(2004) Why do we need to analyze natural conversation data in developing conversation teaching materials?: Some implications for developing TUFS language modules-. In Kawaguchi Yuji, Susumu Zaima, Toshihiro Takagaki, Kohji Shibano and Mayumi Usami. (eds.) *Linguistic informatics III: The first international conference on linguistic informatics -State of the art and the future-. 21st Century COE: Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics*, Graduate School of Area and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS): 263-278. 16頁. 2004年10月.

Why Do We Need to Analyze Natural Conversation Data in Developing Conversation Teaching Materials? - Some Implications for Developing TUFS Language Modules[1]-

Mayumi USAMI *(Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)*

1. Introduction

This paper outlines the aims and scope of a series of research projects conducted by the Discourse Research Group at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) in 2002 and 2003, and summarizes some of the major findings obtained from them. These projects were conducted as Applied Linguistics Projects in TUFS's 21st Century COE Program called the Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics ("Linguistic Informatics COE Program" hereafter), and some of the findings were presented as a series of four presentations at the 1st International Conference on Linguistic Informatics held at TUFS in December 2003[2].

A main goal of the Linguistic Informatics COE Program is to "innovate foreign language education by developing superior foreign language educational material and transmitting it through the Internet (The official website of the Linguistic Informatics COE Program).[3] For this aim, the TUFS Language Modules, new e-learning materials which cover 17 languages, are being developed from the research accomplishments of the program.

As members of the Applied Linguistics Project Group in this COE Program, the main role of the Discourse Research Group is to study actual inter-

[1] I would like to show my gratitude to Takashi Suzuki for his cooperation from various points of view.

[2] At the First International Conference on Linguistic Informatics - State of the Art and its Future - Computer Assisted Linguistics, Corpus Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, held on December 13th - 14th, 2003, the Discourse Research Team presented the following four papers which are related to each other by an underlying theme - the development of teaching materials from natural conversation data: 1. USAMI 2004 (an earlier version of the present paper) 2. SUZUKI et al. 2004, 3. SEKIZAKI et al. 2004, and 4. XIE et al. 2004.

[3] http://www.coelang.tufs.ac.jp/english/coe.html

action and seek implications for the development of the Language Modules, as well as to evaluate the modules that have been already developed and explore ways in which those materials can be improved.

In recent years, the need to analyze actual interaction and to incorporate natural conversation data into language teaching materials has been recognized increasingly. In the field of English language teaching, attempts have been made to use actual conversation for language teaching, both in the form of teaching materials (SLADE AND NORRIS 1986, STUBBE AND BROWN 2002) and suggestions on how to incorporate such data into language teaching (BARDOVI-HARLIG AND MAHAN-TAYLOR 2003, HOLMES 2004). In Japanese language teaching, however, there has been little research and discussion regarding the use of natural conversation as conversation teaching material, and thus to date such materials consisting of natural conversation data virtually do not exist in Japanese.

In this paper, I will discuss why the analysis of natural conversation data is necessary in developing conversation teaching materials, drawing on the results of empirical research conducted by the Discourse Research Group at TUFS. First, I will summarize the major findings of three research projects conducted by our research group and outline their implications for the development of conversation teaching materials. Those projects are, 1. an analysis of English teaching material that consists of natural conversation data, 2. an analysis of the process of developing a multilingual corpus of spoken language and how functions of language behaviors are realized in natural conversation, and 3. an analysis of 'requesting' in actual Japanese conversation[4]. Next, I will compare natural conversation data with the language of created skits presented in the Japanese Dialog Module ("the D-Module" hereafter) of the TUFS Language Modules, and outline the differences found between the two kinds of dialogs.

2. An analysis of English teaching material consisting of natural conversation data

As mentioned above, there are virtually no teaching materials consisting of natural conversation data in Japanese, and the situation is similar also in the field of English language teaching although there are some exceptions. One of such exceptions is "Talk That Works" (STUBBE AND BROWN 2002), a video-based communication training kit based on the findings of the Language in the Workplace Project at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand[5]. We took up Talk That Works ("TTW" hereafter) as a sample

[4] These three projects are reported in detail in SUZUKI et al. 2004, SEKIZAKI et al. 2004, and XIE et al. 2004, respectively.

of teaching materials made up of natural conversation data, and analyzed it to seek implications for the development of such materials in Japanese. Here I summarize some of the major findings and their implications[6].

First, through our analysis of TTW as teaching material, we found that by incorporating natural conversation data and giving learners opportunities to be exposed to such language, TTW gives learners a fresh perspective on the nature of conversation. It facilitates learners to view conversation as interaction between participants rather than merely as successive production of linguistic forms. TTW's focus as teaching material includes discourse processes (e.g. turn/floor taking, topic management, the joint negotiation of meaning, etc.), pragmatic/discourse features (e.g. fillers, feedback, hedges, discourse markers, etc.), politeness strategies, and repair strategies, most of which can be categorized as interactive linguistic behavior. Raising learners' awareness of the interactive aspect of conversation can help them communicate more smoothly and naturally in the target language, and this can be done most effectively through using natural conversation samples.

Next, we analyzed the natural conversation data included in the TTW video to investigate how the functions featured in the D-Module are realized in it[7]. Out of the 40 functions featured in the D-Module, we selected 7[8] which appear most frequently in the TTW data and coded the discourse sentences[9] carrying these functions using the following coding scheme.

Type-1: One of the seven functions is realized in the discourse sentences and is accompanied by a corresponding linguistic form[10].

Type-2: One of the seven functions is realized in the discourse sentences

---

[5] The main aims of the Language in the Workplace Project are to study spoken communication in New Zealand workplaces and to explore possible applications of the findings for those workplaces. This project is led by Dr. Janet Holmes, whose paper (HOLMES 2004) appears in this volume.

[6] For methodology and detailed results, refer to SUZUKI et al. 2004 (this volume).

[7] The same set of 40 functions is used for the D-Module of all the 17 languages in the TUFS Language Modules.

[8] The seven functions are 'Asking for information (about attributes)', 'Stating an opinion', 'Making a comparison', 'Giving a reason', 'Giving a direction', 'Giving an example', and 'Giving advice.'

[9] A discourse sentence is defined as 'a sentence in interaction'. It can be a "single word sentence" or a structurally incomplete sentence as well as a structurally complete sentence, as long as it fulfills a substantive function within the conversation. (See USAMI 1997, 2002, 2003, and SUZUKI et al. 2004 for detail.)

[10] In this study, a "corresponding linguistic form" is defined as "a linguistic form featured in the English D-Module to represent the function" or "a linguistic form which is considered to represent the function from its literal meaning or conventional usage."

but is not accompanied by any of the corresponding linguistic forms for that function.

In addition, we also extracted discourse sentences in which any of the corresponding linguistic forms is used, but the function itself is not realized. We call this kind of discourse sentences Type-3.

We found that in the TTW data, linguistic forms often considered to be 'typical' of a particular function (e.g. "I think -" for 'stating an opinion', or "because" for 'giving a reason') do not necessarily occur as frequently as might be expected. In the TTW data, functions are more often (57.1%) realized without typical linguistic forms, sometimes with forms not usually associated with that particular function, or sometimes without any explicit forms at all. When a function is realized in discourse without a corresponding linguistic form, context at various levels was found to contribute to the realization of the function. This suggests that when developing conversation teaching materials, we must select forms or discourse patterns to be presented for a particular function carefully so that they will reflect the ways in which that function is realized in actual conversations, either with or without a corresponding linguistic form.

In sum, we saw that the analysis of natural conversation data and the actual incorporation of it into teaching material can be beneficial in more than one way; it can raise learners' awareness of the interactive features of conversation which have been often neglected in more conventional teaching materials, and it can also enable the development of conversation teaching materials which present functions in discourse in more realistic ways.

3. The development of the "Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by Basic Transcription System (BTS) - Japanese 2"

In order to facilitate and promote studies on language use by preparing natural conversation data which can be shared by researchers, the Discourse Research Group at TUFS has been developing "the Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by Basic Transcription System (BTS)". The latest addition to this corpus is "Japanese 2 by Basic Transcription System for Japanese (BTSJ) "[11], which consists of natural conversation samples corresponding to various functions in discourse. In developing this component of the corpus, we obtained some findings regarding how functions are realized in actual

[11] A corpus of spoken Japanese was included in the "2002 Progress Report of Applied Linguistics Projects conducted by the Discourse Research Group". This corpus is now considered the first Japanese component of the "Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by Basic Transcription System (BTS)" although it was not named as such at the time of the publication.

interaction in Japanese. I summarize them here as they provide implications for the development of conversation teaching materials[12].

"The Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by BTS- Japanese 2 by BTSJ" consists of discourse samples extracted from actual Japanese conversation. In order to investigate how functions in discourse (e.g. 'stating an opinion', 'requesting', 'apologizing' etc.) are realized in natural conversation in Japanese and compare it to how they are presented in teaching materials, we collected samples in which one of the 40 functions featured in the Japanese D-Module of the TUFS Language Modules is realized. We used a coding scheme similar to the one used for the analysis of the English data in TTW (i.e.Type-1 to 3) to analyze how the 40 functions are realized. Among our findings, the most relevant to the present paper can be summarized as follows.

1. While the majority (73.9%) of the extracted examples are Type-1 (The function is realized with a corresponding linguistic form), there are several functions which have more Type-2 examples (The function is realized without a corresponding linguistic form) than Type-1. These functions include 'giving something to someone', 'asking for information (about experience) ', 'asking for information (about skills and ability) ', and 'asking about responsibilities', among others. When a particular function is realized without the presence of a corresponding linguistic form, it is realized through, or accompanied by, other means or elements which include different levels of context, the local and global structure of discourse, discourse/pragmatic features such as repetition or ellipsis, and politeness strategies.
2. The frequency of occurrence of each function and the ratio of Type 1-3 for each function both fluctuate depending on the participants' relationship with each other (i.e. strangers or friends).

The following example demonstrates both point 1 and 2 above. In our natural conversation data, it was observed that the function 'asking for information' (about existence/place) is realized frequently without a corresponding linguistic form. This is particularly true in stranger to stranger situations, where the ratio of Type-1 to Type-2 is 44% to 56% (16 examples to 20 examples). More specifically, questions asking for information about existence/ place between strangers (typically questions about the other participant's hometown, place of residence etc.) are often expressed as incomplete sentences without explicit linguistic forms corresponding to this function[13]. This can be interpreted as a politeness strategy used to avoid direct expressions

[12] SEKIZAKI et al. (2004) describes in detail the aims and process of the development of this corpus, and discusses some of the main issues and findings of this project.

asking for such information about the other participant. (See SEKIZAKI et al. 2004 for detail.)

Just as we saw in the previous section with the TTW English data, these results in Japanese also suggest that in order to develop conversation teaching materials which can effectively help learners carry out various functions in discourse, it is not enough to merely present linguistic forms for each function. We must design and/or use materials that raise learners' awareness of other elements of natural conversation, such as discourse structure, discourse/pragmatic features, and politeness strategies, which are found to contribute to the realization of functions. We should also provide learners with examples that show functions are often carried out in different ways according to social factors such as the participants' relationship with each other.

4. An analysis of 'requesting' in natural conversation

In the research project described in section 3 above, we analyzed the 40 functions featured in the Japanese D-Module, focusing on form-function relationships. In order to investigate more closely how functions are realized in natural conversation, we selected 'requesting' for a detailed analysis and extracted discourse samples of this function from "the Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by BTS- Japanese 2 by BTSJ". We then compared these samples with those in the Japanese D-Module's unit featuring 'requesting.'

While 'requesting' is a very common function which occurs frequently in our everyday lives and is included in many conversation teaching materials, it is not an easy function for non-native speakers to master. This is because requesting is essentially a face-threatening act, which requires the requester to employ culture-specific strategies to show consideration to the requestee. Failing to do so appropriately 'can cause a malfunctioning of human relations' (NISHIHARA 2004), or result in the request being rejected by the requestee.

We analyzed the samples at the discourse level, focusing on how the requester proceeds to have his/her request granted, and what kind of 'politeness behavior' can be observed. In each 'request sequence', we coded 5 acts performed by the requester: 'getting attention', 'prefacing', 'assessing the prospect', 'a supportive move', and 'an explicit request utterance'[14]. We also coded the existence of 'thanking' and 'apologizing' as politeness behavior.

The differences between the request sequences in the natural conversation data and the Japanese D-Module can be summarized as follows.

---

[13]The corresponding linguistic forms for this function include "*Doko* [where]" or "*Dochira* [where (a more formal form than *Doko*)]" which often appear near the end of a discourse sentence in Japanese, and hence are likely to be omitted if ellipsis occurs.

1. While most of the natural conversation samples include 'an explicit request utterance', there are also some which do not include one. The D-Module skit for this function features a conversation with 'an explicit request utterance'.
2. The request-sequence samples in the natural conversation data have 7 patterns (i.e. combinations) of requester's acts, although the Japanese D-Module has to select only one pattern as an example.
3. Both 'thanking' and 'apologizing' cooccur with 'requesting' as 'face-redress behavior' in the natural conversation samples. Only 'thanking' is featured in the Japanese D-Module.
4. In the natural conversation samples, when the requested action is not performed immediately, it is typically followed by an expression by the requester which functions to reinforce the request, such as "Yoroshiku (onegai itashimasu)" [literally, "(I beg you to) take care of it well"]. The skit in the D-Module does not include this kind of expressions even though the requested action is not carried out immediately in the skit.

From these findings, we obtained the following implications for the development of conversation teaching materials.

There are natural conversation samples in which no 'explicit request utterance' is used, but the request is communicated (and granted) through combination of other acts such as 'assessing the prospect' (e.g. "Print-o motte imasuka? [Do you have the handout?]"), and 'a supportive move' (e.g. "Print o nakushi mashita. [I've lost my handout.]"). If a learner of Japanese is not aware of this kind of discourse pattern, he or she may not be able to understand the intention of the speaker when another person uses this pattern to make a request. If a learner can identify this pattern, he or she can consequently respond to it in a natural and appropriately cooperative manner. Elementary level learners can also use this pattern to make a request even if they

---

[14]Definitions and examples of each act follow. (Refer to Xie at al.2004 for detail.)
Getting attention/An utterance which urges attention, such as "Anoo. (Umm.)"
Prefacing / An utterance which communicates the general purpose of the conversation, such as "Chotto onegai shitai koto ga aru n da kedo. (I wonder if you can do me a favor.)"
Assessing the prospect / An utterance which assesses the prospect of successful implementation of the request, and/or checks the existence of obstacles, e.g. "Getsuyobi, X sensee no jugyo deta? (Did you attend Prof. X's class on Monday?)"
A supportive move / An utterance preceding the explicit request utterance, used to lesson the burden placed on the requestee either practically or psychologically, e.g. "Sono print o nakushi chatta n de... (I've lost that handout, so...)", or "Waruikedo...(Sorry to bother you but...)"
An explicit request utterance / An utterance which includes a typical linguistic form used to make a request, such as "-shite kurenai?", "-shite moraenai?", or "-shite kudasai." (All these expressions can be roughly translated as "Will you (please) -?"

haven't learned the language needed to carry out this function. For these reasons, discourse patterns such as this should be introduced to learners of all levels including beginning level learners.

In only 9% of the natural conversation samples in which a request is granted, the request is communicated through 'an explicit request utterance' alone, or 'an explicit request utterance' and 'getting attention'. In the rest of the samples, 'assessing the prospect' or 'a supportive move', or both of them, always precede an 'explicit request utterance'. Also, since requesting imposes a burden on the requestee, it is often followed by a 'face-redress behavior' such as 'thanking' and 'apologizing'. In order to facilitate learners to be able to make requests in authentic and smooth manner, we must present more than one pattern of requesting, which include not only the 'explicit request utterance', but also the surrounding elements that make up requesting sequences in natural conversation.

Having outlined the major results of three projects undertaken by our research group, I will now proceed to demonstrate why the analysis of natural conversation data is necessary in developing conversation teaching materials.

5. A comparison of natural conversation data and created skits

The studies I summarized in section 2-4 and the present study are all related to each other by an underlying theme: the development of conversation teaching materials using natural conversation data. In this section, I compare features of natural conversation with those of the language in created skits in the D-Module.

5.1 Features of the skits in the TUFS Japanese Dialog Module

In this sub-section, I introduce a skit in the Japanese Dialog Module in order to outline the general features of the skits in the D-Module. In the following created skit, which is supposed to be a telephone conversation, A, the caller, makes a reservation for a graduation party at a hotel. Only A's utterances are shown here.

D-Module Skit -"Making a reservation"

A: Moshi moshi, shaonkai no kaijō o *yoyaku shitai n desu kedo.*
A: Sangatsu nijūgonichi no rokuji kara desu.
A: Sanjūmei de hitori ichimanen gurai de *onegai dekimasu ka*?
A: Hai, Tamura to mōshimasu.
A: Sore kara, hoteru no panfuretto o *okutte hoshi in desu ga.*
A: Hai, jūsho wa, Tokyo-to, Fuchū-shi, Asahi-chō, san no jūichi no ichi desu.

A: Hai, *dewa, yoroshiku onegai shimasu.*

D-Module Skit -"Making a reservation" (English Translation)

A: Hello, *I would like to* make a reservation for a place to hold a graduation party.
A: We plan to hold it from 6 o'clock on the 25th of March.
A: *Would it be possible to* pay about 10,000 yen per person for a group of thirty people?
A: Yes, my name is Tamura.
A: And *could you also please* send me a brochure of your hotel?
A: Yes, my address is 3-11-1 Asahi-cho, Fuchu city, Tokyo.
A: Yes, *thank you very much.*

The characteristic features of this created skit can be summarized as follows.

1. There are no unnecessary or irrelevant utterances or expressions, such as fillers, repetitions, or repairs. This makes it easier for learners to focus on the target patterns and functions, such as "I would like to..." and " Would it be possible to ...".
2. Because there are no unnecessary or irrelevant elements, the skit is rather short. Within seven utterances, the speaker has managed to make a reservation and also has asked to have a brochure sent out. The parts which are italicized, such as *'...tai', 'ongegai dekimasu ka?', '..te hoshii', 'yoroshiku onegaishimasu'* are all typical linguistic forms used to make requests or express desires.

In the D-Module, there are set forms that can be easily focused upon, and the functions associated with them are relatively easy to pick up. The expressions used in the skit and how they are used there also seem to be quite natural. The D-Module also features notes for the function of each and every utterance. This information will be very helpful for learners. In sum, it can be said that for beginners, this teaching material is constructed very well.

However, this does not necessarily mean that this kind of teaching materials alone is sufficient for teaching Japanese. To demonstrate this point, in the next sub-section, I will analyze features of a telephone conversation recorded by our research group, which can then be compared to the created skit we've just presented.

5.2 Features of natural telephone conversation

The following conversation was recorded with the cooperation of a group of TUFS students, who were asked to control the contents of the conversation so that they would match as closely as possible the contents of the

D-Module skit shown in the previous section. However, since we could not ask the students to make an actual reservation, we instead asked them to call up a hotel to make an inquiry about reserving a place for a party. What follows is a transcript of an actual telephone conversation, although the other speaker's utterances are not shown here. We call this conversation a 'natural conversation' here purely for the sake of comparison. We believe that naturalness of a conversation is a relative matter, and we readily admit this conversation is structured to a certain degree. A, the caller, is a student from an undergraduate class, whose permission we secured to use this dialog for this study.

Recorded conversation -"Making a reservation" (in Japanese)

A: Hai, osoreirimasu. (hai) *Ano desu ne*, chotto shaonkai o sochira de **kangae... dekiru kanā to omoimashite, kangaete orimashite** chotto otoiawase no denwa o sasete itadaite iru n desu kedo mo.

A: Hai. *Ēto desu ne*, daitai ninzū sanjyūnin gurai de, hito ata (hai?) rino *anō* ninzū ga sanjūnin gurai de, (ee) *anō* yosan hitori ichimanen to **iu...yutta** katachi de kōsu nado wa sochira dewa kikaku sarete rasshaimasu ka?

A: *A*, sayō de gozaimasu kā.

A: *A*, wakarimashita. Moshi, *ano*, **soitta...hokani wa** ato onedan te aru n desu ka? **Daita...** (hai?).

A: Hoka no ryōkin settei toka mo arimasu ka?

:

(continues)

Recorded conversation -"Making a reservation" (English Translation)

A: Yes, thank you. (yes) *Well*, I'm calling to make an inquiry, please. We're **thinking ..., thinking of, wondering** if it will be possible to, hold a graduation party at your hotel.

A: Yes. *Well, let's see*, we are a group of about thirty, and per (pardon?) person, uh, we are about thirty people (yes) uh, do you have **something, something like**, course menus available for about 10,000 yen per person?

A: *Oh*, is that so?

A: *Oh*, I see. If, *uh*, do you also have **other**, course menus **like**... at different prices? **Abou**... (yes?).

A: Do you have other course menus at different prices as well?

:

(continues)

The characteristic features of the natural conversation can be summarized as follows.

1. Many types of fillers, such as 'ano desu ne' ('well'), 'eeto desu ne'('let's see') etc., which are italicized in the transcript, are present.
2. The actual conversation is overall longer than the skit in the D-Module.
3. Examples of self-initiated repair are present, which are shown in bold in the transcript. Although the speaker is a native speaker, we can see that the speaker is thinking carefully as she speaks.
4. The word '*hai*' (literally, 'yes') which is put in parentheses in the transcript, is used for more than one function; it is used to show that the participant is listening to the other person(backchannels), and also to ask the other person to repeat something (Similarly to 'Excuse me?' or 'Pardon me?').
5. The expression *A, sayō de gozaimasuka* is a slightly old-fashioned, rather polite expression often used in service industries. The use of an expression like this by a student who wouldn't normally use it is a reflection of accommodation to the other participant, who is an employee of the hotel in this dialog.
6. Apart from one expression, *Chotto otoiawase no denwa o sasete itadaite iru n desu kedo* ("I have called to make some inquiries about..."), which is a fairly direct way of expressing that one wishes to make an inquiry, there are no other direct expressions of 'request' or 'desire' to be found, but the information needed is obtained by asking a series of questions.

In the next section, I would like to make a comparison of the utterances made by the person making the reservation in the Dialog Module, and those made by the person making an inquiry in the recorded natural conversation.

5.3. Comparison of the D-Module skit and the recorded natural conversation

As we have seen, what we notice immediately when comparing these two dialogs is that in the D-Module skit, the speaker describes what she wants very concisely with precise forms. The D-Module skit is also shorter in length than the actual conversation. As we saw in section 4 of this paper, our research group found that in natural conversations in which 'requesting' is realized, such acts as 'getting attention', or 'prefacing' are observed frequently before 'explicit request utterances', whereas in the D-Module skit, 'explicit request utterances' are presented without much preceding talk. This, in addition to the presence of various fillers we saw in the recorded dialog, can account for the difference in length of the two kinds of dialogs.

Although there are not many direct expressions of 'request' or 'desire' in the actual conversation, the information the caller needed is obtained without a problem. This is in line with the findings of our projects described in sec-

tion 2 and 3 of this paper which report that functions can be frequently carried out without the presence of typical linguistic forms corresponding to the function in actual conversations. We saw that discourse context, such as surrounding talk and the patterns in which utterances are sequenced, as well as other kinds of context, help realize functions in natural conversations.

In natural conversation, as can be seen from the backchannel 'hai' in the recorded dialog, one form can be used for various functions, whereas in created skits, typical forms tend to be reserved for the function they supposedly correspond to. This is supported by one of our findings in the analysis of TTW that in the authentic conversations in Talk That Works, (English) backchannels are used for different functions, with global context being one factor that influences the function of them (SUZUKI et al. 2004).

Another distinctive feature of the natural conversation is that there are several instances where the speaker repeats or repairs her own utterances, which are shown in bold in the recorded dialog, whereas nothing in the D-Module skit is repeated or repaired. Even though the speaker is a native speaker of Japanese, particularly in situations where one is making inquiries, we can often see people thinking and choosing their words at the same time as they speak. Since actual conversations involve mutual interaction with another person, depending on what the other person has said, one may quickly change what he or she was planning to say. Especially in the case of younger people who are not used to using honorifics, they tend to think as they speak, and therefore repairs occur frequently.

The last difference between the created telephone conversation and the natural one is how backchannels are used. In the case of languages such as English or Chinese, there is a tendency for one person to finish the basic sentence before the other person speaks, at least at the beginning of many interactions. However, in Japanese, it is possible to insert backchannels often in the middle of utterances at certain points, as we can see in the D-Module skit.

6. Conclusion

As we have seen throughout this paper, natural conversation data provides us with insights into how language is used to carry out different functions or to realize speakers' intentions. We believe that even elementary-level learners, as well as intermediate to advanced-level learners, will benefit from being exposed to (recordings of) actual conversations. They may not be able to reproduce much of what is said, but they can notice some of the features of natural conversation, such as backchannels, self-repairs, fillers, humor, turn-taking, or discourse patterns.[15] In fact, these features are essential elements of effective communication and must be introduced to, and noticed by, learners of Japanese in early stage of their learning.

For example, the extensive use of backchannels discussed in section 5.3 is one of the important elements which form the mutually interactive style of communication in Japanese (MIZUTANI 1988, MAYNARD 1993, CLANCY et al. 1996). This style of communication has been termed *kyōwa* ('cooperative talk') and is regarded as characteristic of spoken Japanese (MIZUTANI 1988, 1993). For speakers of languages other than Japanese, the backchannels or overlapping that occurs in Japanese may sometimes be felt to be interrupting or even violating another person's speaking turn, and thus may seem rude. However, in Japanese conversation, backchannels are essential for smooth communication, and therefore must be introduced to non-native speakers. For this purpose, natural conversation data would be the natural choice over created skits to be used in teaching materials.

Also, as discussed in section 4, Japanese people sometimes 'request help' by simply explaining the problematic situation, and waiting for the hearer to offer help. If a learner of Japanese notices this pattern through watching or listening to actual conversations, he or she will at least be able to comprehend what is happening when someone uses this pattern to request help. In this way, for elementary level learners, natural conversation data can be especially useful for improving comprehension skills. This point clarifies some issues and offers a new perspective on the way in which the teaching of listening in the past has been a test of the student's ability to understand the literal meaning memory rather than being a test of their ability to understand the speaker's intention over extended discourse. However, if we believe language education to be about facilitating smooth communication, we can see that in order to listen and understand, one has to understand the intention of the speaker who is making the utterance. Thus in actual communication it is necessary to understand the intention/functions that can arise in dialogs from a whole range of utterances. How to make teaching materials from natural conversations in order to practice such skills requires more attention from now on.

Finally, I would like to add that it is not our intention to suggest that teaching materials should only feature natural conversation data, or that there is no place for created skits in language teaching. Natural conversation data and created skits both have their own advantages and disadvantages as teaching material. We believe that the two kinds of dialogs should both be used in language teaching so that they can supplement each other.

---

[15] KONTRA 2003 demonstrates how non-native speakers' awareness of pragmatic aspects of communication could be raised through classroom activities even at elementary levels.

References

BARDOVI-HARLIG, K. AND MAHAN-TAYLOR, R. (Eds.) 2003: *Teaching Pragmatics*. Washington DC:US Department of State, Office of English Language Programs. (Accessible on the following website: http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/pragmatics.htm)

CLANCY, P., THOMPSON, S., SUZUKI, R. AND TAO, H. 1996: "The conversational use of reactive tokens in English, Japanese, and Mandarin" *Journal of Pragmatics*, 26, 355-387.

HOLMES, J. 2004: "Socio-pragmatic aspects of workplace talk" in KAWAGUCHI, Y., ZAIMA, S., TAKAGAKI, T., SHIBANO, K., AND USAMI, M. (eds), *Linguistic Informatics III -The First International Conference on Linguistic Informatics*. 21st Century COE: Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics Graduate School of Area and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

KONTRA, E. 2003: "In the Mood: Introducing Pragmatic Awareness at Low Levels" in BARDOVI-HARLIG, K. AND MAHAN-TAYLOR, R. (Eds.) *Teaching Pragmatics*. Washington DC:US Department of State, Office of English Language Programs. (Accessible on the following website: http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/pragmatics/kontra.htm)

MAYNARD, S. 1993: *Kaiwa-bunseki [Conversation Analysis]*, Tokyo:Kuroshio-shuppan.

MIZUTANI, N. 1988: "Aizuchi-ron [On Backchannels]" *Nihongo-gaku*, vol.7, number13, 4-11.

MIZUTANI, N. 1993: " 'Kyowa' kara 'taiwa' e [From 'cooperative talk' to 'dialog']" *Nihongo-gaku*, vol.12, number4, 4-10.

NISHIHARA, S. 2004: "Integrating Applied Linguistics Research Findings with Japanese Language Pedagogy:A Challenge in Contrastive Pragmatics" in KAWAGUCHI, Y., ZAIMA, S., TAKAGAKI, T., SHIBANO, K., AND USAMI, M. (eds), *Linguistic Informatics III -The First International Conference on Linguistic Informatics*. 21st Century COE: Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics Graduate School of Area and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

SEKIZAKI, H., KIBAYASHI, R., KIYAMA, S., LEE, E., SHIH, H AND USAMI, M. 2004: " 'BTS ni yoru tagengo corpus- Nihongo2' no sakusei katei to seibi no kekka kara shimesareru koto - kaiwa kyōiku eno shisa [An examination of the process of developing 'the Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by BTS - Japanese 2': Implications for the development of conversation teaching materials]" in KAWAGUCHI, Y., ZAIMA, S., TAKAGAKI, T., SHIBANO, K., AND USAMI, M. (eds), *Linguistic Informatics III -The First International Conference on Linguistic Informatics*. 21st Cen-

tury COE: Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics Graduate School of Area and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies .

SLADE, D. AND NORRIS, L. 1986: *Teaching Casual Conversation: Topics, Strategies and Interactional Skills.* Adelaide:National Curriculum Resource Centre.

STUBBE, M. AND BROWN, P. 2002: *Handbook for Talk That Works: Communication in Successful Factory Teams - Resource materials and notes to accompany the video.* Language in the Workplace Project, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

SUZUKI, T., MATSUMOTO, K., AND USAMI, M. 2004: "An analysis of teaching materials based on New Zealand English conversation in natural settings: Implications for the development of conversation teaching materials" in KAWAGUCHI, Y., ZAIMA, S., TAKAGAKI, T., SHIBANO, K., AND USAMI, M. (eds), *Linguistic Informatics III -The First International Conference on Linguistic Informatics.* 21st Century COE: Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics Graduate School of Area and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

USAMI, M. 1997: "Kihonteki na mojika no gensoku (Basic Transcription System for Japanese: BTSJ) no kaihatsu ni tsuite [On the development of the Basic Transcription System for Japanese: BTSJ]" in J. NISHIGORI (Chief Researcher), *Nihonjin no danwa-kodo no script/strategy no kenkyu to multimedia kyozai no shisaku [Studies on the scrips/strategies in discoursal behavior of Japanese speakers and on the trial development of multimedia teaching materials] - Heisei7-8 Monbusho kagakukenkyuhi Kibankenkyu (C)(2) - Kenkyu seika hokokusho [Heisei 7-8 research report for Scientific Research (C) (2) funded by Grants in Aid for Scientific Research]*:12-26

USAMI, M. 2002: *Discourse Politeness in Japanese Conversation: Some Implication for a Universal Theory of Politeness.* Tokyo:Hituzi Syobo

USAMI, M. 2003: "Kaiteiban: kihonteki na mojika no gensoku (Basic Transcription System for Japanese: BTSJ) [A revised version: Basic Transcription System for Japanese :BTSJ]" in M. USAMI (Chief Researcher), *Tabunka kyōsei shakai ni okeru ibunka communication kyōiku no tame no kisoteki kenkyū [Core research for the education in cross-cultural communication in the multicultural society] - Heisei13-14 kagaku kenkyūhi hojokin kiban kenkyū (C)(2) - Kenkyū seika hōkokusho [Heisei 13-14 research report for Scientific Research (C) (2) funded by Grants in Aid for Scientific Research]*:4-21

XIE, Y., KIYAMA, S., LEE, E., SHIH, H., KIBAYASHI, R., AND USAMI, M. 2004: "TUFS Kaiwa Module no nihongo skit to 'BTS ni yoru tagengo

corpus- Nihongo2' ni okeru irai kodo no taishō kenkyū - kaiwa kyoiku eno shisa [A comparative analysis of 'request' behaviors in the Japanese skits from the TUFS Dialog module and in 'the Multilingual Corpus of Spoken Language by BTS - Japanese 2': Implications for the development of conversation teaching materials]" in KAWAGUCHI, Y., ZAIMA, S., TAKAGAKI, T., SHIBANO, K., AND USAMI, M. (eds), *Linguistic Informatics III -The First International Conference on Linguistic Informatics*. 21st Century COE: Center of Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics Graduate School of Area and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.