Sustaining conversation: Revisiting the teachability of communication strategies

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Dörnyei's (1995) investigation into the efficacy of teaching communication strategies (CS) is well-known, yet there has been relatively little follow-up research in a similar vein since then. While acknowledging other more recent research, this study revisits and adapts Dörnyei (1995), with an interactive focus on *conversational strategies* (CvS). A quasi-experiment involving 90 Japanese university students in four groups investigated the effects of teaching four CvSs, namely, topic avoidance and replacement, paraphrase, fillers and hesitation devices, and clarification requests. All four groups of students experienced the same syllabus in terms of topics, non-CvS language input and free conversation practice, but inclusion of CvSs in model dialogs and explicit teaching of CvS-specific lexical items were varied in a two–factor treatment design. Significant effects included: (1) gains in both types of treatment for quality of paraphrases and for frequencies of fillers, hesitation expressions and clarification requests; and (2) gains only in CvS-featured model-dialog training for speech rate and frequency of paraphrases. None of these gains was correlated with general proficiency. Although the reliability of these findings is limited, it is argued that they constitute significant implications for EFL conversation syllabus design.

コミュニケーション方略の教育効果に関するDörnyei (1995) の調査は有名だが、それ以降類似した調査はあまりない。本研究は、他の最近の研究も紹介しながら、Dörnyei (1995) の調査を会話方略に焦点をあてて再検討するものである。4つにグループ分けした日本人大学生９０名を対象にした準実験により、会話方略のうち、話題の回避と転換、言い換え、つなぎとためらいの表現、説明依頼、の４つの教育効果を調査した。全てのグループが、話題、会話方略を用いない言語入力、そして自由な会話練習という点で同一のシラバスを経験するように、一方、モデル対話に会話方略を含めるかどうか、そして会話方略特有の語彙項目について明示的教授を行うかどうかという2要因に関しては処遇が異なるように、デザインした。どちらの処遇に関しても、言い換え表現の質と、つなぎ・ためらい表現・説明依頼の頻度の向上に優位効果が見られた。また、モデル対話に会話方略を含めるという処遇に関してのみ、言い換えの頻度と発話率の向上に優位効果が見られた。これらの向上はいずれも一般的な習熟度との相関性を示さなかった。こうした知見の信頼性は限られているものの、EFL会話シラバスのデザインに関して重要な意味を持つと考えられる。

MANY LANGUAGE instructors, especially in Japan, have reported dealing with learners who lack strategic competence in their foreign language communication despite having spent years studying it. Their L2 conversation may contain frequent awkward pauses and out-of-character nervous behavior, or they may even give up half-way through or avoid having the conversation in the first place. A range of reasons for this is often offered by instructors and mature present and former students: lack of communicative activities in the

classroom, too much emphasis on grammatical accuracy, lack of authenticity in materials, teacher-fronted education, under-developed meta-cognitive L2 communicative awareness and a culture of non-assertive deference (i.e., almost silent passive acceptance) towards superiors and elders. A significant amount of research over the last thirty to forty years has investigated communication strategies (CS) that are thought to alleviate or avoid such difficulties (e.g., Tarone, 1977, 1980; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005, 2006, 2010). This literature includes a considerable variety of different definitions and taxonomies of CSs. Many studies have focused on productive strategies as options open to an individual (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995). Other research, however, has investigated CSs as they occur in interaction, including those related to reception of the interlocutor's speech (e.g., Senda, 1995; Nakatani, 2010). It has been argued (e.g., Rubin, 1987; Kasper and Kellerman, 1997) that learners can access comprehensible input and experience negotiation of meaning and pushed output by using CSs to trigger interactional modifications and conversational adjustments. This suggests that it is desirable for learners to be able to use CSs, yet there are wide-ranging opinions on whether CSs should be taught. Nevertheless, some findings have suggested that there may be significant benefits of training in CS (Dörnyei, 1995; Senda, 1995; Nakatani, 2005). However, there has been little or no research comparing the effects of different types of instruction. This paper reports on the findings of a small-scale quasi-experiment involving four conditions of English conversation training, including comparisons of strategy use before and after training and correlations with proficiency.

Definitions and taxonomies

Reviewing the many definitions and taxonomies of CSs, Dörnyei (1995) pointed out that they differ mainly in terminology and categorization, rather than the substance of the CSs themselves. Based on the range available at the time, he compiled a list of CSs grouped into three categories: (1) Avoidance or reduction strategies, including message abandonment and topic avoidance; (2) achievement or compensatory strategies, including circumlocution, approximation, use of all-purpose words, word-coinage, use of nonlinguistic means, literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching and appeal for help; and (3) stalling or time-gaining strategies, including the use of fillers and hesitation devices (p.58). Dörnyei and Scott (1997) re-examined the conditions and motives behind CS use, based on the following communication problems: (a) resource deficits, that is, gaps in the speaker's knowledge, (b) the speaker's own performance problems, and (c) problems in understanding the interlocutor's speech. Having reviewed the psycholinguistic and interactive viewpoints of CSs and CS related to negotiation of meaning, Nakatani (2010) concludes:

> In actual communication, interlocutors have to use many strategies, such as maintaining discourse and buying time to think. […] It is reasonable to consider that CSs consist of any attempts to solve communication problems and enhance communication with interlocutors. Therefore, it is appropriate to analyze learners' discourse data by focusing on not only negotiation devices but also other strategies for maintaining and developing interaction. (pp. 118-119).

Although the present study emphasized the individual in the sense that it measured changes in individuals' strategy use, CS use was observed in interactions. Furthermore, the CSs investigated were construed as helping to sustain interactive conversation, rather than simply enhancing the transmission of a particular message. Therefore, to avoid confusion, the term *conversational strategy* (CvS) was employed for the purposes of this study.

Previous literature on CS training

Dörnyei (1995) proposed that CS training should involve: (1) raising awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs; (2) explicit encouragement of risk-taking and CS use; (3) providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs; (4) highlighting cross-cultural differences and stylistic appropriateness in CS use; (5) explicit teaching of specific linguistic items related to CSs; and (6) providing opportunities for practice in CS use. He investigated the teaching of three CSs, one from each of the categories he reviewed, namely, topic avoidance and replacement, circumlocution and filler and hesitation devices, to Hungarian secondary school students of English. Instruction positively affected the quality of circumlocution-like word definitions and the frequency of fillers, but did not affect the frequency of circumlocutions or speech rate. Gain in speech rate was correlated with gain in frequency of fillers, suggesting that instruction in the use of fillers leads to an increase in their fluency. Participants' English proficiency was not related to any of the gain scores, suggesting that the instruction would have similar effects at multiple levels of proficiency.

Similar research was carried out by Senda (1995), except that in this case two CSs were involved, namely, paraphrase (circumlocutions and approximations) and appeals for assistance (clarification requests and confirmation checks). The training activities included practicing model dialogs and feedback on strategic performance. Training was found to positively affect frequency of appeals for assistance and paraphrase markers, but there was no effect on quality of paraphrase or oral proficiency.

Focusing on the relationship between CS use and oral proficiency, Nakatani (2005) investigated achievement strategies in a program in which there was a significant autonomy element involving students' self-reflections and self-planning. The CS training group significantly improved in oral proficiency, whereas the non-CS general conversation group did not. This was found to be related to the CS training group's increased use of CSs for fluency maintenance and negotiation of meaning. Subsequently, Nakatani (2010) found significant correlations between oral proficiency and self-reported use of CSs related to both production and reception, especially those related to discourse maintenance and negotiation of meaning.

None of the designs of these previous studies compared the effects of different elements of CS training. As to what elements could be put to the test, the six proposed by Dörnyei (1995) are plausible candidates. However, since there were only four groups available for this study, only two of Dörnyei's (1995) instruction proposals were selected for this study's two-factor treatment design: (1) providing L2 models of the use of certain CvSs, and (2) explicit teaching of CvS-specific linguistic items. These were selected based on the researcher's own previous experience of CvS instruction, in terms of being feasibly manipulated in practical syllabus design and of critical interest for a conversation instructor. In contrast, the promotion of CvS awareness, explicit encouragement of risk-taking and CvS use, and providing opportunities for practice in CvS use are difficult to avoid in CvS training. Highlighting cross-cultural differences and stylistic appropriateness is also of critical interest and is probably controllable, but would have been difficult to incorporate in addition to the two already selected, and was put aside for a subsequent study. Although the effect of CS use on oral proficiency, as investigated in Senda (1995) and Nakatani (2005), is perhaps the ultimate question in CvS training research, the first priority is to ascertain the effect of instruction on CvS use itself. Therefore the following research questions were established:

1. Which types of CvS training influence the frequency of the use of each strategy?
2. Which types of CvS training influence the quality of strategy use?

3. Which types of CvS influence the students' speech rates?
4. Is the success of strategy training related to the students' initial level of language proficiency?

Strategies investigated

Since the research design concept was based primarily on that of Dörnyei (1995), for purposes of comparison, the same three types of CvSs were investigated: (1) topic avoidance and replacement, (2) paraphrase (circumlocution and approximation) and (3) fillers and hesitation devices. In addition, clarification requests (asking for repetition) were added as a fourth type, in order to include a specifically receptive strategy. Lexicalized and contextualized examples can be found in Table 2 in the following section, and in the model dialogs provided in the Appendix.

Method

The participants were 90 first-year students at a Japanese educational university. They had not yet officially chosen their major subjects, and had therefore been randomly allocated by the university into four groups for a number of compulsory core academic subjects. These groups were used, intact, for the present study. In addition, each group received another "Communication English" lesson each week from a different teacher, though these lessons involved minimal English conversation and no CS training. Their English proficiency ranged from elementary to pre-intermediate level. The treatment conditions, typical lesson flow and outline of the course are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Each lesson lasted 90 minutes. All of the groups experienced general conversational activities with the same topics, including some vocabulary and grammar points appropriate for each topic. All three experimental groups underwent regular CvS awareness-raising and encouragement to use CvS, and were also provided with opportunities for practice in CvS use. Occasional highlighting of cross-cultural differences and stylistic appropriateness in CvS use was also provided to these groups, but only for the first and third topics.

The tests

The paper version of the Oxford Quick Placement Test, along with a listening test compiled by the author, was used for the general language proficiency test. As in Dörnyei (1995), the oral test consisted of three parts: (1) a free-flowing conversation that had to start with a prescribed challenging topic such as environmental problems or cultural differences; (2) a spot-the-difference picture description task; and (3) a word-guessing game eliciting paraphrase-oriented descriptions, where the pool of words was drawn from the topics in the course. However, whereas each participant was interviewed individually in Dörnyei (1995), the tests in this study took place in simultaneous pair-work, in which each pair was instructed to take turns in Parts 2 and 3, and record all of their conversation with a small USB-based voice recorder. Parts 1 and 2 lasted for about three to four minutes each, and Part 3 lasted for eight to ten minutes. The post-training test had the same format as the pre-training test, but the specific contents were changed in the post-training test in order to make it sufficiently challenging and not too familiar. The four groups took exactly the same tests.

Identification and evaluation of CvSs

After the tests, the students were instructed to listen to their recordings and transcribe what they thought was the most fluent two-minute section from each part of the test. Students in the experimental groups were also asked to point out CvSs they had used in each section. Later, the researcher listened to all of the recordings and logged the use of CvS in the whole of each recording, aiming for as much agreement as possible with the

Table 1. Lesson flow and activity times for each treatment condition

"Class CG" (control group)	"Class LIO" (Treatment: CvS-specific linguistic items only)	"Class MDO" (Treatment: CvS-featured model dialogs only)	"Class LIMD" (Both kinds of treatment)
Review of previous lesson with quiz and conversation activity. (15 minutes)	> > > > > (15 minutes)	> > > > > (15 minutes)	> > > > > (15 minutes)
Introduction of topic: Initial short conversation; sharing & checking homework answers; vocabulary & grammar: brainstorm; / quiz; short conversation. (25 mins.)	> > > > > (10 mins.)	> > > > > (10 mins.)	> > > > > (10 mins.)
Introduction of main communicative task: role-play or discussion. (5 mins.)	> > > > > (5 mins.)	> > > > > (5 mins.)	> > > > > (5 mins.)
Non-CvS-featured model dialogs: demonstration & reading. Short initial practice. (10 mins.)	Non-CvS-featured model dialogs: demonstration, reading. (10 mins.)	Short initial practice. **Treatment involving CvS-featured model dialogs:** demonstration, reading. CvS awareness-raising & encouragement. (30 mins.)	Short initial practice. **Treatment activities for CvS-specific linguistic items:** brainstorm, drill, quiz. CvS awareness-raising & encouragement. (15 mins.)
	Short initial practice. **Treatment activities for CvS-specific linguistic items.** (20 mins.)		**Treatment involving CvS-featured model dialogs:** CvS awareness-raising & encouragement. (15 mins.)
Main role-play task or discussion (25 mins.)	> > > > > (20 mins.)	> > > > > (20 mins.)	> > > > > (20 mins.)
Some presentations of role-plays with evaluation & feedback (10 mins.)	> > > > > (10 mins.)	> > > > > (10 mins.)	> > > > > (10 mins.)

Table 2. The training program

Week	Outline of the program activities	CvS-featured model dialogs	CvS-specific linguistic items
1-2	Course orientation, self-introductions, ice-breakers and general warming-up		
3	Pre-training oral test		
4	Pen-and-paper English language proficiency test		
5-6	Topic 1: Food and cooking; CvS Training 1: Topic avoidance and replacement	One speaker wants to talk, or ask, about certain foods or recipes, while the other does not, for varying reasons.	E.g., "By the way,…", "Speaking of ____, …", "Sorry to change the subject, but…", etc.
6-7	Topic 2: Music; CvS Training 2: Paraphrase	Use paraphrases to try to refer to songs, bands and musical instruments that come up in pictures or recordings. The interlocutor attempts to guess the thing being described.	E.g., "What's it called? It's long and thin, and you blow into the end", "I can't remember the name, but it's very large, and made out of wood." Guess-the-word games.
8-9	Topic 3: Culture, customs and politeness; CvS Training 3: Fillers and hesitation devices	Dialogs including requests and responses, with some nervousness and hesitation.	E.g., "erm", "er", "well", "let me think…", etc.
9-10	Topic 4: Telling a story (with past simple and past perfect tenses); CvS Training 4: Clarification requests	Dialogs where the main speaker tells a somewhat complicated story, and the interlocutor has to ask questions to understand it.	E.g., "Pardon?", "Sorry?", "Could you say that again?", "Could you speak more slowly, please?", etc.
11	Topic 5: Movies; CvS Training 5: Review and free practice of all the CvSs		
12	Post-training oral test		
13	Writing a reflective report on the test recordings and transcripts		
14	Questionnaire on attitudes to training. General feedback and consolidation.		

nature of the students' own indications of their CvS use. Unfortunately, it was not possible to involve co-raters in this study. Paraphrases were not counted in Part 3 of the test, since this was a somewhat artificial situation.

In Part 1, the quality of topic avoidance or replacement was evaluated according to the following scale: -2 = In Japanese; -1 = In English but inappropriate (either abrupt with no linking phrase, or explicitly referenced to the classroom context, as in, "Let's change topic for this task."); 0 = None attempted; 1 = Attempted but incomplete linking phrase (e.g., "Sorry it's change,…"); 2 = Naturalistic and competent topic change with an appropriate and complete linking phrase. 'Naturalistic' refers to the explicit aim in this training to develop the ability to manage discourse in a manner not anchored, or limited to, regular classroom routines. Therefore, the phrase quoted above for -1 point was not accepted as naturalistic for this study even though it would be considered as good use of English in most classroom contexts. If the same participant changed topic more than once, an average score was calculated.

In Part 3, the quality of each paraphrase was evaluated as follows: 0 = None, or in Japanese; 1 = Attempted, but not enough information to guess an immediate superordinate, subordinate or coordinate item with any degree of confidence; 2 = Enough information to at least guess an immediate superordinate, subordinate or coordinate item; 3 = Clear enough to guess the precise item with almost total confidence. An average paraphrase quality score for each participant was calculated based on all the paraphrase items attempted by that participant.

Frequency scores (occurrences per 10 minutes) for each CvS were calculated. Frequency of fillers (non-lexicalized but English-based sounds such as "erm", "er", and so on) was treated as a separate variable from frequency of hesitation devices (lexicalized expressions such as "Well", "Let me see", etc.). Speech rate (words per minute, counting repetitions, but excluding non-lexicalized sounds) for each participant was also calculated. Finally, for each of these variables and for each participant, a gain value was calculated by subtracting the pre-training score from the post-training score. SPSS17 was used for statistical analysis.

Results

Categorization of variables

Gain in quality of paraphrase was a parametric variable; therefore, a two-way between-subjects ANOVA (Training with CvS-featured model dialogs vs. Explicit teaching of CvS-related linguistic items) was conducted. All of the other gain variables were non-parametric and were thus re-coded into different kinds of categorical variables depending on their distributions. Gain in speech rate and gain in frequency of fillers were re-coded into two levels: above or below the median of the whole sample. Gain in frequency of topic changes was re-coded into a three-way split: decrease, no change, and increase. All the remaining gain variables were re-coded into two levels: (1) decrease or no change, and (2) increase. These distribution-sensitive categorizations ensured that expected frequency counts would be at optimum levels for non-parametric statistical tests. Log-linear analysis was used for all these non-parametric variables. Log-linear analysis is, simply put, an elaboration of the Chi-square (χ^2) test. Its main advantage over the Chi-square test for this study is that it can deal with more than two variables.

Findings

Effects of treatment factors on CvS use and speech rate

Table 3 shows the significant effects of the treatment for each gain variable, where found. In every case, the gain values were higher (significantly or not) with the addition of a training component, so the statistics should be interpreted accordingly.

Table 3. Effects of treatment factors on CvS use and speech rate

Dependent gain variable	Effect for training with CvS-featured model dialogs	Effect for explicit teaching of CvS-specific linguistic items	Statistical details
Frequency of topic avoidance and replacement	NS	NS	
Quality of topic avoidance and replacement	NS	NS	
Frequency of paraphrases	Effect: χ^2 (1)=4.5* OR=2.8	NS	'Goodness-of-fit' for final model (log linear analysis): χ^2 (4)=1.2, p=.88
Quality of paraphrases (ANOVA)	(F=13.3***) m=.77 vs. .39	(F=27.7***) m=.85 vs. .31	Class MDO: m=.51 Class LIO: m=.68 Class LIMD: m=1.0
Frequency of filler sounds above/below median (Class CG were all below median)	OR=5.2	OR=3.7	Highest-order interactive effect: χ^2 (1)=11.6** 'Goodness-of-fit' for final model: χ^2 (0)=0, p=1
Frequency of hesitation expressions	Effect: χ^2 (1)=10.9** OR=4.2	Effect: χ^2 (1)=5.1* OR=2.5	'Goodness-of-fit' for final model: χ^2 (2)=4.33, p=.115
Frequency of clarification requests	OR=2.3	OR=1.8	Highest order interaction: χ^2 (1)=13.9*** 'Goodness-of-fit' for final model: χ^2 (0)=0, p=1 Downward trend for combined training.
Speech rate (words/minute)	Effect: χ^2 (1)=11.6** OR=4.6	NS	'Goodness-of-fit' for final model: χ^2 (4)=2.2, p=.70 Slight upward trend for focus on lexis. Slight downward trend for combination.

Notes: (1) NS=non-significant; (2) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001; (3) A non-significant p value for 'goodness-of-fit' means that there was no significant difference between the effect of treatment predicted by the 'best fit' model and the actual data; in other words, the model is a 'good fit' and the treatment's effect was significant; (4) OR=odds ratio; (5) m=mean gain; (6) F refers to statistical strength of difference.

As for gain in quality of paraphrase, the ANOVA revealed two significant main effects, as detailed in the table. No significant effects were found for CvS training on the frequency or quality of topic avoidance and replacement. On the other hand, training with CvS-featured model dialogs significantly and positively influenced the frequency of paraphrases. Participants who were provided with such dialogs were 2.8 times more likely to increase their use of paraphrase than those who were not. A highest-order log-linear interaction was retained for gain in frequency of fillers, meaning that both treatment factors and their combination had significant and positive effects on the use of this CvS. The odds ratios for each effect can be interpreted in a similar way as that for paraphrases. Main effects related to both treatment factors were also found for gain in frequency of hesitation devices, though there was no significant interactive effect. Another highest-order interactive effect was retained for gain in frequency of clarification requests. However, in this case, although each kind of treatment in isolation had a positive effect, the combination of the treatments seemed to have a negative effect. Finally, only the provision of model CvS dialogs positively and significantly affected speech rate.

Correlations

Initial proficiency was slightly (but significantly) correlated only with speech rate, at both pre- ($r = .26$, $p<.05$) and post-training ($r = .30$, $p<.01$), and pre-training paraphrase quality ($r = .33$, $p<.01$). Gain in speech rate was slightly correlated with gain in frequency of fillers ($r = .29$, $p<.01$).

Discussion

CvS training seemed to have no significant effect on any aspect of participants' manipulation of topic, as least in terms of the measurements used in this study. Dörnyei (1995) made only indirect observations through possible effects of topic change on fluency, and no such effects were found. No other precedent seems to be available for comparison. It may be that topic manipulation is not teachable, or that the instruction in this study was not the best possible instruction, or that in the post-training test students found the opening topic, *Cultural Differences*, easier or more engaging than the opening topic in the pre-training test, *Environmental Problems*. Research with different methods may yield different results.

As for effects on the frequency of use of paraphrase, whereas Dörnyei (1995) found no effect of CS training, this study revealed the influence of providing L2 models. This may be consistent with the effect on frequency of paraphrase markers found in Senda (1995) and the effect on use of CSs for negotiation of meaning as reported by Nakatani (2005 & 2010). Interestingly, the intensive training in the present study on specific linguistic items related to different kinds of structures (relative clauses; e.g., "an instrument which is held between the legs," etc.) and properties of objects (shapes, sizes, materials, components, etc.) seemed to have no effect on their frequency, but did affect the quality. This tentatively suggests that exposure to models of contextualized use is most effective in encouraging learners to attempt this strategy, whereas more analytical study on specific instances can improve the intrinsic quality of paraphrasing once it is attempted.

Positive effects involving both types of instruction on the use of fillers and hesitation devices were found, concurring with all the previous studies reviewed, and underlining the importance of each technique. This was also the case with the use of clarification requests, providing support for the view that training in this strategy can increase learners' access to comprehensible input, through proactive influence over their interlocutors. It would also be prudent to note this study's focus on NNS-NNS (non-native speaker) interaction, and Lafford's (2004) claim that

interacting with NSs (native speakers) in a study-abroad context seemed to inhibit NNSs' use of CSs due to socio-pragmatic circumstances.

Finally, another interesting departure from Dörnyei (1995) is that one kind of CvS training (exposure to models of contextualized CvS use) did seem to positively affect speech rate, again suggesting that it is exposure to such dialogs that heightens learners' awareness of the communicative potential of CvSs and increases their willingness to take risks and use them. This concurs with Senda's (1995) point, which this author has also noticed in his own teaching experience, that the model dialogs in language textbooks tend to lack authenticity. As a result, students often seem to develop a distorted view of L2 conversations as always flowing smoothly. Dialogs in teaching materials should include instances of communicative difficulties resolved through CS use.

The absence of correlations between English language proficiency and any of the gain variables concurs with Dörnyei (1995), reinforcing his observation that CSs can be beneficial at most levels of proficiency. The association between the gains in speech rate and use of fillers also strengthens his claim (*ibid.*) that training in the use of fillers helps to improve speaking fluency.

Several limitations of the present study should be noted. Firstly, the reliability of these findings is compromised by using intact classes and not employing multiple raters. Secondly, the rating scales and other measurements depend on a number of assumptions (too many to mention) that need reviewing. Thirdly, having the students conduct the oral test in pairs may involve complicated interlocutor effects. Nevertheless, the findings tentatively suggest that EFL syllabus planners in Japan should consider giving more prominence to achievement, time-gaining and receptive conversational strategy use. Future research could also investigate pragmatic aspects of CvS training and the differences between foreign and second language settings.

Bio data

Ivan Brown has been involved in ELT with varying degrees of intensity in several countries for 18 years, and has been teaching at Joetsu University of Education since 2006. He has also worked as a music teacher in state schools in England, and holds CELTA, PGCE, a B.Mus. from the University of Edinburgh, and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from Birkbeck, the University of London. His research interests include sociolinguistics, social psychology of language, conversation pedagogy, and academic writing instruction. He is sincerely grateful to all the students for their cooperation in this study, the reviewers for their helpful comments, and Tetyana Sayenko for her thorough proof-reading and patience. The author remains solely responsible for any shortcomings that remain. <brown@juen.ac.jp>

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Appendix

Extracts of CvS-featured model dialogs

A. Topic Avoidance and Replacement

(B didn't have breakfast, and is very hungry. He wants to forget his hunger in order to concentrate on his work.)

A: Where shall we go for lunch today?

B: Oh uh. I don't mind really. Wherever you want to go.

A: How about Hizamakura? I feel like having a pasta lunch today. And it's not too expensive.

B: Oh, that reminds me. Have you bought a dictionary for this class, yet? Are they expensive?

A: Oh, dictionaries? Yes. I've bought one. It was quite cheap.

B: By the way, I don't understand this point [*points to notebook*]. Do you know what this means?

B. Paraphrases (circumlocutions and approximations)

Two people find a CD, listen to it and try to identify the musical instruments they hear.

A: What's this CD? It looks like it's traditional Japanese music. I wonder what the instruments are.

B: Well, let's listen to a few bits.

(*play a short part of the CD*)

A: Beautiful, isn't it? I've heard that instrument before. What's it called? It's like a flute, but it's not metal. It's made with wood and lacquer. And you blow straight into the end of it, not to the side. I think there are various sizes.

B: Ah! I know – it's called a shakuhachi.

C. Fillers and hesitation devices

A: Hi, Taro, erm, can I use your computer?

B: Well, let me see. Oh, I'm sorry. Actually,… I need it to do my homework, and.. stuff like that. Anyway, erm, don't you have your own computer?

A: Erm, yes, but, actually, it's broken right now. The thing is, I just wanted to, erm, check my e-mail, but it's OK, you know... Never mind.

B: Well, let me think… erm… I think I'll finish my homework in about, erm, 30 minutes. Then you can use my computer, and do, er,… your stuff – your e-mail and so on.

A: Oh really?

B: Yes.

A: That'll be great, thanks.

D. Clarification requests

Student: Do you have any interesting stories to tell?

Ivan: I beg your pardon?

Student: Do you have any interesting stories to tell? For example, have you ever had a misadventure?

Ivan: Ah, well, let me think. I once missed a flight from Milan to London because I went to the wrong airport.

Student: I'm sorry, I didn't catch what you said. Could you speak more slowly, please?

Ivan: I once missed a flight from Milan to London because I went to the wrong airport.