

# How do American University Students “Invite” others?: A Corpus-based Study of Linguistic Strategies for the Speech Act of “Invitations”<sup>(1)</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper examines pragmatic strategies employed by native English speakers for the performance of an English speech act of “invitation” through analyses of responses provided by U.S. university undergraduate students with the use of the DCT (= discourse completion test). The analyses of the linguistic strategies have been carried out at the (1) lexical, (2) grammatical, and (3) discourse levels, along with the strategy combinations, applied by native American English speakers. The results also indicate that the use of corpus data can be effective for ELT (English Language Teaching) pursuing the methodology of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) in that the database can supply materials which provide “natural” and “appropriate” examples of English language use in a context where one needs to perform a specific speech act such as “invitation.”

## 1. Introduction

In line with the movement of introducing more communicative language teaching into ELT classrooms, the cultivation of “pragmatic competence” (cf. Bachman, 1990) and its testing have come to be implemented widely as Rose

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& Kasper (2001: p.3) state.

The learning of the linguistic functions, viz. speech acts such as “requesting,” “thanking,” “apologizing” and their related strategies has become one big issue in the ELT for the CLT. It incorporates not only traditional learning of vocabulary and grammar but also discourse strategies and their combinations (i.e. semantic formulae) and related linguistic politeness strategies. It is desirable that an EFL learner starts to learn such pragmatic strategies so that they can express themselves in “natural” and “appropriate” ways in certain contexts after or while they master the use of vocabulary and sentence structure.

In his recent research project supported by the **Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research** from **JSPS** (Japan Society for the Promotion of Scientific Research) [Subject num.: 18820028] (2006-2008) and **Waseda University Grant for Special Research Projects** [Subject num.: 2008A-840 (2008-2009); 2009B-083 (2009-2010)]<sup>(2)</sup>, the author has been engaged in the compilation of English Speech Acts Corpora (SAC) for the purpose of (1) an academic linguistic survey of pragmatic strategies employed by native English speakers at the lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels, and (2) applying the research results to the production of ELT materials and related teaching methods at all academic levels (viz. elementary, secondary, and tertiary).

## 2. Literature review

This section introduces theoretical frameworks, literatures, and descriptions which are relevant to this study regarding the following subjects: (1) the characteristics of “inviting” as a speech act, (2) pragmatics and corpus data, and (3)

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how pragmatic components have been incorporated in recent ELT.

## **2.1 Speech act of “inviting”**

The first thing that should be understood is the concept “speech act.” It refers to the realization of the speaker’s (S’s) intention in a single or a sequence of utterances. The speech act of “inviting” appears when S is showing his/her intention to request H’s (hearer’s) participation in or attendance at a certain occasion, mainly the one hosted by S. Invitation is an illocutionary speech act, which is supposed to be basically an FEA (face-enhancing act) for H (cf. Kerbat-Orecchioni, 1997: 14), because S undertakes in this speech act to offer H an opportunity to enjoy or acquire something for the benefit of H. In this sense, “invitation” is assumed to belong chiefly to Searle’s EXPRESSIVE (1975: 15) and Leech’s CONVIVIAL speech act categories (1983: 104) because of its FEA nature. However, in the author’s own observation of this speech act (2007, 2009), it has been confirmed that “invitation” is sometimes achieved as one type of “requesting”, when S needs to ask H to participate in or attend at a certain event. In such a case, “invitation” enters Searle’s (*ibid.*) DIRECTIVE or Leech’s (*ibid.*) COMPETITIVE domains, which are mainly concerned with Brown & Levinson’s (1987) FTA (face-threatening act) framework.

It is therefore essential in this research to investigate how the two opposite concepts, FEA and FTA, are realized in the data. Emphasis, simplicity, clarity, and other face-enhancing elements are usually observed in FEA strategies, while indirectness, tentativeness, mitigation and other face-saving components are the features of FTA achieving strategies.

## **2.2 Pragmatics and corpus data**

The pragmatic researchers (e.g. Aijmer, 1996; Adolphs, 2008) have in their current studies incorporated corpus data extracted by such English language corpora as LLC (the London-Lund Corpus) or CANCODE (the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) and accomplished high academic

achievements in their language description.

On the other hand, as such existing large-scale corpora, including BNC (the British National Corpus) or BOE (the Bank of English) were not specially designed for studies on speech acts and related strategies, the linguistic data extracted there are in some way insufficient for a specific, detailed, and exhaustive study of a target speech act (especially when it is not a “major” one such as “requesting,” “apologizing,” or “thanking”). It is therefore necessary for a researcher to exploit a method (e.g. the DCT, role-plays) that can elicit sufficient and condensed linguistic data for a thorough study of target speech acts (cf. Kasper, 2000). It should be noted, however, that previous studies utilizing DCTs or role-plays have often been criticized for the skepticism about authenticity of the data. Notwithstanding, the data obtained through the DCTs are supposed to be “condensed” rather than “dispersed” as Beebe & Cummings (1996) state: the responses in the DCTs model the “canonical shape” of the target speech act. Concerning this, Schauer & Adolphs discussed “potential implications for using the two [DCT and corpus data] in a pedagogic context” (2006: p.119, annotation by the author) in their study of expressions of gratitude. It is important to keep a balance between authenticity and controllability for a fuller investigation of speech act strategies.

As the first step for a study of diverse English speech acts, this particular research project of SAC compilation has so far utilized conventional DCTs (cf. Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989) and role-plays to elicit written/spoken data on a large scale and to sketch out basic tendencies in performances of speech acts. Exploration of existing corpora for a comparison with or reinforcement of these findings is to be carried out as the second step of this research project.

### **2.3 How pragmatic components have been incorporated in recent ELT**

Incorporating pragmatic components (i.e. the use/choice of linguistic items according to the context — cf. Rose & Kasper, 2001) in ELT has become more and more common as researchers and practitioners of applied linguistics are putting more emphasis on the cultivation of the importance of

“pragmatic competence” (cf. Bachman, 1990) for the pursuit of the CLT paradigm (cf. Nunan, 1991).

The term “pragmatic components” refer to strategies at the lexical, grammatical and discourse levels and related politeness strategies. At some stage, probably when an EFL learner has become an advanced/independent learner, it is necessary to acquire ability to understand how intention, modality, politeness, and cultural values are embedded in utterances in explicit and implicit ways. At the same time s/he need to learn strategies to express such things him/herself. For such purposes ELT researchers and practitioners are requested to devise ways to teach (1) how to choose communicative acts, (2) what strategies can realize such acts, (3) what contents should be included, and (4) the necessary linguistic forms, as claimed by Kasper (1997, par. 11-12).

This English SAC project, whose achievements are to be introduced in the following sections, is thought to be able to attend to the matters above by providing ample examples of (1) different types of English speech acts, (2) discourse strategies, (3) semantic formulas, and (4) lexical and grammatical strategies.

### **3. Specification of this research project and the data collection procedure**

This section explicates how this research was conducted regarding the following: (1) the objectives of this research project, (2) the data collection procedure, and (3) the procedure of data analysis.

#### **3.1 The author’s Speech Act Corpora (SAC) compilation project**

This English speech acts corpora (SAC) compilation project has been designed to establish a database of 11 different English speech acts: *apologizing, comforting, complaining, complimenting, giving directions, hinting, inviting, offering, requesting, suggesting, and thanking*. The main aims of this project is [1] to contribute to studies of pragmatics for language description regarding (1a) activity types (cf. Levinson, 1979, 1992), (1b) social variables (*P*,

*D, R*, as defined by Brown & Levinson, 1987), (1c) the influence of formality/informality on language use, (1d) lexicogrammatical strategies, (1e) discourse strategies, along with (1f) strategies for politeness or “rapport management” (Spencer-Oatey, 2000); [2] to provide useful linguistic data based on above to the ELT in Japan and other countries and to produce teaching/learning materials that activate CLT in English classrooms.

### 3.2 The data collection procedure

The corpus data collection in the present study was carried out in (1) February-March 2007, (2) September 2007 in Missouri, U.S.A. with 164 undergraduate students of the Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), who are all native English speakers (i.e. the speakers of English as their first language or “mother tongue”). The data collection procedure is summarized as follows.

- Two types of DCTs and role-plays were employed for data elicitation.
- DCT type-1 requested one group of informants to write what they really said in the past or would say to perform the target English speech acts.
- DCT type-2 requested the other group to write up real or imaginary conversations between S and H.
- Both types asked them to describe situations where they actually performed or would perform the speech acts, along with information on formality/informality and social variables (*P, D, R*).
- Besides these research components utilizing the two types of written questionnaires, the researcher invited informants to perform speech acts in role-plays for the audio-visual data collection (for further study).

### 3.3 The data analysis procedure

The data collected through the above procedure were then analyzed regarding the following categories in the following ways for the present study.

[A] *Situations / Activity types*

Situations specified by the informants were classified according to their types by the researcher in order to investigate what situations generate this speech act.

[B] *Lexical and grammatical strategies*

The written responses were analyzed by *WordSmith* (ver. 4.0 & 5.0) for the exploration of lexical and grammatical strategies focusing on the following subjects: the frequency of word occurrence, collocations or chunks, and grammatical features.

[C] *Discourse strategies*

The whole discourse of the responses in the DCT was divided by the researcher into segments according to their functions in the speech event. They were classified into suitable types for an analysis of individual discourse strategies and their sequence (i.e. semantic formulae).

## 4. The results of the data analysis

This section describes the results of the data analysis with respect to the following subjects: (1) types of situations, (2) lexical and grammatical strategies, (3) discourse strategies, and (4) semantic formulae.

### 4.1 Types of situations

The following table summarizes in what types of situations this speech act appeared.

**Table 4.1** Types of situations

N	Type	Classification	Freq.	%
1	K	Party	57	41.3%
2	I	Meal	21	15.2%
3	E	Event	11	8.0%
4	H	House	10	7.2%
5	J	Movie	10	7.2%
6	G	Going out	9	6.5%
7	N	Sport	6	4.3%
8	B	Dance	3	2.2%
9	O	Study	3	2.2%
10	F	Game	2	1.4%
11	M	Sit together	2	1.4%
12	A	Church	1	0.7%
13	C	Date	1	0.7%
14	D	Dorm	1	0.7%
15	L	Shopping	1	0.7%
		Total	138	

The Table 4.1 indicates that the American university students frequently invite others to (1) a party, (2) a meal, (3) an event (e.g. concert), (4) their houses, (5) a movie, (those appearing 10 times or more) and so on. Broadly these appear to be almost same as the occasions where Japanese people invite their acquaintances. Therefore there does not exist any cultural difference concerning the situations for this speech act, while such cross-cultural difference was witnessed in the author's previous study of the speech act of "suggesting" (Suzuki, 2009).

## 4.2 Lexical and grammatical strategies

This section examines the strategies at the lexical and grammatical levels. Table 4.2, the Wordlist, exhibits the lexical items utilized in the data in the order of frequency. The ways the key words (i.e. those ranked high in the list and performing some special functions in this speech act) are used are scrutinized in terms of (1) how they appear, (2) their collocations with other lexical

items, and (3) the sentence structures in which they are incorporated.

**Table 4.2** Wordlist

N	Word	Freq.	N	Word	Freq.
1	TO	206	26	HOUSE	21
2	YOU	195	27	ON	21
3	COME	106	28	FOR	19
4	A	74	29	US	19
5	HEY	73	30	THIS	18
6	WOULD	66	31	DOING	17
7	LIKE	64	32	WANNA	16
8	PARTY	56	33	WEEKEND	15
9	WANT	55	34	WHAT	14
10	AND	48	35	AM	13
11	GO	45	36	BIRTHDAY	13
12	MY	45	37	CAN	13
13	WITH	45	38	IS	12
14	I	42	39	MOVIE	12
15	ARE	40	40	OUT	12
16	TONIGHT	40	41	SATURDAY	12
17	ME	39	42	SEE	12
18	THE	39	43	DINNER	11
19	DO	37	44	IT	11
20	AT	36	45	OF	11
21	HAVING	35	46	SOME	11
22	IF	31	47	WILL	11
23	I'M	29	48	SHOULD	10
24	GOING	24	49	WATCH	10
25	OVER	24			

The wordlist above shows the lexical items utilized by the American informants in this study. As can be seen, there are some notable key words specific to this particular speech act such as *come*, *would*, *like*, *party*, *want*, *tonight*, *having*, *if*, *house*, *doing*, or *weekend*. (The function words in the wordlist such as *you*, *the*, *to*, *I* are not paid attention to here because they do not possess any unique functions or features in this speech act.) Among these,

*come*, *go*, and *having* have been selected for an analytical lexicogrammatical study to examine the ways they are incorporated in utterance structures, focusing on their collocations, chunks, and the grammatical arrangements. These three words were chosen because their analysis can also provide the comprehensive overview of the lexicogrammatical strategies in this speech acts, including the other key words in the above wordlist.

[Selected] Lexicogrammatical strategies (collocations / chunks / grammatical arrangements)

**A) COME**

**(in Declarative / Interrogative / Conditional + want / like / would / tonight / weekend / party / house / over, etc.)**

- 1) Lovi, you can come with me to the game tonight. (Declarative)
- 2) You should come with me to the party tonight! (Declarative)
- 3) Hey wanna come to my party this weekend? (Interrogative)
- 4) Lisa, do you want to come stay at my house tonight? (Interrogative)
- 5) Would you like to come over to my house for a party tonight? (Interrogative)
- 6) I'm having a party if you want to come? (Conditional)
- 7) Tommy, I was wondering if you would like to come over to my house on Friday for a party. (Conditional)

As can be seen from the samples above, this fundamental word *come* is used in a range of structures and with various expressions. The list above can also serve as a summary of the structures and expressions frequently used as the core part of this speech act. In the first two examples in the declarative, *come* is combined with *you can* (indicating H's possibility) and *you should* (weakly indicating H's obligation). These can be recognized rather as a suggestion and encouragement to H than invitation itself. As for the next three samples in the interrogative, S is asking H's will, which is thought to be polite linguistic behaviour. There are two main patterns in this structure: *do you*

*want (to come)* and *would you like (to come)*. Here “want” is always connected with “do you” and “like” with “would you” without exceptions. This can be useful information for EFL learners when they study about this speech act and frequently used lexical/grammatical patterns, whose choice depends on the degree of formality. The last two samples with the conditional *if*-clause may not be familiar to the Japanese EFL learners, as the sentences like them do not appear in the secondary school ELT textbooks they use. In the author’s observation, an *if*-clause is frequently used as an alternative to the question form in several speech acts (e.g. offering, suggesting, requesting): asking H about his/her willingness to accept the invitation. This conditionality can be recognized as a phenomenon related to linguistic politeness (especially in Leech’s framework), *viz.* in showing S’s tentativeness and giving H an option (cf. Leech, 1989; 2001; 2003).

The principal reason why this word, *come*, is so commonly used in this speech act can be explained in terms of “spatial deixis”: the invitation generally originates in S’s own domain and s/he would like to invite others there (i.e. “invitation” is having H to “come” to S’s place). The frequent use of the adverb *over* after this word is also emphasizing this tendency, as it indicates the direction towards S. This is another useful piece of information for EFL learners when they learn such deictic meaning of English words.

## B) GO

- 1) I was wondering if you would like to **go** play some golf.
- 2) Hey Brian would you like to **go** to a party with me?
- 3) Do you want to **go** to Adam’s party later?
- 4) Do you want to **go** eat at Cracker Barrel with me?

On the other hand, *go* is used most frequently when S would like to invite H to some occasion at a place other than S’s own. This confirms the description about *come* above, with regard to the human sense of direction. One notable feature of the use of this word is that it is often followed by an uninflected

base form of a verb (*play* and *eat* in the above examples), just as it was in the researcher's previous study (Suzuki, 2009). This kind of structure is recognized as erroneous grammatical usage in traditional conservative ELT textbooks, but this combination is commonly used in daily conversations in America as evidenced by the author's research results. While appreciating the importance of studying what is recognized as correct in English in a general sense, it may be beneficial for ELT learners to learn about this type of special usage so that they can accommodate themselves to the local linguistic circumstances more easily and quickly.

### C) **HAVING**

- 1) Amanda, I am **having** a Birthday party next weekend.
- 2) Greg, my family and I are **having** a BBQ at my house on Saturday.
- 3) Hey girl, I'm **having** a few people over tonight
- 4) Bob is **having** a party at his place if you want to come over.

While the word *having* is not use in the “head act” (i.e. the core part) of this speech act, it is used many times in one chief sub-strategy “Supportive move (description of event).” What is suggested by this phenomenon is that present progressive is frequently employed to present a concrete plan in near future. The Japanese EFL learners are generally taught the following expressions for the future reference at junior high: (1) *be going to + V*, (2) *will + V*, and (3) *be + V-ing*. Among these, *will* is the most well-known one as a lexical item indicating future tense and consequently it is most commonly used by Japanese EFL learners when they need to express the future. However, *will* appears only 11 times in this data and there is only one case where it is used to indicate “a concrete plan in near future” (*I will have [a] birthday party this Friday*). In other cases this modal auxiliary is used to express S's intention about his/her future action (e.g. *I will let you know details later! / I will see you at 7:30*), with a third person singular subject (e.g. *It will be fun you should come*) and in **will you** in the interrogative. On the other hand, the first

type, *be going to* + V, are more commonly used with the first person subject to mean “a concrete plan in near future” (7 times: e.g. *I am going to go eat lunch / I am going to have people over later*). However, it can safely be said that the third type, the present progressive, is employed much more widely in daily conversations in the U.S. to denote “a concrete plan in near future” than the other two types. The frequency of this construction, especially that including *having* (35 times), is much higher than the structures with *will* and *be going to* + V. This fact can also be useful information to Japanese ELF learners to teach them “modality” of the modal auxiliaries and some grammatical structures, which is seldom or never dealt with in Japanese secondary school English classes.

#### D) Other issues

In the ELT classrooms in Japan, the expressions such as *let's* or *shall we* are widely taught as key phrases to invite others or make a suggestion. As a consequence, the ELT learners use these expressions in such speech acts. However, their frequencies are very low or do not appear at all in the researcher's studies (cf. Suzuki, 2009). When the author asked his students in his Pragmatics & ELT class (2008) what types of expressions they thought were most commonly used in these speech acts, most of them answered the above two. They were quite surprised when they saw such expressions did not frequently or never appeared. This issue should be certainly investigated further with more native English speakers' data and by the inspection of the way these expressions are taught in the ELT classrooms in Japan.

### 4.3 Discourse strategies

This section examines the discourse strategies employed by the American university undergraduate students for the performance of “inviting.” In order to investigate (1) what types of strategies were utilized and (2) how many times each of them appeared, “semantic tagging” (i.e. coding according to the function of an utterance unit in the discourse) was executed.

**Table 4.3** Conversation/Discourse strategies – strategy classification

No	Type	Strategy Classification	Freq	%(1)	%(2) <sup>(3)</sup>
1	A	Address (voc/intj/etc)	126	28.6%	
2	N	Supportive move (description of event)	82	18.6%	26.1%
3	F	Head act (interrogative)	64	14.5%	20.4%
4	D	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	52	11.8%	16.6%
5	H	Preparatory act (query on h's plan)	21	4.8%	6.7%
6	C	Head act (hypothetical + declarative)	18	4.1%	5.7%
7	O	Supportive move (directions)	16	3.6%	5.1%
8	B	Head act (declarative)	14	3.2%	4.5%
9	P	Supportive move (encouragement)	10	2.3%	3.2%
10	G	Head act (present option)	8	1.8%	2.5%
11	E	Head act (imperative)	6	1.4%	1.9%
12	Q	Supportive move (present option)	5	1.1%	1.6%
13	K	Preparatory act (specification of reason)	4	0.9%	1.3%
14	T	Supportive move (s's want to have h)	4	0.9%	1.3%
15	M	Preparatory act (s's want)	3	0.7%	1.0%
16	S	Supportive move (s's want to have h)	3	0.7%	1.0%
17	I	Preparatory act (query on h's situation)	1	0.2%	0.3%
18	J	Preparatory act (query on h's will)	1	0.2%	0.3%
19	L	Preparatory act (s's readiness)	1	0.2%	0.3%
20	R	Supportive move (specify what h can do)	1	0.2%	0.3%
		Total 1 (all)	440		
		Total 2 (excluding "Address")	314		

The Table 4.3 is a summary of the strategies in the order of frequency. The following parts describe the features and characteristics of the 10 most frequent strategies in order to sketch out some tendencies of this speech act at the discourse level.

(3) Percentage 1 (%1): obtained from Total 1) indicates the proportion including all the strategies and Percentage 2 (%2): obtained from Total 2) represents that excluding "address." "Address," which includes vocatives, interjections, conventional expressions for greetings, etc., is not specific to this particular speech act but is attached to many other speech acts. Therefore it is effective to exclude this type in order to concentrate more on core components specific to the target speech act.

#### **4.3.1 [A] Address (voc/intj/etc)**

- (a) Amber, (b) Hey Aunt Sally, (c) Hey guys, (d) Hello Catherine

These expressions are used as “alerter,” “attention getters” (cf. Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989), social index markers, expressions showing friendliness or closeness, etc. This type includes several different parts of speech (e.g. vocatives, interjections, etc.), put into it because of their somewhat similar and rather independent functions in the semantic formulas. (For more details about these “addresses,” refer to the author’s previous work (Suzuki, 2009).)

#### **4.3.2 [N] Supportive move (description of event)**

- (a) I am having a party at my home this Friday.
- (b) Alicia and I are going out to lunch today.
- (c) There is a bunch of us going to the movies at 5 o’clock.
- (d) me and some of the girls are going out Wednesday.
- (e) My graduation is this Saturday at three o’clock,
- (f) A group of us are going to meet at the school at 7:00pm.

This strategy is commonly used by S to clarify on what occasion s/he would like to invite H. As can be seen above, a construction or expression indicating future time is used in most cases. It is notable here too that the present progressive or the structure *be going to V* is employed instead of the modal auxiliary *will*.

#### **4.3.3 [F] Head act (interrogative)**

- (a) Do you want to come over to my room and watch a movie?
- (b) You want to come with us?
- (c) you wanna go to Wal-Mart with me?

- (d) Wanna come?
- (e) Will you please come?

Most of the utterances of this type contain the phrase *want to* or its colloquial form *wanna*. The most commonly used structure is *do you want to (come)*, although there is only one example of it above. This type is supposed to be less formal than Type [D]: Head act (hypothetical + interrogative).

#### **4.3.4 [D] Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)**

- (a) would you like to come over and watch a movie?
- (b) Would you like to join us?
- (c) Would you like to go get something to eat?
- (d) Would you like to join me for dinner, Derrick?
- (e) Would you like to play volley ball tonight?

This strategy consist of one single structure *would you like to (come)* and it is felt to be more formal/polite than [F] above because of the use of the hypothetical modal *would* and the verb *like*, whose meaning is milder than *want*.

#### **4.3.5 [H] Preparatory act (query on h's plan)**

- (a) what are you doing tomorrow night?
- (b) what are you doing next Friday?
- (c) are you busy today?
- (d) Are you open?
- (e) If you aren't busy,

Type [H] is another commonly used sub-strategy, asking H whether s/he can spare time for S's invitation or not. It should be noted that the present progressive is again used most commonly here, while the use of the auxiliary

verb *will* cannot be seen at all in this type.

The conditional (e) has been included in this category as it is functioning virtually as a questioning form, as described in the previous section on the use of *come*.

#### 4.4 Semantic formulae

This section demonstrates and explicates how each strategy is combined with another or other strategy/ies to constitute a whole semantic formula for the achievement of a speech act, as Table 4.4 displays. While people in some cases use one single utterance to perform a speech act performance, they utilize more elaborated combinations of utterances or formulas to show their intentions, emotions or consideration for others. It is therefore significant to study how sub-strategies are incorporated in a sequence as well as core parts (or “head act”) to learn about what we need to think about and take care of in expressing our intentions.

**Table 4.4** Semantic formulas (Combination of discourse strategies)

N	Combination	Freq.	N	Combination	Freq.
1	AFN	18	9	AB	3
2	AF	17	10	AC	3
3	AD	15	11	AFNO	3
4	D	14	12	AFO	3
5	ADN	8	13	AGN	3
6	F	8	14	AN	3
7	ADH	5	15	C	3
8	DN	4			

The following illustrates the most frequent combination types (appearing five times or more) in Table 4.4: “AFN,” “AD,” “ADN,” and “ADH.” “AF,” “D,” and “F” are omitted because they can be subsumed under similar or bigger combinations “AFN” and “AD.”

#### 4.4.1 “AFN” type

Situation	Remark	Strategy Classification	T	C
Having a party tonight.	Hey.	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	CR
	I'm having a party tonight.	Supportive move (description of event)	N	
	Do you want to come?	Head act (interrogative)	F	
I'm going on a walk and I want to invite my friend.	Hey.	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	CR
	I'm going on a walk,	Supportive move (description of event)	N	
	want to go?	Head act (interrogative)	F	

\*T = Type; C = Combination

This is the most frequently employed semantic formula in this speech act. This casual and friendly style seems to be a preferred strategy of young American students, whose culture was defined as that in “positive politeness” by Brown & Levinson (1987).

#### 4.4.2 “AD” type

Situation	Remark	Strategy Classification	T	C
Inviting a girl to a dance.	Hey	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	AD
	would you like to go to the dance tonight?	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	D	
I invited a friend to come and see me perform.	Amber	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	AD
	would you like to come and see my dance performance at noon?	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	D	

\*T = Type; C = Combination

This type incorporates the phrase *would you like*, which is thought to be more tentative (and therefore more polite) than *do you want*. One interesting feature of this formula is that B&L's (*ibid.*) “positive politeness” (*Hey*) and “negative politeness” (*would you like*⋯?) coexist in one formula. This seems to be another example of a discrepancy between a theoretical framework (i.e. *politeness2*) and what is really happening in lay people's daily life conversations (i.e. *politeness1*) (cf. Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003), which was observed in the

researcher's previous study (Suzuki, 2009).

#### 4.4.3 "ADN" type

Situation	Remark	Strategy Classification	T	C
I am having a Birthday Party and want to invite my friend.	Amanda,	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	ADN
	I am having a Birthday party next weekend.	Supportive move (description of event)	N	
	Would you like to come?	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	D	
Inviting friends to go bowling.	Hey,	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	ADN
	I was thinking of going bowling tomorrow night.	Supportive move (description of event)	N	
	Would you like to come?	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	D	

\*T = Type; C = Combination

This combination is thought to be a better/politer formula than the previous one (ADN type) in that it is providing an independent explanation part as for the occasion of the invitation. (However, this part is often embedded in the ADN type as can be seen in the above examples.)

#### 4.4.4 "ADH" type

Situation	Remark	Strategy Classification	T	C
I want to go out to eat.	Aaron,	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	ADH
	are you doing anything tonight?	Preparatory act (query on h's plan)	H	
	Would you like to go get something to eat?	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	D	
Asking a friend over to a party. I ask robin to come over for a party at my house.	Robin	Address (voc/intj/etc)	A	ADH
	what are you doing tonight?	Preparatory act (query on h's plan)	H	
	Would you like to come over to my house for a party tonight?	Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)	D	

\*T = Type; C = Combination

This is another combination type that derives from [D] (*Head act (hypothetical*

+ *interrogative*). This type is assumed to be more elaborated than “AD” type because S is asking if H can spare time for his/her invitation. This is also a smart face-saving strategy for S because s/he can cancel the performance of this speech act if H responds in the negative. (H often says, however, something like “but why?” after the negative response. If it is the case, S fails to save his/her face with this strategy.)

## 5. Conclusion and future directions

The results of the data analysis above have sketched out how the speech act of “invitation” was accomplished by the American university undergraduate students. While it should be pointed out that this data reveals the language use of only a specific group of people, there are some noteworthy tendencies with regard to the characteristics of lexicogrammatical and discourse strategies as presented above. These research results are likely to be beneficial not only for language description but also for English language teaching pursuing the CLT.

While there are such merits in the reports of this article on “inviting,” further study is necessary to provide more information for the sake of language study and English language teaching. For example, further data collection in other English-speaking countries such as UK or Canada will reveal more about what are common or different in the pragmatic strategies of native English speakers around the globe; exploration of audio-visual data will supply information on prosody and kinesics; comparing the author’s data with those from other existing corpora (e.g. BNC, BOE, LLC) will let us know more about how to keep a good balance between authenticity and controllability of data collection. These issues would be addressed with the growth of the size of corpora and by the researcher’s effort to reveal more about the features of English speech acts.

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