

Title: A comparison of input enhancement and explicit instruction of mitigators

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A COMPARISON OF INPUT ENHANCEMENT AND EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF MITIGATORS

Yoshinori J. Fukuya and Martyn K. Clark

Abstract

As the instructional shortcomings of Focus on FormS and Focus on Meaning have surfaced, Focus on Form (i.e., drawing brief attention to linguistic forms while learners engage primarily in meaning) has slowly but steadily gained the attention of researchers and teachers. The research question underlying this study was whether Focus on Form could be applied to the teaching of second language pragmatics. This study compared two instructional paradigms: Focus on FormS and Focus on Form. Provoked by the proposition that even advanced L2 learners cannot fully utilize pragmatic knowledge (e.g., mitigators), the researchers attempted to raise learners' consciousness about mitigators. Two questions were asked. First, to what extent does input enhancement (Focus on Form) affect learners' ability to recognize the appropriate use of mitigators? Second, does it affect their recognition ability as well as explicit instruction (Focus on FormS) does?

In this study, each of three randomly assigned groups (Focus on Form, Focus on FormS and Control) of adult ESL students took two types of posttests: listening comprehension and pragmatic recognition. The researchers created two versions of a videotaped drama in which the characters performed mitigated requests. The Focus on Form group watched the version that contained typographical enhancement of mitigators in captions, whereas the Focus on FormS group watched the version that gave the participants explicit instruction on mitigators. The Control Group watched a different videotape that did not show any requests. The participants' task in each group was to comprehend the content of the drama. Although the statistical results were inconclusive, the empirical study itself provides considerable insight into the operationalization of Focus on Form for purposes of interlanguage pragmatics pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

Three Paradigms in Second Language Instruction

The pendulum of second language instruction has swung between forms and meaning. As Long and Robinson (1998) claim, three options are available to language teachers. The first, Focus on FormS (Long, 1991), is a "synthetic" approach (Wilkins, 1976) in which teachers present linguistic items in a linear and additive fashion and the learners' task is to synthesize them. For instance, Focus on FormS encompasses synthetic syllabuses (e.g., structural, situational, notional-functional), synthetic methods (e.g., Total Physical Response, Silent Way) and such classroom activities as display questions and transformation exercises. On the other hand, the advocates of the second approach, Focus on Meaning, claim that learners learn languages best when they experience them as a means of communication and that incidental (i.e., without intention, while doing something else) and implicit (i.e., without awareness) learning is sufficient for adults' successful second language acquisition. Focus on Meaning includes immersion programs, the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) and Prahbu's (1987) procedural syllabus. While these two paradigms have enjoyed their theoretical and pedagogical popularity, there is general consensus in the SLA literature that neither instruction that focuses solely on linguistic forms (e.g., traditional grammar teaching) nor instruction that concentrates solely on communicative meaning while ignoring forms (e.g., immersion programs such as those reported in Swain & Lapkin, 1982) are effective or efficient in developing a high level of linguistic competence. (For a more complete overview, see Long, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998.) As the shortcomings of Focus on FormS and Focus on Meaning have surfaced, the third approach, Focus on Form (Long, 1991), has slowly but steadily gained the attention of researchers and teachers as an alternative to both of the preceding approaches. Conceptually, Focus on form involves "an occasional shift in attention to linguistic code features — by the teacher and/or one or more students — triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). In other words, it is characterized as learners' engagement in meaning with brief interventions and brief explicit instruction of linguistic codes as needed (Doughty & Williams, 1998a).

Several techniques have been associated with Focus on Form, varying from relatively unobtrusive and reactive, to more obtrusive and proactive (Doughty & Williams, 1998b). Towards the end of a continuum of Focus on Form in terms of degree of explicitness are input flood (Trahey, 1996; Trahey & White, 1993) and task-essential language (Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993; e.g., match-the-picture task). Somewhere between are recasts (Mackey & Philp, 1998), interaction enhancement (Muranoi, 1996) and dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990). At the other end of the continuum are consciousness-raising tasks (Fotos, 1993, 1994), input processing instruction (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993a, 1993b) and the Garden Path

technique (Tomasello & Herron, 1988, 1989).¹

Although the basic tenets of Focus on Form are relatively unproblematic, researchers differ in their interpretation of the extent to which linguistic forms should be emphasized, and also as to the timing of that emphasis (Doughty & Williams, 1998a). Some researchers (Long, 1991, 1996, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998) emphasize the need for Focus on Form to be radically "learner-centered," in the sense that it must always be in reaction to a learners' comprehension or production problem, which is "pervasive, systematic and remediable" (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 25) in the classroom. In addition, this position asserts that the linguistic item in question must be "learnable" (as claimed in the Multidimensional Model and the Processability Theory) by the learner in terms of the learners' internal psycholinguistic readiness (Meisel, Clahsen & Pienemann, 1981; Pienemann, 1984, 1989). On the other hand, other researchers (Swain, 1998; DeKeyser, 1998) support proactive, explicit and pre-planned techniques in the classroom.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The purpose of this study was to compare the efficacy of two teaching paradigms, that is, Focus on FormS and Focus on Form. This study is, thus, conceptually situated at the crossroads between Focus on Form and interlanguage pragmatics. Focus on Form is theoretically motivated by the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996) and the "noticing" hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1995). That is, teachers and researchers in this framework concern themselves with both negotiation for meaning and the allocation of learners' focal attention. While studies on Focus on Form have revolved around the morphosyntactical domain, some interlanguage pragmatists have attempted to teach pragmatic knowledge within the framework of Focus on FormS, such as complimenting and replying to compliments (Billmyer, 1990); apologies (Olshtain & Cohen, 1990); conversational implicature (Kubota, 1995); downgraders (Fukuya, 1998); and speech acts, registers, and the use of *tu* and *vous* (Lyster, 1994). Other researchers have compared different pedagogical approaches to teach pragmatic knowledge (Fukuya, Reeve, Gisi & Christianson, 1998; House, 1996; Pearson, 1998; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay & Thananart, 1997; Wilder-Basset, 1984). For a comprehensive review, see Kasper, 1997, 1999. Being aware of the increasingly accumulated knowledge in these areas, some researchers (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1997; Doughty & Williams, 1998b) suggest that the principles and efficacy of Focus on Form might be applied to the discourse and pragmatic levels. Provoked by this suggestion, this study takes a psycholinguistic approach (i.e., the use of input enhancement) to pragmalinguistics (i.e., focus on mitigators in requests) to join Focus on Form and interlanguage pragmatics. The following section, therefore, briefly reviews studies on both input enhancement and mitigators.

RELATED LITERATURE

Input Enhancement

In this study, Focus on Form was operationalized to use input enhancement (Sharwood-Smith, 1993), a technique in which part of the linguistic input is intonationally or typographically enhanced so that learners can better notice target forms. Some examples of input enhancement are highlighting, color-coding and font manipulation (Doughty & Williams, 1998b). White (1998), Alanen (1995), Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson and Doughty (1995) and Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman and Doughty (1995) focused on morphology. Doughty's (1991) focus was on syntax (relative clauses); Paribakht and Wesche (1997) targeted vocabulary, such as nouns, verbs and discourse connectives. The results of these studies have indicated that input enhancement is effective, at least temporarily (i.e., demonstrated in posttests) for morphosyntactical and lexical L2 learning. It thus appears possible for L2 learners to improve their linguistic ability while still focusing primarily on meaning.

Mitigators

Mitigators are pragmalinguistic items that soften the impositional force of a request by means of lexical and phrasal modification (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). These items can be either internal to the head act of the request or external to it. Faerch and Kasper (1989), Ellis (1992), Hill (1997), Nonaka (1998) and Rose (2000) investigated L2 learners' use of mitigators in requests, whereas Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990, 1993) examined L2 learners' use of mitigators in suggestions. The results of these six studies have suggested that more advanced L2 learners use more mitigators, but that even advanced L2 learners do not use mitigators as often as native speakers do. None of these studies examined the teachability of mitigators. This study, on the other hand, involved both the implicit and explicit teaching of mitigators.

THIS STUDY

The Foci of the Study

For this study, four types of mitigators in requests were chosen as the target pragmatic items as summarized in Figure 1: downtoner; subjective opinion; the combination of past tense, aspect and conditional clause; and disarmers. These four types of mitigators included six specific pragmalinguistic expressions (*perhaps; possibly; I'd be grateful if ...; I'd appreciate it if ...; I was wondering if ...; I know..., but...*). Figure 1 also shows the frequencies of these mitigators used in 30 scenarios in the instructional videotape used in the experimental treatment for the study. Forty-one mitigators were used in 30 scenarios because 11 disarmers (*I know..., but...*) were used with other mitigators.

Downtoners, the combination of past tense, aspect and conditional clause, and disarmer were chosen for this study because the participants in the current study were likely to be ready to learn these mitigators, as demonstrated in Fukuya (1998). Fukuya investigated which categories of downgraders (i.e., internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders, internally modified syntactic downgraders, or externally modified downgraders) were more learnable and therefore more teachable in requests. In Fukuya's study, 17 students (TOEFL scores ranged from 430 to 512) at a language school at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa received six one-hour periods of explicit instruction on downgraders over a period of five weeks. Although the study had its limitations because of its one-group, pretest-posttest design, the results of role-plays and a Discourse Completion Test indicated that downtoners, aspects and disarmers were easier for the students to learn than any other downgraders.

Figure 1: Six Types of Mitigators Used in the Study and their Frequencies in 30 Videotaped Scenarios

Mitigator	Type	Example	Frequency
<i>perhaps</i>	Downtoner	Can I <i>perhaps</i> borrow your notes?	5
<i>possibly</i>	Downtoner	Can you <i>possibly</i> let me borrow your notes?	6
<i>I'd be grateful if...</i>	Subjective opinion	<i>I'd be grateful if</i> you lend me your notebook.	5
<i>I'd appreciate it if...</i>	Subjective opinion	<i>I'd appreciate it if</i> you let me use your car for a few hours.	4
<i>I was wondering if...</i>	The combination of past tense, aspect and conditional clause	<i>I was wondering if</i> I could audit the class.	10
<i>I know..., but...</i>	Disarmer	<i>I know</i> you don't like lending out	11

		your notes, <i>but</i> could you make an exception this time?	
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Adopted from Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989), Hill (1997), Trosborg (1995), and Van Mulken (1996)

For the current study, aspect (*I am wondering if ...*) used in Fukuya's study was simply replaced with the combination of past tense, aspect and conditional clause (*I was wondering if ...*). Furthermore, subjective opinion was added to the study for a practical reason. Considering the videotape segments in which money-seeking people requested money, subjective opinion (*I'd be grateful if ...; I'd appreciate it if ...*) seemed intuitively appropriate for these contexts.

Research Questions

The study addressed three research questions:

- (1) To what extent does explicit instruction (Focus on FormS) affect learners' ability to recognize appropriate use of mitigators?
- (2) To what extent does input enhancement (Focus on Form) affect learners' ability to recognize appropriate use of mitigators?
- (3) Which is more effective for improving learners' ability to recognize appropriate use of mitigators: Focus on FormS or Focus on Form?

Participants

The participants in this study were 34 students currently enrolled at three language schools at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. The data for 32 students (18 females and 14 males; 23 Japanese, 4 Chinese, 2 Koreans, 2 Taiwanese and 1 Iranian) were analyzed. Among them, 17 students self-reported their TOEFL scores, which ranged from 410 to 600.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research utilized a posttest only, control group design. This design was chosen to avoid pretest effects. In studies to investigate implicit learning, the use of a pretest can inadvertently heighten learners' awareness of target linguistic forms. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the following three groups:

- (1) Focus on FormS (10 students): An experimental group receiving explicit instruction
- (2) Focus on Form (11 students): An experimental group receiving input enhancement
- (3) A control group (11 students)

Figure 2 gives an overview of the research design.

Figure 2: Overview of Research Design

Condition			
	Focus on FormS (10 students)	Focus on Form (11 students)	Control (11 students)
Treatment	Video A: Focus on FormS version (total running time 48 minutes) +explicit instruction on mitigators (6 minutes) -input enhancement (42 minutes)	Video A: Focus on Form version (total running time 48 minutes) -explicit instruction on mitigators +explicit instruction on listening strategies (6 minutes) +input enhancement (42 minutes)	Video B (total running time 50 minutes) This video did not contain any requests.
Measures			
Listening Test	Comprehension Questions (A)	Comprehension Questions (A)	Comprehension Questions (B)
Posttest	Pragmatic Multiple Choice Test	Pragmatic Multiple Choice Test	Pragmatic Multiple Choice Test

Treatment Videotape

A 48-minute video was created for this study (See Figure 3). The video consisted of 30 scenarios in which a variety of people implored a millionaire called Mr. Money to give them money on the basis of their hard luck stories.² As Figure 3 shows, the combination A (-Power, +Distance, +Imposition) of three sociolinguistic variables was incorporated into the 30 scenarios in the video. All of the interactions were to a person with greater power than the speaker (-Power) who was unknown (+Social Distance) for a sum of money (+Imposition).

Figure 3: Distribution of Variables in the Video and Pragmatic Test

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Combination	Variables	Video (30 Scenarios)	Pragmatic Multiple- Choice Test (24 Items)
A	-Power, +Distance, +Imposition	30	8
B	+Power, -Distance, -Imposition	0	8
C	-Power, -Distance, +Imposition	0	8

All of the actors appearing in the video were native speakers of American English. Although the scenarios for each individual segment were conceived ahead of time, the actual dialogue in the video was spontaneous. The only exception was that the last line for each money-seeker, the actual request for money, was written ahead of time to ensure inclusion of the specific mitigators chosen as the foci of the study. Appendix A shows two sample scenario prompts.

Two versions of the treatment video (total running time 48 minutes) were created (See Figure 2). The first version (+explicit instruction, -input enhancement) was used for the Focus on FormS group. In this version, the first 6-minute segment had explicit instruction on mitigators. In non-technical terms, the presenter introduced the concepts of Power, Social Distance, and Imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1978) and their effect on the choice of pragmalinguistic form and provided two examples of making requests more appropriate through the use of the four downgraders previously mentioned. The remaining 42-minute segment consisted of 30 scenarios, with no captioning of the requests.

A second videotape version (-explicit instruction, +input enhancement) was made for the Focus on Form group. The first 6-minute segment of this version did not have explicit instruction on mitigators. Instead, it had explicit instruction on listening comprehension strategies, which remained general. This segment was included to keep the total time consistent for both experimental groups. The remaining 42-minute segment consisted of the same 30 scenarios. However, this version included on-screen, white captions during the request for money in each of the 30 segments. Within the captions, the mitigators appearing in the request were highlighted in yellow. An example is shown in (1).

(1) *I was wondering if you would give me \$120 to have my tattoo removed.*

Thus, the conceptual distinctions between the Focus on FormS and the Focus on Form approaches were realized as empirical distinctions in the video in two ways: explicit instruction and input enhancement. The Focus on FormS group had explicit instruction on mitigators without input enhancement, whereas the Focus on Form group had input enhancement without explicit instruction.

In contrast to these two experimental groups, the control group (-explicit instruction, -input enhancement) watched a Control video, which was a totally unrelated documentary film, *Biography: Harry Houdini* (total running time 50 minutes). This video did not contain any requests.

Assessment

Listening comprehension tests. A set of listening comprehension questions was produced based on the contents of video A (Focus on FormS and the Focus on Form versions). This test consisted of 30 multiple-choice items and was piloted with native speakers of American English to ensure that the questions were unambiguous. The test was the same for both experimental groups, and the prompts and answer choices were delivered within the video itself. Appendix B shows two sample questions. Similarly, a set of 30 multiple-choice questions was also created based on the contents of the control group video (Video B). Examples are shown in Appendix C.

The purpose of the listening comprehension test for Focus on FormS and Focus on Form groups was two-fold. One purpose was to verify, as the result of the random assignment of participants, the absence of significant difference between the two groups in terms of their listening comprehension ability. More importantly, as one of the vital aspects of Focus on Form is the learners' engagement in meaning, the second purpose was to ensure that the participants were focused on the overall meaning of the video and not only on its pragmatic aspects. This was achieved by requiring the participants to answer comprehension questions after each of the 30 scenarios in the video.

A pragmatic multiple choice test (PMCT). To assess the students' ability to recognize pragmatically appropriate utterances, a 24-item multiple-choice test was administered. The prompt for each question was a written scenario designed to elicit a request. Following the scenario, three possible answers were provided. Of the three choices, only one was pragmatically appropriate, while the other two exhibited inappropriate levels of formality, directness or politeness. All three choices were grammatically accurate. The test items were modified scenarios from Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1995); Fukuya, Reeve, Gisi and Christianson (1998); and Hill (1997), and were piloted on native speakers of American English. Appendix D shows two sample items.

Because pragmatic appropriateness is context- and interlocutor- dependent, items for each test were chosen with reference to their categorization within Brown and Levinson's (1978) framework, which describes three variables – Social Distance (D), Power (P), and degree of Imposition (I) – that act as universal constraints on linguistic action. All of the interactions in the video (Combination A in Figure 3) were requests to a person with greater power than the speaker (-Power) who was unknown (+Social Distance) for a sum of money (+Imposition). For assessment purposes, it was important to be sure that the learners were not merely overgeneralizing from the situation on the video (especially for the Focus on Form group) and were, in fact, sensitive to context and interaction. To control for possible overgeneralization, prompts for some of the multiple-choice items were chosen for the opposite setting of the Power, Distance and Imposition variables to include some answers which did not necessarily require the presence of downgraders to be appropriate (Combination B in Figure 3). In addition, in order to gauge learners' ability to extrapolate to new situations, a third set of items was included which involved the use of downgraders in requests, but did not mirror the exact setting of the three variables in the video (Combination C in Figure 3).

RESULTS

Listening Comprehension Test

A *t*-test was conducted and the difference between the two groups (Focus on FormS and Focus on Form) was not statistically significant at $p = .143$ (Table 1). This means that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of their general listening comprehension ability as the result of the random assignment.

Table 1: Means and SDs of Listening Comprehension Test

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Focus on FormS	10	12.40	3.06
Focus on Form	11	15.18	4.95

Pragmatic Multiple-Choice Test

An ANOVA for all three treatment groups (Focus on FormS, Focus on Form and Control) was conducted and the differences among the three groups were not statistically significant at $p = .362$. That is to say, there were no statistically significant differences among the three groups in terms of their pragmatic ability after the participants watched the videos (Table 2).

Table 2: ANOVA

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Between Groups	27.54	2	13.77	1.05	.362
Within Groups	379.95	29	13.10		
Total	407.50	31			

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

From Perceptual Saliency to Pragmalinguistic Saliency

The "noticing" hypothesis assumes that "what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning" (Schmidt, 1995, p. 20). On the basis of this assumption, requests, in particular mitigators, were made perceptually more salient in the present study to increase the likelihood that the participants would become aware of them. Despite this technological intervention, the results of this study suggest at least the following two possibilities: (1) typographical enhancement was not perceptually salient enough to draw the participants' attention to the mitigators; (2) although typographical enhancement was perceptually salient enough to draw the participants' attention to the mitigators, perceptual saliency was not sufficient for pragmalinguistic learning. In either case, future researchers may want to arrange *pragmalinguistic saliency* in such a way that at least the following four factors are salient to learners; (1) a pragmalinguistic form; (2) its function; (3) a situation in which such a form is required; and (4) the particular Power, Distance and Imposition values involved.

Assessment Instrument

Another issue for future researchers to keep in mind concerns the assessment instrument; the results of the present study indicate that the Pragmatic Multiple-Choice Test (PMCT) might not be sensitive enough to accurately measure participants' pragmatic ability. Although the multiple-choice format allowed for the testing of pragmatic knowledge without requiring production on the part of the participants, two drawbacks emerged. The first was the difficulty in creating appropriate distractors, especially for scenarios designed to elicit responses that did not require the use of mitigators. During the pilot testing of the PMCT on native English speakers, it was noted that the most frequently revised items were those in which the Power, Social Distance and Imposition "settings" did not require the use of a mitigated request, such as the scenario in which a classroom teacher is asking a student for the phone number of Tina, another student. Whereas most native English speakers chose a response such as (2), some chose mitigated responses, as in (3).

- (2) Excuse me, but I need to get a hold of Tina. Do you have her phone number?
- (3) Excuse me, but do you happen to have Tina's phone number? I would appreciate it if you could tell me.

Although these items were modified until agreement was reached in further piloting, it is possible that the modified distractors for some items represented extremes in acceptability, as in the modification shown in (4), rather than more subtle distinctions.

- (4) Excuse me, but do you have Tina's phone number? If you do, I was wondering if you could possibly tell me. I know this is a lot to ask, but I really need to get a hold of her.

A second drawback was that because the PMCT was absolute in terms of allowing for only one correct answer, there was no way to measure relative improvement as a result of treatment. It could have been the case, for example, that without the treatment, some participants would have chosen the least acceptable of the three answer choices. Because of the treatment, they might choose an answer that was slightly more acceptable, yet still insufficient when compared to native English speakers. Future researchers would do well to investigate ways in which to increase the sensitivity of the measures used.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the notion that Focus on Form may be an effective pedagogical framework for teaching pragmalinguistics. Specifically, Focus on Form was operationalized to use input enhancement with four types of mitigators. This was realized through the use of captions in 30 requests in a created video. In the video, the effectiveness of this treatment was tested against that of explicit instruction on the mitigators, and the treatment of both groups was measured against that of a control group who watched a video that did not contain any requests.

Although the findings are inconclusive regarding the efficacy of Focus on Form to teach pragmalinguistics through input enhancement, one cannot dismiss the future possibility of further Focus on Form studies yielding significant results. The brevity of treatment (48-minute video), combined with weak statistical power (sample size of 32) made statistically significant results unlikely in this study. Additionally, since this study used a posttest-only design to minimize test effects, it was impossible to detect any improvement as a result of the treatment, even if such improvement did occur. These inconclusive findings should therefore not be seen as evidence of the failure of Focus on Form in the realm of second language pragmatics instruction.

The reported study may be considered to be of some value in its exposure

of several key issues which future researchers examining input enhancement in pragmalinguistics instruction could usefully bear in mind. These include pragmalinguistic saliency and assessment issues, in particular, the need to develop more highly sensitive means of measuring changes in pragmalinguistic competence than appear possible using a multiple-choice format.

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NOTES

¹ Using rigorous criteria, Long excludes consciousness-raising tasks, input processing instruction and the Garden Path technique from the Focus on Form continuum (personal communication).

² Inspiration for this concept was the weekly column, *Thanks a Million* by Percy Ross as published in the *MidWeek* newspaper (RFD Publications, Honolulu, HI).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Scenario Prompts

You are an 24-year-old graduate student. Although you are very serious about your studies now, you used to be a bad student. In fact, you were the member of a gang. You are planning to get a real job next year after you graduate. Unfortunately, you still have the gang tattoo on your arm that you got when you were younger. You will start having job interviews in a few weeks, and you think that the tattoo will cause you problems. You need \$120 to have the tattoo removed.

LINE: I was wondering if you would give me \$120 to have my tattoo removed.

You are a graduate student working on a research project. You have spent several weeks doing a literature review and working on your research design. Although you think that your research will be very important to the field, you do not have enough money to give the research participants anything for helping you with your study. You would really like \$35 to pay for movie tickets for your five subjects.

LINE: Can you possibly give me some money to help with this study?

Appendix B: Sample Listening Comprehension Questions Based on Video A for the Focus on FormS and Focus on Form groups

Why does the graduate student need money?

- (a) To get a tattoo on his arm.
- (b) To buy a tattoo.
- (c) To get his tattoo taken off.
- (d) To draw a tattoo on his arm.

How will the woman spend the money?

- (a) To do a literature review.
- (b) To design her research.
- (c) To watch a movie
- (d) To compensate her participants.

Appendix C: Sample Listening Comprehension Questions Based on Video B for the Control group

Q. What does the name 'Houdini' mean?

- (a) It means 'great magician.'
- (b) It means 'like Houdin.'
- (c) It means 'expert illusionist.'
- (d) It means 'little wooden one.'

Q. How did Houdini's wife pass keys to him during one of his tricks?

- (a) With her feet.
- (b) With her hair.
- (c) With her clothing.
- (d) With her mouth.

Appendix D: Sample Items from Pragmatic Multiple-Choice Test

Situation: You are meeting the loan officer at the financial aid office on campus. You have a conflict with a group project meeting so you can't go. The office has no other appointments available for the next two weeks, but you need your loan approval very urgently. You go into the office to explain your situation.

- (a) I can't make our scheduled meeting. I need an appointment for another day.
- (b) I can't make our scheduled meeting. I was wondering if it would be possible to schedule an appointment on a different day.
- (c) I might possibly have a conflict with our scheduled appointment. Can I get a different one?

Situation. You are applying for a new job in a small company and want to make an appointment for an interview. You know the manager is very busy and only schedules interviews in the afternoon from one to four o'clock. However, you currently work in the afternoon. You want to schedule an interview in the morning. You go into the office this morning to turn in your application form and you see the manager.

- (a) Excuse me, I'm applying for the recent opening and wanted to get an appointment for an interview. I know that you normally schedule interviews in the afternoon, but I was wondering if you might make an exception for me since I work in the afternoon.
- (b) I'd like to make an appointment for an interview. I know that you are very busy in the morning, but I'll come here at 10:00. O.K.?
- (c) Excuse me. I'd like to make a morning appointment for an interview.