Effects of DCT Types in Eliciting Interlanguage Pragmatics Data from Low-level Learners

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Interlanguage pragmatics research has focused on advanced learners under the rationale that even advanced learners who are grammatically competent lack of pragmatic knowledge. However, many scholars now begin to realize that research on low-level learners is underrepresented in the literature. Yet, in order to elicit speech act performances from low-level learners, employing an adequate elicitation method is crucial. The present investigation compared the effects of the written DCT, the oral DCT, and the cartoon DCT in eliciting interlanguage pragmatics data from low-level learners. In particular, the cartoon DCT, which has not been introduced in the previous studies, was newly designed and tested for its adequacy. The results from 60 low-level participants, mostly elementary school students, showed that the cartoon DCT group produced the highest number of responses and used the widest range of strategies. The traditional written DCT failed to prove its adequacy for low-level learners because the participants decided to leave 35% of their responses blank. For the oral DCT and the cartoon DCT, 'No response' was never found. Additionally, the cartoon DCT elicited more politeness marker, *please* and supportive moves. However, in terms of the directness level of requests, there were few differences between the three DCT groups. The results are expected to contribute to the addition of new methodological information to the knowledge pool in the field of interlanguage pragmatics.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence is the knowledge of what to say, how to say it, to whom in what situations. The rationale for interlanguage pragmatics studies is mainly that even advanced learners lack pragmatic competence, thus making them look unintentionally rude,

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ill-mannered, impolite, or awkward (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992). In short, advanced learners show deviations from native speakers in target language conventionality patterns. With the increased popularity in 1980s and 1990s, research on interlanguage pragmatics has flourished so far.

However, some scholars (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996) began to criticize that interlanguage pragmatics studies do not involve beginning level learners. Indeed, most of the interlanguage pragmtics investigations have only focused on advanced learners. Then what would have been the reasons for the dominance of advanced learners in the literature?

First, according to Bardovi-Harlig (1999), to reveal that even very advanced learners have not mastered basic pragmatics is more shocking than to reveal that low-level learners differ from the target norm. This stunning result can lead pragmatics researchers to make a strong assertion that interlanguage pragmatics research is important and that pragmatic knowledge has to be taught at all levels in the EFL/ESL classroom.

The second reason for using advanced learners as subjects can be found in their accessibility and availability in the academic circle. That is, the availability of English-speaking undergraduate and graduate students at universities around the world has reinforced the tendency to use advanced learners.

Lastly, but most importantly for this study, the traditional written discourse completion tasks (DCT) favor advanced learners. The written DCT is without question the most frequently used method to gather pragmatics data (Please see Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Cohen, Olshtain & Rosenstein, 1986; Edmondson, House, Kasper & Stemmer, 1984; House, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Young-sook Kim, 1998; Young-in Moon, 1998; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987; Rose, 1992, 1994; Rose & Ono, 1995; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, 1993; Wolfson, Marmor & Jones, 1989 for research that used the written DCT), and advanced learners are more advantageous in reading scenarios. In fact, many researchers have a concern over using low-level learners as subjects. First, they worry that low-level learners may not be able to understand a written description of a situation. Second, even if low-level learners have read and understood the written scenarios, they still may not write down their response at all.

Therefore, in order to investigate the pragmatic competence of low-level learners, it is crucial to find out an adequate elicitation method for beginners. For example, the written DCT may not have as much value as it has for advanced learners when it is administered to low-level learners. As Kasper and Dahl (1991) rightfully pointed out, selecting an adequate data collection method is crucial since it is a more powerful determinant of the final product. They noted that flawed data resulted from using an inadequate method cannot be treated with confidence. For example, a researcher, after having administered the written

DCT to low-level learners, may mistakenly conclude that these learners simply do not possess any pragmatic competence at all when they have in fact acquired many rules of speaking.

Consequently, it is essential that we test the conventional elicitation methods and also develop new methods to explore its usability and usefulness. In order to respond to this urgent need in the field of interlanguage pragmatics, the present investigation examines the effects of the three DCT types, namely, the written DCT, the oral DCT, and the cartoon DCT in eliciting pragmatics data from low-level learners. The written DCT and the oral DCT are conventional instruments with the oral DCT being more recent; the cartoon DCT is a new type of DCT specifically designed for this study.

Sixty low-level learners, mostly elementary school students, participated in this project. By comparing their speech act performances acquired from the three DCT types, this study attempts to discover the effects of each instrument and make suggestions as to which method is more adequate and effective to elicit interpragmatics data from low-level learners.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research instruments in pragmatics that have been employed for production[1] are mainly naturally occurring speech, role plays, DCTs. First, the natural conversation (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993) is considered the most desirable type of elicitation method since it reflects the natural and authentic negotiations between the interlocutors in real life. In fact, Wolfson (1989) argued that data from other elicitation methods is not reliable because learners' intuitions about what they would actually say in artificial situations are not stable. In other words, since knowledge on what and how to say to whom in certain situations is unconscious both for native speakers and non-native speakers, their hypothetical answers would not be reliable.

However, using the natural speech has some disadvantages in that it is difficult to obtain a sufficient corpus of data. Indeed, it is extremely hard to get natural data in certain kinds of speech act. For example, people tend not to make 'complaints' in front of the third party. Because of this lack of sufficient data, the data from the natural conversation has a danger of being unrepresentative of the population under investigation (Ellis, 1994).

The role play provides a learner with a description of the context which calls for the performance of a particular speech act, and the learner is supposed to play a particular role with another learner or a native speaker (Please see Cohen & Olshtain, 1981, 1993, 1994;

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[1]   As the present study only deals with the production, the methodology reviews upon eliciting perception/comprehension data (Carrell, 1979, 1981; Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Olshtain & Blum- Kulka, 1985; Walters, 1979) will not be conducted here.

Edmondson, House, Kasper & Stemmer, 1984; Fiksdal, 1989; Fraser, Rintell & Walters, 1980; Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992, 1995; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Olshtain, 1983; Scarcella & Brunak, 1981; Tanaka, 1988; Trosberg, 1987 for research on the role play). This method has a great advantage in that it allows the examination of speech act behavior in its full discourse context. In order to reach a communicative goal, the interlocutors must negotiate by verbally interacting with each other. While this dynamic interaction resembles the nature of authentic conversations, the role play has a methodological advantage over the naturally occurring conversation. That is, by controlling the interlocutors' roles and relationships, and the context, one can collect a larger amount of data from the role play. However, the role play also has administrative difficulties because "it must be administered individually using equipment and an interlocutor" (Brown, 2001, p. 320). Also, it takes a tremendous amount of time and costs to transcribe all of the interactions.

Even though the DCTs have been attacked for their lack of authenticity and interaction, their merits have been recognized by many researchers. A DCT is an instrument where the learners are supposed to write/say what they would normally say after reading/listening a situational description. Traditionally, the use of the written DCT which requires respondents to write down what they would usually say after reading a written description has been most dominant in the literature. A countless number of studies utilized the written DCT (Please see Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Cohen, Olshtain & Rosenstein, 1986; Edmondson, House, Kasper & Stemmer, 1984; House, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Young-sook Kim, 1998; Young-in Moon, 1998; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987; Rose, 1992, 1994; Rose & Ono, 1995; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, 1993; Wolfson, Marmor & Jones, 1989 for research on the written DCT). As have been widely known, its greatest value is that it enables a researcher to collect a huge amount of data quickly controlling situational variables without any need for transcription (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000).

However, these administrative advantages are not the only reason that pragmatics researchers continue to adopt this method. As Bardovi-Harlig (1999) maintained, the value of the written DCT should not be underestimated because the data from the DCT provide the basic information about the kinds of semantic formulas that learners use to realize different illocutionary acts, and reveal the social factors that learners think are important in performing speech acts.

While one almost automatically thinks of the written DCT when they hear the term, *DCT*, it is not the only type of the DCTs. While discussing pragmatics tests[2], Brown (2001) also mentioned the oral DCT. The oral DCT (Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992, 1995;

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[2] Again, the multiple-choice discourse completion task will not be discussed here because it measures the perception and comprehension of the pragmatic appropriateness.

Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Rose, 2000) is an instrument that requires learners to listen to a description of a situation and to say aloud what they would say in that situation into a tape recorder. It does not require a conversational partner, allowing for collecting a relatively large amount of data.

However, we have little information about which instrument is adequate to elicit speech act responses from the low-level learners since pragmatics research so far has mainly focused on the intermediate and advanced learners. Therefore, it is necessary to find out if the conventional DCTs are still useful to identify the basic patterns of speech act performances of the beginning learners in a cross-sectional study. Also, there is a need to develop a new DCT type to test its usability and feasibility in eliciting data from low-level learners.

As a response to these needs, the present study attempts to develop a new DCT type, so-called the cartoon DCT, and explore the instrumental effects of the written DCT, the oral DCT, and the cartoon DCT on the speech act performances of beginning learners. The construction and administration of each instrument will be described in the subsequent methodology section.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

Sixty low-level students participated in this study. They were mainly elementary school students (53) with some of middle school students (7) in an English institute in the northern part of Seoul. The age ranged from 9 to 13 with the average age 11.13. There were more female (40) than male (20) students.

In order to serve the purpose of this investigation, the participants had to be at the beginning level. In this institute, students are assigned to a class based on their overall English proficiency measured by the placement test that has been developed by the institute. As the beginners, Level 1 and Level 2 students (among 6 levels, Level 1 being the lowest, and Level 6 the highest level) were chosen, and the mean score of their placement test was 41.88 out of 100.00 points. Since this investigation was conducted two weeks after the placement test, it is safe to say that the participants' proficiency level has not changed very much since the test.

In order to investigate the effects of the three DCT types, Level 1 and Level 2 students (N=60) were divided into three groups with 20 students for each. Table 1 shows the mean score of the placement test and average age of each group. Also, Table 2 shows that the difference of the proficiency level measured by the placement test among the three groups

is not statistically significant (p>.05). Therefore, we can ensure that these three groups are similar in terms of their English proficiency level.

TABLE 1
Mean Score of the Placement Test and Average Age by Group

Group	Mean Score	Average Age
Written DCT Group	42.25	11.05
Oral DCT Group	41.88	11.20
Cartoon DCT Group	41.50	11.15
Mean	41.88	11.13

TABLE 2
One-way ANOVA Analysis for Proficiency Difference among 3 Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	5.625	2	2.813	.062	.940
Within groups	2589.688	57	45.433		
Total	2595.313	59			

2. Scenarios and DCT Types Used

For this study, three types of DCT were employed: the written DCT, the oral DCT and the cartoon DCT.

1) Scenarios

Since the participants of this study were rather young and beginners, the situations that the students are most likely to encounter in their daily life were developed. One of the researchers, who was a teacher of the language institute where the participants were attending, eavesdropped on and observed the casual conversations of students of their age for one semester and identified the most frequently occurring topics. Based on those topics, the four familiar situations were developed. Table 3 summarizes the relationships, topics, and the types of speech act embedded in the four situations.

TABLE 3
Summary of Situations

Situations	Relationship	Topic	Speech act
Situation 1	You-friend	Ruined book	Apology
Situation 2	You-teacher	Broken vase	Apology
Situation 3	You-father	Buy me PS2	Request
Situation 4	You-younger brother	Loud noise	Complaint+(Request)

2) The Written DCT (WDCT)

The written DCT is the classic form of DCT where students are asked to write down what they would say in the situations described in a written form. As the participants had the low English proficiency, the situational descriptions had to be written in easy and simple forms in terms of sentence structure and vocabulary. An example of the written DCT developed for this investigation follows below (Also see Appendix A).

> Example:
> You borrowed a book from your friend. It was *Harry Potter*. You liked the book. You read it in your room. The book was very interesting. But you spilled orange juice on the book. It became dirty. Now, you give the book back to your friend. What would you say to your friend?
>
> _____
> _____
> _____
> _____

The participants were asked to write down their responses in class without consulting with each other. However, the participants were encouraged to ask any questions (e.g., unfamiliar vocabulary items) about the descriptions. No time limitation was set; however, by the time 40 minutes have passed, every participant submitted their questionnaire.

3) The Oral DCT

The oral DCT usually indicates the pragmatics instrument that requires students to listen to a description of a situation on a tape recorder and to say aloud what they would say in that situation into another tape recorder (Brown, 2001). Since the participants of this study were beginners, it was expected that they might have had a problem understanding the oral description. Therefore, a modified version of the oral DCT, which required the participants to respond after watching the scenes on the video, was employed. A student actor (aged 13) and an actress (aged 10) performed the same scenarios given in the written DCT. By employing the student actors of the participants' age, it was intended that the participants felt closer to the characters on the video.

One by one, the participants were invited to a room where they watched the video clips and orally responded at the end of each one. It took approximately 7 to 10 minutes for the participants to complete the task including the video-viewing time. Their responses were all audio-recorded and transcribed by the researchers.

4) The Cartoon DCT

The cartoon DCT was newly developed specifically for this study. Even though the cartoon was recently used by Rose (2000), it was just a single-frame cartoon to support a single sentence, which constituted the whole situational description. Since the researchers in the present investigation decided that a single-frame cartoon is far from enough to describe the situations, the 4 to 5-frame cartoons for each situation was drawn. For the main character in the cartoons, three characters were initially drawn as candidate. Later, in a simple questionnaire, 10 elementary school students responded to the question, "Which character do you like most?" Finally one of the characters was chosen as the majority of the respondents favored it (See Appendix B). The cartoons were all drawn with this character selected.

In the cartoon DCT, the participants were asked to complete a dialogue in the balloon. The dialogues were exactly the same as the ones acted by the student actors in the oral DCT. Again, this task was conducted during the class, and no time limitation was given. It took approximately 40 minutes until everyone had finished the task.

IV.   RESTULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the effects of DCT types to elicit interlanguage pragmatics data from English learners at the beginning level. The data was analyzed in terms of response length and strategy types. In addition, in the case of requests (situation 3 & 4), the participants' responses were also examined in terms of directness level, and internal and external modifications.

1. Response Length

In order to find out whether the DCT types influence the response length of the participants, the number of words used was counted (e.g., *Be quiet*: 2 words). As a result, it was found that the cartoon DCT elicited the highest number of words distinguishably. The total number of words produced from the cartoon DCT was 1,049 words and the participants produced 13.11 words per question item. The total numbers of words for the oral DCT and the written DCT were 441 and 426, and the means of the words produced per question were 5. 51 and 5. 31, respectively. Table 4 and Figure 1 illustrate the results.

In addition, this tendency was consistent across the situations (Figure 2). Initially, it was expected that the oral DCT would gain somewhat different results than the written DCT and the cartoon DCT because in the oral DCT, the participants would respond orally.

However, it turned out that the cartoon DCT elicited the highest number of words from the participants, and the amount of words elicited in the oral DCT was similar to that of the written DCT. It was note-worthy that even though both the written DCT and the cartoon DCT elicited the written response from the participants, the number of words produced for the cartoon DCT was particularly high. This can be interpreted that for the beginning learners, the visual cues are crucial to understand and internalize the situation and respond to it. Also, because the cartoon DCT allowed the participants to read the cartoon strips and have time to think and write, it might have gained the highest number of words.

TABLE 4
Response Length by DCT Type

	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT	Total
Total No. of words	426	441	1,049	1,916
Mean	5.31	5.51	13.11	7.98

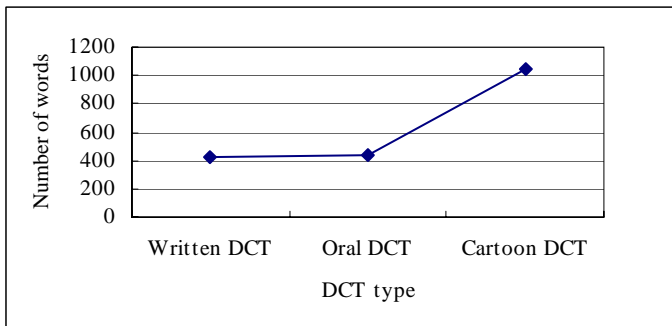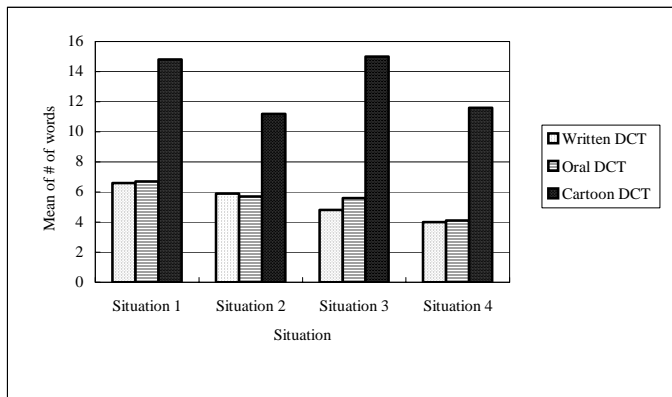**FIGURE 1**
Total Number of Words by DCT Type

FIGURE 2
Mean of Number of Words by Situation

Finally, the absence of the students' response in the written DCT should be mentioned. Even though the written description in the questionnaire has been written in an easy and simple language that was almost identical to the language used in the oral DCT and the cartoon DCT, 35% of the written DCT answers were left blank. Considering blank answers were never found in the oral DCT and the cartoon DCT, this tendency to withdraw in responding to the written DCT is very important. While responding to the written DCT, the participants were encouraged to ask whatever questions they might have including the vocabulary items they were not familiar with. In addition, in a casual interview after the questionnaires were all collected, the students confirmed that they all understood the situations given. But somehow, out of the 80 cases (4 question items x 20 participants) which were supposed to be filled out by the participants, 28 cases (35%) were left empty.

What does this mean? In the cartoon DCT, the participants produced lengthy responses by writing. Therefore, it does not make sense that the written DCT group did not possess the ability to write. Rather, it seems that the written description, the prompt, has something that makes students hold back. These low-level participants might have lost a motivation to respond as soon as they saw the written description that might have overwhelmed them. Maybe low-level learners in general have a strong resistance to read a written text. Whatever the reason might be, the written description seems to have some characteristics which discourage low-level learners from responding.

On the contrary, the results from the cartoon DCT imply that the visual cues and the dialogues, instead of written descriptions, are very helpful and effective to elicit responses from low-level learners.

2. Strategy Types by DCT Types

1) Situation 1

Situation 1 was a situation where a respondent was supposed to apologize to a friend from whom he or she borrowed a book and spilled orange juice on it. The responses from the participants were initially coded based on Bergman and Kasper's (1993) category of strategy types on apologies. And then, as the data revealed its patterns and characteristics, re-categorization and the addition of a new strategy type were conducted. The results are presented in Table 5.

First of all, we can see that different instruments elicited varied range and amount of strategy use from the participants. An important finding is that the cartoon DCT produced the widest range of strategy types. The written DCT group only produced 3 types of apology strategy if 'No response' category is excluded. Also, the written DCT and the oral

DCT groups showed a similarity in their concentrated use of strategy types, which were 'IFID + an Explanation/Account of the situation (e.g., *Very sorry. I was drinking orange juice.*)' and 'IFID only (e.g., *I am sorry.*).' None of the participants in the cartoon DCT used IFID only. For the cartoon DCT group, the most frequently used types were 'IFID + an Explanation/Account + an Offer of repair (e.g., *Oh, I'm sorry. I spilled orange juice. I will buy new book*)' and 'IFID + an Offer of repair (e.g., *Sorry! I will clean the book.*).' The absence of the use of 'IFID only' and the most common use of 'IFID + an Explanation/Account + an Offer of repair' by the cartoon DCT group confirmed the earlier finding that the cartoon DCT elicited the longest responses. As the cartoon DCT group became verbose, their responses tended to be a combination of various kinds of strategy types.

TABLE 5
Strategy Types by DCT Types in Situation 1

Strategy type	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT	Total
IFID only*	25% (5**)	30% (6)	0% (0)	18% (11)
IFID + Explanation/Account of the situation	30% (6)	45% (9)	10% (2)	28% (17)
IFID + Explanation/Account + Offer of repair	10% (2)	0% (0)	30% (6)	13% (8)
IFID + Offer of repair	0% (0)	15% (3)	30% (6)	15% (9)
IFID + Acknowledgement of responsibility	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	2% (1)
IFID + Downgrading responsibility	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	2% (1)
IFID + Other request	0% (0)	5% (1)	20% (4)	8% (5)
No response	35% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (7)
Others	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	2% (1)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (60)

Note) *: IFID (Illocutionary Force Indication Device)

　　　**: Raw frequency.

2) Situation 2

Situation 2 was a situation where the participants were supposed to apologize to their teacher for breaking his vase while playing with a yo-yo. Again, in Situation 2, it was confirmed that the cartoon DCT group utilized the full range of strategies available except 'No response' (Table 6). More specifically, while the cartoon DCT elicited 8 strategy types from the participants, the written DCT and the oral DCT elicited only 4 types. In addition, the most frequently employed strategy for the written DCT and the oral DCT was 'IFID

only,' which was most typically, "I'm sorry." However, in the cartoon DCT, this strategy was used only once. It corresponds to the participants' becoming verbose when they responded to the cartoon DCT. While performing the cartoon DCT, the low level participants showed a strong tendency to combine 'IFID' and other strategies. In the cartoon DCT, it was very rare for the participants to just stop after they had written, "I'm sorry."

TABLE 6
Strategy Types by DCT Type in Situation 2

Strategy type	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT	Total
IFID only	35% (7)	55% (11)	5% (1)	30% (18)
IFID + Explanation/Account of the situation	30% (6)	25% (5)	5% (1)	22% (13)
IFID + Explanation/Account + Offer of repair	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (5)	8% (5)
IFID + Offer of repair	0% (0)	15% (3)	30% (6)	15% (9)
IFID + Acknowledgement of responsibility	10% (2)	0% (0)	10% (2)	7% (4)
IFID + Other request	0% (0)	5% (1)	10% (2)	2% (1)
IFID + Downgrading responsibility	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (2)	3% (2)
IFID + Promise of forbearance	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	2% (1)
No response	25% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (5)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (60)

3) Situation 3

   Situation 3 (Buy me PS2) was a situation where the participants were supposed to ask their father to buy them a computer game set. This situation deals with the speech act of request and the data was analyzed in terms of level of directness of request strategy, internal modification, and external modification.

   First, in terms of level of directness of request strategy, the difference was minor in that all of the DCT types produced the direct request (e.g., *Buy PS2)* although one participant from the cartoon DCT utilized the conventionally indirect request (e.g., *Can you buy me Play Station 2?*) and the other one used the non-conventionally indirect (e.g., *Play Station is very very funny.*). This is understandable considering the English proficiency level of the participants because, for example, in order to construct a conventionally indirect request, one needs at least a proper use of modal, tense, interrogative form, etc. For the beginning learners, these features are yet to have been acquired. It is very likely that these low-level learners' linguistic competence was not strong enough to realize appropriate request

strategies; thus, the participants tended to opt for less polite strategies overall. In conclusion, a DCT type effect was not found in the use of request strategies in terms of directness level. Table 7 shows the distribution of request strategies in terms of directness level by DCT type. It is necessary to pay attention to the percentage of the direct strategy in the written DCT because, even though the number indicates 60%, it is actually equivalent to over 90% when 'No response' is excluded from the strategy types. 'No response' took up to 35% for the written DCT.

TABLE 7
Level of Directness of Request Strategies by DCT Type

	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT	Total
Direct	60% (12)	100% (20)	90% (18)	83% (50)
Conventionally indirect	5% (1)	0% (0)	5% (1)	3% (2)
Non-conventionally indirect	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	2% (1)
No response	35% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (7)
Total	100 % (20)	100 % (20)	100 % (20)	100 % (60)

Next, the data from Situation 3 was examined in terms of internal modification. From the low level learners, only one lexical downgrader appeared. According to Billmyer and Varghese (2000), the lexical downgraders include politeness markers (e.g., please), consultative devices (e.g., do you think?), understaters or hedges (e.g., a bit, a little). However, the low level participants in this study only produced the politeness marker, *please.* As Table 8 shows, the cartoon DCT group produced the highest number of *please.* The oral DCT group followed in the second, and the written DCT in the third. However, considering the total number of words produced, this difference does not seem meaningful.

Lastly, among the types of the external modification, which are supportive moves and alerters, the use of supportive moves is worth presenting here. The participants produced supportive moves such as giving 'reasons (e.g., *My friend is have Play Station 2.*),' 'promise of reward (e.g., *I will study hard.*),' and 'disarmers (e.g., *I know it is very expensive.*)'. As one can see in Table 9, the use of supportive moves was dominant in the Cartoon DCT. Again, it relates to the fact that the cartoon DCT group created the longest responses.

TABLE 8
Frequency of Politeness Marker by DCT Type

	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT
Raw Frequency	7	12	20

TABLE 9
Frequency of Supportive Moves by DCT Type

	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT
Raw Frequency	3	6	22

4) Situation 4

Situation 4 is a situation where the participants were supposed to make complaints and/or requests to their younger brother about loud music. The strategy types employed by the three groups are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10
Strategy Types by DCT Type in Situation 4

	Written DCT	Oral DCT	Cartoon DCT
Request+Complaint	20% (4)	10% (2)	50% (10)
Request	30% (6)	80% (16)	25% (5)
Complaint	5% (1)	10% (2)	20% (4)
No response	45% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)

First of all, because the students who participated in this study were low-level learners, the strategy types identified were not as varied as the ones in Young-in Moon's study (1998) which dealt with intermediate to advanced learners. Such strategy types as 'Further sanction,' 'Rhetorical question,' 'Aggressive question,' and 'Sarcasm' (p. 10) did not appear in the present data. This implies that the higher the learner's proficiency, the wider the strategy type use.

Second, the cartoon DCT group preferred to use a more complex type, 'Request + Complaint (50%).' The most frequently used type by both the written DCT and the oral DCT groups was 'Request' with the use of 30% and 80%, respectively. In particular, the oral DCT group preferred to use 'Request.' In addition, up to 45% of the responses were again blank for the written DCT.

V. CONCLUSION

In order for research on interlanguage pragmatics to contribute to the field of second language acquisition, not only the pragmatic competence of advanced learners but also that of beginners must be examined. So far, studies on interlanguage pragmatics have

focused on the advanced learners mostly using the written DCT. However, the written DCT, which has proven itself useful to collect a large amount of data from the advanced learners, does not guarantee its usefulness when administered to the beginning learners.

As an endeavor to develop a useful and feasible instrument to elicit low-level learners' speech act performance, the present investigation compared the effects of the three DCT types. The most important finding is that a newly developed instrument in this study, the cartoon DCT, produced the highest number of words from the beginning learners. This also relates to the fact that among the other groups, the cartoon DCT group used the widest range of strategy types when they performed apologies, requests, and complaints.

In addition, it should be paid attention that in the written DCT, which has been traditionally used in the interlanguage pragmatics studies, 35% of the total responses were left blank. For the cartoon DCT and the oral DCT, no blank answers were found. This finding is very important in terms of research methodology because a researcher who used the written DCT could have mistakenly assumed that the beginning learners did not possess any pragmatic ability. It seems that beginning learners have a kind of psychological burden when faced with a task to read the written text. This implies that the written DCT may not be the best method to measure the beginners' pragmatic competence. The results from the cartoon DCT tell us that even the beginning level learners can fully illustrate their pragmatic ability when an adequate instrument is administered to them.

Lastly, the results of the present investigation on the methodological issues in interlanguage pragmatics yield some recommendations for future research. First of all, research methodologies to elicit beginning learners' speech act performance should continue to be explored including the cartoon DCT developed in this study. Second, the usability and adequacy of the oral DCT, which did not show any particular effect compared to the written DCT, should not be easily thrown away. Even though the oral DCT group in this study did not make many utterances, beginners in an ESL learning context may bring different results. Third, since the present study was conducted on young beginning learners, further studies should follow in order to test instrumental effects with adult learners at various proficiency levels.

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APPENDIX A
The Written DCT Questionnaire

Situation 1: Ruined Book

You borrowed a book from your friend. It was *Harry Potter*. You liked the book. You read it in your room. The book was very interesting. But you spilled orange juice on the book. It became dirty. Now, you give the book back to your friend. What would you say to your friend?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(This answer space will not be presented for the rest of the question items because of the spatial limitation.)

Situation 2: Broken Vase

You and your friend are playing yo-yo in the classroom. Your yo-yo is bigger than your friend's yo-yo. You like it very much. But your yo-yo flies over and breaks the vase on the teacher's desk. The vase is your teacher's favorite vase. What would you say to the teacher?

Situation 3: Buy me PS2

You are at your friend's house. You and your friend are playing the game, Play Station 2. Play Station 2 is wonderful. On the way home, you really want to have Play Station 2. But it is very expensive. Now you get home. You ask your father to buy Play Station 2 for you. What would you say to your father?
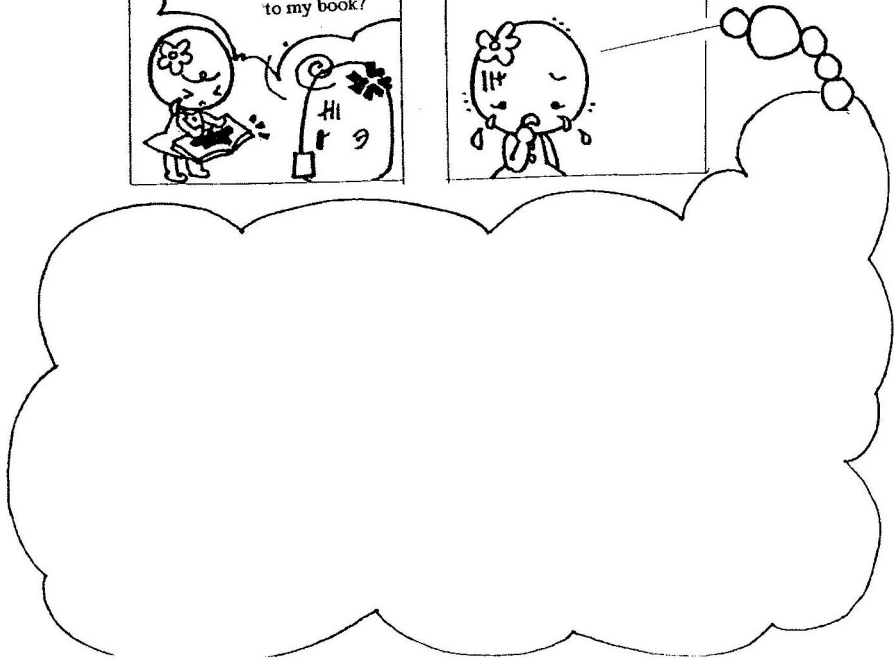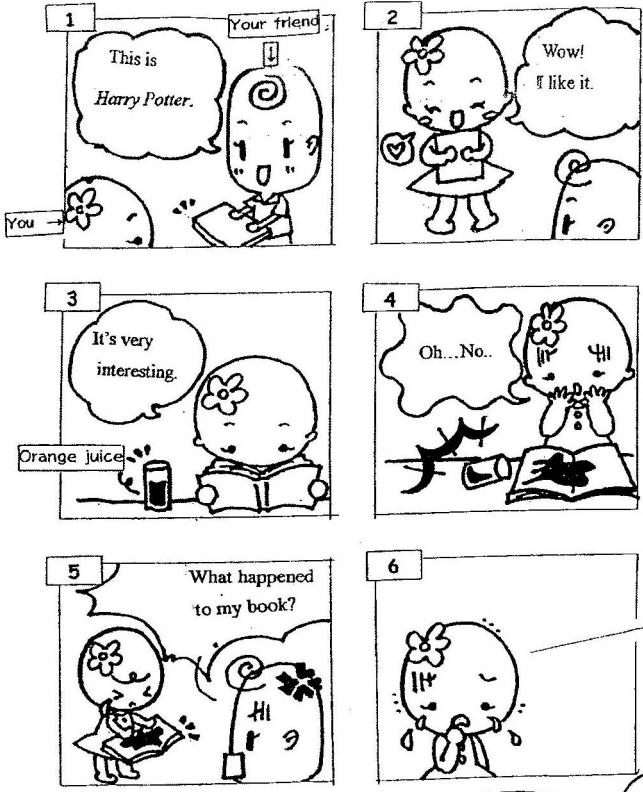
Situation 4: Loud noise

You are studying hard in your room. Tomorrow you have an exam. But you hear loud sound from your younger brother's room. It is the sound of your favorite computer game. You cannot study. You go to your younger brother's room. What would you say to your younger brother?

APPENDIX B
Examples of the Cartoon DCT

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