THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER EXPERIENCE ON INTERACTION IN
TWO JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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by
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DEDICATION

This thesis is written in dedication and as an early birthday gift to my dear daughter, Alice, who is due in two months.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Effects of Teacher Experience on Interaction in Two Japanese as a Foreign Language Classrooms
by
Rina Otsuka Pasamonik
Master of Arts in Linguistics
San Diego State University, 2011

This study investigates interactions between two Japanese foreign language teachers and their students in the United States. Specifically, the goal is to consider the effect of teaching experience on the nature of interaction in their classes. To this end, the analysis focuses on one teacher with twenty years’ experience and another in her first year as a foreign language teacher.

It was found that the experienced teacher’s interactions with her students are similar to those commonly used in the United States. It was also observed that her students might not realize what the Japanese discourse rules are, and that they might not be able to use them appropriately in the classroom. On the other hand, the students in the beginning teacher’s class are exposed to more examples of Japanese discourse style. However, as expected from previous research one point of concern is that English speaking students might feel uneasy using the Japanese discourse style in terms of receiving corrective feedback. Therefore, the study concludes that contextual factors must be considered when foreign language teachers decide how to interact with their students in class. Specifically, it is argued that they need to consider when it is more appropriate to interact in a manner preferred in the country where the target language is used, or when students’ familiar discourse style is more suitable.
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My parents and my grandparents in Japan, who warmly encouraged my decision to study in the United States, were my support throughout my life as a graduate student. Talking with them made me want to do my best for this study.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Michal Pasamonik. I would not have been able to pursue a master’s degree in the United States...
without his daily support. It is mostly thanks to him that I could concentrate on studying in
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completely different field, he showed interest in my study and gave his opinions, which
inspired me with confidence as well as allowed me notice what needed to be improved.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When one is asked about one's feelings toward a class, they may first describe it as “I like it”, “I hate it”, or “It is ok.” There are various underlying reasons for these responses, such as preference for the subject or for the teacher. However, one of the items that may have a major impact on the students’ impression of the class is the teacher’s interaction pattern with the students. In the teacher-fronted classroom setting, which is the most frequent classroom structure (Mehan, 1979; Poole & Patthey-Chavez, 1994), it is the teacher who decides the topic of the interaction and how often the students should talk (Poole & Patthey-Chavez, 1994; Verplaetse, 2000). That is, students’ utterances tend to be qualitatively and quantitatively controlled by the teacher’s style of interaction. Furthermore, studies have shown that the teacher’s interaction with the students can increase or decrease their motivation for classroom learning, and it can also limit or facilitate the students’ achievement in the class (Hall, 1998; Lin, 1999). Furthermore, Hall (1998) describes how a student who was unable to receive the teacher’s attention, despite actively participating in the classroom interaction, came to feel frustrated toward classroom learning. Lin (1999) studied English as a foreign language classes in China from a different perspective. According to Lin (1999), the students’ performance in and preference for the class were affected by when and how the teacher used the students’ first language (L1) in interactions with students during English class.

As these studies indicate, teacher-student interactions are one of the main elements that strongly shape students’ learning experience (Rymes, 2008). Therefore, reconsidering their method of interacting with students will allow teachers to offer better classroom experiences, as Rymes (2008) states that it is possible for teachers to study the classroom interaction and improve their teaching. Thus, a great amount of attention has been given to the research of classroom interaction. Many researchers have examined classroom discourse from various positions, such as the components and the variables that affect it.
1.1 Research Methods Applied in Study of Classroom Interaction

There are three types of research methods most frequently used in the study of classroom interaction; qualitative, quantitative and a mixture of the two. The quantitative research method is the analysis of data primarily through statistical methods; conversely, non-statistical methods are used in qualitative research methods (Dornyei, 2007). Qualitative research methods include close observation of raw material, such as transcriptions of interactions. Most analyses of classroom discourse by qualitative research methods have been based on transcriptions of audio or video recordings of classroom events. In addition to the transcripts, some researchers involve ethnography as a tool for the analysis. Ethnography is most often performed through interviewing the participants and participating in the classroom as an observer for a certain amount of time (Duff, 2002; Talmy, 2008). This allows the researchers to gain a greater insight about the classroom dynamic than by the transcriptions alone. Other researchers apply the framework of conversation analysis (CA) to examine classroom discourse (Koshik, 2002; Mori, 2002). Hall (2007), however, points to the importance of researchers trying to understand the teachers’ intentions behind each utterance before applying CA to examine classroom interaction, so that they fully understand what is happening in the interaction.

In the study of classroom discourse, qualitative research has been attracting more and more applied linguists. This is because, as noted by Dornyei (2007), “almost every aspect of language acquisition and use is determined or significantly shaped by social, cultural, and situational factors, and qualitative research is ideal for providing insight into such contextual conditions and influences” (p. 36).

1.2 Classroom Interaction as Cultural Phenomenon

By analyzing data using qualitative methods, the nature of classroom discourse became apparent. Researchers have discovered that classroom interaction depends to a great extent on the culture of the participants (Cazden, 1988; Koshik, 2002; McCollum, 1989; Talmy, 2008; Vanish, 2008). That is, there is a culture specific way of interacting in the classroom. McCollum (1989), for example, analyzed the interaction in two culturally different classrooms. One class was in Chicago with an American teacher and American
students, and the other class was in Puerto Rico and consisted of a Puerto Rican teacher and Puerto Rican students. The two classrooms showed a different discourse structure. The classroom in Chicago showed a more teacher-oriented interaction pattern and the students had few chances to start the conversation. On the other hand, the Puerto Rican teacher was more open to the students’ initiations, so the students were the center of the interaction. Along these lines, Duff (2002) and Zappa-Hollman (2007) explain that the students who are culturally a minority in the class have difficulty in accomplishing classroom activities. Also, it was described in Heath (1983) that students came to enjoy learning and performed better when the teacher understood the students’ community discourse style, and applied it in the classroom interaction. According to this perspective, teachers are expected to understand their students’ cultural backgrounds and culturally preferred interaction styles, and then adjust the classroom discourse suitably for the students.

In light of these claims, it is important to consider foreign language classrooms. When the teacher and the students share the same cultural background, there is no problem. However, there are many instances where students learn a foreign language taught by a native speaker whose culture is unfamiliar to them. Considering this situation, the teacher who has a different cultural background from the students may be recommended to use the students’ preferred interaction style rather than the teacher’s familiar interaction style that is typically used in his or her country, so that the students feel comfortable during classroom learning.

### 1.3 Classroom Interaction as Opportunity of Language Socialization

Although some pedagogical texts or teacher trainers may recommend that foreign language teachers use the students' familiar discourse style in the classroom, classroom interaction and activity have also been seen as an opportunity for language socialization (Byon, 2006; Cook, 1999; Duranti & Ochs, 1986; He, 2000; Ohta, 1999; Poole, 1992; Talmy, 2008). That is, students learn the culture and the discourse rules of the country where the language is spoken, as well as the material taught in the class, through experiencing interaction and language use in the classroom. According to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), language socialization can occur both implicitly and explicitly as students experience cultural notions implied in the classroom interaction and as students are directed to use the language
in a culturally suitable way. Cook (1999) describes how teachers in Japan implicitly encourage students to listen carefully to other students’ utterances during the class, and explained how this interactive feature can lead children to acquire an attentive listening skill that is considered important in Japanese society. For instance, when a student responds to a teacher's question, the teacher asks the other students to comment on the responses without summarizing the original answer. As a result, the other students are always required to carefully listen to their peers’ presentations in order to give appropriate comments. Children can naturally learn the importance of listening to others and develop a habit of listening to people even when they are not directly talked to, through experiencing this type of interaction. Also, the transcriptions in Cook (1999) show that students often speak in relation to others, which is also a preferable conversational feature in Japan: When the students give comments to their classmates’ previous presentations, they start their remarks by stating how their opinion is related to the previous speaker, such as “My answer is similar to Mr. A's, and...”, “My answer is different from Ms. B's, but...”. These examples indicate that the students in the classroom have been learning to use the language in a Japanese preferable way. That is, the students can be considered as successfully socialized.

Ohta (1999) considers letting students experience and acquire cultural values as a requirement in foreign language classrooms, considering that classroom activities may be the only chance for students to experience the foreign culture in addition to learning the language. Therefore, in her view, a foreign language teacher from a different country should keep his or her own interaction style to offer the students a chance for language socialization.

### 1.4 Classroom Interaction in Foreign Language Classrooms

As discussed in Sections 1.2 and 1.3, on the one hand, the teacher may want to use the students’ familiar discourse style (Heath, 1983), but on the other hand, foreign language teachers should keep their own interaction style, which represents the culture in which the foreign language is used, considering that the classroom experience may be the only chance for foreign language students to learn cultural routines and their implications as well as the language (Ohta, 1999). In light of these perspectives, there seems to be a dilemma in the foreign language classroom, especially when the students’ regular discourse pattern is far different from the one of the country in which the language being studied is spoken.
An example of a classroom setting that may face this dilemma might be a Japanese foreign language classroom in the United States. Due to the cultural differences between the two countries, the classroom discourse patterns in Japan and in the United States differ in terms of basic interactional sequences, the teacher’s role and students’ participation. How are Japanese foreign language teachers supposed to conduct classroom interaction in the United States? Before discussing this topic, the features of the classroom interactions, both in the United States and in Japan, are reviewed in the following section.

1.4.1 Classroom Interaction in the United States

Mehan (1979) proposed that the unmarked interaction sequence in the classroom discourse consists of three teacher-student turns called an IRE sequence: as the teacher initiates (I), the students reply (R) and the teacher evaluates the reply (E). An example of an IRE sequence is shown in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1:

Teacher: Where did Ms. Smith go in the story?  ← Initiation
Student: The beach in Waikiki.  ← Reply
Teacher: Yes, she went to the beach in Waikiki. Very good.  ← Evaluation

This type of IRE sequence is acknowledged to be common in the discourse of English-speaking classrooms in the teacher fronted setting (Cazden, 1988; McCollum, 1989; Poole & Patthey-Chavez, 1994). An IRE sequence is also called IRF, when the teacher's third turn functions as a follow-up rather than being evaluative.

Within an IRE sequence, when a student fails to give the expected answer to the question initiated by the teacher, the teacher continues the interaction to assist the student until he or she can produce an adequate answer. Because this supporting interaction is held between the initiation and the evaluation in the IRE, it is called an extended IRE sequence by Mehan (1979). This extended IRE sequence develops through the teacher’s elicitation, such as repeating the question (repeating elicitations) and simplifying the question (simplifying elicitations). It is also mentioned in Mehan (1979) that the extended IRE sequence prevents a negative evaluation from occurring alone, because the teacher continues to elicit a correct answer by giving hints until the student can produce a satisfactory response, and the student is able to receive a positive evaluation at the end.
Poole (1992) and Koshik (2002) regard the teacher’s tendency to elicit answers from the student, rather than simply giving the answer, as the norms for middle-class North America. Poole (1992), for example, describes strategies to support students in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom, some of which are scaffolding, incomplete sentence frames and expansions. The motivation for using these strategies is that the teacher is expected to aid and lead students to be able to perform a higher level of task, which they cannot reach by themselves. As noted by Poole (1992), the same tendency exists in the ways that novices are treated in middle class American society, indicating that the classroom interaction pattern reflects the cultural implications.

1.4.2 Classroom Interaction in Japan

Teacher-student interaction in the teacher-fronted setting taught by Japanese teachers has been examined by several researchers (Anderson, 1995; Cook, 1999; Ikeno, 1998; Ohta, 1999; Yamashita, 1993). Japanese classrooms often consist of an IRE sequence, as in the United States (Ikeno, 1998; Yamashita, 1993), while some researchers observe the occurrence of an IPRE sequence, which stands for the teacher’s initiation (I), student’s presentation (P), the other students’ reaction to the presentation (R), and the teacher’s evaluation of the presentation (E) (Anderson, 1995; Cook, 1999; Ohta, 1999). What makes the IPRE sequence distinctive from the IRE sequence is that a student’s answer to the teacher’s question is evaluated or commented on by the student’s peers before the teacher gives an evaluation. That is, the teacher-student interaction frequently involves multiple students at one time. An example of the IPRE sequence provided by Anderson (1995, p. 231) is given in Excerpt 2 below.

Excerpt 2:

T: ne..dewa kore wa nan no tame ni reitooko ni ireru deshoo ka.  
Okay? Now, why do you put (fish) in the freezer?]  
←Initiation

Ss: (raising hands): hai!  
[yes!]  
←Presentation

T: Yonekawa-san  
←Initiation

Yonekawa (stands): kusaranai yoo ni suru tame desu.  
[It is so that it does not rot.]  
←Presentation

Student 1: ii desu!  
[good!]  
←Reaction
Student 2: onaji desu!
[I have the same!]

Teacher: kusaranai yoo ni suru.
[so that it doesn't rot.]

As is shown in Excerpt 2, the teacher’s initiation was followed by a student’s presentation and then other students' comments, before the teacher gives her comment on the student’s presentation at the end. Cook (1999) regards the teacher in the IPRE sequence as a facilitator between the students so that students receive knowledge from peers in addition to the teacher. She also considers the appearance of the IPRE sequence as students being socialized through language to the cultural expectations of Japanese society to attentively listen to other people, because students cannot comment or react to a peer’s opinion if they do not pay attention to it: Students are required to listen to the interaction between other students and the teacher, even when they are not directly involved in the interaction.

However, it should be noted that the IPRE sequence may not be the only interactional pattern in Japanese speaking classrooms and only appears sometimes. Ikeno (1998)’s observation at lower secondary schools in Japan illustrates many incidents of the IRE sequences between the teacher and students. Furthermore, Yamashita (1993) analyzed classrooms in the United States which were taught by native speakers of Japanese. Although the classrooms were at a school that conforms to the curriculum required by the Ministry of Education in Japan, she reported that there were no occurrences of the IPRE sequence. Hence, it might be best to understand that Japanese speaking classrooms sometimes bear the IPRE sequences in addition to the IRE, rather than to consider IPRE as the only or primary sequence in Japanese speaking classes.

Yamashita (1993) and Ikeno (1998) illustrate how teachers deal with students’ unexpected answers during the interaction sequence. They highlight the Japanese teachers’ tendency of simply giving an answer rather than eliciting it from the students. Although Ikeno (1998) confirms incidents of teachers’ attempts to elicit the correct answer from students, she states that the teachers simply gave the answer after the students produced the wrong answer in two situations: when “a student’s reply is incomprehensible to the teacher” and when “a student’s answer is not completely wrong, but not exactly right in the first place” (p. 40). No extended sequences were found by Yamashita (1993). That is, the teachers she observed never tried to elicit the correct answer from the students. She also observed that
the teacher often asked a question to the students, but answered it by herself. It was regarded by Yamashita (1993) that the lack of elicitations and the occurrence of what she termed "ostensible questions" reflected the fact that the teacher expected the students to listen to his or her lecture rather than verbally participate in the class. That is, students are supposed to participate in the class non-verbally, such as by nodding. This tendency also can be considered to be reflective of an element of Japanese society, because it teaches students that listening to other people is more important than speaking.

1.4.3 Summary of Differences in Classroom Interaction between the United States and Japan

Table 1.1 summarizes the features of the classroom discourse organization of English speaking classrooms and Japanese speaking classrooms.

Table 1.1. Differences in Interactional Sequence between English Speaking Classes (ESC) and Japanese Speaking Classes (JSC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ESC</th>
<th>JSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction sequence</td>
<td>Dyadic IRE</td>
<td>Dyadic IRE Multiparty IPRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to a wrong answer</td>
<td>Elicit answer from the student</td>
<td>Give the answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s role</td>
<td>Assist the student to perform one level higher task</td>
<td>Lead the students to attentively listen to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s expectation</td>
<td>Participate verbally (presenting)</td>
<td>Participate non-verbally (listening)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discourse patterns of the classrooms in the two countries seem to be different. Japanese speaking classrooms tend to have a multiparty IPRE sequence in addition to a dyadic IRE, while English speaking classrooms mainly consist of a dyadic IRE alone. Also, the teachers’ way of responding to students’ unexpected utterances are distinct to each classroom. Teachers in the United States try to help students fix their problems by themselves. However, Japanese teachers tend to offer the answer: The student who made the mistake receives few chances to fix a problem him or herself. Finally, it can be considered that these differences in interactional sequences emerge from differences in the teacher’s role and student expectation in the class, which is, moreover, reflective of underlying cultural
beliefs in each case: Presenting an opinion and listening to others are considered to be important in the United States and in Japan, respectively.

1.5 Response to Students’ Unexpected Answer in the United States and in Japan

Let us consider the response to an unexpected answer in Japanese foreign language classrooms in the United States. American students are accustomed to receiving assistance from the teacher. Even though their initial answer does not meet the teacher’s expectation, they have an opportunity to fix their mistakes by themselves with the teacher’s support, and receive a positive evaluation, such as “very good,” at the end (Mehan, 1979; Yoshida, 2008). If those learners experience the Japanese method of giving corrective feedback, they may find it disconcerting. Because the teacher gives the correct answer to the student or the teacher lets other students fix the problem using the IPRE sequence, the student who made the mistake cannot fix the problem independently and cannot receive a positive evaluation at the end.

Research has shown that receiving corrective feedback is a sensitive area for students. Yoshida (2008) interviewed Australian students studying Japanese as a foreign language regarding their preference for feedback to their incorrect answers. While their Japanese teachers mostly fixed the problem and presented the correct answer to the students, almost all students stated that they preferred the chance to fix the problem on their own. Since the subjects in her study are Australian students, one may not be able to state that students in the United States feel the same way. However, her study indicates that Japanese language teachers tend to give a direct answer and that their way of giving corrective feedback does not always reflect the students’ preference.

Unfortunately, it was found by Aida (1994) and Tallon (2009) that corrective feedback is one of the factors that contribute to students’ anxiety toward language classrooms. Furthermore, they statistically showed that the more the students felt anxiety toward a class, the fewer achievements were made. That is, the teacher’s incorrect response to the student’s inappropriate utterance could indirectly lead to the students’ failure in learning.
1.6 Japanese Cultural Messages in Interaction

Although corrective feedback is a sensitive matter, the Japanese way of following-up and the interactional sequence in general allow students to experience an important Japanese discourse rule: Listening to the speaker is more important than speaking. Since the American style of IRE involves the teacher and one student at a time, other students in the class may be less motivated to pay attention to the interaction compared to Japanese students. As a result, they may be accustomed to being less attentive when listening to peers. As Ohta (1999) states, many of the students who are studying Japanese as a foreign language in the United States can only learn Japanese cultural rules in the classroom. This raises the question of how Japanese foreign language teachers in the United States should deal with students’ unexpected answers, i.e., whether they should give the answer or elicit the answer from the student who made the mistake.

1.7 Purpose of the Study

As a Japanese foreign language teacher in the United States, I often wonder which discourse style is most effective and which I should be using: Integrating the American style of discourse into my teaching, so that students can relax and enjoy the classroom experience, as mentioned in Heath (1983), or keeping the Japanese interaction pattern so that the students are able to acquire Japanese cultural norms, such as attentive listening skills through experiencing interaction with the teacher, as Ohta (1999) suggests. The solution may not be to entirely apply the American style or Japanese style, but one where the teacher can convey cultural messages while keeping the classroom as comfortable as possible for the students. Therefore, the present study is conducted to seek effective methods of foreign language teaching in terms of teaching the cultural implications in an enjoyable atmosphere.

The interaction in two Japanese as foreign language classrooms in the United States is examined. One of the classes was taught by an experienced teacher who had been teaching Japanese for 20 years in the United States before the data collection occurred, while the teacher of the other class was teaching her second semester in the United States. The latter class was taught by the researcher of this study. I decided to analyze my own classroom in order to discover how I unconsciously interact with the students. Also, I believe that to examine how an experienced teacher deals with this issue will help me improve my teaching
skills in the future. Furthermore, although the results of this research will not be generalized
due to the small sample size, one can grasp an idea of how beginning teachers and
experienced teachers may differ in terms of their classroom interactional patterns. Then, it is
hoped that this study will help prospective or beginning teachers to better understand the
kinds of interaction mismatches or difficulties that may occur in their class.

1.8 Chapter Organization

The chapters of this thesis are structured as follows. Chapter 2 introduces detailed
information of the two classes that participated in this research, including information about
the teachers and students. The procedures for data collection are also explained in Chapter 2.
Chapter 3 presents the findings of the research based on transcription excerpts. The findings
are discussed in Chapter 4 in light of earlier studies. Chapter 4 also states the conclusions of
this study and the implications for applying the findings in this study to actual teaching.
CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In Section 1.1 of Chapter 1, we learned that qualitative research allows contextual information and influences to be considered in the analysis of the language use (Dornyei, 2007). As the present research discusses classroom interaction in relation to cultural phenomenon, qualitative research is applied in this study to observe the naturally occurring classroom interactions of two Japanese foreign language classes. As the first step for the study, the researcher recorded one classroom hour for each class while the students in both classes were working on the same exercise in the same textbook. She then transcribed the data in as much detail as possible, including the length of pauses and overlapping of speech. The transcription process involved multiple viewings in order to be as accurate and detailed as possible, so that the transcripts truly reflected the recorded classroom interaction. In this chapter, each step of the method as well as general information regarding the two classes is discussed in detail. Also, since the findings of the research will be presented with excerpts of the transcriptions in Chapter 3, the process used in displaying the excerpts is explained at the end of the chapter.

2.1 CLASSES

Two Japanese foreign language classes were recorded for this study. Both of the classes were offered at the same university in the United States. The level of the two classes was second-semester Japanese. One of the classes was taught by an experienced Japanese female teacher who has been teaching Japanese in the United States since 1989. The other class was taught by a beginning Japanese female teacher who is also the researcher of this study. She had been teaching Japanese in the United States for about one year when the class was recorded. The aliases “Ms. Tanaka” and “Ms. Kobayashi” are used to identify the experienced teacher and the beginning teacher, respectively. Information regarding the classes of the two teachers is summarized in Table 2.1.
Table 2.1. Data for Two Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Ms. Tanaka’s class</th>
<th>Ms. Kobayashi’s class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native language</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of teaching in the U.S.</td>
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<td>1 year</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
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<td>Male: Female</td>
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<td>12:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of learning Japanese</td>
<td>2 semesters or equivalent</td>
<td>2 semesters or equivalent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom setting</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant structure</td>
<td>Teacher(T)-fronted</td>
<td>T-fronted and pair work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting time</td>
<td>6 hours a week</td>
<td>6 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1 Teachers

Ms. Tanaka (the experienced teacher) is a licensed teacher for the junior high school and high school levels in Japan and had been teaching English at a high school until she came to the United States in 1989. In that same year, she started working at a school for heritage Japanese speaking students once a week. Five years later, she quit the school and started teaching Japanese as a foreign language at the present university. She also completed an M.A. program in applied linguistics in the United States. Currently, she teaches not only the beginner level, but also the advanced level of Japanese. She is a popular teacher among the students, and her class is often observed by prospective teaching associates, per the recommendation of the director of the Japanese language program.

Ms. Kobayashi (the beginning teacher) also obtained a teaching license for the elementary school, junior high school and high school levels in Japan, but she does not have experience of teaching at those schools, except for teaching at an English cram school. She is currently a graduate student at the university and was teaching Japanese as a graduate teaching associate for two semesters when the class was recorded. She started her graduate studies in 2008. In her first semester, she was working as a teaching assistant in a fourth
semester Japanese class, which was taught by the director of the Japanese language program. By the time of the recording, she had taught two classes, first and second semester Japanese.

Both teachers taught the first semester Japanese class in the preceding semester, which is a prerequisite for second semester Japanese. As a result, both teachers have an in-depth knowledge of what their students learned in the previous semester.

2.1.2 Student Participants

Nineteen students, twelve male students and seven female students were enrolled in Ms. Tanaka's class. Their class level ranged from freshman to senior. Most of the students passed the first semester of Japanese at the university and were permitted to enroll in the second semester of Japanese, which is the class that was observed for this study. Some of the students were advised to start from the present class by the Japanese language program coordinator based on the students’ background in Japanese learning and the results of a placement exam. For example, some students were over-qualified for the first semester Japanese class due to prior study of the Japanese language in high school, or due to being a heritage speaker of Japanese to some degree.

There were 20 students taking Ms. Kobayashi’s class, 12 of whom were male and eight were female. The youngest student was a freshman and the oldest was a senior. Like the students in Ms. Tanaka’s class, the students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class had completed their first semester of Japanese or had an equivalent level of knowledge.

2.1.3 Classroom Setting

The two classrooms were located in different buildings on the same campus, but the layouts of the classrooms were similar. The width of the two classrooms was about the same as well as the position of classroom objects, such as desks, the teacher’s table and the whiteboard.

Both classes started in a teacher-fronted setting with the students facing toward the teacher and the teacher facing toward the students. Ms. Tanaka’s class had no pair activities, so this teacher-fronted setting was the only participant structure. The basic structure in Ms. Kobayashi’s class was also a teacher-fronted setting, but the students spent about 20 percent of class time doing pair work. The classes were worth six units and participants spent six hours a week in the classroom. Their seats were not assigned but it appeared that the
students in both classes had a preferred seat and always sat in the same spot. Although teachers have a right to conduct the class according to their own style of teaching as well as the freedom to make their own handouts and tests, they are required to use the same textbook and to cover the same material. The data were collected during moments when the students were working on the same exercises in the textbook.

### 2.1.4. Summary of Classes and Supplementary Information

It seems that the conditions in the two classrooms were similar in terms of institutional policy, students’ academic level, teachers’ knowledge of Japanese, and the target grammatical features that the students were working on. What is clearly different between the two classes is the amount of general teaching experience that each teacher had and the amount of experience of teaching in the United States. For example, the differences in the classroom interaction observed between the two classes could be compared relative to the teachers, with minimal influence from other variables, although the result will not be able to be generalized due to the small size of the sample.

As supplementary information regarding the two classes, the researcher had visited Ms. Tanaka’s class for a general observation several times. It was observed that students in Ms. Tanaka’s class were more active than students in Ms. Kobayashi’s. The students in the former class tended to present their answers even without being called on, while students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class remained silent until their names were called.

### 2.2 Recordings

The researcher visited the Ms. Tanaka’s class and video-taped the naturally occurring classroom interaction after asking the students for permission. The video recorder was placed in the back of the classroom facing the teacher, so that the students were filmed from the back. The researcher stayed next to the video recorder and observed the class while taking field notes as necessary. As mentioned above, she had attended Ms. Tanaka’s class for general observation before this study was conducted, so the students were familiar with her, and her presence in the class on the day of the recording did not seem to disturb the students. The next day, the class of Ms. Kobayashi, the researcher of the present study, covered the same activities in the same textbook. She also asked the students if she could videotape them.
for the research. Prior to the data collection, the researcher already had plans to compare the interaction of the two classrooms to see how her class differed from one of the more experienced teacher’s, so that she would be able to improve her teaching skills. However, she did not develop any stance regarding classroom interaction from a cultural perspective, which is the main theme in this study, although she did have a general knowledge of classroom interaction. Therefore, it can be considered that the interaction in the researcher’s class is a naturally occurring example, and was not intentionally created for this study.

2.3 TRANSCRIPTION

Each class was 75 minutes long on the day the classes were recorded. However, since both classes spent about 15 minutes for daily quizzes, the transcription for each class is 50 minutes long and excluded the 15 minute quiz period. Also, although three exercises were covered in each class on that day, two of them were common between the two classes. That is, each class covered one unique exercise in the textbook, lasting about 15 minutes. Those 15 minutes were also transcribed, but to prevent external variables from affecting the research as a result of the difference in the material, the present research will only focus on the transcriptions from the moment that the two classes were covering the same exercises, which is about 40 minutes in each case.

The data taken from the two classes were transcribed by the researcher after viewing the video multiple times in order to be as accurate and detailed as possible, so that the transcripts truly reflected the recorded classroom interaction.

2.4 HOW TO READ THE EXCERPTS

Transcripts of both classes were used to carefully observe the interactions between the teacher and the students. In the following chapter, the findings are introduced with excerpts from the transcriptions. However, before presenting the findings, signs or symbols used in the transcriptions must be explained.

Each excerpt consists of two columns; the left column shows the original transcription in which Japanese words are romanized. The right side contains the English translation. Because the teachers use both Japanese and English in the class, the phrases that were originally spoken in English were italicized so that we can distinguish the parts voiced
in English and those in Japanese. Excerpt 3 given in Table 2.2 illustrates how to read the excerpts presented in this research.

Table 2.2. Excerpt 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T (1) kyou wa nan’youbi desuka?</td>
<td>T (1) What day (of the week) is it today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA (2) shigatsu (2.0) nijyuuyo nichi</td>
<td>SA (2) April (2.0) 24th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (3) Kyou wa nan’youbi desuka?</td>
<td>T (3) What day is it today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB (4) Kyou (1.0) wa=</td>
<td>SB (4) It is (1.0) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA (5) Mokuyoubi</td>
<td>SA (5) Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB (6) =Mokuyoubi desu.</td>
<td>SB (6) =Thursday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The symbol T indicates that the utterance was spoken by the teacher, and SA and SB indicate the speech of student A and student B. If there was another student, student C, the student would have been represented as SC. The numbers in parentheses after the symbols for the speakers indicate the number of the turn in the given excerpt, which makes it easier to understand which utterance is being discussed when each utterance is examined individually. The numerical expression (2.0) during SA’s utterance means he had a 2.0 second interval between the words. The underlined word, as in the teacher’s third turn, shows that the teacher stressed the word. In the same turn, the symbol “::” expresses that the speaker lengthened the sound. In turns (4) through (6), SB’s utterance in (4) ended with “=” and SB’s next turn in (6) started with “=”, with SA’s speech appearing in between. The symbol “=” means the two utterances were one production, but the production was interrupted by another speaker. Finally, the “?” mark at the end of the sentence indicates that the sentence had a rising inflection, while falling intonation is marked by a period. These symbols used in the transcription in this study are also listed in the Appendix.
CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

In Chapter 1, we discussed two potentially contradictory perspectives toward foreign language classes. One is that the teacher is recommended to use an interactional style in the class that is familiar to the students, so that the students’ learning experience in the class becomes enjoyable, which will result in their better performance. The other is that the teacher must include the interactional routine that is preferred in the culture where the language being studied is spoken in order for students to be exposed to the cultural norms associated with the language of study. That is, teachers are advised to use the interaction style that is common in their own country. Thus, there appears to be a dilemma in teaching Japanese in the United States, since there are differences in the commonly used interaction style between the teacher and the students. As a Japanese language teacher in the United States, the researcher is hoping to find a method for Japanese teachers in the United States to teach cultural implications in an enjoyable atmosphere through this research. As discussed in the previous chapter, two Japanese classes in a university in the United States were chosen for this study. The general information regarding the two classes, as well as the study methods, is also presented in Chapter 2. The researcher videotaped the two classrooms while they were working on the same exercise in the same textbook. The interactions between the teacher and the students were transcribed by the researcher for closer examination. The present chapter, Chapter 3, introduces the findings from the examination of the transcripts of the two classes.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Through close examination and comparison of the transcriptions from both classes, it was found that the classroom discourse style in the class taught by Ms. Tanaka (the experienced teacher) differed from that of Ms. Kobayashi (the beginning teacher)’s class. The discourse organization in Ms. Tanaka’s class was similar to that found in discourse studies of English speaking classrooms, while implicitly providing Japanese cultural insight as well. On the other hand, Ms. Kobayashi’s class was structured differently, and was more
consistent with traditional Japanese speaking classrooms, as the interaction sequence was very different from the sequence that students were used to. The findings from the two classes are described and illustrated separately in the following sections.

3.2 Classroom of Ms. Tanaka

The interactions between Ms. Tanaka and her students are presented in this section. First, the basic teacher-student interaction is described, followed by an illustration of the teacher's response to the students' incorrect presentation. Finally, the incidents of how referential questions are asked by Ms. Tanaka are analyzed.

3.2.1 Basic Interactional Style

The only observed interaction style in the class of Ms. Tanaka was IRE or IRF: as the teacher initiated the conversation or asked the students questions, the students responded and the teacher gave comments to their responses. Excerpt 4, in Table 3.1, is an example of an IRE sequence observed in the class of Ms. Tanaka. In this excerpt, the students are learning the usage of “tochuu (on the way to)”. Two Japanese sentences were given from the textbook and the students were supposed to connect them into one sentence using an expression such as “~suru tochuu, ~suru (I do ~, on the way to ~). Italicized parts under English Translation are originally spoken in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcript</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T(1) Jya 2 ban. “Nihon e ikimasu” to “Hawai de rirakkusu shitai desu”. <em>I would like to relax in Hawaii on my way to nihon.</em></td>
<td>T(1) Then question 2. “I go to Japan” and “I want to relax in Hawaii” <em>I would like to relax in Hawaii on my way to Japan.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(2) Hai. A san</td>
<td>T(2) Go ahead, Mr A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA (3) Nihon e (..) iku tochuu hawai de rirakkusu shitai desu.</td>
<td>SA (3) I would like (..) to relax in Hawaii on my way to Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(4) Soudesu.</td>
<td>T(4) You are right.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first turn, the teacher presents two Japanese sentences that students are required to connect into one sentence. She also gave the English translation of the expected Japanese
sentence. Then the teacher asked Student A to produce a complete Japanese sentence in the next turn. In turn (3), Student A successfully produced the sentence, using the target grammar correctly. Then the teacher gave a positive evaluation in turn (4). As in this excerpt, the interactions throughout the data from the Ms. Tanaka’s class were mostly started by the teacher, followed by the student’s response and then the teacher’s evaluation.

We can also see in Excerpt 4 that only one student was involved in a series of interactions. In this way, Ms. Tanaka’s interactions with the students tended to have a dyadic style, as there were no incidents of IPRE, the sequence discussed in Chapter 1, in which other students participate in the ongoing interaction between the teacher and a student (Anderson, 1995; Cook, 1999).

However, simple IRE sequences such as in Excerpt 4 were observed only when the student produced expected answers to the teacher’s initiations. When the student’s answer did not meet the teacher’s expectations, the sequence was the kind of extended IRE sequence described by Mehan (1979). This kind of sequence consists of the teacher continually eliciting until the student can satisfactorily present the correct answer on his or her own. In the next section, let us examine how Ms. Tanaka treats the students’ incorrect answers in an extended IRE sequence.

### 3.2.2 Teacher’s Response to Students’ Unexpected Answers

When students in Ms. Tanaka’s class gave responses that contained some incorrect features, she tended to continue a variety of elicitations until the student produced the correct answer. Excerpt 5 (Table 3.2) demonstrates how the teacher leads the student to be able to present a correct answer. This teacher-student interaction occurred while the students were working on a new grammar feature that makes verb phrases function as nouns, using the nominalizer “-no”. It is similar to ~ing in English, which also makes a verb function as a noun, as in “I like watching movies.” Just before the interaction in Excerpt 5 began, the teacher had finished explaining the usage of the nominalizer “-no” as well as presenting example sentences containing the expression. In Excerpt 5 Student B was nominated to create “watashi wa tenisu wo suru no ga suki desu (I like playing tennis)”, based on the given words “tenisu wo shimasu (To play tennis)” and “suki (To like)” on the text book. An arrow marks the elicitation made by the teacher.
Table 3.2. Excerpt 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| T(1): Hai kyou wa nana ban kara desu ne.  
Nana ban, watashi tenisu o shi-masu. | T(1): Today, we start from question 7.  
Question 7, “I play tennis.” |
| ((Walking toward the student B))  
T(2): I li::ke pla::ying te::nnis. | ((Walking toward the student B))  
T(2): I li::ke pla::ying te::nnis. |
| ((Pointing to him))  
T(3): How would you say that? | ((Pointing to him))  
T(3): How would you say that? |
| SB(4): Watashi wa:: tenisu ga:: suki – | SB(4): I (.). li::ke tennis – |

→ T(5): Un. Demo ii-n’ dakedo tenisu o shi-masu dakara?  
SB(6): *Tenisu o:: shi-masu ga?  
T(7): No::  
((Walking to WB))  
((Writing on WB))  
→ T(8): Hai koko (...) ii desu ka? Acts as noun,  
so (.). before that informal form come.  
Ss(9): O::h  
→ T(10): Because um (.). this is the relative  
construction, ok?  
((Walking toward student B))  
→ T(11): Just change a few to::: ?  
SB(12): ((Silent)) (2.0)  
→ T(13): I like playing tennis.  
SB(14): Tenisu o suru? (3.0)  
→ T(15): It’s not completed. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SB(6): *Play(formal form) tennis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| T(7): No:: | T(7): No::  
((Walking to Whiteboard (WB)))  
((Writing on WB))  
→ T(8): Ok here, ok? (“to play”) should  
act as noun, so (.). before that informal  
from (of verb) come.  
Ss(9): O::h  
→ T(10): Because um (.). this is the  
relative construction, ok?  
((Walking toward student B))  
→ T(11): Just change a few to::: ?  
SB(12): ((Silent)) (2.0)  
→ T(13): I like playing tennis.  
SB(14): Play(informal form) tennis? (3.0)  
→ T(15): It’s not completed |
Table 3.2. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SB(16): ((Looking at the teacher with a confused expression)) (1.0)</td>
<td>SB(16): ((Looking at the teacher with a confused expression)) (1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ T(17): <em>Something is missing.</em></td>
<td>→ T(17): <em>Something is missing.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB(18): ((Silent)) (2.0)</td>
<td>SB(18): ((Silent)) (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ T(19): Hai jyaa mou ichido zen’bu (..) watashi wa:: ?</td>
<td>→ T(19): Ok then, one more time from the beginning (..) I:: ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB(20): Watashi wa:: tenisu o (.) suru no ga:: suki desu.</td>
<td>SB(20): I:: like to:: play tennis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(21): Sou desu</td>
<td>T(21): That’s right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((Walking to the WB and write))</td>
<td>((Walking to the WB and write))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(22): Ne tenisu o suru no ga suki desu. ii desu ka? Watashi wa tenisu o suru no ga</td>
<td>T(22): See, I like to play tennis. Alright. I like to play tennis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suki desu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 5 illustrates how the teacher applied various strategies to help the student complete the given task within the extended IRE sequence. In turns (2) and (3), the teacher asked Student B to translate the English sentence “I like playing tennis” into Japanese. His answer in turn (4) failed to include “suru no (playing)”, which was the main point in this exercise; instead, he said “tenisu ga suki desu (I like tennis).” Because his answer was incomplete, the teacher indicated what was missing in his answer in line (5). However, he still could not produce the correct form in (6), which signifies that he did not understand the explanation of the grammar. The teacher explained it again on the white board in lines (8) and (10), and gave the student another chance to answer in the next line (11). Because the student remained silent for about 2 seconds in line (12), the teacher repeated the target English sentence “I like playing tennis” in line (13) to clarify that his task was to translate it into Japanese. In the next turn (14), the student was able to produce the phrase containing the correct form of the target grammar. This suggests that he was able to understand the grammar.
point and present it, achieving a higher level of knowledge with the teacher’s support. However, he only presented the correct phrase when he was supposed to give a complete sentence containing the phrase. The teacher required him to present the entire sentence by himself, by telling him to complete the sentence in lines (15) and (17). The student seemed not to understand what he was being asked to do by the teacher as he silently looked at the teacher with a confused expression in line (16) and remained silent in line (18). When the teacher changed the expression into a question in turn (19), he noticed what was required and was finally able to produce the whole grammatical sentence in the next turn (20). The teacher's next utterance (21) indicates the extended sequence is over by giving a positive evaluation to the student.

This excerpt shows a series of teacher-student interactions in which the student eventually became able to produce a correct Japanese sentence by receiving support from the teacher. Every time the teacher received an unsatisfactory answer from the student, as in turns (4), (6), (12), (14), (16) and (18), she used various strategies to elicit the answer, such as emphasizing her expectations to the student as shown in lines (5) and (15), repeating the question such as in line (13), changing the expression of the question in relation to the previous initiation as indicated in lines (11), (17) and (19) and explaining the grammar point again in turns (8) and (10). With help from the teacher, the student successfully presented the correct answer and received a positive evaluation at the end. This series of interactions follows Mehan’s (1979) account of the extended sequence, as the teacher elicited the student’s correct answer until he could perform the task by himself, and the interaction ended with the teacher giving a positive evaluation to the student.

The transcript of Ms. Tanaka’s class contained 30 incidents of students responding to the teacher’s initiation incorrectly. Ms. Tanaka elicited the correct answer from the students 25 times, while there were only five instances of her simply giving the answer. It became clear that Ms. Tanaka has a tendency to help students produce a correct response by themselves, which teachers in the United States typically do. We can also see that prompting assisting students to fix their problems by themselves can also encourage them to orally participate in the interaction. The next section illustrates another example in which the teacher encourages students’ verbal presentations in the class.
3.2.3 Referential Questions

In general, Ms. Tanaka seems to lead students to verbally present in the class. One such incident was the elicitation process discussed in Section 3.2.2. It appears that Ms. Tanaka also maximizes the number of chances for students to present by asking referential questions, in addition to going through the questions given in the textbook. In most instances, the referential questions that the teacher asks can be answered by students using the newly learned grammar.

Excerpt 6 (Table 3.3) shows a moment when the teacher asked a student a referential question: “nani wo suru no ga kirai desuka? (what do you hate to do?)”. Because the student needed to use the nominalizer “-no” to answer this question, it was a chance for him to practice using the newly learned grammar in a realistic communication scenario.

Table 3.3. Excerpt 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC(2) Boku wa:: dan’su suru no ga daikirai.</td>
<td>SC(2) I:: hate dancing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(3) Dan’su? Don’na dan’su desuka?</td>
<td>T(3) Dance? What kind of dance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC(4) Zenbu</td>
<td>SC(4) All kinds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(5) A:: dansu wa:: zenbu suru no ga daikirai?</td>
<td>T(5) Oh:: As for dance, you hate doing any kind (of dance)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first turn, the teacher asked a referential question “what do you hate to do?” Student C gave the answer, utilizing the target grammar correctly in the second turn. However, in the third turn the teacher continues the question based on the student’s previous response, rather than ending the interaction by giving a positive evaluation. Similar to this example, Ms. Tanaka often expanded the interaction between the students. For example, when a student produced the sentence “arubaito wo suru no ga kirai desu (I hate doing my part-time job)”, she asked about what kind of job he has and the reason why he hates it. As a result of the expanded conversation, we can see that the student received more chances to
speak Japanese in the class. In this kind of sequence, Ms. Tanaka’s referential questions may function not only to promote students’ practice of the target grammar, but also to give them more opportunities to speak in Japanese.

There is another advantage to referential questions in this context as they allow Ms. Tanaka to implicitly reveal the preferred Japanese discourse style. In Japan, a speaker is expected to show alignment with the previous speaker, which is often shown with the discourse marker “-ne” (Ohta, 1999). Excerpt 7 below is an example taken from Strauss (1995). This example shows a conversation recorded outside of the classroom setting in which the two people, Ai and Hide, are talking about Los Angeles.

Excerpt 7:

“Well, Los Angeles has been, what shall I say? Eventful, in a bad sense.”

Hide: ho:nto ni ne. Shizen to no tata- ne tatakai desu yo ne
“It’s true ne. It’s like a struggle against nature ne.”

Ai: ne, soo desu ne:
“ne. Exactly ne:.”

By using “-ne” at the end of the sentence in the second turn, Hide tries to indicate that he agrees with what Ai said in the preceding utterance, and that his statement has relevance to her opinion. Ai’s “ne” in the third turn also shows that she agrees with his opinion, “it’s like a struggle against nature.” Along these lines, Excerpt 8 (Table 3.4) illustrates how Ms. Tanaka uses “-ne” to show alignment with the student’s response to her referential question.

Prior to the teacher’s first utterance in this excerpt, the teacher asked all of the students a referential question, “nani wo suru no ga kirai desuka? (What do you hate to do)?” Student D wanted to say “I hate to eat Ikezukuri (a type of sashimi)” but did not remember the word “Ikezukuri.” The teacher gave her the word and also wrote it down on the white board while explaining the meaning to the other students. During that time, another student asked how to say “mother-in-law” in Japanese because he wanted to create the sentence “I hate being with my mother in law”, so the teacher gave her the word. Then the teacher returned her attention to Student D in line (1). After explaining what ikezukuri is in lines (1) and (3), the teacher initiated the interaction by asking Student D why he wanted to know about ikezukuri. Student D produced a correct sentence in turn (9). Then in line (10), the teacher showed alignment with the student’s answer by using “-ne,” as well as indicating her
Table 3.4. Excerpt 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T(1): <em>What were we talking about?</em> A:: ikizukuri(.) Ikizukuri is a sashimi but it is very fresh that means that’s still alive=</td>
<td>T(1): <em>What were we talking about?</em> A:: ikizukuri(.) Ikizukuri is a sashimi but it is very fresh that means that’s still alive=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss(2): Ugh</td>
<td>Ss(2): Ugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(3): =so well, it’s dead but it’s still moving</td>
<td>T(3): =so well, it’s dead but it’s still moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss(4): [( )</td>
<td>Ss(4): [( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss(5): <em>That’s gross</em></td>
<td>Ss(5): <em>That’s gross</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((looking at the student D))</td>
<td>((looking at the student D))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(6): Dakara ikizukuri o::</td>
<td>T(6): So, (what’s about) ikizukuri::?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD(7): Ikizukuri o taberu=</td>
<td>SD(7): Eat ikezukuri=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(8): Taberu no ga::</td>
<td>T(8): To eat::</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD(9): taberu no ga kirai desu</td>
<td>SD(9): I hate to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➞T(10): Un’ kirai desu ne</td>
<td>➞T(10): Yeah, you hate it ne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➞SD(11): [kirai desu ne</td>
<td>➞SD(11): [(you or I) hate it ne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

acceptance of the response by repeating a portion of the student’s utterance. The student in the next turn (11) imitates the teacher’s previous utterance. This is not likely an indication of Student D showing alignment, since it is unnatural to repeat the same phrase twice in this context. However, even if the student merely repeated the phrase, he at least noticed that there is a discourse marker “-ne” and is possibly in the process of acquiring its appropriate usage, as claimed in Ohta (1999): Ohta (1999) explains that the first step in acquisition of the usage of the discourse marker “-ne” is to observe how the teacher shows alignment to the students’ comments.
A comparison of Excerpts 4 and 5, in which students were working from the textbook, to Excerpts 6 and 8, in which students were asked referential questions, reveals a difference in terms of whether the teacher expected the given answer. In Excerpts 4 and 5, the teacher had the exact sentence that she wanted the student to present. On the other hand, Excerpts 6 and 8 show that the information presented by the student was new to the teacher. In other words, we can consider that the interaction initiated by the referential question more closely resembles natural communication, since the student’s answer to the referential question is unknown to the teacher. Thus, it is easy for the teacher to show alignment to the student’s utterance. This is consistent with Ohta’s (1999) opinion that the teacher can show alignment with the students through asking referential questions. In other words, it seems that Ms. Tanaka was able to demonstrate how to show alignment by asking referential questions, allowing the students to observe the teacher’s third turn and potentially reproduce the alignment in their own communication in the future.

3.2.4 Summary of Findings in Ms. Tanaka’s Class

The findings from Ms. Tanaka's class indicate that the interactional organization is similar in some way to many English speaking classrooms in the United States. The basic teacher-student interaction is initiated by the teacher in the IRE sequence. When the student’s response does not meet the teacher’s expectation, she tries to elicit the correct answer from the student by giving hints and support. It was also observed that Ms. Tanaka appeared to encourage students to speak in the class, especially through the use of referential questions. These characteristics of classroom interaction are frequently observed in classrooms in the United States (Mehan, 1979; Poole 1992). That is, the students in Ms. Tanaka’s class were treated in the same way as in other classes. It should be noted that the teacher-student interaction involves only one student in a series of IRE in Excerpts 4, 5, 6 and 8: The instructional sequence is dyadic as there were no incidents of the kind of IPRE sequence, in which other students jump in to the ongoing teacher-student interaction, discussed by Anderson (1995) and Cook (1999). Because there is less of a need to pay attention to the interactions between other students and the teacher in Ms. Tanaka’s class, one may consider that students do not experience or learn an important Japanese cultural message, namely, the need to listen to others attentively. However, Ms. Tanaka displays the importance of the
attentive listening skill by showing alignment to the students’ response to her referential questions.

3.3 CLASSROOM OF MS. KOBAYASHI

We have discussed the findings in Ms. Tanaka’s class in the previous section. Now we will examine the teacher-student interaction in the classroom of the other teacher, Ms. Kobayashi. The findings are introduced in the following order: Basic interaction style, teacher’ response to the students’ incorrect presentations, and incidents that show that the students’ oral presentation tends to be limited.

3.3.1 Basic Interactional Style

As in Ms. Tanaka’s class, the basic sequence of interaction in Ms. Kobayashi’s class was also the IRE, but incidents of the IPRE sequence were also observed. First, an example of the IRE sequence is shown in Excerpt 9 (Table 3.5). As explained in Chapter 2, the transcriptions from both classes analyzed in this study show moments when the students were covering the same exercise, using the same textbook. In Excerpt 9, the students are learning the nominalizer “-no”, as in the transcription of Ms. Tanaka’s class. Student E was asked to make the Japanese sentence “souji wo suruno wa kirai jya nai (I do not hate to do cleaning)” based on the two phrases given in the textbook, “souji wo shimasu (I clean)” and “kirai jya nai (I do not hate)”.

Table 3.5. Excerpt 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE(2): (0.6) Watashi wa:: =</td>
<td>SE(2): (0.6) I::=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (3): Hai</td>
<td>T(3): Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In turn (1), the teacher indicated to Student E which question she was supposed to answer (initiation). Student E answered correctly in lines (2) and (4) (Response). Then a positive evaluation was given to the student in turn (5) (Evaluation). Although the basic interaction sequence used in Ms. Kobayashi’s class was the IRE as in Excerpt 9, elsewhere there also were multiparty interactions in which the students were required to listen to their peer’s utterances.

Excerpt 10 (Table 3.6) immediately follows Excerpt 9 above illustrates the multiparty structure of this classroom in an IPRE sequence. This example shows a situation in which a student received an evaluation from her peer before she was given one by the teacher. In the preceding context, Excerpt 9, Student E created a Japanese sentence “souji wo suru no wa kiraijya nai (I do not hate cleaning)”. In Excerpt 10, the teacher asked student F to give the meaning of this sentence in English.

Table 3.6. Excerpt 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T (1): Dewa F-san imi wa nan’ desu ka?</td>
<td>T (1): Then what is the meaning, Ms F?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF(2): U::m (2.0) I hate (2.0) I don’t know Souji is</td>
<td>SF (2): U::m (2.0) I hate (2.0) I don’t know “Souji” is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (4): Souji is cleaning</td>
<td>T (4): “Souji” is cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF (5): Oh “I don’t like cleaning”.</td>
<td>SF (5): Oh “I don’t like cleaning”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (7): Un’ kirai jya nai</td>
<td>T (7): Yeah “do not hate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF(8): Oh, I like cleaning?</td>
<td>SF(8): Oh, I like cleaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(9): Un’ I don’t (1.0) hate cleaning.</td>
<td>T (9): Un’ I don’t (1.0) hate cleaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF(10): A::h</td>
<td>SF (10): A::h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student F was asked to provide the meaning of the target sentence in turn (1). In turn (2), she encountered a problem as she did not know what “souji” meant. In turn (3), Student G gave her the answer before the teacher did in line (4). She continued to try to translate the sentence, but wrongly translated it as “I don’t like cleaning” in the next turn (5). Student G corrected her answer again in the following turn (6). In turn (7), the teacher chose to indicate specifically what was wrong with her answer by repeating the Japanese target sentence again. However, she still did not seem to understand in line (8). The teacher gave her the answer in the next turn (9). As Student G’s reaction to Student F’s utterance preceded the teacher’s evaluation, this example can be considered as an example of an IPRE sequence. Although earlier studies may not have shown evidence of the existence of the IPRE in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom in the United States, the example above indicates that it actually occurs.

In addition to the occurrence of the IPRE, what also attracts interest in Excerpt 10 is that Student F does not seem to be listening to Student G. In turn (6), Student G gave Student F the entire correct answer. Thus, Student F had a chance to correct her answer but she did not get it right and still incorrectly presented “I like cleaning” in line (8). Although the teacher's elicitation in turn (7) occurs between the two students’ utterances, the teacher only repeated the Japanese expression, which was not helpful enough for the student. As another example of an IPRE sequence, in turn (2) Student F said she does not know the meaning of a word. In the turn (3), Student G gave the meaning of the word. In turn (4) the teacher gave the same feedback as Student G to Student F. Then Student F understood the meaning of the word and correctly used it in turn (5). In this example, we are not sure if Student F got the meaning of the word from Student G or the teacher. However, turns (5) through (8) suggests that Student F is attentive primarily to the teacher in this interaction. A possible explanation for this behavior will be discussed in Chapter 4. However, it was observed in Ms. Tanaka’s class that in addition to the dyadic IRE sequence, the students sometimes voluntarily participated in the interaction between the teacher and other students, which is similar to a kind of IPRE sequence introduced by Anderson (1995) and Cook (1999).

Another point of interest found in Excerpt 10 is that Student F did not receive a positive evaluation at the end of the interaction. In turn (9), the teacher gave the answer “I do not hate cleaning.” Student F’s next turn was “A::h”, indicating she understood the feedback
she received from the teacher. The teacher stopped the interaction with her at this point. That is, Student F did not receive a chance to present the correct answer by herself nor receive a positive evaluation at the end. As this example suggests, Ms. Kobayashi tends to give the answer rather than to elicit one from the students when their answers are incorrect: The transcription of Ms. Kobayashi’s class contained 19 utterances of students that contained mistakes. In 14 out of 19 incidents Ms. Kobayashi gave a direct answer, and there were only five instances of students receiving an additional elicitation. Also, because the students do not typically repeat the correct answer, the students in interactions such as this do not have a chance to present the answer on their own, creating a situation in which students who made a mistake are not provided with another chance to think, produce a correct answer and receive a positive evaluation at the end. Ms. Kobayashi’s responses to the students’ unexpected answers are analyzed in the following section again.

3.3.2 Treatment for Students’ Unexpected Answers

Excerpt 11 (Table 3.7) illustrates how Ms. Kobayashi deals with a student’s incorrect answer. As in Excerpt 10, it also includes a multiparty interactional structure but not like an IPRE. The excerpt occurred while the students were working on an exercise that asked students to practice the usage of “tochuu (on the way~)”. Student H was asked to make the sentence “toshokan e iku tochuu sensei ni aimashita (I met my teacher on the way to the library)”.

The teacher called on Student H and indicated which question he should answer in turns (1) and (3), respectively. However, the student’s answer in turn (4) was incorrect because he used the past-tense form instead of present tense. The next turn (5) shows that the teacher implicitly corrected his mistake by repeating his sentence with corrections. Student H nodded after the teacher’s corrections in turn (6), which represent his understanding of the teacher’s feedback. The teacher then started an interaction with Student I in the next turn (7). This example shows that the teacher did not require Student H to verbalize the correct sentence after presenting it.

Excerpt 11 shows another characteristic of one kind of multiparty interaction which requires the students to listen attentively to others. Here in turn (7), the teacher asked Student I to translate the Japanese sentence that Student H tried to present in the preceding interaction.
sequence. The teacher’s interaction with Student H ended with the teacher’s direct correction and then the student nodded. In the next turn, the teacher told Student I to present the meaning in English of the Japanese sentence that the teacher presented in turn (5). As you can see, the presentation by the teacher in turn (5) was apparently directed at Student H, and she did not repeat the target sentence to Student I. This indicates that she expected Student I to listen to the interaction between herself and Student H. Student I, in fact, had listened to the previous sentence uttered in the interaction between the teacher and Student H and was able to respond to the teacher’s question correctly. Ms. Kobayashi uses this style of interaction, and students must listen to the other students in order to answer the questions. That is, the students in Ms. Kobayashi's class need to pay attention to the exchanges between the teacher and their peers.

Before moving on, it should be pointed out that neither Student F in Excerpt 10 nor Student H in Excerpt 11 received a positive evaluation. The reason seems to be a result of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T (1): Hai H san douzo</td>
<td>T (1): Go ahead Mr H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH (2): Which one?</td>
<td>SH (2): Which one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (3): San ban</td>
<td>T (3): Question 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH (4): Toshokan e itta tochu sensei ni aimashita.</td>
<td>SH (4): On the way to went to the library, I met my teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (5): Sou ne toshokan e iku tochu da ne. daijyobu?</td>
<td>T (5): Yeah,(but) it’s “on the way to go to the library” Is it ok?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH (6): ((nodding))</td>
<td>SH (6): ((nodding))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (7): I san imi wa?</td>
<td>T (7): What does that mean, Mr I?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI (8): On the way to the library, I met the teacher</td>
<td>SI (8): On the way to the library, I met the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (9): Sou ne. jyaa tsugi</td>
<td>T (9): Right then next.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
teacher’s tendency to provide correct answers rather than further elicitations as well as the lack of offering students chances to repeat the correct answer after it was given by the teacher. As seen in Excerpt 5 from Ms. Tanaka’s class, the student who made an incorrect remark kept receiving elicitations and obtained a positive evaluation at the end, because the teacher successfully elicited the expected answer from the student. As discussed in the section on Ms. Tanaka’s class, elicitations can lead students to speak more in the class. On the other hand, it seems that giving a direct answer to the student takes away the floor for presentation as well as the chance for receiving a positive evaluation at the end. The next section introduces more incidents in which the Ms. Kobayashi gave fewer chances to speak to the students when compared to Ms. Tanaka.

3.3.3 Fewer Chances Offered for Students to Speak

Another point of concern, caused by the fact that students who made mistakes did not have a chance to fix them on their own, may be that students’ chances for speaking in the class were also decreased. This became more apparent while observing incidents of the teacher answering her own question and the lack of chances to expand interactions with the students.

3.3.3.1 Teacher Answering Her Own Questions

Excerpt 12 (Table 3.8) indicates the monologic style of talking used by Ms. Kobayashi, demonstrating how the teacher asks a question and answers it by herself.

Table 3.8. Excerpt 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T (1): ((Pointing to the sentence on WB)) Sousou. <em>This sentence lacks a subject</em> ne.</td>
<td>T: (1): ((Pointing to the sentence on WB)) Yes yes. <em>This sentence lacks a subject</em> ne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this example, the teacher tries to indicate that there is a subject even though it does not appear in the sentence, as Japanese language can omit the subject if it is obvious within the discourse. For example, the sentence “sakana ga suki desu ((null-sub) like fish)” lacks an obvious subject. The teacher wrote two sentences: One of them has the subject in the sentence and the other contains the null subject from the previous sentence, “sakana ga suki desu”. In turn (1), using the two sentences, the teacher indicated that one of the sentences lacks a subject. She started turn (1) with “sousou (yes yes)” because a student pointed it out in the previous turn. In turn (2), the teacher asked the students “who likes fish?” to promote them to notice that there is a subject which does not appear in the sentence. However, without waiting for the students’ answers, the teacher gave the answer to the students by saying “yourself or other people,” meaning anything that possibly likes fish could be the subject in this sentence, in lines (3) and (4). Ms. Kobayashi occasionally uses these kinds of “ostensible” questions (Yamashita, 1993). As discussed in Chapter 1, Yamashita explains that the Japanese teacher’s usage of such ostensible questions is because he or she seems not to expect the students to participate verbally during the lecture, but rather to listen to the teacher talk and show their understanding through non-verbal expressions such as nodding.

3.3.3.2 LACK OF EXPANSION OF INTERACTION AFTER REFERENTIAL QUESTIONS

As introduced above in the section focused on Ms. Tanaka’s class, Ms. Tanaka frequently asked referential questions which students could answer using the newly learned grammar. It was also observed that she often expanded the interaction even after she received the answer to the initial question. Ms. Kobayashi also asked referential questions, so that students could practice the learned grammar in a more natural way. However, as seen in Excerpt 13 (Table 3.9), she does not expand the interaction in the way that Ms. Tanaka does.

In this sequence, the teacher asked Student J what she likes to do in turns (1) and (2). Student J successfully answered, using the newly learned nominalizer “-no” in line (3). The teacher showed in turn (4) that she understood what Student J said. Then, in the next turn, she started an interaction with another student, Student K, by asking him to translate what Student J presented. In turn (6), Student K correctly translated the presentation into English, as indicated by the teacher’s next turn showing the acceptance of his response. This example
Table 3.9. Excerpt 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcription</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T(1) Hai dewa <em>what do you like to do.</em></td>
<td>T(1) Ok then, <em>what do you like to do.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(2) J san dekita?</td>
<td>T(2) Did you make (the sentence) Ms J?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ(3) Watashi wa hon o:: yomu:: no ga suki desu.</td>
<td>SJ (3) I like:: reading:: books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(4) Sou desu ka.</td>
<td>T(4) I see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(5) K san imi wa nan’desuka?</td>
<td>T(5) What is the meaning, Mr K?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK(6) <em>She likes to read.</em></td>
<td>SK (6) <em>She likes to read.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(8) Hoka ni dekiru hito imasuka?</td>
<td>T(8) Is there anyone who can present?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This excerpt also shows another incident of one kind of multiparty interaction structure as seen in Excerpt 11. Student K is required to attentively listen to others in the classroom, as the teacher did not repeat the sentence Student J presented to Student K when she asked him to translate it.

### 3.3.4 Summary of Findings in Ms. Kobayashi’s Class

To summarize the findings in Ms. Kobayashi’s class, the basic sequence of interaction was the dyadic IRE and multiparty IPRE. When the teacher received an unsatisfactory answer from the students, she tended to present the answer rather than elicit one from the students. Due to the lack of additional elicitations, the students had few chances to correct their mistakes on their own. Thus, the students also often failed to receive a positive evaluation after presenting a wrong answer. Another finding is that the students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class are required to listen to the interaction in the classroom, even if they are
not directly involved. It seems that Ms. Kobayashi tends to lead the students to be able to listen more than to speak in the class, which was confirmed by the existence of ostensible questions asked by the teacher and her tendency not to extend the interactions with students. In fact, the interactional style observed in Ms. Kobayashi’s class are very similar to those identified previously as characteristics of class in Japan. That is, Ms Kobayashi’s way of interacting with the students seems to be similar to a traditional Japanese classroom style, one which differs in potentially important ways from the American style.

3.4 CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS

It was found that the interactional styles used by Ms. Tanaka (the experienced teacher) and Ms. Kobayashi (the beginning teacher) differ in terms of basic interactional sequence and their way of responding to the students’ unexpected answers. Also, it was observed that Ms. Tanaka has a tendency to let students speak in the classroom, while Ms. Kobayashi seems to recognize listening as more important than speaking. That is, Ms. Kobayashi’s class follows a traditional Japanese classroom interaction style, while Ms. Tanaka more closely applies the interaction style used in typical American classrooms. In the next chapter, we will discuss these findings in greater detail.
CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter introduced the findings of this research. After comparing the discourse style of two Japanese foreign language classes of the same level in a university in the United States, it appears that they differ in terms of the sequence of teacher-student interaction, the treatment of students’ unexpected answers and the number of demonstrations of discourse rules in Japanese. We discuss the findings from various angles in Chapter 4.

4.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings from the two classes of Ms. Tanaka, an experienced teacher, and Ms. Kobayashi, a beginning teacher, are summarized in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1. Summary of Findings in Two Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Dyadic IRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Multiparty IPRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s response to an incorrect utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ verbal participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognized cultural norms of Japanese discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study, all of the interaction in Ms. Tanaka’s class consists of the IRE or IRF sequence, which means that the teacher initiates the interaction, the student replies to it and then the teacher provides an evaluation or feedback move. When a student’s utterance contains mistakes, IRE sequence changes to an extended IRE sequence (Mehan, 1979), in which Ms. Tanaka tries to elicit the correct answer from the student. These characteristics are often observed in classrooms in the United States (Cook, 1999; Mehan, 1979, Poole, 1992). That is, Ms. Tanaka’s classroom interactions are somewhat similar to those typically found in the United States. She also frequently asks referential questions in Japanese such as “Nani wo suru no ga suki desuka (What do you like to do?)” and she further expands the interaction
based on the student’s response such as asking “Doushite suki na no desuka (Why do you like to do ~?)” or “Shuuni nankai kurai shimasuka (How often in a week do you do ~?)”. To answer these questions, the students made their own original sentences using the newly learned grammar and most of the students presented their sentences to the class. Based on the incidents of elicitations and abundance of referential questions, we perceive that students in Ms. Tanaka’s class were frequently given the floor to speak in class. While Ms. Tanaka employs these features of classroom interaction, which are common in the United States, she also provides examples of discourse that is preferred in Japanese by showing how and when to show alignment to the preceding speaker through asking referential questions.

Ms. Kobayashi’s class can be contrasted with Ms. Tanaka’s class, in that it follows an interaction pattern that is more often found in Japanese classes. That is, there are abundant examples of culturally preferred discourse in Japan in Ms. Kobayashi’s class. Regarding the interactional pattern, although the basic interaction pattern was dyadic IRE, there were also some incidents of IPRE in which other students are included in a multiparty form of teacher-student interaction. Also, Ms. Kobayashi created situations in which students were required to pay attention to a classmate’s interaction by asking a student to create and present a sentence, and then directly asking one of the other students to translate it into English. As students needed to listen to the student’s utterance to translate it, the students were guided to attentively listen to others, an important conversational norm in Japan (Cook, 1999). We also saw that Ms. Kobayashi does not continue to try to elicit a correct answer when the student made a mistake in their presentation, but rather gave the correct answer. Furthermore, we observed the existence of “ostensible” questions (Yamashita, 1993), in which the teacher answered her own questions. Thus, Ms. Kobayashi’s class appears to be in accordance with Yamashita’s (1993) finding that is the Japanese style of classroom interaction, students’ verbal presentations tend to be minimized in order to maximize their chances to listen.

In sum, the two classes have dissimilar characteristics in terms of teacher-student interaction sequences, richness of discourse norms often used in Japan and responses to students’ incorrect answers. These differences raise the question of how each of these features in the two classes affects the students’ learning experience in the class. We discuss this point in the following sections.
4.2 INTERACTIONAL PATTERN

Ms. Tanaka’s interactional sequence is closer to the style commonly used in the United States, as it tightly follows the IRE or IRF (Cazden, 1988; McCollum, 1989; Poole & Patthey-Chavez, 1994) and involves only one student at one time (Cook, 1999). Since classroom interaction usually reflects students’ culturally specific style of interaction (Cazden, 1988; Koshik, 2002; McCollum, 1989; Talmy, 2008; Vanish, 2008) and students tend to enjoy learning and perform better in familiar interactions (Heath, 1983), it is possible that Ms. Tanaka’s class is less intimidating to the American students in terms of the interactional pattern used.

On the other hand, the students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class are sometimes faced with an unfamiliar style of interaction, IPRE. First let us consider how IPRE affects students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class. As discussed in Chapter 1, the main characteristic of IPRE is that the student’s presentation receives other students’ reactions prior to the teacher’s feedback. Cook (1999) views the IPRE as socialization to attentive listening. She also regards it as an interaction in which students learn from their classmates and the teacher acts a facilitator. The example of IPRE, taken from Anderson (1995) and presented in Excerpt 2 in Chapter 1, shows an interaction where the teacher asked the student a question and she answered it correctly. Then two other students commented on the student’s presentation with “ii desu!(good)” and “onaji desu!(I have the same!)”, before the teacher made a comment. As in this example, when the student’s presentation is correct, the student’s presentation is confirmed as correct by their classmates. According to Cook (1999), when the student’s presentation is incorrect, other students are invited to fix the problems so that he can learn the correct answer from his peers. However, the IPRE observed in the present study, which was presented in Excerpt 10 in Chapter 3, shows a difference from the traditional IPRE, since the student was not receiving knowledge from her classmates, but instead from the teacher. Excerpt 10 repeated here indicates that a student (Student F) in Ms. Kobayashi’s class did not listen to her classmate (Student G)’s feedback when he was correcting her mistakes. Considering he was sitting directly behind her, it must not be the case that she did not hear him. It is more natural to regard that she is unfamiliar with receiving feedback from classmates. She took the first semester of Japanese at the present school with a different teacher and has spent about one month in Ms. Kobayashi’s class, while the classmate, who
gave the feedback, took the first semester of Japanese with Ms. Kobayashi. We can assume that she has not familiarized herself with IPRE interactions in her one month of experience in Ms. Kobayashi’s class. This observation suggests that IPRE may not function fully unless all participants are familiar with receiving feedback from their classmates.

Then, let us consider how Ms. Kobayashi will accustom all of the students to the IPRE sequence. As the first step, the teacher can invite other students to comment when the student’s presentation is correct. As in Cook’s (1999) example, when the presentation is correct, the student receives positive feedback from their classmates. It can be considered that receiving positive feedback is less intimidating than a negative evaluation, as receiving negative feedback can cause anxiety for classroom learning (Aida, 1994; Tallon, 2009). When the students become used to giving and receiving feedback from each other, the teacher can gradually apply IPRE to any interaction, including one in which the student’s answer is incorrect.

4.3 CHANCE OF LEARNING CULTURAL NORMS

While it is considered that a familiar instructional style makes classroom learning comfortable for students, the experience of classroom interaction also allow students to experience culture and discourse rules of the country in which the language students are learning is used (Byon, 2006; Cook, 1999; Duranti & Ochs; 1986; Ohta, 1999; He, 2000; Poole, 1992; Talmy, 2008). Ohta (1999) states that the chances for students to learn the culturally preferred discourse style associated with the target language may be limited to interactions with the teacher in the classroom. Thus, a desirable skill for language teachers should perhaps be to demonstrate the interaction style used in the country where the target language is spoken. Let us review how the two teachers in this research present the discourse style preferred in Japan and discuss what the students can learn from them.

4.3.1 Ms. Kobayashi’s Class

As we saw in Chapter 3, Ms. Kobayashi’s class had many examples of Japanese style interactions; listening attentively to the class and speaking in relation to others. IPRE, which is discussed in Section 4.2 above, is a kind of interactional sequence which indicates that students are guided to listen to other people’s interactions with the teacher. It is impossible for the students to give comments to another student’s presentation if they are not paying
attention. Furthermore, Excerpts 11 and 13 in Chapter 3 allowed us to recognize that the teacher created a situation in which the students need to pay attention to a classmate’s interaction with the teacher. In Excerpt 12, the teacher corrected a student’s mistake and asked him if he understood by asking “daijyoubu? (Is it ok?)”. Then in the next turn, the teacher addressed another student with “I san imi wa? (What does (that) mean, Mr. I?)”. She did not repeat the sentence that she wanted the second student to translate into English, but she seemed to assume that he was listening to the initial interaction and had understood which sentence he was supposed to translate. Since the students cannot predict when they will be called on to be asked a question based on another students’ utterance, they are required to follow interactions that they are not directly involved in.

Although one student (Student F) was not familiar with the IPRE sequence, the other students who were in their second semester of studying in Ms. Kobayashi’s class successfully participated in the interaction. This evidence indicates that those students understand the importance of attentive listening to others even when they are not directly involved in the conversation. That is, they learned a Japanese discourse pattern through studying Japanese in the class. In this way, we can conclude that those students have learnt to use the Japanese interactional style through experiencing it in the classroom interactional routine (Byon, 2006; Cook, 1999; Duranti & Ochs, 1986; He, 2000; Ohta, 1999; Poole, 1992; Talmy, 2008).

In addition to the examples of interaction seen in Chapter 3, Ms. Kobayashi offers more situations that require students to listen rather than to speak, as indicated by her use of “ostensible” questions (Yamashita, 1993), her lack of expansions with students, and her direct correction of the students’ incorrect answers. In these ways, students can potentially realize the role of listening in a Japanese classroom setting.

4.3.2 Ms. Tanaka’s Class

We observed that Ms. Tanaka also demonstrated an important Japanese discourse pattern in her class; the usage of the discourse marker “-ne”, which Japanese people use when they speak in relation to the previous speaker. It is said that “-ne” indicates that the speaker listened to the previous speaker well and is showing alignment with his or her opinion. This alignment strategy is considered to be acquired by foreign language students while observing the teacher’s interaction (Ohta, 1999). Then, one can assume that students in
Ms. Tanaka’s class may become able to speak in relation to others by observing their teacher. Furthermore, since the speaker must listen well to the previous speaker in order to show alignment, one might imagine that there is a possibility that the students could learn attentive listening as well. However, the data from Ms. Tanaka’s class suggest that the teacher’s presentation of alignment might not be enough to teach them to attentively listen to others. As pointed out in Cook (1999), if the teacher involves only one student in one IRE-based sequence, other students do not need to pay attention to the interaction. It was observed in the present study that while one student was interacting with the teacher, other students were working on an exercise by themselves, chatting with peers and even playing a computer game. These behaviors may be the result of students being indifferent to classmates’ interactions with the teacher.

Chapter 3 also included an example (Excerpt 8) that reveals how Ms. Tanaka used “-ne” with one student who then repeated her utterance, including the “-ne”. It is obvious that the student realized there is “-ne” at the end of her sentence. According to Ohta (1999), we can consider this student as being in the process of acquiring the usage of “-ne” and how to show alignment. Let us consider the difference between the situation in which Student D in Excerpt 8 was placed and the other students who are indifferent to his interactions with the teacher. The former is actually involved in the conversation with the teacher, while the latter do not directly participate in the ongoing interaction. Ms. Tanaka’s attempt to show alignment might be effective in leading students to acquire how to speak with regard to the previous speaker, but only when they are directly included in the conversation. However, Japanese people prefer to attentively listen to others’ conversations even when they are not directly participating (Cook, 1999). Some students in Ms. Tanaka’s class do not seem to have realized this cultural norm. In sum, Ms. Tanaka’s class should be comfortable for the students because the discourse style used in the class is similar to the discourse style of their own speech community. However, there is also a concern that students have fewer chances to notice the importance of attentive listening in Japanese society.

4.4 CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

We have discussed the differences between the two teachers in terms of their interaction pattern and the amount of cultural norms in discourse available in the class. The
The final feature we consider is how the two teachers give feedback to the students when they present an incorrect answer or produce an unexpected utterance.

### 4.4.1 Correction of Students’ Mistakes in Two Classes

We observed that Ms. Tanaka tends to elicit correct answers from the students. For example, Chapter 3 shows a situation where Ms. Tanaka continued to help a student until he was able to present the correct sentence. Since he was able to perform the task correctly, the student received a positive evaluation at the end. This sequence of corrective feedback follows Mehan’s (1979) observation that students can receive a positive evaluation at the end when the teacher elicits a correct answer from them through an extended sequence. Furthermore, Ms. Tanaka’s corrective feedback is in accordance with feedback frequently observed in classrooms in the United States (Koshik, 2002; Poole, 1992).

However, Ms. Kobayashi’s response to students’ unexpected utterances is different from Ms. Tanaka’s. In other words, Ms. Kobayashi’s treatment of incorrect answers is unlike what the students are familiar with. The data (Excerpts 10 and 11) illustrate that she corrected students’ mistakes by herself. The students who made mistakes in their utterances did not receive a chance to correct their remarks by themselves. It is also evident that Ms. Kobayashi finished the interaction with the students without giving a positive evaluation at the end. Let’s consider how these aspects could affect the students.

Before discussing the impact of the corrective feedback, it should be noted that students in both classes actually learned after making mistakes. We saw incidents of teacher-student interactions that contained the student’s incorrect utterance in both classes. As discussed above, Ms. Tanaka’s student in Excerpt 5 was able to present the correct sentences after receiving help from the teacher. So, it is apparent that the student understood what the mistake was and learned the correct answer. However, it is less obvious whether the students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class actually understood what the teacher corrected, since there is no evidence of the students actually presenting the correct form. However, as one student (Student F) in Excerpt 10 uttered “A::h” and another student (Student H) in Excerpt 11 nodded after the teacher’s correction, we can assume that these two students were indicating that they understood the teacher’s correction. Thus, although they did not receive a chance to fix the mistakes by themselves, we can see the possibility of the students realizing what the
mistake was. Hence, the remaining discussion will be about the students’ feelings rather than the efficiency of the teaching.

4.4.2 Students’ Feeling toward Corrective Feedback

Prior research has shown that Japanese teachers including Japanese language teachers tend to correct students’ mistakes rather than elicit the correct answer from them (Ikeno, 1998; Yamashita, 1993; Yoshida, 2008). Yamashita (1993) and Ikeno (1998) consider this tendency as resulting from the fact that Japanese culture regards listening as more important than speaking. As discussed earlier in this research, Ms. Kobayashi’s class abounds with Japanese style discourse patterns. She shows this tendency when giving feedback as well, in a manner similar to the teachers observed by Yamashita (1993), Ikeno (1998) and Yoshida (2008).

Some research indicates a conflict in the preference toward corrective feedback between the teacher and students who do not share the same culture. Yoshida (2008) observed Japanese language classes in a university in Australia and interviewed the students. She found that the Japanese teachers preferred to use a direct correction, which was contrary to the students wish to receive a chance to fix the problem on their own. Since the research was conducted in Australia, we cannot conclude that Ms. Kobayashi’s students, who are in the United States, have the same desire as the students in Yoshida’s (2008) study. However, considering that the students in the United States are accustomed to fixing problems by themselves with the help of the teacher (Koshik, 2002; Mehan, 1979; Poole, 1992), we can assume that the students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class are put in an unfamiliar situation when receiving the corrective feedback.

Other scholars consider negative feedback as one of the main contributors to anxiety toward classroom learning (Aida; 1994; Tallon, 2009). Their research indicates that presenting an incorrect answer and receiving a negative evaluation can generally be considered a sensitive matter for students. Furthermore, when students experience an unfamiliar style of corrective feedback, there is a possibility that their anxiety toward making mistakes will also increase. Of course, more research must be conducted to conclude that giving the Japanese style of corrective feedback results in increasing the students’ classroom anxiety. However, we can understand that the possibility exists.
As Aida (1994) describes, students who are afraid of corrective feedback tend to become quiet or passive in the class. That is, being nervous can prevent students from being active in the class and potentially from developing their language skills, especially in terms of speaking, as fully as they potentially can (Aida, 1994; Tallon, 2009).

This suggests that it is better to use the students’ more familiar style of interaction when giving corrective feedback, as unfamiliar corrective feedback may elevate their anxiety level. As discussed above, letting students experience Japanese cultural interactions is very important from the point of view of language socialization. However, Ms. Kobayashi offers interactions highlighting the importance of attentive listening, such as through the use of “ostensible” questions (Yamashita, 1993) or multiparty interactions. Thus, there are still many instances of Japanese cultural discourse available in addition to those related to error correction. It can be assumed that students will still be able to learn to attentively listen to others without also being subjected to straightforward error correction.

Therefore, we can state that the teacher can choose when to expose students to interactional sequence of Japanese culture and when to apply the students’ familiar style of interaction. For example, the teacher can give the students a chance to fix their problems when they make mistakes, as in Ms. Tanaka’s class, but offer a Japanese style of interaction focused on listening to others and multiparty interaction when dealing with non-sensitive matters.

In addition to considering how to respond to the students’ incorrect answers, there is another way to lessen students’ anxiety regarding negative evaluations, that is to minimize the chances that a student will present a wrong answer, so that they receive fewer negative evaluations. This situation can be created through incorporating more pair work into the class activities. As shown by Ohta and Nakaone (2004), students make fewer mistakes after pair work because they first attempt to resolve the problems with their peers. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Ms. Kobayashi dedicates about 20 percent of the class time to pair work. She lets students work on the exercise in pairs before she calls on individuals to present in front of other students. Excerpt 14 below is an example taken from Ms. Kobayashi’s class while the students were working on the exercise in pairs.

Excerpt 14:

SL: What’s “miru”? 
SM: To see
SL: Oh!

Excerpt 14 illustrates that Student L learned the meaning of a word “miru (to see)” from Student M. As seen in this example, even though students tend to use English during pair work, they try to solve the problem in the exercise so that they make fewer mistakes during their presentation (Ohta & Nakaone, 2004). This suggests that students may naturally receive fewer negative evaluations after pair work, so that the pair work can also improve the students’ feelings of anxiety toward negative evaluations.

4.5 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Based on the findings from the two classes, we discussed the students’ feelings, problems that might be caused by an unfamiliar style of interaction, and a possible solution to the problem. In general, Ms. Tanaka’s class is characterized by the interaction style which is common in the United States. While it is beneficial for students to be able to relax in the classroom, we also arrived at the understanding that insufficient exposure to cultural norms of Japanese discourse might prevent the students from learning the importance of attentive listening. Ms. Kobayashi’s class, on the other hand, used a similar interactional style to those frequently observed in classes in Japan, demonstrating plenty of Japanese discourse routines. Some of the students in Ms. Kobayashi’s class were found to be able to demonstrate the interaction preferred in Japan: they were able to attentively listen to their classmates. However, although further research must be conducted, we consider that Ms. Kobayashi letting students mainly listen rather than speak might have increased students’ anxiety toward the class, especially toward receiving negative feedback. A possible solution to this problem was also discussed. It is important for teachers to demonstrate culturally preferred forms of discourse in the class, but we may also want to avoid it during corrective feedback to minimize the students’ anxiety. Also assigning pair work is considered to be an effective method of lessening students’ anxiety toward negative feedback, as it can lead students to make fewer mistakes after the pair work is complete, which results in the students receiving fewer negative evaluations.
4.6 Conclusion

The foreign language classroom is a place where students learn not only language but also cultural norms in discourse. In the future, students may have a chance to study abroad or work in a foreign country where the language of study is spoken. For such students, an understanding of the culturally preferred interactional style must be as important as learning language. Studies have shown that students will be able to learn the cultural norms of discourse through classroom interactions with the teacher, who demonstrates them. According to this perspective, foreign language teachers are recommended to use the interaction style that is commonly used in the country where the target language is spoken. However, there are other studies which indicate that students may have difficulty learning under an unfamiliar interaction style. In this case, a problem arises when the methods of preferred communication differ between those of the students’ community and the country of the language they are studying. One such example is Japanese foreign language classrooms in the United States. In Japan, listening is regarded as more important than speaking. Thus, in Japanese foreign language classes, attentive listening and speaking in relation to others, which could be done only when one is listening closely to the previous speaker, should be taught through daily teacher interactions with the students. However, the Japanese culturally constructed classroom may be uncomfortable for some students in the United States, due to the fact that students in the United States are accustomed to speaking more and not to listening very attentively to other students.

This study was conducted to contribute to the understanding of this dilemma and explore how Japanese foreign language teachers in the United States can offer a class in which students can relax and enjoy learning while letting the students realize the importance of listening in Japanese interaction. In order to achieve the goal of this study, the teacher-student interactions of the two classes were carefully examined. It was found that one of the classes, Ms. Tanaka’s class, had more incidents of the teacher allowing the students to speak or present in the class. That is, the interaction in the class is similar to that of classes in the United States. Based on earlier studies, we assume that the students in the class feel relaxed and enjoy learning Japanese. However, we also found a concern in Ms. Tanaka’s class. That is, as expected, students have not realized the importance of the attentive listening, which is considered important routine interaction in Japan. Although she provided an example of the
culturally preferred interaction style, speaking in relation to others, through using the discourse maker “-ne”, the observation suggests that it is not enough to let students understand the importance of attentive listening. On the other hand, the other class by Ms. Kobayashi had abundant examples of Japanese discourse. We also saw that some of the students successfully took a role in different kinds of Japanese style interaction. As listening activities were a major part of the class, the students’ presentations tended to be limited. We found a possible problem as a result of this situation. When the students’ utterances included mistakes, Ms. Kobayashi gave the correct answer rather than eliciting the answer. Based on prior research, we assume that corrective feedback in the form of a direct correction might cause students anxiety and potentially prevent them from learning. Therefore, we came to the conclusion that it is important to use the Japanese style of interaction in the class to let the students experience Japanese cultural norms in discourse, but also that we had better apply the students’ familiar interaction style when giving corrective feedback so that there is less of a chance for students to become anxious. That is, providing the cultural phenomenon or applying the students’ familiar discourse style is not an either-or choice, but rather it depends on the context.

As a suggestion for further research, it would be interesting to approach this topic with a larger amount of data. In the present study, two teachers were involved and compared in terms of their manner of interaction with students in class. Also, this study was conducted based on one 50 minute long classroom session per teacher. If the data were to be collected from more teachers and over a longer period, such as an entire semester, the result would be more convincing. Also, the researcher may discover something new or interesting.

As a result of globalization, foreign language teaching is becoming more and more important. As a consequence, there are more varied needs that teachers are required to address in class. Great attention has been paid to how efficiently the teacher can teach the language. However, there are more areas in language interaction which need to be examined for effective teaching. In particular, students often need to learn cultural implications as well as language. In attempt to address this issue, this study revealed how culture-bound interactional styles affected students’ behaviors and eventually their potential learning outcomes. I hope the contribution of this study to the field of language teaching will help teachers obtain ideas for offering a class which is the best for both students and teachers.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPT NOTATION
The data of this study was transcribed using the following transcript notations, which were adapted from Schenkein (1978).

(0.0)  Intervals between utterances

(.)  Untimed pause between utterances

underline  Stressed utterance

::  Extension of sound

=  Continued utterance

?  Rising intonation

.  Falling intonation

((  ))  Contextual information

dash –  Cut-off word