

問路話語再探：使用自然對話做為教科書對話的範本

是個好想法嗎？

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摘要及關鍵詞

本文為史高登及柏登 1988 之研究「自然對話做為教科書對話的範本：非母語者的問路人有在問路的過程中得到結構較為簡單的方向指引嗎？」的延伸之作。本研究的資料來自於在美國印第安那州的一個小鎮所做的一個試驗性研究。我使用兩個問題來問路。一、報歉，你知道布魯明敦醫院在那裡嗎？二、報歉，你知道如何去布萊恩公園嗎？資料收集發生在相同的地點：美國印第安那州布魯明敦市蒙落郡市中心的科伍德街上。被問路者有 81 位，其中 47 位為男性，34 位女性。研究者錄下所有自然發生的對話內容。本研究雖然印證史高登及柏登之研究，證實非母語者的問路人並沒有在問路的過程中得到特殊的待遇；他們並沒有得到結構較為簡單的方向指引。然而，研究者對於使用自然對話做為教科書對話的概念表示存疑。

關鍵詞：語言行為分類法、身份、自然發生的對話、方向指引、指引方向者、特殊的待遇。

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Revisit Direction-Giving: Is It such a Good Idea to Use Natural Conversation as the Model for Textbook Dialogue?

Abstract

Being situated in the studies focusing on specific speech act taxonomies, this paper is one of the further studies in response to a question (Do in fact non-native speakers receive directions with fewer components and less variation in direction-giving) posed by Scotton and Bernsten (1988) in “Natural Conversation as a Model for Textbook Dialogue”. The data of the study was based on a study I conducted at a small town in Indiana, U.S.A. In the process of data-collection, I found that non-native speakers did not receive special treatment from the direction-giver. They did not receive fewer components and less variation in direction type. Such a finding differed from my original assumption that the learners would receive simplified versions of direction-giving because of our non-native identity. However, even though I increased my pragmatic awareness of the linguistic components in direction-giving due to my investigation, I am skeptical about using natural conversation as the model for textbook dialogue, wondering whether the data of this speech act study can represent the American speech norm of direction-giving after the reflections of the study.

Keywords: speech act taxonomies, identity, natural-occurring dialogues, direction-giving, direction-giver, special treatment.



1. Introduction

At the very least, the concept of speech acts could be perceived from two different senses: a broad sense and a narrow sense (Schmidt & Richards, 1980). As noted by Schmidt and Richards, in its broadest sense, speech acts refer to all the acts the general speaker performs through speaking, all the thing the speaker does when he/she speaks. And in its narrow sense, speech acts can be considered as the minimal terms of the set: speech situation/event/act. When a general speaker speaks, he/she performs acts such as giving reports, making statements, asking questions, giving warnings, making promises, approving, regretting, apologizing, and so on.

In the past, researchers have examined the development of speech acts in both the first and the second language learning. In the first language learning, for instance, Aune, Park, Asada, and Banas (2005) reported two tests on native speakers of English, offering initial support for a theory of communicative responsibility. Golding, Graesser and Hauselt (1996) conducted two experiments on L1 subjects, confirming the hypothesis that when the direction givers were asked to provide directions to a destination, their answers established common ground and addressed to the questioner's goal. Blades and Medlicott (1992) provided an outline of how the ability to give directions developed across the age range. Waller and Harris (1988) investigated why younger children failed to produce more linear descriptions for younger children. Based on interviews with L1 pedestrians who were asked to give directions for walking from one place to another, Hill (1987) indicated that navigational assistance was readily and expertly offered when requested.

Regarding the speech act study in the second language learning, some of the researchers focused on specific speech act taxonomies such as indirect complaint, apology, expressions of gratitude, compliments, direction-giving, refusals as well as invitations (e.g., Boxer, 1993; Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Pearson & Lee, 1992; Robison, 2001; Scotton & Bersten, 1988; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Wolfson, 1981a; Wolfson, 1981b). Some researchers examined the non-natives as a cause of systematic modification in the natives' speech (e.g., Long, 1983; Varonis & Gass, 1982). In addition, in the speech act studies, several problematic aspects of appropriacy planning were identified (Kutota, 1996).

In the broad sense of the speech act definition, some other researches can also be considered as the speech act studies. For example, Cathcart-Strong (1986) was engaged in a longitudinal observation of four learners in one classroom with a purpose to understand how and where young learners got language learning input and how teachers could help them in that task. Hirtle (1995) performed a grammatical analysis of direction-giving, discussing the use of the simple tense form in English in direction-giving which was categorized as future, habit, imaginative and imperative. Using the examples of discourse from a variety of



classroom activities were provided in the study, Pica (1987) argued that the unequal status relationship between teacher and students which shaped and was reshaped by most classroom activities provided minimal opportunity for the necessary restructuring of social interaction. Hornberger (1989) analyzed a speech event she encountered in Puno, Peru, suggesting that although these aspects of communicative competence were not entirely teachable in the language classroom, they still needed to be part of our model of communicative competence.

2. The Study

Being situated in the studies focusing on specific speech act taxonomies, basically this paper is one of the further studies in response to a question posed by Scotton and Bernsten (1988) in “Natural Conversation as a Model for Textbook Dialogue”: Do in fact non-native speakers receive directions with fewer components and less variation in direction-giving? In their article, Scotton and Bernsten concluded, or more properly, predicted that the identity as a non-native speaker was not a factor which would disturb the pattern of direction-giving. Therefore, non-native direction-seekers could not expect to receive special treatment from direction-givers.

In the beginning of this study, Scotton and Bernsten indicated that most ESL textbook direction-giving dialogues contained only three parts which were “a request for direction, a set of directions as the response and a statement of thanks from direction-seekers” (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p. 372). Nevertheless, Scotton and Bernsten’s study demonstrated that natural direction-giving contained more parts and certain distinctive discourse features outside of the request for directions and the actual directions. This study showed that naturally-occurring direction-giving had a number of parts: an opening sequence, the direction themselves, orientation checkers, parenthetical comments, confirmation checkers, a pre-closing and a possible closing.

In addition, their findings showed that direction-givers made cognitive and interactional demands on direction-seekers which were not normally taught in TESOL textbook dialogues. As a matter of fact, these so-called cognitive and interactional demands were orientation checkers, parenthetical comments and confirmation checkers, which partially functioned to check whether direction-seekers had the necessary background to make sense of the direction. In order to respond to direction-givers’ demands, Scotton and Bernsten suggested that language learners must learn to recognize and comprehend direction as more than simplified direction-giving dialogues in most TESOL textbooks.

Finally, Scotton and Bernsten indicated that direction-givers did not take account of the fact that direction-seekers had different social identities. Since the identity as a non-native speaker was one of the social identities, Scotton and Bernsten made a conclusion, or more



properly, made a prediction that non-native direction-seekers obviously could not expect special treatment. However, Scotton and Bernsten admitted that “whether in fact non-native speaker receive directions with fewer components and less variation in direction-type is an obvious subject for further study” (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p. 378).

In fact, Pearson & Lee (1992) replicated some of Scotton and Bernsten’s study, extending the analysis to the influence of the non-natives as an addressee on the structure and content of direction given. The study showed that NS/NNS status systematically influenced a small range of linguistic choices in the direction-giving. To some degree, the results of the study contradict with Scotton and Bernsten’s statement that direction-givers did not take account of the fact that direction-seekers had different social identities.

Due to the contradictory views between these two studies, I am somewhat skeptical about the conclusion made by Scotton and Bernsten. In this paper, I will replicate a portion of Scotton and Bernsten’s study as Pearson and Lee did, questioning whether in fact non-native speakers receive special treatment. Therefore, my research question is: Do non-native speakers receive direction with fewer components and less variation in direction-type?

3. Method

Participants and Apparatus

The study was conducted at a small town in Indiana, U.S.A. The data of the study was collected by the researcher, a non-native English speaker. I used two different requests for directions: 1. Excuse me, do you know where the Bloomington Hospital is? 2. Excuse me, do you know how to get to the Bryan Park? These two requests for direction were given in about the same location, the Kirkwood Street in the downtown area of Monroe County, Bloomington, Indiana, to an accidental sample of eighty-one passers-by (47 males and 34 females). All these natural-occurring dialogues were audio-taped by me. Naturally, the directions the passers-by gave in response and the overall structures of the exchanges were the subject of the study.

4. Data Analysis

As indicated by Scotton and Bernsten, “most textbook direction-giving dialogues contain only three parts: a request for directions, a set of directions as the response, and a statement of thanks from the direction-seeker. [However], real direction-giving contains more parts and certain distinctive discourse features . . .” (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p. 373). Based on my investigation, after hearing the request for direction, few direction-givers would respond with a set of actual directions immediately, regardless of the fact that their interlocutors were non-native speakers. Before the direction-givers contributed directly to the actual directions,



there were usually many opening sequences (a term from Scotton and Bernsten) in the beginning of the exchange.

The following components were considered by Scotton and Bernsten as the so-called opening sequences: fillers (um, ah, oh); question repeats or other questions (The Bloomington Hospital?); interjection (Gee!); pauses and space filler (well, let's see) and openers.

An opener was a synthetic statement, a comment on the goal of the direction, such as It's quite a way from there (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p. 376). The examples of each opening sequence in the following dialogues were drawn from the data of my study.

1. Fillers

Example 1

A: Excuse me, do you know how I can get to the Bloomington Hospital?

B: Ya! Ya! Mm (fillers). . . Trying to think which way it is. What street do you want to go? The Bloomington Hospital is way over there.

2. Questions & Other Questions

Example 2

A: Excuse me, do you know where the Bloomington Hospital is?

B: The hospital? (question repeats) Are you in a car or on foot? (other questions) A car? (other questions) Do you have a car? (other questions)

3. Interjection

Example 3

A: Excuse me, do you know where the Bloomington Hospital is?

B: The hospital?

A: Yes.

B: Oh, God! (interjection) No, I am not sure which way it is.

4. Pause & Space Filler

Example 4

A: Excuse me, do you know where the Bloomington is?

B: Oh, yes, let's see. (space filler) This is the fourth street now . . .

5. Opener

Example 5

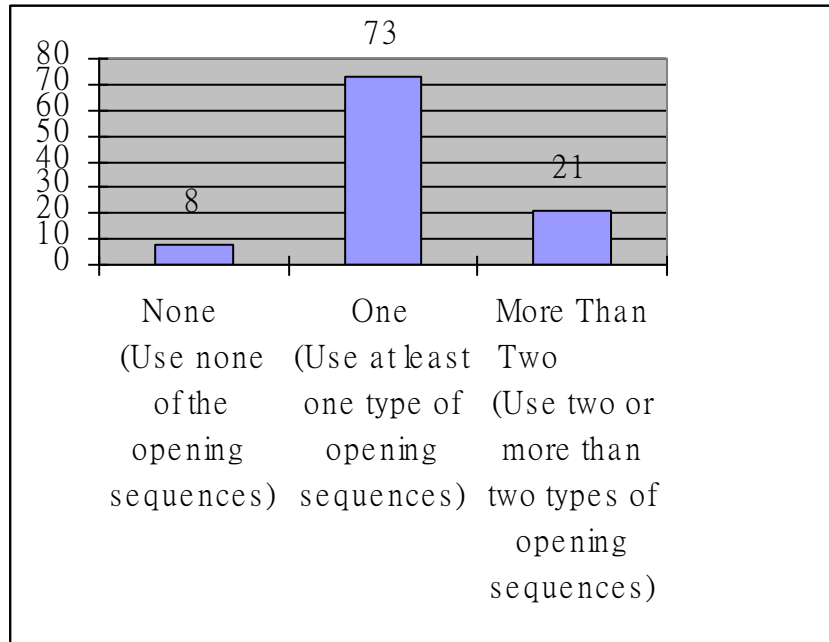
A: Excuse me, do you know how to get to the Bryan Park?

B: It's petty far from here. (opener) Do you know where Henderson Street is? I think it's on Henderson . . .



Diagram 1 illustrates the number of the users of the opening sequences.

Diagram 1 The Number of the Users of the Opening Sequences



According to this diagram, only eight direction-givers (9% of the overall direction-givers) did not use any opening sequence at all. On the other hand, seventy-three direction-givers (90% of the overall direction-givers) used at least one type of opening sequences. Facing the non-native direction-seekers, direction-givers did not obviously use fewer components in the opening sequences. These results also indicated that the direction-givers rarely went directly to the actual directions after the requests for directions, even though their interlocutors were non-natives. Apparently, our ESL direction-giving dialogues should not leave the opening sequences out since most of the direction-givers (90% of all the subjects) used these opening sequences. Table 1 shows the percentage of the user of each opening sequence in the overall subjects.

Table 1 The Percentage of the User of Each Opening Sequence in the Overall Subjects (n=81)

The type of the opening	The percentage of the user
Filler	24.6% (n=20)
Question repeats or other questions	65.4% (n=53)
Interjection	3% (n=3)
Space filler	8.6% (n=7)
Opener	22.25% (n=18)

As illustrated by the table 1, all of the opening sequences were used by the direction-givers. The variety of the opening sequences were not obviously disturbed by the



identity as a non-native speaker. With regard to the opening sequence, even though the direction-seekers were the non-native speakers, the subjects did not obviously use less variation in direction type. In terms of the percentage of the user, questions repeats and other questions were used by the highest percentage of the overall subjects (65.4%). Compared with the other opening sequences, interjections were used by the lowest percentage of all of the subjects. As indicated by S & B, fillers not only appeared at the very beginning of the opening sequences, but they also emerged at the end of the opening sequences. The filler (um; okay), which appeared at the end of the opening sequences, and a pause were called “readiness markers” by Scotton and Bernsten (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p.376). The function of the readiness marker was to indicate that the actual directions were about to begin. For example,

A: Excuse me, do you know how I can get to the Bloomington Hospital?

B: Ya! Ya! Mm . . . Try to think which way it is. What street do you want to go? The Bloomington Hospital is basically way over there. You probably have twenty-minute walk. Try to think which road it is. I am sorry. Okay (the readiness marker). It’s like . . . all right. You go . . . basically, it is over . . . as far as the first street. You go down to hit Walnut (the actual directions).

My study showed that only direction-givers (16 percent of all the subjects) used readiness-markers near the end of the opening sequences. This result was somewhat different from S & B’s claim that “many direction-givers closed the opening [sequences] by indicating that the directions were about to begin” (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p.376).

What follows the opening sequence are the actual directions themselves. As pointed by Scotton and Bernsten, even though the form of the directions was more predictable, there was still more variation in directive type, which was more than the bald imperative favored by many ESL textbook. My study was compatible with some of the results in Scotton and Bernsten’s investigation, overruling my assumption that non-native direction-seeker might receive more simplified directions that were probably limed to the bald imperative, a favored form in many ESL direction-giving dialogue. In my study, 60 percent (n=49) of the overall direction-givers used bald imperatives to direct their interlocutors; however, only 2 percent (n=2) of the direction-givers used bald imperatives as the only direction type. As illustrated by Scotton and Bernsten (1988), when the direction-giver came to the actual directions, they usually used several direction types in addition to bald imperatives. Generally speaking, in the actual directions, there are two categories of direction types: directive and indirect types. The structure of these two directive types are shown as follows.

(A) you + verb (directive type)

For example, you go down to hit Walnut Street. In one’s study, there are 39.5% (n=32) of all



the subjects used this kind of directive type.

(B)you + auxiliary referring to either time or manner + main verb (directive type)

For example,

A: . . .

B: . . . You have to go down to Third Street . . . And you will go that road. In the eighty-one subjects, 45.6 percent (n=37) of the subjects used this directive type in actual directions.

(C) Indirect type (a term from Scotton and Bernsten)

As a matter of fact, the so-called indirect types, which almost included all the other sentences except the former directive types, had a wide variety of sentence structures. The following examples were just some of the sentence structures.

Example 1

Henderson will take you the Bryan Park.

Example 2

When you get to the intersection over there, there is Kroger over there.

Example 3

If you go on Grant, you go straight.

Example 4

Second and Roger is where you want to go.

Example 5

What you want to go is to go down this way three blocks until you get to the Second Street.

According to my study, 77.7% (n=63) of the 81 direction-givers used at least one indirect type in the actual directions. The following table is to show the percentage of the user of each direction type in actual directions. Table 2 shows the percentage of the user of each direction type in actual directions.

Table 2: The Percentage of the User of Each Direction Type in Actual Directions

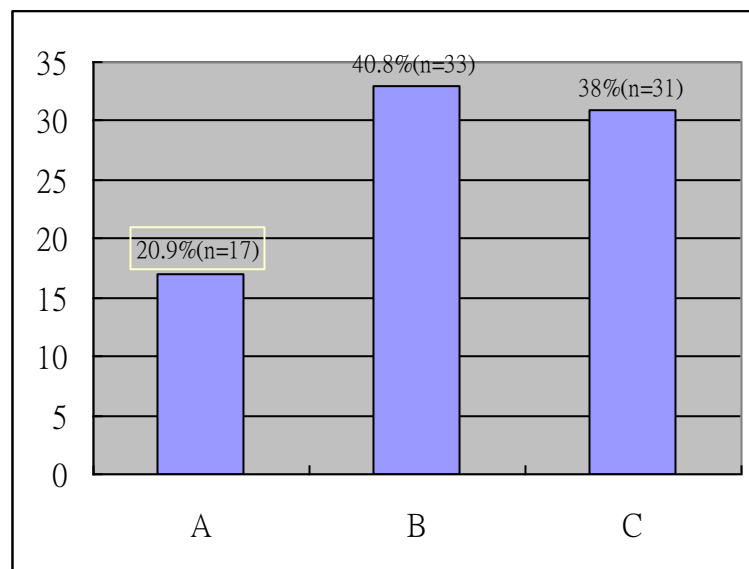
Direction Type	Directive Type			Indirect Type
	Bald Imperative	You+ verb	You+Auxiliary +main verb	
Percentage	60%	39.5%	45.6%	77.7%

As indicated by this table, in the actual directions, compared with the other direction types, the indirect type was used by the highest percentage of the overall subjects. As to the bald imperative, the percentage of the user of this direction type (60%) was somewhat lower



than the indirect type (77.7%). The bald imperative, a favored form in many ESL direction-giving dialogues, apparently was not the most favored one in the real-life direction-giving. In addition, this table also showed that, regardless of the fact that the direction-givers were non-natives, both directive and indirect types were used by the direction-givers. The identity as a non-native speaker did not disturb the pattern of the actual directions, as the direction-givers did not simplify their directions or used only a couple of limited direction types, such as bald imperative, to instruct the direction-seekers.

Diagram 2: The Percentage of the User of One Direction Type
VS. the Percentage of the User of a Combination of Several Direction Types



- A: Use only one type of component (or direction type).
- B: Use a combination of two different direction types.
- C: Use a combination of more than two different direction types.

According to Diagram 2, only 20.9% of the eighty-one direction-givers used only one type of component, which included either directive types or indirect ones in actual directions. On the other hand, about 78.8 percent (n=64) of the direction-givers used a combination of two or more than two different direction types in actual directions. These results confirmed that the identity as a non-native speaker would not disturb the pattern of actual directions. Facing non-native direction-givers, most of the direction-givers (78.8%) preferred to use a combination of different direction types in actual directions. In spite of the direction-seeker's identity as a non-native speaker, the direction-givers did not use fewer components in actual directions.

In natural-occurring dialogues, direction-givers usually contained more components than



just actual directions. Orientation checkers or parenthetical comments (two terms from Scotton and Bernsten) seemed to be two good examples. As indicated by Scotton and Bernsten, the so-called orientation-checkers were questions, or sometimes statements, functioning to see whether the direction-seeker had the necessary background knowledge to understand the direction. They appeared either before or during the actual direction-giving. For example,

1. A: Excuse me, do you know how I can get to the Bloomington Hospital?

B: Ya! Ya! Mm . . . Try to think which way it is. What street do you want to go (orientation-checker)? The Bloomington Hospital is basically way over there . . .

2. A: Excuse me, could you tell me how to get to Bryan Park?

B: Bryn Park?

A: Yes.

B: Are you ready for a walk? (orientation checker)

A: . . .

As to parenthetical comments, they were defined as statements which interrupted the actual direction-giving and as comments on the directions instead of actual directions. For example,

A: . . .

B: Ya. It's kind of over there. It's very tall. Once you get to the first street, you cross over it. You walk by Kroger. You walk by . . . The Bloomington Hospital will be over there. It's not too far (parenthetical comments). You got to walk ahead of you . . .

In my study, 45 percent (n=37) of the subjects gave orientation checkers. As to parenthetical comments, 71.6 percent (n=58) of all the subjects had this component during their direction-giving. The results indicated that many direction-givers still used these two components other than actual directions, even when the direction-givers were non-natives. In order to respond to orientation checkers and parenthetical comments, learners had to know these components in addition to actual directions.

Scotton and Bernsten pointed out that it was somewhat impossible to instruct direction-seekers to say nothing except the direction request Do you know where the Bloomington Hospital is? and a final thank you. In direction-giving, the direction-seeker was often required to respond to the direction-giver's interactional demands. The confirmation checker (a term from Scotton and Bernsten) was another example of the so-called interactional demands. The confirmation checkers included "a pause preceded by non-falling intonation, or rising intonation on a direction", as you go down to hit Walnut Street, okay? (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p.377)

In the process of direction-giving, direction-givers usually would pause (use confirmation



checkers) and did not go on until the direction-seekers showed that they could follow the discourse. At this moment, the direction-seekers were required to meet the interactional demands of these confirmation checkers by saying something like “okay”. In my study, fully 79 percent (n=64) of all the subjects had confirmation-checkers in their direction-giving. These non-natives did not receive special treatment in terms of the interactional demand which they were required to respond.

A pre-closing is an indicator that the whole direction-giving is about to end. S&B said that “a pre-closing was a comment, often synthetic, which directly follows the actual direction” (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988, p.377). In fact, a pre-closing could be a comment (You can’t miss it), a single word (Okay) as well as a question (Get it?/Are you sure?/Does that help?). For example,

1. a single word as a pre-closing

A: Excuse me, do you know where the Bloomington Hospital is?

B: Yes, okay. Go to the College Avenue right there. You take a left. You go all the way down to the Second Street. You take a right. You go down. It’s a big building on the left. Well, It’s like four blocks this way and I can’t tell exactly . . . Two blocks this way. Okay? (a pre-closing)

A: Okay, thanks a lot.

2. a comment as a pre-closing

A: Excuse me, do you know where the Bloomington Hospital is?

B: Yep, you have to go up to the Second Street. Turn right. And it’s probably four blocks down that way. On the right-hand side. You can’t miss it (a pre-closing).

A: Thank you very much.

3. a complete question as a pre-closing

A: . . .

B: It’s on the Second and Rogers. You keep heading west. You will hit Rogers. And then the Second Street is pretty that way. So, it is on the corner of Second and Rogers. If you can find either street, you can find the hospital. Is that help? (a pre-closing)

A: Yes, thank you very much.

Facing the non-native direction-seekers, 61% of the 81 subjects (n=50) used a pre-closing after the actual directions. The direction-seeker’s identity as a non-native speaker did not keep the subjects from using this component in direction-giving.

After the pre-closing, the whole direction-giving comes to the final part—closing or leave taking. We might expect the direction-givers to say You’re welcome or its equivalent in



response after the direction-seekers say Thank you. However, my investigation, which was similar to Scotton and Bernsten's study, showed that 54% of all the subjects did not respond to the direction-givers' final thank you. Table 3 showed the percentage of the user for each form of closing.

Table 3 The Percentage of the User for Each form of Closing

Forms of closing	Percentage
No response	54% (n=44)
Ya/Yep	6% (n=5)
Sure	10% (n=8)
Have a good day	2% (n=2)
Okay	6% (n=5)
You are welcome	7% (n=6)
Good luck	2% (n=2)
You got it	2% (n=2)
Um	8% (n=7)

This table showed that the direction-givers used a wide variety of forms to close their direction-giving. As far as the closing was concerned, facing the non-native direction-seekers, the direction-giver did not use less variation in direction type.

Finally, in natural-occurring dialogues, direction-giving always contained more components than just a set of actual directions as the response to the request for directions. As mentioned earlier, these components include opening sequences (fillers; question repeats/other questions; interjection; space filler; opener), readiness markers, actual direction (directive and indirect type), orientation checkers, parenthetical comments, confirmation checkers, pre-closing and closing. This study showed that 43 percent (n=43) of the 81 subjects used at least five of these components in their direction-giving. And only 7% (n=6) of all the subjects gave only a set of actual directions as the responses to the requests for directions. It turned out that the non-natives did not receive directions with fewer components in direction type.

5. The Result of the Data Analysis

In comparison with Scotton and Bernsten's study, the relevant results of my investigation are:

1. Even though the direction-seekers are non-native speakers, the identity as a non-native speakers do not disturb the pattern of direction-giving. All the components which we could think of still appear in the overall exchange of the subjects. These components are: opening sequences, readiness markers, actual directions, orientation checkers, parenthetical



comments, confirmation checkers, pre-closing and closing.

2. In terms of opening sequences, 90% (n=73) of all the subjects have opening sequences. And 25% (n=21) of all the subjects use two or more than two opening sequences in their direction-giving.
3. As to the actual direction-giving, only 20.9% of the subjects use only one type of component. In contrast, about 78.8% of all the direction-givers use a combination of two or more than two different direction types in actual directions.
4. The non-native speakers are still required to respond to the direction-givers' interactional demand just like the other direction-seekers, since fully 79% of all the subjects are confirmation-checkers in the direction-giving.
5. Only 7% of all the subjects merely receive a set of actual directions as the response to their requests for directions. 43% of all the subjects use at least five of the direction components in their directions.

As a result, non-native speakers do not receive special treatment from the direction-giver. They do not receive fewer components and less variation in direction type. As indicated by Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, Reynolds (1991), when interacting with speakers of a target language, language learners must be exposed language samples which are pragmatically appropriate. Based on the result of the study, it is necessary to make students aware that the components in direction-giving exchange are more than just a request for directions, a set of directions and a final "thank you". What is more, learners should realize that they are usually required to respond to the direction-giver's cognitive and interactional demands in real-life direction-giving.

6. Reflections

The aim of this study was to resolve the contraction in view between the study conducted by Scotton and Bersten (1988) and the one by Pearson & Lee (1992) in order to assess the norm of direction-giving for American English. Even though the results of my study were in agreement with Scotton and Bersten's claim that the direction-seeker's social identity did not affect the native's direction-giving, I am not sure that either Scotton and Bersten's study or mine could represent the American English norm of the direction-giving. In fact, I even wonder whether or not any single speech act focusing on the taxonomy of direction-giving has such a capability.

To begin with, based on Hymes' (1972) claim that the basic unit of speech analysis is a community rather than a language or a dialect, it can be inferred that the participants' occupation is important information in a speech act study. As Kubota (1996) indicated,



“[occupation] is one of the crucial variables in determining what ‘speech community’ the subjects belong to” (p.59).

As to the ethnic variety of the subjects’ speech, Hymes (1972) pointed out that even though there is not much linguistic difference between the urban Afro-American dialects and the standard English, Afro-American speakers place cultural emphasis on their speech acts, making them differ greatly from their white neighbors. As illustrated by the example Hymes provided, ethnicity is important information we need to know about the participants if we want to have clear assessments of the norms of interaction for American English. In addition to ethnicity, age is a variable related to people’s choice of speech style (Labov, 1972).

Even though Scotton and Bersten provided information about the direction-givers’ gender and their social status as a student, they were negligent about the participants’ ethnicity and age. Kubota (1996) pointed out that while researchers of speech act studies have claimed that their data can represent American speech norms, the information of their participants is vague. And since both Pearson & Lee and I replicated a portion of Scotton and Bersten’s (1988) study, neither of our studies offered any information related to the participants’ ethnicity and age. That makes the three studies in comparison dubious because of the vague information concerning the participants.

Secondly, regarding the causes of native English speakers’ linguistic/conversational adjustments, Long (1982) pointed out that there are at least five possible causes: the physical appearances of the non-native, the linguistic features of the non-native’s interlanguage, the native speaker’s assessment of the non-native’s level of comprehension, the comprehensibility to the native of what the non-native is saying as well of combinations of two or more of the four factors.

Among the three studies in question, Scotton and Bersten did not even include any non-natives as the direction-seekers. Although Pearson & Lee mentioned the direction-seekers’ physical appearance (their accent) and their level of English fluency, their study focused on the natives’ direction-giving and overlooked the non-natives’ comprehensibility of the natives’ direction-giving. As to my study, I did not provide enough information about the above-mentioned factors except for a brief mention that the direction seekers were non-natives. With the over-simplified information about the direction-seekers, having a clear assessment of the norms of direction-giving for American English is a mission impossible.

Thirdly, regarding the regional variety of the participants’ speech, among the three studies of direction-giving, only the study conducted by Scotton and Bersten (1988) and the one by me mentioned the exact locations where we collected the data. Even though two of the studies provided information related to the location where the data were collected, it was still



difficult for us to specify a speaker's speech variety. Due to the possibility of fluctuations in population make-up, people in the area where the researcher conducted the data did not necessary exhibit the characteristics of the regional variety.

7. Reflections

Since the variables such as the interlocutor's occupation and age and where the speech takes place influence the speeches in the real life, the norms of interaction for American English are anything but static. While we cannot deny that information of ESL textbooks should reflect the reality in the ESL learners' lives (Kubota , 1996), it is a myth to think that any single ESL textbook based on natural conversation can represent the dynamic norms of American English speeches.

It is needless to say that some of the ESL textbooks are based on the findings of the speech act studies. However, based on Hymes' (1972) claim that the basic unit of speech analysis is a community rather than a language or a dialect, the speech act studies at their best can only represent the norms of the individual communities, rather than the American speech norms they claim they represent. Therefore, using the dialogues in the textbooks as the prescribed rules to teach L2 English learners speaking can be misleading because the dialogues in ESL textbook are seen as static and the factors specific to a context are left out (Kubota, 1996).

Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991) cautioned us that the real responsibility of the language teacher is not to teach learners the intricacies of complementing, direction-giving or closing a dialogue, but to raise their awareness that pragmatic functions are inexistence in language. To extend Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds' statement, I will say that the language teacher's responsibility in the classroom is to raise the learner's critical awareness that the norms of the interaction in American English are fluid. In so doing, we can utilize ESL textbooks to the L2 English learner's advantage.



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Appendix I

An Example of the Recorded Dialogues in the Direction-Giving: Subject Number One.

A: Excuse me, do you know how I can get to the Bloomington Hospital?

B: Ya! Ya! Mm. . . Try to think which way it is. What street do you want to go? The Bloomington Hospital is basically way over there. You probably have twenty-minutes' walk. Try to think which way it is. I am sorry. Okay. It is like . . . All right. You go . . . basically, it is over . . . as far as the First Street. You go down to hit Walnut Street, okay? You go two, three blocks past that. And just hit Walnut Street. Two, three past that. It's not far from here . . . Take a left until you hit the First Street. You'll see it. Okay. You shall be able to see it from there. Okay? Get it?

A: Yes, I get it.

B: Are you sure?

A: Yep.

B: All right.

A: Thank you very much.

