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Verbal Patterns

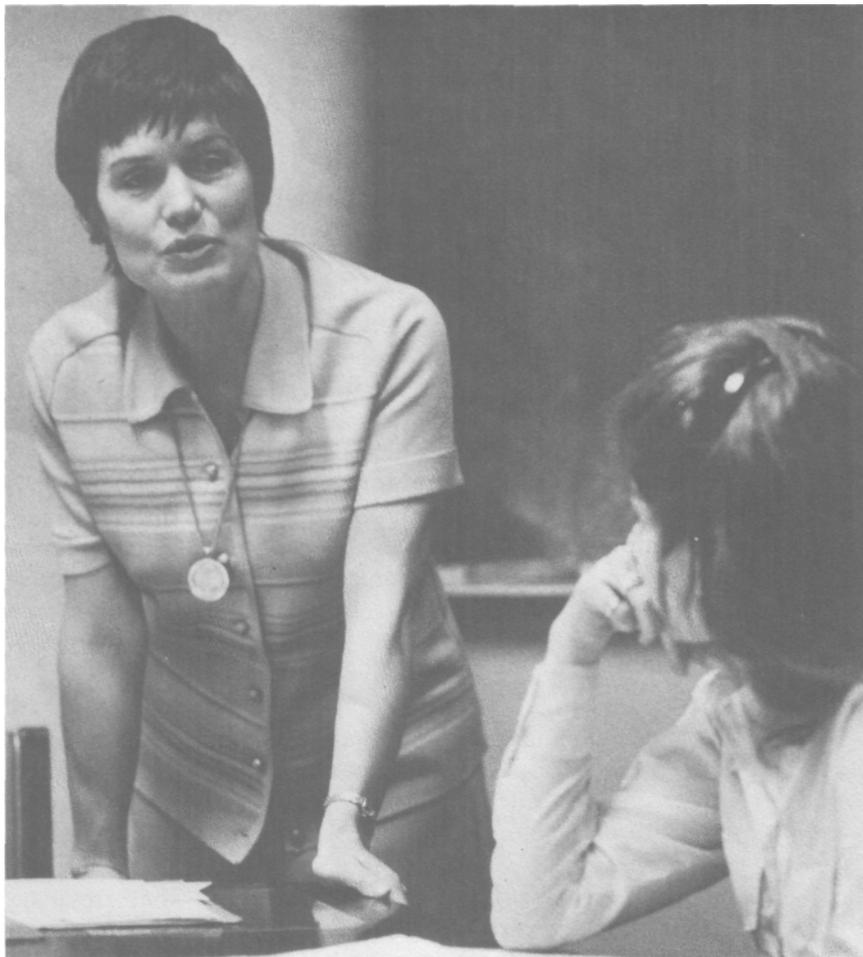
- [A] Have you noticed how often Americans use the expression "thank you"? A customer, after paying \$100 for a meal in a restaurant, says "thank you" to the person who *hands* him the bill. In response to "I like the color of your car," an American might answer "thank you." In both of these cases no great *favor* or compliment was *extended*, yet "thank you" was the *automatic* response.
- [B] When you listen to people speak a foreign language that you understand, have you noticed that the native speakers of that language use words and phrases in a *manner* different from what you are used to? In American English, for example, people say "thank you" frequently. A word for "thank you" exists in almost every language, but how and when it is used is not always the same. In your language, do you thank people for trivial as well as important or unusual favors? For Americans, this expression is used as a polite response to different kinds of favors and compliments, and is often *automatic* (e.g., "Thanks for calling" to someone on the phone or "Thank you" to a teller in a bank).

Rules and Styles of Speaking

- [C] In language there are *tacit* rules of speaking that, unlike rules of grammar or spelling, are not usually studied in a formal manner. These unspoken "rules" exist in every language but differ *significantly* from culture to culture. Acquiring a second language demands more than learning new words and another system of grammar. It involves developing *sensitivity* to aspects of language that are usually not taught in language textbooks. Some important rules include permissible degrees of directness in speech and forms of politeness used in daily conversation.

Directness in American English

- [D] Compared with other languages, American English strongly emphasizes directness in verbal *interaction*. Many expressions exemplify this tendency: "Don't beat around the bush," "Let's get down to business," and "Get to the point" all *indicate* impatience with avoiding issues. If a son *hesitates* telling his father that he received a bad grade in school, his father might respond angrily with, "Out with it!" or "Speak up!"
- [E] Directness is also seen when information is requested from strangers or from people who are not well known to you. For example, when passing a professor's office a student may say, "Excuse me, I'd like to ask



you a couple of questions." Her professor may respond, "Sure, go right
5 ahead. What's the problem?" In this interaction, the student stated her
purpose and the professor responded immediately.

[F] Offers and responses to offers provide another example of directness
in verbal interaction. At a dinner party it would not be unusual to hear
the following conversation:

HOST. Would you like some more dessert?

GUEST. No, thank you. It's delicious, but I've really had enough.

HOST. OK, why don't we leave the table and sit in the living room?

In this conversation between two Americans, the host does not repeat
5 the offer more than once. (Hosts may offer food twice but usually not
more than that.) If guests are hungry, they need to say directly, "Yes, I'd
like some more, thank you." If they are hungry but say, "No, thank you,"
out of politeness, they may remain hungry for the rest of the evening. A
host will *assume* that a guest's refusal is honest and direct.

[G] Of course, there are limits to the degree of directness a person is
allowed to express, especially with people of higher status such as
teachers and employers. A male student was surprised at the reaction of his
female teacher when he said, "What has happened to you? You look 5
like you gained a lot of weight!" When the teacher replied, "That's none of
your business," he answered in an *embarrassed tone*, "I was just being
honest." In this case, his honesty and directness were inappropriate and
unappreciated because of the teacher-student relationship. (In addition,
most Americans do not like being told that they are fat!)

Invitations

[H] A frequently misunderstood area in American verbal interaction is
that of extending, accepting, and refusing invitations. The unwritten
"rules" are confusing and create misunderstandings even for native
speakers. In English someone might say something that sounds like an 5
invitation but that never results in an *actual* meeting with another per-
son. Of course, there are invitations that require *definite commitments*.
Compare these two invitations:

Invitation 1:

KATIE. It was nice talking to you. I have to run to class. DARLENE. OK,
maybe we can meet sometime soon. KATIE. Yeah, love to. Why
don't you drop by my house sometime? DARLENE. Great. Gotta go.
See ya soon.

Invitation II:

KATIE. Before you leave for your vacation can we get together and have lunch?

DARLENE. Sure. I'd love to.

KATIE. How about Friday? Say about 12:30 at my place?

DARLENE. That sounds good. See you then.

The first invitation did not result in an appointment and was nothing more than a "polite" expression. In the second *dialogue a genuine* invitation was extended because Katie had a definite plan (a lunch date) and a specific date, time, and place in mind (Friday, 12:30). If Katie had said only, "Drop by," Darlene probably would not have visited Katie.

Speaking and Refraining from Speaking

- [1] Many rules governing speech patterns are learned in childhood and people grow up thinking that everyone has the same rules for speaking. People *unconsciously* expect others to use the same *modes* of expression as they do. For instance, not all languages use silence and interruptions in



5 the same way. Have you observed the ways people from different cultures use silence? Have you noticed that some people interrupt conversations more than other people? All cultures do not have the same rules governing these areas of communication.

[J] Many Americans *interpret* silence in a conversation to mean *disapproval*, *disagreement*, or unsuccessful communication. They often try to fill silence by saying something even if they have nothing to say! On the other hand, Americans don't appreciate a person who *dominates* a conversation. Knowing when to take turns in conversation in another language can sometimes cause difficulty. Should you wait until someone has finished a sentence before contributing to a discussion, or can you break into the middle of someone's sentence? Interrupting someone who is speaking is considered rude in the United States. Even children are 10 are taught *explicitly* not to interrupt.

Different Ways of Expressing Common Needs

[K] Individuals in every culture have similar basic needs but express them differently. In daily life we all initiate conversation, use formal and informal speech, give *praise*, express disagreement, seek information, and extend invitations. Some of the verbal patterns we use are influenced 5 by our culture. Whereas directness in speech is common in the United States, indirectness is the rule in parts of the Far East. Thus people from both of these parts of the world would probably express criticism of others differently. In parts of the Middle East a host is expected to offer 10 food several times but in the United States he may make an offer only once or twice. The different modes of expression represent variations on the same theme. Each language *reflects* and creates cultural attitudes; each has a *unique* way of expressing human need.



Comprehension Questions¹

Choose the best answer for the following questions. You will find the answer either stated directly or indirectly in the reading passage.

1. What is the main point of this reading?
 - a. Directness is characteristic of American verbal interaction.
 - b. There are unwritten and tacit rules of speaking that affect verbal interaction.
 - c. Invitations may not always be genuine.
2. Three general topics in the reading are:
 - a. Hospitality, honesty, friendship.
 - b. Saying "thank you," offering food, and making a date.
 - c. Directness, invitations, and silence.
3. Why is the example of the Americans' use of "thank you" used in the introduction of the reading? [A]
 - a. Americans are insincere when they say "thank you."
 - b. Certain words and phrases are used differently in various cultures.
 - c. "Thank you" is expressed only after compliments are extended.
4. The authors imply throughout the reading that:
 - a. "Rules of speaking" in the American culture are the only correct rules.
 - b. Direct criticism is more effective than indirect criticism.
 - c. One should learn the tacit and unwritten rules of speaking in a culture in order to understand the people.
5. The brief interaction between the student and her professor is used to illustrate: [E]
 - a. Directness in seeking information.
 - b. The teacher-student relationship.
 - c. Time limitations of professors.
6. Generally hosts do not offer food more than once or twice because they: [F]
 - a. Do not expect you to be hungry.
 - b. Expect you to say immediately what you really want.
 - c. Expect you to refuse politely.
7. The difference between the two types of invitations in paragraph H is that:

¹The capital letter in brackets refers to the corresponding paragraph in the reading.

- a. Invitation I is a false promise, invitation II is not.
 - b. Invitation I is simply a polite way of approaching the end of a conversation; invitation II is a genuine invitation.
 - c. Invitation I demonstrates a closer relationship between Katie and Darlene than does invitation II.
8. The authors imply that silence in conversations: [J]
- a. Always means disapproval and disagreement in the American culture.
 - b. Often makes Americans feel uncomfortable during conversations.
 - c. Means unsuccessful communication in all cultures.
9. The final paragraph states that people from various cultures: [K]
- a. Share common needs but express them differently.
 - b. Share common needs and therefore express them similarly.
 - c. Do not share common needs and therefore do not have similar expressions.

Vocabulary List

<i>Paragraph A</i>	<i>Paragraph B</i>	<i>Paragraph C</i>	<i>Paragraph D</i>
hands	manner	tacit	interaction
favor		significantly	indicate
* extended		* sensitivity (to)	*hesitates
* automatic			
<i>Paragraph E</i>	<i>Paragraph F</i>	<i>Paragraph G</i>	<i>Paragraph H</i>
(no new words)	assume	*embarrassed tone	actual
			definite
			* commitments
			genuine
<i>Paragraph I</i>	<i>Paragraph J</i>	<i>Paragraph K</i>	
unconsciously	interpret	praise	
modes	disapproval	reflects	
	disagreement	unique	
	dominates		
	explicitly		

*See vocabulary exercise D.

Phrases and Expressions

Don't beat around the bush. [D]	Go right ahead [E]
Let's get down to business. [D]	to drop by [H]
Get to the point. [D]	How about Friday? [H]
Out with it! [D]	That sounds good. [H]
Speak up! [D]	on the other hand [J]

Vocabulary Exercises

A. Choose the appropriate synonym (or the word closest in meaning) from **Synonyms** the list and rewrite each sentence, replacing the italicized word. *Change tense, singular and plural, and part of speech when necessary.*

conclude	voice	unspoken
give	way	show
considerable	conversation	courtesy

1. When a professor *hands* the students their exam scores, he doesn't expect them to argue. [A]
2. He did me the *favor* of lending me his car for two weeks. [A]
3. Some doctors have a quiet *manner* with their patients. [B]
4. The two friends had a *tacit* agreement not to share their secrets with other people. [C]
5. Do you think \$10,000 is a *significantly* large amount of money? [C]
6. Often *interaction* between two people who don't speak the same language is difficult. [D]
7. He tried to *indicate* to the teacher that he didn't understand what she was saying. [D]
8. When we see the police, we *assume* there is trouble. [F]
9. A person's *tone* can convey more than her words. [G]

*The capital letter in brackets indicates the paragraph from the reading.

B. Choose the correct word form for each sentence. Make verb tense changes, **Word Forms** make nouns singular or plural, and use active or passive voice as applicable.

1. actual, actually [H]
 - a. " _____," said the student, "I prefer having a job to being a student."
 - b. The patient did not want to discuss the _____ problem with the doctor; instead he talked around the problem.
2. definitely, definite [H]
 - a. The young man said that he would _____ come to the party.
 - b. Are your plans _____ yet?
3. genuine, genuinely, genuineness [H]
 - a. The gift was a _____ expression of his appreciation.
 - b. I sensed a lack of _____ in the car salesman.
 - c. The artist was _____ trying to *be* creative.
4. unconsciously, unconscious, unconsciousness [I]
 - a. After being hit by the car, the child was _____ for three days.
 - b. He _____ turned off the alarm clock when he woke up in the morning.
 - c. He was in a state of _____ that lasted for three weeks.

C. First choose the correct word for the definitions. Then fill in the blanks in **Definitions** the sentences following the definitions. Note: *You may have to change the grammatical form of the word used in the sentence.*

modes [I]	disagreement [J]	praise [K]
interpret [J]	dominates [J]	reflects [K]
disapproval [J]	explicitly [J]	unique [K]

1. one of a kind, having no equal _____
Hand-made jewelry is expensive because each piece is

2. refusal to approve, rejection _____
My father gave me a _____ look when he saw my examination scores.
3. to explain the meaning of _____
His _____ of the book was very different from the author's.
4. styles, manners, forms _____
Each writer has her own _____ of expression.
5. expression of approval _____
The child smiled after he was _____ by his father.
6. shows _____
Her poor response in class _____ her lack of knowledge on the subject.
7. in a clearly stated or distinctly expressed manner _____
The instructions on the package were so _____ that it was impossible to make a mistake.
8. difference of opinion _____
Parents and children often _____ about what is right and wrong.
9. rules or controls _____
The executive president _____ the meeting by not allowing the others to speak.

D. Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right. Place the **Matching** letter of the definition in the space next to the word.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| extended | a. pauses or stops often because of indecision |
| automatic | b. understanding of |
| sensitivity (to) | c. specific promises |
| hesitates | d. done without conscious thought as if from habit |
| embarrassed | e. offered; presented for acceptance |
| commitments | f. uncomfortable; flustered |

- Phrases and Expressions**
- E. Which statement best conveys the meaning of the italicized words?
1. If a person *beats around the bush* when asking a favor, it means that: [D]
 - a. He asks directly.
 - b. He asks indirectly
 - c. He doesn't ask at all.
 2. When the professor told the student to *go right ahead* with her question, he meant that: [E]
 - a. The student should go away from the room.
 - b. The student should wait for her turn before asking the question.
 - c. The student should ask the question immediately.
 3. When you are asked to go out and the person who invites you says, "*How about Friday?*" he means to say: [H]
 - a. "Can you go out on Friday? It's a good day forme."
 - b. "Any day is OK for me. What about you?"
 - c. "If Friday isn't good for you, then we can't go."
 4. When the girl said that having lunch together "*Sounds good,*" she meant that: [H]
 - a. Those words are nice to listen to.
 - b. Having lunch together is a good idea.
 - c. There are good sounds at lunches.

Conversational Activities

- A. In English, as in other languages, the types of vocabulary, structure, and **Language Style** tone used in conversation vary with the situation. Compare the ways that a request may be made; look at the vocabulary used and the length of the sentence in each of the following examples:

I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you please tell me where the library is? (*formal*)

Would you be so kind as to tell me where the library is? (*formal*)

Where is the library, please? (*semiformal*)

Where's the library? (*informal*)

Learning different styles in a second language is not always easy. It is necessary to know how to vary speech according to situations. Read the following situations and respond to each one appropriately.

1. There are discipline problems in one of your university classes. Students are talking all the time and you can't hear the professor or concentrate on the subject. You feel you must say something about the situation to your professor. You also want to tell a friend who is not in the class.

What would you say after class to your professor?

What would you say to the friend?

2. You need some money and you are considering asking either your parents or your friend for a loan.

How would you ask your parents?

How would you ask your friend?

3. You have just read an excellent article written by a student you know and a professor whom you don't know very well. You would like to compliment both of them on their well-written article.

What would you say to the student?

What would you say to the professor?

Follow-up: Look again at the above three situations and determine how you would respond in your *own* language. Are there formal and informal ways of expressing yourself? In your language, what words or grammatical constructions indicate formality and informality? Which situations call for formal speech and which call for informal speech?

B. Initiating and Maintaining Conversations Initiating and maintaining conversations is another skill that is needed when one is learning a new language. In English one of the best ways of initiating and maintaining a conversation is for at least one of the speakers to ask the other questions. Read the following conversation and decide if there is a problem with it.²

(Rick sees Debbie at a party and decides he would like to get to know her.)

RICK. Hello. Where are you from?
DEBBIE. From New York.
RICK. Why did you come to California?
DEBBIE. To study.
RICK. Oh, what are you studying?
DEBBIE. Solar energy.
RICK. How long do you plan to stay here?
DEBBIE. Two years.
RICK. When did you come?
DEBBIE. Three weeks ago.

(Rick is already feeling frustrated. He decides it is not worth meeting Debbie.)

Discuss: Discuss the problems with the conversation and Rick's feelings of frustration.

1. Following is the same dialogue between Debbie and Rick. Change it so that it is not one-sided by adding a question or a comment after Debbie's short answers. Write in Rick's responses to Debbie's questions.

RICK. Hello. Where are you from?
DEBBIE. From New York. _____

RICK. _____
Why did you come to California?
DEBBIE. To study.. _____

RICK. _____
What are you studying?
DEBBIE. Solar energy. _____

RICK. _____
How long do you plan to stay here?
DEBBIE. Two years. _____

RICK. _____
When did you come?

DEBBIE. Three weeks ago. _____

Another way of initiating and maintaining a conversation is to add extra information to a one-word response. In the following conversation Judi helps to maintain the conversation by giving more than a one- or two-word response.

(Judi and Char have just met and have exchanged names.)

CHAR. Where do you work?

JUDI. I work at the university in San Diego. I'm a computer operator.

CHAR. How's the weather in San Diego? I'm from San Francisco.

JUDI. It's warm most of the time. For the past two winters we've had a lot of rain.

2. In the following dialogue, a foreign student is discussing language learning with his teacher. Add extra information to the teacher's one-word responses.

MARI. Do you think that learning a foreign language is difficult?

MS. SOFIA. Yes. _____

MARI. Are some languages easier to learn than others?

MS. SOFIA. Yes. _____

MARI. Should children in elementary school be required to study foreign languages?

MS. SOFIA. Yes. _____

3. In pairs practice initiating and maintaining conversations on the following topics. Remember to ask questions of the other person and to add extra information to your own responses. If necessary, write the conversations before practicing them orally.

Discuss with one of your classmates a poor lecture you have just attended.

Discuss with one of your professors university policy about foreign student admissions.

Discuss with a neighbor environmental problems in your country.

Discuss with an American student difficulties of being a foreign student.

Discuss with a fellow student effective ways of learning foreign languages.

C. The following conversations typify those of native speakers in the United **Invitations**³ States. Notice the different types of invitations extended and the responses to them. Are they similar to the types of invitations extended in your country?

Definite Invitations:

These invitations include yes/no questions which require specific agreements. They both mention a time and a place.

HELAH. I wanted to ask you—are you and your husband free on Saturday night?

TAMA. Yes, we are.

HELAH. Good. How would you like to go out with us?

TAMA. That's a good idea. I've been wanting to get together. Do you want to go to dinner or just a movie . . . ?

OR HELAH. We're going to a concert tomorrow night. Would you like to join us?

Contrast these examples with the following indefinite invitations.

Indefinite Invitations:

Notice in the following three invitations, no specific mention of time or place is made. The speakers do not come to an agreement as to when they will get together.

RITA. Hi, Merritt.

MERRITT. Hi.

RITA. When are we going to get together?

MERRITT. We really should.

RITA. You know my office number. Just give me a call.

MERRITT. OK.

RITA. Good-bye.

MERRITT. Bye.

OR

RITA. Listen, I have a lot to talk about to you. I think we should have lunch together one day soon.

MERRITT. OK. RITA. I'll call you.

OR

RITA. It has been a long time since we got together.

MERRITT. Why don't we?

RITA. I'd love to. But February is shot and March is pretty full too. How about if we get together sometime in the spring?

MERRITT. OK.

RITA. Good. I'll figure out a good time and call you.

MERRITT. Fine.

Notice what happens in the following invitations:

CHUCK. OK, good talking to you. Let's get together some time.

SELMA. I'd love to.

CHUCK. Good. I'll call you soon and we'll have lunch together.

SELMA. Great.

The same conversation could have had a very different result if Selma had wanted a definite answer. Notice the results of the following situation:

CHUCK. OK, let's get together soon.

SELMA. I'd love to.

CHUCK. Good, I'll give you a call and we'll make a date (appointment).

SELMA. If you want we can make a date now.

CHUCK. Oh, OK, let's do that—I'm available any day next week. What about you?

SELMA. Wednesday at 12:00 is good for me.

CHUCK. OK, let's make it Wednesday.

SELMA. Great.

CHUCK. See you at noon Wednesday.

Discuss: At what point did the above invitation change from indefinite to definite? How was this change accomplished?

1. Sometimes it is difficult to know what kind of invitation is being extended to you. Read the following invitations and decide whether they are definite or indefinite. Rank each one on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 = most definite; 1 = most indefinite).

For example:

JOHN. I hope I can get together with you before you leave for the Far East next month. Make sure you call me. JAN. OK.

You'll be hearing from me soon.

most definite

most indefinite

5 4 3 2 1

This invitation does not seem entirely definite because John made no effort to set up a time and place for a meeting. Yet, it is not entirely indefinite because John does mention that he wants to see Jan before next month. *In this exercise, you do not have to agree on the ranking.* Discuss your answers.

Invitation I:

PATRICK. I'd like to have you over to my place sometime this semester.

JUDY. Great.

PATRICK. How about if I call you sometime and we'll figure out a good time.

most definite

most indefinite

5 4 3 2 1

Invitation II:

JUDY. Hi, Pat. When are we going to get together?

PATRICK. Let's do it soon. JUDY. Sounds good.

most definite

most indefinite

5 4 3 2 1

Invitation III:

PATRICK. Are you free next Saturday to come to dinner at our place?

JUDY. Sure, I'd love to. Can I bring anything?

most definite

most indefinite

5 4 3 2 1

Invitation IV:

JUDY. It's been a long time since we've seen each other. Let's get together soon.

PATRICK. I'd love to but February is shot (very busy) and March is full too. JUDY. Well, let's decide in April, then.

most definite

most indefinite

5 4 3 2 1

Invitation V:

JUDY. Hey Pat! Why don't you drop by Friday night. I'm having a party.

PATRICK. OK. I'll try to come.

most definite **most indefinite**
 5 4 3 2 1

Invitation VI: PATRICK. Let's meet this week for coffee, OK? JUDY. Sure. Come to my office when you're free and I'll see if I can get away.

most definite **most indefinite**
 5 4 3 2 1

Follow-up: What words or phrases indicate that an invitation is definite or indefinite? How is it possible to turn a definite invitation into an indefinite one? Have you had any personal experience with these kinds of invitations?

2. In pairs, write dialogues including invitations and responses. The following situations and relationships will help you decide whether to write a definite or indefinite invitation. Perform the dialogues in front of the class and have the other students guess which kind of invitation is being extended.

- Two casual friends passing each other in the school cafeteria.
- A man and a woman at a party—each seems interested in the other.
- Two instructors who are interested in each other's work.
- Two good friends who haven't seen each other for a while.
- A professor who invites a former student to his office for a social visit.

**D .
Multiple
Choice
Questionnaire**

The following questions are intended to stimulate cross-cultural discussion and to help you become familiar with American customs and responses. On the multiple choice questions try to guess what an American would do. *More than one answer may be correct.*

1. When someone compliments the watch you are wearing, you would:
In your country: _____
In the United States:
 - a. Say, "Oh this cheap thing? It's not worth much."
 - b. Give it to him.
 - c. Say, "Thanks" and smile.
 - d. Say, "Would you like to have it?"

2. It is not considered appropriate to give compliments to:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. A woman about her husband.
- b. A man about his wife.
- c. A couple about their child.
- d. A doctor about his or her salary.

3. If someone wants to criticize the behavior of a fellow student, he or she would:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. Say something to the student in front of the class.
- b. Tell the teacher to speak to the student.
- c. Speak to the student after class.

4. If students want to criticize the way a professor teaches, they should:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. Go directly to the dean of the department.
- b. Ask the teacher when an appointment could be arranged in order to talk about the class.
- c. Go directly to the teacher's office with several other students and state the complaint.
- d. Tell the teacher during class time that his way of teaching is poor.

5. What would be a polite way to evade a question that you don't want to answer (e.g., "What do you think of the government in your country?")?

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. "It's none of your business."
- b. "I refuse to answer that question."
- c. "That question is inappropriate so I can't answer it."
- d. "Oh, I don't know. I'm not very interested in politics."

6. To which of the following statements (a, b, c, or d) would you respond "thank you"?

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. "You are a clever person."
- b. "Let me open the door for you."
- c. "Your face is beautiful."
- d. "Please accept this gift as a symbol of our deep friendship."

7. If someone uses a foreign word or phrase you don't know, you might:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. Say, "Please repeat."
- b. Say, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand what you said. Could you please repeat that last sentence (or word)?"
- c. Say nothing and pretend that you have understood.
- d. Say, "Excuse me, but what does _____ mean?"

8. If someone gives you directions in a second language so quickly that you don't understand, you might respond:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. "Could you repeat that?"
- b. "Thank you. I appreciate your help."
- c. "Excuse me, I'm still learning the language. Could you repeat that a little more slowly?"
- d. Try to repeat the directions to the person.

9. If someone offers you some food that you really don't like, you might say:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. "I hate that."
- b. "Sure, I'd love some more."
- c. "I'll have just a little bit, please."
- d. "Thanks, but I'm really full."

10. You have just been asked out to dinner but you really don't want to go with the person who invited you. You might say:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. "Thanks a lot but I'm busy tonight."
- b. "No, I really don't enjoy being with you."

- c. "I'm dieting so I mustn't go out to eat."
- d. "I don't think so. I already have plans."

(Note: This is a situation where Americans might not be direct.)

11. When asking your neighbor to lower the volume of his stereo, you might say:

In your country: _____

In the United States:

- a. "Turn the music down."
- b. "Would you mind turning the music down? I'm studying."
- c. "You are very rude."
- d. "If you don't turn down your record player I'll turn mine up."

- E. Answer the following questions about your own culture and then discuss intercultural similarities and differences. **Cultural**
- Cross-Questions**
1. What does silence indicate in conversations? Does it always indicate the same thing (e.g., approval or disapproval)?
 2. Is it acceptable to interrupt others? If so, when?
 3. Who can criticize whom? Under what circumstances? In what manner do people make criticisms?
 4. Are there different kinds of invitations extended in your culture? Do they always result in a definite commitment (e.g., "Yes, I will come on Saturday")?
 5. How do people refuse invitations? Is it appropriate to insist on someone's accepting an invitation if he or she has refused several times?
 6. In comparing English verbal patterns with those in your own language, have you observed any differences or similarities (e.g., in giving opinions, asking advice, praising, boasting, expressing modesty, complaining, etc.)?

Cultural Notes

1. Generally, when Americans extend invitations, they prefer to know the response ("Yes, I can come" or "No, I can't come") soon after an invitation is extended. This is particularly true of dinner and other formal invitations.
2. Complimenting can be a way of initiating conversation (e.g., "Hi, how are you? Those are beautiful earrings that you're wearing. Where

are they from?"). It is acceptable to compliment a person's material possessions (e.g., home, decorations in the home, clothes, etc.). Too many compliments given may be interpreted as insincere. Not enough compliments may be interpreted as a sign of apathy or dislike. For example: If a guest doesn't praise the quality of a dinner, the host might feel that the guest didn't like it.

3. People in some parts of the world believe that compliments are dangerous because they invite the "evil eye" (bad luck), therefore compliments in these places are not given freely. In the United States this belief does not exist. There are, however, no restrictions or superstitions related to the number of compliments that can be given.

4. There are several ways of requesting information in English. Note the differences between the informal and formal language.

Informal

Can you give me directions to the city library, please?

Where is the cafeteria, please?

Do you have any information on universities in Northern California?

Formal

Excuse me, may I ask you a question?

Pardon me, may I interrupt you for a moment to ask you a question?

Excuse me, would you mind closing the window (e.g. in a bus)?

5. In English favors may be requested formally and informally. Often a request for an important favor is more formal than a request for a less important one.

Informal

Can I borrow your pen?

Would you lend me your library card?

Do you have an extra notebook that I could use?

Do you mind if I return your book next week?

Formal

May I please have a few extra days to complete my term paper?

Would you mind giving me that information?

Very Formal

Would you be kind enough to direct me to the university library? May I ask you a favor? Would you mind contacting my parents when you're in my country?

Would you consider allowing me two weeks of vacation instead of one?

Would it be at all possible to borrow your car?

6. There are many ways of ending conversations and leaving someone before the final good-bye. Here are a few examples:

Informal

OK. Good talking to you. Yeah. I hope to see you around. Take care. See you later.

Formal

It was very nice talking to you. I hope we'll meet again soon. I do too. That would be nice. Good-bye.

7. The following are some expressions of farewell:

Informal

Have a nice day.
 Enjoy your weekend.
 See ya around.
 So long.
 Bye-bye.
 Bye.

Formal

Good-bye
 It was nice meeting you.
 Have a nice evening (day, week, etc.).

Supplementary Vocabulary and Phrases

to communicate	to apologize	to refuse
to request	to boast	to give an opinion
to demand	to brag	to suggest an idea
to criticize	to protest	to excuse oneself
	to agree	to congratulate