

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 744

FL 018 752

AUTHOR Pearson, Bethyl
 TITLE "Persuasion" in Chinese and English: Transfer at the Pragmatic Level?
 PUB DATE 27 Jan 90
 NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Regional Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (7th, Phoenix, AZ, January 25-27, 1990).
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Classroom Techniques; Contrastive Linguistics; Discourse Analysis; *English (Second Language); *Instructional Materials; Intercultural Communication; *Interlanguage; Language Patterns; *Mandarin Chinese; Native Speakers; *Persuasive Discourse; Pragmatics; Second Language Instruction; *Speech Acts; Transfer of Training; Uncommonly Taught Languages

ABSTRACT

By comparing the language performance of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and English to English second language performance across similar speech events, a study suggests a methodology for discovering potential areas of pragmatic transfer. Subjects were 6 native American English speakers and 12 native Chinese-speakers, 6 using Chinese and 6 using English. Each language group was asked to discuss and come to agreement on aspects of a desert survival task. Collaborative interactions were transcribed and analyzed. Native English-speakers used much greater variety and complexity of conversational strategizing, revealed by analyzing contextualized language across the whole discourse event. This finding illustrates why more comprehensive models of language use in the classroom and in textbooks are needed. Students need to see more examples of situationally appropriate uses of politeness and to be shown how they can argue a point persuasively through use of supporting explanation and justification, repetitious persistence, and other speaking strategies. Future research could explore whether the comparative simplicity of the Chinese groups' behavior is a general pattern and whether related problems arise when Chinese- and English-speakers interact. (MSE)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
-
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Pearson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

"'Persuasion' in Chinese and English:
Transfer at the Pragmatic Level?"

Bethyl Pearson
Arizona State University
(602) 965-3168

Rocky Mountain Regional TESOL Conference
January 27, 1990

ED 322 744

018752



Introduction. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it demonstrates the importance of cross-linguistic, pragmatic comparisons of conversational strategies across similar speech events. Such analysis may reveal potential areas of negative transfer or pragmatic troublespots for students who are trying to communicate in a new sociolinguistic and cultural system.

Second, this paper claims that materials for helping ESL/EFL students to increase their pragmatic and communicative proficiency should be based on more than the analysis of isolated speech acts and lengthy, de-contextualized catalogues of the various linguistic forms which these acts are presumed to take (e.g., showing agreement by saying, "I couldn't agree with you more"; showing disagreement by saying, "Well, actually, I ...", etc.), as is the case in many current ESL textbooks.

Rather, classroom materials should derive not only from sentence-level analyses, but also from more macro-levels of analysis which include discourse, cultural, and world-knowledge as well as how one plans one's conversational tactics (Faerch and Kasper, 1984). As Williams (1988:46) puts it: "the focus [of textbooks] should be on using language in ongoing discourse, in a particular context, for a particular purpose, and as a part of a strategy."

At the same time, this paper acknowledges two serious potential limitations of the above points of view: (1) the application of speech-act theory to the field of language pedagogy is at present very controversial due to such problems as determining

how many speech acts there are, what constitutes an act's boundaries, and the multiplicity of speech act meanings involving both literal force and indirect interpretations (Flowerdew, 1990); (2) contrastive studies of any kind of communicative performance, including speech act and discourse investigations, may not always provide easy-to-follow models for the ESL learner, even when target language norms can be diagnosed, because the learner may still choose to exercise individual options. For example, westerners may expect Japanese speakers of English to (learn to) disagree more openly in English conversation than they do ordinarily in Japanese, but Japanese speakers may instead prefer a more indirect communicative style (Littlewood, 1988).

While acknowledging these concerns, and recognizing a limited data base, this paper yet hopes to offer some useful insight to ESL/EFL learners and educators who may be encouraged to further pursue the questions raised here.

Background. There has been an interest in how groups function sociolinguistically in achieving a "working consensus" at least since Goffman (1959) coined the term. This communicative process has been defined by communication researchers as "collaboration" and "negotiation", especially in their work on bargaining teams (Druckman, 1977). For Goffman, a "team" is any group that works together to maintain a particular definition of the situation in which they are engaged, that is, individuals whose intimate cooperation is required (1959).

On this definition, many other collaborative 'teams' exist, such as participants in faculty committee meetings (e.g., Edelsky,

1981) or in church business meetings (Pearson, 1990a, b). In these settings, typical communication patterns in U.S. culture have been examined from several points of view, including ethnomethodology, especially the organization of talk (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), speech-act theory (e.g., Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). From the perspective of organization of talk, which deals directly with turn-taking, collaborative language has been found to exhibit short utterance lengths, many talk-overs and much "shared-floor" interaction (Edelsky, 1981), reflecting freedom and co-responsibility for decision-making.

From the combined perspectives of speech-act theory and politeness, as in Pearson 1990a, b, the language of speakers in a collaborative speech event has revealed correlations with role (e.g., ministers, chairs, and group participants at church business meetings), where more institutionally powerful speakers (ministers, chairs) display more powerful and more lengthy 'control acts' (speech acts of directing and disagreeing) as well as more downward style-shifting (positive politeness) and more mitigation (negative politeness) as concomitant features with the acts of control. Pearson argues that this combination is a useful persuasive style for achieving group consensus and acceptance of one's opinions by others.

Work has just begun, however, on cross-linguistic comparisons of collaborative speech events (e.g., Pearson & Lee, in press). This paper hopes to add to that body of research by reporting on an initial comparison of the conversational strategies used by native

speakers of Mandarin Chinese (in Chinese and in American English) and by native speakers of American English, as they mutually persuade and collaborate with each other in conducting the same desert survival task, described below. Findings will test whether the conversational strategies are encoded in similar ways in the native languages (and cultures), and, if different, whether L1 patterns are potentially transferred to the L2 version of the same task.

Method. In order to create a uniform, although artificial "working consensus" situation, a desert survival task was selected (See Appendix A), and the participation of three groups of speakers or "teams" was solicited. All agreed to audio- and video-recording. Each group of participants was told to imagine that they had just survived an airplane crash in a desert and were given a list of fifteen items (e.g. a cosmetic mirror, a raincoat, a compass kit, etc.) which they had to rank, as a group, according to the item's importance to their survival, given various constraints, such as the pilot is dead, the airplane has burned, etc. Members of each group were given time initially to do individual rankings silently. Then they were told to work out a group ranking. They were prohibited from voting or flipping coins in order to gain consensus. Instead, they had to achieve their ranking as a group by team negotiation within 30 minutes.

One of the groups comprised native speakers of American English (AE), and the other two groups were native speakers of Chinese. One of the Chinese groups performed the task in Chinese (CC) and the other group spoke only English (CE). There were six

participants in each group, three males and three females; all were graduate students at Arizona State University, and members of each group were acquainted with each other to comparable degrees.

Transcripts were made of each collaborative interaction, following the general transcription conventions of the early ethnomethodologists (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). The data were coded on two levels: (1) an episodic, discourse level and (2) a speech-act level, which partially included co-occurring politeness features, both described more fully below. As noted, while this paper cannot attempt definitive, cross-linguistic generalizations, given the limited number of subjects, at the same time it does raise some interesting comparisons which are expected to lead to further ideas for investigation.

Results and discussion.

Overview. The main findings can be summarized as follows. The CC group exhibited the most efficient use of time, although both the AE and CC groups scored equally well when group rankings were compared with the expert's. Each group displayed the same general episodic organization, but the AE group's interaction was more complex in sub-episodes than either the CC or the CE groups. The AE group also displayed a greater variety of speech act types and linguistic forms for realizing the acts (encoded frequently with negative politeness) than either Chinese group. There was just a hint of transfer in the use of two speech acts in the two Chinese groups which were virtually absent in the AE group.

Efficiency. When it comes to the overall efficiency of group functioning, as might be expected, the groups working in their

native languages fared better than the group working in its L2. The CC group finished easily in less than 20 minutes; the AE group finished the task comfortably in 32 minutes; the CE group rushed to finish in 40 minutes. According to computations on the accurate ordering of survival items, which compares the individual group member's score with the group score and with the desert survival expert's score, where the lower the score the better (See Appendix A), the AE and CC groups had the same good numerical score: 50. The CE group, however, had a score of 80, considerably poorer. Nonetheless, all three groups had a better group score than their average individual scores, which was the expected outcome on this group-oriented task.

Episodic organization. For the purposes of this paper, 'episode' is defined as a coherent sequence of sentences of a discourse, linguistically marked for beginning and/or end, and further defined in terms of some kind of 'thematic unity' (van Dijk, 1981:177). Three major episodes comprise the most general segments of the desert survival task discourse: (a) getting started, (b) ranking, and (c) concluding. The (b) episode was further divided into sub-episodes marking where the group reanalyzed strategies for approaching the overall task, as certain group members challenged the previously agreed upon ranking system.

In this level of comparison across the groups, it seems that the AE group conducted a somewhat more complex (b) episode than either of the other two groups (as illustrated in the comparable episodes below), which helps explain why they took longer to complete the task than the CC group, who were also conducting the

exercise in their native language. One AE member was very persistent, although quite mitigating, in seeking group attention to his opinions about how to conduct the ranking--persuasive negotiation by this group member underlay this sub-episode of the analysis (see Episode B, 9 (a-(m) below).

In the CC group, on the other hand, the only opinion on ranking strategy, which was simply a straightforward request that group members add justification to their suggested rankings, was immediately adopted by the group without discussion. The CE group, while exhibiting more complexity than the CC group, but much less than the AE group, reached an impasse in agreement on strategy for ranking, unlike either group, and switched instead to a different strategy in order to complete the task, as shown below.

Episode A: Getting started

In getting started, the Americans spent roughly fifteen turns joking around before someone joked, "Are you the expert here?", indirectly eliciting the first opinion on ranking. The other two groups started very directly: CE: "So how about we just see the rank, how about the first one?" and CC: (in translation) "Ok, let's begin. Well, let's start with [name of person in the group]."

It would take a comparison of more groups in order to test whether this difference in taking charge is cultural or due to unidentified, individual factors. In these data, however, no American directly assumed a leadership role, even after many turns, whereas a leader emerged in the first turn for both Chinese groups.

Episode B: Ranking

When it comes to the strategies for approaching the ranking of the items, the AE interaction suggested eleven sub-episodes, numbered below, compared to only three for the CC group and four for the CE group:

A. Strategies for ranking survival items (AE group):

1. State most important item, then next important, giving opinions and justifications for item's importance, rotating across many speakers:

--"Water's the most important."

2. Suggest reorganization of strategy for ranking:

--"Maybe we should, this is just a thought, but maybe we should go through, maybe we should just start at the top of the list and find out what everybody thinks we can use these things FOR, and then and then you could just go through them and then after we find out what everybody's ideas are..."

3. Give use of items as the group goes down the list: many volunteer what ranking the items had on their individual lists:

--"What would we use the jack knife for?"

--"We could cut open a cactus."

4. Decide to begin group ranking:

--"So should we start ranking?"

5. Give rank and justification for ranking, rotating across all group members:

--"I put four the mirror, because the signalling thing is is important because a mirror you can signal during the day, far away, you know."

6. Question the underlying motivation for the ranking strategy followed to this point (one group member's opinion that the group should "stay put" as opposed to walking across the desert challenges the team's overall survival strategy, but he is not ratified for the time being):

--"I agree with what [name] is saying, since the water is number one, but what I, what I understand of survival, you're supposed to stay put, which means you gotta have signals, right?"

--"But we're not staying put; we're hiking to the mining camp."

7. Reinterpret the instructions:

--"Well, we're talking about priorities here, what if you only had five items, which five items would they be, see, that's the idea."

8. Continue giving rank and justification for items across all members.

9. Discuss when they will be walking versus when "staying put" to determine overall survival strategy, which has still not been resolved (the following comments occur over 10 pages of text as Speaker A (the speaker of 6. above, supported partially by a second speaker) gradually obtains final ratification of his idea):

Speaker A:

(a) "Well, I contend that we should stay put."

(b) "Well, first of all, is the consensus that we're travelling? Because my idea is that we should stay put."

(c) "That's one of the main ideas of survival in the desert is to stay put so that somebody can come and find you."

Speaker B:

(d) "Actually, I believe the intelligent thing is to stay put."

(e) "I think we should stay put."

Speaker A:

(f) "Well, why do we need the map and the compass if we're staying put?"

(g) "Let's drop the compass and the map. We're staying put."

(h) "Let's drop the compass and the map for now. We're staying put."

(i) "So let's stay put, the only way we can () the map and compass, so let's start over."

(j) "Survivalists will tell you, you stay put."

(k) "Let's erase the map and the compass."

(l) "Start it over."

(m) "We're staying put." (repeated by four speakers).

10. Rerank items according to new overall strategy of "staying put":

--"Ok, so one is water."

11. Reorganize the ranking strategy:

--"Ok, let's maybe do this from a different point of view.

Since we decided to stay we have the parachute. We don't care about. . . we have some signalling . . . Let's start with the least important things, and kind of deal with the middle ones."

B. Strategies for ranking survival items (CC group):

1. Give ranking of item across many speakers while going down the list. (using no justification).

2. Reorganize strategy to include justification:

(translation):

--"We should discuss the difference" (i.e. We should give justifications)

3. Give ranking and justification, recycling through all items.

C. Strategies for ranking survival items (CE group):

1. State most important item, then next important, giving opinions and justifications for item's importance and rank, across all speakers:

--"I think parachute. I think for your security."

2. Attempt and re-attempt (by one speaker) to redefine the instructions across several turns until speaker is ratified:

Speaker A:

(a) "My our question is that if we can bring only one thing, what we will want to bring, if we can bring only two things what we want to bring."

(b) "You know the problem is like the problem, excuse me, the problem right now is that, which are we going to bring first. That didn't mean that if we bring the compass we can't bring salt."

(c) "This important series means if you can bring only one thing you bring one thing. If you can bring two, you bring two. That means if if you want to leave and, they say you bring only one, what do you want to bring."

(d) "This is important, the series for importance which means that if you if if they allow you to bring nine you can only bring nine items. But, you see, if you bring . . ."

Speaker B:

--"Ok, how about we leave these two because we only have fifteen minutes. We leave these two and then we go to five. Is that ok? And then if we have time, we'll come back and discuss. What do you think?"

4. Continue opinions and justifications of rankings and rank items until finished.

Episode C: Concluding

The groups concluded the task as follows, with a note of humor in the AE group, and a simple note of accomplishment in the others:

AE: "We're all gonna die like dogs."

CC: (in translation) "Well, finished. Not yet 20 minutes."

CE: "Done!"

While Episode C was very simple, the process in Episode B of negotiating which system of ranking to use extended over many minutes and many turns in the interactions, and was especially dynamic in the AE group. This analysis suggests that in at least some collaborative groups of peers the issuance of one speech act (such as making a suggestion--see 9. (a-m)) is not enough to gain one's conversational goal. Long interim exchanges and building tactics may also be required before compliance is achieved. Furthermore, other factors, including different cultural norms or different gender-related behavior, will probably interrelate in very complex ways. These ideas will also be reflected in the speech-act analysis in the next section.

Speech-act/functions and linguistic forms. Exhaustive coding for speech acts/functions in the three interactions (AE, CC, CE) was

attempted. However, the analysis reported here is considered preliminary in that the problems raised by Flowerdew (1990), mentioned above, abounded. Corder (cited in Holmes (1983:92)) may be right in suggesting that attempts to devise a universal and comprehensive set of speech act categories "are at the stage of what has been called botanizing--the pre-theoretical or natural history stage in the development of a science." It is very difficult to determine what function or overlapping functions a particular utterance represents.

However, speech act/function categories and the variously 'polite' exponents which realize those acts were based on Williams (1988), who compared the speech acts in the naturally-occurring conversation of a set of three business meetings (in British English) with the speech acts taught in over 30 ESL business textbooks. ('Interruption', however, was ignored and 'compliment', 'apologize' and 'concede' were added (See Appendix B)).

Amazingly, Williams discovered that there was almost no overlap between the linguistic forms that speech acts took in real business meetings and the forms that are taught to students in the textbooks examined. For example, the textbooks taught 28 ways of encoding the speech act of 'expressing opinion', such as 'I definitely think that'; 'I'm sure that'; 'I really do think that'; 'as I see it', 'I consider', 'I feel'; 'in my opinion', etc., but in the actual meetings, the majority of expressions of opinion were either implicit statements or simple versions of 'I think'. According to Williams, the real meetings were much less explicit than what students were being taught. She questioned, then, how

useful it was to teach functions and linguistic forms apart from discourse strategies that are situated in and built across an entire speech event.

Likewise, in the desert survival data, this question was also relevant. We have already seen the elaborate re-issuing of a directive to reorganize the ranking strategy, stated in various ways above in 9 (a-m). To take two other examples of build-up across the discourse, we can compare the lengthy negotiation over a suggestion by a female member in each of the CE and AE groups. In the first, the CE female does not gain compliance, but in the second, the AE female does.

In the CE interaction, one female group member who repeatedly, over many turns, tried to insert the mirror into the ranking in a high position, was virtually ignored, and ended up settling for placement of the mirror in last position (15 out of 15 items) when, ironically, the correct answer, according to the expert survivalist, was to rank the mirror first:

--"How about the mirror?"

--(4 pages later a second female supports the use of the mirror): "Then in this case, I think mirror is more important than parachute, because if you put the parachute on the ground, then you can't walk away. You have to stay there."

--(3 pages later) "A mirror, though, a mirror will be durable. I mean it don't need uh it doesn't need a battery."

--(3 pages later) "But we can use the mirror, right?"

--(5 pages later) "I think the mirror."

--(Response: (Male) "You always like the mirror."
<laughter>.)

--(1 page later) "Can we use the mirror now?"

--(Response: (Male) "No." <laughter>)

--(3 pages later) "Mirror? Fifteen." (She accepts ranking of the mirror in final position).

By comparison, a female speaker in the AE group, who did not want salt tablets to be ranked high, contrary to demands of members of the group, did gain her conversational goal. Tablets were in the end ranked 12 (out of 15):

--"I can't stand salt tablets. They make me violently sick."

--(16 pages later, when salt tablets are suggested): "I hate salt tablets."

--(15 pages later): "I hate salt tablets. They make me nauseous; if you're not gonna eat, they'll make you throw up."

--(15 turns later): "I don't want salt tablets."

--(5 pages later): "No, I don't want the salt tablets. It's not a palate thing, it is, I know more people from my wonderful days of girl scouting that puked when they took their salt tablets because it made them sick and if you don't have anything to eat and you're throwing up, and you really get dehydrated quite rapidly. So I wouldn't use the salt tablets, personally. But you guys can have them and eat them to your heart's content, and if you all die then I'll have the water."

--(3 pages later; response (male)): "She said the salt tablets are not good, everybody think that?", (and the tablets are ranked 12).

A summary numerical comparison of the speech acts/functions in the task is shown in Table 1. An exhaustive comparison of the speech acts and the linguistic forms which realize them is given in Appendix C. With the exception of the speech act of 'agree', which occurred with so much frequency and probable inaudibility (e.g., masked "mm-hmm's") that occurrences could not be reliably totalled, all other speech acts were quantified in order to obtain a rough, percentage-based comparison, shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

	AE		CC		CE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Disagree	69	9.8	20	5.6	52	14.1
Give opinion	360	51.3	200	56.2	100	27.0
Suggest/direct	37	5.3	20	5.6	20	5.4
Ask agreement	0	---	5	1.4	26	7.0
Elicit	120	17.1	33	9.3	70	18.9
Sound out	5	.07	12	3.4	10	2.7
Focus	31	4.4	4	1.1	22	5.9
Show intention	1	---	0	---	0	---
Explain	65	9.3	54	15.2	60	16.2
Ask rep/clar	8	1.1	8	2.2	10	2.7
Compliment	2	.03	0	---	0	---
Apologize	2	.03	0	---	0	---
Concede/Compromise	1	---	0	---	0	---
*TOTAL	701	100	356	100	370	100

*Totals exclude 'agree' as a speech act category.

Several interesting outcomes arise from the comparisons of Table 1. All three group interactions exhibited similar frequencies of acts of 'suggesting/directing' and 'asking for repetition/clarification', although the percentages of these occurrences are low in all groups.

However, with regard to other speech acts, the groups behaved quite differently. Both the CC and CE groups 'sounded someone out' more frequently than the AE group did; they both also 'asked for agreement' occasionally, a speech act categorically absent from the AE interaction. The CE group used more 'disagreements' and less 'giving of opinions' than either of the other two groups. The CC group did less 'eliciting', more 'sounding out' and less 'focusing'. The AE group gave fewer explanations and was the only group to use the four acts of 'showing intention', 'complimenting', 'apologizing' or 'conceding'.

It is very difficult to determine the significance of this variation, given the limited number of groups under analysis and the somewhat arbitrary delimitation of speech acts. However, there is some suggestion of transfer of native Mandarin speech act use to L2 English in that the two Chinese groups 'sounded someone out' and 'asked for agreement', while in the AE group the first act rarely occurred and the second act did not occur at all. Both of these acts hint at a greater concern for others' opinions in making the group function better collaboratively. One CC group member even commented on the group's solidarity: "We Oriental people [think this way]." These findings support the claimed contrasts between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (e.g., Okabe, 1983),

where social relationships are looser in the former (e.g., U.S. culture) and tighter in the latter (e.g., China) (Boldt, 1978).

Although the numbers are small, there is also greater variation in the types of speech acts used in the AE group relative to the other groups, which suggests that Mandarin-speaking second language learners would benefit greatly from exposure to the variety of contextualized speech acts which occur in various AE collaborative settings.

Similarly, the catalogue of linguistic forms which realize these functions (displayed in Appendix C), indicates greater variation in the AE group, too. For example, ways of expressing agreement total only six types in the two Chinese groups, while the AE group used at least fifteen various forms. Expressions of disagreement, opinion, suggestion/direction and explanation also exhibit much greater variety in the AE group.

Looking specifically at forms for realizing the two primary acts of control in the conversation, disagreeing and suggesting/directing, in the disagreements of the AE interaction we find a gamut of direct forms (e.g. "I don't buy that.", "There is, too.", "No way.") as well as forms which are mitigated (e.g. "Well, actually..."; "That's true, but"; "I agree, but..."). There is almost no mitigation of disagreements in the CC group (e.g. "But...") and less variety of mitigation in the CE group (e.g. "Yes, I know, but..."; "Actually,..."), although most disagreements are mitigated, i.e., use negatively polite expressions.

Most suggestions/directives are generally unmitigated for all three groups, which probably reflects peer-group interaction and

suggests that these acts are inherently less face-threatening than disagreements. Both English-speaking groups issue many straightforward strong modals ("We gotta", "We have to", "We should"), although bald imperatives ("Wait", "Look", "Start over") are characteristic only of the AE group. Further judgment tests need to be applied to the Chinese forms in order to determine levels of mitigation/directness; however, the tags "hao ma" and "hao le" are occasional mitigators on directive forms.

Conclusions.

By comparing the language performance of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and English to English L2 performance across similar speech events, this brief analysis has suggested a methodology for discovering potential areas of pragmatic transfer. Tendencies for transfer which must be further tested were revealed in the greater concern for receiving opinions of all group members in both Chinese groups relative to the American group.

Clearly, a much greater variety and complexity of conversational strategizing by the native English speakers was evident in the (admittedly limited) data here. This difference was revealed only by analyzing contextualized language across the whole discourse event, and illustrates why we need more comprehensive models of language use in the classroom and in textbooks. Students need to see more examples of situationally appropriate uses of politeness, and to be shown how they can argue a point and persuade listeners to agree with them, through the use of supporting explanation and justifications, repetitious persistence, as well as other speaker strategies. As Williams (1988:53) argues, "we are

probably doing our students a disservice in teaching them functions such as expressing opinion in isolation, as this does not reflect what speakers do with language."

Future data could explore whether the comparative simplicity of the Chinese groups is a general pattern and whether, in situations where Chinese and English speakers are interacting with each other, problems related to these differences arise. Young (1982), for example, found certain discourse difficulties in business meetings, such that Westerners viewed Chinese businessmen as 'beating around the bush'. This indirection she attributed to the topic-comment structure of Mandarin. However, no evidence of greater 'beating around the bush' in the two Chinese groups relative to the American group occurred in these data. This discrepancy alone points to the need for much more research before we presume that our classrooms offer definitive models built on complete cross-cultural and cross-linguistic understanding.

References

- Austin, J. 1962. How to do things with words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boldt, E.D. 1978. Structural tightness and cross-cultural research. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 9, 151-165.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S. 1987. Politeness: Some universals in language usage. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- van Dijk. 1981. Episodes as units of discourse analysis. In D. Tannen (Ed.), Analyzing discourse: Text and talk (pp. 177-195). Georgetown: Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics.
- Druckman, D. (Ed.) 1977. Negotiation: Social-Psychological Perspectives. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Edelsky, C. 1981. Who's got the floor? Language in Society, 10, 383-421.
- Faerch, C. and Kasper, G. 1984. Pragmatic knowledge: rules and procedures. Applied Linguistics, 5, 214-225.
- Flowerdew, J. 1990. Problems of speech act theory from an applied perspective. Language Learning, 40, 79-105.
- Goffman, E. 1959. The presentation of self in everyday life. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Holmes, J. 1983. The structure of teachers' directives. In J. Richards & R. Schmidt (Eds.), Language and communication (pp. 89-115). London: Longman.

- Littlewood, W. 1988. Contrastive pragmatics and the foreign language learner's personality. Applied Linguistics, 4, 200-206.
- Okabe, R. 1983. Cultural assumptions of East and West: Japan and the United States. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), Intercultural communication theory: Current perspectives (pp. 21-44). Beverly Hills, Ca: Sage.
- Pearson, B. 1990a. 'Role-ing out control at church business meetings: directing and disagreeing. Language Sciences, 11, 289-304.
- _____. 1990b. Power and politeness in conversation: Encoding of face-threatening acts at church business meetings. Anthropological Linguistics, 30, 68-93.
- _____ and Lee, K.S. In press. Power and politeness at Korean and American church business meetings. Proceedings of the International Conference on Cross-Cultural Communication. San Antonio, Texas.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. & Jefferson, G. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. Language, 50: 696-735.
- Searle, J. 1969. Speech acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, M. 1988. Language taught for meetings and language used in meetings: Is there anything in common? Applied Linguistics 9, 45-58.
- Young, L. 1982. Inscrutability revisited. In J. Gumperz (Ed.), Language and social identity (pp. 72-84). NY: Cambridge.

Appendix A*

Desert Survival Task

The Situation:

It is approximately 10:00 a.m. in mid August and you have just crash landed in the Sonoran Desert in southwestern United States. The light twin engine plane, containing the bodies of the pilot and the co-pilot, has completely burned. Only the air frame remains. None of the rest of you have been injured.

The pilot was unable to notify anyone of your position before the crash. However, he had indicated before impact that you were 70 miles south-southwest from a mining camp which is the nearest known habitation, and that you were approximately 65 miles off the course that was filed in your VFR Flight Plan.

The immediate area is quite flat and except for occasional barrel and saguaro cacti appears to be rather barren. The last weather report indicated the temperature would reach 110 degrees that day, which means that the temperature at ground level will be 130 degrees. You are dressed in light weight clothing--short sleeved shirts, pants, socks and street shoes. Everyone has a handkerchief. Collectively, your pockets contain \$2.83 in change, \$85.00 in bills, a pack of cigarettes, and a ballpoint pen.

Your Task:

Before the plane caught fire your group was able to salvage the 15 items listed on the next page. Your task is to rank these items according to their importance to your survival, starting with "1" as the most important, to "15" as the least important.

You may assume -

1. the number of survivors is the same as the number on your team;
2. you are the actual people in the situation;
3. the team has agreed to stick together;
4. all items are in good condition.

Step 1 -

Each member of the team is to individually rank each item. Do not discuss the situation or problem until each member has finished the individual ranking.

Step 2 -

After everyone has finished the individual ranking, rank order the 15 items as a team. Once discussion begins do not change your individual ranking.

Your team will have until _____ o'clock to complete this step.

*(The original source of this task is unknown; for a full explanation of scoring and expert ranking, contact the author.)

Appendix B

Comparison of functions in business meetings, business textbooks (Williams, 1988) and desert survival task:

<u>Meetings:</u>	<u>Textbooks:</u>	<u>Desert survival task:</u>
agree	agree	agree
disagree	disagree	disagree
give opinion	give opinion	give opinion
suggest	suggest	suggest/direct
direct	direct	
elicit	ask for agreement	ask for agreement
focus	elicit	elicit
intention	open/close a meeting	sound someone out
explain	keep to agenda	focus
conclude	sound someone out	intention
interrupt	establish topic	explain
correct	promise action/ show intention	ask for repetition/ clarification
ask for repetition/ clarification	explain	compliment
	conclude	apologize
	state aims	conceded/compromise
	say can't answer	
	interrupt	

Appendix C

Comparison of exponents/linguistic forms which realize the speech acts/functions in the 'desert survival' task:

AE=Americans in English; **CC**=Chinese in Chinese; **CE**=Chinese in English

1. Agree:**AE**

(yes), that's true/right/fine/exactly
 (yeah), that's good/great/that'd be a good way
 Mm-hmm/uh-huh
 yeah, really/that's what I was thinking
 well, that's an idea
 yeah, right, for Pete's sake
 I agree, especially when....
 This is true.
 I think [name]'s right.
 I'll buy that.
 repetition of previous utterance

CC

dui, wo ye... 'right, I do, too'
 dui, (dui) 'right, (right)'
 hao 'good'
 ok
 a 'yeah'
 repetition of previous utterance

CE

Yeah
 Ok.
 I think so.
 Yes/Mm-hmm/Uh-huh
 You're right.
 I agree (what you said).

2. Disagree:**AE (69)**

except ...
 well, (actually) ...
 no
 no way
 (yes/yeah/ok/that's true/ I agree), but...(16)
 I don't think it ...
 wait, but ...
 I don't buy that
 There is, too ...
 Sure, we do.
 inexplicit statements (16)

CC (20)

bu guo 'but' (12)

bu hui 'no, it can't...'
 inexplicit statements (6)
CE (52)
 no
 yeah/yes/I know, but (19)
 That's not true.
 actually, ...
 not necessarily
 inexplicit statements (6)

3. Give opinion:

AE (360)
 well, I happen to know
 I (don't/do/should) think (40)
 I'm thinking
 as far as ...
 I'd rather ...
 what I was thinking of was
 I thought
 you know
 actually, I believe
 I would say, you know
 of course ...
 so I guess
 I would ...
 maybe
 I'd like/I personally would like
 I contend that
 my idea is that
 other statements, not explicitly expressing opinion (200 +),
 e.g. The cosmetic mirror is two.

CC (200)
 'I thought'
 'I think' (13)
 'I was/am thinking'
 'I believe'
 'My opinion is this'
 'I say'
 'perhaps'
 'I tell you'
 'it seems that'
 other statements (150 +)
 e.g., We must have water.

CE (100)
 (actually) I think (20)
 another thing is
 what I'm thinking
 my feeling about xxxx is that
 another way is that
 so, my opinion, my comment is
 maybe/perhaps

other statements, not explicitly expressing opinion (75)
e.g., You can pull it.

4. Suggest/direct:

AE (37)

maybe we should
why don't we
ok, (so) let's (maybe/just)
let's
let me
(now), [verb] (e.g., wait/look/ start over/erase)
can we (e.g., go on)?
so should we xxx?
ok, well, explain why
we have to
we gotta
we need to
what if we xxx?

CC (20)

women [verb], (hao ma?)	'we'll; let's'; how about;, ok?'
ni yao [verb]	'you want to/have to'
ni jiang	'you may tell'
jiu, hao le?	'the vodka, ok?'
[verb], e.g. fang dzai...	'put (location)'
wc yao shwo, [verb]	'I want to say, [verb]'

CE (20)

so how about (10)
can we xxx?
read the Bible
hint: e.g., water, water
we should consider
and, remember
we have to

5. Ask for agreement:

AE (none)

CC (5)

wo wen ni, ni yao bu yao xiang	'I ask you, don't you think...'
..., dui bu dui	'yes or no; right?'

CE (26)

Am I right?
Is that ok?
I think we xxx, right?
Nobody support my comments?
Agree?

6. Elicit (information):

AE (120)

interrogative, e.g., What would we use it for?

statement: I want to know why... (1)

CC (33)
interrogative

CE (70)
interrogative, e.g. How far is it?
rising intonation on phrase, e.g. You can use the jackknife to cut
snake? (20)

7. Sound someone out:

AE (5)
What did you guys put...
So you would put what fourth?
What are your thoughts, [name]?
Everybody think that/agree?

CC (12)
'what do you think of it?'
'what about you?'
'what about [noun]?'
'any other ideas?'
'what should be the third?'

CE (10)
Ok, how about the other guys/others?
What did you put?
What do you think?
What else do you want to bring?
How long do you think...

8. Focus (establish topic/conclusion):

AE (31)
Ok, so two is the compass.
So we know we should compromise.
Ok, so um .45 caliber pistol. (as next topic of discussion)
Now what we have left is ...

CC (4)
Number 12.
Now number 14.

CE (22)
Ok, the salt.
Third one.
So it seems that some people think ...
Number seven.
Next, coat.

9. Show intention:

AE (1)
I'll take charge. (joking)

CC, CE (none)

10. Explain:

AE (65)

because (e.g., when you sweat...) (15)

see, (e.g., he had...)

this is my reasoning

well, it depends

I mean (8)

so that, you know

that's why

the only reason

the idea is to

that means

like

that would depend

of course

statements, not explicitly explaining (15)

CC (54)

yinwei 'because'

'you see'

'I mean'

ruguo 'if'

'I want to emphasize'

statements, not explicitly explaining (30)

CE (60)

because (6)

otherwise

even though

you know

which means

(then) if (18)

it's like a

I mean

that's the key point

statements, not explicitly explaining (15)

11. Ask for repetition/clarification:

AE (8)

What?

What were you saying?

Beg your pardon?

What'd you say?

Did you say xxx?

CC (8)

shi ma/jen de ma?

'Really?'

[repeat word]

'Are you still talking about xxx?'

CE (10)

What do you mean?

Parachute, you mean?

Get what?

Coat?

So it means that xxx?

12. Compliment:

AE (2)

Well, we're doing great.

Hey, we're on our way.

CC, CE (none)

13. Apologize:

AE (2)

I'm sorry.

Oh, you're xxx; sorry

CC, CE (none)

14. Concede/compromise:

AE (1)

I will let the cosmetic mirror go as ...if you

CC, CE (none)