A Qualitative Study of Interviewer Variations in the Oral Proficiency Test

for Junior and Senior High School Students
A Qualitative Study of Interviewer Variations in the Oral Proficiency Test for Junior and Senior High School Students

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Abstract

The appropriate conduct of the test is one of the most important works for teachers, especially after the new criterion-referenced assessment was introduced. Interview tests are popular methods of assessing students’ practical communication ability. The purpose of this study is to clarify the distinct and individual interviewer styles and to investigate the impact of the interviewer variation on the ratings and interviewee’s behavior in a newly developed interview test for junior and senior high school students in Japan.

Ross (1996) states that the interview is a simulation of a second language speaker’s capacity to interact in an authentic communicative event utilizing different components of communicative competence. Furthermore, Brown (2003) states that oral interviews have long been a popular method for assessing oral second language proficiency. While the number of secondary schools in which speaking tests are executed has increased in recent years in Japan, it is true that teachers are anxious about the test quality and the certain test method itself has not been established (Baba, 1997). Hence, in this study, we focus on possibility and problems of interview tests by using a newly developed interview test, HOPE, which has three phases, description of a picture, role play, and free interview.

In Chapter 1, we review previous literature on the distinctive styles which interviewers tend to employ across interviews and the relationship between the interviewer style and ratings. Interviewers have been found to vary in five aspects of behaviors (Brown, 2003). Which of these aspects of interviewers’ variation have an impact on ratings is not clear.

Regarding the studies which investigated the impact of interviewer type on
ratings, McNamara and Lumley (1997) examined the impact of the rater perception with regard to the competence of the interviewer on the ratings. They found that raters awarded higher ratings to interviewees when they perceived the interviewer was less competent. On the other hand, Brown (2003) investigated the differences in the strategies to manage the interviews which were conducted by the two interviewers. He claimed that the interviewer training in the interaction-based tests and the construct definition in tests should be appropriate.

Chapter 2 shows the method of this study. In Study I, the data were collected during three pilot HOPE administrations. 6 English teachers conducted the test and 62 students participated. In Study II, An ALT and a JTE in a junior high school conducted the test. 8 third-year junior high school students participated in this study. They were certified by STEP test grade 4. Each of them was interviewed by the ALT and the JTE. Four students were interviewed by ALT first and then by JTE. And the others were interviewed by JTE first and then by ALT. The interviews were rated by three raters.

The interview test, HOPE (High school Oral Proficiency Examination), was designed to assess the speaking ability of junior and senior high school students. The picture description stage and the role play stage each include the follow-up question, which is basically a conversational interview in which interviewees are invited to talk on a range of topics and functional skills. HOPE consists of 4 stages and takes 6 minutes. It assesses students’ speaking ability holistically based on the 4 criteria, function (what can be done with language), content (what can be talked about), text type (how can the talk be presented), and comprehensibility (how well can the talk be understood by interviewer).

Chapter 3 contains the analysis and discussion of this study. First, in study I,
the data of six interviewers' behavior were analyzed in these aspects: the ways in which interviewers develop topics and ask questions, the level of rapport that they establish with candidates, and the number and variety of topics which they introduce in the interview. Interviewer behavior is particular to each interviewer in relation to the test. The major characteristics of it are: that the interviewers establish the rapport with interviewee by repeating interviewee's utterance, integrate the information from interviewees to develop topics, maintain the topic for several turns, respond to interviewee's utterance with minimal responses and comments, develop topics by questions with a certain intention, respond to interviewee's utterance with minimal responses, introduce many ordinary topics, and don't respond to interviewee's utterance but follow with closed questions.

In Study II, there is no significant difference in scores between interviews conducted by two interviewers. One interviewer (JTE) tends to use some yes-no questions and wh-questions before and after an open question. In contrast, the other interviewer (ALT) constructs the follow-up question in the way she introduces a topic with a closed question, elicits the further response with an open question and rephrases them. The ALT doesn't ask closed questions but moves to the next part of the interview. Furthermore, the ALT tends to speak slowly. The ways in which the ALT manages interviews are characterized as foreigner talk, linguistic adjustment and conversational adjustment. The diversity in the way the ALT and the JTE structure the follow-up question causes the difference of the number of the exchanges. Although the ALT puts more open questions to interviewee X to draw out her utterances than the JTE, the ratings of the two interviews resulted in the same. The reason of this is that interviewee X often broke down when interviewed by the ALT and could only perform at the same level.
In conclusion, Chapter 4 indicates that this study has demonstrated various patterns of interview samples which include entrusting behaviors. At the same time, the study has also shown such variety of interview styles didn’t affect ratings. These findings suggest that this oral test, keeping the natural and unpredictable discourse, may still be a reliable and valid test. Finally, the possibility of further research is suggested.
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Introduction

The criterion-referenced assessment of the student's abilities in English has been adopted at junior high schools in Japan since 2002 along with the new Course of Study. Before that, the norm-referenced assessment mixed with criterion-referenced assessment was used. The norm-referenced assessment was criticized because the progress of a student's ability doesn't necessarily reflect his or her grade improvement when the other students' ability has also improved. The grades of the students with the same ability happen to differ in individual groups in each of which the average of the students' abilities is different. Therefore, the criterion-referenced assessment has been adopted (Kanatani, 2003). Students can be intrinsically assessed with it. Teachers have to establish the stable criteria and methods in order to assess students' ability fairly and validly.

What is the students' ability in English? Bachman and Palmer (1996) claimed that "we want to make inference about test takers' language ability in a target language use domain" (44). In Japan, in order to identify the target language use domain, we refer to the Course of Study for foreign languages. The objectives are to develop students' basic practical communication abilities, especially in listening and speaking. What are the practical communication abilities? They are defined as not only having knowledge about grammatical rules and vocabularies of foreign languages but also communicating with foreign languages (Monbusho, 1999).

In the field of second language acquisition, communication ability has been discussed in linguistic and sociolinguistic terms. The first and foremost proposal was made by Hymes in 1972. His proposal of communicative competence had a strong impact on our field of study. Hymes defined it as the competence to use
language effectively and appropriately in various situations and contexts. Later, in 1980, Canale and Swain divided communicative competence into three sub-components, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. This framework has been the basis of discussion on the communicative competence since then. Canale (1983) added discourse competence to the three sub-components.

Turning now to speaking ability, which is emphasized in the Course of Study. Bachman (1990) proposed that speaking ability consists of three components: language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanism. When languages are spoken, knowledge structures and context of situation are combined and added to those three components. Language competence consists of organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence is divided into two sub-components, grammatical competence and textual competence. Pragmatic competence is divided into illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Each of them has some sub-components. The difference between Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) is that strategic competence is not a sub-component of language competence. Bachman and Palmer (1996) extended Bachman’s notion. They added affective factors to the notion.

Fulcher (2003) proposed a framework of the speaking construct, which is adapted from Bachman and Palmer. He states the speaking construct consists of five components, language competence, strategic capacity, textual knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and sociolinguistic knowledge. Each of the components is divided into some sub-components. He claims that:

"Nor is it being suggested that a test of speaking should test
everything that we will attempt to put into our list. Choices will depend upon test purpose and the extent to which scores need to be generalisable to other context.” (19)

Although numerous communicative components have been advanced in the field of research, we English teachers have to test student’s performance in the limited time. If we are permitted to choose the components according to the purpose as Fulcher claims, how can we English teachers in Japan assess the student’s speaking ability?

Weir (1990) classifies speaking tests into eight types, verbal essay, oral presentation, free interview, controlled interview, description of a picture sequence, questions on a single picture, interaction task, and role play. Ross (1996) states that the interview is a simulation of a second language speaker’s capacity to interact in an authentic communicative event utilizing various components of communicative competence extemporaneously. Furthermore, Brown (2003) states that oral interviews, in which examiner and candidate take part in an unscripted discussion of general topics, have long been a popular method for assessing oral second language proficiency. While the number of secondary schools in which speaking tests are executed has increased in recent years in Japan, it is true that teachers are anxious about the test quality and the certain test method itself has not been established (Baba, 1997). Hence, in this study, we focus on the possibility and problems of interview tests by using a newly developed interview test, HOPE, which has three phases: description of a picture, role play, and free interview.

The important test qualities are validity, reliability, and practicality. In the present study, we focus on reliability. Okada (2004) states that the ordinary interaction consists of ‘entrusting behavior’ and ‘grounding behavior’. Each utterance fills the role of both the grounding of previous one and the entrusting of
the next one. As is seen in these concepts, the nature of interaction rests on the fact that each utterance heavily relies on each other. Therefore, when people interact, they have to attempt to predict their interlocutor’s utterance. Therefore, very often they end up facing unpredictable consequences. Brown (2003) claims that whilst the unpredictability and dynamic nature of interaction forms the basis of claims by proponents of the oral interview that it is a valid measure of conversational communicative competence, it has also been argued that this unpredictability may compromise test reliability. Bachman (1990) claims that an oral interview in which the interviewer carries an unstructured conversation is not an adequate operational definition because variations in speech acts elicited may be completely uncontrolled, not only from one interviewee to the next, but from interviewer to interviewer. Lazaraton (1996a) states that we cannot ensure that all interviewees are given the same number and kinds of opportunities to display their abilities unless interviewers conduct themselves in similar, prescribed ways. The role of interviewers in the interview process is to elicit ratable utterance from interviewees. Brown (2003) states that despite the fact that few studies are concerned specially with variation amongst interviewers, there is nevertheless some evidence that interviewers have distinct and individual styles which they tend to employ across their interviews.

In assessing students’ speaking ability, teachers are interviewers and raters as well. Understanding the test situation effect and interviewer effect is one of the problems that language tester should grapple with (Shohamy, 1995). In this study, we focus on the behavior of the interviewer and specify the influence of the interviewer variation on the ratings and interviewee’s performance in the interview test designed to assess junior and senior high school students’ speaking ability.
The plan for this paper is as follows. Chapter 1 describes previous studies on a) interviewer styles and b) the impact of interviewer variation on ratings. Chapter 2 explains the research design: STUDY I aims to clarify the distinct and individual styles in the interview test, and STUDY II aims to investigate the differences between the behavior of the ALT and JTE and the impact of the differences on ratings and interviewee's performance. Chapter 3 investigates and discusses the interviewer variation in the interview test and finally Chapter 4 concludes the thesis by discussing the implications of this study.
Chapter 1

Reviews of Previous Studies

of the Interviewer in the Interview Test

Threats to reliability of interview tests are imposed by the use of a live interviewer. Each interviewer can freely ask whatever questions he or she wishes to ask. Furthermore, the questions largely depend on the direction that the conversation takes (Stanfield and Kenyon, 1992). The role of the interviewers is to elicit the ratable performance from the interviewee, as mentioned in introduction. Lazaraton (1996b) states that “the achievement of consistent ratings is highly dependent on the achievement of the consistent examiner conduct during procedure”(19). The use of a live interviewer causes the variable which may or may not have the effects on ratings and performance, even if the procedure is prescribed.

In section 1. 1, I will focus on the distinctive styles which interviewers tend to employ across interviews. Then in section 1. 2, I will focus on the relationship between the interviewer style and ratings.

1.1 The distinctive styles which interviewers tend to employ across interviews

Interviewers have been found to vary in aspects of behaviors as diverse as: 1) the level of rapport that they establish with interviewees, 2) their functional and topical choices, 3) the ways in which they ask questions and construct prompts, 4) the extent to which or the ways in which they accommodate their speech to that of the interviewee, and 5) the ways in which they develop and extend topics (Brown, 2003). I will specifically address these five aspects.
Firstly, interviewers establish rapport with interviewees by responding to them in various ways; echoing, minimal responses, and evaluative responses. Minimal responses are ways of indicating the listener’s positive attention to the speaker (Coates, 1993). Some behaviors are exhibited more by some examiners than others (Lazaraton, 1996a). The raters’ perceptions of the rapport differ with interlocutors (McNamara and Lumley, 1997). Few studies are concerned, however, with distinctive interviewers’ reactions to establish rapport and with the definition of good rapport and bad one. Secondly, interviewers exhibit the difference in the level of difficulty of the line of questioning and topics (Reed and Halleck, 1997). Reed and Halleck claim that oral interviews should be conducted in the relatively high level of difficulty, within reason, because the proficiency level of interviewees will not be underestimated, with the exception of the lower level examinees. Senior and junior high school students in Japan correspond to this lower level.

Thirdly, Lazaraton (1996b) examined the interviewer behavior for consistency across interviewers in terms of adherence to the procedure which prescribes both the wording and the order. The analysis indicates that interviewers don’t use the prompts consistently, or don’t use the exact word as the procedure prescribes. Each interviewer has their own style even in the interview which has the framework prescribing both the wording and the order of the questions. Then, interviewers accommodate to interviewees appropriately at the extremes of the rating scale, but at the middle, they tend to overaccommodate (Ross and Berwick, 1992). They claim that if the interviewers find there is no practical guide available with which to navigate in the middle range, a more familiar accommodative strategy developed from experience outside of the interview setting, for example, in the instruction, might be drawn into the interview management.
Finally, Berwick and Ross (1996) examined the interviewer’s approach to controlling the development of interview between cross-cultural and cross-linguistic interviews: English as a second language and Japanese as a second language OPIs. Findings suggest that the Japanese interviewer style emphasizes organization ‘through attention to form and a kind of instructional care-taking’ and the American style focuses on control ‘through attention to content and reliance on the interviewee’s willingness to observe a conversational style that engages the issues’. The linguistic differences seem to affect their styles to conduct interviews.

What is not clear is which of these aspects of interviewers’ variation have an impact on ratings. I will specify studies concerning with the interviewer variation and ratings in the next section.

1.2 The relationship between the interviewer style and ratings

Regarding the studies which investigated the impact of interviewer type on ratings, McNamara and Lumley (1997) examined the impact of the rater perception with regard to the competence of the interviewer on the ratings. The factors concerning the competence of the interviewers are: the general competence in conducting the test, the specific competence in adopting the role of patient or client, and the rapport established between participants. McNamara and Lumley were interested not in the objective reality of competence, but rather in the way in which these factors were perceived by raters and in the influence of these perceptions on ratings. They found that raters awarded higher ratings to interviewees when they perceived the interviewer was less competent. Their study focused on the raters rather than the interviewers. O’Loughlin (2000) examined the influence of the gender difference of interviewers on ratings. He investigated all kinds of
combinations of interviewees, interviewers, and raters and found no effect on ratings. Furthermore, the use of speech features such as overlap and feedback were equally frequent between female and male interviewers, although they are said to be typical of female speech. O'Loughlin states that it is not easy for us to foresee when gender will have an impact on oral tests.

On the other hand, concerning the studies which examined the impact of individual interviewers on ratings, Reed and Halleck (1997) focused on the level of difficulty of the questions and topics which interviewers revealed to interviewees. They examined that the scores of interviews which were conducted by two trained interviewers. Each of them interviewed the same 16 learners. Findings were that interviewees who were interviewed by the one interviewer scored generally lower. The interviewer exhibited prompts which were at a functionally lower level than the other. Reed and Halleck claim that oral interviews should be pitched relatively high, within reason, except to the lower level learners. It is reasonable to suppose that learners at junior and senior high schools in Japan correspond to these lower level learners. Brown (2003) investigated the differences in the strategies to manage the interviews which were conducted by two interviewers, who were at the extremes of the difficulty continuum in the IELTS Speaking Module interviews. He found that one interviewer tended to behave as teacherly to elicit the interviewee's utterance and the other didn't assist the interviewer but just had a conversation. These behaviors reflect the ratings. He claimed that the interviewer training in the interaction-based tests and the construct definition in tests should be appropriate.

As we have seen, interviewers seem to have their peculiar styles when they conduct the interview test. Those styles are likely to affect the ratings. The
results in those studies don’t necessarily apply to junior and senior high school students because the tests examined in those studies target the adult ESL learners. Therefore, there is room to examine interview tests for the EFL learners in junior and senior high schools in Japan.
Chapter 2
Method of this Study

2.1 The aim of this study

The appropriate conduct of the test is one of the most important works for teachers, especially after the new criterion-referenced assessment was introduced. Interview tests are popular methods of assessing students’ practical communication ability. Conducting interview tests relevantly, teachers have to take many factors into consideration. One of these factors is the impact of interviewer variation on ratings in the interview test because the styles which interviewers employ are different among them. The impact of interviewer variation on ratings or interviewee’s behavior seem to exist in the interview test (Brown, 2003). The majority of the subjects in the research are adults in ESL contexts. Few are concerned with the context of junior and senior high schools in Japan. It can also be supposed that even in the Japanese high school context there is an impact of interviewer variation on ratings and interviewee’s behavior. Therefore, the aim of this study is, the study I: to clarify the distinct and individual interviewer styles and the study II: to investigate the impact of the interviewer variation on the ratings and interviewee’s behavior in the interview test designed for high school students.

2.2 Participants in this study

Study I

The data analyzed for this study were collected during three pilot HOPE administrations. 6 English teachers conducted the interview tests. Among them, 2 are in the University, 3 are in the Junior High School, 1 is a pre-service teacher.
62 students participated in this interview test. Among them, 32 were third-year junior high school students, 19 were first-year senior high school students, 12 were second-year university students. The information about the test administration is shown in Table 1.

Study II

An ALT and a JTE in a junior high school conducted the interview test. 8 third-year junior high school students participated in this interview test. They were certified by STEP test grade 4. Each of them was interviewed by the ALT and the JTE. Four students were interviewed by the ALT first and then by the JTE. And the others were interviewed by the JTE first and then by the ALT. The interviews were rated by two raters.

Table 1  The information about the test administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>interviewers</th>
<th>period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study I</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior high</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior high</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study II</td>
<td>Junior high</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. For the purpose of this study, the follow-up question part (which is expected to explain in section 2.3.) was analyzed.

2.3 Interview Test

The interview test, HOPE (High school Oral Proficiency Examination), was designed to assess the speaking ability of junior and senior high school students. The purposes of this test are: to grasp their students' speaking ability, to give
feedback to the lessons by clarifying the specific learning target and to give students
a sense of achievement. HOPE consists of 4 stages, of which the first and last, the
opening and closing, which are very short, are not rated. The picture description
stage and the role play stage respectively include the follow-up question, which is
basically a conversational interview in which interviewees are invited to talk on a
range of topics and functional skills. HOPE is designed to take 6 minutes. It
assesses students' speaking ability holistically based on the 4 criteria: function
(what can be done with language), content (what can be talked about), text type
(how can the talk be presented), and comprehensibility (how well can the talk be
understood by the interviewer). The procedure and the level descriptor are in
Appendix 1 and 2.
Chapter 3
Data Analysis and Discussion

3. 1 Data analysis and discussion of study I

In previous studies, analysis of interview is made in some aspects: the ways in which interviewers develop topics and ask questions, the level of rapport that they establish with candidates, and the number and variety of topics which they introduce in the interview. In study I, the data of six interviewers behavior were analyzed in these aspects.

3. 1. 1 The way in which interviewers develop topics and ask questions

The common way in which all six interviewers develop topics is to probe the topic with the closed questions first, and then elicit the extended interviewee's answers. They also ask questions explicitly. Extract 1 shows such an example taken from the interview of interviewer B.

Extract 1

B : Ah do you like swimming?
S1: Yes
B : Oh tell me about the beach which you went last summer.
S1: Summer vacation.
B : Muhu
S1: My family and my neighborhood family together Suma Suma
Ka enjoy swimming.

Interviewer B asks the closed question 'Ah do you like swimming?', relating it with the picture of beach in the picture description phase. He explicitly asks the open question 'Oh tell me about ...' to elicit further response right after the closed question. This way is common to all six interviewers.
Extract 1 shows the common interview style, however, as we see in Extract 2, an interviewer demonstrates one of the distinct interview styles.

Extract 2

A : Do you like shopping.
S2: Yes.
A : Usually where do you go shopping?
S2: I usually go to diamond city.
A : Where is diamond city?
S2: Near Mitami station.
A : What did you buy?
S2: I bought the book.
A : Please tell me about that book.
S2: I bought the Gege. This is written by Sada Masashi. I did not see the movie so I read the book.

Interviewer A asks three wh-questions before the open question. This extract begins with a closed question ‘Do you like shopping?’, which introduces the topic ‘shopping’. Interviewee S responds with ‘Yes’. Then Interviewer T asks three questions, ‘Usually where do you go shopping?’, ‘Where is Diamond city?’, and ‘What did you buy?’. Interviewee S2 responds to each question. Then interviewer T asks with ‘Please tell me about the book’ which is related with the last response. These three wh-questions function as ‘display question’ of accommodation (Ross and Berwick, 1992). This way to ask some yes-no or wh-questions, ‘display questions’, before the open question is typical of interviewer A. As Ross and Berwick discussed, this way to ask some display questions could affect the rating of the performance. Interviewers cannot help asking the display questions, if interviewee is about to break down. But in this case, interviewer A should have asked an open question, for example, ‘Please tell me about it’ straight after the probing closed question.
Extracts 3, 4, and 5 show the variety of ways in which interviewers integrate
interviewee’s utterance into discourse. In developing topics, interviewers tend to
ask questions which integrate interviewee’s responses into conversation.

Extract 3

A: This summer did you go to the sea?
S3: No.
A: No. That’s too bad. Then what did you do this summer?
S3: Ehh. I join ah I belong to basketball team in the university.
   So many game in summer. I went to Osaka, Kyoto. And 5
   Play basketball.
A: Ah. Please tell me about the game in Kyoto.
S3: Kyoto. Muhu. Ahh Kyoto is. Kyoto's games were practiced
   Game with Kyoto education of eh. Kyoto university of education.
A: Oh I see. Ahh was that hard? 10
S3: Yes very hard.

In Extract 3 Interviewer A begins with a closed question ‘did you go to the sea?’.
Interviewee S responds with ‘No’. A responds with ‘No. That’s too bad’ which
functions to establish rapport with S3. Immediately A follows with a question that
elicits the information from S3: ‘what did you do this summer?’. This approach to
topic maintenance is also common of all interviewers. S3 responds with what she did
in summer. Then, A follows with a question that topicalizes the new information
(Kyoto) and elicits an extended response: ‘Please tell me about the game in Kyoto’.
As this way of change of topic is triggered by the information of the interviewee
response, interviewer can’t control it.

Controlling the change of topic, interviewers ask a question with a certain
intention.

Extract 4

C: Muhu. Where do you usually go?
S4: Mu I went diamond city.
C: Muhu I’ve never been there. What’s that place like?
S4: Eh very big. Many shops 5
C : And you mainly shopping do shopping which store?
S4:(LP)
C : You buy clothes yeah?
S4:Yes
C : Mu when you go shopping, who do you go with?
S4: Eh my friend. 10
C : Oh with your friends. Tell me about your friends.
S4: Same clubs. (LP)
C : Like what do you like about her?
S4: Very kind. Mu Akarui

In Extract 4, the topic is ‘shopping’. After introducing a new topic with a closed question, Interviewer C asks a question ‘Where do you usually go?’ which topicalizes the place. Interviewee S4 responds with ‘I went diamond city’. C responds to this information with a minimum response, which he immediately follows with a comment that indicates interest in S4’s response: ‘I’ve never been there’ and asks an open question which elicits an extended response: ‘What’s that place like?’. S4 responses with phrases: ‘Eh very big. Many shops’. In order to elicit a rich description, C focuses the place in which S4 might buy something with a question: ‘you mainly shopping do shopping which store?’. But S4 breaks down. Following the failed topic probe and its closure with the comment: ‘You buy clothes yeah’, C changes the topic with the question: ‘when you go shopping, who do you go with?’. Relating with the earlier topic, C asks this question with a certain intention to change topics. This approach to change topic is peculiar to him. S4 responds with ‘my friend’. C responds to this information with a minimum response and the same phrase ‘Oh with your friends’, which C immediately follows with a question that topicalizes the new information and elicits an extended response: ‘Tell me about your friends’. Even if the interviewee responds with other words, interviewer C can change topics. S4 responds with the phrase ‘same club’ and breaks down. C changes the question to
Like what do you like about her? in order to elicit further description about her friend. This is the strategy for repairing breakdowns. This approach to elicitation of further response is reformulation of the failed prompt (Brown, 2003).

Extract 5

A: Muu ok. So do you like shopping?
S5: Yes I like shopping.
A: Usually where did you go to shopping?
S5: Ehh I went to Osaka many times.
A: How about Kobe?
S5: Ah I eh I like Kobe too. My favorite spot is Nankinmachi
A: Nankinmachi ok. So please compare please tell me the
Difference between Kobe and Osaka.
S5: Ahh ehh Osaka is many many shops and eh people is people
Is people is ah mu friendly Osaka is friendly

Extract 5 shows the technique for extending functions rather than extending topics. Being different from the interviewees in Extracts 3 and 4, interviewee S5 in Extract 5 can respond with sentences which are grammatically accurate. Judging from the first two responses, interviewer A changes the functions from description to comparison. After introducing the topic ‘shopping’, A follows the question which topicalizes the place. S5 responds with the fact that she went to Osaka. A responds to the information with a question that elicits the information about Kobe. S5 responds with two sentences which imply that S5 is familiar with Kobe. A responds with a word ‘Nankinmachi’ which he follows with a question that elicits the function ‘comparison’ with ‘So please compare. Please tell me the difference between Kobe and Osaka’. Then S5 breaks down. Shifting the level of the question by asking for functions and topics required at higher level of proficiency is effective use of spiraling (Reed and Halleck, 1997). In this case, interviewer A keeps the same topic but shifts the level of question by asking for function required at the next higher level.
To sum up, all interviewers structure the topic in a way that they establish it through closed questions and then elicit extended responses with open questions explicitly. As intrinsic styles, some interviewers tend to ask closed questions before or after open questions. Developing topics, interviewers integrate information provided by the interviewee into their next questions. The ways in which they change topics are; the information from the interviewee utterance triggers to ask a question (see extract 3), and intentionally ask questions which provide a new information to extend response (see extract 4). Interviewers employ them when they change functions as well as topics. All interviewers seem to have their own structuring techniques. Providing feedback seems to be peculiar to each interviewer. I will focus on this point in the next section.

3.1.2 Feedback and Rapport

Interviewers respond to interviewees with various ways in which they establish the emotional climate or rapport. To judge whether those established rapport are good or not is beyond this study. Instead I will focus on the process in which interviewers establish rapport with interviewees by analyzing the ways interviewers react to interviewees.

Extract 6

B: Ok. So you can see a cat and a dog. Do you have any pets at home?
S6: Yes, I have cat cats two cats and one dog.
B: Oh you have many pets.
S6: Yes.
B: So tell me about your pets.
S6: My dog is a very old and this dog's mother I know so
He is two ah second year. So I know his mother.
And two cat is very very (pause) scary.
B: Scary. Why are they scary?
S6: I don't know huhuhu.
B : Ok. Thank you very much.

Extract 6 shows the way in which the interviewer establishes rapport with the same word of interviewee’s utterance. The topic is about pets. Interviewee S6 has many pets in his house. Interviewer B responds with ‘Oh you have many pets’ indicating interest in it. Then B asks an open question ‘So please tell me about your pets’. Interviewee S6 describes his pets. Interviewer B responds with the same word of interviewee’s utterance, ‘scary’, and asks the next question. This way is typical of interviewer B.

Extract 7

D : Ok Akina did you go to a beach last summer?
S7: Yes
D : Tell me about experience. Tell me what you did in the beach.
S7: Tell me?
D : Mu ok which which beach did you go?
S7: Eh Awaji.
D : Awaji. Muhmhu how was the beach?
S7: Exciting
D : Exciting mu so with who did you go to the beach?
S7: Eh I went family with my family.
D : I see. Tell me about your family.
S7: I have eh four people in my family. Mother, father and sister.
D : Is she a elder sister or younger sister?
S7: Younger
D : Younger sister. Mu good good family. Thank you ok.

Extract 7 shows the way in which the interviewer establishes rapport by echoing interviewee’s utterance and minimal response. In this extract, interviewer D also establishes the topic through a closed question followed by an open question which elicits extended responses explicitly. In this case, interviewee S7 asks for help with ‘Tell me?’. Interviewer D rephrases questions to support her with, ‘which beach did you go?’. S7 responds with ‘Awaji’. D responds to this
information with the same word and the minimal response, ‘Awaji, muhum’. And D follows the question ‘how was the beach?’ to elicit the extended response. S7 responds with a word ‘exciting’. Interviewer D uses two ways in which he establishes the rapport with interviewee S7. On the one hand, Interviewer D shows interest and comprehension with the same word and minimal response. On the other hand, Interviewer D breaks the prompt down into two separate questions. Although he elicits only two words, interviewee S can respond without breaking down. Those are the responses which interviewer D seeks with the original prompt. Again, D responds with the same word and minimal response, ‘exciting, mu’. At this point, D asks a question to change topics intentionally, as mentioned in section 3.1.1, ‘with who did you go to the beach?’. The topic shifts to ‘family’. Even though interviewee S7 responds with only words, this interview flows relatively smoothly without long pauses.

Extract 8

C: What do you do in winter? Like holidays, winter holidays, What do you do?
S8: Winter event. Christmas, valentine.
C: Valentine's day. Did you have a nice valentine's day?
S8: Yes hahaha
C: Oh very happy for you.

This extract shows the way in which the interviewer establishes rapport with the comment to the interviewee’s utterance. The way in which interviewer C establishes rapport with interviewee is to reply with the minimal response ‘Oh’ and the explicit statement of interest ‘very very happy for you’. Interviewees could feel that interviewers indicate more interest in interviewees’ response with the statement rather than only with minimal responses or the same words or phrases. It is typical of interviewer C. See another example in Extract 4 line 3.
Extract 9

A: I have some questions. Do you have any pets in your house?
S9: Yes.
A: Please tell me.
S9: I have one dog. The dog's name is Lucky. The dog is very old.
A: Is that cute?
S9: Yes.
A: Do you take a walk with your dog every day?
S9: Saturday and Sunday.
A: Do you like a dog?
S9: Yes.

In extracts 6, 7, 8, interviewers seem to establish rapport with interviewees. In contrast, in extract 9, the interviewer doesn't seem to establish rapport with the interviewee. The topic is about pets. Interviewer A introduces the topic about pets with the closed question 'Do you have any pets in your house?'. Then he asks to describe pets with 'Please tell me'. Interviewer A asks questions with no precedent responses, such as those in extracts 6, 7, 8. Instead, interviewer A asks three consecutive questions and tries to establish rapport with interviewee S9. But asking irrelevant questions doesn't work and interviewer A seems to conduct interview one-sidedly.

To sum up, as we have seen in extracts 6, 7, 8, the characteristics of the ways in which interviewers react to interviewees are significant devices to establish rapport with them. The characteristics of the ways in which interviewers respond are:

- Respond with one word or one sentence in the interviewee utterance.
- Respond with the minimal response or one word in the interviewee utterance.
- Respond with the minimal response or one word in the interviewee utterance or explicit statement indicating interest in the interviewee utterance.

What is not clear is that how the characteristics of the ways in which interviewers
establish rapport with interviewees impact on the interviewees' perceptions of interviews and performance. The perceptions of the same rapport are different between raters (McNamara and Lumuley, 1997). I will focus on this point in section 3.2.

3.1.3 The number and the variety of the topics which interviewers introduce in interviews

Table 2 shows the average number of topics which each interviewer introduces in one interview. Topic unit is counted as follows: the topic starts when interviewees responded to the question given by the interviewer; simple yes-no questions are also counted to be the beginning of the topic; the topic ends when the interviewer provided the new topic by asking a new question. Extract 10 shows an example of one-topic unit.

Extract 10

E: Ah ha did you go to the sea ocean like this place this summer?
S10: Ah this summer no I didn't.
E: Mhu what did you do this summer?
S10: Ah I played club sports.
E: Club sports. Tell me about club sports.
S10: Ah I I I I belonged belong to ah handball club.
But it it is no now.
E: OK. This is end of the picture description.

Interviewer E fails to probe the topic 'beach', then she asks a question 'What did you do this summer?'. Interviewee S10 responds with 'I played club sports'. Interviewer E asks the open question and elicits the extended response. In this case, the topic is 'club'.

Table 2 The average number of the topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Junior High</th>
<th>Senior High</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interv.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg.</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each interviewer conducted interview with different interviewees whose levels of proficiency were varied. Because of the characteristic of this speaking test, six minutes, the number of the topics which interviewers could introduce were four at most and two at least.

Of the four interviewers, who conduct interviews with high school students, A and B are under training, C and D are trained and certified, A introduces the number of topics the least and D the most. This fractional difference is attributable to the method of analysis, which derived from averaging of all the number of topics introduced by each interviewer. The fact that the difference is greater than 0.5 of a band indicates that interviewer D is more likely to introduce one more topic per two interviews. In other words, interviewees who are interviewed with interviewer D have more opportunities to demonstrate their ability. It is likely that the difference of the number of topics introduced in the interview is attributable to the ways in which each interviewer develops topics. Interviewers C and D tend to ask intended questions to control the change of topics. In the case of the interview where the interviewers stick to one topic in one follow-up question, they tend to change the levels of function instead of changing topics. Interviewers A and B tend to employ the way of the change of topics which is triggered by the information of the interviewee response or to ask yes-no or wh-questions concerned with the same topic.

The four interviewers, who conducted interviews with university students, were
under training. All of them introduced two topics in each interview. They presented the same number of topic, but they seemed to employ the different ways in which they developed the topic. Interviewer F tended to ask questions with which she changed the function concerned with the same topic. Another reason why they introduced only two topics was that time ran short to change topics. Firstly, irrespective of the interviewee’s level of proficiency, they tended to speak so much, even in words or phrases, that interviewers couldn’t change topics. Secondly, interviewers tended to spend much time in conducting the other part of the speaking test, the picture description and the role play.

Interviewer A, who conducts interviews with junior high school students introduces 2.25 topics. In his interviews, most interviewees frequently break down, speak slowly, and fall back on long pauses and hesitations. Interviewer A tends to ask open questions firstly and then ask yes-no or wh-questions concerned with the same topic.

To sum up, the number of topics has some relations with the ways in which interviewers tend to develop the topics and the functions, the volume of interviewees’ utterance, the interviewees’ level of proficiency, and the proportion which interviewers spend the time for follow-up question. Many factors seem to affect the number of topics.

Table 3 shows the variety of topics which each interviewer introduces in the interview.
Table 3 The variety of topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Interviewer A</th>
<th>Interviewer B</th>
<th>Interviewer C</th>
<th>Interviewer D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>Movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Club</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Trip</td>
<td>Trip</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Season</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap</td>
<td>10/13 (76.9%)</td>
<td>7/7 (100)</td>
<td>10/17 (58.8%)</td>
<td>7/13 (53.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference in the amount of topics is likely to be affected by the way in which each interviewer conducts the interviews. The topics which interviewer D introduces in the interview are presented by some other interviewers. The proportions of the overlapped topics in the interviews of C and D are higher than those in the interviews of A and B. It follows from this that interviewers C and D control the topics and develop them with a certain intention, whereas interviewers A and B integrate information which is in the interviewees’ utterances to develop topics.

To sum up, interviewers C and D seem to introduce the similar topic to give them fair opportunities. The number of topics has significant relations with the way in which interviewers develop the topics.

Interviewer behavior is particular to each interviewer in relation to the test, HOPE, in this study. To sum up the major characteristics of it, the interviewers,

- establish the rapport with interviewee by repeating interviewee’s utterance.
- integrate the information from interviewees to develop topics.
• maintain the topic for several turns.
• respond to interviewee’s utterance with minimal responses and comments.
• develop topics by questions with a certain intention.
• respond to interviewee’s utterance with minimal responses
• introduce many ordinary topics.
• don’t respond to interviewee’s utterance but follow with closed questions.

What is not clear is whether or not these characteristics have an impact on ratings and performance. In the next section, we will examine it.

### 3.2 Data analysis and discussion of study II

Table 4 shows the ratings of 8 interviewees conducted by two interviewers, an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) and a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE). The rating was done by three raters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater III</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater III</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no significant difference in scores between interviews conducted by two interviewers. To clarify the qualitative difference between the two interviewers’ behaviors, the follow-up question phases were analyzed. Firstly we will specify the ALT’s interview style across the interviews. Secondly, comparing to it, we will examine the JTE’s interview style to clarify the impact on the
performance.

3. 2. 1 The behavior of ALT

Extract 10 shows the follow-up question phase after picture description.

Extract 10

N: Have you been to a café?
X: No, I haven't.
N: Ah OK. Have you ever been to a restaurant?
X: Yes, I have.
N: Oh. Tell me about a restaurant. What did you do there?
X: I ate spaghetti. This is delicious.
N: Good.
X: (pause)
N: Who did you go with? Tell me about who you went to the
   Restaurant with. Tell me about them.
X: My mother and sister. (LP)
N: OK. Next we'll go to the role play.

In Extract 10, ALT N introduces the topic ‘café’ related to the picture of ‘café’ used in the picture description phase. ALT N begins with the closed question ‘Have you ever been to café?’ Interviewee X responds ‘No’. ALT N responds with a minimal response ‘Ah’ and asks a question in which she changes ‘café’ to ‘restaurant’. X responds with ‘Yes, I have’. The minimal response which ALT N responds with is ‘Oh’, in this case. Both minimal responses are rather long and low tone indicating comprehension and interest in interviewee response. ALT N tends to respond with ‘Oh’, when she gets the information which seems to satisfy her or which she is likely to expect and with ‘Ah’, when the interviewee’s response doesn’t appear to be what she expects. These minimal responses are typical of ALT N.

Following this minimal response, ALT N asks an open question ‘Tell me about a restaurant’ to elicit the extended response. This way in which interviewers probe
the topic with a closed question first and then elicit the further interviewee’s answer with an open question, is common to all interviewers, as mentioned in section 5.1. In addition, ALT N asks wh-question ‘What did you do there?’ to prompt the interviewee’s utterance. This question is correspondent to ‘Grammatical simplification’ of accommodation (Ross and Berwick, 1992). ALT N accommodates the question type to the interviewee while she doesn’t show difficulty responding to question. The interviewee X responds with 2 sentences, ‘I ate spaghetti. This is delicious’. ALT N responds with a word ‘good’. This indicates interest in interviewee’s response and expectation for further response rather than evaluates the interviewee’s utterance on the ground that ALT N waits for a few second and doesn’t change topics immediately.

Following this pause, ALT N asks with ‘Who did you go with? Tell me about who you went to the restaurant with. Tell me about them’. Maintaining topic continuity, ALT N changes the topic and tries to elicit the description of those who the interviewee went to the restaurant with. Interviewees can answer in any cases, with her family, friends, or alone. Interviewee X responds with ‘My mother and sister’ and breaks down. The reason why interviewee X can’t respond to this question may be presumed that the function is not the simple description of the family but the description of the situation or the narration in the past tense. After more than five seconds pause, ALT N finishes the follow-up question with a formulation and a assessment ‘OK’. This approach to topic development, rapport establishment, and topic-closing move is typical of ALT N. This follow-up question takes one minute thirty-one seconds.

Extract 11 shows a further example taken from other interview.

Extract 11
N: OK. Did you go to the beach last summer?
P: Yes, I did.
N: Oh, tell me about the beach last summer. What did you do?
      Mu Ah I'm eating yakisoba and suika. Mu. (LP)
N: OK. Very good. Thank you. Next is the role play.

ALT N introduces the topic 'beach' with the closed question 'Did you go to the beach?'. ALT N responds with 'Oh' to the interviewee's response 'Yes I did'. Following this minimal response, ALT N asks questions 'Tell me about the beach last summer. What did you do?' to elicit the description of the beach and what interviewee P did. ALT N tends to rephrase questions. As interviewee X breaks down in extract 10, rephrased questions may be more difficult for interviewees than the original question (Lazaraton, 1996a). In this case, after some hesitation, interviewee P begins the extended response to these questions with phrases and sentences. ALT N finishes the follow-up question with formulation and evaluation 'OK, Very good, Thank you'. When interviewees can respond with sufficient information to ALT N, she produces formulations or evaluations such as 'good' 'I see', which indicate to interviewees that his or her talk is adequate. In the case of interviewee's break down, ALT N produces formulation such as 'OK', 'It's OK', which indicate compensation for his or her insufficiency.

To sum up, ALT N conducts the interview slowly, introduces the topic with the same way as the other interviewers, asks an open question and often rephrases it, establishes rapport with minimal responses 'Ah', 'Oh', and tends to close topics with formulation or evaluation.

3.2.2 The behavior of JTE

Extract 12 shows the way in which JTE organizes questions.
Extract 12

A: Did you have a party with your family or with your friend?
X: Ah with my family.
A: Ah then please tell me about your family.
X: Ah My family is father, mother, grandmother, grandfather,
   Sister and brother.
A: And you seven members.
X: Yes.
A: Muhu. And? Ah.
X: (pause)
A: Do you like your brother?
X: Mu I'm so so. Huhuhu
A: Haha. So so ha ha. How about your sister?
X: Mu. I'm so so.
A: Is your sister kind?
X: No.
A: Oh really? Ha ha ha. OK OK Thank you.

After probing the topic ‘family’ with the closed question, JTE A asks an open question ‘Please tell me about your family’. Interviewee X mentions the member of her family. JTE A prompts interviewee X to describe her family more with ‘and’, but she breaks down. Then JTE A asks a closed question ‘Do you like your brother?’, which doesn’t necessarily seem to check the level of interviewee’s ability but seems more likely to avoid her breaking down and consequently losing face in the middle of interview. Interviewee X responds with ‘Mu. I’m so so’ and laughs. Laughing back, JTE A repeats her utterance ‘so so’ and asks ‘How about your sister?’. Interviewee X’s answer is ‘Mu I’m so so’ again. Immediately, JTE A asks ‘Is your sister kind?’. JTE A asked three simple questions after her breakdown. They are typical of JTE A. Then, he responds to her answer ‘No’ with ‘Oh really’ and closes the topic with evaluation and formulation.

Extract 13 shows the follow-up question which takes one minute twenty-seven seconds, the same time as extract 10 conducted by ALT.
Extract 13

A: Ah do you like shopping?
X: Yes, I do.
A: Oh usually where do you go shopping?
X: I went to Yonago.
A: Yonago. Which store?
X: Mu SATY.
A: Muhu. Oh tell me about your shopping.
X: I went shopping with my mother. Mu I bought many t-shirts. (LP)
A: Mu did you buy yellow t-shirt?
X: No no.
A: Oh what kind of t-shirt did you buy?
X: I bought black t-shirt.
A: Oh black one. Do you like that? Do you like that t-shirt?
X: (pause)
A: Yes or no so so?
X: So so.
A: Oh. So so. OK. This is almost at the end of the interview.

JTE A introduces the topic 'shopping' with the closed question 'Do you like shopping?'. Interviewee X's answer is 'Yes, I do'. Then he asks two questions 'usually where do you go shopping?' and 'which store?', which respectively follow the minimal response 'oh' and repeating the interviewee's utterance 'Yonago'. Interviewee X responds to each question. These two questions function as 'display question' of accommodation. Then JTE A asks with 'Tell me about your shopping' to elicit the further response. Interviewee X responds with 'I went shopping with my mother' and 'Mu I bought many t-shirts'. Following them, JTE A asks three yes-no and wh-questions, as we have seen in extract 12. Interviewee X responds with only phrases. Likewise, in extract 12, these questions don't work to check the level of the interviewee's ability. Responding with the same words in interviewee's utterance and evaluation, JTE A closed the topic.

To sum up, JTE A structures this follow-up question in the way he probes with a closed question firstly and extends the topic with an open question and finally
compensates interviewee’s breakdown with a yes-no question and a wh-question. He responds to the interviewee with minimal response and repeats the interviewee’s utterance. And he closes the topic with evaluation and formulation.

The extract 10 and the extract 13 cost almost the same time. But JTE A and interviewee X have more exchanges in extract 13 than ALT N and interviewee X in extract 10. It is likely that ALT N and JTE A employ the different ways to organize the questions. Their rates of speech seem to be different. As we have seen, JTE A tends to use some yes-no questions and wh-questions before and after an open question. In contrast, ALT N constructs the follow-up question in the way she introduces a topic with a closed question, elicits the further response with an open question and rephrases them. ALT N doesn’t ask closed questions but moves to another open question or the next part of the interview. Furthermore, ALT N tends to speak slowly. The ways in which ALT N manages interviews are characterized as ‘foreigner talk’, linguistic adjustment and conversational adjustment. The diversity in the ways ALT N and JTE A structure the follow-up question causes the difference of the number of the exchanges.

It seems to be reasonable that interviewers ask open questions so as to elicit the ratable utterances. van Lier (1989) claims that the emphasis is on successful elicitation of language, not on successful conversation. Although ALT N put more open questions to interviewee X to draw out her utterances than JTE A, the ratings of the two interviews resulted in the same. The reason of this is that interviewee X often broke down in the interview with ALT N and the extent that interviewee X can give the description was the same between ALT N and JTE A. However, interviewee X’s perception was that she seemed to be able to speak English better in the interview with JTE A than with ALT N, because she felt that the questions asked
by JTE A were easier than those by ALT N.
Chapter 4

Conclusion

This study investigated the variations amongst interviewers in the ways they elicit interviewees' speech samples and the impact of the variations on interviewees' ratings and performance. The finding in Study I was that interviewers' behaviors vary in: 1) the way in which interviewers develop topics and ask questions, 2) the way in which they respond to interviewee's utterance, 3) the variety of topics they tend to introduce in the interview, and 4) the way in which they close the topics. Table 5 shows the details of the interviewers' variations.

Table 5 The details of the interviewer's variations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) the way in which interviewers develop topics and ask questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* establish topics through closed questions and then elicit extended responses with open questions explicitly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ask closed questions before or after open questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* integrate the information from the interviewee utterance which triggers to ask a question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* intentionally ask questions which provide new information to extend responses</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2) the way in which interviewers respond to interviewee's utterance</th>
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<tr>
<td>* respond with one word or one sentence in interviewee utterance</td>
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<tr>
<td>* respond with minimal response or one word in interviewee utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* respond with minimal response or one word in interviewee utterance or explicit statement indicating interest in interviewee utterance.</td>
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<tr>
<th>3) the variety of topics interviewers tend to introduce</th>
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<tr>
<td>* introduce the similar topics to give interviewees fair opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>* introduce many ordinary topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>* maintain the topic for several turns</td>
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<tr>
<th>4) the way in which interviewers close the topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>* close topics with formulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>* close topics with evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>* close topics with repeating interviewee utterance</td>
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These aspects are combined and integrated to represent the characteristics of each interviewer. In the Study II, the interviewer variation didn't seem to have
significant impact on ratings. Investigating the interviewees’ utterance, we found that one interviewer (JTE) tended to ask 'display questions' first and then to ask the simple questions to compensate for the interviewee's breakdown. The other interviewer (ALT) tended to move to the next topic or the next part of the interview straight after she elicited the interviewee's utterance even after he or she broke down. The way the ALT tended to conduct interviews may be characterized as 'foreigner talk'. She spoke slowly and often rephrased her questions.

The present study shows the variations amongst interviewers in the interview test designed for junior and senior high school students in Japan. There is much room which the interviewer frame or procedure can't prescribe in this interview test. It is likely that the interaction unfolds in a conversational manner. Such unpredictability gives this test valid measure of conversational communicative competence (Brown, 2003).

We also found that some interviewers were able to use the way they intentionally control the development of topics. The number of topics which they introduced into the interviews was more than that in the interview in which information from the interviewee utterance triggers to ask a question. There are two aspects which interviewers manage in the interview, content and function. It is difficult to elicit the utterance to demonstrate the ability from the lower level of interviewees with controlling functions. Therefore, it is appropriate to present as many topics as possible so as to elicit the ratable utterance from them. This may raise the test reliability.

Unpredictability of the interview depends on how much both interviewer's and interviewee's utterances contains the entrusting behaviors. As we have seen, in some interviews there were the entrusting behaviors and the grounding behaviors
which reflected the uncertainty of the interaction. However, there were also the typical classroom discourse structures in the interviews in which interviewers could not endure the uncertainty of interaction. Although the loss of unpredictability results from not interviewer’s but interviewee’s responses, it is interviewers who need to maintain their entrusting behaviors to control the unpredictable interviews.

The distinction between the natural interaction and the typical classroom discourse depends on whether it has the entrusting behaviors. As we have seen, this study has demonstrated various patterns of interview samples which include entrusting behaviors. At the same time, the study has also shown such variety of interview styles didn’t affect ratings. These findings suggest that this oral test, keeping the natural and unpredictable discourse, may still be a reliable and valid test.

As we didn’t find that the interviewer variation affect the ratings, the variability within interviewer’s performance in this study doesn’t necessarily seem to be controlled through interviewer training and interviewer frames that limit the possibilities for construct-irrelevant variability to affect test score (Fulcher, 2003). The highest score of the interviewees in this test was 3, while the scale is up to 8. Therefore, we can’t exclude the possibility that the differences of interview styles may impact on the ratings for the higher level of interviewees. From this point, we might go on to further investigation into the interviews with the higher level of interviewees. Furthermore, there was only one ALT who participated in the present study. In the light of the present pedagogical condition in Japan, ALTs have the significant role to cooperate in assessing student’s ability. I would like to go on to clarify the variations of ALTs as interviewers and the impact on the ratings.
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Appendix 1

Interview test procedure

Time 6 minutes

(1) ~0'30" greeting, asking the name, warm-up conversation
(2) ~2'30" picture description
(3) follow-up questions
(4) ~5'30" role play
(5) follow-up questions
(6) ~6'00" wind-down conversation

the end of interview

(1) greeting, asking the name, warm-up conversation

"Good morning. My name is Akira Yamamoto. Can I have your name? Please tell me your name.

Make a brief conversation and reduce the strain.
"It's very cold outside, isn't it?"
"You look tired. What time did you go to bed last night?"
"It's almost lunch time. Are you hungry?"

(2) picture description

Show one of the picture prompts. Make the student describe the picture.
"Now, we would like to do picture description. Look at this picture."
"Tell me about this picture. Anything is O.K."
"What do you see in this picture?"

When the student stops speaking and you think the student can speak more.
"Anything else?"
Ask this question then go to next stage.

(3) follow-up questions

Take the picture back from the student. Ask several questions based on the student's level of performance in the P.D.
The purpose of questions is to evaluate if the students are able to perform at higher functions and varieties of topics.
For example, first of all ask a Yes/No question or a simple question the student can answer easily. Then ask a question the student should reason or explain. ("Tell me about the experience.")

"Did you go to the beach last summer?"
"Tell me about the experience."
"Have you had a party like this?"
"Tell me about a party you have had at home."
"Which do you like better a cat or a dog? Why?"

(4) Role Play

Three kinds of situations (shopping, movie, station) have three kinds of levels (red, yellow, blue). The easiest one is red. Pass the appropriate level card based on the testee's speech level. The tester starts the R.P. when the student
finishes reading the instruction.

"Please look at this card. When you are ready, I'll begin."

The purpose of Role Play is to know whether the student can ask questions. So the tester should not ask questions but leave the statement open.

[Shopping / Yellow]

Tester: "May I help you?"

Testee: "I'm looking for a watch."

Tester: "Well, we have different types of watches here. Take a look."

Testee: "Umm. Can you show me cheaper ones?"

Tester: "Sure. These three are very reasonable."

Testee: "Can I try them on?"

(5) follow-up questions

Tell the student the Role Play is over. ("This is the end of the role play.") Take the card back from the student. This shows the end of the Role Play clearly. Ask questions based on the speech in the Role Play. Ask questions in the same manner as (2). Ask questions about the student's speech on the different topics and functions from (2). Check whether the students capable to maintain the speech.

(6) wind-down conversation the end of interview

After the follow-up questions, tell the student it is the end of the interview.

"OK. We are almost at the end of the interview."

Wind down for the last 30 seconds. Ask a brief and easy question to answer and finish the interview so that the student can have a sense of achievement. This will ease the sense of the failure and motivate them to study more.

"What are you going to do after school today?"

"What are you going to have for lunch today?"

"Do you have any plan for the weekend?"
Appendix 2

Interview Test Step Descriptor

Step 1
- Can state one’s name and exchange such easy greetings as “How are you?” “I’m fine, thank you,” or “My name is ...”
- Can complete predictable tasks such as picture description and talk about given topics in utterances on the word/phrase level by simply listing things, persons and events.
- Can respond to closed questions in ‘rigidly formulaic’ expressions.
- Heavily influenced by one’s native tongue in pronunciation and often fall back on long pauses and hesitations, which makes it difficult to establish and maintain the conversation.
- Often have difficulty understanding the tester.
- Often have difficulties in producing utterances, so that the Tester would have to elicit response by pointing to items in the picture prompt or asking easy yes-no questions.

Step 2
- Occasionally able to describe one’s personal preferences and everyday life by producing limited kinds of utterances in phrases or simple sentences such as “I like ...” “This is ...” or “There is ...”
- Can provide an answer to almost all the Tester’s questions, although in the form of (memorized) phrases.
- Most of the utterances are in words or phrases, and only occasionally able to produce simple sentences with major errors like lacking subjects/verbs, or having word order wrong. Errors are seen even in utterances in words or phrases.
- Influenced by one’s native language in pronunciation.
- Occasionally resort to one’s native language in utterances and quite often fall back on long pauses (i.e. more than 5 seconds) and speak very slowly.

Step 3
- Able to carry out a conversation on personal hobbies, everyday life, family and friends in words or phrases, and in words of one’s own*.
- Able to respond, in a simple sentence, to the questions asked, although unable yet to provide more information than required*.
- Constantly produce utterances in the form of a sentence. Sentences contain both major errors like lacking verbs and minor errors such as wrong usage of verb forms (e.g. -s, -ed, -ing), plural-s and articles.
- Sounds of each word get clear but not without a native-tongue-affected accent. Take Japanese speaker for instance; articulate each word ending with vowels as in “I don’t” instead of “I don’’t’’.
- Longish pauses do disappear but still with too much hesitation and unfinished utterances.
- Unable to carry on conversation with a smooth tempo.
*Words of one's own: When a tester produces without drawing on memorized chunks like greeting expressions as shown in Step 1, the production is regarded as words of his/her own. Nothing like formulaic expressions.

*More information than required: cf. Step 4

Step 4
- Able to provide personal information about classes at school or club activities.
- Assumes an initiative role in the conversation by asking questions, and is able to invite the interlocutor or offer reasons and occasionally able to give one more additional piece of information than directly asked. For example, answer to a question like “Do you like your dog?” in such a way as “Yes, I do” followed by “My dog is very cute.”
- Get dependent on short sentences, rather than on words or phrases, with less major errors. Most of the utterances are intelligible enough.
- Pronunciation of each word is distinct with less native-language-affected sounds.
- Get less dependent on hesitation and repetition, and able to carry out a conversation with a smooth tempo.

Step 5
- Can talk about the town or society they live in. They can narrate*, explain*, and promise.
- Use single discrete sentences most.
- Can demonstrate discourse that is connected with “and” or “but,” and use a single complex sentence using subordinate conjunctions such as “when” or “if.” However, these structures are not so common and not controlled completely.
- Show almost correct control of simple structures, but still make minor errors. While talking about past events, speakers try to use past tense but cannot show complete control over it yet.
- Pronunciation is mostly intelligible even if occasional mispronunciations occur with English specific ones.
- Sustain natural intonation but not always. However, hesitation and pauses are not so frequent and can talk in a slow but steady rhythm.

*Narrate: to tell a story by describing all the events in order. In other words, to talk about his/her daily life (e.g. from the moment to rising until arriving at school) or events in chronological order. To narrate, past tense use is commonly required.

*Explain: to describe clearly with his/her own reason and/or opinions.

Step 6
- Can talk about the social topics and negotiate problematic issues that are common in daily lives. Can make a request or insist their ideas to others in order to negotiate means to solve problems via conversation. For example, canceling one’s appointments or exchanging things one has bought at shops.
- Can demonstrate discourse that is reasonably fluent. Also, show frequent use of complex sentences with relatives or conjunctions. Can show correct control over the use of past tense. Grammatical errors are still frequent but rarely impede communication.
- Maintain natural intonation, which is appropriate to the context, but still have a few mispronunciations.
- Hesitation and/or circumlocation are not so evident. Can talk in natural rhythm.

Step 7
- Can negotiate problematic issues and propose a settlement of them to achieve. Can complain, argue, or show some attempt solutions and develop a single topic coherently and cohesively. For instance, immediately expressing one's convincing opinions with regard to the interlocutor's idea.
- Show a static control over the use of complex sentences. Use a variety of appropriate sentence structures so speakers are reasonably fluent.
- Errors that impede communication are limited almost only to the complex sentences or when talking about highly cognitive topics. So, speakers are reasonably intelligible.
- Pronunciation errors and influence from speakers' native language are rare and do not impede communication. Speak in natural speed with native-like intonations and/or rhythm with frequent natural hesitations.

Step 8
- Can talk about imaginative, abstract, or arguable topics. Sometimes demonstrate humorous aspects. Use a variety of appropriate sentence structures so they are reasonably fluent.
- Grammar and pronunciation errors rarely impede communication. Use frequent self-corrections to compensate errors.
- Show appropriate control over pronunciation, intonation and rhythm. Can speak naturally.
Appendix 3

The transcripts of interviews by JTE A in Study II

With interviewee P

A: So let's begin. Hello.
P: Hello.
A: My name is ( ). Please tell me your name.
P: My name is ( ).
A: Oh. ( ). How was the marathon today? Marathon. How was the marathon?
P: How was?
A: Was marathon hot?
P: Yes.
A: Ah. Are you OK now?
P: Yes.
A: So first of all look at this picture. Please tell me about this picture.
P: Mu. Tree. Mu he is read a book. She is read a book. (LP) He is talk to friends.
A: Anything else?
P: Water.
A: Muhu. OK. Thank you. I have questions. Ah Do you like reading books?
P: Yes.
A: Last night did you read a book?
P: No, I didn't.
A: Oh last night what did you do?
P: I watch TV.
A: Please tell me about the TV program.
P: Mu. I watch TV program, Ainori, and Sumasuma.
A: Muhu.
P: Yes.
A: Was that interesting?
P: Yes.
A: After that. After watching TV, what did you do?
P: I sleep.
A: What time go to bed?
P: About mu at eleven.
A: Muhu. OK. Thank you. The next is role play. Look at this card. When you are ready, I'll begin. Are you ready?
P: Ye yes.
A: OK. Hello.
P: Hello. (LP) Mu Next Saturday let's go watch movie.
A: Muhu OK. Sounds nice.
P: (LP) Time time is (LP) wakarimasen.
A: Time is
P: (LP)
A: In the morning or in the afternoon?
P: (pause) Time is afternoon.
A: Muhu. OK.
P: Ah We go to by car.
A: Yes, OK so let's go by car to the movie. OK so see you later.
P: See you later.
A: OK. Thank you. This is the end of the role play. Do you go to see a movie?
P: Yes, I do.
A: Oh, usually with who do you go to see a movie?
P: My friends.
A: Oh your friends. Tell me about your friends.
P: ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ).
A: Please tell me about how what do you like about them?
P: About?
A: About them. About your friends. What do you like about your friends?
P: (LP)suki sukidesuka?
A: Muhu.
P: I like minnna.
A: Muhu muhu. Why why do you like them?
P: They are interesting.
A: Muhu and?
P: And (LP)
A: Are they kind?
P: Yes.
A: OK. Good. Thank you. After this after this interview, what are you going to do?
P: I I want to volleyball.
A: OK good. So practice hard. Thank you very much.
P: Thank you very much.

With interviewee X

A: Hello.
X: Hello.
A: My name is ( ). Please tell me your name.
X: My name is ( ).
A: Oh ( ), how are you today?
X: Mu I'm so so.
A: Oh so so. Last night did you study?
X: No, I don't.
A: Oh really. What did you do last night?
X: Mu I played tennis.
A: Oh you played tennis. At night?
X: Ahh reading read a book.
A: Oh really OK. OK so First of all look at this picture. Please tell me about this picture.
   Anything is OK.
X: This is chair. Mu she is reading a book. Cat is under the table. He is eating a cake.
A: Anything else?
X: They are talking.
A: Muhu. OK. Thank you very much. Ah do you have a party like this with your friend or with your family?
X: Ah yes.
A: Oh yes. Please tell me about the party.
X: (LP)
A: When did you have the party?
X: It's my birthday.
A: How was that?
X: (LP)
A: Did you have a party with your family or with your friend?
X: Ah with my family.
A: Ah then please tell me about your family.
X: Ah My family is father mother grand mother grand father sister and brother.
A: And you seven members.
X: Yes.
A: Muhu. And? Ah do you like your brother?
X: Mu I'm so so.
A: Ahhahaha. How about your sister?
X: Mu I'm so so.
A: Mu is your sister kind?
X: No.
A: Oh really hahaha OK OK. Thank you.
   So Next is a role play. Look at this card. When you are ready, I'll begin. Are you ready?
X: Mu
A: OK. May I help you?
X: Ah Yes. (LP) I want to buy some buy a t-shirts.
A: Ah T-shirts Yes. We have many T-shirts.
X: Many T-shirts. Ah I have I want to yellow.
A: Oh yellow one. Yes we have two kinds of yellow T-shirt. This one and this one.
X: Please small size.
A: Ah small size. Yes this is small size. Is this OK?
X: OK.
A: Mu Oh this is one thousand yen. Is it OK?
X: Yes.
A: OK here you are.
X: Thank you.
A: Thank you very much. So this is end of the role play. Ah do you like shopping?
X: Yes, I do.
A: Oh usually where do you go shopping?
X: I went to Yonago.
A: Yonago. Which store?
X: Mu Saty.
A: Muhu. Oh tell me about your shopping.
X: I went shopping with my mother. Mu I bought many t-shirts.(LP)
A: Mu did you buy yellow t-shirt?
X: No no.
A: Oh what kind of t-shirt did you buy?
X: I bought black t-shirt.
A: Oh black one. Do you like that? Do you like that t-shirt? Yes or no so so?
X: So so.
A: So so. Ok this is almost at the end of the interview.
   After this interview what are you going to do?
X: (LP)
A: Are you going to play tennis or are you going to study?
X: Ah play tennis.
A: How about tonight are you going to study?
X: Yes.
A: Yes, you must. hahaha. you have to study.
X: Yes. hahaha
A: So study hard. Ok thank you very much.
The transcripts of interviews by ALT N in Study II

With interviewee P

N: Hello.
P: Hello.
N: What's your name?
P: I'm ( ).
N: Oh, how are you?
P: I'm fine.
N: How was the marathon?
P: I was hot.
N: Ah. OK. Look at this picture. Tell me anything about this picture.
   Anything is OK. What do you see in the picture?
P: Big tree. Mu it's a red and white parasol. White tape. He is eating sandwich.
   She is eating sandwich. Dog is sleeping. She plays the guitar and sing song.
   He eating hotdog. There on the cat. Parasol on the bird. They are swimming.
   (pause)
N: Anything else?
P: No.
N: OK. Did you go to the beach last summer?
P: Yes, I did.
N: Oh, tell me about the beach last summer. What did you do?
   Mu Ah I'm eating yakisoba and suika. Mu.
N: OK. Very good. Thank you. Next is the role play.
   Please read this card. When you are ready, I'll begin.
P: Excuse me? I'm going to shopping to T-shirts.
N: Ah I see. Can I help you?
P: I'm size is M.
N: Ah. We have many M size T-shirts.
P: Mu color is pink and white.
N: Oh yes. How about this one.
P: Yes.
N: Oh It's 5$.
P: Here you are.
N: Oh thank you. Here the T-shirt.
P: Thank you.
N: Thank you very much. OK. This is the end of the role play.
   So do you like shopping?
P: Yes, very like.
N: Oh, where do you go shopping?
N: Tell me about Jasco and Saty.
P: I'm shopping is accessory. And cap
N: Cap
P: And skirt. (pause)
N: Which do you like better, Saty or Jasco?
P: Ah I like Saty.
N: Why?
P: Saty is many skirt, cute skirt.
N: Oh I see. Very good. OK. We are almost at the end of the interview.
What are you going to do after school today? What are you going to do after school today?
P: I'm going to play volleyball.
N: Oh. What are you going to do this weekend?
P: I'm going to shopping.
N: Very good. OK. Thank you very much.

With interviewee X

N: Hello.
X: Hello.
N: How are you?
X: I'm fine.
N: Oh what's your name?
X: My name is ( ).
N: Ah OK. ( ). I'd like you to look at this picture.
   Tell me about this picture. What do you see in the picture? What do you see?
X: He is reading a book. He is drink a tea. They are talking. He is reading a book. (LP)
N: Anything else?
N: Good. OK. Have you been to a café?
X: No, I haven't.
N: Ah OK. Have you ever been to a restaurant?
X: Yes, I have.
N: Oh, Tell me about a restaurant. What did you do there?
X: I ate ate spaghetti. This is delicious.
N: Good.
X: (pause)
N: Who did you go with? Tell me about who you went to the restaurant with.
   Tell me about them.
X: My mother and sister. (LP)
N: OK. Next we'd go on to the role play. Please read this card. When you are ready I'll begin.
   OK? Are you ready?
X: Yes. I want to go to New York. (pause)
N: OK. We have two kinds of tickets. Expensive fast ticket or cheap and slow ticket.
   Which ticket do you want?
X: (LP)
N: Fast or slow? Expensive or cheap?
X: Fast.
N: Fast OK. Ten $. 
X: Thank you.
N: OK. This is end of the role play. Do you take the train?
X: Yes, I do.
N: Oh where do you go?
X: I went to Yonago.
N: Oh tell me what you do in Yonago?
X: I went to Yonago two my friends. We we play we watch movie. We we took take foods.
N: I see. OK. Almost at the end of the interview. What are you going to do this weekend?
X: Mu I'll go to Okayama.
N: Ah nice. Please enjoy Okayama.