments and compliment responses in a wide variety of situations. In many cases NNSs failed to respond appropriately to compliments thus negating the compliment's role as a "social lubricant" in American culture.

Kasper and Dahl (1991) critique this study on two accounts: that no information is provided about either the discourse contexts or participants involved and that the results focus only on inappropriate compliment responses by NNSs and not on their use of compliments at all. However, they commend Wolfson's study for giving us some important insights into the function of compliments in American culture.

The data on compliments for Wieland's (1995) study consist of seven tape-recorded dinner table conversations in French

between NNSs and NSs. The discourse context and participants involved are carefully described from the outset. While acknowledging the disadvantages of studying speech acts observed in natural data, they provide rationale for doing this by quoting Kasper and Dahl (1991): "Rather than collecting isolated conversational segments, it is preferable to audio- or video-record complete speech events, and to compare these data with elicited data types (241)" (p.797).

One important result of the study was a refutation of the generalization that compliments are given more frequently in American culture than in French culture. Based on Wieland's data, this does not seem to apply to the dinner party context. Wieland calls for future studies on speech acts to take such contextual factors into consideration before generalizations are made.

The third study by Aston (1995) only included native speaker data and would technically not be included in a review of interlanguage pragmatics research if it were not for its emphasis on methodology. Aston compared 150 service encounters in English bookshops with 180 similar service encounters in Italian bookshops in order to examine the influence of conversational management on thanking sequences in closings. Variations in thanking sequences are not always constrained by such variables as degree of indebtedness or social distance. According to Aston, they have as much to do with concerns of local conversational management and role alignment.

To investigate this aspect, Aston claims that role plays are problematic because they do not adequately mirror naturally-

occurring conversation:

Neither the social situation, nor the more local contexts within which processes of conversational management operate, in fact match those within which naturally-occurring conversations take place....Participants may have little investment in their relationship as imaginary characters...(p. 64)

One of the criticisms of natural data is the lack of comparability. However, since Aston's data were confined to a single situation-type--bookshop service encounters between assistants and customers who were all mutual strangers--he feels that the data are comparable cross-culturally.

2.2.1.4 Combination of Methods including Verbal Report or Interviews

Increasing numbers of interlanguage pragmatics researchers are making use of concurrent and/or retrospective verbal report or interviews in combination with other data collection methods in order to gain insight into NNSs' language processing when performing speech acts (see Table 2.2). In addition to a 6-item DCT, Robinson (1992) used concurrent verbal reports and retrospective interviews to examine refusals. Twelve NNSs were asked to record their thoughts as they completed the DCT, and they were interviewed later as well.

Robinson's study was specifically designed to evaluate verbal reports and retrospective interviews as a means of investigating pragmatic knowledge and thought processes. She gives a detailed report on some of the known limitations of

these methods--one being the problem of time lapse between task completion and retrospective interviews. Her rationale for combining concurrent and retrospective techniques is to rectify this problem. These methods proved effective in providing evidence for pragmatic transfer that would not otherwise have been obtained from a DCT used alone.

Table 2.2

Studies Using One or More Methods (b): Observation of Natural Data and Combination of Methods

| Study | Methods | Speech act | L1 | IL | Total n |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| Wolfson (1989b) | Natural data | Compliments | Var. | Eng. | NNS= NR NS=NR |
| Wieland (1995) | Natural data | Compliments | Eng. | Fren. | NNS-NS groups =7 |
| Aston (1995) | Natural data | Gratitude in Closings | - | - | NS-NS pairs= 330 |
| Robinson (1992) | DCT (6) Verbal report Interviews | Refusals | Japn. | Eng. | NNS=12 |
| Cohen & Olshtain (1993) | Role plays Retrospective verbal report | Apologies Complaints Requests | Var. | Eng. | NNS=15 |
| Ebsworth, Bodman, Carpenter (1996) | Natural data Written dialogues Role plays Interviews | Greetings | Var. | Eng. | NNS= 100 NS=50 |
| Boxer (1996) | Natural data Interviews | Complaints | - | - | NS=10 |

Cohen and Olshtain (1993) used retrospective verbal reports to investigate the processes in which nonnative speakers assess, plan, and execute speech acts such as apologies, complaints, and

requests. They were also looking for evidence of positive and negative transfer from the learners' L1. Participants were asked to role play six speech act situations. These role plays were videotaped and played back for the participants who were then asked fixed and probing questions about their responses.

The researchers give their rationale for conducting the verbal reports retrospectively:

Because verbal report techniques are intrusive, it would be unreasonable to ask speakers to provide such data while they are engaged in oral interaction. For this reason...subjects were videotaped interacting in two role-play situations at a time. They then immediately viewed the videotapes...as a means of helping them recall their thought processes...(p. 36).

Cohen and Olshtain list a number of different limitations of their research design, including the problem of forcing the participants to play a role that they might not assume in real life and the problem of using the target language for the prompts thus giving participants opportunity to use language forms from the prompts in their response.

In a subsequent paper, Cohen & Olshtain (1996) highlight the need for triangulation. Rather than discuss the advantages and disadvantages of various techniques, they encourage the use of combined methods for investigating speech act production: this would include observation of natural data to generate hypotheses, role plays to test those hypotheses, DCTs to manipulate social and situational variables, and acceptability checks, followed by further observation of natural data to validate findings. In

addition to all these, verbal reports or interviews provide feedback on participants' responses that might otherwise be left to the researchers' intuitions or speculations.

Ebsworth, Bodman, and Carpenter (1996) used an approach which combined natural observation with elicited data and interviews to investigate greetings in American English. In their results they discovered that greetings in American English range from a simple hand wave or smile on up to a lengthy speech act set which involves considerable negotiation between interlocutors. Even relatively advanced NNSs had considerable difficulty in performing greetings in an acceptable manner.

They began by observing greetings by NSs and NNSs as they occurred in natural discourse. They then used these observations to create an open-ended written questionnaire. Unlike the DCT which has participants fill in blanks, this questionnaire had participants create entire dialogues in both the target language and their L1. Then they had a representative number of NSs and NNSs role play the same situations on videotape. From these they interviewed another subset of participants "to help provide an informed interpretation of the data gathered" (p. 92). The researchers said they came up with this approach of combining methods to meet the challenge of capturing the authenticity of natural speech while attempting to control many variables so the interactions could be meaningfully compared.

One final study by Boxer (1996) on complaints remains to be mentioned. It did not include NNSs, but is interesting from the point of view of methodology. She began by collecting spontaneous speech data on indirect complaints (or "troubles

telling" as it is also called) and came up with six categories of responses. Over half of the responses fell in the category termed "commiseration" giving cause to speculate that much indirect complaining serves a positive role of bonding interlocutors. Hoping to investigate this further, Boxer used the ethnographic interview as a tool to tap NS informants' pragmatic knowledge of this speech act.

Boxer claims that ethnographic interviews can reveal both tacit and explicit knowledge allowing a more complete analysis of a particular speech act :

Because ideal informants in studies of speech acts/events are sociolinguistically naive, it is often possible to bring their tacit knowledge to a state of explicitness through gentle questioning by the researcher within the setting/context where the speech behavior typically occurs (p.221).

Boxer conducted two sets of interviews: one set was fairly structured and the other was more open-ended in nature. Through trial and error, she describes how the first set of interviews went awry. Asking a fixed set of questions of each informant within a brief time (45-60 minutes) did not lead to uncovering any tacit knowledge of the speech act in question. The second set of open-ended interviews provided a much richer data source.

As we have seen, there are advantages and disadvantages to each method: DCTs, closed and open role plays, and observation of natural data. Combining methods including concurrent or retrospective verbal report or interviews is one way of validating results. However, research comparing data collection

methods appears to be a necessary step in furthering interlanguage pragmatics research, and a number of researchers have begun to conduct studies comparing methods. It is to these studies that we now turn.

2.2.2 Studies Comparing Data Collection Methods

There are a few speech act studies with combined methods which compare data collected by different methods (See Table 2.3). Some of these speech act studies were designed for this very purpose, while for others it was more of a secondary issue.

As part of the CCSARP mentioned earlier, Rintell and Mitchell (1989) collected data on requests and apologies made by 50 NNSs and 37 NSs through two different methods: a written 12-item DCT and closed role plays which were performed orally with the researcher. It should be noted that a closed role play is one in which the subjects respond orally to a certain cue, but do not interact in ongoing negotiation with their interlocutor as they might in an open role play. The closed role play data showed longer responses for NNSs but not for NSs. In some request situations, there was a tendency for more directness in the written DCTs than in the closed role plays, but the status difference between the subjects and the researcher could have prevented the use of imperatives face-to-face. The researchers concluded that DCTs and closed role plays yield similar data, and as Kasper and Dahl (1991) have pointed out, this is probably because both data collection methods are noninteractive in nature.

Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) examined expressions of

gratitude in 40 NNS/NNS pair interactions and 24 NNS/NS pair interactions comparing data collected by three different methods: DCTs, open role plays, and naturalistic data. Although all three methods yielded similar semantic formulas, they differed in length and complexity. Data collected by DCTs proved to be shorter and simpler, while naturalistic data proved to be the longest and most complex with open role play data coming somewhere in the middle.

The researchers point out that the speech act of expressing gratitude is more complex than might be expected because it is one which is played out interactively between the giver of goods or services and the recipient. The NNSs seemed to convey their appreciation much more effectively when interacting with a NS than when performing with another NNS who did not collaborate as well. This result would not have been obtained using a DCT exclusively.

Beebe and Takahashi (1989a; 1989b) used a 12-item DCT and naturalistic data to observe how 15 Japanese NNSs and 15 NSs of English performed the speech acts of disagreement, chastisement, and giving embarrassing information. The studies were designed to compare the responses made when speaking to a higher versus a lower status interlocutor, but the researchers focus on methodological issues as well.

Similar to Bodman and Eisenstein (1988), Beebe and Takahashi also found the written responses to be more streamlined and less elaborate when compared with naturalistic data, but they state that, because similar semantic formulas are evident, DCTs can be an efficient way of collecting a large amount of comparable data

in a relatively short period of time. They call for more natural data to show "the depth of emotion, amount of repetition, or the degree of elaboration" (1989b, p.215), but then they also come down hard on natural data. Among other reasons, they feel the data are biased toward the linguistic preferences of their particular circle of friends and associates, biased toward short exchanges because longer ones are impossible to record word for word in a notebook, and "not at all comparable in terms of speakers, hearers, and social situations" (p. 215).

In reviewing Beebe and Takahashi's research, Kasper and Dahl (1991) point out that the observation of natural data is not limited to notetaking of isolated interactions, and that it is far more preferable to tape-record or videotape more complex speech events which might include the speech acts under investigation.

Rose (1994) used a DCT and a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) to explore the cross-cultural validity of DCTs in a non-Western context. In this cross-cultural study of requests, an 8-item DCT, which included contexts where social distance and status varied, was administered in Japanese to 89 NSs of Japanese living in America and in English to 46 American NSs of English. Contrary to previous research, results showed that the Japanese tended to use direct requests more frequently than Americans regardless of the context.

Seeking an explanation for these results, Rose administered another questionnaire, the MCQ, to 38 NSs of Japanese in Japan and came up with very different results. The MCQ, which included the options of hinting or opting out (choosing not to make the

request), revealed more contextual variation and a shift towards opting out or using hinting strategies. In the absence of natural interactive data to compare with, this study does not lead to the assumption that MCQs are representative of face-to-face interactions, but it certainly questions the use of DCTs, particularly in non-Western contexts, as a valid means of collecting speech act data.

Table 2.3

Studies Comparing Data Collection Methods

| Study | Methods | Speech act | L1 | IL | Total n |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-------|------|---|
| Rintell & Mitchell (1989) | DCT(12) vs. Closed role plays | Requests Apologies | NR | Eng. | NNS=50 NS=37 |
| Bodman & Eisenstein (1988) | DCT vs. Open-ended role plays and natural data | Gratitude | NR | Eng. | NNS- NNS pairs= 40 NNS-NS pairs= 24 |
| Beebe & Takahashi (1989a; 1989b) | DCT vs. Natural data | Disagreement Chastisement Giving embarrassing information | Japn. | Eng. | NNS=15 NS=15 |
| Rose (1994) | DCT vs. Multiple-choice Questionnaire | Requests | Japn. | Eng. | NNS=89 NS=46 |
| Beebe & Cummings (1996) | DCT vs. Natural data | Refusals | - | Eng. | NS=22 |
| Dahl (in Kasper & Dahl, 1991) | Natural data vs. Open-ended Role Plays | Refusals Disagreement Disapproval | - | Eng. | NS=137 |

Note: NR = Not reported.

In what Gass (1996) has called "a particularly ingenious design" (p. 5), Beebe and Cummings (1996) compared elicited refusal data collected through a 1-item DCT with natural refusal data collected by tape-recording actual telephone conversations. The DCT, which elicited refusals to a request for volunteer help with a TESOL convention, was administered to 11 native speakers of English, all female members of TESOL. (No NNSSs were involved in this particular study.) The telephone calls were made to 11 other native speakers of English who were also female members of TESOL. The request for volunteer help with the convention was the same and the tape-recorded refusals were used with permission given after the call was completed. The study revealed important similarities and differences.

What was similar between both data types was the content of the refusals. In both types of data, direct refusals were absent, and refusal strategies (excuses, statements of negative ability/willingness, and apologies) were used with the same frequency, although the range of strategies used in the telephone conversations was wider. What was different between the two data types was that, as the researchers themselves stated, the DCTs bias the response toward "less negotiation, less hedging, less repetition, less elaboration, less variety and ultimately less talk" (p. 71).

The researchers go on to explain the long negotiations on the telephone in terms of what Wolfson (1989a) called the "bulge theory". Wolfson found that it was with nonintimates of approximately equal social status that most negotiation takes place. Intimates and strangers tend to be brief, but the fact

that the person making the request and the person making the refusal were nonintimates, but co-members of TESOL may have led to more negotiation. Had the subjects filling out the DCT imagined interacting with a co-member, their refusals may have been somewhat more elaborate.

The researchers voice their criticism of so-called "ethnographic" methods of collecting natural data. In addition to an often undefined target population, they feel that what can be tape-recorded with approval is a "biased subset of the natural speech that is spoken" (p. 68) by a particular speech community. In conclusion, they claim that DCTs are still a highly effective means of:

1. Gathering a large amount of data quickly;
2. Creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech;
3. Studying the stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate response;
4. Gaining insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and
5. Ascertaining the canonical shape of speech acts in the minds of speakers of that language (p. 80).

Nevertheless, the researchers are aware that DCT responses do not mirror natural speech in terms of:

1. Actual wording used in real interaction;
2. The range of formulas and strategies used (some, like avoidance, tend to be left out);
3. The length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfill the function;

4. The depth of emotion that in turn qualitatively affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance;
5. The number of repetitions and elaborations that occur;
6. The actual rate of occurrence of a speech act--e.g., whether or not someone would refuse at all in a given situation (p. 80).

While acknowledging the disadvantages, Beebe and Cummings endorse the continued use of DCTs in combination with other methods.

Dahl (forthcoming) expected open-ended role plays, unlike DCTs, to produce more negotiation similar to that found in naturalistic data because of the interactive nature of both types of data. Three different sets of data were collected. In the first set, she tape-recorded authentic refusals by asking her subjects if they would do a role play with her. If they refused she got their permission to use the authentic data just collected, and if they agreed she would have the subjects do a role play of the same situation. The problem with this was that subjects were being forced to play a role (refusing the request) which was opposite to what they had just done (consenting). The second data set was an authentic group discussion and a role play discussion, while authentic discussions and monologic role plays made up the third set. Here again, in the role plays subjects were given a number of restrictions which may have affected the amount of talk.

Kasper and Dahl (1991) report on the results of Dahl's study:

The most important features that distinguished between authentic and role play productions across discourse types

were amount of talk and directness in the performance of face-threatening acts. Amount of talk also distinguished the two types of role plays from each other with the interactive role plays producing less talk and monologic role plays more talk than their authentic counterparts.

As amount of talk typically distinguishes between different interlocutor relationships (cf. Wolfson's [1989a] bulge hypothesis), and directness interacts with contextual factors in conveying politeness (see Kasper, 1990, for an overview), the disconcerting conclusion suggested by Dahl's study is that role plays are not representative of authentic interaction on these measures (p.244).

However, because of the problems with the role play data mentioned above, Dahl warns that the conclusions drawn may not necessarily be extended to all types of role plays: "Some types of simulations--for instance, those in which participants retain their own identities--might approximate authentic discourse even more closely than open role plays" (p. 245).

As Kasper and Dahl (1991) point out, comparable data on cross-cultural speech acts are very difficult to collect through observing authentic interactions. On the other hand, elicitation procedures such as DCTs and role plays may not reflect the complexity of natural speech. They conclude by saying: "Clearly there is a great need for more authentic data, collected in the full context of the speech event, and for comparative studies on the validity of different elicitation techniques" (p. 245).

In the present study an attempt was made to obtain authentic data on a variety of speech acts by videotaping them in the

context of a speech event. Participants retained their own identities and the situation was somewhat structured in order to provide cross-cultural comparability of data.

2.2.3 Studies Focussing on Pragmatic Development and Instruction

As we have seen, numerous speech act studies in the field of interlanguage pragmatics research have been done utilizing a variety of different methods, and some of these studies have actually compared data collected by different methods. However, the great majority of these studies focus on NNS's production of speech acts rather than on acquisition or instruction. As Kasper (1996) has pointed out, it is for this reason that interlanguage pragmatics has "hovered on the fringes of SLA research thus far" (p. 145). Limited though they may be, there are some studies focussing on developmental or pedagogical issues that we could mention here (see Table 2.4).

Only a few studies exist to date which use longitudinal data to trace the development of adult NNSs' pragmatic competence. Among the notable exceptions are two studies of untutored acquisition which we will look at here: one by Schmidt (1983) and the other by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993).

Schmidt (1983) observed an adult Japanese NNS (Wes) for a period of three years and analyzed his overall acquisition of communicative competence without formal instruction. Wes' high level of motivation to interact with native speakers of English seemed to facilitate his acquisition of pragmatic competence, but not his grammatical competence. In particular, Schmidt looked at the speech act of directives and found that Wes initially

depended on a limited number of routines in specific situations to make requests (such as, *Can I get...* in a restaurant), some of which he extended incorrectly to other situations (*Can I bring cigarette?* for *Could you bring me some cigarettes?*) In some instances, evidence for transfer from his L1 was observed in Wes' use of indirect hints to convey a request. For example, Wes once asked his companion in a movie theatre if he liked his seat. The listener had no idea at the time that Wes was indirectly requesting that they change seats. A few of these overextensions of routines and transfers of L1 patterns remained, but by the end of the three-year observational period his directives were quite elaborate and, for the most part, gross errors had been eliminated.

Schmidt's study suggests that early untutored acquisition of pragmatic competence begins with a reliance on L1 patterns or on unanalyzed routines in the target language which later become available for more productive use. His study also suggests that a high level of motivation to integrate with native speakers may facilitate the acquisition of pragmatic competence to a greater degree than the acquisition of grammatical competence. However, no conclusions can be drawn because of the lack of comparable data for learners with different levels of motivation.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) observed the development pragmatic competence in ten advanced NNSs of English as compared with six NSs of English over the course of a semester. The situation was a natural one where the students' academic advising sessions with their advisors were taped at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. The highly structured situation

allowed for comparability across speakers and sessions. In particular, two speech acts produced by the NNSs, suggestions and rejections, were analyzed with respect to their frequency, form and successfulness as compared with similar data for NSs.

At a macrolevel, like the NSs, the NNSs became more successful in building their course schedules over time by initiating more suggestions and thus having to make fewer rejections of the advice given to them by their advisors. At a microlevel, however, the NNSs' tendency to use fewer mitigators and more aggravators than NSs did not seem to improve over time. For example, where a NS would say something like *I was thinking of taking such-and-such a course, if I can....*, a NNS might say: *I'm going to take....* The researchers attribute this to the lack of explicit input as to the appropriate linguistic form that the NNSs' suggestions or rejections should take.

Based on his research in experimental psychology and anecdotal excerpts from his own journal about language learning, Schmidt (1993) claims that conscious awareness of relevant features in the input, what he calls *noticing*, is a necessary condition in order for the acquisition of pragmatic competence by adult second language learners to take place. Schmidt calls for future research through the introspective method of verbal report on what learners notice or what they do not notice as they are learning pragmatics. He argues for the use of tasks in the language classroom which focus attention on pragmatic forms and functions and contexts, in addition to explicit teacher-provided information on pragmatics based on empirical studies. Clearly, there is a need for the pedagogical implications of his claims to

be tested out.

Table 2.4

Studies Focussing on Pragmatic Development and Instruction

| Study | Focus | Speech act | L1 | IL | Total n |
|---|--|---------------------------|--------|------|----------------|
| Schmidt (1983) | Longitudinal study of untutored acquisition | Directives | Japn. | Eng. | NNS=1 |
| Bardovi- Harlig & Hartford (1993) | Longitudinal study of untutored acquisition | Suggestions Rejections | Varied | Eng. | NNS=10 NS=6 |
| Schmidt (1993) | Conscious awareness in acquisition | Not specified | Eng. | - | NNS/ NS=1 |
| Olshtain & Cohen (1990) | Tutored acquisition-- brief intervention in an EFL classroom | Apologies | Hebr. | Eng. | NNS=18 |
| House (1996) | Tutored acquisition-- implicit vs. explicit instruction in the EFL classroom | Varied | Ger. | Eng. | NNS=32 |
| Holmes & Brown (1987) | Suggestions for developing pragmatic awareness in the ESL classroom | Compliments | NR | Eng. | NNS=10 |
| Bardovi- Harlig, Hartford, Mahan- Taylor, Morgan & Reynolds (1991) | Suggestions for developing pragmatic awareness in the ESL classroom | Closings | NR | Eng. | NR |

Note: NR = Not reported.

There are few studies in the field of interlanguage pragmatics which focus on pedagogical implications. Of these, we will look at two studies which report on the effects of explicit instruction (Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; House, 1996) and two studies which provide proposals for instruction in pragmatics based on empirical data (Holmes & Brown, 1987; Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan & Reynolds, 1991) (see Table 2.4).

Olshtain and Cohen (1990) describe the effects of a brief intervention in an EFL classroom involving the teaching of apologies over a three-week period to 18 advanced NNSs of English who were native speakers of Hebrew. The study consisted of a pretest (DCT) to assess the appropriacy of the NNSs' apologies, a teaching materials packet with pragmatic information aimed at correcting their deviances from NS data collected earlier, and a posttest to determine what progress had been made. After training, the NNSs were able to use intensifiers and produce shorter utterances which were more nativelike in nature. The findings suggest that speech act behavior can be taught in the foreign language classroom by providing explicit, empirically based instruction.

House (1996) tests out a similar idea using an experimental-control group design to compare the effects of explicit instruction with the effects of implicit instruction on the pragmatic fluency of advanced German learners of English. The "implicit" group of 15 students were provided with input and opportunity for communicative practice alone, while the "explicit" group of 17 students were provided with additional explicit pragmatic information. Students' progress was measured

by role plays before, during, and after the 14-week course. In addition to gambits, discourse strategies, and initiating or changing topics, the researcher also examined such speech acts as openings, closings, and requests.

In terms of speech act realization, no difference in progress was found between the two different groups. Both groups seemed to show improvement in initiating topics, while the "explicit" group appeared to show greater gains in their mastery of gambits and discourse strategies, relying less on transfer from their L1. However, neither group showed much improvement in responding to NSs' initiating acts appropriately.

House puts forth various possible explanations for the results. She says that the improvement in initiating by both groups may be explained by the auto-input hypothesis (Sharwood-Smith, 1988) which suggests that learners' confrontation with their own output either by teacher-provided feedback or self-assessment serves as helpful input. She concludes that explicit metapragmatic information provided for the "explicit" group made it less likely for negative transfer to occur: "Students said they believed such consciousness-raising helped them understand how and when they transferred routines from L1 and how they might counteract negative L1 transfer through "noticing" (Schmidt, 1993) and through making attempts to use alternative, more L2 norm-oriented expressions" (House, 1996, p. 247). Finally, House comments that providing metapragmatic information alone does not alleviate the problem that even advanced foreign language learners have in responding appropriately when interacting with NSs because "'control of processing' is not yet functioning well

enough" (p.249). Bialystok (1993) describes this most pressing problem as one where learners must develop strategies for processing pragmatic information in various interactional contexts quickly and routinely.

As Kasper (1996) has pointed out, the research suggests that in order for pragmatic fluency to be developed there must be relevant input, the input must be noticed, and learners need plenty of opportunity to develop their processing control of pragmatic knowledge quickly and effectively. But how can pragmatics be integrated into the second language curriculum in the classroom? Holmes and Brown (1987) provide a set of exercises based on their empirical study of compliments in New Zealand designed to assist learners in recognizing and producing compliments appropriately.

The first exercise has the students recognize the three most common linguistic forms that compliments take in English through analyzing the data provided. The second exercise provides a further look at the linguistic form by having students check which intensifiers can precede which adjectives. The third and fourth exercises have students distinguish compliments from speech acts with similar linguistic forms, while the fifth exercise has students note common compliment topics in the data provided. The sixth exercise has students collect their own data in both English and their L1. This would be followed up by the seventh exercise which is the performance of role plays in the classroom. There is no mention in the article of whether or not the exercises were tested out and of how effective they were in developing pragmatic fluency.

Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991) dismiss the Holmes and Brown proposal for instruction as one in which the focus is more on gaining pragmatic information than on the ability to use that information. Basing their discussion on closings in American English, Bardovi-Harlig et al. describe their four-step approach to integrating pragmatics into the language classroom. The four basic steps are: (1) identification of the particular speech act for study based on the students' needs or interests, (2) data collection on the particular speech act by the teacher supplemented by available literature, (3) evaluation of textbooks and materials for their authenticity, and (4) modification of existing materials or development of new materials. Under Step 3, the article examines twenty current ESL textbooks for their authenticity with regards to American closings. Even textbooks which claimed to use "authentic language" included dialogues which showed incomplete closings leaving students unaware of the proper way to end a conversation.

Bardovi-Harlig et al. go on to describe the activities that they have used with their high-intermediate-level ESL students in a speaking-listening class at an American university. The first was a guided discussion concerning the pragmatic rules of closings in their L1. The students noticed how rude abrupt closings in their L1 were, and this helped them to see that in English, also, intentions to close a conversation are announced by a preclosing. The second activity was designed to make students aware of incomplete closings in textbook dialogues. The researchers report that the students did not recognize these

easily without considerable help. The students were then given the opportunity to practice, and the researchers report that the students' use of preclosing statements such as "well" signalled their emerging pragmatic awareness of this particular speech act.

The researchers then introduce activities that they feel would foster the development of pragmatic competence in the classroom: comparing "real" exchanges with students' re-enactments; acting out incomplete closings from textbook dialogues and then performing dialogues with complete closings; role playing; and collecting data outside the classroom. But here again, there is no mention of the success or failure of these activities as put into practice in the language classroom.

As mentioned in the introduction, this is precisely one of the points that sets the present study apart from previous studies. In the present study, pedagogical implications were actually tested out by involving students in the data collection and analysis, as suggested by the two studies just mentioned, to see how such an approach might develop the students' pragmatic awareness. As will be described in Chapter Five, this approach has some merit, but is not necessarily a foolproof way of developing pragmatic fluency for certain proficiency levels. Making suggestions for teaching pragmatics is good, but considerably more research needs to be done in these areas of both development and instruction.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the major theories behind interlanguage pragmatics research in general and speech act

studies in particular. With the current emphasis in language teaching on communicative competence and the seriousness of pragmatic failure in view, there is clearly a need for more empirical investigations on how speech acts vary cross-culturally, how learners perform these in their interlanguage, and how instruction can make a difference in the development of pragmatic competence.

However, the data collection methods used in these investigations must be a valid means of obtaining results. A number of studies using a variety of different methods were reviewed with a particular emphasis on the researchers' rationale for choosing the methods they employed. Table 2.5 summarizes the

Table 2.5

Advantages and Disadvantages of Data Collection Methods in ILP

| Method | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|--|
| DCT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -large amounts of data in short time -comparability -manipulate variables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -noninteractive -out of context -written -unfamiliar roles |
| Role plays (RP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -interactive (open RP) -replicable -full discourse context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -noninteractive (closed RP) -unfamiliar roles -little investment |
| Natural Data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -interactive -range of formulas and strategies wider than elicited data -shows depth of emotion, length of response, number of repetitions, and so on | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lack of comparability (especially in the case where variables cannot be controlled) -target population often undefined -context not always reported |
| Combined methods with verbal report or interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -triangulation -capture authenticity of natural speech and control variables -reveal tacit knowledge of speakers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -accurate information lost during time lapse between elicitation and verbal report or interviews |

advantages and disadvantages of the various methods used and compared in the speech act studies reported on in this chapter. In addition, studies which were designed to focus particularly on the development of pragmatic competence and the role of instruction were reviewed.

The rationale for the data collection methods used in the present study was also given throughout this chapter. In summary, the focus of the present study was to examine a number of different speech acts cross-culturally in the full discourse context of visiting someone's home. DCTs were rejected because of their lack of context. Role plays were rejected because participants might be made to perform unfamiliar roles, and the interaction might not effectively mirror natural speech. The researcher chose to observe as natural a situation as possible but to give some guidelines so as to be able to compare the interactions. These interactions were videotaped in order to capture aspects of nonverbal communication. Interviews were conducted immediately following the interactions to provide insight for the analysis. Finally, students were involved as ethnographers in the data collection and analysis procedures in order to test out pedagogical implications. Details of the methodology will be given in the chapter to follow.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, we will describe the methodology both as planned and, to borrow an expression used by Aoki (1993) regarding curriculum, as "lived". First of all, the subjects who were recruited for this study and the ethical considerations that were made will be described. This will be followed by a description of the data collection methods and the data analysis procedures by students as originally planned and as actually carried out. Finally, we will also briefly explain how data analysis was conducted by the researcher.

3.1 Description of Subjects

The subjects recruited for this study were from four groups. The first two groups were 16 ESL students (Group A) and 15 ESL students (Group B) from Japan who took part in a five-month immersion program at a public university in Washington. These students will be referred to as Japanese speakers of English (**JE**) or as Japanese speakers of Japanese (**JJ**), depending on whether they were visiting Americans and interacting in English or visiting fellow Japanese and interacting in Japanese. They were all sophomores in Japan, with an average age of 20. Group A was made up of 7 males and 9 females, while Group B was made up of 3 males and 12 females. These students were divided into teams of three students each (four in one case): two (or three) students to be guests in an American home (and guests of or hosts to fellow Japanese students) and one student to be responsible for

videotaping the visits.

The third group (Group C) were volunteers from an apartment complex located near the university. They were 22 American speakers of English (AE) divided into pairs (roommates) who agreed to host the Japanese students in their home and be hosts of or guests to fellow Americans living in the complex. They were made up of mostly female roommates (8 out of the 11 pairs) while three of the pairs were young married couples with one child. Their average age was 21, and most were students at the same university with the exception of two of the spouses.

The fourth group (Group D) were volunteers from a university in Japan. They were nine Japanese speakers of Japanese in Japan (JJJ) divided into three groups of three: two guests who visited the lodging of one host. The reason for having only one host was because Japanese students live alone, and it would have made the situation unnatural to have someone pretend to be a roommate. Two of the groups were all females, one group were males, and their average age was 19.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

The subjects were recruited by means of two advertisements: one which was introduced in the ESL classes with the permission of the instructor, and the other which the researcher took around to tenants in the apartment complex in order to enlist their support (see Appendix A). The only criteria for the American volunteers was that they speak English as their first language or, if English was not their first language, that they had received most of their education in North America.

Before beginning this project, consent was obtained from the director of the ESL program and the coordinator and instructor of the Functions of American English course which became the setting for this project. Separate consent forms were also prepared for the Japanese ESL students in Group A and Group B, for the American participants in Group C, and for the Japanese students in Group D. Japanese translations of the forms were provided for the ESL students so they would know what they were signing. It was made clear in the consent forms (see Appendix B) that confidentiality would be maintained in all reports of the study.

American volunteers were required to devote two hours of their time to the project for the two visits and the interviews following those visits. Japanese ESL students were required to devote the same amount of time outside of class, in addition to ten 50-minute regularly scheduled classes. It should be mentioned that the ESL students were scheduled to do a similar unit in the textbook (Skillman & McMahon, 1990) for their *Functions of American English* course on *Visiting People's Homes* during the period that this project was carried out, so they were in no way deprived of worthwhile instruction during those ten class hours. Japanese students in Japan were required to devote one hour of their time to the project for the visit and interview.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures as Planned

The plan was to collect a total of 20 video-taped exchanges: five of Japanese visiting Japanese (JJ/JJ); five of Americans visiting Americans (AE/AE); and ten of ESL students visiting

Americans (JE/AE). These visits were also recorded on cassette tape as a backup. Before the visits took place, in the first two of the ten class hours allotted, the project was introduced and impromptu role plays, as a kind of pretest, were performed in both classes following the structure provided (see Appendix C).

The students did not seem to have a good command of the language necessary to perform the role plays well, but neither the researcher nor the instructor provided them with any language forms. The purpose of this project was to ascertain what the students could learn about pragmatics by being their own ethnographers rather than by receiving information about the language or culture beforehand. The role plays provided an opportunity for the camera people to practice videotaping.

Guidelines were given to both hosts and guests before the visits took place (see Appendix D). Hosts were asked to assist the video camera person in setting up before the guests arrived. Hosts were expected to provide beverages and a dessert or snacks of some kind. Guests were expected to bring a small gift (under \$5.00 between the two of them) for their hosts. Guests were expected to take the initiative to leave after about 20-25 minutes of chatting. Hosts were to call the guests back in for the informal group interview that was to take place immediately following the visit. These interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were also videotaped and recorded on cassette tape. The interview data were for the researcher's data analysis purposes only and were not analyzed by the students in class.

3.4 Data Analysis by Students as Planned

The plan for the remaining eight classes after the visits took place was as follows:

Class #3 and #4: In their groups of three, students were to transcribe the video of their visit to an American home (JE/AE), finishing it up at home with the cassette tape if necessary. The researcher would then check their transcripts for them.

Class #5: students were to be shown videos of Americans visiting Americans (AE/AE) and were to begin evaluating their own performance based on the native speaker exchanges.

Class #6: students were to transcribe the video of their Japanese visit (JJ/JJ) noting cultural similarities or differences and looking for evidence of negative transfer: things they said or did in their Japanese visit which showed up inappropriately in their American visit.

Class #7: students were to prepare a 10-minute report, evaluating their visit to an American home and comparing it with Japanese culture.

Class #8: Students were to report their findings in their groups of three, making use of the overhead projector and showing short clips of their videos etc. to the class.

Class #9: In-class reports were to be completed and final products (transcripts, critique, cultural comparison and contrast etc.) were to be handed in.

Class #10: Impromptu role plays were to be performed as a kind of posttest. Students would then fill out a questionnaire.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis as "Lived" (Implemented)

The entire project was to be completed over a 2-week period. However, the visits took longer to schedule than expected. While the visits were taking place, the instructor taught the students a different unit in their textbook, and then the project was resumed in class when all the videos were completed. This caused the project to be stretched out over a period of nearly three weeks. In addition, the transcribing took longer than expected, and so the students were asked to do a short written report rather than an oral one. These changes are reflected in Table 3.1.

The researcher had planned to take the students' textbooks away at the outset of the project, but the instructor explained that her students rarely, if ever, look ahead in their textbooks. She also said that taking the books away might make them suspicious enough to want to borrow a friend's from another section, so the textbooks were not collected.

In the case of the AE/AE visits, the researcher was responsible for the videotaping and the retrospective interviews immediately following. In the JE/AE visits, students did the videotaping and called the researcher in afterwards to conduct the interview. Due to difficulty with scheduling, only three JJ/JJ (Japanese visiting Japanese) visits took place, and the students were responsible for the videotaping and for conducting the interviews. As the students noted in their questionnaires, a problem with these visits was that the students knew each other and were forced to pretend that they did not. Another problem was that these visits took place in the United States.

Table 3.1

Data Collection and Analysis as Planned and as Lived

| Class Sequence | Methodology As Planned | Methodology As Lived |
|------------------|--|---|
| Class #1 | Introduce project Sign consent forms | Same as planned |
| Class #2 | Perform role plays Practice videotaping | Same as planned |
| Outside of class | Videotape visits in 3-5 days | Actually took 12 days to videotape |
| Class #3 | Begin transcribing JE/AE visits in groups | Same as planned |
| Class #4 | Finish transcribing JE/AE visits | Transcribed JE/AE visits |
| Class #5 | Observe AE/AE visits Compare with JE/AE visits | " |
| Class #6 | Transcribe JJ/JJ visits Compare with JE/AE visits | " |
| Class #7 | Prepare a 10-min. report evaluating JE/AE visit | Observed parts of AE/AE visits with whole class * |
| Class #8 | Report findings to rest of class in groups | Observed more of AE/AE visits and parts of JJ/JJ visits |
| Class #9 | " | Compared the data cross-culturally in groups |
| Class #10 | Perform impromptu role plays Fill out questionnaire | Same as planned |

Note: JE = Japanese speakers of English (ESL students); AE = American speakers of English; JJ = Japanese speakers of Japanese.
 *By the seventh class it was decided that the task of analyzing the data was too difficult for Group B, so from this point they were given a different task to write, rehearse, and perform role plays rather than continuing on with the project.

To rectify this problem with the JJ/JJ visits, the researcher decided to obtain authentic data by having a former classmate videotape students visiting one another in Japan (JJJ/JJJ). Data from three visits were obtained. In two of the JJJ/JJJ visits, as in JJ/JJ visits, the students knew each other, but it was the first time to visit one another in their homes. It was difficult to find volunteers who would visit the home of someone they did not know. In the interviews, they stated that this is simply not done in Japan.

When the JE/AE and JJ/JJ visits were completed, the researcher and instructor set up five transcribing stations for the students to transcribe the video of their JE/AE visit in groups simultaneously in class. As shown in Table 3.1, students took four class hours rather than two to transcribe their videos and, even then, some of the transcripts were incomplete. A handout entitled "Tricks for Easier Transcribing" was given to the students to help them with the mechanics (see Appendix E). The task proved to be a difficult and tedious one for students at this intermediate level of proficiency. Some groups, however, were taking an interest in the procedure, expressing their surprise (and sometimes embarrassment) when they realized that what their host/hostess said was different from what they had thought when they were actually there.

Meanwhile, the researcher transcribed the AE/AE visits and provided transcripts for the students to look at when they observed these interactions. Without these transcripts it is unlikely that the students would have been able to follow the interactions at all because some of the American participants

spoke very quickly, and at times they all spoke at once.

To focus the students' attention on the data, the researcher prepared two handouts with blanks for each of the five visits to be filled in with the language used for various speech acts such as greetings, introductions, and so on (see Appendix F and G). Because of time constraints they were only able to observe, at most, parts of three out of the five videos. On the first day of doing this exercise, the instructor noticed that some of the students had lost their focus and were not entirely sure why they were doing this. Hoping to remind them what the project was all about and what we were trying to do, the researcher made a handout for Group A describing how the project would be brought to its conclusion during the remaining three days (see Appendix H). The students would finish analyzing the AE/AE data, look at a portion of the JJ/JJ data, and then compare the findings cross-culturally. They would also critique the transcripts of their own visits (JE/AE) that had been checked by the researcher, finishing up with some impromptu role plays in class.

Because of time constraints, another handout was made for the students to assist them in analyzing their data (see Appendix I). The students were to take their transcripts (not of the entire visit), which the researcher had checked and typed up for them, and highlight anything they said that they thought they could improve on. Then they were to go back to the transcripts of the AE/AE visits and note the way native speakers of English performed similar speech acts. They were to write underneath the highlighted part on their transcript what they would say if they had a chance to visit an American home again, and they were to

use a coloured arrow to add things they could have said but did not.

In addition, the researcher prepared a table comparing American visits with Japanese visits culturally (see Appendix I once more). The American side of the table was filled out for the students with cultural statements based on what the researcher had observed in the AE/AE visits, and the students were to fill out the Japanese side of the table with similarities or differences.

In the last class, without any preparation time and without any structure or guidelines to follow, the students in Group A were given the task of performing impromptu role plays of visits as a kind of posttest. Finally, the researcher had all the students in both classes fill out a brief questionnaire (Appendix J) to provide background information and feedback about the project.

3.6 Data Analysis by the Researcher

Long after the pedagogical aspects of the project were completed, the researcher continued to analyze the data. In addition to observing the videos of the visits and interviews, the researcher had been able to observe one of the JE/AE visits in person and had these field notes to work with as well. The purpose for doing this observation was to be able to assess how well a video camera can catch certain aspects of the interaction as opposed to observing in person. With the exception of this visit which included an extra phase, for most of the visits the process of observation and analysis was three-fold.

The first observation was for the purpose of making a transcription of the entire interaction. The researcher watched the video, stopping and starting it many times, to observe the order in which people said things. The transcription was completed by listening to the cassette tape. The transcript was typed and then divided into segments based on the speech acts to be focussed on.

For the second observation, the researcher sat down in front of the video with the pages of the transcript in hand to observe kinesics and proxemics only. This was followed by the third and final observation, where the video was played through one more time without stopping to note anything that might have been missed and to time the exchange.

Once all the transcripts were completed, the researcher could begin to analyze the realization of different speech acts comparing and contrasting them with the realization of the same speech acts from other visits in their full discourse context. As stated in the introduction, these results will be reported in Chapter Four. The researcher then assessed the pedagogical implications (reported in Chapter Five) and critiqued the methodology (reported in Chapter Six) based on data collected through retrospective interviews, ESL students' reports, questionnaires, and the researcher's journal and field notes. As will be seen in the results to follow, for the most part, because the visits took place in a more natural setting, rather than a laboratory-type setting, the analysis was descriptive and qualitative rather than quantitative.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, a description was made of the methodology both as planned and as actually implemented. As in many qualitative studies, the design of the present study was an evolving one, and many of the changes in the methodology came about as a result of the particular emphasis on testing out pedagogical implications. Understanding the evolving nature of the methodology is vital for interpreting the results of this study, to which we will now turn.

Chapter 4

Results (Part I)

In this chapter, we will take a qualitative look at how well the Japanese ESL students interacted in their visits to American homes (JE/AE), and we will compare their interactions with the interactions of Americans visiting Americans (AE/AE), Japanese visiting Japanese (JJ/JJ), and Japanese visiting Japanese in Japan (JJJ/JJJ). The focus will be on the first two research questions: (1a) Without specific pragmatic training in language and culture, how well do Japanese ESL students interact in English during a social visit in an American home? How does the production of speech acts (such as greetings and introductions, gift giving, making compliments, accepting the offer of food and beverages, starting a conversation and keeping it going, making an excuse to leave, and expressing gratitude) by Japanese ESL students compare with the illocution of the same speech acts by native speakers of English?; and (1b) How does the interaction of Japanese ESL students with Americans compare cross-culturally with the interaction of native speakers of Japanese during a social visit? Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer from their L1 coming into play in the interlanguage of the Japanese ESL students?

The analysis will be divided into four segments: (1) **the opening segment** where the speech acts which we will mainly focus on are greetings and introductions, giving and receiving gifts, and making compliments (sequentially the latter two are not always in the opening segment); (2) **the hospitality segment** where

offering and accepting of food and beverages will be looked at (sequentially in some of the visits this comes before the giving of the gift and is interspersed with the gift giving or small talk while the food or beverages are being prepared or served); **(3) the small talk segment** where we will observe who initiates conversation topics and how the conversation is kept going; and **(4) the closing segment** where leave-taking signals and expressions of gratitude, and so on, will be analyzed.

In each segment, we will take a look at the JE/AE visits where Japanese ESL students were visiting Americans, and we will compare these at length with the AE/AE visits where American speakers of English were visiting fellow Americans. This will be followed with some observations from the JJ/JJ visits and the JJJ/JJJ visits. For reasons outlined in Chapter 2, the Japanese native speaker data did not permit as detailed an analysis as the JE/AE and AE/AE data.

In general, the AE/AE interactions went much smoother than the JE/AE interactions, and there were fewer pauses. In the retrospective interviews, many of the American participants commented that the visits with their fellow Americans seemed to go much faster than the visits with the Japanese students. This was partly due to the language barrier in the JE/AE visits, but it should be noted that the Americans had more things in common to talk about with their fellow Americans than they did with the Japanese students: most of the American participants were students in regular classes at the university, tenants in the same apartment complex, and from similar cultural backgrounds. In one case the hosts and guests were both young married couples

with one child, and this also provided common ground to make conversation.

The gender breakdown for the JE/AE and AE/AE visits can be seen in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Among the Japanese and American participants, there were only two males in each group, while the rest were female.

Table 4.1

Gender Breakdown for JE/AE Visits

| Visit | Hosts | Guests |
|---------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| JE/AE Visit 1 | 2 females | 1 male, 1 female |
| JE/AE Visit 2 | 2 females (twin sisters) | 2 females |
| JE/AE Visit 3 | 1 male, 1 female, 1 child | 1 male, 1 female |
| JE/AE Visit 4 | 2 females | 3 females |
| JE/AE Visit 5 | 1 male, 1 female, 1 child | 2 females |

Table 4.2

Gender Breakdown for AE/AE Visits

| Visit | Hosts | Guests |
|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| AE/AE Visit 1 | 1 male, 1 female, 1 child | 1 male, 1 female, 1 child |
| AE/AE Visit 2 | 2 females | 2 females |
| AE/AE Visit 3 | 2 females | 2 females |
| AE/AE Visit 4 | 2 females | 2 females (twin sisters) |
| AE/AE Visit 5 | 2 females | 2 females |

4.1 The Opening Segment

4.1.1 Greetings and Introductions

In all of the visits (JE/AE and AE/AE) both hosts go to the door and greetings and introductions are either made standing or after being seated. The typical greeting by hosts in almost all the visits was something to the effect of: "Hi. Come on in. I'm (first name)." A typical response by guests was: "Hi. I'm (first name). Nice to meet you." Greetings were not chosen as a main focus for analysis because, for the most part, the Japanese ESL students did not have a problem with greetings and introductions.

In one JE/AE visit, however, the Japanese ESL students failed to introduce themselves until later on in the interaction:

Excerpt 1 (from JE/AE Visit 2)

Guest 1: Sorry. Introduce myself okay--My name is Keiko.

Host 1: Keiko?

Guest 1: Yes.

Guest 2: I'm Chizuru.

Host 1: Chizuru?

Guest 2: Yes.

The expression "My name is (first name)," used in three instances by Japanese ESL students, was used only once by the American participants and in the contracted form: "My name's (first name)." In almost all the JE/AE visits, hosts either sought confirmation of their guests' names or asked for them to be repeated. Japanese ESL students need to be reminded to pronounce their names slowly and clearly for Americans who are not familiar with Japanese names.

In one of the JE/AE visits, the guests removed their shoes at the door without asking whether they should or not, and the hosts did not try to stop them. Instead, one of the hosts simply made a comment: "It's a little wet out." In one of the AE/AE visits the guests asked their hosts: "Do you want us to take our shoes off?" to which the hosts responded: "Oh, no, don't worry about it." The question was reflective of the fact that some Americans make it a practice to remove their shoes at the door, and some, although not many, also require their guests to do so.

In two out of the five JE/AE visits, the American hosts shook their guests' hands during the introductions. This can be a problem for Japanese as they are known for weak handshakes (Saito, 1988), but the video did not allow for close observation of this feature. Interestingly enough, hand shaking occurs in only two of the five AE/AE visits also.

Proxemics such as how guests were seated, distance between interlocutors, and so on, would have been interesting to compare cross-culturally. However, unfortunately, the video camera dictated the seating arrangement. This is evident in some of the hosts' comments as the guests are seated: "You kind of have to squish together!" or "Have a seat in our 'rearranged' living room!" The Japanese ESL students in all five JE/AE visits sat forward on the edge of the couch or chair throughout most of their visit, which gave the impression that they were either very nervous or very attentive.

In two out of the three JJ/JJ visits and all three JJJ/JJJ visits, the guests used the Japanese expression *ojamashimasu* [Excuse me for disturbing you] upon entering. The expressions

they used to introduce themselves were consistent throughout as well. As shown in Excerpt 2, the Japanese hosts and guests, for the most part, introduced themselves by their last and first name, whereas only first names were used in both the AE/AE and JE/AE visits:

Excerpt 2 (from JJ/JJ Visit 2)

Host 1: *Hajimemashite*. [How do you do?] (*Last name first, then first name*) to *mooshimasu*. [My name is so-and-so.]

Guest 1: *Hajimemashite*. [How do you do?] (*Last name first, then first name*) *desu*. [I am so-and-so.]
Yoroshiku onegaishimasu. [No equivalent in English: literal translation is "I am in your favour."]

In one case a male guest presented his hosts with his *meishi* [business card], a practice more often observed among business people than among students. In each case the introductory sequence was accompanied by bowing. Taking shoes off at the door is a practice observed all over Japan. In the case of the JJJ/JJJ visits, guests were immediately ushered into a small room with *tatami* mats, so slippers were not provided. Guests were seated on the *tatami* mats. In two of the three visits they were provided with *zabuton* [floor cushions] in front of a low table. Most Japanese are accustomed to sitting on the floor during social visits in a person's home, which offers one possible explanation for why the students sat forward on the couch in the JE/AE visits.

4.1.2 Gift Giving and Collaborating in Expressing Gratitude

In all five of the AE/AE visits the gift giving part of the interaction occurred when the guests first came in, whereas in at

least two of the JE/AE visits the hosts offered the guests food and beverages before the guests had a chance to give the hosts their gift. No cultural generalizations can be made because in the guidelines given to guests before the interaction took place, the gift giving part of the interaction was supposed to come before the offer of food and beverages. It is not evident whether the guidelines were being followed or whether they were just doing what came naturally.

In four out of the five JE/AE visits the Japanese ESL students handed their gift to their hosts saying: "This is present." or "This is present for you." From an interview it was discovered that this expression is one Japanese students learn from their English textbooks in high school, so it may be that this was an instance of "transfer of training" (Selinker, 1972). In these same four visits the gift was wrapped in gift wrap or a bag, and the hosts took the initiative to open it after seating their guests and at an appropriate lull in the conversation.

It is interesting to note that in three out of the five AE/AE visits the guests just handed the gift to their hosts as they came in without commenting, while in the remaining two visits they said: "This is for your abode here." or "We brought you a little gift." In four of the AE/AE visits the gift was not wrapped. In the one visit where it was wrapped, the hosts took the initiative to open it a few minutes later after being seated and at a lull in the conversation.

In three of the AE/AE visits the interaction was very short and sweet, as in Excerpt 3:

Excerpt 3 (from AE/AE Visit 5)

Guest: (handing her host flowers)

Host: Oh, those are pretty! Thank you!

Guest: There you go!

The shortness of these interactions could have had something to do with the fact that guests had been told to bring a gift in the guidelines and may not have had their heart behind it. The hosts in the AE/AE visits did not know that the guidelines required their guests to bring a gift, and most of them seem somewhat surprised. One of the hosts expresses this by saying: "Oh, you brought us something?" In some of the JE/AE visits, the hosts who were guests in the AE/AE visits knew to expect a gift, so this may have affected their response. In only one instance does the host respond with the expression often found in gift giving interactions (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986): "Geez, you didn't have to do that!" This particular host did not know that the guidelines for guests required them to bring a gift.

In two AE/AE visits, quite a lengthy interaction ensues when the gift is given, and it is interesting to note how the guests probe to see whether or not their gift has been accepted well and how the hosts also say something to assure their guests that they appreciate the gift, as in Excerpt 4:

Excerpt 4 (from AE/AE Visit 2)

Guest 1: (handing her host a scented candle) This is for your abode here.

Host 1: Oh, thank you. That's nice.

Host 2: Thank you.

Guest 2: Do you like the smell?

Host 1: Peachy?

Host 2: It's fruity.

Host 1: Yeah.

Guest 2: We figured it was a good neutral color.

Host 1: With all the windstorms, too, we may need this in a power outage.

In contrast, in the JE/AE visits, the Japanese guests explain the significance of their gift when asked, but there are no instances where they probe to see if their hosts like the gifts. Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) comment on the function of probes or prompts as the giver and receiver collaborate in the speech act of expressing gratitude:

In analyzing the role-plays, we found that the language expressed by the giver (of the gift, favor, reward, or service) is crucial to enabling the receiver to convey gratitude successfully. The giver prompts and comments throughout the development of the speech act set. Prompts appear to function as linguistic enabling devices, allowing the receiver to reassure the giver of his or her gratitude (p.71).

The Japanese ESL students would have been better prepared if they had been made aware of their collaborative role as the giver in the mutual development of this speech act set of expressing gratitude. However, the hosts do their best to assure their guests that they like the gift by making numerous compliments such as: "Oh, hey that's neat. Oh wow." or "That's pretty. Thank you." or "Ooh, chocolates! It's our favourite!", and so on.

In one of the JJ/JJ visits the following conversation accompanied the giving of the gift:

Excerpt 5 (from JJ/JJ Visit 1)

Guest 1: *Tsumaranai mono desu ga.* [This is a trivial present for you, but...]

Host 1: *Aa, waza waza, doomo sumimasen.* [I am very sorry to put you to so much trouble.]

Guest 1: *Yokattara akete kudasai.* [If you like, why don't you open it?]

Host 1: *Doomo arigatoo gozaimasu.* [Thank you very much.](peeks in bag) *Aa, doomo wazawaza goteinei ni.* [Oh, thank you for taking the trouble to be so polite.]

The expression used by the guest when giving the gift in Excerpt 5 was a typical humble expression. The host was not intending to open the gift until the guest suggested it, and when he did look in the bag he did not give any indication of how well he liked the gift, nor did the guests probe to find this out. In the interview following, the Japanese participants said that in Japan humble expressions were preferred over boastful ones and that opening a wrapped gift in front of the giver of the gift was not usually done.

In two of the JJJ/JJJ visits, the gift was food to share during the visit, and the guests themselves opened the gift and brought out the food. Hosts simply responded by saying, *A, doomo* [Oh, thank you.] or *Warui ne.* [I feel ashamed.] This last expression is an interesting phenomenon in Japanese: when feeling indebted, there is a tendency to say sorry (Excerpt 5) or to express shame instead of gratitude. Only in one case, where the guests had actually baked a cake for the occasion, did the host make a compliment about the gift.

4.1.3 Compliments

Compliments are another feature that should be looked at in the opening segment. Table 4.3 shows the compliments made in the AE/AE visits, not including the numerous compliments made by hosts about gifts. In three out of the five visits guests complimented hosts on their apartment, the cookies, and so on. Most of these compliments occurred early on in the interaction.

Table 4.3

Compliments Made in AE/AE Visits

| AE/AE Visit # | Compliments made by: | Compliment about: | What was said: |
|---------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| AE/AE Visit 1 | Host | -the guest's daughter | "She's a cutie." |
| AE/AE Visit 2 | Guest | -the apartment | "Oh, wow this is cute." |
| | | -the smell of cookies baking | "It smells good in here. Have you guys been baking?" |
| | | -the view | "Oooh, you've got a beautiful view of the sunset there!" |
| | | -the glasses | "Oh, they're cute little cups." |
| AE/AE Visit 3 | Guest | -the cookies | "Oh, mint!" "They're refreshing cookies!" |
| | | | "Oh, how nice." Oh, yum." "Yum." |
| AE/AE Visit 4 | none observed | | |
| AE/AE Visit 5 | Guest | -the apartment | "This is a cute apartment." "You guys' place is cute. I like how you have it fixed up." |

In contrast, there is a noticeable scarcity of compliments by Japanese guests in the JE/AE visits (see Table 4.4). In one

visit, one of the guests quietly complimented the hosts' apartment upon entering saying, "Oh, it's a nice house." The hosts did not seem to hear him say it, or if they did hear him, they did not respond. In another visit a guest complimented the hosts' baby and the cookies. The only other incident of a compliment (not including compliments on the gifts) was the American host complimenting his Japanese guests on their English speaking ability.

Table 4.4

Compliments Made in JE/AE Visits

| JE/AE Visit # | Compliments made by: | Compliments about: | What was said: |
|---------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| JE/AE Visit 1 | Guest | -the apartment | "Oh, it's a nice house." |
| JE/AE Visit 2 | none observed | | |
| JE/AE Visit 3 | Host | -the guests' English ability | "Wow. You can speak good English for being here for only five months and a month." |
| JE/AE Visit 4 | none observed | | |
| JE/AE Visit 5 | Guest | -hosts' baby -the cookies | "She's a good walker." "Delicious." |

Wolfson (1983a) has pointed out that "the overwhelming majority of all compliments are given to people of the same age and status as the speaker" (p.91), the very situation that we had in these visits. They serve as "social lubricants" in English and can co-occur with or even replace other speech acts such as expressing gratitude. As was also evident in the data from the present study, it has been shown that compliments tend to occur

at the openings and closings of speech events and very rarely in the middle of an interaction (Holmes & Brown, 1987).

Compliments have been found to fall into a very small number of syntactic patterns, and the vast majority of them refer to just a few general topics. According to Holmes and Brown (1987), this should make them "attractive ESL teaching material" (p.535). The scarcity of compliments by the Japanese participants in the present study reinforces Holmes and Brown's call for classroom activities that would raise ESL students' awareness of this important speech act.

Few compliments were observed in the JJ/JJ or JJJ/JJJ visits. In JJ/JJ Visit 3, one of the guests complimented the hosts' room as they were leaving. In JJJ/JJJ Visit 3, the guests complimented the host's room in almost an envious sort of way saying: *Ii ne. Zenbu atarashii ne.* [You're lucky. Everything is new, isn't it?] In one other case a guest mentioned what a nice room it was to the other guest, but did not compliment the host. From the sparsity of the JJJ/JJJ data it is difficult to come to any conclusions, but it appears that compliments are not used as frequently in Japanese as in English, which could explain why the Japanese ESL students in the JE/AE visits did not use as many compliments as American guests in the AE/AE visits.

4.2 The Hospitality Segment

Here we will mostly examine how the guests responded to the offer of food and beverages and whether or not they helped themselves to food in front of them.

4.2.1 Responding to the Offer of Beverages

Let's look at Excerpt 6 from one of the AE/AE visits to begin with. As in most of the AE/AE visits, a list of beverages was given to choose from, and the one guest responded: "Um, a coke sounds good," to which the other guest added, "Yeah, thanks."

Excerpt 6 (from AE/AE Visit 5)

Host 1: We have banana bread over here and popcorn's popping, and we have milk and apple juice and water and coke and Dr. A+...Does any of that sound good to you guys?

Guest 1: Um, a coke sounds good.

Host 1: Okay.

Guest 2: Yeah, thanks. (After a little small talk) I'm going to steal a pear--those look really good.

Host 2: Help yourself.

Guest 2: I will!

In another AE/AE visit where a list of beverages was given, there was a similar response: "Ooh, gosh, a Diet Coke sounds good," followed by a question from the other guest, "Yeah, do you have wild cherry?" In still another visit one guest responded: "How about some juice?" and the other guest added, "Juice is fine." In the remaining two visits, when asked if they would like something to drink, one of the guests declined, and for some reason the offer was not repeated to the guest who did not answer one way or the other. There was no attempt to persuade the guests to have something to drink, and the guests just had cookies when they were offered. It is also interesting to note that, in four out of the five AE/AE visits, water is one of the choices of beverages given.

In all five JE/AE visits, the hospitality segment began with some sort of opener to the effect of: "Do you guys want anything to drink or something to eat?" To this opener, where American guests tended to respond with "sure," three out of the five pairs of Japanese guests responded simultaneously with "yes." Another one of the pairs was not given time to answer because the hosts went on to list what they had, and the remaining pair of guests answered simply, "No." This response surprised the hosts who tried to persuade them, as shown in Excerpt 7:

Excerpt 7 (from JE/AE Visit 3)

Host 1: No?

Host 2: We have hot tea, if you'd like some.

Guests: (no response)

Host 2: Would you like any hot tea?

Host 1: Tea or coke or anything like that?

Guest 1: (after hesitating) I like tea.

Guest 2: Me, too.

As we can see in Excerpt 7, in contrast to the AE/AE visits, some of the Japanese ESL students seemed to be quite hesitant in responding to their American hosts' offer of beverages. Whereas, as we saw in Excerpt 6, American guests responded to the list of possible choices of beverage with something like "Ooh, gosh a Diet Coke sounds good," the Japanese ESL students' responses were either short one-word responses such as, "Oh, juice," or "Juice," or responses such as the one above, "I like tea" or "I want tea, okay?" In the last example, tea was not even on the list given by the host, but iced tea was and that was what she was served. The other guest also chose something that was not on the list of

beverages offered, as can be seen in Excerpt 8:

Excerpt 8 (from JE/AE Visit 2)

Host 1: We have iced tea, apple juice, water, milk, pop--
like Diet Coke, Sprite--almost anything.

(no immediate response by guests)

Host 2: What would you like to drink?

Guest 1: I want tea, okay?

Host 2: What would you like?

Guest 2: Orange juice.

Host 2: I have apple juice.

Guest 2: Apple juice.

In the JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits, no list of beverages to choose from was given. This could explain the hesitation of the Japanese ESL students. Hosts decided what to serve. In the JJJ/JJJ visits, which took place in the warm month of May, the hosts served cold oolong tea. Hosts usually said, *Doozo* [Please.] as they served it, and guests usually just bowed and sometimes added: *Doomo. Dooomo.* [Thank you. Thank you.] or, as in the gift giving sequence, *Gomen, wazawaza.* [I'm sorry to trouble you.]

4.2.2 Helping Oneself to Food

In three out of the five AE/AE visits the plate of cookies or other food was placed on a table and the guests helped themselves, while in the other two visits the guests waited until they were offered the food before taking it. As we saw in Excerpt 6, the guest often said something as she helped herself: "I'm going to steal a pear. Those look really good" or, in

another visit, "Ooh, I'm going to have to try these." In the third visit as the guest helped herself to a cookie on the table in front of her, the host quickly responded: "Oh, yeah, have one, have many. Otherwise they're just gonna sit here."

The latter expression was another interesting feature in the American hosts' choice of words. In two of the JE/AE visits the hosts joked when offering more cookies: "Would you like any more?We gotta get rid of them. We've got a whole batch of them!" or "We don't want them. You guys have to finish them!" It would be interesting to find out how such expressions would sound if translated literally into Japanese.

In the JE/AE visits, none of the Japanese ESL students helped themselves to food unless it was offered. In one visit the American host said: "There's [sic] cookies on the table, and we have a lot so you can eat all you want." The host never got up to serve the cookies, and the guests never took one, so the cookies sat on the table untouched through the entire visit. In another visit the cookies were served to one of the guests and then set on the table in front of the other two guests. There the plate of cookies sat until later in the conversation when the host said: "Well, help yourself to cookies." Even then, the Japanese guests hesitated until the conversation topic changed, and then they finally reached out to take one. Some of the guests held the cookies in their hands for some time before they ventured to take a bite. This could have been because their hosts were not partaking or because the guests were nervous about having to answer a question with their mouth full.

In all the JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits, the food was placed on

a table or on the tatami mats in front of the guests, but the guests waited until they were offered the food and did not help themselves. In two of the visits the hosts had to offer the food twice before the guests finally reached out to take something. It appears that the Japanese have a tendency to be reserved when it comes to helping themselves to food, at least in front of people whom they do not know very well.

4.2.3 Summary

To sum up, this speech event of offering food and beverages in informal American English seems to include some or all of the following utterances:

| | |
|---|---|
| an opening | ("Would you like something to eat or drink?"), |
| a response | ("Sure."), |
| a list of beverages | ("We have tea, coffee, juice, Coke, water..."), |
| a choice | ("Oh, a Coke sounds good."), |
| an offer of food by the hosts | ("Help yourself to cookies."), |
| a comment by the guests as they help themselves | ("Ooh, I'm going to have to try these."), |
| and an offer of more food | ("Would you like any more? ...We gotta get rid of them.") |

To date, there have not been any previous speech act studies done on the offering of food or beverages, but it is an important part of the interaction. As one of the American hosts expressed in the retrospective interview: "getting people something to eat and drink breaks the barrier and makes them feel more comfortable... so I like to get drinks and cookies." This is probably true in most other cultures including Japanese culture,

but, as we have seen, it is a speech event that is not always performed in the same way across cultures. The data here showed that responding appropriately to the offer of food and beverages in the social setting of visiting an American home does not come naturally for Japanese ESL students who are used to different customs.

4.3 The Small Talk Segment

Initiating conversation topics and keeping a conversation going are other areas that have yet to be studied extensively in interlanguage pragmatics research. It is debatable whether they are speech acts at all--perhaps they can be thought of more as discourse strategies or gambits (House, 1996). However, as House has pointed out, the ability to initiate topics and topic changes, and to reply and respond appropriately are important features of pragmatic fluency. Indeed, failure in this area of small talk could limit ESL students' future opportunities to interact with native speakers and thus hinder the development of their overall pragmatic competence.

The data from the JE/AE visits revealed a number of conversational skills in which the Japanese ESL students needed training and practice. These skills had to do with: (1) responding to topics initiated by their host; (2) asking questions to develop or initiate topics; (3) making appropriate verbal responses (rather than just nodding); and (4) negotiating for meaning when they do not understand.

4.3.1 Responding to Topics Initiated by Host

In JE/AE Visit 1, the first topic of conversation progressed in a manner typical of conversations with Japanese ESL students who have not had a lot of experience in conversing with Americans. In other words, the Americans tended to ask all the questions and the Japanese answered with short, one-word answers, as in Excerpt 9:

Excerpt 9 (from JE/AE Visit 1)

Host 1: So you're students?

Guest 1: Yes.

Host 1: You're studying English at the university?

Guest 1: Yeah.

Host 1: Ah, okay. So you spend a lot of time in classes?

Guest 1: Oh--

Guest 2: In a week, four or five classes.

Guest 1: Five class in a day.

Host 2: That's a pretty full day. I don't think I have any days when I have five in one day.

Host 1: It's usually three or four--

Guest 1: Four?

Host 1: --for us. But, some of them are two hours long-- some of the classes, so it kind of makes up for those other classes, huh.

Following this last explanation by the host about their classes, the guests make no response, and there is a brief pause before the hosts change the topic by asking another question.

As House (1996) has observed: "learners' monosyllabic and nonsequitur responses constitute a major barrier to pragmatic fluency...."(p. 244). To put it simply, insufficient or

Table 4.5

Topic Change Initiation in JE/AE Visit 1

| Topic change: | Initiator: |
|--|------------|
| So you're students? | Host 1 |
| So is this your first term here? | Host 2 |
| How do you like Bellingham? | Host 1 |
| Are you freshman? | Guest 1 |
| So what section of Japan do you come from? | Host 1 |
| Are you planning on going back to Tokyo after you leave Bellingham? | Host 2 |
| So you have family back home? | Host 1 |
| And how old are you? | Host 1 |
| So have you done anything fun here in Bellingham yet? | Host 1 |
| Have you seen any movies or have you gone outside of Bellingham to visit any places? | Host 1 |
| So you'll go back to Tokyo...this coming summer? ...Then what are you doing? | Host 1 |
| So what are you studying? | Host 2 |
| I heard that teachers are well-respected in Japan. How do you feel about teachers over in Japan? | Host 1 |
| We have a couple friends that were over in Japan teaching English for a while. | Host 1 |
| So are you sophomores or freshman or? | Host 2 |
| So where are you staying here in Bellingham? | Host 1 |
| Do you have a roommate? | Host 1 |
| How's the food? | Host 1 |
| So have you been eating a lot of American food? | Host 1 |
| There aren't a lot of desserts in Japan. Is that right? You don't eat a lot of sweet stuff? | Host 1 |
| So are you going to do anything for Halloween? Do you know what Halloween's all about? | Host 1 |
| So what's the biggest holiday in Japan? | Host 1 |
| So what do you do for New Year's usually? | Host 1 |

inappropriate responses can be conversation stoppers. The result of this phenomenon was that there were many pauses which seemed especially uncomfortable for the American hosts who were often observed glancing at each other. Nevertheless, the hosts did their best to think up new topics when there was a pause in the conversation. Table 4.5 shows how one host in JE/AE Visit 1 initiated nearly eighty percent of the topic changes throughout the interaction while only one of the topic changes was made by a guest. The frequent topic changes by the host seemed to be caused by the limited responses of their guests and the hosts' uneasiness with pauses no matter how short.

4.3.2 Asking Questions to Develop or Initiate Topics

Excerpt 10 from AE/AE Visit 1 shows the conversation progressing in a very different manner from the one-way conversations (see Excerpt 9) typical of the JE/AE visits:

Excerpt 10 (from AE/AE Visit 1)

Guest 1: (sees a textbook on the desk) Who's the physics major?

Host 1: That would be me.

Guest 1: Are you really?

Host 1: Yeah.

Guest 1: Wow!...

Host 1: Yes, it's a little tough at times.

Guest 1: I love physics. It's better than other science courses.

Host 1: Yeah. It's kind of the same way with me. The other ones kind of, I don't know, I get bored with them sometimes. Physics is really exciting stuff.

Guest 1: It's gotta be a tough major.

Host 1: Yeah, it actually--I'm in my third year right now, so it's--third year physics classes aren't fun. They're not like first year physics classes...

In their cross-cultural study of greetings in American English, Eisenstein Ebsworth, Bodman, and Carpenter (1996) identified *the introductory greeting* which includes the ensuing interaction of people meeting for the first time. They note that the primary function of such interactions is "to allow the parties to find a connection...or a topic of mutual interest" (p. 95). In Excerpt 10 above, the interlocutors were both participating in the development of a topic of mutual interest which continued over a number of turns even beyond what is recorded here. From there, the group naturally moved on to inquiring about the majors of the others present before going on to a different, but related topic. Japanese ESL students would benefit from receiving training and practice not only in giving more substantial answers that can be built upon, but also in reciprocating the question as demonstrated in Excerpt 11:

Excerpt 11 (from AE/AE Visit 5)

Host 1: What are your majors?

Guest 1: Marine biology.

Guest 2: Right now I'm in English, and I hope to get into the secondary ed (education) program.

Host 1: Oh, yeah.

Guest 2: Big thin hope!

Host 1: Yeah, I think she (referring to Host 2 in the kitchen) tried and couldn't get in.

Guest 2: Really? What about you? What's your major?....

In the AE/AE visits, as Excerpt 11 shows, the conversation

tended to go back and forth with hosts and guests asking questions of each other or expanding on what they had heard. In two out of the five JE/AE visits, the Japanese ESL students managed to ask some questions of their hosts, but their questions were often unrelated to what had just been said. At times, they missed seemingly ideal opportunities to keep the conversation going by asking questions, such as when one host explained that they had just moved to the area or when another host told her guests that she had been to Japan. The expected response to the former might have been, "Oh, really? Where did you live before?" or something to that effect, but nothing was said. The students themselves corrected their own transcript in the latter example:

Excerpt 12 (from JE/AE Visit 4)

Host 1: I was in Tokyo when I was, um, I think it was '85.
About ten years ago I was in Tokyo.

Guest 1: Oh.

Host 1: (after pause) And is that where you guys are from?
What part of Japan?

To their transcript, where the guest had only responded with an "oh," the students added "+ How was Tokyo?"

4.3.3 Making Verbal Responses

In observing the responses of the Japanese ESL students, it was evident that they used monosyllabic responses such as "yeah" and "oh" (see Excerpt 12) at times, but for the most part they did a considerable amount of nodding rather than using words to show that they were listening.

In contrast, American hosts and guests tended to use repetition of what the person had just said or expressions such

as: "Oh, okay," "Mm-hmm," "Uh-huh," "Oh, really?" or "Oh, that's nice," and so on. There are equivalent expressions to these in Japanese, so the Japanese ESL students' frequent silent nodding could simply have been reflective of the fact that they just did not know what to say in English or that maybe they were not really understanding what was said. Nevertheless, in the JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits, many of the Japanese were observed nodding silently or making sounds such as "ah" or "oh," and so on, in addition to using expressions such as: *Aa, soo desu ne*. [Yeah, that's right.]

4.3.4 Negotiating for Meaning

It is questionable how much the Japanese ESL students actually comprehended of what their American hosts said. They seemed to respond to direct questions fairly well, but often did not respond much when their hosts explained some things at length. In the JE/AE visits, there were few instances where a Japanese ESL student was observed negotiating for meaning. In one instance, the student simply said to his host, "Please speak more slowly." This failure on the part of the Japanese ESL students to negotiate for meaning sometimes resulted in misunderstanding questions and answering them inaccurately, as in Excerpt 13:

Excerpt 13 (from JE/AE Visit 3)

Host 1: How long have you been in America?

Guest 1: About five months.

Host 1: About five months? Both of you?

Guest 2: I came here a month ago.

Host 1: A month ago? Wow! You can speak good English for being here for only five months and a month (referring to Guest 2).

Guest 2: Thank you.

In fact, both Japanese guests in Excerpt 13 had arrived one month before and were going to be staying for five months. The first guest obviously misunderstood the question "How long have you been in America?" to mean "How long will you be in America?" The other guest tried to clear up the misunderstanding, but he made the mistake of saying, "I came here a month ago" instead of "We came here a month ago," so the host was still not set straight. Like many other NNSs in similar situations, the Japanese ESL students' tendency to assume they understand or to pretend they understand can sometimes cause problems in communicating.

It is difficult to compare the small talk segment in the AE/AE and JE/AE visits with the JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits. As noted in Chapter 3, the problem with the three JJ/JJ visits was that the participants were pretending not to know each other, so the conversation seemed somewhat forced. In one of the JJJ/JJJ visits, where the participants did not know each other, the male host seemed to dominate the initiating of conversation topics just as in the JE/AE visits. However, the two male guests were *kohais* [juniors] of the host who was their *senpai* [senior], and this may have been the reason for their shyness.

The researcher has observed that Japanese people sometimes have difficulty making conversation with people whom they have just met for the first time. In an interview, one of the Japanese ESL students said it is more a matter of personality--that some Japanese are quite shy and find it difficult to make

conversation, while others are more outgoing. In a JJ/JJ interview the participants all agreed that, in general, Americans are better at making conversation and enjoying it than Japanese are. They said that Japanese people sometimes avoid having to make constant conversation with guests by leaving the baseball game on T.V. during the visit. What they probably did not realize was that some Americans do this as well.

4.3.5 Summary

The data from the small talk segment of the interactions show that Japanese ESL students could benefit from training and practice in at least four conversational skills:

1. responding to initiated topics with more than a one-word answer;
2. asking questions to develop or initiate conversation topics;
3. making appropriate verbal responses rather than just nodding; and
4. negotiating for meaning when an utterance is not clear.

Eisenstein Ebsworth, Bodman, and Carpenter (1996) found that some of the interactions of NNSs from a variety of L1 backgrounds were judged by native speakers of English to be more like interrogations and to be full of abrupt topic changes. It seems the NNSs were asking questions to initiate conversation, but were failing to make comments or expansions on the other speaker's utterances before going on to the next topic. The researchers make the observation that, unfortunately, little information is

available in ESL textbooks to show how a conversation is mutually developed by native speakers. The native speaker data from the present study could form the basis for improving such textbook materials.

4.4 The Closing Segment

In their discourse analysis of closings, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (forthcoming) discovered that even advanced ESL students often seem to have difficulty closing a conversation appropriately. They maintained that, because closings are culture-specific, knowing how to close a conversation in a person's L1 does not ensure success in their L2. Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, and Reynolds (1991) claimed that closings in English consist of a minimum of three essential components: the shut down, the preclosing, and the terminal exchange. They gave a number of examples of closings with these components, but they did not describe the context in which each one took place.

In the context of visiting a person's home for the first time, the closing segment seemed to include the following five components:

1. leave-taking signal by guest
and response by host
2. preclosing routines
and responses
3. mutual expressions of gratitude
4. indefinite suggestions to meet again (optional)
5. farewells

Only two of the five AE/AE closings included indefinite suggestions to meet again, but all five visits contained the

remaining four components in some form or another, but not necessarily in the order presented here.

In all five AE/AE visits at least one conversation topic was brought up after the leave-taking signal by the guest: in one visit it was regarding the guest's work, in two of the visits it was regarding where the guests lived in the apartment complex, and in the remaining two visits it was regarding meeting neighbours. It is interesting to see that in two of the JE/AE visits the Japanese guests' names are reviewed, but, other than that, no additional conversation topics are brought up in the closing segment. Perhaps the hosts, who had spent much of the time initiating new conversation topics, were unwilling to prolong the visit or simply could not generate any more topics on their guests' way out.

4.4.1 Leave-taking Signals and Responses

The leave-taking signals made by guests in the AE/AE visits varied slightly in word choice, but, with the exception of one visit, were quite similar in form and meaning. Table 4.6 shows the signals made by the American guests contrasted with those made by the Japanese ESL students in the JE/AE visits.

The word "well," which is used in three of the AE/AE visits shown in Table 4.6, seems to be an important one in leave-taking signals. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, and Reynolds (1991) noted that their students' use of "well" to shut down conversations was evidence of their growing pragmatic awareness of English closings.

Table 4.6

Leave-taking Signals in AE/AE and JE/AE Visits

| AE/AE Visit # | Leave-taking signal | JE/AE Visit # | Leave-taking signal |
|------------------|---|------------------|--|
| 1 | "We should probably get going." | 1 | "Yeah, so we have a lot of homework, so--" |
| 2 | "Well, we better get going, I guess." | 2 | "We have to go." |
| 3 | "Well, gosh, this was nice that you guys invited us." | 3 | "Time!...I have to go back." |
| 4 | "We should probably go." | 4 | "I have to go." |
| 5 | "Well, we better go." | 5 | "I have to go back." |

In the JE/AE visits, the Japanese ESL students' leave-taking signals would have seemed less abrupt had they known how to use this important word "well." Their use of "I" instead of "we" is also an interesting phenomenon. In Japanese, pronouns as the subject of the sentence are usually dropped altogether, so maybe they were not sure whether to use "I" or "we." It is possible that "I have to go" is a routine they had learned in English. "I have to go back," however, sounds like a shortened version of the Japanese expression *Ja, sorosoro kaeranakute wa narimasen*. [Well, (I/we) have to go home soon.] and could be evidence of transfer from their L1.

In JE/AE Visit 1 and 3, the hosts gave quite blatant hints to their guests saying: "Well, have you got studying to do tonight?" or, seeing them look at their watches, "You guys have to get going?" In another context this might have sounded rude,

but the hosts may have sensed that their guests, who were supposed to take the initiative to leave according to the guidelines, needed some assistance.

In three out of the five JE/AE visits and three out of the five AE/AE visits, the American hosts responded to the leave-taking signal with a simple, "Okay." As will be seen in Chapter 5, this response was not what the students might have expected had they relied on the responses provided in their textbook.

In all but one of the six JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits, the Japanese expression *sorosoro* [soon] was used in some form or another as a leave-taking signal. In three cases, this was prefaced with *de wa* or *ja* which are the equivalents to "well" in English. In two of the cases the expression was addressed to the other guest rather than the host. In four of the visits, they added an excuse for leaving, saying it was late, or they were expecting a delivery at home, or, more vaguely, that they had something to do.

4.4.2 Preclosing Routines and Responses

It is interesting to note that, in all five AE/AE visits and all five JE/AE visits, the American hosts used the expression "Well, it was nice to meet you" or "It was good meeting you guys," or something similar. This seems to be almost a required routine to use in English when you are about to part with someone you have met for the first time.

In all five AE/AE visits, the guests responded with something to the effect of: "It was nice to meet you, too" or "It was good meeting you, too." In three out of the five JE/AE

visits, the Japanese ESL students managed to come up with similar responses. However, in two of the visits this response was lacking, even though the students had supposedly studied this in the previous chapter in their textbooks. When the students in these two groups analyzed their transcripts later, however, they saw their error of omission and added these expressions to the transcript.

There was no equivalent expression to "It was nice to meet you" apparent in the JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits. However, there was one Japanese expression that was used in five out of the six visits and seems to be almost a required routine for guests. That expression was *Ojamashimashita*. [Sorry to have disturbed you.] which is the past tense of a similar expression observed in the greetings section (4.1.1) of the opening segment.

4.4.3 Mutual Expressions of Gratitude

Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) found that the speech act of expressing gratitude, which ranges from a simple utterance to a lengthy communicative event, can be very difficult for even advanced second language learners to perform successfully:

Most native speakers of English on a conscious level associate the expression of gratitude with the words "thank you"; however, they are unaware of the underlying complex rules and the mutuality needed for expressing gratitude in a manner satisfying to both the giver and recipient.

Similarly, second and foreign language learners are unaware of the underlying rules for expressing gratitude in English; in fact, they usually assume that the expression of

gratitude is universal and remain unaware of significant differences in its cross-cultural realization. (p.64)

The data from the present study confirm Eisenstein and Bodman's findings: in all five of the JE/AE visits, the Japanese ESL students seemed to have considerable difficulty in expressing their gratitude beyond simple utterances such as, "Thank you" or "Thank you very much." Excerpt 14 reveals the difficulty they were having:

Excerpt 14 (from JE/AE Visit 3)

Host 1: Thank you for coming over. And thank you for the gifts.

Host 2: Thank you for the gifts.

Guest 1: Thank you very much.

Host 2: And come back!

Host 1: Yes.

Guest 1: Oh, thank you very much.

Host 2: Jackets.

Guest 1: Thank you very much today.

As revealed in Excerpt 14, the Japanese ESL students seemed to be unaware that expressions of gratitude in English which imply some sort of indebtedness usually require that the recipient be somewhat specific. In other words, the recipient usually says "Thank you for the gift (or some other specific thing)." The first guest's final expression of gratitude "Thank you very much today" may look like an attempt to be a little more specific, but is more likely an incidence of L1 transfer from the expression in Japanese: *Kyoo wa, doomo arigatoo gozaimashita* [As for today, thank you very much]. It is interesting to note that the other

guest who was quite shy let the first guest do all the thanking and did not say much of anything.

Excerpt 15 from AE/AE Visit 1 shows the expressions of gratitude played out in a much more elaborate manner between native speakers of English:

Excerpt 15 (from AE/AE Visit 1)

Host 1: Thank you very much for the gift. That was very sweet of you.

Guest 1: Oh, you're welcome.

Guest 2: Sure. Thank you for the cookies.

Host 2: (referring to the gift again) Yeah, that was nice.

Host 1: Yeah, we'll put it up....

Guest 2: Thanks for having us over.

Host 1: No problem.

Host 2: Thanks. No problem....

Host 1: (as guests are leaving) Thanks for coming over.

Guest 2: Thanks for having us over.

In most of the AE/AE visits, the NSs of English seemed to make some response to the expression of gratitude. Sometimes it was the standard "you're welcome" or "no problem," while at other times it was a return expression of gratitude. For example, in Excerpt 15, where the host expressed gratitude for the gift, one of the guests returned that with "Sure, thank you for the cookies." Similarly, when the host said "Thanks for coming over," the guest came back with "Thanks for having us over." No responses to expressions of gratitude were observed in the JE/AE data.

It should also be noted that, in Excerpt 15, the host seemed

to be taking the initiative to express gratitude, but in the other four AE/AE visits the guests seemed to take the initiative. Thus, we have in Excerpt 16 similar expressions to those in Excerpt 15 but in the reverse order:

Excerpt 16 (from AE/AE Visit 4)

Guest 1: Thanks for having us over.

Host 1: Thanks a lot for coming over.

In contrast to this, only one guest in the JE/AE visits takes the initiative to express thanks. In the other four visits the Japanese guests say thank you only after the host has taken the initiative to thank them for coming or for the gift (as is evident in Excerpt 14).

It is interesting to note that few specific expressions of gratitude (such as the English expression "Thank you for the gift") were observed in the JJ/JJ or JJJ/JJJ visits. In two of the JJ/JJ visits hosts said: *Waza waza doomo arigatoo gozaimashita*. [Thank you for (coming) all this way.] or something similar. However, none of the hosts thanked their guests for the gift. Rather than thanking their hosts specifically for the food provided as in the AE/AE visits, in three out of the six JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits, guests used the routine, *Gochisoosama deshita*, which is an expression thanking the host for their hospitality in general. It appears that the Japanese language has a number of routines for expressing gratitude that do not require the recipient of a gift or services to be specific. This suggests that the tendency on the part of the Japanese ESL students not to be specific when expressing gratitude in English could be evidence of transfer from their L1.

4.4.4 Indefinite Suggestions to Meet Again

Indefinite suggestions to meet again were offered in two AE/AE visits (one by a host and one by a guest) and in three JE/AE visits (one by a host and two by guests). Excerpt 17 gives the flavour of the NS exchanges:

Excerpt 17 (from AE/AE Visit 1)

Host 1: We'll get in touch and maybe we'll go climbing or something.

Host 2: Yeah, if we ever get another sunny day around here...and Ransom...is feeling good.

Guest 1: Give us a call when he's feeling better.

In the other AE/AE example, a similar suggestion was made by a guest: "We'll have to get together and watch a movie or something."

The Japanese ESL students' suggestions to meet again were similar in that they were left indefinite, but they were markedly different from NSs' suggestions in the way they were expressed: "If you have time, I want to meet again, meet you again" and "If you are okay, we want to meet you next time, okay?"

Five out of the six JJ/JJ and JJJ/JJJ visits included indefinite suggestions to meet again. Three of the suggestions contained the expression *kondo* [next time] and two of the suggestions contained the expression *mata* [again] which seem to have influenced the Japanese ESL students' suggestions in their L2, as noted above.

4.4.5 Farewells

The "farewells" (also called "the terminal exchange" by Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, & Reynolds, 1991) refer

to the expressions that actually terminate the interaction, such as in Excerpt 18:

Excerpt 18 (from JE/AE Visit 4)

Host 1: Okay, well, we'll see you later.

Host 2: Hope you can find your way back...

Host 1: Okay, bye.

Host 2: Okay, have a good evening. Stay warm! Okay, good night.

Guests: Goodnight. Bye.

This final part of this closing segment is usually signalled by an expression such as "okay, well" or "alright, well" (part of the "preclosing" in Bardovi-Harlig et al.'s terms) as in Excerpt 19:

Excerpt 19 (from AE/AE Visit 1)

Host 1: Alrighty, well, we'll see you guys later.

Guest 1: Nice meeting you.

Host 2: Thanks for coming over.

Guest 1: Thanks for having us. Bye.

Guest 2: Bye.

Host 1: See ya.

Guest 1: See ya later.

As shown in Excerpt 19, routines such as "nice meeting you" and expressions of gratitude were often repeated as the guests were walking out the door. In three out of the five AE/AE visits, humorous comments were made, and there was considerable laughter observed as the farewells were exchanged. This phenomenon was not observed in the JE/AE visits.

Transcribing this section was difficult because the angle of

the video camera did not always make it easy to tell which participant was speaking when the guests were at the door. From what was transcribed, the hosts did most of the talking, and the Japanese ESL students did not say much more than "bye" in most of the JE/AE visits, as was evident in Excerpt 18.

Excerpt 20 gives an example of a Japanese native speaker farewell exchange:

Excerpt 20 (from JJ/JJ Visit 1)

Host 1: *Ki wo tsukete.* [Be careful.]

Guest 1: *Shitsurei shimasu.* [Goodbye.]

Guest 2: *Ojamashimashita.* [Sorry to have disturbed you.]

Host 2: *Ja mata kondo.* [Well, (see you) again next time.]

Japanese seems to have a number of routines for farewell exchanges that are used almost automatically. In only one of the six visits was another topic of conversation brought up as the guests were leaving. In one of the JJJ/JJJ visits, virtually no farewell exchanges were evident other than the host's *Sore de wa, nochi hodo* [Well, see you soon.]

4.4.6 Summary

To the observer's eye, some of the farewells, such as the one just mentioned, seemed somewhat hurried. These brief farewell exchanges may have been influenced by the fact that both hosts and guests knew that interviews would follow and that this was not a real goodbye. This was a flaw in the design of the study that detracted from the naturalness of the situation and could be rectified if this study were to be replicated.

Nevertheless, despite the one drawback mentioned above, the

analysis of the closing segment of the interactions has provided a rich source of data on how native speakers of English close an interaction in the context of visiting someone's home for the first time and in what areas Japanese ESL students would benefit from some training and practice. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) found few current ESL textbooks that consistently gave examples of complete closings, and learners cannot always rely on their pragmatic knowledge of closings in their first language and culture. The data from the present study could be used to augment such ESL materials on this very involved speech event of closing a conversation.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the major results pertaining to the first two research questions. Comparing the interactions cross-culturally has revealed a number of similarities and differences in the way Americans and Japanese interact when visiting someone's home for the first time. Examining each speech act in the various segments of the interaction revealed a number of areas in which the Japanese ESL students could benefit from further training and practice. We now turn to the results of the second two research questions which focus on the pedagogical aspects of the project.

Chapter 5

Results (Part II)

The research questions to be addressed here are related to the pedagogical aspects of the project: (2a) How well do Japanese ESL students learn cross-cultural pragmatics by doing their own ethnographic research? What are the problematics and possibilities of such an approach?; and (2b) How might specific pragmatic training in the classroom have enhanced the learning process of Japanese ESL students? How effective would the textbook have been in preparing them for their visit?

Three sets of data were examined in order to assess the pedagogical findings of the project: the final reports handed in by the students which included the students' edited transcripts of their visits and tables showing cross-cultural similarities and differences; the pretest and posttest role plays performed in class; and the questionnaires filled out by the students at the end of the project.

5.1 The Project Assessed Pedagogically: Final Reports

First, the final reports (see Appendix I) submitted by Class A were examined. The students did not make as many changes on their transcripts as expected, which could be a reflection of the lack of time or motivation to work on it or uncertainty as to what was expected of them. However, the changes that they did make showed that most of the students had learned something about the pragmatics of social visits. Some notable changes made were:

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Chapter 5

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5.1 The Project Assessed Pedagogically: Final Reports

First, the final reports (see Appendix I) submitted by Class A were examined. The students did not make as many changes on their transcripts as expected, which could be a reflection of the lack of time or motivation to work on it or uncertainty as to what was expected of them. However, the changes that they did make showed that most of the students had learned something about the pragmatics of social visits. Some notable changes made were:

1. In the hospitality segment, some students changed "I want

tea, okay?" to the more native-like "Tea sounds good."

2. In the small talk segment, they added more information to their one-word answers and thought of questions to ask their host:

e.g. Host: Do you like (name of college)?

Guest: Yes.

To their one-word response the students added: "I think (name of college) is a good place. How about you?"

3. In the closing segment, they changed their excuses to leave from "I have to go back" to "We should probably get going" or "Well, we better go."

4. Rather than simply saying "thank you" and "bye" at the end, some of the students added expressions like "Thanks for having us," "Thanks for the cookies," and "It was good meeting you."

One out of the five groups did not appear to understand the process expected of them and made grammatical changes or cleared up misunderstandings such as answering negative questions incorrectly, and so on, rather than rephrasing or adding speech acts.

All the groups filled out the table comparing the two cultures (see Appendix I) and seemed to be quite aware of the similarities and differences between the way Americans interact with each other during social visits and the way Japanese

Table 5.1

Results of the Students' Cross-cultural Comparison

| American Visits | Japanese Visits Same or different -- how? |
|--|--|
| 1. Guests sometimes take their shoes off (esp. when it rains), but usually not. | Different -- in Japan guests always take their shoes off when they enter. |
| 2. Both hosts usually go to answer the door and welcome guests. | Same -- all 5 groups, but one group added that sometimes only one host does |
| 3. Hosts usually open gifts in front of guests and say how much they like the gift. | Different -- all 5 groups said that hosts do not open gifts in front of guests |
| 4. In interviews, guests said they don't usually bring a gift for such a short visit. | Different -- 3 groups said in Japan they would bring a gift Same -- 2 groups |
| 5. Hosts usually give guests a choice of what to drink and guests say what they'd like. | Different -- all 5 groups said in Japan hosts decide what to offer--usually green tea |
| 6. Hosts sometimes just put the food on the table and let the guests help themselves. | Same -- 3 groups Different -- 2 groups said hosts offer the food to guests |
| 7. Hosts and guests often make lots of compliments to each other. | Different -- 2 groups Same -- 2 groups Blank -- 1 group |
| 8. Hosts and guests both start the conversation by asking each other questions. Everyone participates. | Same -- 4 groups Blank -- 1 group |
| 9. The conversation is kept going by making responses and asking more questions about the same topic etc. | Same -- 3 groups Different -- 1 group said "conversation not kept going" Blank -- 1 group |
| 10. Guests use various expressions to say they should go. | Different -- 3 groups said a few set expressions are used Same -- 2 groups |
| 11. Hosts and guests both thank each other specifically for coming, for the gift etc. | Same -- all 5 groups, but they might not have understood the word "specifically" |
| 12. Hosts and guests use casual expressions ("you guys") and joke a lot even if they met for the first time. | Different -- all 5 groups said Japanese don't use casual expressions and jokes when meeting for the first time |

interact. For five of the items in the table, all five groups' answers were identical, but for the remaining items there was some disagreement across groups.

Table 5.1 shows the results of this particular exercise. The answer to the first item was already given to the students as an example. One concern with this exercise was that it is not certain whether the students were basing their answers on the data they had been working with or their own intuition. Another concern is that the table tends to stereotype, and if there had been more time it would have been beneficial to discuss individual preferences according to situation, status, family background, and so on. Despite these limitations, the table was a helpful exercise for focussing students' attention on cross-cultural similarities and differences. None of the groups added their own observations in the two blanks provided at the bottom of the original table. It is not known how many of the 12 items of comparison the students would have come up with on their own if they had not been provided.

5.2 The Project Assessed Pedagogically: Role Plays

The pretest and posttest role plays were not very helpful as data because students switched roles making it hard to compare. In addition, some of the students did not take the role plays very seriously and were obviously hamming it up for the enjoyment of their peers. This confirms Aston's (1995) suspicion that role plays are not necessarily reflective of natural speech:

"...the relevant concerns may be the putting on of a performance which is entertaining for actors and observers alike, giving rise

to the overacting, laughter, and distancing from role which typify much role-played interaction" (p.64). However, in the posttest role plays, some of the students were observed using new expressions they had learned such as: "Tea sounds good" or "Thanks for having us," and so on, demonstrating that they had learned something through participating in this project.

5.3 The Project Assessed Pedagogically: Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see Appendix J) tended to elicit vague answers to the question: "What did you learn or gain from participating in this project?" Most of the students answered something to the effect of "difference between American and Japanese culture or visiting" and did not elaborate. What they said they found difficult about the project was, almost without exception, communicating during their social visit. Finally, suggestions for future research projects included: not repeating similar class activities over and over again (this was probably a reference to the tedious task of transcribing), scheduling visits earlier, making sure Japanese hosts and guests did not know each other in the JJ/JJ visits, making the project shorter, and learning American customs before the visit.

The last suggestion mentioned has particular significance and warrants further comment here. The purpose for the pedagogical aspect of the project was to see what the students could learn by collecting and analyzing the data themselves as opposed to the instructor using a textbook to provide them with the language and knowledge about pragmatics beforehand and giving them a chance practice. In some respects, the project was not as

effective as anticipated for this particular group of Japanese ESL students at their intermediate level of proficiency. One problem was that the project took longer than anticipated, and the students began to lose interest. It would have been even longer if the students had been expected to do more of the work themselves. As it was, the researcher was overburdened with having to arrange the visits, doing the transcribing and typing, making handouts for the students, and so on. It was hardly a teaching tool that instructors would be encouraged to use on an ongoing basis.

What could have been done differently? The instructor of the course suggested that we should have made the project part of the students' grade, but the required wording of the consent forms made that impossible. Instead, if the students had a second visit to look forward to they might have been motivated to learn more. As we saw with Wes (Schmidt, 1983), motivation appears to be highly facilitative for developing pragmatic competence. However, for this particular proficiency level, using the textbook to give students some idea of the language and customs to expect and giving them the chance to practice before their visits might have been more effective than sending them out as ethnographers with no instruction in pragmatics beforehand.

5.4 The Textbook Evaluated

The language provided in textbooks is not always reflective of natural speech, however. In analyzing the textbook (Skillman & McMahon, 1990) for this course on *Functions in American English* and comparing the language and other information provided

with the data from the present study, a number of inadequacies were found in the text.

In the opening segment, no examples of compliments other than the hosts' compliments about the gift were given in the textbook. The data from the present study, like data from many other studies (Wolfson, 1989b; Holmes & Brown, 1987), show the important role that compliments play in English as a social lubricant. Compliments are covered in another chapter in the textbook, but are noticeably absent in the chapter on *Visiting People's Homes*. Also, in the section on giving and receiving gifts, the probes or prompts that the giver sometimes uses to see how well the recipient appreciates the gift found in the present study and others (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993) are also absent from the textbook, other than expressions such as "I'm glad you like it."

A hospitality segment including language and customs for offering and accepting food or drink is not included, and thus the textbook would not have prepared the students for this aspect of their visit. Similarly, there is no small talk segment in the textbook, although this is found in a previous chapter which the students had already covered. It is interesting to note that this previous chapter did not adequately prepare students for making conversation with their hosts in real interaction, but it is unclear why not. Perhaps it can be explained, as in House (1996), as being due to the students' "control of processing" (Bialystok, 1993) not functioning well enough (see section 2.2.3 in the present study).

Finally, in the closing segment, the textbook suggests that

when guests make an excuse to leave that hosts might say among other things: "Oh, what a shame" or "Oh, that's too bad." (Skillman & McMahon, 1990, p. 77), but in all of the data collected in the current study hosts said simply "Oh, okay" when guests said they had to leave. Also, in three out of the five AE/AE visits in the current study, guests used the expression "Thanks for having us" in response to their host's expression "Thanks for coming over." Although a number of possible expressions of thanks are provided in the textbook, this particular one is missing and would be an important addition.

The data from the present study is limited to university students and may not be reflective of language use for people in other age groups or other walks of life, but as other studies have also shown (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, and Reynolds, 1991), these examples illustrate the inadequacy of certain ESL textbooks and the importance of speech act studies of this kind for obtaining more authentic data (Cohen, 1996).

5.5 Conclusion

As we saw in Chapter Two, a number of researchers have made the suggestion that students be given the task of collecting and analyzing data on pragmatics for themselves (Holmes & Brown, 1987; Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, & Reynolds, 1991). This approach may be more successful with very advanced students, although many of these students are no longer attending ESL classes. This project has shown that ESL students at an intermediate level of proficiency who are in the target speaking country for a very short time would not learn a great deal if

they had to collect and analyze all the data for themselves in order to learn about language or culture--that is, unless they were highly motivated, were willing to devote a considerable amount of time to being an ethnographer while they were here, and had instructors willing to spend many hours helping them out.

It would be beneficial to add cultural experiences such as actually visiting an American home to the existing curriculum. Also, as was demonstrated by this project, videotaping the visit and having the students view the video later can be a helpful exercise. However, the researcher would not suggest revamping the entire *Functions of American English* course or removing the textbook altogether. The textbook needs to be evaluated in light of current research on speech acts, but despite the limitations mentioned above, it still has its place as a tool in the classroom for learning pragmatics.

In conclusion, we have seen that ESL students can learn something about pragmatics by being their own ethnographers, but at certain proficiency levels they need a considerable amount of guidance and assistance in order to do this. As Schmidt (1993) has observed: "Explicit teacher-provided information about the pragmatics of the second language can also play a role in learning, provided that it is accurate and not based solely on fallible native speaker intuitions" (p. 36). It appears that learners need: (1) to have the textbook supplemented with authentic cross-cultural material based on data from speech act studies of this kind; (2) to put their knowledge into practice in real life interactions; and (3) to then be given the opportunity to reflect on their experience under the guidance of the

instructor. The results reported in this chapter have shown the important role that ethnographic techniques, combined with instruction, can play in the development of a learner's pragmatic competence. The concluding chapter will critique the methodology of the present study and provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusion

The third and final set of research questions will be addressed in this chapter: (3a) What are the advantages and disadvantages of collecting speech act data by videotaping semi-structured interactions in a natural setting and by conducting retrospective group interviews?; and (3b) How might research methods in interlanguage pragmatic studies of this kind be improved upon?

First, a summary will be made of how the project was carried out. This will be followed by a second section discussing advantages of the data collection methods employed and implications of the results. In the third section, limitations of the project and disadvantages of the data collection methods will be discussed in order to determine what could have been done differently. The final section will discuss what questions were left unanswered and give suggestions for future research.

6.1 Summary of the Project

As outlined in Chapter One, the purpose of this project was to compare cross-culturally the interactions of Japanese ESL students visiting Americans in their homes (JE/AE), Americans visiting fellow Americans (AE/AE), and Japanese visiting fellow Japanese in America (JJ/JJ) and in Japan (JJJ/JJJ). Chapter Two provided the theoretical background for the study and reviewed related studies with an emphasis on the rationale for the chosen methodology and focus of each study.

Details of the data collection and analysis procedures chosen for the present study were given in Chapter Three. The goal was to examine speech acts in their full discourse context in as natural a situation as possible. However, guidelines were given to hosts and guests so as to provide some structure for making comparisons across visits. The visits were videotaped and recorded on cassette tape. After each visit, a group interview of hosts and guests was conducted following an interview schedule. The Japanese ESL students were involved as their own ethnographers in the data collection and analysis.

The students spent ten days in class analyzing the data under the guidance of the researcher. Videos were transcribed. Students' attention was drawn to observe differences between their interactions with Americans (JE/AE) and the interactions between native speakers (AE/AE and JJ/JJ) in terms of the following speech acts: greetings and introductions, giving and receiving gifts, compliments, offering and accepting food and beverages, starting a conversation and keeping it going, making an excuse to leave, expressing gratitude, and so on. They were asked to make corrections on the transcripts of their visit and to fill out a form about cross-cultural similarities and differences based on what they observed. These results were reported in Chapter Five (Research questions 2a and 2b).

Long after the pedagogical aspects of the project were over, the researcher continued to work with the data, analyzing the same speech acts in the context of visiting someone's home for the first time to see what cross-cultural similarities and differences were evident and to determine in what areas the

Japanese ESL students could use further training and practice (Research questions 1a and 1b). These results were reported in Chapter Four and will be summarized in the section to follow.

Finally, the methodology of the present study was critiqued, and advantages and disadvantages of the data collection and analysis procedures were assessed. In addition, questions left unanswered by the study were also determined in order to obtain direction for future research endeavours (Research questions 3a and 3b). Reflections on these topics make up this final and concluding chapter.

6.2 Implications: Advantages of the Methodology

A number of advantages that the data collection and analysis procedures of the present study have over other methodologies were pointed out in Chapters One and Two, but these should be discussed again in retrospect.

6.2.1 Advantages Over Other Methods

Being able to examine the speech acts in their full discourse context was one advantage the present study had over numerous speech act studies that have made use of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (see section 2.2.1.1). This advantage was especially evident when analyzing sequences such as the giving and receiving of the gift where the giver was seen to collaborate with the recipient in the speech act of expressing of gratitude (see also Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993). Context also allowed the researcher to determine what components are generally included in certain speech events, such as in the hospitality segment and the

closing segment.

Another advantage of the methodology was that it was a natural situation rather than a role play where participants are sometimes forced to play unfamiliar roles. In the present study participants were able to be themselves--college students who were either hosts or guests in a situation which they were, for the most part, familiar with. One Japanese participant said in the interview that his family rarely, if ever, entertained at home because his house is too small, but most of the other participants had experienced being hosts or guests in a home visit situation. In the interview, one pair of American participants said that the situation was particularly familiar for them because they had lived in the dorms on the college campus where it was quite common for roommates to visit another pair of roommates who have just moved in.

Some studies make use of natural data collected in the field by observation, but the data are often not comparable in terms of the relative social status of the interlocutors and the social situation, and so on. It was thought that the guidelines provided for hosts and guests would provide the structure necessary to allow comparability between interactions. However, the guidelines may not have been necessary: The participants were all college-aged students who were visiting one another for the first time, and this situation would have made the data comparable without providing more detailed guidelines. This point will be elaborated on in the next section on limitations.

Videotaping rather than only tape recording the interaction was another advantage not only making it possible to sort out who

said what for most of the exchange, but also allowing the observation of certain details such as: removing of shoes, handshaking or bowing, whether a gift was wrapped or not, whether guests helped themselves to food or not, nodding, glances during pauses, and so on. Tape recording the interaction, in addition to videotaping, was advantageous in that it provided a much more distinct sound when the audio portion of the video was unclear.

Interviewing participants provided some insights that would not otherwise have been available concerning such points as: whether gifts are normally opened in front of the host or not (or if a gift would have been brought at all), how making conversation went for the participants, how familiar they were with the situation, how conscious they were of the video camera, and so on. The next section will cover some improvements in technique that might have made the interviews even more effective as a research tool.

Involving the Japanese ESL students in the data collection and analysis procedures allowed pedagogical implications to be tested out rather than just suggested as in numerous other studies. By being their own ethnographers, students at an intermediate level of proficiency were able to learn something about the pragmatics of a social visit and about cross-cultural similarities and differences, but not without considerable guidance and assistance.

6.2.2 Implications of the Results

A more detailed analysis by the researcher revealed a rich data source from which valuable information was gleaned on

particular areas in which Japanese ESL students should receive further training and practice and on cross-cultural similarities and differences. Table 6.1 summarizes the areas in each segment and speech act where training and practice should be recommended.

As Cohen (1996) suggested (see section 2.1.2), this information could then be used to supplement already existing language materials in order to provide a more accurate and relevant source of input that would benefit this particular group of students and "teach to the gaps" in their knowledge of the pragmatics of a social visit. In addition, an awareness of cultural differences beyond the language points already noted would prepare students for future visits to American homes. A number of Japanese social customs were observed in the present study that differ significantly from American customs and would make suitable material for class discussion.

For example, from the opening segment, it is a well-known fact that in Japan people always take their shoes off at the door. However, the students may not be aware that some Americans do the same especially when it is wet out and that, when in doubt, it might be best to ask before entering.

Japanese people introduce themselves by their last name (and sometimes first name, as well). Americans (at least college-aged students in casual situations) introduce themselves by their first names. Most Japanese ESL students already know this, but they may need to be reminded to say their name slowly and clearly. In Japan, it is customary to bow when introductions are made. In America, handshaking does not always occur, but when it does, students may need to be reminded to shake hands firmly.

Table 6.1

Areas for Further Training and Practice

| Speech Act | Areas for Training and Practice |
|---|---|
| Opening Segment: 1. Greetings and introductions | -saying "I'm ~." or "My name's ~." instead of "My name is ~." -pronouncing name clearly |
| 2. Gift giving and collaborating in expressing gratitude | -saying "We brought you a little gift." instead of "This is present for you." and using probes to see how well the recipient likes the gift |
| 3. Compliments | -using more compliments at the beginning of the interaction |
| Hospitality Segment: 1. Responding to offer of beverages | -responding with "Oh, juice sounds good." instead of just "Oh, juice." |
| 2. Helping oneself to food | -feeling freer to help oneself in appropriate contexts |
| Small Talk Segment: 1. Responding to topics initiated by host | -responding with more than one-word answers to keep the conversation going |
| 2. Asking questions to develop or initiate topics | -asking good questions and expanding on what is heard |
| 3. Making verbal responses | -responding with more than a nod or a monosyllabic response |
| 4. Negotiating for meaning | -not assuming or pretending they understand (clearing things up) |
| Closing Segment: 1. Leave-taking | -saying "Well, we should probably go." instead of "I have to go back." |
| 2. Preclosing routines and responses | -responding "It was good meeting you, too." to "It was good to meet you." |
| 3. Mutual expressions of gratitude | -taking initiative & being specific -responding with "You're welcome" or a return expression of thanks |
| 4. Indefinite suggestions to meet | -saying "We'll have to get together and watch a movie or something." |
| 5. Farewells | -repeating routines and expressions of gratitude, and using humour |

Guests in Japan are usually seated on the floor (or on cushions on the floor) when the room has tatami mats. In America, guests are usually seated on comfortable chairs or sofas. Again, the students should be aware of this, but should be encouraged to sit back in the chair and try to be a little more relaxed.

In Japan, gifts brought to the host are not usually opened in front of the guest unless it is food to share during the visit. In America, the gift is usually opened, and the host and guest collaborate in expressing thanks. Saying "sorry" or expressing shame instead of gratitude in this situation might happen in Japan, but it is not something that would likely occur in America. In America, compliments would be made about the gift to ensure the giver that it is well received.

As far as the hospitality segment goes, in Japan, the host decides on a beverage (often Japanese tea) and serves it to the guest(s). In America, usually a list of beverages to choose from is given (including coffee or tea, juice or soda, milk or water, and, in some homes, a variety of alcoholic beverages depending on the time of the visit). Guests are expected to choose what they would like to drink and can ask questions if they are uncertain about what the host is offering.

Hosts in Japan may have to offer food to a guest more than once before a guest will reach out and take something. Guests in America sometimes wait to be offered, but may help themselves to food that is put in front of them. If a Japanese guest hesitates to accept food that is offered the first time, the offer may be repeated, but in some cases the American host might not make a

second offer. American guests tend to state the first time whether they want something or not.

Cultural differences in the small talk segment and the closing segment are almost all related to language use, and these points have already been covered in Table 6.1. It should be noted that many of the points summarized in this section regarding cross-cultural differences in the pragmatics of language use and customs may not always hold true where diverse circumstances, different social status and background, or other variables might have led to very different results than those recorded here.

6.2.3 Summary

As has been seen in this section, videotaping semistructured interactions in a natural situation and conducting retrospective interviews has provided a rich data source which could benefit both language learners and instructors, as well as providing a starting point for further research. In the following section, consideration will be given to what could have been done differently, and limitations and disadvantages of the methodology will be discussed with the purpose of making future research endeavours even more successful.

6.3 Limitations: Disadvantages of the Methodology

This section will present limitations of the present study and disadvantages of the methodology in regard to: (1) the structuring of the situation, (2) the videotaping of the interactions, and 3. the interviewing of the participants. As

far as the pedagogical aspects of the project were concerned, reflections on what could have been done differently were already covered in Chapter Five and will not be repeated here.

6.3.1 Structuring the Situation

As mentioned in the previous section and in Chapter Four, the structuring of the situation, which was expected to be a strength in the project design, turned out to be a weakness. The purpose for providing guidelines for the hosts and guests (see Appendix D) was to allow for comparability across interactions. For example, the researcher wanted to compare the speech acts such as expressing gratitude that would accompany the giving and receiving of a gift, so the guests were instructed to bring one. However, as mentioned in section 4.1.2, the very fact that the guests were told to bring a gift and that some of the hosts knew to expect one may have affected the spontaneity of some of the language surrounding that event.

In addition, we do not know for certain whether or not the guests would have brought a gift in this situation. In interviews, some of the American participants said that their families always took gifts when they visited someone's home and that they would do the same, especially when they were visiting new neighbours for the first time. Two of the participants said they would not bring a gift when the visit was between college students, and they felt strange being asked to do so. Most of the female Japanese participants said that they would probably bring a gift especially if they were meeting someone for the first time or after not seeing each other for a long time. One

male Japanese participant said he does not always bring a gift and, in fact, two male guests in the JJJ/JJJ visits did not bring a gift despite the request in the guidelines to do so.

Hosts, on the other hand, were requested in the guidelines to provide food and drink for their guests. Again, it would have been interesting to see what would or would not have been provided had this not been one of the guidelines. Considering the importance that offering food and beverages has in a social visit (see section 4.2.3), it is likely that the hosts would have provided them regardless of the request to do so.

One way to correct the problem with structuring might be to change the wording of the guidelines in the following way: "If you would normally do so, bring a small gift for your hosts." or "If you would normally do so, feel free to provide food and beverages for your guests." This might prevent participants from failing to do these things just because they knew the situation was set up as a research project, but it would also give them the option of not giving a gift or serving food and beverages if it did not come naturally.

As mentioned in section 4.4.6, the closing segment was another part of the interaction that may have been affected by the structuring of the situation. Both hosts and guest were told that the guests should take the initiative to leave after 20-25 minutes of chatting and that the guests would be called back in soon after for the retrospective group interviews.

Some seemingly abrupt farewell exchanges may have only been brief because all concerned knew that it was not a final farewell. In fact, the researcher observed American participants

exchanging phone numbers, Japanese participants asking their hosts if they could take a photo, and so on, after the interviews when the actual farewells were taking place. It might have been a good idea to turn the video camera back on at that time. Better still, interviews should have been scheduled for a different time and done separately so that hosts and guests did not think they would see each other again so soon.

Ultimately, it would have been ideal to observe unstructured visits that were not arranged by the researcher, but it would have been difficult to obtain sufficient cross-culturally comparable data if this were the case. In order to make it as natural a situation as possible, it would have been better if fewer guidelines were provided. As mentioned above in section 6.2, the participants were all students in the same age group and social situation, and this alone may have provided all that was necessary for the interactions to be comparable cross-culturally.

6.3.2 Videotaping the Interactions

For reasons described in section 6.2, it was definitely an advantage to videotape the interactions, as opposed to merely tape recording them, and this technique is highly recommended for subsequent studies of this kind. However, there are a number of limitations that could be addressed here.

As far as the obtrusiveness of this technique goes, in interviews, most participants said that they were not very conscious of the camera during the visit and, even if they were aware of it, they did not think it affected what they did or said very much. Many of these participants said they were used to

being videotaped at family gatherings or in class. Some participants were more aware of the camera simply because they were seated facing it and could see the red light flashing. Some of the Japanese participants said it made them nervous, but that they were nervous in any case because of meeting Americans in their home for the first time.

One participant said she was concerned about the camera picking up all her nervous habits, but that it did not affect the conversation at all. Another participant said that being recorded made them think there was a constant need for conversation: "We felt like we had to fill the pauses and keep the conversation going for the video or tape recorder. We could have been watching a game on T.V., just relaxed and not said anything" (from AE/AE Interview 5). Still another participant said that she was trying to be careful not to talk about people behind their backs, and similarly, another participant said that she tried to avoid swearing, talking about "guy topics", or gossiping.

The AE/AE visits seemed quite casual as they were, but one female participant mentioned that without the video camera the visit would have been "a little less formal." She said they probably would have met the new pair of roommates in the parking lot and, if invited over, they would have gone over to their new neighbours' apartment in their sweat pants. For the video camera, they said they tried to go "middle ground": "We didn't want to wear dresses, but we did change out of our sweats" (AE/AE Interview 3).

It has already been noted in section 4.1.1 that proxemics

such as how far apart the hosts and guests were seated could not be compared across visits because the angle of the camera dictated the seating arrangement. In an interview, one host said they definitely would not have sat so close, especially with people they were meeting for the first time, and definitely not if the guests were of the opposite sex.

Unfortunately, even with rearranging the seating arrangement, unless all four participants could have been put in a straight line on a couch, which would have been too unnatural, it was impossible to get a full face view of all participants. This made it very difficult to observe facial expressions afterwards. As mentioned in section 2.2.1.2, Houck and Gass (1996) claimed that videotaping interactions allowed them to make note of gestures such as a raised eyebrow, but in this study such subtle gestures were very difficult to capture on film, both because of the angle of the camera and also because of the poor quality of the equipment. The researcher found it easier to observe these features in person. If observation is impossible, two cameras with better picture quality would have to be used.

Of all the limitations noted above, perhaps the most important was the influence the camera had on the flow of the conversation. This could possibly be rectified in the guidelines, by telling participants that they were not obligated to turn off the T.V. if they would normally have it on, and that they were not required to talk the entire time or fill in pauses for the sake of the camera. Besides this, many of the limitations discussed, concerning such things as conversation topics avoided, dress, proxemics, and facial expressions were

points not covered in the analysis and would therefore not have been problematic. Clearly, the advantages of videotaping the interactions far outweigh the disadvantages.

6.3.3 Interviewing the Participants

As mentioned above in section 6.2, conducting retrospective group interviews provided valuable information for the analysis of the data and critique of the methodology. The main disadvantage of the interviews was the problem of scheduling group interviews with hosts and guests immediately following the visits. As observed in section 6.3.1, this may have affected the closing segment of the interactions because participants knew that they would have a second opportunity to say goodbye. The problem could have been rectified by first interviewing the hosts and then the guests at a later time.

Interviewing hosts and guests separately would have been more effective, especially in the case of the JE/AE interviews where the Japanese guests said far less than their American hosts. In some AE/AE interviews, hosts and guests may have actually stimulated each other to provide information that might otherwise not have been offered. However, the interviews for the JE/AE visits would have been even more informative if the Japanese guests had been interviewed separately in their own language.

The researcher chose to do the interviews immediately following the visits because, as discussed in section 2.2.1.4, much information can be lost if there is too much of a time lapse. However, as in Cohen and Olshtain's (1993) study,

participants could have been shown the video of their interaction to help them recall their thought processes (see section 2.2.1.4). Viewing the video together would have also been beneficial for the interviewer, who could then have asked more specific questions about various features of the interaction rather than following a fixed set of interview questions.

As Boxer (1996) also discovered (see section 2.2.1.4), following a fixed set of interview questions did not lead to uncovering as much information as a more open-ended interview might have. In one of the JJ/JJ interviews conducted by the students themselves, the interviewer was unaware at first that there was an interview schedule to follow and asked his own specific questions for the first half of the interview based on his observation of the interaction. The first half of the interview proved to be a far more richer source of data, than the second half when the interview schedule was being followed.

In retrospect, there were a number of other things that could have been done differently in order to make the interviews more effective as an ethnographic tool. First of all, Schumacher and McMillan (1993) talk about the importance of explaining the purpose of the interview to participants in most studies. The researcher needed to be clear on the purpose herself and then explain the purpose to the participants at the outset of the interview.

Secondly, Marshall and Rossman (1995) claim that "the most important aspect of the interviewer's approach concerns conveying an attitude of acceptance--that the participant's information is valuable and useful" (p.80). In the transcript of the interviews

for the present study, there were a number of times when the informant's response was questioned because it went against certain assumptions that the researcher had.

Thirdly, these assumptions were also evident in the kind of probes the researcher sometimes used in the interview. It has been said that:

The key to successful interviewing is learning how to probe effectively--that is, to stimulate an informant to produce more information, without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in the data. (Bernard, 1994, p. 215)

An example of poor probing can be seen in Excerpt 21:

Excerpt 21 (from JE/AE Interview 1)

Interviewer: Do you think it [the camera] affected what you said or did?

Guest 1: No.

Interviewer: No? Like for example, if the camera wasn't there do you think you might have spoken more? Did it make you a little bit shy? Did the camera make you shy?

Guest 1: No.

Interviewer: No? So no change if there was no camera? You're not sure? It's kind of hard to tell, really, but--.

The problem with the probes in this example is that they were leading questions. The interviewer did not convey acceptance of the informant's answer and seemed to be trying to change her mind.

Finally, it would have been better to space the interviews out more. Bernard (1994) talks about how boredom and fatigue are

among the biggest problems facing researchers who use a lot of semistructured interviewing to generate data. He cites a study where interviewers were doing two interviews a day over a period of 12 days. The second interview on any given day was shorter, and even the first interviews grew increasingly shorter during the 12-day period. The present researcher conducted 15 interviews in a 12-day period. Towards the end, the transcripts show the interviewer halfheartedly asking some of the questions that had failed to generate interesting answers in previous interviews and shortchanging questions that did have the potential to provide interesting data.

To sum up, the following changes in interview technique would be recommended for future studies of this kind:

1. Interview hosts first and guests separately later on.
2. Interview Japanese participants in their own language.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview to participants.
4. Show the video to refresh participants' memories and to allow the interviewer to ask specific questions.
5. Use an open-ended format, rather than following a fixed set of questions.
6. Convey an attitude of acceptance.
7. Learn how to probe effectively without injecting self into the data.
8. Spread the interviews times out so that boredom and fatigue do not set in.

Implementing these changes would make the retrospective interviews more effective as an ethnographic tool in speech act studies of this kind.

6.3.4 Summary

Limitations in regards to the structuring of the situation, the videotaping of the interactions, and the interviewing of the participants have been presented in a considerable amount of detail. The purpose of this section was not to discount in any way the data or the results of this study, but to provide stepping stones for generating an even richer source of data in future speech act studies. The final section discusses questions that were left unanswered by the present study and gives direction for further research in the field.

6.4 Conclusion: Suggestions for Future Research

The present study was organized around three sets of research questions pertaining to: (1) the cross-cultural comparison of the pragmatics of a social visit; (2) the pedagogical aspects of having students be their own ethnographers; and (3) methodological issues in interlanguage pragmatics. For each set of research questions, results were reported in Chapters Four, Five, and Six respectively. In the process of answering these research questions, additional questions for future research were also generated, and these will be presented in this concluding section.

6.4.1 The Cross-Cultural Pragmatics of a Social Visit

The first set of research questions had to do with cross-cultural pragmatics: (1a) Without specific pragmatic training in language and culture, how well do Japanese ESL students interact in English during a social visit in an American home? How does

the production of speech acts (such as greetings and introductions, giving gifts, making compliments, accepting the offer of food and beverages, starting a conversation and keeping it going, making an excuse to leave, and expressing gratitude) by Japanese ESL students compare with the illocution of the same speech acts by native speakers of English?; and (1b) How does the interaction of Japanese ESL students with Americans compare cross-culturally with the interaction of native speakers of Japanese during a social visit? Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer from their L1 coming into play in the interlanguage of the Japanese ESL students?

These questions were the focus of Chapter Four where examining the Japanese ESL students' interlanguage in comparison with NSs' production of various speech acts revealed a number of areas requiring further training and practice and a number of cross-cultural similarities and differences. Some instances of L1 transfer were also observed.

For each interaction, numerous specific questions about the exchange were generated, many of which were mentioned along with the results. One example was whether the Japanese ESL students' frequent silent nodding meant they were following the conversation or not. Another was whether the ability to make conversation was a cultural trait or a matter of personality, and so on.

Other questions left for future research revolve around the issue of acceptability. In some speech act studies (such as Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993), native speakers are called upon to rate the NNSs' production of speech acts in terms of their

acceptability. In the Japanese ESL students' production of speech acts a number of utterances were found that differed significantly from the NSs' production of the same speech acts, but the question is: to what extent is it important to conform perfectly to NS standards? In this same vein, future studies might look at not only the utterance itself and its acceptability to NSs in meaning and form, but also at the tone of voice in which it is said. Some utterances might conform to NS standards when analyzed in a transcript, but the tone of voice in which it is said might not convey the sense of sincerity and warmth that it should in order to be considered acceptable.

Additional questions concern the issue of the reasons behind some of the differences. For example, when the Japanese ESL students had difficulty expressing thanks specifically in the closing segment was it because: (1) they lacked the vocabulary or the pragmatic knowledge to make more specific expressions of gratitude; (2) they had the knowledge, but for lack of control of processing or fear of making a mistake they were not able to process it quickly enough; or (3) they were transferring similar vague expressions of gratitude from their L1? Understanding the reasons behind some of the differences might lead to more effective language teaching and learning.

Further questions for future research have to do with the variables of age, status, gender, personality, cultural background, and so forth. How would the interactions differ if hosts or guests were of a different age bracket or social status from each other? How does the gender makeup of the participants affect the interaction? How does personality come into play as

far as initiating conversation goes? How might the interactions differ if the ESL students were from a different language and cultural background?

6.4.2 Students as Ethnographers

The second set of research questions were concerned with the pedagogical aspects of the project: (2a) How well do Japanese ESL students learn cross-cultural pragmatics by doing their own ethnographic research? What are the problematics and possibilities of such an approach? and (2b) How might specific pragmatic training in the classroom have enhanced the learning process of Japanese ESL students? How effective would the textbook have been in preparing them for their visit?

These questions were the focus of Chapter Five where the students' reports, role plays, and questionnaires were examined in order to assess the project pedagogically. ESL students at an intermediate level of proficiency were able to learn something about the cross-cultural pragmatics of a social visit by being their own ethnographers, but not without considerable guidance and assistance. They might have benefitted from pragmatic training in the classroom before their visit, but the textbook was found to be inadequate as a source of authentic input.

Longitudinal studies on the role of instruction in learning pragmatics are certainly called for. Would the students notice more on their own as ethnographers if they were given the chance to repeat the process a number of times for different speech events until they became more skilled at the techniques? How well would a similar group of students learn the pragmatics of

speech events if speech act data, such as the data from the present study, were first used to teach to the gaps in their knowledge before they experienced the event firsthand?

Other pedagogical questions that could be raised concern the students themselves rather than the process. How well would students from a more advanced proficiency level learn cross-cultural pragmatics by being their own ethnographers in a project similar to this one? How does motivation come into play? If the same group of ESL students in this study had a second social visit to look forward to or, for some other reason, were more motivated to learn, would they have put more effort into working with the data and have learned more?

Further questions for subsequent studies have to do with the teaching of culture in the language classroom. Considering the wide variety of individual preferences according to the situation, status, and family background, how can stereotypes be avoided when bringing up cultural similarities and differences? Certainly more data from a wide variety of sources are needed, and generalizations from one study should only be made with reservations.

6.4.3 Methodological Issues in Interlanguage Pragmatics

The third set of research questions dealt with methodological issues: (3a) What are the advantages and disadvantages of collecting speech act data by videotaping semi-structured interactions in a natural setting and by conducting retrospective group interviews? and (3b) How might research methods in interlanguage pragmatic studies of this kind be

improved?

These questions have been the main focus of Chapter Six where advantages and disadvantages of the methodology have been discussed. Videotaping semistructured interactions in a natural setting and conducting retrospective group interviews provided a rich source of comparable data. However, a number of changes in the methodology were suggested for future studies of this kind. These changes form the basis for further questions.

First, to what extent did the guidelines set out for hosts and guests actually affect what they said and did? It was suggested that comparability could still be maintained if less structure was provided. Either the guidelines could be streamlined or the wording changed so as to give participants the option of not bringing a gift or serving food, and so on, if they would not normally do so. The question, then, is whether or not sufficient data would be generated on the various speech acts if less structure were provided. Clearly, the number of subjects would have to be increased and more interactions would need to be videotaped.

Other questions centre around the use of a video camera. How obtrusive was the camera, and what effects did it actually have on the participants and the interactions? Would it have helped to explain to participants in the guidelines that it would be okay to leave the T.V on and have more pauses in the conversation if they would normally do so? What techniques are available for improving the picture and sound quality of the video?

Still more questions have to do with the interviews. How

would the closing segment of the interactions have varied if group interviews had not been scheduled immediately following the visit? How effective would it have been to: separate hosts and guests, interview the Japanese participants in Japanese, watch the video to refresh participants' memories, ask more specific, open-ended questions, and so forth?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, a number of researchers have emphasized the importance of triangulation in interlanguage pragmatics research (Cohen, 1996). In this study retrospective interviews were combined with observation of a semistructured situation. It would be interesting to compare the data for the various speech acts investigated with data elicited by a DCT or with observational data from a purely natural situation where the participants did not know they were being observed. How would the results vary if the data were collected by different methods?

These and many other questions remain to be answered by future cross-cultural speech act studies. The present study was designed to further research in interlanguage pragmatics by: (1) examining speech acts that have not been studied, (2) involving ESL students in the data collection and analysis procedures, and (3) improving upon research methods that have been used thus far. As research methods are refined, and many more studies are conducted on a wide variety of speech acts, the field of interlanguage pragmatics will continue to have much to offer those involved in second language learning, teaching, or research. Involving second language learners in the process will heighten their awareness of cross-cultural pragmatics and prepare them for their own research endeavours.

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Appendix C

Role Play: Visiting People's Homes

ROLE PLAY:

VISITING PEOPLE'S HOMES

1. Greetings and Introductions
2. Guests give gift to hosts
3. Hosts offer beverages and dessert
or snacks
4. Guests may offer to help if
appropriate
5. Small talk - getting to know one
another
6. Guests make excuse to leave
7. Thank yous are exchanged
8. Guests may invite hosts to do
something next time
9. Goodbyes

Appendix D

Guidelines for Hosts and Guests

GUIDELINES FOR HOSTS

1. Please plan to provide beverages and a dessert or snacks of some kind for your guests.
2. Video camera person will arrive first to set up the camera. Please assist them in arranging seating so both of you and your two guests will not have their backs to the camera and so the camera won't have to be facing into direct light. A small cassette player will also be placed close by as an audio backup. Call to invite guests over when everything is set up.
3. Offer guests food and beverages soon after they arrive.
4. After about 20-25 minutes of chatting and getting to know one another, the guests will take the initiative to leave. The entire visit should only last 30 minutes.
5. After guests have left, please invite them back in and call Laura (if she is not there already!). You might want to offer beverages and food to the video camera person during this time! The video camera will be turned back on, and Laura will interview the whole group informally about the experience for about 30 minutes.
6. Most importantly, relax, enjoy the visit, try to forget about the camera and just act naturally!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!

GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS

1. Please plan to bring a small gift between the two of you (under \$5.00) for your hosts.
2. AUAP students wait at Laura's apartment (Orchard Meadows roommates who are guests wait at their own apt.) until video camera person has set up. You will receive a phone call when they are ready for you to arrive.
3. Give hosts your gift soon after you arrive.
4. After about 20-25 minutes of chatting and getting to know one another, you should take the initiative to leave. The entire visit should only last 30 minutes.
5. After you have left, the hosts will call you back in. When Laura arrives (if she is not there already!), the video camera will be turned back on, and Laura will interview the whole group informally about the experience for about 30 minutes.
6. Most importantly, relax, enjoy the visit, try to forget about the camera and just act naturally!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!

GUIDELINES FOR HOSTS (JAPANESE EXCHANGES)

1. Decide which two of you will be hosts and who will be the interviewer later on. Please plan to provide beverages and a dessert or snacks of some kind for your guests.
2. The video camera person will arrive first to set up the camera. Please assist them in arranging seating so both of you and your two guests will not have their backs to the camera and so the camera won't have to be facing into direct light. A small cassette player will also be placed close by as an audio backup. Call to invite guests over when everything is set up.
3. The entire exchange will be in Japanese. Try to behave as you would in Japan. Offer guests food and beverages soon after they arrive.
4. After about 20-25 minutes of chatting and getting to know one another, the guests will take the initiative to leave. The entire visit should only last 30 minutes.
5. After guests have left, please invite them back in. You might want to offer beverages and food to the video camera person during this time! The video camera will be turned back on, and the interviewer will interview the whole group informally about the experience for about 30 minutes.
6. Most importantly, relax, enjoy the visit, try to forget about the camera and just act naturally!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!

GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS (JAPANESE EXCHANGES)

1. Please plan to bring a small gift between the two of you (under \$5.00) for your hosts. (Maybe you could buy something small in Vancouver?)
2. Guests wait until video camera person has set up. You will be called in when they are ready for you to arrive. The entire exchange will be in Japanese. Try to behave as you would in Japan.
3. Give hosts your gift soon after you arrive.
4. After about 20-25 minutes of chatting and getting to know one another, you should take the initiative to leave. The entire visit should only last 30 minutes.
5. After you have left, the hosts will call you back in. The video camera will be turned back on, and the interviewer will interview the whole group informally about the experience for about 30 minutes.
6. Most importantly, relax, enjoy the visit, try to forget about the camera and just act naturally!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!

Appendix E

Tricks for Easier Transcribing

TRICKS FOR EASIER TRANSCRIBING

1. Just use initials for the people's names, and leave lots of space between people's lines so that you can add something later or we can make corrections:

R: Hi! Come on in.
 space --
 S: Hi, I'm Sandy.
 space --
 K: I'm Keiko. Nice to meet you.
 etc.

2. Don't spend a long time rewinding to one spot and trying to get what they say. If you don't get it after trying two or three times draw a line and go on. Write a key word if you can catch one:

K: What is your major?
 S: Speech _____ and _____
 K: What is that?
 S: _____ deaf people

 etc.

3. The important thing is to get down the order that people say things using the video because you can catch the details later on a tape recorder. Just try to get done as much as possible and I will check your transcription for you when it's done. Don't worry about spelling right now. Just do your best!

Appendix F**Analyzing Native Speaker Data (Part I)**

Questions to answer as you watch the first part of each of the five American/American visit:

I. What kind of greetings and introductions do they use?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

II. What kind of expressions do the hosts use when they receive a gift?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

III. How do the hosts offer beverages and food?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

IV. How do the guests reply? (Do they help themselves to food that is in front of them or wait to be offered?)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

V. Do the hosts or guests make any compliments about anything?
About what? Give some examples.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

VI. What are some of the first questions people ask to make conversation, (and who starts the conversation, hosts or guests)?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

VII. What are some expressions people use to show that they are listening and interested in what the other person is saying?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix G

Analyzing Native Speaker Data (Part II)

Questions for the last part of the American/American Visits:

I. What expressions do the guests use to say they must go?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

II. What kind of closing expressions do people use at the end of the conversation before they say goodbye?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

III. How do hosts and guests thank each other?

1. Hosts: _____
 Guests: _____
2. Guests: _____
3. Hosts: _____
 Guests: _____
4. Hosts: _____
 Guests: _____
5. Guests: _____

IV. Does anyone suggest they get together again? Who? What did they say?

1. _____
5. _____

V. What kind of expressions do people use as they are leaving in all the visits?

Appendix H

Plan for the Conclusion of the Project

PLAN FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT

The whole purpose of this project was to **compare** how native speakers of English, native speakers of Japanese, and Japanese ESL students communicate when **visiting someone else's home**. The idea was that, instead of the teacher telling you what the similarities and differences in the language and the culture are, we **discover them together** by visiting Americans and watching videos of other visits.

One of the problems with this project was that transcribing was **very difficult** using the equipment we had, so it took quite a few days to do that and left us with little time to compare. **But let's make the best of the three days we have left!**

Today (**Tuesday**) we will finish looking at the AE/AE (American speakers of English) visits. We want to notice **how native speakers communicate**. We will just do parts of it in groups because we won't have time to watch all the videos together. If there is time, some of the groups can look at the JJ/JJ (Japanese speakers of Japanese) visits to compare with the American visits.

Tomorrow (**Wednesday**) I will hand back part of the transcript of **your visits** (JE/AE = Japanese speakers of English visit American speakers of English). Based on all you have learned by watching other visits, you will write **a short one-page report** together about your visit--what you noticed, how you could improve next time etc.

Finally, on **Thursday**, we will all have a chance to be hosts and guests again in some ***impromptu role plays** using the expressions we have learned through our visits and videos of other people's visits.

***"Impromptu"** means you **don't** have to prepare the role plays for homework or memorize them!

By the way, if you want to have your American visit on your own video, **bring a blank video tape**, and I will try to copy it for you.

Appendix I

Comparing the Data Cross-Culturally

COMPARING THE VISITS

1. First, take your transcript of your visit and read through it together. Use the highlighter pen provided to highlight anything you said that you think you could improve on. Compare with the transcripts of some of the American/American visits. Pay attention to the categories we looked at:

- greetings and introductions
- gift giving
- offering and accepting food and beverages
- making compliments
- starting a conversation
- keeping the conversation going
- making an excuse to leave
- closing expressions
- ways hosts and guests thank each other
- suggesting to get together again
- goodbyes etc.

2. How could you change what you said to make it more like native speakers of English would say it? Write underneath what you would say next time you visit an American home. Use a colored arrow to add more things you could say.

3. Finally, think about the similarities and differences between the Japanese visits and the American visits. Fill out the table on the next page and add anything you might have noticed.

| American Visits | Japanese Visits Same or different -- how? |
|--|---|
| 1. Guests sometimes take their shoes off (esp. when it rains), but usually not. | Different -- in Japan guests always take their shoes off when they enter. |
| 2. Both hosts usually go to answer the door and welcome guests. | |
| 3. Hosts usually open gifts in front of guests and say how much they like the gift. | |
| 4. In interviews, guests said they don't usually bring a gift for such a short visit. | |
| 5. Hosts usually give guests a choice of what to drink and guests say what they'd like. | |
| 6. Hosts sometimes just put the food on the table and let the guests help themselves. | |
| 7. Hosts and guests often make lots of compliments to each other. | |
| 8. Hosts and guests both start the conversation by asking each other questions. Everyone participates. | |
| 9. The conversation is kept going by making responses and asking more questions about the same topic etc. | |
| 10. Guests use various expressions to say they should go. | |
| 11. Hosts and guests both thank each other specifically for coming, for the gift etc. | |
| 12. Hosts and guests use casual expressions ("you guys") and joke a lot even if they met for the first time. | |
| | |
| | |

2 of 2

1. Name of participant: _____
2. Male ____ Female ____
3. Age ____
4. Year in college if student: Freshman ____ Sophomore ____ Junior ____ Senior ____
5. Major in college: _____
6. Occupation: _____
7. First language: _____
8. Parents' first language(s): _____
9. Foreign language(s) you have you studied, if any: _____
10. Length of time studying the language(s): _____
11. Experience(s) living or studying abroad:

| Country | Length of stay | Purpose |
|---------|----------------|---------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

12. What did you learn or gain from participating in this project? _____

13. What did you find difficult about this project? _____

14. What suggestions do you have for future research projects of this kind? _____

