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Contents

Page

Our homepage:
www.pragsig.org/

All new design!

From the editor:

Greetings. I hope you've all had a good start to the new academic year. The first place to point your direction, especially if you haven't already found it, is towards our new look website. Tim Greer, the Pragmatics SIG website editor, has worked hard to freshen up the design of the website, where you'll find details of the SIG's past and current activities. Please take a look here.
On the website you will find information about forthcoming conferences. The first one the SIG is involved in this year is the imminent PanSIG Conference at Nanzan University, Nagoya over the weekend of May 18-19. Registration onsite is an option still if you were not able to complete online registration before the deadline. It will be good if there are as many SIG members participating as at last year's conference.

Moving on to the three articles in this issue of Pragmatics Matters. First, **Ian Nakamura** continues our series on 'doing Conversational Analysis' by explaining how to organize and participate in data sessions. Next, **Reiko Takeda** reviews some presentations by a JACET study group involved in proposing ways for English language teachers to promote English communication among Japanese learners of English. Third, in an article on intercultural communication, **Pino Cutrone** examines the different ways people in Japanese-speaking and English-speaking countries think about politeness. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading them. I hope, too, that they inspire you to write something for a future issue.

Best wishes,
Tim Knight

(right, at a pre-CamTESOL visit to a teacher training college outside Phnom Penh)

編集者より：

皆様、新年度を迎えて良いスタートを切られたことと存じます。まずは、当研究会のウェブサイトが刷新されましたので、まだお気づきでない方は是非ご覧ください。語用論部会のウェブサイト編集者であるTim Greerが努力して新しいデザインにしてくれました。当部会の過去および現在の活動の詳細を見ることができます。こちらをご覧ください。
今後の学会についての情報も掲載されています。当部会が関わる今年度最初の学会は、名古屋市の南山大学で5月18日、19日に開催されるPanSIG大会です。オンライン参加申し込みを締切前にできなかった方は、当日現地でも参加申し込みできます。昨年同様たくさんの方が参加されることを願っています。

『語用論事情』今号では、3件の記事が掲載されています。1番目は「会話分析をおこなう」シリーズの記事で、Ian Nakamuraがどのようにしてデータセッションを実施・参加するかについて解説しています。2番目の記事では、Reiko Takedaが、日本人英語学習者の英語コミュニケーション能力向上を促進する方法を提案するJACETの研究会がおこなった発表についてReiko Takedaが報告します。3番目の異文化コミュニケーションに関する記事では、Pino Cutroneが、ポライトネスの捉え方が日本語話者と英語話者ではどう異なるかについて検証します。どの記事も皆様に喜んでいただけることと確信しています。さらに、皆様も将来『語用論事情』に記事を書いてみようと思っていただければ幸いです。

敬具

ティム・ナイト

(Thanks to Japanese co-editors Naoko Osuka and Yukie Saito)

Doing CA: How to organize and participate in data sessions

Ian **Nakamura**

Data exploration involves two related but distinguishable processes, 'understanding' and 'analysis'.

(Paul ten Have, 2007, p. 140)

In the following article Ian Nakamura, from Okayama University, explains how to organize and participate in CA data sessions. This is the second in our series of articles on 'doing CA'. In the first, which is in Pragmatics Matters no. 40, Tim Greer showed how to collect and transcribe data for CA.

次の記事で、岡山大学のIan Nakamuraは、どうやってCAのデータセッションを実施・参加するかについて解説します。これは「CAをおこなう」シリーズの第２回にあたります。『語用論事情』第40号に掲載された第1回の記事では、ティム・グリアが、どうやってCAのデータを収集し書き起こすかについて解説しました。

1. Introduction

Ask any experienced CA practitioner and he/she will tell you that data sessions play an integral role in continuous professional development as an analyst. In our ongoing project to promote CA for language teachers, I would like to provide readers with an easy-to-follow guide in how to get started.

1.1 Who is the article for? Why?

This article is not only for those with little or no experience with data sessions, but also for those who are interested in starting their own group or who have studied on their own for some time and now feel the need to join a study group. I hope it will become increasingly clear through this article that data sessions are an essential part of the overall project to deepen knowledge, heighten awareness, and develop skills in 'doing CA'.

1.2 My own training and experience with data sessions

This article is based on what I have learned from participating in data sessions in various formats and countries (Japan, US, UK, Korea) over the last 10 years. I began to study transcripts in some depth through regular one-to-one sessions with my doctoral supervisor. This period culminated with an extended session (two hours) for my *viva* or thesis defense with an external examiner-CA analyst. Since then I have joined workshops conducted by well-known researchers as well as regularly attending data session study groups here and abroad. What I have noticed is the attention to and practice of using similar procedures help to maintain a consistent vision of 'doing CA' through data sessions.

Familiarizing yourself with some of the principles and concepts in advance will help make joining a data session easier. Some people have may heard about CA's reputation for strict adherence to principles of microanalysis with an emic approach in general and an ethnomethodologic stance in particular. However, fewer people may have experienced firsthand the advantages of sharing a common method of data analysis that cuts across national borders and research/teaching contexts. The foundation that we share includes transcript conventions (largely credited to Gail Jefferson) and the literature (with Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974, being one of the seminal papers).

1.3 Sample transcript excerpt

Let us start with an example of what we hand out to participants. While there may be slight differences in the degree of ontology (e.g., write out the word as spelled or how it sounds), most features of transcription are consistent (and readily understandable) wherever you go in terms of such characteristics as line numbers, speaker identification, and symbols to note details like overlaps, latched turns, timed pauses, laughter, contextual information, etc.

Interview no. 1 for CAN-Asia data session in Seoul, Korea
April 3, 2012/ RIE=R, Jon=J

```
1     (4.0) ((Jon walks in, pulls back the chair, sits down))
2      J: okay so this is=
3      R: =okay
4      J: our first interview?
5      R: yes[s
6      J:    [and uhm you have prepared the interview.
7      R: uh ak hhhh maybe
8      J: okay maybe
```

1.4 Can I learn everything about CA through data sessions?

Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how you look at continuous professional development, the answer is a definite 'no'. Data sessions can greatly aid in group and individual development, but there is no getting around the many hours of studying that we do on our own. In order to do CA, there are at least three underlying assumptions being made: (1) We are constantly reading the CA literature. (2) We are collecting and transcribing our own data. (3) We are writing about our studies. The bottom line is the more we do on our own, the more we are potentially able to contribute to discussions at data sessions and learn from them.

2. The organization of data sessions

I will highlight a few main points in order to create a picture of the kinds of things we need to know. Part of the answer can be found by considering the types of teachers and researchers who participate. There is often a fascinating collection of people including postgraduate

students, post-doc researchers, language teachers, and research-practitioners. The other part of the answer addresses some of the 'nuts and bolts' of the actual content such as process, transcription, research interests, and terminology.

2.1 The procedure/steps

While there may be slight differences in what is done and the order, the following steps are commonly followed. Once we are familiar with the steps taken at one group's data sessions, joining sessions organized by other groups is not so difficult.

2.1.1 Getting started

1. Pass out the transcribed data.
2. Listen/watch the recording.
3. Select a smaller part for analysis.
4. Listen/watch the recording repeatedly.
5. Then discuss.

A data session in progress.

2.1.2 Variations of discussion format

1. The presenter identifies his/her interest.
2. Suggestions are made for transcription.
3. Each person makes a brief observation.
4. Open the floor for discussion in depth.

2.2 Topics of discussion/ contents

An important part of familiarizing ourselves with what goes on at data sessions involves discussing the transcription (including the conventions), specific areas of interests (often social phenomena identified in the literature), and terminology (sometimes unique to CA).

2.2.1 Transcription

Here are several features of talk that may be discussed after listening/watching the recording and following along with the transcript. There is no such thing as the perfectly finished transcript, so there is always room for further listening/viewing, interpretation, and refinement. At data sessions, transcripts are treated as in-progress drafts.

1. Word(s) missing
2. Different word(s)
3. Rising or falling intonation
4. Attributed speaker
5. Location of overlap

2.2.2 Areas of interest

The first three listed below represent long-standing interests that have also been of researched (in different ways) in SLA and pragmatics. The second set (4-7) represents other aspects of 'social interaction' that have been of increasing interest.

1. Repair
2. Response tokens
3. Requests
4. Embodied actions
5. Membership categories
6. Epistemic stance
7. Discourse identities

2.2.3 Terminology

Rather than going into an extended introduction into the terms used, I will just mention a few to give readers an idea of what is involved. The good news is definitions and examples are readily available from other participants and in books (e.g., Wong & Waring, 2010).

1. AP (adjacency pair)
2. TCU (turn construction unit)
3. 'Naturally occurring' data
4. <u>not</u> *a priori* (we do <u>not</u> pre-determine)
5. *in situ* (in the moment/situation)

Examples 1 and 2 describe sequence organization of turns. Examples 3-5 describe the stance or position taken by CA researchers. CA does not claim to cover every possible facet of what can be studied about an interaction. There are limitations to any approach.

3. Conclusion

While the previous section outlined some details of what goes on at data sessions, this final section will take a step back and conclude with some answers to questions that readers may still have.

3.1 What do we get out of doing data sessions?

For presenters, they enjoy the luxury of having a group of trained and experienced CA researchers give their undivided attention to our data and point out what they notice. The purpose of sharing ideas is not to evaluate the presenter, but to make use of the example for the mutual benefit of learning more about data analysis and refining analytical skills. For other participants, we learn by analyzing someone's data and hearing what others are seeing and doing. In this way, the community of CA practitioners and learners support and sustain group and individual development. Networking is important because the number of CA practitioners is still small (but always growing).

3.2 How can I learn more about CA?

Establish and maintain a two-sided study approach consisting of self-study (e.g., keep up with the literature and analyze your own data) and talk to other CA practitioners (i.e., over a coffee, at data sessions, workshops, and conferences).

3.3 How long does it take to understand CA?

Studying CA is truly a lifelong learning project. At data sessions, we find a range of ages, varying years of experience, and different degrees of expertise. Even the most accomplished researchers still attend data sessions whenever possible. As long as people talk and interact, there will always be something new to learn about talk-in-interaction.

> The data session can be seen both as a kind of playground to inspire mutually one's understanding of the data, and as an environment that requires a rather specific 'discipline'.
>
> (Paul ten Have, 2007, p. 140)

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the other panelists in the JALT2012 *pechakucha* presentation of 'Doing CA', Tim Greer, Donna Fujimoto, and Yosuke Ogawa, and Tim Knight, the newsletter editor, for their helpful ideas and support.

Ian Nakamura

References

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ten Have, P. (2007). *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide*. Los Angeles: Sage. (Second edition).

Wong, J. & Waring, H. Z. (2011). *Conversation analysis and second language pedagogy: A guide for ESL/EFL teachers*. New York: Routledge.

Four suggested readings to get started

Firth, A. (2012). Interview with Alan Firth: Ian Nakamura. *Pragmatics Matters*, 39, Autumn, 4-9.

Firth, A. & Wagner, J. (2007). Second/foreign language as a social accomplishment: Elaboration on a reconceptualized SLA. *Modern Language Journal*, 91, 798-817. (Note: This is a re-print by popular demand of the originally published paper in 1997.)

Greer, T. (2010). (Ed.). *Observing talk: Conversation analytic studies of second language interaction*. JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Wong, J. (2011). Interview with Jean Wong: Tim Knight. *Pragmatics Matters*, 36, Summer, 5-13.

Conference Report

Reiko **Takeda**

In the article below Reiko Takeda reports on presentations made by members of JACET's Politeness Research SIG at a one-day conference held in March at the Tokyo Polytechnic University in Nakano, Tokyo.

次の記事では、Reiko Takedaが、3月に東京工芸大学で開催された学会におけるJACETのポライトネス研究会の発表について報告します。

On Saturday, March 2, I had the opportunity to attend a series of presentations given members of **JACET's (The Japan Association of College English Teachers) Politeness Research SIG**, which consists of a group of researchers mainly from the Tokai/Chubu area. The objective of the group's 3-year longitudinal study, funded by Kaken ("Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research" sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), is to propose ways for English language teachers to promote English communication for Japanese learners of English. Each member was responsible for comparing the same data between NS speakers and Japanese speakers from a different perspective, such as the **levels of self-exposure** (Iwata), **Q & A sequences** (Shigemitsu), **clarification** (Tsuda), **back-channeling** (Otsuka), **turn-taking** and amount of utterance (Murata), and **topic elaboration** (Iwata).

The introduction by Yuka Shigemitsu started with an explanation on what prompted the group to embark on this project, based on a survey conducted to former Japanese business expatriates. They demonstrated high linguistic English competence on paper tests (e.g., TOEIC, TOEFL, Eiken), but felt at a loss when striking up a conversation in English with strangers. The research was conducted through transcribing the **conversations of groups of male speakers** (aged in their 20s to 30s; university students or graduate degree holders) in **three varieties of English** (US, UK, Australia), **and Japanese**. It was intended to compare the difference between the four groups in order to understand what is absent in the Japanese utterances and conversational styles. Based on the findings, the group shared some pedagogical implications on what English language teachers could do to improve the communicative competence of college-level English language learners' English as an international language.

One of the first findings was **the difference in conversation topics**. According to Shigemitsu, conversation topics which are taught in Japan to be 'safe', such as hometown, weather, climate and travel, are considered by native English speakers to be topics which they would resort to when they had *run out of things* to talk about. The data revealed that **native speakers of English discussed** the following topics: educational background, majors in college, occupation, activities on the weekend, politics (depending on the interlocutor) and

sports, an all-time favorite. In the interviews with NSs of English, Shigemitsu said many participants expressed that they enjoyed intelligent conversations, interesting topics, conversations with intellectual and confident people, and conversations where they could gain new information. On the other hand, **Japanese participants** responded in interviews that they were comfortable when other speakers took the lead, felt uncomfortable when asked to give their opinion, did not feel uncomfortable when there was silence, and found that there was a clear division of roles between speakers and listeners.

Some of the findings of the specific studies are as follows. Yuko **Iwata's study on the different level of self-disclosure** between NSs of English and Japanese showed that while the conversation of the Japanese participants touched on many topics it remained **superficia**l. However, among NSs of English, while not many topics were covered, **each topic was discussed in depth**, showing the high level of self-disclosure among the participants.

Shigemitsu, who studied **Q & A sequences** between the groups, found that questions in Japanese asked for confirmation and agreement, while those in English asked for information and opinions of other speakers. She suggested that when instructing English language learners, we language **teachers need to focus on teaching our students *how* to ask questions.**

Yoko Otsuka, who studied the **back-channeling patterns** found that English speakers back-channeled close to the end of the sentence. However, as Japanese speakers back-channeled before the end of the sentences, when speaking in English they tend to back-channel in the middle of the sentence spoken by the English speaking interlocutor. This appears to be an L1 transfer of their back-channeling behavior, which would sound unnatural to NSs of English.

Yasumi Murata studied **turn-taking** and found that Japanese participants, who listened until their interlocutor finished speaking, would **lose the opportunity to speak**, while NSs of English **knew when to jump in** and take turns appropriately. She also found that NSs of English were adept at giving turns to others to make sure that everybody had an equal opportunity to participate in the conversation.

Some of the **pedagogical implications** shared by the presenters for Japanese English learners were the need to teach how to give and take turns, to teach how to ask questions asking for new information and opinions, ways to disclose oneself, and give lexical back-channels instead of onomatopoeic uh-huh's and mmm's. Also, while these strategies are not practiced among Japanese speakers as they not encouraged in the Japanese language, it was suggested that language instructors needed to provide a new mindset by telling our learners that these would be strategies necessary when speaking in English.

Conference report: Takeda

I was impressed with the depth and detail of this longitudinal study which gives language teachers suggestions on how to teach our learners to communicate in English based on how NSs of English communicate. There were some **questions from the floor** on how to work with tongue-tied students, to which Iwata responded that they need to be presented with choices of the **benefits of learning the strategies** as well as the consequences of not choosing to speak English based on the strategies practiced by NSs. It reminded me of a question Noriko Ishihara asked: **"Whose norms are being imposed?"** The best balance, in my opinion, is, while ideal or even idealistic, for English language learners (of any nationality) to speak in English by learning the strategies implemented by NSs, and conversely, for NSs of English to have the awareness that their norms and strategies are not necessarily the prevalent ones on a global level.

Reiko Takeda

Conceptualizations of Politeness in Japanese and English Speaking Cultures: Raising Awareness to Assist Participants in Intercultural Communication

Pino **Cutrone**

Politeness is also the topic of our third feature. Focusing on the challenges of **intercultural communication**, Pino Cutrone, of Nagasaki University, examines how ways of conceptualizing politeness vary between people in Japanese-speaking and English-speaking countries.

3番目の記事のトピックもポライトネスです。長崎大学のPino Cutroneが、英語話者と日本語話者の国において、ポライトネスの概念化がどのように異なるかについて、異文化コミュニケーションの難しさに焦点を当てながら検証します。

1. Introduction

The real voyage of discovery is not in seeing new lands but in seeing with new eyes.

(Marcel Proust, French novelist)

A great deal has been written concerning Japanese involvement in intercultural misunderstandings and miscommunication, with works ranging from intercultural communication handbooks (McClure, 2000; Yamada, 1992, 1997), to academic papers (Doi, 1981, 1996; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1993; Nittono, 1999), through to theses and dissertations (Day, 1996; Iwata, 1999; Sato, 2008). It is not the writer's intention to regurgitate what has already been reported. Rather, in an effort to add something new to this wide-ranging topic, **the writer attempts to shed light on how lay people come to define politeness across cultures**. However, it would clearly be imprudent, and a vast overgeneralisation, to attempt to essentialize Japanese (or any other group) adhering to any one set of cultural principles or values.

Clearly, there exists a great deal of individual variation within a culture as members will conform to certain behaviors and discount others as they see fit. With this in mind, however, it still seems fairly obvious that fundamental differences in the ground rules of communication do indeed exist across cultures on some levels, and cultural influences do indeed affect the behavior of many individuals to varying degrees. Thus, in using such general terms as "the Japanese" and "native-English speaking countries" in this paper, the writer is simply trying to add to the broad description of the parameters that govern the choices participants make in a given culture (i.e., the conceivable ground rules of communication that they may have to play by). The modest **goal of this paper** is **to foster more fruitful intercultural encounters** by encouraging communicators to consider different perspectives. By having a potentially deeper understanding of one's interlocutor's perspective, it is less likely that intercultural communicators would judge behavior that they are not accustomed to as intentional transgressions against their value system; rather, interactants would be more inclined to extend their patience and tolerance when confronted

with behavior that may be different from what they are used to. Thus, while this paper is intended for anyone interested in intercultural communication involving Japanese people, the writer feels that it will be of particular interest to non-Japanese readers who are unfamiliar with the etymological and orthographic roots of what it truly means to be polite in Japanese.

To this end, the next part of this paper, Section 2, puts the theme of this article into the **appropriate context** by differentiating between first-order and second-order politeness. Section 3 provides general **definitions of politeness** according to Japanese and English dictionaries, while Section 4 delves deeper into the complexities and multi-faceted nature of the Japanese **conceptualization of politeness**. Subsequently, Section 5 considers how politeness in Japan may be related to an ability to adhere to the **expected norms** of society (i.e. knowing one's place and how to act accordingly), and Section 6, the conclusion, offers some **practical suggestions** on how the information in this paper could assist practitioners, as well as language teachers and intercultural trainers.

2. First-Order Politeness

To begin, it is useful to differentiate between the two types of politeness identified by Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992): first-order politeness and second-order politeness. While the distinction between first-order politeness and second-order politeness is not always easy to rigorously maintain, first-order politeness is generally thought to involve **the interpretations of participants**, whereas second-order politeness involves the interpretations of observers. In other words, first-order politeness, or "politeness one", generally refers to a commonsense or lay person's conceptualization of politeness and is defined by Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992) to involve the "...various ways in which polite behavior is perceived and talked about by members of sociocultural groups" (p.3). Second-order politeness, or "politeness two" on the other hand, can be defined more specifically as a "theoretical construct or the scientific conceptualization of Politeness one" (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 10). **Second-order politeness** is commonly associated with well-known theoretical constructs such as Grice's (1967, 1975) theory of conversation and Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory, among others. The writer has addressed various aspects of second-order politeness as they relate to Japanese EFL/ESL learners in a previous paper (see Cutrone, 2011) and will, thus, focus on first-order politeness here.

3. General definitions of politeness across cultures

While there may be common underlying elements of politeness in many cultures, there is increasing evidence to suggest that politeness may be conceptualized differently across cultures (Ide, 1989; Lee-Wong, 2002; Matsumoto, 1988, 1989). In an attempt to understand how ordinary Japanese people may conceptualize politeness through the way it is defined, and how this compares with the conceptualizations in English, the research of Haugh (2004)

is particularly helpful.

According to Haugh (2004, p. 89), who investigated the **definitions of politeness** in English, modern definitions generally fall into **four categories**:

1. politeness as behavior avoiding conflict and promoting smooth communication (Lakoff, 1989, p. 102),
2. politeness as socially appropriate behavior (Fraser & Nolen, 1981, p. 96),
3. politeness involving the consideration of the feelings of others (Brown, 1980, p. 114), and
4. politeness as an evaluation of a speaker's behavior by the addressee as polite (Eelen, 2001, p. 163; Mills, 2003).

These categories are generally consistent with previous research into perceptions of politeness in native-English speaking countries. For instance, in a written survey of 27 British speakers of English, Sifianou (1992) reported that politeness was regarded as "...the consideration of others people's feelings by conforming to social norms and expectations" (p. 88). In another study, Obana and Tomoda (1994) reported that Australian native-English speakers perceived politeness to be associated with such terms as kind, friendly, considerate, humble and respectful. Similarly, in an empirical **study comparing concepts of politeness in American English and Japanese**, Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino and Kawasaki (1992, p. 293) found that the adjectives polite and friendly correlated highly when applied to certain behaviors in specific situations for the 219 American participants in their study; however, for the 284 Japanese participants in their study, the Japanese terms *teinneina* and *shitashigena* (for the English adjectives polite and friendly) respectively fall into different dimensions when applied to the cross-culturally equivalent situations. In other words, these words do not seem to correlate in Japanese as they do in English.

4. A closer look at the Japanese conceptualization of politeness

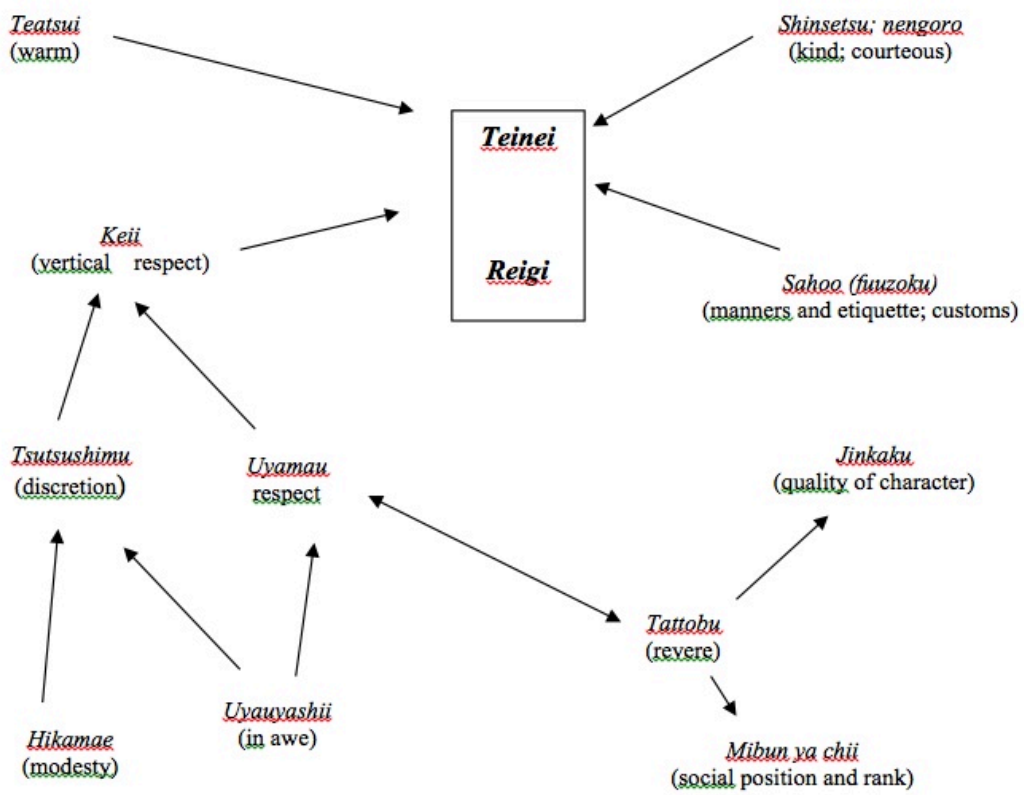
To analyze the Japanese conceptualization of politeness, an examination of the dictionary entries of the term polite is useful. The adjective polite is invariably translated as ***teinei*** and ***reigi tadashi*** suggesting that these may be the nearest equivalents of the English concept in Japanese (Haugh, 2004, p. 91). However, how **these terms** are conceptualized in Japanese appears to be **quite different and more complex** than for the terms in English discussed previously. The terms *teinei* and *reigi tadashi* are made up of multiple kanji characters, with each one providing different insights into the overall meaning of the term. For instance, according to the Daikangorin dictionary (Kamada & Komeyama, 1992), the term *teinei*, as it refers to politeness, is made up of the kanji characters 丁 (*tei*) and 寧 (*nei*). The first character 丁 (*tei*) refers to being warm hearted (*teatsui*), while the second character 寧 (nei) is related to being kind (*shinsetsu*) and courteous (*nengoro*). Thus, politeness in this sense seems relatively straightforward in that it involves people showing warmth, kindness, and courtesy.

However, the meaning of the term *teinei* as it refers to politeness is closely related to the **concept of *reigi***, which is **more complex**. First of all, *reigi* as it relates to politeness is attached to the term *tadashi*, which together make up the set collocation *reigi tadashi*. *Tadashi* simply refers to being correct, while *reigi* is denser in its meaning. According to the Kojien dictionary (Shinmura, 1991, p. 2715), *reigi*, as it relates to politeness, is generally associated with having manners and etiquette (*sahoo*) which express vertical respect (*keii*) or propriety (*rei*). To better understand these concepts, it is necessary to examine the meanings underpinning these kanji characters. For instance, *rei* (礼) and *gi* (儀) combine to form the word *reigi* (礼儀). *Rei*, as mentioned above, is closely associated with *keii*, a vertical or upward-looking type of respect. While respect is generally conceived as mutual in English, the concept of *rei* in Japanese involves **primarily vertical respect** (i.e., one-way). An analysis of the kanji character for *kei* (敬) reveals the nature of this respect. Derived from the original meaning of the respect character (*uyamau*) associated with Confucianism, which is to worship by bending down and making an offering before gods, *kei* incorporates the meaning of *tattobu* (show reverence) and *tsutsushimu* (to be discreet or refrain from). Consistent with the oft-described notion of the Japanese having a vertical society, the qualities that are revered include high social position (*mibun*), rank (*chii*), and others' quality of character (Kamada & Komeyama, 1992, p. 403; Shinmura, 1991, p. 1529, p. 1597).

Further, the concept of discretion or refrain (*tsutsushimu*) mentioned above is associated with being in awe (*uyauyashii*) and modesty (*hikaeme*) (Kamada & Komeyama, 1992, p. 546). Thus, another dimension of *reigi* is one's ability to demonstrate the quality of their character by expressing modesty and humility. *Gi* (儀), the second kanji character in *reigi* (礼儀), involves regulated behavior, or manners and etiquette (*sahoo*) that are in accordance with particular social norms. This follows from the fact that *gi* (儀) is composed of the kanji characters for *person* (人) and *righteous* (義), a righteous person being someone who can follow the *way of propriety* (*reihoo*) (Kamada & Komeyama, 1992, p. 107). Therefore, *rei* combined with *gi* here connotes that **to be polite is to follow particular social norms**, and these social norms seem to involve repressing one's individual desires for the betterment of the group and, more specifically, **understanding one's own place in this hierarchy and respecting or revering those in higher positions** (Matsumoto, 1993).

In an effort to elucidate the Japanese concept of politeness, Haugh (2004, p. 95) provides a useful word-map illustrating the concepts of *teinei* and *reigi tadashii* and related terms in Figure 1 below. The key notions associated with politeness in Japanese as mentioned above are represented in this figure. The double-headed arrow from *tattobu* (revere) to *uyamau* (respect) indicates that both terms are mutually interdependent, while the single-headed arrows pointing to other terms signal that the latter term (i.e., nearest to the pointed end of the arrow) is conceptually derivative of the term preceding it.

Figure 1 Haugh's (2004, p. 95) word map of politeness and related terms in Japanese



Although they are both used as translations of the English term politeness, the concepts of *teinei* and *reigi tadashii* are not necessarily equivalent. From Haugh's (2004) analysis, ***teinei***, refers to showing warmth (*teatsui*), kindness (*shinsetsu*), and courtesy (*nengoro*) towards others, whereas ***reigi tadashii*** is associated with behavior which shows upward respect (*keii*) of the social position (*mibun*), rank (*chii*), quality of character (*jinkaku*) of others, and shows modesty (*hikaeme*) about oneself, in accordance with social norms (*sahoo*).

Haugh's (2004) conceptual framework is supported, at least in part, by previous research about **Japanese speakers' conceptualizations** of *teinei* and *reigi tadashii*. For instance, Ide et al.'s (1992) study, which was also mentioned above, found the term *teinei* to be highly correlated with *keii* (respect), *yoi* (feeling good), *tekisetsu(sa)* (appropriateness) and *omoiyari* (considerateness, kindness) (see also Ide & Yoshida, 1999). Similarly, in a pilot study in which they interviewed Japanese speakers to ascertain their conceptualizations of politeness compared to native-English speakers, Obana and Tomoda (1994) reported that the Japanese respondents commonly associated the terms *teinei* and *reigi tadashii* with knowing where one stands in social interactions (i.e., known as *wakimae(ru)* in Japanese) and *keigo* (honorifics), which both involve upward respect (i.e., showing respect or reverence towards

others of higher rank or status than oneself, and modesty about oneself), as well as horizontal distance.

5. Societal restraints, homogeneity and adherence to the expected norms

In mentioning the term "*wakimae*" above, it is helpful to mention the work of Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki and Ogino (1986, p. 347) who conducted a large scale quantitative analysis of Japanese linguistic politeness in relation to American linguistic politeness. She found that **the concept of *wakimae* was fundamental** to how her Japanese participants conceptualized politeness. While no single word seems to translate *wakimae* to English adequately, the term **discernment** seems to reflect its basic sense in describing one's strict adherence to the expected norms. In other words, discernment in this sense, refers to the "almost automatic observation of socially agreed upon rules and applies to both verbal and non-verbal behavior" (Hill et al., 1986, p. 348). As a counterpart to discernment, Hill et al. (1986) use the term "volition", which is defined as the aspect of politeness that "allows the speaker a considerably more active choice, according to the speaker's intention, from a relatively wider range of possibilities" (p.347). In Hill et al.'s study, participants were presented with language expressions and potential addressees, and asked to complete questionnaires relating to the following measurements: (1) the degree of politeness of each expression, rated on a scale of one to five, (2) the appropriate politeness level corresponding to the various addresses, also rated on scale of one to five, and (3) which linguistic form they would use for each addressee. These expressions, all related to borrowing a pen, conveyed various degrees of politeness, while the potential interlocutors were distinguished by power and status. The results of their study show that both the Americans and Japanese participants' responses were influenced by discernment (i.e., a recognition of certain fundamental characteristics of addressee and situation) to some degree; however, it was clear from the data that **each group seemed to differ in the weight they assigned to the various factors subsumed under discernment and volition**. That is, the Japanese group adopted the discernment principal to a much greater extent as shown by their clustered responses showing a high agreement on the appropriate form(s) for making a certain request, while the American group opted more often for volition as demonstrated by a more diffuse correlation between the addressee/situation features and the appropriate form of a request.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has served to demonstrate how the thought process involved in determining what is polite can be quite different across cultures. In the case of **Japanese society**, the defining characteristic of **politeness**, as demonstrated by the kanji definition of this and related words, **seems to involve the ability to recognize one's place in the social hierarchy** and behave according to the societal norms regulating the behavior of the relationship in a particular situation. Failure to recognize the hierarchical ranking would reflect unfavorably on the speaker, creating an impression of ignorance or lack of self-control.

Thus, what some non-Japanese may deem as rude and aloof behavior and even somewhat childish and submissive (such as not speaking up in various situations), may, in fact, be a Japanese person adhering to the cultural codes they are accustomed to. For instance, corresponding to the principles associated with *sahoo* and *wakimae* described above, the acknowledgement of interdependence, known as *amaeru* in Japanese, is greatly encouraged in Japanese society (Doi, 1981). Subordinates (*kohai*) tend to show respect to their seniors (*senpai*) by acknowledging their dependence, and seniors, in return, accept the responsibility of taking care of their subordinates.

From an American perspective, which, conversely, stresses independence and individuality, it is easy to see how misunderstandings could occur (Yamada, 1997). Taking the first step towards achieving intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Spitzberg, 2000), practitioners must be made aware of potentially diverse thought processes in how cultures conceptualize politeness. By understanding the different perspectives of their intercultural interlocutors, interactants would be less likely to have negative perceptions of each other. Ultimately however, intercultural communicators will have to go beyond the raised-consciousness phase and on to developing more product-oriented skills (i.e., strategies and techniques) to deal with specific situations of potential conflict and/or misunderstanding across cultures.


Pino Cutrone

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