Noting and evaluating contact between Japanese and Australian academic cultures

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This paper reports on a case study of Japanese exchange students that investigated the ways such students note and evaluate various types of contact between native and host academic cultures while participating in new communities of practice at an Australian university. In this study, language management theory (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987; Neustupný, 1985, 1994, 2004) was employed in conjunction with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation in order to investigate the sociocultural influence on cognitive processes of language management. The findings illustrate that not only norm deviations but also the phenomena relating to norm universality and compatibility generated processes of noting and evaluation. This study also provides an insight into mechanisms of self- and other-noting, as well as negative evaluations of norm deviations, and sheds light on positive evaluations of common disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural situational similarities. Based on the findings, this paper indicates that noting and evaluation in language management processes should be considered in relation to students' social positionings, their power relations with other community members, their perceptions of self, and the context where the management occurs.

Keywords: academic contact situations, norm universality, norm compatibility, positive evaluation, legitimate peripheral participation

Introduction

Based on cognitive approaches to second language acquisition (SLA), the importance of noticing gaps between L1 and L2 in the processes of SLA has been recognized by various researchers (cf. Ellis, 1995; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1994; Swain, 1998). However, such noticing cannot be merely considered in relation to the psycholinguistic study of language processing, but needs to be seen as a socioculturally-constructed action. Previous studies have

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not comprehensively addressed how noting is embedded in the social world; for example, how noting occurs in sociocultural contexts, how the noted language phenomena are evaluated, and how noting and evaluation can influence the processes by which learners manage L2 interaction. Also, little research on noting has dealt with similarities in language-using practices across cultures, as the focus has been mainly placed on the negative aspects, such as noticing gaps between first language or interlanguage and second language, or between L1 and L2 writing, or between native and host norms (cf. Cumming, 1990; Qi, 1998; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 1995).

Drawing upon a larger study of the management of intercultural academic interaction (Nemoto, 2005), this paper explores Japanese exchange students' noting and evaluation of various types of contact between native and host academic norms while participating in an Australian host university. The Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) exchange cohort, including Japanese exchange students, is characteristically different from other NESB international students on the grounds that they have membership in two different communities: while belonging to their home universities they temporarily participate in host institutions. Hence, NESB exchange students, who are required to experience two different types of academic practices one after another, are likely to encounter "academic contact situations", which involve multiple norms in a particular academic context (Neustupný, 2004), more frequently than other categories of international students. However, as Neustupný (2004) claims, it is also worthwhile to note that the degree of contact students experience in academic contact situations can vary depending on their academic backgrounds. Such a perspective leads this study to assume that Japanese exchange students have individually-different potential to apply previously developed knowledge and skills in various academic contact situations. Focusing on similar features, as well as contrasts between home and host academic practices, this study illustrates the multifaceted processes of noting and evaluation.

The situated nature of academic interaction

Due to the increasing awareness of the role context plays in learning, in the past 20 years the traditional cognition-oriented paradigm of the field of SLA has been integrated with sociocultural approaches to language and learning (cf. Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Along with this paradigm integration, various sociocultural theories have emerged in the area of applied linguistics, including situated learning, Vygotskian sociocultural theory, language socialization, and so on (cf. Duff, 1995, 2007; Lantolf, 1994, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As Corson (1999) claims, such sociocultural approaches focus on a number of factors outside individuals which may strongly influence their changing of the meaning and value of their presentation of self. These factors include aspects of social structure, opportunities for interaction, constraints on behaviour, and various other sociocultural processes and features (cf. Corson, 1999). Berkenkotter (1991) has stressed that foregrounding of individuals as active, constructive agents of meaning can lead to ignoring the myriad of social and historical factors present in different situations. Reinforcing this view, Norton and Toohey (2002) claim that learners are not only learning a linguistic system, but are also learning a diverse set of sociocultural practices. Thus, as Riazi (1997) indicates, the key issue in conceptualizing learning in terms that are useful for education is to find out how individual intention and agency insert themselves into culturally- and socially-organized practices.

The sociocultural nature of learning significantly affects intercultural academic interaction, particularly when students move cross-culturally from context to context. The activities that NESB students are required to undertake in academic contact situations are regarded as being socially constructed in relation to other community members, teachers' expectations, beliefs, values and conventions of the community. Students' activities are thus not static events, but can be viewed as dynamic actions in connection with the surrounding rhetorical situations. The dynamic nature of academic interaction thus requires us to undertake a qualitative sociolinguistic investigation into the ways in which students undertake their actions in response to academic requirements at a host university.

Conceptual framework

Language Management Theory (LMT) delineates the corrective adjustment processes of language learners' developing interactive competence in intercultural settings, including norm deviations, noting and evaluations of deviations, planning of adjustments, and implementation of adjustment or management strategies (cf. Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987; Neustupný, 1985, 1994, 2004). This paper employs LMT in relation to one of the sociocultural theories — Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) — and takes into consideration the context in which learning occurs and the situated activities that Japanese exchange students undertake. Evolving from situated learning, LPP describes the multiple ways in which novice members participate in a variety of social situations in a certain community of practice, and stresses the impact the learner's interaction with the lived-in world has on their learning. The focus of this concept is placed on the community in which learners seek membership, the learners'

social positions in a community, and the process of becoming fuller participants through involvement in various situations (cf. Belcher, 1994; Norton & Toohey, 2002; Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

This integrated conceptual model thus enables this study to investigate the cognitive and sociocultural processes of situated responses to academic requirements, including assessment tasks and class participation (see Nemoto, 2004, 2005, 2009 for more detail). Students learn how to respond to academic requirements by engaging in activities embedded in the target community. LPP views such engagement in relation to students' social positionings and power relations with other community members. Thus, LPP is employed to highlight the situatedness of academic interaction. However, as LPP is a broad sociocultural framework of applied linguistics, it is more effectively used if incorporated with a theory which delineates the micro processes of L2 learning. In this study, LMT, which covers learners' internal representations in corrective adjustment processes of learning through sociocultural activities, serves to illustrate cognitive processes of students' responses to academic requirements at the micro level.

This study examines two types of noting — self-noting and other-noting — which appear at the early stage of academic management in contact situations. Students may or may not note various contact situation phenomena themselves; in some cases, others may detect these. Following these two types of noting, students evaluate or re-evaluate the phenomena by themselves or with others' support. Three types of evaluations exist at this stage: positive, neutral, and negative. From the perspective of the traditional approach of LMT, a negative evaluation of norm deviations may proceed to the stages of planning an adjustment and of implementing these adjustments or management strategies. On the other hand, neutral and positive evaluations have been regarded as causing the discontinuation of management. However, Neustupný (2003) and Nekvapil (2011) have recently claimed that the positive evaluation of norm deviations can occur as 'gratifications' in intercultural interaction and may prompt further phases of language management. The conceptual model of the present study considers all three types of evaluation and explores how they occur in academic contact situations. Although LMT has been recognized for decades, the usefulness of the theory in investigating various types of language behaviour has not been sufficiently exemplified in academic contact situations (cf. Neustupný, 2004). Therefore, using this conceptual model, this paper contributes to this area of research by demonstrating the impact of noting and evaluation on Japanese exchange students' academic management in Australian host academic settings.

Methodology

A one-academic-year case study was conducted on six Japanese exchange students who were enrolled at an Australian university (AU). The students comprised two males — Shingo and Kenji — and four females — Yuka, Mami, Chie, and Aya (all these names are pseudonyms). As shown in Table 1, Shingo, Kenji and Mami were fourth-year undergraduate students in Japan, each of whom majored in different disciplines, including Economics, Sociology, and American Studies. Two of the participants, Yuka and Chie, were in their third year at their home universities, where Yuka studied English Literature and Linguistics and Chie belonged to the School of International Relations. The other student, Aya, was in her second year of a Masters course and specialized in Astrophysics. Among the participants, Yuka's and Chie's previous overseas experiences were considerable. Although the other four participants had no study abroad experience or had previously studied overseas for only a couple of months, Yuka had studied in Germany for six years and Chie had previously sojourned in the U.S.A and England for six years in total.

Table 1. Profiles of the six Japanese exchange students

	Shingo	**Mami**	**Yuka**	**Kenji**	**Chie**	**Aya**
Year level in Japan	Fourth	Fourth	Third	Fourth	Third	Masters (1st year)
Major in Japan	Economics	American Studies	English Literature and Linguistics	Sociology	International Studies	Physics
Previous study abroad	None	1 month in U.S.A	6 years in Germany	None	6 years in England and U.S.A	6 weeks in England and U.S.A

This study employed a diary study, follow-up interviews, and semi-structured interviews as the main methodological procedures. The exchange students were requested to record diary entries from the day they started working on set academic tasks until they completed these tasks. Even when the students did not have any specific tasks to work on, they kept weekly diary entries on their everyday participation in classes. In the diaries, they wrote about the kinds of in-class and out-of-class activities they undertook, their evaluations of these activities, and the time required in undertaking them. I subsequently administered follow-up interviews to elaborate on the diary data and elicit more details from the participants. All of the interviews were conducted on the day the students completed specific tasks or within a few days after the completion. The interviews were thus conducted roughly once a week over a period of two semesters. The researcher also

administered semi-structured interviews with the participants in Japan after they returned to their home universities. The data collected from the diary study and interviews were further supplemented by a variety of written documents, including students' written assignment drafts, returned assignments, their academic records, subject outlines, lecture notes, handouts and assignment guidelines. Such data triangulation allowed a detailed ethnographic description of each participant and aided this study in analyzing the micro processes of language management through the examination of interview transcripts, diary entries, and other written documents obtained from the six students.

Self-noting

The conceptual model, which allows for students' actual actions in responding to academic requirements, enabled this study to have a broader perspective of the initial stage of LMT and to examine Japanese exchange students' negotiation of norms in academic contact situations (cf. Nemoto, 2005). This negotiation involved the conscious or unconscious processes of making comparisons between native norms and host academic norms. Such comparisons enabled Japanese exchange students to notice not only norm deviations but also phenomena related to norm compatibility, such as commonalities of disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural situational similarities.

Norm deviations

A number of factors appeared to affect Japanese exchange students' self-noting of norm deviations. The students' experience of the inefficiency in their own study behaviour sometimes triggered their self-noting of these deviations. For example, when Aya translated Japanese sources into English and integrated them into a draft for one of her written assignments, she realized that despite the time-consuming nature of this procedure, such an approach did not improve the quality of her English text. Aya believed that the differences between Japanese and English text structures interfered with her organization of a coherent and deductive text. Her difficulty in integrating two different types of writing made her sensitive to the logical development of text and led her to note her deviation from the norm of text organization in academic English.

The Japanese exchange students, furthermore, became aware of norm deviations when they reflected upon their own unsuccessful academic performances, as evidenced in the marks they received for individual assignment tasks as well as the overall academic results attained for each subject. For example, it was not until he

received his final result for Linguistics in his first semester that Kenji noted that he deviated from the norm of producing adequate English written texts in the examinations. Since he managed to fill in all the sections in the examination, he believed that he would obtain a mark of more than 70 percent. However, the result of a credit (60–69 percent) led Kenji to realize that the content of his answers in the examination did not suffice and provided him with the opportunity to review his own performance. He carefully considered the causes of this unsatisfactory result and noted that he might deviate from norms in relation to the construction of clear and concise arguments due to time constraints.

The above cases revealed that it was not until these Japanese exchange students began their assignments that they self-noted norm deviations. However, self-noting could also be enhanced by means of input of explicit knowledge about host academic norms before the students actually undertook these activities. In this study, this type of noting emerged when the students referred to academic instructions, in either spoken or written form, provided by their teachers or by the instructors at the language and study support centre. For example, her teacher's explanation of some of the written conventions in class enabled Mami to compare norms of written academic English with her intended writing style for her forthcoming written assignment. As a consequence, she noted her excessive use of the active voice rather than the passive one. The guidelines for written assignments, which some teachers provided, also helped the participants to familiarize themselves with written conventions, including text structure and organization, in-text referencing procedures, and compilation of bibliographies. Yuka and Mami, for instance, realized that they were required to undertake different types of written work from those at their Japanese home universities when they referred to the instructions and models provided in the guidelines.

These kinds of academic instructions encouraged the students to pay close attention to English academic norms and provided them with the information about such norms which enabled them to make comparisons between their expectations of what was required and their actual interaction (cf. Qi & Lapkin, 2001). The students' possession of some explicit knowledge of English academic norms through these academic instructions could also facilitate self-noting of other new norm deviations while undertaking various academic activities (cf. Ellis, 1995). Although the concept of LPP emphasizes the impact of students' actual utilization of knowledge on learning, it also involves the role of academic instruction (Wenger, 1998). Academic instructions thus need to be utilized as an important means of facilitating students' reflection upon their own academic participation rather than as a tool of merely transmitting knowledge (cf. Flowerdew, 2000).

Although these findings illustrate various cases of self-noting, it should be understood that self-noting does not guarantee students' clear identification of host

academic norms. Given that norms are socioculturally co-constructed by community members, it can be argued that, on occasion, their meanings are not visible enough for newcomers to identify. Thus, in order to promote familiarization with target norms, students need to consolidate genre knowledge by using it in situated activities.

Commonalities of disciplinary knowledge

The traditional model of LMT does not comprehensively deal with contact situation phenomena which stem from universality or compatibility between native and host norms, and the processes in which such phenomena are followed by noting and evaluation. However, based on the assumption that some disciplinary knowledge is common across academic cultures, this study found that universal norms can emerge as common disciplinary knowledge and that the commonalities can be one of the contact situation phenomena which trigger language management processes in academic settings. Three of the participants — Aya, Kenji, and Mami — successfully identified a number of commonalities. Since Aya was a postgraduate student in Japan and Kenji and Mami were fourth-year undergraduate students at their home universities, they had previously undertaken a number of academic tasks and had developed expertise in their disciplines. In Aya's Physics course, mathematical calculations were commonly used as a medium of academic interaction both in her home and host academic contexts. Thus, when Aya saw Australian teachers' manner of using mathematical formulae in class, she recognized the universal nature of basic calculations and found that the knowledge of calculations, which she had previously learned in Japan, was applicable in her host academic community

Similarly, Kenji noticed that common theories in sociology were used in both his home and host universities. When he read prescribed articles, he came across many familiar theories. He commented, "I've got lots of knowledge about sociology. So, I can guess what the authors want to argue without reading the articles carefully". Furthermore, Mami realized that common topics were covered in the written assignments in her home course, American Studies, and in Sociology and Anthropology at AU. When she read the task requirements for the written assignments, she noted that she could apply the same kind of theories and examples as she had previously used in the written tasks at her home university to the assignments in the host academic settings.

In contrast, the other three participants could not identify common disciplinary knowledge between their home and host academic contexts. In Yuka's and Chie's cases, this was largely due to their insufficient development of expertise at their home universities. As is often the case with the education system in Japanese

universities, Yuka's and Chie's home universities required students to study general education subjects in their first two years and only allowed them to undertake study in specific disciplinary areas in their third and fourth years. Thus, Yuka and Chie, who participated in the student exchange program after completing their second year of study, did not possess sufficient disciplinary knowledge to apply in the host academic context.

The other participant, Shingo, was a fourth-year student at his home university but failed to note common features in relation to the discipline of economics. In an interview undertaken after he had returned to Japan, he commented:

> When I came back and started studying here (at my home university) again, I realized we shared lots of common knowledge of economics both here and in AU. If I had used my previous knowledge of economics, I could have coped with my academic life at AU better. But, maybe, I was too nervous to notice the similarities.

Shingo's case suggests that his insufficient academic competence in English resulted in him perceiving common features differently and hindered him from applying some of his previous disciplinary knowledge. Although he attributed his failure to the fact that he was overwhelmed by the linguistic difficulties, we can assume that the difficulties he experienced at AU were much broader than merely linguistic ones. It seems that Shingo's noting is also prevented by the fact that his perception of self as a visiting student who temporarily studies at AU made him less willing to participate in the host community as a legitimate peripheral participant (cf. Nemoto, 2007).

Cross-cultural situational similarities

The other type of contact situation phenomenon which pertained to norm compatibility was cross-cultural situational similarity. Although previous studies of contact situations have predominantly dealt with cross-cultural differences between language-using situations, this study found students noted certain situational similarities between Japanese and Australian universities. For example, Mami and Kenji noted similarities in requirements for their thesis writing in Japanese at their home universities and the written tasks at AU. When one of her teachers explained how to undertake written assignments, Mami noticed that her approach to writing a graduation thesis in Japanese shared many similar features with the kind of academic writing which was required at AU. At her home university, Mami learned and implemented several strategies in relation to thesis writing at a seminar (*zemi*) that was specially organized to help third-year students to prepare for their forthcoming graduation thesis. The written assignments set for the seminar required students to establish their arguments at the initial stage and then

to specify these arguments logically. Moreover, in this course, she learned some principal aspects of managing the processes of writing a thesis, including how to find and read relevant articles, how to write a research proposal, how to elaborate on ideas and how to support arguments using citations. She was able to positively apply these techniques in the Australian academic setting.

Kenji also noticed situational similarities in written tasks when he attended the academic writing course offered by the language and study support centre in Australia. He stated:

> I didn't learn anything new at the session, because I didn't find any big differences in academic writing between Japanese and English, except for in-text referencing. Analyzing references and building up logical arguments using the references are the same.

Kenji's observations were based on his previous experience of undertaking many written assignments in Japanese at his home university. In particular, his experience of completing three 50-page papers for his third-year seminars helped him to develop academic writing competence. In the seminar papers, Kenji was mainly required to evaluate and analyze sources and to provide his opinions, which seemed to be commonly used in written assignments at the host university. As a result, similar features of writing enabled him to apply his routine strategy of making schematic notes to specify ideas and organize text in written assignments at AU (see Nemoto, 2005).

Despite a less conscious level of noting than the cases discussed above, Yuka and Chie noted general situational similarities in L2 interaction and participation in L2 communities by viewing themselves as legitimate peripheral participants at AU. Both of the participants, who had previously studied abroad, were more familiar with contact situations and had a better understanding of struggles with managing such situations than the other participants. Such previous intercultural experiences enabled them to regard their inferior positions to host community members as a natural phenomenon for newcomers (Nemoto, 2005, 2007). Consequently, Yuka and Chie perceived accepting peripheral positionings to socialize with host community members in L2 as similar to the situations they had experienced in Germany, England, and the U.S.A. Yuka mentioned:

> It might be because I had intercultural experiences in Germany, but I really like to communicate with others in English. I don't get nervous because I can't speak good English. Like when I was in Germany, it's more important for me to let others know about myself.

Such noting of the similarities in intercultural interaction in contact situations allowed Yuka and Chie to expand their social networks and draw upon others' assistance in managing their participation.

Communities of practice in Japanese home and Australian host universities are culturally and linguistically different but both home and host universities provided some similar academic contexts to Japanese exchange students. The above findings imply the impact of LPP on self-noting, since Japanese exchange students' active participation, social positionings and perceptions of self at AU affected their noting of positive contact situation phenomena and application of previous knowledge and skills. This study also suggests the impact of self-noting on LPP, in that such noting facilitates the process through which a novice student becomes a fuller participant in the host community.

Noting by others

Japanese exchange students' norm deviations were sometimes brought to their attention by other host community members, such as teachers, the instructors at the language and study support centre, and peers. Previous research on feedback has been commonly dealt with in relation to writing, focusing upon form or content, the usefulness of teachers' written comments, effectiveness of editing instruction and grammar correction, and accommodation of learners' needs (cf. Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Hyland, 1998; Leki, 1990; Paulus, 1999; Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998; Truscott, 1996). This study focuses on three types of feedback: teachers' written comments, oral consultations with academic personnel, and peer feedback.

Teachers' comments on marked assignments

Teachers' comments on marked assignments provided the Japanese exchange students with various types of feedback on their written academic discourse. In Mami's case, teachers commented on her deviations from appropriate register and expressions for academic writing in English as evidenced in her assignments. Her tutor, for example, advised her not to use the spoken register, for example, expressions such as "How about…" and "Now look at …". Similarly, Yuka's problems with academic writing in English were commented on by her teacher, who cited the use of too many non-standard syntactic forms. These types of comments on the students' returned assignments can lead the participants to become aware of their norm deviations. However, the effectiveness of feedback occasionally depended upon the students' attentiveness to feedback, because, following others' research into noticing, students' willingness to notice was necessary in order for

them to detect problems (cf. Schmidt, 1999; Fazio, 2001). This study found that the Japanese exchange students' inattentiveness to written feedback sometimes hindered them from noting certain problems. For example, in one of her major assignments, Mami merely looked at the mark and did not care about the comment or corrections, since she had already decided not to continue studying that subject the following semester. Kenji read the comments but did not carefully study the corrections provided to him. He reported that he was not keen to correct his grammatical mistakes but was more concerned with teachers' evaluations of his arguments. As an example of an extreme case, Shingo did not even collect one of his marked written assignments. He missed the opportunity to receive it in class since he was absent, and did not attempt to collect it later since he felt too guilty for being absent to ask his tutor to return his assignment personally.

In some cases, the teachers' comments resulted in confusing the students, since the recipients felt that the comments were not consistent with the marks awarded to their written assignments. In particular, some of the comments did not sufficiently indicate the problematic aspects of the writing or explain the low marks. For example, Yuka was confused by a teacher's comment that mainly constituted praise for her work, but which was awarded 73 marks. She noted, while reading her teacher's comment:

> My teacher didn't pick up my weaknesses in the writing but commented "This is a thorough description and you illustrated your point very effectively. Well done!" . I cannot understand why the mark isn't higher, then. I wanted to have some more feedback on my writing style and the content of my essay.

As Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) stress, teacher feedback can be occasionally unclear, inaccurate, and lacking balance in form, content, and style. Hyland (1998) claims that students may distrust praise and become cynical about other positive feedback on their writing if they find their marks are low, despite positive feedback. Thus, as Ferris (1995) stresses, teachers need to provide constructive criticism and to place it side-by-side with positive comments or encouraging remarks. In fact, Yuka's marks were reasonably high and the teacher's comment was more appropriate than she thought. However, because she had become accustomed to obtaining more than 80 marks for her academic tasks in Japan, she expected her teacher to point out weaknesses of the text or provide some clues on how to improve her academic writing.

In one of her returned written assignments, Yuka also received a number of question marks besides the text. She realized that some sections were not clearly presented but without the teacher's elaboration on those points, she wondered how she could improve her academic writing for forthcoming written assignments. Mami also had difficulty understanding her teacher's comment which

stressed the need for more specific and clearer analysis. She remarked, "The comment was too abstract, and so I don't know how to make my analysis better". In this type of case, the teachers' comments did not particularly assist students to overcome their difficulties, even though the comments did help students to recognize the existence of some of their problems. These cases demonstrated that teachers needed more sensitivity to students' individual and differing abilities to interpret their comments (Qi & Lapkin, 2001). However, it was more likely that teachers did not have enough time to provide detailed suggestions about how each student should improve their written work because they needed to mark a large number of assignments within a short period of time. Thus, it is necessary for students to make the most of teachers' written feedback by subsequently consulting teachers and clarifying what they expect students to improve. This study thus shows that while noting is a process of basic importance, it needs to be accompanied by other management processes, including, at times, further elaboration of the noting itself.

On the other hand, this study found that teachers' leniency with, and understanding of, the students' adjustment struggles did not always facilitate the students' academic adjustment to the host community. Rather, their leniency, which seemed to disregard some of the participants' norm deviations, could hinder the students from acquiring host academic norms and from becoming fuller participants at the host university. For example, in Yuka's case, she realized that she still deviated from norms in relation to wording, text structure and organization when she received her teacher's comment on her returned assignment late in the first semester which recommended that she use the language and study support centre. Yuka reported that since she had received a satisfactory result on a 2000-word essay for another subject before undertaking this written assignment, she expected that she had overcome most of her writing problems. As shown in this case, teachers' inconsistent treatment of Japanese exchange students' academic tasks sometimes delayed the students' recognition of their inadequacies (cf. Nemoto, 2002). This study reveals that it was difficult for the teachers to actually provide students with sufficiently clear and appropriate written comments to help them to explicitly specify which norms they deviated from and identify the types of adjustment strategies which would help them rectify such deviations.

Consultation with academic personnel

In contrast to the teachers' comments on returned assignments, face-to-face consultation with academic personnel was advantageous in that the students received immediate feedback (Keh, 1990) and were able to detect various problems, sometimes whilst still being engaged in academic tasks. Such consultations could also enable teachers and students to avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings,

which sometimes occurred in written feedback (Hyland, 1998). In this study, consultation with academic personnel, including lecturers, tutors, and the instructors at the language and study support centre, enhanced other-noting of norm deviations with regard to students' written assignments and oral presentations. For instance, Kenji's problems with argumentation were pointed out by his tutor's feedback on the written draft of his essay during consultation. When he sought the tutor's advice before submitting his essay, the tutor suggested that he should re-organize the introduction and briefly outline the main arguments in that section. Furthermore, in his oral feedback on Chie's written drafts, the instructor at the language and study support centre indicated her problems with text organization and structure as well as the use of in-text referencing. He advised her to re-arrange the text by referring to the essay example, which he had provided. The instructor further provided editing support at the revision stage of Chie's written assignments and pointed out weaknesses in her critical analysis. Consequently, the instructor's advice enabled Chie to note the importance of introducing the author's view in the introductory section so that she could develop her arguments based on that view.

As Qi and Lapkin (2001) claim, these findings show that the feedback which academic personnel provide to students during consultation help the latter to maintain a good balance between focus on form and focus on meaning. Thus, such consultation not only helped the students to note their deviations but also helped teachers to provide them with more appropriate feedback and suggestions than written comments, which were commonly received after a task was completed. Although the limited availability of academic personnel and the social distance between these personnel and the students frequently hindered the students from initiating such consultation, face-to-face discussions enabled the students and the academic personnel to identify how to rectify students' problems collaboratively (cf. Nemoto, 2005, 2007).

Peer feedback

Peers, at times, are more adept at responding to another student's work in progress than are teachers, who tend to judge the work as a finished product (Caulk, 1994; Devenney, 1989). Kenji's peer editor, for example, detected unusual English expressions and incoherent sentences in his written draft assignments. The peer noting helped Kenji to not only realize the presence of some problems in his academic writing in English but also to incorporate appropriate written conventions into his current and following written assignments. In Aya's case, one of her fellow students provided her with feedback on her academic interaction in English when the student explained how to undertake some calculation exercises. On one occasion,

because Aya had difficulty keeping up with the pace of her friend's speech, she pretended to understand his explanation of the calculation. Although she tentatively responded to her friend's request for confirmation of her understanding, the friend guessed that she had not actually understood the explanation, stating "You don't really understand what I said but you always say 'yes'. When you don't understand, stop me speaking and ask me". The plain-spoken suggestion made by one of her fellow students allowed Aya to note her occasional lack of communicativeness in L2 interaction. Pair or group work, furthermore, provided Japanese exchange students with opportunities to obtain feedback from group members. For example, when Yuka undertook a rehearsal of a paired oral presentation with her partner, the partner noted her deviation from the smooth oral presentation that was required. Her partner then advised Yuka to change unfamiliar written expressions into casual ones in her speech draft in order to facilitate her memorization and articulation of the English words.

This study showed that peers were the most available resource to bring the existence of norm deviations to the attention of the Japanese exchange students. However, while peers can provide substantial help by means of other-noting, the process is not always an easy one. The closeness between students and their peers occasionally prevented peers from noting deviations and evaluating them objectively. The limitations of peer feedback will be illustrated later in this paper. Given that noticing plays an important role in learning (cf. Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Ellis, 1995) and that it frequently occurs in relation to students' actual engagement in socially-constructed activities, noting can be seen as a part of situated learning and LPP. In particular, it seems that other-noting in academic contact situations is a more socioculturally-oriented action than self-noting, on the grounds that the former type of noting depends on assistance from other community members and that students' attentiveness to feedback is significantly influenced by the sociocultural context.

Evaluations of contact situation phenomena

Noting cannot contribute to the students' learning of English academic norms without appropriate evaluation and subsequent adjustment of noted contact situation phenomena (cf. Neustupný, 1985, 2004). In this study, multiple evaluations sometimes emerged in the evaluation process. Although the noted phenomena were often evaluated by Japanese exchange students themselves as well as by others, the students themselves made a final judgment, regardless of how others may have previously evaluated the deviations. However, on occasion, evaluations were also changed in relation to their requirements of grades, justification of native

norms, and closeness between the students and peers. This study found that not only negative evaluations of norm deviations but also positive evaluations of commonalities of disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural situational similarities led to the next stage of planning an adjustment.

Students' requirements of grades

Japanese exchange students' requirements of grades frequently influenced their evaluation of contact situation phenomena. For example, Kenji needed to obtain reasonable grades in subjects related to Linguistics since he aimed to advance to the Diploma in Education at an Australian university in the following year in order to become a teacher of Japanese in Australia. He thus perceived all activities and tasks in these subjects as crucial. This perception encouraged him to take seriously his norm deviations in relation to listening and understanding the lecture content in Linguistics. In contrast, Kenji did not feel the need to obtain a high result in the end-of-semester examination for Anthropology. He commented, "I only needed 23 out of 40 marks to pass. I thought I could get 23 even if I didn't study hard". Accordingly, although Kenji recognized his insufficient understanding of the lecture content for the examination, the unimportance of obtaining a high result prevented him from perceiving the task as worth properly preparing for. As Nelson and Kim (2001) indicate, his case suggests that students' participation increases or decreases, depending upon how high the academic results they need are.

On occasion, the students' grade requirements were affected by their subject preferences. For instance, Mami minimally allocated her time and effort to studying a linguistically-oriented subject and did not expect high achievement in this subject, since her interest did not lie in Linguistics. Such an attitude toward the subject seemed to interfere with her diagnosis of norm deviations with regard to understanding the task requirements and properly undertaking assigned tasks. Furthermore, when Yuka prepared for the examination in one of her subjects, she also realized that she lacked understanding of the relevant subject content because of her irregular attendance at lectures. However, her lack of interest in the subject prevented her from judging her own participation as important and thus she ignored the deviation. Yuka commented in the interview, "All I wanted for the subject was a pass (mark). So, I wanted to finish it as soon as possible rather than prepare for it properly". Accordingly, she did not make any plans to implement a potential management strategy, such as obtaining the handouts or a copy of the lecture notes, which she missed because of her irregular attendance, but considered reading the textbook as being sufficient preparation to pass the subject. These findings revealed that not all the contact situation phenomena carried the same weight nor were they evaluated in the same manner (cf. Neustupný, 1994). Although most of

the participants selected their own subjects based on their preferences, discrepancies between their expectations of the area of study and the actual content of subject resulted in them investing in each academic context in different ways.

Justification of native norms

Noting commonalities of disciplinary knowledge and situational similarities frequently required Japanese exchange students to justify their native disciplinary knowledge and strategies so that they could confirm the applicability of such knowledge and strategies in academic contact situations. For example, after noticing that common topics were assigned in the written assignments, Mami consulted her tutors and justified the appropriateness of her perception of the commonalities. Similarly, in her first assignment, Aya's noting of similarities in basic calculations was consolidated by peer discussions prior to her engagement in the assignment. In this case, she discussed the logical development of calculations with her peers and confirmed that her approaches were not different from those of local students. These findings thus suggest that the students' evaluations of contact situation phenomena were confirmed by the assistance from other community members.

There were also a number of cases where the students justified the applicability of disciplinary knowledge and their native strategies through actually undertaking socially-constructed activities. Aya and Kenji frequently confirmed the applicability of native writing strategies on the basis of their successful performances and results of their academic tasks. Similarly, Yuka and Chie justified their previously-developed strategies of L2 interaction and participation in L2 communities by actually interacting with host community members and developing their social networks in AU. In this regard, it is obvious that the nature of situated learning is applicable to the evaluation of contact situation phenomena as well as to the noting.

In contrast to these findings, the students' justification of native norms sometimes constrained their participation and performance. Shingo, for example, justified his reticence in class because it was the same participation style as he had experienced in Japan. He realized that being silent in class was contrary to the required participation style in AU but he disregarded his deviation because he was comfortable being reticent in class. Furthermore, he was reticent partly because he wondered if he could perform well in class even though he attempted to adjust to the active participation style. He noted:

> I am used to listening to teachers and thinking about the content by myself rather than discussing it with classmates in class, because that's what I usually did at my

> home university. I'm not confident of joining in discussions. So, at least until I have developed enough English speaking skills, I want others to leave me alone in class.

In this way, Shingo justified his native role in class participation and chose being silent in class rather than embarrassed himself by showing others his limited English competence.

Closeness to peers

As shown above, peers played a crucial role in pointing out the exchange students' norm deviations, but this closeness was not always conducive to the implementation of appropriate management strategies. For example, sometimes peers deliberately refrained from providing negative evaluations of Japanese exchange students' performance because they preferred not to criticize the students' work. In Shingo's group essay, one of the group members simply praised Shingo's role in drafting one of the sections without pointing out any deviations. However, the same member subsequently changed most of Shingo's section when he was in charge of integrating all the sections into the essay prior to the submission. It is likely that this case happened because the group member was afraid of destroying the rapport he enjoyed with Shingo by directly providing the latter with a direct negative evaluation.

On occasion, the closeness between Japanese exchange students and peers also prevented the students from receiving peer feedback on their spoken discourse because peers understood the students' discourse, despite many ungrammatical expressions. In this type of case, the absence of evaluation, which interrupted the language management process, appeared as peers neutrally evaluated the students' deviations. Yuka stated:

> It's good to have a close friend because I have lots of opportunities to speak English. But my best friend doesn't usually correct my English. So, when I speak to others like I speak to him, sometimes I have trouble making myself understood.

Yuka and her close friend established a special relationship in their interaction where her friend developed a high ability to understand Yuka's utterances. The findings suggested that interaction with peers promoted the students' involvement in the host community but peers did not necessarily help Japanese exchange students to note and evaluate some of their norm deviations. Japanese exchange students thus needed to actively seek peer cooperation in indicating and correcting norm deviations rather than simply expecting peers to provide them with feedback.

The three types of factors delineated in this section triggered cognitive and sociocultural processes of students' evaluating contact situation phenomena in the

academic contexts. From the perspective of LPP, it can be argued that the dynamic nature of evaluations is closely related to the existence of other community members as a benchmark, since others' modeling or assistance had an effect of making tacit knowledge explicit and encouraged them to justify commonalities of disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural situational similarities. Japanese exchange students' status as a legitimate peripheral participant also contributed to the dynamism. In particular, it seems that the evaluation stage of language management processes needs to be considered in relation to power relations between students and others as well as the different efforts invested by the students in different situations.

Conclusion

The academic contact situations, which this study investigated, involved not only norm dissonance but were also found to be sites, which enhanced participants' ability to apply previous knowledge and skills in another community of practice. This paper has contributed to LMT studies by demonstrating the detailed mechanisms of the language management processes in which students note and evaluate various contact situation phenomena, including commonalities of disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural situational similarities as well as norm deviations. In particular, it is noteworthy that this study provided an insight into the language management processes that follow positive evaluations of contact situation phenomena. It was demonstrated that the students' noting of common disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural situational similarities was followed by positive evaluations if the students were able to justify the applicability of native norms or previously-developed strategies in the host university.

By viewing Japanese exchange students as legitimate peripheral participants at AU, this study also substantiated that LMT can contribute to delineating the process of LPP. The host university provided Japanese exchange students with various communities of practice where their participation as legitimate peripheral participants led to language management processes. Given that noting and evaluation of contact situation phenomena promoted Japanese exchange students' adjustment to Australian academic contexts, such noting and evaluation are considered to play a crucial role in the LPP process in which a novice student moves from a peripheral to a fuller participant in a L2 community.

LPP is also conducive to LMT in that it helps apply a sociocultural lens to processes of noting and evaluation. Noting and evaluation tend to be considered cognitive processes but, as illustrated in the findings, they may be also closely related to sociocultural factors affecting students' engagement in situated activities,

including their social positionings, sociocultural influences on perceptions of self, the role of other community members, and the context where learning occurs. Such a sociocultural implementation of LMT will lead us to more comprehensively systematize language management mechanisms in relation to the real world, and to further exemplify the dynamism of human actions to cope with cultural contact. More empirical LMT studies, which investigate participants' responses to naturally-occurring contact situations, will be required to consolidate this perspective and elucidate the complex and multifaceted processes of language management.

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