Politeness Phenomena in Japanese
Intercultural Business Communication

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Introduction

This paper is concerned with the communication of politeness in intercultural business situations involving Japanese and Australian participants. Much lively debate on politeness phenomena in general has occurred in recent years and has included some thought-provoking critiques of existing theoretical approaches to the study of politeness, together with a variety of new empirical and descriptive studies[1]. Nevertheless, the communication of politeness in natural intercultural situations is an area where descriptive and empirical research, although not non-existent, remains insufficient (cf. Gumperz 1982; Thomas 1983; Neustupny 1986b; Stalpers 1992; Wolfson 1989). Furthermore, much of the research on politeness to date has concentrated on the linguistic dimension of politeness. In seeking to address the problem, this paper highlights some non-linguistic forms of politeness behaviour - specifically sociolinguistic and sociocultural forms as they are found in natural situations involving participants from different cultural communities.

In a 1968 paper on the structure of the politeness system, further expanded in 1974 and translated in 1978, Neustupny proposed the existence of three principal sub-systems of politeness - the Honorific system, Respect Speech/Speech Rules and the Courtesy system.

1. In this categorisation the <u>Honorific system</u> centres upon the linguistic code and is found only in some languages, Japanese being one of these.
2. Second are the speech patterns which constitute the system of <u>Respect (Polite) Speech/Speech Rules</u>. The focus of most analyses of the English politeness system to date is upon this level, though few have covered as full a spectrum of

behaviour as Neustupny's framework allows, which includes communicative rules on paralinguistics, topic, network, variety and message.

3.   The final sub-system of politeness, labelled the <u>Courtesy or Etiquette system</u>, covers non-verbal communicative behaviour which includes rules of precedence at social occasions, certain gift-giving patterns, dress rules, table manners and ritualised events such as weddings and funerals. Business luncheons also belong in this category.

In the examination of politeness to follow, the main interest centres not only upon the generative behaviour of participants but also upon their evaluative behaviour. Hitherto, much of the work in linguistics and the study of communication has been concerned with generation, leaving the important component of evaluation frequently untreated.   Neustupny has made a substantial contribution in this regard by demonstrating the importance of the evaluative behaviour of participants in any communicative situation.   He has shown that participants of intercultural contact situations frequently deviate from norms and he argues that the ways in which these deviations are evaluated are important processes for attention (Neustupny 1985a, 1985b, 1988).   Consequently, apart from identifying the actual behaviour of individuals in naturally occurring situations, it is also necessary to understand which norms one considered appropriate by participants in each context (Marriott 1991a).

In studying evaluative behaviour, use is made of the concept of norm (cf. Bartsch 1987), that is, expected behaviour, the assumption being that norms account for the whole process of evaluation.   Of course, one of the principal difficulties of an intercultural contact situation is to identify which norms are considered "correct".   Much work conducted on Australian-Japanese contact situations shows that, regardless of the base language code selected in any interactive encounter, a mixture of norms exist (Neustupny 1985a, 1985b; Asaoka 1987; Marriott 1991a, 1991b).   Behaviour is effected by norms which arise from either the Australian English or the Japanese systems, but, in addition, some behaviour is caused by the processes of pidginization which may involve a loss of rules (Neustupny 1985a) or "interculture" (an extension of the concept of interlanguage) (cf. Marriott 1991a, forthcoming a).

In relation to the study of politeness, only a few writers have attempted to systematically treat politeness deviations which are committed by non-native speakers in intercultural communicative situations. Similar to Kasper's category of unmotivated rudeness - "violations of the norms of politic behaviour due to ignorance" (Kasper 1990: 208) - the deviations treated in this paper encompass not only linguistic encodings, as considered by Kasper and others, but also deviations of a non-linguistic nature. It is argued that in the intercultural situation there is much norm dissonance which is caused by the co-occurrence of two disparate cultural systems - the Australian English and the Japanese systems, and, in addition, the processes of pidginization and interculture, as noted above. By showing which norms are judged by participants to be "correct" for the

contact situation, we will attempt to identify the components of interaction where satisfactory resolutions can be reached and where, on the other hand, norm dissonance continues to persist. This approach carries important theoretical implications for politeness as well as for our understanding of the nature of the contact situation itself.

In order to examine the evaluative behaviour of interactants, this paper draws upon Neustupny's (1985a, 1985b, 1988) model of language management. This model allows us to examine deviations from norms and the ways in which these are treated, either by the participant who commits the deviation or by others in the situation. According to the theory, deviations can remain unnoted. If noted, they can attract a neutral evaluation, or, alternatively, a negative evaluation (which is also referred to as an inadequacy). On occasions, a positive rating may be given to norm deviations. Following noting, adjustment may occur at the next stage.

Although the concept of norm is crucial in the analysis presented here, the existence of individual variation in relation to politeness behaviour is also acknowledged. Given that the study of politeness is less advanced in comparison with many other components of the linguistic system, it will be necessary in the future to refine our analysis in order to cover individual and group norms as well as broader cultural norms.

In this examination, the study of politeness phenomena is organized around some of the principal rules of communication which were first delineated by Hymes (1962, 1964, 1972) and adapted by Neustupny (1973, 1987): spatial and temporal setting, personnel, frame, variety and content. Some reference will be made throughout the paper to certain processes found in intercultural contact situations, namely, transference or borrowing from the non-base system, pidginization and interculture.

Methodology

Data for this paper have been drawn from ten video tape-recordings of Australian-Japanese business situations which were set in Australia. These included two negotiations, a management meeting, four other types of business meetings, a courtesy call and two business luncheons. This coverage enables us to deal with the central situations found in the business domain as well as peripheral situations like business luncheons. Business luncheons overlap with other domains but, nevertheless, are strongly in the domain of business and cannot be divorced from the central situations. The video tape-recorded data was principally of industries belonging in the tertiary sector and involved personnel from large Australian and Japanese corporations. These ten business encounters involved twenty-two (twenty male and two female) Australians and nineteen Japanese male participants. Except for one Japanese businessman, all the Japanese were sojourners (cf. Brislin 1981) in Australia, covering periods which ranged from one and a half months for one individual, to nearly ten years for another. The length and intensity of the Australians' contact with Japanese personnel varied: some

had experienced extensive contact, others possessed no experience, while the contact of a further group was negligible. English was the language of communication in all the video tape-recorded data corpus.

In several cases the recordings of these ten situations were supplemented by follow-up interviews with the participants.   In addition, I interviewed fifty-nine Australian and thirty-five Japanese business personnel in Australia and Japan on topics relating to their interaction in intercultural business situations. Apart from representatives of large Australian companies, personnel on the Australian side included those from medium and small enterprises, some of which belonged to the secondary sector of industry. Settings discussed in this paper thus cover Australia and Japan.   Throughout, my focus was upon intercompany interaction, and apart from the management meeting, all the video tape-recorded situations fell within this category.

Setting Norms

Integral to all communicative situations is the feature of setting - both temporal and spatial (Hymes 1972: 60). In the data of situations involving Australian and Japanese businessmen various problems in politeness which relate to timing norms were identified. Where the problems involved deviations from the Australian norm, a negative evaluation was generally imposed by the Australians. Generally, Australian business personnel prefer mid-day business luncheons, whereas in Japan evening is the preferred time. This was so for all Australian participants in the two video-recorded luncheons.   Through interviews it was established that Australian businessmen in Melbourne tend to negatively evaluate dinner invitations from Japanese businessmen. Negative evaluation also occurs if the invitation is issued just prior to the occasion, particularly for an evening encounter. This is so since in the Australian cultural system an invitation normally would be made well in advance.   A7, for instance, who worked as an accountant, indicated his strong dislike of attending mid- to late-afternoon meetings at the offices of Japanese clients and then being asked to stay on and to join them for dinner, particularly when only social conversation would eventuate during the extended evening.   To A7, such functions represented an imposition upon his personal time.   Different Japanese cultural patterns for the temporal arrangement of a hospitality encounter, if applied in Australia, thus conflict with Australian politeness norms concerning timing.

Selection of the spatial setting also causes norm dissonance in the intercultural situation.   This is conspicuous in the case of the venue for a hospitality encounter. Whereas in Japan a public setting such as a restaurant, hotel, bar or other location tends to be chosen (Sakajoo 1984: 219), both public and private venues are utilised in Australia. It has been claimed by Befu (1974a: 198) that Japanese home settings are restricted to certain intimate in-group members and, furthermore, that through the utilisation of

public venues in Japan, "professional service" is available which is most suited to the hospitable treatment of a guest (Nissan 1984: 123). However, a contrary evaluation is applicable in the Australian culture: "home service" with all its personalised connotations is considered preferable to a de-personalised public setting. Australian business personnel report that it is not unusual for them to invite Japanese business guests on short-term visits to dinner, usually on weekends, at their home. A6a (in encounter 6) and A17 regularly extend such invitations to either Japanese sojourners in Melbourne or to visiting personnel from Japan. A8, A9, A13, A14, A16 and others also reported that they, too, on occasions, extend invitations incorporating meal engagements at their private residences to Japanese businessmen, usually those on short-term business assignments. As stated by A16: "I have a big entertainment budget, but it makes a better impression if you invite someone home, or take them out on the weekend". Notably, however, this pattern of utilising their private residence is generally relaxed for mid-week functions when public facilities are commonly used. It was clear from the interviews that although Australian businessmen are often aware of a different norm applying in Japan, they may assign an inadequacy marker when, in reciprocation for the numerous private invitations they initiate in Australia, they receive only invitations to public venues when visiting Japan on business. A17 reported that he feels disgruntled about never having been invited to a home in Japan, especially since he often invites Japanese business interactants to his home in Melbourne. On the other hand, the data do show that occasionally the Japanese utilize their own homes. A14, a young Australian businessman who was invited to three homes when in Japan for a period of six weeks on business, nevertheless evaluated three occasions as a small number, in view of the times he had invited Japanese businessmen to his home.

Norm discrepancy also occurs as a result of cross-cultural differences in the selection of spatial areas utilised for various types of business meetings. Data gathered in Japan and Australia show that Japanese settings for business meetings with participants from a different corporate network - irrespective of the geographical location - are of three types: a conference room, generally containing an elongated table; a meeting room with well-proportioned furnishings; or a meeting area located either within a large open-plan office or else incorporated within a superordinate's personal office. It was found that Japanese invariably transfer these spatial patterns to their overseas venues, with the only noticeable difference being an increase in the number of superordinate's personal offices which, in turn, incorporate a Japanese-style meeting area (Marriott forthcoming b). This form involves no compromise of their Japanese native norm, allowing the business host to treat his guest as a communication superior which accords with the Japanese system of politeness (Neustupny 1968: 414). On the other hand, Australian business hosts utilize a conference room in certain contexts, but where the number of visiting participants is small, not infrequently the host's own personal office is used. Of the eight business meetings in my data which were video tape-

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recorded in Melbourne, the Australian corporations provided the venue in three instances. In two cases, the business personnel utilised their own personal offices for the meeting venue, and a conference room equipped with an overhead projector was used for the third.   On the other hand, Japanese corporations used a conference room for three business meetings, and a meeting room and a meeting area on another two occasions.

In relation to the expression of politeness, differences emerge in relation to the seating arrangements within the settings described above. Whereas the Japanese host treats his guest as a communicational superior and thus moves from his own territorial area to a neutral area, such as the meeting area in his office, an Australian host may continue to occupy a pivotal position at his personal desk. This was the case in the first tape-recorded encounter.   In such contexts, this norm discrepancy may produce in the Japanese participant a negative evaluation which originates, of course, in his native system. Although most Japanese informants <u>report</u> that in their evaluative behaviour they become accustomed to the Australian norm, nowhere in the data are Japanese personnel seen to actually incorporate a similar pattern into their own behaviour.

For Australians, on the contrary, the sharing of their office with a guest is regarded positively, and contrasts with their negative attitude towards use of a de-personalised venue such as a conference room, as can be found in Japanese-initiated meetings. In certain cases like the settings of Australian companies in Tokyo where Australian businessmen are sometimes conscious of the discrepancy in the cultural norms concerning spatial arrangements, some adoption of the Japanese norm was observed. This involved either the use of separate conference and meeting rooms or the establishment of a meeting area within the superordinate's own office. At times such meeting areas contained furniture which frequently consisted of a sofa, matching armchairs and a coffee table which were placed according to the Japanese norm, with the low coffee table in between the other two pieces. However, despite attempts by the Australians to adopt the Japanese norm, the data reveal that actual arrangement of furniture did not always accord with the Japanese pattern and sometimes was more of an interculture pattern which was influenced by both Australian and Japanese spatial strategies.   In certain Australian venues in Tokyo, the position of the furniture accorded with the regular Australian pattern of positioning against two walls. For example, at the company of A32 and A33, an Australian bank in Tokyo, Australian personnel had inappropriately positioned a sofa close to the entrance of a separate meeting room and, despite explicit criticism from a senior Japanese staff member, they did not undertake any reorganisation as they could not understand the inadequacy of their action.

What some of these examples of interaction reveal is that status meanings may be communicated in a different manner in different cultures, and that, furthermore, the communication of status meanings does not necessarily coincide with the status

structure within the socioeconomic sphere (Neustupny 1968: 414).   The position of guests in the Japanese politeness system is illustrative of this claim, for in the Japanese system a guest is treated as superior or at least as equal with regard to seating and some other expressions relating to precedence.   This varies from the Australian system where, for example, the business guest is not usually awarded any superior position with regard to seating, nor is any attempt made to neutralise the positions assumed by either host or guest.

Significant cross-cultural variation in the procedures for initiating use of meeting venues also occurs.   In Japan, or even on occasion in Japanese companies in Australia, due to the process of transference from the Japanese cultural system a business visitor is shown into an empty meeting room and waits there until joined by the Japanese host with whom he has established an appointment.   It emerged from the interviews that a number of Australian businessmen interpret this as an extremely impolite act whereby the Japanese host asserts his superiority or even displeasure.   It is not commonly understood that in the Japanese communicative system politeness is expressed by having the guest wait in the actual meeting area, rather than in a temporary waiting area as required by the Australian norm.

The rigidity of Japanese interpersonal seating arrangements represents another instance of norm discrepancy between the two cultures.   In the Japanese communicative system politeness is displayed to the guest by awarding him the "highest" position, usually the side furthest from the door.   This Japanese norm was unconsciously violated by a video technician in the second business meeting in the data corpus when he requested the Japanese host to sit on the farthest sofa.   The reaction of the Japanese was one of complete surprise, and he confirmed with me after the encounter that he invariably allocates the far position to his visitor.

The data also show that intra-company hierarchy is evident in the seating order, with the superordinate either taking a central or a top position and all others seated in rank order.   Australian businessmen familiar with the Japanese norm generally adjust to this norm when in Japan, though according to their reports, when acting as hosts in Australia they tend to expect the Japanese to adjust to the Australian pattern which is more flexible.   For Japanese businessmen, violation of Japanese norms by Australians in contact situations can communicate impoliteness, not only *vis-à-vis* themselves as the interacting party, but in certain cases, also to senior members of the Australian corporate network.

Personnel Norms

Other important politeness norms are connected with personnel or participant rules which concern the nature of the individuals who participate in an interaction.   Needless to say, various problems arise in the contact situation.   Australian businessmen observe

that Japanese personnel frequently outnumber them at a meeting and that, furthermore, there may be Japanese participants who only temporarily attend a portion of the meeting, and who leave prior to the conclusion of an encounter sometimes to make way for others to join. Such departure and entry during a meeting, while permissible in the Japanese culture, can be negatively evaluated by Australians as a violation of norms of politeness.

Participant rules also concern speaker prerogative and turn-taking. Although not particularly evident in the video tape-recorded business meetings, it was reported by some Australian informants that the Japanese superordinate generally exercises the prerogative of first and main speaker, a pattern which tends to be shared cross-culturally, but one which seems to be stronger in the case of the Japanese culture. (In business meetings variation does exist when a departmental representative assumes the role of a "temporary" pivot, but otherwise generally it is the superordinate who is awarded the pivotal position.) Furthermore, in the Japanese system, this prerogative also extends to hospitality situations and can include Japanese superordinates abruptly terminating an encounter. Such a pattern is not replicated in the Australian communicative system and is thus noted and sometimes marked as inadequate by Australians.

My data thus confirm the frequent claim that the communication of status relationships occurs more explicitly in the Japanese cultural system. As a result of this norm discrepancy, negative evaluations can be found in intercultural business situations. The Australian personnel note the over-attentiveness displayed by some Japanese subordinates to superordinates, particularly to the Japanese, but even on occasions to another Australian. On the other hand, the Japanese negatively evaluate the lack of focalisation by Australians upon their Japanese superordinate. Accommodation of such disparate norms is difficult in the contact situation, and often this dissonance remains unresolved.

The manner in which the expression of status occurs is of significance in any account of politeness. Examples provided above show that there are considerable differences in the surface expressions of politeness in the Japanese and Australian communicative systems. Differences in the input features are also found. Neustupny has characterised English as possessing a politeness system where stress is placed upon the communication of equality rather than upon superiority-inferiority type relations and he contrasts this with the Japanese system (Neustupny 1968: 415). It is noteworthy that several Japanese informants in the data considered the lack of appropriate expression of status towards senior Japanese to be the most serious inadequacy committed by Australians. This finding suggests that for the Japanese status expressions belong in the very centre of the politeness system, whereas for Australians these are less central and are manifested in different ways.

Differences in personnel roles are further seen in the conduct of Australian and Japanese personnel at business lunches and dinners. According to Australian norms of politeness, all participants of a small hospitality encounter should be involved in the

selection of the meal, particularly those who belong on the guest side.   The expression of this norm varies cross-culturally for, according to the Japanese norm, it is polite for the host to undertake the decision on behalf of participants (Befu 1974a: 199; Naotsuka *et al.* 1981: 32).   In the two video tape-recorded business luncheons, the Japanese participants in each situation selected all the meal items; only in one instance (out of seven) in one luncheon, and four instances (out of five) in the other encounter did the Japanese permit the Australians to confirm the items pre-selected by themselves. This exclusion from the selection process received negative markings from the Australians (Marriott 1991a). Paradoxically, the Japanese were not even the hosts in one of these two luncheon situations, so a further violation of politeness was committed against the Australians.

Frame Norms

Frames refer to the way in which encounters are arranged, and can be dealt with at two levels.   One is the arrangement of elements within a specific encounter; the other is the way in which encounters themselves form a part of the overall interaction. Greetings and introductions are essential components in the opening segments of encounters and perform an essential role in the expression of politeness.   A handshake gesture is a normalised opening constituent of Australian business encounters and it is generally accompanied by greeting routines.   All of the Japanese personnel in the video tape-recorded data engaged in handshaking activity, although some deviations from the Australian norm were noted.   In encounter six, for instance, the handshake of J6a with the superordinate, A6a, seemed excessive and then the same interactant failed to shake hands with the Australian subordinate, A6b.   Both of these actions constitute deviations from the Australian norm.   Interviews with other informants confirmed that the Japanese do experience problems in generating this non-verbal expression of politeness: they engage in excessive handshaking, produce limp or weak handshakes or else avoid handshaking altogether.   This act, which is highly communicative of politeness, is not necessarily easily adopted by Japanese businessmen even though most do consciously aim at its adoption.

The data also reveal that in contact situations with Japanese some Australians consciously avoid initiating a handshake because of their knowledge that handshaking is not an integral action within the Japanese internal system of communication. Interestingly, Australian informants, such as A8, report that this avoidance is triggered by their interpretation of politeness as it applies in the other cultural system.   From interviews with Japanese, it is clear that the majority evaluate handshake activity in contact situations positively - even if they remain unconscious of problems with their own acquisition. Consequently, we can safely claim that handshaking is a "correct" norm in the Australian-Japanese contact situation.   Any hesitation by Australians to continue

implementation of this norm in the contact situation thus constitutes a form of norm deviation.

Transference of bowing from the Japanese cultural system is also evident in intercultural business situations.   Both Australian and Japanese informants confirm that some Japanese continue to engage in bowing while some Australians adopt, almost involuntarily, the Japanese gesture of a bow.   Bowing is, of course, an act of politeness and is used extensively in Japanese internal situations.   However, in my data the bowing activity of Australians was sometimes observed to be pidginized, for they engaged in shortish, quick bows which represented deviations from the Japanese norm. For instance, in the closing segment of the business luncheon in encounter six, it was an Australian, not the Japanese, who initiated a deep bow as an expression of appreciation. The borrowing of such a norm from the non-base communicative system by the Australians may be due to an over-estimation of the position of bowing as a display of politeness in that culture.   In the Australian cultural system bowing - even if highly restricted - is strongly marked behaviour, whereas in the Japanese system the regular bow is much more neutral and does not carry a high connotation of politeness (Neustupny 1987: 140).   It is, nonetheless, a common component in the closing segment of a Japanese internal situation.

All informants confirm that the business card exchange is another Japanese norm which is widely borrowed by Australians. The exchange of business cards is an obligatory act in the introduction sequence of native Japanese situations and there appears to be an invariable expectation on the part of the Japanese that this act will also take place in contact situations.   Australian businessmen who are experienced in interacting with the Japanese engage in the exchange of business cards as an obligatory component in introduction sequences, and they are often able to describe some of the ways in which the exchange differs from the Australian pattern.   However, in the present data not all Australian businessmen were prepared to reciprocate and neither did they all follow Japanese politeness rules of exchange which the Japanese seem to automatically expect from both Japanese and non-Japanese business personnel.   This claim applies to those Australians who lack familiarity with contact situation behaviour. Following an in-depth analysis of the six instances of business card exchanges in the video tape recordings (Marriott 1985, 1991b), it emerged that even those Australians who believed they had adopted the Japanese norm were observed to experience difficulty with the actual hand-to-hand presentation, and, in addition, they tended to supplement the exchange with a verbal expression of thanks, an obligatory verbal expression in this context in the Australian culture which has no parallel in the Japanese system.

As an expression of politeness toward their Japanese interactants, a new norm has arisen in Australian-Japanese business relations where many Australians print the reverse side of their business card in Japanese, often with their full Melbourne address transliterated into the Japanese script.   Since no Japanese businessmen resident in

Melbourne translates his address into Japanese in a similar manner, such behaviour on the part of the Australian side is clearly representative of the process of interculture.   It is an attempt by the Australian to adopt a Japanese norm, but whereas the use of romanised equivalents on Japanese business cards is necessary in Japan for those who cannot read Japanese, the employment of a Japanese transliteration for an Australian address serves little functional purpose.   Japanese personnel in interviews frequently indicted that they consider the use of such Japanese transliterations as unusual.   When asked about the reasons for this action, Australians frequently report that it is "polite". Such folk interpretations of politeness are of interest.   Firstly, it appears that the number of issues consciously identified for polite treatment by Australians is quite limited. Secondly, actions like the transliteration of a business card is not part of their normalised behaviour and perhaps, therefore, it is easily identified as an issue requiring action. Thirdly, the degree to which such behaviour is indeed polite remains questionable.

Another conspicuous feature in the contact situation is that many, though not all, Australians present the Japanese side of their business card, despite the fact that the shared spoken language is English.   As in the above case, the reason the Australians give in interviews for such an action is that it is "polite".   This interpretation of politeness is paradoxical, for the extent to which the Australian feels inclined to use the native language of his Japanese partner is often limited to a written version of his business card and perhaps to greetings and occasional expressions.   The Australians remain unconscious that the presentation of the Japanese side of their   card is negatively evaluated by some Japanese, even if for the majority the evaluation may be neutral. Several Japanese informants reported that it may communicate an evaluation by the Australian of deficiencies in the English competence of the recipients.

As noted above, the way in which different encounters are interlinked is also relevant to the frame component.   In the intercultural situations in the data, courtesy visits constituted one discrete category of business encounter.   In relation to courtesy visits norm discrepancy arises as a result of the application of native norms by both the Australian and Japanese businessmen respectively.   Although courtesy visits are characteristically found in both cultures, in the case of Japanese internal situations, the first visit is generally, or at least sometimes, of this nature.   While Australians temporarily resident in Tokyo acknowledge the existence of this norm, several reported that the heaviness of their schedule obliged them to discuss specific business tasks on the first visit in conscious violation of the Japanese norm.   Regardless of being aware of the function of courtesy calls, A1 added: "they only usually talk about generalities but I haven't got time for this".   Some Australian businessmen, like A16, describe the purpose of their visits to Japan as negotiations, or for "goodwill" or courtesy visits.

The periodic courtesy calls made by Japanese businessmen as a means of maintenance of contact with Australian personnel in Japan as well as in Australia represent another Japanese norm which is noted by Australians.   In the Australian

culture, such face-to-face contact is not carried out extensively as a means of network maintenance.   On occasion, courtesy visits from Japanese are interpreted negatively, as involving a loss of time for the Australian.   A13 explained that although he was now no longer involved in a particular joint company with a Japanese corporation, he continues to receive courtesy visits from the Japanese, an action which he believes is totally unnecessary.

A further difference in interaction occurs when a superordinate Japanese assumes a new position or, alternatively, leaves a position.   On these occasions   courtesy calls are made to important business interactants.   Written communication of this event may be sent, as will be news of the change of an individual's status within an organisation or his move to another corporation.   Japanese business personnel sometimes negatively evaluate the Australian's omission to provide information on personnel changes in this way.   These instances which pertain to the establishment and maintenance of networks are significant for they indicate that a greater weighting is placed upon this component of interaction in the Japanese culture.   The cause for such expression may be found in the stronger input of the feature of outgroup addressee in the Japanese communicative system (Neustupny 1972: 12).   As the input of this feature is less strong in Australia, dissonance arises and it would seem that neither the Japanese nor the Australian party is comfortable with the behaviour of the other side.

Variety Norms

Variety norms, or the norms which determine the kind of language to be used is another principal component of communication. One of the most significant rules relating to variety or code in the contact situation concerns choice of language: English or Japanese.   In the majority of instances English is the only shared language of Australian and Japanese business personnel, though the competence of the Japanese businessman in English varies from high to minimal.   In certain circumstances, a third party interpreter or else a member of one of the networks,   typically the Japanese side, assumes the role of interpreter. Although recently there has been a small increase in the number of young Australians temporarily resident in Japan who can competently conduct business communication in Japanese, within the range of the data presented here, invariably the base language is English, generally with or without interpretation.

Selection of the language to be used in a business encounter is of importance, as is maintenance of this language for the duration of that period.   Australian informants report that extensive sequences of code-switching from English to Japanese sometimes occur in Australian-Japanese interaction.   It can be argued that code-switching is a direct violation of English norms of politeness for it acts to exclude certain participants in the encounter from the ensuing discourse.   In the business luncheons in the video tape-recorded data, all the sequences which contained the ordering of the meal items by the

Japanese businessmen were encoded in Japanese, an act which was negatively evaluated by the Australians. In one long sequence covering the selection of three meal items, four instances of code-switching occurred.   In response, one of the Australians pursued two types of actions.   Firstly, he became involved in alternative activities such as examination of the label of the bottle near him, indicating his disengagement from the dialogue from which he was excluded.   Secondly, he re-entered the discourse after each of three sets of switches to the Japanese code, thus simultaneously terminating the code-switch.   In two of these turns he sought information about the message expressed in Japanese, yet was denied it.   From the perspective of Australian rules of politeness, the exclusion of the Australian from the selection process in this context was highly impolite.

In the informant interviews, Australian businessmen disclosed a wide range of attitudes toward code-switching during business meetings.   Some take a very lenient view in contexts where switching is seen as a corrective device to rectify inadequacies in English communication on the part of the Japanese interactant.   Such a position seems to be representative of non-normative use of rules by the Australian participants (Neustupny 1985b: 166), since in internal situations they might be expected to reach a negative evaluation of this type of conduct. On the other hand, a strong marking of inadequacy is placed upon such communication by other Australian businessmen who view it as a violation of norms of politeness.

Another conspicuous deviation from English norms of address and reference occurs in contact situations when Australian speakers use the Japanese suffix *-san*   in place of an English title such as Mr.   In the video tape-recorded data Australian participants in six of the ten encounters employed this pattern in address or reference.   Use of the suffix *-san*   by Japanese speakers in the recorded data was exceptional, although numerous Australian informants report its use by the Japanese.   Elsewhere it has been suggested that Australians readily adopt the Japanese norm as an avoidance measure for using an English title and surname - a pattern which in many contexts in Australian English communicates distance too strongly (Marriott 1991b).   It emerged from the interview data that while Japanese business personnel neutrally evaluate the use of *-san*   by Australians in most cases, they attach an inadequacy marking to it when used toward senior Japanese or toward personnel who are introduced for the first time.   This instance thus parallels others where the status of outgroup addressee or superior referent are components in the input to politeness.   Australians are unable to vary the norm pertaining to the use of *-san* and instead apply it rigidly, giving no consideration to the status of the referent involved (Neustupny 1985b: 165).

Apart from the use of *-san*   sometimes the phenomenon of mixing occurs in the discourse of Australians who employ Japanese greetings and other routine expressions (Middleton 1987).   However, some Australians deviate from Japanese linguistic norms through their production of these expressions in pidginized forms; they exhibit rigidity in their usage, and are unable to adjust their discourse according to the addressee

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(Neustupny 1985b).   My interviews revealed that Japanese informants negatively mark the use of Japanese language by Australian businessmen in introductions and greetings toward very senior Japanese and toward Japanese whom they meet for the first time (Marriott 1988: 10).

In some of the cases discussed above, it has been seen that politeness expressions receive maximum expression in any opening encounter involving outgroup addressee, and continuing expression where superior addressees are involved.   The data confirm that Japanese transfer this norm to the contact situation where English is the language of communication, and where the behaviour of Australians does not accord with their interpretation, they mark such behaviour as inadequate.

Content Norms

Content norms constitute another main aspect of the communication of politeness. In much business interaction small talk is a category of content rules that appears to be shared cross-culturally as a component of opening segments.   This category of discourse was observed in the opening position in the video tape-recorded data and its existence was furthermore confirmed by the informants.

Hospitality encounters within the business domain irrespective of the timing, also perform a significant role at the level of interaction as demonstrations of politeness.   The characteristic feature of hospitality, which is the provision by a host of food and beverages, is an expression of politeness which is common to many cultural communities. Reports from both Australian and Japanese businessmen indicate that the frequency and lavishness which characterise Japanese-initiated displays of hospitality far exceed what is considered the norm in the Australian cultural system.   Interestingly, Australian hosts not infrequently regard the type and frequency of their own hospitality towards the Japanese business guests as inadequate, when measured against the hospitality they receive from the Japanese.

With regard to content norms, a detailed analysis of the discourse topics in the two video tape-recorded business luncheons reveals a striking parallel in the type of discoursal themes found on both occasions: business or company topics, "regulation" (greetings, routines, ordering of meal, correction frames relating to eating), food consumption (meal and beverages), Japanese culture and personal experiences (Marriott 1991a).   As business topics occupied a predominant position in the discourse of both situations, the finding is contrary to the general descriptive accounts found in the folk literature which proscribe business-related topics in intercultural hospitality situations (Sakajoo 1984: 58; Tanaka 1983: 104; Hall 1987: 109).   The present data do not support the contention that business or task-oriented topics are avoided during a meal encounter. Furthermore, there seems to be no validity in the assertion that in either culture the selection of task-oriented topics is contrary to polite behaviour.

Nevertheless, certain topics that were preferred topics for Australian speakers during the business luncheons did not receive the same prominence in the discourse of the Japanese participants. Although there was some development of personalised topics by the Japanese businessmen, their participation was much weaker in comparison with the Australians. In contrast, there was a definite preference by Australian businessmen for topics of a personalised nature: these topics included holidays, overseas experiences and family.   In English, the introduction of content of this nature is a means of expressing politeness   because, in accordance with Australian rules of interaction, it reduces distance between participants at their first encounter.

Content norms also apply to the consumption of food and beverages in business situations. A detailed examination of the drinking norms applied in the two business lunches revealed that all four Japanese businessmen heavily transfer Japanese drinking norms to the intercultural setting: a "toast" was performed at the commencement of drinking activity; they poured drinks for others, usually for the interactant seated opposite; reciprocation occurred; an interactant often used the bottle of his recipient, in addition to his own when pouring another's drink; they did not acknowledge any pouring by the waitress; the Japanese held the glass in an upright position and commonly raised it above the table; furthermore, they held the glass up as a token gesture of receipt even after pouring commenced. Even so, there was considerable disparity between these norms and the ones exhibited by the Australians, despite the fact that two of the Australians believed they were employing Japanese drinking norms. Following Australian norms of behaviour, all four Australians held their beer glass slightly on a slant, they tended to employ a verbal expression of appreciation when a drink was poured for them, and furthermore, they revealed a preference to select their own bottle when pouring for another, rather than select the bottle of the recipient. The other two Australians who possessed little previous experience in Australian-Japanese contact situations did not apply any Japanese drinking norms and as a result of their failure to make reciprocal presentations, their conduct was marked as inadequate by the Japanese participants.

The inclusion of presentations of tea or coffee to visitors during business encounters is another means of displaying politeness, similar to the function of a hospitality encounter. The informants reported that in Japan, host companies invariably provide the business guest with tea or coffee, usually Japanese tea. This is essentially a politeness act on the part of the host and is supplied automatically. By contrast, in the Australian cultural system, it is polite, though not obligatory, to offer a guest a beverage, and in the case of acceptance, to generally provide a choice of tea or coffee, with or without milk and sugar accompaniments. That a beverage is delivered automatically in Japan, coupled with the fact that often no alternative is given, is not always positively evaluated by Australian participants. Contrariwise, some Japanese informants report

that the enumeration of precise components in the Australian culture represents too strong an emphasis on individualisation.

Another significant content rule which belongs in the courtesy sub-system and which causes norm discrepancy in the intercultural situation is gift-giving. Gift-giving in business interaction has a long history in Japanese culture (Befu 1974b) and so it is not surprising that this pattern is commonly transferred to the intercultural context (Marriott 1988). Both Japanese and Australian informants confirm the general view that quite a few Japanese practise gift-giving in intercultural situations. For instance, A8, A9, A13 and A17 reported that Japanese businessmen visiting Australia bring gifts of varying quality and quantity. Similarly, A1, A3, A4, A6, A34 mentioned that the opening of an Australian office in Japan, the celebration of corporate anniversaries or the farewelling of an Australian are occasions when Japanese businessmen commonly presented gifts to them.

Not only are Australian business personnel unsure about the rules concerning receipt; rules of reciprocation are another target of intense concern. Some Australians are consciously reluctant to engage in giving gifts since it is not a feature of business relations in their own culture. Others, concerned not to violate a politeness norm in the intercultural situation, adjust to the Japanese pattern by engaging in some presentation of gifts, but understandably, the type of goods, timing and object of presentation remain as problems. The pattern of gift-giving is a complex one, at least partly due to the considerable amount of variation which actually occurs in Japanese culture itself, in addition to the diverse patterns occurring between Japanese and non-Japanese.

Finally, brief mention should be made of two other Etiquette system norms: dressing and posture. Many Australian informants commented on the formality and lack of variation in the dress of Japanese business personnel and some of them referred to their own attempts to adjust to the Japanese norm when on business assignments in Japan. They had thus evaluated their regular style of dress as being inappropriate in a contact situation - an interpretation which was proved correct in interviews with Japanese business personnel. Whereas dressing manners are more peripheral in the contemporary Australian politeness system, in the Japanese culture they remain of greater importance (Neustupny 1968: 414).

Posture, including sitting styles, is a further expression of politeness which is more central in the Japanese system. In the interviews some senior Japanese business personnel outlined the sitting style which they considered obligatory in formal business meetings to consist of an upright back with feet together and arms firmly placed at one's side. They marked as inadequate the crossing of legs,   both in their own behaviour and in that of their Australian interactants. One senior Japanese participant (J10) related his overt correction of Australian businessmen with whom he worked in Tokyo for their habit of crossing their legs during formal business meetings. In the Japanese system,

then, postural rules remain more central and are characterised by a set of prescriptions which do not apply to the same degree in the contemporary Australian cultural system.

Concluding Discussion

An investigation of politeness behaviour in naturally occurring contact situations throws light on the nature of such situations.   The analysis has shown that norms from the Japanese system are often applied in contact situations, principally by Japanese personnel but also on occasion by Australians.   We have also seen that sometimes deviations from the Australian norm occur on the part of the Japanese participant. Sometimes these deviations are not noted by either the Japanese or the Australian. There are also times when the presence of Japanese norms in the contact situation is positively rated by the Japanese or by the Australian participant or by both.

On the other hand, numerous illustrations have been provided to show that a wide range of norms which are applied in the contact situation by Japanese participants are evaluated negatively by Australians.   Conversely, various examples were given providing evidence that Japanese business personnel mark as inadequate certain Australian norms of interaction.   Such negative evaluations arise because of the application of native Japanese norms by members of that cultural system in the contact situation to their evaluation of the conduct of Australians.

It has also been argued that contact situations involve other processes of behaviour apart from the application of Japanese or Australian norms.   Instances of the processes of interculture and pidginization were furnished, and it was argued that these too sometimes provide the basis for norm dissonance.   The data of naturally occurring business situations and interviews where informants narrate actual incidents rather than provide attitudinal reports has thus permitted an examination of some of the norms of politeness which exist in specific Australian-Japanese contact situations.   By focussing upon deviations from the norm we could highlight one significant feature, that of norm dissonance.   Hopefully this study will confirm the importance of examining the ways in which participants of contact situations evaluate norm deviations, a dimension which has not frequently been awarded treatment in studies on intercultural contact.

Some attention was also given in this paper to the input features of politeness patterns.   In this regard it was suggested that some differences are found in the Australian and Japanese systems of politeness.   As this is a major underlying cause of norm dissonance in the intercultural situation, more empirical research is necessary. Various other tasks also await inquiry.   An urgent undertaking is the establishment of scales of different degrees of inadequacy for different deviations from norms (cf. Neustupny 1990).   Another concern is the interplay of the Respect Speech system with the Courtesy system and the effect of combined or multiple deviations from politeness norms.   One important theoretical issue untouched in this paper concerns the effect on

politeness behaviour of an individual such as a Japanese, who moves from a system which possesses three sub-systems of politeness - the Honorific system, Respect Speech system and the Etiquette system - to a system like English which has only two well-developed sub-systems, namely, Respect Speech and the Etiquette system. The effect which occurs upon individuals who move in the alternative direction is also of theoretical and empirical interest.

Notes

1. Brown and Levinson's revised version in 1987 of their 1978 publication contains an extensive bibliography listing research in the area of politeness. Certain journals have devoted special issues to politeness: International Journal of the Sociology of Language 27, 1981 and 92, 1991; Multilingua 7, 4, 1988 and 8, 2/3, 1989; Journal of Pragmatics 14, 1990.

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