

TR-I-0075

Politeness Strategies
in American English Telephone Dialogues

米語電話会話における
ていねいさの表現

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March, 1989

ABSTRACT

"Politeness Strategies in American English Telephone Dialogues"

To contribute towards the translation of intentions from Japanese into English, a study of politeness strategies in American telephone dialogues was conducted. A data base of telephone conversations was first constructed and then described from a socio-linguistic viewpoint. In particular, attention is paid to the difference between respect and friendliness as components of politeness in American speech, since in Japanese speech friendliness is not considered part of politeness whereas in American English it is an integral part.

Twelve kinds of dialogues were constructed: (1) starting a request, (2) maintaining a request, (3) ending a request, (4) requesting a meeting, (5) making and confirming reservations, (6) making and changing appointments, (7) placing an order, (8) inviting, (9) asking directions, and (10) leaving and following up a message. When these dialogues were analyzed, eight politeness strategies were identified: (1) degree of politeness, (2) use of "please," (3) use of "may/could/would," (4) orienting the receiver, (5) softening requests, (6) connecting a series of requests, (7) ending a request dialogue, and (8) friendliness. Friendliness was further categorized as either tonal or verbal friendliness, with verbal friendliness subclassified into informality, intimacy, sharing of information, and display of personality.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Study

To contribute towards the translation of intentions from Japanese into English, a study of politeness strategies in American telephone dialogues was conducted. A data base of telephone conversations was first constructed and then described from a socio-linguistic viewpoint. In particular, attention is paid to the difference between respect and friendliness as main components of politeness in American speech, since in Japanese speech friendliness is not considered part of politeness whereas in American English it is an integral part.

1.2 Contents of the Study

Ten kinds of dialogues were constructed: (1) starting a request, (2) maintaining a request, (3) ending a request, (4) requesting a meeting, (5) making and confirming reservations, (6) making and changing appointments, (7) placing an order, (8) sending an invitation, (9) asking directions, and (10) leaving and following up a message.

When these dialogues were analyzed, eight politeness strategies were identified: (1) degree of politeness, (2) use of "please," (3) use of "may/could/would," (4) orienting the receiver, (5) softening requests, (6) connecting a series of requests, (7) ending a request dialogue, and (8) friendliness. Friendliness was further categorized as either tonal or verbal friendliness, with verbal friendliness subclassified into informality, intimacy, sharing of information, and display of personality.

1.3 Organization of the Report

There is a text section and two appendices.

The text contains identification and discussion of politeness strategies based on four kinds of request dialogues: beginning, maintaining, ending, and requesting a meeting, or dialogues types 1-4. A summary of main points covered precedes each section.

Appendix 1 contains variations on patterns presented in the text. That is, samples of whole conversations and alternative phrases are presented for dialogue types 1-4 and the politeness strategies they illustrate. Appendix 1 also contains occasional brief commentary on points not covered in the text.

Appendix 2 contains sample dialogues and alternative phrases for the dialogue types not discussed in the text, i.e. types 5-10.

1.4 Source of Data

I constructed the dialogues presented here.

The dialogues were generated before analysis. In other words, I did not try to construct dialogues to fit preconceived ideas. The politeness strategies were derived on the basis of what the dialogues seemed to show.

The data and analysis of the data are derived from intuitive knowledge of English as a native speaker and from experience as a teacher of English literature and composition.

2. Starting a Request Dialogue

2.1 Summary

2.2. Three situations are distinguished: (1) a call directed to an office, (2) a call to a specific but unfamiliar person, and (3) a call to a familiar person. Only the first situation is considered in detail.

2.3. Receiver's first utterance (at an office) is analyzed with reference to

Politeness Strategy 1: degree of politeness. Four degrees are identified: (1) standard politeness, (2) heightened politeness, (3) adequate politeness, and (4) informal politeness/impoliteness.

2.4 Caller's first utterance is analyzed with reference to Politeness Strategy 2: use of "please."

2.5 Caller's first utterance is analyzed with reference to Politeness Strategy 3: use of "may/could/would."

2.6 Caller's first utterance is analyzed with reference to Politeness Strategy 4: orienting the receiver.

2.2 Three Situations of Starting Request Dialogues

Basically, a conversation begins by "requesting to speak to someone." This initial "request" is built into every phone conversation, and in many cases it quickly merges with or is modified by the specific type of request the caller wants to make. A consideration of the patterns present in the request to speak to someone may therefore furnish useful information for analyzing other, more specific types of requests.

There are three general patterns of initiating a conversation depending on the relation between caller and receiver:

- (1) a call directed to an office
- (2) a call to a specific but unfamiliar person
- (3) a call to a familiar person.

Only the first case will be considered in detail in this report, since it is the one including routine business calls of the kind involved in an international conference.

The third case is the least complicated because of familiarity. The caller need not worry too much about using the most appropriate phrases because the caller-speaker relationship is already established.

The second case is the most complicated and difficult to analyze into patterns because it requires, in addition to appropriate phrasing, considerable attention to interpersonal factors. Communication with an unknown person requires one to be friendly without being too intimate, formal without being stiff, polite without conveying a weak impression. In English, these factors can be addressed through innumerable combinations of phrases. Interaction between a caller and an unfamiliar individual will be covered in section 5.4-5.9 on friendliness.

The first case, like the third, is fairly uncomplicated because there is an established, assumed relationship between the speakers, as in the case of acquaintances, though in this situation it is a business relationship. The caller can proceed directly with her request without having to focus on interpersonal factors beyond a basic level of politeness.

The basic pattern for the receiver's first utterance in situation (1) answering the phone at an office, is to give the name of the organization and to offer assistance:

"ATR International."

"May I help you?"

2.3 Receiver's First Utterance in Relation to Politeness Strategy 1: Degree of Politeness

If we designate the example above as standard politeness or level one, we can designate different degrees of politeness in reference to this standard pattern.

Level two, or heightened politeness, can be achieved by the speaker identifying himself by name after giving the organization's name, and by adding "how" to the offer of assistance. Thus:

"ATR International."

"Michael speaking."

"How may I help you? / How may I assist you?"

Heightened politeness is commonly used at service-oriented businesses such as hotels and rental or ticket agencies, where one might also hear, "How may I be of service?" Luxury hotels, expensive salons, and wealthy, power-conscious corporate offices in particular will often employ heightened politeness to suggest sophistication, eliteness, friendliness, or a combination of these factors.

Self-identification is "heightened" politeness when the receiver is a general receptionist, or the one who first fields calls from outside. But if on the other hand the receiver has a specific job, such as customer service manager of a bank, it is simply standard politeness to answer the phone with one's name: e.g. "Customer Service. <name> speaking." Self-identification entails a different level of politeness in these two situations because individuality is associated with specific jobs, not with the general functions performed by a receptionist. Thus, it is considered natural or standard politeness for someone in a specific job to identify herself by name, but in the case of a general receptionist, self-identification will convey an extra, personal touch, or in other words "heightened" politeness.

The zero level or adequate politeness differs from standard (preferable) politeness in that it omits identifying the organization. Thus: --"Hello. May I help you?" or simply "May I help you?"

However, this is still polite because what is sacrificed in verbal expressions can be compensated for in friendliness and sincerity. It is not unusual, in America, to hear this level of politeness used in public service

organizations, universities, or federal, state, and city agencies, which have to answer many requests for information daily. Such offices often emphasize efficiency and speed over trying to cater to the caller's or customer's psychology.

Informal politeness/impoliteness, or the sub-zero level, consists of the bare minimum, either "Hello" or "Yes," and often without even a rising inflection at the end. In some situations, for instance where formality is not expected, one can still avoid impoliteness depending on tone of voice. For instance, a booming, hearty, non-irritated "Hello" creates a friendly informality, whereas a gruff, mumbled, or curt manner of speaking will obviously turn informality into impoliteness as well. "Informal politeness/impoliteness" occurs if the business or agency is relaxed, careless, or simply indifferent to rituals of politeness, or if the office is extremely busy, as in the case for example of driver licensing, or post offices during the Christmas season. Informal politeness will suffice in certain limited situations such as these where informality is expected or put up with as *shoganai*, but it will be considered impolite in regular business situations.

2.4 Caller's First Utterance in Relation to Politeness Strategy 2: Use of "Please"

Two situations are possible, depending on how much information the caller desires:

(1) The caller has one or two specific questions. For example:

"May I have a registration packet sent to me?"

"What is the deadline for submitting manuscripts?"

(2) The caller has several questions or one complicated question, and needs to prepare the receiver for taking up his time. In this situation, the requesting will begin with a general opener of the type:

"Would you be able to give me some information regarding <topic> ?"

"I have some questions about <topic> and would like some information."

However, whether the request for information is simple or complicated, politeness is usually conveyed through the use of "please" and the use of a "may/could/would" cluster.

"Please" functions as a request signal and defers to the receiver. It communicates a request intention and enhances the caller's relationship with the receiver. Thus:

"May I have a registration packet sent to me, please?"

"What is the deadline for submitting manuscripts, please?"

"Would you be able to give me some information, please?"

"I have some questions about <caller's topic> and would like some information, please."

It's possible to omit "please" and still be polite. If spoken with a friendly tone, the "please" is not absolutely necessary. However, since what constitutes a "friendly" tone is difficult to describe and quite subjective, using "please" is simpler and safer.

One situation where "please" is in fact often omitted without any lessening of politeness is when the request is preceded by other sentences that serve the function of establishing politeness. For instance:

"I'm calling in regard to the conference on <topic> . . .

and I was wondering if you could give me some information. . .

When is the deadline for submission of manuscripts?"

The ellipsis represents pauses during which the hearer normally gives indications, like "hai" in Japanese, that she's following the speaker's direction. The first two phrases orient the hearer and introduce the request gradually. This indirection is a politeness strategy, and thus the first two phrases serve the same function as "please." "Please" is not needed

by the time the specific request--"when is the deadline?"--is made. On the other hand, if the speaker begins directly with the specific request, then some other kind of politeness marker is needed, and the addition of "please" will fulfill this need.

As for the position of "please," it can occur at the end of the expression, before the verb, or after the verb:

"When is the deadline for submission of manuscripts, please?"

"Could you please tell me the deadline for submission of manuscripts?"

"Could you tell me, please, the deadline for submission of manuscripts?" (This third case is the least common.)

2.5 Caller's First Utterance in Relation to

Politeness Strategy 3: Use of "may/could/would"

In addition to "please," the most frequently employed and most visible feature of standard politeness is the use of "may," "could," or "would" to frame a request, both specific questions as well as general requests for information:

"May I change my hotel reservation, please?" (specific)

"May I have some information, please?" (general)

"Could I change my hotel reservation, please?" (specific)

"Could I have some information, please?" (general)

"I would like to change my hotel reservation, please." (specific)

"I would like to have some information, please." (general)

Of these three patterns, "may," "could," and declarative constructions with "would" are equally common. Interrogative constructions using "would" are somewhat cumbersome and less common.

"Can I" and "can you" instead of "could" will be heard frequently, but they are less polite. "Could" is always safer.

2.6 Caller's First Utterance in Relation to

Politeness Strategy 4: Orienting the Receiver

As stated earlier, the way the speaker begins the dialogue depends on whether the request is limited to one or two specific questions or involves several or more complicated questions. In the latter situation, the speaker should prepare the receiver at the outset for the amount of time he will probably need to get everything answered. This is done by beginning with a general request for information. However, (1) even a limited, specific request very often will be preceded by a more general request for information, and (2) sometimes a more elaborate orientation consisting of the speaker's personal identification is appropriate.

(1) Preceding a limited, specific request by a general opener is less abrupt, and therefore more polite, than coming directly to the point. Orienting the receiver for a single, specific request can be done by prefacing the specific request with a general one. For example:

"May I have some information, please? . . . I'd like to change my hotel reservation."

"Could I have some information, please? . . . I'd like to change my hotel reservation."

2) A more elaborate orientation consisting of the speaker's personal identification cannot be easily summarized into a few set patterns. The

main elements will be the speaker's name, affiliation, and a brief statement of the purpose of the call. As the following examples illustrate, the statement of purpose should try to establish as briefly but as precisely as possible the speaker's connection to the office being called. Very often, the request is related to whether the speaker is calling for the first time or has already been doing business with the other party. Information can be given more efficiently if the receiver has an idea of how much the caller already knows. For example, in this situation the caller is starting from scratch:

"My name is <proper name> and I work at <company name> in <location of company>. I would like to attend the conference on interpreting telephony and have some questions regarding the submission of manuscripts.

But in the following situation, the caller wants an update on business already in progress:

"My name is <proper name> and I submitted a manuscript for the conference on interpreting telephony, but haven't received any further information regarding whether it's been accepted or not. Is it possible to get this information over the phone?"

3. Maintaining a Request Dialogue

3.1. Summary

3.2 Two types of repetition that serve to maintain a request dialogue are identified as Politeness Strategy 5, phrases which soften requests or offers, and Politeness Strategy 6, phrases that connect a series of requests.

3.3. Two kinds of softeners are distinguished: (1) constructions with

the conditional, and (2) "padding." "Padding is defined as phrases which are dispensable to the core utterance and which cause that utterance to be slightly delayed.

- 3.4. Examples are provided of initial-position transitions which are used to connect several requests within a single conversation.

3.2 Two Kinds of Repetition to Maintain Request Dialogues

In a face-to-face request dialogue (i.e. not machine-translated), requests are repeated often. They are broken down into various components each of which will usually be repeated several times. For instance, a request for a plane reservation will typically involve several rounds of requesting, confirming, and re-confirming flight schedules, flight numbers, prices, and so forth.

The repetition pervasive in request dialogues is a means of advancing the conversation but it is also a politeness feature. Two kinds of repetition patterns are observable: (1) phrases that soften a request or assertion, usually placed at the beginning of a new utterance, and (2) phrases that connect a series of requests, also placed at the beginning of new utterances, that present each additional request as a continuation of the initial one.

3.3 Softening Requests and Offers, or Politeness Strategy 5

In a normal business situation, such as calling an office for routine information, the use of "please," "may/could/would," and a friendly tone comprise standard politeness. But if a request is not routine, if it involves more effort to accommodate than what would be considered the receiver's normal job, then the caller can add politeness by softening his request with the use of conditionals or "padding."

The common expressions of softening are presented here rather than in the Appendix since they are used in every kind of request situation. The main expression is the unbracketed portion; the bracketed portion is provided to give a specific illustration of what kind of request the softener or padding can accompany.

3.3.1 Softening Requests with the Conditional

"Perhaps you could [get me a seat in the business class section]?"

"If possible, do you think you could [arrange for someone to pick me up]?"

"Is it possible for you to [arrange for someone to pick me up]?"

"Is it at all possible for you to [arrange for someone to pick me up]?"

"If you don't mind, could you [call him for me and just mention . . .]?"

"If it's not too much trouble, could you [send me a xerox copy]?"

"If it really won't be too much work, I'd appreciate [getting a list of names]."

"If it won't put you out of the way too much, [it really would be more convenient for me to meet here]."

"If it won't inconvenience you, [I'd be happy to meet you at your office]."

"If it's not too much of a bother, [could I get another copy sent to me]?"

"If it won't be too much of a bother, [I would like to get another copy]."

3.3.2 Softening Requests with "Padding"

By "padding" I mean phrases that allow for a slight delay before stating the main point. Like small talk (an extended kind of padding), they

balance clarity and abruptness, and emphasize the speaker's internal reality over the content of the conversation. For instance, a padded version of "He's not in" would be "I'm afraid he's not in" or "I'm sorry, but he's not in." Some of these phrases can be tacked on to some of the conditionals above, but that tends to risk overdoing politeness.

In front of requests for information or directions, one could add:

"Can you advise me on how to [organize the proposal for submission]?"

"How would you suggest I [organize the proposal for submission]?"

"What do you suggest is the best way to [get from the airport to the hotel]?"

What would you suggest as the best way to [go from here to there]?"

"Do you have any suggestions as to [daytime activities for children]?"

"Do you have any suggestions about/for [sightseeing]?"

"Do you know how I could [get in touch with him]?"

"Do you know of someone I could ask regarding [this proposal]?"

"I'm wondering if you could help me out with something . . ."

"I'm wondering if you could give me some information . . ."

In front of specific requests, one could add:

"I'm wondering if [you could contact her for me]."

"I'm wondering if by chance [he could come by to pick up a parcel]."

"Would you by chance [have his phone number]?"

"Is there any chance [of my receiving it before the conference begins]?"

"Would I be able to persuade you by any chance to [join me in Tokyo]?"

"Would I be able to persuade you to [join me in Tokyo]?"

"May I persuade you [to join me for dinner tonight]?"

"Would you happen [to be free for dinner tonight]?"

"Would I be able to interest you in [spending an afternoon at my
lab]?"

I would be grateful if [you'd squeeze in some time to come by the
lab]."

"I would appreciate it if [you would agree to talk with him briefly]."

3.3.3 Softening Responses to Requests with the Conditional & Padding

Conditional expressions and "padding" can also be used by the receiver to soften suggestions, negative responses, or offers of service.

In front of offers, one could add:

"If you think you might be interested, [we could send you a
brochure]."

"If you wish, [we could hold a space until you decide]."

"If you want, [I can put you in touch with the appropriate
people]."

"If you'd rather, [we could send it by airmail]."

In front of suggestions or advice, one could add:

"If you wish, you could [call him directly and make arrangements
yourself]."

"If you prefer, [you can rent a private car]."

"You might want to [rent a private car]."

"Why don't you [rent a private car]?"

In front of negative responses or lack of information, one could add:

"I'm afraid that [I won't be able to give out that information]."

"I'm sorry, but [I'm not allowed to release that information]."

"Unfortunately, [that information is confidential]."

"Well, as a matter of fact, [we've stopped handling that matter]."

"I wish I could help you, but [I don't have any more information
than that]."

"I wish I had the information, but [I'm sorry, this is the best I can
do]."

"I would like to help you, but [I'm afraid they can't make any
exceptions]."

"I'll do what I can, but [it's probably not possible]."

"I think [we really won't be able to do that]."

"I don't think [we really can do that]."

"I would suggest [you try to make arrangements directly with them]."

"The best we can do is [give you their phone number]."

3.4 Connecting Requests, or Politeness Strategy 6

The same principle of softening the beginning of a request operates throughout the course of a request conversation. (Incidentally, orienting the receiver at the start of a phone conversation can also be viewed as a form of softening, an attempt to soften the inherent abruptness of all conversation which breaks an initial silence.) When a new question is being asked, or a new exchange being initiated, very often the following kinds of softeners, or combinations of them, will precede the statement:

Um, <could you also tell me if . . . >

Okay, <and I also need to know if . . . >

Well, . . . um, . . . <how about if I . . . >

And <is it also possible to . . . >

Oh, . . . <will I be able to . . . >

Oh, another thing is <what about the proceedings? How do I get a copy?>

Oh yes, I also wanted to know if <the fee includes a copy of the proceedings.>

Let me see, <there was one more thing I needed to ask . . . >

I just have a few more question(s), . . .um, . . . oh yes, <how can I . . . ?>

4. Ending Request Dialogues (Politeness Strategy 7)

4.1 Summary

4.2. The caller's sequence for closing a request dialogue is broken down into 5 steps: (1) optional reconfirmation of information, (2) transition to signal end of requesting, (3) optional rhetorical apology, (4) "thank you," and (5) "good-bye."

4.3. The receiver's sequence for closing a request dialogue is broken down into 4 steps: (1) "you're welcome," (2) optional rhetorical denial of having been troubled, (3) optional offer of future assistance, and (4) "good-bye."

4.4. A distinction is made between caller-initiated endings and receiver-initiated endings. The caller or requester usually initiates the ending, but occasionally the receiver may wish to do so if there's an emergency interruption or if the caller is overly rude and willfully troublesome.

4.2. Caller's Sequence for Closing Request Dialogues

One thing of interest in English vis-a-vis Japanese is that American politeness involves *not* drawing out the good-bye in the way that seems typical of Japanese phone conversations. Beyond a "thank you" and departing expressions of pleasure or regret, extended politeness at the end often becomes annoying by American standards.

There is no set pattern for ending a conversation, but endings can generally be broken down into the following parts: (1) optional reconfirmation of information (usually only in cases of specific, limited, and key information such as flight number, arrival time, a particular

name, etc.), (2) transition to signal end of requesting, (3) optional rhetorical apology or, in the case of requesting a meeting, a brief expression of pleasure or regret, (4) "thank you", and (5) "good-bye".

The bare minimum, or adequate politeness, would be

"Thank you for your help. Good-bye."

But this will probably be too abrupt without transitions such as "well," "okay," and so forth. For example:

"Well then,* thank you for your help. Good-bye."

"Well then, I think that will be all. Thank you very much. Good-bye."

"All right,* thank you very much. Good-bye."

"Okay,* I think I got everything answered. Thank you very much. Good-bye."

The asterisked transitions--"well then," "all right," and "okay"--are interchangeable.

Sometimes, when the last request was announced in the form of

"The last thing I wanted to ask was . . . ,"

the receiver rather than the caller may initiate the ending by saying,

"Is there anything else you wish to know?"

In this case, the caller's pattern is modified as below, but note that essentially the transition, which is underlined, still remains:

- C: "No, I think that'll be all. Thank you for your help. Good-bye."
 "No thank you, I have all the information I need. Good-bye."

4.3 Receiver's Sequence for Closing Request Dialogues

On the receiver's part, an ending consists of (1) "you're welcome" or variations of it, (2) optional rhetorical denial of having been troubled, (3) optional offer of future assistance, and (4) "good-bye." For example:

- R: "You're welcome. Thank you for calling. Good-bye."
 "You're welcome. I'm happy to be of assistance. Good-bye."

4.4 Receiver-Initiated Endings for Request Dialogues

Usually it is the caller, or requester, who initiates the ending, but sometimes the receiver may wish to do so if there's an emergency interruption or if the caller is too rude and willfully troublesome and terminating the conversation seems like the best route.

Example:

- R: I'm very sorry to interrupt you, sir, but something has come up just now and I'm afraid I have to leave the phone. Would you mind calling back in a few minutes?

5. Requesting a Meeting

5.1 Summary

5.2. A sample of a whole conversation to request a meeting is presented.

5.3 Requesting a meeting by phone is divided into 8 stages: (1) caller's self-identification, (2) receiver's acknowledgement, (3) caller's extended transition into request, (4) receiver's optional responses to caller's transition, (5) caller's statement of request for a meeting,

(6) receiver's initial response, which may be positive, negative, or tentative, (7) caller and receiver's mutual arrangement of meeting time and place, and (8) caller and receiver's "good-bye."

- 5.4. The difference between requesting a meeting and other kinds of request dialogues is discussed. Basically, setting up a meeting by phone is a form of social introduction which highlights the aspects of natural speech that are difficult to translate by machine.
- 5.5. Friendliness is presented as Politeness Strategy 8, the final politeness strategy identified. The relationship between friendliness and requesting a meeting is discussed.
- 5.6. Friendliness as a matter of tone (rather than expressions) is discussed, in particular the relationship between friendliness and respect.
- 5.7. Friendliness as a matter of verbal expressions (rather than tone) is categorized into four types: (1) informality (e.g. diction, contractions), (2) intimacy (e.g. tags that suggest a shared feeling or point of view), (3) sharing of information (e.g. offering information irrelevant to the core request, thinking out loud), and (4) display of personality (using playful, unusual, or otherwise flavorful language).
- 5.8. The sample conversation is analyzed according to politeness strategies 1-7.
- 5.9. The sample conversation is analyzed according to friendliness, or politeness strategy 8.

5.2 Sample Conversation to Request a Meeting

Here is a sample conversation between two researchers who have been previously introduced through a mutual acquaintance. The receiver

agrees to a meeting. The conversation is polite, professional, and quite friendly. (It is equally possible to have a conversation that is polite and professional but fairly lacking in linguistically expressed friendliness; i.e. where friendliness is a matter of tone only.) A second dialogue between two researchers who have not been previously introduced, and in which the receiver cannot agree to a meeting (although the refusal is not related to not having been previously introduced), is presented in the Appendix. This conversation is also marked by a high degree of friendliness.

C-1 Hello, Susan Davenport? This is Toshiro Hasegawa. . . . I'm a friend of Akemi Williams, I think she mentioned to you that I would be trying to get in touch I'm in town on personal business but I thought if possible it would be a good chance to meet you

R-1 Yes! Akemi wrote me all about you. But I didn't remember exactly when you were coming So you just got here?

C-2 Well, no, . . . a few days ago, but I haven't been able to get away until now. I called you as soon as I could. I don't know if Akemi mentioned it, but my schedule is somewhat tight. . . .

R-2 Is it? Well, same here. Even though Akemi wrote me in advance, I already had this thing scheduled for tomorrow and the next day, which I'm not in a position to change. What's your own schedule like anyway?

C-3 Well, this afternoon and evening are open, and the day after tomorrow, all day I hope we can manage something

R-3 Okay, let me think a moment Um, let's see, this afternoon I still have some last minute preparations to do for tomorrow, and the day after that you're free, right? but on that day I probably only have time for a rushed lunch or maybe even just a coffee break So, maybe tonight would be best? Are you free this evening?

C-4 Sure, why don't you let me take you out for dinner?

R-4 No, don't be silly. I was thinking of having you come over to my place. I'm not much of a cook but I'll figure something out. It'll be more comfortable over here, don't you think? If you don't mind home-cooking, that is. . . .

C-5 Of course not! But that really sounds like an imposition. It's too much bother to have me over. I was thinking in fact of going to <restaurant> because the food's really good there, and it's quiet, and they don't bother you if you want to stay and linger over coffee Let's do that. I really hate to impose on you. You're busy enough as

it is.

R-5 Listen, it's really no trouble at all. My husband won't be home for dinner tonight so it'll be easy. I'll just fix us something simple, and it's really more comfortable there. Besides, I have a lot of stuff at the house that you might want to see. I could pick you up at your hotel after I'm done here, stop by the market, and then you can just relax while I get dinner out. Let's do that, okay?

C-6 Well, . . . if you're really sure it's no trouble of course I'd enjoy that .

R-6 No problem. Shall I pick you up at 6:00?

C-7 Thanks. I'm staying at the Holiday Inn on Merchant Street. I'll be waiting on the curb. . . . Let's see, I'll be wearing a denim jacket. . . . What kind of car do you have?

R-7 A beat up white Toyota. Can't miss it. I'll see you at six, then.

C-8 Right. Thanks for the ride. I'm looking forward to meeting you.

R-8 Me, too. See you, then. Bye.

C-9 Okay, good-bye.

5.3 Stages of Requesting a Meeting

Setting up a meeting follows this basic sequence:

1. The caller identifies himself and gives the name of his referee if there is one.
2. The receiver acknowledges this mutual acquaintance, either minimally by implying "Yes, I do know him" and waiting for the caller to initiate something more, or extendedly by saying or implying "Ah yes, and what can I do for you?" In the case of no referee, the receiver simply says "Yes?" and waits.
3. The caller makes a brief transition into his actual request by referring again to the referee or by further identifying himself. The caller pauses, giving the receiver a chance to break in. If the receiver doesn't, the caller keeps talking until he decides to make the actual request.
4. The receiver meanwhile will either break in with his own questions or comments about the referee or the caller's background or both, or

he will simply let the caller continue, helping him along with "yes" and "uh huh" and "I see" if he is courteous, or with silence if he is reserved or unfriendly.

5. The caller requests a meeting.
6. When a meeting has been proposed, the receiver might say yes or no directly, but more likely "maybe" or "maybe not" before giving a definite answer either way. A positive reply can begin either tentatively or definitely before being followed by a more detailed discussion of where and when to meet. A negative reply can come immediately or after a discussion of place and time makes clear that a meeting is impossible. Sometimes such a discussion is only a formality, but it is a polite way of saying no.
7. Caller and receiver work out the details of the proposed meeting.
8. The caller and receiver, the caller usually to a greater extent, say good-bye with expressions of either regret or anticipation, as appropriate.

5.4 Requesting a Meeting as a Special Request Situation

Ideally, a call to set up a meeting will be preceded by a letter either from the caller or from a mutual acquaintance which sets out in detail the caller's background and interests. A phone call is usually the last stage of, not a substitute for, this kind of request situation.

Setting up a meeting by phone highlights the aspects of natural speech difficult to translate by machine--tentativeness of content, for instance, and the need to continually assess the addressee's psychology. Compared to a request for a reservation, which at least revolves around discrete, exact information such as time schedules and prices, a request to meet someone must produce its own facts as it proceeds; not much can be known in advance. It is probably also more highly marked by silent and

verbalized pauses (um, hmmm, well, ok, etc.) during which the caller must assess the receiver's mood and inclination.

Setting up a meeting by phone is a form of social introduction. The caller tries to introduce and interest the receiver in her self and her work. (It is for this reason that a letter beforehand is desirable.) The receiver will often ask for more information about the caller's work and background if he is truly undecided or if even if he is just stalling to avoid declining too quickly, which might seem rude. Even when the receiver has already decided to accept the invitation, out of interest in getting to know the caller better immediately he very often will continue conversing about the caller's background before moving into details of time and place. The caller, meanwhile, will be furnishing such information in a natural flow without waiting for a prompt each time.

Another feature of the social nature of this kind of phone call is that a new relationship between the speakers develops during the course of the conversation. Especially if the receiver accepts the invitation, a friendly feeling will develop and more casual expressions may become interspersed with the general flow of standard, formal expressions. While these more casual or intimate expressions do not change the overall level of politeness and formality, they can mean the difference between success and failure. They are part of the personality factor in a conversation, and from an American point of view, asserting one's personality is considered part of a request for a meeting. The caller must "sell" herself, or get the receiver to want to meet with her. The ability to come across as friendly while maintaining an appropriate distance or formality is considered a positive social skill, one to be exercised on such occasions as trying to secure a meeting with someone

In this report thus far, I have used the term "friendliness" without defining it. According to some Japanese researchers I have spoken with, in Japanese speech friendliness is separate from politeness and is avoided when the situation requires politeness. In American speech, however, the two are not easily distinguished and in practice are not often separated. In other words, friendliness sometimes means functionally the same thing as politeness. Even when the two can be distinguished, friendliness may still be necessary for achieving maximal politeness.

Unlike other request situations where friendliness is not necessary and can interfere with efficient communication (as in trying to be friendly while making plane reservations), friendliness is a natural part of a request to meet with someone. I have thus chosen this kind of request dialogue as a means of discussing the concept and patterns of friendliness in American telephone speech.

5.6 Friendliness Conveyed through Tone

"Friendliness," even less so than something like "please," is not easy to describe systematically. In addition, people differ in their opinion of the relation between friendliness and politeness. Some Americans will say that friendliness undermines politeness when speaking to a stranger or a person of higher status, because it is inconsistent with respect or deference. But this may be the case only if a person values the idea of superiority, and many Americans do not or at least do not want it to be known that they do. On the level of conscious values, Americans try to avoid or negate affirmations of hierarchy and status. Of course, status levels always exist nonetheless and the actual psychological and ideological reality is probably that an American of higher status *thinks* she does not want her higher status acknowledged but in actuality is annoyed if the

person addressing her does not acknowledge it or violates it, for instance by claiming too much intimacy.

Perhaps what happens in most situations is that status is accommodated through the politeness strategies described thus far, and explicit friendliness is not used unless it is perceived to be a definite enhancing factor, as it would be in the case of requesting a meeting. But when friendliness is called for, it must appear in such a way as to not interfere with attention to status. Its presence must be felt, yet it cannot be too explicit. In situations where the caller cannot gauge the receiver's friendliness, perhaps the safest route is to convey friendliness through tone rather than verbal expressions.

A simple example of how the same words can convey politeness or impoliteness depending on tone is the way a person asks "May I help you?" at the beginning of a conversation, or says "Yes" during the course of a conversation when the caller pauses to see if she's being understood. Both expressions are polite only if a desire to help is actually perceived or heard in the tone of voice.

The opposite case is also true. Certain informal expressions can be polite if spoken with a friendly tone. For example, the following responses to a request to speak to someone can be heard frequently at places where casualness is not considered inappropriate, such as homes, college dormitories, smaller businesses (like neighborhood stores) or activity-centered businesses (like auto repair garages).

--Sure, I'll go get him.

--Hang on.

--OK. Just a sec.

--Well, let me see if she's around.

5.7 Friendliness Conveyed through Verbal Expressions

Friendliness is also expressed through verbal strategies, but these are almost as difficult to codify as tone. Verbal expressions of friendliness are illustrated by the dialogue presented earlier. I make no claims about the extent to which the verbal strategies of friendliness present in this dialogue may be common or systematic patterns. Rather, this should be regarded as an initial attempt to identify through a limited sample how friendliness is marked in American speech.

5.8 Analysis of Sample Conversation for Politeness

Strategies 1-7

Most of the politeness strategies discussed earlier are visible in this request conversation.

The level of politeness (strategy 1) is standard.

The caller orients the receiver (strategy 4) right away in the sentences "This is Toshiro Hasegawa . . . I'm a friend of Akemi Williams." (C-1)

There are many examples of softeners (strategy 5), some of which are:

"I think she mentioned . . ." (C-1)

"I thought if possible it would be a good chance to . . ." (C-1)

"my schedule is somewhat tight" (C-2)

"I probably only have time . . ." (R-4)

"If you don't mind . . ." (R-4)

"I was thinking in fact of going to . . ." (C-5)

"Well, if you're really sure it's no trouble . . ." (C-6).

There are examples of connectors to maintain the flow of conversation (strategy 6):

"Okay . . . Um, . . . let's see . . ." (R-3)

"Well, no" (C-2).

The features of ending a request conversation (strategy 7) are also present:

expression of pleasure, "I'm looking forward to meeting you" (C-8)

reconfirmation, "I'll see you at six, then" (R-7)

expression of thanks, "Thanks for the ride" (C-8).

The politeness strategies that seem to be missing are the use of "please" (strategy 2) and the use of "may/could/would" (strategy 3). But they are not actually missing; they just appear in different forms.

Strategy 3, for instance, is actually visible in C-1, where the core request for a meeting is spread out over two sentences that contain the use of "would" : ". . . [S]he mentioned to you that I would be trying to get in touch. . . I thought if possible it would be a good chance to meet you." The second sentence containing "would" is a variation of "would it be possible to meet with you?" In addition, there is a softening effect in the preceding sentence's "would be trying to get in touch with," which extends and therefore intensifies the politeness of "would get in touch with." In effect, therefore, these two sentences communicate "please" even though the word itself is not present. As noted in sections 2.4-2.5 on the use of "please," "please" is readily attached to requests phrased in single sentences. But when the request is spread out over more than one sentence as it is here, the resulting indirection serves as a politeness strategy that can substitute for the word "please."

Another reason "please" is missing in this conversation is because the caller anticipated the receiver's needs and prevented certain requests from being asked. For example, the receiver could have asked at the end of the conversation, "Could you please wait for me on the curb?," or "Do you think you could wait for me on the curb?," or "Would you mind waiting for me on the curb, please?" But these questions were not asked because the caller anticipated them and made the suggestion himself. This kind of anticipation, like orienting the receiver's needs (strategy 4), is essential to request conversations by phone although it is not a matter of particular verbal expressions.

5.9 Analysis of Sample Conversation for Friendliness, or Politeness Strategy 8

Whether directly or indirectly, then, all the politeness strategies discussed in this report are present in the conversation. But in addition there are friendliness factors that give this conversation a decidedly personal flavor compared to other kinds of phone requests or requests for a meeting that use only standard politeness.

Broadly described, friendliness factors expand the domain of information beyond what is necessary for the actual request to be carried out. Specifically, we can describe four friendliness strategies in the sample dialogue:

- (1) informality (diction and contractions)
- (2) intimacy (tags that suggest a shared feeling or point of view)
- (3) sharing of information (offering unnecessary information or thinking out loud)
- (4) display of personality (using playful, unusual, or otherwise flavorful language).

One aspect of informality is the use of contractions. Generally speaking, contractions such as in C-6 are more indicative of the difference between written and spoken English than the difference between friendliness and neutrality. However, contractions do transmit some element of friendliness, because a very formal or even stilted conversation will use no contractions at all. Thus, in C-1, there is a mix of contractions and no contractions that serves to inject friendliness while maintaining standard politeness. For instance, "I'm a friend" and "I'm in town" are natural conversational English and the speaker does not attempt to formalize them. On the other hand, the two instances of "would" which could be contracted are not, thereby employing the softening aspect of

"would," which is important to phrasing the core request at the start of the conversation.

Another aspect of informality is diction. The following examples of informal diction are compared to alternative expressions:

(R-1) "So you just *got here*?"
Cf. "So, when did you arrive?"

(R-2) "had *this thing* scheduled"
Cf. "had something scheduled"

(R-2) "What's your own schedule like *anyway*?"
Cf. "What is your own schedule like?"

(C-3) "this afternoon and evening *are open*"
Cf. "this afternoon and evening would be fine/I'm free"

(R-5) "I have *a lot of stuff*"
Cf. "I have many things"

(R-5) "*while I get dinner out*"
Cf. "while I make dinner/get dinner prepared"

(R-7) "*beat up* white Toyota"
Cf. "white Toyota/tired-looking white Toyota/somewhat old-looking white Toyota"

(R-7) "*see you at six, then*"
Cf. "pick you up at six o'clock, then"

A second element of friendliness is intimacy, or expressions that suggest a shared feeling or point of view. For example:

(R-4) "It'll be more comfortable over here, *don't you think*?"

(R-5) "*Listen*, it's really no trouble at all."

(R-5) "I'll just *fix us something simple*."

A third element of friendliness is sharing of information. In this conversation, sharing takes two forms--offering information not necessary to negotiating the core request, as in

(R-4) "I'm not much of a cook but I'll figure something out."

(R-5) "My husband won't be home for dinner tonight"--

and thinking out loud, as in

(R-3) "Um, let's see, this afternoon I still have some last minute preparations to do for tomorrow, and the day after that you're free, right?"

The fourth element of friendliness is display of personality, or using flavorful language, as in

- (C-5) "*linger* over coffee"
 (R-7) "*beat up* white Toyota" (other possibilities include *dilapidated*, *nondescript*).

Most of the friendliness markers singled out from the sample dialogue come from the receiver's speech. The receiver is naturally privileged in a conversation requesting a meeting and thus determines to a large extent the level of friendliness, especially at the outset. However, even if the requestor has less control over setting the level of friendliness, he must still be able to respond appropriately. Inability to respond in kind could discourage the receiver from accepting the invitation, while ability to respond appropriately could persuade an initially hesitant receiver to accept. We can see the give-and-take of friendliness in the sample dialogues as follows.

Initially, it is the receiver who establishes strong friendliness through informal diction. Then, in C-3 and C-4, the caller's speech begins to respond to this friendliness through the element of intimacy contained in "I hope we can manage something" (C-3), and "why don't you let me take you out for dinner?" (C-4). The caller could simply give his schedule and answer yes, he is free in the evening, but by adding the element of intimacy, he probably encourages the receiver into insisting on a dinner at her home. It's possible that even if she has already planned it this way, a less positive atmosphere would make her change her mind. She might still consent to a meeting but might want to keep more distance by going to a restaurant. Such a meeting might not be as fruitful from the perspective that it's the receiver's second choice, reflecting the fact that her attitude has already become a little negative. It's also possible that given how busy the receiver is, she might simply say no if there's not enough motivation forthcoming from a friendly atmosphere. Thus, the caller's appropriate

response, in C-3 and C-4, to the receiver's initial friendliness, is important to setting up the exchange that follows in R-4, C-5, and R-5. In this exchange, friendliness is fully explicit in the speech of both parties; both lobby hard for their proposals. If the exchange were as polite but less friendly, neither party would be so explicit or detailed about their proposals. The caller's continued friendliness can be seen in the fact that he feels free to take initiative in finalizing arrangements which are not originally his. That is, in C-7 he anticipates the information the receiver needs and tells her where he's staying, where he'll be waiting, and how to recognize him. By also "helping himself" to information useful to him (what kind of car she has), he "relieves" the receiver of this task.

In sum, there is an effective give-and-take of friendliness in this conversation. The receiver chooses to establish strong friendliness at the beginning, the caller responds appropriately (i.e. definitely but gradually), the receiver solidifies the level of friendliness, and the caller increases his friendliness level to match the receiver's.

6. Conclusion

Compared to politeness in Japanese spoken requests, which appears systematically in the surface structure, politeness in American English spoken requests seems much less amenable to easy codification. However, the results of this study indicate that certain specific strategies are identifiable. Although some of them, like friendliness, are far from systematic, the identification of some typical politeness expressions in English together with the systematicalness of polite speech in Japanese should combine to produce a workable system of translating dialogues between the two languages.

For example, politeness strategies 2-5 have already begun to be applied in a creative way to the concept of Decision Parameters in Masako

Kume and Kei Yoshimoto's work on translation of speaker's intentions. Further consideration of the strategies identified here, and further analysis of the dialogues presented in the appendices, should result in other applications.

Acknowledgements

I thank Dr. Kurematsu and Mr. Aizawa for the opportunity to undertake this study and to study the operations of the Interpreting Telephony Research Laboratory. To the members of this and other research departments in ATR, many thanks for your informal conversation and patience in fielding questions regarding Japanese vis-a-vis American language and culture. I wish to acknowledge in particular Masako Kume for her spirit of joint enterprise, which enabled application of some of these ideas to the work of other members of the laboratory, and Kei Yoshimoto and Takao Sato for constructive comments on earlier drafts of this report and on the research when it was in progress. Special thanks to Takao for always placing things in perspective.

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APPENDIX 1

This appendix contains general expressions and sample dialogues to supplement the basic patterns of (1) STARTING A REQUEST DIALOGUE, (2) MAINTAINING A REQUEST DIALOGUE, (3) ENDING A REQUEST DIALOGUE, and (4) REQUESTING A MEETING. All sentences are in standard politeness unless otherwise indicated.

1. STARTING A REQUEST DIALOGUE

1.1 Calling an Office

R: ATR International.
May I help you?

C: Yes.
I'm calling in regard to the conference on Interpreting Telephony.
May I have a registration form sent to me, please?

R: ATR International.
May I help you?

C: Um, I'm calling in regard to the conference on Interpreting Telephony.

R: Yes, what can I do for you?

C: I would like to have a registration form sent to me, please.

R: All right / Certainly / Of course, may I have your name and address, please?

R: ATR International.
May I help you?

C: I would like some information regarding the conference on Interpreting Telephony. . . .
Is this the right number?

R: Yes, how may I help you?

R: ATR International.
May I help you?

C: Is this where I can get information on the conference?

R: Yes it is. . .

C: Could you tell me how to go about registering and how to submit a proposal for a talk?

- R: ATR International.
 C: Is this where I can get information on the conference?
 R: Not this number, but I can transfer your call. Please hold.
 No, but I can easily transfer your call. Just a minute, please.
- R: ATR International, conference information.
 May I help you?
 C: Yes.
 My name is Gayle Sato and I've already registered, but I have some questions regarding hotel reservations.
 R: Yes? What would you like to know?
 C: Would it be possible to change my reservation after <date> and still get a refund?
- R: ATR International, Conference Center.
 May I help you?
 C: Yes.
 I requested registration materials a month ago but still haven't received them. . . . Would you be able to check whether they've been mailed to me or not?
 R: Certainly.
 May I have your name, please?

Common Orientation Phrases for Speaker's First Utterance, to an Office

- I'm calling in regard to . . .
 I'm calling back in regard to . . .
 I would like some information on . . . ; Is this the correct number?
 I would like some information regarding . . . ; Is this the correct number?
 Is this where I can get information on . . . ?
 Is this the number where I can get information on . . . ?
 I have some questions regarding . . .

1.2 Calling an Unfamiliar Person

- R: Hello?
 C: Hello. Is this the Kume residence?
 R: Yes. . . May I ask who's calling, please?
 C: My name is Gayle Sato and I am a computer linguist from the United States.
 I am trying to locate a Masako Kume, and was given this number by the secretary at ATR International. . . .
 R: I see, just a minute please.

- R: Hello?
 C: Hello. May I speak to Masako Kume, please?
 R: Speaking.
 C: My name is Gayle Sato, and I was given your number by the office at ATR International.
 I'm a computer linguist from the United States, and I'll be attending the conference on Interpreting Telephony.
 I'm especially interested in your paper and was wondering if I could have a copy in advance. . .
 R: Oh, certainly. . . . What did you say your name was again?
- R: ATR International.
 May I help you?
 C: Yes.
 I will be attending the conference on machine translation, and would like to get in touch with Ms. Masako Kume.
 I believe she's a researcher in the interpreting telephony department.
 R: Yes. May I have your name, please?
 C: <full name>
 R: All right, just a minute, please. I'll transfer your call.

Common Orientation Phrases for First Utterance, to an Individual

- C: Is this the <family name> residence?
 Is this the residence of <full name>?
 I'm trying to locate a <full name>, is this the right number?
 I'm trying to get in touch with <full name>, do I have the right number?
 I'm trying to find a <full name>, have I reached the right number?
 I'm trying to get hold of a <full name>. Is there such a person at this address/number?
 I'm trying to reach <full name>.
 I'm trying to contact <full name>.
- R: May I ask who's calling?
 Whom shall I say is calling?
 May I ask who this is, please? [private residence]
 May I ask who's calling, please?
 Who's calling, please? [adequate politeness]
 May I have your name, please?
 Do you mind if I ask who's calling? [private residence]
 Excuse me, but may I have your name again, please?

Just a moment, please.

One minute, please.
 One moment. [adequate politeness]
 Just a minute. [adequate politeness]

Let me transfer your call.
 Let me ring her desk.
 Let me connect you.
 Could you hold for a few minutes, please?
 Would you like to hold the line, or would you rather call back?

1.3 Calling a Familiar Person

R: Hello.
 C: May I speak to Gayle, please?
 R: Just a minute, please.

.....
 H': Hello?
 C: Hi Gayle. It's me, Takao.

R: Hello, Sato residence.
 C: May I speak to Gayle, please?
 R: May I ask who's calling?
 C: Yes. My name is Martin, and I'm a friend from work.
 R: I see. Just a minute, please.

R: English Department.
 C: Hello, Ivy? [student help] *
 This is Gayle. *
 Is Craig in today? *
 R: Hang on, I'll check. *

*informal politeness

2. Maintaining a Request Dialogue

The key phrases for maintaining politeness in a request dialogue were presented in the text under sections "3.2 Softening Requests" and "3.3 Connecting Requests." Here, I re-present these softeners and connectors as they might appear in an actual dialogue composed of several requests.

Sample # 1, A first call

R: ATR International, Conference Center.
 May I help you?

- C: Yes.
I would like some information on the upcoming machine translation conference. . . .
- R: Yes, what would you like to know?
- C: First, could you tell me how to register for the conference?
Is there a special form, how much is the fee, and so forth. . . . ?
- R: You will need to fill out a registration form which I can send you if you give me your name and address.
- C: Okay. The name is
My address is
- [In a real situation there will be confirmations of spelling, etc.]
- R: I'll mail you the registration form right away.
The important information about registration fee, procedures for submitting a paper, hotel reservations, and so forth are printed in the registration packet that comes with the form.
- C: I see. . . .
Could you tell me when the deadline is for registering?
- R: <date>. . . .
- C: Um, is that also the deadline for submitting proposals?
- R: Well, actually, the deadline for proposals is much earlier. . . . <date>.
Let's see, you have about a month left. . . . The deadline for registering is <date> only if you want to reserve a hotel room through us. You can make your own hotel arrangements, and you can register on the day of the conference. But I would suggest making hotel arrangements through us because it's easier and cheaper.
- C: I see. . . . Well, I should probably wait till I receive the registration form. . . . I think that's all I need to know for now. Thank you very much for your help.
- R: You're welcome. Please call again if you have any questions.
- C: All right. Thank you. Good-bye.
Oh! Just a minute! One more thing.
- R: Yes?
- C: Will you be sending me the registration packet by airmail?
- R: Yes, it should get to you by the end of the week.
- C: All right, thank you. I just wanted to make sure. Good-bye.
- R: Thank you for calling. Good-bye.

Sample # 2. A second call

- R: ATR International, Conference Information.
May I help you?
- C: Yes, I have several questions regarding the upcoming conference, and I was wondering if you could help me. . .
- R: Certainly, go ahead.
- C: I don't know any Japanese and I'm a little worried about finding my way to the hotel. . . so I was wondering if it would be possible to arrange to have someone pick me up?
- R: Well, actually it is really not that difficult to get to the hotel by bus. If you just look for Bus # 50, destination Kyoto XYZ Hotel, you won't have any problems. From there, you can take a taxi to your hotel. . . .
- C: Well, I read those instructions in the conference brochure, but I'm still worried that it's not as easy as it sounds. I would feel much more comfortable if I could be picked up. Is it really impossible to arrange? I would really appreciate it if you could help me in this matter.
- R: Well, we really have no arrangements for picking up individuals, since so many people are attending. Let's see. I guess what I would suggest is that you take a taxi directly from the airport to your hotel.
- C: I see, but won't that be fairly expensive? About how much would it be?
- R: I can't say for sure, but I would guess around <yen amount>. It *is* rather expensive, but that would be the easiest way. Probably you will meet other conference participants at the airport and can share a ride.
- C: I see. Well, I guess I will be able to manage. Another thing I wanted to know is if you are offering any assistance with sightseeing. I am bringing my wife and child with me. . .
- R: As for sightseeing, we have one tour planned per day to go to various places of interest, such as temples or craft exhibits. As explained in the brochure, you will need to sign up the day before by 10:00 a.m. in order to get a seat. The tour buses leave from the conference sight at times to be announced. I recommend these tours, since they are the same price as regular tours and will give you a good sense of Kyoto.
- C: Yes, I read about these tours in the brochure, and I am planning to sign up for them, but I was wondering if there is anything else you are offering regarding sightseeing.
- R: I'm afraid that is all. However, our information booth will be operating during conference hours, and they will be happy to

answer your questions. They can help you with transportation arrangements for whatever you wish to do. Also, the hotel personnel will be able to assist you.

- C: Well, thank you for your help. I'm sorry to have taken up so much of your time.
- R: You're welcome. Is there anything else you wish to ask?
- C: No, I don't think so. Um, just in case I really get stuck once I arrive, is there a number I can call for help?
- R: Yes, this number. But I'm sure you'll be fine.
- C: All right, then. Thank you very much. Good-bye.
- R: Good-bye. Thank you for calling.

Sample # 3. A second call

- R: ATR International, Conference Information.
May I help you?
- C: Hello, my name is <full name> and I'm presenting a paper at the conference. I was wondering if it would be possible to get the addresses of some researchers from you?
- R: Um, do you mean their work addresses? Of conference participants?
- C: Yes, I would like to get in touch with several Japanese researchers before arriving at the conference. I only have some names, and some of them will probably be attending the conference, but some may not be. If I give you the names, would you be able to tell me how I can get in touch with them either by phone or by letter?
- R: Well, let me see. We do have a complete file of all registered participants, so if they are on that list I can give you an address. Of course I can only give their work addresses and phone numbers.
- C: That's fine. Whatever information I can get would be helpful. Um, the first name is <full name>
- [at this point, in a real situation, there will be lots of repetition to confirm names and spelling.]
- C: Thank you very much. Now, the people not on your list, . . . do you have any suggestions on how I could get in touch with them?
- R: Gee, I really can't answer that question. Mmmm, I would guess that some of the other researchers would know them or their addresses. Perhaps you could ask them.
- C: Yes, that's a good idea. I guess I'll do that.

- R: I might also add--I've just thought of it--that there will be a directory posted at the conference listing every participant's hotel and room number, or whatever address they give us for that purpose. There's a section for that on the registration form.
- C: Yes, I remember. I'll probably be able to find them once the conference begins. But I just wanted to make arrangements to meet them beforehand.
- R: I understand. Well, that's all the information I'm able to give you.
- C: Thank you very much. You've been a big help. That's all I needed to know. Good-bye.
- R: You're welcome. Good-bye.

3. Ending a Request Dialogue

Note: I have included here, rather than in the next section, patterns for ending dialogues requesting a meeting.

3.1 Common patterns for caller-initiated endings

C: Thank you for your help. Good-bye.*

* too abrupt without transitions such as "Well," "Okay," etc:

Well then,* I think that's it as far as the questions I have for now.

Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

Well then, those are all the questions I had. I'm sorry to have taken up so much of your time. Thank you. Good-bye.

Well, that seems to be all I need to ask. Thank you very much. Good-bye.

All right,* I really appreciate your help. Good-bye.

All right, I think I'm all set then. Thank you very much. Good-bye.

Okay,* I guess I have all the information I needed. Thank you. Good-bye.

Okay, I have everything straight now. Thanks for your time. Good-bye.

* These transitions are interchangeable.

when receiver has asked "is there anything else?":

No, I don't think so. I think I'm all set now. Thank you for your time.
 Good-bye.
 No thank you. I'm sorry to have taken up so much of your time.
 Good-bye.
 No thank you. Well, I appreciate your help. Thank you again.
 Good-bye.

3.2 Receiver's Sequence for Closing Request Dialogues

R: You're welcome. Good-bye.
 You're welcome. We hope you enjoy the conference. Good-bye.
 You're welcome. I'm happy to be of assistance. Good-bye.
 You're welcome. Thank you for calling. Good-bye.
 You're quite welcome. Please call us anytime. Good-bye.
 Not at all. Please call whenever you have questions. Good-bye.
 Not at all. Thank you for calling. Have a good evening.

3.3 Patterns for receiver-initiated endings

R: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but something has come up and I have to leave the phone now. Would you mind calling back in a few minutes?

Excuse me, ma'am, but I'm the only one in the office now, and there's some business I have to attend to. I would be happy to continue helping you if you could call me back in a half hour.

I'm sorry, sir, but I'm afraid it's absolutely impossible to <caller's request>. Is there anything else I can help you with?

I'm very sorry, ma'am, but it's not possible, and if you don't have any further questions there are other callers who may need my assistance.

Excuse me, but there are several other people on the line / on hold, who have been waiting. Thank you for calling. Good-bye.

3.4 Patterns of reconfirmation for ending requests for a meeting

C: See you at <time, place>, then. [informal politeness]
 I'll see you on <day>, then, right?

I'll see you <next week, tonight, etc.>, then?

That's <place and time, place and activity, time and activity>, right/then? *

Ok, so we'll <restate activity>, then. *

So we'll <restate activity>, then. *

It'll be <restate activity>, then. *

R: Yes. See you then. Good-bye.
Yes, that's right. Good-bye.
Yes, it's all set. Good-bye.
Right. See you then. Good-bye.

* These expressions tend to occur if a plan was changed in the course of the conversation. Restating the activity instead of saying "I'll see you" places the emphasis on what the parties plan to do.

3.5 Brief expressions of pleasure for ending requests for a meeting

C: Thank you for making time. I'm looking forward to meeting you.
Good-bye.
I look forward to seeing you. Thank you. Good-bye.
I'm glad we could arrange something; I'll see you then. Good-bye.
Well, it's all set, then. . . . I appreciate your taking time to meet me.
Good-bye.
Thank you for having me over. I'll see you, then. Good-bye.
Thank you for the invitation, I'm looking forward to it. Good-bye.

R: I'm looking forward to meeting you, too. Good-bye.
I'll be looking forward to meeting you. Good-bye.
You're welcome, I'm looking forward to our meeting, too. Good-bye.
Don't mention it; it's my pleasure. I'll see you soon, then. Good-bye.

3.6 Brief expressions of regret for ending requests for a meeting

C: Guess I'm just out of luck but thank you for your time. Good-bye.*
Oh well, I guess it's impossible but thank you for your time, anyway. Good-bye, then.*

* The caller does not convey strong disappointment because expressions of regret are minimal and casual: "guess," "oh well," "anyway," "good-bye, then."

When the conversation has been friendly and/or contained a sense of genuine regret, either the caller or the receiver can initiate expressions of regret, as in the following examples:

C: Well, perhaps sometime in the future we'll be able to get together.
 R: Yes, I hope so. I'm sorry things didn't work out. But thank you for calling.
 C: Thank you. [stress on "you"] Good-bye.
 R: Good-bye.

R: Well, perhaps we can meet on some other occasion, or when you're passing through the area again.
 C: Yes, I hope so. This is definitely an area/conference I plan to visit/attend again. Anyway, it was nice talking to you, and thank you for your time.
 R: Well, thank you for calling.
 C: Well, good-bye then.
 R: Good-bye.

R: I wish we could have arranged something, but I'm glad we had a chance to talk.
 C: Yes, I'm glad I at least got to introduce myself and say hello. Thank you for your time.
 R: You're quite welcome. Have a good flight back
 C: Thank you. Good-bye.
 R: Good-bye.

C: Well, it was nice talking with you, and thank you for spending so much time on the phone.
 R: Not at all. I enjoyed hearing about your research, and please do drop me a letter when you get back. Let's keep in touch.
 C: Thank you. I'll be sure to write. Good-bye.
 R: Good-bye. Have a safe trip.
 C: Thank you. Good-bye.

4. REQUESTING A MEETING

4.1 Common phrases for orienting the receiver

I'm a friend of <referee's name>.
 I'm a colleague of <referee's name>.
 I work with <referee's name> at <company>.
 I was given your number by <referee's name>.
 <referee's name> suggested I try to meet you.

<referee's name> suggested I try to meet you.
 <referee's name> suggested it would be a good idea to try to meet you.

I'm sorry to not have given you advance warning, but . . .
 I'm sorry to call on you out of the blue, but this part of my itinerary was
 a last minute decision, and I didn't have time to write you.

4.2 Common phrases for core request

I'm calling to see if I could possibly arrange to meet you.
 I would very much like to meet you, and I was wondering if you would
 have time to get together.
 I'm calling to see if there's any chance I could arrange to meet you.
 I'd like to meet you, and I was wondering if I could set up an appointment.
 I'm very interested in your research, and was wondering if perhaps you
 would be willing to meet with me.

4.3 Common phrases for receiver's initial response

Oh yes. How is <referee's name> these days?
 Of course. How has <referee's name> been doing?
 Yes, <referee's name> mentioned you to me in a letter/phone call.
 Yes, I understand you're <description of the caller's work>. . . .
 I see . . . Can you tell me a little more about yourself?
 I see . . . Can you tell me something more about your work?
 So you're a good friend of <referee's name>?
 So you work at the same place as <referee's name>?

Excuse me, I didn't really catch your name clearly at the beginning. . . .
 Excuse me, did you say you were <caller's name as recalled>?

Sure, why not?
 Certainly. I'd be happy to meet you.
 <referee's name> was describing your work and it sounds very interesting.
 I'd be glad to meet you and hear more about it.

4.4 Common phrases for arranging time, place, etc.

mostly R: What's your schedule like?
 When are you free?
 What did you have in mind?
 Did you want to propose something in particular?
 Do you have anything in mind?

R: Unfortunately, I'm not free in the next few days.
 I'm afraid you've caught me at a really bad time.
 I'm afraid the only possibility is <time>.
 As much as I'd like to meet with you, too, it looks impossible
 Well, I'd really like to get together but, . . .
 My schedule is really tight this week, unfortunately.
 Well, . . . I really don't know . . .
 Let me check my appointment book.
 Let me just take a look at my calendar.

C or R: I'm free after <time>.
 Anytime <"after today," "before 8," "between 8 and 10," etc.>
 will be fine.
 I'll be in town until <time>.
 I'm tied up until <time> but after <time> looks good.
 Well, <time> looks best for me; but of course I'll try to work
 things around your schedule.

R: Actually things are hectic right now, but I think we can arrange
 something.
 Let me just check my calendar again.
 Let's see, could you give me a second to think? . . . maybe we can
 work something out.

C: Can you suggest a good restaurant?
 I would really like to take you out for dinner; do you have time for
 that?
 What I'd really like to do is take you out for dinner. . . . I was told that
 <restaurant> is very good, . . . what do you think?
 Can you suggest a cafe or something near your place?
 It really doesn't matter what kind of a place it is, as long as it's quiet
 enough for talking.

C or R: How about <place, time, etc.>?
 How does <place, time, etc.> sound?
 Is <place, time, etc.> okay?
 Would <place, time, etc.> be alright?
 What do you think of <place, time, etc.>?
 Does <place, time, etc.> sound good?
 Shall we try <place, time, etc.>?
 Well, I would suggest <place>, if that's alright with you.
 How about dinner at my place?
 I only have time for a quick coffee, but maybe that's better
 than nothing?

R: Would it be too much trouble if we <proposal>. . . . I know that's
 a bit out of the way for you but, . . .
 If you don't mind <proposal>, that looks like the best bet.

- C Are you sure that's not too much of an imposition?
Of course I'd love to, but I'm afraid that's asking too much.
That sounds fine. Let's do that.

Sample Dialogue--Two researchers, unrefereed, negative response, friendly

- C-1 My name is Yoshihiro Ueda and I work at a research institute in Osaka, Japan, similar to Bell Labs. It's called ATR, or Advanced Telecommunications Research. I'm with the machine translation unit. . . .
- R-1 I see. . . .
- C-2 I'm calling from Pittsburgh. I came for the conference on Machine Translation. I thought you might be here and was looking forward to meeting you, but I guess you couldn't make it this year.
- R-2 Well, yes. I had thought about going, but I had to make another trip somewhere just before the conference, and things didn't work out. How was it?
- C-3 Oh, it was very good. Lots of interesting presentations, and I was able to meet quite a few people whose work I'm interested in. But I did want to meet you, and that's why I'm calling. I'm thinking of stopping over in San Francisco on my way back to Osaka, and was wondering if you would have time to meet with me.
- R-3 Well, I'm not sure. You would be coming back when? Um, are you going to come to the Bay area anyway? or are you planning to make a special stopover?
- C-4 Well, the conference ends this afternoon, . . . and my scheduled flight is tomorrow morning, leaving Pittsburgh at 8:00 and stopping over in San Francisco for a couple of hours before going on to Osaka . . . So I'm going there anyway, but I thought if there's a chance to see you, and if you'd like to, then I would try to stay overnight. . . .
- R-4 I see Well, you know, I'd really like to meet with you Actually I've heard about ATR from various people but don't really know anyone from there, but I don't think our schedules will work out. . . . You see I'll be away this weekend, that means tomorrow and Sunday--today's Friday, right?--on a camping trip that I've promised my kids for half a year now and kept putting off. I really can't postpone it again, . . . and besides I think I need the break from work. . . . If you could stay a couple of nights or so in SF then I could meet with you on Monday, . . . but probably you have to be back at work by then?
- C-5 Yes, I'm afraid so Well, I guess I'm out of luck. . . . Let's see, No, I don't think I could stay on till Monday. Oh well, this was a last minute call and I just thought I'd try. At least I got to introduce myself, even if only over the phone. . . .

send you a letter when I get back. I'd like to hear about your research.

- C-6 Okay, do you have something to write with? It's <address>. Can you give me yours, too?
- R-6 Sure, <address>. All right, then. . . . Well, I'm sorry things didn't work out, but perhaps we'll have some other chance soon
- C-7 I hope so. Thank you for your time. And enjoy your trip. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you soon.
- R-7 Okay, thank you for calling. Take care. Good-bye.
- C-8 Good-bye.

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2 presents data not discussed in the report, i.e. sample dialogues and commonly used phrases for dialogue types 5-10: (5) making and confirming reservations, (6) making and changing appointments, (7) placing an order, (8) inviting, (9) asking directions, and (10) leaving and following up a message.

Perhaps this is a good place to remind the reader that while I have tried to provide a fairly substantial data bank of dialogues, it is of course impossible to gather all possible common expressions and combinations of them. Rather, both Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 are intended as core data banks, not exhaustive ones.

Compared to the four request situations discussed in the report, dialogue types 5-10 are more heavily characterized by specific vocabulary and formulaic phrases. This is due to the specific propositional content of reservations, appointments, orders, invitations, and directions compared to the general situations of beginning, maintaining, and ending requests or the special situation of requesting a meeting.

For the sake of clarity and consistency, section numbers in Appendix 2 will begin at "5" and follow the numbering of the dialogue types.

5. Making and Confirming Reservations

5.1 Expressions for Making Reservations

- C: I'd like to make a reservation, please.
Do you have a <product> available on <date>? ("on" is optional)
Do you have something available tonight / right away?

I'd like a <product> for <date>, please.

Do you have a <product> for around / about <price>?

Do you have something for under <price>?

How much are <product>? (item is in plural)

How much are your <product>?

How much do <product> run?

How much do you charge for <product>?

What are the rates for <product>?

Are you offering any discounts / specials right now?

Do you offer any <specify type, e.g. student> discounts / specials?

What's included in the price?

What does the package include?

Is <feature specified, e.g. dinner, gas, tax, insurance> included?

Do you have something with <feature specified, e.g. ocean view>?

- R: The <product> generally run from <price> to <price>.
 <product> start from about <price> and go up to <price>.
 <product> begin at <price>.
 The <product> go from <price> to <price>. ("The" is optional in all
 4 sentences.)

We have a package deal.

We have a holiday special.

There's a student and senior citizens discount.

- C: Okay, I'll take the <product>.
 All right, I'll go with <product>.
 I'd like a <product>.

- R: May I have your name, please?
 May I have your name and telephone number, please?
 And your address?
 I'll also need an address, please.

Could you spell that for me, please?

Let me repeat that to make sure I have it.

How would you like to pay for this?

How will you be paying for this?

Would you like to put this on your credit card?

Would you like me to charge this to your credit account?

Would you like to charge this?

Will this be charge?

Will this be by credit card?

Will you be paying by credit card?

Will this be on your credit card?

Will you be paying by cash or charge / cash or check?

May I have your credit card number, please?

- C: May I pay by personal check?

Do you take money orders?
 Where shall I send it?
 What is your address, please?
 Who should I make the check out to?
 Whom should I address it to?

Credit card.
 By credit card.
 I'll use my credit card.
 I'll put it on my credit card.

R: I'm sorry, we can't book your reservation without a credit card number.

We'll need a deposit of <amount> by <date> to confirm your reservation.
 You will need to send us a deposit of <amount> if you wish to have your
 reservation confirmed.
 Let me give you your confirmation number.

C: Will I be able to extend my reservation later?

R: It looks like there won't be any problem with that.
 Sure, no problem.
 I'm sorry, I can't guarantee that.
 We're pretty booked up so I'm not sure.

C: I won't be arriving until <time>; can you hold my reservation?
 Can you be sure to hold my reservation?
 You'll hold my reservation, won't you?
 My reservation will be safe, right?
 Can I be absolutely sure my reservation won't be cancelled?

R: Don't worry, ma'am/sir; Mr./Ms./Mrs.
 The deposit guarantees your reservation.
 If you should wish to cancel, please do so within <time duration>.
 The deposit is non-refundable after <date or time duration>.

C: When is check out time?
 When is return time?
 When is check in time?
 How early may I check in / pick it up?
 When is pick-up time?

5.2 Expressions for Confirming Reservations

Many businesses use a system of "confirmation numbers" which are given when the reservation is made. In such cases the receiver will begin by asking for the caller's confirmation number.

- C: I'd like to confirm my reservation, please.
I'm calling to confirm my reservation.
- R: Do you have a confirmation number?
May I have your confirmation number, please?
- C: I'm sorry, they didn't give me a number.
Um, . . . I'm sorry, I don't have the number with me right now.
I'm sorry, I don't remember my number.
I'm sorry but I don't have my number handy right now.
- Yes, it's <number>.
Yes, <number>.
<number>.
It's <number>.
- R: May I have your name, please?
May I have your name then, please?
What day did you make the reservation?
When did you book the reservation, please?
Do you remember when you made the reservation?
- And your last name is . . . ?
And your last name, please?
Name, please?
And the first name?
And your first name?
- What flight number?
Flight number, please?
When are you flying?
What city?
- What day is that for?
What are the dates, please?
- Where are you picking it up? (car rental)
What's the pick-up place?
- <caller's name>? (dinner reservations)
<caller's name>, party of <number>?
- Yes, I have you confirmed for <various information>.
I show you confirmed for
I've got you down for
I'm showing a (sometimes used when receiver is reading off a
computer display screen).

5.3 Additional Expressions for Hotel Reservations

- C: Do you have <two single rooms> available for the weekend of <date>?
 <a double room / a suite>
 Do you have any kitchenettes?

Is a shower included?
 Do all the rooms have showers?
 Are the rooms equipped with showers?
 Does it include a shower?

I'd like to book a single room with an ocean view, as high up as possible.

I'd like your best room, please.
 I'd like the cheapest room, please.
 Do you have anything in the middle?
 Is there anything in the middle?

How far is the hotel from the airport?
 How far are you from the airport?
 How long does it take to get to the airport?
 Is there an airport shuttle?
 Do you have pick-up service from the airport?
 Do you provide transportation to and from the airport?
 What kind of transportation to and from the airport is available?
 Does the hotel van operate early in the morning / late at night?

Do you have a restaurant?
 What other facilities are there?
 Can I bring an outside guest to the pool?

5.4 Additional expressions for plane reservations

- C: I'd like to make a reservation for a flight to <destination> on <date>, please.
 I'd like to make a reservation for a flight from <departure> to <destination>.
 I'd like to make a reservation for <departure point> to <destination> on <date>.
 I'd like to book / reserve two first class seats to <destination> on <date>, please.
 I'd like to reserve a seat for <departure point> to <destination>, please.
 I'd like to fly business class to <destination> on <date>, please.
 Do you still have seats available on <date> for <departure point> to <destination>?
 Is anything available on Flight # XXX for <date>?

When making reservations, the caller may begin with a complete sentence stating the gist of his request, but use mostly short phrases thereafter, unless a

new request or special request is initiated. The receiver usually continues to speak in complete sentences when prompting the caller for more information, reflecting the fact that the burden of politeness in reservation making is on the receiver, who wants the caller's business. The following sample illustrates the difference between the receiver's full-sentence pattern and the caller's phrase pattern.

- C: I'd like to make a reservation, please. . . to Boston on June 10th.
- R: All right, and where will you be departing from?
- C: Dallas.
- R: One moment, please. . . One June 10th, that's a Saturday, we have several flights available. Around what time were you thinking of travelling?
- C: Sometime in the morning, say around 10.
- R: Flight # XXX departs at 10:50 a.m. Will that be all right?
- C: Yes.
- R: All right, I'll go ahead and book you on Flight # XXX. May I have your name, please?

(additional expressions for plane reservations, continued):

- C: Are there any restrictions on this ticket?
- Does that leave enough time to make my connecting flight?
- Does that give me enough time to change planes?
- Do you have a later / earlier flight? I'd rather have more time to make a connection.
- I have a Mileage Club upgrade. May I use it on this flight?
- Can I apply my mileage club card to this flight?
- R: Will that be round trip or one way?
- We have you confirmed on Flight # XXX departing (from) <place> on <day of week> at <time>, arriving at/in <place> on <day of week> at <time>.
- Would you like smoking or non-smoking?
- Do you prefer an aisle seat or a window seat?
- I'm sorry, but we don't fly out of/to <place>.

Shall I get you a connecting flight?

Your ticket must be purchased by <date>.

Your ticket must be purchased no earlier than <date> but not later than <date>.

Your ticket must be purchased within <number> days of your departure date.

Would you like to have your ticket mailed to you?

How would you like to purchase the ticket?

We can mail it to you or you can pick it up at one of our offices.

It's cheaper to fly on <day of week>.

The prices go up after <date>.

We can only guarantee this rate until <date>.

The economy fare is only good if you stay a minimum of <number> days and a maximum of <number> days.

This package is only good if you stay at least <number> days but not more than <number> days.

Are you a Mileage Club member?

Are you participating in our Mileage Club program?

Do you have a Mileage Club card?

May I have your number, please?

Please confirm your flight at least <number> hours before departure and again from <destination> before returning.

I'm sorry, we're completely booked, but I can put you on a waiting list.

Would you like to be waitlisted?

All right, I have you confirmed for <date and flight #> and waitlisted for <date and flight #>.

5.5 Additional Expressions for Car Rentals

C: Do you have a <compact> {sub-compact, mid-size, deluxe, convertible} available on <date>?

I'd prefer automatic, but if you only have standard I'll take it.

No, it has to be automatic/standard.

With air conditioning, please.

No, I'll skip the air conditioning.

Okay then, scratch the air conditioning. [informal]

I'd like to pick the car up at <time or place>. Can I do that?

Do you have any package deals?
What's your weekly rate?

Can I use my airlines mileage club card?
Can I get credit for my airlines mileage club card?

R: It's <price> per day with unlimited mileage.
The first <number> miles are free, and after that it's <price> per mile.
You start with a full tank and return it full.
It's better to fill it before returning because we charge a lot if we have
to do it for you.
Do you want insurance?
Collision insurance is an additional <price> per day.
There's an extra charge of <price> for one-way rentals.
Drop-off at the airport is extra.

I'm sorry, we only take credit cards.
I'm sorry, we can't take a reservation without a credit card.

5.6 Additional Expressions for Dinner Reservations

C: I'd like to make dinner reservations for this evening, please . . .
around 6:30 for 5. The name is <last name>.
I'd like to make dinner reservations for <day>, please.

About how long is the wait usually?
How soon do you think we can be seated if we get there in ten
minutes?

May I have a non-smoking section?
Could we possibly get a window seat?
What kind of attire do you recommend?
Do you have a dress policy?
Are small children welcome?

What specialties do you feature?
Are you serving your <known dish> tonight?
Could you give me an idea of what your menu's like?
Could you give me a rough idea of your price range?

R: One moment, please. I'll connect you with catering.
One moment, please. I'll transfer your call.

How many will that be for?
What time did you have in mind?
What time would you like that for?

I'm sorry, but we don't take reservations.
I'm sorry, but we're really crowded at that time. Would half an hour
earlier or later be convenient / suitable?

I'm sorry, but we're booked up / fully booked.

Jackets for men are required.
We request that men wear dinner jackets.
Formal dinner attire is recommended.

5.7 Additional expressions for calling a taxi

C: I need a ride to <destination>, please.
I'm at <location> and I'd like to get to <destination>, please.

I'm really in a rush; can you hurry?
How soon can you get here?

5.8 Sample Conversation--Making Hotel Reservations

- R: New Sato Hotel. Front desk, Gayle speaking. May I help you?
- C: I'd like to make a reservation, please
- R: Certainly, what days did you have in mind?
- C: For the end of December, from Saturday the 21st through Wednesday the 25th. Do you have a single room with a double bed available?
- R: Just a moment, please, let me see what we have. We're pretty busy then but you're making your reservation early so there shouldn't be any problem
All right, yes, we do have a single available, one double bed. Now, that was for the 25th, did you say, and for how many nights?
- C: No, from the 21st, check out on the 26th, actually, so that's for 5 nights.
- R: Excuse me. Check in on the 21st, check out on the 26th. May I have your name, please?
- C: Yes. It's Brenda Diaz, D-I-A-Z.
- R: Thank you. And is there a telephone number where we can reach you?
- C: Yes, it's area code 808, 247-4599.
- R: 808, 247-4599.
- C: Right.

- R: And is this an office number or a residence?
- C: Residence.
- R: Will you be putting this on a credit card?
- C: Yes, it's VISA # XXXXXXXXXX.
- R: All right, Ms. Diaz, I have you down for a single room, double bed, check in on December 21st, check out on the 26th. Let me give you your confirmation number. Whenever you call please refer to your reservation with that number and it will speed things up. The number is G 335 108.
- C: G 335 108?
- R: Yes. Let me explain our cancellation policy, just in case. We require a one-night deposit in advance to confirm your reservation. It is fully refundable if you give us at least 72 hours' notice.
- C: I understand. Do I have to mail in the deposit?
- R: No, I can charge that to your credit account if that's all right with you.
- C: That's fine.
- R: We'll send you a receipt of your reservation in a few days . . . Is there anything else I can help you with?
- C: I think that will be all. . . . Oh! Just one question. Will you be having any special programs on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day?
- R: Our restaurant is offering a special Christmas Day dinner, and we will have someone on hand especially to assist guests with various events going on in town. We're more than happy to help you plan your stay here once you arrive.
- C: Thank you very much.
- R: Thank you for calling New Sato Hotel. Have a pleasant day now. Good-bye.
- C: Bye.

5.9 Sample Conversation--Making Plane Reservations

- R: Sato Airlines, Gayle speaking. How may I help you?
- C: I'd like to fly round trip from Providence to Seattle on November 25th, returning November 28th. Is anything available?

- R: Let me see November 25th, that's the day before Thanksgiving. I'm not sure, so many people travel on that day I'm sorry, I can get you a return on the 28th, but on the 25th we're completely booked. I could get you something instead on the 23rd.
- C: What about the 24th?
- R: We're completely booked on the 24th as well. The 23rd is the best I could do.
- C: Well, I suppose I could spend another couple of nights there. . . Maybe I should take it Okay, I'll go ahead and make the reservation.
- R: All right, may I have your name, please?
- C: Christine Nicolas. Let me spell that for you. It's N-I-C-O-L-A-S.
- R: All right, Ms. Nicolas. I have you confirmed on Flight # 73, leaving Providence on November 23rd, Tuesday, at XX:XX a.m., arriving in Seattle, same day, at XX:XX p.m. . . . and returning on Flight # 3, leaving Seattle on the 28th, Saturday, at XX:XX a.m. arriving in Providence at XX:XX p.m.
- C: Okay, let me just see if I got all the information--Flight # 73, leaving Providence November 23rd at XX:XX in the morning, arriving XX:XX in the afternoon, and coming back, that's Flight # 3, leaving Seattle on the 28th at XX:XX in the morning and arriving at XX:XX in the afternoon.
- R: That's correct. You will need to purchase your ticket no later than 14 days in advance, otherwise we cannot guarantee your seat.
- C: I see. May I pay by personal check?
- R: Yes, you may. Would you like to have the ticket mailed to you? . . . Or you can pick it up at one of our offices.
- C: Let me see. I'll have it mailed to me.
- R: All right, may I have your address, please?
- C: That's 415 Brook Street, Providence, 02906.
- R: Thank you. We will issue your ticket as soon as we receive your check.
- C: Oh, I haven't even found out how much this is.
- R: It's \$520 round trip, ma'am.
- C: 520. Okay. And where do I send the check, please?
- R: Sato Airlines, Box 227, Providence 02912.
- C: Box 227. Thank you. How soon can I expect my ticket?

- R: After we receive payment, you should be getting it within a week.
- C: All right, thank you very much. Bye.
- R: Thank you for calling Sato Airlines. Good-bye.

5.10 Sample Conversation--Renting a Car

- R: Avis.
- C: I'd like to rent an automatic compact for a week beginning Saturday, the 10th.
- R: No problem. Do you want air conditioning?
- C: Well, how much does it cost without?
- R: It's \$27.00 per day, unlimited mileage, bring it back with a full tank. With air conditioning it's \$33.00 per day . . . The standards are cheaper.
- C: No thanks, its gotta be automatic. Let me see, . . . I think I'll skip air conditioning.
- R: Are you sure? It's pretty hot out, you know, and it's not that much extra. I'd take it if I were you.
- C: I guess you're right. . . . Ok, I'll take the air conditioning. I'd also like collision insurance, too, please.
- R: Ok, that's \$7.00 extra per day for insurance.
- C: Fine.
- R: May I have your name, please?
- C: It's Seiko Nomura.
- R: Uh, excuse me, could you spell that please?
- C: First name Seiko, S-E-I-K-O. Last name Nomura, N-O-M-U-R-A.
- R: Okay, and a credit card number?
- C: American Express, # XXXXXXXXXXXX.
- R: Now, where do you wanna pick this up?
- C: Airport.

- R: And drop off at the airport?
- C: Yes.
- R: Have you been here before?
- C: Yes, I know where to go.
- R: Ok, all set. Oh--what time?
- C: Let's see, the flight's coming in at noon, so how about 12:30?
- R: Okay, 12:30, got it.
- C: Thank you. Bye.
- R: Bye.

5.11 Sample Conversation--Making Dinner Reservations

- R: Joe's Grill.
- C: I'd like to make dinner reservations for tonight around 7:30, please.
- R: I'm sorry, sir, we don't take reservations.
- C: Oh, you don't?
- R: No sir.
- C: But I have a large party--7 people, guests from out of town--and I'd like to be sure to have a table
- R: I'm sorry, but it's our policy to not take reservations. The bar's very popular, though, and most people don't mind having a drink while waiting for a table.
- C: I see. I've heard so much about Joe's Grill and I didn't realize you don't take reservations. . . . Well, about how long would the wait be?
- R: For dinner around 7:30, well, that's a busy time, so hard to say. Average of 20 minutes, maybe?
- C: Okay, well, thank you anyway. Bye.
- R: Bye.

5.12 Sample Conversation--Calling a Cab

- R: Joe's Taxi.
- C: I'm at the corner of Elmgrove and Lloyd and I want to go to the airport.
- R: Elmgrove and Lloyd. What's the number?
- C: 123, the red brick two-story.
- R: Okay. Be there in 10 minutes.
- C: Thanks.

6. Making and Changing Appointments

6.1 Expressions for Making an Appointment

R: <Dr. Sato's Office>. May I help you?

C: I'd like to make an appointment, please.

I'd like to make an appointment with <person>, please.
I'd like to schedule an appointment with <person>, please.

May I schedule an appointment with <person>, please?
Could you schedule me for an appointment with <person>, please?
Could I make an appointment with <person>, please?
I was told to call and schedule an appointment with <person>. (e.g.
after an interview or other such previous meeting)
I'm calling in regard to <topic> and I would like to schedule an
an appointment to see <person> to discuss this matter.

Could I come in to see <person> today, please?
Would <person> be able to see me today, please?
Would it be possible to schedule an appointment for this morning,
please?

R: Who would you like to see? (e.g. which doctor)
Do you want anyone in particular? (e.g. which hair cutter)
Did you want anyone in particular?
Which <cutter, etc.> would you like?
Which <cutter, etc.> would you like to see?

When would you like to come in?
When do you want to come in?

When would you like to schedule that?
 What day would you like?
 What day did you have in mind?
 What time were you thinking of?
 What time did you have in mind?

C: How about <day> at <time>?
 Any time after <time> is fine.
 Any time before <time> will do.
 Any time around <time> will be all right.
 Any time between <time> and <time>.

Is <time> possible?
 I'd like to see <person> as soon as possible.
 I'd like to come in as soon as possible.
 I'd like to come on <day> if possible.
 I'd like to come at <time> if possible.
 Well, I'd like to get it done as soon as possible.
 Well, I'd like to have it done as soon as possible.

Can you take me right away?
 Can you take me now?
 Can you take me sometime today?

R: Is <time> all right?
 How about <day> at <time>?
 How about <time>?
 How about <time> on <day>?
 Would <time> be convenient?
 Can you come in at <time>?
 We can only take you in the afternoon / morning; is that all right?
 <person> is busy then, but <person> can see you at <time>.

I'm sorry, we're booked until <time>.
 The earliest we can take you is <time>.
 I'm sorry, but the only time available is <time>.
 I'm sorry, but the only person on duty today is <name>.
 I'm sorry, but the only <cutter, doctor, etc.> available today is <name>.
 I'm sorry, but the only opening is <time, day>.
 I'm sorry, but the only possibility is <time, day>.

C: Are you absolutely sure you can't take me <day, time>?
 Um. . . Is there really no way to schedule me on <day, time>?
 You really can't squeeze me in on <day, time>?

Yes, that's fine.
 All right, I'll take <day, time>.
 Okay, <day, time> will be fine.
 Okay, I'll take the <time> slot.

R: May I have your name and phone number, please?
 May I have your name, please?

Have you ever been here before?

Will this be your first visit?
 May I ask if anyone referred you here?
 May I ask how you found out about us?

What kind of medical insurance do you have?
 What kind of medical plan are you enrolled in?
 What kind of medical plan are you under?

All right, Mrs./Ms./Mr. <name>, we'll see you on <day> at <time>, then.

C: All right, thank you very much. Bye.

Well, I guess I'll try another place. Thank you anyway. Bye.

So that's <day> at <time>, then, right?

So that's for <day> at <time>, then, correct?

Let me just confirm this once more.

Let me just confirm this once more to make sure I've got it right.

All right, I'll be seeing <person> on <day, time>, then.

Let me just double-check--it's <day, time>, right?

6.2 Expressions for Changing an Appointment

C: I'd like to change my appointment, please.

I'd like to re-schedule my appointment, please.

I have an appointment for <day, time>, and I was wondering
 if I could change that to <day, time>.

I've scheduled an appointment for <day, time>, and I was wondering
 if it would be possible to change that to <day, time>.

I made an appointment for <day, time>, and I would like to change
 it to <day, time> if possible.

I have an appointment with <person> for <day, time> and I would
 like to have it changed to <day, time> if possible.

I have an appointment with <person> but I was wondering if I
 could get someone else.

I have an appointment with <person> but was wondering if I could
 change to another person.

I'd like to cancel my appointment, please.

R: Well, I'll see what I can do.

May I have your name, please?

Who did you say your appointment was with, please?

What day did you say your appointment was, please?

What day was that for, please?

Who was that with, please?

Who would you like to change to?
 What kind of change would you like to make?
 When do you want to re-schedule this for?

C: Could <person> see me on <day, time>?
 Would <person> be able to take me instead?
 Could I switch to <person> instead?

Could I make it sooner/earlier on the same day?
 Could I make it later on the same day?
 Could I make it for <day, time> instead?
 Is <day> at the same time okay?
 Is <time> on the same day okay?
 How about <day, time>?
 How about <day> at the same time?
 How about <time> on the same day?

I'd like to change the <day, time> to <day, time>.

I would like a <blood test, permanent, etc.> in addition to . . .
 I would like <an eye test, etc.> instead of <a hearing test, etc.>.

I'm sorry to have to change my appointment with <person>, but my
 company made some last minute changes in my schedule and
 I'm unable to come in as planned. Would <day, time> be all
 right instead?

R: Okay, that's fine.
 All right, I don't see any problem with that.
 All right, no problem.

Yes, <person>'s free then.
 Yes, <person> can see you then.
 Yes, <person> can take you then.

I'm sorry, but <person>'s not available on that day.
 I'm sorry, but we're completely booked at that time.
 I'm sorry, but we don't offer that service on <day, time>.
 You may have to wait a little, but if you don't mind we can
 re-schedule you then.

I'm sorry, but we're closed on <day>.
 I'm sorry, but we don't open until <time>.
 I'm sorry, but we close after <time>.
 I'm sorry, but we can't schedule appointments after <time>.

Excuse me, but may I ask the reason for the change, please?
 Excuse me, but just for our records, may I ask the reason for your
 cancellation, please?

Could you hold on a second? I'll ask <person> if she can work something
 out.

Could you hold a few minutes? I'll see what I can do for you.
 I'm sorry, but <person> has stepped out of the office and I can't

re-schedule you right now. Do you mind calling back in a few minutes?

I'm sorry, but I'll need a little time to see what I can do. May I call you back in a few minutes?

7. Placing an Order

C: I'd like to place an order for <specify items>.
I'd like to order a <specify items>.

Is it possible to order <product> by phone?

Do you take phone orders?

Do you take orders over the phone?

Note: Usually, identifying the order at the outset by a general name is more helpful to the receiver than going straight to detailed specifications, e.g. "two books" instead of "two copies of A Modern Course in English Syntax by Hekker and Haegman." See "Orienting the Receiver," Politeness Strategy # 4.

Generally, phone or mail orders refer to a catalogue which furnishes product identifications numbers, prices, and other codes for size, color, model, etc. If a catalogue is being used, the opening request can add "from your catalogue" for further clarity. E.g. "I'd like to place an order for <product> from your summer catalogue."

R: Could you give me the catalogue number, please?

Which <model> {style, type, line, edition, size, color, etc.} would you like?

I'm sorry, we're out of stock right now.

I'm sorry, we're completely out of stock right now.

We don't have <style, type, color, etc> right now but we do have them in <style, type color, etc.> . . .

May I have your name and address, please?

Could you repeat that please?

Excuse me, I didn't catch the street name.

Could you spell that for me, please?

Excuse me, but could you speak more slowly, please?

I seem to have a very bad connection on this end, so could you speak a little louder, please?

Let me run through your order again and confirm all the information.

Let me see if I got everything down correctly.
 Let me just confirm your order once more.
 Okay, let's just double check this order again.

You want <product>, <size M, type 23C, etc.>, quantity of <number>?

May I have your credit card number, please?
 Would you like to open a credit account with us?

It'll get to you around <date>.
 It should reach you within <amount of time>.
 You should have it by <date>.
 You should receive it by <date>.
 You should get it by <date>.
 Generally it takes about <amount of time> to be delivered.
 We guarantee that everything ordered before <date> will be
 delivered by Christmas.

- C: Do you accept personal checks?
 Do you take personal checks?
 Do you take money orders?

When can I expect to receive this?
 How long does it take?
 About how long does it take to receive orders?

I'd like to have this sent to my business address, please.
 This is a gift and I'd like to have it sent straight to their home.
 Could I have this delivered to another address?
 What happens if I'm not home when it's delivered?

What happens if I find something is broken?
 Do you have a policy regarding returns?

Shall I spell that for you?

8. Sending an Invitation

8.1 Formal Business or Social Situations

- C: My name is <name> and I'm with <company, association> in <location>.

We are having a <event> and I'm calling to extend an invitation to you.
 I'm soliciting papers for the upcoming conference and would like
 to invite you to submit something.

I'm calling to invite you to <specify activity, e.g. be the keynote speaker
 at the conference>.

I'm calling to see if you would like to <specify activity>.
 I'm calling to see if you would be interested in <specify activity>.
 I'm wondering if you would be interested in <specify activity>.

Do you think you might be interested?
 Would you be at all interested?

R: Yes, I think so. It sounds interesting.
 Thank you. I think I might be interested. Could you tell me a
 little more about it?

Do you need an answer right now, or can I think it over a while?
 May I have some time to think it over?
 I'm quite flattered by your invitation but I think I'll need some time
 to make a decision.

Would you mind going over the details of place and time again?

C: Our purpose is to
 We are interested in your participation because

All participants would receive <specify payment or nature of
 benefit or reward to invitee>.

We will furnish <specify financial assistance separate from
 payment for services>.

We can assist with transportation costs.

We feel you could make a valuable contribution to

We desire your participation very much.

We would be honored if you would accept our invitation.

We would be delighted if you could attend.

Thank you very much for accepting. I will send you a
 letter confirming our conversation and other
 necessary information.

I'll get in touch with you again when we have more details
 worked out.

I will send you a letter in a few days formalizing the
 invitation.

I will send you a letter confirming our conversation and
 providing more information to help you decide.

Thank you for your time. I hope you will decide to accept
 our invitation. Please call me if you have any questions.

8.2 Informal Business or Social Situations

C: I want to invite you to a <event>.
 I'd like you to come to a <event>.

Would you like to come to a <event>.
 Would you like to go to a <event>?
 Would you like to attend a <event>?
 Are you free on <date> for a <event>?
 Can you make it to a <event>?
 How about coming to a <event>?

We're having a <event> on <date>.
 Can you come?
 Can you make it?
 Are you free?
 What do you think?
 How does that sound?
 Please come, okay?
 We'd love to have you come.
 It'd be great if you could come.
 You have to come.
 You must come.

R: I'd love to come.
 I'd be happy to come.
 I'd be delighted to come.
 Yes, I'd like to come. Thank you for inviting me.
 How nice of you to invite me. Thanks.
 Sure. Sounds great.
 Sure, I'll be there.
 Okay. I'll see you then.

May I ask who else is coming/going?
 So who else is coming?
 Is anybody I know coming?
 May I bring my family?
 May I bring a friend?

Can I help you out with something?
 Can I help out in any way? What do you need?
 Listen, I'll bring something. What would you like?

What <date, time, place, etc.> did you say that was?
 Can you give me the <date, time, place, etc.> again, please?

I'd like to but I'm afraid I can't.
 I'm not sure if I really have time.
 Well, I'm kind of busy right now.
 I don't know my schedule yet.
 I think I have to leave that time open for something else.
 Well, . . . I don't know

Listen, when do you need to know by?
 Can I call you back?
 Why don't I get back to you later?
 Can I think about it for a while?

9. Asking for Directions

C Can you give me directions to <place>?
 I was wondering if you could give me give me directions to <place>.
 Would you mind explaining generally how to get there?
 Can you brief me on how to get there?
 Could you tell me what's the simplest {fastest, easiest, most scenic, cheapest} way to get to <place>?

R: The best way is to take the bus.
 I would advise taking the train.
 I would avoid the subway if I were you.
 I would suggest calling a cab.
 Actually, you can walk.

The cheapest way is by bus, but the easiest way is by cab.

First I'll tell you how to get to <place>, and I'll meet you there.
 First let me explain how to get to <place>, and then we can go together from there.

Catch a cab to <place> and wait for me there.
 Wait for me at the <landmark>.
 Call me from there and I'll come get you.

From <name> Station, take the <name> train to <place>.
 Go out the <specify location> exit and I'll meet you there.
 First go to <place>, then change there to <name> train and continue on to <place>.
 I'll meet you on the platform, so wait for me there.

Take any bus that says <destination>.
 Take any bus numbered <number>.
 Ask for a transfer when you get on.
 It'll be about <number> stops.
 The stop right before yours is <location>.
 Look for a <landmark> on your right/left.
 After about <number> minutes, watch out for a <landmark>.
 First you'll pass <landmark>, then you'll come to <landmark>.

It's the first {second, third, largest, etc.} one {house, building, etc.}.
 Turn right at the intersection.
 Go straight until you come to the intersection.
 Go straight until you hit the big intersection.
 If you see the <landmark>, you've gone too far.

10. Leaving and Following up Messages

10.1 Please Call Me Back

R: I'd be happy to talk with you but I'm tied up right now.
I'm afraid I'm in the middle of something right now.
I'm with someone right now.
I'm afraid I'm going to be tied up for a while.

Would you mind calling me back shortly?
Could I ask you to call me back, please?

May I call you back when I'm free?
I could call you back sometime this afternoon.

10.2 Please Have So-and-So Call Me Back

R: Thank you for waiting, Mrs. Sato, but I'm afraid he's not in.

I'm afraid he's gone for the day.
I'm afraid he's just stepped out of the office.
I'm sorry, but he's out of town on business.
I'm sorry, but he's on vacation.
I think he's already gone to lunch.
<person> is at a meeting right now.
<person> is on another line.
<person> is seeing a client/customer right now.

May I take a message, please?
Would you like to leave a message?
Shall I leave a message for him?
He can't come to the phone right now but I could slip him a
message if it's really urgent.

Would you like to hold the line or call back later?
Could you call back later again, please?
Would you like him to return your call?

C: Could you please have him call me back as soon as possible?
Could you please ask him to call me as soon as he can?
As soon as he's free, could you have him call me, please?
Could you have him call me at his convenience, please?
If possible, could you have him call me back by this evening, please?

R: Certainly. May I have your number, please?
May I have your name and number, please?
I'm sorry, but could you give me your number again, please?
Is there a number where he can get hold of you after <time>?

10.3 Did You Get My Message?

C Hello. Is this <person's name>? This is <caller's name>. Did you get my message?

Did you receive the message I left for you on <date>?
Did my message get to you?
Did the secretary give you my message?

R: Oh yes, thank you. Everything's worked out.
Yes, it's all settled.
Yes, I had the matter taken care of.
Yes, I'm sorry I wasn't able to talk to you then. It's all taken care of.
Yes, no problem. I took care of it.
Yes. I took care of the matter but I forgot to call you back. I'm sorry.
Yes. Thanks for checking up on me again. I meant to call you back.

Yes I did, thanks. But . . .
Well, yes I did, but I still haven't had time to think about it. Could I put you off a little longer?
Yes, but I haven't been able to get to it yet. I promise to call you back with an answer by <date>.
Yes, and I'd like to discuss things further with you.
Yes, but I wasn't really clear about <topic>. Do you have some time now to discuss it?

No! What message?
I'm sorry, but I'm sure I didn't receive any message.
I'm sorry, perhaps it's in the pile on my desk I haven't sorted through yet. I just returned this morning. Could I call you back in a few minutes?