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ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIVE ACCOMMODATION IN ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW DISCOURSE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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By

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ABSTRACT

Two research hypotheses concerning communicative accommodation by oral proficiency interviewers are addressed in this dissertation. The first assesses interactional phenomena in English as a second language oral proficiency interview discourse and predicts that when there are overt signals of candidate trouble in interacting with the interviewer, these signals will instigate accommodative moves by the interviewer to facilitate and simplify subsequent questioning. This hypothesis is examined with variable rule analyses of 2782 interviewer questions contained in 80 oral proficiency interviews conducted with Japanese company employees. Results of the variable rule analyses suggest that an assortment of candidate troubles differentially function to instigate accommodation in the subsequent interviewer questioning turn. The second hypothesis examined in the dissertation considers the relationship between observed frequencies of interviewer accommodation and the final rating of candidate proficiency. Here, the hypothesis is that high frequencies of interviewer accommodation reveal the interviewer's perception of inability on the part of the interview candidate to engage in proficient second language interaction. Hypothesis Two is evaluated with the use of a multivariate analysis of covariance, which provides evidence that relatively high frequencies of reactive accommodative strategies serve to discriminate among the four rating categories observed in the corpus of 80 oral proficiency interviews.
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Chapter 1. INTERVIEWS AND THE CONCEPT OF PROFICIENCY

The orientation of most current approaches to the teaching and testing of second language proficiency is centered on the assumption that the goal of second language study is the development of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1972, 1983; Canale and Swain, 1980; Munby, 1981). While this goal is justified by observation of the traits communicatively competent users of a second language demonstrably possess, the processes by which communicative competence is developed, and the procedures that can be effectively used to assess such development have only recently been articulated (Bachman, 1988). One major assumption for the assessment of communicative competence is that the procedure best suited for the task must involve a direct observation of a speaker's language use in a simulation of authentic communication (Seliger, 1985; Shohamy and Reves, 1985).

While modern approaches to second and foreign language pedagogy have gradually come to be focused on achieving communicative competence as their goal, it is apparent from the language testing research literature that methods for assessing proficiency have not developed as rapidly (Clark and Clifford, 1988), nor is there a consensus about the validity of the assessment procedures currently used. This overview will therefore outline issues relating to current conceptualizations of the notion of second language proficiency, and will focus on processes used in the major method of assessment, the oral proficiency interview. Following the
review of issues, approaches to the present research project will be introduced.

**Integrative Testing**

In contrast to earlier approaches to language testing, which often involved an atomizing of component traits in discretely measurable units (Lado, 1965), current assessment methods tend to focus on the holistic evaluation of complexes of micro-skills used interactively and integratively for the purposes of communication. In the integrative approach (Oller, 1979; 1983), the focus of assessment is on the product of the communicative effort, with much less emphasis on the interrelatedness of the putatively separable traits that are thought to generate the second language user's proficiency or ability to communicate effectively. Through the common variance shared by different integrative tasks, manifested in high intercorrelations and common factor loadings among such tasks, underlying traits motivating proficiency were thought to be revealed (cf. Vollmer and Sang, 1983).

**Proficiency as Goal**

An immediate by-product of the emphasis on defining language ability as the user's capacity to communicate has been the popularization of the concept of *proficiency* as the goal for second language instruction. By making the target of instruction an attainable standard of proficiency in using a second language for communicative purposes, as opposed to knowledge of sub-skills representing abstract traits, the communicative movement has provided the basis for widespread revision of language teaching and testing. The orientation towards teaching for proficiency (Savignon,
1983; Omaggio, 1984; James, 1985) has concurrently created a need to design language testing techniques that can reliably assess the second language user's ability to use language in interactive contexts in which proficiency converges with the world external to the language classroom. The most direct, and ostensibly authentic method of testing (cf. Stevenson 1981;1985) is the oral proficiency interview.

As the demand for direct testing in government programs increased (Clifford, 1978), greater emphasis was placed on specifying the expected outcome of modern language pedagogy at the college level (James, 1985). By defining the goals of second language learning as predetermined levels of mastery, the curricula to achieve such goals would gradually come into line in a single operationalization of second language proficiency—a “common yardstick” (Hiple, 1987). The standardization of the definition of proficiency required a coherent set of procedures for assessing second language use. Such procedures were in fact extensions of the more familiar direct testing techniques used in government agencies (Clark and Clifford, 1988), with the main difference seen in the naming of particular proficiency levels on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Scale (Galloway, 1987), at the lower end of the hypothetical continuum of proficiency in order to accommodate university-level programs.

Guidelines for Interviewing

With a widening utilization of the oral proficiency interview as the major apparatus for eliciting extemporaneous second language performance has come an increased need for interviewer training
and standardization. The major emphasis for training of interviewers for standardized interview procedures, e.g., Foreign Service Institute, Defence Language Institute, and the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages interview formats, has to date been focused on the structuring of the interview procedure into four major phases; "warm up", "level check", "probe", and the "wind down" (ETS, 1982) and particularly in the focusing of interviewer attention on features of candidate speech thought to instantiate evidence of proficiency at various levels. The questioning and role play strategies interviewers use are for the most part conversational, yet they are linked to functional categories related to putative proficiency criteria outside of the immediate context of the interview. Thus, the content of a role play might be taken to represent a functional category such as "Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimal courtesy requirements" (ETS, 1982: ii). The interviewer's task is to elicit "samples" of extemporaneous second language performance that can be evaluated according to the specifications and definitions of proficiency along the rating scale continuum.

Interview as Communication

Because the interview is widely viewed as a feasible direct method of assessment, its status as the preferred method of "authentic" language testing (cf. Stevenson, 1985) has increased dramatically in the last twenty years. The fact that candidates must directly reveal their skill by participating in conversation-like interaction provides the basis for the face validity of the interview. Among possible alternatives such as simulation and role play, the
interview is widely taken to be the most realistic sampling of interactional competence, if not communicative competence itself. The overwhelming preference for the interview method of communicative language testing has led to a widely received view that what is sampled in the context of the oral interview is in fact second language proficiency (cf. van Lier, 1989; Bachman, 1988). The source of interview face validity perhaps comes from the emphasis placed on the candidate's speech without much reference to the authenticity or sampling adequacy of the questions posed in the interview itself. By defining proficiency according to ordinally scaled criteria defining "real world" competence that must be extrapolated from the content and context of direct interview questions, and not from the world external to the interview, there is an immediate potential discrepancy between the content validity of questions used in the interview and the meanings ascribed to answers to those questions (Bachman and Savignon, 1986; Lantoff and Frawley, 1985). In the received view of interview processes, candidate answers are taken as direct evidence of proficiency, and are apparently less commonly seen as relevant to, and reflective of, interviewer questions. The emphasis on defining proficiency as the well-formedness of responses, as opposed to understanding the construct of proficiency as one possibly depending on the interaction of two speakers engaged in continuous mutual interpretation and accommodation, has led to objections to the oversimplified view that second language proficiency is validly accessed in oral proficiency interviews (Bachman and Savignon, 1988; Lantoff and Frawley, 1988; van Lier, 1989; Ross and Berwick, 1992).
Reassessments of the Received View

As with many innovations in second language pedagogy, the procedures and criteria for defining proficiency according to the oral interview protocols were initially accepted without extensive examination of the underlying presuppositions about the procedures by which the protocols would be implemented. This tendency for unreflective acceptance coincided with the new-found orientation to communicative competence and the concept of "teaching for proficiency" (Omaggio, 1983; James, 1985). Eventually, however, a gradual reassessment of the implications and methodology of oral proficiency testing began to emerge in the research literature. In particular, the oral proficiency interview (OPI) scale (Clark & Clifford, 1988), and its extension to the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines (Byrnes and Canale, 1986), which provided ordinally scaled descriptions of ideally proficient speakers, have come under critical scrutiny. The basis for the objections stem from perceived mismatches between the face validity attributed to interviews and the construct of proficiency.

Lantoff and Frawley (1985; 1988) note that the definitions of proficiency are not linked to any observation of natural communication, but are instead lists of characteristics presumed to be in the repertoire of a proficient speaker. The problem, they argue, is that there is no such "ideal" non-native speaker against whose competence any given level of proficiency can be calibrated, and "that very little is known about how speakers, native or otherwise, relate linguistic structure to language function in the everyday world" (Lantoff and Frawley, 1988, p. 183). A similar
critical analysis of the definitions of proficiency relating to oral interview outcomes has been articulated by Bachman and Savignon (1986) and Bachman (1988), who assert that the interview method influences the candidate's demonstration of language behavior, which may not have a referent in non-test settings. Since the goal of the interview is to obtain a specimen of second language speech through a standardized interview method, the interview presumes numerous rules of behavior and interaction (Schegloff, 1984; Briggs, 1986; Dillon, 1990), which may not reflect the types of interaction non-natives are likely to encounter outside of the interview situation (van Lier, 1988). The standardization of the interview and the rating criteria process thus may increase the reliability of the procedure at the expense of the generalizability of the ratings—a problem which potentially threatens the content validity of the procedure and the predictive validity of the level awarded to the candidate. The effect of standardization of interview protocols may portend serious consequences in other forms of diagnostic interviews as well, and may in fact influence the interaction and discourse in ways that are detrimental to the candidate (Marlaire & Maynard, 1990). What is said by the candidate, after all, is contingent upon, and consequent to, the framing of specific questions. As a candidate's speech occurs within the interview, what is perceived by the interviewer as indicative of "proficiency" is to a large degree dependent on the candidate's understanding of what is being talked about. As Briggs (1986) points out, the context of the interview must be seen as the starting point for understanding the meaning of utterances:
context is a phenomenological construct that is created jointly by the participants. Not only are contexts not situational givens, they are continually renegotiated in the course of the interaction. The words of the interviewer and candidate do not simply occur within this frame; along with nonverbal components, they are the very stuff of which the context is constructed. Each utterance thus reflects this ongoing process, just as it contributes to it. (p. 25)

Critics of the OPI have also given attention to variability of a test taker's behavior in response to such context variables as the personality of the interviewer, the status of the candidate relative to the interviewer, the topic, and so on. Along this line, Shohamy (1988) argues the need for multiple encounters between test takers and test givers under a variety of contextual constraints in order to reduce the effect of the single interview sample. Douglas and Selinker (1985) have also found the context of the test setting and a candidate's schematic knowledge to be largely unexamined influences on the ways speakers elaborate on topics broached in the oral interview. Their study emphasizes the variable effect of discourse domain and specialized knowledge of the speaker on the focus and elaboration of the speech sample. If context and task variability influence a candidate's suppliance of speech in oral test settings, then it would seem that ratings are dependent on the context and topical focus (Tarone, 1988). This implies that interview rating reliability, and potentially, interview validity may be as contingent on the particular test conditions and topics initiated by the interviewer as it is on speech produced by the candidate.
In another critical review of the oral proficiency interview, van Lier (1989) examines whether such interviews comprise instances of natural conversation, or instead reflect a kind of asymmetrical encounter in which participants are entitled to exercise quite different degrees of power over the organization and content of their discourse. Van Lier contends that interviews are by definition non-conversational contexts for interaction and that they thereby generate rateable examples of learner speech by curtailing those opportunities to negotiate meaning that interlocutors would characteristically employ in natural conversational interaction. The distinction between an interview method in which negotiation opportunities are denied to the second language speaker, and a conversation allowing systematic accommodation along the lines observed by Long (1981), appears to be at the crux of van Lier's argument.

From van Lier's perspective, the OPI is insufficient as a means of generating authentic conversation, although it may be modified so as to make it more closely approximate the rules of conversational exchange. While this position constitutes a reappraisal of claims to construct validity for the OPI, it has not been extended to an examination of specific qualities of oral test discourse that relate to the question of the test as an interview, a conversation or, perhaps, something worthy of a different categorization.

The literature on the OPI currently lacks a firm empirical basis for determining how the interview process itself differs from naturally occurring conversations between native speakers and non-native speakers at different levels of proficiency. Van Lier (1989)
points out the need for studies which compare and contrast interview and non-interview discourse. This calls for an analysis of the interview discourse, including communicative accommodation to the non-native interlocutor. Data for empirical studies would have to examine discourse taken directly from actual OPIs which are based on a standard interview protocol (see ETS, 1982) as opposed to simulated interviews or other interview techniques such as those featured in Fiksdal (1990) and in Lazaraton, (1991), which may not involve the same constraints as those enforced in the OPI context.

The Analysis of Interview Discourse: An Overview

The analysis of interview discourse potentially improves the basis for understanding the similarities and differences between interviews as a genre of talk-in-interaction and conversational interaction involving native speakers and second language users. Micro-analyses of interview discourse potentially provides a particular advantage for the understanding of assessment processes - by examining what interviewers actually do in reaction to evidence of interlocutor misunderstandings and interactional difficulties. Contrastive analysis of such reactive strategies with proactive moves by the interviewers attempting to manage the discourse of the interview also provides a novel view of proficiency assessment. The empirical examination of reactive and proactive interviewer questioning, and how such questions reflect the emerging portrait of candidate proficiency, will be the initial goal of the present research.

The core chapters of this dissertation examine the interrelatedness of candidate interactional troubles and interviewer strategies to accommodate to such troubles. Chapter 2 considers the
similarities and differences between language proficiency interviews and conversational interaction. The second chapter also introduces the methodology of micro-analysis of test discourse and provides an overview to the constraints imposed on interviewers to conduct the interaction within a restrictive time frame while minimizing their own speech in a form of interaction designed to sample the speech of their interlocutor. Chapter 3 introduces the structure of the generic oral proficiency interview and dissects the four main stages of the interview into substages during which the interviewer establishes varying topics of talk while probing and confirming a proficiency rating for the candidate. Chapter 4 introduces micro-analyses of interview interaction with a view to revealing how particular types of candidate problems in answering questions lead to specific moves on the part of the interviewer to repair the problems and simplify subsequent questions addressed to the candidate. The focus of Chapter 4 is thus to consider different possible triggers of interviewer accommodation. Chapter 5 examines the product of the micro-analyses and tallies all interview questions from a corpus of eighty interviews. Variation in accommodative questions is modelled across the four rating levels so as to examine the symmetry of the triggering phenomena along the proficiency continuum. In total, 2782 interviewer questions are subjected to variable rule analysis. The products of the Chapter 5 analyses are tables of probabilities that the various candidate troubles observed predictably result in interviewer accommodation in subsequent question turns.
Chapter 6 returns to the micro-analysis mode in categorizing the types of strategies interviewers adopt as a consequence of candidate troubles. The goal of this chapter is to determine which strategies occur, and to provide a glimpse of the interrelatedness of the type of trouble manifested in the interaction and the on-the-spot diagnosis interviewers make. The strategies extrapolated from the corpus become the basis for frequency counts of the tokens of accommodation serving as input to multivariate analyses. Chapter 7 examines the relationship between the outcomes of the interviews and the frequency of different types of accommodative strategies within them. The tallies of varying types of accommodative tokens are the input to multivariate analysis of covariance with the length of each interview serving as the covariate. The goal of Chapter 7 is to examine the degree to which different types of accommodation can discriminate among the rating categories.

The reliability of identifying phenomena occurring within contextualized interaction is an essential issue in all social science research. Chapter 8 examines the consistency of eighteen independent judges who examined excerpts from the corpus of interviews. Both candidate interactional troubles and interviewer accommodative strategies were featured in the excerpts. Chapter 8 features the overall consistency of judgements and examines particular instances of disagreement among the judges.

The core chapters of the dissertation present the details of two approaches to conducting research on interview interaction. Each chapter employs either a qualitative or quantitative method. The categories generated in the interpretive micro-analyses of the
interview discourse serve as input to analyses devised to examine the patterning of variables relative to one another, and to two fundamental hypotheses about the interplay of triggers of accommodation and the power of accommodative questions as predictors of the interviewers' final assessment of candidate proficiency.
Chapter 2. INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS

An interview is understood to be a planned encounter between unequal participants in which one or more persons possess the role of questioner and organizer of the topic and talk (Button, 1992). Because of the ultimate use to which the interview results will be put, that is, evaluation, many of the questions in an interview are intended to provide displays of knowledge, competence and information possessed by the candidate. Interviews are clearly not limited to language assessment, but are common in virtually all spheres of social activity, including such diverse functions as job placement, hospital admission, the provision of social services and legal testimony (Drew and Heritage, 1992). A key characteristic of all interviews, including OPIs, seems to be the allocation of rights to only one of the participants to control the content of talk occurring during the encounter. The asymmetrical control of questions and topics constitutes a potential challenge to the validity of the oral procedure, since an oral interview is assumed to be an appropriate method for determining the limits of an individual’s ability to simulate conversational interaction. Whatever the purpose of the interview may be, this allocation of control clearly distinguishes interviews from conversational processes among equals. This does not assume that all non-interview modes of interaction involving dyads adhere to the rules of conversational interaction. Recent studies of various forms of institutional discourse (Drew and Heritage, 1992) suggest that many interactions involving two speakers do not correspond to conversational criteria. The extent to
which interactions are motivated by transactional goals, where the speakers' intention is mainly to convey novel information to the interlocutor (Brown and Yule, 1983), as opposed to maintain social phatic communication with him or her, provide one criterion for distinguishing between conversations and information-driven communication.

The Nature of Test and Non-Test Discourse

Oral proficiency interviews are interpreted as direct indicators of communicative competence. This interpretation assumes that the rules of turn taking in an interview simulate those of ordinary conversations, given that competence to communicate in interview contexts is not distinguished from competence to converse in other contexts. Comparison of interviewer and conversational processes, however, reveals that there are only a few stable similarities.

A basic turn-taking similarity between conversations and interviews is the contiguity of adjacency pairing. Questions 'project', or create the expectation that answers are forthcoming (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). An asymmetry can be seen in interviews, where there is adherence to a question and answer format in which the questioning is the sole prerogative of the interviewer. Another major difference is seen in the continuity of nominated topics (Schegloff, 1986), since the interviewer is free to cut current topics short and nominate others according the interview agenda. Of importance for understanding the differences and similarities between interviews and native-non-native conversations is the extent of accommodation of linguistic form and discourse organization. Ample description of the ways in which native
speakers accommodate to non-native interlocutors in simulated conversational exchanges exists (Long, 1981; Gass and Varonis, 1985; Pica and Long, 1986), yet there has been little analysis of talk-in-interaction (Schegloff, 1992), that constitutes the questions and answers so central to interviewing (Button, 1992). One possible source of variability in accommodation might derive from the orientation of the speakers in conversations, as opposed to interviews. Conversations typically transpire in an interactional mode (Brown and Yule, 1983), whereas interviews typically manifest a transactional goal for the discourse. Using a transactional or information-oriented mode, interviewers are primarily interested in the elicitation of speech from the interlocutor for the purpose of second language proficiency evaluation, rather than to establish or maintain social communion with the candidate. Their transactional goal, in other words, is to extract linguistic information from their interlocutors. The "information" the interviewer attends to is characteristics of speech thought to indicate proficiency. In the interactional mode, the frequency of accommodation possibly indicates the native speaker's goal of facilitating communication. Conversely, accommodation in the transactional interview may indicate the interviewer's intention to forestall disruption in the sequencing of questions and answers. That accommodation to interlocutor miscomprehension and interactional trouble occurs in both interactional and transactional discourse modes is not surprising. The mechanisms by which accommodation is triggered and the meaning it projects, however, may indicate important differences since, in the context of the interview, accommodation
may reveal interviewer perceptions about the candidate’s linguistic competence.

**Conversations and Accommodation**

Confusion over the content of OPIs—confusion about the "conversational" or "psychometric" orientation of the process itself—has made it difficult to establish the construct validity of oral assessment. An important assumption about oral proficiency assessment is that, given the interviewer’s role in framing the topics for candidates' responses, it is, or ought to be, based on conversation. What, in practice, is "conversational exchange" between native and non-native speakers? One approach to this question lies in the concept of accommodated conversation between native speakers and non-natives, specifically, the use of foreigner talk (Ferguson, 1975; Freed, 1978; Zuengler, 1991) by native speakers in non-test settings.

Numerous studies of native-non-native discourse have suggested that the process of achieving a common understanding entails frequent moves to negotiate the meaning of utterances (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1980, Gass and Varonis, 1985). Negotiation is in fact a basic characteristic of the conversational process and is pitched to the perceived level or interest of understanding of the interlocutor. In foreigner talk discourse (Long, 1980, 1983; Long and Porter, 1985), there is a direct relationship between the amount and quality of conversational adjustment formulated according to the apparent needs of the non-native partner so that the conversation can proceed with both participants sharing opportunities for turn taking, questioning, and other forms of typical conversational behavior.
Foreigner talk may be characterized as an example of a more general process of accommodation, a process whereby the native speaker modifies both the form and content of the discourse so as to facilitate communication. The process is essentially the same as the accommodation that natives extend to each other during conversational interaction. In conversations between native speakers of a language, interlocutors may converge towards each other's register, style or accent (Giles et al, 1987; Giles and Coupland, 1991; Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991). Native-non-native conversations, on the other hand, are dominated by overt moves to help the non-native to participate more fully in the conversation. This accommodation appears to be proportional to the perceived needs of the non-native, and is subject to a dynamic assessment of the current status of the conversation. Naturally occurring conversations are therefore open-ended and unpredictable at the outset of the interaction. Subsequent increases in the frequency and variety of accommodative features in the speech of the more proficient interlocutor imply that there is some perceived need for them as the conversational interaction continues.

Some Open Questions

The debate over the validity of the discourse evolving from oral proficiency interviews has centered on the contention that the structure of the interview itself begets samples of language that are not directly indicative of language use outside of the interview context (Bachman, 1988), and secondarily on the observation that the rating criteria have no real-world basis, but are rather set in idealized projections of what speakers should be able to accomplish.
in situ (Lantoff and Frawley, 1988). The debate has also succeeded in pointing out the need for empirical studies that address the content of oral proficiency interview discourse with a view to examining the fit between the interview and what transpires in ordinary conversational exchange. This need, as well as additional studies of validity criteria are part of a larger program of research required on the oral proficiency interview method.

In a review of the state of the interview, Clark and Clifford (1988) note that five main areas of research on the OPI are required in order to resolve questions about interview reliability and validity. These five areas for research include investigations into: 1) external criterion measures; 2) use-validity research methods; 3) the construct validity of different "levels" of proficiency; 4) native speaker intuitions about non-native speaker proficiency; and 5) research into the scoring reliability of the interview.

The first, which addresses the most fundamental of criticisms of the arbitrary standards used to define proficiency, concerns itself with establishing suitable criterion measures. That is, a given rating on the oral proficiency scale needs to be related to what an individual can do in other non-interview tests of language proficiency. Current definitions have sought to establish what an individual at a given level of proficiency should be able to do in the real world. How the rating criteria relate to less direct tests of proficiency remains to be seen, but they have the advantage of being open to empirical examination. The criterion requirement relates to the second area of proposed research on the oral proficiency interview, which addresses the fit of scalar proficiency definitions to
ways second language speakers interact with native speakers of the target language outside of the context of the interview. The interface between rating criteria and actual second language performance is a crucial factor in validating the descriptions of proficiency that are essential components of the oral proficiency rating scale. The behavioral anchoring factor itself is linked to the fourth area of research on the oral proficiency interview, which addresses a facet of validity. How native speakers who are not interviewers or raters view speech performances of second language users is, according to Clark and Clifford (1988), an area of research that remains unresolved. This area relates also to the issue of rating reliability (Barnwell, 1989). Although there have been ample studies of reratings of interviews which show considerable consistency across raters (Lowe, 1978), the actual criteria used by interviewers, who are also raters, and subsequent raters who listen to recorded interviews, remains as an open source of variance. The reliability issue relates to a more fundamental issue in oral proficiency testing in an indirect way. It has been seen that although consistency can be achieved in multiple ratings of the same performance, how different interviewers structure their interaction with second language speakers may vary to some degree, and therefore may affect candidates' performances. How variation in interviewer style and consequent candidate performances fit into the scheme for defining the principles of level description is an important area of research that has to date not been thoroughly considered.
Extending the Research Agenda

The main thrust of the present research concentrates first on examining how candidate speech and interactional phenomena can be linked to variation in questioning strategies during the interview. This phase of the research thus addresses aspects of the fourth area of needed research, that related to native speaker intuitions about the interlocutor's need for support. Potential causes of communicative accommodation may be extrapolated from micro-analyses of interview discourse and may reveal categorical and variable rules of native-nonnative speaker interaction in the interview context. In terms of test validity, a "thick" description of how interviewers accommodate their speech to their interlocutors, and how patterns of accommodation match with the outcomes of the interviews can provide a basis for understanding the construct of proficiency from within the interview itself, as opposed to externally reified definitions from outside the interview process. The research therefore addresses the use validity facet, and will facilitate an investigation of the construct validity of different rating levels.

The two main research themes are considered in light of the interactional and strategic motives of the interviewer. In order to frame the relevance of accommodation and the influence candidate interactional trouble has on such accommodation, it is crucial to consider the orientations interviewers bring to the interactional context of the interview, and to examine the interaction as essentially an example of institutionalized talk--talk that is fundamentally goal-oriented (Drew and Heritage, 1992). The initial step in understanding the oral proficiency interview as a form of
institutionalized talk requires an analytical framework that first deals with the discourse of the mutual interaction between interviewers and candidates as the basis for generating other categories for closer inspection. It is proposed, therefore, to initially examine the discourse within the interview with micro-analytic procedures (Drew and Heritage, 1992). The major advantage of first examining interview discourse with the methods of micro-analysis of talk resides primarily in the fact that questions, answers, and subsequent reformulations of questions can be more readily seen as interactive and mutually dependent phenomena (Lazaraton, 1991; Button, 1992).

**Micro-Analysis of Talk**

From the perspective of the interviewer, the scheduled interaction with a candidate is for the sole purpose of sampling speech about which specific inferences can be reliably and validly made. The oral proficiency interviewer's orientation can therefore be seen as different from interactions observed in other forms of institutional talk in which the questioners craft queries in order to extract specific answers, and at the same time discourage superfluous and off-topic talk from their interlocutors (Bergmann, 1992; Atkinson, 1992; Button, 1992). Oral proficiency interviewers, in contrast, prefer the candidate to do the talking. The major point of commonality is the manner in which questions are framed. If the interviewer's questions are not properly framed and understood, subsequent turns will have to be spent on reframing or reorganizing the discourse in order to access the required information, or even to turn the floor over to the interlocutor or candidate for an extended
speaking turn. To the extent that interviewers have to engage in reframing and reorganizing turns, the interview will be at variance with the ideal interaction for the genre. From this perspective, the frequency of interviewer accommodation to the candidate's interactional needs during the framing of questions and probes can be seen as tokens of interviewer “work”--the amount of effort interviewers must expend in extracting extended samples of candidate speech.

As has been seen in other forms of institutional discourse (Drew and Heritage, 1992), interviewers follow a principle of parsimony in which their task is facilitated if they can extract the maximum amount of relevant information from their interlocutor with a minimum of elaborative talk expended in eliciting that information. It seems reasonable to consider oral proficiency interviewer accommodative questions as instances of a purposefully crafted effort to facilitate the interview process. The interviewer’s perceived need to accommodate may also be taken as an indication of deviance from the conversational norm against which a candidate’s proficiency may be compared. This leads to a fundamental question: What is the underlying “norm” for interview interaction? In studies of everyday conversational interaction, the latent or unmarked routine of interaction passes without any manifestation of a disruption or signal of variance from the preferred format in the exchange of information in turn adjacency pairings (Levinson, 1983; Atkinson and Drew, 1979). The interviewer’s goal for orchestrating the question and answer sequences is to achieve the turn-taking symmetry of ordinary conversations. There is a
basic mode of turn-taking that is "expected" in a smooth and successful interview or conversation. How the symmetry of turn-taking is achieved, through preferences for contiguity, framed by pre-sequences, and judicious repair, is the object of the micro-analysis of interview discourse.

An examination of interview discourse using a micro-analytical approach such as conversation analysis can serve the function of generating categories of interaction that can be examined qualitatively and quantitatively. The following sections will outline categories of interaction that appear in both ordinary conversations and oral proficiency interviews. Their significance for this research resides in the potential such categories provide to shed light on the triggers of accommodation in questioning when there is communicative breakdown in the interview.

Priorities for Questions and Answers

Whether interviews manifest features of conversational interaction is a primary consideration for validation of interviews as simulations of communicative performance. Interviews are often interpreted as the most direct evidence of communicative performance because they involve face-to-face interaction characteristic of second language use in the world external to the assessment process. An analysis of interviews should thus reveal a degree of comparability between the function and the form of both interviews and conversations. In interviews, we can expect to find a sequencing of questions followed directly by relevant answers to them as the preferred, or at least first priority, (Bilmes, 1993) structure. When there is a disturbance to the preferred question and
answer sequence, we can expect an interviewer move to repair, restructure, or accommodate to the candidate. The interviewer's goal is to maintain the turn-taking symmetry of adjacency pairings, as in ordinary conversation, with a minimum of adjustment. Each adjacent pair is ideally followed by another question and answer sequence until the interviewer has observed sufficient samples of candidate speech to allow for a reliable inference about his or her speaking proficiency. For the interview to adhere to the preferred structuring of question and answers, there may be some form of interviewer "hedging" that serves to increase the likelihood that the questions are fielded by the candidates the first time they are formulated. This form of lead-in can be seen as running parallel to phenomena observed in conversational interaction, specifically in preliminaries to speech acts (Schegloff, 1980).

Pre-Sequences

As Levinson (1983, p. 345) notes, the uses of pre-sequences in conversation are varied. Pre-sequences function to "license" particular speech acts by informing the interlocutor of the speaker's intention to perform the speech act. Atkinson and Drew (1979, p. 253) give an example of a pre-invitation as:

A: Whatcha doin?  
B: Nothin"  
A: Wanna drink?

One common function of the pre-sequence is to confirm the availability of the desired object, or to avoid a negative response to an invitation or request (Atkinson and Drew, 1979). The intentions of interviewers are in many ways similar to those of real-world
conversationalists. Since the purpose of the questioning in interviews is to elicit language for evaluation, having the candidate optimally focused on the topic about which talk is to be directed makes for an efficient interview. Pre-sequences help the interviewer to achieve this end because they draw attention to the next topic for talk, and provide the interviewer with a "set up" that functions to allow him or her to frame topics immediately prior to probing questions. Pre-sequences can therefore be seen to help the interviewer evaluate the readiness for the interlocutor for the next topic. The role of pre-sequences may be considered crucial for efficient interviewing. Without setting up the talk on the next topic, the interviewer runs the risk of inducing a communication breakdown that will be costly in time and effort to repair (West and Frankel, 1991), thus disrupting the preferred sequence of questions followed by answers. The frequency and manner in which pre-sequences occur is therefore of importance for our understanding of how interviewers structure the tasks.

The interviewer's primary task is to ask a series of questions. Pre-sequences can be seen to provide a conjunction between the question-answer sequences since the range of question topics often varies dramatically in the interview. Pre-sequences are often conjunctive because, in addition to setting up transitions, they warn the candidate that new topics and questions are soon to be posed. This factor adds to the efficiency of the interview discourse in that pre-sequences serve to warn the candidate that the focus of talk will be changed. This further serves to reduce confusion, silence and communication breakdowns—all of which interfere with the goals of
the interview. Indeed, if questions were posed without sufficient transitions across topics, there would be greater likelihood of candidate miscomprehension, and subsequent reformulation of interviewer speech. The result would require a higher proportion of interviewer talk, and a greater expenditure of interviewer effort.

Interviewer Repetition After Underelaborated Answers

The preferred structure of questions followed by answers may be thwarted by signals of miscomprehension and non-answers. Other candidate responses may also require more interviewer work to restructure the question and answer sequencing. Previous micro-analysis oral proficiency interviews (Ross, 1992) suggests that when under-elaborated answers follow long question-posing turns taken by an interviewer, a rerun of the question is usually undertaken so as to extract a more elaborate turn from the candidate. As noted above, short answers to long questions do not fit into the preferred structuring of the interview, and impose an increased work load on the interviewer.

Silence, pausing and suprasegmental signals of difficulty in answering seen in a candidate's speech may either indicate miscomprehension of the questions the interviewer poses, or may indicate insufficient declarative knowledge about the content that would make a fluent answer possible. When there are lexical reference problems, the candidate may opt for direct negotiation. Such negotiation requires the interviewer to take more turns to define the content of the question in a manner the candidate can comprehend. Such a strategy is a dangerous one for the candidate, however. Not only does it openly reveal non-comprehension of a
word the interviewer assumes would be known, it creates a greater obligation for the candidate to supply a sufficiently elaborate answer after the extra interviewer work required to reformulate the question. The following excerpt (P = interviewer, N = candidate) reveals one such instance.

P do(1) did the company give you any restrictions?
N→ (1) wh=what do you=do you mean(.) what does a restriction mean?
P restrictions
N =hum
P ahhum restrictions are:::(.) you are allowed to do certain things
P but you are not allowed to do others
N aahaha
P =so restrictions are being no=not allowed to(.) do certain things
N hum (1)
P what kind of restrictions (1) ((ehhem))
N→ (5) .hhh °nothing else I think (17) the com=company per=per
N permitted me(.) everything else
P uh hum
N I was very free
P ah that's good that's unusual.
N ha?
P hum(.5) aaammm(.) hum(1) what were your impressions(.5)
P your feelings about American people

After P's definition of "restriction", N does not take up the topic of company restrictions on employees on overseas business trips. N's long silence ( at → ) can be taken as a token of an under-elaborated rejoinder. The subsequent lines suggest that P, as an employee of the same company, assumes that restrictions are in fact stipulated for employees overseas. N's denial that they exist is punctuated with the seventeen-second silence, which seems to indicate that P, who makes no effort of fill the interlude, expects more elaboration from N on this point. By resorting to silence, N signals that he is unwilling
to elaborate on the topic of company restrictions on employees (Lebra, 1987). The long silence here may signal that an elaboration is not forthcoming, and that the floor is open for P to take back, who in this instance does not want it. Further evidence that N's under-elaborated answer is not sufficient comes when he restates his experience with restrictions immediately after the long silence—which in effect restates his under-elaborated answer. Again, given that this turn follows P's explicit reformulation of the original question, N's reticence may be taken as an indication of an uncooperative posture in the interview. This excerpt provides an illustration of the relevance of a micro-analytical approach to interview talk for generating categories, in this case under-elaboration, that may have some significance as triggers of accommodation in subsequent interviewer turns.

Repair and Reformulation--Interviewer Work

In the ideal interview scenario the interviewer asks pithy questions and candidates would take extended turns in answering them. The data such answers would provide could then be assessed according the proficiency criteria set down in the rating guidelines (ETS, 1982). In authentic oral proficiency interviews, however, a typical interviewer has to consciously manoeuvre around topics that have exhausted further potential for candidate talk and instead purposefully frame new ones for more extensive sampling of speech. The framing of new topics takes considerable interviewer effort, which is subject to a law of diminishing returns. If extensive interviewer speech time must be expended on framing moves and subsequent questions to which the interlocutor does not take up in
extensive rejoinders, a larger proportion of the speech will be that of the interviewer, rather than of the person whose speech is to be evaluated. The premium is therefore placed on interviewers framing statements and questions clearly enough for candidates to field and respond to in a single attempt. The need for this parsimony in question posing creates a two way need for repair and reformulation. Interviewers need to reformulate and self-repair unsuccessful attempts in framing and questioning moves, and candidates need to repair their own monitorable speech errors. The motives for repair and reformulation are therefore contrastive (cf. Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). Interviewers self-repair and reformulate in order to make the interview procedure as efficient as possible; candidates self-repair in order to provide an overt, albeit belated, demonstration of linguistic knowledge. The former case is demonstrated in P (the interviewer's) loosely coherent introduction of question topic in the probe phase of the interview.

P      ahm (.) ↑Japan is very crowded during golden=er=the ah
N                  [ah yes yeah
P      it's very crowded because many people travel
N                [um hum
P ah (1) hum (8) so if you:=if you go during golden week (.)
P ahh(.)when are you going to make plans(.) to go
N (6) .hhehee I couldn't understand
P→ If you ↑decide to travel during golden week when will you
P      make plans(.) to go

On some occasions, the preference for self-repair may come into conflict with the power differential inherent in the interview as an interaction context. Interviewers retain the prerogative to perform
repairs on ill-formed candidate utterances for the purposes of expediting the interview. Malformed queries, in contrast, are rarely the objects of repair by the less powerful members of the interview dyad. Even when questions are inadequately framed or misarticulated in probes, candidates in many cross-cultural interviews, perhaps in deference to the interviewer's role, do not request clarification from the interviewer after malformed queries, and are left to their own inferential devices to identify the intended reference of the question.

The exact manner in which repair and reformulation is performed in interviews differs in subtle ways. In the excerpt below, the interviewer (T) accommodates to a mishearing by using tonic stress to indicate the location of the candidate's (M) mishearing of his question:

T  ahh (.) have you ever been to Japan.
M  no ahh (1) ah (.5) not to (.) Japan
T  Is that right. well do you want to go to Japan.
M  I have never been
T→ Do you want to go to Japan.
M  ah I wa=I want to go

while in the excerpt below, P's (the interviewer) correction of N (the candidate), in contrast, is not done in the service of making the current question more salient, that is, it is non-accommodative. It appears mainly to mark P's status as expert (native) speaker and interviewer. In fact, N takes P's reformulation of the statement as a restatement of fact, with no acknowledgment of the correction.

P  ah its how many miles from Ca=from San Francisco?
N  (2) One hour drive
A descriptive analysis of oral proficiency interviews could be conducted sufficiently within the constraints imposed by conventional conversational analysis (e.g., Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). These constraints require detailed attention to the structure of interaction and the demarcation of positions within the turn taking that consistently reveal the participants' recognition of the underlying rules of organization. Such an approach is optimally suited for a rich exposition of the structure of interview interaction (e.g., Lazaraton, 1991). How structural details within the interview reveal how interviewers come to modify their questioning patterns, may not, however, be readily identifiable by examination of representative excerpts.

The second goal of the present research is to consider how variation in interview accommodation is related to differences in the outcome in the interview interaction—differences in the rating of proficiency. An approach to generalization based on quantification methods of analysis needs to be examined, therefore, in terms of its logic and assumptions, since the method by which the goal is to be achieved relies on providing quantitative evidence for microanalytical categories and phenomena associated with them.

Quantitative Approaches to Discourse Analysis

Current debates between ethnomethodologists and social psychologists of language have addressed the issue of applying
quantitative research methods to data traditionally thought to be in
the domain of hermeneutically-inspired sociologists of language.
(Schegloff, 1993). A main point of the debate concerns the
approaches to the validation of descriptions used by
ethnomethodologists who are wont to describe the regularities with
which particular phenomena occur in natural interaction in quasi-
statistical terms. It is not uncommon, for example, to read
descriptions of apparently pervasive phenomena worded, as
Schegloff (1993, p. 99) points out, with such terms as massively,
ordinarily, regularly or commonly. How such generalizations can be
adequately represented in numerical figures presents the main
objection conversational analysts have to quantification strategies
often used in other social science disciplines. Since, as the argument
goes, conversational phenomena are contingent upon, and are
products of, the immediate details of interaction with an interlocutor
in a given context, by extracting the phenomenon from its position
in talk-in-interaction and making it a unit to be summed for a role as
the numerator potentially strips the phenomenon of its contextual
interpretability. A more serious problem with descriptive
quantification is in rationalizing the denominator in the calculations
of percentages or ratios. Since the denominator is often conceived of
as the total of all possible contexts in which a phenomenon of
interest should occur, there must be an explicit judgement that there
are “obligatory” contexts in natural discourse (Schegloff, 1993). The
logical and empirical problems in defining obligatory contexts are
familiar to second language acquisition researchers (Bley-Vroman,
1983; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Cook, 1993). A more
controversial quantification approach in statistical description involves the total number of times a phenomenon occurs when expressed in relation to the total amount of time available for producing the discourse (Schegloff, 1993). The weakness of this strategy is the assumption that the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs in \( x \) number of times every \( y \) minutes of discourse. Such an assumption cannot be made independently of a myriad of other factors such as the role of the interlocutors, the topics about which they converse, their knowledge and interest of the focus of the current talk, et cetera.

The above objections to the quantification of conversational data are potentially valid if the approach used relies on type/token ratios and arbitrarily-defined notions of obligatory context. The objections are less valid if the approach to quantification used is based on codings of aspects of the talk-in-interaction that show potential for mutual interdependence. Indeed, if the goal of the analysis is to determine which of a field of codifiable aspects of interaction covary with any given phenomenon, some sort of predictive model amenable to quantification is desirable. The major constraint imposed on such a task is one that requires each and every coded aspect of the interaction to be evident in the actual transcripts of the interviews. The codes, in other words, must come directly from the observed data, and not be reflective of the discourse analysts' assumptions about what should occur, or how many occurrences might occur in a given amount of time.
Candidate Troubles and Communicative Accommodation

The essential thesis of the present research is that communicative accommodation occurs in response to overt signals of candidates’ inability to engage in fluent, accurate and pragmatically appropriate conversational interaction. To the extent there are conversational breakdowns, the interviewers are predicted to resort to a wide variety of accommodative manoeuvres that serve to restructure and propel the interview interaction. Before predictions about accommodation can be addressed, however, a more fundamental analysis is required. The preliminary research question must deal with the conditions of accommodation; when and under what circumstances they occur in the discourse. The expectation is that accommodation in its various forms does not occur randomly in the discourse, but that its appearance is in reaction to some overt signal from the candidate indicating a reframing of the speaking task is necessary for the interview to continue.

Two Hypotheses about Oral Proficiency Assessment

The preliminary research focus is on the issue of reactivity in oral proficiency discourse. Here, when and where evidence of candidate interactional trouble is linked to instances of interviewer accommodation is the object of analysis. The hypothesis developed and evaluated in Chapters Four and Five addresses interactional phenomena found in oral proficiency interview discourse and provides a variable rule account for differences in interviewer accommodation to various types of candidate troubles. A second hypothesis in this dissertation is framed in Chapters Seven and Eight. The frequency of interviewer accommodation is hypothesized to be
manifested in the interviewers' ratings of candidates' proficiency and by implication, to be reflective of the construct of second language proficiency as one contingent on the co-constructed nature of interview discourse.
Chapter 3. PARTICIPANTS, METHODS, AND PROCEDURES

The oral proficiency interview recordings examined in this study were selected from an archive of over four hundred oral proficiency interviews conducted in-house at a large Japanese multinational electrical components manufacturing company. The majority of the interview candidates were fully employed at the company in various research or overseas retail positions, or as trainees in the overseas training division, a technical training facility for new employees at the company. A few exceptions were interviews between members of the regular interviewer staff and Japanese professionals, either English language teachers, or in one case, a medical doctor. The level of education of the candidates was at least a bachelors degree from a Japanese university, usually in engineering, computer science, or a natural science. Approximately one-third of the candidates held master degrees in international business management or a natural science.

Interviewers

The twenty-five interviewers included in the study were native speakers of English from the U.S. (18), Canada (4), New Zealand (2), and the United Kingdom (1). All of the interviewers were initially trained by an Educational Testing Service representative affiliated with the Testing of English for International Communication (TOEIC) program. Subsequent recertification training was conducted in-house by the language program coordinators on a yearly basis. The method for recertification was essentially an interrater reliability checking process whereby the recertification candidates
would listen to recorded interviews and rate the performance of the second language speaker. The ratings would then be compared to the benchmark ratings made by the program coordinator. Interviewing technique was introduced in workshop format in the initial orientation to the interviewing procedure, and was checked by the program coordinator after the interviewer in training submitted sample interviews for review and analysis. The method of interviewing was that prescribed in the Oral Proficiency Interview Manual widely used for language assessment in the American Foreign Service (ETS, 1982).

The professional preparation of the interviewers varied widely. Of the twenty-five interviewers, eight held masters degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language. The remainder of the interviewers all held bachelors degrees, usually in the humanities. All of the interviewers were English as a foreign language teachers employed primarily as part-time instructors at one of the company's language training programs for full-time Japanese employees. Length of residence in Japan and teaching experience varied widely as well. The average tenure as a teacher in the company language program was seven years. The profile of the interviewers closely matches that of English language teachers in Japanese corporate programs - considerable practical experience in the classroom, but relatively little formal exposure to ideas from applied linguistics, the research literature in the field, or approaches to teaching English as a second language influenced by academic concerns.

The interviews were provided to the author of this research by the administrators of the language training program for the purpose
of conducting discourse analyses on oral proficiency interviews. All recordings were made with tape recording equipment in full view of the interviewers and candidates, and all participants knew that any interview might be subjected to analyses for reliability and validity checks. The original recordings were made as part of the standard interviewing procedure—not expressly for the purposes of the present research—and are therefore "authentic" in that the purpose of the interaction was not contrived for the purposes of research into interviewing processes, but for language assessment of the candidates.

The policy of recording all interviewers came from the need for program administrators to review the contents of interviews for cross-checking and verification of rating outcomes in high-stakes interviews leading to overseas postings or awards of promotions within the corporation. The recordings were made from 1987 though 1989 with the bulk of them done on-site in company offices in Osaka and Tokyo. The interviews were part of the regular testing schedule at the language training program, usually following the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) or in-house end of term achievement tests designed to assess mastery of course content taught in the company's English language teaching program. In addition to the high-stakes interpretations of interview results, assessments of speaking proficiency were routinely used for decisions about employee placement into overseas training programs, technical school graduation requirements, and overseas assignment potential.
The number of interviews sampled, eighty, was based on an extrapolation from effect sizes observed in a pilot study (Ross and Berwick, 1992). The sampling of eighty was chosen because that number of interviews was determined to provide ample statistical power for multivariate analyses of the accommodation features (Cohen, 1988; 1989; Borenstein and Cohen, 1988; Chmura-Kraemer and Thiemann, 1987). The selection of each interview recording was influenced by three factors: 1) the rating outcome, since a range of rating categories is needed for testing differences in accommodation frequencies; 2) the quality of the recording, because the micro-analysis of interview content requires clear audibility of both members of the dyad; 3) a wide sampling of interviewers from the pool of operational interviewers--so as to minimize the effects of individual interviewer style on the variation in accommodation or frequency of accommodative features.

Rating Criteria

The proficiency levels sampled were selected to represent four of the seven levels on the Defence Language Institute provisional definitions of oral proficiency (ETS, 1982, p. iv). The four rating categories examined in this study are defined and outlined below:

**Level 1+ High Intermediate**

"Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond intermediate survival needs. Show spontaneity in language production but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation but has limited understanding of the social conventions of conversation. Limited vocabulary range necessitates
hesitation and circumlocution. The commoner forms referring to present, past and future occur but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While some word order is established errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features (e.g., pronouns, verb inflections), but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Accuracy in elementary constructions is evident although not consistent. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Articulation is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, and can combine most phonemes with reasonable comprehensibility but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds in certain positions, or in certain combinations, and speech will usually be laboured. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Able to produce quite consistent narration in either past or future."

Level 2 Advanced

"Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. (Can get the gist of most conversations on non-technical subjects [i.e., topics which require no specialized knowledge]). Can give directions from one place to another. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply
with some circumlocutions; accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar."

**Level 2+ Advanced Plus**

"Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech but under tension or pressure language may break down. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary but not in both. Weaknesses or unevenness on one of the foregoing or in pronunciation result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negative to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping for everyday vocabulary still evident."

**Level 3 Superior**

"Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease (Comprehension is quite complete for a normal rate of speech). Vocabulary is broad enough that [the speaker] rarely has to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker."
Interview Format

The interview follows a set of general procedures set down to ensure that the interviewer gets an optimal "sample" of his interlocutor's use of the second language. The typical interview procedure includes a series of general questions that the candidate may be accustomed to answering. The high frequency topics and questions quickly give way to a series of questions crafted to gauge the candidate's most likely position on the rating scale. This "level check" stage may involve as many as ten short questions, often in rapid succession. The mid point of the interview introduces "probes" or detailed questions that attempt to elicit a more complex and grammatically detailed monologue from the candidate. The probes are intended to be articulated so as to force the candidate to demonstrate the use of the second language in a generative, unrehearsed way that provides concrete evidence of mastery at a functional level of second language competence. The type of probing question posed to focus on grammatical competence, such as the capacity to "narrate a story in the past tense", correlates to major rating boundaries such as 1+ relative to 2 (ETS, 1982; see also Lowe, 1988; Clark and Clifford, 1988). The final section of the interview, the "wind down", again involves questions that do not tax the candidate. This phase allows the candidate to recover from the stressful probes, which ideally stretch his/her second language competence to its limits.
Analysis of many interviews (Ross, 1994) suggests that the ordering of questions does not strictly follow the warm-up to wind-down sequence; there are substages in between the level checks and the heart of the interview, the probe. We will examine a sketch of the intermediate phases of oral proficiency interviews with a view to anticipating which kinds of questions are used at any given phase of the interview. The following description of interview substages is based on analyses of the interviews examined in this dissertation. The stages outlined below reflect how the interviewers structure their task, although there is variation among the interviewers in the extent to which they may linger in one phase of the interview process or another.

Openings

The first step of the interview involves a subset of predictable questions that serve to establish one or two main topics. Presumably if the interviewer knows that the candidate has come from home for the purpose of being interviewed, often on a Saturday, he or she may ask a question such as "Where do you live" for the lead in to the interview. If the interview is scheduled on a workday the interviewer may opt for a question such as "what is your job" or "how long have you been working" as the interview opener. Of importance for a description of interview openings is the variability in the second, third and fourth question turns. In these, an interviewer may either continue "trolling" for a response which signals interest and readiness to take an extended turn, or pursue a response to the previous question with follow up questions. While it is perhaps obvious that the first interview questions posed serve to
generate topics about which talk can be organized, it is important to
remember that both parties know that the real purpose of their
conversation is assessment.

**Small Talk**

The second phase of questioning would most likely be one
referring to a topic not directly linked to any in the first phase. At
this stage of the interview, which by now might be five or six
minutes old, an interviewer typically moves to get a wider sampling
of the candidate's readiness to respond. A high frequency of short
questions on different topics may indicate that the candidate
hesitates taking up the questions as conversational openings, but is
rather giving under-specific answers--often in violation of Grice's
maxim of quantity (Grice, 1975).

The exact location of the transition to the second phase of
questions will vary depending on the degree of elaboration in the
candidate's rejoinders. In terms interview goal, the second phase
may still be eliciting small talk, which is often formulaic for the
second language speakers. Candidates may, for instance, have
memorized routine responses to high frequency questions like "What
sort of place do you live in?" or "What are your hobbies?" For this
reason, such questions do not have much currency towards defining
skill in speaking the second language. Rather, they are useful in the
early phases of the interview to establish rapport and help the
candidate "limber up" for the more formidable speaking tasks that
follow.
Commitments

All interviewers aim to get the best performance possible from their interlocutors. Part of the skill in doing this involves getting the candidate to commit himself to a topic about which he has some declarative knowledge, and to get him to take the floor in an extended turn during which he may speak extensively on the topic. In the event a candidate has not taken up any of the questions with an extended answer turn, more interviewer effort is expended in making rapid transitions from topic to topic (Ross, 1994). We also see considerable trolling or throwing out a wide variety of questions for uptake, often done accommodatively. If the small talk stage of the interview has gone well, we may see a gradual focusing on an area of expertise the candidate has—which may lead to a framing of topics for the next phase of the interview. The commitment phase shows potential for considerable variation depending on the current impression of competence the interviewer has about the candidate. Candidates eventually make a commitment of expertise about a given topic—often work or experience related. The commitment phase can be interpreted as a shift in interviewing strategy that puts the burden of speaking onto the candidate.

Elaborations

As in the previous transition from small talk to commitments, if the elaborative phase has not yet been reached, interviewers are likely to revert to a general topic in a continuation of the trolling for viable topics. In most interviews, if a candidate has the wherewithal to talk about a personal experience or job related topic, the interviewer here will expect some degree of elaboration from the
candidate in an extended turn. The elaboration phase often comes after there has been a commitment to speak, but no long turn taken by the candidate to this end. The elaboration thus serves to hold open foregrounded topics for further questioning.

**Extensions**

With a topic suitably framed and the candidate beginning to take the floor in extended turns, interviewers often pursue topics with more specific queries. This portion of the interview is on the surface diverse in content, for the reason that interviewers seek to fine-tune the content of questions for which there have been answers that may under-exploit the candidate's experience. The extensions thus reorient the focus of the talk back to aspects of candidates' discourse that did not provide rich enough content for evaluation of speaking proficiency. The extension phase as a stage of the level check can also be considered an economical way of conducting the interview. When topics are introduced by the interviewer and ratified by the candidate, but do not generate enough speech, the cost of abandoning them to new topics is greater than recycling the under-exploited topics for further candidate speaking turns.

**Browsing**

An alternative to extensions is the browsing phase, in which the interviewer chooses not to pursue a former topic, or has done so unsuccessfully. Since effective interviews ideally contain more candidate talk than interviewer questioning, the browsing phase often indicates that attempts at prompting the candidate to take the floor have been unsuccessful. An extended browsing phase occurring
late in the interview can be taken as a sign of communicative troubles—that the candidate literally has nothing to say about the topics framed by the interviewer. If the interview has been difficult for the candidate, and the interviewer has sufficient evidence to believe that extensive queries will not provoke more speech, he may opt for a sampling of general, but less informative, questions. These function to maintain the form of the interview while expending the remaining time allotted for the interview without an obvious curtailment of the interaction, although an impression may already have been made by this point even without extensive probing.

Short browsing phases, often with a procedural question—querying how to perform a multi-step task, serve to set up the most difficult part of the interview. Extensions and browsing function to qualify the probe phase that may follow them. If a candidate cannot extend talk about an old topic or respond to an easier question in a browsing phase, it is unlikely that a more difficult topic and question will selected as a speaking task. In this manner, the extensions and browsing phases are analogous to computer adaptive tests in which selection of a more difficult test item is contingent on a successful answer of an easier item preceding it. When the browsing phase is very short, or is skipped outright, the usual next step is the main portion of the interview, the probe. The use of probing questions predicated on the candidate being identified at a level of proficiency that can be confirmed with a difficult question devised to tax his/her second language skill to its limits.
Probes

A crucially important portion of the interview is the probe. Successful probes often result in the candidate experiencing communicative breakdown. The interpretation here is that the candidate belongs in a rating category no higher than that evidenced through successful rejoinders prior to the probe. A probe ideally challenges the second language speaker's competence to its limits by requiring, at the high intermediate levels and above, a detailed monologue which must maintain coherent reference to the topic and a cohesive argument structure for the position the speaker adopts relative to the topic. In responding to a probe, the candidate must formulate an argument while concurrently controlling the formal aspects of the second language. The interviewer's task is likewise most difficult in the probe phase. Indeed, many interviewers resort to what appear to be formulaic questions in articulating their probes. The formulaic character of many probes may reflect the syntactic complexity of the framing utterance preceding the probe question. Probes often commence with "preliminaries" (Schegloff, 1980), which serve to orient the candidate to the probe question that follows.

Wind Downs

The final phase of the interview is the wind down phase. This usually occurs just after the candidate has taken at least one long turn for answering a major probe. It is at this point that an interviewer has presumably arrived at an estimate of the candidate's ability to communicate in the second language. The wind down also makes the ending of the interview sound "conversational", and
ideally sets the candidate's mind at ease with a few short questions that he/she can answer with little difficulty.

The micro-analyses of interview discourse presented in the following chapters do not make consistent reference to the specific phases of the oral proficiency interview. The vast majority of the interactional troubles hypothesized to beget communicative accommodation can be expected to occur after the warm-up and before wind-down phases of the interview--during phases where the interviewer is checking the candidate's capacity to answer questions without interviewer intervention or accommodative assistance.

The function of the foregoing sketch of interview phases is to provide an orientation to the types of questions expected to appear even when there is no overt signal of candidate trouble—that is, when there is no apparent need for communicative accommodation.

The Coding of Interview Interaction

The method of coding instances of interview candidate interactional features and different types of interviewer strategies in response to such troubles required varying degrees of inference. The coding involved extrapolating from instances of individual questions to a coding framework devised to capture discourse and interactional phenomena considered to be possible covarying factors related to interviewer accommodative moves. All of the codes used as input to the analysis of variation in accommodative questions were based actual on occurrences of interactional, linguistic, or pragmatic trouble. The following fictitious interview excerpt in Figure 3.1 provides an annotated example of the coding scheme used. The essential frame is
the current question in relation to the previous question posed to the candidate, and the previous answer to that question.

I ahh(.) Mr T, tell me about your hobbies
do you play tennis, play golf-watch tv.
C (2) I am play golf my friends
I I see. WHERE do you play golf.
C I go near my home

accommodative question

accommodation in previous question

( a o p e o j h y ( I see-WHERE do you play golf.

foregrounded topic speaker in candidate's last turn rating tallied as one token of overarticulation in the main tally.

Figure 3.1 Coding Scheme for Accommodation Phenomena

The coding input to the variable rule analysis begins with the status of the current interviewer question. In the example above, the code for a positive instance of accommodation is 'a', because the actual question "I see, WHERE do you play golf?" involves an exaggerated stressing of the interrogative. This strategy "overarticulation" is concurrently logged in a tally of interviewer accommodative moves used for multivariate analysis. In the event there is no accommodation, a default code of 'u' is listed at the head of the
captures the status of the candidate's comprehension in the previous question. The two codes thereafter show features of the candidate's rejoinder to the previous question; 'p' capturing the fact that the candidate paused before answering, and 'e' to indicate that there was a morphosyntactic error in the rejoinder. The next three codes in the input string example indicate discourse factors and potentially covarying candidate factors—the status of the question topic as new or foregrounded, here 'o'; the previous speaker, in this case the candidate; 'j', and the rating of the candidate as "high intermediate"; 'h'. The last factor code in the input string is the status of the previous question. Accommodative questions in the previous interviewer turn are coded 'y' for positive instances of the variable, or 'n' for negative, or unaccommodated questions.

Detailed accounts of the discourse factor codings are provided in the following chapters. A sample list of the 2784 interviewer questions, along with the codings assigned to each question string, is provided in Appendix A.

Analytical Procedures

As a prerequisite to analyses of accommodation frequencies, micro-analyses of the interview discourse introduce and rationalize the units of analysis employed in the empirical analyses in later chapters. The micro-analyses, based largely on the methods established in conversational analysis (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Drew and Heritage, 1992), seek to explicate structural phenomena within the interactional antecedents of accommodative moves systematically made by the interviewers. The micro-analyses introduce analytical categories used in the testing of the two
hypotheses, and indicate how accommodative moves are in talk-in­interaction (Schegloff, 1992). While a catalogue of interactional phenomena in language interviews is of interest to accommodation in its own right (e.g., Lazaraton, 1991), the major purpose for micro­analyses of discourse in the present study is to provide "grounded" phenomena that can be examined in terms of their influence on variation in interviewers' accommodative moves. The micro­analyses, in other words, are used to generate categories for analyses of variation.

The quantitative analytical methods adopted for this study consider 1) the differential probabilistic weights (Rand and Sankoff, 1990; Bayley and Preston, in press) of a variety of candidate­generated signals of interactional distress on interviewer variation in resorting to communicative accommodation and 2) multivariate analyses to test the extent of discrimination among the rating categories assigned by the interviewers. The goals for both approaches to the analysis of interview phenomena are to model the impact varying categories of candidate troubles have on interviewers' propensity to accommodate, and to then to determine the power of the varying types of accommodation in discriminating among the rating outcomes.

**Micro-Analysis Notation**

Several excerpts from the eighty interviews are extracted from the discourse for the purpose of introducing key phenomena leading to accommodation. The method of marking the discourse to capture the actual intonational, hesitation, overlapping, and articulatory
phenomena is based on the system used widely in conversation analysis (Jefferson, 1984).

When the interviewer and candidate speak simultaneously, the fact that both are concurrently talking is denoted with a latch mark [, which signals the beginning of the overlap. The right latch mark shows the position where the overlap ends.

[ Overlapping Speech

A: I used to work out every day
B: [ me too]

Interviewers often seek to retain the floor for an extra turn. When an individual speaker continues immediately without a pause, the continuation is marked with a dash

A: What do you wanna eat-did you have lunch?

In the event the second speaker follows the first with an immediate, but not overlapping turn, an equal sign denotes the immediacy of the rejoinder.

A: We always play tennis
B: =I can never get a court

Pauses reflect different interpretations in the interview discourse. Candidate hesitations, often necessary for planning time, are marked with micro-pauses, which are short durations between speaking turns. Micro-pauses are marked with a dot between parentheses (.). Longer pauses are timed and noted with a numeral that gives an approximate duration, in seconds, of the silence. The
interpretation of long pauses varies in interview. Some represent
wait time allowed for planning of rejoinders, others indicate an
inability of the candidate to provide an answer when it is expected.

A: Doing anything Saturday?
B: (4) Gotta study for an exam.

When the speech of the interview or candidate occurs at a very
slow rate, micro-pause marks are used to denote the speed of
articulation.

A: How was it
B: huh?
A: And how(.)did(.)you(.)like(.)it

Conversely, when information is assumed to be given, or
foregrounded, speakers often increase the rate of speech. Formulae
and aphorisms often are spoken at an increase speed. The content of
the speeded talk is offset with in-pointing arrows.

A: That's a >waddaya call the thing< a hammer

The manner of articulation may vary considerably for both the
interviewer and candidate. The articulation may reveal the
perceived source of candidate difficulty in comprehending previous
speech. When interviewers in particular extend syllables or
constituent segments, colons denote the stretched element.

A: What on earth ha:::ppened
Intonation is marked in a number of ways. Since the major focus of this research is on the form and content of questions, the intonational contours of the questions are of particular importance. A falling tone marked with a period denotes that the statement was made with an overt interrogative.

A: Why can't he come.

In contrast, a rising questioning tone without the syntactic form of a question is denoted with a question mark.

A: He is late again?

A fall plus rise tone, marked here with a tilde ~ indicates either incredulity or the speaker's intention to hold the floor for another speaking turn.

A: Well he said he would come~

Changes in pitch often highlight repairs or offset what is presumed to be old information. The rising arrow denotes a change in the pitch contour relative to the preceding speech.

A: Okay. ↑Well let's talk about your job

The falling arrow shows where the speaker uses a "trailing off" articulation mode that is audibly different, and potentially less salient to the listener.

A: Well fine ↓we don't need to worry

When speakers emphasize the content of utterances, they may do so by placing tonic stress over a particular syllable. When this is done in interviews, it usually reflects content that interviewers
understand their interlocutors not to have comprehended. An underline marks such tonic stress locations.

A: That one is not mine

In the event the interviewer determines the source of non-comprehension to be based on the inaudibility of what has been said previously, a common remedy is to over-articulate the troublesome word or phrase with extra loud articulation. Capital letters denote the place where this phenomenon takes place.

A: Don't be RIDICULOUS

Candidate dispreference for making overt errors or revealing non-comprehension in the interview is often marked by a transfer of a first language strategy of utterance subvocalization. In the interview excerpts, relatively quiet, or barely-audible segments are marked with a raised circle to locate the beginning of the subvocalized portion of the utterance.

A: What do you think about that.
B: °I don't understand.

The final notation introduced here reflects a manner of articulation that reveals a number of possible phenomena. When utterances are laughed in their saying, the function may be to indicate speaker embarrassment. In other contexts, the laughter indicates that both members of the interview dyad recognize the content of the utterance as humorous.

A: Thhhatts so funhhhnyhhheheh
When there is a laughed articulation, there is also an increased likelihood that the interlocutor will not comprehend the content of the actual utterance, and may seek revision in the next turn.

Reliability

The categories associated with the triggers of accommodation and interviewer accommodation strategies require no small degree of interpretation, even within the context of their occurrence in the interview discourse. In the pilot studies (Ross and Berwick, 1992; Ross, 1992) consensus coding was used to arrive at decisions about how particular phenomena appearing in excerpts would be classified. Such an approach of course leaves open the question of interpretability and generalizability of interview data by a wide spectrum of discourse analysts. In the present study, a rigorous approach to assessing the reliability of classifications of accommodation triggers and strategies is adopted. Specifically, the effects of a training program for teachers of English as a second language constitutes the basis of the analysis of agreement across a panel of judges. The classification portion of the study examines the extent of judges' agreement with categorizations of interactional troubles leading to accommodation, as well as with categorizations of the types of accommodative strategies used in response to such troubles. The data for the agreement study were a wide sampling of excerpts from the eighty interviews examined in this study. Robust agreement among judges constitutes a strong basis for generalizability.
Two sets of candidate-interviewer interactions were excerpted from the interviews. Examples of the interactional phenomena hypothesized to be potential triggers of accommodative moves by the interviewer, and example excerpts of interviewer strategies in reaction to such triggers were exported into the two files. The first file (Appendix B) was used as the rater training set in which the excerpts were presented to eighteen English as a second language teachers enrolled in a teaching English as a second language masters degree program. The training set of excerpts was explained in detail and its potential relevance as either a trigger of accommodation or as an interviewer strategy to accommodate was discussed in a workshop format. After the training session, which lasted two hours, the in-service teachers were given a test set (Appendix C) containing a set of different excerpts from the eighty interviews. The teachers' task was to classify each excerpt into one of the categories introduced in the training set--either as one of the seven possible triggers of accommodation or as one of the nine different interviewer strategies presented in the training set. The teachers were given one month to complete the classification reliability test set on their own, and were given explicit instructions to complete the test set without collaborating with other persons.

The agreement study, which utilizes Cohen's Kappa statistic (Cohen, 1960; Fleiss, 1971, Seigal and Castellan, 1988), considers the agreement among many judges while correcting for chance concordance among them. The agreement test set (Appendix C) was split into two main sections--one for the triggers of accommodation phenomena, and the other for the interviewer accommodation phenomena.
strategies. The percent agreement among the judges and overall Kappa Coefficient will be examined for the triggers of accommodation and each of the interviewer strategies examined in the test set.
Chapter 4. TRIGGERS OF ACCOMMODATION

The analysis of interviewer accommodation in the present research is undertaken with a view to uncovering phenomena that stimulate interviewer moves to make tasks and questions salient and optimally answerable by the candidate. This phase of the research addresses the issue of variation in accommodative questions posed by the interviewer. A key question about communicative accommodation is when, and after what features of candidate speech, do interviewers systematically modify their questioning strategies in the direction of facilitative accommodation. In order to examine this issue, a coding of discourse, grammatical and topic-related factors is developed in order to ascertain the most important discourse factors covarying with interviewer accommodation. Figure 3.1 introduced an example of the coding scheme. A detailed exposition of the codes used to represent discourse phenomena will be featured in Chapter 5.

A pilot study was conducted to outline the types of factors impinging on interviewer accommodation (Ross, 1992). The present research extends that study with an extended list of interactional trouble categories and interviewer remedies for them. The significance of such interviewer accommodation in questions as markers of trouble in the interview process relates to the first hypothesis in the present study.

The relationship of accommodative moves to the assessment of proficiency suggests that the symmetry of turn taking and conversational "burden sharing" may indicate a criterion for
about oral proficiency. High frequencies of accommodation suggest that there is systematic trouble in the interview process; low frequencies of accommodation may indicate that the interviewer finds few problems in conducting the interview. Features impinging on the use of accommodation may serve to reveal critical trouble spots which may coincide with interview questions posed used to check if the interviewee is capable of more sophisticated discourse. When such trouble spots occur, the interviewer most likely obtains crucial information about the interviewee's current state of oral proficiency.

**Hypotheses Related to Candidate Trouble**

The pilot study of triggers of accommodation, using logistic regression techniques developed for the analysis of linguistic data (Pintzuk, 1988) concluded that accommodation in interviewer questions is to a large degree contingent on the interviewers' perception that there is trouble in the previous turn. The nature of candidate responses leading to subsequent interviewer accommodation will therefore be the central interest for the first phase of the quantitative part of the proposed research. This phase will take the features generated in the initial micro-analysis of the interview discourse as the basis for examining the following hypothesis about variation in interviewer accommodative questions.

**Hypothesis One:** overt signals of candidate trouble such as requests for clarification, subversions of question content, pauses, non-sequiturs, misarticulations, grammatical errors, and underelaborate rejoinders will trigger accommodation in the subsequent interviewer question.
In testing the first hypothesis, an explication and rationalization of the triggers needs to be presented. Specifically, in addition to requests for clarification, question subversion attempts, pauses, non-sequiturs, and misarticulations, the extent to which under-elaborations and grammatical errors affect subsequent variation in accommodated questions must be considered. The phenomenon of underelaboration is best understood in reference to the concept of interviewer "work". After extensive framing of questions, the preferred, first priority (Bilmes, 1993), or expected, rejoinder is one that results in extensive candidate talk apropos the question posed. When responses are not forthcoming, the interviewer must retake the floor to rearticulate the question, or possibly completely reframe the topic. The consequence of frequent reformulation of topics and questions is more interviewer time and effort expended in engaging the candidate in question and answer sequences. A product of the expended effort on individual interviews is a cumulative fatigue factor that potentially leads to reduced interviewer effectiveness in later interview appointments.

The triggers of accommodation are separated into subcategories of candidate trouble. These categories are hereafter referred to as "factor groups", each of which contains factors that are related to different interlingual, interactional, or discourse phenomena. The use of the term factor in variable rule analysis differs from the uses of "factor" in other modes of multivariate analysis. In variable rule analysis, a factor group is a set of independently occurring linguistic phenomena that are variants within a possible set. For example, in the analysis of morphosyntactic variation, the presence of overt
marking of plurals on count nouns in English is the object of interest. The final segment of the noun stem would represent be a "factor group" with possible variants of the final segment: vowel, sibilant, nasal, stop or lateral as individual "factors" that may influence the variation in the appearance of the plural marking (Young and Bailey, in press). In this manner, factor groups are analogous to independent variables correlated with dependent variables.

In this dissertation seven factor groups were devised for the purpose of modelling the variation in accommodative questioning. The selection of the factor groups was guided by the conclusions reached in the pilot study (Ross, 1992) and by further micro-analysis of the interview discourse. The inclusion of factor groups here may not be exhaustive, but all factor groups encoding in the following analyses constitute plausible influences on variation in accommodative questions.

**Factor Group One: Comprehension**

In order to consider the most likely triggers of accommodation, two factor groups are initially used to examine the effects of candidate's comprehension and production in the previous turn. The effect of candidate comprehension is manifested in variation across the subsequent interviewer question turns. Factor Group One, which contains codings for candidate comprehension of the previous question turn, contains three levels of candidate response. When the candidate does not understand the content of the previous question, and overtly signals non-comprehension through a request for a repetition, or clarification of the question content, a context for subsequent modification of the troublesome question is overtly
made. At this stage, a potential circumstance for communicative accommodation is opened. The frequency of accommodation as a consequence to non-comprehension marked by requests for clarification is one that may vary across the four levels of the interview. The second code for the status of candidate comprehension is evidence of miscomprehension through the provision of an answer to a question that was not in fact asked. Here, the code is for the candidate's ignoring of the meaning of the question. In oral proficiency testing, "subverting the question" is a strategy candidates might use when they do not understand or do not wish to respond to a topic or question posed to them. If the cause of the off-topic response is miscomprehension, accommodative reformulation of the question or task can be considered as a reaction to the candidate's apparent miscomprehension of the preceding question.

Before a formal quantification and analysis is performed on Factor Group One, the actual occasions of candidate miscomprehension deserve considerable examination in their own right. To this end, several excerpts of Factor Group One (comprehension) phenomena are extracted from the eighty interviews for micro-analysis. The first factor to be considered is the candidates' overt signal of miscomprehension. This is most often marked by a direct request for help immediately after the interviewer has posed a question or framed a topic about which a question will be asked.
Excerpt 1

I: so do you know(.)you don't know which company or division
you'll be attached to yet
C: yes
I: which=which place to do you want to work for
C: which place?
I: for example the head office or components or
C: ummm staff section

In the above excerpt, the candidate's (C) miscomprehension of
the reference of the interviewer's question about where he would
like to work in the company leads to an overt question (marked by
lateral arrow) in response to the previous question turn taken by the
interviewer (I). A consequence of the candidate's signal of non-
comprehension is the interviewer's immediate offering of a response
containing potential answers to his own question. In this excerpt
the candidate's lack of comprehension is remedied with an
accommodative reformulation of the task in which a potential answer
is provided as an aid to comprehension.

Excerpt 2 demonstrates how concurrent or overlapping speech
may reduce the salience of the question in the next interviewer turn.
Here, in the turns prior to the request for more information both
speakers vie for a turn. The candidate attempts to complete a turn
in a turn adjacent to the interviewer's move to start a new question
that is topically relevant to the theme "New York". The overlapping
speech ( marked with the latch mark, [ ] , results in the candidate's
having to indicate non-comprehension of the question (→). This leads
to the interviewers' placement of an exaggerated variation in pitch

66
and stress on what is presumed to be the misunderstood or misheard portion of the previous question.

Excerpt 2

I    ahhm what else about New York (.) interests you.
C    (.5) ss(.)shopping
I    um hum
C    and I am just want to see ah(.)
I    is there anything
C    [New York city itself
I    is there anything that worries you.
P    pardon.
I    is there anything that worry. you about going there.
C    yeah or
I    you mean dangerous.

A plausible generalization about accommodative reformulation of miscomprehended questions might be that they are wholly constrained to occur adjacent to the places in which the candidate makes the overt statement of non-comprehension of the question. The accuracy of such a generalization would of course be contingent on no counter-examples in the corpus of interviews. Since the present research investigates variation in accommodation, there is an explicit expectation that accommodative reformulation is not categorically contingent on adjacency to points in the discourse at which requests for clarifications occur. Rather, the strength of contingencies depends on the likelihood that there is accommodation in response to such requests, whatever form such reformulations might take.

In Excerpt 3, the candidate misparses the prefaced question posed by the interviewer. In spite of the preface, which usually
serves to frame the topic of the up-coming question, the main portion of the question remains opaque to the candidate, leading to the request for further information.

Excerpt 3

I we just entered (.)1989 right. (. ) new year ah one thing you mentioned is that you are going to do this year is move to a new (. ) ah home(.) what else do you see in your life in 1989.
C→ °pardon.
I wh-what ↑else do you see your future in 1989.
C→ °ah in 1989?
I yeah what do you think is going to happen to you this year(. ) personal-personal life
C (1)tsshh
I or work life-doesn't matter
C ahmm I want (. )to(.)buy(.) a new car

The consequence of the candidate's request for a reformulation leads to the interviewer's modification of the pitch range, with a sudden rise in the pitch (↑) to demarcate the positioning of the rerun of the question. In addition to the prosodic modification, the interviewer also modifies the lexical complexity of the original question from "see in your life in 1989" to a more direct "see in your future in 1989". This strategy does not, however, serve as a direct resolution of the point of miscomprehension. The second query from the candidate leads to further modification from the troublesome "do you see in the future" to the more canonical future tense "what is going to happen", followed, for good measure, by a narrow specification of the scope of the reference to the subject of the expected narration.
The three excerpts thus far examined suggest that accommodation obligatorily follows candidate requests for clarification about miscomprehended parts of the question or speaking task. Interviewers may, in their framing of the topic for current discussion and questioning, create the misunderstandings through overly complex prefacing or parenthetical commentary about the topic to which the up-coming question is related. In such instances, the interviewers may in fact abandon the question outright, or may reformulate it in a non-accommodative manner. Of relevance to the notion that misunderstandings signal faults in the proficiency of the candidate is the interviewers' interpretation of the source of the trouble. In Excerpt 4, the interviewer evidently anticipates that the question has not been fielded, after a long pause in the answer turn followed by an overt statement of miscomprehension.

Excerpt 4

C  I don't think it is ahh good way that Japan give(.) monies (.) to(,) to such countries(,) only give-only giving money(.) to such countries is not a good way(.) °I mean.
I  Hum um hum (10) I agree with you. ↑But ah ah that leads me to my next question that is ah the imma- the immigration laws in Japan are rather strict ah to ah(.) control ^>people coming into the country< do you think ah the immigration laws are too strict-what do you think of the immigration laws, do you understand them?
C  (.)Yes I know hheh but I don't know ↑exactly(.) but I know there is very little foreign people living(.) in Japan or into immigration to Japan
I  uh huh
C  ahhh(.) one reason is Japan-Japanese land is too small(.)but ah Japanese big town is so crowded otherwise country side is not so crowded Japan(.) so~ Japan can accept foreigners more
um hum
if(.) they(.) want to live in ah ↑country ssihhde in Japan
but what should ah the immigration officials do about(.) people
ah coming into Japan that are not ah interested in working or
that they are not interested in studying to ahhh become better
citizens of their country all they are interested in is working to
send money back home-what should Japan-what should
immigration officials or what should Japan do about that
problem?
(4) °I can't understand the (.)
question? ok ah

By anticipating and completing the candidate's statement for him, the
interviewer was evidently finely attuned to the status of his
interlocutor's comprehension, perhaps indicating that as the length of
the questioning turn increased, the listener's burden of processing
the essential propositional content of the commentary leading up to
the question reached a critical overload point that even the question
asker recognized. The point to consider here is that variation in
accommodative reformulations may to some degree depend on the
interviewers' perceptions of the cause of the miscomprehensions--
with longer prefaces to the questions most likely to lead to parsing
overloads. The degree to which interviewers differ in their
perception of the causes of candidate requests for clarification, which
might be the result of overly complex prefacing or vaguely framed
questions, as opposed to proficiency weaknesses in the candidates,
may be a key source of interviewer variation in accommodative
reformulations after such requests for clarification.
Ignoring Question Content

The second potential trigger of accommodation in the comprehension factor group indicates that the candidate either did not comprehend the meaning of the current question, or opts to subvert the content of the question in order to provide a pre-fabricated question, or a surrogate answer. This second option may relate to a savvy communication strategy by a candidate. Since the onus of comprehension is on the candidate, by offering some answer that is even roughly on topic, the candidate avoids overt exposure of his lack of comprehension. A surrogate answer, even if it is off topic, is still an answer. As Long (1983) pointed out, in contrived interactions such as interviews, interlocutors often allow considerable topic slippage. In the present case, the most likely effect on the interviewer would be an impression of faulty comprehension on the interviewee's part, and a greater likelihood of subsequent accommodation by the interviewer in the next question. The following excerpts illustrate how candidates' ignoring the pragmatic content of the previous question influences the form and content of the following interview question.

Excerpt 5

I Let me change the subject a little bit you have probably read been reading quite a bit in the newspapers and seeing a lot on the television about ah China
C hahha
I how do you feel about(.) what's happening there.
C tssss
I [hhhm
C→ I-I was doing laundry so no(.) there was no only one television in the dormitory
I oh
C: so I can't see t.v. not so much so I read the newspaper
I: uh hum
C: just (7)
I: any ideas. Okay if=do you ah sympathize with the students?
C: ha?
I: do you agree with the students?

Here the interviewer foregrounds a new topic for questioning with a preliminary (Schegloff, 1980) that is meant to license the upcoming question. In the rejoinder, the candidate apparently ratifies the topic and clears the question for asking with his acknowledging backchannel, "hahha", which in the L1 of the candidate signals comprehension of the current topic. The acknowledging backchannel is followed by the question--one that ideally requires the candidate to retain the floor for a long speaking turn. The response to the question, however, suggests a problem either in the candidate's actual comprehension, or ability to formulate an adequate rejoinder. The interdental ingressive fricative "tsss" typically signals a problem in the speaker's expected response--either that the expected answer is not forthcoming, or that it will be a "dispreferred second", one that may differ from the perceived expectation of the interlocutor (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Levinson, 1983, cf. Bilmes, 1993). It appears that the interviewer is attuned to the signal of trouble from the candidate, as he overlaps the "tsss" with a prodding "hmmh". The actual rejoinder is not an overt change of topic. In fact, it may be taken as an account as to why the candidate is not ready to discuss the plight of the Chinese students. The candidate does indicate that he has read the newspapers, which would doubtlessly have covered the then current crisis in the People's Republic of China. The
interviewer evidently does not take the rejoinder as an account or reason for the candidate's self-disqualification as a competent answerer of the up-coming question. Again, he prods the candidate along with another "uh hum." Instead of revealing that he cannot answer, or does not understand the question, the candidate fills the answer space with a long pause, which, as we will see in the section below on production problems, usually leads to an accommodative move. The point Excerpt 5 illustrates is that comprehension of just-asked questions may be faulty because of misprocessing of either the propositional content of the preliminary topic fronting, or of the questions themselves.

For interviewers to detect if the candidates have grasped the intended meaning of the current question, they have to closely attend to the candidate's organization of the response. In the event that the question or topic content has not been fully grasped, the amount of interviewer effort needed to reset the topic after the candidate has launched an extensive off-topic rejoinder will be greater than informing the candidate of the miscomprehension at the next turn transition. This phenomenon is analogous to what has been observed in corrections in conversations (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks, 1977; Keating, 1993)--if corrections are to be made, they must come adjacent to the error. Excerpt 6 shows how an answer that was topically relevant, but was not articulated in the first person. It thus did not give evidence that the rejoinder was 'in the frame' (Tannen, 1979; MacLachlan and Reid, 1994) that would have been apropos the question. By responding to the question with an objective account of what Japanese student life is like, the candidate
is not responding as anticipated--and provokes intervention and specific remediation as to who the subject of the narrative should be.

Excerpt 6

I ahhm (3) do you ah (3) could you tell me a little bit about your ahh university life
C university life.
I what you did in university
C ahh
I in general
C→ yeah in general ahh in Japan the stu-students of university ehhh
I [no your university life not in general but yours
C (.U.S?
I no yours
C my university?
I when you went to college I would like you to tell me about ahh my university life?

The fact that the candidate's rejoinder is met with a corrective and emphatically-stressed restatement of the original question at the next turn transition point (where candidate utters "ehhh") reveals that the interviewer was focused on the propositional content within the answer sequence.

The two comprehension factors thus far discussed, requests for reformulation or clarification of the question, and apparent ignorance of the question, as indicated by off-topic responses or perhaps by strategies to subvert the question, are potentially strong triggers for accommodative questions. Since this study examines variation in questions, it is important to note that apparent candidate trouble spots - such as those examined in the first factor group--do not categorically result in accommodative moves by the interviewer to make the next question more comprehensible, answerable, or salient
to the candidate. In the event that the candidate demonstrates no problem with the just-asked question, the response by the candidate is coded with '0' for an ordinary, or unmarked, rejoinder to the question. A complete exposition of the codes for all factors in these factor groups will be presented in the next chapter.

**Factor Group Two: Production**

The second factor group considers the candidates' production strategies in responding to questions. It consists of four main strategies candidates use in producing responses to interview questions--pausing in the answer turn, misarticulating their responses through mumbles and voice modulation to subvocalizations and pitch falls, under-elaborations of responses in answer turns requiring substantive elaboration, and the just-mentioned non-sequiturs. The importance of this group comes from the fact that candidate speech production is the most obvious evidence of proficiency that interviewers can access--it is essentially the main object of the interview itself, and the focus of rating scale definitions of second language proficiency.

It can be seen that there is some overlap between factor group one members, i.e., ignoring the pragmatic content of the question, and factor group two's non-sequitur. The non-sequitur is in fact a product of non-comprehension or ignoring the content of the question. The separation of these two items is based on a distinction made here between apparent comprehension, and strategies to make that comprehension obvious to the interviewer in the response. A further reason for separating "ignoring the pragmatic content" and "non-sequitur" comes from the possibility that candidates may
choose to provide an answer that is plausible as a response to an interview question, but is not specifically the answer that is most appropriate for the question. Since there is potentially an important distinction between subverting the question and giving an answer that is not a sequitur to the question, the two factors are here separated. The distinction between ignoring the pragmatic content of the question and a non-sequitur will be maintained in the discourse analysis of the interview discourse. If the relationship between the two proves to be non-independent in the quantitative analyses, however, the two separate codes will be regrouped into a single factor category.

**Pauses in the Answer Turn**

The first and most obvious aspect of a candidate's response to a question is his or her apparent comprehension of the content and his or her readiness to present a viable answer. When there is trouble in articulating a response, we might expect that there would be some degree of hesitation, dysfluency, or pause between the question and an attempt at a response. The interviewers' response to pauses may vary if they interpret the significance of the pause in different ways. Pauses at turn transition points may be significant to some interviewers as places where accommodative reformulation of the question is necessary in order for the posed question to be answered. Not all interviewers, we may presume, attend to, or interpret pauses as signals of production difficulties, and may allow different wait times for responses to be formulated. The length of the wait time may reveal the interviewer's interpretation of the reason for the pause.
Excerpt 7 suggests that a pause may be taken as a non-answer, attributable to a lack of comprehension of the question to which the answer would be immediately relevant.

Excerpt 7

I please tell me about-you must be living in a dormitory now I guess
C (1.5)
I→ are you living in a dormitory now?
C yes
I ok please tell me about your dormitory

Here, the candidate's pause is interpreted as a fault in his comprehension of the maladroitly articulated statement to which a response was expected. Statements can be used as topic opening devices to which the candidate is expected to respond, provided such statements are understood as turn taking points in the discourse. In Excerpt 7, the interviewer's statement "you must be living in a dormitory now I guess" does not get processed as one that requires comment. The reason for the pause, as evidenced by the interviewer's expansion of the question, was due to a lack of comprehension of the statement.

Pauses in the answer turn may not be the result of non-comprehension of the topic, but may be more locally contingent on specific lexical or structural features of the most recently posed question. In Excerpt 8, the connection between the topic, which is understood by the candidate, and the object of the next question, "something similar", is not made by the candidate. The resulting pause is interpreted not that the candidate needs more time to
conger up some sort of relevant response, but that the linkage of "something similar" to the work the candidate performs in the company has not been made. The result of this interpretation is a reformulation of the original question into a canonical form.

Excerpt 8

I: it is challenging work-do you like your work?
C: yes(.)very challenging work
I: that's good did you study something similar in school.
C: (4)
I: what did you major in.
C: ah(.) in in university?

As mentioned above, the length of wait time provided by interviewers may vary widely. The interpretation of pauses and the wait time allowed by an interviewer before intervening with an expansion of the question may differ also according to the complexity of the just-posed question. This factor depends on the interviewer's skill at self-monitoring and concurrent estimation of the difficulty of the speaking task. In Excerpt nine, the interviewer opts to interpret a very short, half-second pause as an indication of non-understanding of the propositional content of the question, evidently because of the complexity of the phrase "hurt the credibility of the LDP?" In contrast with the previous two excerpts, which allowed longer wait times for responses to less sophisticated topics, Excerpt 9 indicates that interviewers may even anticipate candidate troubles in the more complex questions found in the probing portion of the interview. As in the two previous excerpts, the pause in the answer
Excerpt 9

I do you think(.) that the recruit scandal has hurt the credibility of LDP?
C (.5)
I→ ah do you think tah (1) that the recruit case has has damaged the the image of the ah LDP.
C "yes"
I (3) do you think(.) that perhaps(.) maybe difficult in the future for the LDP to maintain its control of the government.
C (2) the other party the other government is not so strong in Japan as LDP

space results in an accommodative reformulation of the question. In this instance, the paraphrase is to simplify "hurt the credibility" to the more readily recognizable "damage the image".

Thus far we have interpreted responses to pauses as indicating interviewers' understanding that pauses signify non-comprehension of the meaning of the question. Whether or not the interviewers all attribute the reasons for pause to faults in the candidate's proficiency is a factor that at best can only be inferred from the systematicity of subsequent accommodation. It is important to note also that there are instances in which pauses may indicate processing of the propositions contained in the question, or may indicate a culturally dependent signal of non-willingness to respond to "hostile" questions.

In Excerpt 10, we see a pause that appears to be more culturally significant and less indicative of non-comprehension of the content of the question. Since the notion of "international person" is one that connotes favorable attributes in popular Japanese culture, by being asked to define the favorable qualities of an international
person, the candidate is asked to indicate desirable features about himself. Such an exercise runs contrary to the Japanese practice of taking a self-effacing position when the speaker is referring to him/herself (Barnlund, 1975). Here, the pause may well indicate the speaker's dispreference for violating the cultural norm in order to produce an adequate response to the interviewer's question.

Excerpt 10

I ah::: you said that(.)the Tokyo people are(.)↓kinda internation-

al do you consider yourself an international person Mr I?

C myself?

I yeah

C yeah I think so

I I see what's your definition of an international person.

C (2)

I→ what are yer >what are the points<er the characteristics

about you that make you an international person.

C first international(.) people must(.)ahh have a power to

express ourselves...

The examples of pauses and their immediate consequences suggest that while the reasons for the pauses in the oral interview discourse may vary, there is a probability that the interviewer will interpret the cause as one related to candidate difficulties in comprehending the content of the last question. Whether there is a high probability of accommodation following pauses will be explored empirically in the quantitative analysis sections later in the next chapter.

Misarticulations

When a candidate attempts a response to a question he must do so without delay and with reasonable fluency. As the previous
section on pauses suggests, pauses in the answer space often invoke an accommodative restructuring or repetition of the question, and perhaps influence the interviewer's perception of the candidate's proficiency. When responses are formulated, they may involve false starts, self-correction or may require modification, restructuring, or repetition by the candidate in the response turn. While such dysfluencies and misarticulations are by no means atypical of second language speech, when they occur concurrently with falls in the speaker's voice pitch, there may be a problem with the audibility of the response and an impression of incomprehensibility on the part of the interviewer.

In order to examine contexts in which misarticulations occur, and the apparent consequences they portend for interviewer accommodation, a number of excerpts relevant to these phenomena will be examined.

A minor case of misarticulation typically occurs as a result of phonological interference from the speaker's native language. When interference and dysfluency occur in combination, the cumulative effect on the interviewer potentially leads to a depreciation of the candidate's rating of speaking skill, even if, as in Excerpt 11, there appears to be no direct consequence on the interviewer's accommodative choices to make the question more salient or answerable. Here, the interviewer's pursuit of an answer stems from the candidate giving an insufficiently elaborate answer. The misarticulation of the response here does not provoke accommodation in a direct manner. Rather, the incomplete answer
Excerpt 11

I  alright(.) uhm can you describe your house to me ↓what is it like.
C  my house?
I  uhm
C→ ahm (1)last year I (.) ahhm last year we bou ah(.) we bought a new house(.) and eh tssss itsu very small but(.) uhm (1) now we::we are swee=three three person(.) so umh(1) that is not=that is too=that is not too(1) small °small (.) to live in
I  uhm(.)so it's big enough for you
C  yeahhhs
I  kay(.) can you=how many rooms do you have tell me about your house=describe it

requires a restatement of the original question so that more candidate speech can be sampled and evaluated.

The causes of misarticulation are potentially complex, and not wholly dependent on the candidate's linguistic limitations. When speakers are "put on the spot" in oral interviews, and realize that the topics about which they are expected to provide fluent and knowledgable speech are in fact topics they have marginal interest in or background knowledge about, affective reactions may overlap with the second language speech to create misarticulations and minimally interpretable speech. In Excerpt 12, the speaker has previously committed himself to the topic of snow skiing, by claiming, or more precisely, not denying, that he has had a few experiences with snow skiing. The interviewer has chosen this topic to sample the candidate's ability to provide a narrative in the form of instructions about a procedural script that the candidate has previously acknowledged experience and interest in.
Excerpt 12

I can you tell me ahh(.) if you were going to teach me how to ski, what would you teach me (.).from the first to the last
C [ahhhhoww humm I am not so good at(.). ehh skiing ah I have (.).ummm go skiing (.).eh three times
I ohhh
C→ sohhhhhh hhh ↑Ihhhhhhhh c:::::an't t:::::::ell you hhhh but (.)
.ummm I think ehhhheh mmm(.) you don't suffering eh snow(.) and ehhhhmm high-high eh highest of mountain (1) tehhhh lëttt let's fight togethhhhher hehhehehhhh(.). that's all ehehheh I hehehehh I can't teach ttshheehhh you because I ummm(.) I:::::::was I:::::::taught my friends or my coworker
I °okay (2) hhmm so ahhhm ↑can you ehehem can you tell me how ahm I could go from 'here 'to where you 'live?
C my house?
I give me directions

The candidate's response to the question posed to him is actually an account for his own anticipated inability to fulfil the speaking task. The candidate creates a severe comprehension difficulty for the interviewer because after his accounting preface he provides the instructions through a laughed articulation. Such laughed articulation, like certain pauses, are in Japanese culture indicative of speaker embarrassment of having to perform a task for which he does not have the linguistic or procedural wherewithal for a satisfactory performance. Additionally, in Excerpt 12, the speaker's competence is apparently stretched beyond its limits, as the "instructions" do not in fact resemble a coherent attempt at the task. The interviewer's reaction to this misarticulated response is to take the account at face value and immediately downgrade the topic and task to one that is more readily answerable by the candidate. The fact that the downgraded question is posed in heavily stressed
syllables (over-articulation) suggests that the interviewer at this point has an impression that the candidate has limited speaking proficiency.

**Under-elaboration**

The first two features of candidate production difficulties, pauses and misarticulations, suggest that candidates are aware of their own linguistic and experiential resources in the self-monitoring of their own speech. Since oral proficiency interviews do not allow for pre-planned speech events wherein speakers can mentally rehearse the topics about which they must organize their talk, a means of minimizing one's linguistic liability is to provide the least "exposed" response to interviewer questions. Such a minimalist strategy can sometimes be effective if the interviewer is focused on and assesses superficial aspects of candidate speech such as the degree of native-like phonology or lexical sophistication. A usual consequence, however, is that the underelaborate response does not match the interviewer's effort in framing and articulating the question. Such a disparity exposes the preferred response that interviewers might be expected to anticipate. Candidate responses are ideally lengthy, linguistically rich, and elaborate enough in content to provide ample sampling of the speaker's proficiency. Such an expectation can be a possible interpretation of the ambiguous pause between the apparent ends of candidate utterances and the next interviewer speaking turn. The unfilled pauses after underelaborate responses suggest that the interviewer expects that further talk is forthcoming. When it is apparent that none will follow, a secondary question, one which would have been answered
in an elaborate rejoinder, constitutes the next turn in a series of short question and answers. The candidate's minimalist response in this instance may reveal a cultural phenomenon as well. As Barnlund (1975) and Boxer (1993) have noted, the issue of self-disclosure in cross-cultural conversations is a variable that leads to considerable miscommunication. Japanese are known to be circumspect in their reference to experiences and attitudes that reveal information considered to be personal in nature. Interviewers, it should be noted, often breech the boundaries of public and private information about their interlocutors in the context of the oral proficiency interview.

Excerpt 13

I and ah(.) are you married?
C no I am single.
I (3) do you plan to get married?
C °hha-nohh
I (1) I see you're not a-→ you have no plans right now
C yeah

When candidates do not provide elaborate responses, they may do so because they have opted to follow the minimalist strategy, or they may be waiting for a question about which they can take the floor for an extended turn without overextending their content knowledge or speaking skill. In other cases, underelaboration may be the result of a pragmatic misread of the import of a question or statement by the interviewer. As the following excerpts suggest, a variety of miscues are possible.
Excerpt 14

I so-so tell me a little about your family
C family(.) ahum I have a (. ) ah (.5) father and br-eh mother and grandmother(.) I have no brother
I °I see (.) and how do your parents feel about you joining (the company) are they happy?
C→ (.5) maybehhh:(2)
I what did they say:when you told them:you: were: going to work at (the company)
C pardon?
I what did(.)they(.)say(.) to you(.) when(.) you said you were going to work at (the company)
C ah eh (. )they only say be careful

Here the candidate apparently understood the propositional content of the question, but did not elaborate on the attitudes of his family concerning his employment at the company. His ambivalent answer constitutes an underelaborate response which provokes a reformulation of the previous question. Given the observation that a reformulation results in a request for clarification, we might assume that the underelaboration was a tactic to forestall an exposure of the candidate's non-comprehension. Thus, the underelaboration can potentially invite an expansion or reformulation of the question without directly exposing the candidate's non-comprehension of the current topic.

Another example of underelaboration reveals that the candidate's production actually implicates faulty comprehension of the speaking task the interviewer poses. In Excerpt 15, the interviewer coaxes a response out of the candidate with a marked question form—a rhetorical question that does not require an agreement with the expressed proposition of the question, but rather
an explanation of the circumstances to which the interviewer is referring.

Excerpt 15

I Isn't that ah(.) isn't that strange to have been(.) transferred so many places in such a short time?
C yes
I Is there any special reason why you were moved.
C→ ["yes sp- very special
I what's the reason.

By agreeing to the surface form of the interviewers question "isn't it strange" and "is there a special reason" the candidate only invites redundant pursuit of the answer to which a suitably elaborate response would have been appropriate after the original query. In pragmatic terms, such a response constitutes a violation of the maxim of quantity (Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983). And here again, the type of accommodation the interviewer opts for is an expansion or repetition of the question until there is a minimally elaborate response.

As an interview progresses, more complex questions are typically posed to candidates, providing that their responses have thus far indicated that they are ready to field progressively more difficult probing questions. At the probing phase of the interview, where the most propositionally complex questions are articulated by the interviewer, proportionally more interviewer effort is focused on the framing and articulation of the questions. In framing the probes, interviewers must also take the floor for longer periods of time. Their investment of effort is therefore motivated by the assumption
that the candidate will comprehend the topic and take the floor in an extended narrative apropos the nominated topic.

The following excerpt exemplifies an interviewer's effort to frame a topic about which the candidate is expected to establish and rationalize a position. The response after the set up is an underelaborated rejoinder that does not speak to the question the interviewer is trying to address.

Excerpt 16

I It has been said that ah because Japan is a rich country(.) it should start helping financially ah underdeveloped countries in Asia(.) do ah do you agree with this?
C→ (1.5) Yes, I am agree
I why-why do you agree-what reasons do you have?

The direct effect of the candidate's underelaboration is the interviewer's superfluous reformulation of the question. The candidate evidently mistook the form of the question as being a yes or no proposition instead as an invitation to affirm or deny agreement with the proposition and then elaborate or rationalize the position taken. We might surmise that the candidate's inadequate decoding of the interviewer's orientation to the question is evidence of a lack of pragmatic knowledge of how questions in English work, or it might be a lack of experience with the forms that questions in interviews can take.

Non-sequiturs

Underelaboration of a response is a strategy by which a candidate can overtly, albeit partially, respond to a question even though the actual import of the question may not be clear. It is
potentially a safer strategy than direct signalling of non-comprehension, or a request for clarification in that it can "buy time" for the candidate. If, however, the candidate only partially understands the question, or mishears a segment of the question or framing utterance (Rost, 1990; Rost and Ross, 1991), the response may result in a non-sequitur that potentially exposes the candidate's faulty comprehension. A non-sequitur, though not on topic, may still constitute a complete answer, and thus may be interpreted as relatively more adequate as a response, assuming that the expectations of interviewers are that candidates at least provide overt data for the evaluation of speaking proficiency.

Excerpt 17

I ahum (1)you play soccer
C (1)
I you play soccer
C yes (.)ah hh I don't(,) play soccer (,)now
I oh
C I played_hhhssshoooccer hheheheh
I [when was the last-when was the last youhh plhhhayhhed
C hhabout two years ago
I so you
C→ well now only eh (,)some(,)eh party(,) ehh some party(,) like
   a new year party or end year party with soccer team
I oh I see hum
C [hhhehhem
I so have you given up playing soccer
C hh,m
I you don't intend to play again
C so I'm just old boy

In Excerpt 17 the candidate's offering of an "account" is meant to qualify his previous answer. It explains his role on the soccer team to which he has claimed affiliation. This affiliation is the
presumed reason for the interviewer's broaching of the topic of playing soccer in the first place. Accounting, or the provision of reasons or excuses for a state of affairs, is often oblique in Japanese, with the listener left to make inferences about the causal relatedness of the account to a preceding proposition. In Excerpt 17, the interviewer makes this connection, and confirms his inference that the candidate no longer actually plays the game, but still associates with the players.

The immediate connecting of the answer to the question may not always be direct when non-sequiturs are given as answers. As Excerpt 18 suggests, the answer is ratified by the interviewer in her backchannel, but the ratification of the answer is withdrawn after the candidate takes a second turn on the miscued topic. At this point the non-sequitur is more explicitly obvious.

Excerpt 18

I so ah(2) how did you get your job?
C→ (1)ummm I am get the job in nineteen tsseh ummm(.)
°nineteen eighty six
I um hhhm
C from at that time I work for I am working in (.) Nagaoka Kyoshi City
I (1) but I mean how how did you get the job
C how? how? (6) I had to(.) ah intttehhrviehhhhw test in nineteen eighty two

Here the interviewer accommodates to the candidate's miscomprehension by emphatically restating the original question with a tonically stressed interrogative. This sequence reveals that the candidate did not in fact comprehend the original question, even though two answer turns were positioned in between the original
question and its relevant answer. The positioning of an interviewer's accommodative reformulation of the question, if it comes at all, may occur a number of speaking turns after the original question. This is perhaps related to the main goal of the interview as it is seen from the participants' perspective, to generate talk, and not, we might surmise, to exchange specific factual information. Excerpt 19 suggests one such instance.

Excerpt 19

I now what would you do if(.) there is a train strike or something like
C [yeah
C (1)ahm(1)hmm from my house to(.) Tokiwadai Station(.) I must walk on ah(.) on foot
I uhm hum
C→ and ehh from Tokiwadai to Ikebukuro(.) I get on the train (1) Tobu-Tojo Line
I um hum
C→ and next I(.) I change ahh eh (.).I change train(.) I use eh (1) Yurakucho Line
I um hum(.) Is that(.) a subway?
C yeah subway
I °ahhaah
C→ and ahh at Yurakucho Station(.) I must eh change train again
I um hm
C Mita Line
I uh hum
C→ so I change(.) two times
I ummh so ah(.) what would you do ↑if there is a train strike

Even though the candidate's narrative about how he gets to work indicates at the second turn (first →) that his understanding is not that he must describe alternative modes of transport in the event of a rail strike, the interviewer allows him to continue with his
narrative five more turns. We might assume that the data provided in this narrative about his structural command of English was momentarily more important than the fact that he did not respond using modals and conditional structures as the original question required. It is only after the candidate reaches the end of his narration "so I change two times", that the interviewer resets the question with rising pitch and stress on "train strike". This suggests that candidates may not provoke accommodative reformulation if they provide samples of their speech, even if the content is not actually apropos the original question.

Factor group two presents a number of production strategies candidates may take in signalling their readiness to provide a relevant response. It is important to consider also that the production strategies indicate the candidates' degree of comprehension of the question or speaking task. There is obviously some overlap with Factor Group One in this regard. If a candidate does not opt for signalling non-comprehension with a request for clarification, and instead provides no answer (pause), an under elaborated response or a non-sequitur, the interviewer may still have sufficient evidence to infer that the original question had not been comprehended. Thus we see that the production factor group potentially contributes different types of evidence that corroborate what Factor Group One indicates directly to the interviewer about the status of candidate comprehension.

Factor Group 3: Well-formedness of Candidate Answer

The role of grammatical error in oral interview speech has recently been considered by some researchers (Pienemann and
Johnston, 1986; Pienemann, Johnston, and Brindley, 1988) as a valid basis for drawing inferences about interlanguage development--and as the basis for an evaluation of proficiency. To date, however, little evidence exists as to how and when errors actually influence accommodation in interactive test methods. Factor Group Three therefore includes the well-formedness of the candidate's rejoinder in the adjacency pair prior to the next interviewer question as a factor in the analysis of interviewer accommodation. The assumption here is that the interviewer attends to the details of the candidate's interlanguage and that variation in accommodative moves by the interviewer are in response to instances of overt structural errors in the candidate's previous turn. An important issue here is the independence of the occurrence of grammatical errors and other factors such as articulation, comprehension, and pragmatic appropriateness. In order to examine the effect of structural errors in candidate speech independently of these other factors, there must be instances of error in candidate turns that are coherent and on topic. Interviewer accommodation in turns following such errors would suggest that interviewers attend to structure and modify their speech according to variation in candidate speaking accuracy.

The excerpt below provides an example of an error that does not result in accommodative reformulation of the question. This suggests that the interviewer is mainly concerned with getting the candidate to take as many speaking turns as possible, preferably with long narrative turns. The content of the error does not lead to any difficulty in the interviewer's understanding the propositional content of the answer, which is perhaps the main reason why errors
of this sort can be passed over without overt accommodation in the next interviewer turn. This observation is consonant with the notion that accommodative questions are characteristically crafted to repair interruptions in the communication or cadence of the interview.

Excerpt 20

C (.my hometown outskirts of Tokyo
I [I see
C called Tagishima and my parents live over there
I they have a house?
C yes
I so you live in Osaka.
C→ yes I live in dormitory
I I've never seen a dormitory wha-what is it like inside.

An interviewer's sensitivity to grammatical errors may depend on a number of factors, one of which is familiarity with the interlanguage of Japanese English as a second language speakers. Since most of the errors found in the present corpus are morphosyntactic--related to tense, determiners and prepositions--the intended messages the candidates try to convey will most likely be comprehended despite considerable infelicity in structural form. But as Excerpt 21 indicates, interviewers may choose to clarify the meanings of candidates' messages. We can expect that a motivation for interviewer queries after structural errors arises from ambiguity that may emerge when the predicates candidates use vary

Excerpt 21

C almost so(1) um after reading the books(.) I(.) eh go to the movie
I ah
C→ watching to movie
I the same movie?
between plus and minus finite, thus opening up different interpretations of tense. When such variation in tense marking occurs, an interviewer may seek confirmation by repeating the question with more obvious marking of the tense. As Excerpt 22 indicates, the candidate's switching between the past and present tenses prompts the interviewer to reform the original question to clarify the form and the propositional content of the candidate's utterance.

Excerpt 22

I tell me something about your university days
C mmm hhehahhh um
I if you remember
C→ tshe umh (1) eeehh I belongs belongs to ahh(.)eh (.)
swimming club(1) four years(.) and(.) I didn't thheehh study
tsee hhhhe(.) well(.) but I like swimming and (2) I:::: swam
every(.)day and I am(.) training every day
I did you take a swimming class or was just(.) an extra curricular activity.

The candidate's control of tense marking morphology here leads to the interviewer's follow-up question that seeks clarification of the candidate's previous utterance.
Factor Groups 4, 5 and 6: Topic and Discourse Organization

The remaining binary factor groups in the set include variables that are based on discourse organization and turn taking in the interview. Factor Group Four dichotomously encodes the status of the topic of the just-posed question as one previously foregrounded in the discourse. When topics are new, and questions have not been foregrounded, there may be an increased chance that the candidate will not comprehend the question. When there is miscomprehension, as was seen in the first two factor groups, there is increased need for the interviewer to reformulate the question or provide a prefatory framing monologue to reorient the candidate to the topic. As Excerpt 23 indicates, when there is a sudden switch of topics without adequate foregrounding, the candidate must make a pragmatic link between the current question and last established topic.

Excerpt 23

I you know it seems ah recently (.)home stay programs are getting some pretty bad publicity
C uhhmmmm(1) is it
I = well I-I saw a documentary on tv and (.) ahh it seems that there are a lot of rip offs going on (.) ahh homestay (.) programs are:::e misleading (.)the students
C o u h h m m m m
I in ad->yaknow< in advertisement in advertising the homestay programs that they don't always ahm ahm they don't always get the experience they expect
C u h m m
I and host families are not always sincere about welcoming (.)students into their houses >many do it for the moneyy< yaknow (.)students end up paying a lot and not get much out
C [hhhhaaaaaaa
I ↑have you heard anything like that?
(...) mmm not very serious ones but yes ahm my-a friend of mine went to the United States by a company named Recruit
I uhhm
C ahaha
I [HAAHAAAAH
C [AHAAHAAAAH
I [THAT RECRUIT
C yehehahah hhhhehe and (.) ah she-- couldn't sleep in a bed
(1) ahm she::: was °forced to sleep on the sofa on a couch
I uhh hum
C so she she was not lucky but ahhm (.) fortunately ah the ah theee(.) the company? the travel agent.
I uhh hum
C which I used~ was very good one
I uhh hum
C and all the families ↑we-we went in a group
I uhh hum
C ↓Japanese students
I uhh hum
C and all the families °were very nice to use they treated us very well
I (.) ahh glad to hear that (.) >ya know< recently ↑there's been a lot going on in China uhm
C→ (.) homestaying in China?
I [not-not homestaying but there's been a lot of ah (.) turmoil (.) in China
C ohh
I (.) >ya know <it was reported that ah oh about two thousand six hundred stu↑dents (.) and civilians (.) were killed.
C ° uhh hm
I by the people's liberation army
C yes
I can you comment on that?

In this long excerpt, the candidate does not interpret the interviewer's closing statement "(..) ahh glad to hear that", offset by micro pauses, as an indication that the current topic, "homestay" programs, was to be terminated. The new topic, which is introduced without a formal preamble, invokes a hearing by the candidate that
the topic of homestaying (Japanese students staying in the homes of local families in foreign countries over holiday periods) has somehow been shifted from the United States to China. Her hearing leads to a pause and request for clarification about "homestaying in China." The interviewer then repairs the derailed topic in the two subsequent turns.

The status of the topic does not independently constitute a factor in provoking accommodation in interviewer questions. Yet since the candidates are never free to change the topic, the interviewers' skill in framing new topics may create a cross-cutting factor with candidate comprehension. We would therefore expect that established topics will be less likely to be covarying with interviewer accommodative moves.

Factor Group Five encodes the speaker in the previous turn. This factor potentially provides an index of interviewer attentiveness to characteristics of candidate speech. If indeed variation in accommodative moves by the interviewer covary equally with candidate answer turns and interviewer question turns, there should be evidence that accommodation maintains little local dependence on the immediately preceding turn. That is, interviewers may make their current accommodation contingent on phenomena occurring in turns antecedent to the immediately previous one.

Factor Group Six denotes whether there was accommodation in the previous question or task. This factor is potentially useful for detecting consistent stretches of accommodation in interviews, thus indicating interviewer assumptions that the candidate requires accommodated questions for the interview to continue smoothly.
Excerpt 24, which extends the sequence in Excerpt 22, demonstrates how the interviewer structures the interviewing after the initial trouble spot in a way that scaffolds the interaction through to a completion of the current topic.

Excerpt 24

I tell me something about your university days
C mmm hhehhhh um
I if you remember
C tsshe umh (1) eeehh I belongs belongs to ahh(.) eh(.) swimming club(1) four years(.) and(.) I didn't thheehh study tssee hhheh(..) well(.) but I like swimming and (2) I::::: swam every(.)day and I am(.) training every day
I→ did you take a swimming class or was just(.) an extra curricular activity.
C now?
I→ at that time
C swimming club?
I→ class
C class(.) swimming class~
I→ lessons
C (2)sss(.)umm in a university?
I you said you swam everyday
C [yes
I→ was it in a class?
C no ahh after(.) class(.) in my club °club I swam in every day

Here the coding for accommodation in the previous interviewer question turn varies in relation to the trouble the candidate shows in comprehending the question and formulating a response. The fact that accommodative questions are contiguous in the excerpt indicates that this is a section in the discourse where evidence of candidate difficulty in producing adequate rejoinders is most salient.
This chapter has introduced aspects of candidate speech and turn taking phenomena that potentially trigger variation in interviewer accommodative questioning strategies. The analysis thus far presented provides excerpted examples of interview discourse, and provides the framework for the quantitative analysis of the total corpus of interview questions across the eighty interviews. The purpose of the foregoing analysis of excerpts was to introduce the categories of candidate troubles that potentially trigger a reconstructive or accommodative reaction on the part of the interviewer. The analysis of isolated instances of candidate troubles in each category will of course not represent the cumulative impact such phenomena may have in all of the eighty interviews as harbingers of accommodative moves. For this reason we now turn to quantitative analyses of these same phenomena after they have been encoded so as to represent the major conditions of their occurrence in the interview discourse. A probabilistic analysis of the triggers of accommodation, if successful, should provide justification for the reification and generalizability of the categories of candidate trouble that motivate instances of interviewer accommodation.
Chapter 5. VARIATION IN TRIGGERS OF ACCOMMODATION

The approach for the multivariate analysis of interviewer questions is based on a probabilistic method used for examining linguistic variation. Variable rule analysis (Cedergren and Sankoff, 1974; Preston, 1989, 1991, 1993; Young, 1991; Young and Bayley; in press Rand and Sankoff, 1990) models variation in a single linguistic phenomenon by taking frequencies of all relevant covarying factors and estimating the best fit to observed variation with both step-wise and simultaneous estimation procedures. Individual factor groups, which are analogous to independent variables in conventional multiple regression analysis, are iteratively modelled in an additive manner so as to assess their impact on variation of the linguistic feature of interest. The independent effect of each factor group is assessed when that group is entered into, and then removed from, the variable rule model. When a factor group adds to a better fit to the observed data, as shown in Figure 5.1, change attributable to the addition of the just-added factor group is compared to a chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom equal to the number of factors added in the second analysis (Rand and Sankoff, 1990). Factor groups showing an independent contribution to the model are flagged as significant with the criterion for significance set at .05.

\[
2 \log \left( \frac{\text{likelihood of 2nd analysis}}{\text{likelihood of 1st analysis}} \right)
\]

Figure 5.1 Log Likelihood Analysis for VARBRUL

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Once a factor group has been identified as contributing to variation of the linguistic feature in a non-redundant manner, the individual "levels" or subclasses of linguistic or discourse features contained within the factor group are scaled according to their individual effect "weights"--indications that their appearance in the linguistic environment influences the positive application of the variable rule: Y, as opposed to ~Y. The probability that the variable rule will apply, that is, that there will be a positive instance of linguistic form Y across a corpus of input data from the same environment, is based on the product of all non-redundant factors ($p_b \ldots p_n$) and the baseline, or random input probability ($p_a$):

$$ P = \frac{p_a \times p_b \times \ldots \times p_n}{(p_a \times p_b \times \ldots \times p_n) + [(1-p_a) \times (1-p_b) \times \ldots \times (1-p_n)]} $$

**Figure 5.2 Probability of Variable Rule Application**

The primary object of interest is the individual factor weight for a member of a factor group. The goal here is to determine which of the factors (independent variables) most systematically cooccurs with the application of the variable rule of question accommodation. Individual factor weights are based on the sum of the effects for that particular factor across all contexts. The weights are logit-transformed from the percentage of occurrences of that factor and centered on the average of its factor mates (Rand and Sankoff, 1990). A factor's weight varies from 0 to 1, and corresponds to the likelihood that the occurrence of that factor influences the "firing" of
systematic influence on the variable rule application, essentially meaning that the appearance of that factor, X, has no discernible influence on the application of the variable rule resulting in the appearance of form Y. A low factor effect weight constrains the application of the rule, such that the lower the factor effect weight, the less likely the variable rule leading to the appearance of form Y will apply. Thus, when a factor weight decreases from the .50 probability level, there is a greater likelihood that the variable rule will not apply. A high factor effect weight, in contrast, promotes the application of the variable rule. A factor effect weight of .99 would be a near categorical rule--such that if factor X occurs, variable form Y would also occur.

With social or demographic phenomena, linguistic factors may interact with each other in such a way that the occurrence of one factor subsumes the presence of another in its influence of the variable of interest. For this reason, the influence of each factor group alone and in combination with all others needs to be initially checked to identify interacting factors that can be recoded into non-redundant factor sets, or so that individual factors can be recoded or omitted from the analysis. The interaction analysis is the first step of the variable rule analysis of the present data. Non-independent factor groups are identified by examining the change in the effects (factor weights) for individual factors as subsequent factors are added to the variable rule model. When there is substantive change in the effect of a given factor within a previously entered group after a new group has been entered, the contexts for the cross-cutting factors are examined and a recoding of the two factors is performed.
(Rand and Sankoff, 1990). The choice as to which of the two non-independent factors is to be recoded depends on the interpretability of the recoding scheme. For instance, factor X might be subsumed into instances of factor Z if these two factors cooccur in the data. Alternatively, factor Z may be deletable once X is coded.

**Variable Accommodation**

Accommodation in this study is operationalized as any question or speaking task posed to the candidate that contains an overt modification of the interviewer's speech making the question optimally salient, comprehensible and answerable to the candidate. The premise of accommodation in questions and tasks is that there is a demonstrable antecedent in the candidate's speech which informs the interviewer that such accommodation is necessary in order for the interview to proceed without interactional trouble. In this phase of the analysis, the focus of interest is the context in which the accommodation is initiated in the discourse. To examine the contextualization of triggers, the analysis begins with excerpts of contexts in which accommodation follows an example of candidate trouble.

**Variable Rule Analysis of Accommodation Triggers**

Four different variable rule analyses were performed on the corpus of 2782 interviewer questions occurring in the eighty oral proficiency interviews. The questions occurring in the eighty interviews were sorted into subsets organized by the rating outcome of each interview. The purpose of the separate analyses is to examine differential effects each trigger of accommodation may have across the four proficiency rating levels. This contrastive analysis
across the four proficiency rating levels. This contrastive analysis may potentially tease out differences in the conduct of the interviews by revealing which accommodative triggers are common across all levels of proficiency, and which are particular to specific proficiency levels.

Candidate Response Factor Groups

The results of the contrastive variable rule analysis will be presented according to the order of presentation of the triggers in Chapter Four. The first three factor groups assess factors dependent on the candidates' responses to previous interviewer questions. For these factors, an interaction analysis of the comprehension and production factor groups indicated that the codings for "ignoring the pragmatic content" in the comprehension factor and "non-sequitur" in the production factor group constituted non-independent cross-cutting effects on variation in accommodation.

We will first consider the comprehension factor group. The codings for this factor group are summarized in Table 5.1, below. The definition of the original comprehension factor group contained a coding for "ignoring the pragmatic content." As mentioned above, the interaction analysis indicated redundancy in this coding. All codings of 'i' for ignoring the pragmatic content in the comprehension factor were therefore recoded to '/' as no context for application.
Table 5.1

Factor Group 1 Candidate Comprehension

\[ \begin{array}{l}
0 = \text{no evidence of miscomprehension} \\
q = \text{request for clarification} \\
/ = \text{no context}
\end{array} \]

The binary coding scheme captures the phenomenon of the candidates overtly demonstrating non-comprehension by asking for help from the interviewer through a request for clarification 'q', or by giving no overt signal of comprehension trouble '0'. The code for no evidence of trouble is used in both production and comprehension factor groups to represent the unmarked or expected response form. The slash mark '/' is a form of input to the variable rule analysis to signify that there was no immediately preceding question or answer that would have led to either 'o' or 'q'. That is, at the very beginning of interviews, the first questions have no antecedent questions or answers. Also, when there are questions followed by silence in the answer turn before a rephrasing of the question, certain factor groups such as "well formedness" are encoded as '/'. Since all questions in the eighty interviews, accommodative or not, were coded, the "no context" coding strings occur when there was no codifiable string immediately prior to the currently coded question.
Table 5.2
Effect Weights for Comprehension Factor Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>617</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>631</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>0.984</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 summarizes the weight of the candidates' tacit acknowledgment of the previous task or question posed by the interviewer. No trouble, 'o', is contrasted with a clarification request 'q'. The second numerical column shows the percentage of accommodation cooccurring with each of the binary codings. For example, in the 1+ interviews 33% of the 617 total instances of 'o' (no trouble) occurred before accommodated interviewer turns. However, accommodative questions cooccurred with 90% of the 62 instances of 'q' (request for clarification) coded in the comprehension factor. The rightmost column gives the significance level for the overall effect of the comprehension factor group in each proficiency level. The significance is based on the effect of that factor group when it is entered at the last step of the regression procedure.
As can be readily seen in the Table 5.2, the effect of candidates' request for help is a consistently powerful factor in predicting some form of accommodative reformulation. The factor effect weights for all four levels of proficiency indicate that interviewers nearly categorically attend to the current status of their interlocutors' previous comprehension as they pose subsequent questions. Conversely, when there is no marked signal of non-comprehension, the likelihood of interviewer accommodation in the next question turn is slightly constrained—all four levels show effect weights for the '0' factor ranging from .429 to .466. The exact frequency of the codings varies according to the rating level. At the "superior" rating level (3), for instance, there are far fewer tokens of overt non-comprehension in the twenty interviews. At the high intermediate level (1+), we would expect to find many more instances of requests for clarification in the discourse. Appendix D lists the cross-tabulations of instances of accommodation with each coding from the factor groups.

The consistently high factor effect weights across the four levels of proficiency provide strong quantitative evidence for a phenomenon very similar to what Lazaraton (1991) observed in conversational analyses of language program placement interviews—that question modification or reformulation follows immediately after signals of trouble or non-comprehension by the non-native interview candidate.

The second factor group involves the largest numbers of individual factors. These encode characteristics of the candidates' speech in the rejoinder immediately prior to the interviewer
question, whether the question is accommodative or not. The effect of candidate production on variation in interviewer accommodation was predicted to be substantial. An ancillary question, generated from the analysis of excerpts in Chapter 4, considers whether the factor effects apply homogeneously across the four rating categories.

Table 5.3 Factor Group 2 (Candidate Answer in Previous Turn)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>misarticulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>under-elaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>non-sequitur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>no evidence of problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>no context for factor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The codings for the production factor are listed in Table 5.3. These codings represent the total number of occurrences in the corpus and exemplified in the excerpts featured in Chapter 3. Given the fact that there are five different levels within this factor group, with each of the factors referring to a different aspect of candidate production, factors will be examined individually and contrasted with 'o', the code for no production difficulty.
Table 5.4.1

Factor Effect Weights for Pauses in Answer Turns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.686</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>618</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect for pausing in the comprehension factor group shows variation among the rating outcomes. Most notably, in the lowest rating category, high intermediate (1+), candidate pauses in the answer turn are less likely to invoke interviewer accommodation in the next turn than are pauses in the higher rating levels. It would also appear that the percentage of the total number of pause tokens cooccurring with accommodative questions serves to account for the variation. At the advanced plus (2+) level, however, the percentage of pause tokens occurring with accommodative questions does not follow the pattern. This may be due to a concommittent factor occurring in the 2+ data set. That is, there could be a trend towards an interaction with another factor at this level.

An examination of the factor weights suggests that pauses at the rating levels greater than 1+ are possibly more marked than at
the 1+ proficiency level. A plausible interpretation of this difference is that interviewers at the 1+ level are attending to various aspects of candidate speech simultaneously to govern their choice of accommodative responses. Also, we might presume that candidates at this level are more dysfluent in their responses, and that their pauses are interpreted as necessary for them to plan their responses after questions. Thus pauses are less marked in the 1+ interviews because of their varying functions. Furthermore, an examination of the cross-tabulations in Appendix D indicates that pauses are approximately three times more frequent in the high intermediate interviews than in the superior (3) interviews. Since pauses are less expected, in the superior interviews, their appearance is more likely to be interpreted as a signal of candidate trouble.

The significance of candidate misarticulation of answers appears to follow the pattern observed in the pause phenomenon. The effect of misarticulations as triggers of interviewer accommodation in the 1+ interviews only moderately influences application of the accommodation rule. Clearly the frequency of misarticulations at this level suggests that they are relatively common and thus may be expected as a characteristic of candidate speech. As the frequency of misarticulations diminishes in the higher rating levels, their significance as indicators of candidate problems is reflected in the increasing weight misarticulations obtain in inducing an accommodation in the subsequent interviewer turn. These two asymmetries in the production factor group point to a different set of criteria for interviewers across the proficiency continuum.
Table 5.4.2

Factor Effect Weights for Misarticulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to pausing and misarticulations, which directly indicate candidates' problems in producing rejoinders, the under-elaboration factor may also signify candidates' interactional strategy in the interview. Under elaborations induce accommodation in a fairly symmetric way across the ability continuum--there is considerably less variation in the factor effect for under elaboration than that seen thus far in the pause and misarticulation factors, although the frequencies of under elaboration diminish as the proficiency ratings increase. Interviewers may interpret under elaboration as an avoidance strategy whereby candidates opt to provide a minimal answer turn in response to interviewer questions and tasks. Since candidates all recognize that the purpose of the interaction is language assessment (cf. van Lier, 1989), longer, elaborate speaking turns may be perceived by some candidates as a
potential liability more than an opportunity to demonstrate second language competence. The fact that under elaboration is equally weighted as a prompt for interviewer accommodation across the four ratings of proficiency further suggests that interviewers may interpret this factor as one independent of proficiency level.

Table 5.4.3

**Factor Effect Weights for Under-elaborations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>0.657</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An alternative view on the apparent symmetry of the under elaboration factor is motivated by the observation that the high intermediate candidates under-elaborate their responses because they in fact have limited linguistic resources with which to formulate responses. The advanced plus and superior candidates, in contrast, may follow a "damage control" strategy by selectively under-elaborating their responses when there is potential danger of having to hold the floor on arcane and difficult topics broached by the interviewer.
The subsumption of the comprehension factor "ignores pragmatic content of the question" into the covarying comprehension factor group member, "non-sequitur", potentially complicates the interpretation of this factor. The factor weightings for the four levels nevertheless suggest that non-sequiturs are not out of the ordinary, are less marked, and are much less likely to provoke accommodation in the high intermediate (1+) interviews that at the next higher rating. Like pauses and misarticulations, non-sequiturs by candidates at this level may be interpreted as systemic problems—that candidates who commit them are constrained by other more serious interactional and linguistic limitations such that whatever answer the candidates can muster becomes the basis for evaluation. In other words, even if responses by 1+ candidates are "off topic", interviewers are much less inclined to reframe or reorient the original question in a repair sequence.

Non-sequiturs at the advanced (2) and above levels are in relative terms more likely to provoke an accommodative response by the interviewer than at the 1+ level. At these proficiency levels, answering off topic may indicate faulty comprehension of the topic,
Table 5.4.4

Factor Effect Weights for Non-Sequiturs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>618</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or an interview strategy to "subvert the topic" by steering the answer back to a familiar, formulaic, or rehearsed theme about which an advanced candidate can present a fluent monologue. As the interview training manual (ETS, 1982) explicitly warns interviewers about candidate strategies for answering off topic, it appears quite possible that at the advanced level and above interviewers are inclined to assume that candidates producing non-sequiturs are in need of accommodation--most typically in the form of question repetition or expansion.

The production factor group presents a complex set of phenomena influencing interviewers' use of accommodative questions. Differences in the factor weights in this set across the rating levels roughly suggest a distinction between high intermediate and advanced levels. At the advanced and higher levels, it appears
interviewers have different expectations about candidate production, and are more inclined to intervene with accommodative next-turns when there is a signal of candidate trouble. This finding presents a paradox for the description of accommodation thus far sketched. Although the number tokens of mis-production is in fact smallest in the advanced and above levels, individual tokens are more heavily weighted as triggers of accommodation than the same factors at the lowest rating category. The Ross and Berwick (1992) study concluded that there is proportionally more overall accommodation at the lower end of the OPI rating scale. It may well be that at the lowest level of proficiency sampled in this study there are so many different discourse, structural, and pragmatic sources of trouble that individual production factors do not stand out as particularly weighty signals to interviewers that accommodative intervention is necessary.

The third factor group examined encodes the grammatical well-formedness of the candidates' last speaking turn. Here, when there is an obvious structural error in the last turn, the code for this factor group is 'e'; when there is no apparent error in the last turn, the coding is 'w' for well-formed. The influence of grammatical errors in the description of oral proficiency rating categories has not to date been examined with much empirical rigor (Clark and Clifford, 1988; Bachman, 1988; Lantoff and Frawley, 1985; 1988). Most descriptions of rating categories make assumptions about differing frequencies of errors along the proficiency continuum. Of interest for the present study is the differential weighting of errors across the
four levels of proficiency. Table 5.5 summarizes the relative importance of the well-formedness factor group.

All four rating categories show a remarkably similar weighting for the error coding in triggering accommodation. It appears that interviewers are attuned to the well-formedness criterion in the

Table 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>362</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>0.592</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>0.469</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>0.477</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>581</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>0.612</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>0.589</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

assessment process. Compared to what has been examined so far, however, the importance of errors appears to be only moderate. As would be expected, there is a gradual decline in the gross number of errors as proficiency ratings increase. Yet the weights are very similar in magnitude. In the high intermediate to advanced plus proficiency levels, the contribution of the well-formedness factor group reaches the threshold criterion for statistical significance at the last of the step in and step out regression runs. At the superior rating level, errors in structural detail do not provide a better fit to
the variation in accommodation than production and comprehension factors. It may be that at this level, structural errors occur concurrently with other problems, and are thus subsumed in cross-cutting factors that serve to attract the attention of the interviewers.

Discourse Management Factor Groups

Factor Group Four includes codings for the status of the current topic of talk. As noted in Chapter three, when topics are not foregrounded in the discourse, there is potentially a heavier processing load on the candidate to identify the propositions contained in the current question as being linked to, or independent of, previously nominated topics. Given the fact that interviewers have license to nominate new topics for questioning at any time (Hoekje and Linnell, 1994), the end of a candidate's answer turn may be taken as a potential transition relevance point. Table 4.6 summarizes the weights of the binary current topic status factors as independent triggers of accommodation.

118
Table 5.6.1

Factor Effect Weights for Topic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.432</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>446</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.553</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.619</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>0.406</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>374</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the weightings associated with the new topic coding are similar, their significance is not uniform. The non-significant weight observed in the high intermediate rating category deserves special attention. An examination of the mean length of questions at this level suggests that there are more short questions at the high intermediate level than in the advanced proficiency and above categories. Table 5.6.2 lists mean question length for all questions in each proficiency level.
Table 5.6.2

Mean Question Length

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>1+</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2+</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Plus</td>
<td>12.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the advanced through superior levels, when new topics are broached in interviewer questions, there is concurrently more verbosity, and thus a greater likelihood of an interaction of topic novelty and comprehension troubles on the part of advanced candidates. The status of the topic factor group at these levels is nevertheless independent in the step in and step out analyses. A possible explanation of these results can be gleaned from the observation that accommodation in the current question is in fact embedded in the form of the question itself. Foregrounding is therefore a qualitatively different kind of factor than those seen thus far in that the topic status factor is discourse-dependent rather than candidate-focused. The production, comprehension and well-formedness factor groups capture cross-cutting features of the candidates' speech in the turn prior to the variation in interviewer questions. The new topic status factor, in contrast, is not directly linked to the candidates' speech. Rather, accommodative variation in questions about new topics may be a by-product of the interviewers'
inclination to embed the foregrounding of the question topic in the question turn itself. This phenomenon, which is explored in detail in the next chapter, leads to two main kinds of interviewer accommodation—topic fronting and question expansions. Since high intermediate questions are typically shorter and less propositionally complex, topically-independent questions are more frequent. At the advanced and higher levels, however, there are more probing questions on complex topics that require either long interviewer foregrounding turns containing prefatory information about the new topic, or accommodation within the question turn through fronting and question expansion.

The second discourse-dependent factor group, one that is not directly contingent on the interviewers' interpretation of the candidates' speech in the previous turn, is one that encodes the last speaker prior to the current interviewer question turn. In the basic, unmarked turn taking of the language proficiency interview, the sequencing structure is interviewer question, candidate answer, followed by another interviewer question throughout the interview until sufficient evidence of proficiency has been accumulated. There are, however, many instances in the eighty interviews considered here where the speaker prior to the question is not the candidate, but the interviewer. Deviations from the interviewer question and answer orderings may be the result of side sequences, wherein the interviewer extends the candidate's last turn with a monologue before closing down the previous turn and posing a new task or question. Table 5.7 shows the effects of the last speaker factor on accommodation in the next question. The coding for the interviewer
'r' is contrasted with accommodative questions following turns by the candidates 'j'.

Table 5.7

**Factor Effect Weights for Last Speaker**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.603</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>0.492</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>0.471</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>660</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.553</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>663</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all levels of proficiency, when the speaker prior to the question is the interviewer, the likelihood of accommodation shows a modest increase. When the last speaker was the candidate, independent of the content or quality of the candidates' answer, there is a slight constraint, or no effect at all on the likelihood of accommodation. A possible interpretation of this phenomenon comes from a consideration of the interviewers' expectation that candidates will comprehend questions following the interviewers' turn. Experience may inform interviewers that when they hold the floor before framing a new topic or a question about a foregrounded topic, there is an increased probability that the candidate may not comprehend the just-posed question. Accommodation in questions
following interviewer turns therefore may be seen as a form of hedging against non-comprehension. Interviewers, in other words, may at these junctures employ proactive accommodation. Considering again the notion of interviewer "work" introduced in Chapter 1, such proactive accommodation may be based on interviewers' collective experience with candidate trouble in answering when topics and questions are not adequately foregrounded and framed. By aligning commentary and questions in contiguous positions in the discourse, a certain risk is involved that all the current interviewer effort to induce the candidate to talk will be for naught. Accommodative questions after interviewer turns may decrease this risk.

Table 5.7 indicates that while accommodation following interviewer speaking turns occurs across the four rating levels, the non-significance at the high intermediate and superior levels suggests that this factor group is redundant. A possible interpretation is that at the high intermediate level, the most important triggers are primarily those associated with overt signals of candidate troubles. For the superior candidates, for whom the least effect for the last speaker factor was evident, and relatively few instances of the interviewer taking the last turn (about 5% of the total) occurred, the need for accommodation as a form of proactive discourse management is least necessary, since the likelihood of candidate miscomprehension is slimmest. The lack of an effect for last speaker turn in the high intermediate (1+) and superior (3) ratings may have very different meanings. In the former, the relatively few contiguous interviewer speaking turns may indicate
the preference for short question and answer patternings with few expansive turns taken by the interviewer prior to articulation of a question. In the latter, since interviewers are prone to ask more probes at the superior level, the markedness of long prefatory interviewer monologue before the probe question may well be minimized.

The last of the discourse factor groups encodes the status of the last interviewer question as either including accommodation (y) or not (n). The potential importance of this factor group comes from the observation that in many language proficiency interviews, the interviewers at a certain point resort to preemptive accommodation across many question turns—suggesting a "snow ball" effect (Ross, 1992). In such sequences, interviewers make the default questioning format one that includes redundancy in the question, or some other form of question simplification, presumably because earlier question turns resulted in consistent instances of candidate troubles that portended a slow and drawn out process of question repetition after candidate requests for clarification, pauses or non-sequitur answers. Table 5.8 summarizes the effect weights for the previous question accommodation factor. As can be inferred from the factor weights, the effect of correlated accommodative questions is relatively low, and approaches the center of the scale.
Table 5.8

Factor Effect Weights for Accommodation in Last Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>0.552</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>543</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>0.484</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the other discourse factor groups, the weight of the previous accommodation factor only slightly promotes the likelihood of accommodation in the current question turn. The fact that at the high intermediate through advanced plus levels this factor provides an independently significant factor group suggests that interviewers at these levels may indeed resort to correlated accommodation, even when there may be no trouble in the candidate's previous answer. In relative terms, the weights suggest that this factor is much less important than factors related to the candidates' response--production, comprehension, and well-formedness. It nevertheless suggests that there may be critical points in many language proficiency interviews at which interviewers form impressions about candidates' proficiency, and reveal their impressions through the use of proactive accommodative questioning that is actually independent
of the immediately previous candidate utterance. Further analysis of
the phenomenon is clearly necessary, but a viable hypothesis is that
correlated accommodation sequences occur as a consequence of
candidate troubles early in the interview and continue until there is
a change in the topic about which the original troubles began. The
interpretation of proactive accommodative sequences by
interviewers themselves could reveal critical points in language
proficiency interviews where attributes about candidate proficiency
are formed.

As for the symmetry of the weights and their significance
levels across the proficiency continuum, it appears that the superior
rating level interviews in particular are least affected by the
correlated accommodation phenomenon, and are indeed least
influenced by the discourse factor groups in general. This
observation suggests that accommodation in superior-level
interviews is immediately relevant to interactional troubles, and
serves mainly as a palliative for sporadic instances of
miscommunication. The independence of accommodative phenomena
in ratings of superior level candidates, in other words, suggests that
any instance of accommodation at that level is relatively marked.

Thus far in this chapter we have examined variation in triggers
of accommodation across the four rating categories. The analyses
thus far suggest that trouble spots in the interviews may be variably
significant as signposts of candidate proficiency, and that
interactional and linguistic troubles may have varying degrees of
markedness associated with them. At the lowest rating level (1+),
different signals of candidate production troubles have weights
closer to the middle of the probabilistic scale of triggers of subsequent accommodation (Tables 5.4.1-5.4.4), presumably because there are so many possible sources of trouble that no single source appears salient to the interviewers. At the highest rating category (3), relatively rare instances of candidate trouble are more likely to invoke accommodative repair by the interviewer. A comparison of production trouble weights for the two rating categories will illustrate this difference. For the high intermediate group (1+), misarticulations resulted in a weight of .602, while for the superior rating group, misarticulations were weighted .756. Pauses by the 1+ group promoted accommodation with a weight of .686, while for rating group 3, pauses were weighted at .976, a near categorical relationship to the accommodation variable.

Cross-Validation

The foregoing analyses of triggers in each of the rating categories provide level-specific weightings. The following analysis summarizes the entire corpus of questions in the eighty interviews. In order to examine the variation in factor weights, the corpus of 2782 questions was arranged into odd and even lots of one hundred questions each and recombined into two split halves of the corpus. The data sets were then examined with the same variable rule analysis procedure that was used in the level-specific analyses. The purpose of the cross-validation analysis is to examine the big picture of accommodation in interviews in general, and to explore differences in individual factor weights that could conceivably be the artefact of random variation or individual differences in interviewers.
Table 5.9 summarizes the results of the cross-validation of the combined corpus of questions from the eighty interviews. The purpose of the cross-validation is to examine the stability of the weightings by splitting the corpus of 2782 questions into equivalent halves and running independent analyses. The cross-validation approach is commonly used in examining the beta weights in parametric regression analyses. Cross-validation in the present study should provide an index of stability for the entire corpus of interview data.

With one exception, the factor weights across the two halves suggest considerable symmetry in the derived weightings of triggers of accommodation in the next interviewer question turn. The exception, which is in the comprehension factor group, relates to the "misarticulation" factor: .767 for the odd half and .623 for the even half. Although misarticulation is part of a factor group making a statistically significant contribution to accommodation in both halves of the corpus, the difference in weights suggests that there is a degree of instability in the appearance of the phenomenon and its effect on the variable rule of interviewer accommodation in questions. This may indeed be an artefact of the coding process, since "misarticulation" is the most inferential of the coding categories used in the study. It may well be that variation in the next interviewer turn appears discordant because in the context of the face-to-face interaction, interviewers decode and interpret candidate utterances more accurately than a third party discourse analyst working with audio recordings. Thus 'misarticulations' may well be partially a by-product of the interpretation process.
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A graphic representation of the weights for the two halves of corpus (Figure 5.3, below) indicates the closely parallel weights of the individual factors. From the left, the comprehension factor group, with 'o' coding no problem in comprehending, and 'q' for a request for clarification, in both halves shows how an overt request invokes the highest probability of accommodation in the next interviewer question. With the exception of the misarticulation factor, 'm', the remaining members of the production factor group, 'p' for pauses in the answer turn, 'u' for an under-elaborate answer,
and 's' for a non-sequitur, show a close symmetry in both halves of the corpus of questions. As would be expected, no problem in

Figure 5.3

formulating a response in this factor group, coded 'o', results in nearly equivalent likelihoods of accommodation—slightly constraining the application of the accommodative question in the next turn. Likewise, the other production factor group, the well-formedness of the candidate's last turn, results in very similar weightings. Finally, the remaining factor groups, which encode aspects of the discourse organization in the interview turn taking, show nearly identical weightings across the split halves. Examination of Table 5.9 indicates an average difference in factor weight effect between the split halves of these variables to be a miniscule .020.

The cross-validation study provides a basis for a claim of generalizability about the analysis of the triggers of accommodation.

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The hierarchy of weightings could perhaps become a basis for ordering criteria leading to an account of interactional and discourse phenomena interviewers might be expected to attend to when conducting interviews. If indeed the extent of accommodation can be taken to reveal the interviewers' perception of the candidates' need for interactional support, the relative importance of the different factors, as indicated by the weights of their component members, could be arranged into interpretive rules that should, if this description is accurate, predict the outcomes of interviews. Such a set of interpretive rules would be based on the frequency of such phenomena as requests for clarifications, pauses in answer turn, under-elaborations, non-sequiturs, and errors in the last candidate turn, in particular. Indeed, such an account fits to some degree with the level-specific proficiency descriptors introduced in Chapter Two. A major difference is that the descriptions provided there are projections of what second language speakers could be expected to accomplish in the world outside of the interview--whereas the descriptions sketched here, and the interpretive generalizations that follow from them, are constructed within the context of interaction in the interview.

The foregoing analysis of the triggers of accommodation suggests a firm basis to predict when accommodation will follow from candidate troubles, and when the cumulative impact of such troubles leads to a default accommodative mode, thus providing ample evidence to support Hypothesis One. The cross-validation phase indicated that factor weights are remarkably robust as descriptions of the harbingers of communicative accommodation.
More narrowly, the rating level-specific analyses indicated commonalities and some differences in the perceived importance of interactional and linguistic troubles along the proficiency continuum, suggesting that interviewer interpretations of the significance of candidate troubles becomes more refined at the top end of the ability continuum.

Now that the triggers of accommodation have been identified, specific interviewer reactions to them will be the object of analysis. To this end, we again return to a micro-analysis of interview excerpts. The next set exemplifies different interviewer accommodative strategies invoked in reaction to the phenomena we have examined in this chapter on candidate troubles in the interview.
Chapter 6 FEATURES OF ACCOMMODATION IN INTERVIEWER SPEECH

The present phase of the research addresses interviewer's accommodation in reaction to candidate problems. One key hypothesis is that accommodation occurs in reaction to perceived candidate needs for structuring and repair of the interaction. The interviewer's motivation for such repair is complex, potentially involving psychological, as well as linguistic, convergence (Coupland, Wiemann and Giles, 1991) towards the candidate. Any particular instance of accommodation in interview interaction is determined by the interviewer's perceived need for it under the constraints involved in conducting the interview in an expedient and efficient manner.

The accommodative processes leading to variability in accommodation will depend on specific interactional phenomena within the interview discourse. It will therefore will be necessary to define the phenomena in detail, and categories derived from them, before they are used for multivariate analysis. Here, the focus is on the interviewer's strategies in reaction to signals of candidate troubles in the interview processes. In contrast with what we have seen in the previous two chapters, the present analysis considers the ways interviewers try to repair or restructure the interaction during the interview process in reaction to various phenomena within the candidate's previous speaking turn. The assumption here is that accommodative strategies are locally dependent and are crafted with the recipient of the accommodative move in mind. Modifications of question difficulty may reveal the interviewer's diagnosis of the
source of candidate trouble, as well as a remedy for it. It is worth noting at the outset of the analysis of repair sequences that different repair types are likely to overlap, and may indeed cooccur in any given repair sequence. We can also anticipate that interviewer's choice of strategies for repair reveals their immediate interpretation of the source of the candidate's interactional or linguistic trouble.

The features of accommodation examined in the following sections reflect a number of strategies native speakers typically use in interaction with non-native interlocutors. The features fall into two main groupings--those used in reaction to evidence of candidate trouble in engaging in the interview interaction, and those used by the interviewer to manage the discourse of the interview. Of the first set, slowed down rate of speech (Hatch, 1978) and the interviewer's over-articulation of speech through tonic stress on normally unstressed syllables reflect a form of accommodation involving the interviewer's articulation. Two forms of simplification were encoded as features of accommodation. Simplification of lexical items perceived to be the source of candidate miscomprehension, and simplification of grammatical forms reveal interviewer's attempt to modify structure (Freed, 1978) in order to advance the aims of the interview and keep the candidates engaged in interaction. The discourse managing forms of accommodation were seen in the framing of questions. Selection questions, also known as "or-questions" (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1981), as well as display questions (Brock, 1986) were encoded when interviewers accommodated both reactively and proactively. Question fronting--prefatory statements or monologues articulated before the actual interview question (Ross
and Berwick, 1992), and question expansion, the repetition or paraphrase of questions previously asked (Ross, 1992) were selected to assess the interviewer's management of discourse through topic maintenance. Two other discourse strategies were tallied for the analysis: The interviewer's checking of the candidate's current understanding of the topic, and the admittedly rare, though potentially important, request for clarification from the interviewer about the content of the candidate's utterances (Long, 1981). These features of accommodation will be taken in turn and excerpts from the interviews examined.

**Slowed Down Rate of Speech**

The first strategy we examine is one well known in the foreigner talk literature addressing native with non-native speaker interaction (Larson-Freeman and Long, 1991). The excerpt below shows a slowing down of the rate of speech in reaction to an overt signal of candidate non-comprehension. Here, the interviewer indicates that the perceived source of trouble is understood to be the speed of his own speech. In this excerpt (.) between words indicates a slowed down rate of articulation.

Excerpt 25

I so-so tell me a little about your family
C family(.) ahum I have a (. ) ah (.5) father and br-eh mother and grandmother(.) I have no brother
I "I see(.) and how do your parents feel about you joining this company are they happy?
C (.5) maybehhh:(2)
I what did they say:when you told them:you: were: going to work at this company
C pardon?
I→ what did(.)they(.)say(.) to you(.) when(.) you said you were
going to work at this company.
C ah eh (.) they only say be careful

The repetition of the original question follows the candidate's request for clarification. The interviewer's strategy is to repeat the first part of the original question verbatim, with a minor lexical change in the lower clause, from "told" to "said". The manner of the repetition is further modified through the use of the slowed down rate of speech. It is of course possible for interviewers to simply repeat what they have said prior to the trouble spot. Such a strategy would not reveal, however, the perceived source of non-comprehension. In the above excerpt, the interviewer's diagnosis of the trouble was evidently accurate—the candidate understood the slowed down utterance the second time, and was able to complete the answer turn with an apt, albeit short, rejoinder.

We might surmise that interviewers employ a "hit or miss" accommodation strategy when trying to repair troubles in interaction with their interlocutors. It stands to reason that if one repair attempt does not work, a different one would be indicated. The following excerpt suggests, in contrast to this notion, that a slowed down rate of speech in response to candidate non-answers is a fundamental strategy. In excerpt 26, the slow down in the main part of the repeated question comes after an initial failure of the candidate to respond to the interviewer's attempt to repair the trouble in his comprehension. The interviewer's repair strategy in
Excerpt 26

I ah(2)°yeah ↑so do you have a lot of work today.
C  (.).
I→ a lot of work(.)to(.)day.
C  (.).
I→ today do(.)you(.)have(.) a lot of work.
C  work
I  [yeah
C  of course
I  what's your schedule today, what do you have to do.

This excerpt is actually complex in that it incorporates three different types of accommodation. The first attempt at repair, with repetition of the sentence's object in a slowed down manner (first slow down after →), does not result in the desired effect. In the second attempt, the slow down is combined with adverb fronting making the temporal framing of the anticipated rejoinder optimally salient to the candidate. The second and most redundant rerun of the question here succeeds in orienting the candidate to the desired answering turn.

Over-Articulation of Interviewer’s Utterance

The next type of accommodative move utilized by interviewers is similar to that just considered, since both involve the manner in which the interviewer modifies his speech to the candidate. When interviewers over articulate, they place tonic stress on key syllables in words presumed to be the most informationally weighted. This strategy is one familiar to analysts of communicative accommodation --indeed, it is often observed in inter-generational communication.
contexts (Giles, Coupland, and Coupland, 1991), as well as in interaction troubles between native and non-native speakers. By underscoring key words in the repaired utterance, the interviewer reveals his perception that the source of the candidate's non-comprehension is the decoding of the main proposition-bearing words in the misheard utterance. As seen in the excerpt below, the perceived source of the trouble may not be obvious in the candidate's signal of non-comprehension. Repetition of the misheard or non-comprehended part of an utterance is indeed used by both parties in interviews and conversations. Such a strategy is not dramatically different from learner strategies in getting a second turn at a non-comprehended utterance. Rost (1990) notes that learner attempts to indicate the sources of their non-comprehension often entail a lexical reprise—a repetition of a single word, usually with rising intonation to indicate a query, or even a positional reprise—a clue to the interlocutor about the relative location in the utterance where the non-comprehension occurred. Rost and Ross (1991) corroborated this strategy in finding that novice listeners in particular often resorted to lexical and positional reprises to indicate locations of non-comprehension. That interviewers resort to stressing (over articulating) certain syllables and not others seems likely to be a repair strategy used in interaction with low proficiency language learners when other remedies prove less effective.

Excerpt 27

I I'd like to ask you some other questions
C I see
I [do you ahhhh,] do you travel::: very much do you say go to
ahh Tokyo and that area (.) often?
Excerpt 27 involves the interviewer's over articulation of the main proposition of the original question instead of the reprise segment nominated by the candidate in the line above the repair. The overarticulation here suggests that the interviewer interprets the source of the candidate's non-comprehension was the content of the first question. A plausible interpretation is that the question was met with two requests for clarification after a misplaced correction. The ensuing repair was a verbatim repetition of the latter part of the first question "you go once in a while". This was not successful as a repair, however, since the candidate succeeds only in repeating the restated "once in a while". The interviewer eventually identifies the trouble source here through a process of elimination, and repairs the main question through a combination of over articulation and repetition of the original question.

Interviewer accuracy in determining the exact place of the interlocutors' trouble in comprehension most likely varies with experience in conducting interviews and engaging in foreigner talk discourse. Excerpt 27 demonstrated a trial and error sequence before the candidate's comprehension trouble was corrected and the answer turn could be taken.

The following excerpt, in contrast, shows an interviewer's correct diagnosis of the troublesome word in the repeated question.
Here, interestingly, the first instance of non-comprehension was possibly the consequence of insufficient closing of the previous turn, with the candidate's pause at the end of the fourth line taken as a turn transition point. The candidate's subsequent completion of his turn is not responded to as a completion. Rather, a new questioning turn is started and overlaps with the candidate's superfluous answer to the previous question. The interviewer correctly interprets the source of the non-comprehension to be at the juncture of the overlapping speech. The repair therefore incorporates the whole question with a rise in the pitch range and tonic stress on "worries". The candidate responds with a lexical reprise, or repetition of the stressed word, apparently not to signal a lack of comprehension so much as to indicate that the propositional content of the question was unanticipated at that juncture.

Excerpt 28

I ahhm what else about New York (.) interests you.
C (.5) ss(.)shopping
I um hum
C and I am just want to see ah(.
I is there anything
C =New York city itself
I [is there anything that worries you.
C pardon?
I→ is there anything that ↑worries you about going there.
C worry.
I yeah or
C you mean dangerous. I-I don't think so
I heh heh hhhahh well that's unusual

Thus far two interviewer accommodation strategies have been introduced; slowing down the rate of speech, and over articulation of
content words in questions. Both of these strategies suggest that the interviewer recognizes that the manner of articulation is the remedy for candidate interactional troubles. Modifications to the manner of articulation reveal that the sources of candidate non-answers are interpreted as consequences of miscomprehension of previous questions. As we have seen, these manner accommodation strategies are often applied in combinations with other strategies. Such a multi-feature accommodative strategy serves to maximize the likelihood that the repair will be successful and get the candidate to retake the floor in an answer turn apropos the original question.

**Lexical and Syntactic Accommodation**

Accommodative moves that involve lexical and syntactic features in the repair sequence represent a distinct set of strategies for dealing with candidate troubles from those we have thus far examined. The first considered in this set of lexical and grammatical repair strategies is the lexical simplification form of accommodation. In contrast to changes in the prosodic contours of the utterance through variation in the speed of speech or the stressing of key syllables, the lexical simplification strategy reveals that the interviewer interprets the trouble source to be in the candidate's understanding of specific lexical or phrasal items in the previous utterance. Excerpt 29 illustrates an instance in which the candidate is adequately attuned to the frame of the talk and has in fact fielded a previous question before providing the first of a series of answers about the topic (a trip to Egypt). The candidate's initial signal of
Excerpt 29

C Most of Egyptian people are ahh poor
I Do they beg?
C beg?
I um
C wha.
I ask for money
C Yeess ehh they call it apaksisi

non-comprehension, a lexical reprise with a rising intonation, is not immediately recognized as a lexical problem by the interviewer. Here the interviewer provides a paraphrase of the unknown beg in the current context of the topic, which facilitates a second turn for the candidate to take. The micro pause immediately before the non-completed request for clarification evidently signals to the interviewer that no answer, or interpretation of beg, is forthcoming. The interviewer's strategy in repairing the turn is to simplify the unknown lexical item by supplying a parenthetical definition. The strategy succeeds in reorienting the candidate to a completion of the answer turn.

The second example, excerpt 30, of lexical simplification illustrates how an interviewer may eventually diagnose the source of the trouble through a sequence of strategies in a trial and error manner. In the first repair turn, the interviewer repeats the non-comprehended question verbatim after a one-second pause in the answer turn. Here, no prosodic modification is attempted at all. The candidate succeeds in producing a lexical reprise in the rejoinder, with rising intonation signalling non-comprehension of the last word in the question. At the turn before the lexical simplification, the
interviewer has not yet identified the trouble source. In taking the
candidate's lexical reprise as a check of the question and the start of
an answer turn, the interviewer here permits a rejoinder based on a
mishearing of the question. This phenomenon suggests that
interviewers may with some candidates admit answers that are not
apropos the topic—better an off-topic answer than no answer at all.
Excerpt 30

C ↑well >where are you from originally Mr Y.<
I (1)
C >where are you from originally.<
I regionally.
C uh hum
I what regionally means?
C→ your hometown

In this instance, the ratification of the candidate's mishearing of
"regionally" did not suffice in inducing an answer turn.

The stage-wise narrowing down of lexical problems can be
understood as a fail-safe against repairs that themselves lead to
other troubles. In oral proficiency interviewer, an obvious source of
non-comprehension is the content of topic framing utterances and
questions related to candidates. These initially come from the
interviewer, and reveal the fact that to some extent candidate
troubles in answering questions may be interviewer induced. The
following excerpt exemplifies one such instance of a repair leading to
a secondary regress, or paraphrase of a lexically simplified repair
sequence. Here, the interviewer has opted for a slowing down of the
Excerpt 31

I  what's the basic(.) cause of that?
C  excuse me?
I  what's the basic(.) cause
C  caurv-what is caurv
I→  [cause-cause-what's the reason?
C  (.5) reason?
I→  =⇒WHY is there(.) an imbalance
C  because um (.5) it is(.5) um um decided(.5) historically I think

initial question--which portends anticipated interactional troubles ahead. The first request for clarification is dealt with by verbatim repetition, which only results in a lexical reprise and a request for a definition. The interviewer's strategy shifts to lexical simplification--here a paraphrase of cause to reason. This too does not succeed, possibly because the lexical simplifications were extracted from the phrases in which the troublesome words occurred. The candidate was thus focused on isolated words out of questions which were stranded from the original proposition. The interviewer thereafter redresses the secondary source of trouble by rephrasing the original question with a rising pitch to indicate its newness, and extra loud articulation to mark the resetting of the question. This strategy evidently succeeded, since the candidate could at least take the floor back in an answer turn.

The final example of lexical simplification considers simplification of parts of phrases that are comprised of components that are themselves paraphrases of individual lexical items. The problem here is to consider why interviewers would opt for
idiomatic expressions instead of simpler canonical lexical items in the first place. A plausible answer is that there is no clear evidence at that point of candidate's not understanding paraphrased utterances. We would assume, in other words, in accordance with interviewer's preferences for answers immediately following questions, that there are expectations for questions to be understood in their unaccommodated form. There is, in short, no motive for proactive accommodation in a questioning sequence unless there has been previous sustained evidence of interactional trouble to motivate it.

Excerpt 32

I it is challenging work-do you like your work?
C yes(.)very challenging work
I that's good did you study something similar in school.
C (4)
I→ what did you major in.
C ah(.) in in university?

In Excerpt 32 the question prior to the pause in the candidate turn uses an oblique reference to the candidate's current profession. The connection between the last topic of talk (the candidate's job in the company) is not salient enough for the candidate to do an on-line decoding. The relatively long pause in the answer turn (four seconds) suggests that the interviewer interpreted the pause first as planning time needed for the candidate to articulate the second pair part to the question. The wait time evidently exceeds the expected planning time for the candidate, and is reinterpreted as an indication of non-comprehension. The interviewer paraphrases the question with the more canonical form what did you major in?, which was
evidently sufficient to reorient the candidate to the question topic and turn taking sequence.

A different, but related, form of interviewer simplification involves a syntactic modification to the non-comprehended question. Here the interviewer's strategy for dealing with candidate non-answers appears to be based on repeated failures to identify the trouble spot. In Excerpt 33 we see the simplification as the end of a series of repair attempts arranged in a trial and error manner before a successful correction is achieved. Grammatical simplification in particular is relatively rare, since candidate's don't readily display the sources of troubles related to morphosyntactic phenomena. Excerpt 33 exemplifies an interviewer's arrival at a grammatical simplification as an add-on to an ineffective slow down of the rate

Excerpt 33

I ah(2)°yeah ↑so do you have a lot of work today.
C (.)
I a lot of work(.)to(.)day
C (.)
I→ today do(.)you(.)have(.) a lot of work.
C work
I [yeah
C of course
I what's your schedule today, what do you have to do.

of speech. In the second attempt the interviewer resorts to adverb fronting in order to make the temporal reference most salient to the candidate. This form of syntactic simplification is seen in putative interlanguage developmental sequences (Pienemann and Johnston, 1986), and is often used in lieu of tense-marking inflectional morphology. The interviewer's resorting to adverb fronting here
constitutes an attempt to reorient the temporal frame for the question rerun. This occurs after a micro pause (.), suggesting that there had already been substantial trouble in the interview to the extent that the interviewer has come by this point to recognize any pause as most likely indicating non-comprehension of the question. The actual accommodative question used in Excerpt 33 incorporates the familiar overlapping of accommodation strategies. The interviewer's identification of the source of trouble is rarely one directly related to specific grammatical phenomena.

One aspect of morphosyntactic trouble that the interviewer can identify is tense. Tense marking in oral proficiency interviews is one of the few grammatical watershed criteria explicitly used for determining levels of proficiency. At the advanced level, for instance, one rule of thumb used by many interviewers is to determine if a candidate can distinguish between present and past tense in a sustained narrative monologue. This preference for a clear grammatical criterion is traceable to the interview manual (ETS, 1982), which refers the coherent discrimination between tenses as a criterion for accuracy. Many speaking tasks are therefore crafted to induce the candidate to produce narratives in the past tense in order to provide ample evidence of this aspect of second language use.

Excerpt 34 illustrates a grammatical repair strategy after a request for clarification in a turn taken by the candidate. The original question could in fact be answered with reference to habitual or future action. The candidate identifies two comprehended words from the main part of the interviewer's questions in two separate lexical reprises. After the second reprise, the interviewer reorients
Excerpt 34

I Just one more question I want ask you is ah you said your parents live in Tokyo, right, and you live in Ibaragi now - how often do you go and visit your parents?
C (. )how often
I um
C (1) go?
I→ um-how often wi-will you go to visit your parents
C ma-maybe three(.)four times(.) in a year
I four times in a year (. )when-when will that be, summer?
C summer and winter and(.) golden week

the question from the habitual “how often do you go” to the more narrowly focused, and presumably more salient “will you go”. This strategy of grammatical simplification succeeds in getting the candidate to take an over-due answer turn.

Simplification

A number of different interviewer strategies can be construed as forms of simplification of articulation, structure, or the discourse of the interview itself. The two types of interviewer accommodation that involve structural simplification typically occur in reaction to specific indications of non-comprehension by candidates. These two forms of accommodation are either lexical or grammatical. The following type of accommodation, which also simplifies the candidate’s answering task, often occurs in a proactive, or anticipatory, manner. Here, the interviewer may hedge in the questioning turn by providing the candidate with potential answers embedded in the question itself. This strategy, variously known as an “or-choice question” or “selection question” (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1981), can be used in reaction to candidate non-answers, or as a form of prevention of such non-answers.
The first example of a selection question (Excerpt 35) comes at the outset of the topic nomination. The interviewer hedges against permitting the candidate to claim that no vacation had been taken in the previous year during "Golden Week" by making the selection one of either last year or the coming vacation period. The candidate nevertheless stumbles in his answering by shifting from what at first appears to be an account of the previous year's vacation to what might be his future intentions. The interviewer reorients the candidate to the task and to what he expects in the answer turn by giving the candidate examples within the selection question—"did you play tennis, go hiking". This example shows how selection questions serve to increase the likelihood that there will be answers following them, thus preserving the "preferred" structure of interview interaction. Tense is first made a selection, and subsequently in the face of an under-elaboration, an example-bearing repair of the first question is formulated.

Excerpt 35

I→ so what ah (. ) what did you do for golden week last year(.) or this
C [ahh (. ) talk about last year
I [last year
C (2) ah I went to Karuisawa(.) highland its in highland
I hum
C in Nagano Prefecture(.) they have vacance with my-↑ I have a ah have ah rest with my friend
I→ [ah a vacation (. ) and what did you do- did you play tennis go hiking
C ahhm
I could you tell me something about that trip?

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Selection questions do not predictably occur in question repair sequences. They lend themselves, rather, to the scaffolding of interaction between the interviewer and candidate, especially when there already has been evidence of trouble in previous turns. Their use reveals a strategy for managing the interaction so as to ensure that answers follow the questions. In asking selection questions, the interviewer reduces the task of answering to short answers or even yes/no responses. We can surmise that selection questions occur in anticipation of problems in their absence. Alternatively, selection questions may well be prevalent in places in the interview where the candidate is not expected to take extended speaking turns--in the warm up and beginnings of level check phases.

Excerpt 36 shows an instance of question scaffolding. Here the candidate's task in answering the question is reduced from an extended turn to a series of short answers. Whether in this particular instance the interviewer expected an extended answer from the candidate remains open to interpretation. The framing of the selection question, in spite of whatever expectations the interviewer might have had, results in a short turn for the candidate.

Excerpt 36

I what about your sister(.) what does she do
C [ahhh my sister is going to go in America to study(.) ahh English
I [°I see
C ahh I think it will be=it will August this year
I→ for a long time or just one month?
C ah for one year
I one year? ahh that's a long time.
One interpretation of selection questions in interview discourse is that they are intrusive, misplaced influences of foreigner talk. Interviewers, most of whom are also language teachers, may use selection questions independently of specific candidate troubles, not as a preemptive simplification, crafted in response to the candidate's apparent need for it, but as matter of habit. Such an interpretation would be corroborated if the or-questions did not serve to discriminate among the four rating levels.

**Discourse Management**

A different set of accommodative strategies interviewers might use in response to candidate's interactional or linguistic difficulties involves the organization of the interview discourse. Such accommodative moves serve to maximize the likelihood that the candidate will comprehend and provide talk in response to the topic framed in the interviewer's question. To this end, interviewers often resort to using "preliminaries" to questions (Schegloff, 1980) that serve to provide an appropriate frame to the topic of the yet-to-be-articulated question. The framing of the topic of the question provides the basis for question topic ratification by the candidate (Young and Milanovic, 1992). Such ratification is evidenced by backchanneling from the candidate during the topic-framing preliminary turn taken by the interviewer.

The efficiency of topic-framing discourse management manoeuvres can be seen in the ideal interview questioning sequence, especially at the probing phase. Here, the interviewer sets the stage for the topic of the probes by getting the candidate to ratify the topic, thereby licensing specific questions that will require extensive turns
from the candidate. If this scenario does not evolve, the interviewer runs the risk of expending precious interview time framing a topic about which the candidate is unable or unwilling to respond, thus leading to a disjunctive topic abandonment, embarrassing silence, or costly repair sequences wherein most of the talk comes from the interviewer instead of the candidate.

With this function of discourse management in mind, we will consider one form of accommodation that can be used as either a consequence of trouble, or as a proactive measure to avoid miscommunication. The accommodation featured here comes in two main forms. The first, which has been noted in the foreigner talk literature (Long, 1981), serves to extract constituents from within their syntactic position and make them the topic of the question. The position from which the topic has been extracted is usually filled with a resumptive pronoun, or the actual noun itself. The extracted constituent can be used as a general topicalizer—a preliminary to the actual syntactic fronting.

Excerpt 37 provides an example of an extreme form of this phenomenon. Here the interviewer isolates the topic of the upcoming question between micropauses and waits for a backchannel to signal candidate comprehension of the topic. After the candidate's

Excerpt 37

I→ ahm (.) so economics (.5)
C um hum
I→ when you chose economics
C um hum
I were you thinking about( .) your future job?
acknowledgement, the interviewer proceeds with the second phase of the fronting process with the preposed phrase "when you chose economics" as an antecedent to the main question "were you thinking about your future job?". This form of scaffolding questions incidentally fits into the primary method of topicalization preferred in Japanese discourse (Hinds, 1983). Its common use in these interviews suggests that veteran interviewers could have acquired the discourse function of the backchannel in their contact with spoken Japanese.

An alternative to this two-stage fronting process is a listing of possible topics of questions, often from written information made available to the interviewer about a candidate's background.

Excerpt 38

I  let's see °your hobbies are >travelling reading books< oil painting-↑oil painting can you tell me about that?
C  yes I started oil painting during (. ) ah freshman year

Excerpt 38 exemplifies this strategy. Here, the interviewer lists potential topics of talk - all examples of the candidate's hobbies. The last in the list is repeated and offset with the use of rising pitch and tonic stress on the new topic before the question is articulated. The position from which the topic is extracted is filled with a pro-form. The candidate at this point thus has two saliently positioned reference points in advance of the actual interview question.

Another strategy is to front an entire phrase into a salient topical position before a question is articulated. Excerpt 39 gives an example of such a phrase-fronting topicalization strategy. It appears
in a position in the turn-taking that is not contiguous with a trouble
spot in the previous candidate turn, suggesting that it might be
Excerpt 39

I why-why is that.
C (.)because(.) health is most important(.) to live
I→ (.) okay ahm when you were in Keio University please tell me
about your lifestyle what did you do.

locally independent. The new question “lifestyle while at university”
comes after the framing of the topic, here cooccurring with a double
question in which two speaking tasks are posed without a turn
transition place between them. This strategy, which is explored in
detail below, increases the likelihood of a success in getting a
candidate answer after only one question turn is taken by the
interviewer. The essential point about lexical and phrasal fronting
of topic matter is that without such preliminaries about the content
of up-coming questions, an interviewer runs the risk of having to
reframe the topic and repeat the questions.

A second type of fronting occurs with greater elaboration of the
frame of talk. The positioning of “long fronting” in interview
discourse typically coincides with the probe phase. The positioning
of the long fronting moves can be inferred from their positioning in
interview sequence, and by the observation that they typically occur
before the most propositionally complex questions in the interview.
The function of the long front is identical to the shorter varieties just
examined in excerpts 37 through 39; the topic of the question is
framed and projected (Maclachlan and Reid, 1994) by the fronting.
The long fronting sequences differ from the above examples,
however, in that they require extended interviewer speaking turns. Such turns create increasingly difficult processing loads on the candidate, and run the risk of failure--non-comprehension of the topic of the question at the end of a long fronting turn. Such failures to adequately frame topics result in time-consuming reframing repairs on the part of the interviewer, repairs that, because of the length and complexity of each framing turn, can lead to repair sequences requiring considerable rhetorical and articulatory skill on the part of the interviewer. Competence in producing long fronts before probing questions may be a discriminating criterion of a different sort than thus far discussed. It could be a criterion for identifying individual differences in the communicative competence of the interviewers themselves. Indeed, the frequency of formulaic speech in the probe phase of the interview would suggest that many interviewers resort to memorized probe question scripts so as to avoid convoluted and confusing prefaces to the main questions. The repair of troubles in the main part of the interview are most costly, and is thus most obviously consistent with the preference for minimal interviewer "work" introduced in the first chapter.

The first example of a long probe (excerpt 40) shows how a side sequence, a monologue by the interviewer that extends and provides contextual details of the question, is sandwiched between the first of two related questions. The side sequence comes without a turn transition place occurring after the first question, indicating that the whole preface to the probe was unitary and not in response to evidence that the candidate was not yet willing or able to answer the first question.
Excerpt 40

I Why do you think that ahh(.) [this company]in particular is having so much trouble with its computers I mean umm most people of course buy NEC computers in Japan but many people tell me that [this company] doesn't produce good quality computers yet and I've often heard that [this company] is behind in research for example in computers and this is why there are connections and tie-ups with IBM and things like that but what do you think that [this company] has to do to (. ) get ahead

C catch up=catch up or get ahead

I ahhh catch up or get ahead

C difficult problem but I think....

The side sequence, beginning with "I mean..", and ending with "and things like that" serves to front propositional information that specify the meaning of "so much trouble"--thereby reducing the risk that the candidate will not understand what the topic of the question is. The side sequence is here closed down with a remake of the original question into one that has shifted from the issues of the causes of the troubles, to the remedies the company could take to gain a greater market share. In this instance, the long probe serves its function, since the candidate understands the meaning of the complex question and is ready to formulate a response that can be evaluated according to proficiency criteria at the rating level hypothesized by the interviewer.

The next example of a long front as a preface to a probe question comes not as a side sequence of the sort just examined, but as an unadorned topicalization of the question content. Here the
interviewer provides examples of what the 'situation' is in advance of asking the candidate's view of it. In relative terms, this type of Excerpt 41

I ah::(.)the international attitude Japan >seems to pretty harsh < these days ah:: (3) we->these days I often read articles in the paper that say< well(.) for many Japan has (.). has just said words and promises but ↑the other countries were not- will not be satisfied with only words anymore and the other countries will demand action, ↓what is your view of this current situation.

C (3) ahhm(2) Japanese inte=Japanese industry ahh (.). power of competition is now stronger and stronger

I um hum [um hum

C and Japan is getting a huge surplus

I uh hum

C so the other countries are demanding to decrease the surplus...

fronting without a preliminary question runs a greater risk of going unanswered, chiefly because it often does not provide a sufficient amount of contextualizing detail to the listener. In excerpt 41, for example, the candidate appears not to field the question as it was intended. The response indicates that the candidate recognizes that the topic is related to trade friction, but the rejoinder suggests that the essential meaning of the front and the question following it has eluded the candidate's comprehension. The rejoinder in fact turns out to be a paraphrase of the propositional content of the front, rather than an answer to the question as it was posed.

The two long fronts thus far examined introduce a construct validity issue to oral proficiency interview discourse. The candidates are assessed in terms of their capacity to generate second language speech that is appropriate and reasonably well-formed in response to
specific, but non-scripted, and therefore unpredictable, questions. The fact that in probing questions long fronts are so common, and indeed may be necessary prefatory sequences to questions, suggests an increased possibility that the construct of speaking proficiency is filtered through prerequisite advanced listening comprehension skills, world knowledge, and inferencing skills. Interviewers also differ in their skill in delivering the long front in advance of the key probing questions, and therefore it is all the more likely that the central part of the interview is most susceptible to variation in interviewer skill. Answers to probes conditioned by long fronts, in other words, may well be jointly influenced by attributes of both the interviewer and candidate.

An accommodative strategy that increases the likelihood of a candidate's responding on topic is one that decreases the scope of upcoming questions' possible reference in such a way that the candidate answers within the topic frame. Such a strategy potentially reduces the focus to how the candidate answers, in contrast to the opinion or attitude the candidate may have about the topic. The questioning strategy that captures the distinction between what a candidate says in terms of veracity and thoroughness, and how a candidate articulates the response, parallels the distinction between referential and display questions (Long, 1981; Long and Sato, 1983; Brock, 1986). The distinction between these two rests in the assumption that the answer to a referential question is not known to the asker prior to the asking of the question. Display questions, in contrast, typically have a pedagogical function in creating a context for the interlocutor to display his or her current state of understanding about a topic.
nominated by the interviewer. Such display questions are widely used as a teaching tool, and are indeed common in oral interview questions.

Display questions in oral proficiency interviews function to reduce the cognitive load on the candidate in formulating the answer. Since the focus is displaying procedural knowledge, rather than defending a position taken on a complex topic, display questions often are “how to do something” tasks in which the candidate is asked to produce a monologue requiring a series of steps ordered in a sequence. The focus is on the thoroughness and accuracy of the answer, and thus may differ from questions that are typical of the probe phase of the interview, although in many interviews display question occur within, or as a preface to, the probe phase. Display questions, like other discourse-managing questions, might not necessarily follow overt problems candidates evidence in answering previous questions; display questions are variably accommodative.

Excerpt 42 introduces an example of a procedural display question significant in demonstrating how candidates may be taken by surprise by questions that do not fit in with their expectations of what language interview questions sound like. Here, the candidate seems incredulous in his reaction to the interviewer's

Excerpt 42

I wanna ask you to do one more(,)thing
C [heh heh it's a ↑tough question
I no>this is an easy<this is an easy one
I I would like you ta-this is your tape recorder isn't it(,) ((taps on recorder))
C ye::s

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OK would you tell me how to use it?
C (1.5) use it?
[ I:: yeah I ah just-just teach me how to use it let's >look it's all in Japanese I I I can't so (. ) tell me how to use this if I want to use this tape recorder
C [ if you-if you see the sign-- you you can imagine (. ) what the sign says(. ) you see
I-> well maybe but pretend that I can't ((laughs))hehahahah (. ) how do you start this(1) where is the button or the knob or knob or the switch to (. )
C aahm when you play the (. ) recorded tape you should do the button- push the button umm (1) its ahhh which has a (. ) one triangle
I and what do these buttons mean that two small triangles going into opposite directions?

first articulation of the display question. In the answer turn the candidate pauses before seeking clarification of the question. The pause here portends not a non-comprehension of the content of the question as much as a disbelief that the question had been asked. The display question here can be understood as one coming at a point in the interview where it was unanticipated. Indeed, the candidate offers in lieu of an answer to the display question an alternative explanation by which the interviewer could, if he really desired to, deduce the icons showing how one could operate the tape recorder. This rejoinder is of course blatantly non-cooperative--the interviewer must repair the interaction and openly admit that his original question is not motivated by a genuine need for instructions in the use of the tape recorder--that it is just for "pretend". The candidate's trouble in answering the display question here is not indicative of his linguistic skill. Rather, the display question is out of position in the interview, and thus induces an interactional trouble.
It does not come as a form of accommodative repair, either. Excerpt 42 therefore qualifies as an example of a display question occurring independently of phenomena that would make its positioning understood from an accommodative perspective.

As mentioned above, display questions often occur near the probe phase of the interview. They are not uncommon as a follow up to long fronting moves by the interviewer to frame new topics of talk. They are thus relatable to discourse management strategies used by interviewers wherein the content of the question topic is made superfluously salient. When a display question follows a long front that is understood and ratified by the candidate, it would appear not to be accommodatively reactive to signs of trouble, but may serve instead to compensate for the complexity of the long front.

Excerpt 43 examines one such possibility. Here, the probe content is introduced with a preliminary and is elaborated in the subsequent interviewer turn. The actual probe question is articulated as a display question that seems curiously misplaced in the discourse. The topic of the prime minister's resignation projects a solicitation of the candidate's opinion on the matter. The question, however, requires a recount of the news that the interviewer has

Excerpt 43

I ahmm (.)Mr U you ahmm-I'm sure read the newspaper everyday and umh keep up with the (1) tehh what we call issues that are on the front page(.) ahm and ahh(.) recently there has been ahh(.) a some kind of. >I don't know what you call it< ↑problem with one of the ahm politicians in Mr Takeshita's cabinet I-I-I think he resigned
already nominated as the topic of talk. As in the previous excerpt, the question is unmotivated in the sense that the interviewer evidently already knows details of the political situation under which the resignation took place. The act of display is therefore one of providing the interviewer with evidence that the candidate can describe the current event in English, and not to tell the interviewer more than he already knows on the subject. That the display question is unlike an informative communication is evidenced by the fact that the interviewer provides an unsolicited rationalization and restatement of the question before the answer turn is even given over to the candidate.

The provision of a restatement, reformulation, or repetition of a question immediately following its first articulation is the last of the discourse management strategies we will consider in this chapter. Like the previously considered strategies, interviewer's use of question expansions may be independent of local evidence that the candidate has had trouble with the previous question and answer turn. Question expansions may therefore be variably accommodative in their positioning and function, but may serve as proactive accommodative moves in anticipation of candidate troubles relative to newly-nominated topics. The usual conditions of their appearance are attuned to overt instances of candidate trouble. The first excerpt we will examine is one such case. Here, the candidate in Excerpt 44
does not succeed in answering the question as it was posed because of non-comprehension.

Excerpt 44

I and ah(.) are you married?
C no I am single.
I (3) do you plan to get married?
C °hhha-nohh
I (1) I see you're not aeğyou have no plans right now
C yeah
I how did you ah get your job at (this company)?
C ohm it's quite well
I→ hum ↑how did you get your job at (this company)

The immediate result of the off-topic rejoinder is a repetition of the question. The form of the question undergoes prosodic modification (overarticulation) in the accommodative expansion.

The frequency of question expansions in the corpus of interviews would suggest that it is a fundamental accommodative strategy. This is perhaps an artefact of the interview goals; they motivate a form of transactional discourse motivating the participants to exchange specific information. The object of the transaction is of course the exchange of talk for the purpose of assessment. For this reason, the interviewer's pursuit of answers to foregrounded questions is in accordance with the goal of the assessment transaction.

Excerpt 45 provides another example of an expansion in response to a non-answer to a question. The interviewer could, of course, simply take the non-answer as evidence of an inability to answer. In fact, however, the abandonment of questions never occurs anywhere in the corpus of eighty interviews. In this excerpt,
the candidate's non-answer is taken as indicative of his non-comprehension of the question. The form of the speaking task is modified from the indirect form "you must be living in a dormitory now" to a more direct interrogative form.

Often, the source of the trouble is diagnosed by the interviewer as one related to the understanding of the form of the previous question or speaking task. The expansion is thus performed with a modification of the form of the question, often with lexical or syntactic changes. Excerpt 46 provides an example of such an interviewer strategy in response to a sign of non-comprehension as indicated in the lexical reprise provided in the candidate's answer turn. Here, the variation in question form is from "could you tell me"

Excerpt 46

I ahhm (3) do you ah (3) could you tell me a little bit about your ahh university life
C university life.
I→ what you did in university
C ahh
I in general
C yeah in general ahh in Japan the stu-students of university ehhh

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to an elliptical and partial repair of the question "what you did in university". The expansion serves here to repeat the propositional content of the first question through a specification of a potentially vague term to a more specific one.

As mentioned earlier, question expansions can also be preemptive, or may vary according to the complexity of the probe question articulated. Another source of variation could well be the proclivity of an interviewer to repeat herself when taking long turns. Excerpt 47 provides an example of expansion within the interviewer's speaking turn. Here, the first articulation of the question is followed by two expansions with lexical modifications contained within them before a long extension, which is itself followed by a question expansion as a recapitulation of the original. Interestingly, this instance of expansions does not come in reaction to a need for accommodation. It is, rather, accommodation provided in advance of evidence that it is needed for comprehension. Such positionings of expansions suggest that they occur frequently with long probes as part of the discourse management tactic interviewers

Excerpt 47

I ah (. ) I'm curious ah how do you exp-how do you explain to
the foreigners how do you tell these people ahh(.) how do you
explain questions that they may have such as ah popular
questions foreigners have such as ah popular questions that
foreigners have ah about geisha or say about ah sumo or the
sentos public bathing, public baths things that are very
common to Japanese but ah are very strange to foreigners,
how do you talk about (. ) these-these subjects these topics?
C yeh ah some foreigners have interest geisha so
I =uh hum
C they sometimes confuse geisha and prostitute

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I ah
C I sometimes explain geisha is not similar ≠ not equal (. .) them
I I see

employ. The long fronts function to make the propositional content of the topic optimally salient, while the question expansions function to highlight the fact that answers apropos the newly framed topics are expected in the candidate's next speaking turn.

In this chapter we have explored a variety of accommodative strategies used by interviewers. All of these strategies are variably used in reaction to candidate's signals of interactional or comprehension trouble. The accommodative strategies roughly fit into three general categories. Interviewers may modify the prosody of their questions so as to make the content more salient. Alternatively, if the trouble source is thought to be lexical or grammatical, the accommodative strategy of choice will include some form of lexical or morphosyntactic restructuring in the next question turn. At the level of discourse, interviewers modify their speech to make the topic of talk comprehensible to the candidates after the first utterance. When there is overt evidence that answers are not forthcoming, the most common accommodative strategy in the discourse category is question expansion, often with internal modification to the repeated or expanded question.

The picture of accommodation thus far sketched suggests that individual accommodative strategies occur with symmetry throughout the corpus of interviews. If we relate the accommodative moves to specific phenomena that may serve to trigger them, we can surmise that there are dependencies between the occurrence of
accommodative moves and their identifiable causes. As the multivariate analysis of triggers in Chapter 4 suggests, however, there are differences in the frequency and weight associated with the triggering phenomena across the four levels. We therefore turn to a different approach to quantitative analysis of accommodative moves across the observed proficiency continuum. With it, we will consider the extent to which the frequency of different kinds of accommodation can serve to discriminate among the rating outcomes of the interview.
The preceding chapter sketched the different strategies interviewers use in response to troubles in the interview. The individual accommodative strategies occur with varying frequency throughout the corpus of interviews. This chapter presents a frequency analysis of the different accommodative strategies occurring in the four rating categories examined in the corpus. The analysis presented here examines the degree to which the accommodative strategies used at each level of the interview can serve as the basis for reliable discrimination among the outcomes of the interviews. In terms of current conceptualizations of second language proficiency as it is assessed through the oral interview procedure, the present analysis introduces a different conceptualization of proficiency assessment from the received view—that proficiency is exclusively assessable through the analysis of the speech of the candidate. The view examined empirically in this chapter is based on the hypothesis that a candidate's proficiency is reliably mirrored in the frequency of accommodative moves performed by the interviewer. This is to say that the process of question asking in the interview sheds light on how the interviewers construe their interlocutors as competent second language speakers. Rather than relying on the products of questions—candidate answers—as the exclusive basis for determining proficiency, the approach considered here includes the extent to which interviewers consistently and purposefully assist the candidates in engaging in the interview interaction as a criterion for conceptualizing the construct.
of second language proficiency. Previous chapters have examined
evidence in the speech of candidates that communicative
accommodation used by interviewers is finely attuned to sources of
interactional trouble interfering with the object of the interview, and
have catalogued the particular accommodative repertoire available to
the interviewers when they find it necessary to assist candidates.
This chapter assesses the validity of these accommodative strategies
as predictors of the outcome of the interview. Underlying this
analysis and prediction is an assumption that interviewers reveal
their interpretations of candidate proficiency through the extent of
communicative accommodation required to conduct the interview
interaction. No assumption is made, however, that interviewers are
specifically aware of the accommodative strategies they use with
their interlocutors. Rather, communicative accommodation is
considered a by-product of trouble spots in the interview interaction.

The present research takes as its starting point the study
conducted by Ross and Berwick (1992) in which various features of
interviewer speech accommodation were used as predictors of OPI
rating outcomes. In that study, ten independent accommodative
features were tallied in sixty oral proficiency interviews and were
used to discriminate among four rating categories. The strategies of
communicative accommodation in the present research were derived
from pre-established analytical categories--some widely recognized
as foreigner talk strategies (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1981), and from new
categories devised for the analysis of the interview discourse. The
two new strategies are topic fronting, in both long and short
varieties, and the question expansion strategy.
The ten accommodative strategies used in this phase of the study are listed and defined in Table 7.1. Specific examples of each strategy were listed in the previous chapter.

The discriminant function analysis performed in the Ross and Berwick study indicated that of the ten predictors of rating outcomes, three features of accommodation best served to discriminate among the four rating levels. Following a test of multivariate significance

Table 7.1
Accommodative Strategies

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**Or-question**: The interviewer asks a question and immediately provides one or more options from which the interviewee may choose an answer.

**Slow down**: The interviewer reduces the speed of an utterance.

**Display question**: The interviewer asks for information which is already known to the interviewer or which the interviewer believes the interviewee ought to know.

**Over-articulation**: The interviewer exaggerates the pronunciation of words and phrases.

**Lexical simplification**: The interviewer chooses what is assumed to be a simpler form of a word or phrase which the interviewer believes the interviewee is unable to comprehend.

**Comprehension Check**: The interviewer checks on the interviewee's current understanding of the topic or of the interviewee's immediately preceding utterance.

Table 7.1 continued
Fronting: The interviewer provides one or more utterances to foreground a topic and set the stage for the interviewee's response.

Clarification request: The interviewer asks for a restatement of an immediately preceding utterance produced by the interviewee.

Grammatical Simplification: The interviewer modifies the syntactic or semantic structure of an utterance so as to facilitate comprehension.

Question Expansion: The interviewer repeats, rephrases or restructures an interview question.

for the whole set of predictors, the three best predictors of interview outcomes were identified by examining univariate F tests for each accommodative strategy. The three best predictors in that study were or-questions, slow down, and display questions. The three most discriminating strategies reflect the interviewers' attempts to make the content of their speech optimally comprehensible to the candidates. As in the foregoing micro-analysis of the excerpts, we can surmise that the inclination interviewers show towards accommodation reflects their desire to adhere to the preferred structuring of the interview question and answer format. The Ross and Berwick study contended that some aspects of interviewer accommodation function to differentiate among the levels, and thus implies that the concept of proficiency as it is assessed in the oral proficiency interview procedure reflects the extent of interviewer effort expended in communicating with the second language speakers.
Effects of Accommodation on Ratings of Proficiency

The second phase of the quantitative analysis of accommodation in the present research calls for a replication and extension of the Ross and Berwick (1992) study, which found features of accommodation to discriminate among oral proficiency rating levels. The primary goal in the present chapter is to provide corroborating evidence that features of interviewer accommodation can be found in a different set of interview data, and that they can function as reliable discriminators of proficiency. The hypothesis that motivates the second phase of the multivariate analysis is the following:

**Hypothesis Two**: the more frequent the accommodation in interviewer speech, the lower the rating of proficiency.

Communicative accommodation, according to the micro-analyses in Chapter Three, and the variable rule analyses presented in Chapter Four, is largely attuned to, and contingent upon, instances of candidate communicative trouble. It follows that the greater frequency of interviewer accommodation in an interview, the more likely there is a perceived need for it. The consequence of prolific accommodation should, if Hypothesis Two is correct, lead to reliable discrimination among the four rating levels. In terms of second language proficiency, when there is a need for accommodation, the candidate may well be perceived as not having sufficient proficiency to participate in the interview discourse without the support of the interviewer. At the extreme upper end of the proficiency continuum, a superior candidate should in principle demonstrate few
weaknesses in comprehension of complex questions, and have little trouble in articulating second language speech. Communicative accommodation would not, therefore, be motivated in interviews at the superior proficiency rating level.

Construction of the Data Matrix

Each instance of interviewer accommodation was coded into a matrix of accommodative strategies (Appendix E). Every instance of accommodation in interviewer questions for each of the eighty interviews was tallied and inserted into a matrix containing information about the rating level, length of the entire interview, candidate and interviewer name. Since individual questions potentially involve multiple accommodative strategies, each question could be encoded as an instance of more than a single accommodative category. As the last line in Excerpt 48 demonstrates, the interviewer's response to the candidate's non-comprehension is a lexical simplification with an overlapping overarticulation. Such a question would therefore be encoded in both the lexical and prosodic categories in the data matrix.

Excerpt 48

C so I can't I can't see t.v. not so much so I read the newspaper
I uh hum
C just (7)
I any ideas. Okay if=do you ah sympathize with the students?
C ha?
I do you agree with the students.
Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Accommodation Strategies

As a preliminary step to the analysis of predictors of the four rating levels, it is instructive to consider the dimensionality of the matrix of the potential predictors. To this end, we begin with a principal components analysis of the correlation matrix of the ten accommodative strategies, with an eleventh variable added. The added variable is the interview length, as measured by a standard tape length counter, which was built into the Sanyo Model TRC 9010 Memo Scriber used in the transcriptions of all eighty of the audio-recorded interviews used in this study.

The principal components analysis, based on the correlation matrix in Table 7.2, below, utilized an orthogonal rotation (varimax). It clusters the eleven variables into subsets of four main components that are most highly intercorrelated among themselves. It is instructive to compare the empirically derived clusterings of variables with the groups of discourse variables put forward in Chapter 5 in order to examine the symmetry of what appeared to be the function of the accommodative strategy, and how the relative frequencies of the same variables are intercorrelated.
Table 7.2

Correlation Matrix of Accommodation Phenomena

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Or-Q</th>
<th>Slow</th>
<th>Display</th>
<th>Over</th>
<th>Lexsim</th>
<th>ComCk</th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Clar</th>
<th>Gsimp</th>
<th>Expand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Or-Q</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexsim</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComCk</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>-.108</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clar</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gsimp</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The varimax rotation of the eleven components resulted in four major components. The individual component loadings are listed in Table 7.3, below. The first component is comprised of five clearly identifiable member variables - slow down of the speech rate (slow), over-articulation of key words and syllables (over), lexical simplification (lexsim) requests for clarification (clar) from the interviewer to the candidate, and grammatical simplification (gsimp). For the most part, these variables represent structural modifications to the form of the interviewers' questions. The second principal component, made up of the display question (display) and topic fronting strategies (front), conforms to the discourse modification strategy postulated at the end of Chapter 6. The use of topic fronting and display questions may serve the function of creating the context for further questioning. Display questions in particular may serve to orient the candidate to the topic by giving an opportunity for on-
topic talk that may not be the object of assessment. Once the candidate is referring to the topic nominated by the interviewer, further probing questions can be expected to follow. The fronting-type questions seem analogous to display when viewed in terms of their function in organizing the discourse.

The third principal component appears to be related to the length of the interview. The frequency of question expansions should in relative terms be logically related to the length factor. That is, the more necessary for the interviewers to expand and repeat their questions, the more time-consuming the interview will be. The observed correlation between these two variables, however, does not indicate much variance overlap ($r = .245$), suggesting that the co-membership of the two variables on this component could indicate a rating level specific phenomenon--more expansions may occur in the most advanced interviews because interviewers there must frame more complex probes than in the high intermediate level interviews.

The fourth component consists most clearly of the or-question. The function of the or-question, as outlined in Chapter 6, is often a proactive form of accommodation used in the early stages of the interview, potentially to set up topics about which candidates can take longer speech turns. Its function was thus considered a discourse management strategy. The position of the or-question in the principal components analysis would suggest that it is not robustly correlated with other discourse phenomena (factor 2), but is a secondary form of structural modification covarying mostly with lexical simplification.
The eleventh variable in the analysis, "count", was added after preliminary tests revealed an asymmetry in the length of the four rating outcomes. It was found that the length of the interview covaries with the outcome in such a way that shorter interviews predictably are performed with the least proficient candidates, while the longest interviews are conducted with the superior rated candidates. Reasons for this correlation are fairly obvious. When there is systematic trouble in the interview interaction at the high intermediate level, the interviewers are likely to become aware of it near the outset of the interview. That is, if there is repeated need

Table 7.3
Varimax Rotation of Accommodation Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Or-Q</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.760</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>-.169</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexsim</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clar</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>-.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gsimp</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>-.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>.826</td>
<td>.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>.708</td>
<td>-.446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

for accommodation in the level check phase of the interview, the interviewer may well formulate an impression of proficiency at that early stage of the interview and can confirm that impression without many more question turns. In contrast, the most proficient
candidates take longer speaking turns, and require the most elaborate probing questions, with suitable preliminary fronting and topic ratification moves in advance. The result here is that such interviews take relatively longer lengths of time to complete.

The systematic variation in length relative to the rating outcomes is set down in Table 7.4. It can be readily seen that interview length increase according to rating category (1+ = high intermediate; 2 = advanced; 2+ = advanced plus; 3 = superior).

Table 7.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>260.95</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>292.25</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>321.60</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>344.25</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A formal test of the mean difference of the interview length variable is provided in Table 7.5. Here a one-way analysis of variance was performed. The F-test indicates that there is systematic variation in the length variable as it relates to rating outcome. The importance of this observation for the test of Hypothesis Two relates to a modification of the original research design. The Ross and Berwick (1992) study utilized a discriminant analysis of the set of accommodative exponents on the rating outcomes for sixty interviews. In that study, the length factor was not examined. In the present study, the length factor potentially
confounds the direct comparison of the frequencies of interviewer accommodation strategies since there are potentially fewer opportunities for the interviewers to accommodate in the shortest interviews relative to the longer interviews for the most proficient candidates. Such a potentially confounding influence of interview length could make more accommodation appear to be related to higher rating outcomes and thus lead to a failure to reject a false null hypothesis.

Table 7.5

**Analysis of Variance for Interview Length**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>78377</td>
<td>26125</td>
<td>3.872</td>
<td>.0124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>512825</td>
<td>6747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The best remedy to this situation is to incorporate the length of the interview into the multivariate design as a covariate (Huitema, 1980; Cohen and Cohen, 1983; Stevens, 1986). The analysis conducted in this study thus becomes a multivariate analysis of covariance with ten initial predictors of the four rating categories. The covariate can be used to reduce the error associated with the variation in length, and can also be crucial in detecting interactions.
between the frequency of different accommodative strategies and
the length of each interview.

Two crucial assumptions of the multivariate analysis of
covariance, multicolinearity and multivariate normality, must be
satisfied before the analysis can proceed. The first addresses the
independence of the dependent variables in the analysis. Here, the
assumption is that each outcome variable is not colinear with other
variables in the set. Tabachnick and Fidell (1989) note that a within-
set multiple regression analysis in which each dependent variable is
"predicted" by all other variables in the set. Multicolinearity is
evident when a dependent variable is perfectly predicted, as
evidenced by a multiple correlation with set members of .99. Tests
of multicolinearity for the data set revealed that the highest multiple
correlation was .588, suggesting that the individual dependent
variables are largely independent of each other.

The other assumption underlies the use of multivariate
analysis of covariance. It is assumed that the multivariate
distribution of the accommodative variables is homogeneous
ly normal across the four groups. Stevens (1986, p. 205) proposes two
methods of examining this assumption for multivariate data sets.
One method is to examine the distribution of each predictor variable
within each level of the independent variable. In this study, such a
strategy would involve a visual examination of forty distributions.
The alternative Stevens proposes is a graphical test for multivariate
normality whereby subjects' Mahalanobis distances (how far each
subject is from the centroid of all cases within the membership
category--i.e., the extent to which any given case is an outlier) are
sorted and plotted against a Chi-Square distribution. Since the graphical method results in just four graphs for visual inspection (one for each rating level), it was the method selected for the present research. The linearity of the four derived plots all provided evidence that the assumption of multivariate normality, with squared correlations between the distances and Chi-Square distributions ranging from .93 through .96, was indeed plausible. The plots for the multivariate normality test can be examined in Appendix E.

A further caveat is needed. Since the interviews used in this study were sampled from four rating outcomes, there was no experimental control over the frequency with which an individual interviewer would be sampled. Although twenty one different interviewers are represented in the eighty interviews, it is possible that the frequency of particular tokens of accommodation is to some degree interviewer-dependent, reflecting interviewer style and proclivity to accommodate. A contrastive case study of individual differences in interviewers' attention to candidate troubles (Ross, 1994), suggested that two maximally contrastive interviewers did not differ widely in their interpretation of candidate signals of interactional troubles, but indeed varied in terms of their own preferred strategies for accommodating to them. Although the overall mean differences between the two contrasted interviewers was not great, the differences suggest that interviewer style could be included as a covariate or as a control variable in further analyses. The impact of interviewer style could best be assessed through an
experimental design or through counter-balanced sampling of interviewers.

The first step in examining the influence of the most obvious covariate, interview length, is to consider the potential interactions between the covariate and the ratings on the ten accommodation strategies. In order to accomplish this, the interaction of the covariate (length) and the independent variable (ratings) is assessed. In the event that there is no multivariate or univariate effect for the interaction term, the assumption of the homogeneity of the regression slopes for the ten predictor set remains plausible (Huijtema, 1980; Stevens, 1986).

Table 7.6
Test of Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multivariate Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILKS' LAMBDA =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-STATISTIC =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF = 27, 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p = 0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 7.6 indicates, no significant effect was found for the interaction term. This conclusion permits the inference that length does not affect differences in accommodative strategy frequency within any particular rating level. Rather, if the variation in interview length influences frequencies of accommodative strategies, it probably does so symmetrically across all four rating levels.
Multivariate Analysis of Hypothesis Two

The main test of Hypothesis Two is based on the multivariate analysis of covariance. The ten discriminators of the rating outcomes are here used to differentiate among the four rating outcomes after the correlation between the length of the interview and all of the ten discriminators is partialled out. This design has the advantage over discriminant analysis because the addition of a single covariate increases the power of the analysis by accounting for a potential source of variance that would otherwise go undetected. Table 7.7 lists the results of the MANCOVA for the test of Hypothesis Two.

Table 7.7
Multivariate and Univariate Analysis of Covariance Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORQ</td>
<td>16.168</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.389</td>
<td>2.675</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLOW</td>
<td>16.670</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.557</td>
<td>8.089</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISP</td>
<td>2.558</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>0.691</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVER</td>
<td>18.243</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.081</td>
<td>6.688</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEX</td>
<td>15.229</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.076</td>
<td>5.859</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNT</td>
<td>26.040</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.680</td>
<td>1.477</td>
<td>0.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAR</td>
<td>38.359</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.786</td>
<td>4.079</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSIMP</td>
<td>8.673</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.891</td>
<td>5.407</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>94.326</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.442</td>
<td>2.705</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LAMBDA F DF P
0.431 2.43 27, 196 .001
The multivariate test indicates that the overall discrimination among the four levels surpasses even a stringent critical level of $F$ for the MANCOVA. This result thus provides a degree of empirical support for Hypothesis Two—that the extent of interviewer accommodation serves to discriminate among the ratings of proficiency, and thus corroborates the Ross and Berwick (1992) findings with different interview data. The MANCOVA serves to control the family error (Type I) rate, and thereby obviates the need for individual Bonferroni $F$ criteria for each dependent measure (Huitema, 1980:239). Univariate analyses can determine if the between rating differences are attributable to the same sources of variance as those identified in the pilot study.

Of interest also is the accuracy of the group membership predictions made based on the patterns of accommodation in the interviews. In conventional discriminant analysis, the predictions are derived from the discriminant functions estimated from the frequencies of accommodative features. Classifications are based on the discriminant function weight associated with each predictor variable and the raw score for each case (Wilkinson, 1989). The largest discriminant function for each case is the basis for prediction of group membership. Thus, when the raw score frequency of a significantly discriminating predictor variable is high for a given case, that case is classified as a “typical” member of the particular group for which the mean frequency of that predictor variable was, in relative terms, highest. The actual group membership, i.e., the rating of proficiency, can be cross-classified to show the extent of accurate prediction (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1989), as well as to
classify new cases into rating outcomes based on the extent of accommodation alone. For the present data, since each interview outcome can be used as a benchmark for a prediction of proficiency based on the interviewers' communicative accommodation, the "hit rate" (Stevens, 1986, P. 253), or predictive accuracy of the analysis, can be examined graphically with the use of a classification table (Wilkinson, 1989, P. 297). According to Hypothesis Two, the lower the proficiency rating, the more frequent there should be a need for accommodation. As was seen in Table 7.7, however, the frequency of accommodative features used in relation to candidate troubles, as opposed to frequencies of those used as part of apparent discourse management strategies, mainly served to discriminate among the rating outcomes. Even with this asymmetry in discrimination power, we should still be able to use the variation in the accommodation strategies to classify each interview as being a member of a particular rating outcome category. The predicted membership of each interview is tabulated against the actual outcome of the interview so as to allow an examination of the rating categories that are most accurately predictable from the interviewers' use of communicative accommodation strategies. Table 7.8 reveals the "hit rate" for the multivariate analysis of covariance test performed on the eighty interviews.

The accuracy rate is a modest 53%. The high intermediate ratings (1+) and the superior ratings (3) are clearly the most predictable from the content of the interviewers' accommodative discourse. This outcome is roughly consonant with the predictions motivating Hypothesis Two. The two advanced ratings (2 and 2+),
Table 7.8
Predicted Versus Rating Group Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP (ROWS)</th>
<th>1+</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2+</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, appear to be much less accurately predictable from the interviewers' discourse. The distinction between these two levels may well be more dependent on specific features of candidate interlanguage that are evaluated without an overt manifestation in the variation in the accommodative strategy used by the interviewer. Clearly, further research on the differentiation between the ratings of advanced and advanced plus is implicated by this outcome. The discrimination between high intermediate and superior is quite similar to the pilot study in that very few of the high intermediate interviews show accommodative features that are characteristic of superior interviews. In total, six out of forty interviews are cross-classified according to the interviewers' accommodative criteria.

The multivariate analyses indicate that there is a significant discrimination among the rating levels. Observing Hummel and Sligo's (1971) criterion that univariate analyses are performed only
after a multivariate significance threshold has been surpassed, we can now consider the univariate tests individually. The univariate tests indicated that not all of the potential predictors serve to differentiate among the rating outcomes. The present step in the analysis is therefore aimed at examining the univariate analyses of each discriminating discourse variable, adjusted for the effect of the interview length, with a view to ordering the discriminators into a hierarchy while examining potential reasons for their differential capacity to predict the outcomes of the oral proficiency interviews.

Given the fact that the second hypothesis postulates mean differences in accommodation relative to the rating outcomes, it is important to examine the between group differences for each variable in a post hoc manner. The constraint here is analogous to that used in the overall MANCOVA approach. If there is a significant ANCOVA, post hoc scheffe tests can be applied to determine the exact location of the between-group differences (Huitema, 1980). The test statistic for the ANCOVA Scheffe is based on the covariate-adjusted means and between-rating constrasts.

Figure 7.1

\[
\frac{c_1(\tilde{Y}_{1adj})+c_2(\tilde{Y}_{2adj})+c_3(\tilde{Y}_{3adj})+c_4(\tilde{Y}_{4adj})}{\sqrt{\text{MSres}_w\left[1+(\text{MSb}_x/\text{SS}_{w_x})\{[(c_1)^2/n_1]+[(c_2)^2/n_2]+...[(c_4)^2/n_4]\}\right]}} = \hat{F}
\]

where

\[c_1, c_2, ..., c_4 = \text{contrasts coefficients for rating groups}\]

\[Y_{1adj}, Y_{2adj}, ..., Y_{4adj} = \text{adjusted means}\]
The first predictor examined here, or-questions, comes very close to meeting a conventional criterion for significance. The univariate $F$ test for or-questions reached $2.675 (p = .053)$. But since the critical threshold for $F$ had not been reached, no post hoc analysis is performed. As was seen in the principal components analysis of the matrix of predictors, the or-question variable was unique as the sole high positive loading on the fourth component. It at least schematically fits into the formulation of Hypothesis Two, since the frequency of the or-questions is diminished symmetrically with the increase of proficiency. Table 7.9 provides the means and standard deviations for the or-question variable. Although the significance of this variable misses the critical value of $F$, the results are consistent with the prediction made in Hypothesis Two. We can observe a

**Table 7.9**

**Means and Standard Deviations for Or-Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
trend that the decrease in or-questions is in proportion to the interviewers' perception of their interlocutors' need for accommodative selection questions. Interestingly, the major change in frequency of the or-question strategy occurs between the "advanced" (2) and "advanced plus" (2+) rating categories. This pattern suggests that there may be a functional differentiation for such questions in the discourse management strategies of the interviewers. The discriminating power of or-questions, at best only weakly corroborates the Ross and Berwick observation that selection questions serve to differentiate among the rating levels. In their study, or-questions obtained the first rank as the most discriminating accommodative strategy, although the effect of or-questions there could have been to some degree attributable to differences in the uncontrolled length of the interviews.

The slow down of interviewer speech in formulating questions to the candidate was shown in Chapter 3 as an accommodative strategy begot by clearly identifiable instances of candidate troubles in comprehending interviewer speech. It is therefore no surprise that the slow down appears to discriminate in a symmetrical manner the difference among the four rating levels. Post hoc Scheffe\' tests indicate that significant contrasts are between the 1+ and ratings categories at or above advanced plus (2+).
Table 7.10

Means and Standard Deviations for Question Slow Down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table of means again shows a diminishing frequency of slow downs as proficiency increases ($F = 8.089, p < .001$). Although it is not symmetric, this result corroborates the Ross and Berwick findings wherein the slow down served as one of the most powerful indicators of the interviewers' perception of the candidates' proficiency. The means and standard deviations in Table 7.9 reflect the decreasing slowed down questions in relation to proficiency.

The third variable considered is the highest loading variable on the component reified as a "discourse" factor. The display question is usually formulated by the interviewer in order to facilitate the candidate's providing a monologue about a process. It is understandable that as a discourse variable it ensures that the candidate gives an extended account of a procedure—even if the information value of the account is not in the information, but in the evidence provided by the candidate that such a narrative is sustainable.
The analysis of covariance of the display question variable indicates that there is no significant discrimination among the four levels. An examination of the means in Table 7.11 furthermore indicates that there is a dysymmetry in the mean difference among the groups. Correspondingly, the analysis of covariance for the display question variable does not reflect a systematic difference ($F = .691; \ p = .56$). Examination of the mean scores indicates that the mean display question for high intermediate and advanced plus are equivalent, and are not at all very different from the advanced or superior ratings.

Table 7.11
Means and Standard Deviations for Display Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This result suggests that display questions may be formulated independently of a perception of the candidate's proficiency. They may well be instead part of interviewing strategies orientated to discourse management. The Ross and Berwick study found similar effects for display questions in that such questions failed to reach significance as discriminators of the proficiency levels. Display questions function to allow interviewers to set up topics in a prefatory manner before specific probing questions are articulated.
The principal components analysis and the discourse analysis of the interviews concurred in implicating over-articulation of key syllables in interviewer questions as correlated with similar strategies to repair interactional troubles in previous question turns. The univariate analysis adds further evidence to the symmetry with which interviewers use accommodative over-articulations. They do so in a manner very similar to the pattern observed in the decreased frequency of the slow-downs of interviewer speech. For over-articulations, the univariate tests ($F = 6.68; p < .001$) and progressively decreasing mean frequencies indicate a predictor of interview outcomes roughly consonant with Hypothesis Two. Post hoc Scheffe' tests indicated between-rating differences at the upper end of the rating continuum. Significant contrasts were found between 1+ and 3 ratings and for 2+ and rating categories. It appears that over-articulation does not discriminate between high intermediate (1+) and advanced interviews (2). Interviewers presumably are generally aware of the extent to which they have to accommodate their intonation to get their questions understood by the candidate. To the extent interviewers provide question turns with over-articulation, the more salient these accommodative instances may be for the interviewers in their subsequent roles as raters of the candidates' performances. The means and standard deviations for the four rating levels are given in Table 7.12. These parallel the pattern observed in the slow down variable.

It should be noted that these results differ from the pilot study because the method of defining the variable differs in the two studies. In the Ross and Berwick study, over-accommodation was
tallied wherever it occurred—whether in interviewer questions or not, but was not counted in turn sequences in which slow downs of interviewer speech occurred. The present study tallied over-articulations in interviewer questions, and allowed cross-coding of slow downs and over-articulations in the same interviewer turn.

Table 7.12
Means and Standard Deviations for Over-Articulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first principal component identified accommodative strategies that primarily involved the interviewers' linguistic modification of their own speech. Another of the structural variables loading on the first component was lexical simplification. As the mean scores in Table 7.13 suggest, the gradual decline in the frequency of lexical simplification matches the order predicted, but shows the same pattern in the post hoc Scheffe' tests as that observed for over-articulation; contrasts between 1+ and 3, and between 2+ and 3 rating levels. One mean difference, though not significant, interferes with the overall symmetry; the averages of this form of accommodation in the high intermediate (1+) and advanced (2) proficiency interviews are nearly the same. The overall
discrimination of the lexical simplification variable of course still surpasses the criterion threshold for statistical significance ($F = 5.85$, $p = .001$). This observation differs from the Ross and Berwick conclusions. A possible reason for the difference in outcomes may be related to the narrower focus in the present study—where the unit of analysis is the interviewer question.

Table 7.13

Means and Standard Deviations for Lexical Simplification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The topic fronting accommodative strategy, which includes long fronts and left-dislocations, is a discriminator that is fundamentally different from the variable used in the Ross and Berwick study. The principal components analysis revealed that the fronting strategy loaded on the same factor as the display question, suggesting that these two are more related to a discourse management phenomenon than a strategy motivated by overt signals of candidate interactional trouble. To this extent the empirical analysis is in agreement with the classification Ross and Berwick gave to fronting as an "exponent of control." The results of the multivariate analysis of covariance fit well with the previous study's conclusions in that the fronting
variable appears independently of perceptions of candidate proficiency. The mean differences among

Table 7.14

**Means and Standard Deviations for Topic Fronting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>2.88</td>
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<td>2+</td>
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<td>4.55</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the four proficiency levels do not reflect an ordered diminishing of the mean topic fronting as proficiency increases ($F = 1.477$, $p = 0.228$). Variation in the fronting variable may be related to the discourse management strategies interviewers use. A differentiation between the short form of the fronting phenomenon--left dislocation of constituents to topic position--and the long fronting phenomenon could potentially serve as a more powerful discriminator. Further research on the differences between these forms of fronting is necessary in order to uncover their accommodative functions.

One of the few strategies that involve the interviewer seeking reiterations of candidate speech, possibly in response to misarticulations or underelaborations, is the clarification strategy. The loading of the clarification strategy in the principal components analysis would suggest that it covaries with accommodative moves
attuned to the status of the candidates' previous answer turn. Clarification, however, is a question type that does not in fact serve

Table 7.15

Means and Standard Deviations for Clarifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
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<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to simplify the interviewer's question. Rather, its function is to clarify the content of the candidate's answer, which presumably was not comprehended by the interviewer. That it is correlated with core accommodative moves may well be an artefact of the candidates' articulatory skill. Lower proficiency candidates can be expected to be more constrained in their ability to articulate relative to more advanced speakers, and this factor thus increases the likelihood that interviewers will seek repairs of candidate speech.

Table 7.15 suggests that there is a relation to proficiency in the frequency of interviewer clarification requests. Analogous to the pattern observed in the lexical simplification accommodative strategy, the difference between the 1+ and 2 levels does match the predicted decline. These two nonetheless show greater mean frequencies of clarifications than the 2+ or the 3 proficiency ratings. The observed differences are enough to surpass the critical
univariate threshold for significance ($F = 4.079, p = 0.010$). The major post-hoc difference between the means is at the 2+ and 3 categories. It may well be that there is a comprehensibility factor underlying the distinction between ratings of superior (3) and lower levels. Indeed, since the majority of superior-rated candidates had lived overseas for varying lengths of time, the frequency of clarifications may reflect their relative success in the acquisition of English phonology - thus making them more understandable to interviewers than even advanced plus (2+) candidates, who may well have retained a strong interlanguage accent. In comparison to the Ross and Berwick study, the present analysis of clarifications differs outright from the non-significance observed in the pilot study.

The highest-loading accommodative strategy found on the first principal component was grammar simplification. Like most of its factor mates, this form of accommodation predictably occurred after candidate difficulties were observed in the interview. Table 7.16 lists the symmetrically diminishing means of the grammar simplification variable in relation to proficiency. This accommodative strategy surpasses the criterion for significance ($F =5.407, p =.002$), but differs from the Ross and Berwick study by a wide margin. Scheffe' tests indicate that mean difference are between the high intermediate interviews (1+) and the advanced plus (2+) or higher rating outcomes. Again, the most plausible reason for this difference is likely to be the definition of the variable in the two studies. The fact that the simplification is here counted only in the interviewer question turn obviously limits the overall frequency of the simplification variable. Since grammar simplifications occur in
question turns only, they are much more likely to be motivated by interviewer assumptions that they function to make questions answerable, and thus further the ends of the interview process.

Table 7.16

Means and Standard Deviations: Grammar Simplification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question expansion variable loaded on the third principal component in the exploratory factor analysis. Its factor mate was the length of the interview (count), indicating that the question expansion phenomenon was potentially an artefact of the interviewers' propensity to resort to repetition in framing questions. According to Hypothesis Two, such expansions should correspond to interviewers' recognition that the previous question turn was not properly comprehended. Table 7.17 provides evidence that the mean scores in general correspond to the predicted ordering—with a disturbance to the pattern in the advanced (2) and advanced plus (2+) rating categories. The overall mean differences are enough to bring the univariate test close to the threshold of significance $F = 2.705, p = .051$, but post hoc analyses will not be attempted for this variable.
Table 7.17

Means and Standard Deviations for Question Expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
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<td>6.10</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question expansion variable does not fit into the scheme of accommodation implied in the exploratory factor analysis. Also, it is a type of accommodation not examined in the Ross and Berwick study, and thus is not of comparative significance. Question expansion nevertheless deserves further analysis as a phenomenon within the interview questioning options. A microanalytic approach may turn up more exact details for the context of expansions.

The results of the multivariate analysis of covariance provide fairly robust support for Hypothesis Two. They also provide considerable corroborating evidence in replicating the Ross and Berwick study. Although some of the variables are different in the two studies, or have been defined and quantified in different ways, the distinction remains stable between those accommodative strategies evolving from interviewers direct intervention to provide support to candidates experiencing interactional trouble "exponents of accommodation", and variables associated with strategies to manage the interview discourse--"exponents of control". 199
A novel observation in the present analysis is that interviewer accommodation strategies loading on the first principal component-slow down of the rate of speech in the question turn, over-articulation of key words in the question turn, lexical simplification in the question, clarifications about candidates' answers in the previous turn, and grammatical simplification in the question turn—are all significant as general discriminators of proficiency rating outcomes. These comprise the core features of communicative accommodation in relation to candidate-generated instances of communicative breakdown and generally occur in the decreasing frequency predicted according to the analyses of the interview discourse.

In terms of the comparable "hit rates" between the baseline study and the present analysis, the 60% mark reached in the Ross and Berwick study, compared to the 53% achieved in this study, probably reflects the narrowed operationalization of the accommodation variables adopted here. Both studies suggest that an important conceptualization of second language proficiency can be achieved in examining the discourse of interviewers during the processes of oral proficiency testing, and that the extent of reactive accommodation provides a view to the bases of interviewer hypotheses about candidate proficiency.

The results of the multivariate analysis of covariance indicated that the features of accommodation occurring in apparent reaction to candidate trouble served as the most robust discriminators of rating outcomes. This finding attenuates Hypothesis Two to some degree. The strong form of the hypothesis predicted that accommodation in
any form will serve to discriminate from lowest to highest levels. The observed results suggest otherwise. Certain forms of apparent accommodation are epiphenomena of the interview process, as opposed to the hypothesized attunement of interviewer to a perception of candidate proficiency. The occurrence of non-reactive forms of accommodation in the discourse may be significant as markers of different phases of the interview, or even as indicators of an interviewer's proclivity to accommodate "out of place", possibly while following an internalized interview procedural script.

A further interpretation of the asymmetry in accommodative features' discriminating capacity comes to mind. Given the fact that the lowest rating category in the eighty interviews examined in this study was 1+, "high intermediate", the data may be too truncated to fully test that hypothesis. A better test would extend the range of interviews down to the lowest viable categories--down to 0+ "novice high" rating categories.

The implications of the major conclusions of this part of the study will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 8 after consideration of issues related to generalizability.

The classifications of candidate troubles and specific interviewer accommodation strategies were based on the micro-analyses of interview discourse. These analyses rely on no small degree of inferencing that may vary according to the perception of the individual discourse analyst. It is therefore essential to consider the issue of consistency of classification for the categories devised in the previous chapters.
Chapter 8. JUDGE AGREEMENT ANALYSIS

In this study two approaches to the empirical examination of oral interview discourse were utilized. The first, which was grounded in the actual interview discourse, required extensive interpretation of the form, content and consequence of candidate difficulties in responding to interviewer questions. The other approach focused on the frequencies of interview phenomena extracted and examined the interrelationships among them. Both approaches depended fundamentally on the accuracy of the interpretation and coding of the discourse phenomena. It is for this reason that an examination of the consistency of such codings needs to be examined in its own right.

Chapters Three and Five made extensive use of micro-analytic methods. Micro-analysis requires considerable hermeneutic interpretation of the content and relevance of discourse phenomena. It is therefore all the more important that a reliability study be done on the excerpts used throughout those chapters because of the potential weaknesses associated with high inference (Hawkins, 1982) categories of accommodation. When a discourse analyst extracts specimens of particular phenomena from context-dependent talk-in-interaction, there is a particular danger that what is interpretable and meaningful to the analyst in context will not be recognizable or seen as relevant to an independent observer of the same phenomenon at a different time out of that context. Consonant with the goals of the present study to provide general criteria for examining the notion of proficiency as manifested by accommodative
speech by the interviewer, it is essential therefore to provide a solid foundation for the desired generalizability.

One approach to consistency requires comparable numbers of phenomenon "sightings" in a given stretch of discourse by different tally-takers. Such an approach would not, however, require an analysis of the positioning of a phenomenon in relation to key factors that give it meaning in the context and orderliness of its occurrence. As Schegloff (1993:110) notes, "relevance is at least as important as incidence and non incidence in establishing an oriented-to order". The challenge for the analysis of consistency of classification in the data presented here thus is to provide an accounting not only of how many times triggers of accommodation and subsequent interviewer accommodation strategies occur, but crucially in positioning the phenomena into the discourse so as to make their meaning as accommodation most relevant.

Approaches to reliability in social science research have traditionally worked under the assumptions of a theory of internal consistency (summarized in Traub, 1994), wherein repeated observations of the object of interest are assumed to be intercorrelated if they are reliable. More recent extensions of the notion of reliability to observations of performances (Subkoviak, 1978; Linacre, 1989) have recasted the requirements of reliability from within the performance of the individual externally to consistency of classifications by judges of the individual's performances. Here the concept of reliability relates to the consistency with which different viewers of the phenomenon of interest can agree in their categorizations of it. In order to meet the
demands for this kind of consistency assessment, the present analysis proceeds by having a number of different observers (judges) examine the interview discourse excerpts and classify the contents according to the original discourse analysis taxonomy. High rates of consistency among judges are taken as indices of reliability.

A key factor in the generalizability of the interview phenomena presented in this study crucially relates to the capacity of oral proficiency interviewers and raters to consistently recognize and classify accommodative strategies and the interactional phenomena that instigate them. Since some of the categories of both triggers of accommodation and interviewer accommodation strategies are based on varying degrees of inferencing, a reliability study is essential to determine the extent of agreement among judges with a modicum of training in discourse analysis. The reason for this phase of the study is straightforward—if accommodative features are to be a valid basis of an alternative set of criteria by which interview ratings can be arrived at, the agreement among judges as to what the categories are, and when they can be said to appear in a piece of discourse, is a precondition of that validity. Simply stated, there can be no more validity than there is reliability.

The categories associated with the triggers of accommodation and interviewer accommodation strategies require no small degree of hermeneutic interpretation, even when their positioning in the talk-in-interaction seems obvious in interview discourse. In the Ross and Berwick (1992) and Ross (1992) studies from which many of the coding categories used in the present research came, consensus coding was used to arrive at decisions about how particular
phenomena appearing in excerpts would be classified. Such an approach is feasible if the discourse analyst can observe different regularly occurring phenomena contextualized in specific positions within the interview discourse. Consensus coding, based on reviewing the discourse in context, may itself be a reliable method of arriving at interpretations, but is also the least feasible for most practical applications. When there must be an alternative scheme for coding extracted segments of discourse, interpretability and generalizability of a wide range of interview phenomena by a diverse spectrum of discourse analysts remains questionable.

In the present study, a rigorous approach to assessing the reliability of classifications of accommodation triggers and strategies is adopted. A discourse analysis training program for teachers of English as a second language, many of whom routinely serving as interviewers in English language assessment projects in their home institutions, formed the basis for an analysis of judge concordance. This part of the study specifically examines the extent of judges' agreement with categorizations of interactional troubles leading to accommodation, as well as with categorizations of the types of accommodative strategies used in response to such troubles. The data for the agreement study were a wide sampling of excerpts from the same eighty interviews examined in previous chapters.

Two independent sets of candidate-interviewer interactions were excerpted from the corpus of interviews. Examples of the interactional phenomena examined in Chapter 3, hypothesized to be the most likely triggers of accommodative moves by the interviewer, and example excerpts of interviewer strategies in reaction to such
triggers, considered in Chapter 5, were exported into the two files used for the reliability study. The first file (Appendix B) was used as the judge training set in which the excerpts were presented to 18 English as a second language teachers enrolled in a teaching English as a second language masters degree program in Japan. 10 of the teachers were native speakers of English, and 8 were native speakers of Japanese. The training set of excerpts was examined in detail and each excerpt's potential function as either a trigger of accommodation or as an interviewer strategy in the process of accommodation was discussed in a workshop format, which lasted approximately two hours. At the training session, the workshop participants were given a review quiz (Appendix C) containing a set of eighteen different excerpts from the eighty interviews. The judges' task was to classify specific phenomena occurring in each excerpt into one of the categories introduced in the training set--either as one of the seven possible triggers of accommodation or as one of the nine different interviewer strategies presented in the training set. The teachers were given one month to complete the classification reliability test set on their own, and were given explicit instructions to complete the test set without collaborating with other persons. This strategy increased the likelihood that the judges' categorizations would be independent and thus provide a more stringent test of classification agreement.

Cohen's kappa statistic (Cohen, 1960; Fleiss, 1971; Seigal and Castellan, 1988) examines agreement among a panel of judges while correcting for chance concordance among them. Kappa for ratings of language test performances that lend themselves to categorizations is
especially useful, and captures an essential aspect of reliability, not of each candidate's performance, but of the interpretability of that performance among independent judges. The absolute magnitude of the \( k \) category by \( n \) subject \( \kappa \) statistic varies between 1 for unanimously concordant classification, and 0, for no more agreement than that attributable to chance. The size and interpretation of \( \kappa \) varies according to the number of samples rated and the size of the panel of judges. Wilkinson (1989, p. 481) suggests a \( \kappa \) of .75 as being an indication of a “strong” agreement; Chaudron, Crookes and Long (1988) note that a \( \kappa \) should be larger than .60. These interpretations of \( \kappa \) apparently assume a \( 2 \times 2 \) contingency table analysis of cross-classifications. Another criterion for interpreting \( \kappa \) is the probability that an observed \( \kappa \) could have arisen by chance. Seigel and Castellan (1988, P. 289) provide a method of examining the significance of observed \( \kappa \) against a \( z \)-distribution. The Seigal and Castellan method for examining the significance of \( \kappa \) was the one adopted in this portion of the study.

The agreement test set (Appendix B) was split into two main sections—one for the triggers of accommodation phenomena, and the other for the interviewer accommodation strategies. The eighteen independent judges examined the excerpts in detail and provided a single classification from the set of possible codes indicating which of the "triggers" or "accommodative strategies" were used in particular places in the excerpts. The native language of the teachers/judges proved not to be an important factor in the accuracy of classifying the excerpts from the interviews (\( t = 0.28, p = 0.977 \) Since the two
portions of the test set were separate, the judges knew that individual excerpts were either relevant as potential triggering phenomena or as accommodation strategies.

The matrix of judges' classifications relating to triggers of accommodation is presented in Table 8.1. Individual excerpts are represented as items in the matrix. Perfect classification agreement among the judges would be seen in the total of all eighteen judges fitting into the diagonal through the matrix. As can be readily seen, the largest number in most cells is in the diagonal, suggesting a strong percentage of agreement. The actual agreement index for this data, corrected for chance, reached a kappa of .748; p < .001. This figure of kappa is based on the collapsing of the rightmost "ignore" column into the neighboring "non-sequitur". The rationale for the subsuming of the two categories is based on the actual input to the variable rule analyses featured in Chapter 5. There, the two
different factors "ignore the pragmatic content of question" and "non-sequitur" were found to interact, and were therefore subsumed under the category of non-sequitur in the actual analysis. The two categories were nevertheless left separate on the classification test set. Their substantive significance in Table 8.1 is in the observation that these two categories yielded the least reliable classifications among the judges. That is, the distinction between "ignore" and "non-sequitur" is most difficult for the eighteen independent judges, who were wont to cross-classify those excerpts as candidate "error", "ignore" and "non-sequitur". The judges' difficulty in identifying the trigger of accommodation in the last two excerpts concurs with the non-independence leading to the collapsing of the two categories for the variable rule analysis. We have here a convergence of qualitative and quantitative identification of non-independence.

Table 8.1 suggests that excerpts of candidate trouble can be reliably identified by neophyte discourse analysts with a minimum of training. It also provides some indirect evidence of reliability about the codings used as input to the quantitative analysis featured in Chapter 4, although it is obvious that certain triggers are more identifiable than others. Pausing, under-elaborations, requests for clarification, and non-sequiturs, combined with ignoring the pragmatic content of the question, are the most recognizable to the panel of judges. Errors and misarticulations apparently require the most careful analysis, and thus obtain relatively low agreement percentages. Taken on the whole, Table 8.1 indicates robust reliability for codings of candidate troubles. This is perhaps not very surprising since all of the judges here are experienced language
teachers who are intimately familiar with communication troubles
Japanese learners of English experience. A more important criterion
for the judges' concordance is to be found in their collective
recognition of the strategies interviewers opt for in accommodating
to oral proficiency interview candidates. With a view to considering
agreement among judges of interviewer strategies, we turn to the
other set of excerpts used in the classification study.

Table 8.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifications of Accommodation Strategy Excerpts</th>
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<tr>
<td>SLW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2 lists the agreement among the judges on fourteen
excerpts of interviewer strategies presented to the judges in the test
set. As in the table of triggers of accommodation, perfect agreement
would be represented by all eighteen judges fitting into the diagonal
across the matrix of fourteen items. In Table 8.2, there is less overall
agreement than in Table 8.1, indicating that the judges are more attuned to the what the candidates say to provoke accommodation than they are in identifying the particular strategies interviewers use in modifying the oral interview discourse. The kappa for this table nevertheless reached a respectable .590 (p < .001). An examination of the most and least agreeable excerpts may shed some light on why agreement is relatively more disparate in the classifications of the interviewers' strategies.

The accommodative strategies achieving the highest percent agreement were the display questions (94%), fronting of propositional content (83%), lexical simplification (77%), and slow down in the rate of articulation (83%). The example of the display question (Excerpt A) clearly reveals that the interviewer knows the answer to his own question, thus the display question is easy for the judges to identify. Likewise, the instances of fronting in the test set showed robust agreement. It is noteworthy that the type of strategy does not necessarily correspond to the strategy's identifiability in the discourse. Rather, the positioning of the strategy in the discourse and its relevance as an accommodative phenomenon appears to be the basis of its salience.

In contrast with the triggers of accommodation excerpts featured in Table 8.1, which includes the collapsed "ignore the pragmatic content" and "non-sequitur" categories, all fourteen of the excerpts of interviewer strategies listed in Table 8.2 represent tallies of accommodation extracted from the eighty interviews. The judges' task was to identify the most obvious interviewer strategy in the excerpt and to provide a single categorization. The fact that there
could in practice be multiple codings and tallies within each excerpt in the actual study partly accounts for the lower agreement among the judges relative to the triggers of accommodation categorization task. An examination of the most difficult of the excerpt may prove instructive as to why the kappa for Table 8.2 was relatively low.

The second excerpt on the interviewers' accommodation part of the classification task for the judges involved an "or-question" that yielded an agreement among 55% of the judges. A plausible account of this low concordance is evidenced by the wide range of different accommodative strategies identified by the judges.

Excerpt A

I would like you ta-this is your tape recorder isn't it.(.) (taps on recorder))
C ye:s
I OK would you tell me how to use it?
C (1.5) use it?
I [ I:: yeah I ah just-just teach me how to use it let's >look it's all in Japanese I I I can't so(.) tell me how to use this if I want to use this tape recorder
C [ if you-if you see the sign~ you you can imagine(.) what the sign says(.) you see
I well maybe but pretend that I can't ((laughs))hehahahahhh(.) how do you start this(1) where is the button or the knob or knob or the switch to (.)

The judges' task was to identify the interviewer's accommodative strategy at the focus point (→). 55% of the judges identified the strategy as a display question. A smaller number (22%) saw the interviewer's effort as a token of "question expansion" because the interviewer in fact repeats the previous question in response to the candidate's account about why his answer would be superfluous.
The important point here is that the varied accounts serve to depress the agreement index, but don't affect the accuracy of codings used in tallies of accommodation--the input to the multivariate analyses.

Another excerpt from the categorization task demonstrates the overlapping, or converging, nature of interviewer accommodation. Excerpt E achieved a 61% agreement rate among the judges, who saw this example as one primarily demonstrating grammatical simplification. Similar to Excerpt A, above, the second most frequent cross-classification given to this excerpt was for "question expansion" (17%). Examination of the focus point (→) suggests that there is a plausible case for counting the interviewer's accommodative question as one expanding the previous question while incorporating a grammatical simplification into it. According to the coding scheme used for the main portion of the study, both strategies would have been tallied for that particular interviewer question.

Excerpt E

I Just one more question I want ask you is ah you said your parents live in Tokyo, right, and you live in Ibaragi now how often do you go and visit your parents?

C (. ) how often

I um

C (1) go?

I→ um(.) How often wi-will you go to visit your parents.

C ma-maybe three(.) four times(.) in a year

I four times in a year=

I when-when will that be(.) summer?

C summer and winter and (. ) golden week

Two of the excerpts used in the consistency analysis revealed considerable variation among the judges. Excerpt I, which was
thought to most saliently reveal an instance of question expansion, was in fact cross-coded into four different accommodative strategies. Only 11% of the judges saw the focus line (→) question as one.

Excerpt I

I please tell me about you must be living in a dormitory now I guess
C (1.5)
I→ are you living in a dormitory now?
C yes
I ok please tell me about your dormitory

primarily revealing an instance of "question expansion." Most of the judges (72%) classified this question as a case of grammatical simplification. Indeed, if the original indirect statement is seen as the cause of the candidate's non-comprehension, the use of a more direct form of interrogative with an overt temporal marking could well be categorized as an overt instance of grammatical simplification within a repetition of the same propositional content. The observation among judges that the question was indeed repeated led to that classification by 11% of the judges, who recognized this excerpt foremost as a case of question expansion.

A similar phenomenon occurred in the classification of an excerpt meant to represent a display question. Here 55% of the judges considered Excerpt K as an example of question expansion because the interviewer asks the same question twice in the same question turn. The tendency to base the classification on the form of the strategy rather than on its function is in itself an interesting phenomenon. The fact that the question was a display question was salient to 16% of the judges, while another 16% saw the first portion
of the focus line (→) as a form of fronting the propositional content for the interviewer's accounting, or rationalization of the question, which follows the actual question. This complex excerpt provides an example of the interrelatedness of triggers of accommodation and the potential for multiple accommodative strategies employed in the same interviewer questioning turn.

Excerpt K

I ahhm (.).Mr U you ahmm-I'm sure read the newspaper everyday and umh keep up with the (1) teh what we call issues that are one the front page(.) ahm and ahh(.) recently there has been ahh(.) a some kind of >I don't know what you call it< I think he resigned

C [I:::see yeah

I→ I thought that maybe you could tell me something about it.

C It's a very difficult problem to explain~

The analyses of judges' consistency suggest that there is considerable agreement in identifying interactional phenomena potentially triggering interviewer accommodation. The kappa of .749 indicates a robust agreement among the judges.

The classifications of the strategies used by interviewers provided a more challenging task for the judges. Since there may be overlapping strategies in any given question turn, the accuracy of the coding examined in Table 8.2 does not capture the consistency of the tallies that might be made if the judges' task had been to count the different strategies used in each focus line. Given the potential for a number of different, but technically correct, classifications for a
number of the excerpts featured in the test set, the *kappa* of .59 provides a basis for confidence in the consistency of the codings.

The discourse analysis of the interviews to a considerable degree relied on a range of categorization necessitating inference on the part of the analyst. Yet, the fact that a panel of neophyte judges could agree at the level indicated by the high *kappa* itself suggests that analysis of oral proficiency test discourse and classifications of the frequency of interviewer accommodation could be implemented among interviewers and practitioners of interview discourse analysis without prohibitive amounts of time or expertise.

There are implications of this analysis for the training of interviewers and raters. To a large extent, much of interviewer and rater training is focused on the speech of the candidate at various stages of the interview process--warm up, level check, probes, and wind downs. The present research on interview discourse suggests that accommodation systematically reflects the extent to which interviewers modify their questioning strategies to candidates. To the extent that interviewers can become aware of their own proclivity to accommodate, and especially to various types of candidate troubles requiring some form of accommodation, the better interviewers can self-monitor in the interview process. This self-monitoring can offset what is a potentially dangerous source of between-interviewer variance. While some interviewers may focus exclusively on the speech of the candidate without "hearing" their own speech, and modifications of question difficulty through accommodation, others may be more attuned to apparent candidate needs for interactional modification. Differences in the quality and
extent of self-monitoring potentially impact on the type of interview discourse, and potentially create greater differences in the rating outcomes.

In training sessions for interviewers, attention to accommodative strategies in sample interviews could be the initial basis for eventual self-monitoring. As it is usual for novice interviewers to record practice interviews, potential for self-monitoring is enhanced if interviewers-in-training could examine instances of candidate troubles that were variably accommodated in the test discourse. Such practice could further the understanding that interviews are essentially collaborative efforts, and could sway interviewers and raters from assuming that second language proficiency is exclusively evidenced in the speech of the candidate.

A similar criterion for second ratings is implied by the need for monitoring the extent of interviewer accommodation. When recorded interviews are the subject of second ratings to enhance the reliability of the assessment of proficiency, the extent to which an interviewer accommodates could be included in the assessment process. This criterion is of importance in examining the process of the interview as a factor in determining the rating outcome. Interviewers could, for instance, be given a "weighting" in terms of their proclivity to accommodate, and the specific strategies they use to do so. These weights could be incorporated into analyses of interviews by second raters as specific facets of the test method. Test method facets are increasingly used in compensating for systematic sources of variance in language tests (Bachman, 1990;
Linacre, 1994). The inclusion of an interviewer accommodation facet could for instance provide a basis for compensating for candidate performance with an interviewer whose previous samples of interviewing strategies suggested a dearth of accommodation in place where other interviewers would be inclined to come to the aid of the candidate. Conversely, interviewers who are most inclined to accommodate by scaffolding question and answer turns could receive an accommodation weighting that would lead to some degree of downward adjustment of the candidate performance rating. Such an analytical strategy would allow for greater acknowledgement of between-interviewer differences in style and likelihood of accommodation. The net result could well be greater accuracy in the interview and rating process.
Chapter 9 CONCLUSIONS

Oral proficiency interviews capture both positive and negative evidence of candidates' capacity to engage in spontaneous interaction. The positive evidence of proficiency evolves from the discourse generated around topics chosen by one of the interview dyad participants. Such evidence consists of responses to questions that function as substantive answers that manifest evidence of linguistic skill consonant with the rating criteria interviewers have internalized prior to the interview interaction. The negative evidence occurs as instances of interactional troubles candidates have in providing rejoinders to interviewer questions. Analyses of interview discourse introduced in earlier chapters indicated that questions posed to candidates are in large part crafted to be optimally answerable. The negative evidence candidates provide about the upper ranges of their proficiency are thus crucially information-laden and most relevant to the interviewers' task of identifying the candidate as a member of speakers on the rating scale continuum.

Interactional troubles candidates experience and the interviewers' remedies for them indicated that there is considerable interdependence of answers to questions, and subsequent questions to the answers. This interdependence reveals both the coconstruction of the interview discourse, and to no small degree, the image of proficiency that evolves from the interview interaction.

A key construct examined in this research relates to variability in interviewers' sensitivity to, and remedies for, the interactional
troubles candidates experience in the context of the oral proficiency interview. The fact that there is considerable variation in the use of accommodative strategies among interviewers and across rating levels suggests that an important factor in the interpretation of candidate speech relates to the way interviewers pose questions.

Variation in the types of interactional phenomena that serve to instigate accommodative reactions on the part of interviewers relates to a hierarchy of troubles leading to differential probabilities of accommodative reaction. The hierarchy presented in Chapter Four indicates that comprehension phenomena are most heavily weighted as indicators of candidates' capacity to engage in interviewer interaction. Interviewers are most uniformly attuned to the status of their interlocutors' understanding of interview questions. To the extent that the meaning of questions has to be negotiated prior to substantive answers to those same questions, there is an increased likelihood that perceptions of troubles will be reflected in sustained frequencies of accommodative questioning in subsequent interviewer turns. This phenomenon, it was argued, crucially relates to the notion of second language proficiency.

The analyses of differential weightings for the same interactional phenomena across the four rating levels revealed that some of them retain their substantive meanings along the whole of the rating continuum. Other phenomena, particularly those related to discourse features, have different weightings across the four categories. An interpretation put forward in Chapter Four suggested that answers to questions provided by 1+ (high intermediate) level candidates would be more likely to be accepted, even if the answers
were not entirely on topic. Conversely, an off-topic rejoinder at the other end of the ability continuum would be more likely met with an accommodative move crafted to reorient the candidate to the original question content. A plausible account of this drift in interviewers' interpretation of candidate troubles across the rating continuum was based on the observation that there is such a wide range of interactional and comprehension problems at the lower end of the rating continuum that individual instances of trouble are less likely to be interpreted as particularly deserving of an accommodative remedy. At the 3 (superior) rating level, however, the onus is on the candidate to maintain the continuity of the discourse apropos the topic nominated, and failure to do so more consistently provokes interviewer repair.

The first hypothesis stated that there would be particular triggers of accommodation in the attempted rejoinders provided by candidates. These rejoinders were expected to differentially invoke systematic accommodative repair on the part of interviewers. The split-halves variable rule analyses of the question corpus provided ample evidence that the triggers of accommodation result in symmetric probabilities of accommodation. It was found that the candidate comprehension factor, manifested in overt requests for clarification of question content, led to a near categorical rule of interviewer accommodative repair. The candidate production factor group also revealed a number of factors leading to accommodation. Pausing in the answer turn, under-elaborate rejoinders, and non-sequiturs all served to inform the interviewer of candidate trouble,
and all reliably lend their weight toward applications of the variable rule of interviewer accommodation.

Candidate error was found also to carry considerable weight as a trigger of accommodation. Consonant with the notion of interviewers aiming to minimize their effort in framing topics about which questions can be posed, the influence of the last speaker turn, when taken by the interviewer, led to subsequent accommodation. This observation was corroborated in the cross-validation phase of the study. When interviewers take two turns consecutively, the implication is that they do so because their interlocutor is unable at that point in the discourse to take the floor. Accommodation in questions posed in subsequent turns usually reveal proactive forms of accommodation.

The two factors not contributing much weight to the likelihood of accommodation were the newness of the topic and the status of the previous question. Although these two factors did lead to different degrees of significance and non-redundancy in the across-level analyses, their absolute weights would suggest that they do not provide a substantive account about why interviewers opt for accommodative questions. The status of the previous question may provide a clue about the locations at which, in individual interviews, interviewers shift from reactive to proactive modes of accommodation. In a micro-analytic interpretation of interview discourse the status of the previous question may provide evidence about when proficiency assessments emerge. Since all eighty interviews are the input to the overall analysis, it is perhaps not
surprising that the effect of contiguous accommodative questions is lost in the patternings of accommodation phenomena.

The analysis of interview excerpts in Chapters Three and Five involved micro-analyses of the discourse. The advantage of this approach is that categories of interaction can be identified within the interaction itself. That such categories are interactionally relevant, and provide empirical evidence of how the interviewers interpret and remedy sources of candidate trouble is the main attraction that the micro-analytic approach provides to the analysis of oral proficiency interview discourse.

Chapter Five exemplified the nine major categories of interviewer accommodation strategies. The type of accommodative strategy used was found to reveal the interviewers' on-the-spot diagnosis of the location and source of interactional difficulty. The consistency of candidate trouble types and particular remedial strategies used in response to them suggests that experienced interviewers are finely attuned to the sources of their interlocutor's problems, and the most expeditious strategy to correct them with the goals of the interview in mind. The assumption of this phase of the analysis was that accommodation is essentially the result of interviewer perceptions of trouble. Since the tokens of accommodation are the external behavioral manifestations of interviewers' perception of interactional or linguistic trouble, the most obvious linkage is from candidate trouble to accommodation, and then to the outcome of the interview--the rating of proficiency. This research has addressed the interrelationship between the extent
of candidate trouble, subsequent accommodation, and the rating outcomes. There may well be, however, some degree of direct linkage between instances of candidate trouble and consequent attribute formation in the mind of the interviewer/rater. The empirical problem here is that such putative attribute formation is not outwardly manifested in the speech or behavior of the interviewer—other than through the cooccurrences of accommodative moves. There may nevertheless be an empirical method to examine the extent to which tokens of candidate trouble directly relate to rating outcomes. For this, different categories of candidates troubles in answer turns could be tallied for each interview and used in a hierarchical regression model for predicting rating outcomes. If the sheer volume of different categories of trouble correlates to rating outcomes more than the different tokens of accommodation, the linkage between candidate trouble and ratings would be established. One weakness in such an approach relates to the problem of multicolinearity in regression models. Since the discourse analysis established that accommodation is motivated by candidate troubles in the interview, the extent of accommodation is to a large degree linearly related to tokens of trouble, which tend to be correlated among themselves. Thus, the task of sorting out tokens of trouble occurring independently of consequent interviewer accommodation would be severely constrained by the interdependence of the two phenomena. The strategy of linking candidate trouble to accommodation, and accommodation to rating outcome avoids the interdependence problem.
The second hypothesis tested in this research addressed the predictive power of the various accommodative strategies. The outcome of the interviews, which reflects where interviewers place their interlocutors on the proficiency continuum, served as the basis for discrimination among the different strategies of accommodation. To the extent that particular accommodative strategies would occur in particular rating levels, and not in others, those strategies were hypothesized to reveal benchmarks of proficiency manifested in the speech of the interviewer. The significance of the hypothesis comes from its premise—that candidate proficiency is revealed to a large degree by the extent of accommodative speech of the interviewer. This prediction is a clear departure from conventional conceptualizations of oral proficiency, which construe ability to be reflected exclusively in the speech of the second language speaker. If communicative accommodation is understood as a necessary condition for successful interaction between native and non-native speakers, who may not have the language skills to participate as independent conversational partners, the frequency of accommodative strategies in interviewer speech could indicate that such compensatory accommodation is perceived as necessary for communication. This points to the extent of interlocutor support as a key factor in describing how second language proficiency is defined as a form of talk-in-interaction. The univariate analyses did not confirm the second hypothesis outright, however. The fact that primarily reactive types of accommodation serve to distinguish among the rating outcomes indicates differing meanings of accommodative strategies used. It was observed that
accommodation serving the ends of discourse management did not function to discriminate well. This finding suggests that for some interviews wherein the interviewer anticipates that the candidate is most likely at an advanced plus (2+) or superior (3) level, there will be more discourse management accommodation used in framing the probing questions appropriate for interviews pitched to the highest ranges of proficiency.

The implications of this research for oral proficiency assessment methodology are both practical and theoretical. The practical aspect relates to the conceptualization of second language oral interviews as co-constructed discourse; that both candidate and interviewer contribute to the sketching of the proficiency picture, which has been conventionally viewed as the product of only the candidate's effort and ability. The present research implies that definitions of oral proficiency assessment rating scales could be modified to incorporate the accommodation provided by the interviewer by introducing the extent of communicative accommodation required in the interaction as a criterion for defining proficiency. The advantage of including the extent and manner of interviewer accommodation in the rating criteria would be foremost in acknowledging the role of the interviewer as a co-participant in the interaction, as a responsible contributor to the collaborative speech event. Instead of hearing the content of the candidates' speech as instances of communication correlatable to external, but usually untestable "real world" events, interviewers and raters would most likely have to consider the impact of the interviewer as a facet of the interview context, one that could lead to systematic
variance if the candidate were to be interviewed in another place and time by a different interviewer (Bachman, 1988; Linacre, 1989).

The theoretical implications of the research speak to the construct validity of the interview process. If there are insufficient instances of accommodation, for instance, owing to insufficient interviewer practice in providing effective repairs to interactional troubles, or difficulty in crafting appropriately framed questions in probes, the performance of the candidate could be adversely affected. Differences in interviewer selection of probe topics, as well as idiosyncratic methods of dealing with trouble, could lead to inaccurate perceptions of candidate performance. Since accommodation has been shown in this study to be locally contingent, interpretations of interview results without consideration of the extent of interviewer assistance in creating successful responses may not yield accurate descriptions of what a given rating category "means" outside the context of the interview.

A different aspect of construct validity is reflected in the content of this study. One method of controlling variation in interviewer style, as well as expediting the interview process where trained interviewers are unavailable or too expensive to engage, is to rely on semi-direct interviews (Stansfield and Kenyon, 1992; cf. Hoekje and Linnell, 1994). Here the context for co-construction is erased, since there is no candidate-specific crafting of questions, or accommodative remediation available from the prerecorded series of questions provided to the candidate. The communication is one-way and devoid of the interaction characteristic of oral proficiency interviews. The fact that there can be no communicative
accommodation may well be the greatest liability of the semi-direct method, since the discourse it engenders does not capture the adaptive nature of accommodation, nor the collaborative construction of talk-in-interaction characteristic of the world external to language assessment interviews.

Clearly, further research addressing the use and interpretation of oral proficiency assessments is required. Given the observation that the oral proficiency interview in its various manifestations has been increasingly popularized as the most "authentic" and direct method of assessment, the issues raised in this research may help to instigate other related projects. One issue evolving from the present work relates to the significance of interviewer speech. Indeed, if interviewer accommodative speech reflects unfolding impressions of attributes of candidate proficiency, samples of interviewer speech should independently correlate with interview outcomes. Excerpts of interviewer speech from authentic interviews could be played to experienced raters, who would then assign the excerpt to a category of candidate most likely to be in need of such accommodative speech. If interviewer speech alone could be used to predict with any accuracy the interview outcomes from which the questions were extracted, the influence of accommodation would be of even more obvious significance to the conceptualization of oral proficiency put forward in the present research.

The role of culture is one that requires considerably more work from an ethnomethodological perspective. The interview, for many candidates, is a face threatening event. Candidates from different cultural backgrounds may well react to interview questions in
varying ways, and may differentially opt for avoidance strategies which might affect the content and flow of the interview discourse, as well as the image of proficiency such strategies would influence. One phenomenon of potential cross-cultural interest in the present data is the Japanese candidates' inclination to under-elaborate answers to questions that of a personal nature. European interview candidates, in contrast, may generally know how to play the interview "game" better than Asian candidates, and may interpret questions in interviews as necessary for the conduct of the interview, as opposed to the literal content of the question (Young, in press). Seemingly face threatening questions are typically answered forthrightly and verbosely by Europeans, while Asian candidates tend to be more circumspect in providing answers which involve personal information. The essential valuing of verbosity in interviews may well be different cross-culturally.

Another area of potentially fruitful research is in interviewer differences in attention to candidate troubles and proclivity to accommodate in various modes of accommodation. If the extent of accommodation reveals the interviewer's perception of candidate proficiency, repeated interviews conducted with the same cohort of candidates should in principle evoke similar patterns of interviewer accommodative moves as well as equivalent ratings of proficiency. Early research on the oral proficiency interview (Clark and Clifford, 1988) shows considerable agreement about performances by candidates. The area of inter and intra-interviewer variation is still open to investigation.
One final point is worth consideration. The methodology employed in this research sought to integrate two very different research traditions—the micro-analysis of quasi-conversational discourse, usually performed with the assumptions and world view common in sociology and ethnomethodology, and multivariate analysis, representing a probabilistic approach to arriving at empirically justifiable generalizations about language use in context. Part of the attraction of integrating the best of both approaches is in demonstrating that the same set of phenomena can be effectively unraveled by employing both qualitative and quantitative research tools interactively. The marriage of what are commonly considered to be incompatible approaches to research may be a union, perhaps for many methodological purists, which is not made in heaven. An optimistic perspective on this issue is that the present union will lead to a more widespread methodological crossover between adherents to the different research paradigms, and richer descriptions of how second language proficiency can be assessed.
Appendix A. SAMPLES OF INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS

(ullnlrl/ (could you tell me about yourself?)
(aoownjln (which did you like better Shimonoseki or Ibaraki?)
(uoowojly (I have never been there could you tell me about it?)
(uopenjln (tell me will you play tennis tomorrow?)
(uoowoijln (are you good?)
(uooenjln (have you ever travelled abroad?)
(uoownjln (did you have any trouble when you travelled?)
(aouwojln (what happened?)
(aopeojly (so your laundry stayed in the hotel and you were never able to get it?)
(aooenjly (what was your favorite place in Europe? what place did you like the best?)
(aooenjly (what about Thailand? what was Thailand like?)
(uoooeojly (what time of year did you go there?)
(uooworln (what part of Thailand did you go to?)
(uoowownjln (could you tell me a little bit about your family?)
(uoowojln (do you get to visit them often?)
(uouwojln (why is that?)
(uoownjln (how do you get to your hometown from here?)
(uoownjln (is there anything else you like to do in your free time besides play tennis?)
(uoownrln (if you could make a trip to another country where would you like to go?)
(uoueoijln (why?)
(uooenjln (could you tell me a little bit about your job?)
(uoowoijln (has it been keeping you very busy lately?)
(uoowojln (so you have had time to go to English class?)
(uo{//ojln (what did you enjoy the most in your English class?)
(uoowojln (what's happening?)
(uoowojln (do you think the weather will continue like this or?)
(uoowojln (and what exactly are you doing in that section?)
(uoowojln (when you say functions what exactly do you mean?)
(uoowojln (how long has that division been in operation?)
(aooeojln (that house you mean building?)
(uoo/ojly (well is your section of the company a big one?)
(aouwojln (about how big? so how many people are there working in
your area?)
(uoowmjly (how long have you been working in that section of the
company?)
(aoowojln (what do you think of working there do you like it?)
(aooenjly (can you tell me a bit about personally where you are from
and a bit about your background?)
(uooenjly (obviously you are older than you look are you married?)
(uoowojln (do you have plans to?)
(aoownjln (so what sort of situation are you living in are you on your
own or with your family?)
(aooeojly (can you describe the place to me what sort of a place is
it?)
(uoowojly (and how long have you been living there?)
(uoownjln (where are you originally from?)
(uoowojln (is that where your parents are living how?)
(aoo/njln (can you tell me about your family like your brothers and
your sisters if you have any?)

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(uooenjly (being single at your age do you feel any pressure from your parents to get married?))
(aoownjln (you mentioned your interest in cycling I'm curious as to how you got interested in cycling?))
(uooejlj (mechanism of the bicycle what do you mean by that?))
(uooejln (how many speed is your bike?))
(uooowojln (when did you first start cycling?))
(aooowojln (and how did you get interested in it did your parents buy you a bicycle or?))
(aooowojly (bicycle riding is popular but at some age most people loose interest in it and usually probably high school or so kids start to get interested in cars or motor bikes and they rapidly loose interest in bicycles but you didn't so why do you think that happened?))
(aomeojly (you must have taken many cycling trips was there any trip that you enjoyed more than any other can you tell me about it?))
(uooowojly (why was that trip interesting for you?))
(aomeojln (you say it took you how many hours to get to the top?))
(uooowojly (are you planning any more trips for this year or next year perhaps?))
(aoowojln (what are some of the plans can you tell me about them?))
(aomeojly (anything else any other trips what else do you would you like to do?))
(aoooeojly (how many how would that trip take tour de France do you know?))
(uooeojly (are your muscles in shape?))
(u///nrl/ (please tell me about yourself?))

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(are you going to marry someone from M?)
(I most cases I know most people won't get married until after two or three years so what is the advantage of getting married now? Are you worried that he will find another lady and get married to another lady or does he worry that you will find another man at M and get married?)
(do you mother and father like your fiance?)
(and what about his mother and father are they happy?)
(after you get married will you live in Tokyo did you say?)
(so will you live with your parents?)
(how after two or three years when your husband will come back to Tokyo and so are you planning to live together in an apartment or a house or what would you like to do in the future?)
(you joined M why did you decide to join M?)
(did you try some other companies did you visit some other companies?)
(which other companies?)
(what are you doing to do after this interview?)
(how about you where do you live?)
(which part of Chiba?)
(you went to Waseda University what did you study in Waseda University?)
(so you have joined M do you want to be an engineer?)
(what do you want to sell?)
(please tell me a little about your family?)
(what does your father do?)
(is he a good salesman?)
(you went on a sales trip to the United States this year right? Please tell me a little about the States?)

(sorry you were there one month?)

(who did you travel with?)

('who did you travel with?)

(you wrote down you like doing archery do you mean Japanese archery or ordinary archery?)

(what kind of movies do you like?)

(please tell me about, you must be living in a dormitory now I guess are you living in a dormitory now?)

(what kind of food do they serve?)

(about how many people are there in your dormitory?)

(so you have three roommates now are they good friends of yours now how long have you stayed together?)

(you say you want to become a salesman overseas which country would you like to go to?)

(why the USA?)

(how about this summer you will have about ten days holiday in summer, what are you going to do this summer?)

(tell me about your trip to Europe)

(can you speak French?)

(your name is rather unusual isn't it M. are there many people called M in Japan?)

(now you are living in the dormitory can you tell me a little about the work you have been doing since you joined the company?)

(what did you do?)
(uooeojln (and how do you do that?)
(aq//ojln (how how do you reduce the cost of making irons?)
(aooenjly (what are your plans for this weekend do you have any plans?)
(aooeojly (so you will be living at home and going to a National shop near your house will that be embarrassing?)
(aq//ojly (will you be 'embarrassed?)
(uoowojly (are you happy in a N shop near your house?)
(ao//nrln (you must be looking forward to seeing your family again, what's the thing that you are looking forward to most?)
(uoownjly (you'll do sales until August and then after that will you be told which division you'll be working in?)
(aouwojln (where would you like to work which would you prefer to do?)
(uouwojly (which part of Tokyo there are many M shops?)
(uoowojln (in that case will you travel by train everyday?)
(u///nrl/ (how long have you been working for M?)
(uooeojln (and what did you do before you joined M?)
(uooenjln (and what college did you graduate from?)
(uoowojln (and what did you major in at university?)
(aoeeojln (could you tell me a little bit about your college days about your life at university could you tell me a little in detail?)
(aomeojly (so you enjoyed your college days if you had the opportunity if you had the opportunity would you like to do it again?)
(uo//ojly (if you had the opportunity what would you like to study?)

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(ouoewojhn (is that all?))
(ouuwnjhjn (where do you live now?))
(ouowojhn (you started this year?))
(ouownjhn (how do you like M so far?))
(aq/njhjn (how do you 'like M?))
(ouowoijhy (you work a long time?))
(ouownjhn (are you from Osaka?))
(ouownjhn (and you went to Osaka City University?))
(ouowoijhn (were you a serious student?))
(ouoewojhn (what exactly are you doing now at M?))
(aowoewojhn (where is the shop, in Osaka?))
(aq/orhy (in 'Osaka?))
(aoownrhy (I see you have some hobbies you also like cycling do you have a bicycle?))
(ouowoijhy (National bicycle?))
(ouowoijhn (do you ride a lot?))
(aq/oijhn (do you cycle a lot?))
(aoownjhy (let me ask more about your job you began in April this year right? do you remember your first day working for M what it was like can you tell me?))
(uomenjhy (is your family from Osaka also?))
(aowoijhn (where what part of Osaka?))
(aowoijhy (do they have a house or an apartment or?))
(aowoijhy (is it big can you tell me what it is like?))
(ouueoijhy (is it big?))
(uq/ojhy (is it big?))
(ouownjhn (do you have any brothers or sisters?))
(auowojhn (are they older or younger than you?)
(aooeojhn (you're the oldest?)
(aoo/nrhy (summer vacation is coming up in a couple of months do you have any plans for summer vacation?)
(auoenjhy (have you ever been to Hokkaido?)
(aaownjhn (were you born in Toyonaka?)
(auowojhy (you were born there you were born in Osaka but in Toyonaka?)
(auowojhn (has it changed in the last twenty years? I mean what was it like when you were very small?)
(auoenjhy (Let me ask you a little more about your work, I wonder if you could tell me exactly what you did?)
(auooeojhy (what did you see?)
(auowojhn (how was it?)
(auowojhn (can you tell me a little bit about it I have never heard of it?)
(aaomenjhn (did you come here to-where do you work exactly do you work?)
(auowojhy (how did you come here how do you come from T to here?)
(aq/ojhy (did you walk up to the OTC?)
(aooeojhy (why why do you have to walk or what?)
(auownjhy (are you going back after this interview?)
(aaoenjhn (you have probably read been reading quite a bit in the newspapers and seeing a lot on the television about China how do you feel about what is happening there?)
(uipwojhy (do you sympathize with the students?)
(aq//ojhn (do you agree with the students?)
(ais/njhy (you live in the dormitory now how is the dormitory?)
(aooejhy (how big is the room you have what is it like inside?)
(aomeojhy (in the room?)
(uq//ojhy (is it ah how big is it compared to this room here?)
(aomejhn (six times as large as your room?)
(ao//rhy (one thing I wanted to ask you about you know the new PM Mr U apparently has a geisha friend right Its a big thing, do you think the newspapers should talk about these things?)
(aq//rhy (do you think it is right for the newspapers to published these things about personal things like this?)
(uiserhy (so you are going to have lunch after this after this eh?)
(uoowojln (so in Kyushu University are there no foreigners, or)
(uoownjln (what what did you study in university?)
(uoownrIn (you wrote down you like swimming=which part of Kyushu do you come from?)
(uoownjln (are you living with your family how?)
(uoowojln ( did she sell you a lot of insurance?)
(aoownjln ( did you live by yourself or with a group of students or how did you live?)
(uoownrly ( why are you so interested in economics)
(uoownrln ( what are you going to do this winter?)
(u//nrln ( what are you going to do this summer?)
(uoseojln ( inside of Japan?)
(uooeojln ( how many days holiday will you get this summer?)
(uoowojln ( just one week?)
(uoownrln (are you going to get a bonus this year?)

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（uoowojln（so what are you going to spend your bonus on？）
（aoo/nrln（what have you been doing？have you been studying or working in the head..）
（uoownjly（are you looking forward to going to the head office？）
（uoownjln（which part of Nara are you living in？）
（uoowtnln（when you get home each day what do you do？）
（aoownrln（do you know which department you'll be working in？）
（aioenrly（what's been happening can you tell me？）
（aioenrly（what do think will happen？What do think will happen in the future？）
（aomeojly（and what about the reason now the dollar has become strong, why has the dollar suddenly become stronger）
（aooenrly（do you read any other magazines...what other magazines in English do you read？）
（uoownjly（you must have a lot of friends in Kyushu how many of your friends joined M？）
（uoowojln（did you want to work in Kyushu Matsushita？）
（uoowojln（how long does that take？）
（uomwojln（and what did you study at Keio University？）
（aomwojln（now you've joined M what what do you want to do in M？）
（aooenjly（so now do you live in(．)Kobe？）
（uooeojly（in a dormitory？）
（uqowojln（in a dormitory？）
（uoowojln（so do your parents live in Kobe？）
（aouwojln（did your parents used to live in Kobe？）
(aooenjly (how do your parents feel about you joining M? are they happy?)
(aouoojly (what did they say when you told them you were going to work in M?)
(aqooojly (what did they say to you when you said you were going to work at M?)
(uoouejly (why why is that?)
(aouenrln (when you were in Keio University please tell me about your lifestyle, what did you do)
(uooowojly (what else did you do?)
(uu///orln (did you study?)
(aouwnrly (you said you like music what sort of music do you like?)
(uooowojln (can you play any Beatles?)
(aiownjln (this summer you will have about one week's holidays, right? what are you going to do with the holidays?)
(aqownjly (also you are going to get a small bonus, maybe, from M. what are you going to do with the bonus?)
(uooeojly (how much does it cost to go from here to Kanazawa?)
(aqpeojln (how do you like working for M so far, is it good?)
(aqpwojly (your lifestyle has changed. please tell me some of the things you have been doing.
(aiuwnjly (where have you been working which factory have you been working at?)
(aoowojly (so that is very near your dormitory isn't it?)
(aooeojly (so what is the job like have you been making the 43 inch tv's?)
(aoueojly (is that good?)

(aouwnjly (you said you studied management. do you want to
become a manager?)
(uoowojly (what what do you think you need to do to become a
manager?)
(uoownjly (you said you have no brothers or sisters. do you have
many friends at M?)
(uo//nrs/ (and what is your name?)
(uoownjsn (and where do you come from?)
(uoowojsn (Katano City where is Katano City?)
(uoowojsn (do you live there now?)
(uoowojsn (and who do you live with?)
(aowojsn (and how long have you lived there how many years?)
(uooenjsy (and ah do you plan to get married?)
(uoownjsn (could you tell me something about your daily schedule?)
(aq//njsn (could you describe your daily schedule to me?)
(uoowojsy (that's pretty much what you do everyday?)
(uoownjsn (and where did you go to school Mr K?)
(aq//njsn ('where did you 'go to 'school?)
(aowojsy (could you tell me about your university days what did
you do in university say in general?)
(uiswojsy (do you still play the flute?)
(uoowojsn (so is classical music difficult to play?)
(uoeeojsn (so Mozart is your favorite musician who are some of your
other favorite musicians?)
(uuwnjsn (could you tell how to get to your house from here?)
(uoownjsn (what plans do you have over Oshogatsu?)

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(uoowojsn (why don't you maybe you tell me about the tour you are planning why don't you explain in detail?)
(uoowojsn (where will you be able to see the eclipse?)
(uoowojsn (and where is Shijijo Island?)
(uoowojsn (what chain of islands is that in?)
(uooeojsn (and how many other people are going to be on the tour?)
(uoowojsn (oh can you do that?)
(aooworsn (how are you going to look at the eclipse? what method are you going to use to look at the eclipse?)
(aq/wojsy (if you look at the eclipse just like this with your eyes it is very dangerous so what method are you going to use to look at the eclipse?)
(uopenrsy (do you watch movies often?)
(a/p/njsn (do you enjoy movies?)
(uooeojsy (do you have a video cassette recorder?)
(aooeojsn (what's one of your favorite movies what a movie that you really enjoy that you saw recently?)
(aoswojsy (so what type of movie recently that you have seen that is science fiction or what is the name of the movie?)
(uoo/ojsy (I've never seen Tron could you tell me about it in some detail?)
(aq/njsn (....there has been a world wide crash of the stock markets around the world now since that crash the economists have said there is going to be a major recession in America now my question is what effect will that recession have on Japan?)
(aq/njsy (economists have said there is going to be a major recessions in mid 1988 now what effect is there going to be on Japan if there is a recession in America what effect will there be in Japan?)
(uooeojsy (it will what?))
(aoownjsn (recently you got a bonus recently everybody got a bonus at M I hope I am not rude but what special plans do you have for your bonus?)
(uooownjsy (are you going to go back to work now?)
(uiswnjsn (I mean are you going to go back to work after this interview?)
(uoownjsn (what's your job?)
(uoowojsn (which division are you working in?)
(uoowojsn (at a National shop where would that be?)
(aq/ojsn ( where which National shop is that?)
(uoownjsy (before you came to M what were you doing?)
(uoowojsn (was that your major?)
(uoownjsn (could you tell me a little about your university life?)
(uooeojsn (is that because you are very busy?)
(aoownjsn (when you were a student at Tokyo University what kind of things did you do when you weren't studying?)
(aq/nrsy (when you weren't studying what kind of things did you do?)
(uoowojsy (did you have any free time when you were a student?)
(aoo/njsn (where are you from Mr K? where is your hometown?)
(uoownjsy (what kind of place is Toyama?)
(uooeojsn (did you like it there?)
(uoownjsn (what kind of place do you live in now?)

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(uoowojsn (is that north of Osaka city?)
(uoowwnjsn (do you live in a house?)
(aq/njsn (DO YOU LIVE IN A HOUSE?)
(aooworsy (so tell me about your house how does it look inside?)
(uou/ojsy (do you plan to buy a house in the future?)
(uuowojsn (why do you think housing has become so expensive in Japan?)
(uuowojsn (do you think people can do anything about that?)
(aq/eojsn (is there any way to solve that problem of expensive housing so that more people can afford to buy a house?)
(uuowojsy (do you think the government ought to do something about the rising land costs?)
(uou/njsn (how long have you been married?)
(uuowojsn (did you have a traditional Japanese wedding?)
(uuowojsn (in Japan?)
(uuownjsn (where is your wife from?)
(uoo/ojsn (did you meet when you were in university?)
(aoo/nrsn (we talked about the cost of housing which is one of the biggest problems in Japanese society today Ahm what do you think is the biggest problem facing Japanese society what do you think is the biggest problem today?)
(aoswojsy (apart from that aside from that what is the biggest problem?)
(uuowojsy (do you think the recruit scandal has hurt the credibility of the LDP?)
(aq//orsy (do you think that ah the recruit case has damaged the image of LDP?)
(aouwojsy (do you think that perhaps it may be difficult in the future for the LDP to maintain its control of the government?)
(uooowojsy (why is the LDP so strong?)
(aoownrsn (changing the subject for a moment you have probably been following the news about China there have been some very dramatic political events in China, can you tell me what what happened there lately what is going on in China?)
(uis/njsy (what do you think about how the Chinese government responded to the pro democracy movement?)
(a///ojsn (do you think the democracy movement in China is dead now or do you think the people in favor of reform will continue their efforts?)
(uo//njsy (have you ever been overseas Mr K?)
(uouwojsn (can you tell me about your trip?)
(uoowojsn (what did you see there?)
(aomeojsn (I see he just took the tip and he gave you the change after deducting the tip)
(u///nrsy (have you ever been to the States or ?)
(ao//nrsn (you came to M just this spring, why did you choose M?)
(aoo/nrsy (what do you think is the most important discovery or invention in the world if you had to choose just one?)
(uoowojsy (why do you think that is so important?)
(aoowojsn (you say you are going to be doing research would that be in the field of semi-conductors?)
(aouwojsy (what will that be what research will you be doing?)
(uoowojsy (is that the same as artificial intelligence?)

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(uoowojsn (what would you say are the biggest challenges in your research?)
(uoownjsn (so when you are not busy with research how do you spend your time?)
(uoowojsn (oh you have a personal computer?)
(uoowojsn (how do you spend the rest of the day?)
(uoowojsn (a what? A reporter?)
(uoowojsn (I don't know him, TV?)
(uoowojsn (which(.) channel?)
(uoownjsn (so economics when you chose economics were you thinking about your future job)
(aooworsn (the north and south problem you said what is the north and south problem)
(uoowojsy (what's the basic cause of that?)
(aqowojsn (cause cause=what is the reason)
(apowojsy (WHY is there an imbalance)
(uouwojsy (I've heard that .... northerners work harder...what do you think of that/)
(uo//nrsn (let me find out about your family what kind of family are you from?)
(uouwojsn (he makes them=so it's hand made stuff)
(uoowojsn (what kind of product does he make for tea ceremony)
(uoownjsn (and you have a brother?)
(aoownjtn (and what are you going to do exactly there? The first two months you went there was a familiarization trip and so what are your duties going to be for the next five years?)
(are you replacing someone or setting up a new department?)

(are they difficult to get?)

(can you explain the history of the anti-dumping legislation I understand that ah M was ruled as a maybe I better get you to explain to me anyway the last thing I heard was that something was overturned and M was released from something or can you explain what happened?)

(I am a little confused - is the issue dumping or is the issue local parts contents?)

(and what happened to M as a result of not having enough local content?)

(I notice that your interests among your interests you mention rope jumping and square dance do you jump rope everyday or something?)

(what are the judging criteria?)

(you went to graduate school in both the States and Japan how would you compare the two?)

(I have heard that in Japanese universities that is said, but really only people who study in the liberal arts areas can take a full four year holiday at university but people in technical areas actually have to work quite hard in the last two years and especially in graduate school isn't that true?)

(and how about in graduate school?)

(how would you compare the levels of the two schools, Kumamoto and University of Illinois?)
(aoownjtn (you said that you originally went to work for another company and then changed to M why did you change companies?, if it is not too personal)
(aoownjty (it is often said that lifetime employment is the backbone of Japanese industry I have heard people say that it is starting to break down do you agree that it is starting to break down?)
(uoowojty (what consequences do you think that will have for Japanese industry?)
(aoowojtn (which means what exactly? what are the ways of the American and European companies?)
(uoowojty (where do you put the lifetime employment system on the plus side or the minus side?)
(uooenjtn (are you married?)
(uoownjtn (how does your wife feel about going to the UK for five years?)
(uooeojtn (ok four and a half years how does she feel about that?)
(aoowojtn (they say that it is ah in many ways it is more difficult for the spouse of someone who is transferred overseas in Japan it is usually the man but it is not always the case because ah the person who has been transferred kind of plunges into his or her work and doesn't have to think about being in a strange culture not being able to communicate with the locals whereas the spouse usually the wife kind of left by herself at home and has to cope with day to day living and feels very isolated have you discussed that with your wife?)
(uooeojty (have you thought about what you might do if she starts to show stress or begins to crack?)
(does the company have any provision, I mean if it doesn't work out and your wife wants to come back to Japan could you end your period there early for that does the company understand that kind of thing?)

(you said you were working in Sada did you come here from Sada Ku?)

(and ah what kind of work do you want to do at M?)

(and ah what kind of things do you do what is your work exactly at the museum?)

(and since you have been working at M have you had a lot of vip's visit the museum?)

(if Margaret Thatcher visited the museum how would you feel?)

(so you plan to make this your lifetime career working in the museum?)

(and I am sure you have plans for marriage too don't you?)

(at what age would you like to marry?)

(now that we are on the subject of marriage ahm in Japan I believe the customs about the the customs involved in marriage are quite complicated and different from Western customs, I wonder if you could give me a brief introduction to the traditional customs that are involved in the preparation for marriage in Japan)

(what kind of presents are they?)

(and what about the new home for the newly weds whose responsibility is it to purchase the home the furniture and that kind of thing?)
if the next six months a young man appealed to you proposed to you what would you ah but he made a condition he said when we marry you must quit your job, and you liked him very much, and you have only been working for the company for six months or a year, what would how would you react?)

I am sure you have been reading the newspapers following the news international news the situation in China it is not long ago that you were a student yourself so I am sure you can sympathize with the Chinese students' situation what did you think about the student ah demonstrations for democracy in China?)

(in what way should they support the Chinese students? or support the movement towards democracy?How can foreign governments what kind of approach should they take?)

that's from an individual point of view individual to individual but ah from the government's point of view what kind of stance is the Japanese government taking?)

summer vacation is coming up soon do you have any plans?)

(this is quite lovely is it from your photo album?)

(when were you in New York?)

(how long were you in New York?)

(please tell me about your trip to New York I have never been to New York)

(where did you stay in New York?)

(and how did you travel in New York?)

(tell me about your educational background you speak English very well)
(do you enjoy your homestay experience?)
(tell me about your homestay family)
(with four children?)
(where they house cats?)
(which state were you in?)
(recently there has been a lot going on in China not homestaying but there has been a lot of turmoil in China it was reported that about 2600 students and civilians were killed by the People's Liberation Army, can you comment on that?)
(I think the massacre occurred on June 4th or 5th. Do you know what has been going on in China?)
(well what were the students demanding?)
(were they demanding anything unreasonable?)
(let's say that you are the oldest child in the family and your younger sister has been ill and she went to see a doctor and the doctor found that she has a terminal disease, let's say cancer and he calls you in being the older being the older child in the family and he confides in you, now, would the responsibility of knowing that your sister has cancer, do you think that you would feel you have a moral obligation to tell her?)
(how old are you, excuse me?)
(do you do any cooking?)
(wha do you live Ms O?)
(with your family?)
(you know when you go to a super market and you wanna buy a soft drink, do you generally select a glass bottle or a plastic one?)
(uoowojtn why do you select a plastic bottle over a glass bottle?)
(aopoojtn is there a special reason?)
(uoownjty summer vacation is coming up do you have any plans?)
(uoownjtn it doesn't sound you are easily intimidated why were you intimidated by the tape, but you are not afraid to travel alone?)
(uoowojtn so you are going to Nagasaki this summer)
(u///n/// is this miss or mrs?)
(aoownrtn you just mentioned that you went to college in the States whereabouts?)
(uoownjty did you enjoy staying there?)
(uoowojtn do you have any definite plans?)
(uoownjtn when did you start working for M?)
(uoowojtn how do you like it so far?)
(uooeojtn so what do you have to do?)
(uowojtn do you like your job?)
(uooeojtn which division would you like to go to?)
Appendix B  TRAINING SET

a) clarification request

I and >you have been abroad a little bit<
C→ (.) pard
I you've been abroad
I well >where are you from originally Mr Y.<
C (1)
I >where are you from originally.<
C regionally?
I uh hum
C→ what regionally means?
I your hometown

b) ignores meaning of question

I and ah(.) are you married?
C no I am single.
I (3) do you plan to get married?
C hha-nohh
I (1) I see you're not a-you have no plans right now
C yeah
I how did you ah get your job here?
C ohm it's quite well
I hum ↑how did you get your job at (this company)

C→ maybehhs:(2)
I what did they say when you told them you were going to work (here)
C pardon?
I what did(.)they(.)say(.) to you(.) when(.) you said you were going to work at (this company)
C ah eh (.)they only say be careful
d) misarticulation

I alright(.)uhm can you describe your house to me ↓what is it like.
C my house?
I uhm
C ahm (1)last year I (. ahhm last year we bou ah(.) we bought a
new house(.) and eh tssss itsu very small but(.) uhm (1) now
we::we are swee=three three person(.) so umh(1) that is
not=that is too=that is not too(1) small °small (. to live in
I uhm(.)so it's big enough for you
C yeahhhs
I kay(.) can you=how many rooms do you have tell me about
your house=describe it

e) pause in answer turn

I Let me change the subject a little bit you have probably read
been reading quite a bit in the newspapers and seeing a lot on
the television about ah China
C hahha
I how do you feel about(.) what's happening there.
C tss
I [hhhm
C I I-was doing laundry so no(.) there was no only one television
in the dormitory
I oh
C so I can't I can't see t.v. not so much so I read the newspaper
I uh hum
C→ just (7)
I any ideas. Okay if=do you ah sympathize with the students?
C ha?
I do you agree with the students?
C almost so(l) um after reading the books(.). I (.). eh go to the movie
I ah
C watching to movie
I the same movie?
C yes
I the movie from the book
C [yeah
I which-which movies were they?
C (1)ahmm(.).the(.).E.T.
I E.T.?
C yes
I you read the book of E.T. and then you went and saw the movie?
C yes
I what other movies.
C→ it's so-it was (.). ummn exciting so (1) ° I think
I tell me something about it

f) error in previous turn

I ↑speaking of sports ahh next year will be the 1988
C [yes
I Olympics in Korea~ ahh:: how do you think the Japanese teams will do=the Japanese athletes?
C ahh(2) it's very difficult trend but I think I think Japanessshshshs will not do well~ because thinking of the strong athletes in NIKS like South Korea and China~ (.). even in the Asian Games Asian >how do I say< Asian::: Olympic Games
I yes
C Japan Japan can't ~can't win easily
I um hum
C because of strong power of China and Korea (.). so next year in Olympics(.). I'm afraid(.). Japanese (.). don't well
I what sports though do you think ah are strong Japanese sports for the Olympics?
C→ (2) strong Japan
I °sports that the Japanese are strong in
C like judo?
I: judo will be strong
C: [strong(1)]I think(.) the strong Japanese of Japanese is only j:judo now

Interviewer Strategies

a) slow rate of speech
I: ah(2)ºyeah ↑so do you have a lot of work today.
C: (.)
I: a lot of work(.)to(.)day
C: (.)
I: today do(.)you(.)have(.) a lot of work.
C: work
I: [yeah
C: of course
I: what's your schedule today, what do you have to do.

b) exaggerated articulation; overarticulation
I: so-so tell me a little about your family
C: family(.) ahum I have a (.).ah(.5) father and br-eh mother and grandmother(.) I have no brother
I: "I see(.) and how do your parents feel about you joining (the company) are they happy?
C: (.5) maybeh:(2)
I: what did they say:when you told them:you: were: going to work at M
C: pardon?
I: what did(.)they(.)say(.) to you(.) when(.) you said you were going to work at (the company)
C: ah eh (.).they only say be careful

c) selection questions (or-questions)
I: so what ah(.) what did you do for golden week last year(.)or this
C: ahh(.)talk about last year
I: [last year
C: (2)ah I went to Karuisawa(.)highland its in highland
I: hum
C in Nagano Prefecture(.) they have vacance with my- ↑I have a
ah have ah rest with my friend
I→ [ah a vacation (.) and what did you do-did you play
tennis go hiking ?
C ahh hm
I could you tell me something about that trip?

d) known information questions - display questions
I→ and once I get to Tokyo I have to call my friend(.) ahh so
could you tell me how to use a coin telephone?
C coin telephone?
I ummm
C (1) well fff where are the ffffffriends hhehehh?
I ahh my friend lives in Saitama so from
C [saiTAMA
I Tokyo Station I'll probably have to call Saitama.
C I sssee so you should (.).you(.) should look for the telephone
colored with yellow or green
I uh hum

e) lexical simplification
I ahm have you ever(.) been present when the birth-were you
present at the birth of the last child.
C last child ah pleasant?
I→ ah did you watch the birth?
C ahh no
I no?
C I didn't
I why not.

f) propositional fronting/left dislocation
I ah::(.)the international attitude to Japan >seems pretty harsh<
→ these days ah:: (3) we=>these days I often read articles in the
paper that say< well(.) for many Japan has (.).has just said
words and promises but ↑the other countries were not= will
not be satisfied with only words anymore and the other
countries will demand action, ↓what is your view of this
current situation.
C (3) ahhm(2) Japanese industry ahh (.)
I um hum [um hum
C and Japan is getting a huge surplus
I uh hum
C so the other countries are demanding to decrease the surplus....

I let's see your hobbies are travelling reading books<oil
→ oil painting-can you tell me about that?
C yes I started oil painting during (.) ah freshman year

I grammatical simplification

I ah(2)°yeah so do you have a lot of work today.
C (.).
I a lot of work(.)to(.)day
C (.).
I→ today do(.)you(.)have(.) a lot of work.
C work
I [yeah
C of course
I what's your schedule today, what do you have to do.

I question expansion/repetition

I ah y::ou(3) I'd like since you just started
< I wonder if you remember what the first day was like.
C first day(.5)
I→ how was your first day.
C (1)
I→ were you nervous or (.) what did you do how did you feel.
C (2) °hheheheeh
I you remember? maybe you don't remember. First week?
Appendix C  REVIEW QUIZ

Name ____________________________

Part I

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each of the following excerpts carefully and classify the response the candidate makes in the answer turn. The line where the response takes place is marked with the horizontal arrow (→). Write your classification in the spaces marked by [ ].

HINTS: Use the following list of candidate responses (marked C in excerpts). Be sure to consider the entire excerpt - not just the line with the arrow. CLARRQST = clarification request; IGNORE = candidate ignores the meaning of the question; UNDER = underelaboration of the answer or response; MISART= misarticulation or mumbled response; PAUSE = candidate pauses in the answer turn; NONSEQ = non-sequitur answer; ERROR structural error in answer.

Excerpt A

I ah::: you said that(.)the Tokyo people are(.) ↓kinda international do you consider yourself an international person Mr I?
C myself?
I yeah
C yeah I think so
I °I see. what's your definition of an international person.
C→ (2) [ ] I what are yer >what are the points<er the characteristics about you that make you an international person.
C first international(.) people must(.)ahh have a power to express ourselves...

Excerpt B

I are you ah (..) hoping (..) to travel (..) abroad
C yes of course
I [sometime (.).] °where would you like to go?
C to America or Canada
I °why?
C→ I think climate is very suitable for live [ ]
I: oh ↑you're talking about living abroad?
C: yeah
I: yeah?
C: cause of course me and her and she=sh=sh=sh will go with me

Excerpt C

I: can you tell me ahh(.) if you were going to teach me how to ski, what would you teach me (.).from the first to the last
C: [ahhhoww humm I am not so good at(.) ehh skiing ah I have (.).ummm go skiing (.).eh three times
I: ohhh
C: sohhhhhh hhh ↑Thhhhhhh c:::::an't t::::::ell you hhhh but (.). umm
→ I think ehhhh eh mmm(.) you don't suffering eh snow(.) and ehhhhmm high-high eh highet of mountain (1) tehhhh lillettt let's fight togethhhhher hehhehehhhh(.). that's all ehehehe I heheheheh I can't teach ttshheehhh you because I ummm(.)
I:::::was I::::taught my friends or my coworker
[ ]
I: °okay (2) hmm so ahhhm ↑can you ehehem can you tell me how ahm I could go from 'here 'to where you 'live?
C: my house?
I: give me directions

Excerpt D

I: what >made you decide< to join the company.
C: what major? [ ]
I: what made you decide(.) to join(.)the company.

Excerpt E

I: there's a time limit at ah dormitories right?
C: yes [ ]
I: (1)uhhhm what:::.the time limit.
C: uhhn::: it's eleven o'clock ummbut we can (.). we can go back(.)
I: u hh m
C: we can go back to the domitory by(.).twelve in the midnight
Excerpt F

I now what would you do if there is a train strike or something like that
C [yeah
C (1)ahm(1)hmm from my house to Tokiwadai Station I must walk on ah on foot
I uhm hum
C and ehh from Tokiwadai to Ikebukuro I get on the train (1)Tobu-Tojo Line
I um hum
C and next I (. ) I change ahh eh (. ) I change train(. ) I use eh (1) Yuraku Cho Line
I um hum(.) Is that(.) a subway?
C yeah subway
I °ahhaah
C and ahh at Yuraku Cho Station(.) I must eh change train again
I um hm
C Mita Line
I uh hum
C→ so I change(.) two times [ ]
I ummh so ah(.) what would you do if there is a train strike
C train strike yeah ah(.) now I have been in Tokyo for one year=but for one year I have no experience to ehehh that ehehh
I [umhum
C train strike
I uh hum
C so now I can (. ) very difficult to explain
I ((loudly))hahhhahahhahhah eheheahha yes but ah(.) if=if there is a strike would you ah (1) would you use a taxi from hewhere you live?

Excerpt G

I ahhm (3) do you ah (3) could you tell me a little bit about your ahh university life
C university life.
I what you did in university
C ahh
I in general
C→ yeah in general ahh in Japan the stu-students of university
Part II

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each of the following excerpts carefully and classify the strategy the interviewer uses. The line where the strategy of interest occurs is marked with the horizontal arrow (→). Write your classification in the spaces marked by [ ].

HINTS: Use the following list of interviewer strategies (marked I in excerpts). Be sure to consider the entire excerpt - not just the line with the arrow. GRMSIMP = grammatical simplification; SLOW = interviewer slows down rate of speech; FRONT = interviewer foregrounds the topic before the question; DISPLAY = Interviewer asks for information that he/she already possesses or can easily infer; OVERART = Interviewer exaggerates the articulation of the question contents; LEXSIMP = interviewer paraphrases or simplifies a lexical item to make it more comprehensible in the question; ORQ = Interviewer offers selections for candidate answers; EXPAND = interviewer asks the same question more than once in the same turn.

Excerpt A)

I wanna ask you to do one more(.)thing
[ heh heh it's a tough question
I no> this is an easy< this is an easy one
I I would like you ta-this is your tape recorder isn't it(.) ((taps on recorder))
C ye::s
I→ OK would you tell me how to use it? [ ]
C (1.5) use it?
I [ I:: yeah I ah just-just teach me how to use it let's >look it's all in Japanese I I I can't so (. ) tell me how to use this if I want to use this tape recorder
[ if you-if you see the sign— you you can imagine
(.) what the sign says(.) you see
I→ well maybe but pretend that I can't ((laughs))hehahahah
(.) how do you start this(1) where is the button or the knob or
knob or the switch to (.)
C aahm when you play the (. re)corded tape you should do the
button- push the button umm (1) its ahhh which has a (.)
one triangle
I and what do these buttons mean that two small triangles
going into opposite directions?

Excerpt B

I→ now about your work ahm(.) do you ah does it keep yourself
busy all the time? [ ]
C umm yeah there are waves you know
I [ummm
C like right now it's one of the busiest(.) ahh(.5) days I guess

Excerpt C

I what's the basic(.) cause of that?
C excuse me?
I what's the basic(.) cause
C caurv=what is caurv
I→ [cause-cause-what's the reason? [ ]
C (.5) reason?
I =WHY is there(.) an imbalance.
C because um (.5) it is(.5) um um decided(.5) historically I think

Excerpt D

I→ ahm (.so economics (.5) [ ]
C um hum
I when you chose economics
C um hum
I were you thinking about(.) your future job?
Excerpt E

I Just one more question I want ask you is ah you said your parents live in Tokyo, right, and you live in Ibaragi now how often do you go and visit your parents.
C (,)how often
I um
C (1)go?
I um
C→ How often wi-will you go to visit your parents [ ]
I ma-maybe three(.)four times(.) in a year
C four times in a year
I when-when will that be, summer?
C summer and winter and (.) golden week

Excerpt F

I ahhm what else about New York (.) interests you.
C (.5) ss(.)shopping
I um hum
C and I am just want to see ah(.)
I is there anything
C [New York city itself
I is there anything that worries you.
C pardon.
I→ is there anything that ↑worries you about going there.
C worry. [ ]
I yeah or
C you mean dangerous. I-I don't think so
I heh heh hhhahh well that's unusual

Excerpt G

I ah::: you said that(.)the Tokyo people are(.) ↓kinda international do you consider yourself an international person Mr I?
C myself?
I yeah
C yeah I think so
I I see what's your definition of an international person
C (2)
I→ what are yer >what are the points<er the characteristics about you that make you an international person. [ ]
C first international(.) people must(.) ahh have a power to express ourselves...

Excerpt H

I ahhm (3) do you ah (3) could you tell me a little bit about your ahh university life
C university life.
I→ what you did in university [ ]
C ahh
I in general
C yeah in general ahh in Japan the stu-students of university ehhh
I no your university life not in general but yours
C (.).U.S?
I no yours
C my university?
I→ when you went to college I would like you to tell me about ahh my university life? [ ]
I about your life in university

Excerpt I

I please tell me about you must be living in a dormitory now I guess
C (1.5)
I→ are you living in a dormitory now? [ ]
C yes
I ok please tell me about your dormitory

Excerpt J

I what >made you decide< to join the company.
C what major?
I→ what made you decide(.) to join(.) the company. [ ]
Excerpt K

I ahhm (.)Mr U you ahmm-I'm sure read the newspaper everyday and umh keep up with the (1) teh what we call issues that are on the front page(.) ahm and ahh(.) recently there has been ahh(.) a some kind of >I don't know what you call it< ↑problem with one of the ahm politicians in Mr. Takeshita's cabinet I-I-I think he resigned

C [I:::::see yeah

I→ ↑could you tell me about that? >I don't know anything about it °I thought that maybe you could tell me something about it.

[ ]

C It's a very difficult problem to explain~

Excerpt L

I can you tell me ahh(.) if you were going to teach me how to ski, what would you teach me (.)from the first to the last

C [ahhhhoww humm I am not so good at(.)

ehh skiing ah I have (.).ummm go skiing (.)eh three times

I ohhhh

C sohhhhhh hhh ↑lllllllllll c:::::an't t:::::ell you hhhhh but (.). umm I think ehhheheh mmm(.) you don't suffering eh snow(.) and ehhmmmmm high-high eh highet of mountain (1) tehhhh Iillettt let's fight togethhhhher hehhehehhh(.). that's all ehehheh I hhehehheh I can't teach tshheeehhh you because I ummm(.)

I::::: was I:::taught my friends or my coworker

I→ °okay (2) hhmm so ahhhm ↑can you ehehem can you tell me how ahm I could go from (.).here(.)to where you (.)live?

C my house? [ ]

I give me directions
Appendix D  CROSS TABULATIONS

1+ (high intermediate)

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Legend: ' - ' refers to questions with no accommodation; ' + ' refers to accommodation in the question.
Appendix E  MULTIVARIATE NORMALITY TEST PLOTS

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