

The Use of Conventional Expressions of Thanking, Apologizing, and Refusing

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1. Introduction

Different strands of pragmatics research have emphasized the importance of conventional expressions in the realization of speech acts. Cross-cultural comparisons of speech act realization by native speakers have caught our attention with titles derived from such culturally-based formulaic expressions as *Poison to your soul* (Coulmas, 1981) and *May God increase your bounty* (Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988). Even mundane expressions may be conventional, however, and Coulmas and others brought to our attention the role of conventional expressions as part of the social contract of communication. Coulmas (1981) describes conventional expressions as “tacit agreements, which the members of a community presume to be shared by every reasonable co-member. In embodying societal knowledge they are essential in the handling of day-to-day situations” (p. 4). The construct of “reasonable co-member” of a community is a natural link to second language pragmatics, as learners of the L2 may see themselves or be seen by others as joining a new speech community through language acquisition. Second language researchers are also interested in conventional expressions, although as often from the perspective of general L2 development as from L2 pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006). In fact, Granger (1998) even attributes the research in pragmatics as one impetus to study formulas, observing that “the formulaic nature of many pragmlinguistic rules has necessarily contributed to bringing the study of prefabs to the fore” (p. 145).

Although the use of conventional expressions has garnered significant attention from sociolinguistically- and comparatively-oriented investigations in L2 pragmatics, there has been relatively less attention paid to conventional expressions from acquisitionally-focused research in L2 pragmatics. Early studies include Scarcella (1979) which examined the production of conventional expressions on a written DCT; more recent studies include Kecskes (2000, 2003) which investigated the interpretation of transparent and idiomatic formulas, Roever (2005) which examined the identification of formulas in appropriate settings, Bardovi-Harlig (in press) which explored the recognition of conventional expressions as pragmlinguistic resources, and Bardovi-Harlig et al (in press) which reported on the influence of the use of the expressions on length of learners’ turns.

The strong cultural associations of conventional expressions as well as their highly consistent linguistic composition makes conventional expressions a natural area of exploration for L1 influence. This paper explores the influence of first language and level of development on the use of conventional expressions in the realization of three speech acts, namely, expressions of gratitude, apologies, and refusals. Using an experimental approach, we have sought to reproduce the conditions for the use of conventional expressions. We employed a computer-delivered aural discourse completion task (DCT) with timed presentation of scenarios and a recorded interlocutor to simulate turn taking, and through piloting have identified scenarios that promoted high use of conventional expressions by native speakers.

With the exception of a few studies, the design of most investigations of first language influence compares the production of a single L1 group to the production of native speakers of the target language. The four main language groups in this study—Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—permits the investigation of the influence of L1s across languages, following the research design for studies of L1 influence proposed by Jarvis (2000). Only a few interlanguage pragmatics studies have multiple L1s (Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Hinkel, 1994; Park & Nakano, 1999); without such studies, it is difficult to tell which characteristics of L2 pragmatic development are unique to specific languages or cultures, and which are shared by all learners.

To that end, this study investigates the influence of first language and level of instruction on the development and use of conventional expressions in speech act realization, and addresses two research questions:

Do L2 learners from different language-culture backgrounds show different rates of use of conventional expressions in an instructed second language environment?

Do L2 learners show different rates of use of conventional expressions at different levels of instruction in a second language environment?

The following section provides a brief review of the previous research conducted on speech act realization on the L1s of the learners in the study, namely, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, by considering each targeted speech act in turn: thanking, apologizing, and refusing. It then presents a summary of predicted differences or similarities that have been identified in the literature.

1.1. *Speech Acts*

This study examines three speech acts, thanking, apologies, and refusals, which although differing in illocutionary force, share semantic formulas in English. The semantic formulas that comprise the targeted speech acts are presented in square brackets below, and the formulas that occur in more than one of the speech acts under consideration are indicated in italics.

Thanking: [*expression of gratitude*] [*apology*]

Apology: [*apology*] [*explanation*] [offer] [responsibility] [forbearance]

Refusal: [refusal] [*apology*] [*expression of gratitude*] [*explanation*] [alternative]

Coulmas (1981) investigated the typological similarity of apologies and expressions of gratitude concluding that the common link between the two was indebtedness. According to Coulmas, expressions of thanks convey a speaker's indebtedness as a recipient of a benefit whereas apologies express the speaker's indebtedness to his or her interlocutor for having performed an action detrimental to the hearer. This close relationship between apologies and thanks has especially been observed in Japanese where the expression *sumimasen* is used in both thanking and apology contexts (e.g., Coulmas, 1981; Ide, 1998; Kimura, 1994; Kotani, 2002). Similarly, in Chinese, gratitude can be conveyed by expressing one's embarrassment for causing the interlocutor extra effort or for taking up his or her time with an apology (Cheng, 2006). In Korean, apologies can be used as expressions of gratitude as well (Jung, 1999). In Japanese, the use of *sumimasen* is appropriate when a student arrives late to a meeting with a professor (Ide, 1998). In this context, it might function both as an apology and an expression of gratitude.

However, despite the connection between apologies and thanks in studies on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean L1s, the use of apology expressions in thanking scenarios may be relatively limited. Nakai and Watanabe (2000) tested ten thanking scenarios that presented a range of benefits and formality. They reported that only 18% of the responses of their L1 Japanese participants (13 speakers answering 10 DCT scenarios) used an apology when expressing gratitude in Japanese; nonetheless, this was a noticeable difference when compared to 13 L1 English speakers answering the same 10 DCT scenarios with only a single apology in English.

Previous studies on thanking have shown few instances of L1 influence, especially with advanced learners on both written DCTs (Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986) and multiple choice questionnaires (Hinkel, 1994). This finding is of particular interest since these three studies included ESL participants from multiple L1s. However, some differences have been found in supporting moves and lexical choices in accepting a gift, expressing thanks for an invitation, and accepting money in the form of a raise or loan (Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988). Advanced L1 Japanese EFL learners were likely to express gratitude by saying how they felt on a written dialogue completion task (Nakano, Miyasaka, & Yamazaki, 2000); moreover, lexical choice showed little variation: 99.8% of the thanking expressions consisted of *thank you*, *thank you very much*, and *thanks*.¹

¹ Nakano et al (2000) compared Japanese learners' EFL production on a written DCT to native speaker production in a spoken corpus (the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English) which makes direct comparison difficult.

Similarities and differences have also been found in cross-cultural realization of apologies in a range of elicitation tasks. As in the case of thanking, some differences in apologies have also been attributed to supporting moves and lexical choices. Jordanian L1 Arabic speakers used more strategies to apologize than L1 English speakers on a written DCT (Hussein & Hammouri, 1998). Both groups expressed apologies with offers of repair, but L1 Arabic speakers were also more likely to acknowledge responsibility in Arabic. Differences in supportive moves were also found in the oral responses of young L1 Chinese EFL students on an oral DCT (Rose, 2000). Different supportive moves were also used by L1 Japanese ESL learners on a written dialog construction task (Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1996) and in multiple choice selections by Japanese L1 speakers in Japanese on a written questionnaire (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990). Furthermore, the differences in supporting moves varied according to each situation. Responses to 12 apology scenarios showed that L1 English speakers selected explanations from the multiple choice options whereas L1 Japanese participants selected direct apologies (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990). Direct apologies were also produced more frequently by L1 Japanese learners on the dialogue completion task (Maeshiba et al, 1996).

In contrast, Korean L1 learners of English and L1 English speakers used similar apology and explanation strategies, but the L1 Korean participants made different linguistic choices in role plays (Jung, 1999). Even though they offered as many explanations as L1 English speakers when apologizing to their professor for missing an appointment, their explanations were not as varied. L1 Japanese learners of English seldom used intensifiers with apologies in written dialogue completion tasks compared to the production of native speakers in conversation (Nakano et al, 2000).

Many crosslinguistic similarities were also found with refusals in a variety of written DCTs. Al-Issa (2003) reported that explanations were the most common semantic formula used among all participants (L1 English, L1 Jordanian Arabic and L1 Jordanian Arabic EFL learners). On an oral DCT based on the written DCT developed for refusals by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), L1 Egyptian Arabic speakers and L1 English speakers used explanations to a similar extent, with L1 Arabic speakers providing slightly more explanations (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). However, the content of the explanations has been found to differ. Explanations given by L1 English participants were more specific than those given by L1 Japanese learners of English when considering time, place, and parties involved (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990) and by L1 Arabic and L1 Arabic EFL learners (Al-Issa, 2003). However, this may also be related to status. L1 Chinese participants offered more specific reasons when refusing a teacher's request (Liao & Bresnahan, 1996), and L1 Korean speakers offered more reasons when their interlocutor was a person of higher or equal status (Kwon, 2004).

Further comparisons among learner groups have found differences in the directness of refusals. Both L1 English and L1 Arabic speakers used significantly more direct strategies than indirect strategies in oral DCTs (Nelson et al, 2002). Lii-Shih (1994) used a mix of authentic oral conversations and "realistic written conversations" (p. 128) to compare the use of refusal strategies in both acceptances and refusals in Chinese, reporting that when an interlocutor intends to refuse, the use of direct refusals with an explanation is more common. Therefore, one might expect Chinese L1 participants to be direct when offering a refusal. The use of direct formulas such as "no" or "I can't" is the initial strategy in the responses of L1 Japanese participants on role plays (Gass & Houck, 1999). However, status may also influence the directness of a response, as observed in L1 Korean (Kwon 2004) and L1 Japanese (Beebe et al, 1990) where participants were less direct when interacting with an interlocutor of higher or equal status, both studies reporting results from written DCTs.

Of note for the present investigation is the use of acceptances when a scenario prompts a refusal. In certain situations sociopragmatic norms render refusals inappropriate for L1 Arabic speakers (Nelson et al, 2002). These included refusing an interlocutor of higher status (a boss) and refusing an invitation to dinner from a friend. Similarly, both English L1 and Chinese L1 participants accepted requests for help moving or for a small loan; the Chinese also accepted family requests for money (Liao & Bresnahan, 1996).

Learner production is also affected by length of stay (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986) and level of proficiency (Rose, 2000; Tada, 2005). Whereas there were significant differences in supporting moves between Chinese L1 students who were in their first semester of study and NSs of English, and also

between the students who had been in the US for one year and NSs of English (Cheng, 2006), there were no significant differences between the students who had been in the US for four or more years and NSs, leading Cheng to conclude that, “length of residence in the target community has considerable effects on pragmatic development in L2 and less pragmatic influence from L1 Chinese” (p. 103). EFL learners of L1 Chinese (Rose, 2000) and L1 Japanese (Tada, 2005) used more supporting moves as their level of proficiency increased.

It is widely recognized that context plays a noteworthy role in determining speech act realization; participants may respond differently to individual scenarios even when the same speech acts are used (e.g., Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Cohen, 2004; Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1996; Nickels, 2006). Nonetheless, many of the reports on the languages of interest here only present combined results for different scenarios when the same speech act is targeted in a controlled elicitation task (e.g., Hussein & Hammouri, 1998; Kwon, 2004; Nakano et al, 2000, for learners) or conversational data (Kimura, 1994; Nakano et al 2000 for native speakers).

In summary, four observations emerge from these studies that suggest L1 effects relevant to the present study. First, despite the strong connection of indebtedness between thanking and apologies (Coulmas, 1981; Ide 1998; Kimura, 1994; Kotani, 2002), few gratitude responses have been reported to include an apology in a production study (Nakai & Watanabe, 2000). Second, differences have been observed among L1 groups in supporting moves and lexical choices (e.g., Al-Issa, 2003; Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Jung, 1999). This is particularly relevant to the present study as we focus on the content of the main semantic formulas and whether the conventional expressions used by NSs have been included in the response. Third, both similarities and differences have been reported across L1s in terms of the directness of refusals (e.g., Beebe et al, 1990; Kwon, 2004; Nelson et al, 2002). Our study analyzes the use of direct refusals on two scenarios with interlocutors of different status to determine whether this discrepancy might be related to L1 background or level. Fourth, both Arabic L1 (Nelson et al, 2002) and Chinese L1 (Liao & Bresnahan, 1996) participants offer acceptances instead of refusals on specific scenarios.

2. Method

The present study addresses the following two questions:

Do L2 learners from different language-culture backgrounds show different rates of use of conventional expressions in an instructed second language environment?

Do L2 learners show different rates of use of conventional expressions at different levels of instruction in a second language environment?

We investigate the production of conventional expressions by learners of different L1 backgrounds at different levels of language proficiency through the use of a computer-delivered aural DCT. The aural DCT simulated turn taking, both by requiring the participants to respond orally and by giving them only 7 seconds to respond. Scenarios were selected that exhibited high use of conventional expressions by native speakers. Together these factors were thought to promote the use of conventional expressions by learners.

This study compares the L2 output of learners of four L1s to each other. The object of investigation is conventional expressions in English. The design adopts two of the three points of comparison identified by Jarvis (2000): intra-group similarities and inter-group differences. L1-IL similarities are not investigated.

2.1. Participants

The learners were enrolled in four levels of classes at the Intensive English Program, from low-intermediate at Level 3 to low-advanced at Level 6. Each level of instruction is seven-weeks long, with 135 to 165 hours of instruction. At the time of data collection 123 learners were tested. Four main first languages were represented by 108 participants, and these are the learners included in this report: Arabic (55), Chinese (12), Japanese (13), and Korean (28) (Table 1). The learners represented two main geographical areas, the Arabian Gulf and East Asia, with 55 and 53 learners, respectively. Learners report a mean length of stay in the U.S. of 4.7 months, a mean length of English study of 4.7

years prior to their ESL experience, and a mean age of 24.3 years. The native speakers were comprised of two groups: undergraduates and ESL teachers. The 35 undergraduates (*NS peers*) reported a mean age of 20.0 and the 14 teachers (*NS teachers*) a mean of 43.1. The NS groups are reported separately throughout because of their ages and social circles. The NS peers represent the target group for the learners, but the NS teachers represent the most frequent source of input to the learners, in 4-5 hours of instruction per day.

Table 1. Distribution of L1s by Level of Instruction

Level	3	4	5	6	Total
L1	n=32	n=29	n=26	n=21	n=108
Arabic	24	14	13	4	55
Chinese	3	5	1	3	12
Korean	4	6	7	11	28
Japanese	1	4	5	3	13

2.2. Task

This study employed a speech production task via a computer-delivered aural DCT. The aural-oral DCT was designed to simulate turn taking. The task was computer delivered, and respondents listened over individual headsets while they read their computer screens; they recorded their responses through headset microphones, which were saved as digital files.

We investigated responses to six aural scenarios: two each of thanking, apology, and refusal scenarios. Although this is a small set, the relatively large number of participants (n=157) allows for a robust response set for each scenario. The scenarios on the task were selected because they elicited high use of conventional expressions by NSs in pilot studies. The scenarios included two that required the respondents to initiate an interaction and four that required them to respond to an interlocutor's turn. Participants were trained with two examples of each type (see Appendix). An example of each type is provided here.

Initiating item

You stop by your teacher's office to ask a question about the assignment. She takes time to answer your question. You know she is very busy, so before you say good-bye, you say:

(next screen, visual only) You say:

Responding item

You go to a clothing store and you need to find a new shirt. A salesperson approaches you. You don't want the salesperson's assistance.

(Audio Only): "Can I help you?"

(next screen, visual only) You say:

Within the speech acts the scenarios were paired (Table 2). The thanking scenarios shared an interlocutor (the teacher), but varied in the form of the conventional expression most frequently used by native speakers: one elicited responses that were consistently intensified, the other, responses that consistently named the reason for gratitude. The apology scenarios also shared an interlocutor (the teacher) and the offense (being late for an appointment), but the gravity of the offense differed across scenarios from 5 minutes to 25 minutes. The refusals both elicited two-part conventional responses, the first of which consisted of *No thanks* and the second an explanation for the refusal. The scenarios are given in Table 2. The dominant conventional expression for each scenario as used by the native speakers is given in the right hand column. Each of the expressions contain an IFID, an illocutionary force indicating device (for gratitude, *thanks/thank you*; for apologies, *sorry*; and for refusals *No*). The

conventional expressions investigated here are made up of words from the first 500 list for both function and content words, with the exception *thanks* and *stuffed* which are found in the 1001-2000 word-list (Cobb, 2008), showing that these expressions have very common components. Although these scenarios were derived from observations of speech events in the university community where the task was administered, many similar situations have been discussed in the literature as reflected in the review.

Table 2. Scenarios with corresponding NS dominant conventional expressions

Speech Act	Identifier	Scenario	Conventional Expression
Thanks	Make-up Test	You have been studying very hard for your test. But on the morning of the test, your alarm does not go off and you oversleep. You ask your teacher for a make-up test. (AO) “Okay. I’ll give you a make-up test this time, but don’t let it happen again.”	<i>Thanks/Thank you</i> + intensifier + <i>much</i>
	Busy Teacher	You stop by your teacher’s office to ask a question about the assignment. She takes time to answer your question. You know she is very busy, so before you say good-bye, you say:	<i>Thanks/Thank you for</i>
Apology	Late-5 minutes	You made an appointment with your teacher. Unfortunately you arrive five minutes late for the meeting. (AO) “Hello. Come on in.”	<i>I’m sorry {I am/I’m} late.</i>
	Late-25 minutes	You made an appointment with your teacher. Unfortunately you arrive 25 minutes late for the meeting, and the teacher is already leaving. You say:	<i>I’m sorry {I am/I’m} late.</i>
Refusal	More Food	You are having dinner at a friend’s house. Your friend offers you more food, but you couldn’t possibly eat another bite. (AO) “Would you like some more?”	<i>No thanks, I’m full</i>
	Help at Store	You go to a clothing store and you need to find a new shirt. A salesperson approaches you. You don’t want the salesperson’s assistance. (AO) “Can I help you?”	<i>No thanks, {I’m/I am} just looking</i>

Note. AO = audio only

The speech production task that we report on here was elicited as part of a larger study on conventional expressions (Bardovi-Harlig et al, in press). Three tasks were completed during a 50-minute session in the language lab in the following order: an audio recognition task (12 minutes; Bardovi-Harlig, in press), the audio-visual production task discussed here (20 minutes including instructions and examples), and a background questionnaire (approximately 5-10 minutes).

3. Analysis

The oral responses were transcribed by pairs of transcribers using standard orthography augmented by conversational analytic transcription conventions: Pauses over .5 seconds were timed, elongated sounds were marked, and noticeable intonation rises and falls were indicated. The transcribed responses were then coded for speech acts, semantic formulas, and use of conventional expressions.

To identify conventional expressions, NS responses were coded first. Recurring strings were identified and the longest string that was used the most frequently was identified as the conventional expression. For example, in one thanking scenario 94% (33/35) of the NS peer respondents gave a response that contained *Thanks* or *thank you*. However, only 6% of the NS peers used *Thanks* or *thank*

you only. 89% (31/35) used a longer string, *Thank you so much*. In a second thanking scenario, 94% (33/35) of NS peers again used *Thanks* or *thank you*, but no peer used it alone. All the NS peers who used *Thanks* or *thank you* used a form that named the source of their gratitude as in *Thanks for your time* or *Thanks for your help*. Thus the longer frequent form more accurately captures the expression as used by the native speakers than the shorter form contained within it, and moreover, captures the difference in thanking expressions across contexts. As will be shown in the results, this also captures the difference between learners and native speakers.

For the identification of conventional expressions produced by learners, we adopted an analysis that allows for minor grammatical differences between NSs and learners. The use of the un-contracted copula was the most common allowance. Although NSs say *I'm just looking* and learners say *I am just looking*, their use of *I am just looking* was counted as using the conventional expression. Variations in tense, however, were not included.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. The quantitative analysis used Pearson's Chi-Square tests to identify any significant differences among the learners on the use of conventional expressions. Native speakers were excluded in order to determine whether learners were significantly different from each other.² In all analyses, the dependent variable was the use of the target expression. This was coded in a binary fashion (1 = target expression was used; 0 = response corresponds to the scenario, but target expression was not used). Responses that did not correspond to the scenario were not included in the statistical analysis (x = no response or a response did not include the dominant speech act elicited by the scenario). Each conventional expression was analyzed separately, first by L1 and then by level. The L1 analysis included four L1 groups (Arabic ($n=55$), Korean ($n=28$), Japanese ($n=13$), and Chinese ($n=12$)), and the level analysis included four levels (Level 3 ($n=32$), Level 4 ($n=29$), Level 5 ($n=26$), and Level 6 ($n=21$)).

The qualitative analysis also focuses on the production of each speech act, first by L1, then by level. In order to understand the context in which learners use (or do not use) the conventional expressions preferred by NSs, each section begins with a description of illocutionary acts performed by learners and NSs; in relevant cases we also discuss semantic formulas. Learner production of conventional expressions is considered last because use of conventional expressions is only possible if the targeted speech act is performed. If it is not, then no environment for the use of the conventional expression has been created.

4. Results

The task yielded 942 responses, or 314 per speech act. In all six scenarios, the native speaker responses show that the scenarios were interpreted as thanking, apologizing, and refusal contexts, respectively; learners show varied responses. This section is organized in three main sections by speech act. In each of the sections we first consider the responses that reflect the target speech act, and then consider the responses that use particular conventional expressions. Assessing learners' sociopragmatic identification of a scenario as calling for a particular speech act is completed prior to investigating their association of a particular conventional expression with that same scenario. As the results will show in the following sections, conventional expressions are not only associated with speech acts, but with specific scenarios as well.

4.1. Thanking

The two thanking scenarios elicited high rates of expressions of gratitude from native speakers (see Tables 3 and 4, "all gratitude"). Learners treated the scenarios differently, however. The high scores for all expressions of gratitude show that the Make-up Test scenario was a clear thanking situation to all learners. Native speaker responses show that the conventional expression that they

² Native speaker peers and teachers have been shown to be reliably significantly different from each other in terms of length of response and number of pragmatic formulas (Bardovi-Harlig et al, in press), but no test was conducted in this study.

associate with the Make-up test scenario is *Thank you + intensifier + much* realized as *Thank you so much*, which is the most common expression, and *Thank you very much* which occurs as an alternate. Although a high proportion of learners used expressions that included *Thanks* or *Thank you* (from 64-90%, Tables 3 and 4), considerably fewer used the conventional formula used by NSs, as in (1).

1. Make-up test: *Thank you + intensifier + much*
 - a. Thank you so much. (Level 3, Arabic L1)
 - b. Oh, thank you very much. (Level 6, Chinese L1)

The distribution of the responses by first language is presented in Table 3 and the distribution by level is given in Table 4. In Tables 3 and 4, as in all of the following tables, the first line for each scenario gives the number of responses that used the target speech act. In Tables 3 and 4, this is listed as “all gratitude.” Below the row for “all speech act” the use of expressions is reported individually. All tables follow the same format. To illustrate, even though all examples of *Thank you so much* also include the expression *Thank you*, responses that included intensifiers are reported separately from those that did not (see usage figures for *Thank you + intensifier+ much* and *Thanks/thank you Ø* below).

Table 3. Uses of expressions of gratitude by L1 in two thanking contexts.

Scenario	Expression	Learners								Native Speakers			
		Arabic n=55		Chinese n=12		Japanese n=13		Korean n=28		Peers n=35		Teachers n=14	
		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Make-up													
Test	All gratitude	85	(47)	92	(11)	85	(11)	96	(27)	100	(35)	86	(12)
	<i>Thanks</i> or <i>thank you</i> Ø	24	(13)	42	(5)	23	(3)	46	(13)	9	(3)	7	(1)
	<i>Thank you +</i> intensifier + <i>much</i>	40	(22)	33	(4)	54	(7)	29	(8)	86	(30)	71	(10)
	<i>Thanks +</i> intens+ <i>much</i>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(1)	3	(1)	0	(0)
Busy													
Teacher	All gratitude	47	(26)	92	(11)	62	(8)	50	(14)	97	(34)	93	(13)
	<i>Thanks</i> or <i>thank you</i> Ø	5	(3)	8	(1)	62	(8)	7	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)
	<i>Thanks/thank</i> <i>you for</i>	25	(14)	75	(9)	54	(7)	36	(10)	94	(33)	71	(10)

The learners did not differ significantly from each other in their use of the conventional expression *Thank you + intensifier + much* by L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=102)=4.100, p=0.251$) or by level ($\chi^2(3, N=102)=3.805, p=0.283$). As Table 4 shows, the production of all thanking expressions increases across the levels, even though it begins reasonably high at 78% in Level 3, ending with 100% in Level 6 (see “all gratitude”). In contrast, only half of the thanking expressions include the conventional *Thank you so much* before Level 6.

In contrast to the high scoring Make-up Test, the Busy Teacher scenario shows somewhat lower scores for all expressions of gratitude, in all groups but the Chinese (Table 3). Note, however, that the NSs treat the two scenarios similarly, with high use of thanking expressions. For native speakers, the rate of use of *thanks* and *thank you* is almost identical to the total use of expressions of gratitude. Differences in learner production (in the absence of NS differences) suggest that there may be differences in perceived illocutionary force; learners may understand the scenario, but not see it as a thanking situation.

Table 4. Use of expressions of gratitude by level in two thanking contexts

Scenario	Expression	Level								Native Speakers			
		3		4		5		6		Peers		Teachers	
		n=32	n=29	n=26	n=21	n=35	n=14	%	(N)	%	(N)		
Make-up		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Test	All gratitude	78	(25)	86	(25)	96	(25)	100	(21)	100	(35)	86	(12)
	<i>Thanks or thank you</i> ∅	28	(9)	34	(10)	31	(8)	33	(7)	9	(3)	7	(1)
	<i>Thank you + intensifier</i>												
	<i>+much</i>	34	(11)	28	(8)	38	(10)	57	(12)	86	(30)	71	(10)
	<i>Thanks + intens+much</i>	0	(0)	3	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(1)	0	(0)
Busy													
Teacher	All gratitude	44	(14)	59	(17)	54	(14)	67	(14)	97	(34)	93	(13)
	<i>Thanks or thank you</i> ∅	13	(4)	7	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
	<i>Thanks/Thank you for</i>	13	(4)	41	(12)	46	(12)	57	(12)	94	(33)	71	(10)

A closer analysis of the responses to the different scenarios shows that at least two learners from each group respond to the scenario with an apology. Fully 20% (11) of the Arabic L1 speakers and 7-8% of the learners from other L1s view this scenario as an apology context (Examples 2 and 3). Learners may also integrate an apology into a thanking act by including an apology as a supporting move as in Example (4). This is done exclusively by Arabic L1 speakers with the addition of one Korean speaker. In the following examples the length of pauses is given in seconds in parentheses, elongation of a sound is indicated by a colon with longer sounds indicated by two colons (eh::), and noteworthy falling intonation is indicated by a downward arrow (↘).

2. Eh, I am sorry for uh (.9) eh:: take your time. (Level 5, Arabic L1)
3. I'm sorry↘ if I bother you. (Level 4, Arabic L1)
4. Thank you, and I'm sorry if I, (0.64) take your time. (Level 4, Arabic L1)

When speech acts and moves within speech acts are taken together, 49% of the L1 Arabic speakers (27 learners) used an apology either as the exclusive response to this scenario or as a supporting move. The apology responses are spread across levels. Interestingly, the Japanese learners for whom a close relation of apologies and thanking has been observed in the literature used apologies in the Busy Teacher situation in only 8% of their responses, as did Chinese learners for whom taking someone's time has been identified as potentially warranting an apology (Cheng, 2006).

In response to Busy Teacher, native speakers produced *Thanks/Thank you for your time* or *Thanks/Thank you for your help* as the dominant form (94% of the NS peers and 71% of the NS teachers.) Examples of learner production are given in (5) where the length of a pause is reported in seconds in parentheses.

5. Busy Teacher: *Thank you for*
 - a. Thank you very much (.6) for your time. (Level 5, Arabic L1)
 - b. Thank you for your answer (1.1) about my question. (Level 5, Korean L1)

There were significant differences among the learners when they used the conventional expression *Thank you for* by both L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=69)=9.971, p=.019$) and by level ($\chi^2(3, N=69)=9.812, p=.020$). The Arabic L1 speakers used this conventional expression less than the other groups, and participants in Level 3 used *Thank you for* less than the other levels. Since Arabic L1 speakers comprise 75% (24/32)

of the participants in Level 3, it is difficult to separate the results of these two independent variables. It therefore appears that the significant result obtained on both Chi-Square tests can be attributed to the same group of learners.

The identification of Busy Teacher as a thanking context increases by level, in a scenario where apologies and expressions of gratitude compete (Table 4). Almost all of the expressions of gratitude contain *thanks* or *thank you*, and the use of these increases by level. The use of *Thank you for* also increases with level, and although the rates start out lower in the Busy Teacher scenario in Level 3 than for the Make-up Test, and they increase steadily through Level 6. Interestingly, given the difference in responses to the two scenarios, a higher proportion of learners who recognize the scenarios as thanking situations use a conventional expression in Busy Teacher than Make-up Test. This is true throughout the levels, ending in Level 6 where 57% (12) of the learners produced the respective conventional expressions, although 100% of the learners recognized the Make-up test as a thanking context, and only 67% of the learners responded to Busy Teacher as a thanking context.

4.2. Apologies

The apology scenarios were matched for interlocutor (teacher) and type of offense (being late) but differed in severity, that is, how late the speaker arrived for the appointment (5 and 25 minutes, respectively). As in the case of the thanking expressions, learner responses differ by scenario. Almost all the learners recognize 5-Minutes Late as calling for an apology (Tables 5 and 6), and they respond accordingly as in Examples (6) and (7).

Five minutes late

6. Sorry for late (Level 6, Korean L1)

7. Sorry for coming late (Level 5, Chinese L1)

In the 5-Minutes Late scenario, the use of the conventional expression *Sorry I'm late* is significantly different among the L1 groups, $\chi^2(3, N=102)=17.336, p=.001$, as Arabic L1 speakers used the conventional expression less than the other L1 groups; Japanese learners also showed relatively lower use than Chinese and Korean speakers, but more than Arabic speakers (Table 5). However, the difference among the participants is not significant by level, $\chi^2(3, N=102)=6.363, p=.095$.

Table 5. Use of apology expressions by L1 in two apology contexts

Scenario	Expression	Learners								Native Speakers			
		Arabic n=55		Chinese n=12		Japanese n=13		Korean n=28		Peers n=35		Teachers n=14	
		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
5 min late	All apologies	87	(48)	100	(12)	92	(12)	100	(28)	97	(34)	100	(14)
	<i>Sorry {I'm/I am} late</i>	11	(6)	50	(6)	31	(4)	54	(15)	69	(24)	71	(10)
25 min late	All apologies	60	(33)	75	(9)	46	(6)	71	(20)	100	(35)	100	(14)
	<i>Sorry {I'm/I am} late</i>	11	(6)	25	(3)	15	(2)	39	(11)	60	(21)	64	(9)

In contrast to 5-Minutes Late, 25-Minutes Late elicits at least 20% fewer apologies, and even fewer from L1 Arabic and Japanese learners. It seems that for some learners, 25-Minutes Late was drastic enough that they could not respond with an apology. All learners use fewer conventional expressions than apologies (compare the rows labeled “all apologies” to those labeled “Sorry I'm late”). The number of apologies is consistent for NSs, but the rates of *Sorry, I'm late* also drop for NSs in 25-Minutes Late, suggesting something more elaborate might be appropriate.

There was no significant difference among the learner groups when using the conventional expression *Sorry I'm late* in 25-Minutes Late by L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=88)=6.910, p=.075$) or by Level ($\chi^2(3, N=88)=3.498, p=.321$). With this scenario, responses were less formulaic, and consequently participants were less likely to include the conventional expression in their response. (However, the $p=.075$ in L1 may be attributable to the slightly higher use of the conventional expression by Korean and Chinese L1 participants.)

Although the language groups seem to agree on overall low apology rates in 25 Minutes Late, low rates seem to come about in different ways. Of the Japanese learners, 31% didn't respond, the group with the highest non-response rate. In contrast, the L1 Arabic and Chinese speakers' responses showed 24% and 25% use of meta-statements, respectively, highlighting the seriousness of this offence (Examples 10-11). L1 Japanese also use this strategy, at 15% of the responses, but L1 Korean learners use only 7%. Meta-statements are spread out across the levels. Other learners used an expression of how late they are (12) or an exclamation without accompanying content as in (13).

25 minutes late

8. [Apology] I'm sorry my teacher for that (Level 3, Arabic L1)
9. [Apology] I'm so sorry I'm late (Level 4, Korean L1)
10. [Meta-statement] Oh no~ my god. (1.9) What I can do now? (Level 3, Arabic L1)
11. [Meta-statement] Oh: that's too bad. (Level 4, Chinese L1)
12. [Late] Oh:: ~ I'm so (1.68) late. (Level 4, Korean, L1)
13. [Exclamation] Oh my God. (Level 6, Korean L1; also Arabic L1, all levels)

There is no significant effect for level in the use of the conventional expression, *Sorry, I'm late* in either of the apology contexts, although use of the expression almost triples from Level 3 to Level 6 (Table 6). Level 5 shows unexpected lower use of the conventional expression compared to Levels 4 and 6.

Table 6. Use of apology expressions by level in two apology contexts

Scenario	Expression	Level								Native Speakers			
		3		4		5		6		Peers		Teachers	
		n=32		n=29		n=26		n=21		n=35		n=14	
		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
5 min late	All apologies	88	(28)	93	(27)	92	(24)	100	(21)	97	(34)	100	(14)
	<i>Sorry {I'm/I am} late</i>	16	(5)	34	(10)	23	(6)	48	(10)	69	(24)	71	(10)
25 min late	All apologies	69	(22)	55	(16)	50	(13)	81	(17)	100	(35)	100	(14)
	<i>Sorry {I'm/I am} late</i>	13	(4)	21	(6)	15	(4)	38	(8)	60	(21)	64	(9)

4.3. Refusals

The refusal scenarios elicited two conventional expressions each. The first, *no thanks/no thank you* encodes the direct refusal for both More Food and Help at Store. The second expression for each context encodes the explanation for the refusal, as appropriate to the context: *I'm full* in More Food, and *{I'm/I am} just looking* for Help at Store. Replies to More Food are discussed first.

With the exception of the Arabic and Level 3 learners, participants produced refusals in 90% or more of their responses (Tables 7-10). Responses included direct responses only (14a-b), explanations only (14c-d), and combinations (14e). In (14d) the angled brackets indicate rapid delivery.

14. More Food

- a. No thank you so much. (Level 3, Arabic L1)
- b. Uh no thanks (Level 6, Chinese L1)
- c. No huh, I'm very full (Level 5, Japanese L1)
- d. U:m, >I'm full<. (Level 6, Korean L1)
- e. No, thanks, I'm full. (Level 3, Arabic L1)

Table 7. Realization of direct refusals by L1 in two refusal contexts

Scenario	Expression	Learners								Native Speakers			
		Arabic n=55		Chinese n=12		Japanese n=13		Korean N=28		Peers n=35		Teachers n=14	
		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
More Food	All refusals	78	(43)	100	(12)	92	(12)	96	(27)	100	(34)	100	(14)
	All direct refusals	62	(34)	75	(9)	92	(12)	79	(22)	94	(32)	79	(11)
	<i>No</i>	6	(3)	25	(3)	15	(2)	11	(3)	21	(7)	14	(2)
	<i>No thanks</i>	56	(31)	50	(6)	77	(10)	68	(19)	74	(25)	64	(9)
Help at store	All refusals	76	(42)	100	(12)	92	(12)	86	(24)	100	(35)	100	(14)
	All direct refusals	49	(27)	42	(5)	77	(10)	64	(18)	91	(32)	79	(11)
	<i>No</i>	11	(6)	8	(1)	8	(1)	18	(5)	23	(8)	0	(0)
	<i>No thanks</i>	38	(21)	33	(4)	69	(9)	46	(13)	69	(24)	79	(11)

Note. One of the NS peer responses was not recorded properly on the More Food scenario. The total possible was accordingly reduced to 34 NS Peer responses.

Table 8. Realization of direct refusals by level in two refusal contexts

Scenario	Expression	Level								Native Speakers			
		3 n=32		4 n=29		5 n=26		6 n=21		Peers n=35		Teachers n=14	
		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
More food	All refusals	66	(21)	90	(26)	100	(26)	100	(21)	100	(34)	100	(14)
	All direct refusals	59	(19)	69	(20)	81	(21)	81	(17)	94	(32)	79	(11)
	<i>No</i>	9	(3)	7	(2)	12	(3)	14	(3)	21	(7)	14	(2)
	<i>No thanks</i>	50	(16)	62	(18)	69	(18)	67	(14)	74	(25)	64	(9)
Help at store	All refusals	63	(20)	90	(26)	96	(25)	90	(19)	100	(35)	100	(14)
	All direct refusals	31	(10)	59	(17)	69	(18)	71	(15)	91	(32)	79	(11)
	<i>No</i>	13	(4)	10	(3)	15	(4)	10	(2)	23	(8)	0	(0)
	<i>No thanks</i>	19	(6)	48	(14)	54	(14)	62	(13)	69	(24)	79	(11)

The use of *No thanks* (More Food) was not significant by L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=94)=2.322, p=.508$) or by Level ($\chi^2(3, N=94)=0.730, p=.866$). Analysis of the L1 Arabic responses shows that 20% of the

responses in both contexts are acceptances. Recalculating the percentage of direct refusals as a ratio of refusals provided (discounting the 20% acceptance rate), yields 77% direct refusals in More Food (equal to the Chinese L1 speakers) and 61% in Help at Store (surpassing the Chinese L1 speakers). The use of the conventional expression *No thanks* shows less variation than the total of all direct refusals in More Food. The Japanese and Korean learners reach NS rates (Table 7). The use of *No thanks* in More Food, which starts out relatively high at 50% in Level 3, shows a gradual increase to 69% and 67% in Levels 5 and 6 (Table 8).

The use of the conventional expression *I'm full* was not significant by L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=94)=1.744, p=.627$); however it was significant when analyzed by Level ($\chi^2(3, N=94)=11.533, p=.009$), indicative of the gradual increase in the use of this conventional expression as learners become more proficient (Table 10). The explanation *I'm full* is used more often than *No thanks* in More Food by the Arabic and Japanese groups, whereas *No thanks* is used more often by the Chinese and Korean groups (cf. Tables 7 and 9). Although *No thanks* shows a very modest increase from 50%-69%, the use of *I'm full* in the same context increases dramatically from 28% in Level 3 to 85% and 81% in Levels 5 and 6 (Table 10). Note that American English speakers use both *I'm full* and *I'm stuffed* (for a combined 79% of the responses) the latter an expression not attempted by learners (Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9. Realization of refusals with explanations by L1 in two refusal contexts

Scenario	Expression	Learners								Native Speakers			
		Arabic n=55		Chinese n=12		Japanese n=13		Korean n=28		Peers n=35		Teachers n=14	
		%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
More Food	All refusals	78	(43)	100	(12)	92	(12)	96	(27)	100	(34)	100	(14)
	All explanations	69	(38)	92	(11)	85	(11)	89	(25)	97	(33)	100	(14)
	<i>I'm full</i>	49	(27)	67	(8)	62	(8)	75	(21)	41	(14)	29	(4)
	<i>I'm (adv) stuffed</i>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	38	(13)	50	(7)
Help at store	All refusals	76	(42)	100	(12)	92	(12)	86	(24)	100	(35)	100	(14)
	All explanations	69	(38)	100	(12)	77	(10)	64	(18)	91	(32)	93	(13)
	<i>{I'm/am} just looking</i>	29	(16)	25	(3)	38	(5)	43	(12)	71	(25)	64	(9)

Note. One of the NS peer responses was not recorded properly on the More Food scenario. The total possible was accordingly reduced to 34 NS Peer responses.

More Food consistently elicits more direct refusals from learners than Help at Store, although NSs respond at the same rates (Tables 7-10). Some learners and NSs use a simple *no* rather than *no thanks*, but these are generally mitigated by an explanation. Example (15a-b) shows responses that are direct refusals with thanking expressions, (15c-d) show explanations only, and (15e) shows a response that combines both.

15. Help at Store

- Oh no thanks. (Level 4, Chinese L1)
- No thank you. (Level 4, Korean L1)
- I'm fine. (Level 4, L1 Arabic)
- Oh I just look around. (Level 4, Chinese L1)
- Uh, no thanks, I'm just looking. (Level 6, Japanese)

Table 10. Realization of refusals with explanations by level in two refusal contexts

Scenario Expression	Level								Native Speakers				
	3		4		5		6		Peers		Teachers		
	n=32		n=29		n=26		n=21		n=35		n=14		
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	
More food	All refusals	66	(21)	90	(26)	100	(26)	100	(21)	100	(34)	100	(14)
	All explanations	53	(17)	86	(25)	92	(24)	90	(19)	97	(33)	100	(14)
	<i>I'm full</i>	28	(9)	55	(16)	85	(22)	81	(17)	41	(14)	29	(4)
	<i>I'm (adv) stuffed</i>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	38	(13)	50	(7)
Help at store	All refusals	63	(20)	90	(26)	96	(25)	90	(19)	100	(35)	100	(14)
	All explanations	56	(18)	76	(22)	88	(23)	71	(15)	91	(32)	93	(13)
	<i>{I'm/am} just looking</i>	13	(4)	28	(8)	46	(12)	57	(12)	71	(25)	64	(9)

The use of *No thanks* (Help at Store) was not significant by L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=93)=4.418, p=.220$) or by Level ($\chi^2(3, N=93)=6.614, p=.085$). The lower p-value on the Level analysis seems to be reflective of the increase that occurs between Level 3 and Level 4 (Table 8). The use of *No thanks* in Help at Store shows the same range of variation as the use of direct refusals more generally. The use of *No thanks* is highest for L1 Japanese speakers. In Help at Store, Level 3 learners use *No thanks* much less than in More Food (19% to 50%). This lower rate of use across contexts continues through all levels, but Level 6 learners reach 62% nonetheless.

The use of the conventional expression *I'm just looking* was not significant by L1 ($\chi^2(3, N=91)=1.869, p=.600$) or by Level (L1 $\chi^2(3, N=91)=7.167, p=.067$). The analysis by level, however, approaches significance, as the use of the expression increases as learners become more proficient (see Table 10). The use of the conventional expression for the explanation *I'm just looking* is considerably lower for all L1 groups than their use of *No thanks*, although it is comparable for NSs. Instead of using *I'm just looking* as in (16a) or a less explicit explanation as in (16b), some learners (three each of L1 Arabic and Chinese, and two L1 Korean speakers) used an explicit statement that no help was necessary as in (17).

16a. I'm just looking around (Level 6, Korean L1)

b. I'm good (Level 3, Arabic L1)

17a. No, I don't uh need uh any help. (Level 3, Arabic L1)

b. I can, find by myself. (Level 4, Chinese L1)

I'm just looking also increases across the levels, but is again lower than the use of the conventional expression for declining food. The lower rate of use of refusals of help in a store by all levels of proficiency compared to refusing more food suggests that refusing help in a store may be more specific to a self-service culture (like the United States), than refusing food is. Many cultures have jokes about attempting to turn food down.

Returning to our research question, "Do L2 learners from different language-culture backgrounds show different rates of use of conventional expressions in an instructed second language environment?" the results showed that in most cases, there was no significant difference between learners from different L1s. However, as expected, there was a scenario effect, and a significant difference was found for two of the eight expressions investigated. With regard to our second research question, "Do L2 learners show different rates of use of conventional expressions at different levels of instruction in a second language environment," we saw that learners often showed increased use of the

same conventional expressions used by the native speakers by level, although level was only significant for two expressions. Some scenarios showed early and high use of conventional expressions with little room for improvement. Other scenarios proved to offer a greater challenge to L2 learners who improved with higher instructional levels, but stayed low overall.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In each pair of scenarios by speech act, one scenario seemed to be more immediately identifiable cross-culturally, namely, Make-up Test, 5-Minutes Late, and More Food. In these contexts, specific pragmalinguistic knowledge (how-to-say-what) seems to limit the use of conventional expressions. That is, learners are most likely to use the expression where speech act, semantic formulas, and content align with native speaker interpretation of the context. What remains to be learned in these is the specific form, or conventional expression. In contrast, the other scenarios (Busy Teacher, 25-Minutes Late, and Help at Store) show that the use of conventional expressions is also constrained by sociopragmatic knowledge, including the identification of contexts as culturally appropriate environments for particular speech acts or supporting moves. Where learners differ from native speakers in what speech act, semantic formula, or content is expressed, the environment for a particular conventional expression is not created. That is, for learners to produce the same conventional expression (i.e., form) as native speakers, the speech acts produced, the semantic formulas that support them, and content must align (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

Although many studies had reported differences in lexical choices by L1 groups and native speakers of English in speech act realization (e.g., Al-Issa, 2003; Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Jung, 1999), this study focused on the similarities: namely, the frequency with which learners in a second language environment produced conventional expressions, which by definition restrict rather than promote lexical diversity. Relatively few studies focus specifically on conventional expressions in pragmatics, so there were no specific predictions on L1 effect on conventional expressions. This study confirms earlier reports that participants respond differently to individual scenarios even when the same speech acts are used, as is the case when we compare the responses to the thanking, apology, and refusal scenarios (Cohen, 2004; Nickels, 2006).

The inclusion of multiple L1s showed that some of the L1 effects on speech act realization that were previously reported in the literature may be characteristic of learners more generally. L1 Arabic speakers robustly used apologies in one of the thanking contexts which might be expected of L1 Japanese and Chinese speakers; but L1 Japanese and Chinese speakers did so at a much lower rate.³ Apologies and refusals also showed that unrelated language-culture groups may respond similarly to situations with respect to use of conventional expressions. Other studies with multiple L1s found more similarities than differences, although their learners were advanced (e.g., Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986). However, in the present study the L1 groups were not balanced, owing to the language groups in the program at the time of data collection. The comparatively smaller number of L1 Chinese and Japanese learners of English are a limitation of the study to be addressed in future data collection, as is increasing and balancing the lowest instructional level for L1.

The aural-oral format of the computer-delivered DCT elicited spoken responses, the mode in which conversational expressions, such as those studied here, are used (see also Rose, 2001). The timed format (7 seconds per response) simulates turn-taking and may encourage learners to use conventional expressions if they know them, as one advantage of using conventional expressions is thought to be reducing planning (Peters, 1983; Weinert, 1995). The scenarios were also selected to encourage use of conventional expressions. Pairs of speech acts were identified in which native speakers showed consistent use of conventional expressions typical of the speech acts in question. These did not permit an exhaustive investigation of the variables related to speech act realization, nor

³ Recall that not all studies make the same prediction for Japanese. Coulmas (1981), Ide (1998), Kimura (1994), Kotani (2002) suggest a greater relationship between thanking and apologizing whereas Nakai & Watanabe's, (2000) suggest less, although in a relatively small study.

were they designed to do so. Our main interest was to investigate whether the use of conventional expressions was influenced by first language or by proficiency, represented here by instructional level.

As important as level of instruction proved to be in this study, length of stay should also be investigated separately. In this study length of stay varied for L1 and level of instruction. The Arabic and Korean L1 groups have longer mean lengths of stay, 5.88 and 4.67 months, respectively, compared to the Chinese and Japanese learners with stays of 2.15 and 1.98 months. Length of stay does not always correlate with instructional level, as students can join the language program at any level. It would also be desirable to balance length of stay across L1s, but this is harder to do.

The comparison of multiple L1s shows that learners of various L1s often share production strategies. The comparison of different levels of instruction shows that learners increase their use of conventional expressions at higher levels, requiring both linguistic and sociopragmatic competence. The success of higher level students can be interpreted as due to both higher levels of linguistic development and more exposure to the host culture. In our future work we hope to be able to tease apart these factors.

Appendix: Training examples

Part A. Instructions: Initiating Utterances

In this part of the task, you will see a description on the screen. Read along with the speaker. Imagine that you are speaking to a friend. When you see “you say” on the screen, speak to your friend. Say the first thing you think of. You have 7 seconds to respond. Speak clearly. Here are two examples. (*Note.* Only one is given here)

Example A. The phone rings. You pick it up. (Oral and written)

You say: (Screen only)

NNS respondent: “*Hello*” (Aural only)

Part B. Instructions: Responding Utterances

In this part of the task, you are talking to your friend, and your friend speaks first. When your friend finishes, you answer. You have 7 seconds to respond. Remember to speak clearly. Here are two examples. (*Note.* Only one is given here)

Example A. You see your old friend at a party. (Oral and written)

Friend: How are you? (Aural only)

You say: (Screen only)

NNS response: *Good, how are you?* (Aural only)

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