Extracting *criterial* features from requests produced by Japanese low-proficiency learners of English

TOKYO UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN STUDIES

6 MARCH 2016

Aika Miura
Tokyo University of Agriculture
dawn1110am@gmail.com
1. The Purpose of the Study

To identify **criterial features** of pragmalinguistic competence of the CEFR A1-and A2-level learners in the NICT JLE (Japanese Learner English) Corpus

**Criterial Features** - those which are characteristic and indicative of L2 proficiency at each of the levels and which distinguish one level from the next (Hawkins & Filipović, 2012).

80% of Japanese learners belong to A-levels.

(Negishi, Takada & Tono, 2012)
2. Research Questions

◆ RQ1. What types of request strategies (and what linguistic features) are observed at each level?

◆ RQ2. What linguistic functions do the identified requestive speech acts occur in at each level?

◆ RQ3. What linguistic features characterise successful and erroneous requestive speech acts at each level?
3. The NICT JLE Corpus

- 1,281 Japanese learners of English
- The Standard Speaking Test (SST) – 15-minute oral interview transcripts
- Holistically graded into nine proficiency levels (Level 1 – Level 9)
- Totalling approximately 2 million tokens

**Shopping Role-Play (Beginner and Intermediate Tasks):**
Interlocutor - shop assistant & Learner - customer
The customer purchasing an item
3.1 The Analyzed Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SST Level</th>
<th>CEFR Level</th>
<th>Difficulty of Task</th>
<th>The Number of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Beginner/Intermediate</td>
<td>68 (11+57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Izumi, Uchimoto and Isahara (2004); Tschirner and Bärenfänger (2012)
4. The Annotation Scheme

- Multi-layered annotation schemes
  
  i. Requestive speech acts (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989; Leech 2014)
  
  ii. Transaction: Functions of requestive speech acts in shopping role-plays & Naturalness (The Author’s Original)

- Tool: UAM Corpus Tool 3.2h (O’Donnell, 2015)

- Only learner data were manually annotated.
5. Research Question 1: What types of request strategies (and what linguistic features) are observed at each level?

- head-act \[\text{HEAD-ACT-TYPE}\] direct... conventionally-indirect...
5.1 Direct Strategy

### 5.2 Examples of Direct Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obligation</strong></td>
<td>Umm but I have to now buy this color shirts. (A2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Non-sentential Phrase*** | No, brown, mmm, gray, gray one. (A1)  
And ear ear phone, please. (A1) |
| **Desire**           | I want I want to buy long sleeve dress. (A1)                            
Urr I’d like to buy it err by this card. (A1)  
So I need the short short si short length. (A2) |
| **Imperative**       | So please show me green color. (A1); A a a let me see er for a few minutes. (A2) |
| **Statement***       | And its color is black. (A1); So I buy this one. (A2)                  |
| **Not-classifiable***| Buy it. (A1); Pay cards (A2); Ah I’m present for my friend. (A2)       |
| **Yes/No***          | No? (A1); Yes. Yes. (A2); Yes, please. (A2)                             |
5.3 Conventionally Indirect Strategy

- **Ability/permission (A/P)**
  - can
  - could
  - may

- **Willingness**
  - will-you
  - do/would-you-mind
  - would-you

- **Suggestory**
  - why-not
  - how/what-about

- **Possibility**
  - possible
  - subjunctive
  - without-if-clause

- **Subjectivizer**
  - wonder-if/whether
  - appreciate-if/whether
  - hope-that
  - think/thought-that

- **Existence**
  - do-you-have-item
  - is-there-item
  - i-look-for-item

- **Intention**
  - i-will
  - i-like
  - i-decided-to
  - i-come/am-here
5.4 Examples of Conventionally Indirect Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability/Permission</td>
<td>Can I try it? (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And uhh now, uhh could you umm discount more? (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eh May I try to ss this shoes? (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>Would you show me one? (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestory</td>
<td>So, how about er ten percent off? (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility*</td>
<td>Ahh Is it possible to take back this notebook computer today? (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivizer</td>
<td>But er I hope i it’s cheaper. (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence*</td>
<td>Do you have any jacket? (A1), Er mm i is there a walking shoes? (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m looking for some clothes. (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention*</td>
<td>I will have it. (A1); I will buy it. (A1), Er I like black color. (A1),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uum I decided that one. (A2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. RQ2. What linguistic functions do the identified requestive speech acts occur in at each level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dealing-with-transaction</th>
<th>Requesting-an-action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRANSACTION-2-TYPE</td>
<td>REQUESTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressing-intention-to-buy...</td>
<td>negotiating-for-discount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressing-or-asking-about-item...</td>
<td>asking-for-alternative-item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asking-for-recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asking-someone-to-show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asking-for-permission-to-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negotiating-for-exchange-or-return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asking-for-help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asking-for-refund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>suggesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asking-someone-to-perform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6.1 Examples of Typical Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Conventionally Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing intention to buy</strong></td>
<td>• Er mm this please. (A1)</td>
<td>• I will I will buy it. (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Umm I’d like to buy this expensive one. (A2)</td>
<td>• I’m looking for some clothes. (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing or asking about item</strong></td>
<td>• I want metallic silver. (A1)</td>
<td>• So I’m searching um um very comfortable dress. (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ah I’d like to buy cash here. (A2)</td>
<td>• Do you have the size of this shoes? (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiating for discount</strong></td>
<td>• More cheap please more cheap. (A1)</td>
<td>• If possible, could you discount, please? (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asking for permission to test</strong></td>
<td>• Umm I want to try red color. (A1)</td>
<td>• Can I try it on? (A2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. RQ3. What linguistic features characterise successful and erroneous requestive speech acts at each level?
7.1 Unnatural Examples: Coherent

- **Direct (A1)**
  
  <A>May I help you, sir?</A>

  <B>Yeah. Urr I’d like to I’d like to find I’d like to find a suit.</B>

- **Conventionally Indirect (A2)**

  <A>Oh sorry. We don’t have ur stock. Only</A>

  <B>Urr.</B>

  <A>only this one is available now.</A>

  <B>Urrr I want buy a new. Then would you please send to my house a new one?</B>
7.2 Unnatural Examples: Incoherent and intelligible

Intelligible (A1)

<A>May I help you?</A>
<B>Oh I want D V D recorder.</B>
<A>Uh-huh. Erm we have two types of D V D recorder.</A>
<B>Oh.</B>
<A>What kind do you want?</A>
<B>How much? Both</B>
<A>OK, this one is, let’s say sixty thousand yen. And this one is fifty thousand yen.</A>
Unintelligible (A1)

<A>Uh-uh. O. K. What kind of shoes do you like?</A>

<B>Ee cheap price and black shoes.</B>

<A>O K.</A>

<B>My shoe’s size is twenty seven centimeters.</B>

<A>O K. We have many here.</A>

<B>I am I want I wanted I want the um I wanted not many buying shoes. Minor shoes.</B>

<A>O K.</A>

<B>I er don’t like sh shoes is same, other people.</B>
7.4 Unnatural Examples: Unnatural Topic

Comment

◆ Slightly ill-formed (A1)
<B> Do you have do you have any jacket?</B>
<A> Yeah. We have many kinds of jackets.</A>
<B> Er color is mm brown. Do you have?</B>

◆ Ill-formed (A1)
<A> This is twenty five thousand yen.</A>
<B> Er expensive.</B>
<A> Do you think so?</A>
<B> And er ear phone , please.</B>
<A> Ahh O K. Is this one O K?</A>
<B> Er I’m white color wants</B>
<A> Ahh. Sorry, we have no white color.</A>
8. Research Question 1: Request Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conv. Indirect</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 15.8379, \ df = 1, p = .000069, \ Cramer's V = .1074413$
8.1 The Distribution of Direct Strategies

X² = 55.5151, df = 4, p. = 2.534013e-11, Cramer's V = .1842102
8.1.1 Direct Linguistic Features: Desire Verbs

- **Want**
  - A1: 25.93%
  - A2: 27.68%

- **Would-like**
  - A1: 2.83%
  - A2: 6.56%

Chi-Square Test:
- $X^2 = 5.882$, df = 1, $p = .015$
- Cramer's $V = .1149692$
8.2 The Distribution of Conventionally Indirect Strategies

X^2 = 0.2021, df = 2, p = .90, ns
Cramer's V = .01404966

Not significant
8.2.1 Conventionally Indirect Linguistic Features: Ability/Permission

X² = 9.7444, df = 2, p = .007656
Cramer’s V = .1958668

*A1’s raw frequency of “could” was 4.
8.3 Top Seven Patterns of Direct and Conv. Indirect Strategies

- desire (D)
- statement (D)
- imperative (D)
- nonsentential-phrase (D)
- intention (CI)
- existence (CI)
- ability/permission (CI)

A2

- 35.01% desire (D)
- 6.35% nonsentential-phrase (D)
- 17.51% intention (CI)
- 5.58% existence (CI)
- 12.69% ability/permission (CI)

A1

- 28.76% desire (D)
- 18.08% nonsentential-phrase (D)
- 14.16% intention (CI)
- 10.89% existence (CI)
- 9.59% ability/permission (CI)
8.3.1 Statement (Direct) vs. Intention (Conv. Indirect)

- **A1**: 3.49% (purchase) vs. 3.70% (i-will)
- **A2**: 1.75% (purchase) vs. 6.78% (i-will)

Chi-square: $X^2 = 8.8431$, df = 1, $p = .002942$

Cramer's $V = .2822537$
9.1 Direct Strategies in Eight Functions

- Expressing-or-asking-about-item
- Expressing-intention-to-buy
- Asking-someone-to-perform
- Asking-for-permission-to-test
- Asking-someone-to-show
- Asking-for-recommendation
- Asking-for-alternative-item
- Negotiating-for-discount

Total

X² = 5.13, df = 2, p = .07691901, ns
Cramer's V = 0.07403225

*Only for “Item”, “Intention”, and “Show” whose raw frequencies were 5 and more.
9.2 Conventionally Indirect Strategies in Eight Functions

![Bar chart showing the distribution of indirect strategies across different functions.]

- Total
- Expressing or asking about an item
- Expressing intention to buy
- Asking someone to perform
- Asking for permission to test
- Asking someone to show
- Asking for recommendation
- Asking for alternative item
- Negotiating for discount

Not significant

\[ X^2 = 0.31, \text{ df} = 2, p = .08564332, \text{ ns} \]

Cramer's V = .02144477

*Only for “Item”, “Intention”, and “Test” whose raw frequencies were 5 and more.
## 10. Research Question 3: Naturalness of Requests

\[ X^2 = 7.9393, \text{ df } = 1, p = .004837 \]
\[ \text{Cramer's } V = .0862601 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requests</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>151(42.54%)</td>
<td>368(51.89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnatural</td>
<td>204(57.46%)</td>
<td>344(48.31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.1 The Distribution of Natural vs. Unnatural Segments

**Direct**
- A1: 24.79% Natural, 31.55% Coherent, 25.56% Incoherent
- A2: 28.79% Natural, 25.56% Coherent, 28.79% Incoherent

**Indirect**
- A1: 17.75% Natural, 14.08% Coherent, 18.54% Incoherent
- A2: 22.89% Natural, 18.54% Coherent, 22.89% Incoherent

**X² = 20.982, df = 3, p = .0001061876**
Cramer's V = 0.1274359

**Not significant**

*Only for “Natural” and “Coherent” whose raw frequencies were 5 and more.*
11. Criterial Features Distinguishing A1 and A2

A1 ⇒ A2

Direct ⇒ Conventionally Indirect

Direct
“want” ⇒ “want” & “would like”

Direct ⇒ Conv. Indirect
“l buy” ⇒ “l will buy”

Non-sentential Phrase ⇒ Sentence

Conventionally Indirect
“can” ⇒ “can” & “could”
REFERENCES


