Silence in Intercultural Communication

Ikuko Nakane

John Benjamins Publishing Company

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Volume 166

Silence in Intercultural Communication. Perceptions and performance
by Ikuko Nakane

Silence in Intercultural Communication

Perceptions and performance

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John Benjamins Publishing Company
Amsterdam / Philadelphia

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Nakane, Ikuko.

Silence in Intercultural Communication : perceptions and performance / Ikuko Nakane.

p. cm. (Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, ISSN 0922-842X ; v. 166)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Intercultural communication--Japan. 2. Silence. 3. High school students--Japan. I. Title.

P94.65.J3N35 2007

302.2--dc22 2007027788

ISBN 978 90 272 5410 8 (Hb; alk. paper)

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John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands
John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

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Acknowledgements

The publication of this book would not have been possible without the support of my mentors, colleagues and friends, but first of all, I would like to thank the participants of this project in Australia and in Japan who allowed me to record their interviews and interactions. I learned so much from their voices (including the 'silent' ones).

I would also like to thank Ingrid Piller, who supported me through my doctoral research and continues to be my great mentor. Many thanks also to Barbara Mullock who guided me in the early stages of this research project. I was also very fortunate to have been introduced to Conversation Analysis by Rod Gardner, who gave me valuable comments on my analysis of interaction. My sincere thanks to Jane Simpson and Nerida Jerkey for helping me find participants. I am also indebted to Jane for her valuable feedback on my doctoral thesis. My thanks also to Makiko Tachibana for the opportunity of video-recording classroom interaction in Japan.

I would also like to thank Yoko Matsuda for her insights into intercultural communication and numerous discussions we shared. I was also extremely lucky to be surrounded by wonderful colleagues – especially Constance Ellwood, Emi Otsuji, Caroline Lipovsky, Ursula Ibaraki, Nick Marshall and Nicoletta Romeo – with whom I shared pain and joy of academic training. My special thanks to Constance Ellwood for her meticulous proofreading, valuable comments, and above all, believing in my work. My thanks also to Kepler Ryan for the last round of proofreading. I would also like to thank Andreas Jucker for the opportunity to publish my work from Pragmatics and Beyond Series.

Finally, I would like to express big thanks to my family – my parents, my sister and my husband John – for standing by me and giving me courage.

Earlier versions of parts of this book have been published
in the following articles:

Nakane, I. (2002). Silence in the multicultural classroom: perceptions and performance in Australian university classrooms. *Inter-Cultural Studies* 2 (1): 17–28.

Nakane, I. (2005). Negotiating silence and speech in the classroom. *Multilingua* 24 (1–2): 75–100.

Nakane, I. (2006). Silence and politeness in intercultural communication in university seminars. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38 (11): 1811–1835.

Publication of this work was assisted by a publication grant
from the University of Melbourne.

Transcription conventions

Transcription conventions used for interaction excerpts in Chapter 3

(0.5)	elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds
?	rising contour
.	falling terminal contour
,	a continuing contour
( )	inaudible speech
(( ))	non-verbal activity
→	a pointer to a specific part of an extract discussed in the text

Transcription conventions used for interaction excerpts in Chapter 5

(Compiled from Atkinson & Heritage (1984), Jefferson (1984) and Sacks et al. (1974).)

[	point of overlap onset
]	point at which overlap stops
=	latching (no gap or no overlap between stretches of talk)
(0.5)	elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds
(.)	micropause of less than 0.2 seconds
word	stress
:	lengthening of a sound
.	falling terminal contour
,	a continuing contour
?	rising contour
↑↓	shifts into higher or lower pitch
° °	speech noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk
CAPITALS	speech noticeably louder than the surrounding talk
> <	speech produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk
·hh	in-breath, the number of ‘h’ indicating the length
hh	an out-breath, the number of ‘h’ indicating the length

-	a halting, abrupt cutoff
( )	inaudible speech
(why/well)	varieties of transcriptionist doubt
(( ))	non-verbal activity
→	a pointer to a specific part of an extract discussed in the text

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

> Listening to silences can be just as instructive as listening to voices, maybe more so. (Losey 1997: 191)

This book is concerned with the meanings and roles of silence in intercultural communication. It explores the intricate relationship between perceptions and performance of silence in interaction involving Japanese and Australian participants. Although silence is a phenomenon which people often consider to be merely 'background' to speech, it is in fact a complex, multifaceted and powerful element of human interaction, which in recent years has come to be recognised to for its important role in various aspects of communication. Furthermore, in the context of globalisation, there is a need for more comprehensive research into silence in intercultural encounters. In particular, silence has often been associated with 'Asian' or 'Eastern' cultures in intercultural communication, in contrast with the association of the 'West' with articulation and volubility. One context where such silence has been reported is 'Western' classrooms, especially in mainstream university programs and English as a Second Language programs in the US, UK and Australia. Among such 'silent Asian' students are Japanese students, whose silence in this context has been mentioned frequently in applied linguistics literature. Indeed, when I set out to identify communicative problems of Japanese native speakers in mainstream courses in Australian universities, it emerged from interviews with Japanese participants that, instead of 'ways of speaking,' 'not speaking' was of their major concern. This led me to observe and analyse interactions (in English) between Japanese-native speakers and Australian English speakers in university classrooms, and interview them about their perceptions of silence, in order to see whether the perception of the stereotypical 'silent Asians' does exist, and whether this perception of stereotype reflects the actual performance.

One of the objectives of this book is to propose an analytical model for interpreting silence in intercultural communication. The analytical model is intended to provide various factors in *linguistic*, *socio-psychological* and *cognitive* domains at *individual*, *situational*, and *sociocultural* levels of social organisation to consider, in interpreting silence in intercultural communication. By taking such a multiple-perspective approach, I address the tension between the 'local' and the 'global' perspectives taken in studies of intercultural communication. In his dis-

cussion on the study of talk and social context, Erickson (2004) argues that the two paradoxical positions – the view that interaction is created locally moment-by-moment by local actors and the view that interaction is also influenced by wider contextual factors – must both be considered. This is what this book aims to do, and such a holistic view that captures factors at the individual, situational and sociocultural levels of social organisation was necessary for that purpose (see Chapter 2 for more details).

The proposed model is built upon a combination of theoretical frameworks of the ethnography of communication, conversation analysis and politeness theory. This combination is in part similar to what has been used in Erickson's approach to studies of talk (Erickson 2004; see also Erickson 1996; Erickson & Shultz 1977, 1982). The ethnography of communication (Hymes 1972, 1974a, 1974b; Saville-Troike 1984) has been one of the most dominant frameworks applied to studies of silence, as it allows the researcher to capture community-specific and context-dependent use of silence (Saville-Troike 1985). Although conversation analysis has only recently begun to be used as a tool for analysis of second language conversation, it has provided valuable insights into silence at the micro-level of interaction (e.g. Jefferson 1989; Sacks et al. 1974). Politeness theory (Brown & Levinson 1987) was found to be relevant in the process of data analysis in that the role of face-threat in silence in the context of interaction under examination was important; and that the recent emphasis on 'assessment' in addition to 'strategy' in politeness proposed by Watts (2003) and Eelen (2001) was appropriate for the analysis of perceptions and performance of silence.

Another objective of this book is to provide an empirical view on silence in intercultural communication. The predominant attribution of silence to Asian students in 'Western' classrooms has not been discussed with sufficient empirical evidence from actual performance data, and naturally-occurring performance needs to be examined closely. In the research project reported in this book, video and audio recordings were made of classroom interaction. These recordings were analysed and follow-up interviews were conducted with the participants. I also collected data from high school classrooms in Japan in order to assess the impact of the classroom discursive practice on Japanese students' performance in Australian university classrooms. Through such empirical accounts of silence the book aims to evaluate the widely debated perceptions, or stereotype, of Japanese students' silence in 'western' classrooms.

This takes me to the third objective of the book. It is to reconsider the stereotypical notion of 'Silent East' as opposed to 'Eloquent West.' The book does not reject the stereotype, but instead, explores the complex relationships among various contextual factors, from sociocultural background to specific topics. At times, 'culture' may play an important role, while an emerging local context of

interaction may affect choice between talk and silence. The rich, detailed accounts of silence derived from interviews and recorded classroom interaction also demonstrate the complexity of intercultural communication where perceptions and performance unique to intercultural contact situations are observed. The focus is on how the negotiation of speech and silence takes place and what contextual factors interplay. It is not cross-cultural differences per se, but how silence and talk are perceived and negotiated that I aim to demonstrate in this book.

Finally, I will also address an issue which runs through the whole investigation: what is silence? what do we mean by silence? what is its role in communication? Hence, my research also concerns the operationalisation and conceptualisation of 'silence' by exploring both universal and culturally-patterned meanings and functions of silence in multicultural classroom settings.

At this point, the scope of 'silence' examined in this book needs to be clarified. 'Silence' discussed in this book takes the following forms: inter-and intra-turn pauses, general non-participation or lack of participation in conversation, lack of speech on specific topics/matters, or lack of speech specific to interactive situations. In addition, the term 'silence' may also be used as a verb when referring to the action of preventing another from speaking. The term 'intercultural communication' used in this book also needs to be clarified. Following the distinction made by Scollon & Scollon (2001) and Spencer-Oatey (2000), it refers to communication occurring in encounters between people from different cultural backgrounds. The term 'cross-cultural' is used when two groups from different cultural backgrounds are compared, but not necessarily in interaction. Another important clarification concerns that of the terms 'Japanese' and 'Australian'. The Japanese students in the Australian based studies are those who identified Japanese as their first and strongest language and had Japanese parents. Some had lived in Australia for more than 5 years, while others for less than 2 years. The Australian students in the case studies discussed in Chapter 5 were from Anglo-Saxon or European background, spoke English as their first and the strongest language and were educated in Australia. The Japanese students' interview comments (presented in Chapter 4) also appeared to use the term 'Australian students' to represent this group.

Following this introductory chapter (Chapter 1), I review existing studies on silence in both communication in general and intercultural communication in Chapter 2, with a focus on silence in Japanese communication and in multicultural classroom settings in general. This chapter sets my research in context. At the end of the chapter a model for interpreting silence in intercultural communication is proposed. The model takes account of contextual factors at various levels of social organisation from an empirical point of view. In Chapter 3, I describe silence in Japanese classrooms through my own classroom studies in Japan. Fol-

lowing the tradition of ethnography of communication, the assumption is that an understanding of the role of silence in Japanese classrooms is a crucial resource for interpreting silence in Australian-Japanese intercultural communication in the classroom. Chapter 4 explores perceptions of silence in intercultural communication derived from ethnographic interviews and questionnaires conducted in Australia. In Chapter 5, I present analyses of silence in naturally-occurring interaction among Japanese students, Australian students and lecturers in university seminars, using the framework presented in Chapter 2. Three case studies are used to ascertain the relationship between participants' perceptions of silence and their actual performance in interaction.

In the concluding chapter, the findings of the research are summarised in relation to the framework proposed in Chapter 2, and the notion of the 'silent East' is re-evaluated.

Listening to silences in the classroom and talking about silences with 'the silent students' have given me valuable insights into human interaction and intercultural communication, and the ultimate goal of this book is to share those insights with the readers. It is hoped that the book is relevant not only for researchers interested in intercultural communication, silence in communication, and discourse analysis in general, but also for those who teach in a multicultural classroom environment and those who take part in intercultural communication in various professional contexts.

CHAPTER 2

A review of silence in intercultural communication

2.1 Overview

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the role of silence in communication in the field of linguistics (cf. Jaworski & Stephens 1998). Researchers have indicated that silence is not simply an absence of noise but constitutes a part of communication as important as speech (e.g. Blimes 1994; Jaworski 1993, 1997; Sacks et al. 1974; Tannen & Saville-Troike 1985). Yet, since silence is such a multifaceted and ambiguous phenomenon, it is a challenging task to study. This chapter begins with an overview of the forms and functions of silence. Next, literature on silence from intercultural and cross-cultural perspectives, including silence in multicultural classroom settings, will be discussed. This is followed by a review of existing studies in silence in Japanese communication. Finally, I will introduce a model for interpreting silence in intercultural classroom settings as a framework for my data analysis and discussions in the ensuing chapters of the book.

2.2 Preliminaries: Silence in communication

2.2.1 Forms of silence

Silence takes various forms. Silence at a macro level may involve a total withdrawal of speech at a communicative event; for example, the unanimous silence of the participants in ritual or religious events such as in American Indian or African tribal communities (e.g. Basso 1972; Nwoye 1985; Maltz 1985). It can also include silence of individuals while others are talking as in classroom (e.g. Jaworski & Sachdev 1998) or courtroom interaction (e.g. Eades 2000). There is also the temporary silence of a whole participating group or certain individuals during a certain speech event. In ordinary conversation, some participants remain silent for a certain period of time while others engage in conversation.

The smallest units of silence which will be discussed in this book are switching pauses and inturn pauses (cf. Sacks et al. 1974; Walker 1985) in interaction. Following definitions in psychology, Walker (1985) states that switching pauses "occur at margins of speakers' turns" while inturn pauses "take place during the utterance of a single speaker only" (p. 61). On the other hand, Sacks et al. (1974) list different types of silences in conversation from a conversation analytical perspective. In their terms, silence within a single turn is a "pause," and silence which occurs at a transition relevance place (TRP) where speaker change is relevant is a "gap" (p. 715). Silence at a TRP where no one claims the floor and "the ensuing space of non-talk constitutes itself as more than a gap" is described as a "lapse" or discontinuation of talk (p. 714–715). This type of silence is similar to what Goffman (1967: 36) called a "lull" which occurs when participants in conversation do not have anything more to say. However, as Tannen (1985) points out, it is likely that "how much silence" is perceived as a "lull" can vary (p. 96) and could be a source of negative stereotyping.

When a gap becomes a more extensive silence, it can often be interpreted or intended as a 'silent response,' which itself can perform a speech act in an indirect manner. Below is an example of this from Levinson (1983):

(1) (Levinson 1983: 320)
A: So I was wondering would you be in your office on Monday (.)
by any chance?
→ (2)
A: Probably not

In the above exchange, A interpreted the silence of two seconds after the question as a 'silent response' meaning 'no.' This type of silence can be differentiated from a switching pause or a gap which does not carry illocutionary force or propositional meaning in that it can function as a 'turn' without words. It is however crucial to recognise the possibility that the nominated speaker has the intention to speak but is taking time, whereas the nominating speaker or other participants may interpret the silence as intended to perform the illocutionary act on its own.

Finally, one other form of silence which is not as explicit as the above-mentioned types is 'hidden' silence. According to Blimes (1997), this refers to what remains 'untold' in discourse, and is often associated with power. This type of silence does not have a recognisable 'form' itself, but it can be noticed or even "created by the analyst" (Blimes 1994: 84). In Jaworski's (2000) terms it can be described as "an absence of something that we expect to hear on a given occasion, when we assume it is 'there' but remains unsaid" (p. 113). An absence of information through censorship, as discussed by Jaworski & Galasiński (2000) regarding

the Polish government, is an example of such silence. A number of the essays in Thiesmeyer (2003) also discuss this type of silence.

To summarise, I have listed the forms of silence below, from micro units to macro units:

1. intra-turn pauses
2. inter-turn (switching) pauses / gaps
3. turn-constituting silences with illocutionary force
4. temporary silence of individuals who do not hold the floor in interaction
5. an individual's total withdrawal of speech in a speech event
6. silence of a group of participants as a constituent of social / religious events
7. discourse suppressed by a dominant force at various levels of social organisation

As we can see, some silences are noticeable, but others are seemingly insignificant and may never normally come to attention in our everyday life. When we look at these various forms of silence, it makes us realise how complex and ambiguous, yet finely-tuned our use of silence in communication can be.

2.2.2 Functions of silence

Studies of silence have demonstrated its wide range of functions. However, before we look at those functions, silences in communicative situations and non-communicative situations have to be distinguished, as silence can only have communicative functions in 'communicative' situations (Jaworski 1993, 1997; Saville-Troike 1985). In addition, silences which "structure communication" and "regulate social relationships" (Saville-Troike 1985: 4) have to be differentiated from silences "which carry meaning" (ibid.: 6). Examples of the former type can be the customary use of silence in certain social contexts in specific communities (e.g. Agyekum 2002; Basso 1972; Nwoye 1985), but the silence which can be found and conventionally accepted in encounters between strangers at a public environment, for example on public transport, can also be considered to fall into this type. (On the other hand, silence is expected to be broken between strangers who sit next to each other at a party.) The latter type of silence "which carry meaning" (Saville-Troike 1985: 4) in communicative situations is described as silence which is either meaningful but without propositional content, or "silent communicative acts which are entirely dependent on adjacent vocalizations for interpretation, and which carry their own illocutionary force" (Saville-Troike 1985: 6). The first type of silence in this distinction can be represented by hesitations and pauses, which may play a role in projection of impressions, attitudes or emotions (e.g. Crown

& Feldstein 1985; Scollon & Scollon 1981; Walker 1985). The second type can include silence with non-verbal communication such as gestures, but it can also be silence without any accompanying non-verbal signals. For example, silence of a child after his/her parent's question "Have you done your homework?" can be a communicative act with a propositional meaning of "No." In other words, it involves saying something without actually uttering a word, the interpretation of which requires a high level of reliance on the context of the discourse (cf. Jaworski 1993; Jaworski & Stephens 1998; Saville-Troike 1985). These distinctions described above are important in studying the functions and meanings of silence.

The functions of silence investigated in existing literature can be grouped under the headings cognitive, discursive, social and affective. First, silence phenomena such as pauses and hesitations have been considered to have the function of earning cognitive processing time in communication. For example, Chafe's (1985) work on pauses in retelling a story showed that the lower the codability of items in the story, the longer the pauses. Moreover, when a change in perspective occurred in the retelling of the story, longer pauses were found. Sugitō (1991) looked at the roles of pauses in understanding talk (monologue) in Japanese, and the results indicated that without pauses listeners have great difficulty in keeping up with ongoing talk and interpreting it correctly. Thus, pauses play a crucial role in achieving successful communication in that they allow not only the speaker time to organise his/her thoughts but also the listener time to understand what the speaker is saying.

Silence also has a discursive function, which indicates junctures and meaning or grammatical units in speech. Brown & Yule (1983) claim that units of speech defined by prosodic features such as tones are often followed by pauses, while Jaworski (1993) describes the discursive function of pauses as "defining the boundaries of utterance" (p. 12), marking boundaries as a prosodic feature of discourse (see also Saville-Troike 1985).

Then, there are also the social functions of silence. Using Halliday's (1978) terms for the metafunctions of language, Jaworski (2000) claims that silence can perform the interpersonal metafunction just as small talk does. Examining the use of silence and small talk in plays as literary sources, Jaworski (2000) shows how social distance is created, maintained and reduced by silence. Silence can also affect the formation of impressions in social encounters. An overview of studies in pauses from psychological perspectives given by Crown & Feldstein (1985) suggested that length of pauses, as well as overall tempo of speech, can be associated with personal traits such as extroverted or introverted. Furthermore, long pauses were associated with the formation of a negative impression of the speaker. Similarly, in her study of courtroom discourse, Walker (1985) found that lawyers formed negative impressions of witnesses who had relatively frequent and

long silent pauses, although they advised witnesses to use pauses to think carefully before they responded to questions. Therefore, we see in this instance the clash between silence as a means for cognitive processing and silence as a factor in impression management. As Tannen (1985) says, following Allen (1978), silence has two opposite valuations – "one negative – a failure of language – and one positive – a chance for personal exploration" (p. 94).

The literature also discusses how silence serves to form conversational styles (Saville-Troike 1985; Tannen 1984, 1985). Tannen (1985) demonstrated how features of discourse such as preference of overlap to silent switching pauses and relatively fast rate of speech characterise the conversational style of New York Jewish people. Her analysis of interaction over a Thanksgiving dinner among three New Yorkers, two Californians and one Briton showed that the two groups had different conversational styles characterised by different levels of tolerance of silence. Moreover, as Scollon & Scollon (1981, 1983), and Scollon (1985) argue, different orientations to silence can become a cause of negative stereotyping.

Silence can also be a means of social control. In the Akan community in Ghana where community members refuse to talk to "people who violate sociocultural norms" to deter "future violators" (Agyekum 2002: 39), silence is used for punishment. The Igbo community in Nigeria is also reported to have the same use of silence (Nwoye 1985). Similarly in Western Apache country, people who are 'enraged' are not spoken to by others as talking to them may cause violence (Basso 1972: 77). Silence as a means of social control can also take place in the form of censorship (e.g. Galasiński & Galasińska 2005; Thiesmeyer 2003). Jaworski & Galasiński (2000) argued that silencing by "omission" and "ambiguation" through censorship in Poland was a way for the regime to "preserve its political power" (p. 198). Such examples of silence sanctioning and controlling show silence not simply functioning as a background to speech but taking an active role in social interaction.

Another aspect of the social function of silence is defining or maintaining role relationships and negotiating power. For instance, in the Akan community, the king uses silence to mark his "power, authority, rank and status" (Agyekum 2002: 42). However, the use of silence can mark not only authority but also subordination, which is illustrated by Lebra's (1987) explanation:

> [...] silence is an inferior's obligation in one context and a superior's privilege in another, symbolic of a superior's dignity in one instance and of an inferior's humility in another. (Lebra 1987: 351)

This contradictory aspect of silence indicates the complex and context-dependent nature of silence in communication. Kurzon (1992, 1997) also argues that while questioning in one-on-one situations gives power to the questioner, the respon-

dent can reverse the situation by refusing to give a response. Gilmore (1985) discusses this silence for negotiation of power in his study of students' silent sulking in response to the teacher's reprimand. Watts (1991, 1997) also showed how various pauses can be used for manipulation of status in conversation in his analysis of family interaction at dinner. Watts (1997) shows that by not taking up a topic presented by one participant but instead leaving a silent pause, the topic-suggesting speaker's status in discourse can be lowered. On the other hand, this type of silence can be challenged by persistence in talk despite the silence of recipients.

One of the important functions of silence in social interaction is as a politeness strategy. Silence can be used to avoid unwanted imposition, confrontation or embarrassment in social encounters which may have not been avoided if verbal expressions had been used (Brown & Levinson 1987; Jaworski 1993, 1997; Jaworski & Stephens 1998; Sifianou 1997). However, surprisingly, Brown & Levinson (1987), the founders of the politeness theory, do not recognise the significance of silence in politeness phenomena (Sifianou 1997). In their framework of politeness strategies, almost all the communicative acts are face-threatening, and thus can be labelled as face-threatening acts (FTAs). To perform FTAs without causing conflict in social relationships, there are strategies to be employed which are gradable depending on the level of threat to face (see Figure 2.1 below).

When the risk of threat to face is too great, one may decide not to perform that FTA at all, and this is called the strategy of 'Don't do the FTA' (Brown & Levinson 1987). Therefore, the assumption is that silence would be the equivalent of this 'Don't do the FTA' strategy.

However, Sifianou (1997) argues that silence can be used as a positive politeness strategy when it functions as a sign of solidarity and good rapport, while it can also be a negative politeness strategy if it functions as a distancing tactic. In addition, it is also possible to use silence as an off-record strategy when it functions as the most indirect form of speech act (Saville-Troike 1985; Tannen 1985). It is worth noting that Sifianou (1997) claims that while silence has a positive value in

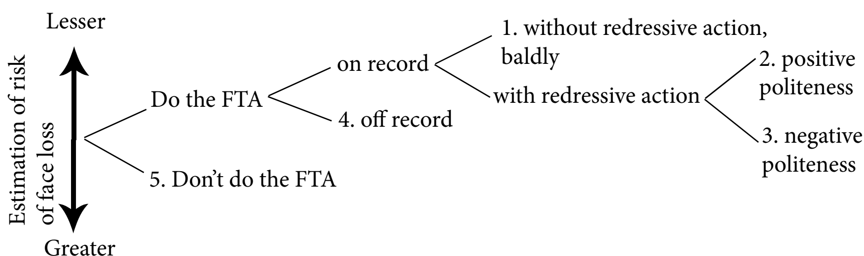

Figure 2.1 Strategies for doing FTAs (form Brown & Levinson 1987: 69)

avoiding imposition, it can also be "the least polite" form because it "places high inferential demands on the addressee" (p. 73). Talk and silence in relation to politeness strategies are also discussed by Scollon & Scollon (1995), who list "Be voluble" as one of the positive (in their term, involvement) strategies and "Be taciturn" as one of the negative (independence) strategies (p. 40, 41). However, they do not explicitly indicate solidarity-oriented silence as a positive politeness strategy.

Silence as a politeness strategy can also be used in communication by people who have a limited verbal communication capacity. Jaworski & Stephens (1998) revealed that avoidance of talk was used not only to avoid loss of face due to their inability to capture the speech content but also to avoid imposition on others by requiring them to repeat their speech. Thus, silence in this case is used as a 'Don't do the FTA' and a negative politeness strategy at the same time. Drawing on a study by Gass & Varonis (1991), Jaworski & Stephens (1988) also suggest that non-native speakers may, like hearing-impaired people, prevent loss of face by avoiding asking native speakers to repeat.

Finally, silence can also have a role in the management and display of emotion. For example, Saunders (1985) describes how serious emotional conflict within a family can be avoided by family members' use of silence in an Italian village. Avoidance of talk with a person who is extremely angry among the Western Apache mentioned earlier (Basso 1972) is also a way of managing intense emotional states.

As shown above, silence has almost as many functions as speech, although only those which are of importance for ensuing discussions in this book were discussed. The multifaceted and ambiguous nature of silence described above suggests that research into the phenomenon of silence requires multiple perspectives and approaches to reach a reliable interpretation and understanding. The following is a summary of the functions of silence discussed above:

1. cognitive
   - pauses, hesitations for cognitive/language processing
2. discursive
   - marking boundaries of discourse
3. social
   - negotiating and maintaining social distance
   - impression management through pause length, frequency and speed of talk
   - conversational styles through pause length, frequency, speed of talk and overlapping
   - means of social control through avoiding verbal interaction with specific individuals

- means of maintaining power through avoiding certain content of verbal expressions
- means of maintaining and reinforcing power relationship
- means of negotiating power
- politeness strategies (negative, positive, off-record, Don't do FTA)

4. affective
   - means of emotion management

2.3 Silence in intercultural communication

It has been claimed that members of a speech community share culture-specific uses of silence just as they do other linguistic features (Saville-Troike 1985; Enninger 1987; Jaworski 1993), and a large proportion of ethnographic studies have exemplified this (e.g. Agyekum 2002; Basso 1972; Nwoye 1985; Saunders 1985; Scollon & Scollon 1983). It has also been suggested that children are socialised to community-specific uses of silence, from an early age, in particular in their family environment (Saville-Troike 1985; e.g. Clancy 1986; Lehtonen & Sajavaara 1985; Philips 1972, 1983; Scollon & Scollon 1981). In addition, as Saville-Troike explains, the learning and use of silence may also be more unconscious than speech:

> Learning appropriate rules for silence is also part of the acculturation process for adults attempting to develop communicative competence in a second language and culture. Perhaps because it functions at a lower level of consciousness than speech, many (perhaps most) otherwise fluent bilinguals retain a foreign 'accent' in their use of silence in the second language, retaining native silence patterns even as they use the new verbal structures. (p. 12–13)

Furthermore, the interpretation of silence, the same type of speech event, may vary across speech communities. An example given by Saville-Troike (1985), based on Williams (1979) and Nwoye (1978), is that a woman's silence following a marriage proposal by a man is interpreted as an acceptance in Japanese, but a rejection in Igbo (p. 9). The non-verbal expressions accompanying silence also have an important role in the interpreting process, and these expressions can also be culturally fine-tuned features of communication (e.g. Harumi 1999, see below for details). What follows is a brief overview of studies which looked at culture-specific forms, functions and interpretations of silence which may become a cause of misunderstanding in intercultural communication.

In terms of silence at a level of localised interaction, norms of pause length across cultures are one of the most contentions issues in the field (e.g. Carbaugh & Poutiainen 2000; Enninger 1987; Jaworski 1993; Kurzon 1997; Lehtonen & Saja-

vaara 1985, 1997; Scollon 1985; Scollon & Scollon 1981; Tannen 1985). Sifianou's (1997) comment is representative:

> [...] the length of 'gaps,' types of fillers and amount of the overlapping talk are culture-specific. In some societies, gaps and silences are preferred to what is considered to be 'idle chatter.' In others, such idle chatter is positively termed as 'phatic communion,' [...] (p. 75)

For example, in their discussion of the stereotypical image of 'the silent Finn', Lehtonen & Sajavaara (1985) suggest that Finns use long silent pauses in their talk compared to Southern Europeans or Anglo-Americans. Similarly, Scollon & Scollon (1981) and Scollon (1985) claim that Anglo-American English speakers often dominate conversations with Athabaskan Indian people because of the longer switching pauses of Athabaskan people. Thus, from Anglo-American perspectives, their communication with the Athabaskan people is perceived as a failure, as suggested by the title of Scollon's (1985) paper, "The machine stops." On the other hand, from the Athabaskan point of view, Anglo-Americans talk too much and are rude (Scollon & Scollon 1981: 36). A similar contrast can be found in Eades' work on courtroom interaction involving Aboriginal witnesses in Australia. Eades advised Anglo-Australian lawyers to "use silence between answers and following questions" (1992: 41) in order to take into consideration the fact that "Aboriginal people often like to use some silence in their conversation, and they do not take it as an indication that communication has broken down" (Eades 2000: 172).

However, as already mentioned, Tannen's (1985) study suggests that even within white American culture, there may be different orientations to silence and talk: the fast-speaking New Yorkers perceived the slower Californian speakers as being "withholding, uncooperative, and not forthcoming with conversational contributions" while the slow speakers' perceived the faster speakers to be "dominating" (p. 108). Moreover, as is the case of Lehtonen & Sajavaara (1985), observations on length of pause are often based on "[C]omparison of the intuitive data" (p. 194), and in their case, the frequency of pauses and the rate of speech in the Finnish sample group do not show differences from those of other cultural groups. One empirically strong study of tolerance for silence is that of Jefferson's (1989) on the length of silent pauses which native speakers of English tolerate. She found that native speakers of English seem to tolerate up to around 1.0 second of silent pause. Except for this study, however, there do not seem to be any large scale empirical studies on tolerable length of silent pauses in different cultures. Although his assumption is not based on a large set of data as in Jefferson (1989), Watts (1997) also claims that "at least within Western European and North American white culture" (p. 93) a silence of between 1.3 to 1.7 seconds and above will be significant and "open for interpretation" (p. 94). However, it should also be

noted that pauses of the same length can be interpreted differently as contextual factors affect their significance and meaning (cf. Watts 1997).

What seem to be argued often, instead of the empirically-measured length of silence, are different levels of tolerance for silence found through ethnographic observation. For instance, Lehtonen & Sajavaara (1985) and Sajavaara & Lehtonen (1997) report that the Finns often attach a positive value to silence on social occasions. Similarly, Jaworski (1993) mentions Reisman's (1974) description of long silences typically observed in social encounters among neighbours in Lapp communities in Northern Sweden. Corcoran (2000), in questioning the Western valuation of talk over silence, describes some uses of silence in Australian Aboriginal communities as "silence at the time of pleasure, sorrow, adopting the meditative and consensual 'mark of silence'" (p. 185, see also Walsh 1994). A number of other speech communities are found to be more tolerant of silence and attach a more positive value to silence than Western-communities (e.g. Basso 1972; Enninger 1987; Nowye 1985; Scollon 1985).

At a wider sociocultural level, different norms may operate in terms of the context-specific distribution of talk and silence. Scollon & Scollon (1983) report that in Athabaskan Indian communities children's learning takes place by listening to and observing adults silently and not by displaying and discovering errors like Anglo-American children. Philips (1972, 1983) also reports a similar distribution of talk between adults and children in the Warm Springs Indian community, which is in contrast with the pattern found in Anglo-American learning processes. Another aspect of silence which can be characterised as part of wider sociocultural frameworks is what not to talk about, or what is irrelevant as a topic. For example, in Aboriginal communities in Australia, there are topics which can only be mentioned by women or men, and these topics have been called "secret women's business" and "secret men's business" (Moore 2000: 138).

Approaching silence from a psychological perspective, one of the important contextual factors which can affect silence in intercultural communication is participants' second language (L2) anxiety. Lehtonen et al. (1985) discuss the role of L2 anxiety in Finnish students' silence. The results of their study suggested that communication apprehension in L2 is likely to be caused by a "perception of low personal competence or low self-esteem, inability to identify appropriate social behaviour, and anticipation of negative outcome to communication" (p. 61). The authors argue that rather than the actual proficiency, the negative self-perception of L2 proficiency can be one of the major causes of avoidance of communication. However, it is notable that hardly any studies in silence in intercultural communication have explored the relationship between silence and the actual language proficiency with empirical data. Lehtonen et al. (1985) also raises an interesting point that one in five Americans feels apprehensive about communication because

of a pressure in their culture where articulate verbal performance "is considered to be one of the most important measures for success and positive image" (p. 56).

In terms of attitudes, there have been a number of suggestions that Westerners prefer talk to silence (Enninger 1987; Giles et al. 1991; Jaworski 1993; Scollon 1985). Argyle (1972) says, "In Western cultures, social interaction should be filled with speech, not silence" (p. 107–108). On the other hand, it has been frequently argued that more positive values are attached to silence in the East (e.g. Enninger 1987; Giles et al. 1991; Scollon & Scollon 1995). Giles et al. (1991) made an attempt to empirically test this "typical Western bias" (Jaworski 1993: 46), and their results confirmed the "bias", with the Anglo-Americans viewing talk more positively than the Chinese Americans and the non-American Chinese. As expected, the non-American Chinese group saw silence more positively and the Chinese-American group came in the middle in their valuation of silence and talk. Giles et al. (1991) also note that Hong Kong students viewed small talk more positively than students in Beijing, and there is also a generational gap in beliefs about talk and silence, which along with Tannen's (1985) findings warns us to be cautious about the stereotypes surrounding silence and talk.

With regard to cultural differences in silence in the literature discussed above, it is worth noting how prevalent the comparison between 'Western' and 'non-Western' cultures is. Here, what groups the 'Western cultures' cover is ambiguous. The use of the general label 'Western' is so prevalent that it seems to contribute to and reinforce the stereotyping of voluble or silent racial groups, which is problematic. Moreover, immediate contextual factors and participants' social identities other than their ethnic one may not be sufficiently considered. Silence can be created when comparisons between communicative styles of distinct communities are made by the participants. When this happens, cultural stereotypes are also reinforced, and perceptions of marked silences or unexpected volubility themselves can bring further silence or dominance of one group. Scollon & Scollon (2001), referring to Bateson (1972), describe this type of amplification process of problems in intercultural communication as "complementary schismogenesis" (p. 294). Sifianou (1997), drawing on Tannen (1993a), states:

> [...] silence in itself is not necessarily a sign of powerlessness, just as volubility in itself is not necessarily a sign of domination. It is the interaction of the two which attributes meaning to each form of behaviour. (Sifianou 1997: 68)

2.4 Silence in multicultural classroom contexts

Studies in multicultural classroom settings have shown students from minority ethnic groups being silent in the classroom, in comparison with their majority peers. According to Jaworski & Sachdev (1998), "research has previously suggested that the multiethnic and multilinguistic educational environment is strongly associated with a 'culture of silence'"(p. 276). In his ethnographic study of Sioux and Cherokee students, Dumont (1972) found that these students' silence in the classroom was a consequence of conflicts based on cultural differences. In both Sioux and Cherokee societies, community members are not used to the "highly individualized atmosphere of the classroom" (ibid.: 362), and being singled out for a response repeatedly by the teachers brings only silence from the children. Similarly, Philips (1972, 1983) explains the silence of children from Warm Springs Indian communities in central Oregon as a way of coping with cultural differences – between the Warm Springs culture and the mainstream white American one – in the classroom. She further explains that because learning takes place predominantly through the visual channel in Warm Springs communities, Indian children face difficulties in learning by trial and error through verbal performance in mainstream classrooms.

Biggs & Edwards (1993) approach silence in the multicultural classroom from a different perspective. They used a combination of ethnographic approaches and quantitative analysis of recorded classroom interaction, and found that teachers interact with black children much less frequently and for a shorter duration than with white children. When the frequency of initiation by children was examined, there were no obvious differences. The authors show, with further support of qualitative data, that the silence of black children is derived from racial prejudice and discrimination. Similar findings are reported by Ortiz (1988, cited in Losey 1997) who found that Mexican American students are called on 21% less frequently than their Anglo-American peers in American mainstream classrooms. The explanation was that the teachers preferred to avoid embarrassing students for their poor English or feeling embarrassed themselves if any miscommunication occurs. Here we see the use of silence as politeness strategies in intercultural communication.

While most of these studies on silence in the multicultural classroom focused on primary school classrooms, Losey (1997) looked at the silence of Mexican American adult college students. In her study of an English composition classroom at a college, she found that the overall participation hierarchy was Anglo-American males followed by Anglo-American females, and then Mexican American males followed by Mexican-American females after a significant gap. Losey (1997) gives negative self-perception as a powerless and silenced minority compounded

with language differences, cultural differences and teachers' perceptions and approaches to these differences as major factors creating and reinforcing Mexican American women's silence in the classroom. The teachers' questioning tends to be directed to the whole class, which makes it difficult for Mexican American students to react quickly enough before their Anglo-American counterparts. Even when Mexican students manage to respond or initiate, interruption by the teacher or peers frequently occurs, further damaging self-esteem and leading to more silences. In addition, Mexican students suffer from not being given opportunities to speak about the 'real' issues which they are interested in or with which they may empower themselves, as the teacher's questions are mostly 'display' questions to teach 'academic discourse' for improvement of composition skills. However, in one-to-one tutorial sessions and unofficial talk in class with peer students, Mexican American students, in particular the most silent female students, broke their silence when they received social support from peers and tutors. The teacher in Losey's (1997) study was committed, but the silence and inhibition of the Mexican American women made her form a negative perception of them, and consequently this was reflected in her communication with them in the classroom, which further brought about a negative assessment of their performance. Losey's work is significant in that she integrated language differences, gender differences, cultural and historical backgrounds, and the immediate environment of the multicultural classroom in investigating the silencing of minority students.

In the studies mentioned above, silence or silencing of the minority students in the classroom can be seen as a sign of discrimination and control and also the tension which exists in negotiating power relationships between the teacher and students, as Gilmore (1985) shows. The black students in his study, who compose the dominant population in the school, used their 'stylized sulking' to show defiance against the teacher. Although Gilmore (1985) interprets this defiant silence also as a face-saving strategy, it "often turns the loss of face back to the teacher" (p. 155). What is interesting is that white teachers tend to show understanding of what they regard as culturally patterned behaviour, while black teachers and parents do not tolerate the silent sulking. This study shows that teachers can also be challenged by the silence of their students, and feel that their face is threatened.

As described above, silence in the multicultural classroom tends to be regarded negatively as it often marks asymmetrical power relationships. Nevertheless, positive aspects of silence in the classroom have also been reported. Mohatt & Erickson (1981) found that Indian students at an all-Indian school on Odawa reserve in Canada were more responsive to an Indian teacher who gave a 'wait-time' of 4.6 seconds average while the responsiveness of students decreased with a non-Indian teacher whose 'wait-time' was 2.0 seconds average. Hence, not only does the increase of 'wait-time' increase the quality of classroom communication

and student performance, but also reveals that there are differences in community-specific expectations about 'wait-time' which may affect teacher and student performances in multicultural classrooms. In a monocultural classroom setting, Rowe (1974) also reported how increasing in 'wait-time' affected the student performances. Similarly, positive outcomes of utilising silence in EFL classrooms in Japan were shown by La Forge (1983). He argues that social and cultural silences among Japanese students can be used facilitatively in learning a foreign language. In his approach, teachers adopt cultural silence, as the "leader in Japanese society tends to be a silent person" (p. 79). Students are given more time for their speaking, and are given time to reflect on their silence in the classroom, putting their reflection in a written form, which receives feedback from the teacher. A facilitative role for silence in learning was also reported by Muchinsky (1985, cited in Jaworski 1993) in Polish high school language classrooms.

At this point, it is important to note that, in most of the studies in silence in the multicultural classroom discussed in English, the mainstream group is Anglo-Saxon, and silence is viewed negatively. It should be mentioned here that in all these classroom studies, the majority group seems to be English-speaking Anglo-Saxons. Little is known about whether Anglo-Saxon students as a minority group would be more silent than non-Anglo majority peers, in situations such as American students in a Japanese-speaking school in Japan. It should also be noted that silence as a problem in the classroom has emerged as approaches to teaching which emphasise critical thinking and interactive modes of learning have been foregrounded. In traditional teacher-centred teaching methodology, silence would be unmarked but volubility would be negatively regarded. In Matsuda's (2000) report on teaching approaches in Australian classrooms, Australian teachers commented that, when they were students, they normally sat quietly and listened to the teacher most of the time: valuation of talk and silence in the same context may change historically.

2.5 Silence of overseas students from Asia in the Anglo-mainstream classroom

This section discusses previous research on the silence of Asian overseas students in mainstream classrooms of countries such as the UK, the US and Australia. The reasons that a separate discussion is given for this particular type of student are firstly, that my studies discussed in this book focuses on the silence of Japanese students studying overseas, and secondly, that this particular area of study seems to be treated differently from ethnographic studies in schools and in minority communities such as those discussed in the previous section. Put another way, such

students are not 'ethnic minorities' who have settled in these countries but 'sojourners' who have come to these countries motivated by academic aspirations.

Students from Asia are often described as 'reticent,' 'quiet' or 'silent' in fields such as TESOL (e.g. Kubota 1999; Young 1990), English for Academic Purposes (e.g. Adams et al. 1991; Jones 1999; Thorp 1991), higher education (e.g. Ballard 1996; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Liu 2000) or intercultural studies (e.g. Marriott 2000; Milner & Quilty 1996). Most of these studies explore why Asian students are silent, or 'reticent,' and how this 'problem' can be improved. To address these issues, research methods such as interviews, questionnaires and observations have generally been used. Overall, it is predominantly sociocultural factors which have been discussed as having the strongest impact on the silence of Asian students (Adams et al. 1991; Jones 1999; Liu 2000, 2002; Thorp 1991) although second language anxiety or actual language difficulties are also claimed to be one of the major causes (Braddock et al. 1995; Volet & Ang 1998). Among the studies mentioned above, Liu's study (2000, 2002) is particularly relevant, since the focal issue of his study is silence of Asian students in American university classrooms. Based on interview and observation data, Liu (2000) lists five major categories for factors affecting the participation modes of Asian students: cognitive, pedagogical, affective, sociocultural and linguistic (p. 163). Among these, sociocultural and affective factors are claimed to affect participation to the largest extent. The sociocultural factors are explored in fuller details in Liu (2002) in which cases of three Chinese students are discussed. Here, silence as a powerful tool for learning and internal information processing, as well as silence as a sign of respect for the teacher as an authority, are argued as culturally framed silences among these Chinese students. A very similar observation is also made in Tatar (2005) about Turkish overseas students in the US. In Liu (2000), it is also suggested that personality and gender are related to participation modes in that introverted students and female students show stronger tendency to remain silent in class, while it is argued that linguistic factors alone did not predict the level of participation. However, no quantification of participation or analysis of classroom interaction was presented as empirical evidence, which is in fact a prevalent weakness of studies in this area.

One of the sociocultural factors affecting Asian students' silence is their unfamiliarity with the way communication is structured in the classroom, which brings us back to Philips' (1972, 1983) study of Warm Springs Indian children who were socialised into 'participant structures' of communication different from Anglo-American norms. Similarly, Asian overseas students may find it difficult to adjust themselves to the "free for all" (Thorp 1991: 114) turn-taking system (Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Jones 1999). For instance, Marriott (2000) reports that Japanese postgraduate students in Australia have difficulties participating in tutorials and seminars because they "had not experienced any tutorial genre in Japan" and

"important sociolinguistic norms concern not only complex turn-taking rules but also the content of such talk" (p. 286).

Furthermore, different sociolinguistic norms apply to the role of teacher in the classroom. In Asian cultures, students are not to challenge their teachers, but are expected to attend and receive knowledge. Jones (1999) points out that students who come from cultures where they are "expected to behave as a respectful and silent recipient of the teacher's knowledge" (p. 248) may apply the same behaviour to the new educational environment of Western universities. She goes on to argue that "inappropriate deference" (p. 249) may be adopted by Asian students in the Western classroom, resulting in their marked passivity and silence (see also Thorp 1991; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996).

Different structures of classroom communication and communicative styles which affect the silence of Asian students are also associated with an emphasis on different types of knowledge. Ballard & Clanchy (1991) claim that Asian cultures place value on the conservation of knowledge while Western cultures have an inclination towards the extension of knowledge. They argue that Asian cultures rote learn through memorisation and repetition whereas in Western cultures critical and analytical approaches to learning are emphasised (see also Milner & Quilty 1996). These claims suggest that discussions which take a critical and analytic approach to content in the Western classroom may be considered irrelevant, or make students from Asian cultures feel uncomfortable, again bringing on their marked silence.

Finally, the value given to modesty and the importance of 'face' are also cited in the literature as crucial factors in understanding Asian overseas students' silence. It is argued that volunteering answers or being voluble in class is likely to be regarded as lacking in modesty. Anderson (1992: 103), for instance, refers to a Japanese proverb "The nail that sticks up gets pounded down" when he comments that Japanese students "are hesitant to talk in settings where they will stand out in front of their peers." On Hong Kong Chinese students' silence in the ESL classroom, Tsui (1996) also argues that students' silence may result from their inhibition due to a "maxim of modesty" in the classroom (p. 158).

However, in contrast to this valuing of modesty is a fear of loss of face. It has been suggested that Asian students often regard asking questions as wasting time and lacking consideration for other students (e.g. Milner & Quilty 1996; Thorp 1991), or as a face-threatening act for themselves because questioning can be interpreted as a lack of ability or intelligence (Milner & Quilty 1996). Citing the study of Japanese children's acquisition of communicative styles by Clancy (1986, discussed above) along with a study of Japan-US intercultural communication by Bowers (1988), Anderson (1992) argues that in Japanese communication there is a stronger responsibility for the listener to interpret the message correctly than for the

speaker to transfer the message clearly. Due to this "burden placed on the listener," Japanese students "may be too embarrassed about not having understood the message to request clarification" (Anderson 1992: 106). In relation to this avoidance of speaking in public, compensatory strategies by Asian students have been reported. These strategies are to ask questions either of their classmates privately or of the lecturer after class (e.g. Anderson 1992; Braddock et al. 1995; Thorp 1991). Such strategies are often viewed negatively by lecturers (Thorp 1991).

As we can see above, these explanations for silence of Asian students in Western universities and in EFL programs which emphasise the role of cultural values and sociocultural norms of discourse in students' native culture and language are dominant in applied linguistics and education literature. However, there is a danger in setting up a dichotomy between Asian and Western cultures and falling into a deterministic view on the non-participation phenomenon (cf. Kubota 1999, see 2.6 below for details). Littlewood (2000) also reveals that the dominant perceptions of Asian students as passive and submissive does not mean that they "want to sit in class passively receiving knowledge" (p. 33), and Willing (1988) states that no direct correlation can be found between ethnic or cultural background and learning styles. Neustupný (1985, 1995) warns that the importance of participants' modification behaviour as well as perceptions of one another in actual 'contact situations' should not be overlooked in understanding intercultural encounters; that is, in intercultural contact situations where participants from different language and cultural backgrounds interact, modifications or correction are likely to take place if participants notice deviations from norms of communication (Marriott 2000; Neustupný 1985, 1995). Gumperz (1982) also claims the importance of ongoing interaction as an evolving context and a basis of judgement for interpretation and message formation. Asian students who join mainstream classrooms at colleges and universities in Western countries go through numerous contact situations and are gradually socialised into the new academic environment. They also bring diverse experiences of exposure to English and to the academic environments of English speaking countries. Therefore, caution has to be exercised in discussing the silence of Asian students so that one does not overlook the factors immediately associated with 'contact situations' as well as other variables such as affective factors and personal histories which students bring with them.

Furthermore, discourse analysis of turn-by-turn management of talk as evidence of Asian students' silence is scarce in existing studies. Asian students are not always sitting in class in complete silence. It is important to examine what they actually do in the classroom when they have opportunities to speak, or when local peer students are speaking. If Asian students feel "overwhelmed by native English speakers in class" (Liu 2000: 165) whereas local students show an "active participation mode" (ibid.: 183), we need to know how turn management is

performed by local students, Japanese students and lecturers. The structure of silence of non-local and non-native speaker students in their encounters with local students and lecturers in the classroom needs to be discussed empirically and more systematically.

Finally, the silence of Japanese students themselves has not been given a focused discussion in this review of silence in classroom contexts. However, as reference to the silence of Japanese students in the existing literature has been made throughout this literature review, a specific section for the discussion of silence of Japanese students was considered unnecessary. Educational practices in Japan which are often mentioned in literature on Japanese students' silence will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

2.6 Silence in Japanese communication

2.6.1 The 'silent Japanese'

The Japanese are one group who are often described as attaching strong values to silence, and as making abundant use of silence (Barnlund 1975; Clancy 1986; Davies & Ikeno 2002; Doi 1974; La Forge 1983; Lebra 1987; Loveday 1982). Lebra (1987) states that "there are many indications that Japanese culture tilts toward silence" (p. 343), and even goes on to say that "Japanese silence stands out not only in comparison with Southern Europeans or New Yorkers but with East Asian neighbours like Koreans and Chinese as well" (p. 344). Doi (1974) also makes a strong statement that "Japanese just don't talk much" (p. 22). This prevalence of silence is often explained by the values attached to silence in Japanese culture. Lebra (1987) presents four dimensions of silence in Japanese communication: truthfulness, social discretion, embarrassment in expression of love, and defiance. The first two dimensions are related to a strong valuation of silence. As Clancy (1986) puts it, the "Japanese have little faith in verbal expression or in those who rely upon it" (p. 214). This is supported by researchers such as Barnlund (1975), Kunihiro (1976), Loveday (1982, 1986), Lucas (1984) and Pritchard (1995). This emphasis on silence over verbal expression is further illustrated by numerous sayings and proverbs, as listed in Loveday (1986): "To say nothing is a flower"; "Mouths are to eat with, not to speak with"; "Close your mouth and open your eyes"; "Honey in his mouth, a sword in his belly"; "Even a lie can be expedient" (p. 308). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the aesthetic value of silence has been explored to a great extent in Japanese literature and arts (Saville-Troike 1985; Lebra 1987). Summarising Lebra (1987), Maynard (1997) claims that silence in Japanese is "a communicative device that can express many intentions and feelings" (p. 154).

The claims that Japanese people value and make prevalent use of silence, however, are mostly not based on empirical findings. Miller (2000) criticises claims which dichotomise Japanese and American communication styles on the basis of accounts from personal experiences or collections of observations made by others, saying these approaches "do not necessarily describe how speakers actually use language" (p. 245). Clancy (1986), who conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses of recorded mother-child interactions in Japanese, may be an exception in the literature on Japanese silence. Her study however focuses on language socialisation processes of Japanese children and she does not directly address silence in relation to her findings.

A classic and frequently-quoted paper which specifically focuses on the silence of Japanese is by Lebra (1987), but her discussion is based on her "personal observations and experiences" (p. 343). Thus, there have been remarks on this popular claim about the silence of Japanese that this "stereotype is hardly accurate" (Anderson 1992: 102). Anderson (1992) further states:

> Japanese do talk, and at times they talk a lot. But the contexts in which talk is culturally sanctioned, and the types of talk that occur in these settings, do not correspond to those of the West. (p. 102)

Mizutani (1997) makes the same point that contextual factors such as social settings or topics must be taken into consideration when talking about volubility or silence. Similarly, Miller (1994b) and McCreary (1992) question the stereotypes of Japanese being 'silent' or 'indirect,' criticising *nihonjinron* literature for overemphasising the uniqueness of the Japanese by placing Japanese and Americans as "polar opposites" (Miller 1994b: 52; see also Miller 2000). Miller (1994b) further argues that "we should specify what the particular situations are in which differences emerge and matter" (p. 53). Hence, there is a need to identify the nature of silence in communication in Japan in more specific terms: how are talk and silence distributed, and in what kind of contexts? Silence needs to be examined by identifying its forms, meanings and functions in context.

2.6.2 Length of silent pauses in Japanese

Apart from the 'prevalence' of silence in social encounters mentioned earlier, at the level of local management of talk, pause length, tempo of speech, silence as a communicative act, minimal responses and underelaborated turns appear to be discussed as characteristics of Japanese silence. In Davies & Ikeno (2002), the following account of silence in Japanese communication can be found:

> In daily conversations, business meetings, and school classrooms in Japan, silence is much more common and is *of longer duration* than in Western countries. (p. 51, italics mine)

Thus, as we can see, length of silent pause is often described to be relatively longer than that of native English speakers, and is claimed as one of the causes of intercultural miscommunication. Pritchard (1995) reports that Japanese students in an EFL classroom with a teacher who is an English native speaker are likely to feel that their own space is covered with their teachers' speech as they try to fill in the silences. Marriott (1984) also argues that Australian English native speakers correct themselves or use prompting in their interaction with Japanese speakers whose tempo of speech they find slow. Furthermore, Murata (1994), comparing frequency of interruptions in interaction between (1) native speakers of Japanese in Japanese, (2) native speakers of English in English and (3) native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of English in English, suggests that Japanese ways of speaking prefer not to have interruptions while English ways of speaking prefer to have interruptions as a sign of commitment to conversation. These findings imply that the tempo of turn-taking is relatively slower in Japanese than in English. In addition, what is interesting is that the Japanese participants interrupted more frequently when they interacted with English native speakers in English than in their own language, which according to Murata (1994), suggests that the Japanese participants may have accommodated their interactional style.

Silences which occur at TRPs of first pair parts are particularly sensitive issues in intercultural communication in English with Japanese speakers. In particular, native speaker English teachers seem to have difficulty in making judgement as to whether a long pause at TRPs after questioning Japanese students are for thinking time required before responding or for a silent speech act indicating that one does not know the answer, or for even nervousness (cf. Anderson 1992; Pritchard 1995). Anderson (1992) notes that Japanese students' non-comprehension tends to be signalled by facial expressions and attitudes, and their period of silences should not be interpreted as "unwillingness to comply" (p. 102). On the other hand, Pritchard (1995) points out that transfer of L1 communicative style causes a problem for Japanese students in an EFL classroom:

> For the Japanese, slow, careful speech is an indication of thoughtfulness and prudence which in English discourse may cause frustration and impatience. In an EFL classroom, silence is equated with 'I don't know the answer,' rather than 'I'm thinking about it.' Students, therefore, need to be taught ways of coping with this silence. (p. 255)

Pause length is apparently one of the major concerns for EFL teachers in their interaction with Japanese students, and again cultural awareness and adaptation is made, as we can find in Thorp (1991):

> [...] I did adapt to Japanese ideas concerning what was an acceptable pause length between speaker turns, and between question and answer. I soon realized that the Japanese have a far greater tolerance of silence than the British do, and I adapted to this. (p. 114)

While the understanding of 'culturally appropriate' silence is important in language teaching, it is also dangerous to rely on cultural differences in interpreting silence because the role of language difficulty and psychological factors such as lack of confidence and embarrassment in speaking English are ignored in interpreting Japanese students' silence. Lawrie (2002) also reports that native speaker EFL teachers find the silence of Japanese students problematic, but she found that rather than lengths of pauses, location of pauses was likely to affect Japanese students' silence particularly as their pauses tend to occur around the beginning or end of their turns rather than in the middle. One of the issues which arises from these observations by researchers in intercultural communication as well as in EFL/TESOL is whether empirical evidence can be found to show that Japanese native speakers' length of inter-turn pauses in their native language is relatively longer than that of English native speakers in theirs. Another issue to be addressed is whether the reported 'longer pauses' and 'slow tempo of speech' are results of a transfer of communicative style from L1 to L2 or due to language difficulties in L2 (cf. Lucas 1984; Neustupný 1985), or something else.

Regarding the timing of turn-taking by Japanese students learning English, Carroll (2000) reports that his Japanese students "are sensitive to and capable of, at least on occasion, precisely timing their entry into talk" (p. 77) when they interact in English, although the students are novice learners of English and their interaction shows more frequent gaps than in native speaker interaction. Furthermore, some extensive gaps occurred due to the students' orientation to avoid premature overlaps over dysfluently produced turns. These findings suggest that Japanese speakers who are more proficient speakers of English as a second language would be capable of managing timing of turn-taking with an orientation to 'no gap, no overlap.' However, since Carroll's (2000) study examined interaction among Japanese students who were all non-native speakers, management of precision timing in interaction between non-native and native speakers may show different patterns. Murata (1994) shows, nevertheless, that Japanese students who are more proficient in English than in Carroll's (2000) study seem to interrupt more often in English conversation than in Japanese. This suggests that despite the fact that Murata (1994) found much less interruption in talk between

Japanese native speakers than between native English speakers, Japanese speakers show orientation to 'no gap' in English.

How then do we make sense of the claims about long pauses and slow speech rate of Japanese speakers? The various arguments presented above seem to come from observations and analysis made in different contexts in terms of participants' proficiency, levels of public exposure and formality of speech events. Therefore these contextual factors must be taken into account when considering silence. As Anderson (1992) points out, if a Japanese student is called on by a native English speaker EFL teacher in a classroom, embarrassment or nervousness from having to speak in public may bring about a longer pause rather than transfer of communicative style in L1. On the other hand, a one-on-one conversation between a native speaker of English and a Japanese student in an informal setting may lead to a removal of inhibition and we may observe shorter and less frequent pauses. More inquiry using empirical approaches and more detailed reports of studies which carefully take variables into account are necessary.

2.6.3 Silences as speech acts

Silence as communicative acts, or more accurately, "formal exponents of acts" (Enninger 1987: 286), is another form of silence which has been discussed extensively. As introduced earlier in this chapter, silence which realises illocutionary force to perform a speech act seems to exist almost universally (Jaworski 1993; Saville-Troike 1985; Sifianou 1997). It seems, however, there are types of speech acts often performed by Japanese with silence which have drawn special attention in existing research. Disagreement and rejection are commonly mentioned types of speech acts which tend to be performed through silence in Japanese (Clancy 1986; Enninger 1987; Maynard 1997; Nakane 1970; Ueda 1974). Enninger (1987) notes that the Japanese discourse system does not follow Levinson's (1983) statement that dispreferred seconds are more morphologically marked than preferred seconds, and are often preceded by a delay (i.e. gap), as dispreferred seconds "do not always take an elaborate formal exponent" (Enninger 1987: 294). Enninger goes on to say that this use of silence for dispreferred seconds "such as declines, refusals" (p. 294) serves to avoid loss of face. This suggests that silence is used as an 'off-record' politeness strategy (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987). He refers to Nakane (1970):

> One would prefer to be silent than utter words such as 'no' or 'I disagree.' The avoidance of such open and bald negative expressions is rooted in the fear that it might disrupt the harmony and order of the group.
>
> (Nakane 1970: 35, cited in Enninger 1987: 295)

However, following Brown & Levinson's (1987) framework, this avoidance strategy falls into the category of 'Don't do the FTA' strategy, where the performance of the act of, for example, disagreement, is abandoned. Whichever the case, it seems that silence is used extensively as a politeness strategy by the Japanese, and that such use of silence may cause intercultural misunderstanding. However, it should be mentioned that long silent pauses in the position of second pair parts are likely to be interpreted as prefaces to dispreferred seconds or even as the dispreferred seconds themselves, as we have seen in the example from Levinson (1983) in Section 2.2.1. Thus, one could say that silence in place of disagreement or rejection is not a communicative behaviour particularly unique to Japanese people. It could be what happens after the silence itself which causes puzzlement to non-Japanese. For example, McCreary's (1986) example of silence as a dispreferred second in Japanese-American business negotiation is followed by another adjacency pair in which the Japanese negotiator responds with the preferred 'yes' without really meaning to 'agree' but only indicating that he is attending to his American negotiator's suggestion. Therefore, caution needs to be exercised in identifying what silences are 'doing' in relation to the contexts in which they occur. It should also be mentioned that the theory that confrontation is avoided in Japanese is not always the case. Miller (1994a) shows that confrontation and argument do take place in Japan, but in private rather than public. Similarly, Ueda (1974) reports that the direct use of 'no' is likely to be found at home with family members and not in public social situations outside home.

2.6.4 Distribution of talk and silence

Regarding the distribution of talk and silence, there are a number of claims that the hierarchical structure of the society is reflected in the use of silence (Beebe & Takahashi 1989; Kunihiro 1975; Lebra 1987; Nakane 1970). Watanabe's (1993) study of Japanese and American group discussions also makes a contribution to this issue. However, as Lebra (1987) and Beebe & Takahashi (1989) explain, silence can either serve the superior in asserting power or the inferior in demonstrating deference, depending on the context. Another dimension in which talk and silence can be distributed is the private-public continuum. It has been frequently mentioned that the Japanese make a clear distinction between in-groups '*uchi*' and out-groups '*soto*' and accommodate their social behaviour accordingly (Loveday 1982; Moeran 1988), and that relatively more silence is likely to be observed in communication in an out-group context than in an in-group context such as among family members, close friends or business allies with whom

self-expression and direct negotiation are more common (Kunihiro 1974; Miller 1994b; Pritchard 1995).

2.6.5 Underelaboration

Underelaborated speech of the Japanese is another type of silence which often comes under attention. Although in the literature on Japanese and their communicative style, there are numerous comments on values like taciturnity, such as "a man of few words is trusted more than a man of many words" (Lebra 1987: 345), specific accounts of underelaborated communication by Japanese are again discussed in their communication in English with native speakers of English. Neustupný (1985) states that one of the problems in Australian-Japanese contact situations is avoidance of communication by Japanese, which includes "lack of elaboration" (p. 54). In relation to this, he reports a study by Marriott (1984) which found that one of the reasons Japanese speakers of English were negatively evaluated by native speakers of English was that they did not manage to supply enough topics or expand and elaborate on topics introduced by native speakers. Asaoka (1987) also reports that Australian participants at a party found Japanese participants uncooperative, and says this can be explained by the Japanese participants' avoidance and insufficient provision of suitable topics. However, proficiency may again be playing a role in these studies, as Japanese participants' inability to comprehend or formulate propositional content of communication was reported in both Marriott (1984) and Asaoka (1987).

Another instance of underelaboration by Japanese speakers of English is reported by Ross (1998), who examined Japanese interviewees' underelaborated responses in oral proficiency interviews in English. The underelaboration was described as "the minimalist approach" and a strategy "in which they transfer the pragmatics of interview interaction from their own culture" (Ross 1998: 339, drawing on House 1993; see also Roberts & Sayers 1987; Tannen 1993b). Furthermore, Ross (1998) notes that the underelaboration is perceived as a marked behaviour and can be negatively evaluated by the interviewer as an inappropriate response in these interview situations. Drawing on Barnlund (1975) and Lebra (1987), Ross (1998) goes on to say that in Japanese, interviewees are not expected to provide "superficially trivial factual information," since "appearing superfluous or verbose" has a negative impact in Japanese culture (p. 339). Moreover, he suggests that questions which address personal issues may receive minimal responses as Japanese interviewees are likely to be sensitive about discussing or exposing personal matters in formal occasions such as language proficiency interviews. Similarly, Young & Halleck (1998) discuss their study of language proficiency in-

terviews in English with Japanese and Mexican students focusing on Japanese students' underelaboration. However, their sample group is extremely small (three participants from each group, one from each group representing each proficiency level out of three), and findings are not consistent, particularly with the advanced level Japanese speaker. Despite this, Young & Halleck (1998) still suggest that the Japanese interviewees tend to make the interviewer "work harder" (p. 374). They also claim generalised patterns even though findings across proficiency levels are inconsistent. Thus, the role of proficiency in underelaboration is unclear.

It has been shown that the stereotype of the 'silent Japanese' is deep-rooted in the tradition of research on Japanese language and culture. It was also shown that explanations are given for this silence in terms of its association with Japanese cultural values and key social themes. Furthermore, these explanations are often seen as ways to 'understand' or 'solve the problems of' Japanese speakers of English when they engage in interaction with English native speakers. What tends to be argued, however, is that the silence of Japanese speakers of English is more to do with a consequence of pragmatic failure (see Thomas 1983) or transfer of Japanese communicative style than surface linguistic competence (e.g. Anderson 1992; Lucas 1984; Maynard 1997; Ross 1998).

Whether this claim is valid or not, the problem is that the silence in communication in Japanese by native speakers of Japanese has not been studied sufficiently from an empirical perspective (Miller 1994b, 2000). Critiquing a large body of applied linguistics literature which draws on sociocultural differences to explain problems in teaching Japanese students, Kubota (1999) argues:

> In these arguments, authors tend to create a cultural dichotomy between the East and West, constructing fixed, apolitical, and essentialized cultural representations such as groupism, harmony, and deemphasis on critical thinking and self-expression to depict Japanese culture. (p. 9)

She goes on to argue that one should approach these generalisations critically and seek evidence that can challenge these stereotypes. It seems, however, that globalisation and increased opportunities and demand for intercultural communication has given the relative silence of Japanese marked attention, and the problematisation of this silence has made Japanese themselves aware of the silence attributed to them. In this regard, Harumi's (1999) study in interaction between Japanese native speakers and English speakers of Japanese as a second/foreign language, that is, the reverse situation, is valuable. The results of her study show that British learners use silence in their communication in Japanese, although Harumi argues that the British students' silence was often accompanied by explicit non-verbal expressions such as eye-gaze, posture or head movements, showing "willingness to participate" (p. 183). As for the Japanese learners of English, based on interpre-

tation of silent responses elicited from both Japanese native speakers and English native speakers, it is claimed that their non-verbal expressions accompanying silence were not "clear enough" to communicate their intention and "problematic" (p. 182). However, the instances of silent responses examined are limited to two cases for each group, and further studies such as Harumi's (1999) of a larger scale are required. As argued by Sajavaara & Lehtonen (1997) as well as Scollon (1985), for some communities, silence can serve communicative/social functions which, in others, can be realised and performed by speech. It is worth referring again to Sifianou's statement (1997: 68), that it is the interaction of talk and silence which gives meaning to each.

2.7. Summary: An overview of silence in intercultural communication

In the above sections of this chapter, an overview of existing research into silence in communication has been given. Section 2.2 discussed the various forms, functions and meanings of silence which have been studied mostly in applied linguistics but also in social psychology and anthropology. The range of phenomena which studies of silence in communication cover is wide, and the functions and meanings of silence are so versatile it appears that silence performs as many communicative roles as does speech. On the other hand, there is a general view that interpreting silence involves difficulties as well as a greater amount of inferential effort due to the ambiguous and context-dependent nature of silence. Therefore, the benefit of an ethnographic approach to capture this complex and subtle nature of silence was apparent (see Chapter 5 for further details on the use of ethnography in the present research).

The ambiguity and context-dependency of silence were described as sources of problems in intercultural communication. With regard to the context of communication, however, it mostly involved English native speakers of Anglo-Saxon background who negatively perceived the silence of their interlocutors from other cultural backgrounds. Then, positive and negative aspects of silence in multicultural classroom contexts were discussed. The silence of ethnic minority students was often found to be a consequence of silencing by classroom participants from mainstream cultural groups and was suggested to be a mark of powerlessness and oppression. On the other hand, the silence of Asian overseas students has been treated in the literature as an intercultural problem and cultural differences have been predominantly given as explanations for the 'problem.' This was critically discussed because of the tendency to propose an East-West dichotomy rather than empirically scrutinising the complex structure of silence.

Finally, various types of silence in Japanese communication were discussed. While there has been some evidence to support strong valuing of silence and extensive use of silence, the lack of sufficient raw data for analysis of silence in interaction in Japanese as well as the danger of stereotypical and essentialist views were pointed out.

Although silence has been discussed as having an important role in communication, silence in communication itself has not been treated widely as a focus issue. Yet, as we can see in the above review, it is important to recognise its role and approach it just as we approach talk. As we have seen, there seem to be a number of methodological problems in the literature to date, such as insufficient empirical data or reliance on a single approach in interpreting silence. Jaworski & Sachdev (1998) argue that for studies of silence, "sophistication of a fine-grained, interdisciplinary analysis" (p. 273) is required. The present research aims to offer such analysis of silence to overcome the problems found in the existing literature on silence. The following chapter will describe the approaches to data collection and analysis embraced in the present research.

2.8 Interpreting silence

2.8.1 A multi-layered model for interpreting silence

The overview of research into silence in communication above shows that silence plays an important role at various levels of communication. It also shows that the ambiguous and context-dependent nature of silence may become a source of misunderstanding or miscommunication in intercultural communication. Furthermore, there are a number of factors in different domains of language use which contribute to such problems in intercultural communication. Since the central concern of this book is the relationship between perceptions of silence and performance, there is a need for identifying different types of silence which affects, or becomes salient in, intercultural communication. For this purpose, I developed an analytical model incorporating multiple perspectives for approaching and interpreting silence in intercultural communication, which is presented below. This model will be the backbone of the analysis and discussion of the data in this book.

The two-dimensional model, on the one hand, includes linguistic, socio-psychological and cognitive domains of communication; on the other hand, it takes account of different levels of social organisation: the individual, situational and sociocultural. Factors which affect silence in intercultural communication are classified into the relevant domains at the appropriate level of social organisation. These factors emerged from the data in my own studies, and the list may therefore

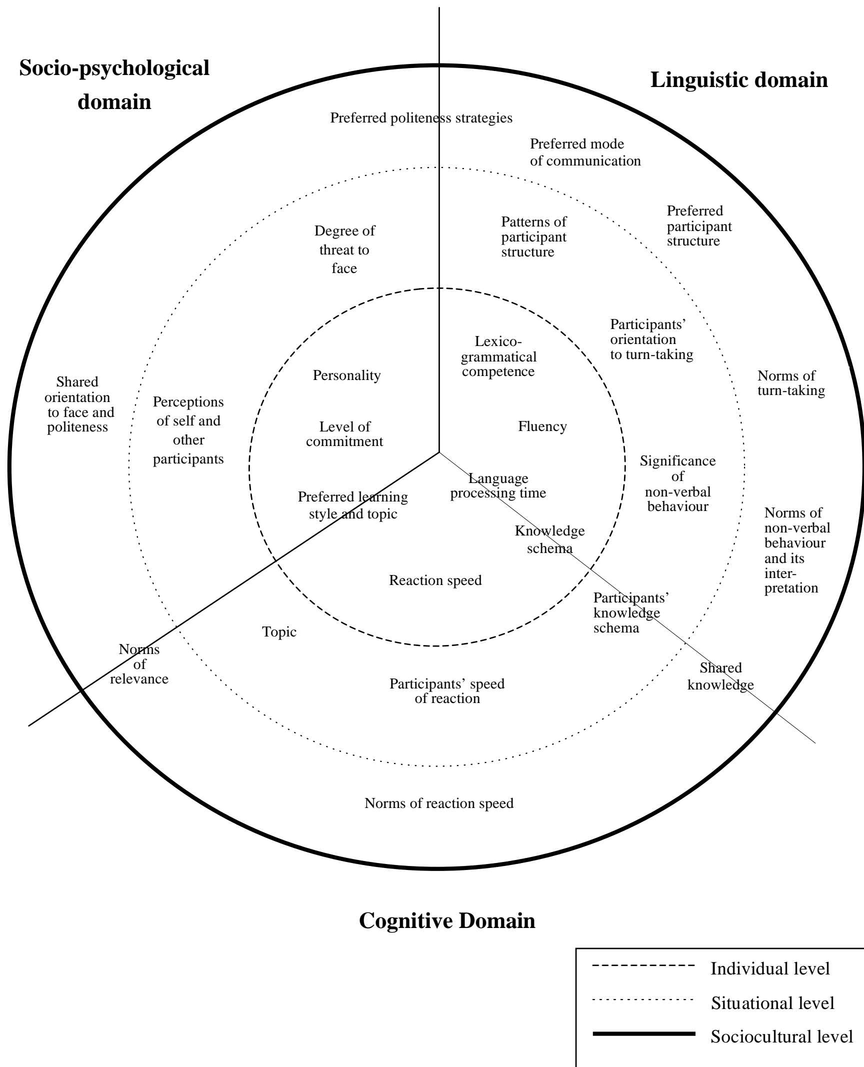

Figure 2.2 Factors affecting silence in classroom intercultural communication

be expanded, especially if looking at intercultural communication in other types of settings.

The three domains of communication emerged from the initial ethnographic interviews and were later modified by incorporating findings of the classroom microethnographic studies, but they also overlap with the main foci of analysis within the tradition of the ethnography of communication, which has produced many accounts of silence used in a variety of speech communities (Saville-Troike

1985, 1984). The ethnography of communication explores how, when, with whom and what meanings are communicated as a norm in a speech community; in other words, researchers investigate how sentences, exchanges and discourses are structured and distributed (which is included in the linguistic domain), with whom and in what situation certain manner and tone of speaking are used (which is included in the socio-psychological domain), and what is communicated in certain situations on the basis of shared knowledge (which is included in the cognitive domain) (Hymes 1974a, b, Saville-Troike 1985, 1984). There are overlapping factors in this dimension of the model proposed here, and the categories used here may possibly be divided into sub-categories. However, for the purpose of presenting factors which emerged from my research, and of demonstrating how they affected silence in intercultural communication, I believe that these categories offer useful guidelines. The three domains of communication allow a holistic view of silence when linked to the second dimension of the model (the three levels of social organisation).

The individual, situational and sociocultural levels of social organisation in the framework were developed based on my findings from initial ethnographic interviews and microethnographic case studies, as well as on the view of communication appreciated by the discipline of the ethnography of communication. According to Saville-Troike (1985), the ethnography of communication is concerned with "the discovery of the regular patterns and constraints (i.e. rules) that operate at different levels of communication" (p. 13), which are described as "a societal level," "a communicative event" and "the participants" (p. 14). These levels are also similar to three factors which Sifianou (1997) claims to determine participation in social interaction: "cultural norms," "situational norms" and "individual traits," in her discussion of silence (p. 63). The tension, which existed among divergent disciplines of research into talk and its social context in relation to relative impact of factors operating at these different levels of social organisation, has been raised as an issue (Coupland et al. 2001; Duranti & Goodwin 1992; Erickson 2004). In the case of research into intercultural communication, such tension concerns questions of how much and in what way cultural norms, as opposed to factors influencing individuals at the local level of interaction, affect the behaviour in, and outcome of, intercultural encounters. Such tension is precisely what emerged in the research presented here: Are Japanese students silent because they are following the sociocultural norms which they acquired through their socialisation in Japan? What roles do local contingencies of talk play in perceptions and performance of silence? What is the role of individual differences, such as personality and language proficiency? The three-layered dimension was devised to account for roles of factors at these levels of social organisation.

In the context of intercultural communication explored in this book, the Japanese and Australian participants bring with them sociocultural norms of interaction which they have acquired through socialisation into their native communities (cf. Gumperz 1982). Such norms of interaction are essential elements of sociocultural background which is likely to have an impact on participants' communicative behaviour in intercultural communication. In my research into silence in Japanese-Australian classroom interaction, such information was obtained from a study of Japanese high school classroom practice (see Chapter 3), interviews of Japanese participants in Australia and other written materials collected in Japan and in Australia (see Chapter 4).

However, it is easy to fall into the trap of 'cultural differences' – to interpret communicative behaviour according to cultural stereotypes. There is a common assumption in sociolinguistics that participants in interaction modify their communicative behaviour in cross-cultural encounters (e.g. Giles et al. 1973; Giles & Smith 1979; Neustupný 1995, 2004). Thus, what is important for analysis of intercultural communication is not finding cultural differences to explain the participants' behaviour but understanding in what context and in what way participants modify or assert their cultural norms, or accommodate to the other party's cultural norms. It is for this purpose that I conducted three classroom case studies involving microanalysis of recorded classroom interaction and follow-up interviews with participants. Later in Chapter 5, I aim to demonstrate what contextual factors specific to a particular 'situated activity' affect participation in interaction and how these factors are intertwined in negotiation of participation at the 'situational' level of social organisation. For example, as we will see later, the same student may be silent in one context but articulate in another because of different levels of rapport among classroom participants or different structures of participation organised by the lecturer.

Finally, it is also crucial to take into consideration variables at the individual level. Participants may remain silent where talk is expected, due to factors such as lack of language proficiency, introverted personality and gaps in knowledge. Other impact on participation may relate to individual differences in the level of familiarity with a topic. The impact of factors at the individual level will also be shown in Chapter 5, where I discuss the case studies, in relation to various other contextual factors as well as sociocultural factors.

My attempt to capture as many types of silence as possible that may become salient in intercultural communication required a combination of a macro-level approach (ethnographic interviews) and a micro-level approach (case studies involving microanalysis of naturally occurring interaction). As a consequence of this attempt, combined with triangulation of analytic approaches, I arrived at the framework proposed above. In the following chapters, the framework will

be used in order to present different types of silence found in my studies and to demonstrate the relationship between perceptions of silence and negotiation of participation in the classroom. However, I will briefly go through the factors in the model in the following section.

2.8.2 Inter-relationship between the two dimensions of the model

As already mentioned above, the framework for interpreting silence developed in my research consists of three domains of communication: linguistic, socio-psychological and cognitive, which overlap with one another in certain aspects. In the linguistic domain of communication, lexico-grammatical competence, fluency and language processing time of each individual are important factors affecting the silence and talk in intercultural communication. At the situational level, the language chosen as a medium of communication may also have an impact. In my study, participants from one group (Japanese native speakers) interact using their second language, English, while those from other group are native speakers of English. This entails a possibility of longer pauses to formulate sentences required by the Japanese participants and more difficulty may be experienced by them in participating fully and spontaneously. However, the level of proficiency varies among participants, and second language speakers have differing strengths in their linguistic competence, which should be carefully taken into consideration. For example, some have a high level of command in terms of lexico-grammar, while others may have a better command in terms of fluency.

At the sociocultural level, norms of interaction, such as the expected timing of turn-taking and other interactional moves, may be interculturally incompatible and therefore become a source of marked silence (and marked talk) perceived by participants. As we have seen above (Section 2.3), interactants from some sociolinguistic backgrounds who may feel comfortable with relatively longer inter-turn pauses may find it difficult to interact with people from speech communities in which shorter inter-turn pauses are preferred, as they feel forced into silence because of the fast pace of turn-taking.

Silence and talk can be considered with notions of participant structures (Philips 1972, 1983) and preferred modes of communication. Participant structures, according to Philips (1972, 1983), refer to the way participation is distributed and organised in various social encounters, and how such distribution and organisation of participation may vary across different speech communities. Thus, when people from different speech communities interact, there may be incongruence in the ways they distribute talk and silence. In Philips' study of Warm Springs Indian Community, schoolchildren were not familiar with the Anglo-American style of

learning which required them to volunteer and respond verbally to Anglo-American teachers. This resulted in the children's silence and underachievement. Using the notion of participant structure, we can identify patterns of participation familiar to participants in the setting in question and consider whether variance in participant structures may affect talk and silence.

Another factor to consider in the linguistic domain at the sociocultural level is preferred mode of communication. Certain types of communication in certain settings within a certain community are done through speech while in others they may be done in written or visual modes. This may lead to a negative evaluation of silence in contexts where the written mode is preferred over speech.

Finally, the shared meanings and practices of non-verbal behaviour can play a role in that they are often acquired through socialisation in speech communities and may become a source of negative stereotyping in intercultural communication, especially when the non-verbal behaviour accompanies silence (Saville-Troike 1985).

At the situational level in the linguistic domain, each classroom context is different in its participants' orientation to turn-taking. For example, in some classes, the students have to interrupt to secure a floor, while in others, the competition for the floor may not be so intense as to require constant interruptions. Another important factor is the extent to which different types of participant structures are used in each classroom context, as it does vary, and therefore needs to be considered in relation to student orientations to participation. Finally, the varying significance of non-verbal behaviour in the classroom may lead to different ways in which silence accompanied (or not accompanied) by certain non-verbal behaviour is perceived.

The second domain, the socio-psychological aspect of communication, involves issues such as anxiety, personality, commitment, and preferred learning style and topic at the individual level. For example, anxiety over speaking is one of the causes of silence. In particular, speaking in a second language may cause so-called second language anxiety, and second language speakers may not speak as much as they would in their first language in the same situation. Even in a first language context, shy or introverted people simply speak less, or do not like speaking in public. This is where personality comes in. Thus, we should be aware there may be occasions where an extroverted, outgoing person speaks more in a second language than a shy speaker in the native language.

Another individual factor in the socio-psychological domain is the level of commitment to the activity which interaction takes place. For example, a participant in a meeting may remain silent throughout if he/she is not interested in the agenda and thinks it would not make any difference to make comments or sug-

gestions. Similarly, students who are not interested in the topics discussed or in obtaining good grades may not speak vigorously in class.

Finally, although students who share the same cultural background may have similar orientation to learning, there are individual differences which may or may not be compatible with the learning style preferred in the specific classroom context or by the host culture, leading to perceptions of either excessive volubility or silence. Learning style and topic are factors which can be located at an overlapping area of socio-psychological and cognitive domains, since learning style is related to types of interpersonal involvement and topic choice may relate to the preferred level of self-expression or disclosure of personal matters.

At the situational level in the socio-psychological domain, the degree of face-threat and assessment of formality expected among participants can be considered key factors affecting silence and talk. As mentioned earlier (Section 2.2.2), silence has been discussed as one of the key features in assessment of face-loss risk and negotiation of face-work (e.g. Goffman 1955; Mills 2003; Tannen 1985; Sifianou 1997). If an intended speech act is too face-threatening, one may withdraw from performing the speech. At the same time, perceived power, social distance and affective involvement may affect the amount and types of talk and silence.

At the sociocultural level in the socio-psychological domain, politeness orientation is a key factor influencing silence and talk. For example, Sifianou (1997) explains Greek orientation to high-involvement, solidarity-based politeness by their preference for talk over silence. According to Sifianou, the English have a more distancing and deferential politeness orientation, preferring much less talk than the Greeks. Such difference in politeness orientations and the related valuation of silence and talk may result in misunderstanding and negative cultural stereotyping. While we can consider politeness orientation at the sociocultural level in such terms as solidarity-oriented or hierarchy-oriented, community members also develop a repertoire of strategies and interpretive frames to attend to face-work, including silence in various forms and functions. Thus, in the framework used here, such a repertoire is considered to belong to the socio-psychological and linguistic domains at the same time.

The third domain of communication in the model is a cognitive one. Factors at the individual level are speed of reaction, knowledge schema, and topic. An ability to process input and react quickly is likely to increase opportunities for participation, and thus speed of reaction plays a role. Language processing speed is also related to the linguistic capacity of an individual and therefore it covers the linguistic domain as well as cognitive domain.

Another important factor is knowledge schema. Varying interpretations have been made of the term, but it is similar to what Widdowson (1983) described as cognitive constructs accumulated through long term experiences which provides

a foundation for organising information in the mind. However, here, knowledge schema specifically refers to background knowledge which allows students to make sense of what they read, hear or see in their learning, and in this sense, it can be described as 'content schema' discussed by Barnett (1989) and Carrell (1987). What is important here is to distinguish it from sociocultural schema – accumulated knowledge shaping views of how social relationships are constructed or maintained – since sociocultural schema shares characteristics with the politeness orientation factor. Individuals vary in their level of knowledge in different fields, and thus in their knowledge schema, a factor which is likely to influence participation. Knowledge schema also involves the repertoire of vocabulary and other linguistic knowledge and therefore covers the cognitive and linguistic domains.

In the cognitive domain, the speed of reaction required for securing speaking turns in a specific classroom context is a key aspect of communication at the situational level. Pauses in and between turns are related to cognitive processing (cf. Chafe 1985), and the negotiation of pacing of such processing among the participants may have an impact on the distribution of silence and talk. In some classroom situations, students may be given time to organise the content of their speech, while in others, they may be required to react immediately.

Another factor in the cognitive domain, on which a substantial amount of discussion will be presented in this book, is topics covered. As we will see later, the participation of the same individual may vary depending on the topics for discussion. Thus, it is an important factor at the situational level of social organisation.

At the sociocultural level in the cognitive domain, norms of speed of interaction, shared knowledge and norms of relevance are included. It has been shown that members of a community often share norms of speed of interaction (e.g. Scollon 1985; Tannen 1985), and when people from different communities interact, different norms of interaction speed may lead to the silence of one group and the dominant participation of another.

Another variable in this category is shared knowledge. People from the same community have shared knowledge to a certain degree, and such knowledge can contribute to patterns of communication. Lack of shared knowledge in intercultural communication may result in a lack of rapport and thus in silence. Knowledge also includes language knowledge, and therefore is a factor extending across to the linguistic domain.

Lastly, among members of a community, norms of relevance in interaction are also shared to a certain degree. The relevance can be understood in two ways: relevance in terms of interpersonal relationships and appropriate choice of silence and talk, and relevance in terms of what is considered appropriate to speak about in a specific context of interaction. In either case, gaps in norms of relevance in intercultural communication may result in perceptions of marked silence or

marked speech by participants. Norms of relevance are an element which overlap the socio-psychological and cognitive domains.

2.8.3 The relationships and weight of factors

As can be seen from the discussion above, the factors listed in the model are not completely independent from one another but can be mutually reinforcing. For example, silence may result when, as a consequence of lack of language proficiency, participants cannot find an appropriate linguistic expression, but this can in turn affect their confidence and lead to inhibition about participation, which can be explained as second language anxiety. As for silences due to time required for cognitive processing, if the need for thinking time is longer for some participants than for others, silence can also be regarded as a result of a gap in time required for cognitive processing which varies across different speech communities.

In addition, as has been mentioned, these aspects of communication have overlapping elements. For example, language processing time is not only affected by lexico-grammatical proficiency but also by the thinking speed of individuals which is not necessarily related to language proficiency. Perceptions of linguistic competence can also be related to both the linguistic and the socio-psychological aspects of communication. Silence which is likely to occur due to a gap in sociocultural norms of relevance can be considered to come from what constitutes 'knowledge' in both cognitive and socio-psychological terms.

Although the model manages to show what factors are involved in the construction of silence in intercultural communication, it is not always possible to claim which of these are more significant than others, or are regarded as being more significant. In my research, as will be shown in the following chapters, some participants explain silence with lack of language proficiency, while others give sociocultural difference as an explanation. The case studies will also demonstrate that each case of silence varies in its causal factors and their relative weights. By investigating patterns of use and interpretations of silence by members from different communities and comparing such patterns with the results of a microethnographic analysis, it is possible to suggest which factor is likely to be playing a major role in the construction of a particular case of silence in a specific context of interaction.

CHAPTER 3

The sociocultural context

Silence and talk in Japanese classrooms

Before looking at the studies in silence in Japanese-Australian interaction in the classroom, which is the core of this book, I will discuss silence and talk in Japanese classroom practice in this chapter, with an aim to set the context for the intercultural studies. The discussion here is primarily based on my study on silence in Japanese high school classrooms. While the main focus is silence in Japanese classroom practice, references will also be made to comparative studies of Japanese and Australian classroom cultures relevant for my discussion and important as background information for the intercultural studies discussed later in the book.

3.1 Japanese high school classroom study

During two visits to Japan in 1999 and 2001, I carried out classroom observations in two Japanese high schools. In an ethnographic approach to intercultural communication, it is crucial to look at participants' culturally patterned "ways of speaking" (Hymes 1974b) as well as wider social organisation, values and beliefs, and norms of behaviour (Scollon & Scollon 1995). Thus, the Japanese high school classroom study was undertaken in order to provide some insights into the culturally pattered norms of students educated in Japan, especially in terms of classroom communication styles, teaching and learning styles, attitudes to learning, relationship between teacher and students, and so on.[1]

In June 1999, four sessions in different subject areas were observed for 90 minutes each at a co-educational private high school in Tokyo. In January 2001, six sessions in different subject areas were observed for 50 minutes each at a co-educational public high school in Tokyo. For reasons of confidentiality, I refer to the private school as Fuji High School and the public school as Tokyo High School.

1. Over half of the Japanese participants in my Australian university studies (in Chapter 4 and 5) came to Australia without university classroom experience in Japan, and those who had university classroom experience in Japan had completed their high school education in Japan.

Fuji High School is a private school in the centre of Tokyo city with a liberal policy and atmosphere; there are no uniforms and the students are permitted to dye their hair or have piercings, and the school is not considered academically prestigious. The class size is very small; the average student number in one class is around 20 to 22, just over half the number of students in most other Japanese high school classes.

Tokyo High School is a public high school in the western suburbs of Tokyo and academically more prestigious than Fuji High School; most of its graduates proceed to university level education. In terms of policy and atmosphere, although more control was exercised on students than in Fuji High School, the rules were generally not so strict, and there were students with dyed hair and piercings. The average student numbers in one class are around 40, which is typical of most Japanese high schools.

Social Science and Japanese were the subjects targeted for observation in these schools, since the Japanese participants in the intercultural studies in Australia were predominantly enrolled in subjects in the area of humanities. In addition, English classes were observed in both high schools to ascertain how Japanese students learn English since English becomes the medium of teaching and learning for those Japanese students studying in Australia. The details of the observed classes are given in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below.

Table 3.1 Classes observed at Fuji High School

Class	Level	Teacher	Number of students	Hours of observation
Japanese	2nd year	Female, Japanese	22	1.5 hours
World History	2nd year	Male, Japanese	21	1.5 hours
Japanese History	2nd year	Male, Japanese	22	1.5 hours
English	2nd year	Female, Japanese	17	1.5 hours

Table 3.2 Classes observed at Tokyo High School

Class	Level	Teacher	Number of students	Hours of observation
Creative writing	3rd year	Male, Japanese	16	50 mins
Japanese	2nd year	Male, Japanese	40	50 mins
Japanese	1st year	Female, Japanese	38	50 mins
Classical Japanese	2nd year	Male, Japanese	42	50 mins
English	1st year	Female, Japanese Male, English	40	50 mins
Philosophy	3rd year	Male, Japanese	27	50 mins

Fuji High School allowed all sessions observed to be video recorded, while at Tokyo High School, video recording could not be arranged, and details of classroom interaction were recorded as fieldnotes. (Pause lengths in excerpts from Tokyo High School classrooms are estimates. Pauses were not recorded in fieldnotes unless considered significant.)

Based on the study outlined above, I present characteristics of communication in Japanese classrooms in the following sections, using the framework introduced in the previous chapter. Silence and talk in Japanese classroom practices are therefore discussed in terms of linguistic, socio-psychological and cognitive domains of communication.

3.2 Linguistic domain

3.2.1 Modes of communication

One of the characteristics of classroom practices in Japanese schools is a strong tendency towards using the written mode of communication. In the study at Fuji High School and Tokyo High School, a reliance on learning through the written mode of communication was observed. At Fuji High School, for instance, most of the teachers made extensive use of the blackboard. Writing on the blackboard was usually done in a similar manner to which lecture handouts are made, with summaries of important points and the use of underlining or coloured chalk to illustrate the hierarchy of concepts being taught. What was written on the blackboard by the teacher was then copied by students into their notebooks. It appeared that students gave priority to copying what was on the blackboard rather than responding or listening to the teacher, since those who were found sleeping, reading comics or chatting would occasionally stop these activities to copy assiduously. Teachers also stopped talking occasionally and waited a few minutes in silence for students to finish copying. Below is an example:[2]

(1) [Fuji High School Class 2 Japanese History]

1	Teacher:	And then next, (3.5) in the textbook that first part there are
2		many foreign issues. So let's have a quick look at these. (1.3)
→ 3		Uh:m, (2.4) Is it all right to rub this out?
4		(0.3)
5		((a student raises her hand to signal 'not yet'))

2. The utterances in the excerpts in this chapter, except the ones from English classes, were translated from Japanese into English by the author.

6 Teacher: Not yet?
→ 7 (16) ((students take notes, the teacher looks at their notes,
8 walking among them to see what they have written.))
9 Teacher: Have you copied properly?
10 Student 1: (I'm hungry)
11 Teacher: Hungry?
12 Student: It's growling.
→ 13 Teacher: It's growling? (0.8) You've copied now?
14 Student 2: (   )
→ 15 Teacher: Then I can rub it out up to here right. I'll rub this out okay?
16 ((the teacher slowly rubs out what is on the blackboard.))
17 Teacher: I was really exhausted last week but I am fine this week.

Following this exchange, the teacher looks at his notes, and writes a summary on the board, without saying anything. Occasionally checking his notes, he writes the summary without speaking. This silence lasts over 4 minutes, during which time the students copy the summary, some chatting to their friends.

Another example of the privileging of writing over speaking can be seen in the World History class at the same school. The teacher gave an instruction to the students regarding the layout of blackboard writing saying "You might want to leave space for two or three lines here, because I will come back to this point later." The teacher's focus on the importance of the written can also be found in a comment such as "There's not enough space here, you know I cannot write below this, so I had to use two lines."

Writing is also used to draw attention to important concepts. In the excerpt below, in line 1, the teacher provides the important concept of *Butsuzoo* ('figure of Buddha') first in writing and then in speaking. Further, in line 7, the teacher announces that the answer is coming, and writes it on the board (line 8).

(2) [Fuji High School Class 3 World History]

→ 1 Teacher: And what is important is, ((writes 'Butsuzoo')) *butsuzoo*
2 'figure of Buddha'.... And, originally Mr. Takeda, *Butsuzoo*,
3 to worship god figure, where do you think it started?
4 Takeda: Eh?
5 (2.4)
6 Teacher: Then I'll make it easier. (0.4) .... This famous area is, (0.2) this
7 you may have heard before.
→ 8 ((the teacher writes 'Gandaara' on the board))
9 Sato: Gandaara.
10 Teacher: Mm. The place called Gandaara. ...

In some cases his 'obsession' with note-making was related to the fact that students were required to submit their notebooks to the teacher for assessment and that the content of the notebooks is what students have to memorise for the exams. Matsuda (2000) says that in Japanese schools, "many students copy the writing on the blackboard precisely the same way in details such as colours, lines and grids" (p. 446, my translation).[3] It was also observed that a substantial amount of teacher-student spoken interaction was likely to occur as a supplement to written mode of learning, for instance, when checking the answers for the exercises on handouts or textbooks. At Tokyo High School, teachers often used handouts, which usually had multiple-choice exercises, gap-filling exercises, summaries of the content, and open questions which seemed to serve as pre-exam exercises. Below is an example of exchange shaped through work on a handout:

(3) [Tokyo High School Class 2 Classical Japanese]

1 Teacher: Number one in Two. Okay, Mr. Suzuki?
2 Suzuki: Number one in Two?
3 Teacher: Eh? Number one in Two.
4 Suzuki: Two.
5 Teacher: Right. It's Two. Okay then, number two. Mr. Kato.
6 (pause – about 25 seconds)
7 Kato: A.
8 Teacher: Right. It's A. ((T gives an explanation)). Okay, next.
9 (pause – around 1.0)
10 Kimura: U? [one of the Japanese syllabic characters given as a choice]
11 Teacher: Ummm
12 (pause – around 3.0)
13 Kimura: I? [another Japanese orthography as a choice]
14 Teacher: Which?
15 Kimura: U, is it?
16 Teacher: It's U. ((gives an explanation))

At Fuji High School, although training for the university entrance exam is not necessary, the written mode of communication was also more prevalent. In the Modern Japanese class, for example, a task was given to students to write a short passage on a topic provided by the teacher. One of the two questions was "Write your thoughts about the description of the scenery in p. 154 line 15 to p. 155 line two 'in the attic on the fourth floor... looked like it was at the mercy of the wind'". Students' written work in short paragraphs was made into a collection of

3. Matsuda suggests that these activities reflect a concept of knowledge that is not negotiable, and where students are expected to accept 'correct answers' from the teacher.

ten model paragraphs by the teacher as a handout, and some of the students' writing, without the names of the writer, was read aloud by the teacher to the class.

The responses to this task and the activities which followed could be described as 'pseudo-spoken through writing'. Firstly, the students' own words communicated through their writing were read aloud to the class by the teacher. Secondly, these ten paragraphs seemed unexpectedly articulate, personal and expressive compared to what is produced in the spoken mode of communication in the classroom. For example:

(4) [A sample of writing by a student in Fuji High School (my translation)]

Although this is her favourite spot, it hangs heavy in her mind when she thinks about the reality. She would not take a step into the room as it represents her troubled mind itself. This scene has a very impressive expression, but it does not work to use these beautiful expressions because it simply shows the fact that Toyotaroo is so weak and hopeless that he makes the situation more and more difficult himself. After all, I think it comes to the vulnerable heart of Toyotaroo. As I am a vulnerable person myself, I get irritated when I read this part. I feel, "This hopeless man!"

Thus, in this example, 'heavy' communicative tasks are done through writing, with the teacher as a mediator who takes the burden of the spoken mode of communication in the classroom, avoiding the risk for students of losing face or of being regarded as lacking modesty. However, an over emphasis on writing and reading skills at the expense of spoken language skills has also been criticised, for example by Yamamoto (1997), who says that education in spoken language has been devalued in Japan since there is a concern that "[Students] cannot read or write any more, though they became talkative" (p. 59, my translation).[4] Such privileging of written mode has implications for the academic success of Japanese students who study at Australian universities which attach more value to speaking skills (cf. Kato 2001; Marriott 2000; Milner & Quilty 1996; Yamamoto 1997).

4. The holistic development of four communication skills was encouraged in Japan first during the Meiji restoration in 1868, and then under the occupation of the American military after the World War II. Yamamoto (1997) also argues that training in oral communication is almost non-existent in Japan while it is systematically taught throughout school years in Australia. Yamamoto's own 'Communication Skills' class at a college attracted a large number of students, which appears to indicate unmet needs for education in speaking skills in Japan.

Table 3.3 Types of activity in Japanese/Australian classrooms (adapted from Kato 2001: 60)

Types of activity	Japan	Australia
Teacher gives lecture on specific topics	4.6	2.7
Teacher asks questions and students answer	2.9	3.8
Teacher asks students for their opinions	1.6	3.9
Students lead discussions for selected topics	1.1	2
Students participate in game-type activities	1.2	2.9
Students participate in debates	1	3.2
Students participate in role-plays	1.2	2.5
Students give presentations	1.3	3.4
Students ask teacher questions	1.7	4.4
Students interrupt teacher to ask questions	1.5	4.0
Students give personal opinions	1.1	3.8

3.2.2 Participant structures in Japanese classrooms

Various resources on comparative studies of education in Japan and in Australia almost unanimously point out that there are differences in the way participant structures are distributed. A Japanese student in Kato's (2001) study commented that in Australia, "teacher and students create the lesson together …. In Japan the teacher just talks to the students" (p. 62). The questionnaire results in Kato's study support the student's comment above. The results shown in Table 3.3 suggest that in Japanese high schools the teacher-centred lecturing style is common, while in Australia it is less frequently observed. Australian schools also appear to have more variety in the types of participant structures used in the classroom; debates, game-type activities and discussions, all of which require student-student interactions more than teacher-centred lecturing, seem to be more common.

In the questionnaire, students rated the frequency of different types of activities using a five-point scale (never = 1; occasionally = 2; often = 3; quite often = 4; in almost every lesson = 5).

Similar differences in perceptions of classroom interaction can been seen in Matsuda (2000):

> While the teacher communicates with students face-to-face as individuals, there is dynamism in the classroom interaction involving 'teacher, individual, students as interactive group' and not 'teacher versus students as a mass'. (p. 74)

A similar observation can be found in a newspaper report on a visit to an Australian school by visiting teachers from Japan:

> Half of the class time was used for group discussion, with the teacher going around groups, participating in exchanges of opinions or monitoring them. In other classes, the learning through the organisation of 'students versus students' was also abundantly included. In Japan, there is a tendency to rely on so-called 'teacher versus students' style.
>
> (p. 70, my translation, an excerpt from *Nichigō Press*, January 2001)

In my Japanese high school classroom study, teacher-centred lecturing with occasional questions from the teacher to an individual student was dominant. For example, in Tokyo High School, although for the Creative Writing class, students' desks were organised in a seminar style circle, student-student interaction was not observed in this class except for private 'chatting.' The dominance of teacher-to-student interaction can be seen in Excerpt (3)–(5) below, where, after each student's comment, the teacher either asks a question about their work or makes a comment (lines 2, 8, 10), and then the student responds (lines 3, 9, 12). Then, the teacher says "*hai*" (in this case, meaning 'right'), which appears to function, along with his eye-gaze, as a boundary marker to indicate a handover of a turn to the next student (lines 4, 13).

(5) [Tokyo High School Class 1 Creative Writing]

1	Student 1:	Um I wanted to become a trainer of killer whale, that's why I wrote this.
2	Teacher:	Can you show us one of the pages a bit?
3		((F5 hesitantly shows one of the pages to the class))
4	Teacher:	Right. (*Hai.*) ((gives a cue to the next student by eye contact))
5	Student 2:	Um, since I was told to work on the last assignment, I wanted to
6		work on something that's not too hard, ( ) I was thinking,
7		( ) it's not something I can show everyone, so I am sorry.
8	Teacher:	You also took the photos yourself?
9	Student 2:	Yes.
10	Teacher:	The front page, it's very good. You don't have to humble yourself so
11		much. Did you hand in first?
12	Student 2:	Oh, I guess second.
13	Teacher:	Right. (*Hai.*)

Although students had been given time to look at all other students' work earlier in the same class, no comments were made by students about other students' work, and no student-student interaction was observed. The prototypical teacher-centred classroom interaction of I-R-F (Initiation-Response-Follow-up) structure (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) can be frequently observed here. This model, which involves a pattern of teacher initiating an exchange with a question (I), followed by a response from a student or students (R) and then a teacher's follow-up turn

(F), is often seen as part of the "traditional" classroom context (Drew & Heritage 1992: 15).

In another example from the same school, in the Modern Japanese class, the teacher spent the beginning of the observed session discussing the films which students had been recommended to see during the New Year holidays. Although the students were encouraged to contribute, no one volunteered except for a couple of students who appeared keen but received teasing from other students. As a result, the teacher nominated students one by one to elicit comments from them. They mostly spoke in a short turn in a reluctant manner. No instances of 'public interaction' between students were observed, although there were low-key *shigo* ('private chats') among students sitting together throughout the session.

As seen above, interaction between the teacher and the students is overwhelmingly teacher-initiated. However, teachers who value students' opinions and encourage their participation mentioned that the lack of responses from students was a 'problem.' Students' lack of motivation or interest in participation may be attributed not only to the control exercised by teachers through the teacher-centred pedagogy but also to the "utilitarianism and pragmatism" needed for survival in a meritocracy which "persuades students to accept, tolerate and endure alienating features of school" (Yoneyama 1999: 146).

3.2.3 Turn-taking in the classroom: Interactional roles

As we have seen above, the way turn-taking is typically organised in Japanese classrooms can be best described as fitting the I-R-F model (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). It is important to note here, in terms of comparison with Australian classroom discourse, that there is overwhelmingly little student voluntary participation in Japanese classrooms. This pattern of interaction suggests that the teacher exercises power and control over students, and this does seem to be the case to a certain degree. However, in some cases such as Excerpt (6) below, teachers, particularly those who frequently encourage students to participate and share their ideas, often attempt to get students to expand their responses in the third position instead of closing the sequence with an evaluative move such as "Okay" or "All right." In the exchanges below, the class is discussing a controversial film called "Battle Royal," which involves secondary school student violence and survival on a remote island to which they have been sent with weapons to kill one another.

(6) [Tokyo High School Class 4 Modern Japanese]

1 Teacher: All right, I know there were people who saw Battle Royal,
2 has anybody seen it?

3	Student 1:	Matsuda did.
4	Teacher:	How was it? The reason I want to ask is because some MPs
5		raised an objection against it. Right. Ms. Ono.
6	Ono:	I was moved.
7	Teacher:	Touched. Did you find it repulsive?
8	Ono:	The unpleasant bloodshed scenes, Ms. Morita watched
9		but I didn't.
10	Teacher:	How about you, Ms. Morita?
11	Morita:	Scary.
12	Teacher:	Scary. But you were moved?
13	Morita:	Well, not really. People have different reactions, right?
14	Teacher:	Do you think there is a possibility that people may imitate this?
15	Ono:	Nobody would I think.
16	Teacher:	How about you, Ms. Morita?
17	Morita:	Mm?
18	Teacher:	((explains her question))
19	Morita:	Well it's too scary to imitate.

In this excerpt, a student, Ono, says "I was moved" in response to the teacher's question (lines 4 to 5). In line 7, the teacher acknowledges the response, and then asks a more specific question "Did you find it repulsive?" to elicit further comments from her. The same attempt by the teacher can be found in line 12, after another student, Morita, produced a single-word response "Scary" in line 11, and a longer response of two sentences was elicited. Thus, the interaction pattern in this excerpt differs from I-R-F in that it is Initiation-Response-Acknowledgement plus expansion initiator. The teacher's expansion initiator turns seem to be successful in eliciting further responses from the students, but the students' responses are still kept at a minimum turn length of no more than a one turn construction unit (TCU), the minimal unit to construct a turn (Sacks et al. 1974). As the film was highly violent yet had a significant social and political message, the teacher aimed to have students think about this controversial aspect. However, the unelaborated responses of the students gave her no other option but to keep asking questions, gradually getting to the point of the discussion. In line 14, the teacher asks the student about the social impact of the film ("Do you think there is a possibility that people may imitate this?"), to which Ono answers directly, without elaboration. Without asking the reason for Ono's response, the teacher then moves on to Morita. However, Morita does not seem to have been attending to the earlier interaction, as she asks for clarification with "Mm?" which obliged the teacher to repeat her question. As can be seen in this excerpt, the teacher does not always wish to take control of the interaction but nevertheless at times has to

continue asking questions if students do not elaborate their comments or attend to the ongoing interaction.

In most classes, students' turns were short, typically consisting of one word or phrase. Students generally did not hold the floor for more than one TCU, even though there was no threat of other students trying to take the floor at a possible completion point. This tendency was also observed by Ross (1998) and Young & Halleck (1998) in their studies of oral English proficiency interviews conducted with Japanese interviewees. They argue that Japanese interviewees do not feel a need for elaboration, as it is desirable not to say more than necessary, and also as it is desirable not to go into disclosure of anything to do with personal matters. The 'minimalism' in students' responses to the teacher's questions in Japanese classrooms may also reflect these preferences.

3.2.4 Turn-taking in the classroom: Timing management

As discussed in Chapter 2, differing levels of tolerance for silence between speaking turns in interaction have been considered as one of the sources of intercultural misunderstanding (e.g. Scollon 1985; Tannen 1985). If Japanese students in Australian classrooms bring with them a norm of turn-taking which includes longer inter-turn pauses than that of Australian students or lecturers, then it is important to take this into account when examining silence in Japanese-Australian interaction. In my data from either of the two Japanese high schools, there is almost no instance of simultaneous talk at the point of turn. The scarcity of simultaneous talk in Japanese classrooms can also be explained by the strong tendency for students not to interact among themselves publicly in the classroom. There is simply no competition for the floor, as students' voluntarily participation is extremely rare. On the other side of the coin is the frequency of silent pauses between turns. One of the extreme cases is the long silence in Excerpt (3) above (Class 2, Classical Japanese at Tokyo High School), where the teacher waited for about twenty five seconds before the nominated student responded. In fact, what would be an inter-turn pause in teacher-student interaction often becomes a silent response. This type of silence appears to be a common face-saving strategy in Japanese classrooms, which will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.2 below.

3.3 Socio-psychological domain

3.3.1 The teacher-student relationship and politeness orientation

Differing assessments of power relationships or social distance, as in the case of teacher-student relationships, may cause problems in intercultural encounters at a sociopragmatic level (Thomas 1983: 105). Generally, when the teacher-student relationship in Japan and in Australia is compared, we find it is more hierarchical in Japan and more egalitarian in Australia. In Yoneyama's (1999) survey study, for example, 93% of the Japanese students indicated they did not feel comfortable about discussing personal problems with their teachers, whereas for 31% of the Australian students, teachers were people with whom they felt they could share personal matters. The teacher-student relationship in Japan is summarised by Yoneyama as "extremely teacher-centred and autocratic" while in Australia 'both the democratic paradigm and the autocratic paradigm co-exist with comparable strength" (p. 72).

In Kato's study (2001), both Australian and Japanese exchange students found teacher-student relationships more equal in Australia but more hierarchical in Japan. Australian teachers were described as "friendly," "informal" and "approachable," while Japanese teachers were described as "polite," "formal" and "strict." Australian students often found Australian teachers had better rapport with students, and this was regarded as a good quality in a teacher. Interestingly, although Japanese students appreciated the friendly attitudes of their Australian teachers, they gave credit to Japanese teachers for being good at discipline.

Some of the Japanese students in Kato's study commented that, not only psychologically but also physically, teachers are higher than students are in the classroom, since there is usually a teaching platform in front of the blackboard on which teachers stand while giving a lesson. Japanese students also observed that Australian teachers often walked amongst students and physically stayed closer and on the same level as students.

In my own visits to Japanese high schools, in almost all the classes, teachers taught on teaching platforms from which they rarely moved down to the students' level. However, the teacher-student relationship was generally not found to be as hierarchical and authoritarian as Yoneyama (1999) and Kato (2001) suggest. Both schools had a relatively liberal atmosphere, Fuji High School to a greater degree than Tokyo High School. For example, Fuji allowed students to leave the classroom and return whenever they wanted to during the class without asking permission from the teacher, and they could also choose their own seats, all of which is unusual in Japanese schools. The comparatively liberal policies of these schools could also be found in the fact that the principals both accepted, without reluctance, having a researcher visit their schools to observe the classes.

Although in both schools teachers and students interacted in a spontaneous and informal manner outside class, such as when students spoke individually with teachers in the teachers' room or in the corridors, in the official and public learning processes in the classroom, the spontaneity and informality disappear. In terms of different types of pedagogy, roughly half of the teachers had a more authoritarian, teacher-centred, chalk-and-talk teaching style, while half had a more interactive teaching style, and were often seen encouraging students to participate. Generally, the latter group tend to have better rapport with students, are often followed and surrounded by a small group of students before or after the class, and also interact in a less formal manner than the teachers in the former group during the class. However, whether taught by the traditional teachers or the more interactive ones, students were generally found to be inattentive and bored, reading comics, sleeping with their heads in their arms on the desk, or having a quiet chat with classmates. Students sleeping in class were usually ignored and not reproached.

These 'rude' behaviours of Japanese students invoke doubts about the 'hierarchical' relationship between teachers and students. Instead, the teachers' indifference (at least on the surface) to these student behaviours, as well as the students' apparent lack of motivation to engage in lessons, could be seen as a lack of rapport or even communication breakdown. However, coherent learning processes and teachers' authority seem to be maintained through the written mode of communication (e.g. note-taking, handouts and written assignments), which has a pivotal role in learning in Japan (cf. Section 3.2.1 above).

3.3.2 Politeness and face-work in the classroom

Let us now look into how the social dynamics of the classroom are intertwined with the way communication takes place there, especially in terms of politeness, face-work and the talk-silence continuum. The hierarchical relationship between the teacher and students which is claimed to characterise Japanese classroom practice (Kato 2001; Yoneyama 1999, see also Hofstede 1980) would possibly be reflected in deference and formality marked by polite sentence endings or honorific expressions (for politeness and stylistic variation in Japanese, see e.g. Ide 1989; Loveday 1986; Matsumoto 1988). However, my observations at the Japanese high schools did not totally support this hypothesis, and instead, the concept of *uchi* and *soto* – in-group and out-group – seemed to explain politeness and communication more appropriately than hierarchy. Distinction between the *uchi* and *soto* mode of communication is one of the distinctive characteristics of communication in Japanese (for detailed accounts of *uchi* and *soto* in Japanese society, see Clancy 1986; Loveday 1986; Moeran 1988). In in-group (*uchi*) communication,

people interact on the assumption of solidarity and plain sentence-ending forms are commonly used instead of polite sentence-ending forms. On the other hand, in out-group (*soto*) communication, social distance and/or power difference are assumed and polite sentence-ending forms are used more frequently.

Okamoto (1997) claims that an examination of classroom interaction in a Japanese primary school suggests that when the polite style is used, the interaction is assumed to be occurring between the public roles of teacher and student in an out-group interaction, while when the plain style is used, the teacher and the student(s) are not interacting within the presupposed roles of teacher and students but rather as individuals in an in-group interaction. In Okamoto's study, students' style shift was also explained in relation to how students negotiate their relationship with the teacher. For example, when they want to appeal directly and individually, they use the plain form – the *uchi* mode of communication – and for rejecting it, the teacher uses the polite form – the *soto* mode – to imply an official power difference.

Similarly, in both Fuji High School and Tokyo High School, only when teachers spoke to a student individually or when they worked on rapport, was the plain form generally used. Students' speech, consistent with Okamoto's results, seemed to shift from plain to polite style when the role of teacher as instructor is foregrounded with the use of the polite style.

Below are two examples of *uchi* and *soto* modes of communication in the creative writing class at Tokyo High School. In this particular session, the students had been asked to speak, in turn, to the class (total 16 students) about their own final creative writing project. In the first excerpt, the student did not shift from the polite style and did not engage in a spontaneous expression of her ideas, even when the teacher, who had good rapport with the group outside class, used the plain style to create a relaxed atmosphere and to encourage her to participate. This was commonly observed when the other students were in the same situation in this class.

(7) [Tokyo High School Class 1 Creative Writing]

(plain forms: underlined; polite forms: italics)

1 Student: Minna tenukitte itterukedo, watashi koso *tenuki desu*.
'Everyone says 'corner-cutting,' but I am the one who did corner cutting.'
2 Teacher: Nanda tenuki jiman <u>ja nai</u>.
'You are all competing for corner-cutting, aren't you.'
3 ((class laugh))
4 Student: Dooshiyou dooshiyou tte *kangaetanndesukedo*, choodo nyuushi no
'I was thinking what should I do what should I do, but the entrance exam

5 himo chikazuitete, kigenno iichijikan mae ni yattotorikumi hajimete,
day was approaching, and I started to work on this an hour before the due,
6 (   ) sutoorii wa kangaete tsukuttande sorewa yoyuu nan*desukedo*,
(   ) I created my own story, so that is not a problem, yes.'
7 hai. *Owarimasu*. *wakarimasen*.
'That is all. I don't know.'
8 Teacher: Sorewa jibun de tsukuttano, soretomo
'Did you make that [re: M4's old-fashioned notebook] yourself, or'
9 Student: Iya, *kattanndesu*.
'No, I bought it.'

Despite the effort of the teacher to motivate the students to have fruitful discussions, as he explained in detail later, students neither spoke spontaneously nor volunteered for comments and employed only polite forms. This may be because the basic one-by-one micropresentation structure created an atmosphere of formal public speaking. Earlier in the same class, in a more informal situation where students' work was being passed around the class for appreciation and the teacher was talking to small groups of students, a more relaxed, casual conversation with only the plain style was observed:

(8) [Tokyo High School Class 1 Creative Writing]

1 Student 1: Sensei, kurippu nakunattenndakedo.
'Teacher, my clip is missing.'
2 Teacher: E? Saisho tsuitetayo nee. Anosa, koreno dekai no dokka ni nokotte nai?
'Uh? Originally it was there um. Look, can't you find a bigger one of this somewhere?'
3 Student 2: Shiranai
'I don't know'
4 Student 3: Shiranaai
I don't know'

It is possible to see that public and private contexts, namely *uchi* and *soto* contexts, and role relationship between teachers and students, are realised and negotiated by shifting communication styles in Japanese classrooms. In terms of silence, it is important to realise that the official learning processes in the classroom, which is in the *soto* mode, is characterised by students' silence and resistance to speaking. An Australian student's comment from Kato's (2001) study aptly describes this

soto mode of communication: "Japanese teachers and students were good at playing the role of teacher and students. They don't behave as they are." (p. 62)

In the *soto* mode of communication in class, only two participant structures are found in Japanese classrooms: on one hand, the teacher casts a question to the whole class; and on the other, the teacher nominates one student to speak. In the first structure, the teacher is often faced by students' collective silence. This is face-threatening to the teacher as an instructor who needs to elicit answers to achieve the goal of education and at the same time to be in control (cf. Gilmore 1985). In cases of the use of this structure in my data, the teacher was observed to either provide an answer or incorporate it into their own statement turn, producing another question or more typically answering the question themselves. Below is an example:

(9) [Tokyo High School Class 5 Modern Japanese]

1	Teacher:	It says "resolution". What "resolution" do you think is it?
2		(pause – around 2.0)
3	Teacher:	Yes, ( ) K's resolution, What resolution is it?
4		(pause – around 2.2)
5	Teacher:	I think this has a lot of meanings. ((T explains))
6		What do you think, everyone?
7		(pause – around 3.0)
8	Teacher:	Okay, it's time [to finish the class]. This "resolution" is very important.

Those questions in the above example, however, were not clearly posed as questions; that is, they were not asked with a strong rising intonation with the teacher's eye gaze and posture directly addressing the students. Thus it was ambiguous whether students were expected to respond, or the questions were an explanatory strategy on the part of the teacher. However, the teacher's silent pauses may be an indication of his expectation of responses from students. In fact, in other classes questions to the whole class were often met with silence. In the English class below, long silent pauses persisted following the teacher's questions:

(10) [Tokyo High School Class 3 English]

(The teacher writes on the board: 'Happy New Year' and has students repeat. Then, writes dates around Christmas and New Year time on the blackboard.)

1	Teacher:	Does anyone know special names for these dates?
2		(pause – around 10.0)
3	Teacher:	Special names for these dates?
4		(pause – around 5.0)
5	Teacher:	Christmas Day. How about this day? ((pointing to one of

		the dates))
6		(pause – around 5.0)
7	Teacher:	New Year's Eve. How about this day?
8	Teacher:	New Year's Day.

As can be seen above, it seems that in Japanese classroom interaction there is significantly less simultaneous talk, less competition for the floor, shorter turn length, and longer and more frequent silent pauses than in Australian classrooms. There are also fewer sequences initiated by students.

On the other hand, a most likely explanation for the students' collective silence seems to be that the act of volunteering an answer or comment means showing off and thus brings about loss of face, the modest face expected of an average Japanese student. This explanation of avoiding 'showing off' is common to studies on Asian students' reticence (Anderson 1992; Goldstein 2003; Tsui 1996). Indeed, in my data, a student was teased by his classmates when he expressed his opinions clearly and more articulately than others:

(11) [Tokyo High School Class4 Modern Japanese]

Class is talking about some young people who had disrupted the coming-of-age ceremony, held nationally on the 15th of January every year by bringing in alcohol or crackers, or making noise.

1	Teacher:	Ms. Kitano.
2	Kitano:	Better to listen when it's time to listen.
3	Teacher:	Ms. Hotta, what did you say now?
4	Hotta:	Make it a party.
5	Teacher:	How about you Mr. Okada?
→ 6	Okada:	We must listen. Of course we must listen, right? Those who do not
7		listen even when they come to an age have distorted
8		('*kussetsushiteru*') mind, so it has to be cured.
→ 9	Nakata:	Professor, what is distorted ('*kussetsu*')?
10		((Class laugh))
→ 11	Teacher:	How about you, Mr. Nakata?

While Kitano (line 2) and Hotta (line 4) responded with short sentences and in a non-committal manner, Okada took a longer turn, stating his opinion in an assertive and serious tone. However, he was teased by other students (lines 9 and 10). Moreover, the teacher did not refer to Okada's comment and instead nominated the student who actually teased Okada (line 11). It seems that the teacher nominated this student to divert the attention from Okada's threatened face.

The resistance to volunteering in class was also commonly found in Fuji high school, where an English teacher was observed to use an interesting strategy. Tak-

ing advantage of the fear of standing out, she gets all the students to stand up and allows those who volunteer for an answer to sit down. In this way, those who do not speak till the end will stand out. The students participate voluntarily by raising their hands, which appears to confirm the fear of standing out as an explanation for collective silence of students.

In the Australian context, where articulation of students' ideas is encouraged (cf. Matsuda 2000; Milner & Quilty 1996; Yoneyama 1999), this behaviour is not considered to be 'showing off.'

In the teacher-nominating-student structure, if the student does not know a 'correct' answer, silence or "*Wakarimasen* ('I don't know')" are common responses. Several examples illustrate this type of interaction.

(12) [Tokyo High School Class 2 Classical Japanese]

1 Teacher: Next, B. Who shall I ( ), Mr. ( ).
2 (pause – around 0.8)
3 Student: I don't know.
4 (pause – around 1.0)
5 Teacher: Are you looking at the back [of the handout]? What is the modern
6 translation of 'hitono soshiri'?
7 (pause – around 1.5)
8 Student: I don't know.
9 Teacher: Why don't you look for the relevant part in the translation and
10 read it ?
11 ((student looks for the relevant section?))
12 (pause – around 15.0)
13 Teacher: '*Hito no soshiri*,' where is it in the translation?
14 (pause – around 3.0)
15 Teacher: '*Soshiri*' means accusation, okay. So, where is it?
16 Student: ((reads out the relevant section))
17 Teacher: Then, ( ), who is the subject of this sentence?
18 Student: *Mikado*.

(13) [Tokyo High School Class 3. English]

(The class is team-taught. Teacher 1 is a native speaker English teacher; Teacher 2 is a Japanese English teacher)

1 Teacher 1: Second question. Erika.
2 (pause – around 4.0)
3 Teacher 2: I usually go to – ((points to the written cue: I usually go to))
4 (pause – around 3.0)
5 Erika: The temple.

6 Teacher 1: ((gives demonstration Q-A for the third question with Teacher 2. 'What do you usually do on the New Year's Day?' 'I usually ---.'))
7 Teacher 1: Yuuki.
8 (pause – around 4.0)
9 Teacher 1: ((gives a cue))
10 (pause – around 3.0)
11 Teacher 1: ((gives support))
12 (pause – around 1.0)
13 Yuuki: I work.
14 Teacher 1: Do you have a part-time job?
15 Yuuki: Uh?
16 Teacher 1: Part time job?
17 Yuuki: Yes.
18 Teacher 1: Okay.

Similar behaviour of students in Japanese schools was reported by an Australian student in Kato's (2001) study:

> When asked questions during the class, they [Japanese students] often said 'I don't know' even if they knew the answer, consulted other students before speaking up, or remained silent until the teacher 'gave up' and moved on to another student. (p. 62)

Pavlidou (2001), discussing politeness in Greek high school classrooms, also states that a student would not be able to "simply remain silent if selected by the teacher as the next speaker, at least not without severe consequences" (p. 107). It seems that, at least in Anglo-Saxon and European contexts, the silence of a student who has been selected as the next speaker is perceived as marked and inappropriate. For Japanese teachers, however, this type of silence does not seem to be as marked. In Excerpts (12) and (13), we can see that teachers used strategies such as expansion-initiating questions, rephrasing questions or providing clues to make sure that responses could be elicited. One English teacher at Tokyo High School told me that often students simply say "I don't know" or remain silent even without thinking about the question. Thus, although receiving no response or an abrupt "I don't know" response may be face-threatening for Japanese teachers, they seem to challenge students' resistance to speak or think by pursuing a proper response, as seen in the teacher's persistence in eliciting a response in Excerpt (12). For students, it appears that silence or an "I don't know" response are the unmarked strategy to avoid engagement in the spoken mode of communication. As Yoneyama (1999) puts it, the "silence among Japanese students is the other side of the coin of the communication breakdown between teachers and students" (p. 86), but we should note that this is at the level of oral communication. What matters practically for

students' academic success are written products, and it seems that risking face-loss by articulating their views in spoken language is not worthwhile.

3.4 Cognitive domain

3.4.1 Norms of speed of interaction

As shown above, in comparison with their Australian counterparts, students in Japan seem to be better trained in written learning processes than in spoken, especially interactive, modes. In terms of cognitive processing, written learning activities allow a longer period of time for processing thoughts and language. Furthermore, in the written mode, reviewing is possible while preparing for production. On the other hand, in spoken learning activities, unless based on a script, less time is allowed for language processing and reviewing is much more difficult than in writing. Comparing the pace of turn-taking in Fuji and Tokyo high schools shown in the above sections with my Australian university classroom data (see Chapter 5), it would be reasonable to say that in Japanese high school classrooms, the normative pacing of interaction is generally slower than in Australian classrooms, where students are more familiar with group discussions and voluntarily participation.

3.4.2 Approach to knowledge

It has been argued that the type of knowledge to be acquired by students shapes the way it is taught (cf. Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996; Willing 1988; Yoneyama 1999). Yoneyama (1999) argues that traditional, teacher-centred pedagogy prevalent in Japan "goes hand in hand with the objectivistic (or positivistic) view of knowledge" (p. 142). Takeuchi (1995) also points out that "what is required to survive in the examination war is to learn and memorise 'objective' knowledge, accessible to the masses and attainable by diligence and hard work" (p. 236, quoted in Yoneyama 1999). In such an approach, there is only one right answer to a question, and other ideas or options are regarded as irrelevant or wrong. This has an impact on the types of spoken participation seen in classrooms.

In my observation of Japanese high school classes, students rarely raised 'new' or 'original' questions. If 'objectivistic' knowledge is valued, disagreeing with or questioning the teacher or the materials provided are out of question. In Australian university classroom contexts, on the other hand, an absence of this type of questioning in students is identified as a 'lack of critical thinking skills.' This view

was frequently taken by the lecturers in my research (see Chapter 4) and is also found in existing literature on intercultural education in Australia (cf. Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Braddock et al. 1995; Milner & Quilty 1996).

Even though there appears to be a certain minority of teachers who give students opportunities to learn to express themselves in the classroom and to ask questions more freely, a teacher-centred pedagogy with no space for students to express their own ideas is still prevalent in Japan. Yoneyama (1997) says:

> The extremely autocratic mode of education of Japan has trained them [students] to be receivers of the knowledge given by teachers, not to ask questions, not to contradict or criticise teachers, and ultimately not to think but just to listen and swallow what they are told. (p. 86)

Although Yoneyama's view may appear extreme, there appears to be a gap in what 'knowledge' means in Japan and in Australia, and this gap seems to be reflected in the different types of pedagogy in Australian and Japanese classrooms, consequently affecting the types of talk considered appropriate there. If students are trained to accept and believe that their teachers present the absolute and true 'knowledge,' it is likely that they face difficulties in adapting to the Australian education system (Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996).

3.4.3 Norms of relevance

As explained in Chapter 2, what is considered to be relevant in intercultural encounters in terms of communicative acts and content of communication may have an impact on participants' behaviour in terms of the silence-talk continuum. It appears that here again there are differences in Japanese and Australian classrooms.

3.4.3.1 *Approach to topics*

In Japanese classroom communication, as Matsuda (2000) suggests, students' experiences outside the classroom and in the personal world often appear to be irrelevant to knowledge gained in school. Yoneyama (1997) argues:

> In Japanese schools where teacher-centred pedagogy is dominant, the student is discouraged from relating knowledge to individual experience – as someone who has her/his 'own' views, ideas, needs, emotions, and experiences, and mobilises these resources to interpret, modify, analyse, create, and play with the knowledge. (p. 143)

Indeed, at Fuji High School and Tokyo High School, the content on which students were working was rarely treated as applicable or relevant to the students'

selves or to their life outside the classroom. This point can be illustrated by a comparison between Australian and Japanese approaches to the interpretation of literary work in schools. Australian schools encourage students to apply what was taught in the classroom to their experiences in the outside world, as illustrated in an assignment for Contemporary English for Year Twelve, on the theme of Peace and War. This assignment was obtained from a student who was a Year Twelve student in Sydney in the year 2000:

(14) [English Assignment 2000 (Peace and War)]

Collect eight different pieces of supplementary material from a variety of sources (print media, radio, television, poetry, song, film, novel short story etc.)
You must present two pieces of material for each of the four main aspects of the Contemporary Issue: Peace and War.

For each provide:
1. Type of source
2. Name of source
3. Author, playwright, producer, poet etc.
4. Title
5. Date
6. Relevant aspect of the Issue (Peace, Comradeship, The Horror of war, Survival)
7. Summary of the material
8. Links to the text
9. Knowledge you have gained about Peace and War from this material
10. What is the material saying about Peace and War in Contemporary Australian society?

This task requires students to personalise the theme and the content learned in the classroom. Items such as 8, 9, and 10 above particularly require students to think about the relevance of what they learn in the classroom for the world in which they live as well as for themselves as a member of a community. In addition to this task, the teacher in charge of this unit of study asked students to give a short speech on one of the materials chosen for the written assignment above.

As Milner & Quilty (1996) explain, in Australia, students are invited to express their personal reactions and responses to the materials for their classes:

> Australian teachers say they prize intelligence in argument and in the expression of complex, novel, personal responses to experience. These abilities in Asian educational systems, however, often indicate negative qualities such as hostility, a lack of respect for superiors, and an ignorance of the proper educative models. (p. 98)

However in Japanese education, it seems that interpretation of literary materials generally does not go beyond the text itself. Thus, commonly observed questions require students to find the relevant sections in the written text which explain the meaning or the referent of key words or concepts. Thus,

(15) [Fuji High School Class 5 Modern Japanese Extract from a handout]

'Kokoro' by Soseki Natsume Handout 6
1. Write the reading of the following Kanji.
2. Give the meanings of these words.
3. What does 'Stopping that' (p. 170 top 14) refer to?
4. Regarding K's 'resolution' (p. 170 bottom 5), what 'resolution' did 'I' think it was?

In this way, although this class was, in fact, more interactive than other teacher-centred classes, the main interactional goal seemed to be to gain a clear and 'correct' understanding of who did what and who felt what in the story. In fact, in both high schools, it was common to find questions regarding referential issues, such as "Who found out all the 'circumstances' from the beginning to the end?" (Fuji High School, Japanese Class) or "K's dilemma is here. This question is often asked in the test. 'Here,' what does that refer to?" (Tokyo High School, Japanese Class). In the following excerpt, for example, the teacher is checking the 'correct' understanding and interpretation of the text taught the previous week:

(16) [Tokyo High School Class 5 Modern Japanese]

1	Teacher:	Why did he travel to Boshu? What was it? It was written in ( ).
2		(pause – around 2.0)
3	Teacher:	Uh, this was not something written in the main text in the textbook.
4		For what did he travel to Boshu?
5		(pause – around 4.0)
6	Teacher:	Do you remember? 'My' big purpose was to disclose
7		his feelings toward the lady to K, right?

Overall, in the Japanese high school study, oral activities which would involve application or personalisation of abstract concepts or information given during the class were rarely observed. However, as already discussed, it is important to be aware that students may be given opportunities to express their opinions and personal responses in writing, depending on the teacher preferences.

In addition to personal views and experiences, the verbal expression of reasoning processes and describing how one arrived at one's thoughts and ideas appear to be limited in Japanese classrooms compared to Australian classrooms. According to Matsuda (2000), in Australian classrooms, students are often asked

to verbalise the process of inferring in cause-effect style explanations, whereas in Japanese classrooms, this process of inference does not seem to be valued but instead a top-down way of understanding is assumed in learning.

In the Japanese classroom excerpt below, the classroom talk is not well connected but incoherent, and the students' comments are based on impressionistic views or transitory emotional reactions.

(17) [Tokyo High School Class 4 Japanese]

The teacher asked students about an incident which affected them during the holidays. One student mentions the destructive behaviour of 20 year olds who attended coming-of-age ceremonies held in communities nation-wide on the 15th of January.

1	Teacher:	Tell me what yours was, Ms. Maeda.
2		(pause about 3 seconds)
3	Maeda:	Seijinshiki 'coming-of-age ceremony'
4	Teacher:	Right. Comment please.
5	Maeda:	Well I was surprised when I saw it on TV.
6	Teacher:	Why?
7	Maeda:	There were people who were pulling crackers, you know.
8	Teacher:	Surprised. Do you know their psychology?
9	Sato:	They just want to attract attention, with big ( ).
10	Maeda:	Those people who do those things, even if they are enjoying, there
11		are people with good motivation, so I don't know.
12	Teacher:	You are going to attend the ceremony in three years' time. What
13		would you do if you are in that situation? Ms. Kimura, what did
14		you think about those people?
15	Kimura:	They don't really have to come.
16	Teacher:	Do you understand why they do such a thing?
17	Kimura:	To attract attention.
18	Teacher:	Mr. Ishida, how about you? You are listening to music, but take
19		your earphones off.
20	Ishida:	What's wrong with that. They are having fun. Let us drink.
21	Teacher:	Mr. Ishida, if you were in that situation, would you do that?
22	Other students:	He'd do it.
23		((class laugh))

The interaction shows that students are unfamiliar with cause-effect discourse structure or with presenting a view using logical and objective reasoning. This appears to contribute to the teacher's questions "Why?" (line 6) and "Do you understand why...?" (line16). It is not only within each students' turn but also in the interactive sequence involving teacher and student turns that construction of coherent and logical discussion does not seem to be achieved. Students neither

attend to other students' talk nor to that of the teacher, and thus fail to achieve cohesion; the stretch of interaction is fragmented into brief exchanges without strong logical connection.

3.4.3.2 *Critical views and disagreement*

As mentioned before, although a recent phenomenon, emphasis is on the development of critical thinking skills in Australian education (Matsuda 2000). One of the web pages of the University of Sydney's Institute of Teaching and Learning says: 'the university places a high priority on critical thinking, problem-solving and autonomy by the students.' It is assumed in Australian classrooms that knowledge presented through materials or by teachers can be challenged, explored and reconstructed through interaction (Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996).

In Japanese classrooms, critical or contradictory comments or disagreements are rarely found. In my observations, students did not raise any issues regarding content, and the lessons were also structured so that critical attitudes were not required or expected. As discussed earlier, 'why' questions were scarce, compared with factual questions, including ones such as 'where is it written in the textbook/handout' (cf. Matsuda 2000).

There was one class in Tokyo High School in which the teacher often asked questions which encouraged students to explain what they thought and why (as found in Excerpt (6) in Section 3.2.3). Students' talk, however, was mostly unenthusiastic and far from articulate, and they produced no more than one short sentence. The emphasis on objective knowledge, required for academic success, can be an explanation for this absence of critical views and disagreement. In Kato's (2001) study, Japanese students found a difference between Australian and Japanese schools in what is acceptable from students in the classroom:

> The Japanese students found that Australian students raised any questions they had, however small or sometimes irrelevant they seemed. They thought teachers did not mind such questions, whereas they would be too embarrassed to raise any questions in a Japanese school, because 'my teacher may say "Don't you know such a basic thing?" or "You should know the answer"'. (p. 63)

In fact, in Kato's study, Australian students were regarded as immature by Japanese students because of their constant need to express themselves, whereas Japanese students were regarded as immature by Australian students because they do not "think for themselves" or "express their opinions" (p. 63).

However, the absence of critical comments and disagreements in classroom interaction may also be explained in relation to face-threat, and therefore can be considered as a socio-psychological factor. Not only are these acts irrelevant for the knowledge to be acquired, but they also entail great threat to face: both the

face of the modest self expected by classmates and the positive face of the addressee whose view has to be respected (cf. Section 3.3.2 above).

In the creative writing class in Tokyo High School, students were given a chance to comment on their own work as well as that of others. There was a tendency to make a humble or even negative comment about their own work such as "My work is rather corner-cutting (*tenuki*)" (see Excerpt (7), Section 3.3.2). Even though the students were encouraged, they did not refer to other students' work except for general comments such as "This class has a lot of good poets" or "I was impressed with everyone's work." No critical comment or comment referring to a specific aspect of other students' work was made, although the teacher encouraged the students to do so. As already mentioned, those who asserted their own stance were teased by other students (cf. Excerpt (11), Section 3.3.2), as on one occasion with "All right, that's enough." Those who verbalise their own opinions in class tend to suffer sanctions, and as Yoneyama (1999) shows, in the worst cases, the minority of students who want their personal voices to be heard end up dropping out of school. Although at Tokyo High School, there were occasions where students were given opportunities to express themselves in a spoken mode, they were reluctant to talk about themselves, often speaking in a modest way or in short sentences. It was often the students' resistance to speaking their minds which discouraged teachers from student-centred pedagogy.

3.5 Summary: Japanese classroom practice and silence

From the discussion of Japanese classroom practices above, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Japanese education produces 'silent' students (Yoneyama 1999). The social distance between the teacher and students and the emphasis placed on objective knowledge are closely tied to a pattern of communication in which students are expected to accept what the teacher gives them as non-negotiable knowledge and to avoid standing out in the classroom.

The participant structures which are common in Japanese classrooms give students few opportunities to verbally interact with one another. This is reinforced by the pattern of turn-taking which does not require the monitoring of or even attention to other party's talk. Students rarely initiate interaction sequences or overlap other talk, but instead tend to take a 'minimalist' approach. Long silent pauses, which are often silent responses, are not uncommon, although some teachers seem to find it a problem. Thus, oral interaction in the classroom is typically fragmentary and even incoherent. Instead, there is a general tendency for written language to be given priority by both students and teachers over spoken language.

While students are generally not expected to be voluble and articulate in Japan, at Fuji High School and Tokyo High School, there were teachers who made attempts to involve students in coherent spoken interaction for learning. However, students were reluctant to speak 'publicly' in class. Within the 'public' sphere of the classroom lessons, teacher-student relationships are not only hierarchical but also distant, reflected in most cases by a lack of rapport or even communication breakdown.

Silence in Japanese classrooms is a part of classroom culture which is accepted as unmarked. Thus, as shown above, when a 'marked' attempt to use spoken interaction as a resource for learning is made, difficulties are experienced both by the teacher and the students.

CHAPTER 4

Perceptions of silence

From a macro-perspective

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I approach silence in intercultural communication from the participants' perceptions. The discussion here is based on what the participants said about silence, and actual classroom interaction will be examined in Chapter 5.

As I briefly mentioned in the introductory chapter, I initially set out to determine the communication problems faced by Japanese overseas students when they join mainstream classrooms in Australian universities. At the exploratory stage of the research, the following questions were addressed:

1. What are the problems faced by Japanese students in communication in Australian university classrooms?
2. Are there any discourse patterns characteristic of Japanese students which could be sources of problems in communication in Australian university classrooms?

As I explored these issues by conducting ethnographic interviews with Japanese participants, the phenomenon of silence emerged as significant, leading me to the focus of study in this book: silence in intercultural communication. The research questions formed after the initial and exploratory stage were:

1. How do the Japanese students compare themselves with their Australian peers in terms of talk and silence in the classroom?
2. What are some explanations for the Japanese students' self-perceived silence?
3. Are Japanese students perceived to be silent by Australian lecturers?

For questions 1 and 2, interview data was analysed to identify different types of silence described by Japanese students. Following this, questionnaires were distributed to lecturers to ascertain whether they also perceived Japanese students as silent (question 3) and if so, what types of silence were perceived. The interaction

of perceptions and performance in the construction of silence will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, through the analysis and discussion of empirical data from three classroom case studies. In this Chapter, I begin by introducing the methods I used to investigate perceptions about silence in intercultural communication. I then discuss the types of silence which emerged from the data.

4.1.1 Speaking about silence: Ethnographic interviews

Nineteen Japanese students from two Australian universities in the Sydney area were interviewed twice in relation to classroom communication over a period of four months in 1999. In most cases, the students were interviewed individually, but on eight occasions focus group interviews were organised. (On the focus group interviews, see below.) The semi-structured interview questions focused substantively on eliciting the students' behaviours and communication styles in lectures and tutorials, but there were diversions and expansions where students displayed strong concern. (The original interview schedule can be found in Appendix 1.) All interviews with the Japanese students were conducted in and later transcribed into Japanese. However, the interview comments which appear in this book are given in their English translations (translated by the author).

Among the participants, seven of the female students were enrolled in programs in the Faculty of Arts, three others were in Science, Commerce, or Education. The majors of the male students were slightly more varied, three coming from Arts, two from Industrial Design, one from Education, one from Engineering, one from Commerce and one from Chemistry. This distribution of the participants' majors, concentrated in the humanities, reflects the distribution of the whole population of Japanese students enrolled at these two universities. Two of the male and two of the female students were enrolled in postgraduate degree programs. The students' length of stay in Australia varied from one to ten years. Two of the male students had come to Australia with their parents as migrants and had gone to local mainstream schools, and two of the male and four of the female students received Australian mainstream secondary education for three years before they entered university. Table 4.1 and 4.2 show participant background information. More detailed biographical information on the participants can be found in Appendix 2.

Focus group interviews, which combined two participants from the above group of Japanese students, were organised on eight out of thirty interview sessions. In all focus group interviews, the two participants knew each other as friends or classmates. The style of interview was again semi-structured with the same set of questions used for the individual interview, but the researcher took

Table 4.1 Description of the Japanese participants in the interviews (male)

Male	Age	Degree	Years	Length of residence in Australia
M1	27	B. of Education	4th	8 years
M2	24	B. of Arts	3rd	6 years
M3	20	B. of Industrial Design	2nd	10 years
M4	22	B. of Industrial Design	3rd	4 years
M5	22	B. of Arts	2nd	2 years
M6	20	B. of Chemistry	2nd	7.5 years
M7	20	B. of Engineering	2nd	5 years
M8	25	M. of Arts	2nd	1.5 years
M9	28	M. of Commerce	2nd	2.5 years

Table 4.2 Description of the Japanese participants in the interviews (female)

Female	Age	Degree	Years	Length of residence in Australia
F1	23	B. of Arts	2nd	5.5 years
F2	23	B. of Arts	3rd	6.5 years
F3	22	B. of Arts	2nd	2.5 years
F4	29	B. of Arts	2nd	2.5 years
F5	21	B. of Arts	2nd	3.5 years
F6	20	B. of Arts	2nd	5 years
F7	20	B. of Commerce	2nd	4.5 years
F8	21	B. of Science	1st	2 years
F9	24	M. of Education	2nd	2 years
F10	27	M. of Commerce	2nd	1.5 years

a more passive role. This is because the focus group interview is regarded as having the strength of eliciting shared views of the group to which participants belong, and these shared views are likely to be expressed more explicitly (Berg 1998; Sussman et al. 1991). Moreover, it provides an excellent opportunity for the researcher to observe how the target group talk about the issues under investigation (Agar 1980, 1998; Berg 1998; Saville-Troike 1984; Spradley 1979). Having both individual and focus group interview techniques enhanced the degree of balance in the data (De Cillia et al. 1999; Espin 1999). Participants in focus group interviews are shown in Table 4.3.

4.1.2 Perceiving others' silence: Lecturer questionnaire

In order to compare lecturer perceptions of Japanese students with self-perceptions of Japanese students, a survey was conducted. Email questionnaires were sent to 371 lecturers across six faculties at the University of Sydney, of which 34

Table 4.3 Participants in focus group interviews

Focus group	Participants	Number of focus group interviews
1	M2, F8	1
2	M5, M6	1
3	F1, F2	2
4	F3, F4	2
5	F6, F7	2

responses were obtained from four of the six faculties. The low response rate is most likely due to the small ratio of Japanese students in the whole population of students at this university (221 of the whole student population of 36,976 in 1999; that is, 0.6%), as well as the method of questionnaire distribution by bulk email which is less demanding than a more individual approach. However, considering the scarcity of Japanese students in faculties such as law or science and the relatively small number of lecturers who had actually had Japanese overseas students in their classes, the response rate can be considered reasonable. Nevertheless, to supplement this relatively small scale survey, I will draw on findings from a similar survey by Braddock et al. (1995) at Macquarie University in Sydney on international students (lecturer respondents: 39).

The questionnaire included three broad questions: (1) What is your impression of Japanese students in Australian university classrooms?; (2) What are particular strengths of Japanese students you perceive in your classes?; (3) What are particular problems of Japanese students you perceive in your classes? This open-question style made it possible not only to elicit lecturers' impressions of Japanese students in their own words, but also to discover whether, without mentioning the word 'silence' itself, the silence of the Japanese students is perceived as a marked phenomenon among lecturers. The content and the format of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

4.2 Linguistic factors contributing to silence

Following the model introduced in Chapter 2, this chapter accounts for Japanese student silences based on comments of the Japanese students who participated in the ethnographic interviews, and on comments made in response to questions in the lecturer survey, both conducted in Australia. I begin by presenting discussions on factors in the linguistic domain.

4.2.1 Language proficiency

Half of the Japanese students interviewed indicated that they felt that their lack of proficiency in English was a major barrier to participation:

(1) Discussion, I find it a little hard to keep up. Yeah. lectures are okay, but with my level of English, it's a bit [difficult]. [1:231 M1]

It is, however, difficult to tell whether students' negative perception of their English proficiency is an accurate self assessment or not. Students who had lived in Australia for more than five years also gave English proficiency as one of the reasons for their silence; this includes the student who gave the comment above. Some students also mentioned that difficulty in understanding what their peers and lecturers were saying was a major problem:

(2) For example, I know I have an accent when I speak, but if I could understand what is being discussed in discussions – I wish I could. People say I don't have any problems in speaking, but I cannot grasp the content of the discussion. [30:111 F7]

Because of the fast rate of speech, manner of speaking and vocabulary use of peer students, discussions appear to be more difficult for Japanese students to understand than clearer and more formal lecturer speech.

(3) F10: Well, say during the class, for example, I can't understand native speaker's English.
I: Oh, because they speak too fast.
F10: Fast but also um they don't seem to know grammar, do they? (laugh) So I don't understand what they are saying. Also, they use different kinds of language. [22:14-16 F10]

The speech of peer Australian students may not be produced in a clear and formal manner unless they are giving a presentation. If that is the case, it is not the formal lexico-grammatical competence of English but rather a sociolinguistic gap in the rate of speaking that may be playing a role in Japanese students' silence.

As for lecturers, they seem to see Japanese students' silence as a reflection of their lack of confidence in language skills, as well as "poor language skills":

(4) Poor language skills lead to lack of confidence in class participation. [LQ26]

(5) They are more comfortable responding to written questions, because they are self-conscious about their verbal skills or lack of them. [LQ8]

Weak language skills of Japanese students were frequently mentioned as a problem, but on the other hand, some comments referred to Japanese students' English skills being better than other students from Asian non-English speaking backgrounds. For example:

(6) Their English is usually better than that of other Asian students and yet they have been more reluctant to converse, than, say, the Chinese students. [LQ11]

Lecturers may find the explanation of lack of confidence in language proficiency more appropriate than that of poor language proficiency, but Japanese student weaknesses in spoken English were also frequently mentioned in relation to silence. In fact, the absence of spoken English skills has often been discussed in existing literature on Japanese student silences (cf. Anderson 1992; Lucas 1984).

The emphasis and reliance on the written mode of communication in Japanese schools, as shown in the previous chapter, may be considered one explanation for the observations of Australian lecturers who mentioned that Japanese students could surprise them by producing well-written assignments despite their inactivity in classroom interaction (see Section 4.2.3.2 below). Japanese student interviewees also said that they are more confident about writing tasks than spoken activities. Some even mentioned that they are able to do better in written assignments since they "do not miss the point."

When we look at overseas students in general, it is quite clear that the problem of language skills is the major concern for lecturers. In the survey study at Macquarie University (Braddock et al. 1995), 46% of the staff responded that the level of English of students from Asia-Pacific region is poor, 49% indicated "adequate," while 5% indicated "good," and 0% "excellent."

4.2.2 Norms of turn-taking

As noted above, the different manner and speed of native speakers' speech seems to trouble Japanese students. A difficulty in finding the right moment to join discussions was expressed by a number of Japanese students:

(7) It's the question of timing. Particularly in English, I just can't work out the timing to speak. Mmm... I wonder if it is because I am not a native speaker. [2:112 M1]

(8) The interaction, even before I finish talking, they [Australian students] come in, interrupting me. [24:147 M5]

The student who gave the second comment also mentioned that it is not only the speed of each utterance but also the turn-taking which he finds too fast. The following comment from a Japanese student on a web discussion page set up for students enrolled in a linguistics course illustrates how Japanese students regard the speed of interaction in Australian classrooms.[1]

> I am a Japanese and one of the surprising thing when I came to Australian university was how much Australian students express their opinions during the lecture. In [course name] class, it's even more than other classes. I often find the way students express their views is *as if bullets are shooting*. I mean very quick. For Japanese student, sometimes it's very hard to because of language handicap and it's speed and moreover, we don't get used to this style of approach.
> (Verbatim, my emphasis)

Another Japanese student's experience suggests, at least from his point of view, that native speakers may sometimes silence non-native speaker peers:

(9) If I struggle a bit, then often it was like, 'all right, then,' and the door was closed for me. [20:87 F9]

These reactions to the speed of interaction suggest that norms of interaction practised in Australian classrooms may be different from those into which Japanese students had been socialised. As we have seen in Chapter 3, there is almost no competition for the floor in Japanese high school classes. In fact, one of the Japanese interviewees said he was not very good at jumping into discussions in his first language of Japanese either. Even after they arrive in Australia, Japanese students seem to have less social contact outside class with local Australian students than with international students from Asian countries, and this they consider to be detrimental to their interactive competence in class. For example:

(10) If I had more Australian friends, my listening would get better. As you know, because most of my friends are international students, I don't worry about my English and I enjoy communicating with them even if my English is wrong. [30:1-2 F7]

The Macquarie University survey (Braddock et al. 1995) also indicates a strong demand from international students for help with their interaction skills, including the desire for knowledge of Australian slang. This indicates that it is the interactive skills required for discussions with local Australian-English speakers which are difficult to improve.

1. The access to this web page was allowed through personal contact with the lecturer in charge of the course (the language retains its original form).

There is also an interface case between the sociolinguistic clash and general social rules of interaction. The following comment expresses a Japanese student's discomfort with interrupting.

(11) You know, I cannot volunteer, and on top of that, interrupt when someone's talking. It's like, offensive, or what can I say, I feel I have to wait until someone finishes talking before I speak. I feel I shouldn't interrupt. [28:39 F3]

The same student expressed her difficulty in keeping up with the Australian students' speed of turn-taking. Thus, both Japanese social etiquette and differences in norms of turn-taking can be at work. As Tannen (1985) argues in her study of different communicative styles, fast-rate speech with frequent overlapping talk can be a sign of 'enthusiasm' and 'solidarity' for some while for others it can be regarded as 'interrupting' and as a sign of 'rudeness' or 'lack of attention'.

At this point, let us turn to lecturers' perceptions. Little reference to the speed of speech and turn-taking was made in their questionnaire responses. However, there was one comment which implied that Japanese students have difficulty with the rapidity of interaction in classroom discussions:

(12) Japanese students sometimes find it hard to adapt to the more critical, analytical, argumentative style of social science here, and to *the cut and thrust of classroom discussions*. [LQ34]

What was expressed as "bullets are shooting" by a Japanese student can be rephrased as "the cut and thrust of classroom discussions" in the lecturer's comment above. This lecturer also mentioned that "their English is often better than students from other Asian non-English speaking countries." However, no other lecturer referred to this sociolinguistic aspect of classroom discussion which may leave Japanese students feeling 'left out' in classroom discussion and thus 'silenced.'

4.2.3 Participant structures

One dimension of perceptions about silence which emerged from the student interviews is the way in which participation is structured in classroom communication. Japanese student orientations towards verbal participation vary depending on how a communicative activity is organised and how much contribution is expected at a certain point in the class. Philips' (1972, 1983) concept of 'participant structures', developed in her studies of children from Warm Springs Indian community, enabled her to identify reasons for their problematic silence in classroom communication. Participant structures are "structural arrangements of interaction" or "ways of arranging verbal interaction" (Philips 1972: 377). Through care-

ful analysis of participant structures found in both the Anglo-Saxon and Warm Springs communities, Philips found that the Anglo-background teachers' structuring of classroom communication was not compatible with the communicative practices into which Warm Springs Indian children had been socialised.

Following and modifying the framework of Philips (1972, 1983), participant structures in Australian university classrooms were identified from Japanese student interview comments and also later confirmed in the lecture and tutorial observations in the case studies (Chapter 5). These participant structures are:

1. teacher nominating a student individually;
2. one-to-one 'unofficial' interaction between a teacher and a student;
3. small group discussion;
4. open class discussion;
5. open class discussion after student's own presentation;
6. student giving a presentation;
7. teacher-centred 'straight' lecturing.

In the first type of participant structure, one student is nominated by the teacher to make a comment or respond to a question, while other students in class attend to the teacher and the nominated person. The second type is a one-to-one interaction between the teacher and a student (initiated by either of them), found in a situation where students are engaged in individual or small-group work. The difference between (1) and (2) is that while the student's speech is heard by other students in (1), the interaction between the teacher and the student may not be heard by others in (2).

The third type of participant structure has students in small groups of typically three or four discussing some questions or issues. Usually a whole class feedback session follows this type of activity to exchange ideas from different groups. In the fourth type of participant structure, the whole class attends to a discussion in which the floor is open to all the participants. This includes occasions when a short period of talk occurs after a certain kind of cue (verbal or non-verbal) or a question is given to the whole class. The fifth type is similar to the fourth in that the floor is open for all the participants in class for discussion, but the discussion leader's role is assigned to the student who is the presenter. In the Australian context, although the teacher still has the ultimate authority to control the discussion, student presenters are expected to take responsibility for the discussion after their own presentations (Marriott 2000).

The sixth type is student presentation itself. It resembles teacher lecturing, but it is a different type of participation since the roles are reversed. The final type is when the teacher is giving a long stretch of talk in a straight lecture style, holding

the floor for a period of time, while students listen and take notes. It is possible, however, to find students interrupting or jumping in to ask questions or make comments.

Among these participant structures, Japanese students did not describe themselves as silent when they were nominated by the teacher individually (1), interacting with the teacher in one-on-one situations (2) or giving a presentation (6). Some of the Japanese students said that the only time they spoke is when they were nominated by the lecturer:

(13) Usually I end up observing. If I am nominated, I say something. [28:97 F4]

(14) [...] normally the only time I open my mouth is when she [the lecturer] nominates me and ask 'What do you think [the student's name]?' or 'How about you?' [2:140 M1]

One-on-one private talk was found to be preferred and more frequent than public interaction:

(15) It's no problem to talk one-on-one or privately, but I don't like talking in public. [28:43 F3]

In the interviews, active participation by Japanese students in small group discussion (3) was referred to. One of the students even mentioned that she often takes a leading role in small group discussions to keep the discussion on track. The absence of Japanese students' participation in whole class discussions (4) contrasts with their participation in small group discussions:

(16) Well... in group discussion, I talk a lot, but usually, I don't know, in open, open discussion, what can I say, I am left behind. [30:93 F7]

These tendencies for participation reflect the Japanese high school classroom practices (discussed in Chapter 3) in which students rarely volunteer in public, on-the-record contexts but take a relaxed approach to conversing with the teacher and peers in unofficial, off-the-record contexts.

With regard to the discussion after a student's own presentation, it appears that the mode of participation in this participant structure is passive, as implied in the following comments:

(17) I: And when people started to talk in these presentations in Asian Studies courses, how do you respond to it as a presenter?
F5: How? Well, I just listen. (giggle) [17:165 F5]

(18) I: How do you find it [the question time]?
M1: Well, how to say, because it's about education, um, it's kind of problem if someone asks me a question. (giggle). I don't know very well. ... I know the basics, but if someone asks me a difficult question, I'd go like, 'Please ask the lecturer.' [2:96-98 M1]

The giggles in extracts above seem to imply that the students are aware of the more active role they are expected to take as presenters.

In the case of student presentations (6) and teacher-centred lecturing (7), interview comments indicated that these are the times when students, as a group, listen. When asked to describe large lectures in lecture theatres, Japanese students remarked that "there are people who want to ask questions to the lecturer." From the Japanese student perspective, this verbal participation of students is a marked behaviour, whereas silence is assumed to be unmarked. This again can be explained by the almost nonexistent questioning and volunteering by students in Japanese classrooms (Chapter 3):

(19) Even though it's a lecture, people ask heaps of questions. Also, there is a lot of interaction between the lecturer and the students, how can I explain, people ask questions one after another even though it's a lecture. [27:136 F3]

The concept of participant structures makes it possible to examine different degrees of silence. The Japanese student comments on when to speak and when not to speak suggest that their silence would be unlikely to occur in participant structures such as the teacher nominating a student individually or small group discussion. On the other hand, in an open class discussion, discussions after a student presentation, and straight lecturing, silence is more likely to be observed. There also seems to be an awareness among Japanese students that they are expected to participate more actively in whole class discussions and post-presentation than they tend to do. At the same time, being silent during lectures is assumed to be unmarked.

In interpreting these different degrees of silence in different participant structures, two dimensions can be useful to consider: pressure to speak and public exposure. First, it seems that the level of pressure to speak affects the occurrence of silence in that being called upon places a student under a lot of pressure, while an invitation to the whole class for comments or responses does not entail such pressure. This can be explained by the notions of adjacency pairs (Levinson 1983; Schegloff & Sacks 1973) and preference organisation (Pomeranz 1984; Sacks 1987). In one-on-one conversation, relevant responses are expected from the addressee for a request or a question, and therefore silence will be unexceptionally assigned a meaning as a 'dispreferred response,' although this interpretation is based on the

discourse of native English speakers (Blimes 1997; Levinson 1983; Sacks et al. 1974) and cannot simplistically be assumed as a norm for Japanese speakers of English. The assumption of more pressure attached to participation through individual nomination should thus only be taken as a possibility, and whether Japanese students are unlikely to be silent when they are nominated in their actual classroom performances will be addressed in the case studies (see Chapters 5).

In open class discussions and question time after a student's own presentation, pressure to participate still appears to be felt, as participation is often assessed and students have an awareness that they are expected to play an active role in discussion after their own presentations. However, a student's silence when the floor is open to everyone in a class discussion would not be interpreted as specific a message as it may be in one-on-one situations. In this way, different levels of pressure to speak are likely to be felt by students in different participant structures, and the more the pressure to speak is felt, the less frequently silence can be expected to occur. One of the Japanese students in fact commented that he found one of the tutorials good for him because everyone was nominated for comments and it forced him to participate.

The second dimension of the relationship between silence and participant structures is degree of public exposure. Apprehension about 'speaking in front of people' was given as a reason for silence by six of the Japanese students:

(20) [...] I don't like speaking in front of people, though I don't mind speaking in a small group. [24:184 M5]

(21) I don't like that kind of, speaking in front of people, you see. [16:162 F5]

Strategies for dealing with this apprehension included taking a seat near the lecturer to make speaking less threatening compared with having to speak up to address the lecturer from a distance, and a preference for asking questions of lecturers in private after class rather than during the class. For example:

(22) [...] even if I have something I didn't understand [during the lecture], I'd prefer to, like um, go and ask a question to the lecturer by myself later. [28:46 F3]

The preference for private communication with lecturers has often been discussed in studies in teaching of international students in general (Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Thorp 1991) and Japanese students (Anderson 1992). In the survey study by Braddock et al. (1995) at Macquarie University in Australia, 69% of the overseas students (among whom more than 80% of respondents were from Asian regions) indicated that they preferred asking questions after lectures rather than during lectures (p. 48). However, similar studies on Australian student preferences have

not been discussed in the literature and therefore their preferences for asking questions during class cannot be assumed.

As shown earlier, it was reported that there is a tendency for less silence to occur in small group discussions (participant structure 3), and more silence in open group discussions of the whole class (participant structure 4). This contrast can be addressed by considering the degree of public attention in class. In other words, participant structures which give a lower degree of public attention to the speaker are likely to correlate with less silence from Japanese students, while in participant structures in which a higher degree of public attention is given to the speaker, one may see Japanese students being more silent. The degree of public attention is related to face-risk (Brown & Levinson 1987; Goffman 1955) in that the more public attention, the greater the threat to face. Silence has been found to serve as a strategy to avoid loss of face in public among hearing-impaired people (Jaworski & Stephens 1998), and it can be used for the same purpose by Japanese students. Silence in open discussion is to be explored in more detail in the next section, and further investigated in the case studies in Chapter 5.

When we look at the two dimensions of pressure and public attention, the degree of public exposure seems to be overridden by the pressure to talk. Students reported to opt for speaking even if they were to be heard when nominated by the teacher, a participant structure in which the pressure to talk is high. Kurzon (2001) points out the difficulties people may have remaining silent when asked a question, by referring to Malone (1986) and Schulhofer (1987). Kurzon (2001) also claims these difficulties are particularly felt when the questioner is in an authoritative role. Therefore, although a student's turn through nomination in this participant structure is heard by the whole class, silence here would be a highly marked behaviour, and hence is likely to be avoided. As Sifianou (1997) states, silence when not responding to a question can be seen as a sign of rudeness rather than as an attempt to avoid a face-threatening act. It is interesting, however, that in Japanese high school classrooms, this type of silence was commonly seen (Chapter 3), and we will be examining some examples of this silence in the case studies in Chapter 5.

From another perspective, however, when the level of public exposure is high and the pressure to talk is low, as in open class discussions or in straight lectures, Japanese student silence is likely to be most distinctively found, according to their comments. The Japanese students' comments on silence in the interviews were given mainly in relation to open class discussions. Moreover, they often compared their own silence with their Australian peers' volubility in this participant structure.

(23) M2: Well I think Australians need to be talking, or you could also say they like discussions.
I: Is that so. But there must be shy people, you know. Would they like discussions?
M2: Not so many Australians are shy, I think... compared with Asian people who are shy, they are somehow totally //different... // Even if they are shy, they would say their opinions.
F8: //totally different//
[23:353-356, M2&F8]

Another student's comment also reflects this contrast and furthermore suggests that there may be something more than an issue of language proficiency in his own silence.

(24) I: What is your impression of Australian students in class?
M5: Well, you know, they speak a lot. Of course, compared with international students, there may be a role of language proficiency in it, but even if I were studying at university in Japan, I don't think I would be so enthusiastic. [8:111-112 M5]

From the Japanese students' point of view, speaking in open discussions by actively volunteering as their Australian peers do is something 'different' from their own behaviour. Yet at the same time, they also perceive not speaking in open discussions as a 'problem,' not only because they are aware of the expectations in Australian university classrooms but also because participation is often a part of the course assessment.

In the lecturer responses to the questionnaire conducted at the University of Sydney, half the respondents mentioned the low frequency of participation, or silence, of the Japanese students in their classes, even though my research focus on silence was not explicit in the questionnaire. In the responses, silence was generally mentioned as one of the 'weaknesses' of the Japanese students in their classes. A similar pattern can be found in the results of the Macquarie University study (Braddock et al. 1995), where 50–60% of the lecturer respondents found Asian international students to be quiet, silent and not actively asking questions in lectures and tutorials. Supporting this view, only 3% of the respondents agreed with the statement "Students ask many questions."

Thus, the image of silent Japanese students seems to be held by both Japanese students themselves and their lecturers. The question is, however, whether the silences described by Japanese students and lecturers are the same. In the lecturer comments in my own survey, similar silences through the various participant structures discussed above can be found. To begin with, Japanese students were

often found to be silent in open discussions, as can be seen in a comment such as "Often silent when other students engage in discussion."

Lecturers also found Japanese students to be "reluctant to ask questions" in class, and this reluctance to ask questions were seen as marked. Occasionally, a surprise was expressed at the quality of the students' written work or thoughtful responses when they were nominated to speak:

(25) Some students are quiet, and don't speak much in class but write very good essays when they have time to think and compose their sentences on paper. [LQ5]

(26) Sometimes they are reluctant to ask questions, but when asked for a response they are thoughtful in their answer. [LQ8]

As the use of the conjunction "but" above implies, these qualities are seen as contradictory: 'silent' students versus 'thoughtful answers' and 'good essays'.

Australian lecturers appear to regard oral performance in class as an important criterion for academic competence. They expect students to ask questions and be interactive in participation structures such as open class discussion (4) or lectures (7) where the pressure to speak is relatively low. The underlying assumption seems to be that the more interaction there is in class, the better the learning which takes place. If there are silent students, they are seen to hinder the effectiveness of this learning-through-interaction. Indeed, some Japanese students complained that they felt misjudged by lecturers as incompetent precisely because of their silence (see Section 4.4.2 below).

With regard to the participation structure in which the teacher nominates a student for a response (1), Japanese students were not regarded as silent. When students were nominated, "thoughtful answers" were heard, as the comment above shows. A lecturer also stated that although Japanese students do not participate voluntarily, when nominated, they "are very good, giving lots of interesting comments, and sometimes they even joke."

As these lecturer responses demonstrate, perceptions about patterns of Japanese student silence and participation seem to be shared by Japanese students and Australian lecturers. In the following section of this chapter, I will discuss socio-psychological factors contributing to silence, examining lack of participation from the perspective of politeness theory.

4.3 Socio-psychological factors contributing to silence: Politeness orientations

The next category emerging from the Japanese student comments relates to socio-psychological aspects of classroom participation; that is, silence which reflects inhibition, fear, anxiety or embarrassment about speaking in public. This seems to lead to a use of silence as a face-saving strategy (Chapter 2).

4.3.1 Maintaining positive face of the self

In the comment below, the student indicates that a lack of confidence in English and anxiety due to having to speak in front of native speakers lead to her silence.

(27) You know, with Chinese people for example, their English is not perfect. So, in fact it's easy for me to speak with them. I get nervous when I speak with native speakers, thinking something like, 'What if my English is not correct?' But with people like Chinese people, I can speak without worrying about this kind of thing. [25:92 F1]

This student also mentioned that she experienced racism during her time at secondary school in Australia, and her friendship group tended to be made up of Asian students. The fear and rejection she experienced may have had a silencing effect, similar to that shown in Losey's (1997) study of Mexican American female students in the U.S. and found among migrant students from Hong Kong in Canadian high schools in a study by Goldstein (2003). Goldstein described this as "inhibitive silence" (p. 65), drawing on Cheung's (1993) discussion of student silence. Thomas (1983: 106), drawing on Glahn (1981), comments that "[n]on-native speakers may sometimes appear to be behaving in a pragmatically inappropriate manner (for example, by being unexpectedly deferential) because they (rightly) perceive themselves to be at a disadvantage." Such a perception of disadvantage puts non-native speakers on a different footing from native-speaker Australian students and, where there is a high risk of face loss, may affect the line of interaction taken.

An anticipation of being negatively perceived by the lecturer also seems to inhibit participation:

(28) I must say asking questions to the lecturer is kind of scary. Because I don't have confidence in grasping the theories, I have this fear that lecturers may in fact spot my weakness if I ask questions. So I decide I'd better not do it. [20:69 F9]

The fear of negative evaluation due to lack of sufficient preparation for class or an inadequate grasp of the subject matter were given by other Japanese students as causes for their silence. Below is an example:

(29) How can I say, something 'wrong,' in Japan, saying something 'wrong' is well not quite bad, but somehow it's like shameful, if you say something wrong, you feel embarrassed, and that sort of thing I still have with me. So yeah I hate saying something wrong, in front of people. [28:48 F3]

What is important to note here is that this is unlike the standard interpretation of politeness strategies as ways to save the addressee's face, as in the study of the silences of hearing-impaired people by Jaworski & Stephens (1998), where silence was used in group conversation to avoid imposition on others to slow down or speak louder for them. In my study, the Japanese student silence described above is employed to protect their positive face, which "includes the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 62). From their point of view, the threat to *their own positive face* is too great for them to participate.

For example, one student, discussing student participation in a postgraduate teacher training program, stated that she would not speak if she lacked experience in the specific areas discussed in class, whereas some of her peers, although less experienced, would participate:

(30) Even someone who is not so much older than me, they would acknowledge their lack of experience, but they have spent longer time as students than teachers and they talk about it… Yeah. I find more people who speak out even if they don't have enough experience. [20:35 F9]

On the other hand, she said she spoke more often about education in Japan, since she had relevant knowledge and experience as the only Japanese student in the group.

Interestingly, being aware of the consequences of silence, and in order to enhance confidence, and thus their own positive face, some students went to class with prepared comments or responses to questions which would be asked in class. One student spoke to the lecturer after one class and asked for the questions for the next class so that he could prepare his comments at home. He also asked the lecturer to nominate him for these comments so that he would not miss out by failing to jump into the discussion. Another student made an arrangement with a classmate to have a question and an answer ready before his presentation. Opportunities for preparation allowed the Japanese students to avoid saying something 'wrong' both in terms of content and language and thus to reduce the risk of face loss.

In all social encounters, as Goffman (1955) argues, human beings do 'face-work' to avoid the loss face. Thus, one would also expect Australian students to experience risk in voluntary participation, although they are unlikely to suffer from a fear of producing incorrect English sentences. However, silence as a face-saving strategy does not seem to be common among Australian students. Instead, there were comments by Japanese students about Australian students speaking without fear:

(31) F8: They don't keep it to themselves, I think. Like, it's a bit of an idea, and it's not a big deal.
M2: I think they just put their thoughts into words and speak straight away. And they don't think they are silly. Or, they are not wrong, and it's not like they don't want to feel embarrassed [23:265-66 F8&M2]

(32) M2: Not so many Australians are shy, I think […] compared with Asian people who are shy, they are somehow totally different […] even if they are shy, they would give their opinions. [23:353-356, M2&F8]

For these Japanese students, volunteering "a bit of an idea" is in fact "a big deal" and they "don't want to feel embarrassed" by saying something wrong.

One way to explain this gap is differences in the schema and interpretive frames. Schema is a notion originally discussed by Bartlett (1932), and has been used extensively in discourse analysis. (for example, Gumperz 1982; Roberts & Sayers 1987; Tannen 1993a). It is "a set of knowledge and belief structures" which has been accumulated through our past experiences and which scaffolds assumptions about our social interaction (Roberts & Sayers 1987: 115). Interpretive frame, a notion developed by Bateson (1972) is a set of expectations about types of roles and activities on which interactants rely to interpret what is going on, and in order to react accordingly. These notions of schema and interpretive frame have been particularly useful in analyzing intercultural discourse (Gumperz 1992; Tannen 1993a; Tyler 1995), where differences in schemata and interpretive frames have often been found to trigger miscommunication or misunderstanding.

In the context of the present study, therefore, different assumptions and beliefs about education, and different expectations concerning appropriate behaviour in the classroom, may lead to cross-cultural clashes. The Japanese students' references to 'wrong' English in the answers shown above seem to reflect the educational practices and ideology of Japanese schooling, where correctness of the end product is valued over the process of learning, such as classroom discussion (e.g. Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Kato 2001; Milner & Quilty 1996; Yoneyama 1999). Japanese students appear to have different criteria for relevance and correctness of student comments in the classroom, and hence frame classroom participation

as a risky act. As we saw above Australian students' participation was criticized by a number of Japanese students for its carelessness and irrelevance. For Australian students, on the other hand, it is possible that in the classroom, learning is seen as being achieved through negotiation of ideas, and therefore quantity of talk matters. The ideologies and theories of education in Australia encourage student-centred classroom practice; classroom participation is often given weight as part of assessment, and active participation is often seen as indicating engagement and willingness to learn (Ballard 1996; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996). In such contexts, silence may be interpreted as unsuccessful learning (Jaworski & Sachdev 2004) rather than as a fear of saying something wrong. This may be one of the driving forces for Australian students' volubility.

4.3.2 Silence to save the other's face: 'Don't do the FTA' strategy

Another socio-psychological factor which seems to impact on Japanese students' perceived silence concerns power, social distance and level of face-threat. When Japanese students refrain from expressing disagreement with the lecturer, silence is being used as a 'Don't do the FTA' strategy in a classic sense (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987; Sifianou 1997). Criticism and disagreement are acts which are 'dispreferred seconds' (Levinson 1983; Pomeranz 1984; Sacks 1987), and are in general also highly face-threatening for the addressee (Brown & Levinson 1987). The use of silence, instead of the verbal expression of critical views or disagreement, can be identified as the superstrategy of 'Don't do the FTA'. This type of silence is illustrated in the Japanese students' comments, below:

(33) I don't really challenge lecturers. ... There were times when I didn't understand what was wrong with the way I was working, but I didn't particularly challenge the lecturers. I didn't change the way I had been working. I continued the work the way I wanted to anyway. [7:24 M4]

(34) As you know, because Australians particularly have their own stance and sort of never compromise, the lecturers would get them to justify their positions. As for me, I accept what the lecturers say at once, like 'Oh, I see.' (laugh). [5:88 M3]

These comments imply the students' preference for deferential silence over 'dispreferred' seconds or responses (Levinson 1983; Pomeranz 1984; Sacks 1987) such as criticism or disagreement, which threaten the face of the listener. It is interesting to note that, in the first comment, the student's silence was not acceptance of the teacher's advice but rather avoidance of confrontation, or even resistance beneath a surface acceptance, since he continued with his own way of

working on his project. Any hidden criticism or disagreement may not surface and therefore may not be noticed by lecturers, but if it emerges, for instance in written assignments, it may lead to a serious sociopragmatic failure. Whether or not relatively less power difference between students and lecturers is realised in actual classroom discourse, in the Australian university context, where critical thinking is encouraged (e.g. Ballard 1996; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Matsuda 2000; Milner & Quilty 1996), expressing critical views or disagreement with classmates or the lecturer is regarded as a sign of engagement and enthusiasm in learning as well as a way of showing academic competence.

As to the second comment, this student indicated he had confidence but he often found himself accepting lecturers' propositions without question. He compared himself with Australian students, saying "you know I find myself weak."

In lecturer responses to the questionnaire, a 'critical approach' was frequently seen as lacking in Japanese students:

(35) I find that they have difficulty with adopting a critical perspective. They tend to seek a 'right' or 'wrong' answer to a question and this is not possible from a sociological perspective. They tend to learn by rote rather than critical inquiry. This holds them back behind Australian educated students. [LQ25]

(36) Writing is reasonable. Grammar is strong. But critical thinking skills often prevent these students from achieving high grades. [LQ4]

If students are expected to perform orally in order to display their critical thinking skills in Australian university classrooms, failure to perform in this respect would be seen as inadequate by lecturers.

'Silence' in these cases of disagreement may not simply be a total lack of verbal communication. Rather, it is *not performing a certain speech act*. This type of silence is discussed in Berman's (1998) study of Javanese women who refrained from speaking out their protest against their employers, since their society expected its women to keep this silence. (Some of them were later shown to be empowered by breaking this silence.) In a similar manner, Japanese student silences in response to confrontation can also be explained by their social expectations of communicative behaviour in teacher-student encounters. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, questioning or critically commenting on the subject matter in Japanese classrooms is unusual, principally because of the non-negotiable nature of knowledge for which the teacher is the authority. An awareness of this Japanese attitude towards knowledge was reflected in comments about Japanese students by some lecturers in my questionnaire study:

(37) Many believe that the teacher is the sole expert/transmitter of knowledge. [LQ28]

(38) Often silent when other students engage in discussion. It does not always mean language difficulty, one suspects culture that expects only instruction. [LQ3]

(39) An inability to be critical of the material they learn, to question authority, and to speak to their teachers in a relaxed manner....A less authoritarian and hierarchical educational system is needed so that Japanese students can develop to the fullest extent of their developmental potential. [LQ13]

In the Macquarie University survey (Braddock et al. 1995), 64% of the teaching staff saw international students as polite. The study interprets this politeness as a reflection of Asian students' perception of academic teaching staff as "parental figures" (p. 20) who should be experts in everything.

However, silence can be a strategy to avoid confrontation and violation of social rules at the surface level of communication; underneath the 'polite' behaviour of Japanese students resistance and disagreement may be hidden, as in the case of the student (in example (33) above) who used silence to cover up his rejection of the lecturer's advice.

In addition to the influence of hierarchy on the silence, distance and formality among students and between students and the teacher assumed in the public sphere of Japanese high school classroom lessons (Chapter 3) may also be playing a role in Japanese student silence in Australian classrooms. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that not only hierarchical relationships but also the social distance among participants in a social encounter provide conditions for them to work on negative politeness which in turn orients participants towards avoidance of imposition. This in turn suggests that solidarity may enhance the participation of Japanese students, as we can see in the comment below:

(40) F6: This term, even though I didn't say anything at all in any subjects before, I began to speak from this semester.
I: How did you work out, how?
F6: Well, the strategy is, not with the lecturer but with the tutor, I am close. That way, I don't feel nervous, because it's someone I always talk to. Because I know that what I say will receive proper attention. I can speak calmly. [30:43-45 F6]

Identifying oneself with other interactants and sharing the membership of a group raise the possibility of more positive politeness strategies being applied in interaction, as Brown and Levinson (1987) argue. In their view, positive polite-

ness strategies are applied when there is relatively less threat to face. With higher threat to face, negative politeness strategies are appropriate.

As the Japanese student commented above (in (34)), Australian students often express a critical attitude to lecturers, which suggests that they may assume a less hierarchical relationship with their lecturers. Whether or not a comparatively egalitarian relationship is reflected in interaction between students and teachers in a real sense, Australian students may have been socialised into classroom practices in which they are expected to show a critical attitude to learning, to question knowledge and to negotiate with the teacher (cf. Chapter 3).

Thus, Australian classroom participants and Japanese students appear to have different politeness orientations, which impact on the participants' preferences as to performance/non-performance of certain speech acts. According to Thomas (1983), such a mismatch of schema and interpretive frames is a cause of 'cross-cultural pragmatic failure', where interactants from different cultural backgrounds misunderstand or miscommunicate intended meanings. Thomas (1983) identifies two types of pragmatic failure: (1) pragmalinguistic failure and (2) sociopragmatic failure. In pragmalinguistic failure, the "attitude of the speaker towards the information" is not mutually understood, while in sociopragmatic failure, it is the "intended illocutionary force and/or attitude of the speaker to the hearer," which is not mutually understood. (ibid.: 101) The type of mismatch in schema and interpretive frame between Japanese and Australian students mentioned above can cause sociopragmatic failure. Thomas (1983) claims:

> It is cross-cultural mismatches in the assessment of social distance, of what constitutes an imposition, of when an attempt at a 'face-threatening act' should be abandoned, and in evaluating relative power, rights, and obligations, etc., which cause sociopragmatic failure. (p. 104)

In their schema and interpretive frame of classroom interaction, Japanese students may find the level of threat to their own face in the act of speaking higher than their Australian counterparts do. However, there are also Australian students who do not participate or who find it difficult to participate (Chapter 5), and it is possible that the Japanese interviewees may have overgeneralised ideas about their Australian peers.

4.4 Cognitive factors contributing to silence

4.4.1 Speed of reaction

Another explanation for silence from the Japanese student perspectives is the cognitive processing time needed for reaction in the classroom. Word-search and formulation of ideas unrelated to proficiency in English can cause a period of silence (Fayer & Krasinski 1995; Wigglesworth 1997). Although this silence for cognitive processing is necessary for all participants in interaction, nearly half of the Japanese students mentioned that the Australian students' reactions were too fast to keep up with. Comments such as "We need more time to think," or "We cannot come up with ideas so quickly," were made by five of the Japanese students.

(41) When I am asked a question, it takes a while for me to think about it. So, while I am thinking about the question, other people say various things, and the lecturer makes the final remark, moving on like 'Okay, next.' It's like that. They finish and move on. [30:93 F7]

There is a possibility that this student needs time for linguistic processing, but nevertheless it seems that she requires more time for formulation of the content of her response than her peers, as she says "thinking about the question" takes a while. Some students, however, explicitly attribute their silence to the speed of their language processing.

(42) A little bit of time, say, for about three seconds before I say something, I need it to decide what to say. I cannot think and talk at the same time like in Japanese. [8:162 M5]

As a matter of fact, it is difficult to distinguish between linguistic and non-linguistic cognitive processing. The student who gave the above comment is most likely to find himself struggling to find the right words and expressions to use in his second language, but at the same time he may be experiencing the gap in response speed caused by differences in learned speed of cognitive processing in the classroom.

Nevertheless, with regard to the rapidity of response, Japanese students' comments about their own inability to formulate ideas contrasted with their view of the Australian students' abilities:

(43) F3: Well, surely I envy them [Australian students] for being able to talk like that. The moment a question is there, they come up with their own opinions so quickly.
F4: And we don't. [28:116-117 F3&F4]

These students went on to explain such abilities of Australian students by referring to the way they were educated:

(44) F4: You know, they are so quick. They are ready, and very quick.
F3: Yeah. So quick. I suppose it's because they are used to it, or even because they have been educated that way.
F4: It looks like it. [28:122-124 F3 & F4]

The two students in the excerpt above also indicated that the Australian students react rapidly to questions and cues in the classroom because Australian children are trained to make their own choices and express their own opinions, while Japanese children are trained to listen to adults and not to assert themselves against them. In fact, this view is often repeated by Japanese expatriates living in Australia. Nichigō Press, which is a Japanese community newspaper in Australia, often notes in its columns on education in Australia that choice-making, expressing opinions, and acknowledging different perspectives of individuals are characteristics of Australian education both in the home environment and in schools. These characteristics are often compared with those of Japan and regarded as positive models. In one issue, the Sydney Japanese School principal was interviewed for a column called "Australian Education." The column reported:

> What he [the principal] realised in particular through exchanges with local schools is local students' 'attitudes to clearly state their own thoughts and ideas, and to listen to what others say.' (Nichigō Press, April 2000, p. 74)

Such views are indeed supported by the analysis of interaction in Japanese high school classrooms (discussed in Chapter 3). Not many classes are structured to allow students to express their own ideas and opinions, and even if encouraged, students are reluctant to do so. As indicated in the survey results, the Japanese students' frustrations at not being allowed enough time to think does not seem to be acknowledged as a relevant factor by Australian teaching staff. It is certainly difficult for lecturers to make a clear distinction between the cognitive processing time required for formulation of language and for reaction to the content of the stimulus. However, it seems that the gap in 'reaction time' may not be recognised by lecturers but instead may be perceived as a consequence of other factors such as a lack of language proficiency, lack of confidence, or the hierarchical teacher-student relationship. The complexity of silence in multicultural classrooms where participants who bring different sociocultural backgrounds meet and negotiate participation may be overlooked in this respect.

4.4.2 Norms of relevance

As discussed earlier, Japanese students seem to have stricter criteria than Australian students for the relevance of comments in discussions and the appropriacy of questions for lecturers, and they consequently perceive a higher risk of face-loss in volunteering participation than do their Australian counterparts. A comment by a Japanese student below illustrates this point:

(45) M8: But when you cannot finish the reading assignment, you would rather not ask questions, I think.
I: Right. I wouldn't-
M8: If you ask about what is written there [as an answer], it is rude. Not even embarrassing but rude, don't you think? [13:56-58 M8]

This student (M8) also complained that in one class, a peer student asked why a certain technical term was used, even though it was clearly defined in the reading material. He was not happy about the fact that the lecturer took time and effort to answer the question. He went on to say:

(46) Also, at times when you cannot understand something, well I think it's rather psychological, but when you cannot understand, how can I put it, well, it's not really anybody's fault, but whether you think you are not good enough or something else, you know, it's definitely a difference, I think. If it's me, if I didn't know something, even though I wouldn't think it's bad, but I would think I should have covered that area myself. But other people probably tend to .... ask the lecturer if they don't understand. [13:62-66 M8]

These comments take us back to the socio-psychological aspect of participation which holds Japanese students back from participation. If Japanese students have stricter criteria for relevance, there is more chance of risking loss of face when they participate.

Fear of producing irrelevant or inappropriate speech in class does not seem to be the only relevance-related trigger for silence. Irrelevant speech by other students also seems to affect Japanese student participation. There are instances where Japanese students seem to 'switch off' and choose to stop engaging in discussions when irrelevance is perceived. The following exchange from a focus group interview illustrates this:

(47) M2: I think it is possible that Asian students just give up if they find it [discussion] pointless.
F8: Often it's not because of lack of understanding but because of lack of attention. [23:248-249 M2&F8]

In this case, silence symbolises the message, "this discussion is pointless," and is an aspect of Japanese students' silence which also does not seem to be recognised by lecturers. As discussed earlier, negative feelings can be found among Japanese students who accuse Australian students of saying what is irrelevant, as the following comments show:

(48) F9: My impression is that occasionally, occasionally, or well, often, how can I say, because they can use English, they, like, say what they don't need to say. How can I put it...
I: What do you mean by 'what they don't need to say?'
F9: Well for example, going off the track. But because they are native speakers, they can say even tedious things as much as they like, right? [20:48:50 F9]

In fact, some students argue that they are unfairly judged as incompetent because of their silence:

(49) When I feel I am perhaps misunderstood is, like, it is said that, like over here, how can I say, if you don't claim where you stand, or if you don't speak up, um people would think you are not thinking at all, something like that. I think there is a tendency to be regarded that way. [8:152 M5]

(50) I don't worry [about participation marks] too much. (laugh) Well, but I wonder what it is to 'participate.' For example, may be there are students who always ask questions, but if you know [the answer], you don't need to ask questions, right? [30:87 F7]

In this case, silence may be a message of "this discussion is going off the track and the important point we need to consider is...." However, this does not seem to be recognised by lecturers, naturally because it is not 'heard.' This type of silence is then recognised as a 'lack of critical thinking skills' when it actually bears a 'critical' message about the direction of the discussion, in which case all participants in class may be missing out on a more meaningful interchange. Indeed, while there may be cases in which Australian students' comments are irrelevant, there may be cases where Japanese students' potentially relevant thoughts and ideas are likely to remain unspoken, and unrecognised. At the same time, it is also possible that such negative comments by the Japanese students may be used, in some cases, to justify their silence because of lack of interactive or lexico-grammatical competence.

The question then arises as to what is actually regarded as 'irrelevant' by Japanese students but 'relevant' by Australian students. One factor or relevance can be seen in the way in which, Australian students were often found to be associat-

ing their personal life and experiences outside the classroom with the knowledge learned in the classroom:

(51) For example, it is impressive to see them [Australian students] making clever use of their own knowledge or something they have seen on TV, or something from other books that they read not necessarily for the particular class. [28:114 F4]

(52) Especially when those people who ask questions to the lecturers, who have their own stances, bring in examples from something they are personally familiar with, well, often these things are not familiar with me, and I feel 'Oh, I have no idea,' and give up. [22:18 F10]

This tendency of Australian students may disadvantage overseas students who are less able to participate since they may be less familiar with local issues or with aspects of culture including history, media, sports, entertainment or general social issues.

However, when issues relevant to countries other than Australia are brought into class discussions, participation can be expected, as in the case of the education major student mentioned earlier (Section 4.3.1). In another example, a lecturer in business in an Australian university gave me an account (personal correspondence)[2] in which one Australian student had showed his surprise saying "Asians can contribute!" after Asian overseas students had actively participated in the class. In relation to the issues being discussed in his class, this lecturer tended to offer examples from Asian countries. This meant that Asian students were able to share their background knowledge with the class.

In addition, it is also possible to find cases of Japanese student adaptation to the Australian education framework:

(53) I said something once, in class. I expressed my ideas and the lecturer expanded on my ideas. That was quite good, as learning…. I think that kind of participation is actually to receive some feedback. It doesn't really look like they want to show off like Japanese do, does it? It's not that they want to show that they know this and that, but somehow it's like genuinely, they share what they know and want to get some feedback for it. [13:13-109 M8]

In fact, numerous comments indicate Japanese students' appreciation of the Australian educational framework as allowing them to explore their 'own' ideas and opinions. The expression *jibun no kangae* 'my own idea(s)' was frequently used in

2. I would like to thank Dr. Loong Wong from the University of Newcastle, Australia for sharing his experiences and insights in relation to Asian students' silence.

describing what they like about studying in Australia. The Macquarie University survey (Braddock et al. 1995) results also indicated that about 60% of international students have a desire to develop critical thinking skills, and that 69% think developing their own ideas in learning is more important than reciting pregiven ideas.

Japanese students also perceive themselves as having sufficiently adapted, particularly in written assignments. For example, one of the Japanese students said he often used *manga* (cartoons) in his presentations to compensate for his lack of confidence in oral communication skills. Some Japanese students see the Australian framework as 'important,' but they cannot adapt themselves to it easily:

(54) I know that for questions, for questions, we Japanese students only look for the answers. It's like 'So what is the answer?' But it looks like students here often pour out things which make me think 'It's got nothing to do with the question!' ... But the lecturers don't say things I would say such as 'You are off the track,' if I was them. Rather, they seem to value these comments. ... I think these things may be important, but for us, it is the most difficult thing, for Japanese people. [27:123 F4]

Comments by lecturers in the questionnaire responses generally did not reveal an awareness that students may have had difficulties in expressing their own ideas or relating their own experiences. Only the lecturer who gave accounts (through personal communication, mentioned earlier) of Asian students actively participating in class had students talk about personal and culturally familiar topics. It may be worth mentioning here that neither this lecturer, who was a Malay-Australian, nor the only lecturer in my survey study who perceived Japanese students to be active participants, spoke English as a first language. Below is a comment by the latter lecturer in response to the question about the strengths of the Japanese students in her class:

(55) Open-mindedness and desire for learning, confident and independent approach to own learning, generally high level of participation in class [LQ31]

It is possible that, because of shared Asian backgrounds, there may have been more opportunities, with this lecturer, for Japanese students to bring up their background knowledge in class. Conversely, if Anglo-Australian lecturers predominantly require local background knowledge and experiences to be articulated, it may reduce participation opportunities for overseas students.

4.5 Intentional and unintentional silence

Before concluding this chapter, I will introduce one other dimension of silence which I find important. This is to do with the intentionality of silence. Kurzon (1997) identifies intentional and unintentional silences, referring to the former as silence intentionally used as a strategy, while referring to the latter as silence caused unintentionally due to extreme anxiety, embarrassment or panic. Consciously avoiding voluntarily participation to avoid loss of face may be considered as intentional silence, while a state of extreme second language anxiety when surrounded by native speaker peers may be considered as unintentional silence. The effort to overcome silence by making special arrangements with lecturers, or students' references to 'difficulty' in participating, suggests there is a sense of inability, and thus unintentionality. It appears, though, that inability is not the only aspect of withdrawal from participation. Some students indicated that they did not *like* participating or asking questions in class. For example, some Japanese students spoke of their preference to take a seat in the classroom in which they were less likely to get attention from the lecturer or the tutor. This is clearly an avoidance strategy. One of the Japanese students said in interview that she was going to skip a tutorial because it was too small, and she would be expected to speak more often than in a larger class. These strategies appear to be used in order to avoid situations in which silence is not tolerated. In other words, with these strategies, these Japanese students seem to resist the pressure to participate. Thus, not only inability but also resistance can be observed in Japanese student silences. In these cases, silence was chosen intentionally, in contrast with unintentional silence due to inability, whether it be linguistic, cognitive or socio-psychological.

The problem is, however, that, due to the ambiguous nature of silence, it is often difficult to discern the intentionality of silence (Jaworski 1993). In some of the comments by Japanese students, it is possible to find what could be called 'risk assessment time':

(56) I often hesitate like "Shall I speak, or not." While I am doing this, other people will say this and that, so there is nothing more I can say. But it looks Aussies don't have that kind of hesitation I have. [30:82 F7]

The risk is assessed of saying something irrelevant, being silenced or interrupted or, if the speaker struggles, of losing the floor or producing a long silent pause. This risk seems to be carefully assessed, and the chance of participation can be lost because of this hesitation caused by careful assessment. It can also be dropped intentionally if the risk is found too high. Thus, this type of withdrawal from participation can have an unintentional element as well as an intentional element. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the *assessment* of silences whether they

are intentional or unintentional, because even unintentional silences may be interpreted by other interactant(s) as intentional. Hence, in the following chapter, rather than trying to determine the existence of intentionality, *assessment* of the intentionality of silence by the participants will be the focus of discussions.

4.6 Summary: Perceptions of silence in intercultural communication

Various aspects of Japanese student silences in Australian university classrooms, as perceived by Japanese students themselves and their Australian lecturers, have emerged from the interviews and questionnaires. In particular, a lack of voluntary participation in participant structures such as open discussion was noted by both groups. In the latter part of the chapter, I presented explanations for such silence from the perspectives of both Japanese students and Australian lecturers.

Linguistic proficiency was the most frequently mentioned explanation for silence by Japanese students, while other factors such as politeness or relevance were mentioned less frequently and less directly associated with silence. Along with the Macquarie University survey results (Braddock et al. 1995), it seems that international students regard their linguistic proficiency as one of the major reasons for remaining silent. However, not only lexico-grammatical competence but also turn-taking skills were found to be an issue, and this will be explored in the case studies in Chapter 5.

Comments by both Japanese students and Australian lecturers showed that sociocultural background is also considered to be an explanation of silence, confirming findings of existing research (Chapter 2). Having been socialised into the classroom practice of Japan, Japanese students bring different assumptions about knowledge and learning processes. These assumptions may clash with Australian norms of classroom interaction and result in Japanese student silences. For example, disagreement, critical comments and jokes are not expected to be voiced by students because they are not expected in Japanese classroom practices. However, covert messages behind the silence of Japanese students were not necessarily recognised by lecturers. Instead, their silence may be interpreted as 'lack of critical thinking skills' or 'expressions of politeness.'

Japanese students are, however, not necessarily slaves to their own culture. Many seem to appreciate the originality, creativity and independence in learning which they see as Australian academic values. However, lack of social contacts with local students seems to be one of the factors which make it difficult for them to accustom themselves to the discursive features of Australian students, which is in turn necessary for successful participation in classroom discussion.

Lecturers also do not seem to realise that silence may also be constructed through the internal organisation of intercultural classroom interaction. Since they appear to regard the speed of talk and turn-taking in Australian classrooms as normal, they do not see how dazzled some Japanese students feel. As we have seen in the comments of Japanese students, instances of 'silencing' may be found, which means that silence may be *co-constructed* with lecturers or peers. The investigation of this aspect will be left to the case studies in Chapter 5 where video and audio recorded classroom interaction will be closely examined and the perceptions of Australian students about Japanese students, not discussed in this chapter, will be included.

CHAPTER 5

Performance and perceptions of silence

An empirical view

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the interface between the actual performance and perceptions of silence in intercultural communication through an analysis of classroom interaction and interview comments in three case studies. The research questions I address in this chapter are as follows:

1. Are Japanese students silent in their classroom performances?
   and if so,
2. How are the Japanese students' silences constructed, in perceptions and in performance?

To address these questions, I found that a combination of observations, interviews and a detailed analysis of naturally occurring classroom interaction provided the most appropriate source of data. This combination of data provided both perceptions and performance surrounding the issue of silence at the micro-level of classroom interaction. Erickson (1996) calls this type of approach "microethnography" or "ethnographic microanalysis" (p. 283), and argues that in order to understand the subtle aspects of interaction which are often socially organised (Hymes 1972, 1974a, 1974b), it is necessary to directly analyse interaction in detail. According to Erickson (2004), his approach, "microethnography," has been influenced by streams of work such as ethnography of communication (Hymes 1972, 1974a, 1974b; Saville-Troike 1984), conversation analysis (traced back to early works by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, for example, 1974), Goffman's work on 'face' (e.g. Goffman 1955) and interactional sociolinguistics which is represented by Gumperz (1982).[1] The importance of including interaction analysis in studies of multicultural classrooms is also supported by Gumperz (1981):

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1. Erickson's approach has recently shifted slightly towards incorporating the historical and socio-political contexts and their impact on negotiation of power in discourse. Although I

> When interpretations of behaviour differ as they do in most ethnically mixed classrooms, there is no way to safeguard against cultural bias in evaluating performances and to distinguish between differences in cultural style and differences in ability. Without reference to the actual process of interaction, nothing can be said about how participants react to and make sense out of particular tasks.
>
> (p. 6)

The approach taken by Gumperz and Erickson originally is influenced by Hymes' notion of 'communicative competence' (Hymes 1972). Hymes argued that competence in communication is judged not only by grammaticality but also functionality, appropriateness and feasibility. Thus, the discussion of the case studies below addresses the following questions: what forms of silence is observed in intercultural classroom communication, how these forms of silences are perceived by the Japanese students, Australian students and lecturers, and what functions are performed (or intended to be performed) by the silences observed. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, while the ethnography of communication assumes the transfer of discourse patterns acquired through acculturation processes in a speech community to intercultural communication, I attempt to demonstrate below how factors in the local context of talk may also play an important role in shaping participant performance in interaction. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the tension between the 'local' and 'global' contextual factors has been an ongoing issue in studies of talk and social context. This is precisely what I intend to argue for – the importance of looking both locally and globally – and this is precisely why it is important both to analyse details of classroom discourse using case studies and interview the participants in order to explore the intertwined relationship between individual, situational and sociocultural factors.

This chapter will discuss the performance and perceptions of classroom participants in three case studies following the framework introduced in Chapter 2: linguistic, socio-psychological and cognitive factors operating at individual, situational and sociocultural levels of discourse. The case studies, each with one focus Japanese participant, will also be discussed in relation to, and in comparison with, the sociocultural context of Japanese high school classrooms (Chapter 3), and the macro-level findings from the ethnographic interviews and questionnaires (Chapter 4). Before presenting the analysis and discussion of the results, I will begin with an overview of the methodology used in the case studies.

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sympathise with this modified approach, these aspects of discourse are beyond the scope of my analysis and discussion in this book, and therefore not included. For further details about Erickson's recent view, see Erickson (2004).

5.2 Methodology of the case studies

5.2.1 Japanese participants

Three Japanese students, who will be referred to as Tadashi (male), Miki (female) and Aya (female), and who were studying in mainstream programs at the University of Sydney, participated in the case studies. Tadashi and Aya also participated in the ethnographic interviews discussed in Chapter 4. Information relevant to these three participants, regarding the classroom sessions in which they were observed and the hours of these observations are shown in Table 5.1 (for more biographical information about the participants, see Appendix 4). All names are pseudonyms, and the names of courses have been modified for confidentiality.

All of the sessions observed took place at the University of Sydney during the period July 1999 to October 1999. Either seminar-type lectures or tutorials were targeted since relatively greater opportunities for interaction could be expected in these types of classes.

5.2.2 Classroom observation

Following the practice of ethnographic research, participants were observed in the classroom and fieldnotes were taken. In Miki's class (Case Study 2), the classroom data collection took the style of participant observation (see Berg 1998;

Table 5.1 Japanese participants in classroom case studies

Study no. & Participant		Gender	Age	Years of residency in Australia	Courses	Subject names of the classes observed and recorded	Hours observed (recorded)
1	Tadashi	M	27	8	Bachelor of Education LOTE (Languages other than English)	1. Teaching as a Profession 2. Curriculum and Examinations	3 hrs 20mns (3 hrs 20mns) 5 hrs (4 hrs)
2	Miki	F	24	2.5	MA Japanese Studies	Intercultural Communication	20 hrs (8 hrs)
3	Aya	F	23	6.5	BA Japanese & Education	1. History of Secondary Education 2. History of Japanese Literature	5 hrs 40mns (4 hrs) 2 hours observation only

Table 5.2 Participants in the observed classes in the case studies

Class name	Case Study participant	Lecturer	Number of students	Other students' backgrounds	Peer students interviewed
Teaching as a Profession	Tadashi	Ms Hardy Australian female	23	1 Australian male 1 American male 1 Italian male 1 Korean male 18 Australian females	1 Australian female
Curriculum and Examinations	Tadashi	Mr Fuller Australian male	5	1 Australian female 3 Australian females	1 Australian female
Intercultural communication	Miki	Dr Telfer Australian female	12	3 Australian males 2 Australian females 2 Filipino Australian females 1 Chinese male 1 Chinese female 3 Korean females	2 Australian-males 1 Australian-female
History of Secondary Education	Aya	Dr Lucas Australian male	4	2 Australian females 1 English male	1 Australian-female 1 British male
History of Japanese Literature*	Aya	Ms Mills	25	Not available	None

* This observation was organised after Aya mentioned a difference in her performance in different classroom contexts. Two lecturers from Japanese studies who had Aya in their class were also interviewed.

Davis 1995; Layder 1996). Details of all participants in the observed sessions are given in Table 5.2.

5.2.3 Video and audio recording from classroom observation

5.2.3.1 *Participation coding scheme*

The observed sessions above were audio taped and video recorded for detailed discourse analysis and coding of interactions. The classroom recording was coded for the following aspects of communication: (1) amount of verbal contribution; (2) degree of pressure to participate; and (3) quality of participation.

First, the amount of verbal contribution was measured, by counting the number of turns as well as the length of turns. This approach was taken to evaluate the view, shared by the Japanese students that the Australian students participate much more than do Japanese students.

Second, the number and the length of turns were coded in three situational categories derived from different participation patterns: individual nomination,

open floor and bidding. Identification of these participation patterns was derived from the notion of 'participant structures' in classroom settings (Philips 1972), but was modified based on my own data analysis.

These three participation patterns can be described as follows. Situations in which the teacher produces a long stretch of turn which consists of multiple turn construction units (TCUs) or in which a student produces a turn as a ratified speaker can be described as 'bidding', and bear relatively low pressure for students to participate verbally. Situations in which the teacher (or a student) addresses a question to the whole class, such as "Do you have any comments?", can be described as 'open floor' participation patterns with medium level and equally distributed pressure for participation. In the final case, situations in which an individual or a specific subgroup of students in the class is nominated by either the teacher or a student are regarded as 'individual nomination' patterns and entail a high level of pressure for participation.

Self-selecting a turn when there is no explicit stimulus to open the floor to the whole class is coded as a turn in the 'bidding' category. Interruption by an unratified speaker is also classified in the 'bidding' category. However, turn-taking with overlapping near the previous speaker's turn completion, in other words, transition relevance place (TRP) (Sacks et al. 1974), is not considered interruption and it can occur in any of the three participatory patterns described above. (For interruption and overlap, see Blimes 1997; Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff 2000; Tannen 1983.)

The third aspect of classroom interaction for coding is the quality of verbal participation. This aspect of verbal contribution in tutorials and seminars was found to be important in investigating the silence of Japanese students, since interview as well as observation data suggested that Japanese students could be perceived as silent because they do not perform certain types of participation moves. Since the interview and observation data showed that comments and questions are rarely raised by Japanese students in the classroom, participation types were given the following categories: comments, questions, clarification questions, factual response, yes-no response and supporting moves (for example, "yeah," "that's right"). The categories were data driven and derived from interviews, questionnaires, survey and observation. For details, sample coding sheets can be found in Appendix 5.

5.2.3.2 *Conversation analysis*

The second type of analysis applied to the recorded classroom interaction data is discourse analysis using a conversation analysis (CA) approach. Although traditionally, CA has exclusively studied monolingual interaction involving only native speakers of the language (Carroll 2000; Markee 2000; Wong 2000), recent studies

of NS-NNS interaction with CA have been able to reveal how NSs and NNSs behave in negotiating and constructing context (Firth 1995; Firth & Wagner 1997; Gardner & Wagner 2004; Wong 2000). However, there is a large gap, between CA and ethnography, in the description of 'context'; CA insists on limiting 'context' to locally evoked context while ethnography includes culture and environment external to local 'context' (Duranti & Goodwin 1992; Markee 2000; Moerman 1988). Thus, it has generally been considered impossible to integrate CA and ethnography in a study (Markee 2000; Schegloff 1987).

Nevertheless, some researchers have integrated CA with ethnography in their studies of talk-in-interaction, justifying the importance of ethnographic information to understand what goes on in culturally situated talk-in-interaction (Cicourel 1992; Moerman 1998). The present research, believing that CA and ethnography can benefit from each other, aims to integrate analysis from both approaches. This is because the main interest of the research is in the interaction between perceptions and performance of silence, and ethnography provides for perceptions while CA provides for performance. Furthermore, both approaches allow us to see how perception affects performance and vice versa. For this purpose, the analysis followed the fundamental principles of 'pure' CA, which only take account of local context. Only after describing the participants co-constructed the context and social order was the ethnographic information brought in.

In terms of the relevance of CA to the investigation of silence, it seems reasonable to suggest that CA is one of the most appropriate tools to study silence in talk. This is because CA treats silences such as gaps, pauses and lapses as important units in the analysis of talk-in-interaction (Sacks et al. 1974). For example, Jefferson's study (1989) of silent pauses and gaps in ordinary English conversation has shown, importantly, that participants in talk are likely to make certain moves when a silence of around one second or more occurs in conversational situations. Jefferson's finding is relevant to the present research, along with one of the norms of turn-taking argued by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) that, at the next possible opportunity to speak, the doer of the second pair part (SPP) of an adjacency pair has to do the SPP. Furthermore, in studies of silence in intercultural communication, the duration of gaps and the use of silence in performing SPPs have been extensively discussed (Carbaugh & Poutiainen 2000; Enninger 1987; Scollon 1985). These strengths of the CA approach, along with the quantitative analysis mentioned above, facilitated an empirical assessment of the widely-debated communicative silence of the Japanese speakers (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6).

5.2.4 Follow-up/stimulated recall interview

In multicultural and second language classroom research, follow-up interviews, in which participants are asked to explain their behaviour as well as their perception of others' behaviour as they review the video-recorded classroom events, has been used as a powerful strategy to validate findings from observation and interaction analysis of recorded classroom events (Gass & Mackey 2000; Nunan 1992; Seliger & Shohamy 1989; Sevigny 1981). Considering that silence is a context dependent and ambiguous phenomenon, and that its meaning and function is heavily dependent on the inferences and perspectives of participants (Jaworski, 1993; Saville-Troike 1985), elicitation of the participants' perceptions by follow-up interviews are essential in the study of silence.

The three Japanese case study participants, the four lecturers in charge of the observed sessions, and seven of Australian students who were in the observed classes (one peer student of Tadashi, two of Aya and three of Miki) were interviewed separately a short time after some of the observed sessions. All interviewees were asked questions about their interpretations of other participants' speech as well as intentions of their behaviour at particular points of interaction which were relevant to the research focus. In order to avoid biased comments, participants of the interviews were not informed about the focus issue of silence.

5.3 Talk and silence in the case studies: Comparison of performance and perceptions

The Japanese students' self-perceptions of silence, which emerged from the interviews (discussed in Chapter 4), confirm the widely discussed silence of 'Asian students in the West' (Chapter 2). However, empirical evidence which supports such attribution of silence to Asian students, in particular the actual amount of talk and silence, is scarce. Hence, in the case studies, as mentioned above, the quantity of participation was measured by coding the participants' participation in classroom interaction, that is, the 'performance data,' which will be presented below. It will be discussed in relation to the participants' perceptions of the Japanese students' performances as obtained through interviews.

5.3.1 Case Study 1: Tadashi

Tadashi had significantly fewer turns than his local Australian peers. Within the total time of the two two-hour tutorials in the Teaching as a Profession class, he

spoke only twice, on both occasions after being selected by the teacher. The average length of his turns was 1.5 seconds. Although the class, with 22 students, was large, extremely active involvement on the part of other students was observed throughout each of the two sessions. Overlapping, interruption and competition for the floor were frequently observed, and humour and jokes from the students were common. Tadashi, however, was an observer and did not attempt to jump into the class discussion at all. This was reflected in his interview comments which included, "I normally just listen, thinking, 'Right, right'" or "Generally I am on the side of listening, sometimes feeling amused, 'Hah hah, that's funny.'" In both of the two observed sessions, the students worked in pairs to discuss how they would cope with hypothetical problematic situations in the profession of teaching. The students were given about ten to fifteen minutes to discuss the situations in pairs, and the teacher asked each pair to report their solution to the class. The class was then invited to comment on the solutions. In the first session observed, it was Tadashi's partner in the pair work who told the class what they had discussed, and Tadashi did not speak during the class at all.

In the second session of Teaching as a Profession, it was again Tadashi's partner who initiated a comment. This time, however, Tadashi added a short comment, which was followed by the teacher's request for him to repeat. Although Tadashi spoke in this session, his contribution was significantly smaller than most other students.

To give a more general overview, Table 5.3 below shows the distribution of talk along with the average number of turns and average turn length (in seconds) of the sample population in this class (these conventions are followed in subsequent tables). Although the student number was 22, due to constraints on identifying participants in the video recorded data, the contributions of only nine students in the group are included.

Table 5.3 Number and length of turns in Teaching as a Profession (Total)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	2	2	3	1.0	1.5
Mark	1	34	309	34.0	9.1
Dave	1	31	308	31.0	10.0
Kylie	2	84	870	42.0	10.4
Michelle	1	34	385	34.0	11.3
Louise	1	17	130	17.0	7.6
Susie	1	1	4	1.0	4.0
Jenni	1	22	143	22.0	6.5
Pat	1	19	380	19.0	20.0
Average				22.3	8.9

It is quite noticeable that, apart from Susie who spoke only once for four seconds, Tadashi did not participate as much as other students. The results also suggest that there are a number of active students who tend to dominate classroom discussion, which was also confirmed in the classroom observation. However, there were few students who were as silent as Tadashi in this group. Since the group had completed their teaching practicum, they were generally keen to share the experiences of it and to benefit as much as possible from these sessions to prepare themselves for their future career. In a recall interview, the lecturer, Ms. Hardy commented:

(1) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]
[...] there were so many people trying to say things. That is the problem with that course just when they're all talking about their experiences in prac because it's so vivid, it's so real.

In contrast, both Ms. Hardy and an interviewed peer student indicated that Tadashi was quiet in class. Ms. Hardy, who had Tadashi in her class for two semesters, commented:

(2) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]
I remembered vividly micro teaching two years ago, umm it was Tadashi and ( ) in the same group - where they wouldn't talk out. They're sort of shy. That's how I feel it is. When he's on one on one, Tadashi - he's very confident, expresses what he wants and will tell you. ... But in class, he doesn't speak and he doesn't participate, and I feel that as a tutor now being exposed slightly, because I didn't make him speak.

She often mentioned Tadashi in association with Wong Young, a Korean student who was seated next to Tadashi in the second session observed. Except for a memory of "Wong Young answering something detailed but not Tadashi," she found them "similar" in that they were generally quiet. A peer student also described Tadashi below:

(3) [Interview: Kylie]
I find that he probably doesn't communicate as much as some of the other students. I think he prefers just to listen and take notes, but when it's his turn to provide - sort of or participate, he always says valuable stuff to say and he's usually pretty knowledgeable on what we're doing.

Tadashi was also observed in four lectures for another education subject, Curriculum and Examinations. Although the sessions observed were supposed to be lectures, they were more like tutorials since only five students were enrolled in this subject. This allowed a relaxed and intimate atmosphere in the class, though

Table 5.4 Number and length of turns in Curriculum and Examinations (Total)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	3	41	92	13.7	2.2
Kylie	3	212	980	70.7	4.6
Tamara	2	124	262	62.0	2.1
Linda	2	38	104	19.0	2.7
Christine	1	13	64	13.0	4.9
Average				35.7	3.3

the sessions had comparatively more teacher-talk compared with the tutorials for Teaching as a Profession. The teacher-centredness of this class was noted by Tadashi, the lecturer (Mr. Fuller) himself and a peer student, who expressed the following:

(4) [Interview: Kylie]
He's got a lot of knowledge and I think he finds it hard to condense it into something so small - he just ends up talking most of the time. But it's good. I mean I don't mind. And usually he lets us talk if we have anything to say or questions to ask.

There was a considerable amount of discussion and talk in this class, as indicated in the comment above. However, when student participation in this Curriculum and Examinations class is examined for the number of turns, it is again evident that Tadashi is one of the two students with the lowest participation rate, as can be seen in Table 5.4. For this class, contribution from all the students was included as the speech of all participants was captured clearly by the video recording.

It should be noted that in the cases of other students with low participation rates, Christine attended only 40%, and Linda 50%, of the video-recorded class time. Additionally, only Tadashi and Kylie attended the last session, in which Tadashi took 11 turns. This means that his average of 13.7 turns per class is higher than his real average when everyone attended the class.

Although students generally produced short turns with an average of 3.3 seconds, when students' longest turns are examined individually, Tadashi's longest turn was 6 seconds while Kylie's was 33, Tamara's 39, Linda's 12 and Christine's 18.

In the follow-up interview, Mr. Fuller did not mention Tadashi's silence but instead gave generally positive comments about him:

(5) [Interview: Mr. Fuller]
I personally - I warm to him as a personality. He's a positive person. He approaches his tasks and learning with some enthusiasm. He seems to be

> unafraid to ask questions when necessary. (long pause) I think he should make a success of his career as a positive personality.

Throughout the interview, however, Mr Fuller used defensive strategies, such as providing a long account of the subject as being set up in an emergency and his lack of sufficient preparation for teaching it. Unlike Ms. Hardy, Mr. Fuller was careful in deciding what to say, spoke slowly with occasional long pauses, and avoided making judgemental comments expressing stereotypical images of certain cultural groups.

His only comment concerning Tadashi's participation in the class, "He seems to be unafraid to ask questions when necessary", is carefully worded, not describing or negatively evaluating Tadashi's silence. In performance, however, Tadashi had asked a question once, in a one-on-one situation, about how to obtain a newsletter the lecturer had mentioned. Tadashi's own reflection of his participation in this class was that he was "listening almost all the time".

In sum, Tadashi appears to present the image of the silent Japanese student represented in the Japanese students' accounts in the interviews in Chapter 4. Although Tadashi was described by others as a conscientious, punctual student with a good attendance rate, he was passive and silent as far as the quantity of his classroom participation was concerned.

5.3.2 Case Study 2: Miki

In the classes observed in Case Study 2, there were generally three major types of communication. Firstly, there was straight lecturing by the lecturer, Dr Telfer, which was almost never interrupted by the students. Secondly, there were occasions for students to present their papers, which was also a one-way delivery of talk. Finally, class discussions took place after each student presentation. Due to the monologic nature of the first two types of classroom communication, the third type of classroom communication was selected for data analysis in this case study. Furthermore, the quantity of the students' own or others' participation after presentations was considered separately, as the nature of the presenter's role meant that students tend to speak more in their own post-presentation discussion. Contributions by two female and two male students other than Miki were considered for video coding analysis. This sample group had three Anglo-Australians and one female Filipino Australian who were all native speakers of English educated in Australia. The participation of other students, who had Chinese, Korean and Japanese backgrounds, was coded but not included in the sample group for comparison since it is beyond the scope of the case studies.

Table 5.5 Number and length of turns in Intercultural Communication (Regular Discussion: Total)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn-length
Miki	3	7	98	2.3	14.0
Sophia	4	33	378	8.3	11.5
Molly	5	80	577	16.0	7.2
Bill	4	56	339	14.0	6.1
Tony	4	7	138	1.8	19.7
Average				8.5	11.7

Table 5.6 Number and total lengths of turns in Intercultural Communication (Presentation Discussion: Total)

Participant	Number of turns	Total turn length	Average turn length
Miki 1st pres.	16	64.5	4.0
Miki 2nd pres.	9	171	19
Miki Average	12.5	117.8	9.4
Bill	18	153	8.5
Tony	8	61	7.6
Average	12.8	112.4	9.8

Looking at patterns of participation among the students in the sample group, we can see that in discussions after others' presentations (hereafter Regular Discussion), Miki speaks much less frequently than other students, with the exception of Tony, as shown in Table 5.5.

In discussions after her own presentations (hereafter Presentation Discussion), Miki spoke with greater frequency. Table 5.6 shows the total number and length of turns of three participants from the sample group.

Comparing participation in the two different situations, Miki had an average of 12.5 turns after her presentations, while her average turn number in Regular Discussion was 2.3. Tony, who took the least turns per class (1.8 turns) in Regular Discussion, also spoke with greater frequency in Presentation Discussion (8 turns). As for Bill, he was one of the most active participants in the group, and the results show that he made a substantial contribution to class discussions in both Regular and Presentation Discussions. Indeed, Bill was described by Dr. Telfer as being among those students who "don't need encouragement" to participate. Dr. Telfer in fact mentioned that all the local Australian students seemed confident in this class.

On the other hand, Miki was perceived as one of the "two [students] that spoke the least" by Dr. Telfer, and as "reticent" by Bill. This suggests that Miki's

modest contribution in Regular Discussion had more impact on perceptions of her silence. This is supported by Dr. Telfer's comment expressing her surprise that Miki delivered her presentations without "obvious signs of nervousness" despite her silence in Regular Discussion:

(6) [Interview: Dr. Telfer]
From my experience of Australian students, if you had an Australian student who doesn't say anything, then that usually indicates that they are feeling unconfident, so if I had a Japanese student who doesn't say anything, and who's quite confident, um...it's a bit of surprise.

In Dr. Telfer's view, those who do not participate actively, in a normal seminar-type lecturing situations tend to be "shy" and "unconfident." She further mentioned her surprise at the "outstanding work" (in her written assignment) of a Korean MA student who did not say anything in class. It seems that there is a strong reliance on classroom participation in evaluating students' overall academic ability, which was also implied in the comments by Ms. Hardy in Case Study 1 (Section 5.4.3, interview comment 36 below). On the other hand, Japanese student interviewees indicated (Chapter 4) that they feel unfairly judged by lecturers because of their silence in the classroom. This is not unexpected if we consider the value placed on written communication in Japanese classroom practice, as described in Chapter 3.

Aside from frequency of participation, the results indicate that Miki produced long turns. Her average turn length in Regular Discussion is 14.0 seconds, which is the second longest in the sample group. Interestingly, the student with the longest average turn length was Tony, who spoke least frequently in the sample group, with the longest turn of 72 seconds. This however, can be explained in terms of personal principles of participation. Tony mentioned in his follow-up interview that when other people are talking, he waits until they finish speaking, because he does not like interrupting and overlapping. Tony was actually almost never observed to interrupt or overlap others, while other native English speakers in the sample group did so. Significantly, however, Tony was still included in the "confident type" of students by the lecturer. As for Miki, her longest turn was 66 seconds and the next longest 51. The only noticeable difference between Tony and Miki, which may explain the different perceptions of their performances, was that the ratio of volunteered turns was 86% for Tony but 58% for Miki (see Section 5.4.3 for more details of participant structures). Thus, as far as the quantity of participation is concerned, it appears that the frequency, and voluntariness of participation in Regular Discussion affected others' perceptions of Miki's silence.

5.3.3 Case Study 3: Aya

As in Case Study 2, participation in tutorials given by other student presenters was considered separately from participation in a student's own tutorial presentation. In this case study, the contributions of all four participating students were coded for analysis, as the group was small enough to identify speakers in all the recorded data. The contribution made in Regular Discussion included one one-hour tutorial in which the lecturer, Dr. Lucas, delivered a class using newspaper articles.

Looking at Aya's contribution to Regular Discussion in Table 5.7 below, her participation shows almost average frequency in the group.

The results above show that Aya is not significantly inactive. On the other hand, Henry participates twice as frequently as the second most actively participating student, Robin. In addition, his total turn length is overwhelmingly longer than Robin's. From these factors, it appears that Aya is an average participant in terms of frequency of contribution. However, in the follow-up interview, she was perceived as a "quiet" student by Dr. Lucas:

(7) [Interview: Dr. Lucas]
My general impression was that she was very quiet and very retiring so it needed some real, I suppose, a real decision on my part whether I was going to ask her questions or bring her in because I felt just that she would have been quite happy to be in the corner and not really part of it.

As the comment above shows, Dr. Lucas not only found her "very quiet" but also lacking in interest and engagement. One of the peer students, Robin, also commented on Aya's silence, saying "she's really – she seems quiet", although she said another student, Kathy, was also "pretty quiet." Another peer student, Henry, mentioned, "She didn't really ask – I have rarely heard her ask too many questions." However, the results of coding actually show four questions by Aya, six by Robin, one by Kathy and six by Henry in Regular Discussion, which does not support Henry's perception. Aya also asked seven questions during her own

Table 5.7 Number and length of turns in History of Secondary Education (Regular Discussion: Total)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Aya	3	21	122	7.0	5.8
Robin	3	24	112	8.0	4.7
Kathy	3	11	83	3.7	7.5
Henry	3	44	287	14.7	6.5
Average	3	25	151	8.4	6.1

tutorial presentation. Hence, there is incongruity here between performance and perceptions. To explain this incongruity, a more detailed analysis of classroom interaction will be given below in Sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6.

5.3.4 Summary

The quantitative analysis of classroom participation in the three case studies presents a mixed picture. In Case Study 1, Tadashi's silence was evident, in terms of both the frequency and length of his turns, and he was also perceived to be silent by at least one of his lecturers and a peer student. The results from Case Study 2 are slightly more complex: Miki was more silent than other students, but it appeared that her low frequency of participation seemed to override her turn lengths in perceptions of her as silent by the lecturer and peers. Case Study 3 shows an incongruence between the performance and the perceptions: Aya was perceived to be silent despite the fact that she participated with average frequency and turn lengths. Significantly, all the Japanese students in the case studies were perceived to be silent, although the performance data did not always provide evidence to support these perceptions of silence. This, and comments from the case study participants, suggest that there is more to perceptions of silence than the actual frequency or amount of participation; the manner of participation plays a role. This is what the following sections aim to explore.

5.4 Linguistic factors contributing to silence

5.4.1 Language proficiency

Lack of language proficiency in English was given by the Japanese students as one of the major causes of their silence (Chapter 4). Furthermore, this lack of confidence in English appeared to hold them back from participation. Lack of proficiency and lack of confidence in proficiency were also given by lecturers in their questionnaire responses as major causes of Japanese student silences. In the existing literature, however, an emphasis on the role of language difficulties in creating Asian student silences has been replaced by an alternative view in which culturally shaped communicative styles and beliefs about communication are considered to be the most important factors (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). The case studies thus allowed actual performances of Japanese students to be examined in order to investigate the extent to which proficiency in English affects silence.

Language proficiency seemed to vary slightly among the three case study students, as did the degree of silence. Importantly, language proficiency did not seem to directly predict this silence.

Two raters, the author and a native English speaker, both with language testing experience, rated the Japanese students' English language proficiency from the video-recordings of their classroom interaction. The ISLPR (International Second Language Proficiency Ratings) system was used. (See Appendix 6 for details) The ratings given by the native speaker rater were 4+ for Aya, 4 for Tadashi and 3+ for Miki. The author rated Aya and Tadashi as 4, and Miki as 3. Apart from these ratings, short descriptions of each student's competence in English were also produced by the raters. Both the native speaker rater and the author evaluated Aya's English to be native-like, fluent and Australian, although a low command of academic language was noted. Tadashi's English was found to be fluent (not to the same degree as Aya's) and to show control of grammar and vocabulary including academic language, although with a relatively strong accent. Miki's language was evaluated to be adequate for communicating her ideas. Her accent, occasional grammatical errors and frequent hesitations contributed to her lower rating.

An examination of the students' own comments as well as those of their lecturers about their English shows that there is agreement for the most part with the raters' evaluations. For example, Aya mentioned that her lack of vocabulary and knowledge of academic English prevented her from discussing issues in the History of Secondary Education class, but her lecturer in that class described her English as "reasonable," while a lecturer in her Japanese translation class described it as "native-like." Tadashi said he was worried about his accent, but his lecturers indicated that his English was "[e]xcellent to very good" and said that "he can communicate perfectly well." Miki emphasised her need to "take time" before speaking, and her lecturer described her English as "careful" and said that she took "trouble when she speaks." However, Miki also commented that she had "a communicative problem rather than the problem with English proficiency."

Concerning measured frequency of participation, Aya was, quantitatively, the least silent of the three Japanese students in the case studies. Since Aya's English proficiency was evaluated the highest, a role for proficiency in silence can be supported in her case. However, in terms of perceptions, she perceived herself to be silent and also was perceived so by the lecturer and her peers.

(8) [Interview: Aya]

A: I suppose in this kind of class - it is difficult to say what I want to say, I think.

I: What do you mean?

A: Because of the lack of preparation, pretty difficult reading and my English competence, I mean the fact that I am not used to this kind of reading, it is quite hard for me to express myself.

Her lack of language to handle academic concepts in history and education, especially in the Australian context, is likely to have prevented her from participating as actively as she would have done in other contexts (see Section 5.4.5 below). As a matter of fact, there were a few incidents which suggested that Aya was not able to keep up with the subject in terms of her academic English. The following excerpt gives one such example:

(9) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   1   Aya:    U:m (0.4) prime focus in the life of those
-> 2           schools was (0.3) the literal, (0.2) and
   3           performance of the school assembly in the
   4           great hall.
   5           (0.6)
-> 6   Lect:   U:m (0.2) that doesn't quite make sense
   7           I don't think, (1.1) (        ) =what the:
   8           (0.3) do you remember what that was about?
   9           (0.4) than: the spelling.
   10  Aya:    I thought was um: (0.6) u:m (0.7) like
   11          (0.3) (guess) by children: (0.6) reading,
   12          (0.4)listening,
   13  Lect:   R[i:ght.]
   14  Aya:    ([probab]ly,)
   15  Lect:   Maybe: (.) to do with literature or: (0.3)
   16          the (treading) debate (          ) but
   17          I'm not quite sure.
   18          (1.0)
   19  Kathy:  ((clears throat ))
   20  Lect:   (Good),=
   21  Aya:    =Um (0.3) the curriculum of these schools
   22          was dominated by the literary and
   23          historical subjects ((Aya reads on))
```

Here, Aya is giving a presentation on one of the reading materials in the History of Secondary Education class, and reading out what she has on her handout in lines 1 to 4. However, her sentence does not make sense and Dr. Lucas points this out by asking her what this sentence is about (lines 6–9). Aya explains her interpretation, but she does not seem to recognise the problem of "literal" in the sentence under question. Dr. Lucas' lengthened "Ri:ght" in line 13 suggests that he under-

stands Aya's explanation but is not entirely convinced by it. Thus he provides his possible explanation but expresses his uncertainty at the end of his comment in line 17. Nevertheless, Dr. Lucas gives a cue to Aya to continue (line 20), and the misunderstanding is left as it is.

This incident illustrates the problem that Aya faced in this subject because of her weaknesses in English and background knowledge of concepts in the field of education. Rather than the overall proficiency of her English or general fluency, her lack of command over a specific genre of language in a specific context affected silence in both perceptions and performance.

As to Miki's performance, she was more silent than Aya but less so than Tadashi, despite her English proficiency being evaluated the lowest of the three Japanese students. One way to explain this anomaly is that she produced turns much longer than her Australian peers when she was given opportunities to speak. The other explanation is that the topic of the course, intercultural communication, may have given Miki more opportunities to talk about her own experiences and culture. Below is an excerpt from Case Study 2, in which Miki gave a relatively long account related to education in Japan:

(10) [Interaction: Miki]

```
10  Miki:    Yeah. (0.6) uh I- my mum sent me a (       )
11           (0.5) um program in Japan, she taped it
12           for me and I watched the TV program, that
13           was talking about the high school
14           students in Japan? (0.4) And um (0.6)
15           (played) (1.2) there was one mother who
16           was trying to (1.3) trying to: (0.6) how
17           do you say (1.2) uhm (0.4) there was one
18           girl who (1.2) who really (0.2) do- (0.2)
19           does not respect
20           (0.3)
21   ?:      •hhhh
22  Miki:    [does]
23  Molly:   [S-s-]scold,
24  Miki:    Yeah. um=
25  Molly:   =the mother has scolded her,
26  Miki:    Yeah, yeah.  [Sco-] sco:ld?
27  Molly:                [Mm. ]
28  Molly:   Mm:.
29  Miki:    but um (0.5)(           ) the girl (0.2)
30           doesn't change at a:ll,
31  Lect:    Um:,
```

```
32 Miki:    So (0.4) the (1.0) interviewer, (0.2)
33          came to her (0.2) family, and a:sked
34          (0.2) why (.) why, like that- that was a
35          program.
36          (0.2)
37 Bill:    [Mm.]
38 Miki:    [The]n uh they wanted to kno:w why the
39          girl was behaving like that,(.) and
40          mother- mother (1.2) sho- she said
41          mother said she was trying to (0.5)
42          scold her,
43 Molly:   [scold],
44 Miki:    [ so  ]
45  ?:      Mm huh,=
46 Miki:    = and uh but (0.2)she does because:
47          the girl doesn't listen to her, she
48          stopped.
```

In this stretch of talk, Miki managed to take a long turn, possibly because of its narrative structure. However, there are a number of long intra-turn pauses (lines 15–18), fillers and word searches (lines 16–26). This dysfluency in Miki's speech suggests that she would be more vulnerable to interruptions or missed opportunities in a faster exchange of comments, as we will see in the conversation analysis of classroom interaction in Section 5.4.2 below.

While Miki's case suggests that Japanese students' silence in interaction with Australian students is in part due to a lack of fluency, Tadashi's case seems to suggest a role of transfer of L1 communication style for silence (Enninger 1987; Lehtonen & Sajvaara 1985, 1997; Scollon & Scollon 1981; Scollon 1985; Sifianou 1997). Tadashi was, from a quantitative perspective at least, the most silent of the three Japanese students, despite a positive evaluation of his proficiency by his lecturers as well as the raters. He did not have the native-like fluency of Aya, but instead, seemed to possess control over the technical and academic language which Aya did not seem to manage. Here, he is talking about different types of assessment systems in the school curriculum in the Curriculum and Examinations class:

(11) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
-> 15 Tadashi: Ah yes. u:m (thi:s) norm reference. (0.4) norm
   16          references you can get (0.4) o:nly certain
   17          percentage of students (0.3) in: (0.4) yes
   18          that (0.3) bell curve thing?
   19 Lect:    ((writes on the board 3.2)) that's right.=
```

```
   20 Tamara:   =Mm ↑hm.
   21 Lect:     The bell curves? (1.0) so I can only get
   22           uh certain number between ninety in a
   23           hundred,=
   24 Tadashi:  =Mm:.=
   25 Lect:     =and eighty in a hundred.
   26 Tadashi:  Mm:.
-> 27           (0.5)
-> 28 Tadashi:  Yes in a (0.4) standard (.) or criteria
   29           referencing, .hhh u:m as long as the students
   30           performs well, (0.2) you can (.) you can
   31           have as many (0.2) students as possible (0.5)
   32           in say (0.3) between ninety to one hundred.
```

Despite his control of technical terms and grammar, he remained, and was perceived to be, silent. As we will see in the following section, there were significant 'delays' in his turn-taking behaviour, and as in Miki's case, he was also found to be vulnerable to interruptions and missed opportunities. However, as we see in the above excerpt, his speech does not have long intra-turn pauses as did Miki's, and with his fluency and command of English within his turns, it would be more reasonable to interpret his silence as being strongly affected by Japanese approaches to classroom communication. These approaches appear to have overridden his language proficiency.

The discussion above suggests that there is no direct correlation between lexico-grammatical competence and silence when participants are at an advanced level, especially in terms of perceptions of silence. However, as argued, *fluency* still counts to a certain degree, because dysfluency tends to leave more space for interruption and to support self-selection moves by native speakers. On the other hand, dysfluency can be compensated for with topics exclusively familiar to Japanese students, as was the case with Miki. Furthermore, a more fluent speaker such as Tadashi can be silent due to cultural, personal or immediate contextual factors, and even a highly fluent speaker such as Aya can be silent in certain contexts in which command of a specific genre of language is required. The role of language proficiency, which tends to be overlooked in discussing silence in a multicultural classroom, is important, but should not be overemphasised.

5.4.2 Norms of turn-taking

As discussed in Chapter 2, issues for researchers who investigate silence in intercultural communication include whether rates of turn-taking and normative lengths

of switching pauses in the first or native language may be transferred into communication in a second language, and if so, whether the difference would lead to the silencing of one group by another. Indeed, as shown in Chapter 4, an unfamiliarity with the fast rate of turn-taking was given as one of the explanations for silence by Japanese students, some of whom also mentioned experiences of being interrupted by Australian students. My Japanese high school study (Chapter 3) showed almost no instance of overlapping talk but long silent switching pauses in classroom interaction, and it was then left to the case studies to empirically investigate whether a gap in the speed of turn-taking did actually exist between Japanese students and their Australian peers, and to what extent silencing could be observed.

In this section, I will present some evidence from the case studies of a gap in the speed of turn-taking between Australian and Japanese participants. In a situation where the Japanese student is nominated either by the lecturer or a peer student, the gap resulted in three forms of pauses: (1) silent inter-turn pauses leading to a delayed response turn; (2) silent inter-turn pauses leading to expansion of the nomination turn; and (3) silent inter-turn pauses leading to other students' self-selection. Following the discussion of these pauses, I will present a discussion of silence in a situation where students participate through self-selection of their turns.

5.4.2.1 *Silent inter-turn pauses leading to a delayed response turn*

The excerpts below show relatively long inter-turn silences between elicitations and Japanese students' responses. Although inter-turn silences greater than one second, and up to three or four seconds, were commonly found where the floor was open to any participant, they were much less common in the situation where a student was selected for a response. In the excerpt below, the first pre-response pause is one second (line 14), and the second one is 0.5 seconds (line 27). Since Tadashi was the only student who had attended the previous week, the question was directed at him, and there was no competition for the floor. Hence, although these inter-turn pauses may not appear too long, considering the normative 'no gap, no overlap' orientation found among English native speakers (Sacks et al. 1974), they can be significant in terms of the fine-tuning interaction.

(12) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
   10 Lect:     Okay, so: (0.4) what- (0.2) what does one of
   11           what- (0.3) how would you describe the-
   12           the main differences and what(0.2) we were
   13           doing last week.
-> 14           (1.0)
-> 15 Tadashi:  Ah yes. u:m (thi:s) norm reference. (0.4) norm
```

```
   16             references you can get (0.4) o:nly certain
   17             percentage of students (0.3) in: (0.4) yes
   18             that (0.3) bell curve thing?
   19 Lect:       ((writes on the board 3.2)) that's right.=
   20 Tamara:     =Mm ↑hm.
   21 Lect:       The bell curves? (1.0) so I can only get
   22             uh certain number between ninety in a
   23             hundred,=
   24 Tadashi:    =Mm:.=
   25 Lect:       =and eighty in a hundred.
   26 Tadashi:    Mm:.
-> 27             (0.5)
-> 28 Tadashi:    Yes in a (0.4) standard (.) or criteria
   29             referencing, .hhh u:m as long as the students
   30             performs well, (0.2) you can (.) you can
   31             have as many (0.2) students as possible (0.5)
   32             in say (0.3) between ninety to one hundred.
```

Although line 27 does not seem to be a directly elicited response, it is obvious from the context (in which Tadashi is asked to explain the differences) that he is expected to continue after line 25. The two pauses may appear to be a delay from an Australian participant's perspective, considering the unmarked frequent overlapping talk and latching around transition relevance places (TRPs) in discussions (see examples (17), (28) and (29) below, for example). Thus, in situations where he has to compete with Australian peers, for example in an open floor situation, Tadashi may miss opportunities to secure his participation. In fact, he referred repeatedly in his interview to this "problem" of "not knowing the right timing to participate." In another course, he made an arrangement with the lecturer to be nominated to give an answer so that he could secure his speaking turn.

The following excerpt from Case Study 2 shows a 4.2 second inter-turn pause after Molly, Miki's Australian peer, asks her a question. Miki had given a presentation on backchanneling in Japanese and in American English, and Molly has been asking Miki about "Westerners" using "fill-ins" more often than the Japanese. The exchange in the excerpt occurred after a series of attempts by Molly to elicit a response from Miki (see example (15) below). The long silent pause puts a considerable amount of pressure on Miki, and her uncertain response is followed by a longer silence of 6.0 seconds. The lecturer, sensing Miki's discomfort, tries to divert attention by shifting the topic in line 142.

(13) [Interaction: Miki]

133 Molly: But that- it- like how- >I don't know,< (.)
134 i- is there: (0.4) do Westerners do you find
135 Westerners do that?
136 (4.2) ((after 2.5, shakes her head))
137 Miki: I really don't (know) ( ).
138 ((looks down on the paper.
139 Molly nods 4 times- 1.2))
140 (6.0)
141 Lect: It's really (quite a) dramatic difference,(.)
142 (those) ( ).

It should also be mentioned that Australian students were rarely nominated for a response, as we will see in the next section (5.4.3), and therefore a comparison of pause lengths in the same participant structure is not possible. Furthermore, the examples above are unusual in the sense that, in most cases of long inter-turn pauses following a question directed at the Japanese student, the questioner elaborates or another student offers a response in place of the Japanese student. In the section below, examples of silent pauses leading to questions being elaborated, will be examined.

5.4.2.2 *Silent inter-turn pauses leading to expansion of the elicitation turn*

When a response from a nominated Japanese student is 'delayed,' the questioner may elaborate or paraphrase in order to secure a response without a long pause. In the example below from Case Study 2, the lecturer directs a question at Miki, during a discussion on male-female differences in compliment responses. Not hearing a response at the first possible opportunity in line 5 (after "it"), she goes on to clarify the referent of the pronoun "it" in line 5. Miki then responds immediately in line 8.

(14) [Interaction: Miki]

5 Lect: Miki, what do you think about it. (0.5) u:m
6 (0.6) the idea of male versus female ways
7 of responding to compliments.=
8 Miki: =I don- I don't know if- (0.4) if (0.3) it's
9 because of female (0.2) and male, (.) but I
10 think it's true that (0.4) um female's
11 conversation goes on en on en on,=

In another example from Case Study 2 below, Molly again asks Miki a question, this time about Japanese non-verbal backchanneling behaviour and the contrast

with verbal fillers used by "Western people." As we can see in line 63 ("how can I say it right"), Molly's question is not totally clear, and Miki asks a clarification question in line 67. Molly struggles to clarify her question and her re-phrased question is followed by a pause of 3.6 seconds (line 76). This leads to Molly's elaboration in lines 77–79, which is followed by a pause (line 80). This pause of 1.2 seconds then leads to another elaboration by Molly.

(15) [Interaction: Miki]

```
   62  Molly:     Do- do we: lik- do generally um: (0.6) I
   63             don't know how can I say it right do Western
   64             people: (0.3) do their ow- do their own
   65             fill-in: stuff?
   66             (0.2)
-> 67  Miki:      Do their, sorry?
   68             (0.4)
   69  Molly:     L- like um (0.4) um? hu(h)h (0.2) li- do we
   70             (0.2) instead of um:: li- >I don't know< we
   71             have pauses instead of um: (0.6) I don't know
   72             we have pauses instead of (0.5) um (0.2)
   73             the: (0.2) those (      ) you know saying
   74             something  with: nodding or whatever, (.) do
   75             we fill it in instead? (0.2) more?
-> 76             (3.6)
   77  Molly:     Er the are the:se backchannel:s(0.4)um(0.2)
   78             after: like specifically a:fter sentences but
   79             the person keeps(.)the speaker keeps talking?
-> 80             (1.2)
   81  Molly:     Because I think u:m (1.2) cause I- I
   82             (really think) Western people they tend to:
   83             put a lot of um fill-ins when they are
   84             talking?
```

The example below is from the History of Secondary Education class in Case Study 3, in which the lecturer asks the students about extra-curricula experiences at high school. The example differs from the two above in that the Japanese student, Aya, either overlaps (line 18) or responds without a pause (line 19), although initially in a soft voice. But the soft voice and the ensuing one second silence led the lecturer to paraphrase (lines 21–22), specially for Aya, a question which had been initially directed at the whole group (lines 1–9). Comparing the responses of Kathy and Aya, Kathy's responses follow pauses of 0.4 and 0.5 seconds (lines 10 and 14), while Aya's responses follow pauses of one second (lines 20 and 28).

The pause lengths which the lecturer allows before taking his turns after Kathy's comments (lines 13 and 17) are 0.4 and 0.6 seconds.

(16) [Interaction: Aya]

```
    1  Lect:    ↑Just think about your own high school
    2           experiences. (0.4) U:m (1.0) that may be
    3           worth if you just sort of ta:lk about sorts
    4           of clubs and extra curricula experiences.
    5           (0.4) u:m (0.3) that were there, which
    6           (0.2) maybe suggestive of the school.
    7           (2.0) °(               )° importance of
    8           (    ),do you see reflections of any of
    9           these in yours?
   10           (0.4)
   11  Kathy:   Oh no just the sport ones,
   12           (0.4)
   13  Lect:    Yeah:, so sport. That's it.
   14           (0.5)
   15  Kathy:   °That's >about it<, (0.4) >that's all<,°
   16           (0.6)
   17  Lect:    Okay, what about y[ou,  A y ]a?
-> 18  Aya?:                      [°(      )] ?°
   19  Aya:     °(             )°
   20           (1.0)
   21  Lect:    What sort of high school did you go
   22           to = where did you go [to] high [school].
-> 23  Aya:                          [I ]      [I went] to
   24  Aya:     ah: Christian school,
   25  Lect:    Yeah.
   26  Aya:     It's uh: down Sutherland,
   27  Lect:    Right.
   28           (1.0)
   29  Aya:     They didn't- (0.2) >they had it< like some
   30           s- sports but they weren't really (0.4)
   31           doing this. (0.5) Cause (0.4) they had it
   32           (0.2) but (0.2) and it wasn't really
   33           compulsory with (0.2) school subjects =
   34           =>something like that?<
```

This seems to suggest different norms of unmarked inter-turn pauses. Following Jefferson (1989), the 0.4–0.6 seconds of inter-turn pauses above may be represent-

ing an unmarked phenomenon, while one second may be felt as marked. There are more examples (see below) of Australian English speakers allowing 0.4–0.8 seconds of inter-turn pauses with one another, and of the Japanese students taking one second or more to respond, or of allowing their turns to be taken over by their Australian peers.

The excerpt below is from the smaller class, the Curriculum and Examinations, in Case Study 1. This is an example of elaboration by the lecturer after a short pause, but also shows an Australian student taking over the Japanese student's turn. At the beginning of the excerpt, the lecturer asks a question, which is assumed to be directed at Tadashi, as he is referring to the number of language courses offered in the old High School Certificate exams, which was mentioned the week before, when Tadashi was the only participant.

(17) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
    1  Lect:     u:m (0.4) now (1.0) you've got (0.3) u:m (0.3)
 -> 2            I don't know if you remember (0.5) the figure
    3            I gave you and (    ) in the old HSC*
    4            now how many: uh: languages courses.
 -> 5            (0.4)
    6  Lect:     There are hundred and forty nine HSC
    7            courses, how many languages
    8            cour[ses].
    9  Kylie:        [thi]rty ei[ght]?
 -> 10 Tadashi:                 [uh:]:
   11  Kylie:    [thir]ty eight?
   12  Tadashi: [ uh:]
   13            (0.3)
   14  Lect:     no there are thirty eight langu[ages],
   15  Tadashi:                                 [(lan]guage)=
   16  Lect:     =but each language is more than one [cour]se.
   17  Tadashi:                                      [ye:h]
   18  Kylie:    ah [that's right. yeah that's right yeah]
   19  Lect:        [many languages ha[ve mo]re than one]
   20  Tadashi:                       [ uh: ]
   21  Kylie:    [that ' s]
   22  Lect:     [course.]
   23  Kylie:    right.=
   24  Tadashi: =uh huh huh=
 -> 25 Lect:     =all right? (.) do you remember?
```

```
-> 26  Tadashi:  I don't remember.= ((giggling))
   27  Lect:     =no? (0.2) okay.
```

* HSC = Higher School Certificate

Following the lecturer's question, there is a short pause of 0.4 seconds (line 5), which prompts him to elaborate (lines 6–8). Towards the end of this elaboration, however, an Australian student, Kylie, begins to respond, overlapping the lecturer (line 9). Having been selected, Tadashi utters "uh:" in line 10, as if about to respond to the question, overlapping the end of Kylie's turn. Here, the first opportunity to respond to the lecturer's question (line 5) is missed, and then, at the second opportunity after line 8, it is taken over by Kylie. Kylie's response turns out to be incorrect, and an explanation is given by the lecturer, during which a number of overlaps occurs. Tadashi also joins in, providing backchannels. When the lecturer, having clarified the confusion, directs the question "Do you remember?" to Tadashi, he immediately responds with a negative, showing signs of embarrassment. This example demonstrates that the negotiation of participation revolves around finely-tuned turn-taking practices, and that small gaps in such turn-taking practices between Tadashi and the Australian participants affected his silence.

5.4.2.3 *Silent inter-turn pauses leading to other students' self-selection*

There were cases where another student took over the response turn initially allocated to the Japanese student, especially where the inter-turn pause exceeded one second. The excerpt below is from the Cross-cultural communication class in Case Study 2, and is part of the discussion after a presentation by Miki on apology in Japanese and English. Bill directs a question at Miki in lines 89–91, and Miki, overlapping the end of the question, asks for clarification. Here, we can see Miki's capacity for 'precision timing', as the overlapping begins near the TRP. Following this, Bill elaborates his question (lines 96–100). The 0.6 second pause in line 99 occurs after a TRP, and Bill here may have been waiting to hear from Miki. Whether or not this is the case, the pause led to more elaboration (lines 99–100). When Bill's turn is over, however, there is a pause of 1.2 seconds, after which Gary, another Australian student, takes up the opportunity to speak. Then, another peer, Molly, latches onto Gary's turn.

(18) [Interaction: Miki]

```
   81  Bill:     Well in fact we just I sometimes say sorry
   82            when (0.3) someone ↑else's caused something
   83            to me, (0.3) they'd- they'd- they'd-
   84            pro'bly say sorry too. (0.2) An' I just
```

```
   85             I'll apologise and I say sorry even if
   86             that's- even in fact it's not- me who did
   87             it.
   88    ?:       Mm.=
-> 89   Bill:     =In Japanese is the- you have a sorry- w'd
   90             that be a- w'd that be a similar um
   91             situ[ation?]
   92   Miki:         [if :   ]  if (0.4) you are not the one
   93             who really caused [it
   94   Bill:                       [You didn't. ↑Yeah=
   95   Miki:     =[Yeah.
   96   Bill:     [You didn't cause it,=for example someone
   97             might um (0.4) knock over this.(0.4) I- I-
   98             I oh sorr- I could actually say so:rry in
   99             English. to them. (0.6) At the same time
   100            they'd say sorry.
-> 101            (1.2)
   102  Gary:     (    ) So in a car crash, Japanese say
   103            sorry (                 )=
   104  Molly:    =But I think that's just somebody trying to:
   105            get something out of someone else who:
   106            didn' qui[te understa:]nd.
```

Here, another inter-turn pause greater than one second is seen as a signal for the Australian participants to take over. Because of the participation of Gary and Molly here, the focus shifted towards the motivation behind the English word "sorry" in Bill's example, rather than to what Japanese speakers would do in the situation being discussed. The excerpt below shows a later section of the same discussion, in which Miki asks Molly about her example of a situation where "sorry" might be used. The lecturer reintroduces Bill's example of knocking someone's drink over (lines 182 and 184). This brings the focus of the discussion back to Bill's original question (example 18 above) about Japanese reactions. Bill picks up the cue, describing the situation again in lines 186–188. There is a pause of 1.2 seconds within Bill's turn (line 187), where his eye-gaze is directed towards Miki, but she does not take a turn here, which leads to his elaboration. This provides another opportunity for Miki to respond, but instead, there is a pause of 0.8 seconds (line 189). Again, Molly takes a turn, providing an interpretation of the "sorry" in question.

(19) [Interaction: Miki]

```
-> 173 Miki:    I- i- is that because you are (0.3) making
   174          some- (0.2) you are causing some problems
   175          before, (0.5) to some oth[ers?]
   176 Molly:                            [U::m] not so much
   177          of that, but u:m (0.5) what's the good
   178          term, (0.2) u:m (3.0)u:m (0.9) like m- may
   179          be if you had helped mo:re, (0.2) if,
   180          (0.2)o:r even done something it might not
   181          have happened like u:m
   182 Lect:    Well just like the example he gave;
   183 Molly:   Mmm[m.
   184 Lect:       [where he's- she knocked his
                             ((points to Billy))
   185           (0.4)
   186 Bill:    This is my drink. (0.5) He knocked it
   187          over,= I say say sorry. (1.2) Even though he
   188          caused it.
-> 189          (0.8)
   190 Molly:   Yeah might be that you feel
-> 191 Miki:    Ah:,
   192 Molly:   that you shouldn't have that drink
   193          [(                        )]
   194 Bill:    [Well he'll he'll probably ] say sorry
```

Thus again, Miki's response to Bill's question is suspended. Towards the end of the discussion, the lecturer returns to this focus, seen in the next excerpt (line 224). Miki responds with a clarification question after 0.4 seconds. Bill and Molly respond to this request for clarification, and Miki overlaps their turns with "I just." As Miki withdraws from her turn due to the overlap, there is another pause (line 231), and Gary gives a full rephrasing of the question in lines 232–233. Then in line 234, another pause exceeding one second precedes Miki's response.

(20) [Interaction: Miki]

```
   219 Molly:   Mm:: [yeah.
   220 Gary:         [Yeah. I don't know °(                )°
   221          Just °it's automatic probably°. (0.2) An
   222          accident happens and you just say sorry,
   223          (1.0)
   224 Lect:    Well what would you do in Japanese.
-> 225          (0.4)
```

```
-> 226 Miki:    When-;
   227          (0.5)
-> 228 Bill:    I-in th[at [situ]ation].
-> 229 Molly:              [You ]spill]ed (0.3) the-
-> 230 Miki:            [I  just  ]
   231          (0.4)
   232 Gary:    If someone spilt (.) your drink would you
   233          say sorry to them?
-> 234          (1.2)
   235 Miki:    °Uh: yeh;° (1.2) Yeah, I would say s- (1.4)
   236          sorry, I mean >sumimasen in Japanese=that-
   237          means< sorry; because I put that- one (0.4)
   238          there,
   239          (0.2) ((students and lecturer nod))
```

Bill remarked on the problem as he perceived it, in his follow up interview:

(21) [Interview: Bill]
Bill: [...] when we got to a stage where she still required [the lecturer] to rephrase it, I was there thinking well...that's (awkward?) I think it may be sli- ...not annoyance, but some slight....fractures coming in there [...]

According to Miki, she is aware of the markedness of her pause length, but she requires the time to organise her thoughts:

(22) [Interview: Miki]
M: Mmmm. what can I say, it is already a lot of work for me to understand, and I don't get to the point where I offer my own opinions. Mm.
I: You mean to keep up with the talk?
M: So, when I am asked "What do you think?" I need some time to think about it. I don't come up with an idea straight away. So on balance, something like, you can take your own time, for example letters or email, for those things I can say quite a lot. Well perhaps because they are one-way [communication].

This suggests that the longer pauses were required for cognitive processing rather than produced as a norm. However, there are instances of overlaps and near-TRP turn initiation, as seen in some sections of the excerpts above, where Miki shows an orientation towards no-gap turn transition. Below is one example from another Cross-cultural communication class, in which Miki has presented a talk on backchanneling across cultures:

(23) [Interaction: Miki]

```
   34 Lect:    =if we are not giving you so much (0.3)
   35          backchanneling, does that- (0.8) give you an
   36          odd impression at all does that (0.5) trouble
   37          you in a conversation, (0.2) [if you don't]t
-> 38 Miki:                                 [that  would]
   39 Lect:    get enough backchannel.=
-> 40 Miki:    =that would give me um (1.2) how do you say
   41          I would get (1.5) I would think people cannot
   42          understand me if they don't give me (1.4)
   43          yeah. °backchannels.°
```

Hence, the "fractures" between Miki and her Australian peers caused by the pauses over one second seem to result from differences either in strategies to hold the floor (that is, verbalisation/vocalisation or silence), or in proficiency (that is, language processing speed). In Japanese high school classrooms, long pauses following individually directed questions were very commonly observed (see Chapter 3), and there is no need for verbalisation/vocalisation to hold the floor, since no other students attempt to take over the turn, or the students expect their teacher to speak for them. In the Australian context, however, silence seems to be interpreted as an intention to relinquish the right to speak or as a 'cry for help.' The lecturer in Miki's class shares her interpretation of the Australian students' takeover of Miki's turn:

(24) [Interview: Dr. Telfer]

[...] I mean, by saying, by saying you spilled the...or whatever, by ..trying to help her, they are also at the same time saying "I knew what the question was." It's an assertion of ... they keeping up to that with the conversation as well as assisting up Miki. I think.

. . . .

I think there's two things going on at once. I think there was a genuine concern, a number of Australian speakers that... they should, because, here we are in Australia, here it is non native speakers, here we are in a course in [intercultural communication], we should be helpful.

The lecturer's interpretation of Miki's silence appears to be that it is a proficiency-related inability ("trying to help her" "non-native speakers"). It is interesting to see the lecturer mentions intercultural awareness as part of the motivation for taking over. A comment by Bill, one of the peer students, reveals a similar perspective:

(25) [Interview: Bill]
[...] I was perceiving cultural difference here that um, yes, on one hand I thought perhaps she can't she doesn't understand what we were saying, or maybe this is ( ) just basically a language problem here, but I didn't think so. I thought, I thought it was cultural. I thought it was cultural behaviour affecting linguistic behaviour. [...]

Chapter 4 discussed comments by Japanese interviewees which referred to being silenced by their Australian peers. If we compare such reactions to Australian students' turn-taking behaviour with the above interpretations of silence by the Australian lecturer and peer, it is possible to see that misunderstanding between Japanese and Australian students may occur. From the Japanese point of view, Australians are rude or aggressive, but from the Australian point of view, they are being helpful to the Japanese students. Miki's silence shown above is difficult to interpret, as the silence could be intended as an expression of inability (thus an indirect request for help), or as thinking time, to which she assumes she is entitled.

A similar example can be found in the next excerpt taken from a larger class, the Teaching as a Profession class in Case Study 1, where we find peer students taking over a response turn allocated to Tadashi, after a silent pause of 1.5 seconds. In lines 3–4, the lecturer nominates Tadashi and Wong Young to comment on questions about the ethics of the teaching profession. The students had been given the set of questions to discuss in pairs, and each time a student pair gave comments, this was followed by a whole group discussion.

(26) [Interaction: Tadashi, Teaching as a Profession]
(Lect= Ms Hardy; WY= Wong Young, a Korean student; Kylie = an Australian student; Gary = an American student).

```
3   Lect:    Okay, let's move on, =Tadashi: and (.) Wong
4            Young can you,
5            (1.0)
6   Lect:    The last, (.) Eleven,
7            (0.6)
8   WY:      What is a profession. (0.3) What
9            distinguishes profession from trade, (0.2)
10           What does it mean to be a professional?
11           (0.4) Does being a pro- professional affect
12           the way you dress (0.2) speak behave
13           towards others at work?
14           (0.7)
15  WY:      Uh: °[(so:)]°
16  Lect:         [Comme]nts?
```

```
   17  WY:       U:m (0.5) my definition of a profession is:
   18            u:m (0.4) actually (0.2) ei occupation,
   19            (0.2)
   20  Lect:     Mm hm?
   21  WY:       Uh: but um (0.4) who got thi: (0.5) um e-
   22            expert on (a special) field?
   23  Lect:     Mm: hm?=
   24  WY:       =Yeah.
   25            (0.4)
-> 26  Tadashi: An- to be paid for (too).=
   27  WY:       =Yea:h.
   28  Lect:     And what? Sorry?
   29  Tadashi: Um to be paid for?
   30            (0.3)
   31  Lect:     Paid for?=So what to do with (distinguishing)
   32            a profession from a trade.
-> 33            (1.5)((Tadashi looks down, hands on chin))
   34  Kylie:    [You have to study to]
   35  Gary:     [You have to (0.2) ni]fty ja:rgon (.) if
   36            you are a professional (0.2)
   37            ((Class laugh))
```

Tadashi waits till Wong Young has given his comment, and then gives his (line 26). After the clarification of his comment, the lecturer asks the second part of the question from the original task (lines 8–9), implying that there is more to be said about 'profession.' Tadashi remains silent, looking at the task sheet with one of his hands on his chin (line 33). He revealed in his interview that he and his partner only discussed the first part of the task and then talked about job hunting. Thus, it is likely that he remained silent because he did not have the answer. Two of his peers seem to have judged Tadashi's 1.5 seconds of silence as a sign of an inability, or a refusal, to answer, and volunteered comments in lines 34 and 35 (although at least one response was deliberately humorous). From there on, the mode of communication was no longer one-on-one (or in this case, one-on-two), and the students began to self-select. (The continuation of this talk is in example (28) below.)

Another example of other student self-selection from Case Study 3 is shown below. Robin, one of the Australian students, is the presenter of a talk on one of the reading materials in the History of Secondary Education class:

(27) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   1  Robin:  Thus the:y introduced courses that would
   2          have greater relevance to adolescence.
```

```
   3           (0.4) So that's the: changing of the
   4           curriculum.(0.4)°[>(I don't know)<]°.
   5  Lect:                       [° Yeah °  and ] this
   6           is: extensions to thi: (0.2) what- was
   7           that, (0.2) Aya, thi: nineteen eighteen,
   8           (0.3) big document?
-> 9           (1.0)
  10  Lect:    What was that called = the cardinal,
-> 11          (0.4)
  12  Henry:   Cardinal°principle;°
```

Here, Aya is nominated by the lecturer to answer his question (line 7), but she cannot remember the name of the document, and this leaves a pause of one second. The lecturer gives her a clue in line 10, but after 0.4 seconds Henry responds instead. The 0.4 second pause seems rather short, but this being a second opportunity, Harry may have been attempting to save her from embarrassment, as it was a factual question relying on memory.

In sum, this analysis of classroom interaction data demonstrates that Australian students tend to normally wait between 1.0–1.5 seconds for Japanese students to respond before they take over the allocated turn. This seems to confirm Jefferson's (1989) finding that the standard maximum pause length of English native speakers is around one second. However, once the floor is perceived to be open, overlaps and interruptions are common, and silent pauses occurring before Australian participants' turns tend to be below 0.5 seconds.

5.4.2.4 *Timing of self-selection*

Let us now turn to a situation which involves participation where students self-select their turns. Compared to the lack of voluntary participation in Japanese classrooms discussed in Chapter 3, it is very common to see students in Australian classrooms competing for the floor and participating voluntarily with overlaps and interruptions. This is confirmed by the Japanese student interviewees' impressions of Australian students in Chapter 4. As suggested in the analysis above, if a longer time is required for Japanese students to respond to questions when the turn is secured by nomination, it is likely they will find it difficult to compete for the floor with Australian students.

An example of Australian classroom interaction with numerous overlaps and interruptions is the transcript from Case Study 1, taken from the Teaching as a Profession class shown below. It begins at the end of example (26) above, where Tadashi remained silent after the lecturer's question. All participants are Australian, except Gary, an American.

(28) [Interaction: Tadashi, Teaching as a Profession]

```
34  Kylie:   [You have to study to]
35  Gary:    [You have to (0.2) ni]fty ja:rgon (.) if
36           you are a professional (0.2)
37           ((Class laugh))
38  Gary:    So [that n]o =
39  Dave:       [Profe-]
40  Gary:    =one e[lse (        ) gonna say to them?]
41  Dave:          [profession (it offers you money)]
42           but I think it's mo:re specialised
43           (0.2)
44  Gary:    Yeah.=
45  Dave:    =knowledge
46  ?:       Mm:=
47  Dave:    [=knowledge based] knowledge based
48  ?:       [=Knowledge based]
49  Dave:    (              ) whereas trade's more
50           (0.4)
51  ?:       Uh:=
52  Dave:    =obscure.
53           (0.5)
54  ?:       Yeah, trade's obscure. [Yeah].
55  Dave:                           [(But s]ti[ll )]
56  ?:                                        [They]
57           don't (actively)=
58  FS1:     =No actually my dad's just (0.4) he's a
59           tradesman, (0.4) he's a plumber but- (0.4)
60           he's had to do courses (0.4) all the time=
```

The competition for the floor can be found in lines 34 and 35 between Kylie and Gary, from lines 38 through to 41 between Gary and Dave, and from lines 47 to 57 between Dave and an unidentified student, and then in line 58 FS1 interrupts the previous speaker at a spot far from the TRP. There are inter-turn pauses, but they are relatively short (0.2, 0.4 and 0.5 seconds). Lines 34 and 35 follow Tadashi's silence of 1.5 seconds in his nominated turn, but once the floor opens for the whole group and the timing of turn-taking becomes fast-paced, it becomes almost impossible for Tadashi to claim his right to respond to the lecturer's question.

The next excerpt is also from Case Study 1, but from the smaller class, Curriculum and Examinations, which Tadashi attended. The lecturer in line 7 opens the floor to the class with a question about having students from two different levels

in one language classroom at a secondary school. Immediately, Linda responds, but this is overlapped by Kylie (line 9). The moment Kylie's response is heard and Linda withdraws from her turn due to the overlap, Tamara responds and starts talking about her experience. When she finishes the first part of her account, Kylie begins to talk about her experience, but this is interrupted by Tamara, who has not finished her account and to whom the lecturer has been giving continuers (lines 16 and 18).

(29) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
   1  Lect:    You sometimes ha:ve a beginner's group,
   2           (see it), (0.8) and the two unit into the
   3           same class.=
   4  Kylie:   =Um,
   5           (0.4)
   6  Lect:    And the issue's about how to manage
   7           that.= 'ave you ever experienced that,=
   8  Linda:   =No [ u- ]
   9  Kylie:       [Yep.]
  10  Tamara:  Yeah.
->11  Tamara:  My history teacher:, (0.5) had a: (0.4) I
  12           remember we used to do two
  13           units three unit at the (           ) time,=
  14  Lect:    =That's right.=
  15  Tamara:  =All in the (one cla[:ss)?]
  16  Lect:                        [Yeah.]
->17  Kylie:   We [ did ] two (        ) two general
  18  Lect:       [Yeah.]
  19  Kylie:   to: [(        )]
->20  Tamara:      [And others] in both cla:ss (.) both
  21           in two unit and three unit and so (.)
  22           we're sort of lost, (0.3) for a while,
  23           thinki:ng,(0.4) what are we doing
  24           are we doing three unit or two unit,
  25           or: what's happening,
  26           (0.3)
  27  Lect:    So: you had to (.) become a little bit of
  28           a magician.[Yeah].
  29  Tamara:             [Yeah](hh) huh.
```

The competition between Tamara and Kylie is clear here. This type of floor competition is not very common in Japanese classrooms, and with English as their

second language, it is difficult for Japanese students to adapt to this mode of communication.

For example, in the Teaching as a Profession class, the legal implications of the teachers' drinking alcohol were discussed at one stage. Tadashi did not speak publicly about his own experience of seeing the teachers drinking after school in the teachers' room, but he shared this experience privately with his classmate Peter during a heated discussion in the classroom. This was captured in the video-recording and confirmed in a recall interview. He indicated that he thought about sharing his story with the class but he didn't, because it was difficult for him to find the right timing to speak.

The timing of self-selection also emerged in Aya's presentation in Case Study 3. The presentation in the History of Secondary Education class was on the weekly reading materials, in which the student presenter explained, summarised and discussed these materials. In all student presentations, the lecturer made comments or asked questions from time to time. What follows is a series of excerpts showing transition of turns, where student presenters go through questions prepared for tutorial discussions. In general, the students responded to questions and the lecturer would provide feedback. However, as the lecturer did not mark the end of this feedback in an explicit manner, it was left to the presenter to initiate the move onto the next question. In their role as discussion leaders, then, the presenters had to negotiate the transitions from one question to another. Below, Aya, who is the presenter, takes time (7.3 seconds) to make sure the lecturer's feedback is over, and the "u:m" and the following pause at the beginning of her turn (line 151) suggests that she is testing her understanding that it is now her turn to initiate the next question. The lecturer does not stop her from initiating the next move, and she goes on to the next question.

(30) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   145  Lect:    I mean you can have a scientific education
   146           which is the one you want. But um (0.7)
   147           during this century (            )
   148           curriculum is still (0.5) historical,
   149           literary (.) subjects.
-> 150           (7.3)
-> 151  Aya:     U:m (1.0) next question? U:m how did they
   152           relate to the often older cooperate cooperate
   153           school.
```

The next example in a similar situation shows Aya allowing 11.2 seconds of silence to ensure that she is not making a premature move to the next topic.

(31) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   204 Lect:   All high schools (0.4) were selective high
   205         schools (0.3) until a:fter World War Two.
-> 206         (11.2)
-> 207 Aya:    And the fourth one, (0.2) What assumptions
   208         were made (.) about curricula (.)
   209         appropriate to females and males?
```

In comparison, however, a typical example of an Australian student's initiating move to the next question in a similar context, in the same subject, is given below:

(32) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   1  Lect:    It's a huge social revolution. (0.5) with
   2           with all sorts of terrible consequences
   3           (I think).
   4           (1.6)
-> 5  Robin:   Okay, (0.2) ↑what led to high schools
   6           taking this approach to youth.
```

Robin initiates a shift to the next question after allowing a silent pause of 1.6 seconds, which is significantly shorter than the length Aya allowed. The initiation of the shift is also marked by "okay," instead of more inexplicit "um" or "and" often used by Aya. "Okay" here serves as a boundary marker to signal the shift in the focus of discussion (see Beach 1993; Dorr-Bremme 1990; Hatch 1992; Rendle-Short 2000; Schiffrin 1987; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). The following excerpt shows Aya using "and" in a similar context and being intercepted by Dr. Lucas.

(33) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   169 Lect:   Another (King) School Parramatta, what
   170         he wanted (Fort street) today. But um
   171         (0.3) it's not to be so:.
   172         (2.2)
-> 173 Aya:    °And°
   174         (0.9)
   175 Lect:   A love hate relationship=I would say (    ).
   176         (2.3)
-> 177 Aya:    Um (0.6) third question? (.) Um were the
   178         early state high schools founded on
   179         principals of universal or meritocra (.)
   180         tic? Access.
```

Here, Aya's eye-gaze is on her sheet of paper in line 172, and as she says "and" in a soft voice she turns the page, getting ready for her next question. However, the lecturer continues to talk about the previous topic, and Aya is required to do her negotiating work again by waiting a few moments in line 176. While "okay" can signal "readiness to commence the next section of talk" (Rendle-Short 2000: 26), "um" and "and" signal continuity in talk. Hence, Aya's strategies are less powerful in terms of control over the discussion, which could lead to negative judgements about her "leadership" and "engagement" in tutorial discussions. According to Dorr-Bremme (1990), "framing words" (p. 388), which are equivalent to boundary markers, can play important roles as contextualisation cues in controlling and regulating classroom talk efficiently, and an absence of these "framing words" is likely to cause problems in "enacting authority" and "maintaining the floor" (p. 389). The perceptions of Aya being "quiet" and "retiring" may partly be partly due to the absence of these "framing words" combined with longer silences preceding topic initiating moves in her presentation.

In the stretch of talk below, however, Aya makes a move to shift from Dr. Lucas' comment to the next key question in line 315 by using the boundary marker "okay," and the pause before "okay" is far shorter than pauses in her other cases shown above. For once, Aya in fact uses the same strategy as her Australian peers to maintain control in the discussion:

(34) [Interaction: Aya]

```
-> 293  Aya:   °But° weren't they trying to sort of °(   )
   294         equal opportunities°?
   295  Lect:  Yeah but the way timetables often worked is
   296         meant that (0.2) it will be very diffi- (.)
   297         difficult for a girl to do (0.3) u:m (0.5) uh
   298         maybe to do French a:nd
-> 299  Aya:   mmm.
   300  Lect:  physics for example.
               ((More explanation from the lecturer))
   312  Lect:  [(        )] (0.3) The academic course
   313         for girls was (0.5) French:, Botany,
   314         (.) History. (0.4) The academic (0.6) uh::
   315         subjects for boys were (0.3) mathematics:,=
-> 316  Aya:   =Mm hm,=
   317  Lect:  =physics, (0.4) uh: chemistry, (1.1) Latin.
   318         (2.2)
   319  Lect:  They were still going strong in the mid
   320         nineteen sixties when I was at high school.
```

```
   312            (0.4) °High school (          )°. (0.3) Yeah.
-> 313  Aya:      Mm.
   314            (1.0)
-> 315  Aya:      Okay the la:st question? (.) What role
   316            did university controlled public
   317            examinations play in the early state high
   318            schools.
```

Looking at the excerpt, it seems that the temporary rapport established through the exchange between Aya and Dr. Lucas directly before the shift led to Aya's quick and decisive move. As we can see in lines 293 and 294, Aya volunteered a comment and received feedback from Dr. Lucas. She has also been backchanneling (lines 299, 316 and 313) to maintain the two-way interaction. Thus, it is possible that "the turn order bias" which Sacks et al. (1974: 713) describe as "last being next speaker" had been at work through the exchange between Aya and Dr. Lucas. It is also possible that she was more certain about the appropriate location of the topic shift, since she was the one who raised the issue. This observation in turn suggests that in other contexts of shifts in her tutorial paper, it may have been difficult for Aya to be in control because she rarely participated in discussion except for reading out her questions.

5.4.2.5 *Summary: Norms of turn-taking*

When interaction following the nomination of Japanese students was examined, there were a number of cases where 'delay' in reaction led to their silence. When the 'delay' occurred, it was often interpreted as a sign of a 'problem' by Australian students and lecturers, who tried to compensate for this 'problem' by modifying or paraphrasing the questions, or providing responses on behalf of the Japanese students.

The difficult question, however, was the interpretation of 'delay.' It may have been caused by the Japanese students' lack of proficiency, individual differences in cognitive processing, or sociolinguistic unfamiliarity with the fast rate of turn-taking. To make the question of 'delay' even more complex, some instances of 'delays' are more likely to be 'silent responses' intended to mean "I don't know the answer" or "I don't understand." This leads us to a discussion of silence in relation to politeness, which will be presented in Section 5.5 below.

If there is a mismatch between the cause of silence and the interpretation of silence by the peers or the lecturer, the Japanese students are likely to be either silenced or to experience loss of face. If the cause of silence and the interpretation match, then native-speakers' moves will serve as both a face-saving strategy

for Japanese students and an opportunity for native speakers to display academic competence.

The close analysis of turn-taking in the case studies above also suggests an important issue in relation to the Japanese students' comments, discussed in Chapter 4. In the interviews, the Japanese students indicated that they participate exclusively when they are nominated and they do not participate in free-for-all open discussions. However, there were a number of instances in which Japanese students remained silent when they were nominated. This means that the Japanese students may not perceive such silence as 'marked' (while the Australian students and lecturers may do so).

Finally, it should also be noted that in the case studies it was mostly a limited number of Australian students who tended to dominate classroom discussion and to silence Japanese students (whether consciously or from supportive intentions). In Case Study 1, these students were Kylie, with Dave and Michelle to a lesser extent; in Case Study 2, Molly, and then Bill; and in Case Study 3, Henry. It should be mentioned that, from my own experiences and personal communications with lecturers, Australian students sometimes complain when a small group of students dominate classroom discussions. Therefore, the role of proficiency in English as well as cultural differences in norms of turn-taking should not be overemphasised. Silence was jointly created in the case studies, often as a consequence of interaction among the lecturers, the Japanese students and a small number of dominant Australian students. This also suggests that Japanese students' interview comments (Chapter 4) reflected their overgeneralised image of the voluble Australian versus the silent Japanese.

5.4.3 Participant structures

Silence and talk in the classroom are closely related to participant structures, which are "ways of allocating student involvement" (Philips 1983: 79). As already detailed earlier in Section 5.2.3, students' turns were coded using categories of situations in which turn-taking took place: (1) bidding for the floor; (2) open floor and (3) individually offered floor. As far as the first and second categories are concerned, in most classes in the case studies, there was a general tendency for more turns to be taken through 'bidding' than in 'open floor.' With regard to the third category, generally fewer turns were taken through individual selection by others than through all other methods. Since self-selected turns were rarely observed in the Japanese high school classroom study (Chapter 3), and Japanese students in Australia indicated that, unlike their Australian peers, they tend to participate through nominations by the lecturer (Chapter 4), it seems worth examining the

distribution of self-selected and other-selected turns. Thus, figures obtained for the first and the second categories were combined for analysis as a category of self-selected turns, although they were also examined separately. The category of 'individually offered floor' in contrast with that of self-selected turns is accordingly called other-selected turns, since turns are selected by others when the floor is offered to a specific individual. The terms self-selection and other-selection are derived from the notion of self-selecting and other-selecting in turn-taking rules, which are central to conversation analysis as proposed by Sacks et al (1974).

5.4.3.1 *Case Study 1*

Comparing self-selected turns (Table 5.8) with other-selected turns (Table 5.9) in the larger class in Case Study 1 (Teaching as a Profession), we can see that there are clearly more self-selected than other-selected turns as a tendency of the group.

Table 5.8 Number and length of self-selected turns in Teaching as a Profession

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	2	0	0	0.0	0.0
Mark	1	32	296	32.0	9.3
Dave	1	27	288	27.0	10.7
Kylie	2	78	730	39.0	9.4
Michelle	1	34	385	34.0	11.3
Louise	1	16	128	16.0	8.0
Susie	1	0	0	0.0	0.0
Jenni	1	21	142	21.0	6.8
Pat	1	16	352	16.0	22.0
Average				20.6	8.6

Table 5.9 Number and length of other-selected turns in Teaching as a Profession

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	2	2	3	1.0	1.5
Mark	1	2	13	2.0	6.5
Dave	1	4	20	4.0	5.0
Kylie	2	6	140	3.0	23.3
Michelle	1	0	0	0.0	0.0
Louise	1	1	2	1.0	2.0
Susie	1	1	4	1.0	4.0
Jenni	1	1	1	1.0	1.0
Pat	1	3	28	3.0	9.3
Average				1.8	5.8

Since there was relatively stiff competition for the floor, students had to 'jump into' the discussion if they wanted to say something, rather than waiting for the chance to speak to be offered by the teacher. In this class, Tadashi, the Japanese student, did not self-select his turns at all.

Let us now turn to the smaller class in Case Study 1 (Curriculum and Examinations). Here, Tadashi self-selected his turns 22 times, but not as often as the other students, as we can see in Table 5.10 below.

Although the total number of turns (see Table 5.3 in Section 5.3.1) shows that Christine took fewer turns than Tadashi, it should be noted that she attended only 40% of the recorded sessions in which Tadashi was present. Moreover, three turns out of twelve in the bidding category for Tadashi (Table 5.11) were taken during a one-on-one session with Mr. Fuller, the lecturer, before other students joined the class, and four turns out of twelve in the same bidding category were taken in the session in which only Tadashi and Kylie attended. This leaves five turns taken by Tadashi during the sessions in which more than three students attended. In any case, the average number of turns taken by Tadashi in the bidding-for-floor situation is the lowest in the class. In the 'open floor' category (Table 5.12), four out of ten turns were taken during the session in which only Tadashi and Kylie attended.

Table 5.10 Number and length of self-selected turns in Curriculum and Examinations

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	3	22	47	7.3	2.1
Kylie	3	202	940	67.3	4.7
Tamara	2	111	225	55.5	2.0
Linda	2	37	102	18.5	2.8
Christine	1	11	61	11.0	5.6
Average				31.9	3.4

Table 5.11 Number and length of turns through bidding in Curriculum and Examinations

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	3	12	32	4.0	2.7
Kylie	3	138	730	46.0	5.3
Tamara	2	88	191	44.0	2.1
Linda	2	33	95	16.5	2.9
Christine	1	9	57	9.0	6.3
Average				23.9	3.9

Table 5.12 Number and length of turns in open floor situations in Curriculum and Examinations

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	3	10	15	3.3	1.5
Kylie	3	64	210	21.3	3.3
Tamara	2	23	34	11.5	1.5
Linda	2	4	7	2.0	1.8
Christine	1	2	4	2.0	2.0
Average				8.0	2.0

Table 5.13 Number and length of turns through individual nomination in Curriculum and Examinations

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Tadashi	3	19	45	6.3	2.4
Kylie	3	10	40	3.3	4.0
Tamara	2	13	37	6.5	2.8
Linda	2	1	2	0.5	2.0
Christine	1	2	3	2.0	1.5
Average				3.7	2.5

Regarding participation through individual nomination (Table 5.13), Tadashi had the highest number of turns, although on average Tamara showed the highest number of turns per class. It should be noted, however, that nine of Tadashi's turns in this category were yes-no responses, as were seven of Tamara's. As in the larger Teaching as a Profession class, the students in Curriculum and Examinations had to self-select to make an average contribution, despite the small class size. It is possible that this turn-taking system in classroom interaction, which required frequent self-selection, made it difficult for Tadashi to participate to an average degree, since he had a tendency to participate more by other-selection. This is also suggested by the lecturer in the Teaching as a Profession class:

(35) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]
[...] he would never volunteer and there's so many kids in that group that do volunteer that unless you do, you don't have a chance.

From the coding results, it can also be inferred that, due to this preference for self-selection in classroom participation, there seem to be a number of students who tend to dominate interaction. Kylie, for example, is the most active student in both of the two classes followed in this case study (Table 5.3 and Table 5.4

above). More importantly, a comparison of Tables 5.8 and 5.9, and Tables 5.10 and 5.13, above, shows that although Kylie's average number of other-selected turns is not significantly higher than others, her self-selected turns are overwhelmingly higher than her classmates. Kylie was observed to be a motivated, enthusiastic and active student, and was positively evaluated by Ms. Hardy. Ms. Hardy noted in her interview how impressed she was by Kylie's performance saying, "That [Kylie] girl sounds pretty good, too. I thought she was going to be wonderful." Similarly, Gary, a mature student from the US, who was also articulate, voluble and enthusiastic (see Table 5.3), was described by Ms. Hardy as "really committed." It was also the case that he self-selected his turns frequently while the frequency of other-selected turns was moderate. In contrast to Kylie and Gary, Tadashi was negatively evaluated by Ms. Hardy for his classroom performance:

(36) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]
I'd be interested to know what he was getting. Yes - pass ... I couldn't imagine it would be a higher level than a pass from just my impression in the classroom.

Ms. Hardy also commented that Tadashi and Wong Young only spoke when they were asked direct questions ("direct" meaning straightforward factual memory checking questions), which she found unsatisfactory. Moreover, the negative evaluation expressed in the comment above was not an evaluation of classroom performance but actually an evaluation of overall academic performance. This comment seems to strongly encode the considerable impact of classroom participation on perception of academic competence, at least from Ms. Hardy's point of view.

On the other hand, the lecturer in charge of Curriculum and Examinations class, Mr. Fuller, noted that Tadashi approached "his tasks and learning with some enthusiasm." He added, "[Tadashi] seems to be unafraid to ask questions when necessary." However, among Tadashi's total 22 turns through self-selection in this class, he asked three questions, two of which were asked during a one-on-one period before all other students arrived. The gap in Mr. Fuller's comments and Tadashi's performance maybe due, as mentioned earlier, to the fact that Mr. Fuller is overly careful about giving any judgemental or negative comments.

5.4.3.2 *Case Study 2*

The tables below show the sample group's patterns of participation in Regular Discussion. First of all, comparing the frequency of self-selected turns (Table 5.14) and other-selected turns (Table 5.15), it is possible to see that all the students in the sample group take their turns more frequently through self-selection, however Miki's turns are almost evenly taken through self-selection and other-selection.

The percentage of self-selected turns out of total turns for each participant is shown below in Table 5.16.

Table 5.14 Number and length of self-selected turns in Intercultural Communication (Regular Discussion)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Miki	3	4	62	1.3	15.5
Sophia	4	31	346	7.8	11.2
Molly	5	66	454	13.2	6.9
Bill	4	50	274	12.5	5.5
Tony	4	6	66	1.5	11.0
Average				7.3	10.0

Table 5.15 Number and length of other-selected turns in Intercultural Communication (Regular Discussion)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Miki	3	3	36	1.0	12.0
Sophia	4	3	32	0.8	10.7
Molly	5	14	123	2.8	8.8
Bill	4	6	65	1.5	10.8
Tony	4	1	72	0.3	72.0
Average				1.3	22.9

Table 5.16 Ratio of participants' self-selected turns in total turns in Intercultural Communication (Regular Discussion)

Participant	Total number of turns	Total number of self-selected turns	Total number of other-selected turns	Ratio of self-selected turns in total turns
Miki	7	4	3	58%
Sophia	33	31	3	94%
Molly	80	66	14	83%
Bill	56	50	6	89%
Tony	7	6	1	86%

The fact that Miki took fewer turns than the others through self-selection was noted by Dr. Telfer in her interview:

(37) [Interview: Dr. Telfer]
I would have thought - because *she never asked me, because she never volunteers any comments*, I would have automatically probably, until discussing with you [the researcher], (inaudible) I would have automatically said oh she is an unconfident shy person.

The coding results show that Miki actually volunteered her comments a few times, but Dr. Telfer was correct that Miki never asked a question except for confirmation questions in her Presentation Discussion.

The above comment by the lecturer suggests that voluntary questioning and commenting is expected from students, and those who speak only when selected by others may be perceived as "unconfident" and "shy." This perception can have particular consequences. In the excerpt below, Miki is supported by the lecturer in securing a turn:

(38) [Interaction: Miki]

```
36  Tomo:   So I think (.) the students who come
37          from Japa:n or uh Korea China or
38          (                    ), um:: might find
39          (          ) difficult I think.(0.3)
40          (Yeah.)
41          (0.2)((Miki moves her gaze away from Tomo))
42  Miki:   ye[ah] ((tilts her head; gazes towards Lect))
43  Lect:     [Mi]ki, wh[at do you thi]nk.
44  Miki:               [when I am in]
45  Miki:   when I (0.3) when I am asked to: (0.2) give
46          my own opinion,(0.3) I have to take some
47          time to think (0.5) what my opinion is,
48          (0.3) why  I (do) this (0.7) argument,
49          cause (0.6)  even when I was writing (0.3)
50          something in Japan for school (0.2) work for
51          homework, (0.4) I wasn't asked to: (.) give
52          (0.3) my opinion.
```

In this Cross-cultural communication class, the class discussion was on classroom discourse across cultures. Tomo, a visiting scholar from Japan, comments on Asian students finding it difficult to express their own opinions. At line 42, Miki says "yeah," moving her gaze towards the lecturer, which seems to indicate her wish to make a comment. The lecturer catches the gaze and immediately nominates her, as if she is trying to secure the turn for Miki. Miki's willingness to comment can be detected by her early and overlapping start in line 44. Thus, she may not have needed the encouragement in this particular occasion. It is possible that the lecturer acted on the assumption that Miki needed to be encouraged. As mentioned before, Dr. Telfer commented that Miki's Australian peers "do not need encouragement."

The results above suggest that lack of participation by self-selection affected the perceptions of the Japanese student's marked silences. However, these silences were not explicitly associated with lack of competence by the lecturer. Neverthe-

less, the lecturer's perception that Miki's performance in her presentations was surprisingly good, despite her overall silence, implies that silence is likely to be viewed as an indicator of a lack of academic competence.

5.4.3.3 *Case Study 3*

Data from Case Study 3 reveals some interesting patterns when the quantitative results of participation coding are compared with the participants' perceptions obtained through qualitative interviews. First of all, as we can see in Table 5.17 below, in Regular Discussion, Aya is the second most frequent participant after Henry through 'bidding.'

This has an important implication for perceptions of silence. In the two other case studies, the Japanese students' low frequency of participation through 'bidding' seemed to have contributed considerably to the perception of them as 'silent students.' Here, despite Aya's participation through 'bidding' almost as often as her peers, she was still regarded as a quiet student. Although her total number of self-selected turns (see Table 5.18 below) falls short of that of Henry and Robin, it is larger than that of Kathy.

However, Kathy self-selected her turns most frequently in Presentation Discussion, as shown in Table 5.19 below. We can see that Kathy, in this participant structure, takes twice as many turns as does Aya.

Table 5.17 Number and length of turns through bidding in History of Secondary Education (Regular Discussion)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Aya	3	10	22	3.3	2.2
Robin	3	7	18	2.3	2.6
Kathy	3	4	25	1.3	6.3
Henry	3	16	108	5.3	6.8
Average	3	9.3	43.3	3.1	4.5

Table 5.18 Number and length of self-selected turns in History of Secondary Education (Regular Discussion)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Aya	3	12	28	4	2.3
Robin	3	20	93	6.6	4.7
Kathy	3	9	80	3	8.9
Henry	3	42	229	14	5.5
Average	3	9.3	43.3	6.9	5.4

Table 5.19 Number and length of self-selected turns in History of Secondary Education (Presentation Discussion)*

Participant	Number of turns	Total turn length	Average turn length
Aya	13	61	4.7
Robin	8	52	6.5
Kathy	27	198	7.3

* Henry is not included in this table, since his presentation had taken place before recording started.

Table 5.20 Number and length of turns in open floor situations in History of Secondary Education (Regular Discussion)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn length
Aya	3	2	6	0.6	3.0
Robin	3	13	75	4.3	5.8
Kathy	3	5	55	1.7	11.0
Henry	3	26	121	8.7	4.7
Average	3	11.5	64.3	3.8	6.1

In class Kathy was generally silent, looking sleepy and slumped in the chair often with her head bowed and arms crossed. However, when she gave her presentation, she was completely in control to the extent that it was difficult for other participants to have a say. Almost all the answers to the questions which Kathy prepared were answered by herself before others had managed to respond. When Aya was a presenter, on the other hand, she let others respond first. In this sense, Kathy demonstrated greater initiative and motivation when she was responsible for the tutorial paper. Nevertheless, Aya can still be described as an average participating student when the frequency of her contributions in her Presentation Discussion are compared with Robin's.

Looking at the number of turns in 'open floor' situations in Regular Discussion, the results show that Aya is the least frequently participating student with only two turns. Table 5.20 shows that Kathy is also low in her frequency here, but her average turn length is by far the longest of the group.

In the other two case studies, a low frequency of participation in 'open floor' situations was commonly seen in both Tadashi and Miki, and in this regard, Aya shows the same tendency. What seems crucial, however, is that 'open floor' situations in Aya's case were often created by either the teacher checking on the key facts discussed in preceding classes or by a student presenter asking discussion questions. Since the questions for discussion at the end of a presentation directly addressed the key points each week, the presentation is assumed to provide guidance on these points. Thus, responding to these key questions in an 'open floor'

situation can be a good indicator of engagement, interest and understanding of the subject. The average number of turns in ‘open floor’ situations was larger than that in the ‘bidding’ category for all the students in the class except Aya. This could have resulted in the impression that she was “quiet and retiring” as described by Dr. Lucas (in example (7) above). According to Aya, one of the reasons that she did not participate in ‘open floor’ situations was her lack of confidence in grasping the content of the class:

(39) [Interview: Aya]
[This subject] is difficult. [Dr. Lucas] has really, so, got his principles, and I think he is a very good teacher, and the way he talks makes it very easy to listen, so that is good, but you know, my knowledge doesn’t keep up with it. When I can understand, really, I understand, I find it useful, but after all, how can I say, um... I also [attend the class] thinking, “I don’t understand.”

She also mentions that she felt that her English skills were inadequate to grasp the content of the reading materials and that she was not able to speak as much as she would have liked because of her lack of confidence:

(40) [Interview: Aya]
A: [...] This, to be honest, with this subject I don’t have any confidence [“confidence” spoken in English], so you know, yeah, I want to speak, but even if I want to speak more, I can’t.
I: Um, so you had things you wanted to say but you couldn’t.
A: So um, I really wished I could have read more. Yeah.

These difficulties in fact led to a lack of interest, according to Aya, who commented that the class “was a bit awkward, so I didn’t enjoy it at all,” and that her motivation for this subject was “40 percent, less than half.”

In Table 5.21 below, we can see that Aya has the largest number of other-selected turns, all selected by Dr. Lucas. It is possible that Dr. Lucas made attempts to include Aya precisely because she did not respond to the key questions after the discussion as often as others.

Dr. Lucas noted in the follow-up interview that the researcher’s presence and project made him “sensitive to Aya’s position in the group.” As he stated in example (7), he could have let her “be in the corner and not really part of it.” Thus, if he had not become “sensitive to Aya’s position in the group,” she may not have been nominated as many as the nine times (Table 5.21 below). Below is an example of the lecturer’s nomination of Aya, following a peer students’ voluntary participation:

Table 5.21 Number and length of other-selected turns in History of Secondary Education (Regular Discussion)

Participant	No. of classes included	Total number of turns	Total turn length	Average no. of turns per class	Average turn-length
Aya	3	9	94	3.0	10.4
Robin	3	4	19	1.3	4.8
Kathy	3	2	3	0.7	1.5
Henry	3	2	58	0.7	29.0
Average	3	4.3	43.5	1.4	11.4

(41) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   16  Kathy:   So (0.2) as it went on it became (0.6)
   17           it- it (     ) a lot of youth had still
   18           (0.2) open eyes to adults (              )
   19           to (        ) •hhhh.
   20           (0.8)
   21  Kathy:   Kind of (              ) friends with,
   22           (0.6)
   23  Lect:    That's not the point of the question
   24           probably,
   25  Kathy?:  (Mm huh),
   26  Henry:   I just think that (0,2) (es ar: ci:), even
   27           though they did that, (0.2) they were
   28           within the guidelines of the (        ),
-> 29           (4.5)
-> 30  Lect:    What do you think about this question Aya,
   31           (0.4)
-> 32  Aya:     I- I- I ↑just wasn't sure what you mean
   33           wha- ex- (0.6) what extent? belong to-? Is
   34           it like (1.6) the youth have (0.6) really
   35           get (.) (got) up from the reading which is
   36           written by Ueda?
```

The above extract begins with the last part of Kathy's comment in response to a discussion question asked by the presenter of the session, Robin. In an 'open floor' situation, Kathy volunteers first, and then, after negative feedback from the lecturer in lines 23 and 24, Henry offers his comment. This does not receive any feedback, but instead, the lecturer nominates Aya for a response. A similar situation, where Aya was nominated after other students' voluntary comments, occurred

in other sessions, at least twice. This indicates that despite her average frequency of overall voluntary participation, Aya was negatively evaluated in terms of her engagement and commitment to the subject. This evaluation was in fact accurate, as Aya's own comments about the subject also indicate (see interview excerpt (67) in 5.6.2 below). From both the interaction and interview data presented so far, the possible explanations for this perception of Aya as a silent (and thus not committed) student would be her: (1) lack of voluntary contribution when discussing key issues (2) soft voice which is difficult to hear; (3) lack of eye-contact with the lecturer; (4) lack of strategies for discursive control; and (5) lack of proficiency in English to cope with the subject. These factors seem to have overridden her relative frequency of participation in this case study.

5.4.4 Preferred mode of communication

It was shown in Chapter 3 that there is more focus on the written than spoken mode of communication in Japanese classroom practices. In Chapter 4, comments from Japanese students in Australia suggested that certain types of talk in class are considered irrelevant by them, while they also perceived their own silence negatively. When we look at the case studies, preference and orientation to learning in the classroom varied.

In the case of Tadashi, there were indications that he did not value discussion or student classroom participation as learning processes. Furthermore, his lecturer, Ms. Hardy, expressed the opinion that Tadashi and his Korean classmate did not need the course any more because they were "sorted out" and "had their jobs lined up." Tadashi had not found a job at that stage, but Ms. Hardy's impression was correct insofar as the two students did not seem to feel the need to commit themselves to discussions or the tasks. As mentioned earlier, Tadashi and his Korean partner did not discuss all of the four questions in their pair task but talked about job hunting during the time allocated for pair discussion. One of his peer students suggested his preference for listening and writing:

(42) [Interview: Kylie]
He's always listening and he's always um organised. […] he's always taking notes and listening, which is not everyone's um ((laugh)). […] I think he prefers just to listen and take notes but when it's his turn to provide or participate, he always says valuable stuff to say and he's usually pretty knowledgeable on what we're doing.

With the other two case studies, the pictures are different, however. There is almost no evidence that the Japanese students dispreferred the spoken mode of

communication, except for comments by Miki's lecturer, who was impressed with and surprised by her presentations, which were based on prepared and written materials. In terms of attitudes to talking in class, both Miki and Aya expressed their wish to talk more. For example, Miki said, "I think I should talk more, but I can't," and considered this to be a "communicative problem rather than problem with English proficiency." Thus, we can see that Miki is experiencing a dilemma between two contrasting types of classroom discourse.

Aya's comments and those of her Japanese Studies lecturers suggest that Aya values and prefers the spoken mode of communication as a learning process. For example, she commented on her performance in the recorded sessions:

(43) [Interview: Aya]
I think my performance was not good at all in class. Yeah. So, [in the presentation], I wish I could have more interaction and things like that with others rather than just reading… I have given presentations in Education [subjects] before, but this is the first time I read all the way through. I didn't like it, yeah, because I really struggled to do just this [presentation].

This is at odds with the greater weight placed on the written mode of academic performance in Japanese education and described by Japanese students (see Chapters 3 and 4). Aya's frustration with her self-perceived inability and silence in the History of Secondary Education class, in contrast to her voluble and engaging image in Japanese Studies classes, seems to reflect a transitional stage in her adaptation to Australian classroom practice. There were also comments from Japanese interviewees (see Chapter 4) which suggested their appreciation of discussion and of the opportunity to express one's own ideas in Australian education. This explains Miki and Aya's frustration towards their own silence.

In addition to a preference for the written or spoken mode of communication, a preference for the direction of communication emerged as one of the aspects of perceived silence. A tendency found among the Japanese students was to direct their talk exclusively towards the teacher. This tendency was in contrast with their Australian peer students who appeared to assume and perform multi-directional modes of communication. Hence, the silence of Japanese students can be observed when their Australian peers are talking among themselves. This type of silence was particularly noticeable in Tadashi and Aya. Even Miki, who frequently directed questions and comments towards her peers (see Section 5.4.2), did not initiate sequences of talk: a close examination of Miki's participation shows that it tended to occur after an elicitation turn of another student or the lecturer or comments initiated by her peers (see Section 5.4.2).

Such silence due to an exclusive focus on teacher-student communication can be considered a consequence of Japanese classroom practices, where, as shown in

Chapter 3, a multi-directional communication system involving student-student talk rarely occurs. This absence of communication among students in the classroom has been associated with assumptions that the teacher is the only authority of knowledge and that learning takes place through reception of knowledge from an authority, rather than through negotiation and interaction with peers and/or the teacher (see Section 3.3.1; Matsuda 2000; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996). Thus, as Marriott (2000) indicates, Japanese students are not likely to be familiar with the Australian "tutorial genre" (p. 286).

It must be noted, however, that the immediate contextual factors such as peer initiatives to interact with Japanese students (in Miki's case) or a teacher-dominant communicative structure of the class (in Aya's case) affected the Japanese students' modes of communication to a great degree. In other words, cultural or linguistic interpretations of Japanese students' silence in a specific mode of communication should not be overemphasised; other factors affecting behaviour should also be taken into consideration.

5.4.5 Summary

The results of the case studies reveal a complex and mixed picture of silence and perceptions of it. It is likely that perceptions of silence are affected by the frequency of voluntary participation through self-selection. At the same time, perceptions of silence seem to be strongly related to evaluations of student academic performance. Nevertheless, the frequency or the amount of participation does not seem to simply account for perceptions of volubility or silence. As we have seen, strategies which enhance or reduce the level of control in classroom discourse seem to make a difference. On the other hand, the mode of classroom discourse varies from class to class, and the effect of strategies on the perceptions of talk and silence may depend on the ways in which the classroom discourse is structured.

5.5 Socio-psychological factors contributing to silence

This section discusses the orientation of the three Japanese students to politeness in relation to their silence and in comparison with that of Australian students. It will demonstrate how silence and talk are used to negotiate politeness by the three Japanese students and their Australian peers and lecturers.

5.5.1 Silence as a strategy to maintain positive face of the self

The Japanese students' comments in the interviews suggested that silence is often used as a strategy to avoid loss of their own positive face (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1). This strategy can generally be found in the low frequency of self-selected turns in the case studies, especially in the cases of Tadashi and Miki. The discussion in Chapter 4 showed that a lack of confidence in language proficiency as well as an awareness of inadequate background knowledge were found to inhibit voluntary participation. What is interesting is that none of the three Japanese students gave lack of confidence as a reason for their overall silence. Rather, they attributed their silence to inability: namely, lack of knowledge, understanding, or interactional skills. The 'inability' explanations are valid in a number of ways, as we have seen in the struggle with turn-taking above, and, as we will see later in Section 5.6.2, there are topics which place Japanese students at a disadvantage due to limited experience in, and limited cultural knowledge of, Australia. However, there were also signs of face-saving silences found in the case studies. The excerpt below shows an example, from Case Study 1, where Tadashi remained silent while the lecturer, Ms. Hardy, tried to bring him into the discussion. This exchange follows the 'take-over' of the turn specifically allocated for Tadashi, when he was asked about the difference between a trade and profession (excerpt (26), (28) above). He had not discussed the relevant part of the task, and by avoiding eye contact with the lecturer when she cues for Tadashi's participation, he manages to maintain his face:

(44) [Interaction: Tadashi, Teaching as a Profession]

```
-> 99   Lect:    That's- that's true. Can- (.) just come back,
-> 99a  Lect:    ((opens hand and point to Tadashi and WY))
   100           (0.4)
   101  Gary:    [and] there is a secret (       ).=
   102  Lect:    [um ]
   103  Lect:    =there's other parts.= [That's right.]
-> 103a Tadashi: ((leans forward to look at the task))
   104  Class:                          [huh  huh  huh] huh
   105           ((class laugh and talk 1.3))
   106  Lect:    *[that I want you to bear with, (.)
-> 107           Quickly I know you- I] feel sa:me here
   108           just for a few more minutes. (0.2)
   109           hhhhh
   110           (0.4)
   111  Lect:    Please, da [ha huh huh huh huh ] huh
```

```
   112   Class:               [huh huh huh huh huh]
   113   Kylie:    You can't ma[ke us,]
   114   Lect:                [·hhuh ] huh,
   115   Class:    Uh huh huh huh huh huh=
   116   ?:        =We have right [(         ] )
   117   Lect:                    [Quickly,] ]
-> 117a  Lect:                    [((pointing at Tadashi and WY))
-> 117b  Tadashi:                 [((Tadashi is looking down))
   118             (1.0) ((students mumbling jokes))
   119   ?:        [We k]now our rights.
   120   Lect:     [U:m ]
-> 121             (0.6)((Tadashi looks up and sits straight))
   122   Lect:     u:m [(0.3) way you dress speak behave,
-> 122a  Tadashi:      [((looks down))
   123             dress:,(0.2) all right? [(0.4) How
-> 123a  Tadashi:                          [((looks up at Lect))
   124   Lect:     dress[ing ,]
   125   Kylie:         [firs-]
-> 126   Lect:     all of [you?
   127   Kylie:           [first week suits:.]
   128             (0.4)
   129   Lect:     That's right.
```

*[] overlaps the laughter

While the peer students try to continue with their talk, the lecturer attempts to bring their attention to Tadashi and his Korean partner (line 99), and to "the other parts" (line 103) of the task assigned for them. However, Tadashi's non-verbal behaviour shows that he avoids the lecturer's attention (103a, 117b, 122a), by looking down. In the end, the lecturer explicitly addresses the whole group ("all of you?" in line 126), at which point Kylie, one of the most active students, responds.

We have also seen in the previous section that Miki often remains silent and lets her peers talk when she seems to be unsure of herself. As for Aya, she does not often respond to discussion questions, which sometimes results in the lecturer nominating her. She mentioned in her interview that she was under pressure to perform appropriately. This pressure may have led to her perceptions of her own inability to express herself, which resulted in silence to avoid inappropriate responses. Such silence can be regarded as a strategy to save one's own positive face: the image of a competent student. This, however seems to lead to a pragmatic failure, caused by a mismatch of politeness orientations between Japanese students and Australian lecturers. For example, Miki's lecturer described her English as "careful," and "a great contrast with" one of the Korean students in the same class

who "lets it pour out regardless how grammatical it is." This student, Nakki, was perceived by the lecturer as an excellent student, although she was aware that this student did not always attend the class.

As we have seen, the perceived silence of the Japanese students had a negative effect on perceptions of academic competence, yet the desire to avoid being perceived as an incompetent student seems to have led to the face-saving silence of the Japanese students. Thus, when studying in the Australian education system, academic achievement seems to be sacrificed to some degree by Japanese students for the sake of saving face.

5.5.2 Silence to save the other's face: "Don't do the FTA" strategy

Silence is also used as a "Don't do the FTA" strategy in a classic sense (see Brown & Levinson 1987; Sifianou 1997) when Japanese students refrain from expressing disagreement with the lecturer (see Chapter 4, 4.3.2) This use of silence, in place of the verbal expression of critical views or disagreement, can be identified as the superstrategy of "Don't do the FTA," and this was also found among the Japanese students in the case studies. They rarely made critical comments or disagreed with anyone, while their Australian peers showed more willingness to verbally demonstrate their critical thinking, which is valued in Australian university education (Ballard 1996; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Matsuda 2000; Milner & Quilty 1996).

Below is an example, from Case Study 1, of an Australian student critically commenting on the lecturer's point. The excerpt begins with a comment by the lecturer, Mr. Fuller, on the lack of communication between teachers across different languages at secondary schools:

(45) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
   6  Lect:    Language teachers haven't checked, (.)you know,
   7           Greek teacher hasn't checked with Italian
   8           teacher=Italian teacher (.) ah hasn't checked
   9           with the Japane[se t]eacher.
-> 10 Tamara:                 [But-]
  11           (0.2)
  12  Lect:    What's happening in the different
  13           languages that I can bring in,
  14           (0.2)
  15  Tamara:  Mm[:]
  16  Lect:      [t]o my subject for example film, (0.4)
  17           bringing in the aspect of film. and
  18           the text. ((cough)) u:m (1.2) one of the
```

19 successes with French and German, (0.2) and
20 then later Japane:se, was (.) precisely
21 using film. (0.5) and it's come late to some
22 other languages = you were gonna say
23 but (.) I'm sorry,=
-> 24 Tamara: =Ahm yeah I- I understand like cause I've
25 been studying Greek for many many many many
26 years since (.) you know kindergarten, and
27 uni,(0.7) but- um (0.4) uh I just don't
28 know okay we have to implement new
29 strategies in order to get (0.2) you know,
30 candidates to continue the language, ·hhh
31 but I think it's (0.4) it- it varies from
32 >subject to subject< cause once you get to
33 >year eleven and twelve for Greek< it's more
34 content based. ·hh I don't know how >you
35 will be able to< introduce it.=
36 Lect: =(Right/But),
-> 37 Tamara: and I don't know how students would
38 react. (0.4) I don't know if it's such a
39 difference?

In the excerpt above, it is interesting to see Tamara perform the FTA of making a staged critical comment with redressing politeness strategies. She shows approval by saying "yeah I- I understand" in line 24, being positively polite, and then indirectly expresses her doubt by hesitantly saying "but um …I just don't know" (lines 27 to 30, being negatively polite), before gradually getting to her disagreement "but I think it's…it varies from subject to subject" (lines 31–32; negatively polite); and "I don't know if it's such a difference?"(lines 38 to 39; negatively polite). This type of staged critical comment was also performed by other Australian students. Here we can see the tension between the need to perform FTA for the practical goal of classroom participation and a need to maintain the lecturer's face.

In her study on politeness in Greek high school classrooms, Pavlidou (2001) finds "minimal politeness investments" in teacher-student interaction (p. 129), and explains that, because of the goal-orientedness of classroom activities, "certain acts that would be very face threatening in another setting are less so in classroom [*sic*]" (p. 130). In the Australian university context, criticism and disagreement, which are highly face-threatening in other settings, are performed with staged politeness strategies by Australian students, and lecturers are likely to perceive such behaviour as an indicator of academic competence rather than as a threat to the lecturer's face.

Turning to the Japanese students' orientation to politeness, Tadashi, in Case Study 1, did not critically comment or disagree. For example, when Mr. Fuller wrote up his ideas for the assignment on the whiteboard, inviting Tadashi and Kylie to give their opinions, Tadashi focused on copying the details, whereas Kylie negotiated the content with Mr. Fuller:

(46) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
   1  Lect:    Is this: (0.6) being unreasonable? or can
   2           you see uh:=
   3  Kylie:   =No it=
   4  Lect:    =practical purpose with this.
-> 5  Kylie:   I can see (it)/(you).(0.2) because it is
   6           good (0.2) but u:m so are you saying that
   7           we design one, and then we give you reasons
   8           for what we've designed (    ) thing that.
   9  Lect:    u:h the so: (0.2) what- what I am getting at
  10           i:s, say you've got two (.) two foci if you
  11           like. (0.2) year eight and year ten. (0.4)
  12           there might be something different.(1.5) you
  13           know there might be difference in what you
  14           do in year eight what you do in year ten.
  15           (0.6)
-> 16 Kylie:   Yeah (.) uh: but- are you saying that we
  17           desi:gn (0.2) one for year eight and one for
  18           year ten and then we give reasons for what
  19           we designed that?
```

In the follow-up interview, Tadashi said that the assignment had seemed too long, but he had not said so:

(47) [Interview: Tadashi]

I: What did you think of the assignment's content?

T: That was a bit, well, to be honest I thought it was, it might be a bit too much, but, then, the content of the assignment seemed very useful, so - […] I decided not to say anything. "I will do this if the teacher told us to do this," I thought.

This silence of 'non-resistance' or 'non-negotiation' could in fact be considered as his politeness strategy of "Don't do the FTA."

In the other two case studies, critical comments and disagreements were not performed by Japanese students either. Instead, a tendency for deferential behaviour towards the teacher was observed. In Case Study 3, Aya's politeness orienta-

tion appears to assume a hierarchical power relationship with the lecturer, Dr. Lucas, while her peers were found to use more solidarity-oriented strategies with him. The exchange below shows an incident, during her paper presentation, in which Aya's deference towards Dr. Lucas can be clearly seen:

(48) [Interaction: Aya]

```
    5  Lect:   What would you say if I tho:ught (.) that
    6          your nineteen twenty three was a mistake.
    7          (0.2) I thought it should read ninety thirty
    8          three. (0.5) Do you think that's possible?
    9          (1.0)((Aya looks through the paper))
-> 10  Aya:    Possible.=Yes, ve(h)ry very possib[le].
   11  Lect:                                     [um]:
   12  Lect:   Cause (0.3) the nineteen thirties are
   13          great depression. (0.4) in Australia >in
   14          most of Europe most of north America<. (0.4)
   15          an- it certainly in South Australia.(0.4)
   16          They put fees on. (0.2) in high schools.
   17          (0.2) I'd be very surpri:sed if that
   18          shouldn't be ninety thirty three.
   19          (1.3)
   20          But I could be wrong. (.) I °(          )°.
   21          (2.4) ((Aya looks through the paper))
   22  Lect:   Maybe it's not worth checking now, b[ut ]
-> 23  Aya:                                       [sor]ry=
   24  Aya:    =Yea.
   25          (0.3)
   26  Lect:   But if it is (      ) (0.2) thirty three=
-> 27  Aya:    =Oh no I haven't-,
```

In the excerpt above, Dr. Lucas points out that the year 1923 which Aya has on her handout may be a mistake. Aya replies that it is "very very possible" after one second in which she turns the pages of the article on her lap. It is unlikely that Aya spotted the error during the one second pause in line 9, as she still tries to find the relevant page in the article between lines 19 and 21. This suggests that even without having strong evidence of her error, she deferred to Dr. Lucas' suggestion. In line 27, Aya also blames herself ("Oh no I haven't") for the confusion. Notice also that her apology (line 23) and agreement with Dr. Lucas' suggestion to check the facts later (line 30 "Yeah") overlap with Dr. Lucas' turns, and her admission of her shortcomings (line 27) latches onto Dr. Lucas' turn (line 26). Aya's deference to Dr. Lucas was also noticed by one of her peers:

(49) [Interview: Robin]
[...] she said it's very possible, I think she said - or something like that. So that sort of showed [...]. *It probably shows that she's got a lot of respect for the lecturer* as well. In that way, like that "it was very possible," like straightaway she said without hesitation like "Oh no." [...] She's - yeah, *whatever he's saying*, you know.

From Aya's perspective, whether or not she has "a lot of respect for the lecturer," she mentions "a very strong pressure" to perform and be well prepared:

(50) [Interview: Aya]
[Dr. Lucas] is very, you know, experienced, and certainly his own knowledge, he knows his own subject well, and yeah, he is very well organised, so in that sense, I am not unhappy about him. To some degree, yeah, because he is too strict, or rather than strict, he is disciplined, I myself in turn have to be disciplined, that sort of pressure is very strong, so - yeah.

As previously claimed in Australian-Asian cross-cultural classroom studies (e.g. Braddock et al. 1995; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Milner & Quilty 1996), the footing that these Japanese students take in classroom interaction thus seems to assume a relatively more hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student. This relationship is evident in Japanese schooling, where teachers are often regarded as holding the authority for knowledge, which is to be transmitted to the student without question (Kato 2001; Matsuda 2000; Yoneyama 1999). Thus, instead of highly face-threatening disagreement or criticism, silence is the appropriate option for Japanese students. Here again, the level of face-threat may be perceived to be higher by Japanese students due to institutionally and socioculturally conditioned politeness orientations (see Hamamoto 2001; Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988, 2003). In the Australian university classroom context, however, the option for silence is a marked, and negatively evaluated, strategy. According to Thomas (1983), such a mismatch of power and social distance assessment is one of the causes of cross-cultural sociopragmatic failure.

5.5.3 Silence as an "off-record" strategy

As shown earlier, the close examination of classroom transcripts in the case studies revealed instances of Japanese student silences after being nominated. In this section, I will demonstrate that the silence of Japanese students when being asked for a comment or response can be identified as an "off-record" politeness strategy.

The excerpt below is part of the excerpt from Case study 1, already shown in Section 5.4.2. It shows Tadashi remaining silent (line 33) after being counter-questioned by the lecturer.

(51) [Interaction: Tadashi, Teaching as a Profession]

```
   17 WY:       U:m (0.5) my definition of a profession is:
   18           u:m (0.4) actually (0.2) a occupation,
   19           (0.2)
   20 Lect:     Mm hm?
   21 WY:       Uh: but um (0.4) who got thi: (0.5) um e-
   22           expert on (a special) field?
   23 Lect:     Mm: hm?=
   24 WY:       =Yeah.
   25           (0.4)
   26 Tadashi: An- to be paid for (too).=
   27 WY:       =Yea:h.
   28 Lect:     And what? Sorry?
   29 Tadashi: Um to be paid for?
   30           (0.3)
   31 Lect:     Paid for?=So what to do with
   32           (discriminating) a profession and a trade.
-> 33           (1.5)((Tadashi looks down, hands on chin))
   34 Kylie:    [You have to study to]
   35 Gary:     [You have to use ni]fty ja:rgon (.) if
   36           you are a professional (0.2)
```

Judging from the simultaneous participation by the two students in lines 34 and 35, Tadashi's silence is interpreted as an indirect message that he does not know the answer. Tadashi mentioned in the follow-up interview that he did not have confidence and he was not sure, but he also said that he had not discussed all the issues in his task. The length of his silence seems long enough to entitle others to speak (cf. Jefferson 1989) and his non-verbal behaviour also suggests that he is not sure of the answer. Silence in combination with these indicators can be interpreted as an "off-record" politeness strategy.

In the next example (also presented in Section 5.4.2), an Australian student, Molly, asks a question in relation to Miki's presentation on backchanneling across cultures. Initially, Miki asks a clarification question (line 67), but after that, she remains silent while Molly tries to elicit a response from her.

(52) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   62  Molly:  Do- do we: lik- do generally um: (0.6) I
   63          don't know how can I say it right do Western
   64          people: (0.3) do their ow- do their own
   65          fill-in: stuff?
   66          (0.2)
-> 67  Miki:   Do their, sorry?
   68          (0.4)
   69  Molly:  L- like um (0.4) um? hu(h)h (0.2) li- do we
   70          (0.2) instead of um:: li- >I don't know< we
   71          have pauses instead of um: (0.6) I don't know
   72          we have pauses instead of (0.5) um (0.2)
   73          the: (0.2) those (       ) you know saying
   74          something  with: nodding or whatever, (.) do
   75          we fill it in instead? (0.2) more?
-> 76          (3.6)
   77  Molly:  Er the are the:se backchannel:s(0.4)um(0.2)
   78          after: like specifically a:fter sentences but
   79          the person keeps(.)the speaker keeps talking?
-> 80          (1.2)
       ((Lect makes a comment on the concept of backchanneling))
  133  Molly:  But that- it- like how- >I don't know,< (.)
  134          i- is there: (0.4) do Westerners do you find
  135          Westerners do that?
  136          (4.2) ((after 2.5, shakes her head))
  137  Miki:   I really don't (know) (          ).
  138          ((looks down on the paper.
  139          Molly nods 4 times- 1.2))
  140          (6.0)
  141  Lect:   It's really (quite a) dramatic difference,(.)
  142          (those) (                  )
```

Molly is quite persistent in her pursuit of a response from Miki, who remains silent on three occasions. In line 136, there is a long silence of 4.2 seconds. Since no one speaks, Miki has to verbally express an outright admission of not knowing the answer, which causes a serious loss of face. It is possible to consider these silences as realizations of "off-record" politeness strategies, but the silence did not seem to have been interpreted by Molly as a face-saving strategy by Miki. The difficulties of interpreting silent pauses in intercultural communication are exemplified here.

The type of silences shown above are likely to be used as an indirect method of communicating "I don't know the answer" or "I have no idea" or "I am not

quite sure if I understood the question". However, as we can see above, Miki repeated this strategy until she had to verbally express "I don't know", and as a consequence, a long and awkward silence followed after which the lecturer tried to restore the flow of discussion.

In fact, this use of silence was found extensively in my observation of high school classes in Japan. When this type of silence occurs, teachers would either keep providing clues to guide students to a 'correct' answer or move on to the next student. The example below, from a lesson on classical Japanese literature in a Japanese high school,[2] shows the former strategy (lines 2, 4, 7, 12 and 14):

(53) [Interaction: Tokyo High School]

1	Teacher:	Next, B. Who shall I ( ), Mr. ( ).
2		(pause – around 0.8)
3	Student:	I don't know.
4		(pause – around 1.0)
5	Teacher:	Are you looking at the back [of the handout]? What is the modern
6		translation of 'hitono soshiri'?
7		(pause – around 1.5)
8	Student:	I don't know.
9	Teacher:	Why don't you look for the relevant part in the translation and
10		read it ?
11		((student looks for the relevant section?))
12		(pause – around 15.0)
13	Teacher:	'*Hito no soshiri*,' where is it in the translation?
14		(pause – around 3.0)
15	Teacher:	'*Soshiri*' means accusation, okay. So, where is it?
16	Student:	((reads out the relevant section))
17	Teacher:	Then, ( ), who is the subject of this sentence?
18	Student:	*Mikado*.

Similar behaviour of students in Japanese schools was reported by an Australian exchange student in Kato's (2001) study:

> When asked questions during the class, they [Japanese students] often said "I don't know" even if they knew the answer, consulted other students before speaking up, or remained silent until the teacher "gave up" and moved on to another student. (p. 62)

2. The transcription conventions used in the Australian classroom studies do not apply to this transcript.

On the other hand, Australian students in the case studies who did not have the exact answer were often found to use verbal responses to indicate that they either had no idea or that they had some idea. In the following excerpt, Dr. Lucas asks the group in the History of Secondary Education class to give the name of the chancellor of the university:

(54) [Interaction: Aya]

```
     1  Lect:    >You know< the myth goes on:, our own
     2           chancellor or this university, (.) who is?
     3           (1.0)
-> 4    Kathy:   hhh uh huh [huh hhhh]((Aya silently giggles))
     5  Lect:               [ Ah HAH ] ha:h, (0.2) who's the
     6           chancellor of °Sydney university°.
     7           (0.4)
     8  Robin:   Um:=
-> 9    Kathy:   =Haven't got [a clue.]
-> 10   Robin:                [I can  ] see him (0.3) uh huh
    11           huh huh=
    12  Lect:    =Aye,
    13           (0.3)
-> 14   Robin:   I can see his picture: but-
    15  Lect:    All  right, you really will. (0.2) because
    16           it's not a he.
    17           (0.4)
    18  Robin:   Ah all right, (.) °Thinking of (       ) °
    19  Lect:    It's a she: it's a woman called Leonie
    20           Kramer. (0.8) you know? (.) She's been
    21           quite an important and powerful person
    22           (0.4) in Australia.
```

It is interesting to see how the two students handle this situation in which they do not have the 'correct' answer to the question. Kathy openly admits she does not have a clue. Her straightforward response without hesitation as well as her giggles in line 4 suggest that she is not worried about loss of face. On the other hand, Robin makes attempts to show that she has some clue, even though she cannot come up with the name. Although she does not know the answer, she manages to cope with the pressure to present herself as a committed student by showing her engagement and requesting more clues to the answer.

As to Aya in the stretch of talk above, she was in fact the only one who stayed silent. She also giggled along with Kathy in line 4, but silently. It is possible that her

silence, in contrast with Kathy's straightforward response and Robin's attempts to show her involvement, does not communicate her engagement in the discussion.

The examples shown above suggest that Japanese students and Australian students may choose different politeness strategies in coping with face threatening situations such as not knowing an answer when questioned. Judging from the extensive use of silent responses in Japanese high school classrooms, it seems that silence in response to questions or invitations for participation is an unmarked and common off-record strategy for Japanese students. From the teacher's reaction, it is also possible that the silent response is not perceived as highly face-threatening or impolite. However, such silent response can be regarded as 'rude' or 'impolite' in other cultures. Pavlidou (2001) comments, referring to teacher-student power asymmetry in general, that the teacher can ignore a student wanting to participate, but "a student could not simply remain silent if selected by the teacher as the next speaker, at least not without severe consequences" (p. 107).

It is also possible that using silence as the most indirect form of message in Australian classroom contexts can be interpreted as placing more demands on the co-participants and is therefore a dispreferred politeness strategy in the situations illustrated above. The meaning of silence may become a source of miscommunication if it is not interpreted as intended. In the case studies (for example, examples (51) and (52) above), Japanese students were asked to provide answers a second or a third time following their silences. This causes serious loss of face, especially since they tend to perceive their Australian peers as voluble, and they know they are expected to participate actively in Australian university classrooms. It is not certain, however, if Japanese students are aware of the fact that silent responses may be perceived negatively by their Australian peers or lecturers.

5.5.4 Assessment of politeness and negotiated silence

From the analysis above, we could say that silence is used as a marked face-saving strategy by Japanese students in Australian university seminar settings. However, precautions should be taken not to consider such politeness strategies of classroom participants as fixed attributes. Instead, we should take into consideration how politeness strategies are negotiated in various communicative situations.

First, we need to consider how lecturers deal with politeness in classroom communication. Some lecturers seem to avoid making attempts to include less vocal students because they do not want to embarrass the students. Dr. Telfer from Case Study 2 explained why she does not prefer nominating a student:

(55) [Interview: Dr. Telfer]

T: First, because I worked in ( ) Aboriginal communities and habit into it that singling out ( ) a direct question was a bad thing to do. And, second, because working with undergraduates in big classes, *if you ask them direct questions you often put them on a spot*.

I: Um...you don't like to do it to ( )

T: No, we don't. *We worry about doing it because if someone doesn't know the answer, it is really bad if they don't have things to say*, so... but, it doesn't ...from the semester ( ) in order to get better participation from the students like Miki and Mike, I should ask direct questions.

These comments suggest that one way to avoid nominating a student in the classroom is the "Don't do the FTA" strategy, used to minimize imposition or loss of face. As shown in example (13) in 5.4.2, Dr. Telfer sensitively performs 'face-work' when Miki's face is threatened by her classmate persistently directing questions to her. Ironically, as Dr. Telfer herself notes above, she elicited relatively long accounts from normally inactive students by direct questioning after becoming aware of issues in classroom participation in the first recall interview. Thus, her approach to interaction with quieter Asian students was altered to accommodate their politeness orientation. Ms. Hardy in Case Study 1 also mentions that students should not be embarrassed by being forced to speak:

(56) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]

[..] there are many other kids like him [Tadashi]. And the Australian kids that should not feel embarrassed - and to a certain extent, you know, as a tutor, I think you've got to be aware - if they don't want to speak…

She also feels that the "quietness" of students such as Tadashi "has to be respected as well," and she "won't impose that [speaking] because you [they] don't want it to happen." She also says she is "scared of" breaking down the "barrier" which she feels is there. She goes on to say:

(57) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]

[...] there must be a difference and in the behaviour that we'll tolerate that would cause actually a difference between how I relate to Tadashi that I expect a bit more up front more um engagement with me that probably- I find [it] difficult - that I don't get with him and that I must admit I don't get with a lot of students that haven't got an Australian background?

However, the students are likely to be evaluated negatively by not participating actively, as discussed earlier. Erickson (2004) and Jaworski & Sachdev (2004) also found that teachers tend to form a negative view of students' academic compe-

tence if they are silent in class. Unless the 'barrier' is broken by either the student or the lecturer, the negative consequences of silence will remain.

We can see that the politeness orientation of lecturers can also affect their decisions in directing and regulating classroom discourse. Although the silence of Japanese students is a face-saving strategy for them, it threatens the positive face of Australian lecturers at the same time. On the other hand, Australian students' politeness strategies appear to be less face-threatening for Australian lecturers, as an "up front" and "relaxed" manner is expected from students in Australian university classrooms. Thus, in order to save their own positive face, and to avoid imposition on the negative face of the Japanese students, Australian lecturers seem to divert attention from the silent Japanese students to Australian students who are willing to participate voluntarily. As we have seen above, however, Japanese students' silence as a face-saving strategy appears to be common in Japanese classrooms, and Japanese teachers do not seem to find it face-threatening, as Australian lecturers appear to. A similar perception gap of silence and politeness is raised in Goldstein's (2003) study of Hong Kong migrant student silences in Canadian high schools. The study showed that non-Asian peer students found the silence of Hong Kong migrant students 'burdensome' and demotivating, while some teachers, being aware of the problem, were found to be using nomination as a way of enhancing these students' participation. Interestingly, where Goldstein as a researcher mentions the danger of 'embarrassing students' by nominating them, the teachers point out that the students would get used to it gradually. This echoes the Japanese high-school teachers' strategies to deal with student silence, which imply a limited concern with embarrassing silent students.

5.5.5 Context and politeness orientation

Another important aspect of silence and politeness is the role of context. There is evidence that Japanese students do not always exhibit the politeness strategy orientation illustrated above. For example, the Japanese student in Case Study 3, Aya, who was found to be "quiet and retiring" by Dr. Lucas, was perceived to be "always the first one to speak" and "fantastic" by other lecturers in Japanese Studies courses. One of Aya's Japanese peer students even referred specifically to Aya and another Japanese student actively participating in these other courses:

(58) [Interview: Japanese student]
[...] There are Japanese students who respond, […] a great deal, [...] even though they are Japanese, in that kind of way in class, they are not - sort of not hesitant like normal Japanese about participation. I watch these two girls admiring the responses that pop out of their mouth. They are [Yuri] and [Aya].

The female lecturer in charge of this class, who will be referred to as Dr. Riley, was seen to smile and encourage students in an explicit manner. She commented that Aya's contribution in her class was "terrific" and she was "good in volunteering and vigorously talking in class."

One explanation is that Aya's different performance may depend on her perceptions of the level of performance expected by lecturers. While Aya mentions 'strictness' and 'pressure' with Dr. Lucas's class (see interview excerpt 50), she appears to have responded positively to Dr. Riley's encouragement, as she commented:

(59) [Interview: Aya]
[...] [Dr. Riley], how can I put it, she says we should ask about anything. I mean, she says there is no stupid question, and this, you know, just this makes me think of asking questions, like she says it is okay to say things like "What is a verb?" So this motivates me very much. I like this kind of way very much.

However, it should be emphasized that a space for negotiation as well as humour was present in Dr. Lucas' class. He also commented in his interview that he was well aware of the fact that students may falter in on-the-spot oral communication and that oral performance may not be as reliable as written language. Moreover, the two peer students from this subject commented that the tutorial sessions were "informal," "relaxed" and "cosy." In fact, Dr. Lucas commented that Aya's communication felt "formal" to him. In his class, Aya's voice tended to be soft and difficult to hear compared to her peers'. He also indicated that it was difficult to hear her. This may be one of the reasons why Aya was perceived as a silent student, despite her average frequency of participation. Her voice projection was so soft that more than once Dr. Lucas asked her to repeat what she had said (see interaction excerpts (16) above and (83) in Section 5.6.3 below for example). She was also observed to have a tendency to lower her eye gaze, which she herself describes:

(60) [Interview: Aya]
I think that kind of situation is in fact different from the presentation you give standing in front of the class, for example. So I wouldn't read looking down when I stand in front of everyone. I would look ahead or around. But in such a situation, although I try to look up a bit from time to time, if on the other hand you make too much eye-contact it makes me feel "He might pick me next," or something like that.

Although it was not only Aya who looked down to avoid being selected by the teacher to contribute, her eye-gaze was almost always down when questions were asked, including in her own tutorial presentation. Dr. Lucas, commenting on the way he organised tutorial presentations, indicated the importance of eye gaze:

(61) [Interview: Dr. Lucas]
[...] I keep on assessing through their interest, through their eyes, whether or not I'm talking too much, so that's okay. But I do try and question as well although sometimes that doesn't work quite well because they get a bit frightened.

If one of Dr. Lucas' strategies to assess student engagement with the subject was non-verbal communication with "their eyes," Aya's frequent lowering of eye-gaze around key open questions would negatively affect this assessment.

Dr. Lucas also mentioned in the interview that he did not see Aya as a student "asserting a strong personality" or "projecting a mature and confident image." Instead, he found hesitancy in her communication. In contrast, the student, Henry, was positively evaluated by Dr. Lucas as being "excited, engaged" with "genuine passion for issues," and showing "personal interest" in the subject. Henry was also often observed maintaining his eye-gaze towards Dr. Lucas, which may have contributed to the positive image. The contrast between Aya and Henry found in their use of eye-gaze, and the perceptions of their attitudes by Dr. Lucas, are similar to what Harumi (1999) found. The British students in her study directed their eye-gaze towards the teacher during their silences while the Japanese students did not, and furthermore, the meaning of Japanese students' silence not accompanied by such eye-gaze was found to be unclear, while the British students' silence accompanied by such eye-gaze was found to show a positive attitude to participation. The role of non-verbal expressions accompanying silence appears to be significant, and requires more extensive, in depth research in the future.

Returning to the issue of varied perceptions among the students in Dr. Lucas' class, Henry expressed an extremely positive attitude towards both the subject and Dr. Lucas, as found in his comment below:

(62) [Interview: Henry]
I found that I've learnt a great deal more because of the small tute and the small number of people in there. I find I've been really motivated to learn because I can do the readings each week because you're in small group. … in a big class of 20 people, you can sit back for a week if you don't do any readings and not say a thing basically. But in a small group, you've got a (   ) of really learning a great deal more because of it and it's really - I think it's a lot better. It's good. I really enjoy the class and I like how it's run. I like how it's organised and things like that. I think Dr. Lucas is a very good lecturer.

The "pressure" to perform well and the level of deference towards the lecturer expected of students may have been overestimated by Aya. This may have led her to communicate on a footing where the 'correct' answer was important and the

teacher was the absolute authority. This in turn was perceived by Dr. Lucas as Aya distancing herself and lacking in involvement.

Another important factor in relation to Aya's different politeness orientations and silence is the topic. Australian Education was the subject of Dr. Lucas' course, while Dr. Riley's was Japanese Linguistics. As a native speaker of Japanese, the approach Aya took in the latter course was that of an expert user of the language in question who was unlikely to say anything wrong. Because she was clearly informed on the topic, she was less likely to receive disagreement or criticism. In contrast, in the course in Australian Education among Australian students, she was in a position of 'apprentice.' This position of being less informed than other students entails a higher risk of saying something wrong or receiving negative feedback.

The analyses of the empirical data above seem to show that the use of politeness strategies is negotiated in each unique classroom context. In each situation, both students and lecturers engage in assessing threats to their own faces as well as to others, and silence is constructed as a result of the interaction of these assessments.

5.5.6 Summary

In this section, the often negatively viewed silence of Japanese students was analysed in the framework of politeness. A possible transfer of customary silence use from Japanese classroom practices into Australian university classrooms emerged. Such use of silence was found to be ambiguous, problematic or face-threatening for Australian lecturers. It was argued that as a consequence, gaps in politeness orientations represented in talk and silence may lead to sociopragmatic failure. The negotiable nature of silence, talk and politeness was also demonstrated.

5.6 Cognitive factors contributing to silence

5.6.1 Speed of reaction

As we saw in Chapter 4, Japanese interviewees found the limited time allowed to interpret, think and react to the preceding comment or question in discussion problematic. There seem to be multiple factors contributing to this problem. These include a lack of proficiency in English leading to a longer time required for decoding the previous speaker's utterance and for producing coherent and grammatical English sentences; a lack of familiarity with the timing of turn-taking by Australian participants leading to difficulty in participation; and a lack of

familiarity with coming up with ideas or organising thoughts in a short period of time. The first two of these were observed in the case studies to some degree, as discussed earlier. The last has not been discussed in detail, and will be addressed below with data from the case studies. Among the three Japanese participants, Miki explicitly mentioned the difficulty she faced when asked for an opinion, during one of the lectures:

(63) [Interaction: Miki]

```
45  Miki:     when I (0.3) when I am asked to: (0.2) give
46            my own opinion,(0.3) I have to take some
47            time to think (0.5) what my opinion is,
48            (0.3) why  I (do) this (0.7) argument,
49            cause (0.6) even when I was writing (0.3)
50            something in Japan for school (0.2) work for
51            homework, (0.4) I wasn't asked to: (.) give
52            (0.3) my opinion. (0.2) I just (0.2) could
53            get something from the book what it
54            says, (0.8) a:nd um I could say (0.5) I
55            (0.2) will agree or I will not agree, but
56            I couldn't give much of my opinion why I
57            agree or why I don't agree.(0.8).
```

She reiterates this problem in her interview:

(64) [Interview: Miki]
Miki: […] when I am asked "What do you think?" I need some time to think about it. I don't come up with an idea straight away. So on balance, something like, you can take your own time, for example letters or email, for those things I can say quite a lot.

Miki's perceptions of this particular problem resonate with comments by some of the Japanese interviewees (see Chapter 4). With regards to Tadashi and Aya, however, no explicit comments were made about silence due to the time required for organising thoughts. In fact, this is the most difficult aspect of investigation into silence in communication – researchers often have to depend on self-reports of the participants to analyse intentions and interpretations of silence (Jaworski & Stephens 1988).

In Aya's case, it seems that she is more accustomed, when asked to give her opinion, to verbalise her thoughts, rather than allowing a long silent pause:

(65) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   26  Henry:   I just think that (0,2) (es ar: ci:), even
   27           though they did that, (0.2) they were
   28           within the guidelines of the (        ),
-> 29           (4.5)
-> 30  Lect:    What do you think about this question Aya,
   31           (0.4)
-> 32  Aya:     I- I- I ↑just wasn't sure what you mean
   33           wha- ex- (0.6) what extent? belong to-? Is
   34           it like (1.6) the youth have (0.6) really
   35           get (.) (got) up from the reading which is
   36           written by Ueda?
```

In general, if Aya is nominated for an opinion or to recount a personal experience, she responds within one second, as shown above. It was when she was asked to recall a fact in history that her pauses were longer. As mentioned earlier, in a course for which she had more motivation and confidence, she was described as the first student to speak. Having experienced the Australian secondary school system, she may be more familiar with the mode of interaction in Australian classrooms.

With regards to Tadashi in Case Study 1, as discussed earlier, he finds it difficult to adapt to norms of turn-taking speed in Australia, but whether this is because of the time he requires for organising thoughts is difficult to determine, based only on analyses of classroom interaction and his interview comments. Nevertheless, there is an indication that thinking time contributed to his silence. In his interview, he told of an arrangement with a lecturer (not those in the observed classes) where the lecturer told him what questions would be discussed in advance and for which question Tadashi would be nominated. This allowed him more time to be organised for this participation. In this way, he managed to secure his participation without having to deal with the problem of turn-taking timing, and at the same time he had enough time to organise his thoughts. However, it is still difficult to judge whether the preparation time required was due to a lack of English proficiency (which is unlikely, given the command of English displayed in his speech) or to the need to structure the content of his comment.

5.6.2 Knowledge schema, topic and shared knowledge

Another aspect of the cognitive factors raised by the Japanese interviewees in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to silence was the role of knowledge schema. While each individual has their own fields and level of knowledge, those who share a cultural or linguistic background are likely, to a large extent, to

share knowledge schema. It Chapter 4, it emerged from the interview comments that the shared knowledge of the Japanese students is in some ways at variance with their Australian peers, which is likely to result in the silence of Japanese students. The case studies, however, showed a more complex picture.

In Case Study 1, while all the students in the Teaching as a Profession class including Tadashi had experienced a teaching practicum in a secondary school, in the Curriculum and Examinations class, Tadashi was the only student who had not attended an Australian secondary school. The Curriculum and Examinations class focused exclusively on issues involved in the planning, teaching and administration of the HSC exams for secondary school students in New South Wales. Thus, graduating from secondary school in Japan may have made it particularly difficult for Tadashi to bring his own experiences to the Curriculum and Examinations class, where he had a 'topical disadvantage' in participation. However, his comment below suggests that he attributes his silence to his own lack of knowledge as an individual:

(66) [Interview: Tadashi]
I think they are knowledgeable - they know a lot of things. As for me, I almost always listen by their side thinking, "Oh that's what it is," and I am always nodding.

In Case Study 3, in the History of Secondary Education class, it was mostly events, people, schools, and social changes which had taken place in the history of education that were discussed. Occasionally education in the past was discussed in relation to contemporary education, but aspects of the participants' present day lives and personal experiences were not brought up in discussions as frequently as in the two previous case studies. This suggests that those who had more background knowledge and experience in history and education in Australia or even in the United Kingdom, which has had a great influence on Australian education, may have had an advantage over those who came from different educational and cultural backgrounds. The tutorial group for this case study had two Australian students, one British student and Aya. Thus, it is likely that Aya was disadvantaged by her lack of background knowledge. Even though Aya had spent three years in an Australian secondary school, her background knowledge would have been limited compared to those who had been brought up in Australia or in the UK. Therefore, this may have been another factor which affected her ability to keep up with and make contributions to the discussion.

As shown earlier in her comments, Aya did not have confidence in this subject, which made it difficult for her to participate. Furthermore, Aya never took on the role of the first respondent when discussion questions were asked in an open floor. The two occasions on which Aya provided her response to key discussion

questions came after other students had responded. One was when she volunteered her answer after an initial attempt by Robin, one of the peer students. In this instance, Dr. Lucas was not able to hear Aya's soft voice in her response.

Furthermore, while Henry, one of Aya's peer students, is positive about the readings he is assigned to do, Aya found the reading assignments difficult and daunting:

(67) [Interview: Aya]
The level of interest in this course, well, it was 70 or 80 percent. Then, I went to the lecture, well, the lecture is easy, you know. Just listen to it, take notes and have a look at it at home, thinking this part is talking about this, and so on. But when it comes to the tutorial, just the fact that there is this much reading lowered my level of interest. And perhaps when you look at the questions for presentation and the essay, they are pretty hard, so the level of motivation is - may be 40 percent. Less than half.

She further mentions that it is difficult to express herself because of difficulty in grasping the concepts in reading. Aya wished to be perceived as an expressive student who showed interest and engagement, but she felt unable to achieve this because of her lack of ability and lack of preparation, as her comments suggest. As a matter of fact, what she did in her presentation was read through sentences in point form. In the interview, Dr. Lucas commented that the series of written sentences on her handout was a "collection of things and did not hang together." In addition, he also commented that Aya's essay which was submitted later on the same topic was not "good at all," and that she was "reliant on the authority of text" and not able to "put the argument together."

On the contrary, in the History of Japanese Literature class (not tape- or video-recorded), Aya was evaluated positively by the lecturer as a student who "stands out," "naturally jumps in and speaks" and "knows what to say" in class. She further mentioned that Aya was "always the first" to contribute. These comments are in sharp contrast with what has been presented and discussed in relation to Aya in the History of Secondary Education class. Thus, another important factor affecting performance and perception of Aya's communicative behaviour appears to be her level of familiarity with the topic. In other words, she was advantaged by being a native speaker of Japanese in classes such as "Japanese Linguistics" or "History of Japanese Literature." Aya herself commented on this advantage:

(68) [Interview: Aya]
[In the History of Japanese Literature class] there are quite a lot of readings, but these readings for this subject are not at all hard for me.

(69) [Interview: Aya]
[...] [In the History of Japanese Literature class] because it's like we work on translation together, in a sense, you are all right even if you don't prepare properly, yeah. So in that sense there is less pressure. But in this [History of Secondary Education] class, if you haven't done the reading, you definitely cannot keep up, and you cannot enjoy the class if you haven't. So well, it's not really appropriate but it [History of Japanese Literature] is easy, and because it is about Japanese, it is possible to do the translation on the spot. So in that aspect, that subject gives me little pressure and so it is comfortable and easy I suppose. It is one of the means of retreat (giggles).

She also mentioned that because her "knowledge is double" on the topics in Japanese Studies subjects, it was possible for her to participate actively. Comparing herself in different classes, she commented:

(70) [Interview: Aya]
In situations like classes about Japanese language or something, I can, not exactly lead, but I can give my own opinion, or it's easier for me to do so. But this [History of Secondary Education] is pretty confusing.

As comments from Aya herself, her peers and her lecturers suggest, one of the explanations for Aya's silence in the History of Secondary Education class appears to be a lack of confidence and motivation in handling unfamiliar concepts in history and education which are moreover expressed in unfamiliar genres of the English language. However, Aya's English in fact was the most fluent of the three Japanese participants in the case studies. As a lecturer from the Japanese Studies whose class was observed once for this case study commented, Aya's spoken English was "native-like." Aya herself also mentioned that she preferred discussion to essay writing and that she was better at speaking than at writing:

(71) [Interview: Aya]
[...] Essays, they actually get checked everything, all the words. So, even a little mistake of grammar can be checked strictly, you see. But *because I am better at speaking*, with speaking, even if your grammar is not good, you can rephrase and say "Does it make sense?" or something like that to get the meaning across. So in that sense I feel less pressure in speaking.

In fact, Aya was the only one among the Japanese participants who openly indicated a preference for speaking over writing. Thus, we can see that fluency and general command of English do not necessarily guarantee more participation from non-native speakers. Gaps in language in a specific field and in the knowledge schema required for a course of study can create difficulties in participation.

However, it should be noted that Aya's silence can also be interpreted as a consequence of her own lack of commitment, as she admits choosing Japanese courses as her "retreat."

Unlike in Case Studies 1 and 3, where the subject matter mostly covered Australian issues, Japanese sociocultural and sociolinguistic issues were as prominent as Australian issues in Case Study 2, which placed Miki in a better position than Tadashi or Aya. As a general tendency in the Intercultural Communication class, the content of students' comments and questions concentrated on students' own cultural experiences and knowledge. Accounts of personal experiences and participants' own cultural knowledge were frequently given in this class, and technical issues or theories were rarely discussed but provided in straight lecturing periods. Dr. Telfer also commented that she recognised what students from various cultural backgrounds had to say as valuable resources. Hence, Miki seemed to have fewer difficulties created by a lack of background knowledge about Australia, compared to Tadashi and Aya. It should be noted, however, that talking about one's own experiences or opinions was regarded as characteristic of Australian students, and lacking in Japanese students, by Japanese interviewees in Chapter 4. This was not necessarily the case with Miki and Aya. As we will see below, at least for these two students, relevance to the subject matter of their own experiences and culture created more opportunities to speak.

Nevertheless, the lack of local knowledge, a disadvantage inherently faced by overseas students, can be regarded as one of the factors which negatively influence their capacity to participate. It is also important to recognise that the subject matter under discussion, as an immediate contextual factor, can give an unexpected twist to the performance of silence and talk, as seen in the cases of Miki and Aya.

5.6.3 Norms of relevance

While silence may result from a lack of background knowledge both as an individual and a cultural group, different assumptions about relevance of message content in classroom discussions among Japanese and Australian students appeared to lead to less frequent participation of Japanese students (Chapter 4). This factor which emerged from the interviews was explored in the case studies with empirical data. The essential questions here are: what is considered to be a relevant comment?; and what are the relevant interactional moves to make?

5.6.3.1 *Topic relevance*

As Jaworski (1993) states, silence can be found where certain issues or subjects expected to be brought up are not spoken about. As discussed earlier (Chapter 4),

there seem to be topics which Australian students regularly introduce but Japanese students do not. Personal and everyday life experiences, often contributed to classroom discussions by Australian students, were noted by Japanese students to be missing in their notion of 'classroom discussion.' This difference may contribute to Japanese student silences. However, the Japanese participants' performance in the case studies revealed a different picture. Although it was found that silence could emerge from the absence of talk on specific topics, preferred and dispreferred topics of the three Japanese students appeared to vary.

In the sessions observed in Case Study 1, which were all in the field of education, it appeared that students were allowed or encouraged to share their own experiences as a student or a trainee teacher, since they had already had their teaching practicum in that year and were about to enter the teaching profession. Therefore, comments such as "I remember in my prac,..." or "In my school, ..." were heard frequently. An example is given in the following interaction excerpt below, in which one of Tadashi's classmates provides her own experience related to the issue of "rank order" in high school exams in the Curriculum and Examinations class.

(72) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
1   Lect:    and that's what they mean by the rank
2            order. And the differences.
3   Linda:   So what would you do space out difference
4            in assessment? or: maybe (        ) that? or
5            (0.4)
6   Lect:    >I mean< it could be that my test was too
7            easy.
8   Linda:   All right.
9            (0.7)
10  Chris:   I remember with um: one of our subjects in
11           um year twelve, in a (     ), (0.2) our
12           teacher gave us the mark that she thought,
13           (0.2) and then she got uh:m one of her
14           friends who's teaching in a different school
15           to just give us a mark of[ her own ? ]
16  Lect:                             [Very import]ant.=
17  Chris:   =yeah. (.) just to see like the difference
18           in um: (0.2) markings. (.) yeah.=
19  Lect:    =Working with colleagues getting advice
20           from someone else bouncing an idea of (
21           ) monitoring (0.2) it's very important.
22           (0.4)
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```
23  Chris:   And it was interesting cause um (0.2) there
24           was a there was a bit of difference in our
25           marks and we 'oh oh:' (0.2) and actually
26           get (          ) my teacher was obviously
27           somewhat quiet because we do hers.
28           (0.3)
```

This type of recounting of one's own experience was frequent among the local Australian students. In example (29) (Section 5.4.2), Tamara recounts her experience as a student of being in a class of mixed students levels (line 11 onwards, "my history teacher, ... I remember we used to..."). In the same excerpt, Kylie also attempts to tell her own experience (line 17, "we did two..."). Similarly, as mentioned earlier, the Teaching as a Profession class was full of stories from the students' experiences in their teaching practicum. Tadashi, however, did not make this type of contribution at all in either of the two classes.

Australian students' comments were not limited to their own experiences, but often related to their own life and people around them outside university. For example, in the Teaching as a Profession class, a student argued with another student regarding his comment that a profession is "knowledge based" while a trade is "obscure" (example (28), Section 5.4.2) by referring to what her own father does as a tradesperson. In the case of Tadashi, these types of comments were not made, but rather his contribution was dedicated to neutral, technical and impersonal matters. For example, when Tadashi and his peer partner Wong Young were asked to give comments in example (51) (Section 5.4.2), Tadashi offered a comment "to be paid for" to explain the meaning of "profession" (lines 26 and 29). The question he was responding to was "What is a profession?" which was followed by "What distinguishes profession from trade?" and "What does it mean to be a professional?" Ms. Hardy recalls that incident and commented on Tadashi's response:

(73) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]
[...] that was quite a detailed - I remember that question - there was a lot wanted from that question there. And to just make those sort of observations, they're very thin.

(74) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]
[The responses from Tadashi and Wong Young are] bit shallow. (laugh) And - and yeah the fact is you see I let them go. That's - I do that all the time. I let - I let them go and defer to someone who has much more to - to hear.

In fact, Ms. Hardy had taught Tadashi and Wong Young in her class in another subject the previous semester, and she described the type of contribution obtained from Tadashi and Wong Young in her comment below:

(75) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]

If I ask them a question, [they would respond] but it would be a *total sort of a factual recall type question*. It wouldn't be about - it wouldn't be a nuts and bolts type question - it wouldn't be about an issue that was an educational or something. I don't recall except Wong Young when I was talking about Korea - but I don't recall any Japanese schooling ever been mentioned.

In the Curriculum and Examinations class, where more participation by Tadashi was observed, his contributions concentrated on responses to the teachers' questions that checked the facts and figures which had been provided in earlier lectures, in other words, responses to "total sort of factual recall type" questions. For example, on one occasion, he responded to Mr. Fuller's question about what the key subjects in the School Certificate were. On another occasion, as shown in example (12) (Section 5.4.2), he explained the differences between two "reference systems." All of these contributions are to do with facts or labels for categories which require a search of one's memory or notes.

A couple of occasions on which Tadashi unusually self-selected to ask a question appear to reflect his orientation to participation focusing on administrative or practical issues. In the interaction excerpt below, he asks a question regarding the availability of the material which Mr. Fuller has introduced to him in the Curriculum and Examination class.

(76) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

1	Lect:	So it looks at the- (0.4) what constitutes
2		an excellent answer. (0.3) you know, (0.5) a
3		little bit less: an:d (.) low quality (.)
4		answer. (0.3) from actual examination
5		papers. (0.4) so it's uh it's a very good
6		training for the beginning teacher (.) to
7		understand (0.2) what happens at the high
8		school certificate exams. (1.2) u:m=
-> 9	Tadashi:	=Around what time of the year can we get
10		this document? (0.3) June? or:=
11	Lect:	=U:m no well actually: this one's only
12		just come out.
13	Tadashi:	Just [now.]
14	Lect:	[now.]
15		(0.2)
16	Tadashi:	[It must be ( )].
17	Lect:	[So: it' a bit of a prob]lem.
18		(0.2)

```
19 Tadashi: [Right. ]
20 Lect:    [Becau :]se i- it's good it's good if it
21          comes out earlier, (0.5) but (0.5) u- u- wh-
22          what I am saying is one can (.) try and
23          get the nineteen ninety seven exam report
24          or the nine[ty six.]
25 Tadashi:            [(Ah nin]ety), (.) um.=
26 Lect:    =to compare the question paper (0.2) and the
27          report, (0.5) u:m because it does it does
28          help in the prepa[ration ]
29 Tadashi:                  [Yes yes] yes=
30 Lect:    =o:f students.
```

What also seems significant in the above excerpt is that there are frequent overlaps, response tokens and grammatically incomplete sentences by Tadashi. This suggests that Tadashi is capable of participating in "free-flowing conversational interaction" (Drew & Heritage 1992: 14) in classroom talk at least in one-on-one situations with the lecturer, but if we take a closer look at some of the turn transitions (lines 8–9, 15–16 and 18–19), there are pauses which suggest slight delays in Tadashi's timing. This also supports the explanation that his silence in group discussions is due to difficulties in managing timing in turn-taking (see Sections 5.4.2).

In interaction excerpt (77) below, Tadashi asks a question about the publication year of the material Mr. Fuller is talking about, which is again a non-negotiable factual matter.

(77) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
   1 Lect:    So: (0.9) you know you'll you'll see that
   2          the they're given. it's from the board of
   3          studies (1.3) a:nd (1.6)you you should make
   4          a note of thi: um the contact number and the
   5          fax number to (0.7) contact because this is
   6          very u:m (1.0) that's that's very useful.
   7 Tadashi: Yes. ye:s.
   8          ((Lect brings out more materials 3.8))
-> 9 Tadashi: If you (0.2) if I ring them up can I
  10          get (0.2) u:m (0.2) eich es cee
  11          report (0.4) from nineteen ninety
  12          seven or nineteen ninety six?=
  13 Lect:    =Yeah it's a question of uhm ringing: the
  14          client ringing (0.2) wha- what you do is you
  15          you ring client services.(0.4) at this phone
```

```
16               number. (1.2) uh ask for client services.
17  Tadashi:     Okay.
18               ((T take notes/Lect still bringing out
19               materials 13.5))
```

Mr. Fuller described Tadashi as "business-like." Tadashi himself revealed that the type of questions he asked were more to do with administrative matters than with the actual content of the subjects:

(78) [Interview: Tadashi]

I: What kind of occasions do you tend to ask questions?

T: Mmmm. I don't really ask questions much, but well if I do, what can I say, rather than the content, I ask about uh when the due date for assignment is (laugh) or I ask the teacher to explain the assignment a bit or something like that. Other than that, in terms of content of the class, unless there is something I really need to ask about, I'd ask my friends.

Below is a comment by Ms. Hardy:

(79) [Interview: Ms. Hardy]

[…] the other students were quite personal, quite personal comments about their life and about what they'd done and how they feel, but he certainly didn't do that.

Thus, there seems to be a gap in relevant and preferred topics between Tadashi and Ms. Hardy, while his Australian peers' preferences appear to match her expectations.

A close examination of his non-verbal behaviour suggests that Tadashi is more committed to responding to knowledge-testing questions than to reaching a better understanding of issues through interaction. This suggests resistance to participation. When fact-checking questions were asked, Tadashi often diligently examined his notes to find the answers. He also made more attempts to self-select when questions requiring him to go back to his memory were posed. For example, in the interaction excerpt below, Tadashi seems to be competing for responses with Kylie, when the lecturer asks a question about key themes of the Higher School Certificate. He gives the 'right' answer (line 42) slightly earlier than Kylie, who overlaps Tadashi (line 43), but Tadashi repeats his answer in the clear space (line 42). The competition continues for the next six turns. Tadashi's perseverance in the sequence is unusual but can be clearly seen in this excerpt, in which memory-checking was the main task.

(80) [Interaction: Tadashi, Curriculum and Examinations]

```
   34            (2.7)((Lect writes on the board))
   35  Lect:     And (0.2) the changing world can bring in
   36            environmental issues social issues drugs
   37            (0.3) u:m all kinds of things.
   38            (0.6)
   39  Kylie:    °( [   )°]
   40  Lect:        [And ]the middle one (.) i:s:
   41            (0.3)
   42  Tadashi:  Co[mmunity ?] community.
   43  Kylie:      [community]?
   44  Kylie:    Community, >I think it is?<
   45  Tadashi:  °Yeah°.=
   46  Kylie:    =Yeah,=
   47  Tadashi:  =°Oh yeah,°
   48            (0.4)
   49  Kylie:    Communi- self community. [yeah].=
   50  Tadashi:                          °[yeah].° =
   51            =Community french community
   52            °(        ) community.°
   53            (0.2)[ °Yeah,°]
-> 54  Tamara:        [Is that ] for the french?
-> 55  Kylie:    That's for all of them,=
```

Furthermore, talking about his personal life may be face-threatening for Tadashi if he considers classroom discussion to be a formal situation where negative politeness orientation is expected (see Section 5.5 above).

In Case Study 2, in which Miki was observed in the Intercultural communication class, Miki's speech content shows that almost all of what she said in class had to do with her background knowledge and experiences as a Japanese, or with her intercultural experiences in Australia. Thus, unlike Tadashi, who did not make comments based on his personal experiences and background, Miki expressed her personal views and shared her own experiences with the class. The following excerpt shows Miki giving a long account of the attitudes of modern Japanese mothers:

(81) [Interaction: Miki]

```
   10  Miki:     Yeah. (0.6) uh I- my mum sent me a (        )
   11            (0.5) um program in Japan, she taped it
   12            for me and I watched the TV program, that
   13            was talking about the high school
```

```
14             students in Japan? (0.4) And um (0.6)
15             (played) (1.2) there was one mother who
16             was trying to (1.3) trying to: (0.6) how
17             do you say (1.2) uhm (0.4) there was one
18             girl who (1.2) who really (0.2) do- (0.2)
19             does not respect
20             (0.3)
21    ?:       •hhhh
22   Miki:     [does]
23   Molly:    [S-s-]scold,
24   Miki:     Yeah. um=
25   Molly:    =the mother has scolded her,
26   Miki:     Yeah, yeah. [Sco-] sco:ld?
27   Molly:                [Mm. ]
28   Molly:    Mm:.
29   Miki:     but um (0.5)(            ) the girl (0.2)
30             doesn't change at a:ll,
31   Lect:     Um:,
32   Miki:     So (0.4) the (1.0) interviewer, (0.2)
33             came to her (0.2) family, and a:sked
34             (0.2) why (.) why, like that- that was a
35             program.
36             (0.2)
37   Bill:     [Mm.]
38   Miki:     [The]n uh they wanted to kno:w why the
39             girl was behaving like that,(.) and
40             mother- mother (1.2) sho- she said
41             mother said she was trying to (0.5)
42             scold her,
43   Molly:    [scold],
44   Miki:     [ so  ]
45    ?:       um huh,=
46   Miki:     = and uh but (0.2)she does because:
47             the girl doesn't listen to her, she
48             stopped.
49             (0.2)
50   ?:        Uh:[:m].
51   Bill:        [Uh] huh:.
52   Tony:     She never (      ).=
53   Miki:     =Yeah she never. (0.5) I think that's
54             happening uh especially to high
```

```
55          school students°,(0.2) so they (0.2)
56          they think,(1.1) what they think like
57          is (.) right.
```

The preference for talking about personal experiences or everyday life matters, as seen above, is at odds with the perception of Australian students' greater preference for such topics which emerged from Japanese students' comments in Chapter 4. It is likely that, in Miki's case, the fact that the focus issues of the Intercultural Communication class required and encouraged students to talk about intercultural issues led to her participation through recounting personal experiences.

It should be noted, however, that Miki rarely voluntarily referred to or asked about cultures other than her own, while other students in the class did so. The absence of comments and questions in Miki's speech regarding unfamiliar topics can be explained either in terms of face or in terms of relevance. She may have kept to her own territory from negative politeness, assuming a distance from other participants in class. It is also possible that Miki avoided a potential loss of face from saying something irrelevant on unfamiliar issues. On the other hand, it is also possible that she did not find the other participants' cultural backgrounds relevant for comment, as talking about or expressing interest in other students' responses are both rare in Japanese classrooms.

Considering this aspect of silence in addition to her lack of initiating moves and reactions mentioned earlier, refraining from showing her interest and involvement may have made her appear "reticent" and "self-contained" by her peer students and Dr. Telfer. However, the fact that she made moderate contributions with long accounts of her own experiences is a significant difference from what was found in Case Study 1.

Turning to Case Study 3, Aya's silence in relation to topical preference seems be due to the nature of the subject, namely the history of Australian education, which did not require students' personal experiences as much as other courses. Otherwise, Aya also had a preference for talking about her own experiences, her own life and culture:

(82) [Interview: Aya]
In Japanese Studies classes, how can I put it, like talking not just about Japanese language but about cultural differences or something like that, when I can discuss these things, I quite enjoy it. So, in that linguistics class, we sort of, well it's pretty difficult because we don't find one answer, but I quite like saying what I think of other people's opinions or explaining things with my own experiences.

This topic preference is evidenced in Aya's communicative behaviour in the History of Secondary Education class. There were a couple of occasions, when Aya talked about her own schooling experiences, on which she was more elaborate and more overlapping talk in turn transition rather than long silent pauses was found. In the following excerpt, when Aya talks about her high school, she elaborates more, and responds more quickly than she does in other instances where she participates:

(83) [Interaction: Aya]

```
   1  Lect:    ↑Just think about your own high school
   2           experiences. (0.4) U:m (1.0) that may be
   3           worth if you just sort of ta:lk about sorts
   4           of clubs and extra curricula experiences.
   5           (0.4) u:m (0.3) that were there, which
   6           (0.2) maybe suggestive  of the school.
   7           (2.0) °(              )° importance of
   8           (    ),do you see reflections of any of
   9           these in yours?
  10           (0.4)
  11  Kathy:   Oh no just the sport ones,
  12           (0.4)
  13  Lect:    Yeah:, so sport. That's it.
  14           (0.5)
  15  Kathy:   °That's >about it<, (0.4) >that's all<,°
  16           (0.6)
  17  Lect:    Okay, what about y[ou,  A y ]a?
-> 18  Aya?:                     [°(      )] ?°
  19  Aya:     °(            )°
  20           (1.0)
  21  Lect:    What sort of high school did you go
  22           to = where did you go [to] high [school].
-> 23  Aya:                           [I ]      [I went] to
  24  Aya:     ah: Christian school,
  25  Lect:    Yeah.
  26  Aya:     It's uh: down Sutherland,
  27  Lect:    Right.
  28           (1.0)
  29  Aya:     They didn't- (0.2) >they had it< like some
  30           s- sports but they weren't really (0.4)
  31           doing this. (0.5) Cause (0.4) they had it
  32           (0.2) but (0.2) and it wasn't really
```

```
  33           compulsory with (0.2) school subjects =
  34           =>something like that?< = other than (0.4)
  35           say athletics °(                  ) sort of°,=
  36  Lect:    =°Right°. Now when you say that's a
  37           Christian school, (0.4) u:m (0.7) is it
  38           u: m (.) was it a schoo:l of: the sort of
  39           the traditional sort of (0.2) religions in
  40           Australia, or wha- some of the newer sort
  41           of America[n sort of mission].
->42  Aya:               [It's a reform chu]rch u:m school,
  43           (0.4)
  44  Lect:    °Mm huh°,
  45  Aya:     They had um: like uh: religious studies,
  46           an- u:m (2.5) I'm- I'm not sure if it was
  47           really traditional. (1.0) was more (1.4) it
  48           was compulsory subject (.) yet, (0.3)
  49           wasn't really °(        )°
  50           (1.5)
  51  Lect:    I- I- I-(0.2) I think it's some of the newer
  52           Christian schools, which aren't (0.4) the
  53           Church of England schools or the Uniting
  54           schools (.) often take as their models,
  55  Aya:     Mmm.
  56  Lect:    American(.) high schools very specifically.
  57           (0.3) U:m (0.4) although I think >you know<
  58           lots of high schools don't really (       ).=
  59  Aya:     =Yeah.=
  60  Lect:    =I was just interested whether or not.
  61           (1.2)
->62  Aya:     Cause the reform (0.2) churches from (.)
  63           Dutch (0.2)background [and]
  64  Lect:                          [Ah:] right.=
  65  Aya:     =So u:m (0.6)it's not(   )that traditional.
  66           (0.4)
  67  Lect:    Yeah.=
  68  Aya:     =Mm.
```

In this excerpt, the students had been asked to reflect on their own high school experiences outside the designated curriculum. Kathy's response in line 11 is short and unelaborated, which makes Dr. Lucas ask a confirmation question in line 13 to make sure she has no more to say. When Dr. Lucas' attention turns to

Aya, she responds, overlapping with Dr. Lucas before her name is mentioned. This suggests that rather than avoiding eye-contact, she was ready to pick up Dr. Lucas' non-verbal cue. Although there is a slight problem between lines 19 and 23 because of Aya's voice projection and Dr. Lucas' modification to his question, Aya provides a response to the initial main question which was about extra curricula experiences. Dr. Lucas asks a further specific question about Aya's high school. Aya overlaps again with Dr. Lucas in a slightly interrupting manner at a spot not necessarily close to a TRP to respond to the question. She goes on to provide details of her school in relation to its religious background. Aya makes further comments on the nature of the "reform church" in lines 62, 63 and 65. In all these exchanges, turn transition and adjacency pairs run smoothly with overlapping, latching and less than 1.5 seconds transitional pauses, although the overlapping talk occasionally occurred in a slightly interrupting manner. This exchange shows turn-taking and pause management which contrasts with Aya's general characteristics in these areas, in which expansion of sequences was rare and long silent pauses in turn transition were common.

Thus, it appears that Aya is at her best in situations where the subject matter can be associated with her own life and experiences, while she tends to struggle and remain more silent when expressing her own thoughts in her own way if there are fewer opportunities for her to associate the content of learning with her life and experiences. Gaps in topical preference between Japanese students and Australian peers found in the self-reports of Japanese students in Chapter 4 contradict the findings in Aya's case, as they did with Case Study 2. In contrast, Tadashi's case seems to be a strong reminder of topical preference in Japanese classroom discourse in which the personal lives of students are generally considered irrelevant for learning (see Chapter 3), as well as of the pattern found in the Japanese students' interviews (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2). It was also confirmed in the case studies that Australian students frequently provide their personal experiences or stories in relation to topics for discussion. Nevertheless, the cases of Miki and Aya were at odds with the Japanese students' comments given in Chapter 4. It can also be said that Miki and in particular Aya have adapted, to some degree, to the norms of Australian classroom discourse.

Another factor affecting topical preference is personal interest. Aya's case revealed that loss of interest in the subject reduced her motivation to engage and participate. On the other hand, her strong interest in subjects from Japanese studies, supported by her confidence in her background knowledge, motivated her to participate actively. It was also shown that the level of difficulty Aya found in different subjects affected her preference in topics. If one cannot grasp concepts and the language related to them in a subject, it becomes difficult to participate. Her native-speaker peers, on the contrary, expressed their interest and motivation

in this subject. With regard to Tadashi, his preoccupation with his future work and the imminent arrival of his baby could have set his priority on "getting things done" and made him appear "business-like." This is clearly reflected in his comment about his topic preference for administrative matters, while his Australian peers were more enthusiastic about the topics that they could relate to their experiences or to the world outside university.

5.6.3.2 *Relevance of critical comments*

As discussed earlier in relation to silence and politeness, critical views were never expressed by the Japanese students in the case studies. Rather, there were comments and evidence from classroom interaction that they tended to accept what the lecturers or peers said without question. This also seems to be a reflection of Japanese classroom practices where learning takes place almost exclusively through information given by the teacher (see Chapter 3). Tadashi's comments indicate his orientation to acceptance rather than critical thinking:

(84) [Interview: Tadashi]
I think they are knowledgeable - they know a lot of things. As for me, I almost always listen by their side thinking, "Oh that's what it is," and I am always nodding my head.

He also commented, on the suggested assignment which he initially found too demanding, that he decided not to say anything, thinking "I will do this if the teacher told us to do this."

Miki did not explicitly mention anything to suggest her orientation to critical views, but when her comments were challenged, she remained silent and did not attempt to respond. For example, in the following excerpt, Miki is asked to give her view on male and female responses to compliments in Japanese. She indicates that she is not sure what would be the case in Japanese communication. Following this, Nakki, who lived in International House (university student accommodation), shares her impression of Japanese male students who she finds "really quiet." Nakki's gaze is directed to Miki at this point, but there is a silence of 2.2 seconds (line 32), after which Sophia speaks about her views on gender differences in communication.

(85) [Interaction: Miki]

```
5   Lect:   Miki, what do you think about it. (0.5) u:m
6           (0.6) the idea of male versus female ways
7           of responding to compliments.=
8   Miki:   =I don- I don't know if- (0.4) if (0.3) it's
9           because of female (0.2) and male, (.) but I
```

```
   10           think it’s true that (0.4) um female’s
   11           conversation goes on en on en on,=
   12   ?:      =heh [hhh]
   13 Miki:          [be ]cause they tend to say (.) oh
   14           that’s not true but (this is true,)
   15 Lect:     Mm [hum]
   16 Miki:        [jus]t like this,(example of)/(it’s
   17           like) this? (1.2) yeah. (0.4) I don’t know,
   18           (0.2) if (0.3) it’s general idea but (1.8)
   19           ma:le, (1.4) like men, (.) really don’t
   20           that much as (1.0) do it (0.4) °yeah.°
   21           some (0.2) some men do but (3.2) I don’t
   22           know if- (.) I don’t know if it’s: cultural
   23           (0.2) thing or, (1.5)°(maybe/I don't know)°
   24           (1.2)
   25    ?:     °Mm:::::::.°
   26           (1.4)
   27 Nakki:    Maybe it’s too much generalisation but I’ve
   28           had about twenty people (0.3) like in (.)
   29           in and out all Japanese guys they’re all
   30           really quiet. (0.5) they won’t say anything
   31           unless you talk to them.
-> 32           (2.2) ((Nakki smiles, gazing towards
   33           Miki))
   34 Sophia:   Well I think um (0.6) men are like (       )
   35           doesn't capture (      )(0.5) what’s
   36           acceptable to say ...
```

Nakki's comment from lines 27 to 31, with her gaze directed towards Miki, suggests that Nakki expects a reaction from Miki. Nakki does not disagree with Miki, but provides an alternative view on the issue raised by Dr. Telfer’s question. Therefore, the pressure for Miki to speak at this point is not so strong. Nevertheless, this example illustrates that Miki does not participate in ‘negotiation’ processes during discussion but instead withdraws from them. The following example also shows Miki’s one-off participation pattern similar to the one shown above:

(86) [Interaction: Miki]

```
   42 Miki:     ye[ah]
   43 Lect:       [Mi]ki, wh[at do you thi]nk.
   44 Miki:                 [when I am in]
   45 Miki:     when I (0.3) when I am asked to: (0.2) give
```

```
   46              my own opinion,(0.3) I have to take some
   47              time to think (0.5) what my opinion is,
   48              (0.3) why  I (do) this (0.7) argument,
   49              cause (0.6)  even when I was writing (0.3)
   50              something in Japan for school (0.2) work for
   51              homework, (0.4) I wasn't asked to: (.) give
   52              (0.3) my opinion. (0.2) I just (0.2) could
   53              get something from the book what it
   54              says, (0.8) a:nd um I could say (0.5) I
   55              (0.2) will agree or I will not agree, but
   56              I couldn't give much of my opinion why I
   57              agree or why I don't agree.(0.8). so: I
   58              (0.2) sometimes still (0.2) find it hard
   59              for me to °give my own opinion.°
   60              (0.5).
   61  Lect:       It's also hard even for Australian school
   62              kids, (0.3) because (0.3) the- the question
   63              i:s, okay, the kids give their opinions
   64              (0.2) but is your opinion (    ) acceptable.
   65              (1.2) and are there a whole set- set of
   66              answers (                   ) which the
   67              teachers will accept and tho:se they won't
   68              accept. (1.0) so to produce that- (
   69                   ), (0.4) teachers can be forming the
   70              opinions of the students by saying this is
   71              what's acceptable (           ),  so you
   72              know, (1.2) ((Lect facing the class))
-> 73  Miki:       ((head and gaze go down))
   74              (0.3)
   75  Lect:       what about in Korea?
   76              (0.6)
   77  WS:         I (0.2) um when I was in Korea, the teacher
   78              is (wise) because (       ) students,
```

Here, the lecturer gives a comment from a different point of view after Miki's comment on a lack of familiarity with "giving one's opinion." Miki's head goes down in line 73, which seems to indicate that she has nothing to say in response to this alternate view.

In Aya's case, the desire to be capable of expressing critical views was mentioned in her interview:

(87) [Interview: Aya]
After all you often do not have one answer in things like education. So, so that's actually difficult, or that's why I feel the need to improve my ability to argue... rather than simply accepting something because that is what they say, you know, you consider what other people think about certain issues, and you see what you think. I feel I (lack?) that kind of (ability?).

Thus, while the expression of critical views was absent from their speech, we can see that the three Japanese students have varied attitudes towards it. Their norms of relevance may be negotiated as they are immersed into, and become aware of, the norms of Australian classroom practices, although, as with Aya's case, the inability to adjust their behaviour may result in silence. Concerning Australian students, a greater degree of orientation towards critical thinking was observed, if not strongly demonstrated, as there were instances where they expressed critical views in classroom discussions (see Section 5.5.2). Considering the valuation and advocacy of critical thinking in Australian education, however, the absence of expression of critical thinking among Japanese students may be perceived as a marked silence.

5.6.4 Summary

While inadequate data was obtained from the case studies in relation to silence due to reaction speed, or cognitive processing speed, it was possible to see that the Japanese students in the case studies are in various stages of their adaptation to a variety of aspects of discourse in Australian classrooms. Such an understanding was gained by scrutinising the roles of the cognitive factors and the way the impact of these factors were negotiated in each specific classroom context. This approach also allowed us to see the context-dependent nature of silence, especially the importance of the topic and the organisation of classroom dynamics. Therefore, although there may be general patterns of preference in Australian classroom interaction and among the Japanese students, it is important to recognise that preference patterns in a specific classroom context can also influence silence.

5.7 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the widely perceived silence of Japanese students has been discussed through the analysis of empirical data from an authentic multicultural classroom context. The findings from the three case studies were also compared with those from the studies in Japan (Chapter 3) and Australia (Chapter 4). With regard to perceptions, all three Japanese students in the case studies were perceived to be silent by their lecturers, peers and themselves. Furthermore, it was revealed that lecturers expect and value voluntary participation from students, so that those who do not volunteer comments or questions are regarded as "shy," "unconfident" or even lacking in "interest" and "commitment." It was also found that the frequency of contribution as well as non-verbal behaviour in the classroom can contribute to impressions of overall academic competence.

However, when the Japanese students' performance was analysed, the degree and types of silence were found to vary. Moreover, most importantly, gaps in assumptions about classroom communication and in perceptions of others by both the Japanese students and the Australian participants were found to contribute to silence. It was also noted that in the case studies a limited number of Australian students tended to dominate classroom discussion and silence Japanese students (whether consciously or from supportive intentions). Therefore, the role of proficiency in English and the transfer of discourse style from L1 should not be overemphasised but treated carefully. This in turn also suggests that Japanese students' interview comments in Chapter 4 reflected their overgeneralised views on their silence in contrast with Australian students' volubility.

While there is an overall tendency toward self-selection of turns in all the sample groups, the Japanese participants relied more frequently on other-selection of turns for their participation. These incongruent participation patterns confirm what was described by Japanese students in Chapter 4 and found in Japanese high school classrooms, as seen in Chapter 3. Hence, silence can be seen to be partly due to a lack of familiarity with voluntary participation. However, as seen in Aya's case, where self-selection in a particular participant structure ('open floor') was critical to demonstrate academic competence, lack of participation through a particular type of self-selection may lead to negative perceptions of silence (and academic competence).

In the case studies, language proficiency seemed to vary slightly among the three Japanese students, and so did the degree of silence. Importantly, language proficiency did not seem to directly predict the degree of silence. It was found that, rather than overall proficiency of English or general fluency, lack of command of a specific genre of language in a specific context affected silence in both perceptions and performance. It was also suggested that those who have decreased fluency (as

in Miki's case) are more vulnerable to interruptions. Thus, comparing proficiency levels and degrees of silence among the three Japanese students in the case studies, it can be claimed that the role of language proficiency is important but should not be overemphasised.

There have been claims that rates of turn-taking and normative lengths of switching pauses in the first or native language may be transferred into communication in a second language (see, for example, Scollon & Scollon 1981; Lehtonen & Sajavaara 1985; Anderson 1992; Pritchard 1995). In the case studies, discussions among Australian students with overlapping talk, including interruptions, were commonly found, but Japanese students rarely participated in this type of interaction. This seems to suggest that these claims can be supported, and when interactions following the nomination of Japanese students were examined, there was a number of cases where a 'delay' in reaction led to their silence. When the 'delay' occurred, it was often interpreted as a sign of a 'problem' by Australian students and lecturers, who tried to compensate for this 'problem' by modifying or paraphrasing the questions or providing responses on behalf of the Japanese students.

The difficult question, however, was how to interpret the 'delays.' They may have been caused by the Japanese students' lack of proficiency, individual differences in cognitive processing, or sociolinguistic unfamiliarity with the fast rate of turn-taking. The question of 'delay' is complex, since some 'delays' may be 'silent responses' intended to mean "I don't know the answer" or "I don't understand." If there was a mismatch between the cause of silence and the interpretation of silence by peers or the lecturer, the Japanese students were likely to be either silenced or experience loss of face. The case studies revealed how the complexity of the interpretation processes can be a source of miscommunication.

The ambiguous nature of silence was further probed by approaching it from the perspective of politeness. Silence was more commonly used as a politeness strategy by Japanese students, while Australian students showed an orientation towards verbal realisation of politeness strategies.

Finally, silence was discussed in relation to familiarity and relevance of content, relevant moves, and mode of classroom communication. In terms of knowledge schema, the Japanese students' relative lack of familiarity with Australian sociocultural issues may have prevent ed them from participating as actively as their Australian peers. However, it was also revealed that their Japanese background gives them an advantage over Australian students in certain contexts. In such contexts, what is normally regarded as irrelevant in classroom talk in Japanese classrooms becomes relevant in Australian classrooms, and moreover, functions as a participation enhancing factor for Japanese students (with the exception of Tadashi in Case Study 1).

Having discussed silence through an examination of various types of data obtained from multiple sources, the next step is to integrate the findings from all the studies presented in previous chapters in order to respond to the research questions. In the concluding chapter, I will return to the multi-layered model for the interpretation of silence presented in Chapter 2 and consider the roles of individual, situational, and sociocultural factors. I will also present a re-evaluation of the widely perceived and discussed construct of 'the silent East,' and offer suggestions for future research in silence in intercultural communication.

CHAPTER 6

Re-interpreting silence in intercultural communication

6.1 Introduction

In this book, I have presented an analysis and discussion of silence in intercultural communication from multiple perspectives. First, I explored silence in the Japanese classroom context. Second, I looked at perceptions of silence in intercultural classroom communication in Australia. Finally, the silence in the actual performances of the Japanese students, their Australian lecturers and peers was investigated using empirical classroom data. This analysis was then juxtaposed with perceptions of performance obtained through follow-up interviews. I now address the question of "what is silence?" by summarising various types of silence discussed in this book. Following that I will return to the multi-layered model for interpretation of silence in intercultural communication introduced in Chapter 2, in order to integrate the findings from the various studies presented in this book. Then, I will present a discussion of the long-debated view of the 'Silent East', by reconsidering it from an empirical perspective. I will conclude by offering implications for improved intercultural communication and for future research.

6.2 What is 'silence'?

The main theme of this research, 'silence,' must now be addressed. As is clear from the wide range of phenomena covered in this book, the question "What is silence?" is rather difficult to answer. However, it is worthwhile tackling the question by rephrasing it as "What phenomena were perceived as silence, what roles did these silences play, and what were the meanings of these silences?" As a response to these questions, I give a summary of the forms, functions and meanings of silence identified in my research and discussed in this book.

In terms of forms, the types of silence found in the research and discussed in this book are summarised as follows:

1. intra- and inter- turn pauses
2. silent responses
3. being silenced and silencing
4. not participating in specific participant structures
5. not participating in interaction on specific topics
6. not taking certain speaker roles
7. not performing certain speech acts
8. overall infrequency of participation

Analysis of the data showed that some of these categories overlap, as in the case of a silent inter-turn pause being indistinguishable from a 'gap' or a 'silent response' loaded with illocutionary force.

Second, silence discussed here had various functions. Silence which took place during cognitive processing was one of the most difficult types of silence to identify, but it was nevertheless reported by Japanese students, and cases of silent pauses which were likely to be due to cognitive processing were observed. Silence was also found to signal or negotiate certain stages of classroom discourse, often accompanied by non-verbal expressions. This discursive use of silence was employed by Japanese participants, and their lecturers and peers. It occurred with varying frequency and duration, but the Japanese participants' silence tended to be longer than that of Australian peers.

Regarding the social functions of silence, it became clear that the silence of Japanese students as a face-saving strategy seemed to be incongruent with the solidarity and egalitarian politeness orientation of Australian participants, resulting in distancing and negative effects. At a turn-by-turn level, silence may also function as an indirect speech act which is an off-record politeness strategy. As to the social function of silence in relation to social/institutional power, although the Japanese students were in passive roles and often dominated by Australian students, the asymmetry seemed generally to be limited to interactional dominance. However, further inquiry into silence in intercultural communication from a historical and political point of view would be informative.

Finally, various meanings of silence were found in the present research. Regarding inter-turn pauses, they were seen both as a sign of the dysfluency of the second language speaker, and at times as a consequence of cultural influences on L2 communication. Inter-turn pauses after questions were interpreted as an indication of not knowing the answer. Silence could moreover indicate embarrassment, due to loss of face, for instance, when an addressee was unable to provide a response after a repeated question. Overall, however, difficulties with the identification of the meanings of inter-turn pauses were common, which was identified as one of the sources of misunderstanding in intercultural communication.

It was also pointed out that silence could be used to express, or was perceived as a sign of, deference, but that it is possible that misunderstanding may occur when such silence is interpreted as rude behaviour.

Then, there was a tendency to see silence as a reflection of a 'shy' personality. The problem was that this image did not always reflect personality outside the classroom. Silence was also interpreted as representing a negative attitude to studies. In some cases, silence was regarded as an indication of a lack of commitment to and engagement in the classroom, and the case studies revealed that this lack did exist to a certain degree in the case studies.

This is not an exhaustive list of the silences found in intercultural communication, but it offers some guidance on analytic focus in studies of silence in intercultural communication, as well as in the classroom context.

6.3 The roles of factors affecting silence at different levels of social organisation

I turn now to the multi-layered model for interpreting silence in intercultural communication. As described in Chapter 2, the model is organised around three domains of communication – linguistic, cognitive and socio-psychological – and three levels of social organisation – individual, situational and sociocultural. I will now explicate this model with the findings of the studies presented in this book.

6.3.1 Individual level

At the individual level, while there was a general view among the Japanese students that low levels of language proficiency hindered their classroom participation, the research findings suggest that different types and levels of silence resulted from a lack of fluency or a lack of familiarity with specific knowledge in the relevant topic area, and that silence may result in part from interaction between the individual's language proficiency and the immediate topic in the classroom. In terms of perceptions of language proficiency, second language anxiety seemed to contribute to silence, since both Japanese students and Australian lecturers (Chapter 4) raised self-perceptions of low levels of language proficiency as a factor. However, in the three case studies (Chapter 5), although the students were aware of the silences due to particular types of language problems, the role of second language anxiety did not emerge. This may be partly because Tadashi and Aya already had spent substantial lengths of time in Australia, and Miki was a postgraduate student who had spent a year as an exchange student in a BA program before.

At the individual level in the cognitive domain, it was found that knowledge schema, preferred learning style and topics of discussion may affect participation in classroom interaction. While it is expected that these aspects of communication are, to a large extent, shared in interactions among people from the same cultural background than in intercultural communication, silence may be a consequence of a context-specific mismatch between the preferences and background knowledge of individual participants and those assumed as shared in the immediate context of interaction. In this respect, the interactants' levels of acculturation to one another's cultures are strongly related to variations in individual knowledge and preferences, with consequent effects on silence in intercultural communication. This is illustrated by the case studies (Chapter 5) where varied levels of adaptation to Australian classroom discourse were found among the Japanese participants, with the least adapted being perceived as the most silent.

The commitment of individuals to speaking in each context, which is located in the socio-psychological domain of the model, was also found to be related to the performance and perceptions of silence. Different levels of commitment towards classroom talk and discussion were observed, and seemed to derive from various causes, such as family commitments or difficulties in keeping up with the reading. While one could consider lack of commitment as a factor at an individual level, a pragmatic orientation to learning may also be a consequence of a Japanese educational background (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1, see also Yoneyama 1999). Hence, both an individual level of commitment and a socioculturally-shaped undervaluation of classroom interaction may be operating here.

Turning to another factor in the socio-psychological domain, personality, in the individual variables, was discussed with a specific reference to the personality traits 'shy' and 'unconfident' which are often associated with silence. This is a dangerous assumption to apply to the interpretation of Japanese student silences. It was discussed that this association may have a negative impact on intercultural communication in the classroom, which is also suggested by Crown & Feldstein (1985), Erickson (2004) and Scollon (1985). Moreover, 'shyness' is ambiguous in that it can not only be a personal trait but also a temporary reticence which can be caused by various contextual factors in different situations in the classroom.

6.3.2 Situational level

Factors at the situational level presented in the model were mostly discussed in the case studies, naturally since the perceptions and performances of the participants could be accounted for in details with a great amount of specific information on the local context of interaction. In the linguistic domain, we have seen

that perceptions of silence may depend on the weight of significance placed on participation in a specific type of participant structure, which could vary across situations. Thus, those who do not participate as much as others in a participant structure which is significant (academically or motivationally), may be perceived negatively for their silence.

Turn-taking behaviour was also found to depend on the local negotiation to some degree. The impact of the co-participants' individual orientation to turn-taking needs to be taken into account. The image of articulate Australian students does not always represent every Australian student, and the turns allocated to Japanese students were often taken over by the Australian students who tend to dominate classroom discussions, while other Australian peers sat in silence.

A consideration of silence in the light of systems of politeness in context also revealed how talk and silence are negotiated in intercultural communication. The different levels of face threat perceived by participants may lead to varying politeness strategies, which may explain such cases in which the same individual may be silent in one situation and articulate in another. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the case studies, it is important that silence and politeness are approached not only from the *user's* perspective but also from the *receiver's* point of view. Such a focus on 'process' and 'assessment' in politeness research, advocated by Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003), has been very informative in this respect, particularly considering the ambiguous nature of silence.

In the cognitive domain, the topic discussed in the classroom was found to affect the behaviour of the students. Not only the main topic of a particular session but the types of topic across sessions – for example, technical or everyday – may interact with the individual topic preferences of the participants and lead to silence which is topically salient. It was also revealed that the silence may depend on the types of background knowledge required for or relevant to a particular class discussion and the knowledge schema that the individuals bring to the class.

Having considered silence in intercultural communication focusing on the local negotiation of participation, it would not be an exaggeration to say that these factors at the situational level are the key to addressing the tension between the 'local' and 'global' perspectives (Erickson 2004: 197) in interpreting intercultural communication. Exactly how the situational level provided the key in the case of my research will be presented in Section 6.4. 1 below, in which 'the silent East' will be reconsidered.

6.3.3 Sociocultural level

One of the factors explored through the analysis of empirical classroom interaction data was the norms of turn-taking. There was an indication by some of the Japanese students in the ethnographic interviews that different sociolinguistic norms of participation in Japanese and Australian classrooms prevented them from actively participating in classroom discussions. The detailed analysis of intercultural classroom interaction in the case studies confirmed this difference to a certain degree, although the Japanese students were found capable of precisely timing their turn-taking in one-on-one situations and when they were given support to hold the floor. Hence, it is important to include various contextual factors at the local level of interaction when considering silence in relation to sociolinguistic norms of participation. In addition, to my knowledge, no comparative analysis is yet available. Thus, an important area to be explored in future research would be speed of interaction in Japanese in contexts where Australian English speakers interact *in Japanese* with Japanese native speakers.

At the sociocultural level, from a linguistic perspective, silence can be interpreted as a consequence of a cross-cultural gap in the expected pattern of interaction, or participant structures. The overall preference for self-selected turns by both students and lecturers in the Australian university context is a challenge to the discourse system of the Japanese students who are familiar with participation brought about almost exclusively through nomination by the teacher. Similarly, a marked silence may be found if the functions and allocation of the written and spoken modes of communication in the context of interaction vary across cultures, as illustrated by the contrastive weight placed on written and spoken modes of communication in the classroom which played a role in Japanese student silences in Australian classrooms.

A factor which falls in between the linguistic and cognitive domains at the sociocultural level is shared knowledge. Where the knowledge required for participation in a speech event is not shared, silence is likely to result. However, as we have seen in the case studies, with the recognition and advocacy of multiculturalism in Australia, sharing of experiences and knowledge about issues outside Australia is encouraged and appreciated, and where such activities were enacted in the classroom context, participation by some of the Japanese students was enhanced.

In the cognitive domain at the sociocultural level, silence was analysed in relation to norms of speed of interaction. Speed of reaction, in terms of cognitive processing, was perceived to be faster in the Australian classroom, and Japanese students in Australia struggled with the insufficient reaction time. However, an analysis of the empirical evidence is difficult because of the problem of discrimi-

nating between silence for cognitive processing time and silence as an aspect of sociocultural practice. Self-reports of the participants seem to be a reliable source, but they need to be complemented with an analysis of interaction data.

At the intersection of the cognitive and socio-psychological domains, the impact of norms of relevance was considered. Topics and interactional moves which are considered relevant or practised as norms in the Australian classroom differ from those of the Japanese classroom. Such differences may affect silence in intercultural situations, in that participants may remain silent about certain types of topics, or avoid performing certain speech acts which are accepted or even valued in the other context.

Finally, in the socio-psychological domain, a consideration of socioculturally framed orientations to face and politeness systems allowed elucidation of constructions of silence in intercultural communication. This was shown by the divergent assumptions regarding classroom role relationships held by Japanese students and their Australian lecturers and peers. If the role relationships and the normative assessment of appropriate politeness strategies in the context of interaction show different patterns across the cultural groups in question, and if such differences in patterns involve volubility and taciturnity as politeness strategies, it is likely to lead to the silence of one group and to cause frustration to both groups.

It should be noted that not all the variables in this model affect the silence observed in each instance of intercultural communication. Instead, as revealed in the case studies, different sets of variables are likely to contribute to each participant's silence to a varying extent and to result in different degrees of silence. This leads us to the next section, where I will reconsider the stereotypical image of 'the silent East' by drawing attention to the interaction between perceptions and performance and the impact of the immediate context of interaction.

6.4 Rethinking 'the silent East': Perceptions and performance

6.4.1 Perceptions, performance and the role of context

Japanese student perceptions about classroom communication in Australia, as found in the ethnographic interviews, reflected the stereotypical dichotomy of 'silent East versus articulate West'. However, as I have sought to demonstrate in this book, when actual performance was scrutinised and compared with the perceptions, a much more intricate picture emerged.

The results of the studies discussed here have shown that Japanese students in Australian universities are likely to be, and are perceived to be, silent, and that this

can be explained, *to a certain degree*, through the transfer of L1 discourse features. However, the silence found was *more* than a consequence of a simple clash of L1-L2 practices. Additionally, the extent to which silence was perceived and performed differed among participants and across classroom contexts. Furthermore, the explanations for silence and types of silence also varied.

For instance, in Case Study 1, it seems that factors at a sociocultural level strongly affected Tadashi's silences. The analysis showed that, patterns of his behaviour were similar to patterns typically found in Japanese classrooms, in that he participated almost exclusively through lecturer nomination, he focused on the written mode of communication, and he almost never engaged in interaction involving his own personal views or experiences.

Of Case Study 2, one could say that factors at all three levels of social organisation seem to be equally significant. That Miki's stay in Australia was the shortest of the three case study participants (2.5 years), and that she was living with a Japanese flatmate suggest that she had not had enough exposure to colloquial interaction among Anglo-Australian or Australian-educated students to enhance her fluency. Nevertheless, she seemed to have diverged, to some degree, from the Japanese sociocultural norms. Thus, factors such as knowledge schema and preferred topics appeared to have enhanced her participation. The immediate context of the class also seemed to have influenced her readiness to speak as it required her to share her personal observations of Japan and its culture which were obviously more familiar to her than to the Australian students. This familiarity factor also may have reduced the risk of face-threat, which would otherwise have increased silence due to psychologically and socioculturally based fears of face loss. However, her lack of participation in the negotiation of ideas, and in inquiry about other students' cultural backgrounds, appear to indicate a socioculturally-based orientation to a deference politeness system (Brown & Levinson 1987; Scollon & Scollon 1995). These equally-weighted influences on Miki's silence at different levels of social organisation seem to reflect a particular stage of an adaptation process to Australian classroom discourse. She expressed uncomfortable feelings of wavering identities associated with English and Japanese, and the sense of an inability to speak with fluency frustrated her as she wanted to speak more in classroom discussions.

In Case Study 3 (Aya), it seems that a mismatch between the immediate context of the particular class observed for the study and her individually preferred classroom context significantly affected her silence. The academic concepts and language essential for the particular subject were not congruent with Aya's knowledge schema and vocabulary, which caused her to remain more silent than in other subjects. Moreover, the image of 'strict lecturer' as perceived by Aya, but crucially not by her peers, modified her politeness orientation (Brown & Levin-

son 1987; Scollon & Scollon 1995) from relatively solidarity-oriented with her 'less strict' female lecturers to more hierarchy-oriented in this particular class. This suggests that immediate contextual factors triggered the Japanese orientation to politeness in classroom discourse, a factor at the level of sociocultural context. However, in terms of participant structures and turn-taking norms, Aya seemed to show a high level of adaptation to Australian classroom discourse. She was not as vulnerable as Miki or Tadashi to interruptions, and more frequent voluntary participation was observed. Indeed, Aya was found to be experiencing the greatest exposure to the discourse of the mainstream Australian population including young people. She had an Australian boyfriend, regularly attended church youth group activities where she mixed with local people, and had spent three years with an Australian family during her secondary school years. Thus, her extensive exposure to local native-speaker Australians may have played an important role in the level of her sociolinguistic and sociocultural adaptation to Australian classroom discourse. However, as discussed, lack of control in a specific area of language and perceived face-threat seemed to have reduced her bicultural ability and readiness to participate.

When factors in the model which could be affecting Japanese students' silence were considered, a tension between 'inability' and 'resistance' emerge. In the midst of this tension, the performance of the Japanese students was found to be greatly affected by contextual factors in the immediate situation specific to each classroom. This is one of the most significant implications for future research into silence in intercultural communication. The previous emphases on cultural and linguistic factors in interpreting Japanese student silences in classroom contexts, as found in existing literature may therefore need reconsideration. Earlier studies, which looked at the silences of Asian or Japanese students in the classroom (e.g. Harumi 1999; Liu 2000, 2002; Tsui 1996) did not give sufficient consideration to the role of evolving immediate contextual factors in the construction of silence, or to the role of individual variables in interaction with such immediate factors. It is hoped that this book revealed that silence is constructed through a complex negotiation process of talk and silence by not only the Japanese students but also by other participants in the classroom. It is also important to recognise that silence was observed not only amongst Japanese students but also those Australian students who were relatively silent compared to their peers who tended to dominate the class. Thus, the extent to which, and the specific context in which, silence is observed should be carefully taken into account by critically scrutinising the perceptions of interactants involved.

6.4.2 Implications for improved intercultural communication

In my studies presented above, classroom silence was generally perceived as a 'problem'. At least from an Australian point of view, it was associated with a lack of competence or commitment, and sometimes perceived as a face-threat. This seems to reflect the tendency, in the last few decades, for interactive and student-centred classrooms in Australia and in other western Anglophone universities (Wells 1999). Taking into account that Japanese students are studying in Australia of their own will, strategies can be suggested to both students and lecturers to break the silence. First of all, Japanese students need to be made aware that silence may be interpreted negatively in both social and academic terms and that it may even be regarded as impolite behaviour. In turn, lecturers can be informed of interpretations of silence from the Japanese classroom point of view. On the practical level, students can be given more opportunities to prepare before speaking, preferably in groups, as suggested by Goldstein (2003). Finally, nomination of relatively silent students can be expected to produce more participation, although, again, organising some form of preparation may be necessary to avoid face threat.

It should also be understood that silence can play a facilitative role in learning and in improving the quality of classroom interaction. As discussed in Chapter 2, studies such as Rowe (1974) and Mohatt & Erickson (1981) show that giving a slightly longer 'wait-time' after questioning increases the quality and frequency of response. The findings of the present research also support increased 'wait-time', following indications of silencing triggered by inter-turn pauses (see 5.4.4 and 6.3.7). To avoid silencing by other students and also misunderstanding silence as an 'off-record' response, Japanese students need to be taught to verbalise hesitation or to use a verbal response strategy which would be unmarked in Australian classrooms.

Although such strategies can be effective in the participant structure where a student is nominated, the issue of lack of voluntary participation in general remains an issue. This can be addressed by enhancing classroom solidarity, and where relevant and possible, bringing in issues from students' home countries into classroom discussion, which would in turn benefit local students.

A written mode of communication can also be utilised more as a means of participation, as it not only removes the problem of timing in turn-taking but also gives second language speakers time to edit their language and ideas. As evidence of this, the web discussion strategy was witnessed to be highly successful in one of the courses at the University of Sydney. Many Asian students in this particular class participated in discussions, and in fact, Japanese students were one of the most frequent comment-posting groups in this course.

Finally, it may be necessary to reconsider the nature of 'classroom participation' and the negative connotations attached to silence in the classroom (Jaworski & Sachdev 2004), as well as the positive aspects of silence in the classroom as demonstrated in existing studies (Rowe 1974; La Forge 1983; Jaworski & Sachdev 1998). The strong reliance on verbal communication in the classroom for assessment of academic competence, which was critically regarded by some of the Japanese students in my study, should be re-evaluated.

Although the present research focused on Japanese students, some of the implications given above can be applied to groups in other intercultural communication contexts, especially where silence is viewed as a problem. In doing so, as has been argued above, it is important to consider the given model in relation to the immediate context, and to the historical/political context, of the interaction.

6.4.3 Implications for research into silence in intercultural communication

In this book, I aimed to demonstrate how silence is constructed through the perceptions and performances of participants in intercultural communication. A combination of methodological approaches and data sources, including ethnography of communication, conversation analysis, analysis of coded classroom interaction and stimulated recall interviews, enabled the provision of multiple accounts of silence and a critical discussion of silence from these various perspectives. While conversation analysis provided an understanding of silence as a product of participants' orientations to face-to-face interaction which often operate at an unconscious level, self-reports given in interviews brought out silences which would not be found otherwise (Jaworski & Stephens 1998) and revealed the types of silence which can be perceived and how they are perceived. Empirical analysis of silence in intercultural communication has been scarce and is long overdue. More empirical accounts of silence – as to exactly what behaviour is perceived as marked silence and how such silence is noted as 'deviant', or taken for granted, by participants in intercultural communication – are required if we wish to advance a theory of silence.

There are limitations to this study, however. More empirical data and rigorous analysis as baseline information on standard length of inter-turn pauses in Japanese would have provided useful comparative data for analysis of silence and turn-taking management. There were also difficulties in specifying, from among a number of possibilities, the motivations for, and interpretations of, silence in each context. The ambiguity of silence is magnified in intercultural communication. It will always be a problem in this field of research, and is exactly why the triangulation of data and analytic tools is important. Another limitation is that a contras-

tive investigation of the non-native and native speaker dimension, through an analysis of Australian students' behaviour in classroom interaction in *Japanese* as a second language, as in Harumi's (1999) research, would have provided valuable insight. In fact, many studies, including my own research presented here, deal with the silence of non-English speaking groups in comparison with the 'norm' of English native/first language speakers. A move, in future research into silence in intercultural communication, towards contexts in which the focus and the norm of communication is not always assumed to be 'talk', can take our understanding of silence further. At the same time, silence in and across a greater variety of speech communities needs to be studied, particularly from empirical perspectives. Nevertheless, I hope this book makes a small contribution towards a better understanding of silence, not solely as a background to talk but as an essential aspect of human communication.

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Electronic references

Names and Brief Summaries of ISLPR Levels
http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/call/content4c.html

APPENDIX 1

Questions for interviews with 19 Japanese students (translated from Japanese)

1. What are you studying?
2. What made you choose that field?
3. How long have you been enrolled in the current program?
4. Have you studied abroad anywhere outside Japan before starting your studies here?
5. Have you studied in programs which are run in the English medium before?
6. Have you lived overseas before starting your studies here?
7. Can you tell me about your educational background? What type of school/college/university did you go to?
8. What is your occupation in Japan? What kind of jobs have you had?
9. What made you study in Australia?
10. What did you think it would be like to study at university in Australia? What were your expectations?
11. Can you describe your typical day at this university?
12. How different is it to study here from studying in Japan?
13. Can you describe typical classes at this university? What are the typical procedures of these classes? How many students are there? What proportions of overseas students are there?
14. How different are classes here from those in Japan?
15. Can you describe typical tutorials? What are the typical procedures of these tutorials? How many students are there? What proportions of overseas students are there?
16. How different are tutorials here from those in Japan?
17. What do you think of university education in Australia?
18. What courses do you like? What courses do you think are of good quality? What courses do you dislike? What courses do you think are of poor quality?
19. Who is your favourite lecturer? What is he/she like?
20. Who is your least favourite lecturer? What is he/she like?
21. Who are the students with whom you are closest? Can you tell me about your friends at university?
22. What do you think of Australian students? Do you have Australian friends? How do you socialise with them?
23. What do you think of students of other backgrounds? Do you have any particular ethnic/cultural groups with whom you tend to form friendship more easily than others? How do you socialise with them?
24. Do you think classes here are different from those in Japan? Can you tell me how different they are?
25. Do you sometimes feel uncomfortable or doubtful about communication in the classroom? How about in personal contact with lecturers? Do you sometimes feel gaps between yourself and lecturers? Between yourself and your Australian peers?

APPENDIX 2

Biographical information of Japanese participants in the interview

M1 See Appendix 4. This participant is the focus Japanese student Tadashi, Case Study 1.

M2 M2 came to Australia to study at a secondary school in Sydney. After finishing secondary school he spent a year at a matriculation college, and moved on to study linguistics at the University of Sydney. He is in his third year of a BA.

M3 M3 came to Australia with his family when he was ten years old. After graduating from a public school in Sydney, he was accepted to the Bachelor of Industrial Design program at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). His parents went back to Japan at this stage, but he and his siblings remained in Australia to study. He is in his second year.

M4 M4 came to Australia to study Industrial Design, as he had not been accepted into a university program in Japan. After studying English for 7 months at a language school in Sydney, he studied in a foundation course at the UNSW for a year, and was accepted into an Industrial Design program at the same university.

M5 M5 is a third year student majoring in Chinese language at the UNSW. Before beginning his studies at university, he spent six months in New Zealand at a sports college playing rugby, and studied in an EAP program for 20 weeks in Sydney.

M6 M6 came to Australia with his family when he was thirteen years old. After graduating from a public school in Sydney, he began a Bachelor of Chemistry since he was interested in genetic engineering. He is in his second year at UNSW.

M7 M7 went to secondary school in a country town in Queensland (Australia) for three years before beginning his studies in telecommunication at the University of Sydney. He was not interested in acquiring English skills, but he came to Australia to avoid the 'examination hell' in Japan and experience study abroad. In order to do this, he chose a school in a country town. He is in his second year at university.

M8 M8 is in his second year in a Masters in Applied Linguistics. He came to Australia after graduating from university with a major in comparative culture in Japan. This particular program was run through the English medium. Before starting his Master's degree at the University of Sydney, he studied in an EAP program in Sydney for 10 weeks.

M9 M9 is in his second year in his Masters in Commerce at the UNSW. Before beginning his studies in Australia, he had worked for a trading company in Japan as he had a Bachelor of Economics degree from a Japanese university. He studied in an EAP program for six months in Sydney before being accepted into UNSW.

F1 F1 went to a public secondary school for three years in Sydney before she started her B.A. at the University of Sydney. She is a second year student majoring in Chinese Studies and Psychology. After completing secondary school, she decided to study at university in Australia as she preferred it for her education.

F2 See Appendix 4. This participant is the focus Japanese student Aya, Case Study 3.

F3 F3 is in her second year as a B.A. student majoring in Asian Studies and Politics. She came to Australia after graduating from high school in Japan, and studied at a language school in a university in Sydney for 8 months. After this, she did a one-year tertiary preparation course at TAFE (Technical And Further Education) college before beginning her studies at the University of Sydney.

F4 F4 is in her second year as a B.A. student majoring in international relations at the University of Sydney. Before joining this program, she did a foundation program for a year in the UK and studied anthropology at a university there for a semester. She did not like the program and decided to study in Australia instead. She had also worked in Canada and in Australia for a year each on working holidays. Prior to these overseas experiences she also worked as an instructor at a computer college in Japan, after graduating from a Japanese university.

F5 F5 is in her second year as a B.A. student majoring in linguistics at the University of Sydney. After finishing high school in Japan, she studied in a foundation program for a year at a university near Sydney in order to be accepted to the B.A. program in Sydney.

F6 F6 went to a private school in Sydney for two and half years before beginning her B.A. at UNSW. After her experiences at the Australian school, she did not want to study at a Japanese university but preferred to stay in Australia for her further studies. She is in her second year majoring in Asian Studies.

F7 F7 went to an international school in Sydney for three years. She came to Australia to study English, but then towards the end of Year 10 at school, she decided on university in Australia. She is in her second year in a Bachelor of Commerce program at UNSW.

F8 F8 is in her first year as a Bachelor of Science student at the University of Sydney. Before starting this course, she had been enrolled in a nursing major, but changed after one semester. She had studied at a TAFE foundation course to fulfil the requirements for admission into university. She had lived in Malaysia and spent the first two years of junior high school there. Upon returning to Japan, she and her parents decided it was better for her to study overseas, and the whole family went back to Malaysia so that she and her sister could study at an international school there for three years. She lives with her sister who is studying at a secondary school in Sydney.

F9 F9 is in the second year of her Master of Education program at the University of Sydney, specialising in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). After completing her B.A. in English in Japan, she was accepted into a Tourism program at a university in an outer Sydney area, but after one semester she applied for the TEFL program.

F10 F10 is in her second year in her Master of Commerce program at the University of Sydney. Before coming to Australia, she worked at a financial institution for five years. Her Bachelor's degree from a Japanese university is in Japanese History, but she came to Australia to develop her career opportunities in the financial field by gaining a masters degree from an English speaking country.

APPENDIX 3

Lecturer questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

One of our research students works on educational issues which concern Japanese students in Australian University classrooms. If would be very much appreciated if you could answer the four questions below. Your answers will be anonymous, and the ethics clearance has been received for this research.

Questions

1. What is your impression of Japanese students in Australian university classrooms?

2. What are particular strengths of Japanese students you perceive in your classes?

3. What are particular problems of Japanese students you perceive in your classes?

4. What is your first and the strongest language?

Your support will be very much appreciated.
Yours sincerely,

International Student Services Unit

APPENDIX 4

Biographical information of the three Japanese participants in the case studies

Case Study 1: Tadashi

Tadashi, the only male student in the case studies, is a 27 year-old fourth year undergraduate student majoring in a Bachelor of Education in LOTE (Languages Other Than English). He has been residing and studying in Australia for 8 years, in which time he studied in a Bible School for three years and in a university TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program for two years before beginning the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Sydney. While in the TESOL program, he was asked to teach Japanese, and this experience led him to join the LOTE program.

When the observation for this case study started, he had just finished his teaching practicum at a private girls' school in Sydney and he was hoping to find a teaching position at a secondary school in Sydney. He has a Korean wife, and a few weeks into the observation research, his second child was born. He and his wife both speak Korean or Japanese fluently, and use both languages at home, as his wife speaks Japanese as fluently as he does Korean. His spoken English language proficiency was rated 4 (ISLPR) by both raters.

Case Study 2: Miki

Miki is a 24-year old female postgraduate student enrolled in an MA Japanese Studies program. She came to Australia after completing her BA in English in Japan. While she was enrolled in her BA program, she spent one year at an Australian university in a suburban area of Sydney. After completing her degree in Japan, she decided to return to Australia to study in a Master's degree program.

At the time of the research, she lived with a Japanese student who was studying at another university in Sydney. Among the three Japanese students in the case studies, Miki's time in Australia was the shortest, 2.5 years. Her ISLPR ratings were 3+, given by the native-speaker rater, and 3, by the author.

Case Study 3: Aya

Aya is a 23 year-old female third year student studying a Bachelor of Arts. Her degree program includes Japanese Studies, Korean language and Secondary Education. Before university, she attended a secondary school in Sydney from Year 9 to Year 12. Her original motivation to study in Australia was to acquire English skills. However, as she wanted 'more than English', she stayed in Sydney to study at university. During her secondary school years, she stayed with an Australian family, but after moving on to university, she lived on her own. She has an Australian boyfriend, with whom she attends a church youth group regularly. She hopes to become a Japa-

nese language teacher, and after completing her BA, she is to move on to a Master of Education program in LOTE (Languages Other Than English). Her spoken language proficiency was rated ISLPR 4+ by the native-speaker rater and 4 by the author.

APPENDIX 5

Video coding sheets

Video ( ) J ( ) Class ( ) Bidding for Floor

Time	Environment (1)				Bid by (2)				Bid type (3)				Turn Length (4)	Turn management (5)			Turn recognition & feedback (6)	
	Ttalk	Stalk	Lap	Other	Jps	Aus	MigA	OS	C	Q	Clr.Q	Other		Comp	Interrupt	Unfini		

[Notes] (1) Environment: speaker or event before bidding. Ttalk: teacher talk; Stalk: student talk; Lap: lapse; Other: other environment such as laugh (2) Jps: Japanese students; Aus: Australian students; MigA: migrant Australian students; OS: overseas students (3) C: comment; Q: question; Clr.Q: clarification question; Other: other types of turns (4) Turn length in seconds (5) Comp: completed; Interrupt: interrupted; Unfini: unfinished (without being interrupted) (6) Turn recognition & feedback: whether the turn was recognised, and notes on reaction to the turn.

Video (   ) J (   ) Class (   ) Open Floor

Time	Stimuli Sender (1)		Stimuli Type (2)			Response by (3)				Response type (4)						Resp Length (5)	Turn management (6)			Turn recognition & feedback (7)	
	T	S	Q	VR	NV	Jps	Aus	MigA	OS	C	Q	Clr.Q	F	YN	S		Comp	Interrupt	Unfini		

[Notes] (1) Participant who opened the floor (2) Q: question; VR: verbal other than question; NV: non-verbal (3) Jps: Japanese students; Aus: Australian students; MigA: migrant Australian students; OS: overseas students (4) C: comment; Q: question; Clr.Q: clarification question; F: factual response; YN: yes-no response; S: supporting move (such as 'right' or 'true') (5) Response length in seconds (6) Comp: completed; Interrupt: interrupted; Unfini: unfinished (without being interrupted) (6) Turn recognition & feedback: whether the turn was recognised, and notes on reaction to the turn.

Video ( ) J ( ) Class ( ) Individually offered Floor

Time	Stimuli Sender (1)		Stimuli Type (2)			Student given the floor (3)				Response type (4)						Resp Length (5)	Turn management (6)			Turn recognition & feedback (7)	
	T	S	Q	VR	NV	Jps	Aus	MigA	OS	C	Q	Clr.Q	F	YN	S		Comp	Interrupt	Unfini		

[Notes] (1) Participant who nominated the next speaker (2) Q: question; VR: verbal other than question; NV: non-verbal (3) Jps: Japanese students; Aus: Australian students; MigA: migrant Australian students; OS: overseas students (4) C: comment; Q: question; Clr.Q: clarification question; F: factual response; YN: yes-no response; S: supporting move (such as 'right' or 'true') (5) Response length in seconds (6) Comp: completed; Interrupt: interrupted; Unfini: unfinished (without being interrupted) (6) Turn recognition & feedback: whether the turn was recognised, and notes on reaction to the turn.

APPENDIX 6

International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) levels

Names and Brief Summaries of ISLPR Levels

0	ZERO PROFICIENCY	Unable to communicate in the language.
0+	FORMULAIC PROFICIENCY	Able to perform in a very limited capacity within the most immediate, predictable areas of need, using essentially formulaic language.
1-	MINIMUM CREATIVE PROFICIENCY	Able to satisfy immediate, predictable needs, using predominantly formulaic language.
1	BASIC TRANSACTIONAL PROFICIENCY	Able to satisfy basic everyday transactional needs.
1+	TRANSACTIONAL PROFICIENCY	Able to satisfy everyday transactional needs and limited social needs.
2	BASIC SOCIAL PROFICIENCY	Able to satisfy basic social needs, and routine needs pertinent to everyday commerce and to linguistically undemanding vocational fields.
2+	SOCIAL PROFICIENCY	
3	BASIC VOCATIONAL PROFICIENCY	Able to perform effectively in most informal and formal situations pertinent to social and community life and everyday commerce and recreation, and in situations which are not linguistically demanding in own vocational fields.
3+	BASIC VOCATIONAL PROFICIENCY PLUS	
4	VOCATIONAL PROFICIENCY	Able to perform very effectively in almost all situations pertinent to social and community life and everyday commerce and recreation, and generally in almost all situations pertinent to own vocational fields.
4+	ADVANCED VOCATIONAL PROFICIENCY	
5	NATIVE-LIKE PROFICIENCY	Proficiency equivalent to that of a native speaker of the same sociocultural variety.

Source: http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/call/content4c.html

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