Enhancing Teaching and Learning Speech Acts:
Action Research of Japanese as a Foreign Language

Sawako Akai, B.A.

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies in Education

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Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

This action research observes a second year Japanese class at a university where foreign language courses are elective for undergraduate students. In this study, using the six strategies to teach Japanese speech acts that Ishihara and Cohen (2006) suggested, I conducted three classes and analyzed my teaching practice with a critical friend. These strategies assist learners toward the development of their understanding of the following Japanese speech acts and also keep the learners to use them in a manner appropriate to the context: (1) invitation and refusal; (2) compliments; and (3) asking for a permission. The aim of this research is not only to improve my instruction in relation to second language (L2) pragmatic development, but also to raise further questions and to develop future research. The findings are analyzed and the data derived from my journals, artifacts, students’ work, observation sheets, interviews with my critical friend, and pretests and posttests are coded and presented. The analysis shows that (1) after my critical friend encouraged my study and my students gave me some positive comments after each lesson, I gained confidence in teaching the suggested speech acts; (2) teaching involved explaining concepts and strategies, creating the visual material (a video) showing the strategies, and explaining the relationship between the strategy and grammatical forms and samples of misusing the forms; (3) students’ background and learning styles influenced lessons; and (4) pretest and posttests showed that the students’ level of their L2 appropriate pragmatics dramatically improved after each instruction. However, after careful observation, it was noted that some factors prevented students from producing the correct output even though they understood the speech act differences.
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Teaching</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of Chapters</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Act Differences between English and Japanese</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstanding</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Instruction and SLA</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site and Participant Selection</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Instrument</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Instrument</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Chapter</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Results</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Thoughts</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms................................................................. 120
Appendix B: Lesson Plan Model .............................................................. 123
Appendix C: Observation Sheet............................................................... 124
Appendix D: Pretest & Posttest Role-plays Model................................. 125
Appendix E: Pretest / Posttest Evaluation Sheet ...................................... 126
Appendix F: Hand-out for Lesson 1......................................................... 127
Appendix G: Hand-out and Used for an Overhead Projector (Lesson 2)........ 129
Appendix H: Hand-out for a Video (Lesson 2)......................................... 131
Appendix I: Hand-out for a Video (Lesson 3).......................................... 132
Appendix J: Ethics Research Approval Letters........................................ 133
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Appropriate Use of the Target Speech Act (Lesson 1)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 1 K)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 1 J)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 1 A)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Appropriate Use of the Target Speech Act (Lesson 2)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 K)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 J)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 A)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 B)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Appropriate Use of the Target Speech Act (Lesson 3)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 K)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 J)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 A)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 B)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Schraw’s Regulation Checklist (2001)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16: Instruction and Students’ Learning</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Schmidt’s awareness</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Teacher’s learning path</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Components of a visual material</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Teacher’s model talk</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Teacher’s learning path</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The relationship between second language (L2) learners’ first language and culture and cross-cultural misunderstandings is an area that has received much research interest over the years, particularly where the field of linguistics and psychology met. In the last 2 decades, divergent views have emerged to explain the impact of L2 learners’ first language (L1) on their L2 misunderstandings in the area of sociolinguistics, interlanguage pragmatics and second language acquisition (SLA). Initially, researchers, (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka, House-Edmondson, & Kasper, 1989; Cohen, 1996; Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Wolfson, Marnor, & Jones, 1989), used empirical studies to focus on how non-native speakers comprehend and produce speech acts such as requests, compliments, apologies, complaints, refusals, and thanks, in L2. Later, researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Ross, 2003; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Schmidt, 1995) began to focus on how non-native speakers acquire speech acts in their L2 and suggested focusing on aspects of pragmatic knowledge through consciousness-raising activities and communicative practice that seemed highly facilitative. Other researchers (e.g., House, 1996; Krashen, 1994) have suggested that providing additional explicit instruction in the use of conversational routines is necessary. In addition, Ishihara and Cohen (2006) have suggested that classroom instruction should focus on these six strategies: (1) classroom materials that include descriptions of the situation with contextual factors (variables) and successful L2 sample interactions; (2) pragmatic awareness-raising tasks; (3) use of form-focused exercises to reduce negative transfer of interlanguage grammar; (4) opportunities for students to practice producing output; (5) explicit explanations of sociocultural
information; and (6) evaluation and feedback on the success or failure of the interactions. Interestingly, despite the debate on the role of L2 instruction in relation to learners’ pragmatic development, few longitudinal studies on Japanese language teaching have examined the issue on how pragmatics are acquired.

In this study I conducted classes focusing on Ishihara and Cohen’s (2006) six strategies for learning speech acts in Japanese for introductory Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) learners to develop their understanding of the following Japanese speech acts and to use them in a manner appropriate to the context: “invitation,” “compliment,” “apology,” and “request.” The aim of this paper using self-study research based on qualitative research methods is not only to improve my instruction in relation to L2 pragmatic development, but also to raise further questions and develop future research. I have based my research design on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), because it has a bearing on questions of how I can teach more effectively. Although the definition of SoTL has evolved over time, for the most part, it involves these elements: (1) it is driven by questions about one’s own teaching and student learning, (2) the results are made available in such a way as to encourage public review and use of additional research, (3) it involves work that is reflective and iterative in that it forms further practice and later questions, (4) it is longitudinal, and (5) it engages others in the process (Darling & Wulff, 2001, p. 7). To fulfill these components of the SoTL, this paper draws on Lewin’s action-reflection cycle (McNiff & Whitehead, 2001): (1) Planning – lesson design; (2) Acting – conduct lesson; (3) Observing - lesson observation from both me and a critical friend; (4) Reflecting – interview with a critical friend. The results of this study suggest that collaboration is an important part of enhancing teaching and learning.
Statement of the Problem

Teaching pragmatics is a current debate in the field of SLA. Noticing that most studies in interlanguage pragmatics have focused on second language use rather than second language learning, in Developmental Issues in Interlanguage Pragmatics, Kasper and Schmidt (1996) aim to profile interlanguage pragmatics as an area of inquiry in second language acquisition research. Most questions they raise in their article have neither found any answers yet, nor to answer the question “Does instruction make a difference?” However, their suggestion to focus on aspects of pragmatic knowledge through consciousness-raising activities and communicative practice seems highly facilitative.

Second, there is little research on JFL in Canada, and even less on JFL in Canada from a qualitative action research procedure. To my knowledge, Iwai’s (2004) study is the only one that uses the action research method. She investigated the feasibility and effectiveness of learning JFL in cooperatively structured groups at the university beginners’ level.

Third, there is a gap between theory and practice. Teachers know that, even though they attempt the techniques or theories recommended by SLA, these techniques do not necessarily work well. This study will give a chance for researchers and classroom teachers to work together.

Purpose Statement

The methods of research employed in this study were designed to provide empirically based answers to the following questions:
1. In what ways does the instructor's philosophy about speech act teaching/learning change through the collaboration process? (beliefs)

2. In what ways do the instructor's beliefs affect his/her teaching and how does the instructor improve his/her instructions? (instructions)

3. In what ways do the participants develop their understanding of the Japanese speech acts through the instructions? What instructional strategies affect the participants' learning? (learning)

**Importance of the Study**

The aim of this study is not only to improve my instruction in relation to L2, but also to raise further questions and develop future research. Using the self-study research based on the collaborative action research cycle, this study is important for several reasons.

First, pragmatic development is important to the field of foreign language/second language acquisition. Although action research emphasizes practical significance and not theoretical significance, it is hoped that this study shows the link between theory and practice.

Second, collaboration is important for enhancing teaching and learning. The collaborative approach encourages teachers to “share ideas, concentrate on techniques, and experiment instructionally without being judged by supervisors” (Dantonio, 2001, p. 3). Once the teacher’s philosophy about his/her teaching behaviour changes, his/her instruction will also change. If the instruction changes, it will influence student’s learning. McNiff and Whitehead (2001) assert that, “the process of influencing social change begins with the process of personal change” (p. 23). I am expecting that
collaboration with my colleagues will affect my teaching philosophy and behaviour. Therefore, it is hoped that higher education administrators will see the benefits of collaboration and encourage it more in schools.

Third, by using reflective self-study, a teacher’s voice can be heard. It reveals a teacher’s dilemma in which he or she might ask if it is worthwhile to spend time on a given experimental instructional initiative, such as a new teaching strategy. According to Schon (1983), much of teachers’ practical knowledge is implicit in their patterns of actions. Reflection helps to make this practical teaching knowledge more explicit (Platzer, Blake, & Ashford, 2000). Reflection also helps teacher development, especially for increasing self-awareness.

Fourth, this study will give a chance for researchers, classroom teachers, and learners to pay attention to speech act teaching and learning. Sample interactions in Japanese classes, such as those noted by Makino, Hatasa, and Hatasa (1998), are not always enough in Canada. Also, most textbooks do not provide students with sociolinguistically meaningful opportunities to become familiar with the speech act differences associated with cultural concepts. I regularly have role-plays in my classes in order to evaluate learners’ output production, focusing on the sentence structures and forms that learners have studied in class. However, I do not expect students to act out role-plays as a native speaker does, nor have I planned to teach pragmatic strategies for the students. As a result, since learners are more conscious of making correct sentences without considering the whole situation, sometimes the learners’ output does not sound natural to a native Japanese speaker. I believe that this is because my instruction does not
include speech act aspects. This fact might be familiar to other instructors who are in a similar situation although in a different setting.

Lastly, the findings of this study are important to language teaching, particularly for Japanese language teachers. Because this research method focuses on advanced practice as well, more future tasks are expected to arise. The findings are also helpful for the improvement of JFL syllabus design and JFL material development.

**Philosophy of Teaching**

I have been teaching Japanese language in Canada for 5 years. During the last 5 years, my main focus has been to complete daily lesson requirement content based on the curriculum regardless of whether the students understood it or not. To become a more effective teacher, I should plan content according to students’ background or interests. Also, I should be able to explain students’ behaviour linking my teaching actions and student behaviour.

One behaviour I have considered recently is that my students have difficulty producing output. It is interesting to note that my students cannot achieve proficient oral ability as easily as other abilities, such as reading, writing, and listening. Without considering the students’ learning habits, I want to explain the relationship between my teaching actions and student learning development. First, I do not provide students with enough interaction in Japanese. Since it is a JFL setting, interaction in Japanese is limited. I am the only native Japanese speaker in the classroom and I seldom use visual or audio materials where students can experience actual Japanese interaction. So, students rarely have a chance to see interaction among Japanese people. Second, no extra information, such as short dialogue examples and sociocultural and sociolinguistic
explanations, are provided. I rely heavily on the textbook but it does not provide students with enough strategies to master role-play exercises. Third, there is not enough speaking practice provided in class. I tend to focus on writing in order to examine if the students understand the grammatical items. I provide students with role-playing exercises after the students are able to grasp a new grammatical item, but sometimes there is not much time left after that.

On the other hand, oral ability including understandings of sociocultural and sociolinguistical aspects may be something students can acquire only through living in Japan. The adaptation of sociocultural strategies as one’s own in an L2 is an individual decision; however, I believe that it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide students with the ability to choose what they can say and predict causes of possible misunderstandings that can occur when they get involved in interactions with Japanese people outside of the classroom.

Limitations

Adopting a small-scale qualitative case study method, this study intends to explore in depth three individual students’ beliefs about Japanese learning rather than to look at all JFL students’ perceptions. In other words, the focus of this study is more on the depth of understanding than on the generalizations of the findings. However, even though the generalizations of such a study are limited, the typicalness and tendencies of the development of the three students will ensure a comparatively inclusive study in which perceptions of a large range of JFL students can be reflected.

Qualitative case studies may also be limited by other factors, such as sensitivity or the mutual influences existing between the researcher and the participants. Being aware
of these limitations, I will try to contact my subjects, consult with them on a regular basis, and review the data many times with my critical friend, who is "a person who presents a different perspective. [He/she is] one who helps us to question those things taken for granted; and who helps us to view educationally related phenomena through socially and historically critical lenses" (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2005). This critical friend has an important role as a collaborative partner for SoTL because he/she helps the researcher to be open to critique and evaluation, engaging others in the process. In addition, by having another person with whom to share ideas as the third person, the tension existing between the researcher and the participants will diminish.

**Outline of Chapters**

The thesis is divided into five specific organizational units. It begins with an introduction, which includes the background of the research problem and the rationale, the problem situation, the purpose of the study, and its limitations.

In Chapter Two, the background literature of relevance to the study is presented. I outlined the background of Japanese speech acts as well as instructional recommendations.

In Chapter Three, I present the methodology used in this study, focusing on the rationale for selecting an action research framework. The participant selection, data collection and analysis are explained in detail. This chapter also includes ethical considerations for teacher action researchers.

In Chapter Four, I present the results of the research, adopting Sagor's (2005) three-step approach for classroom action research. I also describe the instructor's
philosophical change through the collaborative process, the instructional change, and the learners' learning development.

In Chapter Five, I provide a summary of the study and discuss the study findings. I briefly discuss my own transformations through the study process, and then I suggest implications of further research for JFL educators and classroom teachers.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1962, John Austin presented the speech act theory in his study *How to Do Things with Words*. Although Austin did not actually use the term ‘speech act’, he had been developing the speech act theory. Austin classified utterances into two types: constative and performative. Austin explained that constative utterances are statements used to describe situations and these utterances can be either true or false. For example, "It is snowing." On the other hand, performative utterances do not have to describe elements and they are used in specific situations that require a performance, such as when someone says ‘I do’ during the proceedings of a marriage ceremony. The action the verb describes is performed by uttering the phrase in which the verb occurs.

Austin (1962) also theorized that there are three kinds of utterance meanings. 1) locutionary, 2) illocutionary, and 3) perlocutionary. If we take the phrase “It is hot in here,” the locutionary meaning is simply the description of the warm temperature of the present environment. The same phrase could also imply a request to turn down the heat, which would be the illocutionary meaning. If the utterance leads to someone opening the window, this is the perlocutionary force of the utterance causing a desired result or effect given that context.

Over the last 15 years, emphasis has shifted from an anecdotal approach of speech act description to an empirical one. Such empirical research has focused on the perception and production of speech acts by learners of a second or foreign language. Over the last few years, empirical studies concerning the nature of various speech acts in a variety of languages and cultures have been steadily accumulating. Sociolinguists, increasingly aware of its implications for language teaching and learning, have become
particularly interested in this field of study. Making use of terminology from the anthropological, the sociological, and the philosophical literature, researchers adopted the term speech act as a minimal unit of discourse upon which to focus their investigations (Wolfson et al., 1989).

Speech Act Differences between English and Japanese

Speech Act Situation 1 – Refusals –

In a business situation, if you are not interested in purchasing a product from a salesperson, what would you say?

A Japanese speaking person (JSP): “chotto kangaesasete kudasai.”

(Let me think about it.)

An English speaking person (ESP): “I do not want it.”

In English, when one says that they do not want your product, there is no hidden meaning behind this sentence. When a Japanese person says “let me think about it,” he really means “no.” This utterance is because of the Japanese culture of harmony. Japanese people try not to hurt other people’s feelings by directly refusing one’s request. However, an English person who accepts the words at face value will once again ask if the shopper had a chance to think about it.

There is an interesting episode about this issue. In an interview with former Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, Miller (1997) touched on the problem of restricting textile exports when he met with former President Nixon. Mr. Sato said, “...I did not say that I would do anything specific. Japanese people may say, ‘I will think about it’ and ‘I will try to do something about it,’ but in Japanese culture that doesn’t mean anything. The Americans thought that we had actually committed ourselves and that some tangible
result would come out of it” (Miller, 1997, p. 34). If an American heard a direct
translation of the same words spoken by former PM Sato, many experts thought, “That
would mean that Mr. Sato promised specific steps” (Miller, 1997; p. 34). In the same
situation, when a Japanese person wants to give a vague answer, they say, “cyotto”,
which literally means “a little bit” or “just.” “Where are you going?” “Just to there.”
This exchange can be considered very meaningless in terms of content, but it serves its
purpose in Japanese. As Miller (1997) says, a Japanese person should speak in very
clear-cut terms when talking to foreigners because normal, idiomatic Japanese will
normally be misunderstood.

Speech Act Situation 2 – Apologies –

When you are late for an appointment, how would you apologize and explain the
reasoning?

A JSP: “osoku natte sumimasen. kurumaga kowaremashite. gomeiwakuwo
okakeshite moshiwakearimasen.”

(I’m sorry I’m late. My car broke down. I apologize for the
inconvenience.)

An ESP: “I’m late is because my engine wouldn’t start, so I had to call a tow
truck to bring my car to the garage. I had to take a cab to get here.
Sorry I’m late.”

Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) point out that in Japanese it seems impolite to explain
situations too much. In order to be polite, the actual apology should take more time than
the explanation, so the Japanese apologize at least twice, once at the beginning of the
conversation and one more time when they end the conversation. However, English-
speaking people tend to explain their situation or their reasons for making a particular request in much greater detail than is expected by a Japanese listener. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) also imply that using “because” in a Japanese apology is impolite because it sounds as if one is justifying for their wrongdoing and that one does not need to feel sorry. That is why Japanese-speaking people tend not to use ‘because’ in their English apologies. According to Goldstein and Tamura (1975), English-speaking people may feel that a proper apology must be accompanied by some personal reference to the specific situation. Students should practice this situation in order to avoid possible misunderstandings. The Japanese word “sumimasen” is used in many different situations. “Sumimasen” means, “I’m sorry” when one apologizes for being late, causing trouble, stepping on someone’s foot, or lightly bumping into someone. It can also mean “excuse me” when you want to get somebody’s attention. When expressing gratitude, “sumimasen” also means “thank you” when someone goes out of his/her way to do something for you. As a result, Japanese-speaking people tend to confuse these three expressions in English, especially “I am sorry” and “Excuse me.”

Speech Act Situation 3 – Thanks –

You were invited over for dinner at your friend’s house. What would you say before leaving the host’s house?

A JSP: “ojama itashimashita.” (Sorry to have disturbed you.)

An ESP: “Thank you very much for a lovely evening.”

Goldstein and Tamura (1975) suggest that English and Japanese conditions for thanking someone or apologizing are often similar in the two languages, but notable differences do exist. One difference is that the Japanese tend to use a term of apology in situations
where the English-speaking people would use one of thanks. This tendency also stems from the “wa” (harmony) concept that rewards the person for his/her trouble. However, if a Japanese-speaking person simply translates this Japanese expression into English, thanking the host, it would be very awkward. The English are more inclined to feel that a personal reference to the particular circumstance is required. Goldstein and Tamura (1975) also mention another noticeable difference between the American and Japanese cultures at a dinner party. An American usually feels it is necessary to comment on the food; on the other hand, a Japanese person may eat his/her dinner without making any comments on the food whatsoever. An American hostess might regard such silence as ominous. If a comment is made by the Japanese guest, it need not be more personal or original than “it was delicious.” As a result, it is very important for Japanese language students to learn the Japanese phrase, “Thank you for...” in order to make a personal comment. There are many possible English equivalents, such as “It was awfully nice of you to...” and so on. It is also important to know other ways to make comments.

Speech Act Situation 4 — Acceptances —

When you are at someone’s house, and the host offers you a drink, what would you say? (You are very thirsty.)

A JSP: “iie, kekko desu. okamainaku.” (No, thank you. Don’t worry about me.)

An ESP: “Thank you. I’ll have a glass of water.”

Japanese people expect to be asked three times when they have an offer. The number three is from the Japanese proverb “sandomeno shojiki” (Honesty in the third time.) It is not considered polite to accept the first or the second offer. If a Japanese person really
wants to take the offer, he/she should wait for the third opportunity. This custom is a result of the “honne to tatema” (true feeling and public behaviour) concept. In Western society people do not usually get a third chance. Goldstein and Tamura (1975) explain that to Japanese “No word conveys sorrow; you must look at the colour of the eyes” (pp. 92-93). This technique then becomes quite useful, for each individual realizes that one must look beneath the surface into the eyes, into gestures and expression, into the smile, and also into the silence. On the other hand, the English believe that feelings can be directly transmitted by words; therefore, individuals strive to find a more adequate way of expressing their feelings. For example, they seem to say “I love you” to their lovers or family much more often than the Japanese do. By doing so, the standard way of expressing something becomes devalued and the speaker must search for a more adequate way to say what he/she “really means.” It is easy to understand the cultural difference in this situation, but for the students the actual change in language is not an easy task to learn. Other cultural concepts also have to be considered in Japan. For example, in Japan if someone were to ask, “Would you like to try this?” “Can you do this? (even if it is something s/he cannot do),” most Japanese language students would show acceptance or non-acceptance the first time they are asked, but the Japanese language students will notice that it is not the custom to express one’s own opinions in Japan.

Speech Act Situation 5 – Gift Giving –

*Your friends bought a new house and you want to give them a house-warming gift.*

*What do you say to them when you give the gift?*

A JSP: “makotoni tsumaranaimono desuga.” (This is a useless gift.)

An ESP: “I hope you like this.”
Even though the gift may be fine and expensive, Japanese-speaking people say “tsumaranaimono” to belittle their own gift. This tendency is a result of the “kenson” (modesty) concept, which is the attitude of deprecating oneself and is considered to be polite (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987). However, English-speaking people who hear this phrase with their gift must be thinking, “Why are you saying that? This is a wonderful gift.” English-speaking people usually make personal comments and give an explanation for why they picked the gift.

Misunderstandings also occur when one serves food. Japanese-speaking people say “amari oishikunaidesuga.” (This does not taste good.) On the other hand, English-speaking people say, “This is one of our favourite dishes; try some and tell us if you like it?” This situation reveals a big difference between the Japanese approach and English approach. If English-speaking people receive the Japanese comments, they might feel strange, and think, “Why are you serving me this if it does not taste good?” Another example of misunderstanding occurs in evaluation situations. A boss says, “You did a good job.” However Japanese-speaking people say, “Oh, no, I could do better” because of their “kenson” (modesty) concept. This response would be misunderstood by English-speaking people because it would show a lack of confidence in one’s ability or that greater effort is required from the individual.

*Speech Act Situation 6 – Compliments –*

*When your visitor says, ‘You have a very nice house,’ what do you say?*

A JSP: “iie.” (No, no.)

An ESP: “Oh, thank you. It’s a little small, but I am proud of it.”
It is customary for a Japanese person to deny all compliments (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987), or sometimes he/she will deny it at first and then mention the bad points of his/her house, such as “It is an old house” or “It is in a bad location.” This response also comes from the “kenson” (modesty) concept. On the other hand, English-speaking people show appreciation for kind words and usually make a personal comment afterwards. If an English-speaking person compliments a Japanese person, the English person would feel awkward when a Japanese person refuses to accept the compliment.

Similar misunderstandings occur when someone compliments another’s family. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) show that the Japanese response to such a compliment is usually “ie” (No, no), and once again the recipient of the compliment usually focuses on the weak points of his/her own children, for example, by saying “itazurade komarimasu.” (S/he does not behave very well.) When one compliments another’s wife, the husband will deny the compliment and usually call his wife “gusai” (a stupid wife). However, if English-speaking people hear the negative comments about their family, they would be offended. This concept can be referred to an “uchi to soto” (inside and outside). Japanese people should not say good things about their family, “uchi” people; however, to say nice things about others, “soto” (outside) people, is another way of showing the harmony “wa” concept (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987). English-speaking people usually compliment their own families and it is generally accepted. In a situation where both English and Japanese children are playing sports and a child makes an error, a typical Japanese parent would say, “What are you doing! You need to practice more after you come home.” An English parent might say, “That’s alright! Good try!” The Japanese parents’ attitude may look too strict and serious for children’s sports.
Speech Act Situation 7 – Saying Good-bye –

You see your friend on the street. You have a nice chat and are about to leave.

What are your last words when you leave?

A JSP: “itsudemo asobini kitekudasai.” (Please drop by anytime.)

An ESP: “See you.”

It is important to note that the Japanese expression “Please drop by anytime” does not have any meaning. It is simply a conversation closer to maintain the “wa” (harmony) concept. The Japanese want to show that there may be a future relationship. They use this expression even to a person they do not want to invite, but this use is due to the “tatemae” (public behaviour) concept. However, if an English person really were to drop by because he/she had heard this expression, a Japanese person would be shocked. Once again, Japanese need to be more direct when talking (Miller, 1997).

A similar kind of misunderstanding occurs when Japanese people invite somebody for dinner and are asked, “Do you want me to bring anything?” They reply “teburade kitekudasai” (Come without anything.). However, the Japanese guest will bring something as a gift almost every time. What would happen if the English-speaking person heard the same phrase? Often, they would not bring anything. Once again “teburade kitekudasai” is a conversation closer and does not have any meaning. Japanese people would not be upset if their guests do not bring anything, but they might think that the visitors have poor manners. To avoid this misunderstanding, it is very important for Japanese students to learn to speak directly in English.
Misunderstanding

The areas of pragmatic failure, transfer, and sociolinguistic miscommunication are of critical importance when trying to understand and solve problems having to do with intercultural communication (Wolfson et al., 1989). The business world, too, is turning its attention to resolving the cross-cultural differences in language use that cause not only misunderstandings but also, at times, offence (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). A *Wall Street Journal* (Bennett, 1986) article about training foreign managers in the U.S. mentions some of the kinds of problems that have led to specialized training. For example, a Japanese businessman angers an American colleague by repeatedly apologizing for a late report when the American expects explanations and solutions. On the other hand, in Japanese culture, the actual apology is more important because it sounds more sincere than a detailed explanation.

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), several major investigations into the speech act have been conducted. Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1985) collected data from 60 subjects who were divided into three groups: native speakers of Japanese speaking in Japanese (JJ), native speakers of American English speaking in English (AE), and native speakers of Japanese speaking in English (JE). The design of the study used both ethnographic data and responses to a Discourse Completion Test or DCT. The DCT, a written questionnaire, contained 12 situations or dialogues, each with a blank in which only refusals would be appropriate. Situations involved; refusing a worker’s request for a raise, refusing an invitation to the boss’s house for a party, refusing an offer to pay for a broken vase, and refusing a friend’s suggestion to try a new diet. Not surprisingly, in view of the extreme differences in the cultural backgrounds of
the groups studied, it was found that the Japanese learners of English used strategies of refusal which resembled those of the Japanese speaking in Japanese and differed from those of the native speakers of American English speaking in English. One significant finding was that the status of the person being addressed is a much stronger conditioning factor in the speech of the Japanese speaking both in English and in their native language. Americans did not suggest alternatives when refusing an offer or a suggestion, but the Japanese did, especially if they had higher status. In their refusals of offers from someone of lower status, all respondents gave essentially the same semantic formula, but the JE resembled their native JJ counterparts in adding two additional semantic formulae—a statement of philosophy (e.g., “Things break anyway”; “This kind of thing happens”) and then suggested a future alternative (e.g., “Be more careful from now on”).

What is the relationship between those responses produced by learners, those responses produced by native speakers of the target language, and those learners speaking in their native language? The differences are the strategies used to produce the speech acts. People produce utterances based on their native culture. However, when they speak the target language, they often produce the utterance used in their native culture, and sometimes that does not match with the target language culture. Researchers realized that it is important for the learners to understand the differences that might cause misunderstanding, and language teachers need to develop better teaching methods. Rintell and Mitchell (1989) suggest some possibilities for the classroom teaching: 1) teach the speech act strategies explicitly in language classes, 2) observe a variety of strategies in the target language environment, 3) explain native language strategies, and, perhaps more important, native culture estimations of the requirements of a given social
situation, and 4) explain aspects of the language development process independently of L1 knowledge to L2 input. Linguist Edward Sapir (1949) states, “Language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives” (p. 207).

**Classroom Instruction and SLA**

The author’s review of the SLA literature reveals that classroom instruction should provide (Ishihara & Cohen, 2006): (1) classroom materials that include descriptions of the situation with contextual factors (variables) and successful L2 sample interactions; (2) pragmatic awareness-raising tasks; (3) risk of interlanguage grammar and negative transfer and form-focused exercises; (4) practice in producing output; (5) explicit explanation of sociocultural information; and (6) evaluation and feedback.

*Classroom Materials that Include Descriptions of the Situation with Contextual Factors (Variables) and Successful L2 Sample Interactions*

Compared to English, Japanese has more complicated speech act differences due to the politeness that is inherent in Japanese culture. According to Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995), each speech act behaviour has to be determined by (1) relative power/age; (2) social distance; and (3) degree of imposition. These variables are independent and culturally sensitive in speech act behaviour. Successful L2 sample interactions of dialogue in a textbook or a role-play activity will need to include the situational background that explains the relationship between a speaker and a listener. For example, does the speaker have a higher rank, title, or social position (power/age)? Do speaker and listener know or identify with each other (social distance)? How big is the expenditure of goods and/or services by the listener or the obligation of the speaker to perform the act
(degree of imposition)? By balancing the level of power and the degree of distance and imposition, various scenarios should be covered in the role-play.

**Pragmatic Awareness-raising Tasks**

The role of awareness is often called consciousness, noticing, or attention, and is concerned in SLA with the support of psychological investigation. According to Schmidt (1993, 1994, 1995), a low level of awareness is called “noticing” and is a synonym for attention; on the other hand, a high level of awareness is involved when there is explicit learning with a conscious process and implicit learning with an unconscious process. Metapragmatic awareness can be considered as a high level of consciousness-awareness using input processes.

Schmidt (1995) (see Figure 1) also argues that what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning (Noticing Hypothesis). He stresses, “Awareness alone (without input or interaction) is clearly inadequate” (p. 47). When teachers provide new information (input), learners have to notice, and then classroom instruction leads to interaction. Showing speech act differences between Japanese and English is the best way to notice the difference. He suggests that instructors ask learners what they would say in the situation in English and what they expect to say in Japanese then show the authentic sample interactions. Although a classroom is an inauthentic environment, using authentic materials, such as video tapes or letters, will help learners. Other linguists, such as Hall and Verplaetse (2000), agree that authentic materials provide learners with a degree of syntactic complexity, the rate of speech, and the length of utterance. Because characters in textbook dialogues are usually one-dimensional, their relationships are
Intention → Attention → Noticing → Understanding

- Unconsciousness-Awareness
- Consciousness-Awareness
  (Metapragmatic Awareness)

*Figure 1. Schmidt's awareness.*
defined stereotypically (Washburn, 2001), and learners often believe that there is only one way of acting for a particular speech act (McLean, 2004). It is necessary to provide richer input for pragmatic consciousness-raising to help when learners encounter a similar situation outside the classroom.

Risk of Interlanguage Grammar and Negative Transfer and Form-focused Exercises

This strategy poses a possible interlanguage grammar problem. When learners have problems conjugating verbs, it is easy to use the inappropriate forms that the learners learned first in a previous chapter. Another problem is caused by the learners' negative transfer of sentences (Kasper, 1997). Learners tend to translate what they would say in their native language (L1). For example, in the case of apology, learners may use explicit reason expressions in great detail when they speak Japanese. Negative pragmatic transfer is more salient than positive transfer because it is often a source of miscommunication.

Most certain speech act behaviours require their own specific linguistic forms. To be intended to induce learners to pay attention to linguistic forms, “Form-focused instruction (FFI)” (Ellis, 2001) is used. Ellis defines the term “form” to include phonological, lexical, grammatical, and pragmalinguistic aspects of language. According to her, FFI has two features. First, it enhances input with what is called “input flood.” It involves many examples of the target structure, and learners can draw attention to the form without any device. For this reason, repetition is analysed in successful language classrooms (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Second, FFI primarily focuses on meaning. The tasks are designed for communicative purposes. Without understanding the meaning of the target form, learners cannot accomplish the task. As a result, the aim of FFI is to
enrich input and, in turn, induce noticing the form in the context of meaning-focused activities.

**Practice in Producing Output**

Output can be defined as the writing and speech produced by a learner. Swain (1995) emphasizes that the role of output promotes acquisition. She proposes three ways in which output aids second language acquisition. First, output promotes noticing (consciousness-raising function). By producing the target language, learners become aware of what they want to say and what they ultimately can or cannot say. For example, learners may say, “I have short leg,” and then they notice that they did not pluralize the word “leg.” They may notice that they often forget to pluralize words. So learners may not only notice the target form, but also that it is different from their own interlanguage (i.e., they notice their “gap”). Second, output encourages “Hypothesis Testing” or the process of modification. Learners try out new language forms and structures as they stretch their interlanguage to meet communicative needs. Japanese learners may say “leg” because they hypothesize it by following their L1 linguistic rule (there is usually no pluralizing in Japanese.) Then the listener corrects them and says “legs.” The Japanese learners then modify or correct what they just said. Through analysing learners’ errors, the learners’ inner learning process can be observed. Third, output serves a metalinguistic function. By producing the target language, learners use language in order to reflect on and negotiate linguistic functions and forms. Once they realize that their hypothesis is incorrect, they begin to apply a metalinguistic approach by discussing and reflecting upon the language form (singular / plural). This process enables learners to control and internalize linguistic knowledge.
There has also been considerable interest in classroom interaction on the grounds that output practice promotes acquisition. Interaction can be defined in two ways in SLA: teacher (NS) to learner (NNS); and learner (NNS) to learner (NNS). In this section, the latter is the focus. According to Long's (1996) "Interaction Hypothesis", form-focused instruction with collaborative tasks leads to meaning-focused instruction and becomes an effective approach. Learners' negotiation of meaning promotes input, which leads them to "noticing the gap" (interlanguage) and finally to "pushed output."

Collaborative tasks (Donato, 2000) and role-playing (Hudson, 2001; Makita-Discekici, 2002) lead learners to reflect on their own language production as they attempt to create meaning. Such tasks not only stimulate output to function as a means to focus attention and to test hypotheses, but they also provide opportunities for output to function as a metalinguistic tool.

Explicit Explanation of Sociocultural Information

Yamashita's (1996) two conditions under which learners may have to deal with target language pragmatics are (a) the learner's language has an equivalent pragmatic strategy, but the function is different (for example, apology expressions are used much more frequently in Japanese than in English); (b) the learner's native language does not have a pragmatic strategy similar to that found in the target language (e.g., implicit reason / explicit reason). In both cases, learners need to investigate the pragmatic differences between the two languages, then such cultural-specific strategies need to be taught.

Cultural-specific strategies can be taught by providing sociocultural information, such as cultural values, beliefs, morals, and assumptions. For example, the Japanese have
unique cultural concepts (Doi, 1986; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Hodgson, Sano & Graham, 2000; Nishiyama, 2000; Yamada, 1997) such as "harmony," "in-groups and out-groups," "true feelings and public behaviour" and "modesty." These cultural norms relate to Japanese speech act behaviours and influence the degree of formality, directness, and politeness. Integrating such sociocultural information into the classroom, McLean (2004) suggests examples of explicit pragmatic instruction including using metapragmatic language, having discussions, and providing other examples of how varying forms affect the meanings of utterances.

Explicit instruction is supported by several studies. House’s (1996) study shows that there is a necessity to teach the target language focusing on metapragmatic awareness, and the result can be explained by the auto-input hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that learners’ confrontation with their own output in the playback, discussion, and reconstruction sessions is a significant part of their input. Another study, such as Rosa and O’Neil (1999), stresses that such consciousness-raising helps learners to notice when and how the negative transfer occurs. According to Schmidt’s (1995) awareness theory, learners can only attain a high level of awareness, that is, consciousness-awareness or metapragmatic awareness, through explicit instruction. As a result, explicit instruction promotes learners’ noticing as well as their input.

Evaluation and Feedback

The most best known self-assessment instrument for pragmatic purpose is the Discourse Completion Test (DCT), which was used for the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Research Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), one of the most comprehensive empirical studies of speech act behaviour. Kasper and Dahl (1991) define the DCT as
“written questionnaires including a number of belief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study” (p. 221). Some researchers (Beebe & Cummings, 1985) criticize the DCT as a non-standardized test because it lacks observation of nonverbal behaviours, it lacks examination of emotions, and it has cultural biases. On the other hand, McLean (2004) demonstrates that the DCT has potential use as a springboard for discussion in the L2 classroom. Using the DCT in classroom discussions and providing explicit instructions enhance learners’ input and leads to consciousness-raising opportunities for developing pragmatic awareness.

The role of negative feedback should also be considered when the DCT is used as a classroom instruction tool. In L1 acquisition, parents and peers often teach pragmatics by providing negative feedback. On the other hand, in SLA, learners’ errors are treated as an opportunity to raise the learners’ consciousness, so errors are seen as evidence of the learners’ progress (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). However, it is worth noting that a learner’s anxiety increases as his or her fear of negative evaluation gets stronger in Japanese classes (Kitano, 2001).

If the DCT is used in classroom instruction, what is an appropriate evaluation after the instruction? While the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) and Business Japanese Test do not examine learners’ speaking skills, the Oral Proficiency Interview from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL-OPI) is becoming the focus of Japanese language instruction. According to Johnson (2001) in the OPI, “the examinee converses face to face with one or two trained testers on a variety of topics for ten to thirty minutes” (p. 2). The OPI is an oral test focusing on a learner’s performance, not their achievement. It consists of four areas to observe: (1)
global tasks, (2) context and content, (3) text, and (4) accuracy. Sociolinguistic skill is measured in the accuracy category. The OPI has been criticized (Johnson, 2001; Kasper & Ross, 2003) because of its validity, reliability, and the authenticity of the test format; however, it is currently the only developed assessment of communicative ability in Japanese language teaching. Makino (2001), the leading authority in Japanese Language teaching, suggests that the classroom materials should be selected based on OPI guidelines, and that classroom instruction should follow them.

**Summary**

In this literature review, I look at Japanese speech acts from two directions: from a sociolinguist's point of view and a second language acquisition (SLA) researcher's point of view. When looking at speech act differences between languages, sociolinguists are concerned about the risk of misunderstanding when non-native speakers have pragmatic failures or negative transfers in their speech act situations. Increasing implications for language teaching and learning has become a part of their field of study. The area of pragmatics as a research topic in SLA has grown since the 1990s. Based on SLA theories, Ishihara and Cohen (2006) developed six strategies to learn Japanese speech acts. At this point these strategies are theory based and not necessarily valid in the classroom. Questions, such as “Does instruction make a difference?”, in teaching pragmatics still remain unanswered (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Practical issues and further investigation in this area is required.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Considering that my initial interest in carrying out this study was to examine the role of instruction in relation to L2 pragmatic development, action research can be approached through the action-reflection cycle (planning, acting, observing, reflecting).

I chose the collaborative action research cycle for the present thesis for three reasons. First, it supports an SoTL inquiry. I drew from the connections between these two research methods for my study in the hope of reflecting on my teaching as a university language teacher. Second, this method provides a means for continuous reflection and renewal of my teaching method based on the results of the action based inquiry. Lastly, by reflecting, studying, and deliberating on my teaching, I will become a more effective instructor for my students. I believe that every student’s performance will improve in the area of L2 pragmatics by this research. To measure the students’ improvement, I will conduct pretests beforehand and posttests after each instruction.

The research design follows that of a grounded theory using the process of a self-study collaborative action research cycle. Grounded theory describes a process in which the researcher collects and analyzes data and builds a new theory that is based on the evidence generated. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the grounded theory is “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p. 24). It makes data and theory interact; therefore, “data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other” (p. 23). Neuman (2003) also explains, “a researcher creates grounded theory out of a process of trying to explain, interpret, and render meaning from data. It arises from trying to account for, understand, or make sense of the evidence” (p.
For these reasons, a grounded theory study is an appropriate method for this action research, as action research is defined as "a process of systematic investigation leading to increased understanding of a phenomenon or issue of interest" (Stringer, 2004; p. 3).

Self-study is a reflective and inquiry-oriented approach that provides teachers with the opportunities to explore teaching in their own situation and improve classroom practice. Drevdahl et al. (2002) characterize self-study as the research which "assists faculty in creating knowledge that helps understand and answer pedagogical questions" (p. 414). The aim of self-study links it closely to action research, which provides teachers with new knowledge and understanding enabling them to improve classroom practice. Stringer (2004) defines action research as "a process of systematic investigation leading to increased understanding of a phenomenon or issue of interest" (p. 3). However, relying on one's own view of one's teaching may become biased. Drevdahl et al. express this concern: "...increased self-awareness about teaching is not enough. Reflection should be deliberate so any examination of reflection needs to be conducted in a planned and systematic manner" (p. 416). In addition, the collaborative approach is increasingly applied to classroom research such as collaborative self-study and collegial coaching. The benefits of collaboration in conducting self-study research by Louie et al. (2003) are outlined below:

1. Collaboration gives social support, which provides motivation and encouragement that increase the meaningfulness of the work to the researchers.

2. Research groups foster a culture of reflection that results in higher-level discourse and critique.

3. Validation of self-study research is enhanced significantly.
In *Collegial Coaching*, Dantonio (2001) also explains, “by collaborating, teachers are afforded opportunities to attain insights into effective practices, building knowledge and confidence in delivering effective instruction for students” (p. 22). Collaboration, through dialogue with continual reflection as the teachers work together, fosters the outcome to enhance teaching and learning. Action research, in which an instructor and a critical friend / colleague collaborate through the stages of: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, will provide the ideal framework for a collaborative relationship.

**Site and Participant Selection**

*The Site*

The study takes place at a university where foreign language courses are elective for undergraduate students, and Japanese is one of the various languages offered. At the 2nd-year level, 25 learners will be enrolled in the course. The learners' backgrounds are varied, but none of them will likely be of Japanese heritage. The textbook used for the course is Nakama (Makino et al., 1998).

*The Participants*

Three participants were selected by purposive sampling focusing on Canadian students who were studying Japanese as their foreign language in a university setting. In this study, the students will be observed in class and analysed by pretests and posttests. The study is not intended to measure the participants' Japanese language ability, or to evaluate participants' class performance based on their course marks. Accordingly, the following criteria are set:

1. All participants will not have had the experience of living in Japan. The aim of this study is to teach Japanese speech acts to students of JFL, which means that I
would like to examine how to teach a foreign language with sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects to people who have no knowledge of them.

2. The participants must have started to learn Japanese in the institution where I was working 2 years ago. The reason of this criterion is that I will be familiar with the participants' previous learning experience. Since I am working at the institution, I will know the curriculum, the textbooks, and the content that was taught for the 1st-year level classes.

3. The participants ideally would maintain an "A" average in order to avoid the lack of understanding of material learned previously, for example, sentence structures that were taught in their 1st-year level classes.

Prior to the commencement of the study, the participants were invited to read the study proposal and make recommendations for any changes in the procedure. Upon their approval of the process, formal participation was sought by asking the participants to sign an informed consent form that is based on the ethical guidelines outlined by the Brock University Ethics Review Board.

My Critical Friend

According to Holly et al. (2005), a critical friend is a person who helps us to question things taken for granted; a person who presents a different perspective, and who helps us to view educationally related phenomena critically through a social and historical point of view. I asked my Japanese program co-ordinator to be my critical friend. The critical friend's role in this study is to support and participate in the critical reflection by guiding the instructor, by providing insights and implications for planning
the lesson, and by analyzing the data for review, through the stages of the action research cycle.

At beginning of the planning cycle, an initial lesson plan (See Appendix B) was provided. Objectives, time frame, and contents of the lesson were written in the lesson plan. The critical friend provided insights and literature, if needed, and suggested any desired changes. During the planning cycle, the critical friend was available if needed as a sounding board.

During the acting cycle, the critical friend observed my lessons. A final lesson plan and an observation sheet (See Appendix C) were provided before the lesson. The points of the observation sheet are based on the six strategies for learning Japanese speech acts. The critical friend was instructed to pay attention to my teaching and to the participants’ learning and follow the six strategies to complete the observation sheet.

During the observing cycle, the critical friend analyzed his comments on the observation sheet and prepared for the next meeting.

At the reflecting cycle, the critical friend and I discussed the comments of the observation sheet and analyzed the pretests and posttests. At the next meeting the critical friend provided feedback and set the direction for the next lesson.

I repeated this process three times and kept a reflective journal throughout the process in order to see how this collaborative approach affects philosophy, teaching, and learning.

Data Collection

This is mainly a qualitative study, while the data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. This data collection method involves gathering
both numeric information (pretests and posttests in this study) as well as text information (e.g., documentation of discussions with my critical friend), and the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. The analysis of the quantitative data consisted of descriptive statistics comparing the score differences of pretests and of posttests to describe a phenomenon using the statistics. In descriptive statistics, the goal is “to describe, summarize, or make sense of a particular set of data” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; p. 434). In this study, descriptive statistics is used as “a measure of relationship” (Gay & Airasian, 2000; p. 437) to indicate the degree to which two sets of scores of pretests and posttests are related. Using these methods, I can confirm findings from different data sources that examine the extent to which I can improve my instruction by the qualitative method and how much learners can improve their understanding of Japanese speech acts by using the quantitative method.

Qualitative Instrument

Qualitative data are collected during each of the action research cycles for the following reasons:

- Action research requires a method of identifying problems and goals currently faced and qualitative methods can be used to “uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 19).

- Action research reflects “certain sets of beliefs, commitments and hopes” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2001), and they can be explored and described by the qualitative approach.
Collaborative relationship is the key to this study and the correspondence with a critical friend can be described well by using the qualitative approach.

In this research, I implemented triangulation procedures by using five sources of data collection: artifacts, students’ work, teacher’s journal, critical friend’s observation sheet, and critical friend’s postobservation interview. This triangulation of measures, (Neuman, 2003) in which researchers take multiple measures of the same phenomena, is often used for qualitative research methods. The use of different data leads to results in similar findings (McMillan & Wergin, 2002), and it can enhance credibility, dependability, as well as conformability by cross-validation of those findings (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Triangulation is an important procedure for action research as well. Sometimes action research data are not very reliable because it is impossible to control all aspects of the variables. However, by using multiple sources and by looking at something from several angles at the same time, minimizing the subjective element provides various types of information that lead to more effective solutions to the problem (Stringer, 2004). The grounded theorist also advocates triangulation because different data sources provide different vantage points in order to understand potential conceptual categories (Locke, 2001).

**Artifacts**

I collected artefacts, such as lesson plans and additional class materials (literature reviews, OHP, hand-outs, etc.), to use during reflection with my critical friend. I also analyzed these artifacts and the ways in which they changed through the action research cycle.
Students' Work

At the observing cycle, I collected students’ work, such as tape-recorded conversations, to demonstrate their learning in relation to my expectations of the learning that had taken place.

Teacher's Journal

Throughout the study, I kept a journal indicating attendance, class activities, students’ behaviour, class atmosphere, and reflected on my feelings regarding how the class proceeded that day. I will use the journal for assessing the feasibility and practicality of explicit instruction in a language class in a university setting qualitatively.

A teacher’s inner voice is seldom heard. By keeping a journal on actual teaching, it will be better able to understand the dilemmas of practice and theory. In particular, I paid attention to the change in my philosophical approach to teaching after the considering reflection from my critical friend in order to see in what ways the collaborative approach affected my teaching and the student’s learning. Notations were made during all phases of all cycles.

Critical Friend's Observation Sheet

During the observing cycle when my critical friend observed my practice, I provided him with an observation sheet which focused on identifying the learning outcomes for students, that is, what I expected the students to achieve.

Critical Friends' Postobservation Interview

During the reflection cycle, after my critical friend’s observation of my teaching, I conducted an interview with him in which he provided me with a critique of my teaching. I also reflected on that recorded interview within my journal.
Quantitative Instrument

Action research is a practical tool for improving the local situation by blending qualitative and quantitative instruments. In order to examine how much learners improved their understanding of Japanese speech acts and used them in a manner appropriate to the content of the instruction, quantitative data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Pretests and Posttests

The pretest and posttest (See Appendix D) was administered to three selected students to examine the development of their L2 pragmatics after the instruction. The tests consist of structured role-plays based on the Cohen and Olshtain communicative ability scale (Cohen, 1994).

One of the issues in interlanguage pragmatics is its lack of any common assessment method that can measure learners’ pragmatic development. Production of linguistic action can be assessed by comparing non-native speakers to native speakers by their performance on discourse completion questionnaires (DCT), role-plays, and by having (semi-) authentic settings. Among these three options, the discourse completion questionnaires have been by far the most common (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Kasper and Dahl define the DCT as “written questionnaires including a number of belief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study” (p. 221). Some researchers (Beebe & Cummings, 1985) criticize the DCT as a non-standardized test because it does not allow for observation of nonverbal behaviours, it lacks the examination of emotions, and it has cultural biases. More importantly, the DCT is not a measurement of speaking ability since it is a written questionnaire. On the
other hand, role-plays are used for the assessment of oral language production. Role-plays probe for the ability to “handle social functions such as greetings, invitations, and other speech acts” (Cohen, 1994). Role-plays are more appropriate because they are closer to the real situation and they match the goal of the communicative approach.

I evaluated learners’ performance in their role-plays based on the Cohen and Olshtain communicative ability scale, which is developed for the purpose of assessing functional speaking ability (See Appendix E). The evaluation consists of three areas to observe: (1) sociocultural ability; (2) sociolinguistic ability; and (3) grammatical ability. Cohen (1994) summarized that these areas of ability can be defined as follows:

1. Sociocultural ability – Assessment of the appropriateness of the sociocultural strategies selected for realizing speech acts in a given context, taking into account (1) the culture involved, (2) the age and sex of the speakers, (3) their social class and occupations, and (4) their roles and status in the interaction. For example, while in some cultures (such as the U.S.) it may be appropriate for speakers to explain the reasoning in detail if one were to miss a meeting with the boss, in Japan such an excuse strategy might be considered out of place in that it would most likely be more of the apologizing phrases the boss expects to hear.

2. Sociolinguistic ability – Assessment of the use of linguistic forms to express the intent of the speech act. For example, if a student were to thank the professor, “arigatoo (thanks)” would probably constitute an inappropriate thanks, unless the students had an especially close relationship with the professor.
null
3. Grammatical ability – Assessment of how acceptable words, phrases, and sentences are formed and pronounced in the respondents' utterances. (pp. 283-287)

However, the communicative ability scale has been criticized due to lack of reliability and validity. In this study, I asked my critical friend to examine the test format and the data to increase its validity and authenticity of the test format.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative grounded theory analysis was used to examine how I could improve my explicit instruction of the JFL learners' L2 pragmatics development in a university classroom. Also, qualitative grounded theory analysis was used to examine how introductory JFL learners develop their understanding of Japanese speech acts. In the process of analyzing the data derived from my journals, artifacts, students' work, observation sheets, interviews with my critical friend, pretests and posttests, the data were coded with the six steps adopted by Strauss and Corbin's (1990) three kinds of qualitative coding: (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding. They are: (a) read all notes; (b) categorize based on Sagor's three-step approach (Sagor, 2005); (c) label preliminary concepts based on research questions; (d) examine causes and consequence of concepts; (e) raise new questions; and (f) build a new theory based on well-developed concepts and overall analysis.

First, I read all the data I collected from my journal, artifacts, students' work, observation sheets, interviews with my critical friend, pretests, and posttests.

Second, I categorized all data based on Sagor's (2005) three-step approach: (1) What did we do?; (2) What change occurred regarding the achievement targets?; and (3)
What was the relationship between actions taken and any changes in performance on the targets? (p. 76)

1. What did we do?

The lesson plans were designed based on SLA theory. I recorded my instructions, such as what I taught, how long I taught, and why I taught it that way. During the three lessons, I examined if there was a pattern in my instruction and recorded those patterns. In addition, I determined whether or not there was a change in my teaching and recorded what those changes were.

2. What changes occurred regarding the achievement targets?

Using my journal or other records I have kept on the achievements regarding the students’ behaviour and improvements, such as the pretests and the posttests, I placed the data in a chronological sequence for the individual students. Then I compared and contrasted trends in performance to see if they might have been influenced by variables other than my actions.

3. What was the relationship between the actions taken and any changes in performance on the targets?

I examined the findings I generated in answering the first two questions. Then I looked for changes in performance reflected in my data to determine if I could identify a pattern or patterns of corresponding actions or events that might help explain these changes.

Third, I labelled preliminary concepts based on my research questions: beliefs, instructions, and learning. I underlined these words with three different coloured pens. By doing this, all the points relating to the three preliminary concepts stood out.
Fourth, I focused on the preliminary concepts and examined their causes and consequences, looking for categories or concepts that cluster together.

Fifth, to determine whether there are any linkages between concepts, I raised new questions, which became major themes. In this step, I decided to drop some concepts that were not relevant and examined other concepts in more depth, that reinforced the connections in my observations.

The last step involved building a new theory based on the major themes, supported by well-developed concepts and overall analysis around several core generalizations. In this step, relevant literature was necessary to develop concepts in accordance with Miller’s (2004) suggestion that “a grounded theory derived from the field data, coded under conditions of theoretical sensitivity, and then, as the grounded theory emerges, the research literature is turned to in order to provide support for it” (p. 199).

**Ethical Considerations**

I followed the ethical guidelines for teacher action researchers (Holly et al., 2005).

*Obtain Permission*

I obtained permission from students and the Human Subjects Review Board from both Brock University and the university where the study was to take place. Participants were made aware of the general aims of the study and what it were to involve. Since I focused on a small number of case study participants (four students in total) within a much larger class (of approximately 25 students), it was necessary to receive informed consent from both the case study students and other class members and to assure both
groups that there would be no disadvantage to withholding consent or from choosing not to participate in the study (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

Involvement of Regular Students and Three Case Study Student Participants

I encouraged the full participation of all students in the classroom. The activities in the classroom proceeded without affecting the learning that would regularly take place even if this study were not to be conducted. Both the four case study student participants and the entire classroom of students, who are not identified participants, underwent the same activities. Only the case study students participated in the pretests and posttests, which took approximately 10 minutes each. These tests were not an evalulative component of the students' course mark. These tests took place in my office. I informed all students that the research would not affect their course grade. I asked that the case study students form one group during classroom activities, which allowed me to take notes pertaining to the participation of these students as it occurred in the regularly scheduled lesson plan. I also paid the usual amount of attention to my students who are not case study participants and consulted with them frequently. I took notes of the other groups in the class, so that the case study students would not be singled out or identified by my note taking.

Ensure Confidentiality

Students need to trust that what they say in private will remain private and that their thoughts and feelings will not be used against them. Therefore, I assured them that no identifying information will be included to maintain confidentiality.
Inform Participants of the Right to Withdraw

Students had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of negative consequences.

Build Relationships of Trust

I worked for open communication, trust, and reciprocity to conduct successful research.

Be Self-Reflective

It was important to include self-reflection as an integral part of the study. Using my journal, I interpreted and portrayed the evidence I gathered with honesty, respect, fairness, and accuracy.

Dissemination

I will share my findings at conferences, such as the Pragmatic and Language Learning, Canadian Association for Japanese Language Education (CAJLE), TESOL, ACTFL, as well as by establishing pragmatic files for my own language program. Sharing research results is important for both action research and SoTL. Classroom action research is designed to help a teacher learn what is happening in his/her own classroom and to use that information to take action for future improvement. Classroom action researchers report outcomes not only at conferences, but also through informal sharing with colleagues, brief reports, or ERIC documents. The sharing provides "the possibility of clear and effective communication based on richly evocative accounts that accurately capture and represent people's experience (Stringer, 2004, p. 137)." In SoTL researchers are also encouraged to undergo public review for the additional research:
...when it invites peer collaboration and review, then that teaching might rightly be called scholarly, or reflective, or informed. But in addition to all of this, yet another good is needed, one called a scholarship of teaching, ..., as having the three additional central-features of being public ("community property"), open to critique and evaluation, and in a form that others can build on. (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999, p. 48)

As results are disseminated, further research is encouraged, by suggesting new directions for inquiry and motivating others to pursue their own reflective-study (Drevdahl et al., 2002).

**Summary**

This chapter provides the methodology used in this study. The research design is based on a self-study using the process of collaborative action research cycles. The framework of the collaborative relationship with my critical friend provided an opportunity to reflect on my teaching and raised further questions that could develop into future research. Through the process of action-reflection cycles, changes in philosophical approaches, improvements in teaching, and the learners’ progress towards goals were observed.
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the research, which aims to examine classes based on Ishihara and Cohen's (2006) six strategies for learning speech acts in Japanese for introductory Japanese as foreign language learners. These strategies assist learners toward the development of their understanding of the following Japanese speech acts: (1) invitation and refusal, (2) compliments, and (3) asking for a permission, and use them in a manner appropriate to the context. The aim of this research, in line with the scholarship of teaching, is not only to improve my instruction in relation to L2 pragmatic development, but also to raise further questions and to develop future research. The findings are analyzed and presented through coding the data derived from my journals, artifacts, students' work, observation sheets, interviews with my critical friend, pretests and posttests. The analysis shows that (1) after my critical friend encouraged my study and my students gave me some positive comments after each lesson, I gained confidence in teaching the suggested speech acts, (2) teaching was developed by explaining concepts and strategies, creating the visual material (a video) showing the strategies, and explaining the relationship between the strategy and grammatical forms, and samples of misusing the forms, (3) students' background and learning styles influenced lessons, and (4) pretest and posttests showed that the students' level of their L2 appropriate pragmatics dramatically improved after each instruction. However, after careful observation, it was noted that some factors prevented students from producing the correct output even though they understood the speech act differences.

The following sections report and discuss the results of each general research question individually and in greater detail.
Beliefs

One of the three general research questions presented at the beginning of this paper asked in what ways do the instructor’s philosophy to speech act teaching / learning change through the collaboration process. My personal beliefs about teaching speech acts were not well established before the study. Excerpts from my journal demonstrate this finding as follows:

I believe that teaching speech acts should be an important aspect for language instruction... but I wondered what my critical friend thought ... because I remember that he once said that understandings of sociocultural and sociolinguistical aspects may be something students can acquire only through living in Japan. It might be true. Even though there are many researchers who preach the importance of teaching sociocultural and sociolinguistical aspects, I cannot prove it because I have never taught it that way ... but I guess that is why this study will be important because it is linking the theory to practice. [26 Sep 2]

At the initial meeting with my critical friend, the purpose of this research was introduced. In spite of my anxiety, my critical friend agreed with the importance of teaching speech acts and suggested that I should teach them as a part of the long term learning since these aspects are difficult to teach and should not be expected to be taught to each student all at once. I recorded in my journal as follows:

I was relieved. My critical friend was supportive of my research. He suggested that with 1 hour of instruction for each speech act, the content covered in class would be limited. The goal of my instruction was to be able to teach some examples of the speech act. [27 Sep 3]
In addition, my critical friend pointed out the importance of explicit instruction of socio-cultural information, which is one of the six strategies recommended for teaching speech acts. He stated that many educators were against it before; however, students would not realize or understand speech acts without a thorough explanation. He showed me a classic Japanese textbook called, *Japanese: the spoken language*. In my journal I recorded my critical reflection on this well used textbook: “Jorden’s textbook. I had heard of it. This textbook was made very simplistically. I can see why Japanese textbooks had to be developed so much for the last 20 years” [27 Sep 3].

Jorden’s (1987) textbook is heavily linguistic oriented, and absolutely no sociocultural and sociolinguistic explanation is included. As my critical friend said, explicit explanation in relation to the culture was ignored at that time. Jorden’s textbook was the one my critical friend used before, which is why I was worried about what my critical friend thought about my speech acts instruction. My critical friend is a linguist and his beliefs and instruction were developed with this textbook. My instruction might be a challenge for my critical friend because it links to current SLA theory; however, my critical friend agreed about the importance of this research and showed interest in the SLA theory. Next, I considered whether my students would be interested in learning speech acts.

*Lesson 1*

On Oct. 29, I conducted the first instruction. During the lesson, I was concerned about how students would react to this lesson. It was very new for them. Also, this extra instruction might be perceived as a waste of time because it did not concern their marks directly. In my journal on that date, I wrote,
I asked students how the first lesson was. All four students I asked said, "It was good." They did not give me any other comments. I wondered if it would be difficult for students to make honest comments on teaching, especially if it was a negative comment. I wondered if students did not appreciate this lesson. [29 Oct 4]

Sometimes teachers should not take the words of their students seriously. There is a status difference between teachers and students. Often students are afraid that teachers would give them low marks if they were to make negative comments on teaching, so students may not state their honest opinions. I have always assumed that teachers should know what students learned from the class, without asking students. I found that the first lesson did not go well because of my low self-confidence. Students are like a reflection of the teacher. If teachers are trying out new approaches without previous experience to draw on, it is likely that students would not understand the expectations of the lesson.

Lesson 2

I analyzed my first lesson and made some changes for the second. On Nov. 3, I taught the second lesson and it went much smoother. After the lesson, one student mentioned that she just simply did not know how to deny compliments in Japanese before the lesson, so she just accepted the compliments even though she felt strange doing so. In my journal, I wrote, "Her comment proved that students do not know what to say in the L2 if they are not taught. The explicit teaching was working" [3 Nov. 5]. Another student commented that the lesson was useful and that it was more fun to learn culture than reading and writing. He also mentioned that he understood the concept; however, he found it difficult to apply it. He did not want to deny the compliments toward his mother.
In my journal, I wrote, “He was going through the same experience I went through. When I accept compliments in English, I feel very strange. This is the speech act difference and he is now at the process of awareness” [3 Nov. 5]. These positive comments on speech acts gave me some confidence to teach. However, I repeated this question. “Why can students not produce the appropriate speech acts even though they understand the concepts?” [4 Nov. 6].

Lesson 3

On Nov. 24, I taught my third lesson. My confidence level was high from the students’ positive comments that they were interested in learning them. After the lesson, one student commented:

She felt that the third lesson was easier than other lessons because it required the material of the current chapter taught in the class. Now she knew what kind of situations require those materials that we learned from the textbook. The situation “asking for permission” is a common situation at school, so it will be very useful when she asks for permission from a teacher. She also liked the aspect that students have to speak for the whole 1 hour. [24 Nov. 7]

Her comment suggested that not only producing a sentence but also producing sentences in a certain situation was the goal of the language learning. Every chapter has five new language sentences. In my regular class, after making sure that students acquire the sentence level, situational practice using role-plays was introduced. Role-plays were 10 minutes long and sociocultural and sociolinguistic explanations were not given. These speech act lessons will provide a great opportunity for evaluation in order to see if the students acquired the grammatical materials so they can build on them.
I began the study with some anxiety toward my critical friend and my students. After my critical friend encouraged my study and I heard some positive comments from the students, I gained the confidence I needed to teach speech acts. I believe that these lessons could be the ultimate goal for language courses.

**Instruction**

One of the three general research questions presented at the beginning of this thesis was “in what ways do an instructor’s beliefs affect her teaching?” and “in what ways can an instructor improve her instruction?” In order to answer these questions, two types of instructional changes were set a) technical aspects, and b) management of environmental influences.

**Technical Aspects**

The changes in technical aspects related to the technical change regarding tools and strategies that are used in a class in order to make lessons more effective.

**Lesson 1.** The first lesson was devoted to teaching the uses of the expression of declining an invitation / offer, since chapter 9 covered the phrases “doozo okamainaku (Please do not go out of your way.)” However, there was no explanation written in the textbook regarding the use of their expression. Since explicit teaching has an important role in speech act teaching, I designed the first lesson focusing on a cultural concept "enryo" which related to this speech act situation. Terminology and stories related to the concept were found on the internet. The lesson was structured with the following sequences of activities:
1. Description of the situation / discussion of the speech act difference based on the DCT that students completed during the last class was presented. The video “Yan and the Japanese people” was shown.

2. Explicit explanation of sociocultural information and the risk of interlanguage grammar and negative transfer were presented on a handout.

3. Form-focused exercises were given using cue cards.

4. A communicative activity was given, which required students to role-play given situations on a handout.

5. The role-play was presented by the students and feedback was given by the instructor.

During the 10 minute explicit lesson, the cultural concept was explained using a hand-out (Appendix F). Students worked well with reading materials; however, there was no sample dialogue that might cause misunderstanding. Then an example of the situation was shown using the video, “Yan and the Japanese people” (The Japan Foundation, 1984), which was made for general learning purposes, not for speech act learning particularly. While students were watching this tape, they were trying to understand the story and none of them noticed if there was a small speech act aspect. This episode was a few minutes long and the aspect was too small to pick up. Even after I stopped the tape, explained, and repeated, students had difficulty understanding. My purpose for this activity had not been realized. In my journal, I wrote,

I was disappointed with my lesson. I was nervous and students were nervous as well with the new method and with the presence of my critical friend. It seemed
that I stuck each activity together, lacking overall coherence. But I think it was because I did not have the confidence to teach speech acts. [29 Sep. 2]

At the postinterview, my critical friend encouraged me to teach the lesson like a regular class. He also commented, “It will be nice if sample models of dialogues are tape” [30 Sep. 2].

Lesson 2. The second lesson was devoted to teaching the use of the expression of denying a compliment. This speech act was introduced in the textbook. In response to my critical friend’s advice, I decided to make a video tape for the second lesson. The speech act of how you receive a compliment in Japanese has the Japanese cultural concept of “uchi to soto” (inside and outside). In the video tape, six samples of the dialogues were taped and a variety of responses to the compliments were covered, and I noted in my journal:

Once I decided to make the video tape for the lesson, I was always thinking about samples of the dialogue. The website of speech acts (Retrieved on June 27, from http://www.iles.umn.edu/introtospeechacts) was very helpful and I learned that there were strategies for each dialogue. However, I could not use them because the students’ vocabulary and grammatical sentence structures were limited and I did not want students to get overwhelmed with lots of unlearned items. [18 Oct. 3]

After reviewing the first lesson which had focused on (1) explaining concepts and strategy, and (2) making visual materials explaining the strategy, the second lesson was structured in the following sequence:
1. Pragmatic awareness raising tasks were given showing a few questions on an overhead projector.

2. Explicit explanation of the sociocultural information and risk of interlanguage grammar and negative transfer was assigned by reading the textbook (pp. 322-347)

3. Description of the situation / discussion of the speech act difference was presented by showing a video that includes six dialogues and filling in a strategy worksheet.

4. Form-focused exercises were given using an overhead projector.

5. A communicative activity was assigned which required students to role-play given situations on an overhead projector.

6. The role-play was presented by the students and feedback was given by the instructor.

During the lesson, the cultural concept “uchi to soto” (inside and outside) was explained explicitly using the textbook and an overhead projector (Appendix G). All the students were engaged in the reading. Following the explicit explanation, a video was shown in order to describe the situations and help with the discussion. Handouts (Appendix H) were given to the students, and they watched the video in order to fill in the handout.

Students watched the video carefully and focused on listening to the dialogues. When I asked the questions based on the handout, students volunteered to answer very actively.

After the lesson, I commented in my journal, “It went smoother, was it because students knew what to do? Or was it because I used strategies? Or was it because the instruction focused on only one situation?” [3 Nov. 4].
null
Lesson 3. The third lesson dealt with the expression to ask for permission. For the third lesson, the lesson plan was designed focusing on (1) explaining concepts and strategies, (2) creating the visual material (a video) showing the strategies, and (3) explaining the relationship between the strategy and grammatical forms, and samples of misusing the forms. The lesson was structured in the following sequence:

1. Pragmatic awareness raising tasks were given showing a few questions on an overhead projector.

2. Explicit explanation of sociocultural information and the risk of interlanguage grammar and negative transfer were presented by showing one sample dialogue.

3. Description of the situation / discussion of the speech act difference was presented by showing a video that included two dialogues and the students filled in the strategy worksheet (Appendix I).

4. Form-focused exercises were assigned on three sentence structures using an overhead projector.

5. A communicative activity was assigned which required the students to role-play situations shown on an overhead projector.

6. The role-play was presented by students and the instructor and students provided feedback.

Before this study took place, I was aware that teaching explicitly was the key to teach speech acts even though Ishihara and Cohen (2006) raised five other important aspects. However, at the beginning of the study, I did not know how each aspect related to each other. After presenting three lessons focusing on the relationship between strategies and grammatical forms explaining cultural concepts and showing the sample interactions by
video, I was able to fill in the gap between one activity to another, and the whole lecture went smoother. In my journal, I wrote, "The students looked comfortable. They knew what to expect from each activity" [24 Nov. 5].

Management of Environmental Influences

Through the three lessons, I found that students' background and learning style influenced the instruction, and I realized that considering the students' learning styles and their ability was the key for the successful lessons.

1. Students' background. The class consisted of 21 students (11 Chinese, 9 Korean, 1 Canadian). Students' learning style is influenced by where they grew up and had their education. In most Asian countries, classes, including language classes, are based on a lecture style which is teacher centered. On the other hand, in North America, classroom discussion is a common way to deliberate, aiming toward student-centered classrooms. Speech act instructions also consider discussion as an important element to understand speech act differences. However, discussions will only succeed when students participate. In my journal, I wrote, "There was only silence when I opened the discussion. How can I lead the discussion if nobody volunteers? I should prepare more questions so that they can easily answer" [after 1st lesson; 29 Sep. 2]. My critical friend realized the problem and pointed out the students' English ability: "Some ESL students did not seem like they understood what was written in the handout. For those students, giving out the English materials beforehand or a simple brief English explanation should be considered" [interview after 1st lesson; 30 Sep. 3]. Because my students were mainly from outside Canada, there was a problem with English for most of the students.
For the second lesson, textbook material was used instead of giving handouts, hoping that students already read the section before the lesson. Also, the explanation was brief and easy to understand.

In the third lesson, recognizing that ESL students were the majority of the students, speech act differences from the English language were no longer ignored. When the students were asked how to ask for permission in their native language, I noted in my journal: “Korean students were so excited to tell me how similar their sentence structures are with ones in Japanese” [24 Nov. 5]. However, my critical friend pointed out that, “I did not ask a Canadian student how English speech acts work” [25 Nov. 5].

2. Students’ fear. In language classes, students often have a fear of speaking out in the target language. It is interesting to note that in those students who have a fear of speaking, their fear increases to even higher levels when they study Japanese (Kitano, 2001). With this fact in mind, I aimed to reduce their fears in my class and to assist them in speaking freely. As a result of considering the students’ fear, I would sometimes give students easy tasks, or speak slower, but then the students’ responses would also get slower. After the second lesson, my critical friend pointed out that, “Chorus speed was very slow. It was like a chant” [7 Nov. 4]. My speech speed was slow unintentionally, so that students could understand me. If the model speech is slow, the learners’ speech tends to be much slower than that. In my journal, I wrote,

I did not realize that my speech speed was that slow until my critical friend told me. But I do not know how to go back to the regular speed. I do not even know what the regular speed is. I do not know if students can catch up. [7 Nov. 4]
After the second lesson, I tried to speak at a regular speed in class; however, the class’s old habit was very strong, just as I expected. I noted that,

Students showed more fear when they did not understand what I said or when they were asked to repeat after me with the same speed. I was going to repeat it until they could do it, but they failed. [12 Nov. 4]

I did not know when to stop the repetition. It looked as if I was wasting time. [14 Nov. 4]

A few students finally did it in one shot. I did not think that they could do it. I realized that I had a low expectation of my students’ ability. [19 Nov. 4]

It was not the students’ problem that they could not repeat at an appropriate speed. It was my problem that I underestimated their ability. I made this critical suggestion about revising my teaching:

What you can do is to let one student speak, then do chorus, then ask another student to repeat it. If the student fails, repeat the chorus and let the student try again. Until s/he can successfully do it, repeat this process. [25 Nov. 5]

Another problem that my critical friend raised was that the students’ voices were very soft. That problem was addressed by making some changes in my teaching. My critical friend pointed out that,

- When students present their role-plays, they are looking down and gazing at the paper which the tasks are written on.
- The situations in the task card are not explained well enough to conduct the roles.
• Before students practice their role-plays, right after you explain the situation, you can demonstrate the examples with one of the students who has better knowledge than others.

• When you ask students to present their work, you should let them stand up, so that everybody can hear. [30 Sep. 3]

Based on my critical friend's advice, I made some technical changes for the second lesson: (1) I wrote the situation for the role-play practice in detail; (2) I showed the situation on an overhead projector; (3) With a student's help, I showed a sample demonstration before asking the rest of the class to practice; and (4) students presented their work while standing. I wrote a comment after the second lesson:

(The pair work) went much better. I thought that showing a demonstration was like giving an answer for the task. But the students were more creative than I thought. They presented in a different way from the example. Even though they used the same sentence for their practice, I think that it was still OK because they repeated with understanding. [3 Nov. 4]

These four small changes led to the better test results. However, my critical friend pointed out another issue after the second lesson:

• The situation was not still explained well.

• You should not give all tasks at once. You can give it one by one.

• Because you did not point out the mistakes right away, other students kept making the same mistakes thinking they were correct. [7 Nov. 4]

Following his advice, in the third lesson, I made further changes: (1) I presented more detailed situations on an overhead projector; (2) I gave an example and practice time for
each task; and (3) I asked for comments from the class after each presentation. In my journal, I wrote, "Asking comments from students about students' presentations was good. Probably you can ask students to come up to the front when they present" [25 Nov. 5]. Giving students confidence when they speak a foreign language should be done by giving them an opportunity to accomplish a difficult task. One of the ways in which teachers can help involves how we present the lessons. Giving clear instructions and examples of the tasks helps the students to understand what the expectation of learning is. Using an overhead projector and doing exercises one by one gives focus to the task. Then asking for and giving comments after each presentation lead to further understanding.

In summary, instruction changes if the instructor's philosophy changes. I interpreted teaching explicitly as explaining the cultural concepts that related to the speech act situations. However, that definition was not enough. Through the collaboration process, I improved my instruction by providing visual materials that explained the strategy, explaining the relationship between the strategy and grammatical forms, and showing examples of misusing the forms. By making these improvements, each activity could be connected and the whole lesson had coherence. Second, I found that the lesson had to be adjusted to the students who were taking the lesson every time. In my class, there were many ESL students who had difficulty understanding the teacher's directions and questions, as well as having difficulty reading the English handouts. Sometimes they were confused with a student-centered instruction which was not familiar to them. In addition, students' fears of speaking need to be considered. In
order to have efficient lessons, the students' background and ability should be considered and controlled by adding some small changes into the regular classes.

Learning

The last general research question presented at the beginning of this paper asked in what ways do participants develop their understanding of Japanese speech acts through the instructions and what instructional strategies affect the participants' learning. Four students (three students for lesson 1) were selected to be observed and examined on their oral communicative ability. Their development after each instruction was shown through pre and posttests. The results showed that the students' level of L2 appropriate pragmatics dramatically improved after each instruction. However, with careful observation, some factors prevented students from producing the correct output even though they understood the speech act differences.

Lesson 1

Table 1 shows the appropriate use of the target speech act. The three findings were raised by looking at the results: (1) all three students mixed polite speech with casual speech, when they talked to the person who is of higher status or more senior; (2) one student could not produce the appropriate speech act in situation #2 (students were put in the position that they should deny the offer), which was not exactly the same situation as the role-play practiced in the class; (3) two of the students could not produce the appropriate speech acts in situation #1 (students were told to react to the denial) by applying the speech act difference they learned in class; and (4) all three students denied the offer in situation #3, which was the same situation as the role-play practiced in the class.
Table 1

*Appropriate Use of the Target Speech Act (Lesson 1)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A senior member of the sport club you belong to visits your house just to give you something. You would like to offer your senior member to come in.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>0/1 (0%)</td>
<td>0/1 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You are walking to the bus stop to take the bus to go home. All of a sudden, your teacher walks by and asks if you would like a ride home by his/her car. It was late at night and you are carrying heavy boxes.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You are at your aunt’s house. She offers you some cake. You love cake.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*0/1 means, could be used one time but was not used at all.*
Table 2

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 1 K)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
<th>Post3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In situation #1 for K’s pre-test (Table 2), she earned a 2 in sociocultural ability. Her comment “jaa mata ashita (see you tomorrow)” right after her senior member rejected her offer came across as “clear-cut” and even rude. In sociolinguistic ability, her utterance “arigatoo (thanks)” is not the appropriate level of politeness when replying to a senior person. With respect to grammatical ability, she earned a 4 because she used the wrong word choice “kimasenka (won’t you come?)” instead of saying “hairimasenka (won’t you come in?)”.

In situation #2 of her pretest, she achieved a 5 in sociocultural ability since her performance was fully appropriate for the intended speech act. Her sociolinguistic ability, on the other hand, was rated at a 3 because her utterance “daijoobu (I’m fine)” was not polite enough and her last utterance, “arigatoogozaimasu (thank you)” should have been “sumimasen (sorry)” to show her appreciation to the senior for her consideration and taking time for her. As for grammatical ability, her utterance “uchini kaerimasu (I’m going home)” should have been in the explanatory mode “uchini kaerundeusu (I’m going home – that’s why.)” since she was asked for an explanation, and, therefore, she received a 4.

For her posttest in situation #1, she earned a 4 in sociocultural ability. Her utterance “jaa gochisoosamadeshita (well, thank you for the food)” was acceptable; however, it would have been more appropriate to thank the senior for his/her time and trouble or express some regret that she cannot stay since the senior is older than she and did something for her as a favor. In sociolinguistic ability, again her utterance “arigatoo (thanks)” was not the appropriate level of politeness to a senior person. With regard to grammatical ability, she got a score of 3 because she had some minor errors in vocabulary (“kimasenka (won’t you come?)” instead of “hairimasenka (won’t you come
in?)”) and aspect (“gochisoosamadeshita (thank you that you gave me food --- thanking for the action that already happened) instead of “gochisoosamadesu (thank you for giving me food --- thanking for the action that is happening right now)”). In situation #2 of her posttest, her sociocultural and grammatical abilities were rated at a 5 because her utterances were fully appropriate socioculturally and grammatically. However, her utterance “kaerimasu (I am going home.)” instead of “kaerundesu (I am going home, that’s why.)” was not an appropriate comment because she needed to use the explanation mode “ndesu” for the question using the same form “ndesu.” In situation #3 of her posttest, her sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities were rated at a 5 because her performance and utterance were appropriate socioculturally and sociolinguistically. However, errors in vocabulary “irimasu (I need it)” and “shimasu (I do)” resulted in her grammatical ability being rated at a 4.

In situation #1 of J’s pretest (Table 3), she received a 2 in sociocultural ability. Her utterance “a soodesuka? ...sayoonara. (Oh really? ... Good bye.)” was not an appropriate response after she heard that the senior person could not stay. On the other hand, she earned a 5 in sociolinguistic ability. As for grammatical ability, her comment “uchini ikundesuka? (Are you going to somebody’s house?)” when someone visits her house to give her something included incorrect vocabulary and sentence choice and created a discourse problem. In situation #2 of her pretest, she received a 2 for sociocultural ability since accepting her teacher’s offer on the first time would not be considered good manners. Also, it would be better to use an apologetic phrase instead of “arigatoogozaimasu (thank you)” so she received a 4 for sociolinguistic ability. She made a frequent number of major and minor errors, such as “kurasuni ikimashita (I went
Table 3

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 1 J)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
<th>Post3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to class)” for the question “dokoni ikundesuka (where are you going?)” and “ikimasen …
iki mashoo (I won’t go .... Let’s go);” thus, her grammatical ability was rated at a 2.

In situation #1 of J’s posttest, her sociocultural ability and sociolinguistic ability
was rated at a 5 since her responses towards the senior declining her invitation was
socioculturally appropriate and her linguistic forms were fully appropriate for the
intended speech act. Her grammatical ability, on the other hand, was rated at a 4 because
there was a minor error in pronunciation (“gattekudasai” instead of “agattekudasai
(please come in/up)”). In situation #2 of her posttest, all her abilities were rated at a 5
since her utterance was appropriate socioculturally, sociolinguistically, and
grammatically. In situation #3 of her posttest, her sociocultural and sociolinguistical
abilities were rated at a 5 because her performance and linguistic forms were fully
appropriate for the intended speech act. However, her utterance “agatte (come in/up)”
was not the proper word and she looked for a proper word on her handout, and so
received a 3 for her grammatical ability.

In situation #1 for A’s pretest (Table 4), he received a 2 in sociocultural ability.
His response “a daijoobu, sayoonara (Oh OK, good-bye.)” right after the senior member
rejected his offer came across as “clear-cut” and even rude, even though A showed his
regret. In sociolinguistic ability, his utterances “arigatoo (Thanks.)” and “daijoobu
(OK.)” were not the appropriate level of politeness to the senior person. With respect to
grammatical ability, he achieved a 5 because his utterances were grammatically
appropriate. In situation #2 of his pretest, he received a 2 in sociocultural ability because
he accepted his teacher’s first offer without hesitation and his response was not
appropriate for this speech act. As for the sociolinguistic ability, his comment “kaeru
Table 4

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 1 A)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
<th>Post3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(going home)” was not polite enough to the teacher, but “arigatoo gozaimas (Thank you very much.)” was sociolinguistically appropriate. Hence, his averaged rating was 4. His grammatical ability, on the other hand, was rated at a 5 since his grammatical forms were fully appropriate.

In situation #1 of A’s posttest, his response “hai sayoonara (Yes, good-bye)” after his senior member refused to come in was not appropriate socioculturally, so he received a score of 2. However, his sociolinguistic and grammatical abilities were rated at a 5 because they were fully appropriate sociolinguistically and grammatically. In situation #2 of his posttest, he received a 1 for sociocultural ability because he accepted his teacher’s first offer without expressing thanks. As for his sociolinguistical ability, he received a 3 because his utterances “daijoobu (OK)” and “kaeru (going home)” were not polite enough to the teacher, and also “kaeru (going home)” should be in its explanatory mode “kaerundesu” when the question is also in the explanatory mode. As for his grammatical ability, he received a 4 because he made an error of structure by saying “doozo (please)” instead of “doozo turetette kudasai (Please take me.)” In situation #3 of his posttest, his response was rated at a 5 for sociocultural ability. Sociolinguistic ability, on the other hand, was rated at a 4 since his utterance “daisukidesu (I love it.)” should have been in an explanatory mode “daisukinandesu (I love it, that’s why.)” to explain why he decided to eat cake. As for grammatical ability, he said “arigatoogozaimashita (Thank you.)” which is in the wrong aspect, when he should have said “arigatoogozaimas (Thank you.)” for thanking the action that is happening right now; thus, his grammatical ability was rated at a 4.
Lesson 2

Table 5 shows the appropriate use of the target speech act. Three findings were raised: (1) All four students produced the appropriate speech act when denying compliments about themselves in situation #1. (2) In situation #2 where students received compliments about their families, students denied the compliments a few times. However, (3) the phrases used to deny compliments were not produced correctly.

In situation #1 for K's pretest (Table 6), K received a 2 for sociocultural ability since she accepted the compliment saying “arigatoo gozaimasu (Thank you.)”, although her sociolinguistic and grammatical abilities were rated at a 5. Also in situation #2 in her pretest, she accepted a couple of compliments as well as making a positive comment about her mother saying “haha wa shinsetsude yasashiidesu (My mother is gentle and kind.)”, and so received a 2 for sociocultural ability. With respect to sociolinguistic ability, she received a 3 since her politeness level was not appropriate while talking to a teacher; on the other hand, her grammatical ability was perfectly fine.

In situation #1 for her posttest, with the exception of her unclear sentence “takusan benkyooshimasu (I study lots / I am going to study lots.)” for replying to a compliment, her performance and linguistic forms were very good; therefore, sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities were rated at a 5 but her grammatical ability was rated at 4. In situation #2 for her posttest, she received a 4 for sociocultural ability. Her performance on the first compliment on her physical appearance was rated at a 5 since she declined the compliment and made a negative comment on it. However, she expressed thanks for the second compliment about her father, and she also made a positive comment about her mother, which was rated at a 3, so her average rating was a 4.
Table 5

*Appropriate use of the target speech act (Lesson 2)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your teacher will make compliments on your physical appearance (pre-test) / ability (post-test). Continue the dialogue.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>0/1 (0%)</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>0/2 (0%)</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1/2 (50%)</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0/1 (0%)</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show your family photo to your teacher and explain about your family.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>0/3 (0%)</td>
<td>1/3 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>0/2 (0%)</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0/1 (0%)</td>
<td>3/3 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0/2 (0%)</td>
<td>1/4 (25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*0/1 means, could have been used one time but was not used.*
Table 6

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 K)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to sociolinguistic ability, she earned a 4 because she had a minor error mixing politeness with casual speech. As for grammatical ability, she had some minor errors ("otooto (brother)") instead of "chichi (father)," "motto (more)" instead of "moo (already)," "imasu (be)" instead of "ikimasu (go)," and adjective formation); thus, her grammatical ability was rated at a 3.

In situation #1 of J's pretest (Table 7), she received a 2 on sociocultural ability. Her performance of thanking the speaker for all compliments would be an example of one that is lacking in sociocultural appropriateness. Sociolinguistic ability, on the other hand, was rated at a 5 since her linguistic forms were fully appropriate. As for grammatical ability, she received a 1 because of frequent major and minor errors (case particles, vocabulary, tenses, and use of an English word). In situation #2 of her pretest, she received a 2 for sociocultural ability because she expressed thanks for compliments on her family members and made a positive comment on her mother. On the sociolinguistic scale, she received a 2 because she mixed casual with polite speech, and she misused the word "imooto-san (your sister)" and "imooto (my sister)." Her grammatical ability was also rated at 2 because she made a number of major and minor errors (case particles, vocabulary, and use of an English word).

On the other hand, in situation #1 of her posttest, she received all 5's on each scale. In situation #2 of her posttest, she declined three compliments but expressed thanks for one compliment on her family. She also made a couple of positive comments about her parents, saying "watashino hahawa shinsetsude mega ookiidesu (My mother is kind and she has big eyes.)" and "watashino chichiwa atamaga iidesu (My father is smart.)" Thus, her sociocultural ability was rated at a 3. With regard to sociolinguistic
Table 7

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 J)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ability, she received a 4. Her utterance that she self-corrected later, “madamadadesu (He still has a long way to go.)” was not appropriate for a compliment on her brother’s physical appearance. In grammatical ability, she received a 3 because she had several major errors and a fair number of minor ones (vocabulary and misuse of verb tense).

In situation #1 of A’s pretest (Table 8), he received a 4 in sociocultural ability. He declined one compliment, but interestingly he did not reply to the second compliment. As for sociolinguistic ability, he received a 3 because he spoke using casual speech. With regard to grammatical ability, he received a 4 because of one unclear sentence “ah ah …” In situation #2 of his pretest, he made a positive comment about her mother saying “watashino hahawa yasashikute totemokirei (My mother is gentle and pretty.),” and expressed thanks for the compliment about her. Thus, sociocultural ability was rated at a 2. As for sociolinguistic ability, he received a 3 because he spoke in casual speech. However, he received a 5 for his grammatical ability because there was no major or minor errors in structure or vocabulary.

In situation #1 of his posttest, he declined compliments on his language ability twice which is appropriate socioculturally; however, he tried to make a joke saying “sensei no nihongo nohooga joozu (Your Japanese is better, teacher.)” and this is not an appropriate utterance in this scenario. Hence, he received a 4 for his sociocultural ability. With respect to sociolinguistic ability, he received a 3 because he spoke using casual speech. However, his grammatical scale was perfect since there were no major or minor errors in structure or vocabulary. In situation #2 of his posttest, he declined all three compliments which was socioculturally appropriate, so he received a 5 for sociocultural ability. As for sociolinguistic ability, again he spoke using casual speech which is not
Table 8

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 A)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
appropriate when talking to a teacher, so he received a 3. He frequently made major and minor errors with verb forms, adjective forms, and vocabulary "motto (more)" instead of "moo (already)," and he asked me to repeat the question so his grammatical ability was rated at 1.

In situation #1 of B's pretest (Table 9), he expressed thanks for a compliment regarding something he possesses, saying "arigatoo (Thanks.)" which would neither be appropriate socioculturally nor polite enough. Hence, he received a 2 for sociocultural ability and a 3 for sociolinguistic ability. In situation #2 of his pretest, he expressed thanks for a compliment about his mother, so sociocultural ability was rated at a 2. Sociolinguistic ability was also rated at a 2 because he spoke using casual speech, and he misused the article "san (Mr./Mrs./Miss./Ms.)." He also made a few major and minor errors (use of an English word and silence); thus, his grammatical ability was rated at a 3.

In situation #1 of his posttest, on the other hand, he received 5 in each scale. In situation #2 of his posttest, he declined only one compliment about his mother, but he expressed thanks for or admitted the rest of the compliments, and he also made a positive comment about his father saying "otoosanwa shinsetsu otoosan. Yoku hanashite supootsuga joozu arimasu (My father is a kind father. He talks a lot and he is good at sports.)" although this sentence was grammatically incorrect. Thus, he received a 2 for sociocultural ability. As for sociolinguistic ability, he received a 3. He spoke using mostly casual speech and used words, such as "otoosan (your father)", instead of "chichi (my father)," which related to the Japanese cultural concept "uchii to soto (inside and outside)." He also made frequent major and minor grammatical errors (vocabulary,
Table 9

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 2 B)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Pre2</th>
<th>Post1</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adjective formation, use of English, and silence); thus, he received a 1 for grammatical ability.

Lesson 3

Table 10 shows the appropriate use of the target speech act. Three findings were raised: (1) All students at least tried to use the appropriate grammatical forms based on the strategies that were learned in class, except the potential form; however, they sometimes failed because they used (2) the wrong level of politeness and (3) the wrong verb forms.

In situation #1 of K’s pretest (Table 11), she received a 4 on sociocultural ability. Her performance in the situation would warrant a 4 because she did not identify the topic when she started a conversation. With respect to sociolinguistic ability, she continuously used inappropriate linguistic forms when expressing the speech act (reasoning, explaining, use of potential form, and inappropriate politeness level), so she received a 1. She earned a 5 for grammatical ability since her grammar was fully appropriate.

In situation #1 of her posttest, her performance in the situation warranted a 4 on sociocultural ability, because she once again did not identify the topic when she started a conversation. Other than that, she received 5 for both sociolinguistic and grammatical ability since she used the linguistic forms appropriately for expressing the intended speech act and there were no major or minor errors. In situation #2 of her posttest, familiar to situation 1, she earned a 4 for failing to identify the topic; however, both her sociolinguistic and grammatical ability were rated at 5. In situation #3 of her posttest, she missed identifying the topic again, so her sociocultural ability was rated at a 4; however, her linguistic forms were fully appropriate for this speech act, so sociolinguistic
Table 10

*Appropriate Use of the Target Speech Act (Lesson 3)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy and Form</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Post 1</th>
<th>Post 2</th>
<th>Post 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implicit reason</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause &amp; effect</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
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<tr>
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Table 10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>K</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*0 means, no used. 0/2 means, used two times but none was used in the correct form.*
Table 11

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 K)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
<th>Post3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ability was rated a 5. Grammatical ability was rated a 5 because her grammar was fully appropriate.

In situation #1 of J’s pretest (Table 12), her performance lacked sociocultural appropriateness because she did not identify the topic when she started the conversation and she used a suggestion instead of asking for permission, which was the required speech act. Thus, her sociocultural ability was rated at a 3. With regard to sociolinguistic ability, she received a 2 since there was substantial use of inappropriate linguistic forms when expressing the speech act (reasoning, explaining, and use of potential form). In grammatical ability, she received a 2 because of a frequent number of major and minor errors (wrong tense, verb form, and case particles).

In situation #1 of her posttest, once again she did not identify the topic, so her sociocultural ability was rated at 4, but her sociolinguistic ability was rated a 5 since her linguistic forms were fully appropriate for the intended speech act. With regard to grammatical ability, she received a 3 because there were several major errors and a fair number of minor ones (verb form and case particles). In situation #2 of her posttest, she received a 3 on the sociocultural scale because she failed to identify the topic and apologize. She received a 5 in sociolinguistic ability; on the other hand, she received a 1 in grammatical ability because she made a number of major and minor errors (repetition, case particles, verb form, and wrong tense). In situation #3 of her posttest, she missed identifying the topic, so she received a 4 in sociocultural ability, but she earned a 5 in sociolinguistic ability because her linguistic forms were fully appropriate. As for grammar, she made several major errors in verb forms, so she received a 3.
Table 12

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 J)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In situation #1 of A’s pretest (Table 13), sociocultural ability was rated at a 2 because he failed to (1) identify the topic, (2) use the permission phrase, and (3) apologize. Thus, his performance is not considered socioculturally appropriate. With regard to sociolinguistic ability, he received a 1 because he continuously used inappropriate linguistic forms for reasoning, and explaining, and he made an error in his use of potential form and he used the wrong politeness level. As for grammatical ability, he received a 1 because he made frequent major and minor errors (verb form, use of English, vocabulary, and case particles).

In situation #1 of his posttest, his performance lacked topic identification, so his sociocultural ability was rated at 4. Sociolinguistic ability was rated a 3 because he did not use the appropriate politeness level to ask the teacher for permission. With respect to grammatical ability, he earned a 4 because he self-corrected often which may frustrate listeners. In situation #2 of his posttest, sociocultural ability was rated at 3 because he did not identify the topic and apologize. He used an inappropriate level of politeness, so his sociolinguistic ability was rated at 3. His grammar is fully appropriate, so grammatical ability was rated at 5. In situation #3 of his posttest, his sociocultural ability was rated at 4 because his performance failed to identify the topic. He used an inappropriate level of politeness, so his sociolinguistic scale was rated at 3. As for grammatical ability, he made no errors, so he achieved a 5.

In situation #1 of B’s pretest (Table 14), he received a 4 in sociocultural ability. His performance was mostly appropriate for the intended speech act, but he failed to identify the topic when he started the conversation. He used an inappropriate level of politeness. Hence, his sociolinguistic ability was rated at a 3. With respect to
Table 13

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 A)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
<th>Post3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

*Communicative Language Ability (Lesson 3 B)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre1</th>
<th>Post1</th>
<th>Post2</th>
<th>Post3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
grammatical ability, he received a 1 because he had frequent major and minor errors of vocabulary and grammar (case particles, tense, wrong word, and use of English word).

In situation #1 of his posttest, he received a 4 on sociocultural ability. His performance once again lacked topic identification. With respect to sociolinguistic ability, he achieved a 5 since his linguistic forms were fully appropriate for the intended speech act. His grammatical ability, on the other hand, was rated at a 2 because he made a frequent number of major and minor errors (case particles, verb form, and tense). In situation #2 of his posttest, he received a 3 on sociocultural ability. His performance failed to identify the topic and permission phrase which were required for this intended speech act. He misused his name, which was very awkward, so his sociolinguistic ability was rated at a 3. As for his grammatical ability, he received a 2 since he made a substantial number of inappropriate linguistic forms (sentence and verb forms). In situation #3 of his posttest, sociocultural ability was rated at a 4 because he did not identify the topic of a conversation. As for sociolinguistic ability, he received a 3 because he used an inappropriate level of politeness. With regard to grammatical ability, he received a 3. There were some major errors which made understanding difficult.

**Summary of Chapter**

The results from this study suggest that collaboration is an important part of enhancing teaching and learning. Figure 2 shows the teacher’s learning path through the action research cycle with collaboration. By self-reflecting from my instruction and the students’ outcome, and also noting my critical friend’s observation and advice, my beliefs on my teaching behaviour expanded and my instruction was affected accordingly. The students’ learning has improved as my instruction changed. Repeating this cycle three
times encouraged me to develop my own description and explanations for my own learning.

I began the study with great anxiety about teaching speech acts in my class, considering I did not know the following: (1) whether students would be interested in it, (2) whether my program would accept this kind of teaching, and (3) if I would be able to teach it. Using Lewin’s action-reflection cycle with collaboration, I could hear the encouragement from my students as well as my critical friend and overcame my anxiety and gained confidence during every lesson.

Through the three lessons, I developed some positive teaching methods to increase students’ learning. I realized I must not only explain cultural concepts but also show strategies in order to use appropriate grammatical items. Creating visual material (a video) showing the related strategies helped increase students’ understanding.

Pretests and posttests showed how the students’ level of their L2 appropriate pragmatics dramatically improved after each instruction; however, there were some factors that prevented students from producing the correct output even though they understood the speech act differences. The findings indicate that (1) it is difficult to apply the strategy to another situation (giving invitation) when the students only learned how to receive invitations, (2) students hesitate when denying compliments to family members, (3) students lack the perfection of grammatical forms, and (4) students were using the wrong level of politeness and mixed polite speech with casual speech.

While the study showed significant results in enhancing teaching and students’ learning, I am still in the process of learning. This study raised further questions which would become the subject of my future research.
Belief on teaching behaviour

Instruction

Students' learning

Collaboration

Figure 2: Teacher's learning path.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the reflective practice of one practitioner as I worked to improve my instruction in relation to L2 using self-study research based on the collaborative action research cycle. Using the six strategies to teach Japanese speech acts that Ishihara and Cohen (2006) suggested, I conducted classes three times and reflected on my practice with the help of a critical friend.

Central to my research is my belief that a gap exists in the literature. While Ishihara and Cohen's (2006) six strategies are based on numerous current SLA theories and are designed to teach Japanese speech acts within the context of a class lesson, there are few reports that examine the implementation of these teaching and learning processes in the classroom. The aim of this study was to see if Ishihara and Cohen's approaches are valid in the classroom and if they meet reliability standards.

Three questions were addressed in order to examine the instructor's learning path.

1. In what ways does the instructor's philosophy about speech act teaching/learning change through the collaboration process? (beliefs)

2. In what ways do the instructor's beliefs affect her teaching and how does the instructor improve her instructions? (instructions)

3. In what ways do the participants develop their understanding of the Japanese speech acts through the instructions? What instructional strategies of the instructions affect the participants' learning? (learning)

The purpose of this study was not only to improve my instruction in relation to L2, but also to raise further questions and develop future research. I have based my research design on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The rationale guiding the
decision to use this approach is based on the fact that it focuses on questions of how to teach and learn in the discipline while also allowing the individual to apply new teaching methods. To fulfill components of the SoTL, this paper draws on Lewin’s action-reflection cycle. With the action research cycle, the teacher’s learning path was observed. The results from this study suggest that both collaboration and self-reflection of practice are important parts of enhancing teaching and learning. It helped the teacher to develop her own teaching belief (philosophy), which affected her instruction and ultimately the students’ learning. Also, the data from the research also revealed that the key to successful speech act instruction was knowing the “teachable range,” that is, how much to teach in a given time in a particular classroom setting, and the action research helped to measure the “teachable range” in an individual classroom.

Discussion of Results

The headings from this model are used here to frame the discussion of the results.

Beliefs

Before the study, my philosophy toward teaching speech acts was ambiguous and reflected traditional expectations about teaching from the institution, students, and colleagues. Applying the self-study research based on the collaborative action research cycle, I learned that my critical friend (representative of my institution) was supportive overall and my students were interested in the new teaching approach. I also found that Ishihara and Cohen’s (2006) six strategies were well balanced for development of communicative competence. One student commented that she liked the aspect that students have to speak for the whole hour. Even though the development of communicative competence via spoken language is our program goal, the term
"communicative competence" was not clear. While many researchers try to define a communicative language ability, Bachman's (1990) study is well known. According to him, a language competence of communicative language ability includes organizational competence, which consists of grammatical, textual and pragmatic competence, which, in turn, consists of illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence. Although I was trying to focus on organizational competence during speech act classes, I found that a balance is needed between organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Performing speech acts is an important piece of pragmatic competence, and enhancing pragmatic competence is the key for communicative competence for my teaching. In short, my ambiguous belief of teaching behavior has changed to one that is more informed by deliberating with my critical friend and my students.

The literature states that teachers' beliefs are mostly based on their personal experiences (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993); hence, they are highly resistant to change (Block & Hazelip, 1995). Also, there are numerous SLA theories that language teachers are expected to follow but are difficult for teachers to access (Markee, 1997). McNiff and Whitehead (2001) argue that teachers who wish to develop their work have to be aware of how the institution influences a teachers' attempt, so teachers do not have the self-confidence to develop their work further. Collaborative action research gave me an opportunity to face my institution and students and break my fear that kept me from trying something new.

Instructions

Instructional learning relates to how a teacher learns through instructions about (1) technical aspects, and (2) management of environmental influence.
I. Technical aspects. In the third lesson, I provided visual material that explained the strategy and cultural concepts. I explained the relationship between the strategy and grammatical forms, and showed examples of misusing the forms. I learned that by providing this material, each activity could be connected and the whole lesson gained coherence.

I attributed my lack of success during the first lesson to the existence of my critical friend, considering my students' feelings as well as lack of low confidence to teach the new material for the course. These finding are reflected in Dantonio's (2001) statement that “encouraging professional development and rewarding leadership among teachers are two of the most challenging aspects of education today” (p. 3).

However, it was my critical friend that gave me an opportunity to look at my teaching problems and I realized that I was blaming external influences. Based on a discussion with my critical friend, I adopted his idea of using visual materials for my instruction. That new technique led me to think of creating a video, and I also came to the conclusion that I should explain the relationship among the strategy, grammatical forms, and cultural concepts in the video followed by a worksheet. This reflective inquiry is “an approach that used a deliberate, as well as a deliberative process that contributed to the development of self-awareness and new ideas to improve teaching practice” (Drevdahl et al., 2002). This result ties back to the understanding that collaborative and reflective self-study is used to enhance the scholarship of teaching by improving my teaching practice and creating pedagogical content knowledge.

My new teaching technique resulted in combining two of Ishihara and Cohen's (2006) strategies: (1) classroom materials that include descriptions of the situation with
contextual factors (variables) and successful L2 sample interactions; and (2) explicit explanation of sociocultural information (Figure 3). This technique helps students understand the nature of the task, their goal, the kind of information and strategies they need, and how much time and resources they would need. In addition, this technique matches the planning stage of Schraw’s (2001) regulatory checklist. In his paper “Promoting general metacognitive awareness”, Schraw stressed that improving “regulation of cognition” (p. 11) is an effective aspect of learning as well as improving knowledge of cognition. The “regulation of cognition”, which refers to a set of activities that helps students control their learning, consists of three stages: planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Table 15). In the final lesson, I found that each activity could be connected and the whole lesson had coherence because the instruction included those three stages. Students became aware of what their goals were and what kind of information and strategies they needed in their planning stage. Students monitored their learning process through their form-focused exercises and role-plays in order to determine if they were reaching their goals in their monitoring period. Students learned through feedback of their role-plays from both the instructor and their classmates if they reached the goals in their evaluation period. Students became knowledgeable about how their sentence structures function in a particular social context.

2. Management of environmental influence. I found that students’ background and learning styles influenced the instruction and realized that considering the students’ learning styles and their ability were the key for successful lessons. I learned that the lesson had to be adjusted to the students who were taking the lesson. In my class, there were many ESL students who had difficulty understanding the teacher’s directions and
Figure 3. Components of a visual material.
Table 15

_Schraw's (2001) Regulation Checklist_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the nature of the task?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is my goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What kind of information and strategies do I need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How much time and resources will I need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do I have a clear understanding of what I am doing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the task make sense?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Am I reaching my goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do I need to make changes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Have I reached my goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What worked?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What didn’t work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would I do things differently next time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
questions, as well as reading the English handouts. Students were anxious and confused with student-centered instruction that was not familiar to them. In addition, I learned that students felt anxiety when they spoke Japanese. Because of my consideration of their anxieties, I found that I had a tendency to speak very slowly.

These findings lead to an interesting point. In language learning, motivation and attitude are related to anxiety, which is defined as "an apprehension, a vague fear" (Scovel, 1978). While my ESL students kept silent, they may have been facing their anxieties because of the different teaching style. They were not used to public speaking. While my students spoke Japanese very softly, they may have been worried about their utterances. Krashen (1981) addressed the affective conditions surrounding second language acquisition, such as the impact on self-confidence, empathy, anxiety, personality, and self-image of the EFL learner's success. In addition, according to Tsui (1996), teachers need to create a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere, knowing that there are risks that students take while performing academic tasks in the classroom that can have damaging effects on their self-image.

For these reasons, I slowed my speech speed, perhaps too much. This finding is reflected to the theories of teacher talk, or foreigner talk, which are the languages used by native speakers when they address non-native speakers, and they are said to speak at a slower rate (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Thus, teachers often hear from students that they can understand "classroom Japanese" but not "real" Japanese.

Figure 4 shows the influence of the rate of the teacher's model talk. If the teacher's speech rate is slow, the difficulty of repeating is low, and students would not feel a high level of accomplishment. However, I found in this study that if the teacher's
Figure 4. Teacher’s model talk.
speech rate is high, the difficulty of repeating is also high. Students would have to try repeating until they succeeded, so their sense of accomplishment from the task becomes high; thus, students gain confidence and their anxieties will eventually reduce.

This finding is linked to the relationship between my belief on my teaching behavior and my instruction. The finding is also tied to the importance of the SoTL because I shared my traditional pedagogy (my habit) with my critical friend and my critical friend shared his pedagogy with me. As a result, I was able to try the new approach for classroom practice.

*Students' Learning*

Selected students' learning was examined by pretests and posttests. The purpose of these tests was not to see the score of the results or to evaluate their achievement, but to see the tendency of the students' utterances and the differences between pretests and posttests. I critically reflected on the teaching strategies that I implemented in order to augment student learning (after gauging student learning after each test), which was followed by my critical friend's observations. Table 16 shows what went well and what went wrong, and what new strategies I used in the lesson.

I learned that the students' level of their L2 appropriate pragmatics dramatically improved after each instruction. Two points emerged from this finding. First, explicit instruction about the cultural concepts and strategy in the second lesson affected the students' utterance greatly. Second, explicit instruction about the concepts, grammatical forms and strategy in the third lesson encouraged students to use certain grammatical forms based on the strategy.
Table 16

*Instruction and Students’ Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Change</th>
<th>Students’ learning (successful)</th>
<th>Students’ learning (unsuccessful)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>Appropriate utterance in the same situation practiced in class</td>
<td>Unsuccessful in the situation which is not the same situation practiced in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>(1) explaining concepts and strategy; and (2) making visual materials explaining the strategy.</td>
<td>Appropriate speech act when denying compliments about themselves. In situation where students received compliments about their families, students denied the compliments just a few times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>(1) explaining concepts and strategies; (2) creating visual material (a video) showing the strategies; and (3) explaining the relationship between the strategy and grammatical forms, and samples of misusing the forms</td>
<td>At least tried to use the certain grammatical form based on the strategy except the potential form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This finding is because (1) by explaining the concept and strategy, students became aware of sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of the speech act situation, which means that students became aware that the language form carries a social meaning as well as a practical function, and (2) As a result of having the concept explained, as well as the grammatical forms and strategy, students finally knew the role of grammar in a communicative setting.

However, with careful observation, I learned that (1) some factors prevented students from producing the correct output even though they understood the speech act differences, (2) students had difficulty with situations that were not practiced in class, (3) students hesitated to perform the speech act as the Japanese do, (4) students lack accuracy of their use of verb forms and vocabulary, and (5) students used the inappropriate level of politeness. I recall the first conversation with my critical friend. My critical friend said, “With one hour of instruction for each speech act, the content covered in class would be limited. The goal of my instruction was to be able to teach some examples of the speech act.” After reflecting on my lessons, I know what he meant really, what the limitation was, and how I could adjust the limitation. By not only collaborating with my critical friend, but also by reflecting on the students’ learning, my belief has changed (Figure 5).

Teachers’ beliefs are not easy to change. My critical friend’s advice from the first meeting, I really did not understand. Through analyzing and reflecting on practice, I finally learned what my critical friend meant. To enhance teaching, self-reflection is essential, because opportunity for self-reflection and analysis are central for learning to
Belief on teaching behaviour

Instruction

Self-reflection

Students’ learning

Collaboration

Figure 5: Teacher’s learning path.
teach (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). However, I would not have realized their fact without my critical friend’s initial advice. Neither action research through self-reflection nor collegial coaching alone would encourage me to notice the teachable range in my classroom. The action research cycle through self-reflection and collaboration give teachers the opportunities to attain insights into effective practices and build knowledge and confidence in delivering effective instruction to students.

Some pedagogical implications were drawn from this failure. I should not have expected too much from students who had only 50 minutes of lesson time for one speech act. I should start teaching from a very basic level and students should practice only the situation within the content of teaching. The primary purpose of the lesson is to help students understand the differences and not to use the same speech act behaviour. I should keep the situation similar from the introduction to the role-play practices, so that students keep using the same vocabulary and the same level of politeness. I should not make the sample dialogue too complex using many grammatical forms.

In short, I learned my “teachable range” in my classroom. These findings tie into the Cohen (1995) study. Cohen discussed a number of variables that affect a learner’s production, including strategies learners use and the explicit teaching of complex verbal behavior. Cohen points out,

(1) Learners may have a more difficult time producing complex speech acts than teachers think, because they need advanced knowledge to perform them successfully – sociocultural knowledge about the situation and sociolinguistic knowledge about the language forms that are appropriate. (2) The study gave empirical evidence that some tasks make far greater demands on learners than
others. The seemingly simple task of asking the teacher for a ride home, for example, called for the most mental logistics in terms of thought patterns and monitoring for grammar, pronunciation, and so forth. The end product – the learner’s utterance – may be the result of extensive thought processes in two or more languages and of repeated internal debate about which lexical word or phrase to choose. (p. 225)

Summary

There were important reasons why I needed to conduct this collaborative action research on the teaching and learning of speech acts. First, while many SLA researchers stress new theories and strategies including the importance of explicit teaching and learning (House, 1996; Hulstijn, 2002; McLean, 2004; VanPatten & Sanz, 1995), no specific teaching techniques are introduced. Second, once I was able to understand more about how external factors, such as my critical friend’s comments, my students’ background and ability, affected my teaching beliefs, I was able to pursue alternative instruction techniques for a particular situation. Third, by repeating the cycle three times, even though the content of the lessons was different, I was able to reflect on my teaching and the students’ learning process each time. It is clear from this finding that the action research cycle through self-reflection and collaboration are important pieces to enhance teaching and learning. Nunan (1996) states,

Collaborative research not only provides insights into what happens as teachers and learners work together, but also acts as a device through which teachers can reflect upon their work and grow professionally as a result of that reflection. In
this way theory, research, and practice are bound together and become mutually reinforcing. (p. 55)

**Implications**

The findings of this study affect my assumptions about theory and practice and illuminate areas for further research. The results suggest that collaborative action research helps teachers to develop their beliefs, which affect their instruction and students’ learning. The study also raises questions for further research in the area of SLA because the collaborative action research shows the “teachable range” for speech act instructions in the individual classroom and investigates the linkage between theory and practice.

*Implications for SLA/JFL Educators*

Even though action research is not displayed for purposes beyond the classroom, there are a few things that educators, such as researchers, curriculum planners, and textbook writers, can learn from it.

The interpretation of the data in Chapter Four indicates in my self-study that I needed to adjust the strategy based on the theory recommended by SLA to my own classroom. I started to think about what role SLA theory and research play in language teaching (Freeman, 1996; Markee, 1997). Teachers know that, even though they attempt the techniques or theories recommended by SLA, these techniques do not necessarily work well in a real classroom setting where various students of different experiences and learning readiness are sitting. The study confirmed that the teacher’s beliefs of students’ fears affect her teaching through her speech rate, and students’ first language and cultural background affect the classroom teaching. Teachers also know that the results of SLA
research are not realistic because those studies control variables, such as only students with the same mother tongue or in an overseas setting. In addition, teachers know that the results of SLA research are only a small segment of the process of learners’ language acquisition and merely one part of the entire classroom instruction; on the other hand, the actual class continues for a whole school year. Researchers need to understand that teachers have to try digesting the theories in their own environment. Also, teachers’ action research is rooted in the classroom, and there are other issues teachers struggle with on a daily basis within the classroom. It is necessary to have further mutual understanding between teachers and researchers, so the components of SoTL will be utilized effectively.

If curriculum planners state that their program goal is for communicative purposes, they need to see that the program has a good balance with two major components of communicative language ability: organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Speech act instruction based on six strategies is very strong on developing students’ pragmatic competence. However, when combining a language syllabus with a proficiency objective, for example, the Nakama textbook, both the organizational and pragmatic components can be covered.

Textbook writers need to offer more pragmatic information for both students and teachers. In this study, I investigated how to explain concepts and strategies related to the speech act situation. I created visual material (a video) showing the strategies. I also studied the relationship between the strategy and the grammatical forms, and samples of misusing the forms. To reduce the teachers’ burden, the textbook writers need to know how many communicative patterns are introduced in a textbook and provide students
with sociolinguistically-meaningful opportunities to become familiar with the speech act differences.

**Implications for SL/JFL Classroom Teachers**

The study indicates that self-study based on collaborative action research helps teaching and learning. Action research helps teachers make sense of their own practice as well as interpreting cultures and theories that are far from their own. In addition, collaboration leads teachers in the right direction.

A key finding of this study was that the action research model through self-reflection and collaboration provides a "teachable range" in a classroom for speech act instruction. That teachable range varies depending on the teaching environment. The finding in this study was limited to one class that I taught last year. However, it raises some suggestion for the next opportunity, adjusting "teachable range."

As Freeman (1996) writes "Teaching itself becomes a form of research" (p. 112), the idea of "teacher-as researcher" (Hobson, 2001, p. 7) should be encouraged among teachers. The field of action research needs to develop more, and teachers' action research should be published more or paid attention to at conferences.

**Final Thoughts**

After my study, at the end of the school year, one student came up to me and said in Japanese, "This course was very good because I could learn culture too." She had attended Japanese language school and enrolled in another intensive course at a university before she came into my class. She was not a student selected for my study but I paid attention to her during class because she looked bored at the beginning of the school year. She already knew more than the course contents. However, she gradually
showed interest in my class. Although I did not show movies or other related materials, I was very pleased that she saw language as a part of culture through learning about speech acts. This is the strength of action research cycle – teacher’s initiative changes the students’ view of learning.
References


null


Glossary of Terms

- **Action Research**: Action research is defined by Sagor (2005) as “an investigation conducted by the person or the people empowered to take action concerning their own actions, for the purpose of improving their future actions” (p. 4). McNiff and Whitehead (2001) also state “because action research is always to do with learning, and learning to do with education and growth, many people regard it as a form of educational research” (p. 15).

- **Self-Study**: In the self-study educational literature (Louie, Drevdahl, Purdy, & Stackman, 2003), self-study is a mode of scholarly inquiry in which teachers examine their beliefs and actions within the context of their work as educators and explore pedagogical questions. Self-study research can be grouped into three categories:
  1. Identity-oriented research focusing on developing awareness of one’s current self and development as a teacher;
  2. The relationship between teaching beliefs and practice to improve teaching practice; and
  3. Collegial interaction such as collaborative self-study (see below). (pp. 150-152)

- **Collaborative Self-Study**: This is the self-study conducted collaboratively with colleagues. It “helps reduce self-serving biases and fosters dialogue and critique, which advance pedagogical knowledge” (Drevdahl, Stackman, Purdy, & Louie, 2002, p. 415). Louie et al. (2003) offered a three-stage model to conduct collaborative self-study.
On the

The government and the armed forces are working closely to address the challenges posed by the current...
1. *The Assessment Phase* requires, before engaging in self-study for the researcher to conduct assessments at the self, group, and community levels to evaluate self-readiness, determine access to colleagues, and define a focus within the academic discourse.

2. *The Implementation Phase* directs the researcher to select appropriate data collection and analysis methods.

3. *The Dissemination Phase* asks the researcher to share findings with other researchers. (pp. 157-165)

- **Reflective Inquiry**: Reflective inquiry is an approach that uses a deliberate, as well as a deliberative process that contributes to the development of self-awareness and new knowledge to improve teaching practice (Drevedahl et al., 2002).

- **Critical Friend**: A critical friend is a person who helps us to question things taken for granted; a person who presents a different perspective, and who helps us to view educationally related phenomena critically through a social and historical point of view (Holly et al., 2005).

- **Collegial Coaching**: Collegial coaching is the reflective process of sharing, observing, practicing, reflecting, and conferring about instructional practice among colleagues (Dantonio, 2001).

- **Circle of Collegial Coaching**: Circle of collegial coaching fosters the outcomes in teacher professional development through dialogue, continual reflection, and collaborative factor. There are four major phases to the collegial coaching cycle (Dantonio, 2001).
1. *Planning* is conducted to discuss what is to be observed by the coach (colleague) during lessons, as well as how data is to be collected.

2. During the *observation of the teaching performance*, the coach observes the lesson, and learners focus on only the specific behaviours identified in the planning phase.

3. *Reflecting time* on teaching performance is spent with the teacher and coach separately.

4. At *debriefing*, the coach shares his / her insights and begins a problem-solving process to improve teaching. (pp. 26-27)
Appendix B

Lesson Plan Model

Speech act: invitation, acceptance, decline
Total fifty minutes

1. Description of the situation
   Describe the situation
   (1) Your boss invites you to his house. However you already have plans to go to see a movie with your girl/boy friend.
   (2) At your friend’s house, your friend offers you a drink.

2. Discussion of the speech act difference (raising pragmatic-awareness)
   (1) English: Do you want to; Would you like to; explicit reason
       Japanese: Why won’t you; implicit reason
   (2) English: Do you want to; Would you like to; clear-cut answer
       Japanese: Won’t you drink something? ; hesitation

3. Form-focused exercised
   Masenka; mashooka; nai; nanika

4. Explicit explanation of sociocultural information and risk of interlanguage grammar and negative transfer
   Politeness

5. Role-play (practice in producing output)
   You want to become friends with him/her. Think of a place and an activity, and then extend an invitation.

6. Presentation (evaluation and feedback)
Appendix C

Observation Sheet

(1) Classroom materials that include descriptions of the situation with contextual factors (variables) and successful L2 sample interactions
   Instruction:
   Student 1:
   Student 2:
   Student 3:
   Class:

(2) Pragmatic awareness-raising tasks
   Instruction:
   Student 1:
   Student 2:
   Student 3:
   Class:

(3) Use form-focused exercises to reduce negative transfer of interlanguage grammar
   Instruction:
   Student 1:
   Student 2:
   Student 3:
   Class:

(4) Give students practice in producing output
   Instruction:
   Student 1:
   Student 2:
   Student 3:
   Class:

(5) Make explicit explanation of sociocultural information
   Instruction:
   Student 1:
   Student 2:
   Student 3:
   Class:

(6) Give students evaluation and feedback on the success or failure of the interactions
   Instruction:
   Student 1:
   Student 2:
   Student 3:
   Class:
Appendix D

Pretest & Posttest Role-plays Model

Speech act: invitation; acceptance; decline

Pretest:
1. Your boss invites you to his house. However you already have plans to go to see a movie with your girl/boy friend.
2. At your friend’s house, your friend offers you a drink.

Posttest:
1. You have two movie tickets, so you want to ask a friend to go with you.
2. Your friend asks you to go shopping together tonight, but you have an exam tomorrow.
Appendix E

Pretest / Posttest Evaluation Sheet

A. Sociocultural Ability
   5 – the message is socioculturally appropriate, reflects the situation clearly, and
      contains the proper amount of information.
   4 – the message is for the most part socioculturally appropriate, reflects the
      situation relatively clearly, and/or contains the proper amount of information.
   3 – the message is somewhat lacking in sociocultural appropriateness, calls for
      some interpretation to be understand, and/or contains too much or too little
      information.
   2 – the message is mostly lacking in sociocultural appropriateness, calls for
      much interpretation to be understand, and/or contains too much or too little
      information.
   1 – the message is completely lacking in sociocultural appropriateness, is not
      clear, and/or contains far too much or too little information.

B. Sociolinguistic Ability
   5 – the speaker uses linguistic forms that are fully appropriate for expressing
      the intended speech act.
   4 – the speaker used linguistic forms that are mostly appropriate for expressing
      the speech act.
   3 – there is some use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing the speech
      act.
   2 – there is substantial use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing the
      speech act.
   1 – there is continuous use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing the
      speech act.

C. Grammatical Ability
   5 – no major or minor errors in structure or vocabulary
   4 – no major errors and only several minor ones
   3 – several major errors and a fair number of minor ones
   2 – a somewhat frequent number of major and minor errors
   1 – frequent major and minor errors
Appendix F

Hand-out for Lesson 1

Lesson 1 – Speech Act (invitation/offer, acceptance/decline)

Japanese people expect to be asked three times when they have an offer. The number three is from the Japanese proverb “sandomeno shojiki” (Honesty in the third time.) It is not considered polite if you accept the first or the second offer. If you really want to take the offer, just wait for the third opportunity. This is also because of the “honne to tatamae” (true feeling and public behaviour) concept. In Western society you will not get a third chance. Goldstein and Tamura (1975) explained that to Japanese “No word conveys sorrow; you must look at the colour of the eyes.” The form then becomes quite useful, for each individual realizes that one must look beneath it into the eyes, into gestures and expression, into the smile, and also silence. On the other hand, the English believe that feelings can be directly transmitted by words, therefore the individual strives to find a more adequate way of expressing their feelings. Then the standard way of expressing something becomes devalued, and the search is on for a more adequate way to say what one “really means.”

えんりょ:
One concept related to Japanese politeness is “えんりょ which means hesitation.” Basically, if a group of Japanese is eating a pizza, it will take some time for one of the members to get around to taking the last slice, because of the tendency for each individual to defer to the others in the group — until everyone is deferring to everyone else, and the pizza is getting cold. If you watch a group of Japanese people, it’s interesting to see how this comes into play. The concept of えんりょ rears its head when trying to make a decision among a group, too. Say a large people is trying to decide on a restaurant to go to. Each member if the group will put out some feelers, trying to nudge the collective opinion of the group in one direction or another. If even one person in the group is inconvenienced by the collective decision, you can be another decision will be made.

えんりょしないで ってください。
(Please feel free to say anything.)

えんりょしないで たべて / めしあがって ください。
(Please help yourself.)

どうぞ おかまいなく。
(Please don’t go out of your way.)

A Japanese American friend (whose mother is Caucasian)’s story:
His son was told that whenever he visits his grandparents in Japan, he should always exercise “enryo”, and if offered nice sweets or extra helpings, always say no the first time
Introduction

Methodology

Results

Discussion

Conclusion

References
and then later, if offers again, they accept it. One day, after an overnight stay at his maternal Granpa’s, he came home angry and hungry because he exercised enryo and never got enough food. My friend realized he forgot to clarify that enryo should only be used when visiting his Japanese grandparents.
Appendix G

Hand-out and used for an overhead projector (Lesson 2)

うちとそと

Giving compliments

➤ Avoid complimenting your own family member (in-group) in the presence of guests (out-group).

➤ Avoid self-praising

➤ Use the appropriate level of politeness throughout the interaction

Responding to compliments

➤ Deflect or refuse compliments about yourself and members of your own family (in-group) when speaking
The current trend was only to improve access to a larger number of students. The success of this approach has been evident in terms of increased graduation rates. This has led to increased federal monies allocated to the institution. However, it is important to note that these changes have been guided by careful planning and strategic decision-making. The goal is to ensure that resources are allocated effectively and efficiently to support student success.

One challenge that the institution has faced is the need to balance rapid growth with quality assurance. This has required careful planning and the implementation of robust systems and processes. The goal is to maintain high standards while accommodating growth.

In conclusion, the institution has made significant progress in recent years. However, there is always room for improvement, and ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that the institution continues to meet the needs of its students.
to someone who is not close and/or someone who is of higher status (out-group)

れんしゅう

1. Adjectives for praising
   きれい
   すてき
   かわいい
   かっこいい
   いい

2. Sentence structures for the physical appearance / ability
   _______は _______が _______です。

3. To connect two adjectives
   _______て いいですね。

4. To deny the compliments
   いいえ、それほどじゃありません。
   いいえ、そんなことはありません。
   いいえ、まだまだです。
Appendix H

Hand-out for an video (Lesson 2)

Responses to Compliments and Strategies Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogues</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Responses to compliments</th>
<th>Strategies for responding to compliment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Refusing (disagreeing with the compliment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Accepting + downgrading</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 3         |              |                          | Deflecting (expressing surprise + questioning)  
|           |              |                          | Accepting (providing positive comments)    |
| 4         |              |                          | Refusing(disagreeing) +  
|           |              |                          | Deflecting(downgrading)  
|           |              |                          | Deflecting (Offering background information) |
| 5         |              |                          | Refusing (disagreeing with the compliment) |
| 6         |              |                          | Refusing (disagreeing with the compliment)  
<p>|           |              |                          | Deflecting (returning the compliment)       |</p>
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Appendix I

Hand-out for an video (Lesson 3)

Asking for Permission and Strategies Used

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<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Asking for permission</th>
<th>Strategies for asking for permission</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Getting attention</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be hesitant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identifying the topic</td>
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<td>Softening phrases</td>
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<td>Offering a reason</td>
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<td>A few apologizing expressions</td>
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<td>Getting attention</td>
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<td>Identifying the topic</td>
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<td>Softening phrases</td>
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<td>A few apologizing and thanking</td>
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<td>expressions</td>
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Appendix J

Ethics research approval letters