

Requesting Information Online:
An Exploratory Study of Native and Non-native English
Discourse Patterns

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要 約

コンピュータ・コミュニケーションにおける英語母語話者と非母語話者の会話パターン

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本論文では、日本などの英語を非母語とする英語学習者にとって、コンピュータのような科学技術によるコミュニケーションや情報がどのような可能性をもっているのかということ明らかにするため、英語の母語話者 (NS) と非母語話者 (NNS) のコンピュータによるコミュニケーションの違いや特徴について検討した。海外と受送信している大学のメーリングリストに送られた電子メールのメッセージを調査し、非母語話者 (NNS) にとって実用的に重要である情報依頼 (IR) の構造的な特徴について分析した。また、コンピュータを用いたコミュニケーション、すなわち、文書による会話に感情的な意味を追加するパラ言語の特徴についても分析を行った。書き言葉や話し言葉などの口語的なコミュニケーションの方法から依頼のパターンについて検討し、母語話者 (NS) と非母語話者 (NNS) との会話の特徴を明らかにした。

結果から、母語話者 (NS) と非母語話者 (NNS) が用いる情報依頼 (IR) パターンは、コンピュータによる会話である文書と一般的な書き言葉や話し言葉を用いる会話において、明らかに異なることが示された。さらに、母語話者 (NS) と非母語話者 (NNS) のパラ言語の用い方についても顕著な違いがみとめられ、非母語話者 (NNS) は母語話者 (NS) に比べて、より口語的な習慣的表現を用いないことが示された。これらの結果は、非母語話者 (NNS) のコンピュータによる会話が母語話者 (NS) に比べて量的にも質的にも異なるという、より感情的な側面を含んだコミュニケーションの違いを示唆していると考えられる。本研究の結果は、非母語話者 (NNS) の英語に対する障害の解決や会話をより母語話者に近づけるための教授法を示唆するだけでなく、教育的にも非常に大きな意義を持っていると考えられる。

INTRODUCTION

Advances in information technology in recent years have resulted in faster and more convenient modes of communication becoming within economic reach of an increasing portion of the world's population. Email and internet-based chat systems, for example, provide an improved combination of cost and speed when compared to traditional options such as letter writing or the telephone, yet also present a challenge to native speakers and language learners alike, as the generic structures and discursive patterns of these still evolving forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) have yet to become fully transparent, let alone comfortably mastered. It is clear from initial observations of the nature of CMC discourse (see, e. g. Maynor, n. d. ; Bolton, 1991 ; Wilson, 1993 ; Cumming, 1995) that while CMC remains primarily a textual medium, it combines elements of oral and written discourse with features unique to electronic media. Qualitative and quantitative research has provided further insights into the general characteristics of CMC *vis à vis* conversation and written communication (see, e. g., Warchauer, 1995 and Murray, 1991 for an analysis of electronic versus face-to-face (FTF) communication ; and Korenman and Wyatt, 1996 for an investigation of group dynamics in electronic discourse communities) as well as the uses of CMC for various situations, purposes and participant characteristics (see, e. g., Ziv, 1996 for CMC in the workplace ; Murray, 1995 for choice of communicative mode in multi-mode environments ; and Ma, 1996 and Herring, 1996 for intercultural perspectives on CMC). Despite these advances, however, analysis of specific discourse characteristics of CMC remains in its infancy.

Further investigation of the characteristics of CMC would benefit both practitioners and researchers in the fields of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), with the benefit for TESL accruing from the promise CMC holds as a tool for authentic communication in English language classes—particularly in foreign language (EFL) settings such as Japan where opportunities to use English outside the classroom are limited. In EFL contexts, CMC enables students to communicate with native and nonnative speakers of English worldwide. In a similar vein, one interest of CMC for SLA researchers is its potential for providing advanced learners with worldwide access to international discourse communities which could facilitate their entrance into professional communities of practice. This desire to develop and/or maintain professional networks provides self-directed learners with an authentic communicative purpose which accordingly could simultaneously benefit their communicative language competency. At this point, however, the uptake of CMC by such language learners is as yet unclear, for while its potential advantages for language learners as well as other groups who may feel uncomfortable or at a disadvantage in FTF discourse have been identified (Murray, 1995 ; Warchauer, 1995), so too has a reluctance among certain cultural groups—particularly Asian students—to participate fully in electronic discourse because of its perceived impersonal nature (Ma, 1996).

This paper examines specific discourse characteristics of CMC in an exploration of the potential for communication and information technologies (CIT) to transform the learning experi-

ences of nonnative speakers of English, particularly advanced EFL learners who have had limited access to target language culture. To isolate the language of most benefit to advanced EFL learners, the study will focus on one form of CMC (email, an *asynchronous*, or delayed, form) and one specific electronic discourse community (TESL-L¹, a multi-member electronic mailing list catering to ESL/EFL professionals and with a large international membership² consisting of advanced nonnative speakers of English as well as native speakers of a number of standard varieties).

The study will isolate the speech act of information request (IR) which is particularly salient in CMC discourse and which also can potentially leverage important benefits for language learners attempting full-fledged membership in professional electronic discourse communities, as will be explained below. In analyzing the data, first the generic structure of electronic messages carrying the *illocutionary force* of a request for information will be identified and compared with the structure of the reprint request (RR), a conventional written form of request which can perform a similar communicative function. Second, the specific discourse features of the information request (IR) as posted on the TESL-L multiple-recipient electronic mailing list will be analyzed and compared with general characteristics of requests identified in the speech act literature. Third, the *pragmatic use of paralinguistic features* (traditional text-based tools such as punctuation as well as those specific to CMC) will be analyzed to determine whether they convey oral or written style. In all three levels of analysis above, native English speaker (NS) and nonnative English speaker (NNS) usage will be compared and any differences identified.

The analysis and interpretation of the results encompasses several fields of research including speech act theory and politeness in pragmatics as well as computer-mediated communication and discourse analysis. The next section will introduce aspects of each of these disciplines as they pertain to the current research following a brief argument for the importance of the information request (IR) and of CMC for advanced English language learners. Following this background section, the details of the exploratory study will be described and implications of the results discussed.

BACKGROUND

Importance of Electronic Discourse for English language learners

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has influenced the manner in which people communicate. E-mail, though not replacing other modes of communication as predicted by some early visionaries, has now evolved beyond its initial use primarily by academics and professionals in the United States to become a more inclusive and increasingly important mode of communication for individuals worldwide. Communications and information technology (CIT) has advanced to the extent that English NSs and NNSs now communicate daily with friends, peers and colleagues internationally, both directly through email and via multiple recipient forums such as bulletin boards and electronic mailing lists. CMC complements and expands our communicative options, and within professional disciplines has become an important means of sharing and creating knowledge through an increased opportunity for networking among re-

searchers, teachers, students, and professionals.

CMC is also changing and expanding our linguistic repertoire, which due to its unique combination of features (described more fully below, but incorporating a fast but delayed text-based system with speech-replicating features, yet without the immediacy and FTF intimacy of spoken interaction) may serve to help democratize communication and provide potential empowering effects for those individuals who may have experienced difficulty communicating on an equal basis in traditional FTF conversations (i. e. young, female, minority group member, person of lower social status, subordinate worker, novice professional, student, nonnative speaker etc. ; Murray, 1995). For language teaching, CMC has also been suggested as a means of individualizing instruction by providing another forum for students who are shy in formal classroom settings to actively take part in the course, with potentially carry-over benefits to the classroom as well (Warschauer et al., 1995).

Of particular interest here is the potential benefit that email provides to NNSs due to the delay in message transmission. Moreover, as asynchronous CMC does not involve instantaneous feedback³, non-native speakers have additional time to construct a response that would not be available in immediate FTF communication. This feature, of course, benefits not only NNSs, as its advantages have been extolled by NS computer users as well : “It’s a problem to respond on the fly” and “E-mail gives you more time to think” (Murray, 1991). As CMC has come to complement traditional avenues for professional development (e. g. annual conferences, personal written and oral communication, and printed sources such as newsletters and professional journals), its value has increased not only for NS and NNS novices in their professional disciplines but also for advanced nonnative speakers who have a new avenue open to them to participate in an international discourse community.

Features of CMC Discourse

...e-mail has begun to develop its own style as an independent literary genre.... On one hand it is fluent and hence conversational ; on the other hand the subtle cues of voice inflections and body language are lost in the phosphor of the computer screen... (Bolton, 1991, p. 35).

...the language of CMC is a simplified register, a hybrid of written and oral language. Users simplify their language in order to meet their primary goal of interactive communication within a context that has a different grouping of constraints from those of oral or written language. Typing at a terminal is slower than speaking ; time delays occur also because of technical failures ; the recipient is not physically present and so CMC has no visual paralinguistic or non-linguistic cues.... Thus, the simplification strategies that CMC communicators use all serve to reduce the time taken to write the message or to substitute for paralinguistic and non-linguistic cues (Murray, 1995, p. 79).

As a text-based communication medium, CMC conveys messages linearly or chronologically in a defined turn-taking pattern. However, the rapid transmission speed of CMC messages

(leading to almost immediate responses in the case of 'synchronous' CMC such as chat forums) has resulted in a brevity and informal style of CMC that is most prevalent in synchronous discourse but which has also become apparent in the less rapid asynchronous CMC discourse of email. While the rapid-fire sending of brief messages might evoke a conversational style, as a text-based system, CMC is devoid of the concurrent oral feedback and contextual visual and aural cues which are available in FTF communication, resulting in CMC being seen by some to be a less 'personal' form of communication with a "low social presence" (Korenman and Wyatt, 1996 ; Ma, 1996). However, the lack of extra-textual cues is circumvented to some extent by traditional choices of topic, vocabulary and syntax as well as the adoption of other mechanisms—*electronic paralanguage*—which are capable of conveying personal interaction and thus help reduce ambiguity and develop concord among participants (Ma, 1996).

The conventions (known as "e-style") which have developed as a paralinguistic channel of communication are varied, and they exhibit—yet simultaneously violate—traditional features of both written and spoken discourse. Conventional text is used in unconventional ways, such as the use of ALL CAPS for emphasis. Similarly, multiple exclamation marks (!!!) heighten intensity level to convey a level of affect that is not performed in the same way in formal writing. However, some conventions have developed merely to increase communication speed, such as the use of acronyms for commonly used expressions (as opposed to nouns and titles as is often the case in writing). Some typical examples are presented below :

- BTW = by the way
 - OTOH = on the other hand
 - OIC = oh, I see
 - FAQ = frequently asked question
 - IIRC = if I recall correctly
 - FWIW = for what it's worth
 - IMHO = in my humble opinion (to deflect fear of pretension)
- (Maynor, n. d., p. 5 ; Smith, 1998).

Other unique CMC conventions have developed to accommodate a lack of specific features existing in the more traditional modes of communication. The *emoticon* or *smiley*, for example, helps to fill the visual void of CMC and reduce ambiguous affect through the arrangement of text elements to create graphic images that mimic well-known facial expressions. Such emotions conveyed are not traditionally observed in text in such a direct manner. Following is a short list of the extensive set that has been developed :⁴

- : -) = smile (inflects humor, happiness, or sarcasm)
- ; -) = wink (mitigates threat caused by sarcastic remarks)
- : -(= frown (expresses disapproval of previous utterance or other item)
- > : -(= angry smiley
- : -o = shocked smiley ("oh, nooooooo")
- : -] = indifferent/small smiley

: -))) = emphatic smile

(Maynor, n. d., p. 5 ; Smith, 1996)

The 'smiley' therefore plays a significant pragmatic role to indicate affect and mitigate threat to face by replicating features of spoken discourse :

...with smileys we see the additional meaning-bearing elements of speech—which are particularly important in carrying pragmatic meaning—being retained through the use of pictograms in electronic language. Electronic language is thus adopting features of spoken communication which facilitate both comprehension and communication which is considerate of other parties, but translating them into forms which are consistent with the written medium (Wilson, 1993, p. 392).

Though emoticons reduce ambiguity in CMC by increasing or mitigating the level of affect within the communication, such direct displays are associated in any mode of communication with casual rather than formal discourse. Therefore, emoticons may be expected to play a less prominent feature in academic mailing list discourse than other less direct methods of conveying affect. These other features of e-style can perhaps be seen most clearly in synchronous, or 'real time,' electronic discourse as exemplified by Excerpt 1 of a BITNET conversation between an English professor and a computer systems programmer. In addition to illustrating unique features of CMC style which are not merely a transfer of language forms already used in traditional written and spoken communication (Maynor, pp. 1-2), the excerpt also illustrates that the "incorrect" grammatical and lexical choices are not performed by uneducated or ignorant participants. Rather, they reflect the constraints and purposes of the interaction.

Excerpt 1

A : i think I just got mail thru a gateway that wouldn't work last summer

.

B : a coupla answers to questions...

A : ok

A : waiting ...

B : 1. i ain't mad

Punctuation and other conventions of e-style observable in Excerpt 1 above tend to exhibit two general properties : the disuse of traditional conventions of writing which are not relevant in oral conversation (such as the sentence-ending period or capitalization of sentence-initial words or first person subject pronoun) and the use of conventions (including traditional punctuation in new ways) which are meant to mimic or reflect oral discourse.⁵

Simplified quasi-phonemic spellings fall into the former category. While the two morphemes "night/knight" (or "threw/through") are distinguishable in writing, they are indistinguishable in speech. As the context of the utterance must be used to determine the specific morpho-phonemic meaning of homonyms in speech, traditional orthographic conventions are often dis-

carded in electronic discourse, particularly when the new spelling provides a short-cut that is valuable in 'real time' synchronous discourse (i. e. 'nite' and 'thru').

Clipped sentences fall into the latter category in which unique CMC conventions or traditional written conventions are used in novel ways to mimic the characteristics of speech. Marked by a hyphen to indicate a sudden break or an ellipsis to mimic the trailing off of speech, clipped sentences are reminiscent of the more free-flowing nature of speech in contrast to the discrete boundaries and completed thoughts of edited text. Similar conventions include the use of asterisks or capital letters to indicate an emphasis that would be apparent in the intonation contour of spoken English (e. g. "I *did* do it!" or "Well, how 'bout THAT?"), or multiple uses of punctuation marks (e. g. "How did things go yesterday?????" or "I can't believe it!!!!") to intensify affect (Murray, 1995). Another intensifier commonly found in electronic discourse is the use of capital letters to express several words or even an entire utterance (e. g. "CAN SOMEBODY PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON HERE???"). This practice illustrates both the illocutive power of the capital letter as well as the textual/verbal amalgamation of CMC, as this powerful visual 'noise' has been given the oral term of 'screaming.' Other manners of mimicking spoken discourse include the use of expressives such as "Humpf!" and "Pshaw!"; hesitancy through multiple consonants or vowels ("HmMMM," or "Sooooooo, what's up?"); and spellings such as *gotta*, *gonna*, and *cuz* which accurately represent phonological patterns of oral discourse (Murray, 1995).

Pragmatic factors of Communicative Competence

Pragmatic competence, or the ability to understand and produce appropriate utterances in given situations, while shown to be crucial to successful interaction in one's second language (L2), bears little relation to grammatical competence and therefore remains a challenge even for advanced learners (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1985; Thomas, 1993). Furthermore, as Wolfson (1986) discusses, the successful completion of certain pragmatic routines are crucial for improving a NNS's overall acquisition of the target language. She suggests that the invitation, for example, should be considered of primary concern to language learners in face to face (FTF) interaction because it is precisely the successful performance of this speech act that provides the non-native speaker with an opportunity to interact further with native speakers in non-academic settings and thus improve their communicative competence.

Despite their brevity and highly standardized rhetorical structure, Swales (1990) argues that the written genre of reprint request (RR) can perform a similar function in a non-FTF context. This request to the author of a research article for a copy or reprint of the paper is highly standardized and usually consists of a small preprinted card available in research libraries for the convenience of their research faculty. Despite its conventional—even institutionalized—form, the RR can serve an important professional function: "an initial and impersonal RR may have repercussive effects; it may lead to the reciprocal return of papers, a growth of correspondence, arrangements to meet at conferences, and, in a few instances, to that most satisfactory outcome—collaborative research (Swales, 1990, pp. 190-191). Following Wolfson and Swales, I argue that the speech act of request has a similarly important function for an academic electronic discourse community. In this case, the object of the request is information, either fact or opinion,

which allows advanced NNSs to network with other professionals in the discipline while simultaneously asking for needed information.

Due to its networking and information value as well as the more limited set of interactions possible on electronic discourse relative to FTF interaction (Korenman and Wyatt, 1996), the information request is perhaps not surprisingly one of the most common speech acts observed on academic electronic mailing lists. While suggestions, advice, and request responses are also prevalent on list and also satisfy valuable networking, social, and membership status functions, I argue that the information request (IR) is particularly important to NSs and NNSs alike as its successful completion will allow the addresser to receive a favorable response in the form of needed information. Moreover, the IR might also be more conducive to initial participation of NNSs, novice NSs and other less empowered community members by being less threatening than other speech acts (e. g. advice or opinion-giving) to other community members and thereby allow participation of those who may not be willing or able to participate in an equivalent FTF discussion.

Despite the inherent value of mastering the IR, there are several challenges facing its successful use. Factors such as the perceived degree of need by the requester, the specific information desired, and the perceived personality of the requester may contribute to a reader's decision whether or not to respond to a request, so an inappropriate attempt to request information may result in responses that do not truly address the requester's needs, or even a complete lack of responses. Worse, as pragmatic errors—unlike linguistic errors—tend to be attributed not to the communicator's status as a language learner but rather to the individual's personality (Thomas, 1993), inappropriate requests may also impact negatively the views of the very colleagues the requester is attempting to contact.

Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether NNSs are willing to use this networking opportunity. Swales (1990, p. 194) finds that despite their low cost and ready availability, few RRs in his corpus were sent by researchers in developing countries, corroborating earlier findings that for cultural reasons, many non-native speakers with high-level writing skills were hesitant to initiate academic contact with colleagues in other parts of the world. A similar concern about lack of Asian CMC participation in electronic discourse communities (Ma, 1996) leads one to suspect that a similar hesitancy may be present regarding the initiation of contact through information requests despite an ease of access to the discourse community and the potential professional value of the interaction. This is the subject of a separate investigation.

Speech Acts and Implicature

Speech acts such as the information request analyzed in this study are realized within speech events. These subsets of all possible communicative contexts restrict communication to those activities satisfying common sets of rules, as in telephone conversations, interviews or lectures. As specific features of the communicative context influence the speech event and, in turn, speech act realization patterns, changing features of the communicative context can be expected *a priori* to alter the speech acts realized. CMC discourse can occur in various forms, including synchronous/asynchronous, individual/multi-person, and moderated/non-moderated, all of which lead to different speech events and expected differences in discourse patterns. The

current study thus restricts the analysis to one forum, TESL-L, a moderated asynchronous multi-person electronic mailing list.

Speech acts do not have a unique one-to-one structure-function correspondence (Hatch, 1997, p. 135), and furthermore, the literal meaning and intended communicative meaning often differ and may even be opposing, as is the case with sarcasm (Hatch, 1997, p. 121). Therefore, listeners interpret the speaker's intended meaning from the context of the utterance as well as the linguistic forms with which the speech act is delivered. Grice's theory of implicature suggests that conversation is a joint activity guided by a set of assumptions or conversational maxims that help interlocutors achieve a common understanding (Levinson, 1983, p. 101). Armed with these maxims, essentially that speakers "speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information" (Levinson, 1983, p. 102), listeners assess the conversation in context to determine the speaker's intended meaning, but upon hearing an utterance which does not seem to satisfy certain conversational maxims when interpreted literally, the listener must construct a new hypothesis of the speaker's intended meaning. As this process can be time-intensive, however, speakers usually provide listeners with further cues as to their intended meaning through the use of conventional syntactic forms of speech acts (Levinson, 1983, p. 101).

Face threatening acts, politeness and indirectness

According to Brown and Levinson (1988, p. 13), linguistic politeness occurs in response to two conflicting human needs, the need to belong (one's positive face) and the need for independence (one's negative face). Speakers choose communication strategies and linguistic forms that represent a tradeoff between satisfying the other's face and satisfying one's own (p. 17), and the specific face-mitigating strategies chosen will depend on the severity of the face threat, which in turn depends on the social distance and status/power differences between the interlocutors as well as the degree of imposition of the act itself (p. 15).

Linguistic politeness, therefore, dictates the use of indirect language as a means of softening the force of a potential face threatening act (FTA) and potential deleterious effects for both the speaker and the addressee. Levels of directness vary from direct *bald on record* in which the hearer's face needs are completely ignored, to *on-record with redress* in which the message is unambiguously conveyed but the addressee's needs are accommodated in some way, through *off-record* remarks which hint at the message, to *avoidance* of the FTA entirely. As both extremes of *bald on record* and *off record* language impose on the listener, the linguistic forms most commonly used are *conventionally indirect* forms in which an equivocal literal meaning has been made unequivocal through conventional use (i. e. *Can I borrow your pen?* is not a question of ability but is understood by native speakers of English as an unambiguous request). This use of indirect forms reduces the threat of both the speech act itself as well as any non-compliance by the listener. If the face threat is sufficiently high, other additional means of redress may be used to further soften the threat to face (Brown and Levinson, 1988, p. 68-70).

A request is an inherently face-threatening act (FTA) because it places an imposition on the addressee. A refusal to carry out the request, meanwhile, is also an FTA to the addresser, and so expressing a request in a nonliteral way that nonetheless can be unambiguously inter-

preted as a request by convention lowers the threat of the request to the addressee and also reduces the threat of noncompliance to the addresser. "Could anyone tell me where to find a reference to the Silent Way?" is not literally a request for information but merely a question as to whether the listener is prepared, willing or able to provide the information. However, a NS unambiguously would interpret the statement as an information request, particularly in the context of electronic mailing list discourse. The context and medium of the communication would further reduce the threat of such a request: the message is not posted to an individual but to many, so a person need not feel as obligated to respond since others could provide the answer. Furthermore, an information request is less threatening and creates less imposition than does a request to perform some action, and can even attend to the recipient's face needs by allowing him to share knowledge. These factors would imply that discourse on electronic mailing lists may need not be as indirect as would be suggested by FTF communication.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

One goal of the current study is to explore the extent to which features of oral, written and CMC discourse discussed above are salient in discourse observed on an academic international mailing list. It can be argued that this discourse community might reflect the tension between the informality of CMC discourse and the formality of academic English. For English language learners in particular, while the forum may provide crucial benefits in developing and maintaining language competency as well as professional networks, the use of appropriate discursive forms may be critical in participating successfully in such a discourse community. Therefore, an additional goal of the study is to explore whether the rhetorical and discursive patterns of NNS electronic discourse reflect that of NSs.

In order to accomplish these goals, three features of the email messages will be examined: first, the generic characteristics of one specific language function, the information request (IR), a speech act with high saliency in academic electronic mailing lists and one for which mastery might be particularly beneficial for NNSs; second, the head act characteristics of the IR to evaluate the degree of politeness/indirectness of the electronic IR data according to the Brown and Levinson (1988) model; and third, the paralinguistic features of the electronic messages to determine the degree of speech-like or writing-like characteristics as discussed above. The combination of these three levels of analysis will help provide information regarding the characteristics of academic electronic discourse and the degree to which NNS discourse falls within NS norms.

Research Questions:

This research aims to examine the following questions:

1. to what extent do information requests (IRs) posted on TESL-L, a moderated academic international asynchronous electronic mailing list, display similar structural characteristics as similar requests in a written genre, such as the reprint request (Swales, 1990);
2. to what extent do the head act features of IRs posted on TESL-L display the general characteristics of the speech act of request identified in the literature (Ervin-Tripp, 1976,

1987; Blum-Kulka, 1985, 1986), and reflect politeness strategies associated with the Brown and Levinson (1988) model ;

3. to what extent do the paralinguistic channels of electronic discourse observed on TESL-L exhibit characteristics of “oral” or “written” discourse ;
4. to what extent do IRs posted by NSs and NNSs differ.

It is hoped that the results of this exploratory study will provide directions for a larger scale observational study as well as data to inform a study determining whether contrasts in NS and NNS email discourse, if they exist, impede the ability of NNS posters of IRs to achieve success (i. e. acceptable responses to their questions). Finally, the study will provide background information to inform research in progress on the uptake of CMC among EFL learners in Japan and their relative preference for various modes of CMC.

Subjects

The subjects of this study consist of NS and NNS members of the TESL-L electronic mailing list, with NSs comprising several standard English varieties including American, Canadian, Australian, and British English. With a membership of teachers, academics, professionals, and graduate students in the field of ESL/EFL, the discourse observed in this community is academic English. NNS members were identified by their full name, country of origin of message, and any positive identifying factors in the message text. This criterion left the identity of a number of posters still undetermined, however (a hypothetical example of such an indeterminate case would be full name of mixed ethnicity such as Hannah Hanase sending a message from the United States). While these subjects would be invaluable to the study of the effect of ethnic/national identity on language, such nonnative subjects living in a target language culture were excluded from consideration, following Eslamirasekh (1993), in order not to bias through acculturation influence the observed realization patterns of NNS and NS discourse.

Data Collection

Messages posted to TESL-L were collected for a period of one month, and those displaying the speech act of information request (IR) were selected for the study. This collection of 119 messages was sorted into native language group of poster (NS=82, NNS=18, ambiguous=19), and after the ambiguous group was discarded, 18 NNS posts and 82 NS posts remained for consideration. To achieve a balanced design for coding and data analysis, 18 NS IR posts were randomly selected and all 18 NNS messages displaying IRs were chosen for analysis.

Methodological Considerations for analysis of CMC data

CMC presents special methodological considerations for sociolinguistic research. Wolfson (1976, 1985, 1986) stresses the importance of collecting spontaneous language data through passive or participant observation rather than descriptive accounts of canonical forms from elicitation instruments such as interviews, Discourse Completion Test (DCT), or similar questionnaires. Spontaneously occurring natural speech provides the most accurate information as to how language is actually used in specific contexts, but the challenge for the researcher is to make

“anonymous observations” which do not distort the naturally occurring language being observed because “from the point of the speaker, [the observations] have not occurred at all” (Wolfson, 1976). However, such researchers face the challenge of overcoming Labov’s (1972) “observer’s paradox”: a researcher who wants to observe unattended language cannot obtain it due to that researcher’s very presence.

Collecting electronic mailing list data, however, presents no such problem, as the language collected is authentic, (semi-) public, and not affected by the presence or absence of researchers. Moreover, the language is readily obtained in text form, thus eliminating any transcription errors. Finally, and perhaps most important for understanding the pragmatics of email discourse, unlike transcripts of spoken conversations in which important nonverbal cues or other paralinguistic communication elements remain undocumented (Korenman and Wyatt, 1996), since CMC is devoid of any simultaneous nonverbal or other cues sent via other channels, it is similar to written discourse in that the text provides the entire communication record.

Data Analysis

A three-level analysis of the data was conducted. The first level consisted of an analysis of the generic structure of the IR and comparison with that of a similar request type in a written form, the reprint request (RR) studied by Swales (1990). The second level of analysis involved the head act characteristics of the IR, using a modified version of the coding system developed for the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project, a major international project which laid the groundwork for cross-cultural speech act analysis (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1985, 1989). The flexibility of the CCSARP metaparadigmatic system allows for both non-realization and subclassification of speech act features as necessary, making it particularly appropriate for analysis of cross-cultural or multi-modal speech act realization patterns.⁶ The third level of analysis involved an examination of the paralinguistic features of the messages to determine the degree to which these features replicated or conveyed a feeling of oral conversation or written text.

Results

1. Structural characteristics of the information request (IR) genre :

Figure 1 displays the structure of Information Requests (IRs) posted on the TESL-L electronic mailing list. The structure exhibits the same pattern as that of the reprint request (Swales, 1990), with the same first four elements in the same order. In the present study, a fifth element, email signature, which is not relevant to Swales (1990), has been added in order to isolate

Figure 1 : Structure of the Information Request on TESL-L

	Occurrences	%	Corpus
1 . Opening Salutation	28	78	36
2 . Request Statement	36	100	36
3 . Anticipatory Expression of Thanks	22	61	36
4 . Closing Salutation	9	25	36
5 . *Email Signature	36	100	36

elective and obligatory closing salutation components. Although TESL-L list management requires all posters to include an email signature in their message, this is not the case with all mailing lists. Furthermore, it is unclear whether NSs and NNSs will find an email signature sufficiently functional so that no further embellishment is needed. Thus, these two closing elements, closing salutation and email signature, are separated in the present analysis, resulting in elements 2 and 5 being obligatory for the IR on TESL-L, and the remaining three elements, opening, expression of thanks and closing salutation being voluntary elements as in Swales' (1990) study of the RR. Comparing the frequency rates for the three voluntary elements, however, all three elements appear less frequently in the current study than in Swales (1990): openings, 78% (82%); thanks, 61% (70%); and closings 25% (74%).

The considerably lower frequency of closing salutations in the present study is possibly due to the presence of a subsequent mandatory email signature for which many posters may feel provides sufficient closure. The lower prevalence of anticipatory thank you could be interpreted as a result of an inherently lower level of imposition of the IR versus the RR: a request for information broadcast to an anonymous group of individuals rather than a request for an object sent directly to one individual. Given the low imposition of the IR, an even lower saliency of anticipatory thank you could be predicted, as discussed further below in the analysis of NS and NNS patterns. Nonetheless, we can conclude that the IR and RR display broad similarities in structure, probably due to the similar characteristics of the communicative acts themselves (brief, factual, 'one-shot' communication to obtain information in some form), rather than potential long-term effects (professional networking) or specific features of the media (electronic vs. textual).

Figure 2: Frequency rates of IR elements for NSs and NNSs

	NS	%	NNS	%
1 . Opening Salutation	12	67	16	89
2 . Request Statement	18	100	18	100
3 . Anticipatory Thank you	9	50	13	72
4 . Closing Salutation	7	39	2	11
5 . *Email Signature	18	100	18	100

A look at frequency rates of the structural elements (Figure 2) shows that opening salutations and anticipatory thank you appear less frequently while closing salutations appear more frequently in NS postings compared to those of NNSs. These results indicate that more NSs (though still a minority) feel that a personal elaborated closing is needed in addition to the required email signature. Additionally, the lower frequency of anticipatory thank you among NSs may indeed indicate a recognition of the low degree of imposition of the IR on a multi-person mailing list, as noted above. The relative desire of NSs to elaborate the closing of an IR rather than provide an anticipatory thank you could reflect a standard IR discourse pattern on this list, thereby affecting the perception of IRs of NNSs. IRs of NNSs could be judged more negatively than those of NSs, as they exhibit higher saliency of anticipatory thank you, which recognizes

the existence and thereby raises the perceived imposition of a face threatening act, and a lower saliency of personal closing salutation which implies friendliness. Taken together, the illocutionary effect of these differing patterns of usage between NSs and NNSs could result in NNSs appearing as 'outsiders,' rather than regular members of the discourse community: formally announcing their presence to the group through an opening salutation; raising the perceived imposition of a low imposition FTA through an anticipatory thank you, an action that implies greater social distance or power differences among interlocutors; and then taking leave without an accompanying personal leave-taking statement. Additional research to obtain NS evaluations of this discourse pattern must be conducted in order to confirm this hypothesis, however.

2. Characteristics of IR speech act on TESL-L

Analysis of speech act characteristics is divided into two components: the *head act*, or core linguistic kernel within which the speech act is performed, and *adjuncts to the head act*, or the language preceding or following the head act which serves to either mitigate or strengthen the illocutionary force of the head act itself. Both head act and adjunct characteristics affect the illocutionary force of the speech act as well as its perceived level of politeness and alignment with the norms of the discourse community, and a taxonomy of characteristics of each is provided in the appendix. While information requests posted on TESL-L exhibit general characteristics of the speech act of request, considerable differences are observed in the patterns of NSs and NNSs as seen in Figures 3 and 4 below, and these differences are particularly salient in the head act itself (Figure 3).

Figure 3 : Characteristics of the IR Speech Act (Head Act)

	NS	%	NNS	%
Point of View	18	100	18	100
Hearer (H)	5	28	3	17
Speaker (S)	1	6	10	56
Speaker-hearer (SH)	0	0	3	17
Impersonal (IM)	12	67	1	6
Request Strategy	18	100	18	100
Direct (D)	0	0	5	28
Conventionally indirect (CI)	16	89	9	50
Unconventionally indirect (UI)	2	11	4	22

A speaker making a request can increase the level of either positive or negative politeness by either reducing or increasing the distance between the speaker's and hearer's points of view. A speaker-oriented or a hearer-oriented point of view emphasizes the difference in viewpoints each participant has toward the inherently face threatening act (the speaker wants the request to be carried out, and the hearer is expected to comply), and thereby reduces solidarity between the two illocutors, raising the illocutionary force of the act itself (Brown and Levinson, 1988, p. 118). In FTF conversation, though both S and H points of view create distance between

the illocutors (e. g. "Could I have a cup of coffee?" vs. "Could you give me a cup of coffee?"), a hearer point of view is considered more face threatening because it specifies explicitly the action the hearer is asked to undertake (Blum-Kulka, 1987). In electronic mailing list discourse, the difference in illocutionary force between S-oriented and H-oriented point of view is expected to be even greater, since a speaker-oriented point of view does not necessarily place any imposition on any given recipient, as there are many others who could comply with the request, while a hearer-oriented point of view, on the other hand, makes explicit to each recipient that he or she is asked to reply.

In contrast to points of view which emphasize the distance between illocutors, one that either includes both speaker and hearer or which is impersonal reduces the perceived distance between interlocutors and emphasizes a cooperative viewpoint, thus reducing the face threat of the request. An impersonal point of view could be used to soften a reference request made by a student to a professor, for example (e. g. "If it is no problem, it would be good if the letter could be sent by the end of next week," or even better, "The deadline is next Friday.") or in an attempt by a parent to cajole a child into compliance (e. g. "Could we try to have the homework finished by 9 tonight?").

The point of view orientations taken by NSs and NNSs in making IRs on list exhibit a marked difference, with the majority of NSs choosing a distance-reducing point of view (IM=12 and SH=0 for a total of 12, or 67%) but the majority of NNSs choosing a distance-enhancing point of view (H=3 and S=10 for a total of 13, or 72%). As indicated above, such a pattern is likely to increase the force of the requests by NNSs as compared to those of NSs. The choice of S and H orientation also differs among NSs and NNSs, with NSs exhibiting a preference for H orientation and NNSs for S orientation. It is unclear why this result was obtained, as one would expect that the relatively less distance-creating speaker-oriented point of view would be preferred by NSs. However, it is possible that the anonymity of the electronic mailing list resulted in NSs judging the face threat of an IR to be sufficiently low that rather than creating a negative face threat (by imposing on the recipient) it would create positive face work (creating solidarity between S and H in a cooperative problem solving situation). As such connotations impact significantly the effects of interactions between participants in a common discourse community, further research is needed to obtain finer-grained data on the *intended* illocutionary effects of S versus H orientations as well as the actual illocutionary effect understood by the IR recipient.

The second major strategy requesters use to impact the level of politeness of a request is the level of directness. As explained above, a direct request is easy for a recipient to understand, but imposes a face threat on both S and H, as H is expected to comply and S is exposed to the possibility of noncompliance. A nonstandard indirect request such as a hint, on the other hand, reduces the threat to the face of S, but is difficult for H to understand, thus imposing on and threatening the face of H. The choice which maximally limits the threat to face of both S and H is a conventionally indirect strategy for which the literal interpretation of the utterance is not coded as a request (and thus allows S to save face in the event of noncompliance) but for which the pragmatic meaning is determined by convention in the discourse community (and thus does not impinge on the face of H in trying to decode the intended meaning).⁷

As expected, NS electronic information requests exhibited overwhelming adherence to con-

ventional forms (CI=16, or 89%); however, NNS IRs exhibited a wider range of request strategies, though conventional indirectness was the most salient (CI=9 or 50%; UI=4 or 22%; D=5 or 28%). While the data exhibit differing patterns for NS and NNS request strategies, it is yet unclear whether this results in pragmatic failure (that is, a lack of request responses due to the use of a request strategy that does not satisfy discourse community norms). Further research of recipient responses is needed to determine whether such a pattern constitutes pragmatic failure or whether it represents an acceptable variation from discourse community norms.

The illocutionary force and level of politeness of a request can also be altered through language preceding or following the head act itself. Such adjuncts to the speech act include downgraders which reduce and upgraders which raise the illocutionary force of the head act itself. NSs and NNSs patterns observed in the data (see Figure 4) were generally similar, as the majority of both NSs and NNSs used downgraders to reduce the force of their requests (NS=17 or 94%, and NNS=13 or 72%). Furthermore, the mechanisms used to perform downgrades were similar, with both NSs and NNSs exhibited a preference for syntactic forms (NS=76%; NNS=77%). No upgraders to heighten the force of the IR were present in either NS or NNS data. The similarity of NS and NNS adjunct patterns indicates that nonnative speakers in the study have successfully adhered to target community discourse norms.

Figure 4 : Characteristics of the IR Speech Act (Adjuncts to the Head Act)

	NS	%	NNS	%
Downgraders	17	100	13	100
Syntactic	13	76	10	77
Other	4	24	3	23
Upgraders	0	0	0	0

3. Characteristics of CMC discourse on TESL-L :

Electronic discourse observed on TESL-L exhibits features of both spoken and written discourse as well as its own unique features. However, the unique features of CMC discussed earlier (e. g. emoticons, non-capitalization, capitalization for emphasis) are less salient than expected, probably due to the moderated and academic nature of the list, whose management is known for its strict adherence to guidelines⁸. As seen in Figure 5, in the present study most textual features coded are not features unique to CMC, but rather uses of text either in conventional written ways (hereafter called “writing-like”) or in attempts to mimic spoken conversation (hereafter called “speech-like”). The one major exception is the email signature following the closing ; however, as it is required on TESL-L, it is unclear to what extent such a feature would be used voluntarily.

Figure 5 shows the characteristics of the IR genre. Of the 28 opening salutations observed (or 78% of the messages in the corpus), the majority (54%) consisted of traditional written salutation forms (e. g. “Dear netters”, “Dear TESL-Lers”, “Dear LIST members”), followed by conversational attention-getters (e. g. “Hello”, “Hi”, “Hi TESL members!”), and limited use (7%) of the unique CMC technique of including a brief segment of a previous message to frame the current

message. Expressions of anticipatory appreciation, appearing in 61% of the corpus, consisted of an equal number (50%) of written forms (e. g. “thank you in advance”) and spoken forms (e. g. “thanks”), while closing salutations, appearing in 25% of messages in the corpus exhibited an overwhelming (89%) preference for writing-like forms forms (e. g. “Sincerely,” followed by one’s name) with one speech-like token observed (and interestingly, a non-English form used by a NS: “Ciao”). While the results appear to suggest a dominant preference for written forms, marked differences are observed in NS and NNS discourse, and this analysis is taken up next.

Figure 5 : Characteristics of Generic elements of IR : Orality and Textuality of CMC

	occurrences	% of category	% of corpus
Openings	28	100	78
Speech-like	11	39	
Writing-like	15	54	
CMC	2	7	
Anticipatory Thank you	22	100	61
Speech-like	11	50	
Writing-like	11	50	
CMC	—	—	
Closing Salutation	9	100	25
Speech-like	1	11	
Writing-like	8	89	
CMC	—	—	

Figure 6 : Structure of NS and NNS IR on TESL-L

	NS	%	NNS	%
Openings	12	—	16	—
Speech-like	6	50	5	31
Writing-like	5	42	10	63
CMC	1	8	1	6
Anticipatory Thank you	9	—	13	—
Speech-like	6	67	5	38
Writing-like	3	33	8	62
Closing	7	—	2	—
Speech-like	1	14	0	0
Writing-like	6	86	2	100

Of interest in the structural comparison of NS and NNS IR discourse are the marked differences in the use of speech-like and writing-like features, with NS tokens exhibiting relatively higher speech-like characteristic in all three genre elements: openings (NS=50% vs. NNS=31%), anticipatory thank you (NS=67% vs. NNS=38%), and closing salutations (NS=14% vs. NNS=0%).

The exhibited preference in NNS for writing-like forms in information requests, when considered together with the higher saliency of formal genre elements, could potentially result in NNS posts being perceived as relatively formal and impersonal. Furthermore, the use of speech-like forms by NSs also tended to display a strong personal connection and equality as compared to those of NNSs (“Greetings TESLers”, “Hello Colleagues”, “Hello to all” vs. “Dear English Experts”, “Dear Considerate Colleagues”).

Paralinguistic Features

In addition to the coding of paralinguistic features according to generic IR elements, an additional coding of all paralinguistic features was performed and identified according to code-type deemed as speech-like or writing-like. Speech-like tokens include intensifiers to create greater affect (ALL CAPS, multiple exclamation marks, multiple question marks) as well as other speech replicating items (simplified spelling, loong vowels, ellipses). Writing-like tokens included identifiers (e. g. use of quotation marks as in the following: such terms as “equipment”; the structure ‘need + p. p.’) and itemizers (e. g. 1., 2., 3., as in a list), following the common uses of punctuation in written texts. A total of 179 paralinguistic tokens were found, amounting to an average of five tokens per message, of which an average of two were spoken form and three were written form, as indicated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 : Paralinguistic features of CMC observed on TESL-L

	occurrences	%of category	Tokens / message
Speech-like items	71	100	2.0
Intensifiers	30	42	
other	41	58	
Writing-like items	108	100	3.0
Identifiers	59	55	
Itemizers	20	19	
Other	29	27	
Total Nonlexical items	179	100	5.0

However, an analysis of NS and NNS use of paralinguistic features again displays a significant difference, as seen in Figure 8. While the non-lexical features of both NS and NNS IR discourse exhibited a preference for writing-like tokens, a greater balance was observed in the use of token types by NSs (WL=51% ; SL=49%) as compared to NNSs (WL=71% ; SL=29%). Therefore, paralinguistic features of NNS discourse in addition to request strategies and genre structure, all combine to convey a more formal, writing-like quality of NNS discourse as compared with that of NSs.

Figure 8 : Nonlexical paralinguistic features of NS and NNS Information Requests on TESL-L

	NS	%	NNS	%
Speech-like items (SL)	47	49	24	29
Writing-like items (WL)	48	51	60	71
Total Nonlexical items	95	100	84	100

Conclusion :

Salient differences were observed in the discourse characteristics of NS and NNS information requests sent to members of the electronic mailing list TESL-L. These differences existed in the structural characteristics of the IR genre, the point of view and request strategy employed in the head act of the IR, and in the paralinguistic features employed in the discourse, all of which could negatively impact how NNS information requests are perceived by list members. The relatively more frequent use by NNSs of opening sequences and displays of anticipatory gratitude, combined with a relatively higher use of writing-like paralinguistic tokens within these sequences compared to NSs, could result in a perception that NNS requests are more formal and less personal than those of NSs. The relatively more frequent use of distance-enhancing points of view and less frequent use of conventionally indirect request strategies by NNSs could further enhance this perception by increasing the illocutive force of the information requests.

These preliminary findings are important in recognizing how the IR is presently employed in electronic discourse, and also provide a foundation to begin considering pedagogic strategies and practices that may be needed to address these issues in the EFL classroom. Although the differing discourse patterns of NS and NNS information requests posted on the TESL-L electronic mailing list imply that NNSs could be perceived negatively as outsiders to the electronic discourse community, further research is needed to confirm this hypothesis. In addition, it is not yet clear the extent to which any negative perceptions, if they do exist, affect the ability of NNSs to obtain satisfactory responses to information requests online. If such perceptions do result in pragmatic failure in that they hinder NNSs' abilities to obtain satisfactory responses to information requests, then appropriate remedies in the classroom would be justified. Such remedies could include consciousness-raising activities that illustrate to students accepted discourse norms, and task-based activities providing students with opportunities for authentic communicative practice so that such normative discourse patterns could be internalized.

NOTES

- 1 Hosted and moderated by the City University of New York, the language of communication is English. Permission was granted by list management for corpus use of TESL-L postings for this project but not the replication of individual messages (personal communication, May 2, 2000).
- 2 Membership statistics available to listmembers indicate a worldwide membership of 27, 333 as of August 19, 2000.
- 3 Though all text-based CMC is, practically speaking, asynchronous, the distinction has traditionally been drawn between systems of communication in which all participants gather virtually together in order to interact (e. g. chats and MUDs) and systems such as email and bulletin boards in which a response to a message is received after substantial delay. As instant message services are blurring the distinction

- between synchronous and asynchronous CMC, however, the extent to which interlocutors will be able to postpone responses in future is as yet unclear. In any case, the short delay even of asynchronous CMC relative to FTF interaction may provide beneficial effects to illocutors in constructing their replies.
- 4 Though not addressed directly in this paper, it appears that as with facial expressions themselves, emoticons may be culture-specific, presenting a further pragmatic challenge to successful cross-cultural communication. Emoticons viewed by the author in messages from Japanese students, for example, differ from those described in the literature not only in the emotions conveyed but also in the symbols used and the manner in which they are arranged. The following are some examples : *^_^*, (^_^), (*_*)/, (^_^), o(^-^)^o, (=^_^=), (^_3^).
 - 5 While some e-authors continue to use punctuation in traditional ways (such as using italics, quotes or double quotes to indicate a book title, for example) they are just as likely to perform the same communicative function in other ways, as in the use of the underline mark in this example : The Times : They Are A'Changing by I. M. Payned.
 - 6 A full description of the features of the coding framework can be found in the Appendix.
 - 7 See appendix for a taxonomy and examples of direct, conventionally indirect, and unconventionally indirect request strategies.
 - 8 New members are sent a message indicating appropriate practices to observe on list, including the requirement to include an email signature at the end of each message, as discussed earlier.

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APPENDIX: Coding of Information Request (IR) on Academic Electronic Mailing Lists

(following Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1985)

I. LINGUISTIC FEATURES:

A. OPENING: (written style, spoken style, CmC style)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Salutation: | "Dear Netters," "Hi folks!" |
| 2. Attention-getter | "Pardon me" |
| 3. Reference to previous discourse | implicit reference
explicit clipping of previous email |

B. HEAD ACT:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Request Perspective | |
| i. Hearer oriented | "Could you open the window?" |
| ii. Speaker oriented | "Could I could borrow your notes?" |
| iii. Speaker and Hearer oriented | "So, could we please clean up?" |
| iv. Impersonal (3 rd p. or passive) | "It would be nice to get it cleaned up" |
| 2. Request Strategy | |
| i. Direct (explicitly marked by syntax or other means) | |
| a) Mood derivable | "Clean up this mess, please." |
| b) Explicit performatives | "I'm requesting you to not do that." |
| c) Hedged performatives | "I would like to request a favor of you." |
| d) Locution derivable | "You'll have to move your car." |

- ii. Conventionally Indirect (meaning derived explicitly by convention)
 - a) Scope stating "I really wish you'd stop bothering me."
 - b) Formulaic suggestion "How about cleaning up?"
 - c) Preparatory conditions "Could you read this?" / "Would you mind reading this?"
- iii. Unconventionally Indirect (meaning implicitly derived from context)
 - a) Strong hints (partial reference to object or elements needed for speech act) "Is there any coffee?" (make coffee)
 - b) Mild hints (no reference to speech act or its elements but potentially indirectly interpretable through context) "It's cold in here!" (open window)

3. Downgraders

- i. Syntactic Downgraders
 - a) Interrogative "Could you open the window?"
 - b) Negation "I wonder if you wouldn't mind helping?"
 - c) Past tense "I was hoping that you could read this."
 - d) Embedded 'if' clause "I would be happy if you could call me."
- ii. Other internal downgraders
 - a) Consultative devices "Do you think I could borrow your notes?"
 - b) Understaters "Could you tidy up a bit before they arrive?"
 - c) Hedges "Could you do something about the lawn?"
 - d) Downtoner "Could you perhaps drive me to work?"

4. Upgraders

- i. Intensifiers "Clean up this mess, it's disgusting!"
- ii. Expletives "When will you clean up that damn mess!"

C. ADJUNCTS TO HEAD ACT :

1. Check on availability (ability to comply) "Are you going to town? If so, can I join you?"
2. Getting a precommitment (willingness to comply) "Will you do me a favor? ... Could you~?"
3. Grounder (reason for request) "I missed class, so could I borrow your notes?"
4. Sweetener (hearer's ability to comply) "You're so smart, could you help me with this question?"
5. Disarmer (awareness of possible offense) "I hope this isn't too difficult, but could you~"
6. Cost minimizer (awareness of cost of compliance) "Could you read this when you have the time?"

D. PRE-CLOSING :

1. Anticipatory show of appreciation/thank you "Thank you in advance" ; "Thanks"

E. CLOSING :

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Written style closing | "Yours Sincerely" |
| 2. Oral style closing | "Ciao" ; "See ya later!" |
| 3. E-mail signature | <maclelln@uiuc. edu> |

II. PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES (NON-LEXICAL CONVENTIONS) :

A. SPEECH-STYLE CONVENTIONS :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Intensifiers (stress intonation) | |
| i . exclamation marks (! or !!!!) | "(that goes without saying!)" ; "Wow!" |
| ii . multiple question marks (???) | "...but anything more current???" ;
(Longman???) |
| iii. CAPS | "...but there's a HUGE difference..." |
| iv. <u>underlines</u> | "...which is very (or VERY) informal..." |
| v . *asterisks* | "I feel I <u>should</u> teach the differences..." |
| vi. 'single' or "double" quotes | |
| 2. Other speech-replicating conventions | |
| i . loooong vowels | |
| ii . shortened / spoken spelling | "I'm not agin', mind ya..." ; mat'ls" |
| iii. (parentheses) | "...output (or something like that)" |
| iv. ellipsis (...) | "...an article that deals with this..." |
| v . etc. etc. | "...write something on the board etc etc." |
| vi. 'smiley' ☺ emoticons | |
| vii. other spoken conventions | "Hahaha! Did you hear her say 'hawkee'?" |

B. WRITING-STYLE CONVENTIONS :

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Identifiers | |
| i . 'single' or "double" quotes | "such terms as 'equipment'..."
"...the structure 'need + p. p.' as in..." |
| ii . <u>underline</u> | Grimshaw <u>Argument Structure</u> |
| iii. *asterisks* | |
| 2. Other writing-style conventions | |
| i . (parentheses) | "Schmidt, M.F., (1981)" |
| ii . i. e. ; eg. | "i. e. affective versus referential responses" |
| iii. etcetera, etc. | |

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