HELEN MARRIOTT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Despite the fact that the business domain is one which is characterized by intensive communicative interaction, until recently this communication rarely became the focus of sociolinguistic or applied linguistic research. Communication — whether within the business domain or not — can broadly be divided into two categories: communication in intra-cultural situations, otherwise called "internal" or "native" situations and communication in intercultural situations which are areas of a "contact" or "external" nature (NEUSTUPNY 1988:5). Members of the Department of Japanese Studies and the Japanese Studies Centre of Monash University developed a strong interest in the study of Japanese business communication in Japanese internal situations but more particularly in Australian-Japanese contact situations. An overwhelming theme throughout our research is the specificity of contact or intercultural situations, so that a mere cross-cultural comparison of communication or cultural patterns will
not show us what behaviour actually occurs in situations of contact nor enable us to consider the processes connected with that behaviour.

Our studies have primarily covered two types of "guest" (as against "host" or "home") business personnel: sejourners, and occasionally individuals who are either on short-term assignments in the other country of origin or sometimes proceed to a new overseas location after the period of their appointment. Most Japanese who are temporarily resident in Australia for business purposes belong to this category, as does the majority of Australian business personnel in Tokyo. Studies of sejourners are important theoretically and empirically for they add a new dimension to the studies on migrant communities in Australia.

Reasons for Developments in Business Communication Research

Reasons for the recent world-wide developments in research on business communication (cf. Note 1) appear to be numerous and reflect changes which have come about in contemporary society. The focus on business communication within sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and related disciplines is a very new one., yet it constitutes a natural progression from the developments which began in linguistics in the seventies. At that time attention was increasingly being shown to studies of discourse and to processes within discourse. Methodological procedures emphasized the collection of natural data and much productive research was undertaken of communication in specific situations: classrooms, law courts, doctor's rooms, among others. While such research continues to develop, "business situations" can now be added to the list. However, given the range of communicative settings, categories of contact and other features within the spectrum of business communication, we can only claim to have made a beginning.

Management and Other Popular and Academic Literature

A considerable body of literature exists on intra-national and international management, including business communication and business negotiations. However, after surveying 500 English-language management texts, HOLDEN (1987) concluded that such literature has incorporated minimal treatment of linguistic and sociolinguistic issues.

Many of the popular monographs and articles dealing with Japanese and non-Japanese (usually American) business communication which are frequently presented under the routine titles of "Doing Business in Japan" or "How to Negotiate with the Japanese" (cf MILLER 1988:40-50) are anecdotal and full of stereotypical perceptions and recommendations. Most of these lack a base in vigourous empirical data, are limited in purpose, and draw upon questionable sources such as Benedict, Nakane, Doi and Lebra (ZANDT 1970; DEUTSCH 1983; GRAHAN and SANO 1984; MORAN 1984; ZIMMERMANN 1985; MARCH 1988; CRUMP 1989). Nevertheless, on occasion, perceptive observations are incorporated. Writing from a management perspective, TUNG (1984a, 1984b) has contributed various articles on Japanese-American negotiations. Her work is
data-based but she relies heavily upon questionnaires which produce attitudinal rather than actual data, and her analyses commonly lack depth.

So far I have been able to identify two American PhD dissertations of relevance to this topic. The first, "Communication strategies in Japanese-American negotiations" (MCCREARY 1984, published 1986) comprised little more than a discussion of stereotypes using highly questionable secondary sources, including an unsatisfactory film of a role-play negotiation. By contrast, MILLER's (1988) ethnological study of "Interethnic communication in Japan: interaction between Japanese and American co-workers" is based upon video tape-recorded discourse. Her observations on such topics as content organization and discourse structure, listening and cultural assumptions are of interest.

Development of Research on Japanese Business Communication

Following the establishment of the Department of Japanese Studies (then the Japanese section) in 1966, the teaching of Japanese was developed in combination with social science subjects dealing with Japan, and emphasis was placed upon independent inquiry into aspects of contemporary Japanese society or Australian-Japanese contact. A glance at the list of fourth-year dissertation topics written over the past twenty years thus shows a high degree of relevancy. Moreover, the research undertaken by honours students, usually during their six month stay in Japan, forms a firm base on which further graduate and staff research develops.


The Japanese Studies Centre currently acts as the coordinating body for four projects on business communication. Firstly the Centre is responsible for the development of an entirely new major sequence in Business Japanese. Funded by the Victorian Education Foundation, the new course is being taught at Monash and Chisholm. To complement the development of the new course is another research project investigating the situations of Japanese language use by graduates of Monash. This survey has identified various problems in the social interaction which accompanies business interaction. Thirdly, an important component of the Morwell project - a study of Japanese sojourners in Morwell-involves a study of interaction in the work domain. Finally, another project covers research on interaction between Australian-Japanese businessmen in a variety of business situations, including those of a central (e.g. negotiations) and a marginal type (e.g. business luncheons).

Special Features of Research on Japanese Business Communication
The contribution to research by the Department of Japanese Studies can be summarized under the following four headings:

(i) theoretical framework.
(ii) methodology.
(iii) a selection of studies, and
(iv) application

Theoretical Framework

Much of the research on business communication has been undertaken within the framework of "contact situations" as developed by Neustupny in the seventies and eighties (1973, 1982, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987, 1988a, 1989) and cover interaction where the base language is English or Japanese. Here I will mention only three theoretical features:

Of central importance is Neustupny's model of interaction which embraces sociocultural/socioeconomic competence, and communicative competence which, in turn, consists of linguist and sociolinguistic competence (Figure 1).

\[ \text{INTERACTIVE COMPETENCE} \]
\[ \text{SOCIOLINGUISTIC} \]
\[ \text{LINGUISTIC} \]

\[ \text{SOCIOLINGUISTIC} \]
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Figure 1: Neustupny's model for interactive competence (1989:6).
The capacity of this model is exemplary, and in contrast to some other sociolinguistic approaches, permits a broad, rather than a narrow, research focus.

Following advances in sociolinguistics in the 1960s and 1970s, and especially the work of Del Hymes on the factors of communication, Neustupny emphasized the importance of research on sociolinguistic competence over that of linguistic competence. Inquiry falling under the rubric of sociolinguistic competence includes study of formation of networks for communication, the variety of language, settings, the selection of participants, the selection of context, message form, channels, and management rules (Neustupny 1973, 1987:6-8). Together, linguistic and sociolinguistic competence constitute an individual's communicative competence. In recent years, as the emphasis of our research moves to higher level of interaction, increasing attention is paid to sociocultural/socioeconomic competence.

Also of pivotal importance is Neustupny's concept of interaction management (referred to as "correction" in his earlier writings), consisting of number of processes: deviations from the norm, the evaluation of these deviations, and adjustments (Neustupny 1988a: 3-4). This model of interaction management attaches much significance to the role of norms, including deviations from what speakers accept as the norm, as mentioned above, but also to norm origin, norm discrepancy and to other processes which relate to norms in the generative and evaluative competence of participants in contact situations. Neustupny was the first, for instance, to extend the concepts of pidginization and interlanguage, which were originally applied to the linguistic level, to also cover sociolinguistic and sociocultural behaviour. In this way, the model has enabled us to observe more perceptively actual interaction in contact situations.

**Methological Procedures**

Neustupny's influence on the development of methodology has also been consequential. A most important feature of the studies on Japanese business communication is the application of methodological procedures which record the actual behaviour of participants in business situations. Where this was not possible, other methods were developed to approach as closely as possible the tapping of actual behaviour. The methodological approach includes:

- an emphasis on the collection of natural data and use of methods facilitating this objective (audio and video tape-recordings, interviews to gauge actual behaviour)

- development of follow-up interviews
development of "interactive" interviews
- advocacy of prolonged periods of participant observation
- utilization of other effective recording methods (e.g. diary)
- in-depth case studies rather than quantitative studies
- use of multiple, complementary methods

As a collorary, there is a tendency to avoid use of such procedures as questionnaires since these commonly provide only generalised data of an attitudinal nature.

The Follow-up Interviews

Much original research has resulted from the use of the follow-up interview as developed by Neustupny (1985c, 1988). Intended to be held immediately upon the conclusion of an interaction which was recorded either on audio or video tape, this category of interview is significant for the insights it allows into communicative processes, thus enhancing the validity and value of the collected data (Neustupny 1985c:4). The study of norms, and in particular, the process of deviations from a norm - a frequent occurrence in contact situations - requires techniques which enable us to detect behaviour which may not surface. By allowing us to tap the conscious norms of participants, the follow-up interview represents a significant advance over methods which simply recorded the message (cf. Neustupny 1988; R. Neustupny 1989; Marriott forthcoming b).

"Interactive Interviews"

"Interactive" on pair interviews where both participants in an interaction are interviewed, preferably after a specific interactive encounter, is another valuable methodological procedure which permits a study of the processes of interaction (cf. Asaoka 1987, Smith 1989).

Audio and Video Tape-recordings

While the difficulty of gaining permission to record business situations such as meetings, negotiations, and business luncheons on audio and video-tape appeared to be an obstacle to research, the problem has been surmounted on numerous occasions. I can but confirm that the value to be obtained from the video-recording of business situations is immense, and I urge others to persevere, even if implementation of this technique requires more effort (cf. Marriott 1986, 1988a, 1988b, forthcoming b; Glynn 1989; R. Neustupny 1989).

A Selection of Studies

This section contains a brief introduction to a selection of studies from members of the Department and the Centre. In each
case, methodology and some reference to the objective and/or findings will be included.

(i) Interviews

MURIE

As noted above, the pioneering study on Australian-Japanese communication problems between intercompany business personnel was undertaken by Murie (1976). Murie conducted interviews with Japanese businessmen temporarily resident in Melbourne, and used an equivalent set of questions in interviews with Australians businessmen. Amongst other findings, Murie showed how both the Australians and the Japanese adjusted their regular norms of interaction in contact situations in Melbourne, and she highlighted the existence of considerable dissonance between the norms of the Japanese and the Australian businessmen. Of significance was her finding that the perceptions of the Japanese and Australians were different. The Japanese engaged in certain communicative activity which was judged as inadequate by the Australians, yet there was no clear perception of this on the part of the former. Murie found that the Australians were dissatisfied with the slowness of the Japanese to reach decisions, and that both sides misunderstood the decision-making processes of the other. The study claimed that the problems in communicative activity are largely disregarded when the socioeconomic relationship proper is. On the other hand, when the socioeconomic relationship is not so successful, it is suggested that communication problems move to the forefront.

ASAOKA

The study by Asaoka (1987) of communication problems between Japanese businessmen and Australians at a dinner party firmly established the value of the interactive interview. In individual interviews with the Japanese and Australian participants about their prior interaction at a dinner party - an important entertainment situation in which business personnel regularly participate - Asaoka attempted, first, to examine whether the Japanese were able to participate appropriately and effectively at an Australian social gathering, and, secondly, to evaluate their awareness of the norms governing interaction in such situations. She achieved this by investigating six situational elements: greetings, management of the communication network, seating arrangements, etiquette, competence in English and leave taking.

Among her findings was the noting by Australians of lack of the Japanese participants’ involvement in the conversation, their violation of some etiquette norms, and the conveyance of formality in their behaviour.

SMITH
Apart from the temporary sojourner-host contact, as mentioned above, the other principal category of Australian-Japanese business interaction involves travellers on short-term business assignment in the other country. In a study on the business interaction between an American company's independent Australian unit in Japan (a medium-sized company employing 150 Japanese), SMITH (1989) highlighted various communicative and cultural problems. Interviews with Australian businessmen in the Victorian company as well with visiting personnel from the company in Japan allowed valuable insights into the ways in which the two corporate institutions adjust their communication and other patterns of interaction. Smith discussed the various solutions undertaken by the Australian company to rectify the Japanese side's inadequate forecasting of its own needs and the way in which it has accommodated the Japanese requirement for the elimination of defective manufactured items. This study illustrated ways in which corporations with disparate socioeconomic norms are able to function together, with certain adjustments being undertaken and some dissonance remaining. Contrary to the stereotypic image of Japanese companies as efficient and superior planners, the Australian personnel interviewed by Smith negatively evaluated the capacity of their Japanese marketing unit to engage in broad and innovative planning. They were also critical of the Japanese side's attention to detail, their management of tasks in a sequential order rather than simultaneous management, and the extended duration of time taken for the completion of tasks.

(ii) Participant-Observation

YOSHIMITSU

Yoshimitsu (1986) studied various aspects of communication within a branch of a Japanese general trading company in Melbourne which employed Japanese as well as non-Japanese staff and where both the Japanese and English languages were in use. Participant observation was used effectively by Yoshimitsu through her regular attendance at the company over a period of 29 days. While performing general office tasks like a temporary employee, she observed the communication patterns among the business personnel, conducted interviews with nearly one half of them and engaged in spontaneous communication with a wide range of other personnel.

Aiming to discover how non-Japanese who possess Japanese language competence could be employed in Japanese companies overseas, Yoshimitsu conducted an in-depth examination of spoken and written channels within the company. The study illuminated, for instance, the importance awarded by the company to the monitoring of Australian news contained in local newspapers, thus confirming the view that one of the principal roles of an overseas Japanese company is to gather and transmit information to Japan. In her analysis Yoshimitsu also noted the significant role awarded to informal business and casual conversations as against formal meetings. This is a valuable finding on the pattern of communicative networks and decision-making in a Japanese company, and at least partially explains why formal meetings alone are not
necessarily successful in contact situations consisting of Japanese and non-Japanese businessmen.

**MIDDLETON**

Through an investigation of the operations of an Australian bank in Tokyo, MIDDLETON (1987) focusses upon Australian business sojourners who were temporarily resident in Japan. He, too, conducted in-depth interviews with a selected number of Japanese and Australian personnel interviews with a selected number of Japanese and Australian personnel and further interviews with other staff. Like Yoshimitsu, Middleton took up a desk within the company and over a two-month period undertook intensive observations of two Australians and their interaction with a specified number of Japanese staff with whom they had high contact.

His research included an examination of communication problems and provided for the first time actual examples of the English discourse employed between the Australian and Japanese staff of the bank. This data contained significant examples of mixing and code-switching. Although there were sometimes switches to simple sequences in Japanese, most of the communication in this intracompany situation was English, since the Japanese competence of the Australian staff was minimal. Mixing of Japanese occurred in such contexts as greetings, in routine expressions like hai doozo and chotto matte, in names which attached the suffix san, and in sentences endings such as deshoo, (desu)ne, ja nai no and wa.

Middleton's findings persuasively negate the stereotype that Japanese employees of Australian companies in Tokyo are competent communicators in English: problems existed not only with spoken English but also in reading and writing. Middleton argued that the Australian management's low competence in Japanese language and their consequent dependence upon their Japanese staffs' communicative competence was unfortunate, as was the lack of understanding of these problems by the Australian head office. (MIDDLETON 1987: 86-88).

(iii) **Video-recording and Follow-up Interviews**

R. NEUSTUPNY

In a report on the first stage of her study on Australian-Japanese interaction in the work domain at a Japanese company in Australia, R. NEUSTUPNY (1989) analyzed the substantive behaviour of individuals within one department, with a special focus on two members. Following the construction of a detailed inventory of the situations into a number of types. In addition, she singled out a departmental meeting for more detailed analysis.

Neustupny's study is important for at least three reasons. Firstly, her analysis confirmed the value of video tape-recordings combined with (follow-up) interviews as sources of data. Secondly, the need for studies on such issues as decision-making processes to be based upon micro-analysis of discrete situations, such as a meeting, is borne out by her work. Thirdly, she
provided evidence which is contrary to certain stereotypes such as the Japanese preference for formality. Finally, her observation that communicative hierarchies may be different from power hierarchies offers further insights into the structure of Japanese organizations.

GLYNN
Tour guide discourse was the data used in GLYNN's (1989) examination of politeness. Her video tape-recording of the city tour of a small Japanese tour group in Melbourne was supplemented by a follow-up interview with the Japanese-speaking Australian guide and with three other informants who viewed the videotape and offered their observations on the interaction. Various communicative and sociocultural deviations were noted by the informants, some of which were subsequently discussed with the speaker.

Although conscious of certain norm deviations, others had been unnoted by the tour guide. For instance, the informants observed that the speaker used the gozaimasu style - the norm in Japanese tour guiding discourse - only in the opening frames. Conscious of her deviation, the speaker commented that she felt use of the gozaimasu style creates too much communicative distance, a justification which is indicative of interference from English. It is probably also true that apart from greetings, the speaker's linguistic competence did not include the gozaimasu style.

Other problems in the Japanese discourse of the Australian included the over-use of N desu and the final articles ne and no, and also over-use of deshoo. Although unaware of her extensive use of N desu until it was brought to her attention, the guide had previously noted her frequent use of ne and yo as deviations from the Japanese norm. However, she could not account for her deviations and had not endeavoured to eliminate them.

A conspicuous occurrence of deviation from a sociolinguistic norm was observed when the tour guide failed to recognise refusal signals from a Japanese tourist indicating that he did not wish to purchase a coconut which she was urging him to purchase. Despite the tourists responses- Kore kitainaa, naifu naishi. Ha, il desu. Motte kaerenai shi, Budoo mo sukoshi - the guide selected a coconut for him to buy.

All three informants agreed that the Australian's interaction was too informal and not sufficiently polite linguistically or sociolinguistically. However, one of these viewers was of the opinion that whereas towards older tourists the behaviour of the guide would have been inadequate, towards young Japanese tourists - the category in this study - the Australian's manner was adequate, expressing friendliness and a pleasant attitude. In this case then, the viewer had relaxed her own Japanese norms of politeness by accepting a greater range of deviations for the non-native speaker of Japanese.

PINDA
In an analysis of negotiation discourse between Japanese and Australian businessmen in English, PINDA (1989) argued that the competence of the non-native English speaker affected the success of the business transaction. Pinda's data was selected from role-play negotiations which formed part of a business training course undertaken by ten Japanese retail executives who had been posted to Australia to establish a Japanese department store in Melbourne. Prior to the negotiation in which an Australian took the role of seller while the Japanese became the purchaser, all participants had access to a written script which provided instructions on the role-play.

By comparing two of these negotiation situations, PINDA found that in their respective interaction with an Australian businessman, one Japanese speaker of English had much greater control over the management of topic that did the other non-native speaker of English. This better management was evidenced through the production and maintenance of topics and sub-topics as well as through topic translation. PINDA contended that both communicative and socioeconomic competence distinguished the two Japanese speakers. She argued that the performance of the Japanese in initiating main topics was due to them both having briefs to study prior to the negotiation. The production of sub-topics, on the other hand, was partly, perhaps even largely, dependent upon comprehension of their partner's discourse as well as on their competence to readily formulate responses and new moves. In this regard, the competence of one Japanese businessman was markedly stronger. Similarly, their ability to use cohesive transitional devices varied, with the more competent speaker able to "tie" his topic to the preceding utterance or topic.

PINDA's study was based only upon a video tape-recording and is different from other business communication studies reported here in that it was not an actual business situation. However, to the extent that the recorded sessions were part of a business training program and not specifically established for the purpose of research, some use - even if limited - can be made of the recordings.

MARRIOTT

My own studies on Australian-Japanese business interaction have been primarily based upon recordings of ten business situations - a courtesy call, a management meeting, two negotiations, two business luncheons and four other business meetings - all of which were recorded on videotape, with follow-up interviews in several cases, and further supplemented by the procedure of extensive interviewing in Melbourne as well as in Japan (MARRIOTT 1985, 1988a, 1988b, forthcoming a,b,c and d).

The spoken and visual recordings of the business luncheons provided data for an in-depth analysis of the verbal and non-verbal interaction from the perspective of etiquette (MARRIOTT 1988a, forthcoming a). Focussing upon norms and norm deviations, problems were identified in all segments of the encounter: invitation, opening, discourse, selection of beverages and meal,
consumption and closing. Furthermore, these problems were found in the conduct of both parties - the Australian as well as the Japanese. This work confirmed NEUSTUPNY's (1985a, 1985b) claim that behaviour in Australian-Japanese contact situations is due to at least four processes: (i) the application of norms which have their source in the Australian communicative system; (ii) norms which originate from the Japanese system; (iii) interculture, a notion derived from the earlier term of interlanguage which is the process covering the approximative rule system of participants; and, (iv) pidginization, not only of linguistic behaviour, but also of sociolinguistic and sociocultural conduct.

Verbal and non-verbal politeness phenomena were further analyzed in the introductory segments of the recorded business meetings where interactants met for the first time (MARRIOTT 1985).

The use of follow-up interviews to complement a video taperecording of a business negotiation has resulted in an important empirical study of a category of interaction which to date has received little attention in sociolinguistics (MARRIOTT forthcoming b). The participants in the negotiation were a Japanese who was temporarily resident in Melbourne and an Australian businessman with no previous experience in interacting with the Japanese, who had approached the Japanese company in order to promote and sell his product. As neither interactant had previously met, the encounter consisted of self-introductions, small talk, a general proposal in the medial segment, a proposition for future action, and a closing segment. This case study enabled me to confirm some generalizations commonly made about Japanese business behaviour; others, however, were negated.

Significant norm discrepancies were found to occur at the communicative and sociocultural levels of interaction. Notably, the participants possessed different norms concerning the function of an initial negotiation. Whereas the Australian businessman expected an explicit display of interest or disinterest, and of the type which accorded with his own norms, for the Japanese the purpose of the encounter was one of information-gathering. In relation to this disparity, both individuals perceived the role of the Japanese differently: the Australian expected him to possess the necessary decision-making authority even though the Japanese clearly described his role differently.

Both participants revealed a negative evaluation of the other's presentation and organization of content. By the end of the negotiation, the Australian, on the one hand, felt uneasy about the degree of interest shown by the Japanese businessman, because, apart from not providing what he regarded was an explicit expression of interest in proceeding with further interaction, the Japanese had not solicited all the details normally sought by an Australian interactant. In contrast to this, the Japanese businessman negatively evaluated the lack of explanation provided by the Australian. Further norm disparity was discovered in the importance awarded to the written language. In particular, the presentation of written material in the form of a brochure was regarded more positively by the Japanese.
The settings of the eight videotaped business meetings, supplemented by interviewing additional business personnel, formed the basis of an analysis on spatial arrangements in the Australian-Japanese business domain (MARRIOTT 1985). Norm discrepancy was found in the contact situation due to cultural differences in the selection of venues for meetings, with Australian superordinate personnel sometimes utilizing the territorial space surrounding their own personal desks. By contrast, the Japanese distinctly preferred de-individualized areas. Differences were also observed to arise from different patterns in the choice of seating for a business guest who waits prior to the commencement of a meeting: the requirement to wait in the actual meeting room prior to the arrival of his Japanese host receives an extremely negative evaluation from the Australian businessman (MARRIOTT 1988b).

The procedures of participant observation and interviewing to obtain as accurate reports as possible on actual behaviour permitted the investigation of other topics. As has already been indicated, one of the major themes which emerged from the research is the existence of norm discrepancy and the concomitant negative evaluations held by at least one of the parties in the contact situation. Cross-cultural differences in the expression of status, for instance, causes considerable norm dissonance in the intercultural situation.

Australians negatively evaluate the over-attention displayed by subordinate Japanese to their superordinates, and conversely. Japanese businessmen tend to be critical of the inappropriate treatment given by Australians to superordinate Japanese personnel. Preference for face-to-face meetings over other forms of contact appears to be a feature of the Japanese Cultural system and this extends to greater attention being paid to courtesy calls in Australian-Japanese business relations. The application of this norm by Japanese businessmen is sometimes negatively evaluated by Australians who view participation in such encounters as inefficient utilization of time.

Disparate norms were also found to occur at the level of sociocultural interaction. The obligatory provision of tea to the business guest at a Japanese company in Japan was noted to differ from the norm found in Australian corporations. Another area of business conduct which gives rise to norm discrepancy is gift-giving, a feature of the Japanese sociocultural system which is sometimes transferred to varying manner and degree, to the pattern of receiving as well as presenting gifts, though in the majority of cases a number of problems remain (MARRIOTT 1988b).

Application of Business Communication Research

Research into business communication has at least four significant areas of application. Firstly, research in Japanese, and Australian-Japanese, business communication, has been of direct relevance for the teaching of Japanese language and communication courses in our department. It has provided the foundation for the development of a full graduate program - MA
and postgraduate Diploma in Japanese Business Communication—where two of the four core subjects are devoted to teaching on linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, and a further two to the introduction of content of a socioeconomic nature: the structure and organization of Japanese economic and political institutions, and the role of individuals within these; and the nature and activity of Japanese companies overseas.

Production of the new undergraduate major sequence in Business Japanese is similarly possible on the basis of the research which has been built over the past two decades. Constructed upon the model of interactive competence, the course materials cover content which teaches not only linguistic competence but also sociolinguistic and socioeconomic competence.

Secondly, the studies bear direct relevance to business personnel who seek to increase their competence in communicating with the Japanese in English. Various findings already form the basis of courses in Japanese Business Etiquette and Japanese Business Interaction which are offered by the Japanese Studies Centre. Our research has shown that in business, as in other communicative situations, a wide gulf exists between "perceived" problems - by the participants themselves - and "actual" problems. Consequently, many business personnel remain unaware that they could develop further competence in their interaction with the Japanese and hence our short courses may not attract as much attention as they deserve.

In addition, the research has contributed to furthering our theoretical understanding of contact situation behaviour and of intercultural contact in general. The approach of studying interaction in-depth has been extremely productive.

Finally, the incorporation of illustrative data relating to business communication into such studies courses as Japanese Linguistics and Japanese Sociolinguistics work to stimulate the interest of students both in the theoretical problem and in the fragment of data from actual interactive situations.

NOTES

1. Interest in business communication research is now observable on an international level. International conferences which have devoted sessions to business communication include:

(i) The Second International Eindhoven Language for Specific Purposes Conference. 3-6 August 1988, at Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands,
carried the title, "Technical and Business Communication goes Networking, LSP research and applications for the nineties". This included papers by C. DUPONT on "International Business Negotiations: Cross-Cultural, Communication and Cross-Linguistic Aspects", and by J.A.M. VAN DER HORST on "Business Communication is a Large Firm".


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