

Japanese Ambiguous Communicative Expressions in Intercultural Environments

by

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore Japanese communicative expressions used between Japanese students and English speakers, and to identify Japanese intercultural communicative events that influence Japanese students to construct ambiguous communicative expressions. Ohyama (2002) analyzed students' ambiguous utterances in intercultural environments using a quantitative research method, which brings up another topic that deserves attention; Japanese students' ambiguous communicative expressions utilizing a naturalistic inquiry. Results of which are illustrated in qualitative data as well as a questionnaire.

It is vital to explore this issue among university students due to the fact that they develop their communication skills in and outside of classrooms. The result of this study conducted within Chiba University might highlight the ongoing ambiguous communicative expressions occurring among the wider population of Japanese English learners. By examining who communicates what with whom in what situations and under what type of atmosphere, it will possibly allow us to pinpoint Japanese students' ambiguous expressions. In order to explore these communicative expressions occurring between the Japanese students and English speakers, the researcher used a categorization of language functions.

Having analyzed sociolinguistic qualitative data, Ohyama (1997) analyzed the five major language functions utilized between Japanese and American people. These major language functions were as follows:

- 1) Initiating/terminating information
- 2) Seeking/refining information
- 3) Acknowledging/responding to information
- 4) Giving/receiving instructions
- 5) Giving/receiving opinions (pp. 62)

The previous study explored emerging themes repeatedly commented by Japanese and American individuals at their workplace in the United States. Additionally, it

analyzed the problems and miscommunication of Japanese workers around these five major language functions.

Specifically, in order to initiate interaction as a first language function, it described Japanese communicative expressions in beginning conversations with small talk. Secondly, in order to seek information as a second language function, it explored Japanese communicative expressions in asking information indirectly by going around the question and taking an unneeded amount of time to seek information. Thirdly, in order to acknowledge/respond to information as a third language function, it analyzed Japanese communicative expressions in responding positively to negative responses. Fourthly, in order to give instructions as a fourth language function, it analyzed Japanese communicative expressions in giving instructions indirectly using tentative expressions. Fifthly, in order to give opinions as a fifth language function, it explored Japanese communicative expressions in giving information indirectly and not speaking precisely what they meant.

The purpose of the present study is to explore Chiba University students' ambiguous expressions around these five major language functions described above. It is also important to take into consideration the Japanese communication tendency of using group-oriented communication styles (Ramsey & Birk, 1983; Hsu, 1985; Triandis, Brislin, & Hui, 1998). These group-oriented communication styles might be connected with the reason why Japanese students use ambiguous expressions in intercultural environments.

Research Items to Examine Japanese Ambiguous Communicative Expressions

- 1) Starting conversations with small talk when communicating in English
- 2) Taking an unneeded amount of time to find information when communicating in English
- 3) Responding positively to negative responses when communicating in English
- 4) Using tentative expressions when communicating in English
- 5) Not speaking precisely what one means

2. Research Methods

2.1 Participants

The participants were Chiba University students who majored in various fields. They received English instruction for more than 380 hours before entering Chiba University together with 30 hours as freshmen in this institution. Each took TOEIC IP test during the first semester in 2011 and got a test score above 500. Therefore, they were relatively motivated to study English and participate in English classroom activ-

ities. They enrolled in elective intermediate English courses and agreed to cooperate in providing qualitative data for this research.

2.2 Methods

In order to research Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions among language learners, qualitative approaches were utilized for gathering data (See Appendix A) as well as questionnaire results. Emphasis was placed on examining ongoing communicative expressions utilizing naturalistic inquiry for gathering data including five short role-plays (See Appendix B). This qualitative approach was adequate for examining Japanese communicative expressions because of its multiple methods to gather data for this research. These multiple methods included document analysis, observation in classrooms, and interviews at Chiba University. These multiple methods of gathering data promoted the concept of triangulation. This emphasis on triangulating data enabled a decrease in personal research bias and also assisted in verifying naturalistic data which was gathered throughout the research.

This qualitative approach created a rich and thick description of the Japanese ambiguous communication situation as a whole. The rich description contained detailed data which included the context of the research and its relevant information to their specific research conditions. The thick description contained multiple perspectives within the specific situations. For example, some Japanese students might have evaluated weekly homework by stating that they did not need their weekly homework, whereas other students might have commented on the value of weekly homework since they could prepare well for their final examination. Having analyzed the element of including multiple perspectives, it was realized that it was necessary to take into consideration multiple perspectives for specific issues depending on personal bias.

While this naturalistic data was gathered, the categorization of the qualitative data was coded (See Appendix C). After coding and sub-coding the naturalistic data, the next phase was the arrangements of sorting the data. After sorting the data, an analysis of the relationship across the code was completed, and a memo based on the examination of this relationship was created. The process allowed for the organization of findings for this study.

3. Results

3.1 Starting Conversations with Small Talk when Communicating in English

Starting conversations with small talk was the first major language function of the Japanese communicative expressions when communicating with English speakers. Regarding Japanese students' expressions for starting with small talk, Table 1 and

Table 1: The Result of the Questionnaire by University Students

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree
1	6	21	58	28	7
2	2	40	36	32	10
3	5	30	41	40	4
4	4	20	31	50	15
5	7	24	48	41	0

Adopted from Ohyama (2002)

*See research items (1-5) in Section 1

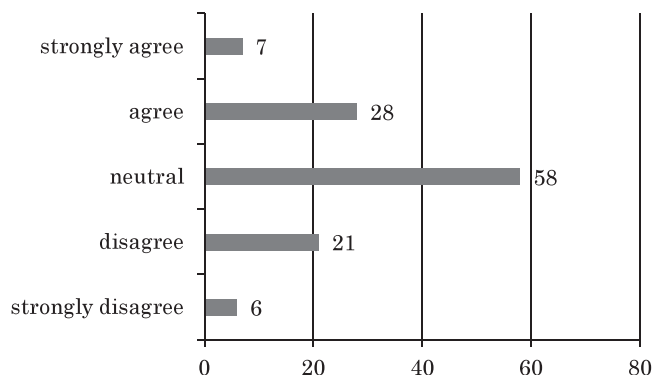
Figure 1: Using Small Talk

Figure 1 indicated that positive answers (agree...28; strongly agree...7, total 35 [29.1% of Japanese students]) were more frequent than negative ones (strongly disagree...6; disagree...21, total 27 [22.5% of Japanese students]). Due to the slightly larger number of positive answer concerning their communicative expressions for this issue, it seemed that Japanese students tended to use small talk slightly more when they started their conversations.

The following qualitative data on small talk in this section highlighted the Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions. 19 students (19/20=0.95: 95% of participants) among 20 students used small talk when they started their conversation. When they had the intention to start their conversation with English speakers, they tended to talk about weather (34% of responses), health (18% of responses), news in the world (16% of responses), hometown (11% of responses), food (5% of responses), sports (3% of responses), family (3% of responses), season (3% of responses) and themselves (3% of responses). One student (1/20=0.05: 5% of participants) stated that he had not used small talk when starting his conversation with English speakers.

Specifically naturalistic data indicated that a student (student 18 A) greeted to his

English teacher typically and further mentioned about Japanese news as follows:

Student: How are you?

English teacher: I am fine. Thank you.

Student: What kind of a book are you reading?

English teacher: I am reading news about what is happening in Japan.

Student: What is it about?

English teacher: It is about sumo wrestling. Do you like to read this type of the book?

Student: I like soccer.

English teacher: Do you play soccer?

Student: No, I don't play soccer, but I like to watch it.

English teacher: I see.

The student started his conversation with his English teacher using small talk and continued his conversation utilizing another small talk before discussing his main topic.

There were three types of main reasons as to why they started their conversation with small talk. One of the main reasons for 6 persons (30% of participants) was to soften the communication atmosphere so that they could prepare their conversation for exchanging information when communicating in English (e.g., ⟨student 3A⟩ “We used small talk so that we could prepare our atmosphere for exchanging information”). Another main reason for 6 students (30% of participants) was to develop understanding in the relationship (e.g., ⟨student 9A⟩ “We utilized small talk for deepening our relationship”). One more main reason for 5 students (25% of participants) was to make an effort in finding an opportunity to ask questions to English speakers (e.g., ⟨student 11B⟩ “We tried to use small talk so that we could exchange information frankly”).

Without using small talk, 7 students (35% of participants) stumbled in their conversation and 4 students (20% of participants) failed to keep an ongoing conversation with their English speakers, while 4 students (20% of participants) did not respond to this issue. Having faced difficulty in starting their conversation without small talk, it could be correct to assume that most students felt uncomfortable producing English and were unsatisfied with their English communication skills.

On the other hand, there were special conditions for not using small talk on campus. For example, student 9A stated, “I could communicate in English without utilizing small talk only when they needed to give simple information for simple tasks to English speakers.” There was the same type of communication phenomenon only when a Japanese student had previously developed his strong relationship with English speakers. This human relationship enabled Japanese students to skip small

talk and allowed them to talk directly about their specific topics which thus also allowed them to ask questions frequently to English speakers.

This section focused on uncovering small talk as Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions. The next section is closely connected to this issue but it is emphasized on taking more time to find information.

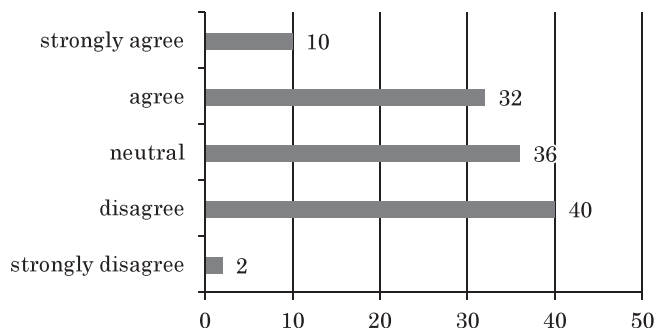
3.2 Taking More Time to Find Information while Communicating in English

Taking more time to find information was the second major language function of Japanese students' ambiguous communicative expressions. Figure 2 stated there was no significant difference in how Japanese students reacted positively or negatively to this issue: (agree...32; agree strongly...10, total 42 [35.0% of Japanese students]) vs (disagree strongly...2; disagree...40, total 42 [35.0% of Japanese students]).

On the other hand, the following qualitative data in this section might pinpoint that Japanese students tended to take more time in seeking information. 7 Japanese students (35% of participants) among 20 students constantly took unneeded time gathering information (e.g., <student 10A> "I always took more time to ask information in English"). While 6 students (30% of participants) were asked a question by English speakers, they tended to take time for organizing their thoughts and seeking supplementary information (e.g., <student 1A> "It took more time to ask supplementary message"). In these cases, it could be said that they did not take time to prepare their conversation consciously, but spent their time to prioritize their ideas and put them in English as a foreign language. They often faced communicative difficulties when they did not know how to express their ideas into English especially when they were involved in dealing with American cultural background.

With regard to American cultural background, a student (student 9A) used small talk twice before discussing sensitive issues such as racial discrimination in the United States. In the middle of conversation with his English teacher, he decided to take

Figure 2: Taking More Time to Find Information



his time before discussing sensitive issues as follows:

Student: How do you spend your holidays?

(Suddenly the student made up his mind to utilize small talk when he and his English teacher had planned to discuss sensitive issues in the United States.)

English teacher: I will spend my holiday playing tennis.

Student: Playing tennis? Hmm ... Are you good at playing tennis?

English teacher: A little bit.

Student: Yesterday, I ate bread, soup, and salad. What did you eat? (The student decided to utilize another small talk while organizing his thoughts about his main topics.)

English teacher: I ate ... Oh, we had a BBQ.

Student: Oh, a BBQ? Oh, a BBQ. That sounds good.

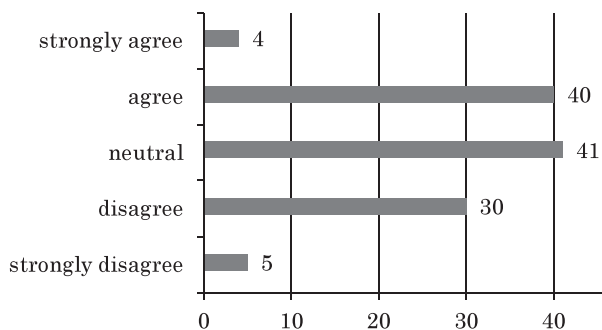
After using two topics as small talk, the student had finally decided to discuss discrimination in the United States.

In the process of taking more time to find information, one of the reasons was that 8 students (40% of participants) had a strong intention to convey correct information to English speakers. In order to process the correct information in English, they cross-checked the information with their knowledge (e.g., ⟨student 1A⟩ “I always spent my time to send my correct message in English”). Another reason was that 3 students (15% of participants) needed to consciously slow down their speech due to their limited English language proficiency. It especially took time when they needed to work with cross-cultural knowledge (e.g., ⟨student 9A⟩ “I needed more time to analyze intercultural communicative expressions”). One more reason was that 3 people (15% of participants) needed to take time so that they could create the content in Japanese and translate it into English as a foreign language (e.g., ⟨student 2A⟩ “It took time to translate Japanese expressions into English”).

This section was focused on taking more time to find information as an example of Japanese students' ambiguous communicative expressions. The next section is similarly related to this one but emphasizes the process of responding positively to negative responses.

3.3 Responding Positively to Negative Responses while Communicating in English

Responding positively to negative responses was the third major language function of Japanese communicating with English speakers. Figure 3, concerning Japanese

Figure 3: Responding Positively to Negative Responses

students' ideas for this issue, showed that the percentage of positive responses (agree...40; agree strongly...4, total 44 [36.5% of Japanese students]) were larger than negative ones (disagree strong...5; disagree...30, total 35[29.2% of Japanese students]). The result of this questionnaire might indicate that Japanese students had a slightly greater tendency to respond positively to negative responses.

The following qualitative data on responding positively to negative responses were highlighted as Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions. 10 Japanese students (50% of participants) among 20 students avoided providing negative responses while the other half of participants did not indicate their answer to this issue. For instance, one student (student 17A) stated, “I avoided indicating my negative opinions. For example, I gave my positive response even though I had a negative opinion to our English teacher's favorite activities.”

The reasons for avoiding negative responses were two-fold. One of the reasons was that 5 Japanese students (25% of participants) thought that they could continue having an English conversation by avoiding negative responses because they recognized their limited English language proficiency:

e.g., (Student 5A) “When I was asked if I was majoring in architecture. I answered positively even though architecture was not my real major. I did not know the vocabulary of urban design system.”

e.g., (Student 13B) “When I was involved in an argument with English speakers, I could not establish my argument by responding negatively due to my poor English.”

Another reason for avoiding negative answers was that Japanese students were afraid to create an uncomfortable atmosphere which might affect the human relationship:

e.g., (Student 2A) “I was afraid I might create a bad atmosphere by showing my negative reactions to English speakers.”

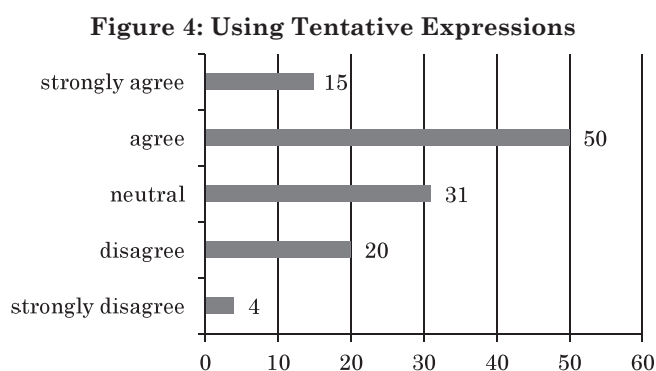
e.g., (Student 9A) “I tried not to create negative human relationship by indicating my

negative answer to my English teacher.”

Without showing their positive reactions against their negative responses, 11 Japanese students (55% of participants) assumed that they might be involved in a long discussion and face a critical situation which might cause the discontinuation of their discussions due to their limited English language proficiency. In other words, for discussing the reasons of their negative reactions, they did not have confidence in constructing their thoughts and putting them into English.

3.4 Using Tentative Expressions while Communicating in English

Tentative expressions was the fourth major language function of Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions when communicating with English speakers. Figure 4



clearly showed that the use of tentative expressions were higher (agree...50; strongly agree...15, total 65 [54.2% of Japanese students]) than negative ones (disagree...20, strongly disagree...4, total 24[20.0% of Japanese Students]). From the results of this questionnaire, it could be claimed that Japanese students tended to use tentative expressions when communicating with English speakers.

The following qualitative data on tentative expressions in this section illustrated Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions. 6 Japanese students (30% of participants) among 20 students tried to share their opinions to their English teacher, however, there were occasions when they could not convey their intentions by using tentative expressions due to their limited English proficiency. 5 students (25% of participants) stated that there were also occasions in which decisive statements were avoided so that no one lost his or her face in a group, and as a result of this, harmony within the group was maintained. For example, one participant (student 6B) indicated, “I avoided decisive statements to indicate my positive 'yes' and negative 'no' intentions.” Another participant (student 7A) commented, “If I state my negative opinions, I might have a bad relationship with native English speakers.” 3 students (15%

of participants) sometimes expressed their opinions tentatively and simplified their expressions and in some cases even avoided using English. For example, when their English teacher gave them questions, they frequently utilized tentative expressions such as (student 7A & 12 B)“Maybe,” (Student 4A)“I think so,” and (student 7A & 12B)“Little.”

Specifically, there are many occasions when Japanese students used tentative expressions in their conversations as follows:

English teacher: As a group, we would like to go to Chiba Park next week. Would you like to go there?

Student 17A: Yes, I would like to go there. But in fact my house ... It's near Chiba Park. So I don't want to go there because my friend can see my house.

Another student answered exactly same way to their English teachers. After student 7A was invited to join the group who had a plan to visit Chiba Park, he answered, “Oh, that's nice. It is a good idea, but my house is near Chiba Park. So I don't want my friend to see my house.” These dialogues indicated Japanese students' tentative expressions which include “Yes ... But ...” expressions which consisted of negative expressions after positive expressions.

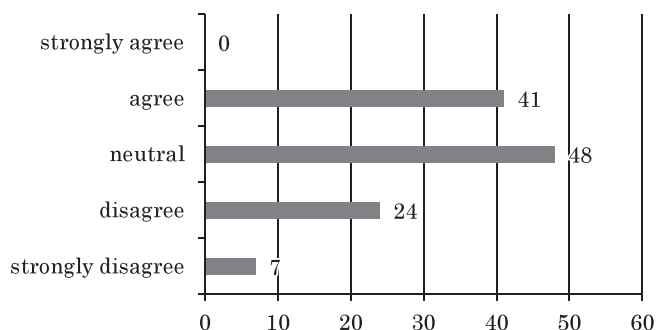
This section analyzed how tentative expressions in the form of Japanese students' ambiguous communicative expressions influenced their intercultural communication at Chiba University. The next section is closely connected to this issue but focuses on a Japanese communicative phenomenon while speaking English.

3.5 Not Speaking Precisely What One Means

Not speaking precisely what one means was the fifth major language function highlighted by this research into Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions among language learners.

With regard to this issue, Figure 5 showed that Japanese students reacted positive-

Figure 5: Not Speaking Precisely What One Means



ly. The percentage of positive counteractions (agree...41; strongly agree...0; total 41 [34.2% of Japanese students]) were high when compared to negative ones (strongly disagree...7, disagree...24, total 31 [25.8% of Japanese students]). Due to the high percentage of positive reactions shown in these statistics concerning this issue, it might be possible to state that Japanese students tended not to speak precisely what they really wanted to say.

The following qualitative data in this section indicated that Japanese students had difficulty developing their logical statements and giving their opinions due to Japanese communicative styles. Some Japanese students tended to avoid stating their negative opinions. For instance, one student (student 13A) stated. "I avoided stating my negative opinions in order not to create communication problems." Another student had difficulty answering whether or not he could enjoy eating American food in the following conversation:

English teacher: Ken, I would like to invite you to a party at my house. Can you eat American food?

Student 17A: Oh ... So so. I ... I ... But I like Japanese food. I don't like American food. But I am interested in American food. So I would like to eat American food.

This dialogue indicated that the Japanese student hesitated answering the question. In the follow-up interview he commented, "In this situation, it is not appropriate to respond negatively to my English teacher in the beginning of my response." Furthermore, he emphasized, "I felt very sorry to respond negatively to this offer." He avoided a decisive negative statement indicating negative "no" intentions. Even after he chose his favorite Japanese food, he still put effort into positively commenting on American food by stating, "I am interested in American food. So I would like to eat American food."

With regard to giving his opinions in the same situation, one more student (student 9A) also made an effort to deal with avoiding a negative response in the following dialogue:

Student 9A: Ah ... Yes, I like American food. Yesterday I ate American food, so if you could choose another food, I would like to eat it.

English teacher: I see. What kind of food would you like to eat?

Student 9A: I would like to eat Chinese ...

English teacher: Oh, Chinese food?

Student 9A : Yes, Chinese food.

Student 9A avoided using negative responses by indicating that he had American food on the previous day. At this moment, he still did not answer precisely what he would like to eat. Rather than indicating his favorite food, he suggested giving an opportuni-

ty to his English teacher to ask him again by suggesting, "... if you could choose another food, I would like to eat it." Then the English teacher asked him another question therefore offering an opportunity to choose his favorite food. Then he tried to answer while showing his hesitation by stating, "I would like Chinese ...". And his hesitation offered the English teacher an opportunity to finish the sentence by saying, "Oh, Chinese food." It seemed that in this dialogue he avoided negative responses after learning communication skills.

Some students stated reasons for avoiding negative comments when communicating with English speakers. They thought that they could keep conversing in English and build good relationships by avoiding negative statements. With regard to their communication abilities, they do not have confidence in themselves to present their ideas logically and to convince English teachers of their logic.

e.g., (Student 9A) "I tried not to create negative human relationship by indicating my negative answer to my English teacher."

e.g., (Student 2A) "I do not have any confidence if I have to develop arguments and convince English speakers of my logic."

In regard to their communicative acts, Japanese students tended to state negative and positive aspects of their communication with English speakers. The negative idea of this issue was that they were afraid to convey their real intentions to their English teacher because they felt their English was inadequate, and thought that they couldn't develop their language skills for organizing their thoughts as well as speaking about their ideas logically. For example, one participant (student 13A) commented, "If I state my negative opinions, I might face communication difficulties in developing discussions logically." Positive aspects of this issue were that they might be able to have a more interesting conversation which would allow them to develop conversation skills which would enable them to strengthen their relationship with English speakers. For example, one participant (student 15A) indicated, "If I had an opportunity to exchange our different opinions, we could develop discussion skills."

4. Conclusion

This study has examined emerging themes of Japanese students' ambiguous communicative expressions at Chiba University and identified Japanese intercultural communication events that influenced university participants to construct ambiguous communication expressions. It has been carried out to describe their ambiguous expressions by examining qualitative data. This qualitative data has included rich and thick description which involved detailed data collection about who conveys what to whom in what conditions and under what situations. Furthermore, this study has uti-

lized the categorization of language functions. Determining the purpose of university students' interaction has provided opportunities to check five major language functions in the process of highlighting Japanese ambiguous communicative expressions:

- 1) Japanese students' communicative expressions to start their conversation
- 2) Japanese students' communicative expressions to ask information
- 3) Japanese students' communicative expressions in the way they acknowledge their intention
- 4) Japanese students' communicative expressions to send information
- 5) Japanese students' communicative expressions to state their opinions.

As a recommendation for future study, there are research fields to explore. Having conducted research at Chiba University to examine Japanese students' ambiguous expressions, future study could involve multinational companies. While younger students are likely to establish their aims on personal, academic, and social development (Hull, 1978), older adults have a tendency to establish their aims on the more business-oriented and/or professional field (Hull, 1978). This type of research in multinational organizations in Japan might explore Japanese employee's ambiguous communicative expressions around five major language functions. To generalize an emerging theme in this specific area of research, it is also suggested that the same type of research using a quantitative approach be conducted.

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tions, 12, 269–289.

Appendix A
Guide for Collecting Qualitative Data

大学生の英語能力調査のための資料を収集しております。すべて匿名扱いにしますので、もし宜しければ、アメリカ人との英会話についてご記入ください。どうか宜しくお願い致します。

A.

- 1) アメリカ人に英語で話しかける時に、世間話をしますか。
その具体例をあげてください。
- 2) その状況で世間話はなぜ必要ですか。
- 3) 世間話なしでは英会話はどうなると思いますか。
- 4) 世間話なしで良かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。
- 5) 世間話なしで悪かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。

B.

- 1) アメリカ人に英語で話しかける時に、あいまいな表現を使いますか。
その具体例をあげてください。
- 2) あなたにとってあいまいな表現はなぜ必要ですか。
- 3) あいまいな表現なしではあなたの英会話はどうなると思いますか。
- 4) あいまいな表現なしで良かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。
- 5) あいまいな表現を使用しなくて悪かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。

C.

- 1) アメリカ人に質問するときに日本人との会話より少し時間をかけながら質問しますか。その具体例をあげてください。
- 2) その状況ではなぜ時間をかけながら質問しますか。
- 3) あまり時間をかけないでアメリカ人に質問したらどうなると思いますか。
- 4) あまり時間をかけないで質問して良かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。
- 5) あまり時間をかけないで質問して悪かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。

D.

- 1) 話の状況によりアメリカ人に否定的に答えるべき時に、肯定的に返事をした時がありますか。その具体例をあげてください。
- 2) その状況においてなぜ肯定的に返事をしましたか。
- 3) その状況において肯定的に返事をしないとどうなると思いますか。

- 4) 肯定的に返事をしないで良かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。
- 5) 肯定的に返事をしなくて悪かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。

E.

- 1) アメリカ人に英語で話しかける時に、反対意見を述べるのを避けますか。
その具体例をあげてください。
- 2) その状況で反対意見を述べない理由を教えてください。
- 3) その状況で反対意見を述べるとどうなると思いますか。
- 4) 反対意見を述べないで良かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。
- 5) 反対意見を述べないで悪かった具体例とその理由を教えてください。

ご協力をしてくださりどうもありがとうございました。

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Appendix B ロールプレイ

次の(1)から(5)の具体的な状況を把握し、英語で答えてください。

- (1) 親しいアメリカ人の英語の先生が昼食時間に図書館の前にある池のそばの椅子に座っています。お互いに気がついたので、親しく語りかけます。
- (2) 彼は日本語を勉強しており、日本語の論文の訂正を頼まれました。しかし、あなたは今週3つもテストがあり、そのことを伝えなければなりません。
- (3) 彼にアメリカの人種問題について質問して良いのかどうか迷っています。少し複雑な表現で彼にそのことを質問したいと思っています。
- (4) 彼はあなたにグループで一緒に千葉公園に行きたいと提案してきました。自分の家その公園の近くにあり、友達に見られたくないので、本当はそこへ行きたくありません。
- (5) 彼の家でのパーティにあなたを招待してくれました。アメリカの食事は好きかと尋ねられ、本当は好きではありません。あなたはどの様に答えますか。

Appendix C
Code List

(Initiating/Terminating Interaction)

- 111 Greeting
- 112 Starting conversation with small talk
- 113 Using small talk for opening ones' minds
- 114 Using small talk for preparing for exchanging information
- 115 Using small talk for softening ones' conversation
- 116 Using small talk for asking questions to English native speakers
- 117 Using small talk for making the conversation more relaxed
- 118 Ending conversation

(Seeking/Asking for information)

- 121 Asking for Information
- 122 Taking time for organizing their thoughts
- 123 Seeking supplementary information
- 124 Spending ones' time for prioritizing ones' idea
- 125 Spending ones' time for translating Japanese into English
- 126 Spending ones' time for cross-checking the information with ones' knowledge

(Acknowledging/Responding to Information)

- 131 Acknowledging to information
- 132 Responding positively to negative responses
- 133 Without showing ones' positive reactions against negative responses

(Giving/Receiving Information)

- 141 Giving Information
- 142 Receiving Information
- 143 Describing information tentatively
- 144 Simplifying information
- 145 Softening statement
- 146 Showing hesitation
- 147 Showing consideration

(Giving/Receiving Opinions)

- 151 Expressing ones' concern
 - 152 Preparing for discussion
 - 153 Avoiding discussions
 - 154 Avoiding arguments
 - 155 Constructing ones' thoughts logically
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(Small talk)

- 161 Talking about weather
 - 162 Discussing health
 - 163 Mentioning about news in Japan and in the world
 - 164 Talking about hometown
 - 165 Discussing food
 - 166 Mentioning about sports
 - 167 Talking about family
 - 168 Discussing season
 - 169 Mentioning about oneself
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