LEARNERS' PRACTICE AND THEORY ABOUT JAPANESE HONORIFICS:
AN ORAL INTERVIEW ACTIVITY WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS

by

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ABSTRACT

Japanese honorifics (JH) are challenging for learners of Japanese language to acquire due to their complex grammatical formulas. Textbooks tend to assume that the explanation of grammatical rules and drill exercises focusing on the rules are sufficient for learners to be competent in JH. However, functional issues related to honorifics such as how to use honorifics in socioculturally appropriate ways or how to deal with non-linguistic aspects of honorifics are likely to be ignored.

The present study questioned the assumptions entailed in the traditional form-oriented approach to teaching language, and examined an oral interview activity carried out by 24 students in a Japanese language course at a Canadian university. In this activity, the students interviewed Japanese professors using JH, and several types of data (i.e., the researcher observations and interviews with the participants and student written reflections on the interviews) were analyzed in order to find out students' practice (i.e., what students did) of and theory (i.e., how students perceived) about JH and oral interviews.

The findings of the study present a very complex picture of students' practice and theory; they were engaged not only in the formation of the rules of JH but also in the functional areas such as non-verbal behaviour and conversation management. The data also revealed that students were very much concerned with functional areas during the interviews. From these findings, the study emphasizes the importance of *functions* embedded in JH, and suggests that the Japanese teacher help learners acquire the functional competence dealing with JH as well as the linguistic competence.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Japanese Honorifics

Japanese honorifics are one of the most unique characteristics of the Japanese language. They are characterized by "a highly developed grammatical system" and, hence, are "notorious among learners of Japanese because of the complexity of usage" (Kunihiro, Inoue, & Long. 1998, p.91). According to the *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992), language honorifics are "politeness formulas in a particular language which may be specific affixes, words, or sentence structures" (p.169), and such languages as Japanese, Korean, Javanese are examples of the languages that have language honorifics.

1.2. Characteristics of Teaching Japanese Honorifics in a Traditional Way

Honorific forms of Japanese languages are known as being particularly complex, since they take specific grammatical forms to express different level of politeness or respect according to the mutual status of the participants (Crystal, 1987; Donahue, 1998). Therefore, a number of textbooks on the Japanese language are likely to introduce honorifics as a set of grammatical rules for learners to remember. In general, Japanese honorifics appear in later chapters of introductory level textbooks, indicating that learners need to learn Japanese honorifics in order to complete an introductory level Japanese course, and to continue their studies to more advanced levels.

1.2.1 How Textbooks Teach Honorifics: Three Examples

How do the textbooks usually teach Japanese honorifics? This section will look at

three different introductory level textbooks to observe how they teach Japanese honorifics.

The first textbook, *Foundation of Japanese Language* (Soga & Matsumoto, 1978),

deals with Japanese honorifics in the very last chapter of the textbook, explaining the

concept and the importance of grammar of honorifics as follows;

> ... level of politeness is virtually important in the Japanese language, and a student of
> Japanese must learn the polite style, often referred to as the 'honorific' style... In
> general, the honorific style is used to express a feeling of 'politeness' or 'respect' for
> guests, older people, customers, or anyone considered socially superior. ... It is
> important to emphasize the fact that honorific styles conform to the general rules of
> grammar although it often requires some distinct vocabulary items. (p.410)

After this explanation, the textbook goes on to explain honorific nouns, verbs, adjectives,

and other honorific forms (particular vocabulary items) with several rules to remember. The

rest of the chapter is practices for learners, such as a transformation from regular vocabulary

or sentence to honorific forms or substitution exercises (p.407-423).

Another textbook, *Japanese for Everyone* (Nagara, 1990) explains the concept of

Japanese honorifics, as "oftentimes it is proper to indicate a certain amount of respect in your

speech. This is done by using humble terms when speaking of yourself, and honorific terms

when speaking of or addressing others" (p.204). It then presents a list of both honorific and

humble forms of commonly used nouns and verbs in the same chapter (p.204) and the basic

grammar structures of commonly used verb constructions in a different chapter (p.264). On

top of these, the textbook demonstrates another list of particular vocabulary item for

honorific expression in a later chapter (p.303) as further information to remember. Each

chapter that deals with honorifics provides several types of exercises, such as a

transformation from original forms to honorific forms, or a role-play type of practice.

The final example, *Nakama* (Vol. 2, Hatasa, Hatasa, & Makino, 2000), demonstrates

that "honorific expressions are used for actions performed by people with a higher social

status than the speaker. ... Humble expressions are used for actions performed by you or

member of your in-group when these actions affect or are related to a social superior"

(p.380). The text offers a list of honorific and humble forms of main verbs (p.380) and the

rules of how to construct honorific and humble forms (p.396-404). Along with these

explanations of the rules, the textbook provides different types of exercises similar to the

ones in *Japanese for Everyone*.

1.2.2 Major Characteristics of Teaching Honorifics

To summarize what is in common to these textbooks in terms of teaching Japanese

honorifics, the textbooks first explain the concept of Japanese honorifics and its relationship

to Japanese society: what Japanese honorifics are, on what occasions Japanese honorifics are

used by whom, and why Japanese honorifics are such an important element in the language.

The textbooks then give an explanation of basic rules of honorifics such as particular

vocabulary to remember or the grammatical rules of how to construct honorific nouns, verbs

adjectives, and so forth. Following the rules are several types of exercises so that learners

can apply their knowledge of the rules in actual use. These exercises are varied, ranging

from substitution or transformation practice to role plays.

What these textbooks mainly concentrate on through written explanations and actual

drill exercises that learners can practice is teaching learners the concept and grammatical

rules of honorifics. In a word, the textbooks view honorifics as another grammatical category in addition to many other categories, and singles this category out from others in particular chapters in the textbook. To rephrase this from a different angle, the textbooks do not really relate honorifics to other grammatical content or other areas of the Japanese language, such as how to use honorifics appropriately in authentic situations, and neither do they regard honorifics as a component required to construct the Japanese language in a broader sense.

1.3 Problematic Assumptions of the Textbooks

Having understood the approach that these textbooks employ for teaching Japanese honorifics, some problematic assumptions embodied in this 'traditional' approach to teaching honorifics (or language) are found. These assumptions are;

(1) Classroom exercises with honorifics appear to be considered to be adequate preparation for engagement in authentic interactions with native speakers.

(2) The rules of honorifics appear to be the only theory that learners need to master. To restate, the formal grammatical rules of honorifics appear to be the main emphasis, and a detailed description of their functions in interactions is likely to be ignored.

(3) The learners' activity in the interaction appears to be thought of as limited to learning the rules as stated and applying them to an interaction.

The three assumptions above are commonly acknowledged in the field of language education, and this type of language teaching is commonly practiced in a language classroom; therefore, these assumptions have rarely been discussed as problematic issues in the past.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study

Having realized these problematic assumptions in the traditional teaching approach, the present study will question these assumptions. In order to find out whether or not the assumptions are adequate, this study will investigate learners of the Japanese language, their learning of Japanese honorifics in a language classroom, and their use of honorifics in authentic interactions. More specifically, the present study will investigate how learners deal with Japanese honorifics both on a practical level and a theoretical level when they actually interact with a Japanese person considered to be their superior.

The major purposes of the present study are to investigate:

(a) Japanese language learners' actual use of Japanese honorifics in authentic interactions with native Japanese people. It will examine learners' actual practices when using honorifics in a real-life situation.

(b) learners' theories about Japanese honorifics. In order to do so, this study will examine learners' reflections on honorifics as a way of gaining information about their conceptions of honorifics.

(c) learners' involvement in the teaching and learning process, asking whether they are engaged solely in a transmission process or whether there is evidence of the learner acting as a reflective practitioner engaged in constructing an understanding of honorifics and their use.

1.5 Learner's Interactions with Native Speakers: Oral Interview Activity

In order to investigate learners' authentic interactions with native speakers (NS) of Japanese, the present study will examine an oral interview activity conducted by learners. In this activity, learners actually interviewed NS Japanese who were their superiors with the

use of honorifics. More description of this oral interview activity and the data collection procedure will be discussed in Chapter 3.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in terms of the following reason; the assumptions that the traditional language teaching approach embodies have rarely been questioned in the past since they are too well recognized in the field of language education. The grammatical rule-oriented, or form-oriented teaching approach is, more or less, well accepted and practiced in language classrooms throughout the world; however, it does not really pay attention to learners' actual performance or perceptions about what they are learning. What makes this study unique is that it highlights learners themselves, and attempts to discover, from the learners' perspectives, whether this type of teaching is truly adequate and effective, and, if it is not, what should be changed or improved in order for language learners to be more competent in the target language. No other studies have tackled the traditional form-oriented teaching approach, from the learners' stance; therefore, this study will contribute to shedding new light on language education.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will review the research literature for this thesis as follows. It will first review honorifics in the context of Japanese society in Section 2.1. Section 2.2 will then discuss the 'traditional' approach to teaching Japanese honorifics, which concentrates on the formal features of honorifics and says little about their functional features. Section 2.3 will introduce a different approach to language from the traditional one. This approach considers sociocultural factors in language as being important. To provide the needed functional perspective, Section 2.4 will review a functional approach to language and discourse in context. Following that, it will present a functional approach to the learning of discourse in context, which is language socialization. From there it will move on to consider conscious and intentional forms of language socialization in Section 2.5. Section 2.6 will explain the theory of experiential learning which is very relevant to this study. The research questions of the present study will then be established in Section 2.7.

2.1 Japanese Society and Language

In order to examine learning Japanese honorifics more thoroughly, we need to grasp some features of the Japanese language and the society in which the language is used. In this section, then, major characteristics of the society, such as the values and beliefs respected in the society, will be discussed. After understanding the characteristics of Japanese society, Japanese language, and in particular Japanese honorific forms, will be explained in detail.

2.1.1 Japanese Society

In considering the cultural/social norms unique to Japanese society, it is often pointed out that "notions of hierarchy are extremely important" (Hendry, 1987, p.71), and because of this hierarchy, Nakane (1970) calls Japan a "vertical society," as opposed to the more horizontal societal structure in North America. The notion of hierarchy, or vertical relationships in Japanese society, is well described by Reischauer (1977):

> It is as natural for a Japanese to shape his interpersonal relations in accordance with the various levels of hierarchy ... Older people or persons ... recognized as having higher status walk fast, people are seated in clear order of precedence on any formal occasion. ... One addresses a person who is recognized as being of higher status with regard to wisdom by the title *sensei*, a general term for "teacher" ... A good part of one's personal self-identification is by one's status role. Others will treat one according to one's status, and there is nothing less becoming than for the person himself not to act accordingly. (p.163-164)

To restate what Reischauer outlines above, the conception of the older being a superior and the younger being an inferior is a commonly shared norm by Japanese people, and it is this hierarchical order by which Japanese people can shape their interpersonal relationships in society. In fact, "in many situations it is difficult to know how to behave unless one can place the other people present in a hierarchical order in relation to oneself" (Hendry, 1987, p.71). For Japanese people, therefore, it is a crucial part of everyday life that they establish certain interpersonal relationships with various people in society, according to hierarchical differences such as age, social status, and the like. It can be understood that these hierarchical differences among individuals are the essential factors, or needs, for Japanese people to live more adequately and comfortably in their society.

2.1.2 Honorific Forms

Having understood the importance of hierarchical differences among individuals in

Japanese society, how is this characteristic of the society related to the language? In fact, the

hierarchical difference in Japanese society is definitely reflected in the language; in the

Japanese language, speech styles are clearly distinguished into polite style and plain style,

and "an utterance may be plain or polite, according to the situation" (International Christian

University, 1996, p.22). In other words, the speaker chooses to make his/her utterance in

either polite style or plain style, depending on with whom he/she is interacting. The best

example to indicate this polite/plain distinction in accordance with situations is Japanese

honorifics.

2.1.2.1 What Are Honorific Forms?

According to the *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (1992),

language honorifics are "politeness formulas in a particular language which may be specific

affixes, words, or sentence structures" (p.169). To put it in another way, language honorifics

are the particular formulas used to show the speaker or writer's politeness or respect to

his/her interactants. Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean, Madurese (a language of

Eastern Java), and Hindi, are examples of the languages that have honorifics.

These languages are particularly known for their very complex honorific forms. What

makes the honorifics in these languages distinct is that a special set of grammatical contrasts

is embodied in the language, and different levels of politeness or respect are expressed in

particular grammatical forms, according to the mutual status of the participants (Crystal,

1987; Donahue, 1998). Although English has similar functions of showing politeness or

respect by using expressions such as "Would you...?" or "May I...?", Japanese or Korean honorifics are more complex than the English polite expressions in terms of employing different grammatical forms or vocabulary for honorifics. For instance, according to Bialystok and Hakuta (1994), the English sentence, "Are you going to eat rice and cassava now?" has many different forms in Javanese which are determined by the subtle relationship among interlocutors. For Javanese people, though, it is just natural to be aware of these levels of speech and to present them in specific linguistic forms.

2.1.2.2 Japanese Honorifics

"It is impossible to speak or write Japanese without employing the *keigo* (honorifics)" (Smith, 1983, p.77). In general, any adult Japanese is consciously or subconsciously compelled to choose the level of politeness when interacting with others, based on his/her calculation of social distance with their interactants in terms of "a complex combination of age, sex, social position, nature of previous interactions, and context" (Smith, 1983, p.77).

To apply this issue of sociopragmatics to the Japanese language, a number of scholars have presented research on how deeply the Japanese language and Japanese society are interrelated to each other. For instance, Hori (2000) explained that appropriate selections of words in the Japanese language were fundamentally based upon the hierarchy of the comparative age and social status characteristics of the interlocutors, and the selectional system is established as honorifics which has been developed over centuries in Japanese society. In addition to the hierarchical relationship, Moeran (1988) emphasized the inside-outside group structure in Japanese society and its relation to language use. One distinct

example of this in-group versus out-group distinction represented in the Japanese language is the kinship terminology; a child addresses his/her older family members (e.g., mother, father, older siblings) with an exalted expression among family members while he/she uses humble expressions for them when talking to people outside his/her immediate family circle.

It is often considered that Japanese honorifics are more complex than those in other languages in terms of their grammatical contrasts to present politeness or respect (Donahue, 1998). Japanese honorifics "include several separate systems including terms denoting superior/inferior social status, respectful terms of address, and 'beautification' terms for certain objects" (Donahue, 1998, p.134). The most outstanding characteristic of the Japanese honorifics is that verbs can be constructed in different ways according to the level of politeness or respect. The table below explains this different construction of Japanese verbs:

Table 1: Japanese Honorific Forms (Verb)

	Plain	Formal	Exalted (honorific)	Humble (honorific)
to go	i ku	iki masu	irasshai masu	mairi masu
to read	yo mu	yomi masu	o yomi ni narimasu	yomasete itadakimasu

Among these verb forms, the exalted forms are used to raise the other person above oneself, and the humble forms are used to lower oneself, which, after all, raises the other person above oneself. These two exalted and humble forms are considered to be typical of Japanese honorifics in general, and, as can be seen in the figure above, it is necessary to change the verb forms in several ways in order to make honorific forms.

On top of these verb constructions, Japanese adjectives and nouns are also formed in honorific styles by adding the prefix, "o" or "go" to the original form. For instance, the

following list shows how honorific forms of adjectives and nouns are derived from the

original forms.

Table 2: Japanese Honorific Forms (Adjectives and Nouns)

	Original	Honorifics
young	wakai (adjective)	o wakai
name	namae (noun)	o namae
address	jyuusho (noun)	go jyuusho

e.g.,   *Watashi wa wakai desu.* vs *Sensee wa o-wakai desu.*
         (I am young.)   (The teacher is young.)

         Watashi no namae   vs *Syachoo no o-namae*
         (My name)   (The president's name)

These honorific forms described above are used by adult Japanese in everyday life as a

demonstration of their politeness or respect to the other person. To give an example, when a

young company employee interacts with his/her boss at work, the former is expected to use

honorific forms to show his/her politeness or respect to the boss, whereas the boss does not

need to use honorific forms with the younger employee. The following table illustrates some

typical social situations in which Japanese honorifics are used:

Table 3: Social Situations in Which Japanese Honorifics Are Used

Addresser of honorifics	Addressee of honorifics
student	teacher, professor
subordinate	boss
salesperson	customer
junior	senior

(Makino & Tsutsui, 1986, p.44)

Thus, Japanese honorifics employ very complex grammatical rules; verbs have to be changed into different forms for both exalted and humble cases, and certain prefixes need to be attached to adjectives and nouns.

As explained, Japanese honorifics are deeply related to the social structure in Japan where hierarchical relationships among people are considered salient. This means that honorific forms are used by those who consciously or unconsciously understand the importance of the hierarchical relationship in their daily lives. In this sense, children at the elementary level usually neither use honorific forms nor even know the existence of honorific forms, since they are not aware of more complex hierarchical relationship in the society yet. The language forms that children use are either the plain forms used in individual and personal situations, such as speaking with family members or friends, or the polite forms used in more formal situations such as speaking up in class. Therefore, "as children mature into adults they eventually gain competence with the forms of difference" (Donahue, 1998, p.135), and hence, honorific forms are usually used by adults who have already gone through several social experiences to understand hierarchical relationships in Japanese society. This, in turn, means that the use of honorific forms is an indication of being an adult member of the society, and whether or not one can use honorific forms adequately is one of the keys to judge his/her maturity, social background, or the past experiences which he/she went through in life and in society.

2.2 Characteristics of Teaching Japanese Honorifics in a Traditional Way

This section demonstrates how Japanese honorifics have been traditionally taught in class and outlines what elements have been emphasized in teaching Japanese honorifics in

traditional ways.

2.2.1 Traditional Form-Oriented Teaching Approach

Before discussing the traditional approach to teaching Japanese honorifics, the form-oriented teaching approach to second/foreign language in general should be mentioned in this section.

"Language instruction can have many purposes. One of these has traditionally been to teach the learner the formal systems of a L2, in particular grammar, although phonology and lexis are also likely to receive attention " (Ellis, 1986, p.215). Thus, there was a tendency for the language teaching to focus on the grammatical rules and correctness in order for learners not to make errors in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary in their second language (L2)/foreign language (FL) production. In fact, these errors often created serious problems, and a number of studies focusing on language learners' linguistic errors and their effect on communication with their interactants were conducted.

For instance, in her study on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' error analysis, Burt (1975) grouped syntactic errors made by FL learners into two, namely, global errors (e.g., wrong word order, missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors, missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules and overgeneralizing pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions) and local errors (i.e., errors that affect single elements in a sentence, such as errors in noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of quantifiers). She then discovered that "global errors--those that affect the overall sentence organization – cause the listener or reader to misinterpret the speaker or writer's message, ..." (p.57), and warned that some syntactic errors were so serious that they

hindered communication among interlocutors. Other studies on error analysis also talk about this issue of language learners' errors and their effect on communication (e.g., Tomiyama, 1980; Khalil, 1985; Sheorey, 1986; Santos, 1987; Ellis, 1994; Williams and Evans, 1998; Pica, 2000).

2.2.2 Traditional Form-Oriented Teaching Approach to Japanese Honorifics

As mentioned earlier, Japanese honorifics are a very challenging component for learners of the Japanese language. It is widely believed that in order for learners to be competent in honorifics, first of all, they must have good knowledge of how to construct proper grammatical forms of honorifics. Because of the perceived necessity of good grammatical knowledge, many Japanese language textbooks usually emphasize very detailed rules of Japanese honorifics. For instance, one of the Japanese language textbooks, *Japanese for College Students* (International Christian University, 1996), which was used by the students who participated in the present study, explains Japanese honorifics by providing very basic rules set up as "Grammar Notes" in the grammar sections. This section includes vocabulary for honorific nouns, verbs, and adjectives, how to form correct honorific forms in sentences, how to conjugate original verbs to honorific verbs, to whom these honorific forms must be addressed and by whom, and so forth. By providing these precise grammatical rules, the textbook assumes that learners will be able to master the Japanese honorifics if they read these explanations carefully.

In addition to these precise explanations of the rule of Japanese honorifics, the textbook also provides drill exercises in order for learners to apply the rules they learned from the textbook and put them to use. These exercises in the textbook above are varied;

some are formation exercises that can be practiced by learners on their own, and some are dialogue style exercises that require learners to work in a pair. By providing these drill exercises, the textbook also assumes that after having practiced these exercises, learners will be able to use Japanese honorifics correctly and appropriately in authentic interactions with native speakers (NS) of Japanese.

We can look at the textbook's approach to teaching and learning Japanese honorifics more broadly, from an educational standpoint, and ask what kind of teaching and learning process it envisages. It appears that the textbook takes the view of the teaching-learning process as a one-way transmission; the major role of the textbook is simply to provide the rules and drill exercises to learners. As long as the learners learn the stated rules and engage in the exercises, the textbook assumes that learners will become competent users of honorifics in authentic interactions. To put this in another way, the textbook does not really leave room for the possibility that learners might develop their own conceptions (or confusions) as to honorific rules and the use of honorifics in authentic interactions. In a word, there is little room for learners' voices and independent initiatives.

2.2.3 Problems with the Form-Oriented Teaching Approach

There are therefore important questions to be raised about the traditional approach. These questions are posed, with their responses, as follows.

(1) Is the textbook's statement of the rules about honorifics adequate?

For example, while the textbook highlights the grammatical rules of honorifics or grammatical competence very well, does the textbook ever regard sociocultural competence related to language as being important? The significance of sociocultural competence in

language education, in fact, has been well recognized by a number of scholars. To give an

example, Brown (1994) believes in the deep connection between language and culture and

its significance in second language education, and states:

> It is apparent that culture ... becomes highly important in the learning of a second
> language. A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the
> two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the
> significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language ... is
> also the acquisition of a second culture. (p.165)

When observing how the traditional textbook teaches Japanese honorifics, the notion of

"culture and language being interwoven" is hardly mentioned. The primary focus of the

textbook is on the rules and practices with no relation to sociocultural factors. Then, how can

sociocultural competence necessary for language learning, as Brown mentioned above, be

taught through a form-oriented textbook?

(2) Are the practice exercises an adequate preparation for authentic interactions?

The textbook provides drill exercises in order for learners to apply their grammatical

knowledge, but are these exercises truly adequate for learners to be able to actually USE

Japanese honorifics in authentic interactions? In other words, if learners practice exercises

on honorifics with their textbook, can they use Japanese honorifics appropriately in authentic

interactions with NS Japanese? With regard to the use of language, Finegan (1994) views the

knowledge of how to use language as being crucial to language education by stating that

"knowing a language is not simply a matter of knowing how to encode messages and

transmit them to a second party, who by decoding them understand what we intended to say.

If language use were simply a matter of encoding and decoding messages--in other words, of

grammatical competence--every sentence would have a fixed interpretation irrespective of its context of use" (p.334, italics in original).

Context, according to Levinson (1983), "covers the identities of participants, the temporal and spatial parameters of the speech event, and ... the beliefs, knowledge and intentions of the participants in that speech event ..." (p.5). To restate what Finegan stresses, if the speech event takes place in different times and places and involves different participants, the use of language and the participants' interpretations of the messages will also differ. Now, do practice exercises in the traditional textbook ever recognize the deep connection among language, context, and language use? Does the textbook ever explain in what ways and in what context Japanese honorifics should be and/or should not be used? (3) Is the learner a passive recipient of a transmission process of teaching and learning?

The third question concerns the one-way transmission teaching-learning process, which the form-oriented textbook tends to substantiate. Will learners never express any thoughts, questions, or confusions as to honorifics and the use of honorifics? Can learners just apply their grammatical knowledge and their drill practices to actual language use without experiencing any problems? Are learners' voices and independent initiatives apparent in a language classroom? Note that the one-way assumptions about the transmission process depend on the adequacy of the rules and of the practice exercises. If they are inadequate, the learner will need to depend on her/his own resources, and operate in some sense as a reflective and engaged learner.

Thus, the above three problems with the traditional approach to teaching Japanese honorifics are raised. In fact, while the traditional approach ignores the importance of the actual usage of language in context, there are other stances on language which regard

language use in context as being very important, or more important than the grammatical rules. The following sections will demonstrate some of these theories, and will examine in what ways these theories are different from the traditional approach. It will help the reader understand more clearly why the three issues embodied in the traditional teaching approach described above are problematic.

2.3 Language Use in Human Communication: How to Use Language

For the past several years in the field of applied linguistics and language education, the idea that learning language entails not only the mastery of linguistic rules or native-like pronunciation but also the acquisition of socioculturally appropriate use of language in actual communication has been widely discussed. A number of studies on the use of language, or pragmatics, have discovered that the acquisition of appropriate use of language is as salient as whether or not appropriate vocabulary or linguistic rules are acquired. In fact, the view often voiced is that "learning the organizational rules of L2 are almost simple compared to the complexity of catching on to a seemingly never-ending list of pragmatic constrains" (Brown, 1994, p.231).

2.3.1 Hymes' Theory

The issue of socioculturally appropriate language use (or sociopragmatics), which is a well studied area at present, became the focus of discussion about four decades ago. A significant researcher was an American sociolinguist, Dell Hymes. He raised the issue that most linguists were concerned only with the details of language structure and paid little or no attention to the context in which the language was used, hence, he pointed out that the sociocultural factors embedded in the language were almost neglected. He then proposed a

theoretical framework called the "ethnography of speaking" (1962), which explained how important it was to study language not only from the traditional form-oriented linguistic perspective but also from sociolinguistic perspectives. The following statement by Hymes demonstrates his belief in considering sociocultural aspects of language very well:

> ...[The ethnography of speaking] fills the gap between what is usually described in grammars, and what is usually described in ethnographies. Both use speech as evidence of other patterns; neither brings it into focus in terms of its own patterns. In another sense, this is a question of what a child internalizes about speaking, beyond rules of grammar and a dictionary, while becoming a full-fledged member of its speech community. Or, it is a question of what a foreigner must learn about a group's verbal behavior *in order to participate appropriately and effectively in its activities. The ethnography of speaking is concerned with the situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking as an activity* in its own right. (1962, p.101, italics added)

As understood from his statement above, what Hymes tried to achieve was to gain a full picture of culture on the one hand and language on the other hand and to connect them to each other. He examined speech behaviour from the perspective of the joined force of anthoropology and linguistics. The commonly used term "communicative competence," which means the competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts (Brown, 1994, p.227), was coined by Hymes (1967, 1972). Such efforts by Hymes have had a great influence on the field of language teaching and learning, and most of the underlying dimensions of analysis of sociolinguistics were organized based on Hyme's proposal.

2.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics and Language Socialization

Hymes' emphasis described above can also be observed in other theories concerning

how to view language; they are Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory and Language

Socialization (LS) theory. These will be discussed separately, but it should be noted that SFL

takes a language socialization standpoint on language learning. SFL theory and LS theory

are pivotal ideas to present a clear picture of language and its use in a culture or society and

to understand the close relationships among them. The following sections will introduce SFL

and LS ideas in detail.

2.4.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

The key notion of Systemic Functional Linguistics as they relate to this study will be

explained in this section; how SFL perceives language, in what ways SFL is different from

the traditional approach to language, and how SFL perspective has been used in empirical

studies on language will be explained.

2.4.1.1 Halliday's Theory

Among a number of scholars in the field of SFL, the most distinguished scholar is

Michael Halliday. He published the book, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985,

1994), describing what SFL attempts to deal with in the examination of English grammar. In

the book, Halliday clearly states that the emphasis of SFL includes the use of language rather

than simply syntactical or vocabulary elements, as can be seen below:

> It is functional in the sense that it is designed to account for *how the language is*
> *used*. Every text – that is, everything that is said or written – unfolds in some context
> of use; furthermore, it is the uses of language that, over tens of thousands of
> generations, have shaped the system. Language has evolved to satisfy human needs;
> and the way it is organized is functional with respect to these needs – it is not
> arbitrary. (p.xii. bold letters in original, italics added.)

To put what Halliday mentioned in another way, SFL attempts to approach language by focusing on the questions, "how do people use language?" and "how is language structured for use?" (Eggins, 1994, p.2). In order for these questions to be answered, examinations of authentic social interactions in everyday life are key to SFL. Moreover, in such everyday social interactions, how people negotiate texts (i.e., written or spoken language) in order to make meanings with each other is also an important focus in SFL. In short, SFL perceives that "the general function of language is a semantic one" (Eggins, 1994, p.2).

2.4.1.2 SFL versus Traditional Approaches to Language

Based on Halliday's theory, Derewianka (1999) contrasts the functional approach to grammar with the traditional, grammar-oriented approach; in this contrast, Derewianka illustrates how their emphasis is different. The following Table 4 (p. 23) presents key points of the contrast between the two paradigms. As can be understood from the table, SFL takes a totally different stance on perceiving language from the traditional approach; SFL is interested in the functions and meaning which language can perform in social life, whereas the traditional approach stresses such aspects of language as grammatical rules, phonological analysis, or correctness/incorrectness of vocabulary or sentences. SFL views language with relation to real contexts where language is used by various people for various purposes whereas the traditional approach considers these social contexts to be unimportant.

Table 4: Functional linguistic approach versus traditional approach to grammar

Functional approach to grammar	Traditional approach to grammar
Is based on the functions that language serves within our lives. It is concerned with how language has evolved in our culture to enable use to do things.	Is based on syntax and grammatical categories. It is concerned with the forms and structure of language, and the labelling of grammatical units.
Sees language as resource for making meaning – a vast network of choices.	Sees language as a set of rules and conventions which allow us to make judgements about correctness and incorrectness.
Emphasized the text as a whole and how texts are patterned. Smaller units of language can be focused on as they occur within the whole text.	Operates at the level of the sentence and below, often building up from smaller to larger units (morpheme, phrase, clause, etc.).
Seeks to describe authentic language in use.	Generally uses idealised samples of language constructed to teach a particular point of grammar.

(Derewianka, 1999, p.19)

2.4.1.3 Empirical Studies from Functional Viewpoints

Various studies on language and language education were conducted on the basis of functional perspectives on language, that is, the idea that language is used by people for various purposes. To take an example, Hori (1986) argues that commonly discussed idea that females speak more politely than males is superficial and does not reflect social reality, and studied how Japanese honorifics and the language were used by males and females for different purposes in their daily lives. According to Hori, since the social networks of males and females in Japanese society are very different (i.e., job-related network for male and

home-related network for female), the purposes for using the language also differ between males and females; at workplaces where males are involved in more hierarchical relationships, whether to use honorifics or polite speech form or casual forms is determined solely by the person in higher status. In addition, solidarity among workers is essential at a workplace; therefore, the use of elaborate and euphemistic expressions with redundant honorifics will make the work less efficient. On the other hand, for females staying at home as housewives, nobody is obviously inferior to them in a status, except their children, which makes the speech style of females tend to be more polite to their interactants in the home-related network such as to their neighbours or even to delivery people.

As a significant finding of the study, Hori points out that "the crucial factor which decides the choice of linguistic forms is the social network within which the speaker operates; i.e. the kinds of people the speaker comes in contact with" (p.385), and he emphasizes that the choice of linguistic forms is made by language users depending on their purposes, the interlocutors, and the context. Thus, Hori's study was based on socio-functional perspectives and approached language in relation to human relationship and social context where language is used. This approach is very different to the traditional formalist approach to language that tends to ignore human relationships or social contexts.

Similar to Hori's approach to language is the study by Okamoto (1997) who studied the use of Japanese gendered sentence-final particles in authentic situations. Drawing on the actual conversational data collected from females of two different age groups (college students and middle-aged), Okamoto argued that, in contrast to the widely recognized normative usages of this unique linguistic form of the Japanese language, actual uses of sentence-final particles presented many variations; while it is widely studied and recognized

that Japanese sentence-final speech forms contain male forms (e.g., *zo, ze*) and female forms (e.g., *wa, kashira*), which are regarded as direct index of gender, the actual conversation data revealed various examples of contradiction of these normative usages of sentence-final forms. For instance, younger females did not necessarily use female forms, and, moreover, they sometimes used masculine forms in their conversations.

Okamoto analyzed this contradiction from a functional viewpoint, and claimed that the "actual use of language forms requires a consideration of multiple social aspects of the context" and "the choice of a linguistic form is not determined by a contextual feature; rather it is based on the speaker's judgement about the appropriateness of the linguistic form in a given situation" (p.809). That is to say, whether or not female speakers use masculine sentence-final particle *ze* or feminine sentence-final particle *wa* may not necessarily be associated with gender difference, but related to a function of the speaker's attitudes toward speech styles for men and women. Thus, Okamoto emphasized the way speakers' beliefs or concerns about language use lead to variations in the actual use and interpretation of indexical expressions.

The present study recognizes the studies by Hori and Okamoto as a valuable approach to examining what NNS learners want to do with the target language and what social meaning can be constructed through their use of the target language. In other words, this study attempts to investigate the use of language among human beings, relating it to language users' perceptions and purposes in a given context. What Halliday or other SFL scholars emphasize with regard to language use, thus, should be very relevant to this study. It is expected that the SFL approach to language is an important guide for analysis and interpretation of the raw data collected from real human interactions in real life.

2.4.2 Language Socialization (LS) Theory

As described earlier, Hymes believed that " ... a child internalizes about speaking, beyond rules of grammar and a dictionary, while *becoming a full-fledged member of its speech community*" (1962, p.101, italics added). A similar idea to this concept of Hymes's is found in the studies by scholars whose stance is language socialization (LS) theory. In this section, we will explore the theory of language socialization and mention various empirical studies based on this theory.

2.4.2.1 Studies by Ochs

From the anthropological stance, Ochs was interested in the process of children learning "pragmatics," that is, "the systematic use of language in context" (1979, p.7). Based on her own studies on child-caregiver interactions in Western Samoan society, and contrasting them with the ones in Anglo-American society, Ochs demonstrated that "…children develop concepts of a socioculturally structured universe through their participation in language activities" (1988, p.14).

As a finding of her examination, Ochs revealed that while Anglo-American child-caregiver (mostly mother) interactions are a "two-party conversational sequence in which child talks to mother, mother talks to child, child talks to mother, ... (ABABA...)" (1983, p.187), Samoan child-caregiver interactions are, on the other hand, "three-party conversations. Child speaks to mother, mother speaks to the child's older siblings, the siblings speak to the child ... (ABCA...)" (1983, p.188). Concerning this interactional style between children and caregivers, Ochs explained that, behind this ABC interaction, there lie Samoan sociocultural values of child-mother interactions. In Samoan society, where older

people are more authoritative than younger people, mothers, who are higher status caregivers, direct the older siblings of the child, who are lower status caregivers, to care for the child whenever the child demands his/her mother's attention. The ABC type of child-mother interactions, therefore, reflects these Samoan social values of the child-mother relationship.

Illustrating the influence of these cultural and social factors on children's acquisition of pragmatics, Ochs pointed out that

> Samoan children, then have quite different expectations from American children concerning how mothers will respond to their needs. ... Samoan children usually do not expect a direct verbal response to a notification of their needs. Indeed, under certain circumstances, such as when the mother is talking with another adult, the child learns to expect no response at all from the mother. (1983, p.188)

Thus, throughout her studies on Samoan villages, Ochs stressed the idea of children developing their pragmatics through participating in interactions with adults in the community.

2.4.2.2 Studies by Schieffelin

Another researcher who also examined the process of children's acquisition of language and pragmatics is Schieffelin. Through her intense investigations of infants' and young children's development of communicative competence in the Kaluli community in Papua New Gunea, she discovered that children's very playful and rhythmic sound play was terminated by the mother since the mother thought the children did not speak "good talk." Schieffelin relates this incident to Kaluli ideas about language development and the broader notion of taboo, and explains that Kaluli people neither use baby talk (BT) words nor

employ other features of BT, since "Kaluli feel that even young children should not hear or be encouraged to use childish forms" (1983, p.182). What lies behind this Kaluli people's idea is the fact that language is considered to be an important means of social control in the Kaluli community, where people essentially make their own way. Because of this high value placed on language, even young children in Kaluli community are taught by their mothers to express themselves in well-formed and adult-like language.

2.4.3 What is Language Socialization?

To restate what Ochs and Schieffelin demonstrated in their studies, children's linguistic competence is greatly affected by social and cultural systems, and "…children's performance is nested in social life, and as such is responsive to social norms, expectations, values, and beliefs" (Ochs, 1988, p.30). In other words, "the acquisition of language is embedded in culture, and as the children are learning one, they are also learning the other" (Schieffelin, 1983, p.184). On the other hand, children come to understand the cultural norms, moral values and social organization in the community through the medium of language. Thus, it is obvious that "acquisition of linguistic knowledge and acquisition of sociocultural knowledge are interdependent (Ochs, 1988, p.14). Schieffelin and Ochs (1986a, b) call this process language socialization, that is to say, socialization through language and socialization to use language (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). Through this language socialization process, "children develop concepts of a socioculturally structured universe" (Ochs, 1988, p.14) through their roles as members of the community to which they belong. In short, language socialization draws on anthropological, sociological, and

psychological approaches to the study of linguistic and social competence within a social group (Schieffelin, 1990).

2.4.4 Consciously Intentional Language Socialization

The Ochs and Schieffelin studies deal with interactions between young children and caregivers in the home, where the child is learning the first language and the first culture in the context of the first culture. This thesis, however, deals with interactions between adult learners and a teacher in the language classroom, where the adults are learning Japanese as a foreign language and Japanese culture in the context of Canadian culture. As Mohan (ms.) points out, these classroom interactions differ from the mother-child interactions in that they are more consciously intentional in two senses.

In the first sense, which is a general one, these classroom interactions are consciously intentional because they are part of formal education in an institution, and formal education is a conscious and intentional process. For example, teachers plan courses, and students enrol for courses and can protest if a course does not match its description. In the second sense, which is much more specific, the teacher studied in this research consciously and intentionally planned the learning interactions as language socialization. Mohan (ms.) notes that this is less surprising than it may seem since the North American education tradition has incorporated certain central features of consciously intentional language socialization for a long time, though he points out that there are important questions about *which* features of language socialization have been incorporated, *what degree* of conscious intentionality is present, and how explicit the available theory is. Mohan quotes Dewey in *Democracy and Education*:

To say that education is a social function, securing direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong, is to say in effect that education will vary with the quality of life that prevails in a group...A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (1926, p.81, 99)

In other words, learners learn democracy through participation in a democratic society, and so teachers in a democracy should not merely teach about democracy, but should socialize students through participation and interaction in democratic practices in the school itself as a democratic institution. Mohan goes on to say that since this participation occurs through discourse, this means in effect that such teachers should consciously and intentionally plan these learning interactions as a form of language socialization into democratic practices. Mohan concludes that reflection on the social practice, in its various forms, is the major feature that distinguishes conscious and intentional language socialization. However, he points out that this is not to say that teachers planning for language socialization do so in the terms of a theory that a researcher in language socialization would recognize. There is no requirement that they explicitly reflect upon theoretical concepts such as the social practice (or activity) as the unit of analysis of meaning, or the theory/practice distinction between reflecting on and engaging in the social practice. It is the examination of reflection which differentiates the present thesis from Ochs's and Schieffelin's studies.

2.4.5 Language Socialization in School Cultures: Three Empirical Studies

This section will now discuss three studies of language socialization in school cultures, raising the questions of reflection on the social practice and conscious and intentional language socialization. The first study deals with these issues only by implication. The second deals with them partially through research procedures and the third explicitly incorporates them.

The first study is a report by Willett (1995) whose investigation was on first grade ESL children entering a mainstream class at an elementary school in the United States. From a language socialization orientation, Willett examined the process by which ESL children became more competent both in English proficiency and in the sociocultural aspects of language and of life in a new school culture. As a finding, it was reported that these ESL children's participation in activities in class and interactions with their teachers and classmates contributed to them becoming successful members in a new culture. Willett described what the children learned in a new school culture as very complex in nature:

> The children ... were not just learning English language and literacy. They were
> attempting to become competent members of the classroom and community culture.
> For these children acquiring English language and literacy was essential for
> membership, and their drive to learn was unrelenting. But classroom and community
> cultures are complex, and becoming a competent member requires navigating the
> competing agendas of its subcultures. (p.498-499)

Willett's report illustrated very well how much the language socialization process contributes to L2 learners becoming competent both in linguistic and in sociocultural components in a different community. Although conscious and intentional aspects of language socialization are not highlighted by Willett's study, it should be noted that the

report is meant to reach teachers of first grade ESL children entering mainstream classes, and thus raise teacher awareness of language socialization processes.

The second study is provided by Morita (2000) who attempted to discover ESL adults' language socialization processes in one type of culture: an academic graduate school setting. In her study, Morita looked into oral academic presentations conducted by students in a TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) graduate program, and questioned how graduate students became competent members of the academic community. These graduate students were assigned to give an oral presentation on a selected topic in class and were expected to lead a discussion related to the topic.

According to Morita, these graduate students (both NS and NNS), in spite of being experienced teachers in various schools who were used to presenting in front of their own students, were new to the academic environment, and therefore experienced several difficulties in giving an effective, informative, and captivating academic oral presentation. The activity (an academic oral presentation) was actually very challenging for most of the students, yet Morita revealed that students used a variety of strategies to make their presentations more effective, and that the presentations turned out to be successful in general.

As a significant finding of the study, Morita pointed out that "...students gradually became apprenticed into the academic discourse by negotiating with instructors and peers as they prepared for, observed, performed..." (p.302). In other words, members of academic community were able to become more competent in performing as a graduate student through their participation in academic activities in graduate courses and through their negotiation with other members of the community. Thus, Morita, from an educational point

of view, proved that it is important to recognize the value of language socialization taking place in a classroom; there is a high potential for students with less competence to perform more successfully through their participation in activities and through their interactions with more competent members (e.g., teachers or peers) in a school culture.

Conscious and intentional aspects of language socialisation are slightly more prominent in Morita's study than in Willett's. As part of her research procedures, Morita interviewed the graduate students about their presentations as well as observing them. Thus the graduate students were required to reflect on the social practice of academic oral presentation during the research process. It is not difficult to see how a teacher can make such reflections on a social practice a consciously planned part of a course which is aimed at learning that practice.

Conscious and intentional elements play a greater part in a study by Mohan and Smith (1992) which looked into adult L2 learners becoming more successful in their studies through their experience of the language socialization process. This study looked at a group of Chinese students who participated in a graduate-level adult education course at a Canadian university. Mohan and Smith paid special attention to the fact that these Chinese graduate students, despite of their limited English skills and unfamiliar school culture in Canada, completed their course successfully.

As a major reason for this Chinese students' success, Mohan and Smith pointed out students' participation in a number of language activities such as lectures by professors, group discussions with Canadian students, group tutorials, and written assignments for evaluation. Regarding the Chinese students' language socialization process, Mohan and Smith described it as follows:

Participation in the cultural activity of program planning was a central thread. ... During the course, these students, or novices, became more expert in the culturally organised and recognised activity of program planning.... Their progress was reflected in an increase in control of the activity, as they performed their assignments more confidently and successfully... There was considerable evidence that the instructor, as expert, had structured the course interaction and the series of assignments so that the novices could participated in the activity and undertake tasks that were beyond their unaided capabilities, but within their 'zone of proximal development'. (p.98)

There are three main points to note about this as an example of conscious and intentional language socialization:

(1) The instructor consciously and intentionally engaged the students in the social practice that was the aim of the course. The social practice was planning a program in adult education, and the instructor divided the planning process into a series of steps that the students did, consciously and intentionally, as a series of assignments.

(2) The instructor consciously and intentionally designed the course to provide for reflection on social practice. He designed the lectures of the course and the readings to provide his reflections on the background knowledge for each coming assignment, and he arranged for group discussion for student reflection as students worked over each assignment. The students were aware that the course was designed for these reflective purposes.

(3) The instructor did *not* consciously and intentionally design the course as one where a second language was learned along with sociocultural knowledge. He designed the course as a subject-matter course in program planning. It happened that the course favoured second language learning, since the Chinese students succeeded in the reading and writing required

in their assignments despite their limited abilities in English, but this occurred incidentally and was not the teacher's intention for the course.

2.4.6 Intentional Language Socialization in the Present Study

The course that is the focus of this study *is* designed as one where the second language is learned along with sociocultural knowledge. As will be shown, it has three features of intentional language socialization: (a) it intentionally engages students in a social practice; (b) it provides for reflection on the practice by both teacher and students; and (c) it aims for language learning and sociocultural learning. Feature (a) is particularly problematic in courses for foreign language learners, and we will devote most of the next section to a discussion of it. (The reader is reminded of the widely accepted distinction between 'second language learning', which is conducted in the country where the second language is spoken, and 'foreign language learning', which is conducted in a country where the second language is not spoken.)

2.5 SFL and LS for Foreign Language Learners

As the three empirical studies of LS introduced in an earlier section show, learners' exposure to the target culture, that is, learners participating in cultural activities and interacting with other people in the target culture, contributes to learners coming to acquire cultural knowledge to a great extent. In other words, if learners are exposed to the target culture, or if learners live in the target culture, there are a lot of opportunities for them to experience cultural activities and to interact with other members very easily.

If learners do not live in the target culture, on the other hand, the probability of learners experiencing cultural activities and interacting with other members of the culture is extremely low. It is often the case that when learners learn a language as a foreign language (FL), the contact with the target culture for learners is only in their classes and through their teacher(s). FL courses, at whatever institutions, are usually held just a few hours a week, and once the class is over, learners go back to their own culture outside the classroom with no or little exposure to the target culture. Considering this reality, it can be assumed that, in the case of learning a language as a foreign language, neither the language socialization process can be practiced nor can learners appreciate the functions of language in authentic contexts, and therefore the sociocultural aspects of language use can hardly be properly acquired by FL learners.

2.5.1 LS in a FL Classroom

In response to this concern, a longitudinal study by Ohta (1999) clearly suggested that one type of cultural aspect of language, namely "interactional routines" could be learned well by adult learners of the Japanese language through their participation in classroom activities. In this study, Ohta concentrated on the students who were in first year university Japanese language courses and on their development of interactional routines, defined as "a sequence of exchanges in which one speaker's utterance, accompanied by appropriate nonverbal behavior, calls forth one of a limited set of responses by one or more other participants" (Peters & Boggs, 1986, p.81). Based upon her analysis of the data collected over the academic year, Ohta discovered that students were able to develop these culturally formulated modes of expressions (i.e., interactional routines) into more culturally

appropriate manners over time through their repeated participation in the routines of the classroom with teachers and classmates. As a concluding remark, Ohta demonstrated that if adult language learners were provided with opportunity for participation in classroom routines, they would become more skilful in their use, and become able to exploit their possibilities. She further stressed the importance of learner participations in cultural activities in a FL classroom on a regular basis as a language socialization process for adult FL learners.

Ohta's study stimulates present educators in language education to continue to search for how well and effectively FL learners can be exposed to a new culture and have opportunities to participate in cultural activities and interact with members of the culture. Ohta clearly shows that even if learners do not live in the target culture, it is still possible for them to experience the culture if teachers provide them with enough opportunities for interacting with NS (e.g., NS teachers themselves) in the target language. Through the interactions with NS in the target language, learners may realize something new or different as to how NS use the language and how NS deal with the language in addition to realizing how grammatical rules, sentence structures, or pronunciation are formulated. Although the learners' exposure to the culture is very limited in these types of learning opportunities, they still help FL learners realize that the language they produce when interacting with NS is not merely the grammatical unit that they have learned from their textbooks, but their language functions as constructing meaning with the interlocutors. It is meaningful, then, to provide this type of learning, since FL learners may realize that they and their interlocutors actually "make meanings with each other" (Eggins, 1994, p.2) through the use of the language. For this reason, teachers of FL, for the purpose of helping learners acquire sociocultural

knowledge, need to consider how they could create opportunities in which their learners can interact with the target culture.

2.5.2 Intentional Language Socialization in the Oral Interview Activity

The present study responds to this need to create opportunities for interaction. The teacher can create these opportunities to interact with the target culture by organizing such activities as conducting oral interviews with NS. Although these activities are more timeconsuming and challenging, they are more authentic. In fact, this is the activity that the present study examined thoroughly. In the oral interview activity examined in this study, students in a university Japanese course met with NS Japanese and carried out interviews in the Japanese language.

As stated above, the course that is the focus of this thesis has three features of intentional language socialization: It intentionally engages students in a social practice, it provides for reflection on the practice by both teacher and students, and it aims for language learning and sociocultural learning. The oral interview with an NS of Japanese provides the first feature. What of the other two?

In this course, both teacher and students reflected on the social practice. Teacher reflection was shared with the students in part by teacher presentation of information about Japanese honorifics. This was not limited to the "traditional" description of honorifics from a formal point of view; it dealt with honorifics more functionally, but it did so in a very general way in order to leave room for the students' own perceptions of the functional nature of honorifics. Student reflection was provided for by student discussion before and after the

interviews with NS Japanese. In other words, the teacher planned to allow space for the learner to be a 'reflective practitioner' engaging in the social practice.

With regard to the aim of coordinating language learning and sociocultural learning, this was definitely an aim of the teacher. The teacher regarded the interview as an opportunity for students to learn the appropriate use of honorifics in an appropriate sociocultural context. At a general level, this aim was shared by the students, who also regarded the interview as a means to learning honorifics in context. However, there was a difference in that the teacher had a much deeper understanding of how honorifics and sociocultural context were specifically linked in interaction.

The researcher in language socialization typically works with the social practice (or social activity or social situation) as a unit of meaning (see, e.g., Ochs, 1988). In fact, the present researcher needed to treat the social practice as a unit of meaning in order to do justice to the three features of intentional language socialization mentioned above-- engagement in a social practice, reflection on the practice, and integration of language learning and sociocultural learning. The theory of the social practice or activity as a unit of meaning will be discussed in chapter three on research methodology, because it is central to the research approach of this thesis. This is not to deny that the social practice is a unit of meaning for the teacher and students, but it is to emphasize the point that for research purposes the concept of a social practice needs to be addressed from the point of view of theory.

2.6 Experiential Learning

The idea of learners' engagement in social practice and their reflection on the practice

described above is, in fact, closely related to the theory of experiential learning in education. Experiential learning stresses immediate personal experience as the focal point for learning (Kolb, 1984; Kohonen, 1992), and encourages various types of first-hand experience by learners as an important part of learning. Although learner experience is highly respected in experiential learning, it must be noted that experience alone is not necessarily learning; it must be turned into learning by thought (Herbert 1995; Kohonen 1992). In the light of this transformation from simple experience to learning with thought, Kolb (1984) also believes that learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience and demonstrates a cyclic model of four developmental stages of experiential learning: learners' (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation. Based on this cyclic model, Kohonen (1992) emphasizes the significance of learner reflection in the process, since it provides a bridge between experience and theoretical conceptualization, which transforms simple experiences into educative learning.

Thus, what is stressed in both Mohan's theory and the theory of experiential learning is that learners' involvement in practice should be well integrated into their involvement in their reflections on the practice. The oral interview activity in the present study is a type of experiential learning; therefore, students' involvement in social practice and in their reflections on the practice will be the major focus of the examination.

2.7 Research Questions

This study does not take language learners as "information-processing automata", but as active human agents acting intentionally according to local norms to achieve certain ends

(Harré, 1993, p.11). This study also utilizes the SFL and LS theories; it views the language as a semiotic system for making meaning in daily life, deeply influenced by its cultural and social context, and views learning language as an interconnected process which occurs simultaneously with learning sociocultural knowledge. Therefore, whether or not the Japanese language that the learners produce is grammatically correct is not the major issue in the study. Rather, it attempts to understand how the Japanese language is used by native speakers (NS) and by non-native speakers (NNS), and what meaning lies in the use of the Japanese language by NS Japanese and by NNS learners. It also attempts to explore what will happen both linguistically and non-linguistically in interactions between NS and NNS. Moreover, understanding language learners' perceptions of the appropriate use of the Japanese language will also be a focus of the study.

In the context of the issues stated above, the purpose of the study is threefold: to investigate the appropriateness, both linguistically and non-linguistically, of Japanese language learners during their interactions with NS Japanese, to investigate NS and NNS' perceptions of appropriateness concerning the Japanese language and its use, and to consider the learners' process of relating interactions and perceptions (i.e. their process as reflective practitioners). The specific research questions set for pursuing the purposes of the study are:

1. Can adult learners of Japanese language as a foreign language produce the appropriate linguistic forms (i.e., Japanese honorific forms) and use them in a socioculturally appropriate manner while interacting with NS Japanese people? With regard to the traditional approach, are the textbook practice exercises likely to be an adequate preparation for authentic interactions?

2. What are the perceptions (or 'theories') of learners with regard to "appropriateness" embedded in the Japanese language? Are their perceptions the same as those of NS Japanese? With regard to the traditional approach, is the textbook's formal rather than functional statement of the rules about honorifics adequate?

3. Is there evidence of the learner acting as a reflective practitioner engaged in constructing an understanding of honorifics and their use? In other words, do these learners act as 'reflective practitioners', reconstructing their 'theories' as a result of their engagement in the interactive practice? With regard to the traditional approach, are they engaged in a one-way transmission process of learning, applying received honorific rules to interaction?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD OF INQUIRY

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to conduct the present study. Section 3.1 explains how the research design was implemented in a particular setting, including the procedure of data collection. Section 3.2 shows the theoretical framework used to design the research upon which the present study was based. The procedure of the data analysis will be described in Section 3.3.

3.1 Research Methods

The process of deciding which procedures to use is a funnelling process, a process of developing an understanding of the research issues (Duff, 1995). The research issues in the present study were very broad at the beginning; they were how non-native speakers (NNS) of a second or foreign language interact with native speakers (NS) of the target language, what will happen among them while interacting with each other, and how NNS learners use language and what their perceptions of their language use are. These general issues were gradually developed and specified as the process of the research proceeded, and eventually, an understanding of the research issues was established. The primary focus of this study was on the learners of a language; therefore, any methodological procedures employed in the study held the purpose of understanding language learners at a deeper level. Learners' actions, perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and any other issues surrounding the learners were all considered.

3.1.1 Sampling Procedure

When selecting a site and participants, the most important consideration is "what information you want to obtain, and who has access to that information" (Palys, 1997, p.123). Therefore, in this study, the procedure was purposeful in that the participants chosen were expected to be information-rich and to provide useful insights about the phenomenon in which the researcher was interested.

3.1.2   Research Site

This study was conducted at a university in Canada. The details of the university and the class examined in the study are as follows.

3.1.2.1   University

The Department to which the Japanese language program in this university belongs offers a variety of Japanese language courses as credit courses for those who wish to study in university-level Japanese courses. The Japanese language program in the department is rather big, offering a number of different courses for the undergraduate level, ranging from very introductory Japanese courses (100 level) to advanced courses (400 level).

3.1.2.2 Class

Among a number of Japanese courses, one class at the intermediate level, Japanese 210 (pseudonym), was chosen for this study. The reasons for choosing this class are as follows. First of all, the students in the intermediate level of Japanese were chosen as being most suitable for this study since they had already studied the basic structures of the

Japanese language and were therefore expected to be able to carry out basic conversations with NS speakers. At the same time, it was expected that these students were less able to speak with NS fluently with no problems, unlike the students in the more advanced levels; hence, they still needed to make great efforts to carry on conversations with NS. The researcher wanted to examine the efforts that students might make during their interactions.

Secondly, among several intermediate courses at this university, Japanese 210 was chosen since the researcher learned that the instructor of this class was making plans for her students to conduct an oral interview activity with NS Japanese in order for the students to practice the Japanese honorifics that they had learned in class. Since the major reason of the researcher carrying out this study is to investigate learners' language use during their interactions with NS in the target language, this plan seemed to be very suitable for what the researcher wished to investigate. The details of the focus activity, that is, an oral interview activity in which students were engaged and the researcher observed, will be described more precisely in a later section.

Japanese 210 was a course for the students with an intermediate level of Japanese to improve their oral and written skills; therefore, the primary focus of the class was on students' speaking and writing practices throughout the course, and reading practice or grammar study was less emphasized. The course began in September, 1998, and ended in April, 1999, running over a period of about 7 months, following the academic year of the university. The class regularly met twice a week for two hours each time. At the time when this research was conducted, 26 students were enrolled in the class.

The main instructor of the class was Mrs. Ono (pseudonym), who was a native Japanese speaker with years of experience teaching Japanese at various schools. There was a

Teaching Assistant (TA), Ms. Sato (pseudonym), who was also a native Japanese and was working with Mrs. Ono in the class from September. In terms of instructors' responsibilities, Mrs. Ono was usually responsible for the first hour of the class, teaching mainly about written compositions in Japanese. Ms. Sato was responsible for the second half of the class, in which the emphasis was on oral practice, using the textbook assigned to Japanese 210. Although Mrs. Ono and Ms. Sato had different responsibilities for the class, they worked as a team, helping and contacting each other during and outside of class, so that they would be aware of what was going on in class if there were any problems with the entire class or with any individual student.

3.1.3 Participants

The participants in this study form three groups: student participants, Japanese participants, and the class instructor participants.

3.1.3.1 Student Participants

The students who participated in this study were enrolled in Japanese 210. They had already completed the introductory level (i.e., 100 level) Japanese course at this university or other institutions before registering in Japanese 210. Japanese 210 was a credit course, so all the students were planning to earn six academic credits from this course.

The student participant composition was very diverse; there were 24 student participants (10 males and 14 females), ranging in age from 19 to 24 years old, with an average age of 20.5 years old. Although five students were majoring in Japanese or Asian Studies, the rest were majoring in a variety of subjects, such as Commerce, Economics, or

Linguistics. The history of the students' time spent studying the Japanese language varied from 10 months to 6 years.

With regard to students' ethnicity, 12 students referred to Hong Kong as their native country, seven referred to Taiwan and five referred to Canada. Furthermore, 13 students referred to Cantonese as their native language, seven referred to Mandarin, five referred to English and two referred to Taiwanese (three students referred to two languages as their native languages). Although closer to 80 percent of the student participants were non-native speakers of English, it was expected that there would be no communication problems between the participants and researcher due to the lack of English comprehension; students who are non-native speakers of English who wish to study at this university must have a very high level of English proficiency both in oral and in written skills for university entrance, and all the student participants had met the English requirement when they had been admitted to the university. Therefore, the participants who were non-native speakers of English were considered to be equipped with a high level of English proficiency. In fact, English was the common language spoken between the students and researcher most of the time.

A few students had lived in Japan on exchange programs or for other reasons, whereas eight students had never been to Japan by the time the present study was conducted. This point should be taken into account; since the activity in which the students were engaged was an oral interview with NS Japanese, it was presumed that the students who had lived in Japan were perhaps more used to communicating with NS in Japanese and hence, may have had higher skills in speaking and listening than those who had never been to Japan. Detailed information about the student participants are summarized in Appendix 1.

3.1.3.2 Japanese Participants

The Japanese participants in this study were visiting professors from Japan. They were staying in Canada for their studies or in order to do research at the university. There were nine professors who agreed to participate in this study. Of these nine, seven were actually university professors in Japan and came to Canada as visiting professors during their sabbatical period. The other two were researchers at laboratories and came to Canada as visiting researchers. Although these two people were not really "university professors," they met the criteria which had been set by the researcher for the selection of the Japanese participants and were therefore considered as "professors" in this study.

In order for students to experience some of the more natural and authentic ways in which Japanese people speak, behave, and interact, the researcher needed some criteria for the selection of the participants. Those criteria were as follows. First of all, the Japanese participants should not be instructors of the Japanese language. Japanese language instructors are generally more used to the language that Japanese language learners speak, or "learners' talk," such as grammatically incorrect speech, incomplete sentences, or accented Japanese. Hence, the researcher, who was also a Japanese language instructor, was afraid that Japanese language instructors, compared to ordinary Japanese people who were not used to interacting with non-Japanese people, could guess what learners were trying to say more easily, even if the language produced by the learners was incorrect or incomplete.

Secondly, the Japanese participants should not have had been in Canada or North America (or other countries) for a long period of time. The oral interview activity in which students engaged in was for students to experience a part of Japanese culture, that is, how Japanese people speak, behave, and interact while communicating with other people.

Therefore, it was preferable that Japanese participants were less North Americanized (or had less exposure to living in other countries), and still kept the traits, characteristics, or manners of the Japanese people.

The third criterion for the selection of the Japanese participants was whether or not the Japanese participants were old enough for the student participants. As mentioned, students' interaction with NS in natural settings was the major purpose of this oral interview activity; therefore, it was necessary that the Japanese participants be far older and higher in status than the students. Knowing that students tend to communicate with their young interactants (e.g., students in their twenties) in more casual and informal ways through her usual interactions with students, the researcher was concerned that the students might feel too relaxed if they found that the professor was young, and as a consequence, they might not be obliged to use honorific forms. The researcher did not wish students to look at the professor as a friend, and believed that the distance between the professors and the students had to exist and that the relationship between the two parties should not be too casual, so that students would feel that it was appropriate to use honorific forms throughout the interviews.

In sum, based on the above three criteria, the selection of the Japanese participants were decided as follows. Japanese participants were visiting professors or researchers from Japan who:

1. were not instructors of the Japanese language,

2. had been living in Canada or North America (or other countries) no more than three years, and

3. were in their thirties or above.

Regarding criterion two, one professor had been living outside Japan for more than three years at the time of the oral interview activity. The researcher had to make a special exception for this professor since it was very difficult to find Japanese participants who met all the criteria. More details about the Japanese participants are presented in Appendix 5.

3.1.3.3 Class Instructor Participants

As explained earlier, there were two instructors in Japanese 210 who participated in this study. Mrs. Ono was the main instructor, and had full responsibility for the course. She had several years of teaching experience in various Japanese classes, including a few years of experience at this university. Ms. Sato was a Teaching Assistant (TA) who was helping Mrs. Ono with every aspect of the course. She also had taught Japanese in various school settings, and this was her second year as a TA for the Japanese program at the university. Both Mrs. Ono and Ms. Sato were native speakers of Japanese.

Mrs. Ono and Ms. Sato had been teaching separately in the regular classes since the beginning of the school year, that is, Mrs. Ono was responsible for teaching writing and Ms. Sato was responsible for oral practice. Therefore, the actual preparation for this oral activity was carried out in Ms. Sato's classes, although the original idea of the interview activity was proposed by Mrs. Ono. For this reason, Mrs. Ono and Ms. Sato participated in the present study in different ways; Mrs. Ono provided the researcher with her perceptions and insights regarding the students in this class, the oral interview activity, students' learning, and her beliefs for (language) learning. Ms. Sato, on the other hand, participated in this study by presenting her actual instructions and interactions with students in her classes.

3.1.4   The Role of the Researcher

The researcher attended this class on a regular basis (twice a week) throughout the academic year. She did so in order to familiarize herself with the entire class and each individual student. By the time of the data collection, she had already participated in this class for more than five months; therefore, she had gained relevant information about each student (e.g., name, personality, level of Japanese, and so on). Students had also been accustomed to having her in class, talking with her, and asking her questions without any hesitation. Hence, it was less likely that the existence of the researcher hindered the students from acting in an unnatural manner when the researcher was observing their regular classroom activities.

When collecting the data in regular classes, the researcher set her role as a moderate participant observer. According to Spradley (1980), "moderate participation occurs when the ethnographer seeks to maintain a balance between being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation" (p.60). The researcher believed that the balance between being an insider and an outsider enabled her to observe and appraise the students' everyday life in the classroom as a participant and as an observer.

3.1.5   Focus Activity – Oral Interviews with Japanese Professors

The focus activity that was investigated in this study is students conducting an oral interview with NS Japanese professors. This activity was planned by the class instructor, Mrs. Ono, at the beginning of the school year, in September 1998, and was actually executed six month later, in March 1999.

3.1.5.1 Purpose of the Oral Interview Activity

Since one of the major foci of the course was to improve students' oral skills, as described in an earlier section, Mrs. Ono designed this oral interview activity as an oral exercise for the students to use the Japanese language, and in particular, Japanese honorific forms. The students had already learned about the grammatical aspects of honorific forms in September. Therefore, this oral interview activity in March was the time for students to practice what they had learned from the textbooks in actual interactions with superior NS Japanese people. Mrs. Ono knew that this activity was very challenging for the students, so she decided not to mark each student's performance in the interviews for the class evaluation. Mrs. Ono particularly emphasized the "appropriateness" of language use in actual communication rather than grammatical correctness. She hoped that this oral interview activity would raise students' awareness of the appropriate use of honorifics (and Japanese language).

3.1.5.2 Procedures of the Oral Interview Activity

Students' oral interviews were conducted according to the following procedures; 26 students in the class were first divided into nine groups of three students in each group (two students in one group), and asked to give convenient times for them to meet with a professor. According to the students' stated preferred times and the professors' schedules, Ms. Sato decided which group would meet with which professor. Due to the very busy schedules of the professors and also of the students, all the interviews had to be conducted outside of class time. Instead, Mrs Ono, later, cancelled one class in return, so that the students did not have to spend extra hours on this interview activity.

When the interview dates approached, students were given the chance to prepare for the interviews in two of Ms. Sato's classes. In these classes, students in groups worked with their group-partners making up questions to ask the professors, discussing how they could organize their interviews, who would ask which questions, and so on. Ms. Sato circulated from group to group, helping the students mainly with vocabulary or expressions in Japanese. Sometimes, students asked Ms Sato such question as "Do you think it is OK to ask the professor this kind of question?", so Ms. Sato helped them with some of the non-linguistic aspects of the interview as well. Halfway through one class, Ms. Sato brought up an important issue and asked everybody to think about it; that was "What kinds of questions SHOULD YOU NOT ask the professors?" In response to Ms. Sato, students came up with such questions as "How old are you?", "What's your salary?" or "Are you married?" Through this interaction with Ms. Sato, students seemed to understand that asking the professors something too personal was not polite in this interview. These interactions among students and between students and Ms. Sato were recorded by the researcher as a part of the data.

On the days of the interviews, the three students in each group showed up 10-15 minutes earlier than the appointed time. The researcher distributed to each student participant a sheet of questions about their thoughts before the interview. After students had filled out the sheet for the researcher, they entered the assigned professor's office and carried out their interviews. Since two of the professors did not have their own offices in the university, the students who were going to interview these two met the professors in coffee shops outside of university campus. The researcher, with the permission of both the students and professors, went to all nine interviews. Most of the interviews lasted about one hour,

with one exception, which lasted almost two hours. These interviews were tape-recorded by the researcher for transcription and further analysis. Immediately after each group of students interviewed a professor, the researcher interviewed the group about their oral interview. Later the researcher also interviewed the professor about the oral interview.

As the follow up to the activity, a brief class discussion session was held in Ms. Sato's class about a week later. In the discussion, students freely gave their opinions about the interviews, such as how they liked the interviews, what was good and/or not good about the interviews, what their performance was like, what they learned through the interviews, and so on. The researcher recorded what students said during the discussion. When the discussion was over, the researcher distributed to each of the student participants a list of questions to aid written reflection, and asked each participant to write down his/her own opinion. Unlike the class discussion which was very open, this written reflection was more private, so it was expected that even shyer students or the students who were hesitant to give different opinions from their classmates could express their honest thoughts about the interviews more comfortably on the written forms. Although student participants were asked to write their names, none of the students seemed to mind offering their honest opinions.

3.1.6 Data Collection Procedures

The students' oral interview activity was conducted in March, 1999, which was the time when all the data were collected. For data collection, multiple methods, or triangulation of data was used, since "no single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.12), and it [triangulation] can "secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2). In addition,

according to McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead (1996), "good researchers develop monitoring skills that enable them to triangulate their data – that is, get data from more than one source to use as evidence to support a particular explanation" (p.42). Hence, the present study involved collecting different types of data, including: (1) the researcher observations and field-notes, (2) the researcher interviews with participants, (3) audio-taped conversations (i.e., discourse) between students and Japanese professors and (4) students' written reflections. In short, this study attempted to triangulate several types of data to interpret the phenomena surrounding the participants and the activity in a more in-depth manner, and also to support the explanation of its interpretation established through the data analysis.

3.1.6.1 Observations

What people do is clearly of interest to social scientists (Palys, 1997, p.208), and observations are commonly used to look at people engaging in social practices. In the present study, what the students and the Japanese professors did when interacting with each other, and what happened among or with the participants, were of the most interest to the researcher; therefore, the interviews (i.e., interactions) between students and professors were closely observed. As Palys states, "observation as a research strategy involves *looking with a purpose*" (p.191, italics in original). All nine sets of interviews were observed with the purpose of finding out what students would deal with verbally and non-verbally to conduct an oral interview and what Japanese professors would do or how they would react to the students. While observing, the researcher took personal notes on what was going on among the interlocutors. She, in particular, paid attention to whether or not students did something

inappropriate or unnatural, using her own knowledge of Japanese culture and society as a native Japanese to judge the appropriateness of the interactions.

Luckily, the nine interviews between students and Japanese professors were conducted at different times, and the researcher could observe all the interviews. The discourse among the interlocutors were audiotaped in order to be analyzed in detail later. During the observations, the researcher sat near the students in order to be able to hear what they said and to see what they did non-verbally. At each interview, two small cassette-recorders were placed between the students and the professor to tape their conversations.

When conducting the observations, there was one important consideration for the researcher. The researcher had anticipated that some students would become nervous in the face-to-face interviews with the Japanese professors and might not be able to say any words in the middle of the conversations, and might ask the researcher for help. The researcher, personally, was willing to help them in order for all the students to feel satisfied with their performance after the interviews. Yet she tried to minimize giving students any help since she wanted to make the interactions between the students and professors as natural as possible, and she was also interested in how students would cope with problems such as being unable to find proper words in Japanese or forming proper sentences during the conversations. In short, the researcher was trying to be "a complete observer" (Palys, 1997, p.199) while observing student participants' oral interviews with Japanese professors, and to do her best "to remain relatively inconspicuous, doing nothing other than observe with the full knowledge of all who are present that that's why the researcher is there" (Palys, 1997, p.199).

3.1.6.2 Interviews

According to Spradley (1979), interviews, especially ethnographic interviews, are "one strategy for getting people to talk about what they know" (p.9), and are used to reveal the theory of an activity. In the present study, the researcher carried out two different kinds of interviews: the researcher interviews with the student participants and the researcher interviews with the Japanese professor participants.

The former were the interviews that were conducted immediately after the students completed their oral interview activity with Japanese professors. When each group finished their oral interviews, students in the group were asked to go outside of the professors' offices (or moved to a place where the professors were not present), and were invited to talk about their interviews as a group rather than individually, their overall impressions, what was good and what was not good, how they were feeling, how they found the professors, and the like, on the spot. These interviews were conducted in English, the language that the researcher usually used to communicate with students.

When the researcher finished her interviews with students and all the students had left, she started interviewing the Japanese professors. This time, the interviews were given in Japanese in order for all of the professors to be able to express themselves more easily and freely. The researcher's questions were open-ended, trying to draw out each professor's honest impressions and opinions concerning students' performance, such as how they felt about students' language proficiency (e.g., honorific forms or grammatical aspects) and about the students' uses of the language (e.g., whether or not they were natural and/or appropriate), if there were any other issues which the professors noticed were unnatural or if they felt uncomfortable with the students' performance, and the like. For the sample

questions which were asked of both the student and professor participants, see Appendix 2 and 6.

3.1.6.3 Written Records

Another type of data collected in this study is students' written records. Among these written records, two different types of records were collected: students' thoughts before their interviews and students' reflections on their performance and the interview activity after the interviews. These written records, being students' reflections, were used as data to reveal students' perceptions or theories concerning Japanese honorific forms and the interview activity.

As for the first type of record, students' thoughts before the interviews, student participants were asked to write down what they were feeling and thinking right before each group meeting with their professors for their interviews on the sheet distributed by the researcher. On the sheet, there were already several open-ended questions prepared by the researcher; therefore, student participants wrote whatever they wanted to express freely. The second type of record, students' reflections after the interviews, was in a similar format. In the reflection papers, there were several open-ended questions prepared, and the student participants gave their own responses to the questions in sentence or paragraph forms. In both cases, students were asked to write their reflections individually with no discussions with their classmates or instructors; therefore, it could be expected that, although students were asked to write their names on the sheet, each student, in particular, shyer or introverted students could express their honest thoughts in the written records more freely compared to the post-interview discussion in front of other students in class. For this account, the

reflection data were a very important source for examining the "theory" which each individual student held during the interview. For the details of the questions, see Appendix 4.

3.1.7 Data for "Theory and Practice"

The data which have been described so far were collected and analyzed for different uses. The researcher's observations with field notes and audio-taped discourse were collected to analyze the participants' actual practices, that is, what the participants actually did, especially with Japanese honorifics during the interviews. On the other hand, the researcher interviews with participants' and students' written documents were collected to interpret the participants' theories, that is, what the participants thought or believed about Japanese honorifics and the interview. This issue of "practice and theory "will be explained in more detail later in the data analysis section.

3.2 Research Design

When deciding on the research design, core approaches that would be useful, relevant, and effective to what the researcher wished to discover in the research were needed. The present study is based on four approaches to the analysis of the collected data. These four are (1) qualitative research methods, (2) language socialization theory, (3) theory and practice of an activity, and (4) discourse analysis approach.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research

This study views humans as active agents and is interested in what they do and what they think in their natural lives. Therefore, a qualitative research approach is employed in

this study, since qualitative research is "a field of inquiry that studies in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincolin, 1994, p.2). In other words, this study takes "a more human-centred methodology" (Palys, 1997, p.16), and the researcher wants to find out what meanings lie behind the phenomena that are realized by human beings in their everyday lives.

3.2.2 Oral Interview Activity as a Language Socialization Activity or Social Practice

The concept of activity understood as social practice has been recognized to be central to the educational process by many scholars. Dewey (1926), for instance, considered education as the initiation of learners into the activities of society. Activity or social practice, moreover, is a very central idea in language socialization. According to Ochs (1988), "activity mediates linguistic and sociocultural knowledge" and "knowledge and activity impact one another" (p.15). Taking Ochs' view of activity, the present study conceives the oral interview activity conducted by students of the Japanese language as a language socialization activity. That is to say, this oral interview activity is viewed as a mediation of students learning both linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge embedded in Japanese language at the same time. Ochs illustrates the perception of activity well in the diagram below (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Ochs's Model of Language Socialization

Linguistic knowledge←----→ Activity ←----→ Sociocultural knowledge

Furthermore, Ochs believes that an activity plays an important role in the development of knowledge, and demonstrates that "novices are able to acquire cognitive skills through participation in joint activities (which requires these skills) with more knowledgeable persons" (1988, p. 15). Thus, in the present study, students' engagement in the oral interview activity with Japanese professors is considered as a meaningful activity for students (i.e., novice) to acquire more knowledge about the Japanese language from the Japanese professors (i.e., more knowledgeable persons).

A similar idea to the Ochs' activity theory is advocated by Mohan (1986) as well. He perceives an activity (not necessarily involving physical action) as the central idea in education by stating that "the concept of an activity is so central to education that education can be defined in terms of activity" (p.44), and "activity is a broad integrating idea relevant to all teaching and learning" (p.45).

3.2.3   Theory and Practice of An Activity

Having defined the meaning of activity, Mohan further argues that "an activity is a combination of action and theoretical understanding" (p.42), and demonstrates that these two can match the two sides of a framework; the specific and practical aspect of an activity is an action situation and the general and theoretical aspect of an activity is background knowledge. As an example of these action and theoretical understandings of an activity, Mohan provides "playing chess" as an activity, and explains practical action situation as players identifying chess pieces, sequencing moves, and choosing appropriate moves. He also explains theoretical background knowledge as classifying chess pieces, understanding the rules for moves, and evaluating moves according to strategies. In his view, "all activities

have a practical and theoretical aspect" (p.43), and both aspects are very important elements in teaching, since "without the practical, students cannot apply what they know; without the theoretical, students cannot understand what they are doing, nor transfer what they know" (p.43). Like Ochs, Mohan believes that knowledge includes both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge.

Harré, Clark, and Carlo (1985) present a similar idea to Mohan's framework of theory and practice. They consider that an activity consists of two aspects: "acts" and "resources". Acts are "behaviour that somebody intended" (p.83), whereas resources are "the body of knowledge of legitimate projects, rules and conventions appropriate for persons of our sort in specific social situations" (p.85). Thus, Harré et al. make a sort of division between theory and practice by dividing resources and acts.

Furthermore, from the ethnographic point of view, Spradley (1980) distinguishes human activity as what people do (i.e., cultural behaviour) and what people know (i.e., cultural knowledge). As an example, Spradley explains that the people he saw on a train in the United States were engaging in a cultural behaviour, namely reading, and that in order to engage in that cultural behaviour, they had to hold cultural knowledge (i.e., several rules of the behaviour of reading, such as understanding the English alphabet and grammar, moving their eyes from left to right and from the top of a page to the bottom, a sentence at the bottom of a page continuing on the top of the next page, and the like. According to Spradley, while cultural behaviour can be easily seen, cultural knowledge lies beneath the surface and cannot be seen. Although cultural knowledge is hidden from view, "it is of fundamental importance because we all use it constantly to generate behaviour and interpret our experience" (p.6).

To sum, Table 5 below illustrates what three theories described above present regarding theory and practice.

Table 5: Two levels of an Activity

	Mohan (1986)	Harré et al. (1985)	Spradley (1980)
Theory	Background knowledge	Resources	Cultural knowledge
Practice	Action situation	Acts	Cultural behaviour

Although the theory/practice contrast is described in different ways by different people, as seen above, what all three explain is that an activity contains two levels: One is a practical level which generally deals with actions or behaviour and can be observed more easily, and the other level is a theoretical level which deals with general and abstract concepts or theory, and cannot be observed directly. The present study takes these two levels of an activity: theory and practice, as the two principal sources according to which the data should be analyzed and understood.

3.2.4 Discourse Analysis

What ethnographers make use of in order to seek to describe a culture is what people say (Spradley, 1980, p.12). Spradley, from an ethnographer's point of view, states that, "both explicit and tacit cultural knowledge are revealed through speech .... Because language is the primary means for transmitting culture from one generation to the next, much of any culture is encoded in linguistic form" (p.12), and so he puts his primary focus on making inferences from what people say. Harré and Gillet (1994) also argue that people

display their attitudes and create a social context through discourse or linguistic exchange. A similar view appears in the definition of discourse given below:

> Discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific *groups of people*, whether families of a certain sort, lawyers of a certain sort, bikers of a certain sort, business people of a certain sort, churches of a certain sort, and so on through a very long list (Gee, 1991, xix).

3.2.4.1 Discourse Analysis in Empirical Research

"Discourse analysis is widely recognized as one of the most vast ... areas in linguistics" (Schiffrin, 1994, p.5). Different people employ different approaches to analyzing discourse for different purposes. Among several approaches, the present study takes the functional paradigm of discourse analysis (i.e., discourse as function), that is, "the analysis of the purposes and function of language in human life" (Schiffrin, 1994, p.31), since the present study is interested in looking into "real language used by real people" (Derewianka, 1990, p.4.) in real contexts. Therefore, according to Schriffin's (1994) description of functional discourse analysis, the present study emphasizes language and discourse as social phenomenon, and examines their use in human society, the language of communicative needs and abilities in society, and the relationship between language and social function.

3.2.4.2 Action Discourse and Reflection Discourse

In order to better understand both theoretical and practical aspects of an activity and to understand participants' actions and beliefs, it is important to examine the discourse which reflect both participants' theory and practice. As a key to distinguishing what theoretical discourse is and what action discourse is, Mohan (1987) explains that practical

discourse is related to action situations and specific practical knowledge, and theoretical

discourse is related to general background knowledge. For instance, when dealing with the

issue of automobile insurance, a conversation about a particular car crash is action discourse

because it is describing a specific car crash, whereas a newspaper article about car insurance

is theoretical discourse, discussing more general ideas about insurance. To use Mohan's

words, "practical discourse is characteristic of everyday interactions in society; theoretical

discourse is characteristic of language in school learning-academic discourse" (p. 108).

Harré also distinguishes two types of discourse: acts and accounts of discourse. The

first type, acts, is "language in use as the accomplishments of acts or as attempts at their

accomplishments" (Harré & Gillett, 1994, p.32), whereas the second type, accounts, deals

with theoretical aspects of action. In short, discourse acts are language used while doing

actions, and accounts are language for talking about action.

3.2.5 Research Design

To sum up what has been presented in this section, the following are the main

considerations for how the present study was designed:

1. In order to find answers to the research questions, it is necessary that the researcher go

into natural settings, that is, where language learners are interacting with NS, and investigate

what is actually going on with the people involved. Therefore, the qualitative research

approach is considered to be the most adequate way to understand the real meanings of

phenomena that the participants create.

2. The oral interview activity conducted by students is viewed as a language socialization activity through which it is anticipated that students learn both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of the Japanese language, hand in hand.

3. In order to fully understand how this oral interview activity contributes to students' language learning, both levels of the theory and the practice of the oral interview activity are examined in detail.

4. Discourse is very important evidence in order to interpret each participant's theory and practice; therefore, a discourse analysis approach is employed in the present study, focusing on contrasting practical discourse and theoretical discourse.

3.3 Data Analysis

This section will describe in what ways and for what purposes each type of data was analyzed. The main purpose of the data analysis is to discover the practice and theory of the participants, and the analysis was conducted in inductive ways rather than in deductive ways.

3.3.1 Analysis for "Practice" and Analysis for "Theory"

During the analysis process, the data collected for this study were divided into two types: the data that presented the participants' practice and the data that presented the participants' theory. The data that belong to the first type were researcher observations and audio-taped discourse of the participants. These data show what the participants actually did in general and, more specifically, what they did with Japanese honorific forms and with the language per se as visible (or audible) evidence. Therefore, the researcher analyzed what she

saw and heard while observing the participants and interpreted it in the light of her knowledge of Japanese language and culture.

The second type of data was the researcher interviews with the participants and students' written reflections on the activity. By contrast with the first type, this second type of data was used to enable the researcher to interpret the participants' thoughts or beliefs lying below their surface acts. The researcher interpreted it in the light of her knowledge of the interviews and the participants.

3.3.2 Inductive Analysis of Interview Data and Written Documents

The interview data between the researcher and student participants and students' written record data were analyzed using an inductive analysis strategy (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993) in order to reveal NNS students' thoughts and beliefs with regard to interacting with NS Japanese professors with the use of honorific forms. Although both kinds of data presented the participants' thoughts well, a slight difference was found between the two. The researcher interview was conducted immediately after the students finished their oral interviews with Japanese professors. Therefore, students were still very excited and emotional, and commented on their general opinions using expressions such as "great," "fun," or "difficult," and they reported particular incidents which they remembered and their impressions of the Japanese professors with a lot of excitement. Students' written reflections, on the other hand, were conducted about a week after the oral interview activity; therefore students looked back on how their performance went and what they learned from the activity with more objectivity and less excitement as far as the researcher observed.

Because of the different nature of these two kinds of data, students' written reflection data were generally used more often than the interview data for analysis. Students expressed their "theory," that is, what they were thinking or believing during the interview activity, a lot in their written reflections in a more objective manner, which helped the researcher make a good connection between the "theory" and "practice" of students. Thus, along with analysing the interview data, the students' written reflection data were reviewed again and again by the researcher in order to interpret what personal theory lay behind each student's acts.

Another important type of data was the researcher interviews with the Japanese professors. These data were used to reveal how NS Japanese perceived students' performance and interactions. All the nine professors were interviewed in Japanese by the researcher, who was also a native Japanese, immediately after the students' interviews were finished, and it was expected that the professors would express their opinions freely in their own language with fresh impressions. The nine sets of interviews were audio-taped and transcribed later. Like the data of students' discourse and written reflections, the researcher analyzed what the professors stated closely, so that she could reveal what theoretical beliefs lay behind the professors' practice, and could discover if the professors' theories were different from students', and if they were, how different.

In summary, the interview data and students written reflection data were very valuable in order to interpret both the students and professors' "theories" in inductive ways, and to connect these "theories" with their "practice".

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

A close examination of the data--audiotaped discourse between students and

Japanese professors during the interview activity, the interview responses from students and

from professors, and the written records of students' thoughts before the interview activity

and of students' reflections after the interviews--reveal that conducting an oral interview

with Japanese professors is not a simple task for students at all; this activity, in fact,

embodies a number of diverse issues. This chapter will present findings based upon the

analyzed data. As mentioned, two dimensions of an activity, practice and theory, were the

foci of the analysis, and hence, two different types of data to analyze each dimension should

be presented respectively. Section 4.1 presents what students actually did when engaged in

using honorifics and related matters, as students' practice. Section 4.2 presents what students

thought or believed with regard to the use of honorifics and related matters, as students'

theory. On top of NNS students' practice and theory, NS Japanese participants' perceptions

of students' performance is presented as well in Section 4.3.

4.1. Students' Practice: What Did Students Actually Engage In?

The analyzed data disclosed that what students actually engaged in could be

categorized basically into three groups: linguistic features, non-verbal behaviour, and

conversation management.

4.1.1 Students' Practice of Linguistic Features (Honorific Forms)

As the aim of the course instructor was that students would experience a real

situation in which to use honorifics with NS Japanese, the students' efforts to use honorifics throughout the interview were clearly seen in the discourse data. Through the analysis of the discourse data, a significant issue with regard to the students' use of honorifics was disclosed; whether students' speech was prepared or spontaneous was the major factor in their using honorifics successfully.

4.1.1.1 Good Use of Honorifics

The following excerpts show examples of the linguistically (i.e., grammatically) good use of honorifics by students when they were asking the professors the questions that they had already prepared in advance. In these excerpts, "Interview 1, 2, 3,..." indicates the order of each interview conducted, from the earliest to the latest, "P 1, 2, 3, ..." indicates professor 1, professor 2, professor 3 ..., and "S1, 2 , 3, ..." indicate student 1, student 2, student 3, ... All the names of people, university, and places (except for Canada) which appear in the data are pseudonyms.

Excerpt 1:

Interview 1

(S1 reading her note)

S1: *Itsu kanada ni **irasshai** mashita ka.*

(When did you come to Canada?)

P1: *Ee~, kyonen no shigatsu desu.*

(Ah~ (I came to Canada) in April, last year)

* "*irasshai mashita*" is a honorific form of the verb "*kimiashita*" (came)

Excerpt 2:

Interview 2

(S4 reading her note)

S4: *Ichiban o-sukina tabemono wa nan desu ka.*

    (What is your favourite food?)

P2: *Soo desu ne... Sakana da to yappari saamon o guriru shita no ga ii desu ne.*

    (Let me see..., in the case of fish, grilled salmon is good.)

* *"o-"* is an honorific prefix to present the speaker's respect, attached to *"suki na"*

    (likeable).

    "o-sukina" is a honorific form of *"sukina"* (likable)

Like these students above, all the other students had already written down a number of questions to ask in their notebooks, and had checked whether or not each question was grammatically correct in advance. Therefore, these questions were generally well formed by students during the interview.

4.1.1.2 Non-Use/Misuse of Honorifics

In contrast with these prepared questions, the speech that students produced on the spot with no preparation in advance was far more grammatically ill-formed. The spontaneous speech contains mainly (1) unprepared questions from students to the professor and (2) students' response to the questions which the professor asked students. In various examples of spontaneous speech, students' grammatical errors were found. The errors made with honorific forms by students will be described here.

The errors which students made when speaking to the professors on the spot are mainly categorized into two types: non-use of honorifics and misuse of honorifics. Non-use

of honorifics means that students did not form honorific forms when they should have done so. The following is an example of this type of error:

Excerpt 3:

Interview 9

    (Students and professor talking about tennis, one of the hobbies of the professor)

    S23: *Kanada ni wa **doko, doko** ni tenisu o shi te **imasu** ka.*

        (In Canada, where, where do you play tennis?)

    P9: *Kanada de wa, ano, A university de shite imasu.*

        (In Canada, well, I play (tennis) at A university.)

    * "*doko*" (where) should be "***dochira***" (honorific form of "*doko*")

      "*imasu*" (to be) should be "***irasshaimasu***" (honorific form of "*imasu*")

Students had already studied these honorific forms in class in many practices using their textbooks. In fact, a lot of students could use these two particular honorific forms above, "*dochira*" and "*irasshaimasu*," in their prepared speech very well. However, student 23 in the example failed to form the honorific forms for "*doko*" and "*imasu*" when speaking spontaneously.

The second type of errors related to honorifics is students' incorrect use of honorific forms. In particular, students often mixed up two kinds of honorific forms, respect (exalted) form and humble form, and used them on incorrect occasions. For instance, in the following dialogue, students 1 and 2 did use honorific forms, yet they mixed the respect form up with the humble form.

Excerpt 4:

Interview 8

P8:   *Anata no go-ryooshin, otoosan ya okaasan mo koko ni iru no?*

   (Your parents, your father and mother, do they live in here?)

S20:   *Watashi no go-ryooshin wa koko ni sunde imasu.*

   (My parents live here (in this city).)

P8:   *Aa, sun deru.*

   (Oh, they live (in this city).)

   Anata wa hitori?

   (Are you alone? (Do you live alone?))

S18:   *Watashi go-ryooshin wa taiwan de*

   (My parents in Taiwan...)

* *"go-"* is an honorific prefix attached to a noun, showing the speaker's respect to the objects (noun) related to the interlocutors.

In this example, first, the professor used "go-" to show his respect to the students' parents (*ryooshin*). In their replies, student 18 and 20 also attached *"go-"* to *"ryooshin,"* which is indicating students' respect to their own parents. Since family members are considered as in-group members in Japanese society, using the respect form of honorifics when referring to your own parents is inappropriate. In the example, both S18 and S20 should have used just a plain noun, *"ryooshin"* instead of *"go-ryooshin"*. It is assumed that, since it was easy for students to repeat the same words which had just been said by the professor, like *"go-ryooshin"* in this example, students could not afford to think and judge which form (i.e., respect form or humble form) is appropriate on the spot, though they had been able to use them correctly for the prepared speech.

4.1.1.3 Students' Efforts to Use Honorific Forms

As mentioned above, students were more likely to fail to use honorifics when speaking spontaneously compared to their prepared speech. It was found, though, that students were trying to use honorifics as much as they could, even though it was not an easy task for them. The following examples show this effort being made by students very clearly:

Excerpt 5:

Interview 4

S8: ***Kocchi, kocchi, kochira*** *no terebi wa yoku mite irassharu n desu ka.*

(Here, here, here's TV, do you watch TV often?)

Excerpt 6:

Interview 8

S18: *Ano... sono hito no shyoosetsu o yonda koto ga **irasshai** masu ka.*

(Well... have you ever read that person's novel?)

The first example illustrates this student's effort to produce the honorific form of *"kocchi"* (here) that is a casual speech style. As can been seen, after S8 pronounced more familiar word for him, *"kocchi"*, twice, he produced *"kochira"*, the honorific form of *"kocchi"* successfully. Here, it is assumed that this student was trying to recall the right honorific form and to produce it willingly, while repeating more a familiar word *"kocchi"*.

The second example also illustrates that student 18 was trying to use the honorific form, though the honorific form which she produced was incorrect. *"irasshai masu"* is one of the honorific forms of *"imasu"* (to be), which conveys a different meaning from the notion of past experience. For the sentence above, *"~ koto ga arimasu"* (have experienced ~) with no change to honorific form of *"arimasu"*, but the use of the honorific form of

"*yonda*" (have read), "*o yomi ni natta*" would be appropriate. The point here is that this student' effort to use honorifics of her own volition should be highly praised, regardless of whether she correctly produced the suitable honorific forms or not.

4.1.2 Students' Practice of Non-Verbal Behaviour

It was obvious that completing the task of having an interview with a NS Japanese person successfully was the major goal for students. In order to do so, in addition to dealing with honorific forms, students dealt with other two areas, namely, non-verbal behaviour and conversation management. Since these two areas, along with the linguistic features, seemed equally important for students conducting their interviews, first, non-verbal behaviour will be examined in this section, followed by an examination of conversation management in the following section.

4.1.2.1 What Is Non-Verbal Behaviour?

Before presenting the related data, first of all, what non-verbal behaviour means must be clarified. This study will follow the definition cited in the *Dictionary of Language Teaching &Applied Linguistics* (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992), and will define non-verbal behaviour as "communication without the use of words" (p.248). To give examples, such non-verbal elements as body language, gestures, facial expressions, physical movements, and the like will be included as non-verbal communication in this study.

Students' engagement in several of these types of non-verbal behaviour is found in the researcher observation as well as in the written reflections which students wrote after the interview activity. The students' written reflections reveal the underlining ideas of students'

engagement in non-verbal behaviour; therefore, more details will be discussed in a later section. In this section, students' non-verbal behaviour which was found mainly through the researcher observing each interview, will be presented.

4.1.2.2 Bow Instead of Handshake

It is observed that, unlike when first meeting with an English speaking North American in Canada, no students exchanged handshake with their Japanese professors. Instead, students bowed when first entering the professor's office and when leaving the office after the interview. Some students, before entering the professor's office, consulted the researcher informally about the Japanese way of entering a professor's office, such as how to knock on the door, what to say first or when and how to bow. In other words, students' engagement in the interview activity had already started even before they actually conducted verbal exchanges with the professors. What seems to be important here is that students' awareness of different behavioural rules in a different culture was already stimulated, even before students met the professors. Note that the textbooks which students used did not mention the appropriate non-verbal behaviour for Japanese people.

4.1.2.3 Manner, Attitude, and Attentiveness

In general, all the students seemed very keen to listen and respond to the professors, and tried to show their enthusiasm throughout the interview. Through her observation, the researcher noticed that most students were smiling a lot, nodding and/or using hand gestures a lot, sometimes laughing with the professors when they were talking about something interesting, and most of all, students seemed very enthusiastic about trying to convey their

message and to understand the professor's message, using their entire body.

On top of these observations, students seemed very careful about behaving politely non-verbally as well as verbally. For instance, none of the students were chewing gum or eating candies, which was different from the usual classroom scene. Also, none of the students were late for their interview, except for one female student who had to be late due to her having taken an examination for another course just prior to the interview. Almost all students showed up at least ten minutes prior to the interview, and looked over the prepared questions once again or asked the researcher questions related to the interview or the professors. The researcher also noticed that some students were even wearing much nicer clothes than their usual casual clothes; a few male students were in their more formal jackets for this interview. Furthermore, during the interviews, students were looking at the professor's face attentively without being distracted by something else, which was also not the same as their regular behaviour in their usual classes.

Observing these students' behaviour, the researcher was very impressed in several respects. The researcher noticed that the students took this interview activity more seriously than the instructors and the researcher had expected; therefore, the interview activity would be, more or less, very meaningful to students' learning Japanese. More importantly, the researcher learned that students were not merely "students," but "university students," who could interact with the Japanese professors as young adults. The researcher, while observing, personally felt that these students seemed more mature and independent than usual, due to their polite behaviour, attentive attitude, and their great consideration of the professors and the interview per se.

4.1.3 Conversation Management

The other area in which students engaged during the interview activity is how to manage the interview (or conversation). In other words, students were making great efforts to keep the interview (conversation) with the professor going more smoothly and successfully. What the researcher realized with regard to conversation management through the observation and discourse by the students is that there were generally four points which students were trying to manage. These four were: (1) how to organize the interview, (2) how to put the questions to ask in order, (3) what to do when students do not understand what the professors were saying, and (4) developing the conversation.

4.1.3.1 How to Organize the Interview

The way in which each group of students led their interview varied from group to group. For instance, some groups chose the style of three students equally asking questions to the professor one by one in order, whereas one group made roles of two students mainly asking questions and one taking notes. It is not the focus of this study to determine which way was more successful; therefore, deeper discussion about this point will not be held. The notable findings, either way, is that students experienced participating in a thinking process with their group-mates in a collaborative way, and chose what their group determined was the best way to lead the interview smoothly and effectively. Here, it was discovered that students were already conscious of and engaged in how to manage their interviews in successful ways even at the very beginning of the interview or even before starting the interview.

4.1.3.2 The Order of the Questions to Ask

Related to the issue of how to organize the interview as described above, students also considered the order of the questions which they would ask to the professor. For instance, most groups chose more general questions, such as, "Where in Japan are you from?" or "When did you come to Canada?" for their first question to break the ice, then developed the interview by gradually asking more specific questions, such as, "How did you find Canadian university students are different from Japanese university students?" or "Did you experience any culture shock in Canada?" It is also observed that many students tried to expand the conversation by asking further questions on the spot after listening to the professor's response to their original question. Furthermore, in order to expand the conversation, students often changed the order of the questions or crossed out some questions that had already been written down in their notebook while listening to the professor's response. From this observation, it is clearly understood that students were engaged in organizing the questions to ask very seriously, depending on what comments the professors responded with, as well as being engaged in organizing the way of leading the interview per se as interviewers.

4.1.3.3 Students' Reactions When They Did Not Understand What the Professor Was Saying

One interesting issue which was revealed in this study is what students did when they did not understand what the professor was saying. Students' reactions to such a situation can be generally divided into three categories. First, some students promptly asked the professor

for repetition or more explanation with no hesitation in order for them to understand, for instance the meaning of an unknown word, like in the following example:

Excerpt 7:

Interview 4

P4: *(Senkoo wa) shinrigaku...*

((My major was) psychology...)

⇨ S8: *Shinrigaku tte nan desu ka.*

(What is "shinrigaku"?)

P4: (in English) Psychology.

In this example, S8 did not understand what "*shinrigaku*" meant, and immediately asked the professor for explanation. As far as the researcher observed, this type of request from students seemed so natural that the conversation flowed smoothly. Also, the professors did not seem to mind repeating or explaining for the students at all.

The second reaction of the students is that some of them were just silent with no verbal response. The following excerpt shows this type of students' reaction very clearly:

Excerpt 8:

Interview 3

S5: *Sensee wa A-machi deno seekatsu wa doo omoware masu ka.*

(How do you think about the life in A-city?)

P3: *Un, ano~, A-machi ni tsuite doo omooka tte koto desu yone.*

(Um, well, you mean how I think about A-city, right?)

⇨ S5: (silence)

P3: *A-machi no kansoo?*

(My impression of A-city?)

⇨ S5: (silence)

    P3: (in English) You mean " How do I think about A-city?" right?

    S5: Oh, yeah...

As seen in this discourse, S5 did not give any verbal response when the professor confirmed the meaning of the question with him by paraphrasing the question. It was after the professor talked to S5 in English when S5 finally responded to her. This kind of silence by students was observed in other interviews as well, and, for the researcher, it seemed rather awkward and unnatural, as if the interview was stuck halfway to the goal.

Thirdly, when students did not understand what the professor was saying, some students pretended to understand with a short utterance, and, all of sudden, changed the subject into something totally different. The following excerpt is a good example of this reaction:

Excerpt 9:

Interview 1

1 S2: *Daigaku demo chuugoku de oshieru...* (Also at university, teach in China...)

2 P1: *Chuugoku no hito ni desu ka.* (Do you mean if I teach Chinese people?)

3 S2: *Soo desu. Chuugoku...* (Yes, that's right. China...)

4 P1: *Hai, arimasu.* (Yes, I do.)

5 S2: *Kookoo?* (High school?)

6 P1: *Hai?* (Pardon me?)

7 S2: *Kookoo desu ka.* (Is that a high school?)

8 P1: *Iya, daigaku de chuugoku kara no ryuugakusee wa kanarazu imasu kedo...*

     (No, there are always students from China in my university.)

=> 9 S2: *U~n, soo desu ka.* (U~m, is that so?/I see.)

=>10 S2: *U~n, sensee wa syuumatsu ni nani o shimasu ka.*

     (U~m, what do you do on weekends?)

This segment of the conversation between S2 and the professor was, in fact, started off by the professor's good guess of what S2 meant, since the first question from S2 to the professor (line 1) is grammatically incorrect and does not make good sense semantically. Despite this, the professor guessed what S2 had asked, then answered S2. Yet, S2's further speech, "*kookoo*" (line 5) did lead the professor to be confused, which made him say "*Hai*?" (Pardon me?) (line 6). After another set of exchange was carried out to make the meaning clear (line 7 and 8), S2, who probably realized that there was something wrong going on between the two, finally said, "*U~n, soo desu ka*" (line 9), and, all of sudden, changed the subject from the university where the professor teaches in Japan into what the professor usually does on weekends, with no more questions regarding the previous subject.

What needs to be paid attention to here is S2's use of "*U~n, soo desu ka.*" (line 9). "*Soo desu ka.*" literally means "Is that so/Is that right?", yet is often interpreted as "Oh, I see," the hearer's filler phrase of understanding for the speaker's statement. From the discourse above, though, it is possible to say that "*Soo desu ka*" uttered by S1 did not really indicate her understanding of the professor's statement, but it was used to terminate the subject of the conversation talked about between the two, since she probably did not understand what the professor actually meant. In other words, it is assumed that S2 wanted to change the subject to something new so that she could keep the conversation going. In fact, S2, in her written reflection after the interview, clearly mentioned the reason why she changed the subject. This issue will be more deeply examined in a later section.

4.1.3.4 Developing Conversation

The last point observed as a strategy for students to manage their interview more successfully is students trying to develop the conversation more fully, by asking further questions in reply to the professors' response. For instance, the student in the following interview asked a further question on the spot in reply to what the professor had just said, which helped the conversation flow more naturally:

Excerpt 10:

Interview 6

S13: *Ninon ni kaeru to, a~n, go-kazoku to o-tomodachi ni, a~n, nan omiyage o motte Irasshai masu ka.*

(When you are going back to Japan, what souvenirs are you going to bring for your family and friends?)

P6: (huhuhuhu...) *Meepurushiroppu to sumooku saamon o motte kaerimasu* (huhuhu..).

(Giggle) I'm going to bring maple syrup and smoked salmon (giggle).

⇨ S13: *A~, takusan nihonjin wa, ah~, ninon ni kaeru to smoke salmon to maple syrup o motte imasu. Dooshite...(ufufu) ..... Amari yoofuku toka karendaa toka motte imasen. Dooshite...*

(Ah~, many Japanese bring smoked salmon and maple syrup when they go back to Japan. Why...? (giggle) .... They don't bring clothing or calendars much. Why?)

P6: *Aaa, sore wa nihonjin ga kanada to iu to, kanada rashii mono ga meepuru shiroppu nandesu ne.*

(Oh, that's because when Japanese hear about Canada, something Canadian is maple syrup.)

In this example, S13, replying to what the professor just responded with, asked further questions in order to learn about the Japanese people more, and the conversation could

develop in a more interesting way. Furthermore, in another interview that was held in a

coffee shop, one of the students asked the professor an unexpected question as seen below:

Excerpt 11:

Interview 7

(professor and students talking about chemistry, the professor's speciality)

S15: *Omoshiroi...? Kookoo no toki yoo benkyoo shite mashita. Chotto tsukareta...*

((Is chemistry) interesting? I studied (chemistry) so hard at high school. I was a

little tired...)

P7: (laugh)

S15: (talking to S17)

Adam-san wa, nanka... (in English) You wanna ask something?

(Adam, anything...)

⇨ S17: *Sensee wa koohii wa doo desu ka.*

(How is your coffee, teacher?)

P7, S15, S16: *Ahaha....* (laugh)

P7: *Oishii desu. Hai. Ahaha...*(laugh)

(It's delicious, Yes.)

S15, 16: (laugh)

This question by the student 17 in Interview 7, "*Sensee wa koohii wa doo desu ka.*"

(How is your coffee, teacher?) has no relation to the topic discussed at that moment (i.e.,

chemistry). Yet, it is somehow important, since this question seemed to indicate that S17,

who was rather quiet compared to S15 and S16 during the interview, showed his

consideration of the professor and his involvement and contribution as a part of the

interview. Moreover, this question seemed to serve as a way to make the atmosphere

between the interviewers and the interviewee closer and friendlier, bringing about a lot of

laugh among the interlocutors.

Thus, although students had prepared a lot of questions to ask to the professors in advance, the way students led the interview was not merely them reading out their prepared questions; rather, students listened to the professors' responses very carefully, and judged what was going on among the interlocutors, and then tried to develop the topic more by asking further questions on the spot. From this analysis, it could be concluded that the interviews which students tried to establish seemed not to be just one-way interviews of students asking prepared questions of the professors one by one, but more a two-way communication between students and the professors, which involves developing each topic by replying to what the interlocutors said. In this sense, it is presumed that the students' involvement in how to manage their interviews was an important component in successfully completing this oral interview task.

4.1.4. Summary of Students' Practice

As illustrated so far, the students' practice was discovered through the data from the researcher observation and the transcribed audiotaped discourse. The most important finding as to the students' practice is their engagement in three areas during the interview. These three areas are linguistic features, or more specifically, formation and use of honorific forms, non-verbal behaviour, and conversation management. In order to conduct an oral interview with Japanese professors, students were engaged in these three areas simultaneously and with equal attention.

Having discovered what students actually did in their interviews, the following questions can be raised: What made students act as they did? What was their understanding

or interpretation of conducting an oral interview with Japanese professors? In order to shed light on these two questions, the focus of the data analysis will shift from students' practice to students' theory, the other aspect of an activity, in the next section.

4.2. Students' Theory: How Did Students Reflect?

This section will explain the second aspect of an activity: "theory," or what students thought and believed and how they evaluated their performance with regard to the interview activity. For the purpose of finding out students' theory behind their actual practice, their written reflections on the interview activity were analyzed thoroughly.

4.2.1 Students' Reflections on Non-Verbal Behaviour

Students' written reflections presented what students believed and how they perceived their interactions with the NS professors. A notable finding from this analysis is that students' concerns regarding the interview activity were very varied, which is well reflected in their actual practice. Students were very concerned about non-verbal behaviour while conducting their interview; they pondered how to perform or behave in a non-verbally appropriate and polite manner. The following are some of the students' responses to the question, "What did you think was impolite to do?" As can be seen below, students brought up various responses related to non-verbal behaviour. This indicates students' awareness of the importance of the area of non-verbal behaviour when communicating with a Japanese superior. Table 6 below shows some examples of students' responses.

Table 6: Students' Written Response to the question, "What did you think was impolite/not appropriate to do during the interview?"

Giggle & silence
Reading my own notes in order to ask questions
Writing when the professor is talking
Look impatient or make the interview short
Using a cellular phone
Showing a lack of effort or lack of interest would be impolite
No eye contact
To eat, drink, yawn and to fall asleep
Being late
Almost forget the professor's name
Talking in English
The incorrect use of honorific forms

It is very surprising how various beliefs or theories students held as to what is inappropriate to do in non-verbal ways when communicating with a Japanese professor. As mentioned in a previous section, most students were observed to behave somehow differently from their behaviour in regular classes and to be more polite in general. Students' written reflections described above validate students' practice; students acted based on their beliefs as to what is impolite or inappropriate to do. What Mohan (1986) claims, "...an activity is a combination of action and theoretical understanding" (p.42), should be remembered and is closely underlying this study. Students' written reflections are, so to speak, the representation of students' theoretical understanding of each act, and show a much richer picture under the surface level of students' practice. This theoretical understanding of students is discovered in the area of conversation management as well, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Students' Reflections on Conversation Management

The students' reflection data also revealed how concerned students were with

conversation management while conducting the interview. As seen in an earlier section, it was observed that students were engaged mainly in four different areas in order to manage their interviews: how to organize the interview, the order of the questions to ask, what to do when they did not understand what the professors said, and development of the conversation. The students' written reflections explain why students did these actions very well, as in the way that they explained students' non-verbal behaviour. The following are some of the students' responses regarding their concerns during the interview activity:

Student Written Response 1:

Q: What were you most concerned with during the interview?

- Understanding what the professor said and being able to answer him in correct Japanese.
- Understanding what the teacher said and avoiding silence. Trying to answer what the teacher asked.
- Flow of conversation, avoiding silence, thinking of what to say and how to answer his questions,
- The most concern was being polite to the professor and gave him a good impression. However, trying to use honorifics is the most important goal for me during that time.
- Most concerned about being rude and not understanding the conversation
- Avoiding silence, applying the correct word usage
- Honorifics and avoiding silence
- That I would improperly say something (specifically using honorifics) and that by doing so I would somehow insult the interviewee.

The table below is the summary of the students' response to this question. The numbers

beside each response show how many students gave a response (twenty-four students in

total, some multiple response):

Table 7: Students' Response to the Question, "What were you most concerned with
during the interview?"

Avoiding silence (conversation management)	8
Whether or not understanding the conversation (comprehension)	8
Being polite (non-verbal behaviour)	4
Honorific forms (linguistic features)	4
Flow of conversation (conversation management)	4
Being able to answer the professor's question (comprehension, linguistic)	4

From these results, it is clear that avoiding silence and whether or not one could understand

what the professors were saying are the major concerns for students. These two are generally

viewed as very important factors in order to keep conversation flowing more smoothly and

successfully. For language learners, in particular, understanding what the interlocutor(s) said

in the target language is a critical component of managing their conversation; otherwise, the

conversation will break down. Moreover, these students seemed to realize silence during the

conversation is something unpleasant and should be avoided. This data, as well as the data of

students' concerns about non-verbal behaviour, discloses that the aim of these students

during the interview activity went beyond the mastery of linguistic forms of Japanese

language (i.e., honorific forms); students tried to achieve one type of communication

between human individuals by utilizing their knowledge of what they have learned through

their past experience in the world. In other words, this interview activity can be viewed not

only as an opportunity for students to practice the linguistic forms, but also as an experience

through which students will practice and come to gain skills for more effective and successful human communication.

4.2.3 Different Theories from Student to Student

Close examination of students' reflections, particularly in the area of conversation management, has revealed another important issue to be discussed; that is, each individual student holds his/her own theory (or belief) regarding how to manage the conversation with a NS more successfully, and each student's theory may differ from other students' theories. This issue is deeply related to what was described in an earlier section, which is that students acted in different ways when they faced problems during the interview. For instance, while there was a student who promptly asked for explanation from the professor when he could not understand, there was a student who did not ask the professor for further explanation, but changed the subject to another one. Why did these students act in different ways? The following are the students' written responses that help explain the students' reason:

Student Written Response 2:

Q: What did you do when you did not understand what the professor was saying?
S8: Asked for repetition. Pretending to understand only leads to trouble.

This is a response by S8, who asked the professor for explanation promptly. This response reveals that this student has his own belief as to the best solution for not understanding what the interlocutors said. It is clear that his actual action was drawn from his belief.

On the other hand, the student who changed subjects instead of asking the professor for explanation responded to the same question as shown below:

Student Written Response 3:

> S2: (when I did not understand what the professor was saying, I) Just smiled and let it slip away because no matter how many times the professor explains or repeats something, I won't understand anyway.

This statement of S2 reveals that knowing that the professor's repetition or further explanation would not help her understand what the professor was saying. S2, with this belief in the ineffectiveness of asking for repetition, purposefully chose not to ask for further explanation from the professor, and chose instead to change the subject. In other words, S2 believed that changing the subject was the best strategy to solve the problem. Thus, the beliefs that S8 and S2 hold as to the best solution when not understanding what the interlocutors said are totally different.

The data also shows that other students had their own beliefs regarding this issue as well. The following are the students' written response to the same question:

Student Written Response 4

Q: What did you do when you did not understand?
- First try to pretend I understand, but eventually asked again.
- Guessing
- Change the subject because it's embarrassing to ask for repetition so many times.
- Pretend to understand because it's awkward to ask again, and we were embarrassed.

As can be understood from these responses, students' beliefs are not the same. Some students came to realize that asking for repetition or explanation would be better than not

asking, whereas some students realized that asking for repetition was embarrassing.

It is not the focus of this study to search for which belief is good and which is bad; it is, actually, not easy to decide which strategy is good and which is not. Therefore, which practice and theory are more proper will not be considered. Instead, it should be discussed what this issue--students holding their own theories--means for the language teacher and language teaching and learning; that is, it can help the language teacher understand his/her students at a deeper level (i.e., students' theoretical understanding), and as a consequence, realize in what ways he/she should deal with students' theoretical understanding. This issue will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

4.2.4. Theory and Practice of an Activity

What was discovered from the students' reflections and the examination of the data is the deep relationship between theory and practice. This relationship in an activity has been discussed by a number of researchers, as introduced in Chapter 3. For instance, Mohan (1986) takes an activity as "a combination of action and theoretical understanding" (p.42), and explains two dimensions of an activity: background knowledge and action situation. Harré, Clark and Carlo (1985) also demonstrate that an activity consists of two aspects, resources and acts; so does Spradley (1980), who refers to these two aspects as cultural knowledge and cultural behaviour.

Furthermore, to use the Knowledge Framework advocated by Mohan (1986), which is a framework to explain the main structure of topic information and is a guide to the structure of knowledge across the curriculum, the two related categories in the framework, "choice" (the practical dimension) and "evaluation" (the theoretical dimension), seem very

relevant to this study. That is to say, students chose an appropriate action (e.g., changing the subject when they did not understand) because they evaluated or judged this action as the best strategy (e.g., it is embarrassing to ask for repetition so many times) to solve the problem. In short, students' actual practice (choice) was based on their theories (evaluation or judgement); hence, these two dimensions are deeply interrelated. This is the major significance of the present study; it is notable that this study has disclosed the fact that students actually acted drawing on their own theories, and that students' theoretical understanding and actual practice are definitely interconnected.

4.2.5 Students' Reflections on Linguistic Features (Honorific Forms)

Regarding the major concerns of students while conducting their interview, fewer students pointed out honorifics (i.e., linguistic features) as their major concerns (see page 89). Considering the course instructor's main objective of this interview activity, "for students to practice honorific forms in authentic situations," it is a bit surprising that the use of honorific forms was not of primary importance, but just one of several concerns related to making the interview successful for students. From the result of students' reflections, it is presumed that students were so engaged in conversation management and understanding what the professor was saying that the use of honorific forms sometimes became less important, and consequently, students tended to use honorifics incorrectly or even to forget to use them.

In fact, the data revealed that these students knew that, even with no use of honorifics, communication with the professor would be, at least, established as long as students could understand the professor's utterances and convey their own messages to the

professor. A couple of the students' written reflections on their usage of honorifics below illustrate this point very clearly:

Student Written Response 5:

Student 13:

I think I forgot, at the moment, a lot of Keigo (honorifics). I didn't use very much because it would have taken me forever to form sentences. I did use enough though (only because our sensei (professor) was so nice).

Student 6:

(My usage of honorifics was) not very good because I tend to get nervous when I have to speak in Japanese. Then I forgot which vocabularies to use and what are the Keigo (honorifics) forms.

Hence, a complicated picture of students' cognition is discovered; students understood that they had to deal with various aspects of communication, such as forming grammatically correct sentences, evaluating what is appropriate/inappropriate to do, and so on, simultaneously. It is also found that, due to this complication, students sometimes had to make a decision of putting less value on one aspect among some, namely on honorific forms (e.g., like student 13 above). To sum up, students' evaluations of their own use of honorific forms were bad in general, despite the fact that they knew it was very important. In fact, none of the students out of twenty-four evaluated their usage of honorifics as good. The following are some of the self-evaluation responses given by students in respect to the use of honorific forms (see Appendix 3 for more data):

Student Written Response 6:

Q: How was your Keigo (honorifics) usage? Do you think you were polite enough?

- Very bad, because didn't use enough; too tense to think how to change into Keigo.
- Very bad. I kept forgetting the Keigo forms.
- Started at the beginning, but didn't use mostly at the end.
- My Keigo usage is not too good, because when it comes to live talking, I can't react that fast. And I'm not that good at composing polite sentences at real time.
- Keigo is only used during my questions which already written out.

4.2.6 Summary of Students' Theory

To summarize the findings through the analysis of the students' written records, it was discovered that students held their own beliefs or values with regard to appropriateness in human communication, and that these beliefs or values were very complex and different from student to student.

First of all, students were very aware of the importance of non-verbal behaviour and had their own beliefs of what non-verbal behaviour would be impolite during the interview. For instance, no eye contact with the professor, not showing their respect, or using a cellular phone during the interview were considered as being impolite or inappropriate to do by students. In addition, students were also aware of how to manage their conversation more successfully, so that the conversation would flow more naturally among the interlocutors. The data showed that one major concern students held during the interview was avoiding silence. Many students found that being silent during the conversation was awkward and impolite to the professor. Besides silence, students were also concerned about the flow of

conversation and believed that it would be very awkward if their conversation did not flow well.

Together with the awareness and concerns of students being found, the fact that students' beliefs or values were very different from student to student was also discovered. To give an example, the strategies employed by students when they did not understand what the professor was saying differed among students. One student believed asking for repetition and explanation was the best way, whereas another student evaluated this strategy as useless, and believed that changing subject would be the best strategy. Hence, a very complex picture concerning students' theories was disclosed in this study.

4.3. Professors' Theory: How Did the Professor Perceive Students' Interview?

As the previous section shows, most students in this study considered their use of honorific forms not good or even very bad. Through her observation, the researcher also noticed students' misuse and/or no use of honorifics, as mentioned in the earlier section. How, then, did this unsatisfactory performance in honorific forms by students seem to the Japanese professors? Did the professors feel uncomfortable or offended due to the students' lack of use of honorifics? This section will explain what the Japanese professors thought about the students' performance.

4.3.1 General Comments by the Professors

All nine professors interviewed by the researcher commented that, in general, students' use of Japanese was good enough, and students were polite enough, so that the professors did not feel uncomfortable or offended by students' inappropriate language or

ways of communicating. The professors, of course, noticed that the students' Japanese, and in particular, their use of honorifics, was not always correct or appropriate. They were also aware that students made some grammatical errors or mispronunciations which sometimes confused the professors' understanding of the conversation. Despite these imperfect linguistic factors, the professors' impressions of students' performance was overall positive. For instance, one professor commented as follows:

Professor Comment 1

Researcher-professor interview 2

P2: Of course, there are some unnatural (or inappropriate) things (in students' Japanese). But, if thinking that they speak to a superior person, there are no problems with their performance, I think. Of course, it does not mean that their performance is perfect, but I feel that their way of speaking or something like that is good enough. ... Well, for students with 200 level Japanese, they were polite enough, I think.

Thus, it is understood that students' linguistic failures, such as misuse/no use of honorifics, grammatical errors or mispronunciation, really neither offended the professors nor broke the conversation down, and these professors seemed to consider the linguistic failures by students as rather minor elements in the conversation.

4.3.2 Professors' Perceptions of the Overuse of Honorifics

Although students' misuse or no use of honorifics was treated as rather a minor element by the professor, as described above, students' use of language, to be more specific, of honorifics, was pointed out by some professors; some professors mentioned that students

used honorifics too much, and, as a result, felt awkward. For instance, one of the professors pointed out students' overuse of honorifics as follows:

Professor Comment 2:

The researcher - professor interview 3

P3: ... Students are extremely too polite because they are trying to use honorifics. Well, for instance, even when asking me some singers' names, ... It might be good to be polite directly to me, ...but for some sentence structures, although students could use just a regular sentence structure, and don't need to use honorifics, they use honorifics... when they ask me who my favourite singer is, they use unnecessary honorifics, showing their respect even to the singer, then ask me whom I like. I feel that their usage of honorifics is a bit inappropriate or they used honorifics too much.

It is interesting that this point of students' overuse of honorifics received more attention than their misuse or no use of honorifics by the professors. As a reason of this point, it is assumed that, since the professors knew that the students' level of Japanese was not high, some linguistic errors were viewed as unimportant, or the Japanese term, *"shyoo ga nai"* (cannot be helped), unless these errors created serious conversation breakdowns. In fact, one professor admitted her feeling of *"shyoo ga nai"* about students' grammatical errors as follows:

Professor Comment 3:

The researcher-professor interview 6

P6: ... I would probably become more aware of students' use of honorifics if our conversation came to flow more smoothly. If students can't speak Japanese to a certain degree, I would consider that point. So, even if students can't form

honorifics, I would see it like, "Well, it can't be helped since their level of

Japanese is not high." ... If students could speak Japanese more naturally, and

they still did not use honorifics, I would feel more aware of their use of

honorifics.

This issue of overuse of honorifics, in fact, was never anticipated as a problem by the

class instructor or the researcher before this study. The textbooks also never warned the

learners not to use honorifics too much. From this study, it is understood that overuse of

honorifics should be an important issue to be kept in mind when a Japanese language teacher

is instructing students in honorific forms.

4.3.3. Professors' Perceptions of Students' Non-Verbal Behaviour

As described earlier, non-verbal behaviour during the face-to-face interviews with a

Japanese professor was an important area for students to engage in for a successful

interview. The researcher found out that the way students behaved non-verbally was good in

general; however, there was one case to be mentioned here: One professor during the

researcher-professor interview raised the issue of non-verbal behaviour performed by

students. What this professor pointed out was how students should sit on a chair when

interacting with a Japanese superior. The professor, interviewed by three students at a coffee

shop, noticed that one female student speaking and listening to the professor put her elbow

on her crossed legs. Having observed this, the professor later told the researcher that, from a

Japanese norm, the posture of this female student was not appropriate when interacting with

a Japanese superior. Below is the professor's statement:

Professor Comment 4 :

The researcher-professor interview 6

P6: If their (students') Japanese was more fluent, I would be bothered by trivial
(linguistic) things, but, because the conversation itself was formed with their
great efforts, I think it would be hard to ask them to use even honorific
forms. Rather, other than the language itself, I am more bothered by the
atmosphere during the conversation, or by their (students') behaviour (posture) or
attitudes or something like that. Although I understand that they are trying to
speak very politely, their behaviour (posture) is casual, ...so if this was really
among Japanese people or in such a case, how to behave would be more the basic
issue before paying attention to the language...

Thus, the professor emphasized the importance of non-verbal behaviour, such as how to sit

appropriately when interacting with a superior, for human communication, and viewed the

non-verbal performance as sometimes more important than linguistic performance.

Could it then be said that this female student who sat inappropriately was not aware

of how to behave during the interview at all? In fact, she was very conscious of behaving

politely in this face-to-face interaction with the professor. The following written response of

hers shows her consciousness clearly;

Student Written Response 7:

Q: What did you think was impolite/inappropriate to do?
A: • Ask about her (the professor's) family
   • Drink my coffee
   • Not ask questions in reply to her answer - not continue subject

From this response, it is understood that this student considered one type of non-verbal behaviour, drinking coffee while interviewing the professor, impolite, but did not consider another type of behaviour, sitting with her elbow on her crossed legs, impolite, while the professor found the latter behaviour to be impolite. What can be discovered here is the different values or beliefs of the student and the professor. That is to say, some behaviours which one person does not think are impolite might be impolite for another person.

According to Mohan and Helmer (1988), who investigated the comprehension of non-verbal communication (i.e., gestures) by ESL children, "a number of 'messages' have an emblematic performance, though the enactment varies from one culture to the next. There are emblems for greeting, departures, ... found in all cultures studied to date, but the enactments used vary from one group to the next..." (p.281). In other words, a certain behaviour in a culture has a meaning, and those who grew up in the culture share the interpretation of the meaning, since "children acquire their culture by watching and listening to adults and then making inferences about the cultural rules for behaviour..." (Spradley, 1980, p.10). What Mohan and Helmer and Spradley argued in their studies is confirmed in the present study as well; a certain type of behaviour (e.g., sitting with one's elbow on one's knee with legs crossed) was inferred differently by a Japanese professor and a non-Japanese student, which resulted in the Japanese professor somehow feeling offended. The role non-verbal behaviour plays in cross-cultural communication must be reconsidered, and the importance of non-verbal behaviour in a language classroom must be emphasized. Language learners need to learn that "in conversation, all expressions have to be said not only with the right grammar and right pronunciation, but also with the appropriate manner" (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1979, p.37).

4.3.4 Professors' Perceptions of Conversation Management

Another area of the professors' comments on students performance is related to how students managed the interview or conversation. The following comment by one of the professors concerns how the students interviewers started off their interview:

Professor Comment 5:

The researcher-professor interview 6

P6: When students started off the interview, they started to ask questions abruptly. Usually, there are some pre-statements, such as "today, we want to interview you for such and such...", and I expected students to start the interview saying such things. But they started asking me questions abruptly with no statement. I think they should say something before starting the interview.

As this professor points out as above, how to start off the interview, or how to open the conversation, especially among the interlocutors who do not know each other, plays a salient role in communication, since it could work as a way to break the ice between them. Similar to this issue is how to close the interview (or conversation). During the observation, the researcher found that some groups of students closed their interviews rather abruptly, and it seemed very unnatural to the researcher. The following excerpt is one of the examples of how students closed their interview:

Excerpt 12:

Interview 1

(the students and professor talking about the professor's experience of travelling in Canada)

P1: *Rokkii ni ikimashita. Subarashikatta.*

> (I went to the Rockies. It was wonderful.)
>
> S1: *Ee, sugoi desu ne.*
>
> (Yes, it is great, isn't it?)
>
> P: *Hai.*
>
> (Yes.)
>
> ⇨ S2: *U~n.* (pause) *Kyoo wa arigatoo gozaimashita.*
>
> (U~m. (pause) Thank you very much for today.)

In this discourse, although the students and professor have agreed that the Rocky Mountains were wonderful, and students could have developed this topic more, S1, all of sudden, terminated the interview without expanding the topic any more. In addition, there was no sign of closing the interview, such as students' saying "Well, I guess that's all for today" to the professor; therefore, the students' way of ending the interview seemed very abrupt and awkward.

Schegloff and Sacks (1973), in their study on issues in the closing of conversation, discussed that there is a proper way of initiating a closing section, a so-called, "pre-closing" (p.303), which is usually one of the following forms, "We-ell...", "O.K...", "So-oo"', and so on. According to Schegloff and Sacks, the important operation of these pre-closings is that "they occupy the floor for a speaker's turn without using a topically coherent utterance or the initiation of a new topic" (p.304), and placing these pre-closings is "a way of establishing one kind of warrant for undertaking to close a conversation" (p.309). In the current study, though, some students, like S1 in the example above, failed to establish this "warrant," by neglecting to place pre-closing (and/or pre-opening) statements; therefore, some interviews seemed to begin or end abruptly and unnaturally.

Thus, while students dealt with how to manage the interview very attentively, the

professors' comments have revealed that the students' engagement was not always sufficient and was sometimes improper. From this finding, it becomes clear that the professor as well as students viewed the oral interviews not simply as students' linguistic practice but also as a type of human communication. It is reasonable to think that both students and professors put values on various areas of communication, such as non-verbal behaviour and conversation management, in order for them to have more successful communication with each other.

4.3.5 Summary of Professors' Perceptions

As has been described in this section, the Japanese professors' comments about students' performance illustrate some complex pictures as to the issue of what was important and/or what was less important in the oral interview activity conducted by non-Japanese students. The summary of the main findings from the professors' comments are as follows:

1. Despite the fact that students evaluated their use of honorific forms very poorly, the professors seemed to mind less the students' misuse of and/or no use of honorifics. It seemed that the professors considered students' grammatical errors, including honorific forms, as rather a minor element in the conversation.

2. Although the students' misuse or non-use of honorifics was treated as less important by the professors, students' overuse of honorifics was taken more seriously by some professors. The professors found that students sometimes used honorific forms on unnecessary occasions, which sounded inappropriate to the professors.

3. Students' non-verbal behaviour was considered very salient by some professors, especially in this cross-cultural communication. Since NS Japanese professors and NNS learners of Japanese have different cultural/social backgrounds, their sociocultural norms

may sometimes differ from each other. An example from the data is that one of the professors felt uncomfortable seeing a student sitting with her elbow on one of her crossed legs, whereas this student did not realize that the way she was sitting on a chair was not appropriate for the Japanese norm. It has become clearer that non-verbal behaviour plays a significant role in human communication, especially in cross-cultural communication, a role which is as significant as the verbal elements of communication.

4. The area of conversation management by students, such as how to start off the interview in more natural and appropriate ways, was also pointed out by the professors. For instance, students' starting their interview by asking the first question abruptly, with no pre-interview statement, was considered inappropriate.

In sum, from the professors' comments on the students' performance, it could be understood that students' non-use of honorific forms or grammatical errors of honorific forms was considered less important by, at least, these Japanese professors in this study, yet how and when to use honorifics (i.e., overuse of honorifics) was considered as a more important factor in communication. Furthermore, other than the linguistic forms of the Japanese language, how to behave in a non-verbally appropriate manner and how to manage conversation more appropriately were viewed as a salient part of communication by the professors.

4.4 Summary of Chapter 4

In this chapter, the result of a close examination of the collected data has been presented. The data were categorized into two groups: students' practice (i.e., what students did) and students' theory (i.e., what and how students reflected). The former was visible and

easily observed while students were conducting the interview activity, and various elements of practice were found through the researcher observation and in the students' discourses. The latter, on the other hand, was not visible. These theories are underlying concepts of why students acted in certain ways, that is, a theoretical framework that each student holds. These two areas, practice and theory, cannot and should not be separated in examining the data in order to understand both the surface and deep levels of students' performance more precisely.

Regarding the students' practice, that is, what students did in order to have more successful communication with the Japanese professors, it was revealed that students were engaged in communication in three different areas: linguistic features (e.g., how to form honorific forms), non-verbal behaviour (e.g., manner, body language), and conversation management (e.g., what to do when not understand the conversation). The data show that students had to deal with these three areas simultaneously throughout the interview, although the class instructor's major purpose of conducting this oral interview activity was found more in the linguistic features: students practicing honorific forms in an authentic situation. It should also be mentioned that the textbooks in which students studied honorific forms neither explained the importance of non-verbal behaviour and conversation management, nor mentioned the relationship among these three areas in human communication. This is a very important issue in language teaching and learning, and will be further discussed in a later chapter.

The results of students' reflections support students' practice. After examining students' written reflections, it was confirmed that what students actually did in the interview was drawn from their theoretical understanding of successful communication with

a Japanese superior. More specifically, students' engagement not only in linguistic features, but also in non-verbal behaviour and conversation management during the interview was drawn from students' beliefs about what is important for achieving successful communication. It was also confirmed that theories of successful communication vary from student to student, and students acted in different ways even in the same situation, based on their own theories or beliefs. It is noteworthy that students' written reflections clearly presented what the students' theory behind their actual actions was. The very close tie between the practice (i.e., surface level) and theory (i.e., deeper level) in an activity was well exposed through the examination of these data.

Another important finding was the Japanese professors' thoughts about students' performance. Unlike students, who evaluated their use of honorifics as very bad, the professors seemed to mind less students' grammatical errors or non-use of honorifics. On the other hand, some of the professors were more concerned with how students use honorifics (e.g., overuse of honorifics), students' non-verbal behaviour (e.g., posture), or conversational management (e.g., how to start the interview). Here, it becomes more obvious that linguistic features, such as the formation of honorifics or grammatically correct sentences, are not the only element to be considered in this oral interview activity; there are much more complex factors with regard to human communication embedded in the activity.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The previous chapter presented important findings with regard to NNS students' practice (i.e., what they did) and theory (i.e., what they believed) by examining students' authentic interactions with NS. This chapter, then, will more fully scrutinize the issue of learners' practice and theory; how these two dimensions of an activity are interrelated will be discussed in detail. Section 5.1 will focus on students' practice, followed by the discussion on students' theory in Section 5.2. Section 5.3 will explain students' active involvement in their own learning as reflective practitioners. Furthermore, critical arguments about language and human relationship will be explored from the viewpoint of the Systemic Functional Approach in Section 5.4.

5.1   Discussion on Students' Practice: What Textbooks Teach Versus What Students Actually Engaged In

This section first discusses students' practice; what students actually did in the interview, with contrast to what students practiced with the textbook in class.

5.1.1 Students' Practice in the Oral Interview Activity

In Chapter 4, it was clearly discovered that what students actually engaged in during the interview activity was not only the linguistic features of the language, such as to form grammatically correct honorific forms and sentences, but also two other areas, namely, non-verbal behaviour (e.g., to behave non-verbally appropriately) and conversation management (e.g., to keep the interview flowing). In other words, no single one of these three areas was particularly concentrated on, but students dealt with all three equally. This is what students

actually did in the oral interview activity, and, therefore, these are the actions of students (i.e., practice), as Chapter 3 described in detail.

5.1.2 Students' Practice in a Classroom

Contrary to this finding of students' equal engagement in the three areas, what students had practiced prior to the interview activity concentrated exclusively on drill exercises centring on the linguistic features. When comparing these two, there seems to be a significant gap between what students had practiced in class and what students actually did in the interviews. To take an example, the textbooks that students used in class provide different types of practice and drill exercises for honorific forms in order for students to be able to form honorific forms more easily and accurately. This means that the textbooks attempted to provide students with tasks of exercising the linguistic rules of Japanese honorifics, assuming that application of the rules in actual oral production is the major focus of classroom activities.

This point, learners' task of practicing grammatical rules, was and still is the central goal of language education for a number of teachers and researchers. Nunan (1988) describes very well the preference of this mastery of grammatical rules as a major goal in the language teaching as follows:

> Until recently, most syllabus designers started out by drawing up lists of grammatical, phonological, and vocabulary items which were then graded according to difficulty and usefulness. The task for the learner was seen as gaining mastery over these grammatical, phonological, and vocabulary items. (p.11)

Drawn from this goal of language education, many textbooks have been more likely to emphasize primarily the mastery of linguistic rules, which is true of the textbooks that the

students in the present study used.

5.1.3 What the Textbook Does Not Teach

What, then, could be interpreted from the result of this study? One important issue

here is what textbooks actually teach, or what textbooks DO NOT teach, language learners.

Although the textbooks that the students in the present study used taught grammatical rules

of Japanese honorifics in detail, these rules were introduced with no relation to the actual use

of them in real conversational settings. Through this type of drill exercises, the textbooks are

likely to teach grammatical rules "detached from students' uses of language in activities"

(Collerson, 1994, p.140). To restate, the grammar and the language are introduced with no

relation to the actual use of the language in the real world. If textbooks emphasize linguistic

features, detaching them from the actual use of the language in the real world, then they

hardly provide learners with other necessary skills, such as non-verbal behaviour and

conversation management together with linguistic skills. The gap between students' practice

in the classroom and their practice in authentic interactions discovered in this study shows us

what is lacking in classroom practices that follow the form-oriented textbook.

5.1.4 Interactional Skills

Such skills as non-verbal behaviour and conversation management have been claimed

as being important by L2/FL educators. According to Saville-Troike (1996), one important

dimension of communicative competence that learners need to acquire as well as linguistic

knowledge and cultural knowledge is "interactional skills" (p.365). She explains that

interactional skills consist of "social conventions which regulate the use of language and

other communicative devices in particular settings" (p.365). These social conventions are,

for instance, "who may or may not speak in certain settings, ... when they should remain silent, how they should talk to people of different status and roles, what nonverbal behaviors are appropriate for them to use in various contexts ..." (p.365).

The data presented show that the students in this study had not acquired these interactional skills well enough to perform linguistically and functionally appropriately before they conducted the interview despite their practice on the rules; one student in the study was talking and listening to the professor in an informal posture (i.e., with one leg crossed over the other, her elbow resting on her leg and her hand propping up her chin), and one group of students started their interview abruptly with no opening statements. Moreover, another group of students overused honorifics on unnecessary occasions. These actual functional issues were viewed as not being appropriate by the professors. Having noticed these, the professors admitted that they felt uncomfortable observing student's incompetent interactional skills. These are good examples of communicative conflicts due to the NNS learners' lack of sufficient knowledge of interactional skills. Since "a wide range of behavior, including posture, facial expression, and intonation, ... can act as cues, carrying meanings that are interpreted and responded to as part of the interaction process" (Wolfson, 1989, p.157), these interactional skills should be emphasized in the textbooks as well as the grammatical rules, so that learners can actually practice these skills in class on a regular basis.

To summarize, there is a gap between what types of practice the traditional form-oriented language textbooks usually provide and what language skills learners actually have to utilize when interacting with NS in real conversational settings; while learners are more likely to practice grammatical rules of a language detached from actual context through drill exercises in class, what learners have to practice in actual communication is not only the

grammatical rules but also various functional issues necessary for human interaction. Therefore, learners need to gain various types of interactional skills in addition to the skill of forming proper linguistic forms through their classroom practices. If learners do not practice these interactional skills in class with teacher guidance, they might behave in an inappropriate manner when interacting with NS, and some conflicts or misunderstandings might be brought about among interlocutors, since "rules are so much a part of unconscious expectations concerning proper behavior" (Wolfson, 1989, p.25).

5.1.5 Language Teacher's Role

From this finding, the language teacher needs to bear in mind that if the textbooks concentrate on the practice of the linguistic rules, then the teacher should provide learners with opportunities to learn about other interactional skills related to the language in class, with the purpose of helping learners improve their interactional skills. The gap between learners' practice in class and what learners have to deal with in the real world, can then be easily filled by teacher help. The teacher must realize how seriously the gap affects learners' L2/FL performance in negative ways, and that the teacher needs to consider the best ways to fill the gap. If this gap can be filled adequately as a part of learners' language learning, the results are positive. The teacher always should remember that "if students can be guided to understand the values, patterns, and conventions of the target language community, they will be in a position to communicate effectively with its members" (Wolfson, 1989, p.32).

5.2 Discussion on Students' Theory

Along with the issue of students' practice, the present study also focuses on students' theory (i.e., students' perceptions) through an analysis of students' written records. As

explained in Chapter 4, the students' written record data have revealed that students were psychologically very concerned about three areas of human communication (i.e., linguistic features, non-verbal behaviour, and conversation management) when and even before interacting with NS Japanese professors. Moreover, the data also revealed that each individual student held his/her own belief concerning how to communicate with others adequately. This section will focus on these theoretical dimensions lying behind students' actual practice in their oral interview activity.

5.2.1 Theory in the Textbook

The theory explained in the textbook about the Japanese honorifics is mainly the grammatical rules of honorific forms. For instance, what Japanese honorifics are, how to form honorific nouns, verbs, and adjectives, two kinds of honorific expressions (respect/exalted honorific forms and humble honorific forms), and so forth, are the foci of the theory stressed in the textbook. These honorific forms are introduced in contrast to regular nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and there are also explanations of the contexts in which Japanese people use these honorifics and to whom.

5.2.2 Students' Theory in Authentic Interactions

As the data presentation chapter demonstrated, the students in this study held their own beliefs concerning what is appropriate in face-to-face interactions. For instance, some students believed that asking the professor for repetition was the best way to solve the problem of not understanding what the professor was saying and actually asked for repetition, whereas some students believed that asking for repetition was useless and chose a different strategy, namely, changing the subject, to solve the same problem. This issue of

students holding their own beliefs, which is the basis of their practice in authentic interactions, is a representation of students' awareness of functional aspects in communication.

In order to facilitate the discussion of the various beliefs students held, some examples of written reflections by students are repeated below. These reflections include what each student believed at the moment of facing the problem in the interview and why they acted in their own ways:

Student Written Response 8:

Q: What did you do when you did not understand what the professor was saying? Why?

S9: Asking for repetition and further explanation. It was rude and embarrassing if I answer something irrelevant.

S3: We asked the professor to repeat, but dare not ask again ....It was awkward and we were embarrassed. We'd pretend to understand.

S21: ... I was trying really hard to understand, but after several tries I had to give up, because the interview had to go on.

The underlined parts in each sentence show what students believed (i.e., students' theory), and the rest of each sentence are what they did (i.e., students' practice). From these beliefs of students, it can be inferred that beneath the students' practice lay their own theory concerning the appropriate manner of human interaction; each student consciously or unconsciously realized that just using Japanese honorific forms (i.e., linguistic feature) would never be sufficient for them to carry out a successful interview and used his/her knowledge as to what is appropriate to do. Students also realized that even if they could produce grammatically well-formed honorifics, albeit not always, they still needed to be aware of what they could/should do in order to avoid having such unpleasant feelings as

"rude," "embarrassed," or "awkward,", in facing the Japanese professors, and in order to let the interview "go on".

Thus, while the textbook emphasizes grammatical rule as the major theory for NNS learners to use in order to be able to interact with a NS Japanese superior person, students had to go through a lot of thinking beyond the grammatical rules in order to deal with various functional issues necessary for human interactions. In brief, students' theory was far more complex than the theory explained in the textbook; the theory of functional issues together with the theory of the linguistic rules were essential for students to gain interactional skills.

5.2.3 Learners' Theory Not Necessarily Correct

Although it is important for teachers to take learners' theory into account seriously, it does not mean that teachers should always accept learners' beliefs or theory as being appropriate; it must be noted that learners' theory or belief is not necessarily appropriate, especially in the case of intercultural communication. Learners' belief is often their personal understanding that has been influenced by the sociocultural values of their own or by their past experience in life. That is, their belief is not necessarily a commonly recognized or socioculturally accepted theory. For instance, if NNS learners sit with their legs crossed in front of Japanese professors, as one of the students in the study did, learners do so because they believe that it is all right to sit in this posture when interacting with a Japanese superior. However, this is just their personal belief or understanding based upon their own sociocultural judgement; it is not based upon a commonly recognized theory about cultural/social norms or rules in Japanese society. The teacher must recognize this point and direct learners to a more adequate theory.

5.2.4 Theorization of Functional Issues

If learners' belief regarding the appropriateness in human interaction is just their personal understanding, then learners must learn commonly recognized and socioculturally accepted theory of interactional skills in a language class with a teacher's help. In other words, the language teacher needs to consider providing learners with opportunities to learn what is appropriate and what is inappropriate to do in the target culture as a generalized THEORY of sociocultural values of the target culture. As the data suggested, language learners are consciously or subconsciously well aware that having a more successful interaction requires them to cope with all the aspects of human interaction, including linguistic aspects and functional aspects. This learner awareness indicates that even if learners are incompetent in linguistic aspects of the language, they consciously or subconsciously still wish to be competent in the functional aspects and are willing to learn the necessary theory about being functionally competent in the target language.

As has been discussed, the theory in the textbook about the grammatical rules is insufficient for learners to become competent users of the language; learners need a theory as to what socioculturally appropriate interaction is. If learners hold their own theory or belief, the teacher first needs to ensure whether their theory is adequate. In a word, the teacher needs to lead learners to theorize what commonly recognized and socioculturally accepted values in the target culture are as a part of language learning in class. Through this process, learners can truly come to learn about the importance of socioculturally appropriate interactions with NS, which will help them be more competent users of the target language.

5.3 Students as Reflective Practitioners

The third issue discovered from the data is that students in the present study actively

engaged in their learning by using their knowledge about Japanese honorifics and related matters throughout the oral interview activity and also by reflecting on their performance (both linguistic and functional performance) after the interviews.

5.3.1 Students' Active Interactions with Learning Process

The form-oriented textbook assumes that what language learners need to do is to master the grammatical rule of the language and to apply that knowledge in actual use by practicing different types of drill exercises. However, what students experienced in authentic interactions with NS in this study is more complex than what the textbook assumes. Students utilized their knowledge about the rules, evaluated what was appropriate and inappropriate to do, became confused with their interlocutors' unexpected responses, encountered various difficulties to keep the conversation moving, and tried to find the solutions for these difficulties. Through these involvements in dealing with honorifics and related matters, which are not described in the textbook, students actively participated in their learning and constructed their own ideas about the subject other than the textbook's explanations. Furthermore, through the reflections on the interview activity, students were able to think about their linguistic and functional performance objectively and came up with ideas as to what is important and meaningful for human interactions in the real world.

Thus, against the assumption contained in the form-oriented textbook, students in the present study participated in their own learning very attentively as active and reflective practitioners throughout the entire oral interview activity. In other words, while the form-oriented textbook assumes that the role of language learners is just to receive the necessary knowledge of the rules as being stated and to apply it in authentic interactions, the present study suggests that students were very active in formulating their own knowledge as to what

they were learning by participating in different stages of the entire learning process.

5.3.2 The "Transmission of Knowledge" View

This gap between what the textbook assumes about language learners' learning and how learners really deal with their learning is a matter of "the transmission-of-knowledge view of education, whereby teachers are expected to transmit knowledge to their students, and students are expected to be passive receivers of that knowledge" (Iseno, 1998, p.141). Iseno points out that this transmission-of-knowledge view of education often lowers learner motivation and involvement in learning and therefore causes various problems in a classroom. In order to avoid this kind of problem, Iseno emphasizes that students become active participants in the creation and construction of knowledge, and that "teachers must be willing to give students the opportunities and mechanisms to make sense of that knowledge for themselves" (p.149). The present study clearly shows that students had an opportunity to make sense of the knowledge of Japanese honorifics and related matters for themselves through their participation in the oral interview activity. Students in this study were no longer receivers but active participants in the creation and construction of knowledge.

Hence, the present study argues against the assumptions that the traditional form-oriented textbook embodies; the assumption that language learners just receive the knowledge from the textbook and teacher and just apply the knowledge in actual use is not adequate. Learners interact with various facets in the process of learning attentively, and are able to construct new ideas about what they are learning on their own. In a word, the present study stresses the meaning of language learners' active interactions with their learning and creation of knowledge rather than learners having knowledge transmitted from their textbooks or teacher in a language classroom.

5.4 The Functional Approach to Japanese Honorifics

Having discovered that students in the present study deal with and are aware of the functional aspects of human communication to a great extent, the issue of "function" should be more explored in the present study. With regard to this issue of function in human communication, the "Systemic Functional Linguistics" approach, which was described in Chapter 2 is a very relevant theory and will be discussed in this section once again.

5.4.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

As introduced in Chapter 2, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) treats language as "a system for making meaning" (Halliday, 1994, xvii). The focal point of the functional linguistics approach is that

> It [functional linguistic approach] is closely related to the meanings being expressed through language. Thus its concern is not just with different kinds of words and structures, but with features of the language that reflect and gain their meanings of the text. These connections with context and purpose mean that there are criteria available for evaluating language realistically ... (Collerson, 1994, p.142, italics added)

In short, the functional approach to analyzing language emphasizes what "meanings" are expressed through language in a particular "context" where the language is used. Concerning the issue of "context", Collerson (1994) also explains that "whenever we use language there is a context. The immediate context is the situation in which the language is being used. But every situation is also part of the larger culture in which we live" (p.2) and views this larger culture, namely, "context of culture" (p.2), as a broader sphere of our operations, and involves shared meanings and assumptions.

5.4.2 Context of Oral Interview Activity

When looking at the oral interview activity in the present study from this functional approach, the "context of culture" becomes a very salient issue for further discussion. Even though none of the students were native Japanese nor grew up in Japan, at the moment of the oral interviews, they were expected to be a part of Japanese culture since they were interacting with native Japanese people, and most importantly, this oral interview activity itself was carried out for the sake of students to improve their Japanese. Therefore, what was considered as "shared meanings and assumptions" in this larger context of Japanese culture is Japanese cultural/social norms which are deeply pervasive among people in Japanese society, including the nine Japanese professors participating in the present study.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, one characteristic that is unique to Japanese society is that "notions of hierarchy are extremely important" (Hendry, 1987, p.71). It is this hierarchical order by which Japanese people can shape their interpersonal relationships in society. In fact, "in many situations it is difficult to know how to behave unless one can place the other people present in a hierarchical order in relation to oneself" (Hendry, 1987, p.71). For Japanese people, therefore, it is a crucial part in everyday life that they establish certain interpersonal relationships with various people in society, according to hierarchical differences, such as age and social status. It could be understood that these hierarchical differences among individuals are essential factors for Japanese people to live more adequately and comfortably in their society.

To apply this notion of hierarchical differences to the oral interview activity, it is obvious that Japanese professors were of a superior status to students, according to age difference (i.e., professors being older versus students being younger) and different social status (i.e., professors being university professors versus students being university students).

According to this hierarchical order, it is assumed that the Japanese professors could determine what interpersonal relationship they could/should establish with the students with a good understanding of "one's personal self-identification" (Reischauer, 1977, p.164). Since the students had learned about this hierarchical order unique to Japanese society from their textbooks and instructors when they had first learned about Japanese honorifics, they were expected to understand the concept of hierarchy in Japanese society: the professors being superior to the students. This is the context in which the oral interviews were carried out; the interpersonal relationship between the professors and students determined by the hierarchical order was the commonly shared social norm in this context. In short, the concept that the professors were superior to students was expected to be shared by both the Japanese professors and by students.

5.4.3 Fundamental Functions of Japanese Honorifics

Having recognized the larger context of oral interview activity, the following questions arise from a functional view of language. What was the most fundamental function that was underlying the interactions between the Japanese professors and students? What "meanings" were expressed through the Japanese language, in particular, through Japanese honorifics in this particular context? To find out the answers to these questions, what Derewinaka (1990) talks about regarding language is closely related to the discussion here. According to her, "language in real life is not a complete, ideal system confronting to neat, pre-determined categories. Language is dynamic and ever-evolving. **We** develop language to satisfy our needs in society" (p. 4, bold in original).

Taking what Derewianka states into account, that is, language is developed by humans in order to satisfy social needs, it can be understood that the Japanese language has

developed in order to satisfy Japanese people's needs in Japanese society. More specifically, Japanese honorific forms, which embody "a special set of grammatical contrasts, in which different levels of politeness or respect are expressed, according to the mutual status of the participants" (Donahue, 1998, p.134), were presumably developed to satisfy Japanese people's needs to establish more suitable relationships with other people in society, by showing one's politeness or respect to one another through specific verbal mediums. A very fundamental function of Japanese honorifics, hence, is that they are considered to aid Japanese people in shaping suitable interpersonal relationships in accordance with various levels of hierarchy in various contexts in Japanese society.

5.4.4 Japanese Honorifics in Social Context

Considering language as a context-dependent system and as a development meeting people's social needs, grammar in language can be viewed not just as a set of rules to memorize but as a link with fundamental functions underlying language. Regarding this view on grammar, Collerson (1994) explains grammar in relation to wider social contexts as follows:

> grammar is not some isolated system with a life of its own; it is an integral part of language. Our language isn't an isolated system either. It is part of our culture and way of life--something that we share with others. It is largely through language that we take part in the life of our community and wider context to which we belong. The purposes we have for using language and the meanings we express come from the social context, and our language is organised to serve social functions. These are reflected in the grammar, which is central to the organisation of language. (p.1)

In short, the social context and social functions underlying language are reflected through each grammatical component, and when each grammatical component is assembled, a whole

language is constructed.

This argument is easily applied to learning Japanese honorifics. As discussed in the earlier section, Japanese honorifics are usually introduced as another set of grammatical rules in textbooks in addition to other numerous rules, such as how to form the present form, past form, or potential form, how to deal with morphological rules, and so on. As a result, learners of Japanese honorifics are less likely to have a chance to learn the fundamental function of Japanese honorifics, that is, what Japanese honorifics can mean in Japanese society, or what Japanese people can realize with Japanese honorifics, due to the emphasis only on the linguistic rule of honorific forms. It must be emphasized that the learners of Japanese need to understand the fundamental function of honorifics, that is, language learners, most importantly, need to understand what they can realize with Japanese honorifics in their interactions with various people in various contexts in society.

5.4.5 Fundamental Function of Japanese Honorifics in the Oral Interview

This fundamental function of honorifics forms, in fact, can easily be spotted in the discourse data of the student-professor interviews when examining it carefully. While the textbook which the students in the present study used explains that, "honorific forms, which may be markers or distinct words, express respect for those of a higher social status than the speaker" (International Christian University, 1996, p.22, italics added), and that "When using an honorific verb, the subject must be older or superior to the speaker" (p.110, italics added), actual discourse data displays some examples which contradict these explanations. In the actual interactions, there are quite a few occasions in which the Japanese professors addressed honorific forms to the students. In other words, honorifics were used by those who were superiors to show their politeness or respect of those who were inferiors. The following

are some examples of the professors using honorific forms:

Excerpt 13:

Professor 3

• *A-machi wa donokurai **irassharu** no?*

   How long have you **been (honorific)** in A-city?

• *Minasan wa yoku eega toka **irasshai** masu?*

     Does everybody often **go (honorific)** to movies or something?

Excerpt 14:

Professor 5

• *Rirakkusu shite nihongo o benkyoo shite **itadake** tara to omoimasu ...*

     I hope you will study Japanese in a relaxed manner ...

     (Lit.) I hope **I will receive a favour of you kindly** studying Japanese in a

      relaxed manner ...

Excerpt 15 :

Professor 9

• *Go-shinseki to issho ni o-sumai ni natte iru no?*

     Are you **living (honorific)** with your **(honoured) relatives**?

• *Anata no danna sama ...*

     Your **(honored) husband**...

From these examples, it is revealed that in reality, honorific forms are commonly utilized not

only by inferiors to superiors, but also by superiors to inferiors (e.g., from a university

professor to a university student).

5.4.6 Japanese Honorifics as a Realization of Suitable Human Relationship

    What, then, can be interpreted from this contradiction between the explanation in the

textbook and the real usage? Why did these Japanese professors use honorific forms when talking with university students, despite being superior to the students in Japanese social norm? These questions cannot be answered if Japanese honorifics are viewed only from a form-oriented perspective; even if linguistic (grammatical) rules of honorifics are carefully examined, they cannot explain why the real usage of honorifics contradicts the explanation in textbooks, and Japanese honorifics are actually used by superiors to inferiors. If Japanese honorifics are viewed from a functional approach, on the other hand, these questions can be explained, relating them to what the fundamental function of honorific forms is. Standing from the perspective of the functional approach, that is, honorific forms as a realization of more suitable relationship among interlocutors, it is presumed that the Japanese professors in this study, in spite of their being in a higher social status, needed to use honorifics to establish a more suitable relationship with students. In other words, rather than establishing a rigid superior-inferior hierarchy which is commonly believed appropriate, the professors may have wanted to establish a more formal relationship with respect and politeness towards the students.

There might have been several factors that stimulated the professors to move in that direction. These students were young adult university students, so the professors may have wanted to treat the students in the same way as the professors were being treated. Furthermore, the professors met the students for the first time at this interview; therefore, more formality and social distance might have been preferred by the professors. In any case, the fact that the professors used honorific forms for the students obviously showed that, for the professors, a more suitable relationship with students was with a certain degree of formality or politeness among the interlocutors. With regard to a person in a higher status using honorific forms to a person in a lower status, Makino and Tsutsui (1986) explain that

"sometimes, an older person uses polite expressions when he is asking a favor of a younger person. Under such circumstances, the older person feels psychologically inferior to the person he is addressing" (p.44). This statement by Makino and Tsutsui indicates that an interpersonal relationship between a superior person and an inferior person is not always such a rigid relationship as the superior person being more authoritative than the inferior person; it varies depending on contexts.

Interestingly enough, an opposite example of the use of Japanese honorifics was reported in the study by Okamoto (1997). Based on the discourse data that Okamoto carefully analyzed, she revealed the fact that honorific forms were not necessarily used by a person in a lower status all the time in his/her interactions with a person in a higher status. This finding definitely contradicts the general notion of honorifics being utilized by a person in a lower status to a person in a higher status in broader hierarchical relationships. According to Okamoto, for instance, shop vendors in public markets in Osaka and in Kyoto used very few honorifics when talking to their customers and used more casual and informal speech styles, whereas salespeople in large department stores in the same regions never failed to use honorifics to their customers in a very polite manner. To restate, even though both shop vendors in the markets and salespeople in the department stores belong to the "customers - salespeople" relationship in a broader hierarchical relationship (i.e., the former is higher in a status and the latter is lower in a status) in Japanese society, the linguistic forms used by the shop vendor in the markets and the salespeople in the department stores were very different.

As an explanation of the non-use of honorifics by shop vendors in the markets, Okamoto pointed at the "speaker's consideration of multiple social aspects of the context" (p.809). In other words, the choice of linguistic forms (e.g. use or non-use of honorifics) is

determined by the speaker's judgment about the appropriateness of the linguistic form in a given situation. In the case of shop vendors in the markets, they judged the use of honorifics as inappropriate in their given situation, since they probably believed that the use of honorifics was too formal to create intimacy or friendliness towards their customers. Thus, the choice of linguistic forms cannot be directly correlated with a single social variable, rather, "it is best regarded as a strategy based on the speaker's linguistic ideology that mediates the pragmatic meanings of linguistic forms and his/her assessment of multiple social aspects of the context" (p.814-815). This implies that it is not sufficient for the language learner to know linguistic forms and their pragmatic meanings. In addition, the learner must be able to "think on her/his feet" when using this knowledge, assessing the social aspects of the context and the speaker's strategies and linguistic ideology.

5.4.7 Japanese Honorifics and Human Relationship in Society

In sum, the kind of interpersonal relationship among interlocutors is determined by the given context and by the interlocutors' assessment of suitability in the context. Hence, Japanese honorifics, as a function of establishing an interpersonal relationship, can be used for various purposes in accordance with what relationship each interlocutor wishes to establish in what context. By analyzing student-professor interactions from a functional viewpoint, it has become clear that honorific forms were used by Japanese professors with their assessment of appropriateness in order to satisfy their needs according to what context each individual was in at the moment of their interaction. To rephrase, it has become clear that each professor's individual social needs were well reflected through the use of honorifics that they used to address the students.

In contrast to the NS Japanese professors, NNS students were not competent enough

to use honorifics both in grammatical aspects and in appropriate ways of use. However, the students could still cover their incompetence in the use of honorifics by paying attention to their non-verbal behaviour and to conversation management and by performing in a functionally appropriate manner. To restate this, students were able to establish the most suitable human relationship with the combination of linguistic skills (i.e., using honorifics) and functional skills.

Hence, if learners truly understand the fundamental function of honorifics, they will take functional aspects of interactions more seriously and be able to interact with NS in a more appropriate manner based upon adequate theory about functional issues related to honorifics. Learners are then able to convey their messages to the interlocutors and to establish the most suitable relationship with them effectively even if learners lack the linguistic competence in forming grammatically correct honorifics.

Japanese honorifics should no longer be considered just as stylistic devices or frills that can be easily analyzed on surface sentence level. They contain a deeper meaning, which may not be easily observed and tend to be neglected by language teachers. It is actually this "meaning" which has to be conveyed to each interlocutor who is participating in the interaction using honorifics. Japanese honorifics, hence, contribute to a realization of conveying "meaning" among interlocutors. Once realizing this functional meaning of Japanese honorifics as a kind of tool to establish a suitable interpersonal relationship in society, learners of the Japanese language should also come to notice that there are other important tools that serve to establish a suitable interpersonal relationship, namely, non-verbal behaviour and conversation management.

What is of the utmost importance for both the teacher and learners is that they must realize that the use of honorifics is not the sole ingredient to satisfy Japanese people's needs

to establish a suitable interpersonal relationship in society; it is one of several ingredients which respectively contribute to shaping an interpersonal relationship. The functional aspects of human communication are also essential ingredients that must be acquired by learners so that they could interact with NS appropriately without violating cultural and /or social norms that NS interlocutors generally hold.

5.5 A Call for Focus on Function in Language Education

To sum up what has been discussed in this chapter, there should be a call to bring into focus more of the functional aspects of human communication in the field of language education. Learners of a L2/FL have been more likely to learn only the linguistic rules of the target language in classroom as the major theory and to use exercise drills as the major practice detached from actual contexts, as shown by the textbook which the students in the present study used. Linguistic features or rules of the target language are, of course, important components for learners to become able to communicate in the language. However, language educators must realize that mastery of the linguistic rules of the target language is not the ultimate goal of the language education. As the data in the present study show, learners need to learn about socioculturally appropriate non-verbal behaviour and conversation management as important elements of human communication in addition to learning about linguistic rules of the target language.

Based on the analyzed data, the present study emphasizes that learners of a L2/FL should be encouraged to think about the question, "What does the learner want to do with the target language?" (Nunan, 1988, p.11). That is to say, language learners are encouraged to think about the function--what they can realize through the target language--in relation to the target culture and society. In the oral interviews observed in the present study, what students

consciously or subconsciously wanted to do with Japanese honorific forms in the context of facing the Japanese professors was not merely to practice linguistic rules of honorific forms they had learned, they also wanted to show their politeness or respectfulness to the Japanese professors through their use of honorific forms AND wanted to establish a suitable relationship with the professors. Although students themselves might not have realized this point, it can be affirmed by the finding that students were aware of being polite in non-verbal behaviour and of managing the interviews more successfully. Students' wish to show their politeness, in turn, reveals that they were attempting to establish a suitable interpersonal relationship between the two parties by means of both the linguistic medium (i.e., Japanese honorifics) and the functional medium (i.e., non-verbal behaviour and conversation management).

Realizing a suitable interpersonal relationship with others is what people in society need in their everyday lives as a member of its society. Halliday (1978) describes this relation between people and society as follows:

> A society ... consist [s] of ... relations, and these relations define social roles. Being a member of society means occupying a social role; and it is again by means of language that a 'person' becomes potentially the occupant of a social role. Social roles are combinable, and the individual, as a member of a society, occupies not just one role but many at a time, always through the medium of language. (p.14-15)

As a member of society, each individual possesses several social roles in a variety of contexts. The students and Japanese professors in the present study, for instance, possessed different social roles that were socioculturally and contextually determined. Through the medium of the Japanese language--more specifically, of Japanese honorifics together with the knowledge of non-verbal behaviour and conversation management, each interlocutor's social roles were expected to be well constructed.

Language education, thus, should always be concerned with the concept that "learning a language ... that enables one to use that language for a range of social and expressive purposes requires more than learning a list of vocabulary items, syntactic paradigms, and nativelike pronunciation" (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 323, italics added). The present study supports what Schiffrin stresses and provides a clue as to what L2/FL education needs to concentrate more on. Educators in the field of language education always have to bear in mind that it is the learners who communicate and interact with other NS people in the target language; therefore, what learners can do, need to do, or want to do with the language is the most salient factor in learning language. The functions of language and communication should never be neglected and should become a focus of reflective enquiry for the learners.

5.6 A Call for Helping Learners Stand *On Their Feet*

It is important to be clear about what is at issue here. It is not just that learners attend to function as well as form. It is that learners should be helped to be reflective enquirers about function as well as form. There is a further point. In addition, learners should be helped to be persons who can think on their feet. They are not only persons who learn what they can in the classroom, but also persons who learn in the midst of interaction, noting how honorifics are being used in the interactions they are engaged in and adjusting to the social context in which they find themselves. The data in the present study clearly indicated that the student participants were very independent in their interactions with NS and during their reflections on the performance. Thus, the present study strongly emphasizes that the teacher should value learners' independence and responsibility for their learning and help them think and learn on their own feet. That is what language education must call attention to in the future.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study attempted to discover whether the assumptions embodied in the traditional language teaching/learning textbook are adequate. More specifically, this study questioned the assumptions that the traditional language teaching/learning approach in the textbook holds concerning learning Japanese honorifics and investigated learners' performance with honorifics in authentic interactions. The assumptions that this study have been questioning are as follows: The traditional approach assumes (1) that drill exercises in the textbook can be considered to be equivalent to engagement in authentic interactions with NS, (2) that it is adequate to state the rules of honorifics only as formal grammatical rules without a detailed description of their functions in interactions, and (3) that learners' activity is limited to learning the rules as stated and applying them to interactions.

In order to explore the issues raised, the present study set the following questions as the research questions:

1. What are the learners' practices when they use Japanese honorifics in a real life situation? Are the practice exercises provided in a classroom adequate for learners to be competent in honorifics?

2. What are learners' theories about honorifics? Do they regard the grammatical rule just as stated in the textbook, or do they construct their own theories about honorifics?

3. What is the learners' involvement in the teaching-learning process? Are they solely engaged in a transmission process of teaching-learning or is there evidence of the

learner acting as a reflective practitioner engaged in constructing an understanding of honorifics and their use?

6.1 Summary of Research Findings

This section will summarize the major findings of the present study. Three findings that correspond to the research question 1 to 3 respectively are as follows:

(1) There was a gap between what the textbook aimed to teach through the practice exercises and what students actually engaged in during authentic interactions with NS.

(2) There was a gap between the formal rules of honorifics described in the textbook and students' perceptions of honorifics and related matters.

(3) There was a gap between the assumption entailed in the textbook that students would simply apply the rules to authentic interactions and the evidence from the data that students were active and reflective practitioners.

6.1.1 Learners' Practice

The first finding of the present study is about learners' practices. This study discovered that there was a gap between the practice exercises of Japanese honorifics that the textbook aimed to provide and what students actually engaged in authentic interactions with NS using honorifics. According to the data, although the textbook provided several kinds of drill exercises highlighting the rules of honorifics, students in authentic interactions attempted to deal with three different areas necessary for human interactions; these three areas were linguistic components (e.g., constructing grammatically correct honorific forms and other structures), non-verbal behaviour (e.g., showing their enthusiasm to the

interlocutors), and conversation management (e.g., changing the subject when they did not understand what NS were saying). Among these three areas, students practiced linguistic components (i.e., grammatical rules) through the drill exercises in the textbook as a class activity beforehand, yet the other two areas, non-verbal behaviour and conversation management, were not the focus of the drill exercises, and hence were hardly recognized in the classroom exercises.

To show an example of this gap, the data revealed that students in authentic interactions were attempting to bow, smile, look at the professors' eyes attentively and so forth, in order to be non-verbally polite in front of the professors. However, these non-verbal issues were hardly covered as practice exercises in a classroom, and students had no chance to practice how to behave in a non-verbally polite manner; what students did as classroom exercises was to apply their grammatical knowledge of honorifics in the oral production (i.e., speech). In short, when practicing honorifics in class, students concentrated only on linguistic elements with little attention paid to non-verbal behaviour and conversation management.

Thus, a gap between classroom practices of honorifics that the textbook aimed to provide and learners' actual engagement in authentic interactions with NS was discovered. It becomes evident that there are several functional aspects that language learners should master along with the mastery of the rules of the language as a part of language learning. Learners need practices in a classroom dealing with these functional aspects more seriously on a regular basis.

6.1.2 Learners' Conceptions of Honorifics (Learners' Theories)

The second finding of this study concerns learners' theories, or what learners think or believe about Japanese honorifics. The data revealed that there was a gap between the formal rules of honorifics described in the textbook and learners' own theories of honorifics. When interacting with NS Japanese, students were aware of the functional aspects related to honorifics as well as of the linguistic aspects of honorifics and the language. To be more specific, the theories described in the textbook are detailed grammatical rules of Japanese honorifics, such as how to form honorific verbs or adjectives, how to conjugate regular verb forms into honorific verb forms, and so forth. However, according to the student written reflection data, students' theories about honorifics went beyond the rules stated in the textbook; students held their own beliefs about functionally appropriate human interactions with a Japanese superior, and the rules of honorifics were just a part of their theories. In other words, although students acknowledged the importance of the grammatical rule of honorifics stated in the textbook, they also recognized functional issues related to honorifics and human interactions as being important, and held their own theories. Thus, students' holding their own theories about honorifics is a significant discovery in the present study.

It should be noted, however, that students' understanding of honorifics and related issues was not always adequate as the Japanese professors pointed out concerning non-verbal behaviour or conversation management. It cannot be assumed that the learners have no need of teacher guidance to understand functional issues related to honorifics. If learners' theories are inadequate, the teacher must help learners reshape their theories into adequate ones. This issue of teacher help will be elaborated later in the pedagogical implication section.

6.1.3 Learners as Reflective Practitioner

The third finding of the present study is about learners' involvement in the process of learning. The data proved that there was a gap between the assumption of the traditional teaching-learning approach and learners' active involvement in their learning. To put this in another way, while the traditional teaching-learning approach views language learners as passive recipients who simply memorize the grammatical rules as they are stated, and apply the rules to interactions, students in the present study did not merely apply the rules of honorifics, but actively participated in constructing their own understanding of honorifics and related issues. Students reflected on their performance of honorifics and of interactions after the interview, and by doing so, they were eventually able to connect their theories and practices well.

Students in this study experienced a unique process of learning honorifics; they studied the rules of honorifics and practiced them through drill exercises in the textbook as the traditional teaching approach stresses. Students then used honorifics in authentic interactions with NS and reflected on their performance afterwards. Through their involvement in these non-traditional learning processes, students were able to formulate their understanding and their new ideas with regard to honorifics and related issues more actively. In other words, students in this study were reflective practitioners, not passive recipients, who could put their theories and their practices together by participating in each process of learning honorifics. It should be remembered, however, that learners' theories were sometimes inadequate, as mentioned in an earlier section, and they needed to be reviewed and reshaped properly with teacher support. It can therefore never be assumed that learners have no need of teacher support to become better reflective practitioners.

In sum, the present study credits students' active involvement in their own learning with an effective approach to learning language. This approach is very different from the traditional teaching-learning approach in terms of the former putting emphasis on learners' active participation in learning. As the evidence suggests, there should be room for language learners to be able to engage in both practical and theoretical aspects of learning as a classroom activity. By doing so, learners can construct clearer ideas about their own concerns over what they are learning in the classroom.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications for the Language Teacher

This thesis has argued three major problems that the traditional teaching style of Japanese honorifics contains. Based upon the findings, three pedagogical implications are suggested. These implications are expected to be useful for teachers to deal with the problems discussed in this thesis. The three implications are as follows: The language teacher should attempt to minimize (1) the gap between classroom exercises and authentic interactions by employing experiential learning in class, (2) the gap between the theories in the textbook and the theories of learners by leading learners to theorize what is important/unimportant when dealing with the target language in authentic interactions, and (3) the gap between the assumptions embedded in the traditional teaching approach and learners' active involvement in learning by viewing learners as active and reflective practitioners.

6.2.1 Learners' Practices in a Classroom

First of all, the present study suggests that the language teacher minimize the gap

between what learners practice in a classroom and what they actually deal with in authentic interactions with NS. As has been discovered, in authentic interactions, learners have to engage in functional issues (i.e., non-verbal behaviour and conversation management) as well as in linguistic issues. The functional issues, however, are rarely stressed in classroom practices since most practices are usually centred on drill exercises to apply the grammatical rules in oral (or written) production. Consequently, learners are neither likely to practice how to deal with functional issues in authentic interactions as regular classroom exercises nor to acquire the competence needed for the functional issues.

The present study emphasizes that learners' competence to deal with the functional issues, or functional competence, should be fostered in a language classroom on a regular basis. According to Seelye (1984), "interpersonal communication requires skills. When communication is between people from different cultural backgrounds, special skills are required if the messages received are to resemble the messages sent" (p.2). Hence, language learners who are from different cultural backgrounds from their NS interactants are required to be equipped with functional competence in order to exchange the messages with NS in linguistically and functionally appropriate manners. It is the language teacher's role, then, to consider what classroom exercises will help improve the learners' functional competence and whether it can be applied to authentic interactions with NS.

An effective classroom exercise to improve learners' functional competence is learners experiencing actual interactions with NS, as we saw in the present study. Through this hands-on exercise, learners are encouraged to realize what areas, other than the linguistic rules, they must deal with and practice for better interactions with NS. Learners are also encouraged to prepare for authentic interactions with NS that learners might

encounter outside the classroom in the future. In this sense, classroom exercises employing authentic interactions with NS will be very relevant to learners' actual engagement in the real world compared to simple applications of a grammatical rule, and the gap between what learners practice in a language classroom and what they actually engage in during authentic interactions outside the classroom would be expected to be decreased.

If authentic interactions with NS as a class activity are impossible to do, there are other alternatives to improve learners' functional competence. For instance, the teacher can show videos on how Japanese people interact with each other. That is to say, the non-verbal ways in which Japanese people interact with others, or the ways in which Japanese people keep the conversation going can be introduced through the use of videos in class. The teacher, not just by telling the fact, can encourage learners to find out any functional issues unique to Japanese people on their own through viewing the video and can discuss these in class. It is important that learners should be given an opportunity to reflect on what they saw in the video and to learn the theory of functional issues on their own as reflective practitioners. Through this type of exercise, learners will be able to learn sociocultural values that must be taken into account in functional aspects of language and interactions and be able to improve their functional competence.

6.2.2 Learners' Theories in a Classroom

As the second implication, the present study suggests that the language teacher minimize the gap between the theories introduced in the textbook (i.e., grammatical rules) and the theories that learners hold during authentic interactions (i.e., rules for human interactions). To put this in another way, the teacher should help learners acquire adequate

knowledge or theories about the functional issues in addition to the grammatical rules of the language.

6.2.2.1 Learners' Theorization of Functional Issues

This suggestion draws on the evidence that students in the present study were very aware of functional issues related to honorifics as well as of linguistic issues when interacting with the professors, and held their own beliefs or theories as to what is appropriate/inappropriate to do. Having said this, however, it should not be assumed that learners' awareness or theories about functional issues are always adequate; rather, it must be remembered that learners' awareness are just "intuitive" and their beliefs are just "personal" which might contradict adequate theories. A good example of inadequate theories of learners is the evidence that some students' beliefs about appropriateness in non-verbal behaviour were not acceptable to some Japanese professors. In other words, at the time of the interviews, students were not fully equipped with socioculturally and functionally adequate knowledge about Japanese honorifics and related issues. In order for learners to develop their intuitive awareness and personal beliefs into adequate theories, or to theorize their intuitive and personal understanding of the issues, teacher support in class is necessary. The teacher, then, should consider designing lessons that facilitate learners' theorization of the functional issues.

6.2.2.2 From Practical Experience to Theoretical Understanding

In terms of activity designs, a pedagogical theory dealing with both practice and theory must be remembered; the fundamental framework of the entire activity and learning

should be "starting from practical example and cases and move towards theoretical understanding" (Mohan, 1986, p.100). According to Mohan, teaching and learning can be divided into two approaches: experiential approaches and expository approaches (p.102). The former is learning through first-hand experiences such as laboratory work or practical activity in art, and the latter is learning through discourse, such as lecture, textbooks and classroom discussion. In order for learners to understand the theory more easily and effectively, teachers have to consider both experiential and expository approaches, and decide how they can first provide learners with practical learning, how they can transfer students' focus from practical to expository, and how they can help learners finally theorize what they learned through practical learning.

As Cummins (1983) mentions, "A major pedagogical principle for both L1 and L2 teaching is that language skills in context-reduced situations can be most successfully developed on the basis of initial instruction which maximises the degree of context-embeddedness, i.e., the range of cues to meaning" (p.125). To restate this, context-embedded learning is the solid ground from which learners can move to abstract and context-reduced theory more easily and effectively. In this respect, offering learners a chance to interact with NS, like the oral interview activity in the present study, is a type of practical learning through which language learners can take a first step towards mastering functional competence related to honorifics. Drawing on this first-hand experience, students move to the next step where they could develop what they intuitively understood into theories, that is, theorize what they learned through their own experience. This process is the key transition from practical to theoretical learning, and the most important part of the entire

process. Thus, a theory, from practical to theoretical is useful and salient when the teacher

helps learners theorize their intuitive or personal understanding of the issues.

6.2.3 Viewing Learners as Active and Reflective Practitioners

The third implication for the language teacher is that the teacher should view

learners as active agents and design lessons to enhance learners' practical and theoretical

involvement in their learning process. This implication is based upon the evidence that

students in the present study did not passively receive the knowledge about honorifics from

the textbook or teacher as being stated, but were more actively involved in constructing new

ideas and reflected on their performance through participating in authentic interactions with

the NS professors.

6.2.3.1 The Effectiveness of Experiential Learning

As introduced in Chapter 2, the oral interview activity examined in this study is a

type of experiential learning that aims for learners' theoretical understanding through their

reflections on their experience (or social practice). In the study, this experiential activity was

able to provide students with room to think about what they were learning (i.e., Japanese

honorifics and related issues and interactions with NS) by reflecting on their first-hand

experience. In other words, students' experiences of interacting with NS were turned into

learning by thought (Herbert, 1995; Kohonen, 1992), and knowledge was created through

the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). The findings of the study indicate that this

kind of experiential learning is very effective in terms of integrating learners' practical

learning with their theoretical learning. As a consequence of the integration, the ultimate

goal of learning, that is, learners' conceptual understanding of the subject matter can be more likely to be realized in an effective way.

This integration of practice and theory and the ultimate goal of learning must be always well considered when the teacher plans lessons incorporating a type of experiential learning. The first step of lesson planning is that teachers should review how they view learners: whether they view learners as active practitioners who can construct their own ideas through their involvement in learning process. The teacher can then move to the next step, deciding on the most effective way to make learners participate in both practical and theoretical learning with more concrete ideas.

6.2.3.2 Learners' Role as Active Practitioners

The essential quality contained in experiential learning is to inspire learners to realize that they are the ones, not their teacher, who are the centre of entire learning and who can make learning happen. For example, Kozolanka (1995) stresses this point by citing the voice of two students who participated in experiential learning programme of cultural journalism as follows:

> A lot of learning went on throughout the semester (of the experiential learning programme) although the approach was quite different from the school we've been used to. The things we learned could not have come out of a textbook; we had practical experience and *learned by doing things, not just by listening to an explanation. We learned valuable lessons from our mistakes, from everything we said and did, and from everyone we came into contact with.* That's what life is all about.
> (Doubt & Ramsey, 1991, p, 25, italics added).

As understood from the above comments, learning by doing things gives more meanings to learners compared to learning by listening to a teacher's explanation or a teacher's interpretation and accepting it as stated. Listening to a teacher's interpretation is considered to be a transmission of information, which is a second or third-hand experience for learners. On the other hand, learners' drawing meaning and information through their own experience is a first-hand experience (Herbert, 1995, p.20), and in this first-hand experiential learning, learners are encouraged to make more decisions as key participants in learning. Experiential learning, hence, takes a very different stance from the traditional teaching-learning approach, which views learners as passive recipients.

In fact, this traditional teaching-learning approach, or the traditional transmission education (Miller & Seller, 1990) has been widely criticized by a number of scholars and educators who value the idea of learners as active participants in their learning process. Among them is Dewey (1963) who argued against traditional education as the imposition of adult standards, subject-matter, and methods which restrained expressions and cultivation of young learner's. He believed that "education is essentially a social process" (p.58), and stressed the importance of learner participation in the formation of the purposes which direct their activities in the learning process. Based on this viewpoint of learner participation, Dewey pointed out the major role of teachers as the most mature member in a group who had a responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group.

A Brazilian educator, Freire (1970) who has had a profound influence in the educational field, also emphasized the importance of learner participation in learning as a focal issue of education. In his renowned book, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970), he

discussed *problem-posing education* which encourages students to become more conscious of participating in their learning, in contrast with traditional *banking education*, in which students are mere receivers of education. Freire pointed out a significant aspect of problem-posing as dialogue between teachers and learners and contrasted it with the banking education as follows:

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of the students and the students-of the teacher ceases to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-students with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. *They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.* (p.61, italics added)

In this problem-posing education, according to Freire, students were no longer quiet listeners, but "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (p.61).

What both Dewey and Freire emphasize is the very fundamental nature of education; hence, it should be applied to any educational environment, including language education. It is often the case that the language teacher tends to believe their major role is to transmit knowledge of the target language such as vocabulary, grammatical rules, or pronunciation to their students and to make students acquire these kinds of knowledge through practice exercises. Providing certain knowledge of the target language is indeed a part of teacher roles; however, the critical issue here whether the teacher wishes to transmit knowledge to passive recipients in a one-way direction with no dialogue between the two parties, or whether the teacher wishes to make active participants play their roles as learners throughout the process of learning by establishing dialogue with them.

Concerning the issue of learner role in education, Newman (1990) describes her belief as follows:

...learning – language learning in particular – is a collaborative, global, risky business. Learners play a crucial role in creating knowledge and language for themselves. They must constantly experiment, try things out, and make adjustments as they see how a particular learning endeavor is faring. (p.9)

It is important for the language teacher to be aware of what role learners should play in their learning. Learners are in a classroom not just to have knowledge transmitted from their teacher; they are there to create knowledge for themselves.

In summary, through critical observations of the oral interview activity between learners of the Japanese language and NS Japanese professors, it is hoped that the present study will contribute to minimizing the gaps between what is happening in a language classroom and what is happening in authentic interactions. As has been well demonstrated in this thesis, learners' experience of authentic interactions with NS as a classroom activity is an effective way to solve the problems. It is also important that, after the experience, learners should be guided to reach the final goal, that is, the understanding of the issues with adequate theories through their reflections on the experience as researchers. This type of learning process, that is, an integration of theory and practice in a classroom, helps learners improve their competence needed for authentic interaction, and prepare for entering the real world. By participating in both practical and theoretical learning with teacher support, learners are expected to realize eventually what their own role is as language learners and to be more responsible and positive about their own learning.

6.3 A Final Word about the Value of Qualitative Research Methodology

The significance of the qualitative research methodology employed in this study

must be mentioned. As explained in Chapter 3, the aim of this study was to analyze human

beings and their connections to the real world. The analysis was accomplished fruitfully by

the qualitative research method. Hence, it is expected that further qualitative research will

explore a deeper understanding of human beings in society in both practical and theoretical

aspects.

6.3.1 Discourse as an Important Source of an Analysis of Theory and Practice

This study has clearly demonstrated that various types of raw data exhibited what

was happening with the student participants in terms of both their practice and of their

theories related to Japanese honorifics and the oral interview activity. The most significant

data in terms of revealing important issues surrounding the activity and language learning

were, without any doubt, the discourse of the participants, and in particular, of the student

participants. To restate, the analysis of student interview discourse (i.e., what students

actually said during the interviews, especially using honorific forms) disclosed students'

practices, and the analysis of student reflection discourse (i.e., what they talked about

honorifics, their performance, and the interview per se after the interview activity), on the

other hand, disclosed students' theories. Through the analysis of each type of discourse,

practices and theories of language learners were well connected, and hence various issues

related to language learners and language learning were understood more completely from

these two levels.

In fact, this study is a good example of a realization of connecting what language

learners actually do with the language (i.e., practices) and what they think or believe about

the language and learning per se (i.e., theories). The most effective contribution of this

realization is the analysis of discourse of the participants. As the data presentation chapter

demonstrated, a clear presentation of two very distinct types of discourse, practical

discourse and theoretical discourse, is a unique characteristic of this study. By analyzing the

first type of practical discourse, that is, the participants' discourse spoken in Japanese during

the oral interview, what students did with the language, or what linguistic forms or language

patterns students produced in their actual speech was understood. By analyzing the second

type of theoretical discourse, that is, the discourse (both written and spoken discourse)

mainly in English to talk about the Japanese discourse, why students produced a certain

linguistic forms or language patterns and what they believed about the language were

revealed to account for their practice. It is also clear that the student theoretical discourse

unveiled what students believed about learning per se as well as about learning Japanese

language (in particular, honorifics). Thus, the qualitative research methodology combined

with discourse analysis has contributed significantly to a better understanding of language

learners' perceptions of Japanese honorifics and Japanese language, interactions with NS,

and human communication on the larger scale and, furthermore, their own language

learning in a broader sense.

6.4 Implications for Further Research

The initial aim of the present study was to discover how learners of the Japanese

language would engage in Japanese honorifics in authentic interactions. Along with this

aim, the present study attempted to discover whether the assumptions about learners as

passive recipients in the traditional teaching-learning approach were adequate. As the data

analysis advanced through the qualitative research methodology, though, the initial focus

turned out to reveal various complex issues regarding human communication in a broader sense. In particular, the issue of language learners' awareness of functional issues in human interactions was well demonstrated in this study. Surprisingly, the issue of learners' awareness of language, language use, and their own performance have rarely been highlighted in previous research in the field of language education although it seems an obvious avenue for research to take. In order to develop learners' mere awareness into a solid understanding with adequate theory, further studies concentrating on how to connect learners' practices to theories effectively through classroom activities are needed.

It is strongly expected that future qualitative research will explore more issues on what learners actually learn in a classroom both on a practical level and on a theoretical level, and that it will explore how relevantly these findings are to what learners have to deal with in authentic interactions. In other words, it is hoped that future studies will encourage the language teacher and learners to pay more attention to what issues are important when using the target language, and consequently, that learners will become more competent in all aspects of human communication. That is what language education should pursue: Teachers and researchers in the field of language education should always search for the most effective and efficient approaches to invite learners to improve their competence not only for grammatical rules but also for human interactions in general. In that sense, the discoveries of the present study will contribute to advancing the quality of language education to a further stage.

6.5 Limitations of the Present Study

It should be noted that the present study is a partial scene of a larger scene, and the

results of the study cannot necessarily be generalized to other studies conducted in different situations. For instance, the student participants in this study were at specific stage in their studying of Japanese (i.e., at the intermediate level of a university course), and different groups of learners at various stages in various school settings may have different theories and practices concerning the use of honorifics and their interactions with NS. Moreover, the Japanese participants were also a specific group of people (i.e., university professors or researchers) who are more likely to be immersed in an academic environment in their daily lives. If a different group of people (e.g., company employees, sales clerks, nurses, and so forth) participated in the same type of study, they may provide different perceptions with regard to learners' use of honorifics and performance. In addition, there may be differences among the student participants in their theories and practices since, as mentioned in Chapter 3, these students have different backgrounds (e.g., ethnicities, native languages, past experience of studying Japanese, and so forth), and these differences might have had a critical influence on students' theories and practices. In sum, it should be well understood that the findings of this study are limited to the specific context in which this study was carried out, and may not be applicable to different contexts.

6.6 Reflections on the Study

This study has turned out to be a very precious experience for the researcher in two respects. First of all, the researcher was able to establish a very complex picture of learning process of young adult language learners. The discovery of the complexity that learners face will help the researcher, as a language teacher, understand her own students' complex processing of theory and practice, and will inspire her to create effective and successful

lessons with consideration to her students. This experience is very valuable in terms of the researcher being a more competent language teacher.

Secondly, the researcher was able to better understand the meaning of function in human communication. As she has advanced her analysis of the data, the researcher, in her own life, has become very aware of what meaning is established among interlocutors by their choosing certain vocabulary, behaving in a certain non-verbal manner, and managing the conversation in a certain way. The researcher believes that her insight fostered through conducting this study will be an asset for her to build better human relationships with others not only as a language teacher but also as an individual in her life.

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Appendix 1 : Background Information of the Student Participants

Sex	Males : 10 Females: 14 Total: 24
Age	19-24 years old (Average 20.58)
Years in university	1st year 1 2nd year 12 3rd year 8 4th year 3
Majors	Animal Biology 1 Fine Arts 1 Asian Studies 5 International Relations 1 Commerce 6 Linguistics 2 Computer Science 1 Marketing 1 Economics 4 Undecided 2
Years of studying Japanese	Less than 1 year 2 4 years 4 1-2 years 2 5 years 7 2 years 2 6 years 2 3 years 5
Native Countries	Canada 5 Hong Kong 12 Taiwan 7
Native Languages	Cantonese 13 English 5 Mandarin 7 Taiwanese 2 * 3 students referred to 2 languages as their native languages
Experience of visiting Japan	Yes: 15 No: 9 If yes, Less than 10 days 4 10 days-3 weeks 4 3 weeks 2 2 and ½ months 1 11 months 1 2 years 1 not indicated 2

Appendix 2: Sample Questions of the Researcher Interviews with Student Participants

Question 1: How did your oral interview activity go?

2: How was your Keigo (honorifics) usage?

3: What was difficult for you?

4: How did you like the oral interview activity?
   Was it useful to improve your Japanese?

5: Are there any other issues that you found/noticed regarding the interview?

Appendix 3: Students' Responses to Written Questions (Students' Thoughts Before the Interview)

Question 1 = What are you feeling now, and why? Question 2 = What do you hope to learn from this interview?
Question 3 = What do you think will happen?

Ss	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
S1	Nervous and scared. Because this is my first time interviewing a Japanese professor in Japanese	I'm hoping to understand more of Japanese native speakers.	There will probably be many grammar mistakes in my speech or things that I won't understand.
S2	a little bit nervous because I'm afraid I won't do good	to learn to communicate freely with someone superior in Japanese	Something funny, and some misunderstanding
S3	Not too excited nor nervous. Just a bit worried that I won't understand or that I will take too much time to think about what to say	How to speak and listen without thinking for a long time	Lots of pauses and laughter
S4	Quite calm	Using honorifics in real situation Talk more fluently	I will forget to use honorifics for all the verbs
S5	I just feel a bit nervous	Get a feel of trying to communicate with a native Japanese	If he or she doesn't know English well, then it is going to be very funny
S6	Very nervous, a little scared A little excited	• I hope that I could understand more about the way Japanese people speak • I also hope that I could at least understand part of the interview	I will be so nervous that I couldn't catch everything that the professor said
S7	Excited, very excited, but a little nervous	The way to interact with a Japanese teacher through the use of honorific forms	We will perform really well and have a good time
S8	• interested to see what the teacher is like • slightly nervous about the interview – especially about using honorifics	• hope to gain experience that will help in future interviews • learn about the teacher and what he's doing here	The teacher will probably enjoy talking with us and we will learn about each other

S9	A little worried. Because I know I will not be able to answer or understand some of the questions	What Japanese professors are like	Embarrassment My face will turn red
S10	Excited because this is my first time to talk to a Japanese in honorifics. I'll probably panic when I start talking.	I hope to practice my fluency in speaking in honorifics.	I'll forget my honorifics and make a fool out myself.
S11	Excited, and nervous. Very very nervous. Probably because I am subconsciously concerned I might make an embarrassing mistake.	About the professor in more detail	It will be nerve-wracking at first, but the (after the first couple of seconds) fun
S12	Somehow nervous, because afraid of saying things inappropriate	Mostly greetings and using practical honorifics	I don't know exactly. I think it would be fun though.
S13	A little bit unsure, nervous but excited to be doing	I hope to learn more about Japanese views on things, Japanese norms and about experiences of being an a foreign country	I think we will get completely muddled up, but it will be OK. I hope the professor will be understanding.
S14	I feel a little nervous because I am not sure how the interview will go; whether we will have a nice conversation or just only questioning and answering.	I hope to become more used to communicating to an actual Japanese person with what I have learned in class.	I'm not sure what will happen but it would be a good learning experience for me.
S15	Nervous, but excite, Ready to get going	Other than the answers to the questions that I have prepared. I hope to practice my honorifics a bit.	I will make mistakes ad hopefully he will laugh.
S16	My feeling is quite excited, because I can have a chance to meet a professor with honorifics. Since I have not quite understood how I can utilize honorifics, I am quite nervous.	I hope to learn how to use honorifics in real situation.	A few laughter since we may not use honorifics properly.
S17	Nervous, because I don't understand Japanese.	Japanese	I will not understand what the teacher is asking

S18	Nervous, because I haven't met the professor yet	Fluent usage of honorifics, hopefully	Everything turns out to be fine.
S19	Alright, but I have a headache	Usage of honorifics in Japanese and listening comprehension	Don't know what to answer or ask the interviewee
S20	I'm kind of nervous, or the other hand, I'm also looking forward to this interesting experience.	Conversation skill and get use to using honorifics	There will be moment of awkward silence, a few fake laughter, but overall, I think it should be a fun experience
S21	A little bit of nervous, because we just start to learn honorifics and we are just not that familiar with this kind of expressions	I hope to learn to use honorifics in real talking, and improve my reaction.	I don't know, but the interview will not run dead in the middle.
S22	A little bit of nervous and excited because this will be my first experience to interview someone else, not like usual that someone interviewing me	To gain a good experience of speaking Japanese with a Japanese, especially he is a professor	Say something wrong, get stuck
S23	nervous	I hope I can understand what the professor says.	I think I will only ask questions, and I won't be able to understand the professor's questions.

Appendix 4: Students' Responses to Written Questions (Students' Written Reflections After the Interview)

Note: Q1= In general, how did you find the interview?
Q3= How was your *Keigo* (honorifics) usage? Do you think you were polite enough?
Q4= What were you most concerned with during the interview?
Q5= What did you think was impolite/not appropriate to do during the interview?
Q6= What did you do when you did not understand what the professor was saying? Why did you choose that ways(s)?
Q7= Please describe your own performance in the interview?

Ss	Q1	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
S2	Interesting and gave me a good chance to find out how an adult Japanese thinks about the topics we discussed	Very bad No, I kept forgetting the honorific forms	Avoiding silence and being natural when using honorifics	To eat, drink, yawn and to fall asleep	Just smiled and let it slip away because no matter how many times the professor explains or repeats, I won't understand anyways	Ok I guess. But I could speak more Japanese instead of smiling and bowing
S3	Embarrassing	Not really much used. We had the questions written down beforehand. Probably polite enough	Flow of conversation, avoiding silence, thinking of what to say and how to answer his questions	Being late or having nothing to talk about	We asked him to repeat, but dare not ask again if we still didn't get it. It was awkward and we were embarrassed. We'd pretend to understand.	Not good

S4	Quite embarrassing but have me a look at how well I can speak and listen	Started at the beginning, but didn't use mostly at the end	Definitely keep conversation going, and be polite	Asking a little too much about the professor's family perhaps. Didn't give response when we didn't understand (but we couldn't help it)	Asked for further explanation, listen again, when hopeless, pretend to understand and went on with other questions	Could have been better Need to be better prepared
S5	Very challenging but it was very hard to follow	Very bad because didn't use enough=> too tense to think how to change into honorifics	Avoiding the silence	To be silent and not show respect	Wait for others to answer or change subject because lack of confidence to speak to a Japanese stranger	Very lousy. Tried my best though
S6	Interesting but also very difficult I realized that my Japanese is very very bad.	Not very good because I tend to get nervous when I have to speak in Japanese. Then, I forgot which vocabulary to use and what are the honorific forms	Understanding what the professor was saying and trying to answer what she asked		Just nodded of the time when she was speaking to me. Also I felt embarrassed because I didn't understand what she was saying	Horrible I couldn't understand part of what the professor was saying. Just picked up bits and pieces Couldn't think of vocabulary or verbs to answer what the professor asked. Also didn't know what questions to ask
S7	Good and very interesting	Not as good as I thought	1.Flow of conversation 2. smile 3. jokes	Talking in English No eye contact Bad breath	First try to pretend I understand, but eventually asked again	I'll give myself a C+

S8	Interesting talking and learning about the professor and was great experience	Very bad. Prior lack of use made it difficult to remember what to use and when	Flow of conversation as well as keeping things interesting	Showing a lack of effort or lack of interest would be impolite	Asked for repetition Pretending to understand only leads to trouble.	Because I have quite extensive experience in speaking Japanese I feel I did quite well in keeping the flow of conversation and level of understanding high (even though my honorific was bad)
S9	Difficult	Only used honorifics in the questions that I prepared ahead of time	Understanding of the professor's questions	•Eating/drinking/smoking •using cellar phone •not paying attention •looking around	•Asking for repetition and further explanation •it was rued and embarrassing if I answered something irrelevant	Very bad Didn't say much Didn't understand much
S10	Let me realize how bad my Japanese is It was a good experience	Totally forgot about using honorifics because the atmosphere was casual and I naturally used the casual form of Japanese	Understanding what the professor said and being able to answer him in correct Japanese	Look impatient or make the interview short	Asked for repetition and pretend to understand if already asked for repetition or that another student understood but that I didn't Change the subject- so that I won't fall asleep	Terrible

S11	Nerve-wracking, but fun, and very interesting	I believe my usage is fairly good, and that I was polite enough although I feel that my level of honorifics is not very good	I would improperly say something (specifically using honorifics) and that by doing so I would somehow insult the professor	Asking personal questions pertaining to the interviewee, Using (colloquial) an inappropriate level of speech, Being or acting impatient, anything that is against basic principles of politeness	Would ask for him to explain again	I was nervous and I believe I made some mistakes, although since our questions were pre-marked I feel that I performed fairly well overall
S12	Fun and interesting Went better than expected	Bad Polite in desu/masu form but not enough I think	The attitude of the professor	Almost forgot the professor's name	Jut said "soo desu ka (Is that so?/Oh, I see) because I think my partners got the answer so I could ask later	I did OK, but I didn't say a lot and didn't use honorifics well
S13	Went a lot better than I thought it would I ended up not being nervous and as a result it went well I found it very interesting and a good experience	I forgot, at the moment, a lot of honorifics I didn't use very much because it would have taken me forever to form sentences. I did use enough though (only because our professor was so nice)	Being polite and understand her answers	Ask about he family Drink my coffee Not ask questions in reply to her answer-not continue subject	Sometimes I asked her to repeat or said I didn't understand, other times I acted like I understood	I'd say I get a high mark for effort but low mark for grammar

S14	Interesting and fun	At first, the we just used desu/masu form	None. The professor is very nice	None. The interview went really well	Ask her to say it again, or tell her that I don't understand. No matter what, there is always a way to communicate	A bit silent but overall did okay
S15	Not bad, but short. I felt embarrassed that I couldn't make long sentences without thinking about them for 10 minutes	I didn't use it, but I think I was polite enough by using desu/masu form	I was worried about honorifics because I didn't know how serious the professor would be, but once there I knew I could relax a little	Ask about the professor's personal life	Just listened or asked a roundabout question which would get me the answer in a different way	I talked a lot, but when I had to answer difficult questions, I was caught off guard
S16	Very nice	Honorifics was only used during my questions which had been already written down.	Avoiding the silence, apply the correct word usage	Interrupt when others were speaking	Just listening and figuring it out later	I think I did alright, not the best though
S17	Fun, but very difficult	Honorific usage was not present. I tried to be polite, but probably wasn't polite enough	Most concerned about being rude and not understanding the conversation	I think silence was impolite. Silence meant that you weren't trying	Tried to make small chitchat or change the subject or topic of conversation	Not very good, didn't understand most conversation

S18	An Interesting experience to practice honorifics orally with Japanese people	I think I did fine at the beginning, but forgot to use honorifics afterwards	Ran out of questions to ask the professor	Writing when the professor was talking	Asking for repetition, because I wanted to understand fully what the professor talked about	I think I did OK during the interview, but tended to forget to use honorifics when asking question that were not written down on paper
S19	Very interesting and a good idea for us to practice what we've learned	My honorific usage was not good at all I made questions from reading my notes I don't think I was polite.	1. being able to understand what the professor was answering 2. avoiding the silence	1. reading my own notes in order to ask questions 2. asking my partners about what the professor said before answering his questions/responding	Asking for repetition/further explanation	Not very good
S20	I like this assignment very much I think its' a great opportunity to practice my Japanese	Didn't really use a lot of honorifics during the interview I think I should work on that	Avoiding silence	Giggle and silence	Asking for repetition and explanation	I did OK but could be better
S21	Very interesting because the communication between us and the professor was very active	Not too good because when it comes to live talking, I can't react that fast And I'm not that good at composing polite sentences at real time	Honorifics and avoiding silence	1. pretending to understand 2. interpret the professor's talking 3. using "o…san" to call our own family members	Ask for repetition/further explanation If still don't understand, just listen Because I was trying really hard to understand, but after several tries, I had to give up because the interview had to go on.	I asked a few questions and answered the professor's questions (pretty good job)

S22	Learned a lot from the interview Gained a great experience from it	My honorific ability was too weak and didn't use correctly while I talked with the professor	Being polite to the professor and gave him a good impression. However trying to use honorifics correctly was the most important goal for me that time	There were many conversations that I didn't quite understand, but I seemed to pretend that I did understand. Now thinking about that, it was very impolite to the professor	Tried to ask him to repeat the questions, but sometimes just tried to change the subject while I didn't understand	I was quite calm and tried my best to ask the professor questions and listened to what he said
S23	Interesting	If prepared, then it shouldn't be a problem	Whether I could understand what the professor said	Not paying attention to the professor (e.g. eye contact) Don't participate in the conversation	Asked him "if he would mind repeating " Guessing- try my best to reply to him	Did well in asking questions since I had already prepared them But, did bad at replying the professor's questions
S24	Learned a lot	Not good Too nervous, forgot everything	Understanding what the professor said and avoiding the silence Trying to answer what the professor asked	When didn't understand what the professor said, couldn't give him any reply	Asked for repetition and listened carefully once more However sometimes it was too embarrassing to ask for repetition so many times. So just changed the subject	Could d beer with more practice

Appendix 5: Background Information of the Japanese Participants

Prof-essor	Age	Speciality	Position in Japan	Position In Canada	Period of staying in Canada	Experience of living overseas (before Canada) How long?	Experience of speaking with non-Japanese people in Japanese	If yes, with whom? in where? how often?	The level of their Japanese
1	30's	Marketing	Associate Professor	Visiting Researcher	1 year	Never	Yes	Colleague, students, friends (in Japan) Sometimes	High-Very high (graduate/ undergrad students)
2	50's	Statistics, Economics	Professor	Visiting Scholar	2 years	Never	Yes	Friends, Colleague (in Canada) Visitors (in Japan) Sometimes	Depends
3	40's	Psychology	Professor	Visiting Scholar	7 months	Never	Never	N/A	N/A
4	40's	Psychology	Associate Professor	Visiting Scholar	1 year	Never	Never	N/A	N/A
5	50's	Korean Economics	Professor	Visiting Researcher	1 year	Korea 2 years	Yes	Friends (in Canada) Colleague, students, friends (in Japan) Very often	Depends (low to excellent)
6	30's	Atomic Physics	Researcher	Visiting Researcher	1 year and 6 months	Never	Yes	Friends (in Canada) Neighbours (in Japan) Sometimes	Very good
7	30's	Chemistry	Researcher	Postdoctoral Research Fellow	2 years	Never	Never	N/A	N/A
8	50's	Economics	Professor	Visiting Scholar	7 months	USA 7 years	Yes	Students (in Japan) Once in a while	Very good
9	40's	Economics	Professor	Visiting Researcher	1 year and 7 months	Never	Yes	Friends (in Canada) Once in a while	One : low One: very high

Appendix 6: Interview Questions for the Japanese Participants

Question 1: How was the students' overall performance?

2: How were the linguistic elements of the students' Japanese?

3: How was the students' use of honorific forms?

4: How was the students' use of the Japanese language?
Did you notice anything unnatural or awkward in their use of language?

5: Did you notice any behaviour of students which bothered or
offended you?

6: Overall, do you think students were polite enough in their performance?