

Intercultural Communication of Foreign Youth in Japan

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One significant factor which influences both the effectiveness and efficiency of communication between Japanese and foreign speakers in contact situations concerns the degree of competence which the interactants possess in the base language being spoken. Taking Australian youth in Japan as an example, either English or Japanese can be selected as the language of communication, or, alternatively, mixing of the two language codes may occur. Where the Australian interactant is in the early stage of acquiring Japanese, it is common for numerous communication problems to arise, including the avoidance of speech, the extreme simplification of discourse, or the incorrect transmission or reception of messages.

In this paper I will discuss the communicative competence of young Australian speakers of Japanese focussing upon their management of variation, principally in relation to politeness. This will include an examination of the metalinguistic awareness of the Australian learners in relation to Japanese politeness and also reference to the ways in which Japanese native speakers evaluate the youths' management of politeness.

Increasing numbers of Australian youth are spending time in Japan, travelling, working or studying. One important sub-group are secondary school students who spend up to one year on an exchange program, attending a Japanese high school and staying with a host family or families. These young Australians principally acquire Japanese naturalistically through interaction in the family, school and community domains where they are exposed to modelling and corrective feedback from their host family members, peers and teachers. Some of them receive a small amount of individualised tuition in Japanese language at school, but this appears to be only a minor component in their total exposure to Japanese communication and interaction.

METHODOLOGY

The data referred to in this paper is drawn from an on-going research project on the acquisition of Japanese in Japan by Australian exchange students who are generally in the 15 to 18 year age range. Discourse data was obtained from video tape-recorded oral interviews in Japanese between a university lecturer and a sample of 11 students (numbered E1 to E11) in 1992 and eight students (E12 - E19) in 1993. Recordings of the 1992 group consist of post-

exchange interviews only (averaging 21 minutes in length), whereas the 1993 group undertook interviews just before their departure for Japan (averaging 20 minutes in length) and post-exchange interviews upon return (lasting an average of 40 minutes). The 1992 post-exchange, and the 1993 pre-exchange interviews were conducted by two interviewers — I1, a male in his mid-thirties and a female, I2, in her late thirties, whereas the post-interviews (1993) were conducted by a single female interviewer in her late twenties (Int.). Table 1 shows the highest level of Japanese studied at secondary school in Australia by the students and their ages at the time of the oral interviews following the exchange experience. Further background details on the two groups are presented in Appendix 1 and 2.

Table 1: Year level of Japanese completed before exchange and age of student

Highest level of Japanese completed at school	1992 students	1993 students	Total
None	E1 (18), E9 (17), E10 (18)	E15 (17), E19 (16)	5
Year 10 or below	E2 (16), E6 (18), E11 (19)	E12 (16), E16 (17)	5
Year 11	E5 (18), E8 (19)	E14 (18), E18 (18)	4
Year 12	E3 (18), E4 (20), E7 (19)	E13 (18), E17 (19)	5
Total	11	8	19

* the age of the students at the time of the post-exchange interview is given in brackets

Appendix 1

Students

Background details

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11
Sex	F	F	M	M	F	F	F	F	F	F	M
Age	17 yrs	15 yrs	17 yrs	19 yrs	17 yrs	17 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	16 yrs	17 yrs	18 yrs
Yr. level completed	Yr 12	Yr 10	Yr 12	Yr 12	Yr 12	Yr 10	Yr 12	Yr 11	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 11
Prior study of Jap.	2 wks	4 yrs (Yr 7-10)	4 yrs (Yr 9-12)	6 yrs (Yr 7-12)	5 yrs (Yr 7-11)	3 yrs (Yr 8-10)	5 yrs (Yr 8-12)	2.5 yrs (Yr 9-11)	2 mths	3.5 mths	less 1 yr (mid Yr 7-8)
Length of stay in Japan	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths	12 mths
Exchange organisation	Rotary	AJS	AJS	AJS	Rotary	AJS	AJS	Rotary	Rotary	Rotary	Rotary
Other lang. studied	Indon (6 Yrs)	none	French (2 yrs)	none	none	French (4 yrs)	French (1 yr)	none	Italian (7 yrs PS) French (0.5 yrs)	Italian (4 yrs)	Indon (1 yr)
Residence in Japan	Nanzo (Shikawa)	Kurashiki (Okayama)	Okayama	Toyama	Matsuyama	Tsushima (Aichi)	Tokyo	Tokorozawa (Saitama)	Tokyo	Koofu (Yamanashi)	Mooka (Tochigi)
No. of homestays	4	4	1	5	3	4	1	6	4	4	4
Interviewer	I2	I2	I2	I2	I2	I1	I2	I1	I1	I1	I1

Table 1: Background details of the 1992 cohort of exchange students

AJS= Australian Japan Society of Victoria

Age= Age at time of departure for Japan

The 19 students were fairly evenly spread in terms of the amount of Japanese studied at secondary level in Australia, whether it be Year 12 (the final year of secondary school), Year 11, Year 10 or below, or none. Of the five who had not studied any Japanese at school, four

Appendix 2

Background of 1993 cohort of exchange students

Student	E12	E13	E14	E15	E16	E17	E18	E19
Sex	M	M	M	F	M	F	F	F
Age	15 yrs.	17 yrs.	17 yrs.	16 yrs.	16 yrs.	18 yrs.	17 yrs.	15 yrs.
Year level completed	Yr.10	Yr.12	Yr.11	Yr.11	Yr.10	Yr.12	Yr.11	Yr.10
Prior study of Japanese	3 years (Yr.Levels 8-10)	5 years (7-9 < Sat. sch. >, 11-12)	5 years (7-8 < Sat sch. >, 9-11)	approx. 4 mths. (1 hr.wk)	3.5 yrs. (7 < .5 > 8-12)	5.5 yrs. (7 < .5 > 8-12)	5 yrs. (7-11)	None
Length of stay in Japan	12 mths.	9 mths.	12 mths.	12 mths.	12 mths.	12 mths.	12 mths.	12 mths
Exchange organisation	school	AJS	Rotary	Rotary	AJS	school*	AJS	Rotary
Other language study	French (4 yrs.)	French (3 yrs.) Italian (1 yr.)	French (2 yrs.)	Indonesian (2 yrs.)	French (0.5 yrs.)	French (2.5 yrs.) Latin	None	French (4 yrs.) Italian (8 yrs. P.S.)
Residence in Japan	Nagoya	rural area of Okayama	Saitama	Kofu (Yamanashi)	Sakae (Aichi)	Kamada Okazaki (Aichi)	Okayama	Tanuma (Tochigi)
No. of homestays	1	6 (2 wks., 3 mths., 2 mths., 2 mths., 2 wks.)	4	5 (3 mths., 3 mths., 3 mths., 2.5 mths., 3 wks.)	4 (3 mths. each)	2	5 (1wk., 2 mths., 4 mths., 1 mths., 3 mths.)	4 (3 mths. each)

* partly arranged by self with sister-school where she was employed to teach English

(excluding E19) had undertaken a small amount of study in preparation for their exchange participation. Their ages at the time of the post-exchange oral interviews were as follows: 18 years — 8 students; 19 years — four students; 16 years — 3 students; 17 years — 3 students; 20 years — one student. Seven of them (5 in 1992; 2 in 1993) had completed their secondary education in Australia before taking part in an exchange program.

The 1993 discourse data was supplemented with follow-up interviews in English, background interviews (also in English), diary entries and a sample of their written language (Marriott 1993a, forthcoming). Further case studies and a national survey on the experiences of exchange students and the outcomes of their exchange in terms of subsequent study and use of Japanese have also been undertaken (Marriott 1994a).

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND NORM DEVIATIONS

Integral to the analysis undertaken in this paper is the concept of the contact situation as delineated by Neustupný (1985a, 1985b, 1994). The contact or foreign situation (as opposed to a native or internal situation) in which most typically the participants originate from two or more communicative systems is characterised by numerous features, predominant of which is the frequency and type of communication problems present. What constitutes appropriate

norms for the contact situation is an issue of central significance and, accordingly, deviations from these norms and the ways in which these deviations are evaluated by participants in the contact situation is important in empirical studies.

In analysing the communicative competence of young speakers of Japanese, and, as a corollary, the kinds and intensity of their deviations from Japanese norms, this paper draws upon the stages of management which have been developed by Neustupný (1985a: 45). These stages include the noting of deviations from the base norm, evaluation, selection of an adjustment plan, and implementation of adjustment. Reference will also be made to a categorisation of deviations according to their nature: propositional, performance, presentational, discord and correction deviance (Neustupný 1985a: 50-52). Use of these concepts allows us to view communication problems from a much broader perspective than has been the case with most of the earlier research conducted on intercultural communication.

The concepts which Neustupný employed to categorise deviations can be applied equally to a description of the types of competence needed by interactants in communicative situations: propositional, presentational, performance and corrective. Propositional competence refers to the ability of speakers to formulate or comprehend a proposition. Upon their return to Australia and regardless of whether or not they had previously studied Japanese before their exchange, the oral interviews recorded with the 1992 and 1993 groups of Australian speakers of Japanese reveal that they appear to be able to communicate messages about their experiences in Japan with minimal deviations in propositional content, at least for the range of topics covered in the oral interviews. In the 1992 interviews the participants discussed their reasons for participating in an exchange program, their life in Japan, the Japanese language and differences between Australia and Japan. The pre-exchange interviews in 1993 covered topics on their study of Japanese, school and family, imminent trip and their future plans. Needless to say, the ability of the Australian learners to communicate in Japanese was severely limited prior to their sojourn in Japan. The second interview which took place following their return included an extended section on their experiences at home and at school in Japan, a description of a picture featuring a Japanese meal situation, and a role play where they were required to make a request. Although not directly tested, the listening ability of all the students seemed very high and, furthermore, they tended to be cooperative speakers who contributed to maintaining and developing the conversation, especially in comparison with their performance in the pre-exchange interview.

Propositional deviations constitute a basic problem in contact situations and, no doubt, if the type of conversational content was more complex, we could predict that deviations of this nature would appear in the exchange students' spoken discourse. Indeed, their discourse contains many grammatical errors but these do not often affect the speakers' ability to transmit their intended messages, though admittedly, the Japanese interviewers possessed shared knowledge concerning the topics under discussion and this probably assisted their understanding of the students' discourse content.

In like manner, performance deviation which deals with the inability of speakers and/or

hearers to perform a message according to norms prevalent in internal situations (Neustupný 1985a: 51) did not constitute a particular problem in the post-interview situation. The students or their interviewers did not appear to use extra energy to either perform or to comprehend the messages being transmitted and neither did the interviewer become weary or irritated because of the students' slowness of delivery or other communication problems. Furthermore, mixing deviance involving the mixing of English and Japanese did not characterise the performance of the exchange students.

In contrast, presentational deviance is a problem that characterised the communication of nearly every young speaker. Presentational deviance has been described as "the inability to send or receive information other than the bare proposition: to communicate about the speaker's attitudes, intention, or personality" (Neustupný 1985: 51). The deviations from Japanese norms of politeness which are found in the discourse of these speakers thus fall into this category.

Closely related to some kinds of presentational deviation is discord deviance which refers to "cases in which participants feel that a foreign feature of the situation does not match with a native means of communicating about it or vice-versa" (Neustupný 1985: 52). Finally, correction deviance refers to the inability to correct a deviation once it is noted by the speaker or even when the interlocutor brings it to his or her attention. Both discord and correction deviance can be identified in the discourse data of these Australian speakers.

MANAGEMENT OF HONORIFICS

Politeness is encoded in Japanese through honorifics as well as through a number of other features of communication. These other features, many of which have been introduced in Mizutani and Mizutani's (1987) discussion of Japanese politeness will not be dealt with in this paper but have been categorised by Neustupný (1968) as Respect Speech, and together with Courtesy or Etiquette, make up politeness. Within the Japanese system of honorifics, numerous grammatical, and to a lesser extent, lexical, features express politeness, but of central importance are addressee and (subject and object) referent honorifics. An analysis of the discourse data of the 1992 cohort of 11 returned exchange students revealed that the students used very few referent honorific forms. None of them used the *o*-verb *ni naru* form in relation to honorific referents and neither did they use verbs with special forms such as *irrasharu* (go, come, be) or *nasaru* (do). Only one student employed more than one honorific form (*mooshiageta* ((said)), *gozonji* ((know))). No examples of referent honorifics were found in the 1993 data corpus. Nevertheless, this non-use did not necessarily constitute deviant behaviour.

On the other hand, management of addressee honorifics emerged as a principal area of deviation for both the 1992 and 1993 groups of students. The three basic styles of Japanese addressee honorific are known under various labels: the plain, informal or *da*-style; the polite style, which is also referred to as the formal or *desu/masu*-style; and, finally, the very formal

form, also known as the deferential or *gozaimasu*-style. In an interview situation with a university lecturer, the Japanese norm requires the use of the polite (*desu/masu*-) style, with switches to the plain style being permissible in certain contexts (cf. Niyekawa 1978; Ikuta 1983:37; Neustupný 1986; Maynard 1992:27). It was thus assumed that the basic style of the exchange students in the conversational interaction segment as well as in the picture description would be the polite style. However, in the role-play where the interviewer took the role of host mother and where the student was to realistically act out the role of an exchange student, it was originally planned that the student could switch to the plain style, but as the instruction provided to the Australian learner did not specify the relationship between the student and the homestay mother, use of either the plain or polite style was assessed as adequate by the two native speaker raters who undertook the evaluation of the data.

Occurrences of the plain and polite styles were calculated for the pre-exchange interview and for the three discourse types found in the post-exchange interview. Appropriate use, in addition to deviations (principally covering use of the plain instead of the polite style) are shown for the two styles, and, as well, the omission of predicates was totalled. (Use of sentence final particles was not considered in the analysis.) Although in Japanese predicates are sometimes omitted — largely as a strategy to soften the politeness level (Mizutani and Mizutani 1987) — for non-native speakers with low competence in the language, predicate omissions occur often, for example, when utterances are abandoned mid-way or when single, or strings of single, lexicon are produced.

For the six students in the 1993 cohort who had studied Japanese prior to their sojourn in Japan, use of the polite style, together with a fairly high proportion of deviations in the use of predicate omissions characterised their discourse in the pre-exchange interview (Marriott forthcoming). In contrast, Table 2 below reveals that after their stay of approximately one year in Japan, all students dramatically increased their proportion of plain honorific forms which were used deviantly, while at the same time reducing inappropriate predicate omissions. It would seem that underlying sociolinguistic variables which concern selection of language according to solidarity rules (in-group/ out-group distinctions), for instance, were not adequately acquired by the students during their in-country sojourn. As a consequence, the speakers did not select an honorific style which was appropriate for the senior addressee in the interview situation.

Individual variation emerges as a conspicuous feature in the students' performance. Of the two students who had not studied Japanese prior to their exchange experience, one (E19) employed a high proportion of the polite form (though she also spoke the least), but the other student (E15) exhibited weak performance. Use of the plain form instead of the polite form was frequent for two of the three 1992 students without any secondary school background in Japanese, though relatively low for the other student. In contrast, the speakers who exhibited the highest use of the plain form in both the 1992 and 1993 groups had studied Japanese for five or six years and both had completed Year 12 Japanese. Needless to say, the number of cases are still too few to draw generally valid conclusions about the effect of prior study of

Japanese on the management of addressee honorifics.

Table 2: Post-exchange interviews (1993)

Students	Data type	Polite form		Plain form		Predicate omission	
		Norm	Deviation	Norm	Deviation	Norm	Deviation
E12	Conversation	56	2	12	53	5	39
	Picture description	6	2	0	6	0	0
	Role play	6	0	5	0	0	1
	Sub-total	68	4	17	59	5	40
		35.2%	2.1%	8.8%	30.6%	2.6%	20.7%
E13	Conversation	16	0	17	240	1	176
	Picture description	2	0	0	20	0	23
	Role play	4	0	0	14	0	5
	Sub-total	22	0	7	274	1	204
		4.2%	0%	3.3%	52.9%	0.2%	39.4%
E14	Conversation	59	0	55	128	21	41
	Picture description	38	0	17	34	9	10
	Role play	8	0	4	1	0	0
	Sub-total	105	0	76	163	30	51
		24.7%	0%	17.9%	38.3%	7.1%	12.0%
E15	Conversation	37	2	7	83	21	36
	Picture description	2	0	0	7	1	3
	Role play	2	0	2	0	1	0
	Sub-total	41	2	9	90	23	39
		20.1%	1.0%	4.4%	44.1%	11.3%	19.1%
E16	Conversation	214	5	39	94	21	58
	Picture description	21	0	4	13	4	7
	Role play	7	0	9	0	0	0
	Sub-total	242	5	52	107	25	65
		48.8%	1.0%	10.5%	21.6%	5.0%	13.1%
E17	Conversation	43	8	9	117	18	58
	Picture description	12	0	2	29	0	6
	Role play	10	0	1	2	0	1
	Sub-total	65	8	12	148	18	65
		20.6%	2.5%	3.8%	46.8%	5.7%	20.6%
E18	Conversation	60	3	13	76	10	1
	Picture description	23	0	1	3	0	4
	Role play	14	0	2	0	0	0
	Sub-total	97	3	16	79	10	5
		46.2%	1.4%	7.6%	37.6%	4.8%	2.4%
E19	Conversation	87	1	2	33	0	25
	Picture description	18	0	1	6	0	4
	Role play	2	1	3	0	0	0
	Sub-total	107	2	6	39	0	29
		58.5%	1.1%	3.3%	21.3%	0%	15.8%

In relation to the use of honorific style in the three discourse types in the post-exchange interview, shown in Table 2, a few differences did emerge, but not in the way predicted. Contrary to the norm, in the conversational interaction with the university lecturer where the polite style was expected, as noted above, all the speakers used the plain style in varying degrees, while in the picture description and the role play, some of them switched to using a greater proportion of polite forms, often along side use of plain forms, but all continued to mix the styles, contrary to the Japanese norm. This is despite the existence of some metalinguistic awareness of the need to vary use of the honorific style according to the situation, to be described below. In considering the reason for the feature of deviant mixing of

honorific styles in these three discourse contexts — the interactional conversation, the picture description and the role-play — it is possible to argue that the polite style occurs in their more carefully monitored speech whereas the plain style appears in their spontaneous conversation. In any case, their mixing of plain and polite forms appears to be largely haphazard, and does not follow the Japanese norm. Furthermore, they often display correction deviance through their inability to apply appropriate corrective adjustments to deviations of this kind, sometimes correcting the polite style to the plain style or vice versa.

Even though there was considerable individual variation among the students, the employment by them of predominantly the plain form in the interviews was marked as a negative deviation by two of the three interviewers (I2 and Int.) and by all the native adult informants who have subsequently rated the deviations found in the discourse data. While we can expect some native speakers of Japanese to treat the communication problems of foreign learners of the language leniently, it is incorrect to believe that they will all absolve the latter from every deviation from Japanese norms. In particular, the Japanese language teachers of the courses they resume upon return to Australia either at the secondary or tertiary level are frequently critical of the deviations in addressee honorifics as well as in other formal language features made by former exchange students (cf. Atsuzawa-Windley and Noguchi 1994). Such negative evaluations suggest that the norms concerning selection of appropriate honorific style and appropriate mixing are central in the Japanese system of communication. Furthermore, it is expected that later, employers or other native speakers of Japanese with whom former exchange students come into contact with as clients or customers in the work domain are likely to be critical of certain deviations from Japanese norms, especially those which involve inadequate use of addressee honorifics and other honorific (informal/formal) forms (Okamoto 1993).

It has been mentioned above that only two (I2 and Int.) of the three interviewers tended to negatively evaluate the students' over-use of the plain style. The third interviewer (I1) noted this norm deviation but tended to evaluate it neutrally. Such mild evaluative behaviour illustrates an important feature of contact situations. This is the fact that norms other than native norms of the base language of communication are sometimes present. In this instance, the native speaker did not insist upon *desu/masu* usage by the exchange students. The exposure of this particular teacher to the discourse of former Australian exchange students (though this factor similarly applies to the other two interviewers) or perhaps the youthfulness of the exchange students may have contributed to this native speaker assuming a more lenient attitude towards the Australian speakers' use of the plain form. It is also arguable that the interviewer's attitudes may have been partly due to idiosyncratic variation. We are led to conclude, nevertheless, that in the communicative behaviour of this native speaker, the context of the contact situation has given rise to a type of interlanguage rule that use of the plain form is acceptable and that this has influenced his evaluative behaviour (cf. Neustupný 1985a, b; Marriott 1993c). That is to say, he applies a rule which is not a Japanese norm but which emerges in the contact situation as an "approximate" rule. This thus indicates that

interlanguage can apply on occasions to native speakers too, and not just to non-native speakers, as is often stated.

On the other hand, it is possible that the other two interviewers and raters have rigidly applied a Japanese norm (that is, use of the polite style by young speakers towards an adult) given the ages of at least some of the Australian students, coupled with the fact that many of them are still secondary school students.

One other feature worth noting here is the tendency of two (I2 and Int.) of the three Japanese interviewers to employ quite a high proportion of the plain honorific style themselves. Of course this is in accordance with the Japanese norm as it applies in Japanese native situations, and it also generally includes non-reciprocal use of the same style by their young interlocutors. Their speech contrasts with I1's discourse, for he adheres more strongly to the polite *desu-masu* style which seems to be a feature of Foreigner Talk, specifically, Teacher Talk, which is used by teachers of Japanese towards learners, at least in relation to the variety of Japanese regularly spoken by Japanese teachers overseas.

It is interesting to speculate about what triggers greater use of the plain style by the two interviewers. It is possible that these interviewers were partly accommodating their speech to the overall plain style of the exchange students (cf. Giles et al. 1997; Gallois et al. 1988), or that they were applying a native norm and attempting to speak as they might to young native speakers of Japanese of the same age as the exchange students. The increased spoken fluency of the exchange students, in comparison with Australian learners who do not spend time in Japan, may have contributed to the other two native speakers' (I2 and Int.) variation of the Foreigner Talk norm in this manner. In any case, it seems reasonable to claim that in these contact situations, the spoken discourse of at least two of the native speakers differs from the Japanese (Foreigner Talk) norm which is generally applied in similar contexts. The tendency of native speakers to also vary their norms in contact situations is a common phenomenon yet analytic research in the past has invariably focussed upon the conduct of the non-native speaker in these environments (cf. Neustupný 1985b; Marriott 1991).

STUDENT ATTITUDES AND METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS OF POLITENESS

An exploration of the students' attitudes and metalinguistic awareness towards their management of politeness, especially addressee honorifics, was also undertaken as part of the investigation of their management of politeness. Overall, the exchange students in the 1993 group made minimal reference to Japanese politeness phenomena in the diary entries kept during their sojourn in Japan. Occasionally, however, they gave reports which provide insights into their metalinguistic awareness of politeness, where they invariably focussed upon the factor of honorific style. Most of the learners with previous background in Japanese made one or two explicit statements about the necessity for them to acquire the plain form of verbs after arrival in Japan, or else they made entries in their diaries giving the plain form for

previously-known polite (formal) lexicon.

There is further written evidence to suggest that the learners were aware of variation in relation to use of the polite honorific style. For instance, E16 referred to continually hearing the plain form but no *-masu* form which resulted in him experiencing problems in a "polite situation". In other words, this speaker was aware of not being able to switch styles according to the situation. However, other evidence suggests that not all students were willing to receive negative feedback on their over-use of the plain form. For instance, E17 wrote as follows:

"My host mother said I shouldn't use '*ikoo*' for 'let's go' but '*ikimashoo*', and when I pointed out that she says '*ikoo*', she said yes but I shouldn't and eventually because 'girls' don't use it. Rubbish. I hear it at school."

This case illustrates the learner's incomplete understanding of the rules determining variation in use and it may also indicate the learner's conscious (or unconscious) intent on reciprocal selection of style.

During the follow-up interviews which were administered immediately after the Japanese oral interviews, the students were shown the segment of the video tape-recorded interview covering the picture description and probed about their use in general of the plain and polite styles. Here the students' predominant contact with the plain honorific style within the home and school domains was confirmed. As a corollary, some students, such as E17, noted their lack of opportunity to use the polite style. For E15, use of the polite form was reportedly restricted to her three weekly Japanese language lessons where this style was explicitly taught to her.

The interviews established that all learners were aware of the need to vary the honorific style according to the situation. Some of the students revealed an awareness that the polite style was the appropriate one for the oral interview. Both E12 and E16 claimed to have consciously selected the polite style on this occasion, since the interviewer was a teacher and thus their superior. As the analysis reported above showed, these two students did make more use of the polite style than nearly all other students, but nevertheless, their discourse actually contained less than 50% spoken in the polite style. On the other hand, E14 gave a correct assessment of his own usage when viewing the video tape-recording, for he evaluated his performance negatively, claiming, "I'm speaking really rudely aren't I".

Most of the students nominated addressees in Japan for whom selection of the polite form was appropriate. For example, mention was made of the school principal (E13, E17), teachers and older people (E12), women (E13), Rotarians (E14), one pair of host parents in whose home he perceived he was unwelcome (E16), and one host father, because "He always talked formally to me and I did to him" (E14). While this list suggests sensitivity to the factors of social status, age and sex and others, the nature of the differentiation of honorific usage may not always accord with the Japanese norm. For example, E13 claimed to use the plain style towards men and the polite style towards women, and, similarly, E14 reported speaking in the

informal style to women, including the wives of Rotarians, though he used the polite form for (male) Rotarians. Their inaccurate deduction that gender influences selection of honorific style in this manner is noteworthy.

The students' explanatory discourse further revealed some uncertainty about their own ability to employ the forms they considered appropriate. No doubt this was the case with E13 who mentioned "making an effort" to use the polite form in his interaction with the school principal. E16's report also displayed some inconsistency, for he claimed to speak politely to teachers, following the pattern he observed from listening to Japanese students. However, he then advanced a specific distinction between language use towards his martial arts (*kendoo*) teacher and to other teachers, thus indicating that he did not only employ the polite style towards all teachers. In general, given the learners' inability to minimise use of the plain form in the oral interview, it is very unlikely that their reported usage corresponds with actual usage.

Another issue which emerges from the students' reports is their difficulty in distinguishing plain and polite forms. For instance, E13 referred to just "picking up words" and not knowing whether these were colloquial (a term he seemed to use as the equivalent of informal) or not. In connection with this is the pervasive problem of insufficient feedback and inadequate knowledge. E15 implicitly registered this attitude when she spoke of wishing to be polite and wanting to employ the polite form at Rotary meetings, yet feeling restricted by her lack of knowledge. A more explicit statement was advanced by E14 who claimed that no-one told him which style to use and thus he learned by observing the speech of others. A comparison with his performance in the oral interview (Table 2) does not confirm this learning strategy as a successful one. The most specific instance of correction was provided by E16 who claimed that his martial arts teacher, mentioned above, negatively evaluated E16 for slipping into the plain style by "showing disapproval on his face". On the contrary, this student claimed that other teachers "did accept it (the plain style)". Another aspect of the same problem was raised by E12 who noted that once a relationship of friendship developed, he was unsure whether he should use the plain or polite style. Since this reference was made in relation to interaction with teachers, E12 may have been over-generalising the tendency for stylistic change to occur as relationships become more intimate.

From the statements of students outlined above, we can deduce a number of other problems pertaining to their management of honorific style. Firstly, there appears to be little explicit correction available to the learners, either in the form of negative feedback or else in pre-corrective instruction. While it could be that ample negative feedback is actually available but is not decoded by the learners, there is also the possibility that the students themselves as well as their interlocutors are more concerned with the transmission of propositional content and that the correction of honorific style — which pertains to presentational appropriacy — is minimised. However, since the absence of correction signals to at least some of the students that their speech style is adequate, this lack of negative feedback hinders their acquisition of a central component of politeness. Secondly, the

discourse data itself, as well as the reports of students indicate that the learners have not adequately acquired the rule concerning the non-reciprocal nature of honorific styles in adult, outgroup interaction. Consequently, their claims not to have the opportunity to use the polite style may actually refer to a lack of opportunity to “hear”, rather than to “produce” this style in their speech, but this fact is debatable. Thirdly, no student made any reference to the problem of inadequate mixing of styles, which is a feature characterising the discourse of them all, as noted earlier.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Non-native speakers in contact situations possess varying degrees of competence in the base language being spoken. Included among these participants are learners who may be at various stages in their acquisition of the language. The opportunity which a sojourn of a year in Japan provides Australian secondary students results in them achieving greatly improved overall communicative competence in Japanese, even for those who do not study Japanese prior to an exchange experience. Their competence in transmitting and receiving propositional content develops to a remarkable extent.

On the other hand, the fact that much of the language is acquired naturalistically, without formal instruction, may be a contributing factor to the tendency of nearly all the learners to experience fairly serious problems with presentational competence, especially in relation to the management of politeness. This study has shown that, although there is variation among students, most select the honorific plain style as their basic style, which represents a deviation from Japanese norms in the situation of an interview with a university lecturer. Furthermore, they frequently mix the plain and polite style inappropriately and also exhibit correction deviance in that they are often unable to correct deviations of this nature. The study has further shown that students are not so concerned with presentational appropriacy even though they possessed some awareness of addressee honorifics, including the underlying factors which determine the surface forms. From the students' own reports, it appears that they receive little explicit correction from their interactants for their deviations with addressee honorifics.

Nevertheless, the study has shown that young speakers' deviations in addressee honorifics frequently attract negative evaluations from Japanese native speakers. Other evidence from one longitudinal case study undertaken by Hashimoto (1993), however, shows that subsequent instruction in Japanese in Australia can assist the learner to implement adjustment strategies and switch to selection of the appropriate polite style when communicating with teachers. We can thus expect that youth who acquire Japanese in the exchange environment may also subsequently undertake similar adjustment measures. If such adjustments do not occur at some stage, then, as hypothesised above, the speakers' deviations may continue to attract negative evaluations from their native speaker interactants.

In relation to the discourse employed by the interviewers in this study, it was noted that

two of the three native speakers tended towards greater use of the plain honorific style themselves and some reasons for this conduct were proposed. On the basis of this evidence, together with the fact that the third interviewer tended to leniently evaluate the students' deviant management of honorific style, it is clear that native speakers in contact situations also undergo changes in their communicative behaviour.

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