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THE LANGUAGE OF  
ENTRY-LEVEL JOB INTERVIEWS

OCCASIONAL PAPER #11  
1985

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA

O C C A S I O N A L P A P E R S E R I E S

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*Occasional Paper #11* is an MA thesis by Marybeth Arago. Her thesis committee members were Michael H. Long (chair), Ted Plaster, and Jack Richards. This work should be cited as follows:

ARAGO, Marybeth. 1985. The Language of Entry-Level Job Interviews. *Occasional Paper #11*. Honolulu: Department of English as a Second Language, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

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This study reports an investigation of the discourse occurring in job interviews for entry-level positions-- positions that require minimal training or skills (Gage and Prince 1982b). The purpose was to discover some of the characteristics of the target discourse in job interviews, and in so doing, to identify certain communicative needs of a specific group of English as a second language (ESL) learners--i.e., Indochinese refugees in the United States-- who must be able to perform successfully in such interviews. In particular, this thesis is concerned with the kinds of information that a materials writer should have before writing Vocational ESL (VESL) materials on the topic of job interviews for refugees or other VESL learners.

A total of eight entry-level job interviews, all conducted by interviewers who were native speakers of English (NSs), were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. Four of these interviews had NSs as applicants, and were analyzed in order to identify various features of the discourse (e.g., topics, lexical items and certain syntactic structures) that would be specific to entry-level job interviews. The discovery of such features is relevant to the needs of the refugee ESL learner in that this information could reveal the language and topics of

## INTRODUCTION

### CHAPTER I

on general ESL, usually taught in the traditional manner were developed for these people. Initially the focus was in the United States from Southeast Asia, ESL programs During the mid 1970's, when refugees began to arrive

#### Background Information

communicative behaviors specific to job interviews. the target group of learners, with regard to appropriate provided here, and consideration is given to the needs of interaction; a description of these conventions is conventions that have been established for interview literature was done in an effort to ascertain the characteristics of job interviews. A survey of related Finally, attention is given to the communicative and a review of related literature, is included here. which was based on both the entry-level job interview data A description of the structure of job interviews, learners' needs more precisely. the NS applicant interviews, in order to define the and the results were then compared with the findings from were analyzed in the same manner as those described above, the target group of refugee learners. These interviews English (NNS) as applicants, who were representative of The other four interviews had nonnative speakers of smoothness of each interview. Measures were also taken to determine the interactional discourse with which the refugee learner must be familiar.



with an emphasis on grammatical forms in structurally graded materials. It was not long, however, before it became clear that such general ESL courses were not reflecting the needs of the majority of these newcomers, whose main concerns necessarily revolved around finding work in order to make a living (Gage and Prince 1982a). In addition, there was a growing realization that, in order to successfully equip these people with the English they needed for finding a job, they would also need to be familiarized with such things as the culture, norms and values of this country.

The stage was thus set for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to be incorporated into refugee language programs, in order to address the learners and their particular communicative needs. There began to be increased consideration, for example, of the reason why the learners needed to learn English, and what communication skills the learners needed to be able to function adequately in particular situations.

Because this study addresses a particular group of learners and their needs, it is an instance of ESP. However, it should be noted that there is a tendency, at least within the field of VESL, to use the term ESP in a more restricted sense. ESP is used to refer to the English required for professionals or those in highly skilled occupations, whereas the term VESL refers to the

English needed for those in unskilled, semiskilled, paraprofessional and some of the technical occupations (Crandall 1979, A Guide to Manpower/Vocational ESL 1979). VESL may be further subdivided into two categories: prevocational ESL (this study) and vocational-specific ESL (Gage and Prince 1982b).

Since the 1980's have shown increasing instances of federal belt-tightening, employment is, more than ever before, considered to be the top-priority concern for refugees. Time for learning English is shorter and consequently more precious. Cost-efficient language teaching has become a necessity. But the fact of the matter is that due to a lack of empirical research, these refugee English programs often must rely on intuitive decisions as to students' needs; moreover, there is little guarantee that the learners are truly receiving what it is they need. More likely, what they are getting is what materials writers and/or ESL teachers imagine they need. Empirical research should be able to provide us with more accurate information on learners' needs than can an assessment based primarily on intuition. A data-based study of the language in use in those situations relevant to the learner is an important part of doing a learners' needs assessment. Candlin et al., (1976:245,246) have stated:

Only on the strength of a data base can we discover in quantitative terms the various cognitive and attitudinal language functions entailed in the efficient execution of job-specific tasks, and construct teaching/learning materials which are accordingly weighted.

And in her survey of theoretical positions in the field of ESP, Robinson (1980) notes that many materials writers regard as essential the collection of authentic data on which to base their materials.

In an effort to respond to the need for a data-based study relevant to a particular learner's needs, this project attempts--through an analysis of the discourse in job interview **situations**--to explore the needs of the refugee who must learn to operate in that particular setting. Furthermore, this project focuses on job interview situations for entry-level job positions for the following reason: In addition to the economic reality of recent federal budget cuts, there has also been a change in the type of refugee coming into this country. Most of the refugees who have arrived here in recent years have, in general, less formal education and fewer transferable job skills than the refugees who came here in the 1970's, since training programs for skilled positions are not available, the efforts to place these people in jobs have

The work of Candlin et al., (1976, 1981) is especially significant because it represents one of the few major undertakings in the field of ESP--more specifically, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)--involved with oral English. Candlin et al. carefully designed a curriculum and teaching materials for overseas doctors in Great Britain, in order to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed for effective communication with their patients. Extensive research on actual doctor-patient consultations taking place in hospital emergency room

#### Literature Review

American labor system. s/he will have opportunities for advancement in the refugee the concept of upward mobility, it is hoped that Prince (1982b). In this way, and by instilling in the designed to prepare them for job advancement (Gage and employed refugees may receive subsequent instruction and perhaps on-the-job training as well. In addition, position, refugees would acquire skills and experience, placement efforts is this: Once placed in an entry-level done with them. The rationale behind entry-level people as refugees in unskilled, low-paying jobs and be a vocational English program is not simply to place such It should be mentioned here that the ultimate goal of and Prince 1982 a&b). necessarily focused on entry-level work positions (Gage

settings provided the basis for the curriculum and materials designed. This study was aided by opinions of medical professionals as well as audio- and video recordings. The research and resulting teaching program emphasized an understanding of and sensitization to cultural conventions as well as linguistic conventions. Space does not permit here a complete description of the complex nature of the research and materials developed. Essentially, the descriptive framework for the analysis of doctor-patient conversation was based on a taxonomy of communicative acts or functions (e.g., greet, interrogate, reassure). Through the initial analysis of about 50 consultations, a list of functions was drawn up. This list was refined by measuring the frequency of these functions across 400 further consultations. Yet another 400 consultations were analyzed; this time with the help of *tramine* notations, whereby comparisons could be made of analyses performed by several *different* analysts on the same consultation. In these and other ways, revisions and refinements were made in the taxonomy throughout the process of analyzing a total of 850 consultations. From Candlin *et al.*'s work, it is clear that devising a descriptive framework to fit the data is no easy task. In describing course and materials design for ESP, Candlin *et al.*, make clear the importance of simulation to ensure transferability. Given a data base, the language

presented to the learner can be authentic. There should ultimately be a simulation of the target setting and learner to make a relatively smooth transition from the simulated situation to the actual one.

More recently, Candlin *et al.* (1980) investigated the nature of dentist-patient communication, in preparation for the possible development of a testing scheme to assess the English abilities of overseas dentists in Britain. This work is quite broad in scope, as it describes many aspects of dentist-patient communication including the proportion of talk to silence; topics, functions and treatment-related tasks; interpretation and shared knowledge; control strategies; mitigation and preserving face; *and, casual* vs. formal speech. The authors also include questionnaires for both dentists and patients, combining to provide quite a thorough assessment of the communication skills that would be needed by an overseas dentist practicing in England.

In another study, this time of teacher-student discourse in primary school classrooms, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) devised a hierarchical system of analysis in which there are five different ranks: lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act. Each of these units is able to account for the data, but with increasing degrees of precision. With the exception of the unit at

the fifth rank (act), each unit has structures which are realized by the unit at the rank immediately below. The smallest unit, that of act, cannot be reduced to simpler elements and therefore has no structure at the discourse level. Like Candlin *et al.*, Sinclair and Coulthard view discourse as being concerned with the functional properties of an item, with what the speaker's purpose is for using the item. Twenty-one acts are defined (e.g., elicitation, acknowledge, prompt, evaluate, etc.). Sinclair and Coulthard found that a three part structure of initiation--response--feedback is standard in classroom language.' They also found the nature of teacher-student interaction to be quite organized and disciplined. In most instances, the teachers initiate interactions, though students do so occasionally. Few interruptions occur, especially of the teacher by the student, and the students have a very limited range of behavior (Coulthard 1977). It seems that power and control in the classroom generally belong to the teacher. Chiu (1978) attempted to apply the Sinclair and Coulthard method of analysis to her study of the discourse between manager and employee in job-specific situations as part of a series of projects undertaken for the Public Service Commission of Canada. The overall objective of

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**1** In reviewing relevant literature, Hatch and Long (1980) note that this pattern has been found not to be universal.

the projects was to provide a description of the communicative skills required by those in bilingual jobs, for use in designing second language materials. Initially, Chiu applied Sinclair and Coulthard's

unaltered model to her data; the only exception was that the highest rank in the model, *i.e.*, lesson, was changed to conversation. Necessary alterations were made in this descriptive system throughout the process of analyzing fifty conversations (*twenty-nine* of which were in English, twenty-one in French). Not surprisingly, Chiu found that there were discourse functions, or acts, common to teacher-student discourse (*e.g.*, bid, nominate) that never occurred in manager-employee discourse. Conversely, a number of acts identified in the manager-employee discourse were not a part of teacher-student interaction (*e.g.*, suggest, accelerate). Still other acts, common to both kinds of discourse, required alterations in their definitions to fit the job situation data. Although analysts generally agreed on the identification of acts, analysts at the move and exchange ranks proved more difficult. The transaction unit was not dealt with since Sinclair and Coulthard themselves had found the structures of this unit difficult to isolate. Despite these difficulties, however, Chiu felt that the model was helpful in identifying learners' needs, and concludes her article by recommending further application



of this model to a variety of situations, including job interviews.

Although Chiu recommends the application of this model to job interviews, Sinclair and Coulthard are less optimistic about the ability of their system to handle interview data. In their discussion of an M.A. thesis by Pearce (1973), who unsuccessfully attempted to fit broadcast interview data into their model, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:117) comment:

In extending this type of description to another situation, one of the dangers is that of forcing data into the categories set up for the description of classroom discourse; the descriptive system for the interview was therefore constructed from scratch, following the same basic principles, but taking similar analytical decisions to those in the classroom research only when supported by the interview data.

Pearce's work revealed that interview language does not generally fit into the initiation--response--feedback structure. Furthermore, interview discourse is much more restricted in terms of function than is classroom language.

In a project undertaken for a seminar on ESP at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (ESI 611) this writer

attempted to apply the Sinclair and Coulthard model to describe a portion of job interview discourse, before realizing that Sinclair and Coulthard themselves had doubts about such an application of their model. For the reasons cited above, as well as others (practically the whole taxonomy of acts had to be altered), the project did not yield satisfactory results. Perhaps the failure of the Sinclair and Coulthard model to fit the data for job interview language is not so surprising, if one considers the differences between classroom discourse and job interview discourse. Sinclair and Coulthard's system was designed to handle the discourse occurring between one adult and a group of children in a classroom setting, where the purpose of interaction is basically either to learn or to teach. **This is** quite different from a job interview setting, where there is one on one, adult to adult conversation, and where the primary goals are either to evaluate applicants and fill job positions, or to be evaluated and get a job. At any rate, the conclusion reached in doing the ESP project was that either the model of Sinclair and Coulthard should be radically altered to fit job interview interaction, or, better still, a new descriptive system should be devised to account for job interview data. The latter solution was chosen for the purposes of this thesis.

how linguistic and cultural differences in ways of speaking English can lead to the reinforcement of group stereotypes, resulting in discrimination and the keeping of minorities in disadvantaged social positions. Along these lines, Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979) have created a film, "Crosstalk," the aim of which is to foster awareness of the nature and problems of cross-cultural communication (Baxter and Levine 1982). In addition, the ways in which differences in communicative style can serve to cause breakdowns in communication have been described by Scollon and Scollon (1983). Such intercultural communication problems that result in misunderstandings and communication breakdowns are particularly damaging for the minority group member when they occur in what Erickson (1975) has termed gate-keeping encounters. Some examples of gate-keeping encounters are counselling sessions, legal trials and job interviews--situations where there are individuals, or gatekeepers, who represent a larger group and who have been invested with the authority to evaluate other persons on behalf of the larger group, making decisions that will ultimately affect the mobility of these persons in society.

The film "Crosstalk" was primarily designed to be used as training material for British professionals who act as gatekeepers (e.g., social workers, job interviewers

and job supervisors who work with multiethnic populations). One example of a gatekeeping situation in the film that is also described in the Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz (1982) article is that of a job interview. Although the interview was simulated, care was taken to ensure that it was performed in a realistic manner. The applicant, a South Asian man, was qualified as a librarian and was acting to seek a position as such in the interview. The interviewers were British professionals working in the college system, with wide job interviewing experience. The filmed interview interaction revealed certain factors which contributed to miscommunication and led to a negative evaluation of the applicant. Several of these factors are noted below.

In the first place, the applicant interpreted interview questions literally, rather than responding to their implied meanings. Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz (1982:252) note: "There is an assumption in a job interview that all questions, however indirect, are related to the job the candidate has applied for." To illustrate this point, the authors give an example of a question which was asked of the applicant, "Why are you applying for this particular type of job in a college?" to which the applicant responded by talking about such things as how many applications he had filled out to get his present job and the fact that his present job is temporary

successfully in a job interview situation (e.g., selling which an applicant must abide if s/he is to perform Evidently, there are certain communicative rules by replies.

important or relevant points occurred at the end of his manner of organizing information was such that the most 1982:252). Furthermore, it was found that the applicant's motivation towards a job" (Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz inviting candidates to 'sell' themselves on the basis of

unwilling to comply with the English convention of was that "the candidate seems to be unfamiliar with or inferring the underlying meanings of interview questions) the applicant (a factor that is closely related to Another factor leading to a negative assessment of

the question as simply "Why do you want a job?" Clearly, it is not enough for an interviewee to interpret do well?"

professionally and which you think you could about this job which you are interested in infer from it the message, "What is there question. The candidate needs to be able to process in Britain would recognize such a Anyone familiar with this type of interview

(1982:252) comment:

and he desperately needs another job. Referring back to the interview question, Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz

yourself, being concise, being positive) and "Crosstalk" highlights the fact that these rules are not necessarily shared by those from other cultures.

"Crosstalk," although not specifically designed for second language teaching, has implications for teachers and learners of ESL. According to Baxter and Levine (1982), the most important message the film conveys to those in the ESL field is that there is a need for an alternative approach in language teaching which emphasizes skills in intercultural communication. Accordingly, materials which would aid students in developing an awareness of the subtle aspects of communication and culture need to be designed. For example, materials could be developed which would demonstrate the dynamics of intercultural communication as well as communication taking place with NNS who share the same cultural background. This communication could be that of any of a variety of settings or situations in which the learner must be able to perform (e.g., doctor-patient consultation, job situations and job interviews). Materials should present the learner with examples of both successful and unsuccessful communication since, as Baxter and Levine (1982:251) point out, The weakness of most materials is that they present only idealized, trouble free communication among native speakers.

Learners are not shown how to deal with confusion, misinterpretation, incorrect conclusions, negative judgments, and other aspects of real world communication. One other study having to do with job interviews is that of Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajirrotutu (1982). Twelve black American students, who were involved in a job training program, participated in this study by acting as applicants in simulated job interviews. In their article, the authors compare the performances of two of these applicants, showing how one of them came to receive a negative evaluation due to her communicative style, which employed ethnic discourse strategies and thus differed significantly from what is the conventional and established style for interview talk. Since evaluating and comparing the performances of the two applicants involved measuring each applicant's performance against the established conventions for job interview interaction, much of this article entails a description of and/or information about these conventions. The interactional characteristics of job interviews are described, as well as the nature of job interview questions. In essence, this information provided the authors with a framework within which they could evaluate and compare the applicants' performances. Also covered in this article is the structural nature of job interviews

and the differences between job interview conversation and ordinary conversation.

Much of the information provided by Akinmaso and **Seabrook** Ajirrotutu was relevant to the purposes of this thesis, since such information about the proper interactional behaviors in a job interview and the ways in which job interviews are structured is suggestive of what would need to be present in ESL materials for a learner who needs to be able to perform in a job interview. It is true, however, that the Akinmaso and **Seabrook** Ajirrotutu study looked at the discourse of job interviews that were for positions of a professional nature, while this thesis examines the discourse of interviews for entry-level job positions. For this reason, attention is given in the Discussion section as to how these two kinds of interviews are distinct from one another.

Akinmaso and **Seabrook** Ajirrotutu's work highlights how discourse conventions used by the applicant may be the determining factor in whether or not that person gets a job. While the two applicants whose interview styles were analyzed in this study were both members of a minority group, one of them had had a good deal more exposure to and interaction with mainstream culture, particularly in bureaucratic settings (e.g., interviews with social welfare workers). Consequently, this person was quite successful in the role of applicant; she was already



familiar with the "rules of the game" by which applicants must play in order to achieve a favorable outcome from an interview situation. She readily perceived the inferential implications of interview questions, and thus was successful at selling herself to the interviewer. Referring to the Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz (1982) article discussed above, Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajitotutu (1982:143) note that:

▪ ▪ ▪ where several candidates have equivalent qualifications, as is often the case in present-day urban settings, candidates who can linguistically match a standard variety and interact within the discourse conventions of the standard language are normally at an advantage. What is perhaps even more disturbing to learn, however, is that: "Even when the position is explicitly advertised for 'minority applicants,' candidates are often evaluated on the basis of standardized discourse conventions" (1982:143).

Data Collection

In an effort to increase the generalizability of this study, analyses were undertaken of data for two different kinds of entry-level job interviews. The first step in the data collection process, therefore, was to find two places of entry-level employment whose personnel recruiters would be willing to participate in this study. Because this project is primarily concerned with the needs of **refugees, employment** interviews were to be from places that either were known to hire refugees or that feasibly could have been in a position to hire them.

Job interviewers at a college campus and a fast foods restaurant consented to conduct interviews which could be recorded for the purposes of this study. Before approaching the fast foods restaurant interviewer to see if this person would be willing to cooperate in this recording project, however, it was necessary to have this project approved by the head office of the fast foods restaurant company. Permission was eventually granted on condition that, should the interviewer decide to participate, the anonymity of the company and its employees would be guaranteed. A letter to that effect was composed and signed by this writer and her thesis committee chairperson, and sent to the company's head

METHOD

CHAPTER II

~ h e r e w a s a n e x c e p t i o n t o s i m u l a t i o n i n t h e p r e s e n t  
s t u d y , i n t h a t t h e N N S a p p l i c a n t s i n t e r v i e w i n g f o r w o r k a t  
t h e f a s t f o o d s r e s t a u r a n t w e r e a c t u a l l y c o n s i d e r e d b y t h e  
i n t e r v i e w e r f o r e m p l o y m e n t a t t h e r e s t a u r a n t .

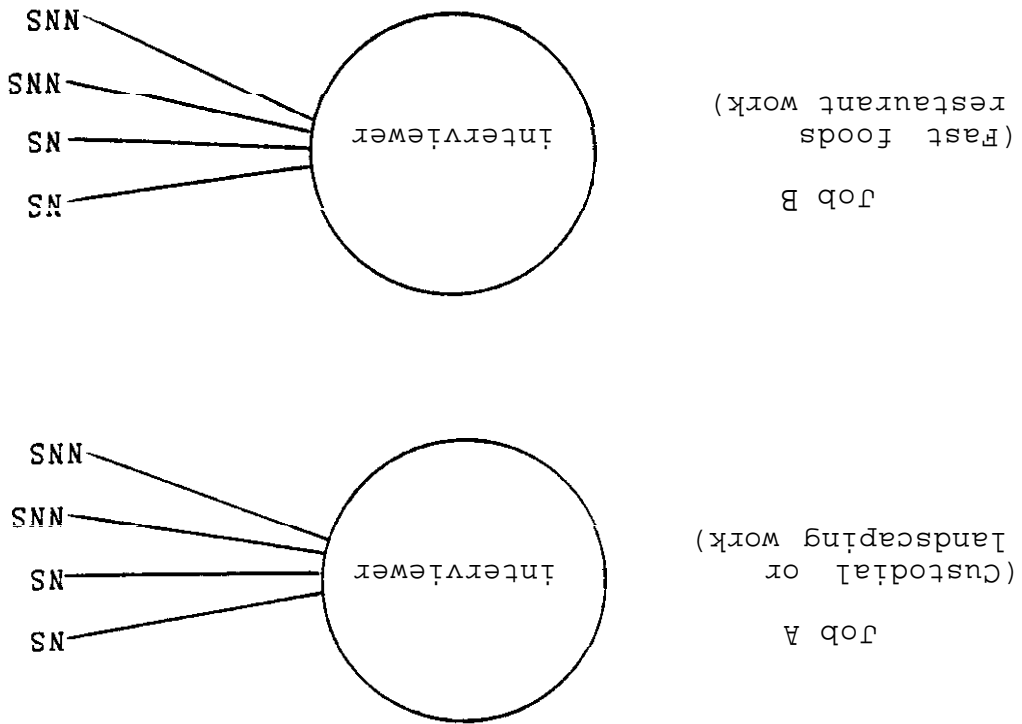
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interviews. 2

realistic manner, representative of their usual  
gave assurance that the interviews would be conducted in a  
than authentic job interviews. However, the interviewers  
recordings for this study were made of simulated rather  
1982, Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajirrotutu 1982, Arago 1982),  
involving job interviews (Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz  
recorded. Therefore, as was true of other studies  
confront applicants with requests for permission to be  
without their consent, and furthermore, did not want to  
interviewers did not feel it ethical to record applicants  
recordings of actual interviews. Naturally, these  
interviewers declined on ethical grounds to allow  
recordings of authentic job interviews. However, both  
The original plan for this project was to obtain  
the purposes of this thesis.  
that they had granted their permission to be recorded for  
a written statement, signed by themselves, to the effect  
the applicants bring with them on the day of the interview  
landscaping and custodial services interviewer was that  
stipulation required for the participation of the  
evaluate the performance of the interviewer. The only  
office. This writer also agreed that she would not

Ten subjects participated in this study. As mentioned above, job interviewers at both a college campus and a fast foods restaurant agreed to participate. These two interviewers each conducted interviews with four applicants: two NS applicants and two SNN applicants. Figure 1 (below) is included here to illustrate the way in which the interviews were arranged.

Figure 1  
How Interviews Were Arranged



The college campus interviewer was, in fact, the personnel recruiter for landscaping and custodial services (this was state employment) on several college campuses; a middle-aged male with wide job interviewing experience. The other interviewer was the manager and person in charge of hiring for a fast foods restaurant; a male in his mid-twenties, also very experienced in job interviewing. Both interviewers spoke a variety of standard American English typical of the English that middle-class speakers, local to Hawaii, would use in a bureaucratic situation such as that of a job interview.

As can be seen from the descriptions below, all NS applicants were people who were, at the time, involved with entry-level work, and who had had experience in entry-level job interviewing. All NNS applicants were representative of the target group of VESL learners.

NS applicants for landscaping or custodial work were males, in their late teens, and local to Hawaii. They had both previously experienced several job interviews for entry-level work. At the time of the interviews for this study, these applicants were employed at a restaurant: one worked as kitchen help, and the other as a busboy. NNS applicants for landscaping or custodial work were a Laotian male in his late teens and a Vietnamese male in his mid-twenties. Both possessed some, albeit limited, ability to communicate in English, and neither had ever

experienced a job interview before nor had they received special training in how to play the role of applicant in a job interview.

**NS** applicants interviewed at the fast foods restaurant were a male in his mid-twenties who had resided in Hawaii for the past three years, and a female in her early twenties, local to Hawaii. Both persons had a fair amount of entry-level job interviewing experience. The male was employed as a waiter in a restaurant, and the female was employed as counter help by the fast foods restaurant involved in this project. **SNN** applicants for fast foods restaurant work were two Vietnamese males in their early twenties, who, like the **NNS** applicants described above, were of limited English proficiency, had no job interviewing experience, and no training in job interviewing.

Care was taken to ensure that the interviews would be as realistic as possible. Except for the presence of a tape recorder, which was operated by the interviewer, interviews were conducted in the same manner that they would have been under ordinary circumstances. Interviews also took place where they normally would have, i.e., in offices where the speakers could carry on a relatively private conversation (there were other workers occasionally in the vicinity, but no interruptions, other than telephone calls, occurred).

The NS applicants agreed to behave as if they were genuinely looking for and in need of work, and to come to the interviews appropriately prepared. The NNS applicants for the fast foods restaurant job actually were hoping for employment with this company, and the interviewer considered them as possible employees. NNS applicants might have been actually considered for landscaping or custodial work too, had it not been for a hiring freeze imposed by the state which was in effect at the time of the interviews. Applicants were given the appropriate application forms to fill out several days in advance of their interviews (NNS) were given some assistance in filling out their forms by this writer). Also, before the interviews, applicants were given some information about the nature of the work for which they were applying, so they might, for example, consider how their previous experience would tie in to these jobs (they were not, however, explicitly told to do this).

Analyses

The entry-level job interview data were analyzed to determine:

1. The topics of these interviews and the frequency with which these topics occurred
2. Whether there were topics that occurred in NS-NS interviews that did not occur in NS-NNS interviews (and vice versa)

3. How topics involved language with present and nonpresent temporal marking, and whether there was a difference between NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews with regard to present and nonpresent temporal marking of topics
4. The relative importance of the more frequently occurring topics
5. The lexis of these interviews that would be apt to hold across job interviews in general, and the frequency with which relevant lexical items occurred in both NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews
6. The proportions of questions, statements and imperatives in utterances
7. The proportions of wh-, **yes/no**, intonation (uninverted), alternative (or-choice), and tag questions in utterances that were questions
8. The relative frequencies of repairs and **misunderstandings** that occurred in these interviews
9. The basic structure of these interviews (Related literature on job interviews provided an additional source of information for this analysis.)
10. The special needs the target group of learners might have, with regard to certain appropriate communicative behaviors specific to job interviews (This was a rather informal analysis, based on information attained from a survey of related literature, which



revealed what these appropriate communicative behaviors are.)

All analyses were primarily intended to provide information about entry-level job interview discourse that would be useful in writing materials for the target group of VESL learners. The way in which each analysis was meant to contribute such useful information for materials writing will be elaborated on in the Discussion and/or Results section of this thesis.

Analysis 1 was to give an indication of what is talked about in these job interviews, and how often. Each transcribed interview was divided up into topics, and labeled accordingly. With the exception of differing on one topic, two independent raters were found to agree on the ways in which transcribed interview data should be separated into topics. (There was agreement on 24 of 25 topics.) In view of this, the analysis was continued. A list was then drawn up of all topics and this topic list was set out in checklist form to reflect each place (interview) in which the topic was found, as well as the number of times a topic may have surfaced during one interview. Through the use of the topic checklist, comparisons could be readily made of interviews with NS applicants (NS-SN interviews) and interviews with NNS applicants (NNS-SN interviews), in terms of topics and their frequencies, thus providing results for analysis 2

as well. Subsequent topic lists (or summary tables),

again in checklist form, were made to show topics that

were found in:

1. two or more of the NS-NS interviews
2. three or more of the NS-NS interviews
3. two or more of the NS-NS interviews
4. three or more of the NS-NS interviews
5. both NS-NS interviews and NS-NS interviews, two or more times
6. both NS-NS interviews and NS-NS interviews, three or more times

The first part of analysis 3 was to indicate whether

a given topic is more apt to contain a reference to

present time, to nonpresent time, or to both; the second

part of this analysis was intended to show whether the

interviews with NNS would differ from those with only

**NNS**, with respect to the present and nonpresent time

marking. It was speculated that the discourse with NNS in

might be more restricted than the discourse between **NNS** in

terms of limiting matters of discussion to the speakers'

current time reference. Since concerns within the realm

of present time might be conceptually easier for a NNS to

grasp, such present concerns could prove to be the

preferred subject-matter in NS-NNS interaction (Long

1981).

Analysis 4 was meant to give some idea of which of the more frequently occurring topics would be most influential in terms of getting a job. Topics found in three or more of both kinds of interviews, i.e., NS-NS interviews and NS-NNS interviews, were listed in rank order, according to the number of utterances devoted to each topic. The two lists resulting from this analysis were then compared, to determine similarities and differences between the two kinds of interviews. Finally, the lists were collapsed to show, in rank order, all the topics that occurred in three or more of either NS or NNS applicant interviews.

Analysis 5 involved an examination of the lexis found in the interview data. All lexical items included in this analysis were words generated by the interviewers. Applicant-generated words were not included. The idea was to find content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) that would be likely to occur in and hold across entry-level job interviews in general. Job specific words (e.g., sweeping, groundskeeper, weed-eater, hamburgers) were, therefore, intentionally excluded. Lexical items were listed alphabetically, in a checklist form similar to that used in the topic analysis. In this way, one might easily note the frequency with which an item occurred, both within individual interviews, and across all eight interviews. The checklist also makes it easy to see

any differences between NS-NS interviews and NS-NNS interviews, in terms of the lexis used by interviewers in these two kinds of interviews.

Because the orientation of this lexical analysis is towards learners who already possess some beginning English skills, a method was needed to screen out words too elementary in nature. To this end, a word frequency list, the Cambridge English Lexicon by Hindmarsh (1980) was used. This work was also helpful in obtaining a general idea of the difficulty level of words included in the analysis.

Hindmarsh had originally prepared his lexicon to establish guidelines concerning the approximate vocabulary comprehension level needed for students wanting to pass the First Certificate in English (FCE) examination, an examination in English as a Foreign Language administered by the University of Cambridge. As Hindmarsh (1980:411) says, his "list is based on a large number of lexicographical and pedagogical sources worked and reworked in a sequence of often laborious procedures." Each of the 4,470 lexical items in Hindmarsh's list is graded from 1 to 5. "Level 5 means that the item is approaching or at FCE level. Level 1 means that the item is at beginner or post-beginner level" (1980:411). For the purposes of the lexical analysis for this study, words found in the interview data at levels 1 and 2, which

covers the first 1,215 words on Hindmarsh's list, were

omitted.

As in the topic analysis, summary tables are

provided, this time to show lexical items found in:

1. two or more of the NS-NS interviews
2. three or more of the NS-NS interviews
3. two or more of the SNN-NS interviews
4. three or more of the NS-SNN interviews
5. both NS-NS interviews and SNN-NS interviews, two or more times
6. both NS-NS interviews and SNN-NS interviews, three or more times

Analyses 6 and 7 were also conducted only on

interviewers' speech, and were meant to give some general idea of certain syntactic structures (i.e., questions,

statements and imperatives) of the interviews, and how NS-

NS and SNN-NS interviews might be distinct from one

another with regard to these structures. As did analysis 4, analysis 6 employed Scollon's (1974) definition of an

utterance: it is one semantic unit; has one intonational

contour; and is generally preceded by, and followed by, a

pause. For analysis 6, however, some utterances, such as

those employing back channeling (e.g., "hmm," "OK"), were

excluded, generally being considered to be uninformative

in nature, and not meriting the status of a statement.

Analys 7 dealt solely with question types. The "alternative" questions included here, also known as "or-choice" questions elsewhere in the literature (Hatch 1978, Long 1981), are defined as those questions in which the speaker offers the listener a choice of answers" (Celice-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1980:148).

Analys 8 was to make a comparison between NS-NS

interview data and NS-NNS interview data. In terms of interactional smoothness. This analysis was based on Jefferson's (1972) concept of side sequences, which helped

to provide a method whereby a systematic measurement of the repairs and misunderstandings in the interview data

could be obtained. NS-NS data were compared with NS-NNS

data as to the number of side sequences per total number of utterances occurring in these two kinds of interview data. A side sequence is characterized by a break or interruption in the flow of ongoing conversation, often

for the purpose of clarification. Lines 4 through 6 in the following extract from a NS-NNS interview offer an

example of a side sequence (see Appendix C for an

explanation of the notation used below):

Interviewer Applicant

1. Do you live with your
2. parents at the present
3. time?
4. ((3)) Present time.

Although Jefferson identified several types of side sequences in her work, the kind of side sequence presented above--i.e., where there is a misapprehension of sorts by the hearer and a subsequent need for clarification or confirmation from the speaker--was the kind most common to the job interview data. Jefferson used an analogy to introduce this kind of side sequence by describing what might be an ongoing football or soccer game (the ongoing conversation) in which a player gets injured (beginning of side sequence) and must be carried off from the field (last part of side sequence), at which point the game may resume (resumption of ongoing conversation). An example from a NS-NNS interview (lines 6 through 12) may help to clarify:

1. OK. You don't have any

2. more questions..that's it.

3. ((3)) Thank you for coming.

4. Thank you.

5. Bye.

6. ((5)) Uh..how much to

7. get paid?

8. Oh..you want to know how

5. Do you live with your

6. parents?

7. No.

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sequences in her work, the kind of side sequence presented above--i.e., where there is a misapprehension of sorts by

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1. OK. You don't have any

2. more questions..that's it.

3. ((3)) Thank you for coming.

4. Thank you.

5. Bye.

6. ((5)) Uh..how much to

7. get paid?

8. Oh..you want to know how

Analyses 9 and 10 changed the emphasis to the structural and communicative characteristics of job interviews. Analysis 9 had to do with the way in which the content of job interviews is organized, and entailed an examination of the entry-level job interview data, as well as a perusal of relevant literature on job interviews. Analysis 10 was conducted to find out the communicative behaviors specific to job interviews that would need to be given attention in materials for the target group of learners. This determination of communicative needs was based on: 1) a review of literature concerned with the established conventions for interaction in job interviews, and 2) an examination of the entry-level job interview data to determine to what extent the applicants (especially the NNSs) in this study exhibited proper interactional behaviors.

9. much the pay is? \$0000 a
10. month. OK?
- 11.
12. OK.

OK..yeah.



Table 1 shows the results for: 1) analysis 1, i.e., the topics found in the entry-level job interview data and the frequency with which these topics occurred; 2) analysis 2, i.e., the topics that occurred only in NS-NS interviews (see topics 27 through 36 in Table 1) and the topics that occurred only in NS-NNS interviews (see topics 37 through 49); and 3) the first part of analysis 3, i.e., how topics matched up to present and nonpresent temporal marking. It should be pointed out here that, by far, the majority of the topics were initiated by the interviewers, a finding in keeping with other research on NS-NNS conversation where the NNS is of elementary second language proficiency (Long 1983). The only exceptions were two occurrences of topic 11, and topics 48 and 49. Summary tables for Table 1 are located in Appendix A of this thesis (Tables 1.a through 1.f).

Before presenting Table 1, a comment may be in order regarding certain items in the table, specifically topics 1 (opening of some kind), 17 (whether applicant has questions) and 26 (closing of some kind). These items were treated as topics for the purposes of this study, even though they may not exactly qualify as topics in their own right. Topic 1, for example, rather than being the first topic, might more accurately be described as

## RESULTS

### CHAPTER III

"a way to set the stage for a first topic." However, while there were some misgivings over the labeling of these items, a decision was made to refer to them as topics anyway, primarily for the sake of simplicity. Whatever one calls these items, they are indispensable elements of the interviews studied, and are at least closely related to topics.



Table 1 (Continued)  
 Topics Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS				NS-NNS				
L-1	L-1									7. how long applicant has been in Hawaii/ Honolulu
L-2	L-2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8. applicant's education
L-1	L-1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9. applicant's work experience
L-2	L-2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10. why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)
L-1	L-1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11. miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)
L-2	L-2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12. applicant's availability (work shift preference)
L-1	L-1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	13. information on what applicant can expect (or should do) with reference to the outcome of this interview
L-2	L-2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14. whether applicant was involved in high school sports or other activities
L-1	L-1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	15. applicant's living situation (i.e., at home, alone, with parents)

Table 1 (Continued)  
 Topics Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS			NS-SNS		
		L-1	L-2	R-1	L-1	L-2	R-1
16. applicant's expectations regarding this job				x			np
17. whether applicant has questions		p	p	p	p	p	p
17. whether applicant has questions		x	x	xx	x	xx	xxx
18. applicant's job position preference		p & p	p & p	x	p & p	p & p	x
18. applicant's job position preference		x	x	x	x	x	x
19. applicant's job location preference		np	np	x	np	np	x
20. driver's license (whether applicant has one, what type it is, how long it will take applicant to get one)		p	p	xx	p	p	np
21. phoning the applicant		p	p	x	p	p	x
22. applicant's physical condition		p & p	p & p	x	p & p	p & p	x
23. whether applicant has friends at this workplace		p	p	x	p	p	x
24. whether applicant has relatives at this workplace		p	p	x	p	p	x

Table 1 (continued)  
 Topics Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS				SNN-SN			
		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
25. how applicant heard of job	np	x				np			
26. closing of some kind (thanks exchanged, leaving)	p	x				p			
	p					p			
	p					p			
27. whether applicant has applied elsewhere	np	x				np			
	x					x			
28. where applicant comes from						p			
						x			
29. why applicant is interested in Hawaii						p			
						x			
30. whether applicant enjoys working with people						p			
						x			
31. applicant's interests and/or future goals						np			
						x			
32. whether applicant has history of military service	np	x				np			
	x					x			
33. whether applicant is presently employed	p					p			
	xx					x			

Table 1 (continued)  
 Topics Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS			NS-NNS		
		L-1	L-1	L-1	L-1	L-1	L-1
		R-2	R-1	R-2	R-1	R-2	R-1
34. applicant's permanent mailing address							
35. whether applicant has dependents							
36. applicant's marital status							
37. application form (whether applicant has it, whether information on it is current)							
38. alien registration card or number							
39. applicant's family							
40. applicant's involvement with sports							
41. applicant's spare time activities							
42. restaurant's involvement with volleyball							

Table 1 (Continued)  
 Topics Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

NS-NS			NS-NS			
	L-1	R-1	L-1	R-1	R-2	L-1
43. soccer		P				L-1
	X	P				L-1
44. what language applicant speaks		P				L-1
	X	P				L-1
45. whether applicant came from Vietnam alone or with family		np				L-1
	X	P				L-1
46. whether applicant is familiar with restaurant's food		P				L-1
	X	P				L-1
47. why applicant chose cook's helper as job of choice			np			L-1
			X			L-1
48. * salary/pay information		P				L-1
	P	P				L-1
	X	X				L-1
49. * how applicant would find workplace, if hired		np				L-1
		X				L-1

\* These topics were initiated solely by applicants. All other topics, with the exception of two occurrences on topic #11 (where applicants requested information on work hours), were initiated by the interviewer.



Table 2 shows the results of the second part of analysis 3, which was to determine whether there was a difference between NS-NS and NS-NN-SN interviews in terms of present and nonpresent temporal marking of topics. The results show that both kinds of interviews have somewhat more topics containing references to present than to nonpresent time. There was a tendency for the NS-NN-SN interviews to have slightly more topics marked for present time than the NS-NS interviews. The difference between the two kinds of interviews, however, was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.30$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .50$ , NS, Yates correction applied).

Table 2

Present and Nonpresent Temporal Marking of Topics in NS-NS and NS-NN-SN Interviews

	Present	n	Nonpresent	n
NS-NS	59	58	43	42
NS-NN-SN	62	63	37	37

( $\chi^2 = 0.30$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .50$ , NS)

The results for analysis 4, which was done to find which topics would be the most essential for obtaining employment, are to be found in Tables 3, 4 and 5. Topics were ranked in importance, according to the number of utterances devoted to each topic that occurred in:

1) three or more of the NS-NS interviews (Table 3) and 2) three or more of the NS-NNS interviews (Table 4). Table 3, by revealing the most frequently occurring topics in NS-NS interviews, shows which topics would be obligatory in the context of an entry-level job interview, i.e., this table reflects the topics which an applicant should be prepared to handle. A comparison of Table 3 with Table 4 reveals a good deal of similarity between the interviews with NS applicants and those with NNS applicants, in terms of which topics occurred most frequently across interviews. The two kinds of interviews also showed a fair amount of resemblance to one another in terms of which topics commanded the most attention in the interviews. For example, certain topics tend to be high on both lists (Tables 3 and 4), indicating a large number of utterances given to these topics (e.g., applicant's work experience, education and availability), while other topics, although obligatory, did not seem to require so much attention in either kind of interview (e.g., applicant's method of transportation, why applicant wants to work here, and closing of interview).

Table 5 is a collapsed version of Tables 3 and 4, The differences in topics between Tables 3 and 4 are accounted for in the footnotes for Table 5. From these footnotes, it can be seen that most of the topics which appeared in three or more of only one kind of interview,

also appeared in the other kind of interview, but two times instead of three or more. For example, the topic "applicant's living situation," which occurred at least three times in the NS-NS interviews, occurred twice in the NS-SNN interviews. Because the two occurrences of this topic in the NS-SNN interviews is a further indication of the importance and/or likelihood of this topic in **entry-**level job interviews, the number of utterances contained in this topic from both kinds of interviews are shown in Table 5. In fact, there were only two topics that were found to occur in three or more of one kind of interview (NS-SNN), and not at least twice in the other kind of interview (NS-NS). These topics are "**salary/pay**" information," and "application form." It is worth noting that the former topic was, in all cases, initiated by the NNS applicants, and that the latter topic contained a total of only eight utterances.

Table 3

The Relative Importance of Topics that Occurred  
in Three or More NS-NS Interviews

*60	applicant's work experience
49	applicant's availability
47	miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)
20	applicant's education
17	information on what applicant can expect (or should do) with reference to the outcome of this interview
16	applicant's name (full, middle, last, whether same now as in high school)
14	applicant's method of transportation (to work)
13	why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)
12	opening of some kind (greeting, introducing, applicant told to come in <b>and/or</b> to <b>sit</b> down)
10	whether applicant has questions
9	closing of some kind (thanks exchanged, leavetaking)
7	applicant's living situation ( <b>i.e.</b> , at home, alone, with parents)

Numbers refer to the number of utterances that were contained in each topic. (Topics are ranked in importance according to the number of utterances they contained.)

Table 4

The Relative Importance of Topics that Occurred  
in Three or More NS-NNS Interviews

109	applicant's availability	*
58	applicant's education	
36	applicant's work experience	
27	salary/pay information	
26	miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)	
18	applicant's address	
17	opening of some kind (greeting, introducing, applicant told to come in and/or to sit down)	
16	applicant's method of transportation (to work)	
11	why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)	
10	closing of some kind (thanks exchanged, leavetaking)	
9	whether applicant has questions	
8	application form (whether applicant has it, whether information on it is current)	
		*

Numbers refer to the number of utterances that were contained in each topic.

The Relative Importance of Topics that Occurred in Three or More of Either NS-NS or NS-NNS Interviews

Table 5

158	applicant's availability
96	applicant's work experience
78	applicant's education
73	miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)
37	information on what applicant can expect (or should do) with reference to the outcome of this interview
30	applicant's method of transportation (to work)
29	opening of some kind (greeting, introducing, applicant told to come in and/or to sit down)
28	applicant's address
27	salary/pay information
24	why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)
23	applicant's name (full, middle, last, whether same now as in high school)
19	whether applicant has questions
19	closing of some kind (thanks exchanged, leavetaking)
17	applicant's living situation (i.e., at home, alone, with parents)
8	application form (whether applicant has it, whether information on it is current)

Numbers refer to the number of utterances that were contained in each topic of both NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews.

+ topic occurred in two (but not three) NS-NNS interviews  
 = topic occurred in two (but not three) NS-NS interviews  
 - topic never occurred in NS-NS interviews

Table 6 shows the results for analysis 5, which was done to determine the general (as opposed to job-specific) lexical items apt to be used by interviewers conducting entry-level job interviews. In order to give some notion as to how the lexical items in this table might be graded, the grading scale developed by Hindmarsh (1980) (discussed earlier in this thesis) was used. This scale, which has five levels, appears at the top of Table 6; lexical items in the table are graded as they were in Hindmarsh's list. As mentioned earlier, items from the first two levels are ignored here. The absence of a number or grading before a lexical item in this table indicates that the item did not appear in Hindmarsh's list. It may be noted here that in a few cases, items also were graded at levels 6 and 7. These items were so graded because Hindmarsh had included these items in his work, based on some preliminary research which suggested that level 6 probably correlates with about 6,500 items, while level 7 appears to involve about 8,500 lexical items.

Items in Table 6 are listed in alphabetical order. Where there might be confusion as to the meaning of a particular item (i.e., if the word has more than one semantic value), parenthetical notes are given to clarify the intended meaning. The items are shown as they appeared in the interviews; there are parenthetical notes to indicate where more than one form of an item occurred

(e.g., singular and plural, present and past tenses).  
Summary tables for Table 6 are located in Appendix B  
(Tables 6.a through 6.f).



Table 6  
Lexical Items Found in the Entry-Level  
Job Interview Data

Grading Scale for lexical items		cumulative total		(Words from levels 1 & 2 were omitted from this analysis.)		NS-NS		NS-NNS	
level	1	598							
	2	1215							
	3	2207							
	4	3241							
	5	4470							
	(Hindmarsh 1980:xtii)								
	L	>ndscaping/custodi=I interviews		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2
	R	Best food restaurant interviews		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2
4*	activities					1+			
4	appearance								1
4	application (s)					1	1	1	1
3	apply (ed)			1	1				
	alien registration (card or number)							2	2
3	attend (ing)					1	1	1	1
	availability								1

\*The number to the left of an item indicates the grading given the item by Hindmarsh.  
†Each number here refers to the number of times an item was used by interviewer during an interview.

Table 6 (Continued)  
 Lexical Items Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS			NS-NNS				
		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
4	available								1
4	choice	5	4			3			
4	citizen					1	1		
3	college			1					
	commute	1	1						
6	consider		1			1	1		
4	contact (verb)		1			1			
5	current (adj. - topical, ongoing)				1			1	
3	decision								1
5	dependents	1	1						
3	directions						1		
5	(driver's) license	2	1			1	1		
3	employed	1	1						

Table 6 (Continued)  
 Lexical Items Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS				NS-NNS			
		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
3	employment								1
	evaluation								1
4	experience (noun)	1	1			2	2		
4	follow (ing), (to understand)								3
7	freeze (noun, as in hiring freeze)								2
	frustrations				1				
	fulfillme					1			
3	future			1	1				
6	goals					1			
	graduate (verb)								1
3	hire (ed, ing), (verb)	3	2	1		3	7	1	1
3	inform (ed)	1	1						
4	instructions								3

T>10 6 (Continued)  
 Lexical Items Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS				NS-NNS			
3	Interested	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
3	Interested (verb)			1					
4	Interview (s), (noun and verb form)					1	1	1	1
	locations		2						
7	major (verb, take a degree principally in)			1					
4	manager					1		1	
4	opening (s), (unfilled work position)			1				1	
4	original							1	
4	parttime					1		1	
4	performance (carrying out of duties)								1
4	permanent			1					
5	position (job, post)			1	2				
4	possibility								1

Table 6 (Continued)  
 Lexical Items Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS			NS-NNS				
		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
3	prefer	2	1			2			
5	preference	1	1						
	priority		1						
	professionally			1					
6	raise (salary increase)								1
	recruit	1							
4	relatives	1	1			1			
3	retiring (give up work)		1						
4	satisfaction			1					
4	select (ed)		1			1			
	service (military)		1						
	session			1					
	shift (noun, as in work shift)								4

Table 6 (continued)  
 Lexical Items Found in the Entry-Level  
 Job Interview Data

		NS-NS				NS-NNS			
		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
4	single (not married)	1							
3	spare (adj., as in spare time)							1	
5	sports			1				1	1
4	staff (group of workers)		1						
3	system		2						
4	temporary							1	
	trade school	1	1						
	transportation							1	
3	type (kind)	1							
	unemployed	1							
3	university	1	1						
	updated	1							
	versatility								1

The results for analysis 6 are to be found in Table 7, which gives the raw scores and percentages of questions, statements and imperatives in the interviewers' utterances. While questions dominated in both NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews, the proportion of questions was slightly higher in the interviews with NNSs. The difference was not, however, enough to be statistically significant ( $\chi^2 \approx 2.72$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.5$ , NS, Yates correction applied). Imperatives occurred very infrequently in the data, accounting for only 1% of the utterances in both kinds of interviews.

Table 7

Proportions of utterances in NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews formed by Questions, Statements, and Imperatives

	Questions		Statements		Imperatives	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
NS-NS	122	63	70	36	2	1
NS-NNS	241	70	99	29	4	1

(Questions x statements,  $\chi^2 = 2.72$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.5$ , NS)

Table 8 shows the results for analysis 7, which involved an examination of the interviewers' questions, to find what proportion of them were intonation (uninverted), wh-, yes/no, alternative (or-choice), and tag questions.

Raw scores and percentages are given in Table 8 for each classification. The frequency of intonation, wh-, yes/no, and alternative questions in NS-NS and SNN-NS interviews differed significantly ( $\chi^2 = 10.17$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .005$ ). Both NS-NS and SNN-NS interviews were similar with regard to the small proportions of questions that were tag (accounting for 1% of the questions in both kinds of interviews), and alternative (accounting for 2% and 3% of the NS-NS and SNN-NS interview questions, respectively). The yes/no question was the next most frequently used question type in both kinds of interviews, accounting for 24% of the question types in NS-NS interviews, and 20% of the question types in SNN-NS interviews.

While NS-NS and SNN-NS interviews showed considerable similarity concerning the extent to which tag, alternative, and yes/no questions were used, the two kinds of interviews differed significantly regarding the proportions of intonation and wh- questions. In the NS-SNN interviews, 27% of the questions asked by the interviewers were wh- questions, and almost half (49%) of the questions were intonation questions. When asking questions of NS applicants, however, the interviewers tended to use mostly wh- questions (wh- questions comprised 39% of the question types in NS-NS interviews); intonation questions were the second most frequently used



question type in these interviews, comprising 34% of the questions.

Table 8

Proportions of Questions in NS-NS and NS-NNS Interviews Formed by Intonation, Wh-, Yes/no, Alternative, and Tag Questions

	Intonation		Wh		Yes/No		Alternative		Tag	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NS-NS	41	34	48	39	30	24	2	2	1	1
NS-NNS	118	49	64	27	79	20	8	3	2	1

( $\chi^2 = 10.17$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p > .005$ )  
Intonation x Wh x Yes/no x Alternative,

Analysis 8 involved counting the number of side sequences that occurred per total number of utterances in NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews. From Table 9, which gives the results of this analysis, it can be seen that interviews with NNS applicants contained a significantly greater number of side sequences than did the interviews with NS applicants ( $\chi^2 = 63.44$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .001$ , Yates correction applied), indicating that sizable portions of the NS-NS interviews were given so making repairs in the interview conversation.

Analysis 9 was to determine the basic structure of job interviews. The way the content of the entry-level job interviews was organized turned out to be quite compatible with the descriptions of job interview structure given in related literature on job interviews. The following is a synopsis of what this literature reports on how job interviews are structured, together with additional information from the entry-level job interview data. The first part of the job interview is the opening or introduction, in which participants greet and/or get acquainted with one another. At this time, the interviewer generally tells the applicant or indicates to that person in some way where s/he should sit. Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajirrotutu (1982:132) note a transition point between the opening and main portion of the interview; this point takes place when the interviewer begins

Table 9  
Total Number of Side Sequences per Total Number of Utterances in NS-NS and NS-NNS Interviews

		(X <sup>2</sup> = 63.44, df = 1, p < .001)	
	NS-NS	NS-NNS	Utterances
9	119	468	703
		Side Sequences	



applicant, often, if not usually, by asking questions (Bachhuber and Harwood 1978). The interviewer may also give information about the firm **s/he** represents. It is usually as the interview progresses that the applicant has opportunities to sell **him/herself** by highlighting training and past experiences that would be of value to the employer (Bachhuber and Harwood 1978, Kushner 1982). The transition point between the main interview and the closing takes place when the interviewer asks if the applicant has questions. At this time, the applicant has an opportunity to reverse roles and become the questioner rather than the questionee (Akinmaso and **Seabrook** Ajitrotutu 1982); this possibility for a role reversal gives the applicant additional opportunities to show a vital interest in some aspect of the job, and thus sell **him/herself** further (Bachhuber and Harwood 1978). The closing begins with the interviewer providing the applicant with information about what that applicant can expect to happen as a result of the interview (**e.g.**, future contact from the employer). Finally, the interviewer is thanked (and/or vice versa), **goodbyes** may be exchanged, and the interview is concluded (Bachhuber and Harwood 1978).

Figure 2 (below) gives an idea of the manner in which the most frequently occurring topics in the entry-level job interviews (essentially, those topics found in three

of "salary/pay information." This topic was omitted since of either NS-NS or NS-NNS interviews), with the exception (which contains the topics that occurred in three or more structure, are identical to the ones found in Table 5 Topics found in Figure 2, which covers job interview applicants.

Information after he was finished questioning the restaurant interviewer had a tendency to give most of this throughout the interviews, though the fast foods Miscellaneous information about the job was to be found organization) tended to occur somewhat later.

experience, education, reason for wanting to work for the while the more indirect questions (e.g., applicant's work situation) tended to occur fairly early in the interviews, applicant's name, address, transportation, living questions or topics dealing with practical matters (e.g.,

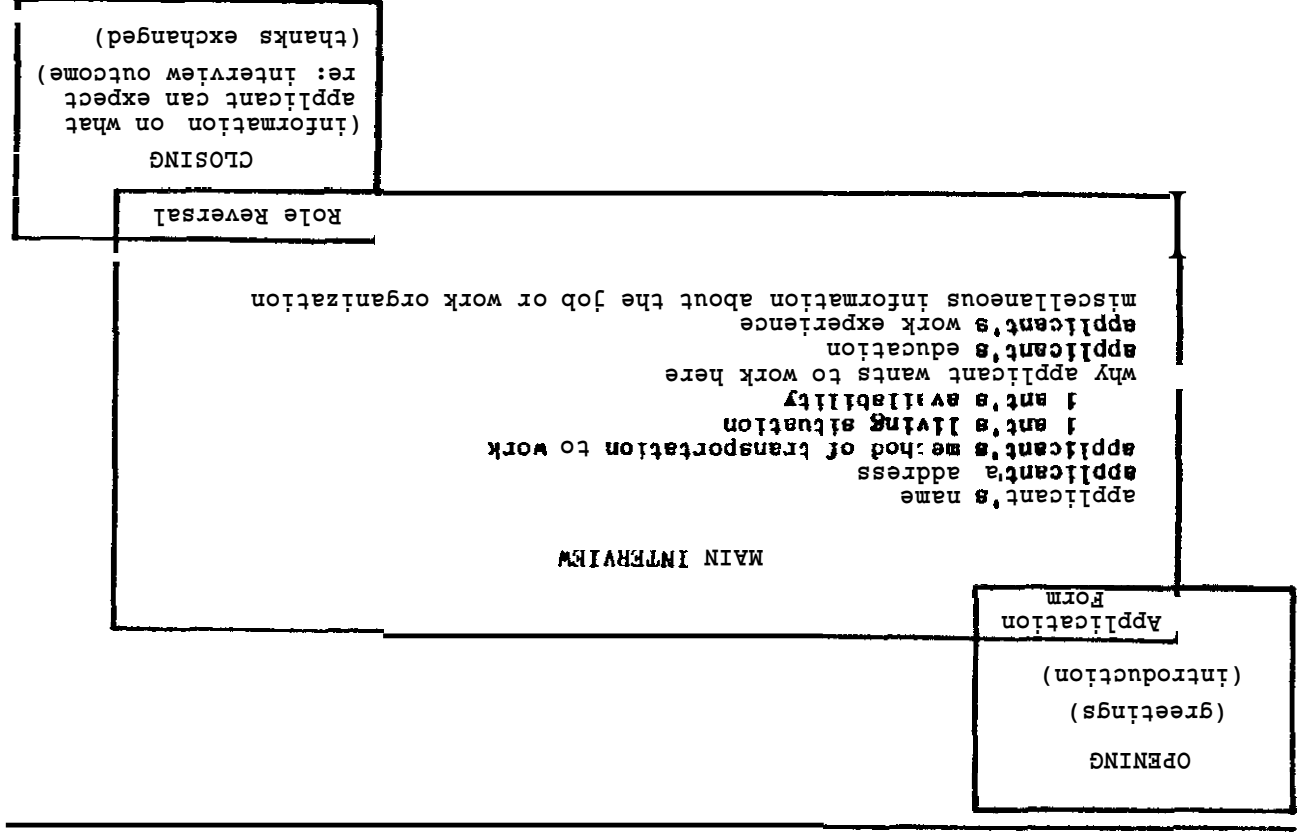
occurred. However, it can be said that generally differed somewhat as to the order in which topics actually occurred in the interviews, since all interviews are placed only roughly approximates the way these topics the topics in the main interview section of this figure above. It should be pointed out that the order in which corresponds to the synopsis of job interviews outlined

from Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajitrotutu (1982:133), organized. The framework for this figure, which was taken or more of either NS-NS or NS-NNS interviews) were

it was initiated only by applicants. Furthermore, for the purposes of this figure, such a topic could be subsumed by the topic covering miscellaneous information about the job. As discussed earlier, the transition point between the main interview and closing, which is **labeled** "role reversal," stands for the topic "whether the applicant has questions." One additional point is that "application form" would have been included on this figure even had it not been a topic that occurred in three **NS-NNS** interviews, since, as previously mentioned, the application form served as a transition point between the opening and main portions of the interview.

The Basic Structure of the Entry-Level Job Interviews"

Figure 2



Outline for this figure taken from Akinnaso and Seabrook Ajiroutu (1982:133)

The 10th and final analysis focused on the communicative characteristics of job interviews. In order for an applicant to perform successfully in a job interview situation, that person must be aware of and abide by certain conventions for interaction that govern expected behavior in a job interview. As discussed in the Literature Review section of this paper, members of outside or minority cultures who do not know these conventions or rules are generally penalized, since an understanding of and willingness or ability to comply with such rules is often crucial to employability (Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz 1982, Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajirrotutu 1982). For this reason, it is especially important to consider here the communicative (and possibly other) behaviors which are specific to job interviews and with which the target group of learners must be familiar. First, some basic information on the nature of job interview interaction is given here; an understanding of such information would be a prerequisite for anyone planning to design materials on job interviews. A list of basic rules and recommendations for job applicants follows, and finally, in light of this prescriptive information given for job applicants, certain communicative behaviors of applicants participating in this study (particularly the **NNSs**) are considered, since these behaviors hold implications for materials design.



Akinaso and **Seabrook** Ajitrotutu (1982) give a fairly thorough account of the basic characteristics of job interviews. The authors begin by discussing the nature of job interviews in general; they state that the interview is one kind of conversation that has quite possibly been in existence for as long as language itself. Akinaso and **Seabrook** Ajitrotutu (1982:119,120) also have this to say about the interview:

In its simplest form, it is prototypically manifested as an interrogative encounter between someone who has the right or privilege to know and another in a less powerful position who is obliged to respond, rather defensively, to justify his/her action, to explain his/her problems, to give up him/herself for evaluation. The authors propose that the last discussion God had with Adam in the Garden of Eden provides us with the original model for the interview. Of this they say: "That the origin of human problems is traceable to God's decision during this interview is symbolic of the role of interviews in modern society" (1982:120). Elaborating further on the role of interviews in modern society, they note:

With the growth of complex social and political institutions, the division of labor, and the development of the bureaucracy, the interview

has become the major medium for determining people's access to political, social, and economic rewards.

Today, the job interview is likely to be the most prevalent kind of interview; it is also the most formal, and "perhaps the most crucial face-to-face encounter in ethnically mixed industrial societies" (1982:120).

job interview conversation is quite different from ordinary conversation. The job interview is a formal speech event for which participants must (usually) schedule an appointment. In addition, job interviews are goal oriented. Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajitutu (1982:121) note: "The interviewee wants the job; the interviewer wishes to select the most suitable candidate(s)." The goal is to attain a favorable outcome. The job interview also differs from ordinary conversation in that it involves the use of some kind of agenda or list of items to be covered. Moreover, the proceedings of the interview are likely to be recorded, most often in writing.

Of the (usually) two participants in job interviews, it is the interviewer who wields the power. The interviewer has control over the format of the interview, the topics of conversation, and the level of formality. And, it is the interviewer who decides when it is time to close the interview. According to Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajitutu (1982:121), the interviewer's "greatest weapon"

is perhaps "the legitimate responsibility for asking questions designed to elicit responses by which the interviewee will be evaluated." The applicant's role is confined primarily to answering these questions--questions which normally require the applicant to reveal information about **his/her** personal background and experiences, and perhaps attitudes and beliefs as well. The authors also contend that unless given explicit permission to do so, the applicant may not ask questions, unless they are for clarification. There is additional evidence of the interviewer's power, the authors maintain, in that the interviewer is not obligated to answer the applicant's questions (e.g., questions may be sidestepped); furthermore, the interviewer is allowed to interrupt the applicant, although it would be considered unacceptable behavior for the applicant to do likewise. While generally in agreement with the information on job interviews presented by **Akinfoso** and **Seabrook** Ajirotutu, there are some other sources of information on job interviews which do not seem to conform quite so enthusiastically to the notion of such a huge imbalance of power between interviewer and applicant. Porter (1979), for example, says that the interview should be thought of as a two-way process in which both interviewer and applicant are evaluating. While it is common knowledge that the interviewer is involved in evaluating the

applicant, the applicant should also be making an evaluation of the job and work organization to get a feeling for how s/he would fit in and whether or not the job would be what s/he wants. Similarly, Dickhut (1981:192) views the interview as a "mutual check-up": "an exchange of information and impressions" between interviewer and applicant.

The only major difference between the information given by Akinvaso and Seabrook Afiroutu (1982) and the information given by other literature on job interviews had to do with the issue of the applicant asking questions. Akinvaso and Seabrook Afiroutu (1982) hold that the applicant may ask questions only if explicitly given permission to do so. However, it is suggested elsewhere (Kushner 1982, Dickhut 1981, Job Research Information: Hints for Starting Your New Career 1978) that the applicant should ask questions, if, at the closing of the interview, the interviewer has overlooked matters important to that applicant (e.g., work hours, what applicant can expect in the way of future contact from interviewer). In such cases, the applicant would be, as Kushner (1981:58) says, "justified in inquiring courteously" about such items.

The importance of selling yourself in a job interview had to be the major theme to emerge from the literature review done for this study. Bachhuber and Harwood

(1978:280,281) point out that "You have some skills and experiences that are critical to your salability, and it is your task to communicate these qualities to the interviewer." And Kushner (1982) actually views the job interview as a type of sales transaction in which the applicant **him/herself** is the product to be merchandised. Indeed, practically all works consulted stress the value of selling yourself in a job interview. In short, selling yourself involves convincing the interviewer of your worth. In order to do this, you must be very familiar with your own positive characteristics, especially those attributes you possess which are relevant to the job. Moreover, you must be able to communicate these things about yourself to the interviewer (Kushner 1982, Dickhut 1981, Bachhuber and Harwood 1978). You must also be aware of the relationship, no matter how indirect, between the questions asked by the interviewer and the job for which you are applying; it is crucial that you, as an applicant, go beyond the surface meaning of interview questions to infer the kind of answer the interviewer expects of you, **i.e.**, an answer that both highlights your positive characteristics and is relevant to the job being applied for (Jupp, Roberts and **Cook-Gunperz** 1982, Akinmaso and **Seabrook** Ajiroutu 1982). The problems and pitfalls of an applicant's failure to do this have already been noted elsewhere in this thesis (see

discussion of Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz' work in the literature Review section).

The following list presents a summary of do's and don'ts for job applicants. The sources consulted for this information (Bachhuber and Harwood 1978, Kushner 1982, Dickhut 1981, Job Research Information: Hints for Starting your New Career 1978, Porter 1979, Howell 1951, Looking for a Job? n.d.) concurred with these rules and recommendations.

1. Preparation is essential, so do your homework in advance: know as much as you can about the company, the work for which you are applying, and why you could handle the job.
2. Also, take a guide sheet with you to the interview that lists your personal data, e.g., jobs, job duties, and any experience relevant to the work for which you are interviewing.
3. Take with you to the interview two pens, your social security card (refugees should take their alien registration cards as well) and, if required, any special licenses or training certificates you may have (Kushner 1982).
4. Your physical appearance is very important; make a good impression by being dressed neatly and appropriately.

5. Go to the interview alone and arrive about ten minutes early. Be sure you know where you are going so you will not be late.
6. Do not smoke or chew gum.
7. If the interviewer is late, wait patiently (read a book or magazine, especially company literature, if available).
8. Remain standing until you are offered a seat. Watch your posture, but try to be relaxed.
9. Be pleasant (smile once in awhile) and polite. Also be honest and accurate. Stay alert and make eye contact with the interviewer. Do not call the interviewer by first name.
10. Think before speaking. Speak clearly. Be concise, relevant and to the point. Do not overelaborate.
11. Do not interrupt the interviewer. Do not tell the interviewer your personal problems (unless specifically asked about them).
12. Always let the interviewer take the lead. Never try to control the conversation.
13. Show a positive interest in the job (but it is important to be sincere at the same time). You might, for example, look for opportunities during the interview to show you have done some research on the job or company. Also, try to learn what you can

16. When the interviewer indicates the interview is finished, thank her or him and leave promptly. Do not try to prolong the interview.
15. Be sure to have questions ready for the point in the interview when the interviewer asks if you have any questions. Your questions should indicate to the interviewer your interest in the job and/or company. For instance, you might want to ask about hours of employment, opportunities for future advancement with the company, or the furthering of your education. While it is generally considered acceptable to ask about salary (but only towards the end of the interview), be very careful not to give the impression that you are only interested in what the company can do for you.
14. Communicate to the interviewer your marketable and positive characteristics and/or experiences. Do not overlook any possible qualifications you may have which are relevant to the job. Suggest ways in which you would be of benefit to the company. If you are lacking in experience, education and/or skills, stress your willingness and desire to learn and to work hard.
- during the interview about the company and the position for which you are interviewing.



17. You may want to follow up on the interview with a note or phone call a few days later, both to thank the interviewer again and to reaffirm your interest in the job.

18. Be prepared for rejection and do not become discouraged (it generally takes a number of interviews before an applicant is able to secure a job).

19. Before participating in an actual interview, it is suggested that you practice your interviewing skills in simulated interviews. You can have a friend act as the interviewer.

When examining the entry-level job interview data in light of the above list of established conventions for job applicants, deficiencies in the **communicative** behaviors of applicants participating in this study became apparent. (Since this study is based on tape recorded transactions, nonverbal behaviors such as how an applicant was dressed or whether s/he made eye contact are not addressed here.) Because the aim of this study is to gather information which would be of use in designing **materials** on job interviews for the target group of learners, the behaviors of NNS applicants are the main focus here, although the behaviors of NS applicants are also considered. By measuring the actual communicative behaviors of the NNS applicants (who are representative of the target group)

against the established rules for a job applicant's communicative behavior in a job interview, it should be possible to determine what the particular communicative needs of the learner might be; where the data show there are deficiencies or shortcomings in the interactional behaviors of the NNS applicants would indicate which behaviors need to be given particular attention in materials for that learner.

Given the clear emphasis the literature placed on the selling of oneself in a job interview, the proficiencies of the entry-level job applicants with regard to this practice is naturally a point that is given consideration here. In order to determine how effective applicants were at selling themselves in the entry-level interviews, the ways in which they responded both to questions pertaining to their work experience and to questions asking why they wanted to work for the organization are examined. These two kinds of questions were chosen for the purpose of evaluating the applicants' abilities to sell themselves because: 1) both kinds of questions occurred frequently, i.e., at least once (and in the case of questions to do with work experience, sometimes more than once) in every interview (thus indicating that such questions would be apt to occur in other entry-level job interviews as well); and 2) both kinds of questions afford applicants maximal opportunities to sell themselves: questions relating to

the applicant's work experience invite applicants to communicate their marketable characteristics, experiences and/or qualifications relevant to the job (Kushner 1982, Bachhuber and Harwood 1978), while questions asking "Why do you want to work here?" offer them an opportunity to express an interest in the work or company (Kushner 1982). Since a good deal of attention was generally given in the entry-level job interviews to the topic of the applicant's work experience (see Table 5, which ranks topics in importance according to the number of utterances each topic contained), the responses given by applicants to questions about their work experience would seem to be particularly important to consider here.

With one possible exception to be discussed, most of the answers NS applicants gave in response to questions about their work experience were adequate. In general, the NS applicants were able to communicate successfully to the interviewer that they would have something of value to offer the employer. Those applicants who seemed the most successful at selling themselves conveyed their potential worth by what they said (by describing work skills and duties) and by the manner in which they said it (they conveyed a self confident and positive attitude). Furthermore, the applicants who appeared to sell themselves most effectively were those who offered information about their work experience with little

prompting from the interviewer, as did the applicant in the following exchange which took place between the interviewer of the fast foods restaurant and one of the NS applicants:

Interviewer

Applicant

OK, this other job just before Star wheels..um..

cleaner business?

Yeah, well I worked doing

maintenance in a dry cl..it was actually a laundromat..

and uh what I did was

maintenance on uh..washing

machines and dryers. I..

made sure that the areas

where the dryers..didn't

build up with dust because

there's a lot of dust in

dryers so they're fire

hazards..I changed motors on

dryers and washing machines

um..just generally

maintenance..keeping things

clean..painting uh..whatever

the job demanded, you know..

Oh, OK.

You know, I'd do a lot of

cleaning... a lot of scrubbing

and whatnot.

OK.

It was pretty much routine

maintenance for a uh,

laundromat situation.

With the possible exception of overelaborating

towards the end of this exchange, this applicant has

abided by the rules for selling yourself in a job

interview. For one, the applicant immediately took

advantage of an opportunity to discuss and offer

information about his past work, based on what seems to be

a rather minimal cue from the interviewer. Also, by

readily communicating his past duties and

responsibilities, this applicant not only relays his

skills; he also manages to convey the impression that he

is accomplished at being versatile in his work--an

important selling point, especially at this fast foods

restaurant where there is an emphasis on a worker's

ability to be versatile.

The next example is of a NS who was applying for

work, primarily as a groundskeeper (his first choice for

work).

Applicant

Interviewer

1. Do you have any experience

as a groundskeeper?

No.

You haven't even cleaned

5. your own yard? Or—

Oh yeah..(I've done)

yardwork around my own house

((phone stops)) and a little

bit around my school..but..I

wasn't hired for anything.

I've..built some fences and

stuff for friends.

When you clean(ed) your yard

at home..did you use any

15. mechanical equipment?

Yeah, a lawnmower, a

weed-eater.

What type of power mower did

you use..was it a reel-type

20. or a rotary?

Rotary (I think)..yeah

rotary.

Can you use a weed-eater?

A weed-eater..yeah. ((3))

25. And I've also had some

groundskeeper. that he in fact did have a fair amount of experience as a experience progressed, the applicant was able to reveal be seen from the above exchange that as the topic of work question beyond the applicant's initial response. It can applicant, the interviewer was willing to pursue the the job should not be overlooked. Fortunately for this not be an issue; any qualifications one has relevant to however, whether or not one was paid for past work need (1981), Kushner (1982), and Bachhuber and Harwood (1978), had not been paid for his work. According to Dickhut first reluctant to mention his related experience since he related to the job. It appears that the applicant was at before this applicant began to convey some of his assets interviewer ("You haven't even cleaned your own yard?") was less than adequate. It took some prompting by the In this case, the applicant's initial answer (line 3)

again))  
 ((phone begins ringing  
 (and I've cut um off).  
 couple (of) trees..(xx)  
 30. Cut logs..and I've trimmed a  
 trees or just cut logs?  
 ((??)) What did you do..trim  
 saws.  
 experience with uh, chain

While NS applicants were generally satisfactory in indicating to the interviewer that they would have something of value to offer the employer or organization, most, if not all, fell short in the task of selling themselves when it came to expressing or demonstrating an interest in the job being applied for. According to Bachhuber and Harwood (1978), in order to successfully answer the question, "Why do you want to work here?", the applicant must refer to some positive feature (or features) of the job or work organization that has inspired **her/his** interest in the job. In order to do this, applicants would need to know something about the work for which they are applying (as mentioned earlier, applicants in this study were given as much information as possible prior to their interviews). Bachhuber and Harwood (1978:277) also point out that applicants should try to answer this question "in terms of what will interest the employer." Some examples of appropriate responses to this question that were given by Kushner (1982:54) include expressing an interest in the nature of the work or business, and referring to the company's excellent reputation in dealing with the public and/or with its employees.

When the NS applicants in this study were asked "Why do you want to work here?", two of them said they needed the money, and another indicated that since he did not



had to say. There were two other possible problem areas for the NS applicants in the NS-NS interviews. For one, when asked if they had questions to ask of the interviewer, only one of the NSs took the opportunity to ask a question (a question about work hours). As pointed out elsewhere

least on the right track, according to what the literature good opportunity for employees), this applicant was at could have given a reason why working for the state is a been more effective had he been more specific (e.g., he While this applicant's response would undoubtedly have

place to work for.

It's a good...good

the state ((2))

opportunity (with)

I think um, good

the state?

Why do you want to work for

Interviewer Applicant

advises:

an answer that was in keeping with what the literature applying for work as a groundskeeper (a state job), gave or outstanding traits of the job or company. Only one NS, that there was an interest in the job due to some positive Clearly, such answers did nothing to show interviewers have local references, it was hard to find work elsewhere.

in this thesis, it is recommended that applicants ask something at this point in the interview, in order to demonstrate that they are interested in the work or company (and thus take advantage of yet another opportunity to sell themselves).

The other way in which some of the NS applicants seemed to fall short of the rules for communicative behavior in job interviews had to do with the amount of information they gave in response to questions in general. One NS applicant tended to overelaborate on occasion, while two others showed a tendency towards underelaboration, as, for example, in the following:

Interviewer  
Applicant

You work anyplace?

I've been unemployed.

In this case, it seems, at least to this writer, that some explanation was in order on the part of the applicant as to his present employment situation. It is possible that because the applicant failed to offer some reasonable explanation as to why he had been unemployed, the interviewer may have been led to speculate that this applicant might lack the necessary motivation to work for him.

With the exception of what has been noted above, the NS applicants conducted themselves quite appropriately with regard to prescribed interactional behaviors. For

example, none interrupted the interviewer, nor did they speak of personal problems. All were polite, spoke clearly, and gave the interviewer control of the conversation.

Turning now to the communicative behaviors of the NNS applicants, the extent to which these applicants abided by the rules for interview interaction are considered. In view of the importance the literature placed on the selling of oneself, evidence of this behavior or its lack on the part of the NNS applicants bears close examination. As will be discussed here, there were a few ways in which some of the NNS appeared to be selling themselves successfully in the entry-level interviews. However, few NNS did so by communicating their marketable experiences to the interviewer. Indeed, when responding to questions about their work experience, the NNS generally revealed little that could have convinced the interviewer that they would have much to offer the employer. The following example (taken from a fast foods restaurant interview) constitutes the shortest of such exchanges:

Interviewer: Have you even worked before?

Applicant: No.

When answering this question, it seems this applicant succeeded in selling himself short, rather than selling

himself to the interviewer. However, it must be pointed

out that, like some of the other NNS applicants in this

study, this applicant effectively managed to sell himself

elsewhere in the interview:

Interviewer

Applicant

Um... why do you want to work

at ((names restaurant))?

Yeah, I like to learn..

first uh I like to learn

(xx) this job and second

(um I want to learn) (xx).

Here, the applicant has expressed an interest in the job

and a desire to learn how to do it.

The other NNS who was interviewed for work with the

fast foods restaurant responded to questions about his

work experience as follows:

Have you ever worked with

food in Vietnam? Have you

cooked... hamburgers or

anything like that?

Yeah.

Did you?

Yeah.

OK. ((3)) OK..um..(over here

it) says you've never worked

before. You didn't?

of what this applicant had to say here and elsewhere in previous work experience. (Unfortunately, a fair amount one of the NNS who indicated that he had had some primarily as a groundskeeper. This applicant was the only custodial services and a NNS who was applying for work, place between the interviewer for landscaping and area of selling themselves. The following exchange took two NNS applicants also reveals some shortcomings in the An examination of some responses given by the other it is not included here. to work for the restaurant was essentially unintelligible, this applicant's response to the question of why he wanted assumed he at least was familiar with doing so. Since in the interview where appropriate, and thus it can be for clarification from the interviewer two times elsewhere answers. It should be noted that this applicant did ask was also confused as to the meaning of this applicant's of the questions asked of him. Clearly, the interviewer difficult to determine whether he in fact understood any (nor did he offer) to elaborate on his answers, it is questions about his work experience, and was not asked Because this applicant was only asked **yes/no**

((3)) OK. ((3)) Hmm. ((3))

No? OK. Um, let's see now.

Yeah.

the interview was unintelligible, since he mumbled and was often barely audible.)

Interviewer

Applicant

The only job you had was

making noodles?

(xx)

You just made noodles..you

didn't do anything else in

the shop?

Umm..just made noodles.

So your only experience so

far is..working with your

family making noodles?

(xx)

You did any other kind of

work..other than making

noodles?

Yeah I (cooked it) and

after that I have (xx)

Oh, you sliced it all up?

Yeah, yeah (xx)

So you don't have any other

experience as a janitor or

groundskeeper then?

Yeah ((2)) But uh, (xx) I

study about..

You studied in school you

said you (were) ..

(xx)

agriculture in school so..

This applicant was able to communicate something of

his past work experience and to point out his relevant

education to the interviewer. However, for this person to

'put his best foot forward' in a job interview, more is

needed. The applicant needs to be able to present his

past experience in an intelligible and positive way, and

without prompting from the interviewer. Furthermore, it

is important that the applicant not overlook any

qualifications he may have which are related to the jobs

for which he is applying. If, for example, clean-up

duties were **involved** in his job as a noodle maker, this

would need to be related to the interviewer.

Although some of this applicant's answer to the

question "Why do you want to work here?" was not

intelligible, the response he gave seemed at least

somewhat promising; from his reply, the applicant sounds

quite motivated:

Interviewer

Applicant

Why do you want to work over

here?

((3)) Because I want to (xx) (and I want to get a job and study.)

The other NNS applicant to apply with landscaping and custodial services was someone who (based on the writer's personal knowledge) had much experience with farming, since he had farmed with his family in his country. Yet, as the following exchange indicates, this experience was not made known to the interviewer.

Interviewer Applicant

You haven't worked at any

job?

No.

Even in Laos?

No (I don't need) I (xx) in Laos.

As with the NS applicant who initially failed to

reveal any groundskeeping experience until prompted to do so by the interviewer, this applicant seems to be

discounting his farming experience because it had not been a formal job with a salary. Furthermore, this applicant did not take advantage of another opportunity to sell

himself when he answered the question "Why do you want to work here?", since his reply was simply, "Because I want to earn money." However, it is important to note that despite the apparent shortcomings in this applicant's



responses to these two questions, there was one point in the interview where his response was conducive to selling himself. (It should be mentioned here that for this particular applicant, "cook's helper" was one of the jobs presented by the interviewer as a possibility for employment with the state, and that the applicant had chosen this as his first choice for work.)

Interviewer Applicant

Do you have any experience as a cook's helper?

No, I don't have (that).

No experience?

Yeah.

Why did you select a cook's

helper as your first choice

for a job?

I want to try and I want to

learn.

(Oh you're) interested in

cooking?

Yeah, I interested.

The success of this applicant's response (to the last

two questions in the above exchange) stemmed not only from

what he said, but also from the way he said it; his voice

and tone reflected much eagerness and sincerity--two

already discussed was the insufficient amount of behavior situation, there were a few inadequacies. One inadequacy

by the NNS were quite appropriate for a job interview While many of the communicative behaviors exhibited

in the job.

questions, applicants may further demonstrate an interest

interviewer indicates they may do so, since by asking

is desirable that the applicants ask questions when the

the NS applicants did not do). As discussed earlier, it

opportunity to do so by the interviewer (something most of

four of the NNS applicants asked questions when given an

and desire to try, to learn, and to work. Moreover, all

problems. Additionally, some stressed their willingness

interviewers; and they did not bring up their personal

generally quite polite; they did not interrupt the

in job interviews. For example, these applicants were

this study abided by the rules for communicative behavior

There were many ways in which the NNS applicants in

successfully at other points in the interviews.

noted, however, some NNS did appear to sell themselves

interviewer of their worth to the employer. As was also

generally disclosed little that could have convinced the

when responding to questions about their work experience,

To reiterate an earlier point, the NNS applicants,

in their prospective employees.

qualities that personnel recruiters undoubtedly look for

devoted to selling oneself to the interviewer. Also

mentioned was the fact that one of the NNSs did not speak clearly and was therefore difficult to understand. There were at least two other problem areas in the interviews with NNSs that deserve mention. One, there seemed to be an assumption on the part of at least two of the

applicants that because they were participating in a job interview, they were going to get the job. Both of these NNSs applied for work with the fast foods restaurant, so there was, in fact, a possibility that they could become employed as a result of the interviews. However, it should be pointed out that before the interviews, these

applicants were told (in English this writer thought would be understandable) that employment with the restaurant was only a slight possibility, and was dependent on many things, such as whether the restaurant needed more employees along with the outcome of the interviews.

Nevertheless, that there was a misunderstanding either about the purpose of a job interview or about proper behavior in a job interview seems apparent from the following (lines 2 and 3):

Interviewer Applicant

1. OK..Any more questions?

Applicant..When can I start? ((3))

Interviewer..When can I start?

Applicant..I'll hold this application

5. at this time. I'll go over it

with my manager. OK..then

I'll give you a call at your

home..within 2, 3 days.

Yes.

10. Then we'll see what happens

from there..OK?

OK.

A similar question was asked by the other NNS, but

this time the misunderstanding was not handled quite so

easily:

1. Any more questions you have

for me today?

Yeah (xx)

No..you have any questions.. (How about) uh when when

5.

uh when I (xx) ((2)) when

I (xx)

I'm sorry..slow down.

When I (xx) (over here)

OK..I don't know yet. Um

10. Let me..um we'll go over

these applications 'cause I got

more applications to go over

..with some other people.

Yeah.

15. OK, I'm still giving interviews. We will give you a call within a couple of days. This is your home number. 000--..

20. 0000? Yeah my phone number

Are you home in the evening?  
 Yeah.

'Cause you go to school in the morning, yeah?

25. Yeah.

Yeah.

OK. I'll give you a call as soon as we make our decision.

OK?

30. Yeah.

Thank you for your time.

Oh! (xx) what time I can.. come (in)

35. No.. I don't know yet! I'll.. Oh.

I will tell you.. I'll call you.

Right.

(When you call me..)

Clearly, for an applicant to ask the equivalent of the question, "When can I start?" is inappropriate in any job interview where the interviewer has not already perceived by the interviewer as an attempt to gain control of the power that normally is the province of the interviewer. Given the circumstances of the interviews with NNS in this study, it does not seem likely that the interviewer here would have been offended by such a question, as he would probably attribute a question like this to a misunderstanding. Certainly, the difficulties with which this NNS-applicant had to contend in his first job interview experience were compounded by his lack of comprehension. Nonetheless, to avoid the possibility of offending future interviewers, it is important that the NNS learn about the inappropriacy of such a question. Lines 32 and 33 in the above example show the other problem area to be found in an interview with a NNS, i.e., the way this applicant prolonged the interview after the interviewer had indicated the interview was finished. As the rules for interview interaction made clear, once the interviewer indicates the interview is over, the applicant is to thank her or him and leave promptly. To do

40. Yeah.  
Then I'll let you know.  
OK?  
OK.

otherwise is to run the risk of being interpreted or  
evaluated by the interviewer as annoyingly aggressive or  
persistent. In fact, this applicant's prolonging of the  
interview did seem to be to his detriment; by the time  
this interview was finished, the patience that had  
formerly been evident in the interviewer's voice appeared  
to be waning.

The analyses done for this study were aimed at providing information about entry-level job interview discourse that would be useful in designing materials for the target group of VESL learners. The results of this study clearly reflect certain needs of these learners. Moreover, through an understanding of these needs, a materials writer should be able to determine what might best be included in (and/or excluded from) lesson materials for these particular learners.

From the results presented in Table 1, a writer preparing materials on entry-level interviews may determine which topics should be covered. The most frequently occurring topics in the interviews analyzed for this study would likely be the ones most apt to occur in other entry level interviews. It is reasonable to suggest that these same topics be included in materials. Since language programs vary in terms of their duration, the needs of those who create materials for these different programs also vary. Writers creating materials for short-term language programs need to concentrate principally on topics most essential to entry-level job interviews, i.e., those topics that occurred the most frequently, and with which the learner must therefore be familiar. Writers planning materials for language

#### DISCUSSION

#### CHAPTER IV



programs of longer duration, where time is available to study more than just the bare essentials, would have more latitude in choosing what to include in their materials. However, these writers would also probably want to base their decisions about which topics to include on the likelihood of the topics occurring in an interview. As an aid for materials design, the summary tables (Tables 1.8 through 1.1) are included in Appendix A. These tables were derived from Table 1, and are meant to give a clearer picture of the frequency with which topics occurred in NS-NS interviews, NS-NNS interviews, and in both kinds of interviews combined. An examination of these tables coupled with a consideration of the amount of time the users of their materials will have for learning should enable materials writers to obtain a good notion of which topics would best be included in their materials. Also, having separate tables for NS-NNS interviews and NS-NS interviews (Tables 1.a through 1.d) makes it easier for one to see what is present in one kind of interview, but absent in the other. In this way, writers may get an idea of what additional topics should be included in materials to be designed for such **NNS**. For example, the writer might want to consider a reference in the materials to application forms--a topic found only in NS-NNS interviews.

Table 1 shows that forty-nine different topics occurred in the eight interviews. Twenty-six of these topics occurred in both NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews, while ten of the forty-nine topics were found only in NS-NS interviews, and the remaining thirteen topics (two of which were initiated by the NNS applicants) were found only in the NS-NNS interviews. While this may suggest some differences between the topics of the NS-NS interviews and those of the NS-NNS interviews, the differences, for the most part, do not appear to be very significant. Indeed, the similarities between the two kinds of interviews in terms of topics seem to outweigh the differences.

As Table 5 clearly illustrates, when a topic occurred in three or more NS-NS interviews, the same topic also occurred in at least two (although usually more than two) of the NS-NNS interviews. Conversely, when a topic occurred in at least three of the NS-NNS interviews, that same topic was apt to occur in at least two of the NS-NS interviews. There were only two exceptions to this: the topic concerning job application forms and the topic of **salary/pay** information (which was, in every case, initiated by the NNS applicants). Each of these topics was found in three NS-NNS interviews, but did not occur in the NS-NS interviews.

In designing a short-term language program covering only the essentials, it would seem that those topics that occurred in three or more of either NS-NN or NS-NNN interviews (see Table 5) would be the most important to include. All of these topics, with the exception of the two topics that occurred only in the NS-NNN interviews (application form and **salary/pay** information), were the ones that took place in the majority of the interviews (i.e., these topics were found in at least five of the eight interviews). Of the topics concerned with application forms and salary information, it would seem necessary to include at least the one having to do with application forms, since these forms are an integral part of entry-level job interviews. While the topic of salary seems less crucial, it may be desirable to include it, particularly in view of the rules for appropriate communicative behavior in job interviews, which state that applicants should be careful of giving the impression that they are mainly interested in what the company can do for them. Since the other topics to be found exclusively in either NS-NN or NS-NNN interviews never occurred in more than two of the eight interviews, they are not too likely to be essential items to include in materials.

There are two more ways in which Table 1 may prove helpful in designing materials. First, in addition to showing topics and their frequencies across the eight

interviews. Table 1 also shows the number of times a topic was brought up within an individual interview; more than one occurrence of a certain topic may be an indication that the interviewer considers the topic important. Second, each topic in each interview was given a mark to indicate whether the function of the utterances occurring within the topic contained a reference to present or nonpresent time, or both. Although, as Table 2 shows, the difference between NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews was not significant in this respect, it may be useful for a writer to see the temporal marking of an individual topic. As previously noted, there was originally a conjecture that the discourse in the NS-NNS interviews might be more restricted than the discourse in the NS-NS interviews, in that the conversational matters might be more limited to the speakers' current time reference. As Table 2 reveals, the topics of the interviews with **NNSs** were **only** slightly more concerned with present time than were the topics of the NS-NS interviews. This may, at least in part, be due to the fact that there are certain topics which are integral to these interviews, requiring the interviewer to refer to nonpresent time, regardless of whether the applicant is a NS of English, or a NNS of limited English proficiency. It would not be possible, for example, for an interviewer to inquire about an applicant's past education or work experience without

referring to the past. At any rate, the ways in which the NNS applicants were able to handle topics referring to nonpresent time would suggest that their deficiencies in English were exceeded by their cognitive maturity.

While Table 1 provides a good notion of which topics are the most important to include in materials, Tables 3, 4 and 5 further refine this by indicating how much attention might best be given to each of these topics. The fact that some topics (e.g., applicant's work experience, education, and availability) were shown by these tables to be the topics which commanded most of the attention in the entry-level interviews suggests that these are the topics which deserve the most emphasis in materials. As Tables 3, 4 and 5 show, there are other topics which, while obligatory, would require less attention in materials, based on the small amount of attention they received in the interviews (e.g., applicant's method of transportation, why applicant wants to work here, and closing of interview).

Table 6, which displays the lexical items used by the interviewers who participated in this study, may be used to determine which lexical items to include in materials on entry-level job interviews. Since Table 6 shows the occurrences of the lexical items in the entry-level interviews in much the same way that Table 1 did for topics, the frequency with which a lexical item occurred,

both across all eight interviews and in individual

interviews, may be easily noted. (Certain words tended

to occur frequently within individual interviews, and a

writer should take this in to account when selecting

vocabulary to present in materials.)

As did Table 1, Table 6 includes summary tables

(Tables 6.a through 6.f, located in Appendix B) to make it

easier to establish which lexical items would be most

important to present in materials for short-term language

programs, and which additional items might be considered

for language programs of longer duration. Also, by having

separate tables for the interviews with NS applicants and

those with NNS applicants (Tables 6.a through 6.d), it

would be easier for one to note any words likely to occur

primarily or exclusively in interviews with NNS, since

such words would be important to consider in materials for

these NNS (e.g., "alien registration (card or number)"

and "application").

It may be of interest to note that in a comparison of

Table 6.a with Table 6.c (the tables showing the lexical

items found in two or more of the NS-NS interviews and two

or more of the NS-NNS interviews, respectively), that

there are more than twice as many lexical items in Table

6.a than there are in Table 6.c. This suggests that the

interviewers spoke with a more restricted vocabulary to

the NNS than they did to the NS.

Table 7 could prove useful in materials writing as it shows what proportions of the interviewers' speech were questions, statements, and imperatives, and the differences between NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews in this respect. The finding that questions accounted for roughly two-thirds of the interviewers' speech in both kinds of interviews (although proportionally there were somewhat more questions in the interviews with **NNSs**) and that almost all of the remaining one-third of the interviewers' speech was made up of statements (imperatives accounted for only 15 of the interviewers' speech in both kinds of interviews) would be an indication of how these syntactic structures might best be proportioned in materials (e.g., in dialogues). Imperatives, for example, might be excluded based on their rare occurrence in the interview data.

Types and frequencies of question forms are covered in Table 8. From this data, the materials writer can make decisions concerning the kinds of questions to include in lesson materials. Thus, most probably intonation, wh-, and **yes/no** questions should be the question types required for presentation in materials, while the inclusion of tag and alternative questions would be optional.

While intonation and **wh-** questions were the most frequent question types in both NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews, there was a discrepancy between these two interviews, there was a discrepancy between these two

kinds of interviews with regard to the proportions of these two question types. An inspection of the data suggests that the relatively large percentage of intonation questions in NS-NNS interviews is accounted for by the fact that these interviews contained numerous clarification and confirmation requests. These requests, which were quite often formed by partial repetitions of noncomprehended speech, were found only infrequently in the NS-NS interviews. This is in keeping with the results of a study done by Long (1981), which also showed

discourse between NSs and NNSs to contain significantly more intonation and fewer wh-questions than did NS-NS interaction, due to clarification and confirmation requests. Moreover, Long also reported that echoic repetitions of an interlocutor's speech often served as elicitation devices for clarification and confirmation. The following extract from a NS-NNS interview is fairly typical:

Interviewer

Applicant

How long do you live in

Honolulu?

Live..uh..one a half year.

Half a year?

Ye..one a half year.

One and a half year?

Yeah.



Further evidence that there was a relatively large number of trouble spots in the NS-NS interviews is provided by Table 9, which shows the number of side sequences in both NS-NS and NS-NNS interviews. Most of these side sequences reflect efforts on the part of the interviewers to repair problems in the interview conversation, often in much the same way as was done by the interviewer in the above example. There is little doubt though, that there were also occasions when repair by the NNS applicants was indicated. While such repair was sometimes forthcoming, there were other times when NNS responded to speech they did not comprehend either by being silent, by saying "yes," or by pausing for some time before indicating they did not understand. The following example shows how one applicant responded before finally communicating his lack of understanding:

Interviewer

Applicant

Can you climb a stepladder?

((2)) Yes.

What's the highest you'd

climb? ((3)) How many feet..

how many feet have you

climbed?

((7)) I don't understand.

Although it took some time for this applicant to

state his lack of understanding, when he did so, he was

able to get the conversation recycled, learn what the interviewer was asking, and finally, give an adequate answer to his question.

The finding that such large portions of the NS-MNS interviews were given to repairing the interview conversation holds implications for materials design that would be in accord with Baxter and Levine (1982), who argue that materials should sometimes present the learner with communication that is not trouble-free. As Table 9 indicates, the communication between interviewers and NNS applicants was clearly not trouble-free. There were a number of misinterpretations and misunderstandings, and some instances of probable confusion. Such problems are aspects of everyday communication that are even more likely to be present in communication between those of different language and cultural backgrounds. For this reason, there is a need for language-teaching materials to present learners with various repair strategies that would help them deal with such problems.

Hatch (1978) has identified some strategies for language learners to help them repair trouble spots in conversation; these strategies have obvious application in the design of ESL materials. For one, Hatch believes that students should practice echoing noncomprehended speech so that it may get recycled again. For the same purpose, she also suggests students be taught to use such phrases as

'pardon me, excuse me, I don't understand, huh, I'm sorry.'" In addition, students:

- should be told to use uh-uh-ah or

whatever fillers they can to show the Native Speaker that they are really trying. Nothing stops the opportunity to carry on a conversation quicker than silence or the use of 'yes' and head-nodding when the learner does not understand (1978:434).

Indeed, for Hatch, the most important message to impress on a learner is: "Don't give up." Citing the progress made by learners who did not give up and who used the above devices to recycle, elicit, or hold on to conversation "for all they were worth," Hatch (1978:434) says that other learners should likewise be encouraged to use these strategies.

One more point should be made here in favor of emphasizing repair and other such communication strategies in language-teaching materials which address the question of interviews. An interviewer is likely to take note of how an applicant responds to noncomprehended speech in an interview since this would be an indication of how that applicant might also react to something **s/he** does not understand on the job, where communicating a lack of understanding is often imperative. If, for example, a worker fails to communicate a lack of understanding when

given directions to carry out a certain work assignment, that assignment may either be done improperly or not at all, resulting in wasted work time and an unhappy employer. If, in an interview, an applicant shows an ability and willingness to readily communicate misunderstandings and request clarification, there is at least some assurance to the interviewer that this applicant could and probably would do the same on the job. Language learners need to know that it is ~~acceptable--even~~ desirable--to admit freely when they do not understand; to do so could help promote a favorable outcome to the interview.

Another condition which can affect the outcome of an interview for a NNS applicant would be the interviewer's ability to handle conversation with NNS. If the interviewer is able and/or willing to adjust ~~his/her~~ speech to accommodate the NNS applicant, the applicant is likely to have an easier time "putting ~~his/her~~ best foot forward" than if the interviewer fails to recognize when the NNS does not understand and/or talks to the NNS as if ~~s/he~~ were a NS. Certainly, real-world communication is not usually going to present the NNS with good "language teachers." Since many NNS are bound to encounter interviewers (as well as countless other ~~NNS~~) who are not particularly adept at talking with NNS, it would seem advisable for a materials writer to address this matter in

lesson materials. The writer might, for example, suggest that some of the classroom role plays of job interviews be done with the teacher playing the part of an interviewer who does not "tune" his/her speech to accommodate the NNS. This could be accompanied by a class discussion exploring strategies to cope with this kind of situation.

Candlin *et al.* (1976, 1981) stated that the ultimate aim of materials should be a simulation of the actual target setting and language, in order to ensure transference from the learning environment to the actual situation. The data-based information contained in this thesis on the content and structure of entry-level job interviews should equip a materials designer to create realistic language-teaching materials which would allow for a simulation of the setting and language of entry-level job interviews. Of course, the information concerning the communicative conventions specific to job interviews is important for materials design as well, since the learner needs to be sensitized to such conventions.

Before concluding, there are several points with respect to the appropriate communicative behaviors for job interviews to be briefly addressed here, based on what appear to be the special needs of the target group of learners. The need for the learner to be able to request

clarification has already been mentioned, but bears repeating. In addition, learners need to understand that simple participation in a job interview does not mean one automatically gets the job, and therefore, a question such as "When can I start?" is not appropriate. However, it is quite acceptable for applicants to ask what they might expect in the way of future contact from the employer. In the event that the interviewer fails to provide that information voluntarily, an applicant needs to be able to ask such a question. While the prolonging of an interview by an applicant was a problem in only one of the NS-NNS interviews, it may be worthwhile to ensure that learners are sensitized to cues an interviewer might give signaling the end of an interview. (In the entry-level interviews, interviewers usually indicated the closing of an interview by thanking the applicant.)

Language learners preparing to participate in job interviews need to **recognize** the relationship--often **indirect--between** the questions asked by the interviewer and the job being applied for. For example, in order to give an adequate answer to the question, "Why do you want to work here?", it is necessary that the applicant go beyond the surface meaning of the question to infer the question's implied meaning. Such a question calls for an answer that both relates to the job being applied for and highlights the applicant's salable qualities. For the

writer of materials on entry-level job interviews, however, it may be of some comfort to note what Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz (1982:252) have to say about this point: "The higher level the job, the more likely it is that questions will be very indirect and the interviewee may have to search the question to find out the interviewer's real intention."

As many of the questions found in the entry-level interviews would also suggest, there are apparently fewer demands placed on an entry-level job applicant, with respect to inferring the covert messages of interview questions, than, for example, an applicant who is interviewing for a professional-level job. The professional kinds of interviews, such as the ones described here in the Literature Review (Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz 1982 and Akinmaso and Seabrook Ajirrotutu 1982), seem to call for more sophistication in the second language, since these interviews require the applicant to go farther beyond the surface meaning of a question to conjecture the implied meaning. However, while there is, no doubt, more demand placed on professional-level applicants in this way, it would still be necessary for entry-level job applicants to understand: 1) the importance of relating their answers to interview questions to the job for which they are applying, and 2) the importance of emphasizing their positive attributes.

many Indochinese consider talking about their work  
This reluctance most likely stems from the fact that  
is.

experience, no matter what their English proficiency level  
many refugees appear reluctant to talk about their work  
Indochinese refugees, there is a common observation that  
teachers and job developers who have worked with

Problem--Getting to Know the Vietnamese n.p.d. . Among VESL  
language to do so (Perspectives on a Cross-Cultural  
qualifications, even after these learners acquire the  
of the target group of learners from discussing their  
is that certain cultural factors may act to prohibit some  
One point to be aware of and sensitive to, however,  
experiences and positive characteristics.

to an interviewer their special skills, marketable  
The learners need to have the language for communicating  
even work for which no pay was received can be important.  
it somehow can be related to the job they are seeking;  
to know that all work experience is valuable, so long as  
learn, and an interest in the job. These people also need  
express to an interviewer a willingness to work and to  
The target group of learners needs to be able to  
your work experience?"

questions as "Why do you want to work here?" or "What's  
to "put their best foot forward" when answering such  
With such an understanding, applicants would be more apt



experience tantamount to boasting, and boasting is unacceptable to them. In short, these people have a sense of propriety that may well conflict with the notion of "selling themselves" in a job interview (Swanbrow 1981, Perspectives on a Cross-Cultural Problem - get tin to know the Vietnamese n.d.). Additionally, it is possible that some refugees might be reluctant to discuss past experience for fear of having to accept jobs similar to the ones they had in their country. Since most of these people are not accustomed to the American concept of upward mobility, i.e., "working one's way up the job ladder," they may tend to view their first job here as a permanent one, rather than as a temporary condition.

In conclusion, materials writers need to be sensitive to the possibilities of refugees' reluctance to discuss past employment. This information should be included in teachers' manuals accompanying VESL materials for the particular target group. One way to make refugees aware of how these matters are addressed in a culture different from their own is through the use of video taped interviews which clearly explicate the behavior.

It is the author's intent that this thesis will contribute to the fulfillment of the need for data-based studies which identify the communicative needs of Indo-Chinese refugees. However, while the inspiration for this thesis came out of a concern for these refugees, much of the information that has been presented here would be applicable to any VESL learner who needs to be able to perform in entry-level job interviews. It is recognized that interactional behaviors are culturally governed, and for this reason, the behaviors that were deemed to warrant particular attention in materials for Indo-Chinese would not necessarily be the same behaviors that would need to be stressed in materials for those from other cultural backgrounds.

The findings reported in this thesis are limited in that entry-level interview data from only two places of employment were analyzed. Further studies would be useful in determining whether similar findings would result with interview data from other kinds of entry-level job interviews. Such studies could result in a more refined and generalizable collection of information on which to base lesson materials.

The amount of data-based communication descriptions in the field of VESL is limited. Perhaps the most

#### CONCLUSION

#### CHAPTER V

significant work in this area to date is that of Gage and Prince (1982a&b), who conducted a study to identify the language strategies needed by refugees in order to maintain entry-level employment. Gage and Prince collected their data via oral surveys of employers/supervisors and through nonparticipant observations of work settings, for the purpose of researching and developing a beginning-level VESL curriculum.

The need for data-based studies of language use extends not only to VESL, but indeed throughout the entire field of ESP. Empirical research is an essential component of ESP course and materials design, yet very little has been reported in the way of such research. Descriptions of data-based studies conducted for various target groups would be of enormous benefit to those in the field of VESL and/or ESP, since such descriptions could demonstrate the different methods by which researchers identified learners' needs. Data-based studies are important for the learner as well: without such studies there is no way to assess the learner's communicative needs for a specific purpose with any degree of accuracy.

x the occurrence of a topic in an interview  
(More than one 'x' per box means the topic  
came up more than once in the interview.)

np nonpresent temporal markings

p present temporal markings

R fast food restaurant interviews

L landscaping/custodial interviews

Abbreviations used

The Summary Tables for Table I (Topics Found  
in the Entry-Level Job Interview Data)

Tables I.a through I.f:

APPENDIX A

Topics Found in Two or More of the NS-NS Interviews

Table 1.a

NS-NS			
L-1	L-2	8-1	8-2
p	p	p	p
x	x	x	x
opening of some kind (greeting, introducing, applicant told to come in and/or to sit down)			
np	np		
x	x		
this interview (interview process explained, information on nature of interview)			
np	p	np	& p
x	x	x	x
applicant's name (first, middle, last, whether same now as in high school)			
p	p		
x	x		
applicant's address (where it is, what it is, distance from work place)			
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
applicant's method of transportation (to work)			
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
how long applicant has been in Hawaii/Honolulu			
np	p	np	np
x	xxx	x	x
applicant's education			

Table 1 a (Continued)

Topics Found in Two or More of the NS-NS Interviews

NS-NS			
L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
p & p	p & p	np	p & p
np	np	np	np
x	xxx	x	x
applicant's work experience			
p	p	p	np
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
Why applicant wants work here (or is interested in this organization)			
p	p	p	p
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
collaborative information about the job or work organization (not already included with other topics)			
ap	ap	ap	ap
xx	xx	xx	xx
applicant's availability (work shift preference)			
ap	ap	ap	ap
xx	xx	xx	xx
information on what applicant can expect (or should do) with reference to the outcome of this interview			
ap	ap	ap	ap
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
whether applicant was involved in high school sports or other activities			
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
applicant's living situation (if, at home, alone, with parents)			
p	p	p	p
np	np	np	np
x	x	x	x
whether applicant has questions			
p	p	p	p
xx	xx	xx	xx

Topics Found in Two or More of the NS-NS Interviews

Table 1.a (Continued)

NS-NS		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
applicant's job position preference	p & p	np	np	x	
applicant's job location preference	p & p	np	np	x	
applicant's license (whether applicant has one, what type it is, how long it will take, applicant to get one)	p	p	xx	xx	
phoning the applicant	p	p	x	x	
applicant's physical condition	p & p	np	np	x	
whether applicant has friends at this workplace	p	p	x	x	
whether applicant has relatives at this workplace	p	p	x	x	





Topics Found in Three or More of the NS-NS Interviews

Table 1.b

NS-NS			
L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
p	p	p	p
x	x	x	x
applicant's name (full, middle, last, whether same now as in high school)	u	p	p
x	x	x	x
applicant's method of transportation (to work)	u	u	u
x	x	x	x
applicant's education	u	p	u
x	x	x	x
applicant's work experience	p	u	u
x	x	x	x
why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)	u	p	p
x	x	x	x
miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)	p	u	p
x	x	x	x

Topics Found in Three or More of the  
**SN-NS** Interviews

Table 1, b (Continued)

NS-NS			
L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
up	up	up	up
xx	xx	xx	xx
information on what applicant can expect (or should do) with reference to the outcome of this interview	up	up & d	up & d
applicant's living situation (i.e., at home, alone, with parents)	x	x	x
whether applicant has questions	p	p	p
closing of some kind (thanks exchanged, leavetaking)	x	xx	x
	p	p	p
	x	x	x

Topics Found in Two or More of the NS-NNS Interviews

Table 1.c

NS-NNS		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
		p	p	p	p
	opening of some kind (greeting, introducing, applicant told to come in and/or to sit down)	x	x	x	x
	applicant's name (full, middle, last, whether same now as in high school)	np	np	x	
	applicant's address (where it is, what it is, distance from work place)		p	p	p
	applicant's method of transportation (to work)	np	np	x	x
	applicant's phone number			p	p
	how long applicant has been in Hawaii/ Honolulu			np	np
	applicant's education	np	np	x	xx

NS-NNS				L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
	p & np	p & np	p & np				
applicant's work experience	xx	np	xx	x	x	x	x
why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)	p	p	p	x	x	x	x
miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)	np & p	np	np & p		np	p & p	x
applicant's availability (work shift preference)	np & p	np	np & p	xx	x	x	x
information on what applicant can expect (or should do) with reference to the outcome of this interview		np			np	xx	xx
applicant's living situation (i.e., at home, alone, with parents)	p	p	p	x	x		
applicant's expectations regarding this job		np			np	x	x

Topics Found in Two or More of the NS-NNS Interviews

Table 1. c (Continued)



Topics Found in Two or More of the NS-SNN Interviews

Table 1.c (Continued)

NS-SNN		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
closing of some kind (thanks exchanged, leaving)					
	p	p	x	x	xx
application form (whether applicant has it, whether information on it is current)					
	p	p	x	x	
alien registration card or number					
		p	p		
		x	x		
applicant's involvement with sports					
	p	p			
	x	x			
soccer					
	p				
	x				
salary/pay information					
	p	p			
	x	x			

Topics Found in Three or More of the NS-NNS Interviews

Table 1.d

NS-NNS			
L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
p	p	p	p
x	x	x	x
opening of some kind (greeting, introducing applicant told to come in and/or to sit down)			
np	wp	x	
applicant's address (where it is, what it is, distance from work place)			
np	wp	x	x
applicant's method of transportation (to work)			
np	p	np	np
np	p	x	x
applicant's education			
p & p	np	p & p	np
applicant's work experience			
np	np	np	np
np	x	xx	x
why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)			
p	p	p	p
p	p	x	x
miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)			
np & p	np	np	x
p	p		x











Topics Found in Both NS-NS Interviews and NS-NNS Interviews,  
Three or More Times

Table 1.F

NS-NNS		NS-NS		NS-NS		NS-NS	
L-1	R-2	L-1	R-2	L-1	R-2	L-1	R-2
p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
opening of some kind (greeting, introducing, applicant told to come in and/or to sit down)				applicant's address (where it is, what it is, distance from work place)			
applicant's method of transportation (to work)				applicant's education			
applicant's work experience				why applicant wants to work here (or is interested in this organization)			
miscellaneous information about the job or work organization (not already included within other topics)							



APPENDIX B

Tables 6.a through 6.f:

The Summary Tables for Table 6 (Lexical Item Found in the Entry-Level Job Interview Data

Grading Scale for lexical items used

Level	cumulative total
1	598 (Words from levels 1 & 2 were omitted from this analysis.)
2	1215
3	2207
4	3241
5	4470 (Hindmarsh 1980:xiii)
L	landscaping/custodial interviews
R	fast food restaurant interviews

Note: The number to the left of a lexical item indicates the grading given the item by Hindmarsh. The numbers on the right (in the boxes) refer to the number of times an item was used by the interviewer during an interview.

Lexical Items Found in Two or More of the  
NS-NS Interviews

Table 6.a

		NS-NS	
	L-1	L-2	R-1
4	application (s)		1
3	apply (ed)	1	
3	attend (ing)		1
4	choice	5	4
	commute	1	1
5	dependents	1	1
5	(driver's) license	2	1
3	employed	1	1
4	experience (noun)	1	1
3	future		1

NS-NS			
	L-1	L-2	R-1
3	3	2	1
3	1	1	
3	3		1
4	1	1	
4			1
5	1	2	
3	2	1	
5	1	1	
5	1	1	
4	1	1	
5	1	1	
5	1	1	
5			1

Lexical Items Found in Two or More of the NS-NS Interviews

Table. 6.a (Continued)



Table 6.a (Continued)  
 Lexical Items Found in Two or More of the  
 NS-NS Interviews

NS-NS				L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	3 university
				1	1			trade school

Table 6.b  
 Lexical Items Found in Three or More of the  
 NS-NS Interviews

NS-NS				L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2
				3	2		
3	hire (ed, ing), (verb)	3	1				
3	Interested	3	1				

Lexical Items Found in Two or More of the  
NS-NNS Interviews

Table 6.c

NS-NNS							
	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2			
4	1	1	1	2	application (s)		
					alien registration (card or number)		
4	1	1			citizen		
6	1	1			consider		
5	1	3			(driver's) license		
4		2	2		experience (noun)		
3	1	7	1	1	hire (ed, ing), (verb)		
4	1		1	1	interview (s), (noun and verb form)		
4	1				performance (carrying out of duties)		
5	1				sports		

Lexical Items Found in Three or More of the NS-NNS Interviews

Table 6.d

NS-NNS				I v	I n I n	I n I n
L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	1	1	2
application (s)				3	1	
hire (ed, ing), (verb)						
Interview (s), (noun and verb form)						

Table 6.e  
 Lexical Items Found in Both NS-NS Interviews  
 and NS-NNS Interviews, Two or More Times

		NS-NS						NS-NNS		
		L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	L-1	L-2	R-1	R-2	
4	application (s)			1		1	1	1	1	2
5	(driver's) license	2	1			1	3			
4	experience (noun)	1	1			2	2			
3	hire (ed, ing), (verb)	3	2			1	3	7		1
5	sports			1		1				1

Lexical Item Found in Both NS-NS Interviews and NS-NNS Interviews, Three or More Times

Table 6.f

NS-NNS		NS-NS			3 hire (ed, ing), (verb)		
L-1 R-2		L-1 R-1			L-1 L-2 R-1		
3		2			3		
7		1			1		
1		1			1		

APPENDIX C

A Transcribed NS-NS Interview  
(for Landscaping/Custodial work)

Note:

(xx) unintelligible utterance

( ) Items in single parentheses indicate what is thought to have been said.

.. speech pause (one second or less)

... speech pause (between one and two seconds)

(( )) Numbers in double parentheses indicate seconds elapsed.

An overlap in speech is indicated where utterances by two speakers are printed on the same line.

Personal information (e.g., names, telephone numbers and addresses) has been changed.

Interviewer. Applicant

OK..you can sit over here.

OK.

uh, what kind of position are you interested in?

um, basically anything that's open and available.

OK..we have uh, three

choices..um, within the university system. One is a janitor, two..two is a groundskeeper, and three is uh, general labor. Which is your preference?

um, probably landscaping.

OK. (( )) You have a second choice?

Uh, janitor.

((5)) OK, we recruit for uh..

several campuses within this system. Which area do you prefer working: University

Manoa, Honolulu Community College, Kapioian Community College, Leeward Community College or Windward Community College?

Honolulu Community College.

That would be your first choice?

Yes sir.

(All) right. What's your second choice?

Um..Kapioian.

((Yeah) ((10)) OK..what's your middle name?

Peter.

You have PK here.

Yeah..Peter Kealoha.

((spells)) P-E-T..

E-R-R-K-E aloha.

((3)) Did you go in the service?

Uh, no sir.

((10)) While attending Mckinley High School you had the same name?

Yeah.

((9)) What did you major in?

Uh, I took auto.



((7)) (So lots of technical)

Yeah.

((8)) Went to any business school, trade school?

No sir.

Have a driver's license?

Yup.

((7)) You work anymore?

I've been unemployed.

((12)) What's the best time to phone you at home?

Oh, any time.

((2)) Someone is always there?

Yeah.

Is this your permanent mailing address?

(xx)

((10)) Do you have any dependents?

No.

You're single?

Yup.

You live with your parents?

Uh huh.

((7)) What type of driver's license do you have?

Um, just..

You drive a car?

(xx)

automobile, yeah.

That's a type 3. ((3)) If we hired you as a janitor, would you prefer working days or evenings?

Days.

Would you consider working evenings?

Yeah, sure.

OK, that'd be your second choice?

Uh huh.

If we hired you, how do you plan to commute to work?

By car.

Your own car?

Yeah.

((5)) Since you indicated that days would be your first choice, can you start work at 6 o'clock in the morning?

Yeah.

((4)) If we sent up to you, when can you start work?

Um, as soon as possible.

Right away. ((2)) You said you're unemployed now, right?

Mm hm.

((4)) Can you climb a stepladder?

Yup.

What's the highest (you'd climb?

((2)) Uh, I'd say .10 to 15 feet.

((2)) Can you carry 45 lbs.?

Yup.

Are you allergic to any chemicals, dust or pollen?

Uh, not that I know of.

((3)) Why do you want to work for the state?

I think um, good opportunity (with) the state. ((2)) It's a good . . . good place to work for.

((10)) Do you have any experience as a groundskeeper?

I uh . . . I worked um . . . for the state when I was uh, in school . . .

The summer youth program?

on the summer youth program. Yeah.

What did you do?

I was a groundskeeper at uh, McKinley Community College, and a janitor there.

What type of work did you do there?

Uh, janitorial and uh . . . just basically keeping the grounds, the grass.

Raking it?

Raking and the uh, the bushes, you know, trimming the bushes and just . . . yardwork.

((12)) Do you have any relatives working here?

Uh..no sir.

You have any friends?

No sir.

Who informed you of the position on this campus?

Marybeth.

((6)) You apply for work any other place?

Uh..no sir.

((5)) OK. Do you have any questions?

Uh..no.

OK. At the present time we don't have any openings for groundskeepers, and we have a freeze on hiring janitors. If you are still interested in getting ((2)) employed by us..you have to.. you can check with us..once a month. And if you should change your phone number or your address, you should let us know right away.

OK.

If we are interested in hiring you after the freeze is over, we'll contact you by phone. So it's very important that..your phone number is always updated. ((5)) OK? Thank you.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX D

Interviewer

Applicant

OK..why don't you come (and  
sit..over here. Did you bring  
your application with you?

(Yes)

OK..can I see it?

((gives the application))

OK..(you) can sit here.

(Yeah, thank you)

OK..uh, since you're not  
an American citizen..

No.

Do you have your alien  
registration card with you?

(Yeah)

May I see it?

((5)) But I have copy ((2))  
because..

No, I don't need a copy, I  
just need uh, your alien  
registration number. ((10))  
What happened to your card?  
This is only a temporary  
card.

(Oh) that's card I keep..

You keep it at home?

(xx)

Yeah. I'm (xx)

Some places you have to have the original card (because) they don't use copies.

Yeah.

((6)) What kind of job are you looking for?

((6))

Over here we have uh, three choices..you (want to) be a janitor..one..two, a grounds-keeper, or three, a cook's helper. Which job do you think you would like the best?

((4)) Cook's helper.

Cook's helper?

Yeah.

OK. ((3)) Would you consider the other job..janitor or the groundskeeper?

((2)) Yes.

Which one would you prefer as your second choice?

Janitor.

A janitor?

Yeah.

OK. ((7)) What's the best time to phone you at home.. just in case we wanted to contact you?

((3)) Oh, any time.

Any time?

Yeah.

You uh, always at home, or somebody else is at home?

I always..

You're always at home?

at home.

Yeah.

((15)) When you attended

school in Laos, you had the same name..your name was the same?

Yes..

Yes, same name.

OK. ((18)) You went to the

6th grade?

Yes (xx)

You went to any other school?

No.

That's the only school you

went to?

Yes.

OK..you have a driver's

license..or any other kind of

license?

No.

No? ((5)) You haven't worked

at any job?

No.

Even in Laos?

No (I don't need) I (xx) in

Laos.

((xx)) OK. ((3)) If we hired

you as a janitor, would you

prefer working daytime or

evening time?

Daytime.

Daytime? (3) If we hire you, how do you plan to come to work?

I will get here by bus.

By bus? (6) Can you start work at 6 o'clock in the morning?

Yes.

If we wanted to hire you, when can you start work?

Any time.

Any time? (3) Can you climb a stepladder?

((2)) Yes.

What's the highest you'd climb? (3) How many feet.. how many feet have you climbed?

((7)) I don't understand.

Oh like uh (3) If we hired you as a janitor, and you might let's say, have to change the fluorescent lamp that burns out.. then you need a stepladder to go up there and change it. So.. we want to find out if you've climbed a stepladder before, and how high was the ladder. Like the ceiling here is about 8 feet tall. ((5)) Maybe you haven't climbed a stepladder.

Any feet. ((laughs))

Any amount?

Yes.

You're not afraid of heights?

(Yes)



OK. ((12)) Can you carry 45 lbs.?

(Yeah)

((5)) Are you allergic to any chemicals, dust or pollen?

No.

No? ((5)) Why do you want to work here?

((3)) Because I want to earn money.

To earn money?

Yeah.

((8)) Do you live with your parents at the present time?

((3)) Present time

Do you live with your parents?

No.

Do you live alone?

Alone. ((machinery noise begins))

((12)) Do you have any experience as a cook's helper?

No, I don't have (that).

No experience?

Yeah.

Why did you select a cook's helper as your first choice for a job?

I want to try and I want to learn.

(Oh you're interested in cooking?

Yeah, I interested.

(18)) Since you don't own a car and you don't drive how far away are you willing to work? (2)) We interview people for five different campuses over here (xx), Are you willing to work at the University of Hawaii Manoa campus, uh, Honolulu Community College, Kapoian Community College, Leeward Community College or Windward Community College? How far are you willing to go by bus. since you say your only means of transportation is by bus. (machinery noise stops))

((7))

Do you know where Honolulu Community College is?

((3)) Yes.

Are you willing to work there?

Yes.

((3)) Do you know where Kapoian Community College is?

(Yeah )

Are you willing to work there too?

Yes. (more machinery noise)

OK.

((3)) (Anywhere)

You willing to go to Pearl  
City? Leeward Community  
College is in Pearl City.  
(3) Too far?

No (xx)

(5) What about Windward  
Community College, which is  
in uh... Kaneohe.

(xx)

It's on the opposite side of  
this... It's too far?

Too far.

OK. (3) Do you have any  
relatives working over here?

No.

None? (2) Do you have any  
friends working here?

No.

(5) OK. Do you have any  
questions? (6) about the  
job or... the pay... or...

(5) (I work here) fulltime  
or parttime?

No, the only openings we have  
on this campus is for full-  
time work. So... it's 8 hours  
a day, 40 hours a week. (6)  
Anything else?

(No)

OK. That's it for today  
Thank you for coming.

(Yes) Thank you.

Bye.

(Bye)

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