TEACHING PRAGMATICS TO LOWER-LEVEL LEARNERS

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Abstract

The teaching and learning of the pragmatics (socio-culturally determined norms) of a second language is vital if migrants and refugees are to live and work in the country of resettlement without miscommunication (Yates, 2008). One way of teaching these is by having learners listen to and work with naturalistic samples of native speaker interaction (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Following a series of action research investigations into the teaching of pragmatic norms using elicited recorded samples of native speaker role-play at intermediate level (Denny, 2008), the authors have turned their attention to learners at lower levels of proficiency. There are indications that it may be difficult to use authentic or semi-authentic samples to teach at this lower level (Denny & Basturkmen, 2011). This project sought to discover if lower-level learners can learn pragmatics by being helped to notice pragmalinguistic features in recorded discourse samples created from native speaker role-play. The research showed that this is possible, but that the teaching methodology needed to be adapted to the needs of this group of learners, using more teacher-facilitated activities and scaffolding, and focussing on the teaching of formulaic expressions.

Introduction

Teaching pragmatics

The importance for language learners, particularly migrants, of knowing the socio-culturally determined norms, or pragmatics, of the target language is now widely accepted (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Riddiford, 2007; Wigglesworth & Yates, 2007; Yates, 2004). Yates (2008) points out that communications skills 'are especially problematic for job seekers and employees from other language and cultural backgrounds...not all cultures have the same understanding about what is clear or polite communication,,,' pviii. An awareness of the cross-cultural differences is essential learning for all newcomers if they are not to be misunderstood or judged to be deficient in what is regarded as self-evident communication skills by native speakers, particularly the monocultural majority of a country like New Zealand.

Pragmatics can be divided into sociopragmatics, the cultural norms implicit in an exchange, and pragmalinguistics, the way these norms are realised in language (Yates, 2004). Research shows that pragmatic norms are not learned by immersion in the target community and elements can be taught, even to beginner learners (Tateyama, 2001). Instruction (most probably explicit) is necessary (Kasper & Roever, 2004), although conditions for instruction are still being debated (Takimoto, 2007).

The use of authentic or semi-authentic discourse samples, rather than more artificial scripted textbook dialogues, to teach the linguistic and socio-cultural norms of spoken interaction has been widely supported (e.g. Burns & Joyce, 1997; Butterworth, 2000; de Silva Joyce & Slade, 2000; Yates, 2004). In addition, methodologies have been suggested for using this approach (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahon-Taylor, 2003; Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Yates, 2008). Typically students listen to recordings of the discourse samples and do various tasks including guided consciousness-raising exercises, scaffolded practice of the 'noticed' language, role-played practice which is sometimes recorded and

reflected on, experiments with the newly-learned language in interactions outside the classroom, and cross-cultural comparison of the target norms with those of the first culture.

Fully authentic New Zealand discourse samples have been used to teach the socio-cultural norms of New Zealand English in various kinds of workplaces and New Zealand academic contexts to higher level learners (Basturkmen, 2002; Malthus, Holmes & Major, 2005; Riddiford, 2007). However there is a shortage of suitable fully authentic published local samples for lower-level learners.

There are a number of real and perceived barriers to teachers' use of authentic texts. It is difficult for them to access the time, resources and expertise necessary to search corpora and published collections of fully authentic texts, and adapt them for classroom use or make their own fully authentic recordings. The latter is ethically difficult and intrusive and access is not always possible for privacy reasons. From interviews conducted with ESOL teachers in a research project funded by the Northern Hub of Ako Aotearoa (Denny & Basturkmen, 2011) it was found that there can be a number of additional barriers to trialling this approach, particularly for teachers of lower-level learners. These include a feeling that the language in authentic samples is not controlled, making it hard to focus on specific language items needed by learners at this level.

To fill this gap, semi-authentic sample texts were developed using native speakers of varying ages and genders in contexts relevant to learners at four levels. Actors were asked to role-play a situation without rehearsal or script and with only an outline of the proposed exchange and its purpose Recordings were made and transcribed.

The aim of the current classroom-based study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials for pragmatic instruction which were developed for lower-level learners based on these semi-authentic elicited samples. This study builds on a series of similar classroom-based research projects (Denny, 2008, 2010; Sachtleben & Denny, 2012) and adds to previous evidence to create a fuller picture of its strengths and weaknesses with different kinds of learners, in a variety of levels and contexts.

Lower- level learners: issues

The research we had done to date in this series had been with higher-level learners (high-intermediate and advanced). Using semi-authentic or authentic samples to teach the pragmatics of New Zealand English (negotiation and casual conversation) in relevant contexts had been shown to be effective in high-intermediate classrooms. The methodology involved comparing pre- and post-test measures and conducting student surveys (Denny, 2008, 2010). The use of semi-authentic samples had also been shown, in a qualitative analysis of student blogs, to be effective in raising pragmatic awareness of students in an undergraduate interpreting class (Sachtleben & Denny, 2012). However in the Ako Aotearoa funded survey and interviews we found that teachers of lower-level learners in particular were very reluctant to use fully authentic materials for pragmatic instruction. They believed that the language in the sample texts would be too complex, confusing and distracting. Because it would not be controlled as to vocabulary, idiom, or structural features, it would be hard to focus on the language their learners initially needed to learn (Denny & Basturkmen, 2011). We therefore turned more in this project to issues for lower-level learners and the effect on their learning of using semi-authentic recorded samples.

Action research and teacher development

This project used a form of action research called Self-Study Research (Louie, Drevdahl, Purdy & Stackman, 2003) in which the classroom teacher researches his/her own practice in collaboration with a critical friend. In this case the critical friends were colleagues and members of the research team. One teacher was also a member of the research team. Action research has been widely advocated as a powerful form of teacher development, empowering teachers to develop their teaching skills in self-selected areas of interest and concern (Burns, 1999) in a cyclic process of reflecting, identifying areas of interest, collecting and analysing data, drawing conclusions, and reflecting on these conclusions, then starting a new cycle of investigation.

The current project involved two levels of learners, pre-intermediate and post-beginner. More details about these levels and learners are given below.

Investigation into the teaching of the pragmatics of casual conversation to lower-level learners

Research questions and methodology

Research questions

The research questions were:

1. What evidence is there of development in the learners' awareness of the pragmatic norms targeted in instruction?
2. What activities do learners believe contributed and most contributed to this development?
3. What pedagogical issues (if any) arise in the use of semi-authentic recorded samples of elicited native speaker role-played conversation with lower-level learners?

Answers to these three questions at each level (post-beginner and pre-intermediate) were obtained from an analysis of pre- and post-instruction learner self-assessment surveys and DCTs, quantitative activity surveys and data in teacher reflective journals.

Data gathering tools

Conscious awareness is a precondition for acquiring features of a second language (Schmidt, 1990). However when a learner becomes aware of a new feature he or she may not show this awareness in on-line production in a multi-tasking situation such as role-play. This is because interactive tasks require learners to mentally process what they hear, construct a reply and deliver the reply under time pressure (House, 1996) and this can be difficult, especially for lower-proficiency learners. We therefore decided to measure awareness only, using a data-gathering tool that allowed the learners to show that they were aware of the features in question without multi-tasking. Thus a learner self-assessment survey (Appendix 1) incorporating a simplified discourse completion task (DCT) was used. This tool, administered before and after pragmatic instruction, allowed the learners to self-assess their ability to complete a given communicative task (for example opening or closing a conversation) appropriately on a three point scale and giving examples of language they might use in the relevant context.

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In addition, a quantitative learner survey was conducted after the teaching was completed in which the learners identified, from a list of all learning activities undertaken during tuition, all those activities which they believed had been helpful, and, for greater discrimination, two which they believed had been most helpful in learning the relevant norms (Appendix 2).

Triangulation was provided by data from teacher reflective journals in which the two classroom teachers recorded their perception of changes in learner awareness in the classroom and learner reactions to the various learning activities. The teachers also reflected on issues that arose around the use of naturalistic samples with lower-level learners and recorded the various activities undertaken in the classroom.

Analysis

The answers in the DCT items were assessed on a three point scale following pre-determined criteria (Appendix 3), and this assessment was moderated by another member of the research team. This provided a teacher-generated rating for each learner on each skill. Then the self-assessment data in the same survey was collated, providing a self-assessed learner rating on each skill. Data from pre- and post-tests were compared and changes in the number of students showing full awareness and the number of individuals showing increased awareness calculated. Increased awareness was defined as any positive change in an individual's awareness of the skill. This could be from no evidence of the skill to some evidence or from some evidence to full mastery.

The quantitative data from the second survey, in which learners rated and ranked the classroom activities was collated and analysed using descriptive statistics. Themes emerging in the qualitative data from the teacher journals were identified.

Post-beginner participant context

The fifteen post-beginner participants all came from a refugee background and originated from East Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia. They were studying in an EAL course (FFTO: Foundation Focused Training Opportunity programme) in a New Zealand university. This programme aimed to help refugees and new migrants with low or no qualifications to acquire the English they needed to progress to higher levels of study or to enter the workplace. For these learners successful communication was vital and, given the part that pragmatics plays in successful communication in the workplace (Riddiford, 2007; Yates, 2008), it was important to see if there were ways of raising their awareness of pragmatic norms. The decision to place students at post-beginner proficiency level was based on a short reading and writing test followed by an informal interview. They could understand instructions and information in very limited contexts. Their ages ranged from 21 to 51 years and their educational background ranged from zero to 13 years' formal education. They had relatively brief exposure to formal English study, both in New Zealand and prior to coming to New Zealand. Since coming to New Zealand, the length of time that students had studied English ranged from one month to 3½ years. The teacher (also one of the researchers) was responsible for introducing learners to exchanges relevant to their needs at this stage of settlement, and the norms of casual conversation and inviting were two types of exchanges believed to be important to help them communicate with native speakers. Within a 17 week semester course, the eleven hours of work on pragmatics occurred in lessons over five Thursdays (weeks 8, 10, 11, 12, & 13). These eleven hours do not include pre- and post-tests.

Teaching strategy: post-beginner

One semi-authentic conversation recording was used to expose learners to a sample of native speaker conversational discourse. It was created by giving two native speakers general guidelines (the relationship between the speakers and the fact that an invitation should be issued and refused) and asking them to role-play without rehearsal or script. This phone conversation was between two middle-aged friends, a man and a woman.

Learners listened to the whole conversation several times, and answered questions on the 'gist', then completed worksheet activities, listening again to the invitation and refusal segment or referring to the transcript. Activities included a pre-listening discussion question, general and then detailed comprehension questions, a vocabulary matching exercise, and questions about staging and other pragmatic features of the exchange. (See question samples Appendix 4). The pragmatics-focussed questions were confined to the invitation and refusal exchanges in the sample to make them more manageable at this level, but also looked at starting and finishing a conversation.

During the teaching cycle for pragmatics there were also activities in which the students in pairs practised moves in the conversation, such as explaining the reason for not being able to come. This was followed by semi-structured conversation practice of acceptance and refusal. Generic conversation frames, partly based on the sample dialogue, were used, with the teacher taking one role, and then with the class listening as two students role-played the conversation with teacher feedback. Finally the students took part in paired role-plays of the whole conversation. So teacher input consisted of feedback and clarification when checking answers with the class, and corrective feedback during controlled practice and freer role-play.

Only one semi-authentic sample was used with post-beginners because of limited resources and time. Functions not represented in this sample (for example accepting an invitation and starting a face to face conversation) were modelled by the teacher or elicited from the students in a teacher-fronted session.

Pre-intermediate participant context

There were twelve pre-intermediate consenting students, whose ages ranged from 21 to mid-fifties. They had spent an average of only one year nine months in New Zealand and all were enrolled in the most advanced level of the FFTO programme. They were able to understand spoken information and instructions in familiar contexts and complete practical transactions in English and had come to New Zealand as refugees from seven different countries. Formal education ranged from zero to 13 years, although more than half of them had less than seven years. While two students had no English prior to coming to New Zealand, the majority had studied English for less than 5 years in their home countries and up to 3 years in New Zealand.

Teaching strategy: pre-intermediate

The pre-intermediate level class was also taught conversational skills including inviting and accepting or refusing an invitation. The teacher was not a member of the research team but kept a journal. The teaching approach was similar to the post-beginner class, although at this level a greater number of teacher-made samples was able to be used. The teacher-made samples for this level included two between colleagues (one between two middle-aged New Zealand men, the other between two middle-aged female teachers) and one between two female friends in their early twenties who had not seen each other for some time.

In each of three lessons students listened to a different recording. They then answered a range of worksheets questions for comprehension and to help them notice linguistic features and native speaker socio-cultural norms. (See Appendix 5 for samples). Teacher attention was given to all nine conversational skills included in the pre- and post-teaching tests. The transcript was used for language focus, for example to find natural expressions for suggestions and arrangements, and to check understanding. Other activities included group and whole-class discussion in which target language and cultural features were compared with those of the students' first languages and cultures, and paired practice with teacher feedback. Both spoken and written teacher input during the analysis of the pragmatic features in the samples was a significant part of the teaching strategy.
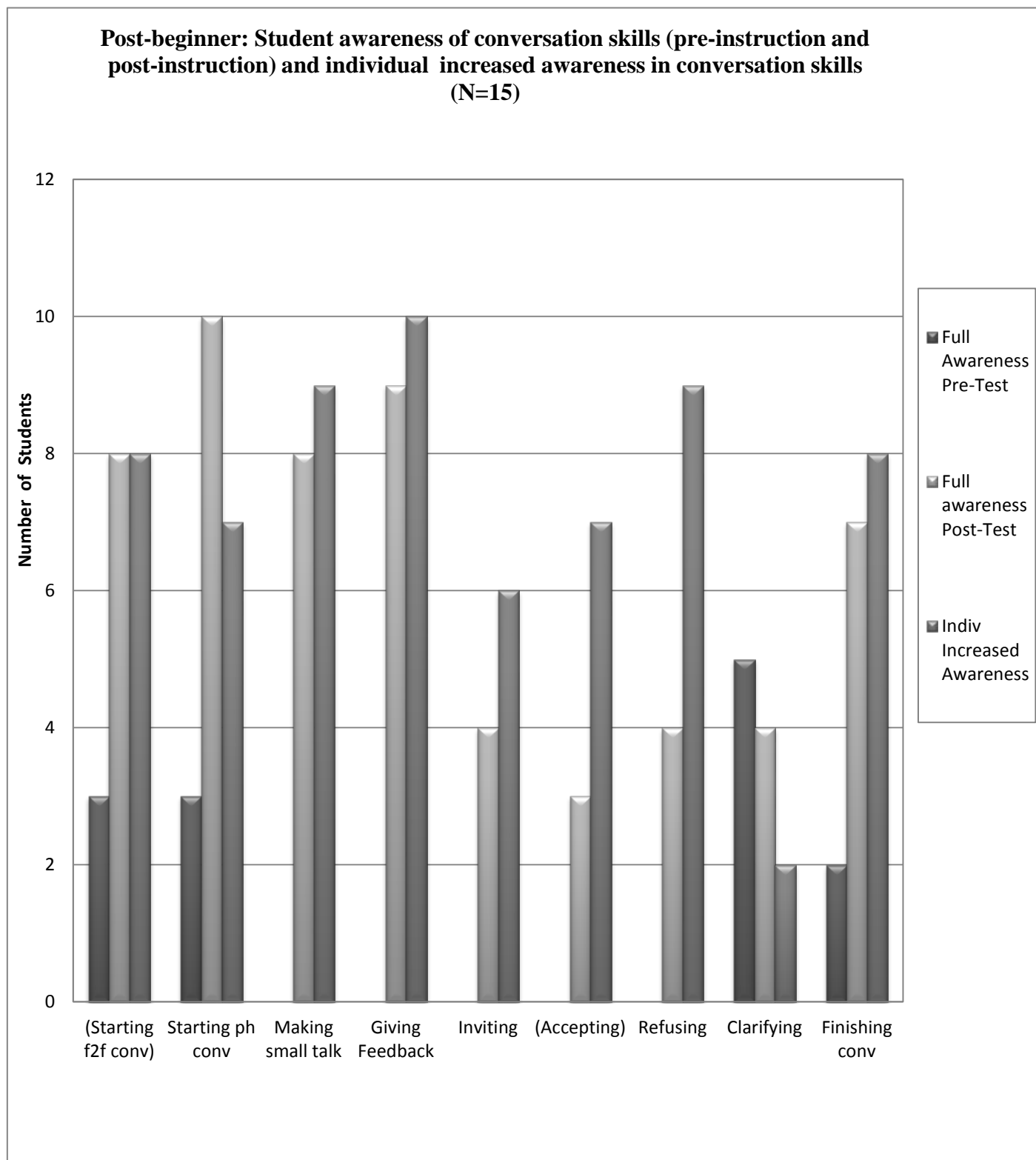
Results

Post-beginner level

Figure 1 represents the results of the pre- and post-tests in the teacher-assessed DCT. The first two bars (black and light grey) show the difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores, representing the number of participants demonstrating instances of full awareness of the skills involved in managing invitation conversations appropriately. (Note that the skills bracketed were not taught from the semi-authentic samples.)

From this chart it can be seen that in the pre-test (black bar), students showed evidence of full awareness in only four of the conversational skills. However, post-teaching, there was, in all skills except one, an increased number showing instances of full awareness, and this increase, represented by the difference between the black and light grey bar, ranged from 20% to 60%.

The contrasting decrease in the number of students showing evidence of full awareness of *clarifying* from the pre- to the post-test could be explained by the fact, confirmed by teacher journal data, that less classroom time was spent on this skill than on the others because of the larger number of students showing pre-awareness of the relevant clarifying norms.

The third bar in Figure 1 (dark grey) shows the number of participants showing individual increased awareness, for example from 'not aware' to 'partly aware' or 'fully aware' or from 'partly aware' to 'fully aware' as measured by the teacher assessment on the DCT (See Appendix 1). For example for inviting (question 6) one student wrote '*I hopeful to you visit us.*' on the pre-test and was rated N (not appropriate), then '*I really love you to come*' on the post-test and was rated S (somewhat appropriate). Another wrote '*Can you come to house for visit*' on the pre-test, rated N, and '*Actually I was ringing to invite you …..*' on the post-test, rated Y (appropriate). Both were evidence in our view of increased awareness. Individually, there was an increase in the number of participants demonstrating individual increased awareness of the appropriate language in all nine skills and this increase was substantial (46% to 66%) in six of the seven skills taught using the semi-authentic samples. Again, seeking clarification showed the smallest increase.

Figure 1

Post-beginner: Student awareness of conversation skills (pre-instruction and post-instruction) and individual increased awareness in conversation skills (N=15)

Figure 2
Figure 2 shows the various classroom-based activities used in instruction and the student feedback on which activities they believed were helpful and which two they believed were most helpful.

Post-beginner: Student perceptions of helpful and most helpful learning activities (N = 15)
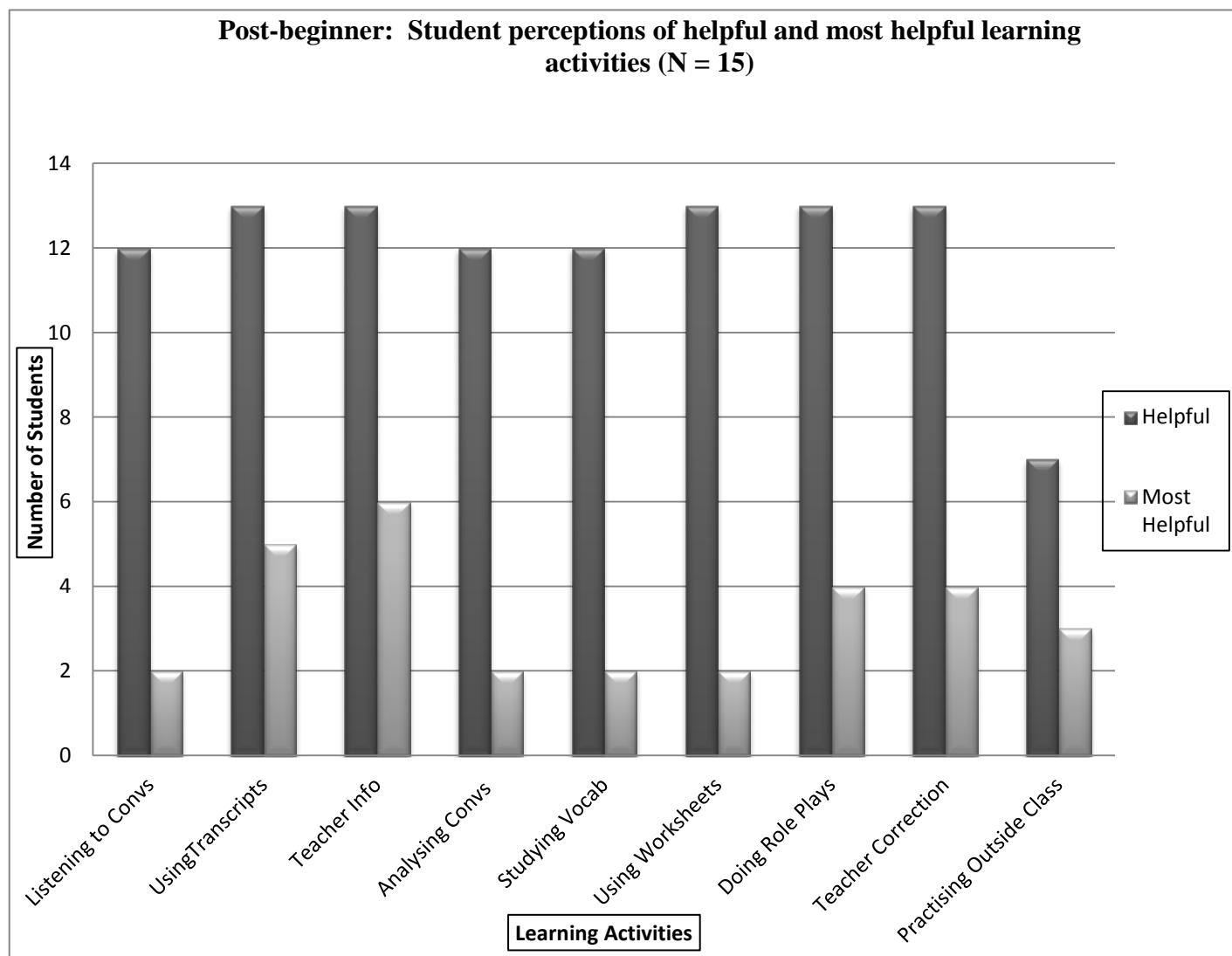
The black bars in the chart (Helpful) indicate that the majority of the students rated all of the activities as being helpful.

Looking at both data sets, and using the 'most helpful' (grey bar) to discriminate where the figures for 'helpful' were the same, the activities which were most highly ranked were *teacher information* and *using transcripts*. These were followed closely by *doing role plays* & listening to the *teacher correction* when practising. Activities rated most highly were those perhaps involving a greater degree of teacher input or more 'real-life' activities, and students showed they valued the transcript, possibly for support in understanding the conversation.

The activity with the least 'useful' ratings was *practising outside class*, perhaps because it precluded any teacher correction and feedback and demanded a greater degree of independence than lower-level learners usually have. They possibly also hesitate to initiate conversations with expert speakers.

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We also note that the data shows that *using transcripts* was rated more highly by students than listening to the conversations. This suggests that post-beginner students were learning from the semi-authentic texts, but needed the additional support of the transcript.

Teacher journal data confirms the positive attitude of the learners to the approach: *Almost every day after or during class, one or more students commented to me on how useful they found what we were covering and practising.* And the role of the transcript was explained: *It seemed more logical for students to answer these from the transcript (not the recording), so I asked them to do this... in groups. Worked well.* Also why the teacher decided to supplement the noticing activities based on the one semi-authentic sample with other types of input,: *Did lots of chalk and talk and some oral practice about beginning and end of conv / feedback / time, day, date.... prepositions / lang for accepting and refusing...because the dialogue didn't give many useful examples of ... these things.* With more sample dialogues and more time this may not have been necessary.

Pre-intermediate level

Figure 3 represents data similar to that shown in Figure 1 but relating to the pre-intermediate class.

From this chart it can be seen that in all nine skill areas there were some students who were already aware of the appropriate language before teaching began, as measured by the teacher pre-test. This ranged from nine who already knew how to start a conversation appropriately, to two who could ask appropriate questions and two who were able to accept an invitation. When the data for the pre- and post-tests shown in the first two bars was compared, there was a small (8.3% to 25%) increase in the number of students showing instances of full awareness of the socio-cultural norms in six of the nine skills: *making small talk*, *using polite questions*, *giving polite feedback*, *changing the subject*, *inviting* and *finishing a conversation*.

The fact that the increase, although small, occurred in these skills could be because these functions, apart from *using polite questions,* can be carried out with the use of formulaic expressions which students at the pre-intermediate level are generally familiar with or can easily acquire, perhaps because they are more often heard and therefore more easily noticed. Typical formulaic language used by learners in the DCTs included *'How'* questions in small talk, for example *'How've you been?',* which featured on one of the samples; using *'anyway'* to change the subject; *'would you like to'* for invitations and *'I have to go'* as a pre-closing.

In contrast, the findings indicate that in *using polite questions* and *accepting and refusing invitations,* which require more complex language and interactional skills, students were less likely to gain awareness of relevant norms. One example of this complexity is the need to process what has just been said while formulating a suitable response, always difficult for lower-level learners. This kind of difficulty is identified by House (1996) in his study of German learners of English pragmatics.

The data represented by the third bar in the chart measures the number of students whose individual awareness of the skill increased. As for the post-beginner data the increase could be from none to some or full awareness, or from some to full awareness, meaning that some who showed increased awareness had not yet shown evidence of full awareness, hence the seemingly contradictory data for finishing a conversation.

This data indicates there is evidence of improved individual awareness in all nine skills, with a more substantial increase (41.6% to 58%) in the skills of *inviting someone, making small talk, and finishing*

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a conversation. As noted previously these functions can more readily be expressed using formulaic language.

Figure 3

Pre-intermediate: Student awareness of conversation skills (pre-instruction and post-instruction) and individual increased awareness in conversation skills (N=12)
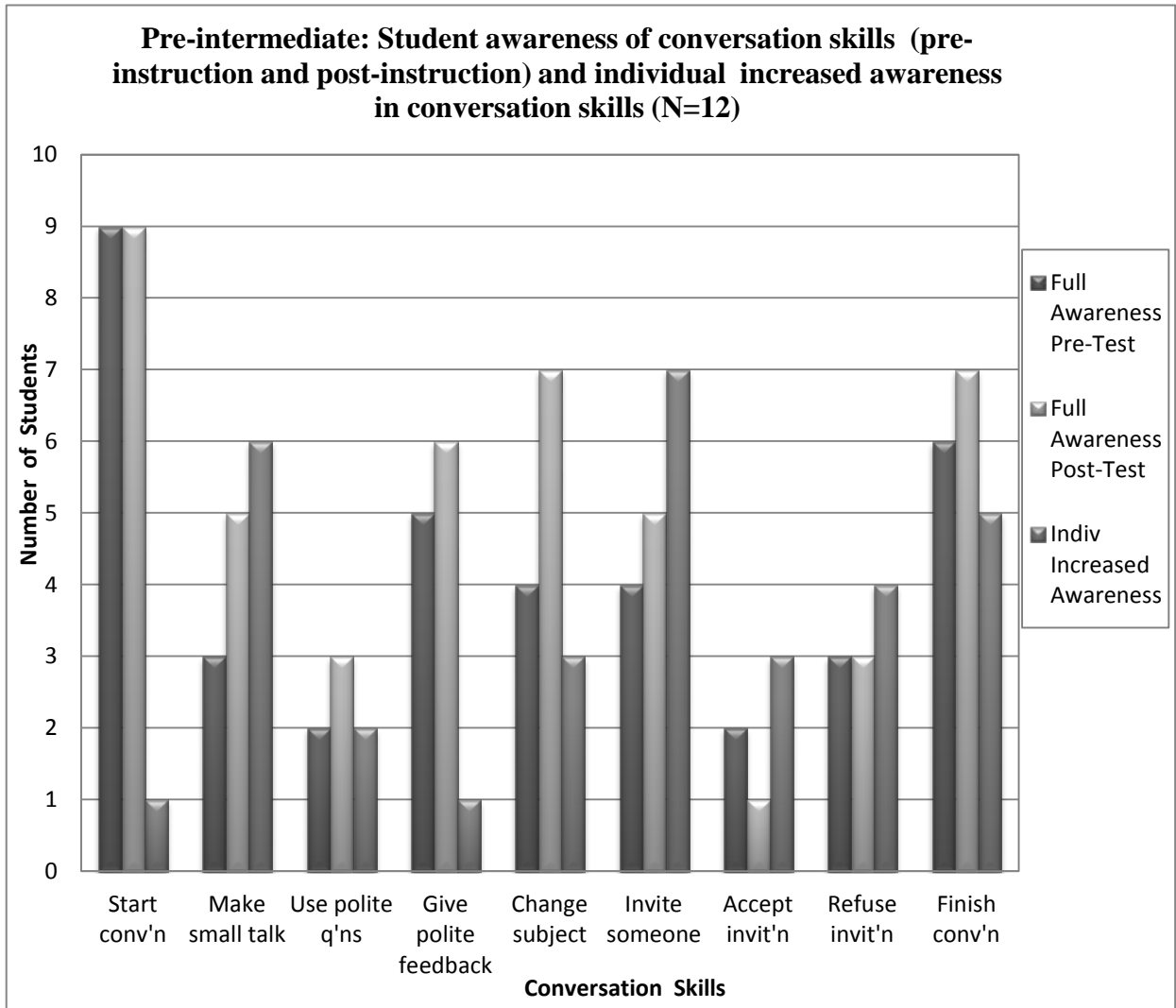

Figure 4 shows which classroom-based activities contributed to this improvement.

The ranking of the classroom-based learning activities was arrived at in the same way as for the post-beginners. The data represented by the first bar ('helpful') shows, as for the post-beginners, that all activities were helpful to the majority of students, with 75% or more of students selecting each activity. However when students were restricted to selecting only two which were 'most helpful' (see the second bar) the activity rated overall as the most helpful in learning conversation skills was *information told by the teacher. Teacher feedback* followed closely, with *listening to conversation tapes* ranked third if 'helpful' and 'most helpful' data were considered together. The students' positive response to the listening was reflected in teacher journal comments: *The class got better at listening for the target language and listened enthusiastically. The class appeared to understand and complete all questions well. Studying the transcripts* was the least favoured activity, with no student selecting it as most helpful. In fact teacher journal data shows that the transcripts were used very little during

teaching: *The students did not appear to need the transcripts during the listening lessons.* However, when they were used, the teacher's comment was: *The class did the exercise well, much discussion was generated.* In contrast to the findings for the post-beginner level the data indicated that listening to semi-authentic texts was seen as very helpful. It is also interesting that more students at this level learned from contact outside the classroom. However, as with the post-beginner class, the three most highly ranked activities involved teacher input.

Figure 4

Pre-intermediate: Student perceptions of helpful and most helpful learning activities (N=12)
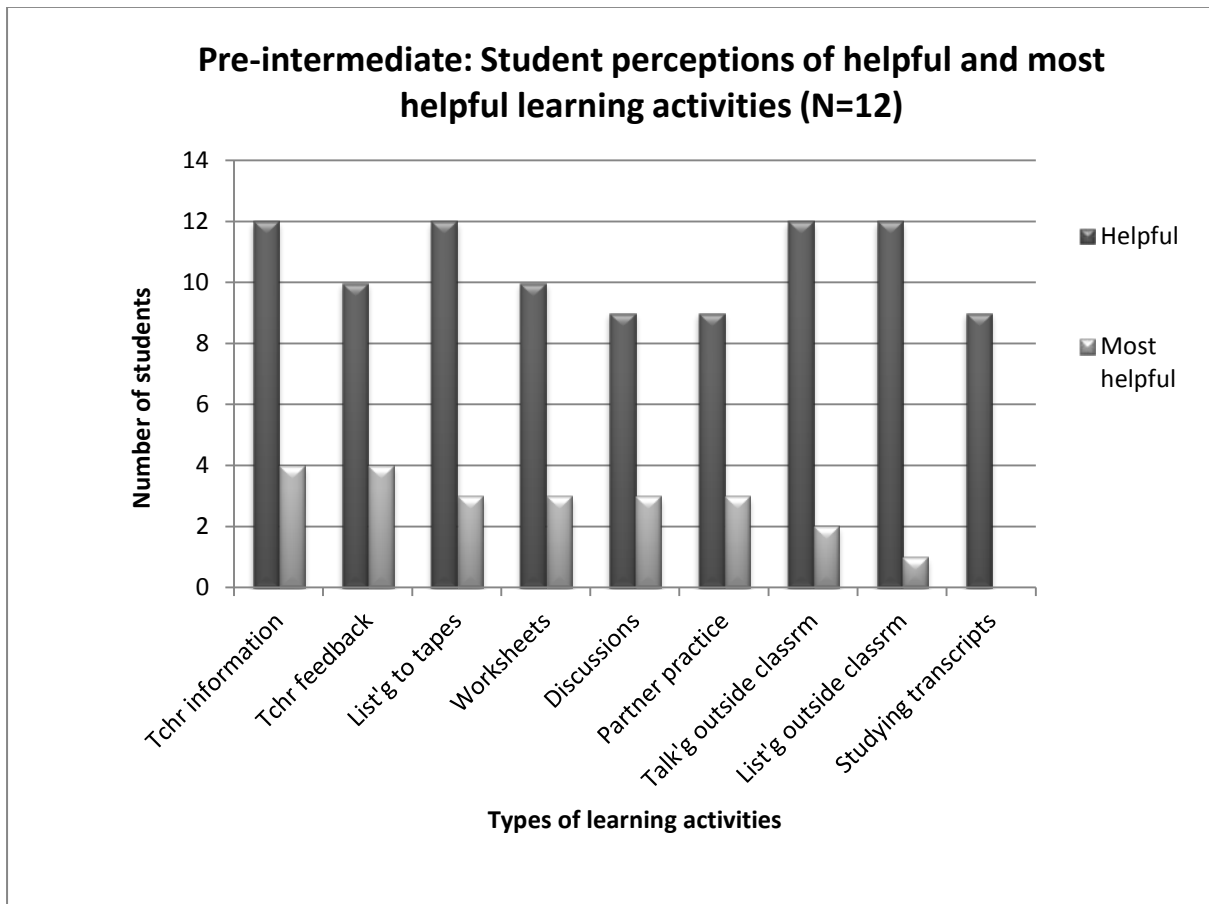
Discussion and conclusions

Looking at outcomes common to both levels it is clear that these lower-level learners could learn features and pragmatics of conversation from semi-authentic models. There were modest to substantial increases in the numbers who were able to show awareness of these norms, and students in both classes rated either listening to the authentic conversations or reading the transcripts highly in the activities survey. In general it seems that functions easily expressed in formulaic language are those showing a greater increase in awareness, highlighting the importance of teaching these multi-word units to lower-level learners. The improvements in the pre-intermediate class were small, however. This is surprising since our research at higher (Denny, 2008, 2010) and now lower levels has shown greater benefits. Further study would be needed to see what other factors might influence this result.

In addition it is noticeable from the results of the activities surveys that the teacher-directed activities (teacher information and teacher feedback) are consistently more highly ranked by these particular learners than they have been at higher levels in our previous studies. This suggests that although these learners at lower proficiency levels could learn from semi-authentic sample texts, they believed they benefitted from more teacher guidance. However individual teaching or learning styles may also be a factor here. Further research could explore these variables.

There were differences between the levels. For post-beginners the analytical activities (using worksheets to analyse stages in conversation, and studying conversational vocabulary and expressions) were less highly rated in the 'most helpful' data. This is not surprising as analysis is highly language dependent. Also, whereas the transcript was less valued or needed at the pre-intermediate level, at the post-beginner level the higher rating of *using transcripts* suggests that the support of the transcript was important with complex samples. There are other task design and learner variables that might have affected the outcome, and a closer analysis and more detailed data on these factors could strengthen further research.

There is of course limited generalisability for these findings given the small number of participants. However, taken together with the similar results in our previous cycles of action research, trustworthy evidence is building that semi-authentic discourse samples are valuable tools for the teaching of natural spoken language to migrant and refugee learners, and are valued by and accessible for learners, with scaffolding, even at lower levels. This study has also highlighted the need for such scaffolding at these levels and the value of prioritizing the teaching of formulaic language and the importance of learner noticing.

Given such encouragement, we will continue to use and refine this methodology.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Sample questions from self-assessment survey and DCT – Post-beginner

You are having a conversation with a friend. Please tick one box for each sentence and answer the questions:

		Yes	Sometimes	No
1.	I can politely start a conversation face to face.			
	What do you say?			
2.	I can politely start a conversation on the phone.			
	What do you say?			
3.	I can politely ask the usual beginning questions in a conversation.			
	Write one question.			
4.	I know when it's my turn to speak.			
5.	I know the words to use to show I am listening.			
	What words do you use?			

Appendix 2: Sample activities survey – Pre-intermediate

Please tick every activity that helped you to understand the culture and cultural language of conversation in NZ English.

You can tick as many as you need to.

1. listening to people outside the classroom ☐
2. talking to people outside the classroom ☐
3. information told you by the teacher (spoken) ☐
4. information written in worksheets ☐
5. group or class discussions in the classroom ☐
6. conversation practice with a partner in the classroom ☐
7. teacher feedback or correction during practice with a partner ☐
8. listening to conversation tapes ☐
9. studying transcripts of conversations using worksheets ☐

Write here the two activities from the nine above that helped you improve the most.

1. _____

2. _____

Appendix 3: Criteria for assessment – Post-beginner

The learner can, according to core NZ English socio-cultural and pragmatic norms covered in the course:

Skill	Yes (Y)	To Some Extent (S)	No (N) No Response OR as below
1	Start face to face conversation appropriately	Address or greeting inappropriate	Both inappropriate OR one /both missing
2	Start phone conversation appropriately	Address or greeting inappropriate	Both inappropriate OR one /both missing
3	Ask the usual beginning questions in a conversation appropriately (small talk)	Inappropriate form (including register & grammar) OR inappropriate small talk topic	Small talk topic and form inappropriate
5	Use feedback to indicate listening	Inappropriate feedback	No feedback
6	Invite someone appropriately	Language partially appropriate e.g. too abrupt or direct	Language inappropriate e.g. not a request
8	Accept an invitation appropriately	Language partially appropriate e.g. too abrupt or direct OR no pleasure shown	Language inappropriate i.e. more than one mistake
9	Refuse an invitation appropriately	Language partially appropriate e.g. too abrupt or direct OR no reason given	Language inappropriate i.e. more than one mistake
10	Seek clarification appropriately	Impolite OR too abrupt	Impolite AND too abrupt
11	Finish a conversation appropriately	Some pre-closure, but not all, or some inappropriate	No pre-closure

Key to Categories:

Yes –   Does this without any pragmatic errors (i.e. there may be minor grammatical errors, but the form and content are fully appropriate)

To Some Extent & No – As described above.

Appendix 4. Sample worksheet activities – Post-beginner

1. Questions to raise pragmatic awareness (sample)
- What word does Judy use just before she says <u>why</u> she is ringing?
- What are the first eight words that Judy uses to explain why she is ringing?

……….

2. Role play activities

<u>Speaking Practice</u>

I. **Now practise saying these things politely with another student:**

1. Practise saying <u>why</u> you are ringing.

2. Practise explaining <u>what</u> you are inviting them to and <u>when</u> it is.

3. Practise saying you <u>can't come</u> and <u>why</u>.

II. **Now listen to the teacher having a <u>whole</u> invitation conversation with some students.**

<u>**Beginning of the Conversation:**</u>

A: Hello. …………………… speaking.
B: Oh hi ……………….   It's ………………….. here. How are you?
A: I'm fine thanks. And you?
B: ………………………………………………. Have you been busy lately? (**or:** How's the family?)
A: …………………………………………………………………………………………………..
B: Actually I was ringing to invite you to ………………………………………….

<u>**End of the Conversation:**</u>

A: Oh, well. See you soon.
B: Yes, see you soon. Bye bye.
A: Goodbye.

III. **Now <u>you</u> practise having an invitation conversation with some students.**

Appendix 5. Sample worksheet activities – Pre-intermediate

<u>**AN INVITATION ON THE PHONE**</u>

<u>**Listen again for details to learn about the language used.**</u> **[After two global listening activities]**

1. *Listen to the first half of the conversation a couple of times. Write down how they greet each other on the phone. Try completing the small talk questions that Jo Anna and Jenny ask each other. These standard questions are called 'openers'.*

    Jo Anna: _____

    Jenny: ___ ___ . ____ _____ _____ . ___ _____ _____?

    Jo Anna: _____. _____ ___ ___ . ___ . _____ _____ _____?

    Jenny: _____ , _____ . ____ __ _____ _____ _____

    _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ .

2. *Travel becomes the topic of this casual conversation from lines 6-47. Listen for the typical follow-up questions Jenny asks about Jo Anna's trip. Write down as many as you can. The first one has been done for you. [Sample].*

    a.   You went to India. Is that right?

    b.   And _____?

    c.   Mmm is Goa _____?

    d.   Wow. _____? …………………

    ..

3. *What common small words (discourse markers) do you hear them begin their responses with?*

    To introduce questions   _____, _____

    Neutral responding words   _____, _____

    To introduce a response that needs some thought   _____

    Before an unexpected (surprising) response   _____

4. *Now listen to the last part of the conversation (the invitation and the acceptance, lines 48 - 60) and answer these questions. [Sample]*

    What are Jo Anna's responses to Jenny's two invitation questions?

    Jenny: Do you want to get together sometime…and have a coffee?

    Jo Anna: _____   _____.   _____.

    Jenny: So...um...do you want to come round to my place?

Jo Anna: _____. _____. _____. ………………….

6.   *In English, we let each other know when we want to end the conversation. Write in the expressions used (lines 65-70).*

Pre closing: _____

_____

_____

Closing: _____

_____

7.   *Now it's your turn to practise making an informal invitation on the phone.*

- *Find a partner.*
- *You are workmates.*
- *Imagine you have just had a holiday and one of you rings the other to catch up. Ask them what they did over the break.*