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Effects of gender-identity and gender-congruence on levels of politeness among young Japanese and Koreans*

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The two factors of 'gender-identity' (whether the speaker is male or female) and 'gender-congruence' (whether or not the gender of speaker and listener is the same) can be assumed to act differently in determining levels of politeness. To investigate this assumption, the present study was designed to analyze university student politeness levels in Japan and South Korea when they (i.e., speakers) asked various people (i.e., listeners) to purchase a concert ticket. A *decision tree* analysis revealed hierarchies of factors predictive of politeness levels specific to young Japanese and Koreans. Among Japanese, distance (i.e., extent to which speaker and listener are acquainted) was the strongest followed by power (i.e., extent of disparity in social status) and gender-identity/gender-congruence. Among Koreans, however, power appeared to override distance, resulting in the descending order of power and gender-identity/gender-congruence. Regarding gender-related factors, the results of these parallel studies in Japan and South Korea generally suggested a distinctive influence of gender-identity on politeness levels when listeners held equal or lesser power than speakers, while gender-congruence was implicated when listeners held greater power.

Introduction

Biological differences between men and women are often considered to be amplified by the social system, especially during interpersonal communication within a peer group of the same gender during middle childhood. This notion is known as the gender-as-culture hypothesis (Maltz & Borker, 1982). According to this hypothesis, men and women acquire the gender specific culture of a specific society.

Unlike societies in North America and Europe, Asian societies are often thought to be characterized by traditional or conservative values and gender differences are assumed to be strongly preserved within these societies. If men in these societies are likely to hold more 'power' than women, it is expected that men would respond to members of the same gender (i.e., men) more politely than to those of the opposite gender (i.e., women) whereas women respond more politely to members of the opposite gender (i.e., men) than to those of the same gender (i.e., women). If these behavioral patterns are observed, it could be interpreted as a reflection of Asian socio-cultural values. However, both genders display a similar tendency in interactions with male and female interlocutors of varying levels of power, and then, gender is not influenced by power in society. Thus, the present study investigated the interplay of 'gender-identity' (whether the speaker is male or female) and 'gender-congruence' (whether or not the gender of speaker and listener is the same) acting on levels of politeness in situations involving different power relations in two Asian societies: Japan and South Korea.

As with studies in Western cultures (e.g., Bodine, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 2001; Holmes, 1995; McMillan, Clifton, McGrath & Gale, 1977; Shimanoff, 1994; Smith, 1992; Tannen, 1990), Peng and Hori (1981) and Ide (1982, 2006) found that Japanese women also use polite expressions more frequently than men, supporting the general notion that women are more polite than men in a majority of cultures. If gender difference in language use reflects Japanese and Korean socio-cultural values, and if Asian cultures share similar characteristics, speakers of both languages should exhibit similar tendencies. However, H. Jung (1995) reported contrasting findings in modern Korean language in which the usage of polite honorific expressions by Korean men were more frequent than by Korean women. This is surprising considering the geographic and cultural proximity of Japan and South Korea.

Ide (1991) described Japanese women's frequent usages of polite expressions as including: (1) use of various personal pronouns, (2) avoidance of vulgar expressions, (3) use of overly-correct (hypercorrect) honorifics, and (4) use of feminine sentence-final particles. Likewise, Miyake (1996) reported that the Japanese honorific particles of *o-* and *go-* were associated with women's language. Taking the view of Ide, Miyake (1996) also mentioned that the frequent use of *o-* symbolized the language use of women of higher social class. Unlike these frequent usage of gender-specific expressions in the Japanese language, S. Jung (2005) investigated role language (e.g., lexical, syntactic, idiomatic and intonation of comic book characters) in Japanese and Korean mutual translation of comic books, and reported that features of gender difference tend to appear in Japanese role language, whereas features of age difference are likely to show an influence in Korean role language. Gender differences frequently found in sentence-final particles and personal pronouns in the Japanese language do not appear in the modern Korean language.

Once again, gender-specific linguistic expressions seem to distinguish the two languages.

Regarding generational difference, Okamoto (1995) reported that young Japanese women speakers use fewer feminine expressions than in previous generations, and use masculine forms at the ends of sentences and other masculine expressions in their speech more frequently than in previous generations. Suzuki (2007) also found that older Japanese women were judged to be the best performers both in politeness and appropriateness. His study supported the common belief that Japanese women are traditionally good performers of sophisticated and polite expressions. As seen in these studies, Japanese women, especially older women, seem to be sophisticated users of polite expressions. Gender-related expressions and politeness seem to have been changing from generation to generation; generational difference seems to be a potential candidate for influencing levels of politeness. Therefore, the present study investigated effects of both gender-difference and gender-congruence together in predicting politeness levels, focusing exclusively on only young Japanese (average of 19 years and 10 months) and Koreans (average of 20 years and 7 months).

Background of gender-related studies

The effect of gender difference on spoken and written language has been extensively researched not only for English (e.g., Crosby & Nyquist, 1977; Freed & Greenwood, 1996; Holmes, 1984, 1995; Lakoff, 1975; Thorne & Henley, 1975; Wetzel, 1988) but also for Japanese (e.g., Ide, 2006; Ide & Inoue, 1992; Ide, Ogino, Kawasaki, & Ikuta, 1986; Ogawa, 1997, 2006; Sakata, 1991; Shibamoto, 1987; Suzuki, 2007; Takahara, 1991; Tanaka, 1973; Ueno, 1972). However, combined analyses of 'gender-identity' (whether the speaker is male or female) and 'gender-congruence' (whether or not the gender of speaker and listener is the same) have been empirically conducted for English (e.g., Bilous & Krauss, 1988; Fitzpatrick, Mulac, & Dindia, 1995; Harris, 1992; Johnstone, Ferrara, & Bean, 1992; Mulac, 1989; Mulac, Wiemann, Widenmann, & Gibson, 1988; Wood, 1987), but are still lacking for Japanese, with the exception of Uchida (1997) which suggested that women are more likely to use honorific expressions to men than to women, and that women try to break silence in conversation more frequently when talking to men than men do when talking to women. Among other aspects of conversational dynamics, it can be assumed that these two factors act differently to determine levels of politeness.

Zimmerman and West (1975) found that 96% of interruptions during periods of speakers' conversation were made by male listeners. The interruptions were less frequent in conversations with the same gender. West and Zimmerman (1977)

further suggested that this pattern of verbal interaction reflects the power difference between men and women. These studies by Zimmerman and West (1975) and West and Zimmerman (1977) add support for Lakoff's claim. In Lakoff's (1973, 1975) view, gender differences in language usage reflect not only differences in roles but also unequal status. She further states that speech often reflects sexual discrimination in society. Since women have an inferior status to men, this sex-related power difference results in women's greater politeness than men. This claim has been generally supported by various empirical studies (e.g., Bodine, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 2001; Holmes, 1995; McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, & Gale, 1977; Shimanoff, 1994; Smith, 1992; Tannen, 1990).

Contrary to Lakoff's claim, results (e.g., Brouwer, 1982; Freed & Greenwood, 1996; Winther & Green, 1987) in which men behave more politely than women, have also been reported. A null gender effect was found in the use of tag questions and minimal responses (McMullen, Vernon, & Murton, 1995; Simkins-Bullock & Wildman, 1991). Furthermore, Kollock, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1985) investigated power relations in conversation regarding both gender-identity and gender-congruence. They found no effect of gender-related factors in conversational privileges. Regardless of the gender of partners, the more powerful partner interrupts more frequently than the less powerful partner, whereas the less powerful partner use tag questions more frequently than the more powerful partner. Thus, linguistic features, such as tag questions, interruptions and minimal responses, seem to appear more frequently among women who may often be in position at less power, but there are exceptions. Thus, putting all findings of these previous studies together, the conflicting results might be explained by other factors, including situation, individual differences and the two gender-related aspects of 'gender-identity' and 'gender-congruence', operating simultaneously (e.g., Eckert, 1989; Edwards, 1998; Eliasoph, 1986; Ervin-Tripp, 2001; Holmes, 1984; Holtgraves, 2002; Okamoto, 2004).

Japanese researchers (Peng & Hori, 1981; Ide, 1982, 2006) explained the tendency of Japanese women's frequent use of elaborate honorific expressions as a result of good upbringing and higher social class. Ide labeled this explanation 'wakimae' or 'discernment theory'. In response to Ide and her colleagues' discernment theory, Fukuda and Asato (2004) argued that discernment theory is 'negative politeness' in Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) framework, since Japanese women of higher social class use honorific expressions to demonstrate appropriate respect, and thereby avoid conflict with people of a higher social status (i.e., non face-threatening approach to power).

Related to discernment theory, Suzuki (2007) distinguished between 'discernment theory' and 'individual intention' in polite linguistic behavior. He observed involvement of individual intention in politeness, 'people (especially Japanese)

engaging in business are expected to follow social-norm politeness for business practices but the same people will use individually motivated politeness strategies when they are with their family or friends' (Suzuki, 2007, p. 91). Suzuki further suggested the factors influencing polite linguistic behavior in Japanese lie somewhere between *wakimae* (discernment) and personal intentional (or *hatarakikake* termed by Ide, 1989) strategies.

Framework of the present study

The model of multiple factors determining selection of 'face-redressing' (or politeness) strategies was developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Brown and Levinson posit 'face' as the basic wish of every member of society to be satisfied. They predict that each individual selects politeness strategies by estimating the weightiness of *face threatening acts* (FTAs), based on *social distance* (D) between self and other, *relative power* (P) between other and self, and *ranking of imposition* (R) (the value of the seriousness of an FTA in a given culture). The relationships among these factors are represented in the following formula (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 76): $Wx = D (S, H) + P (H, S) + Rx$, whereas Wx weightiness of the FTAx (face threatening acts), S speaker, H hearer, D social distance between S and H, P Power that H has over S, and Rx the degree to which the FTAx is rated as an imposition in that culture. The socio-cultural factor of Japanese and Korean culture is represented as Rx. This formula is assumed to be universally applicable to every 'competent' member of any society. Thus, people in society would appropriately interpret the reason why others adopt a certain strategy on a given occasion.

Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) framework, however, does not include the gender aspect. Thus, for the purpose of analysis, the present study tentatively introduces gender-related factors to their framework to produce $Wx = D (S, H) + P (H, S) + G (GI, GC) + Rx$ whereas G gender. It is assumed that gender-roles in society reflect socio-cultural values (i.e., gender-as-culture hypothesis). However, gender roles may also be determined to some extent by fundamental biological needs related to preservation of the species through reproduction. Although gender related behavior has undeniable socio-cultural influences, the biological determinants of behavior, while not yet fully understood, cannot be ignored. For this reason, we consider both gender-identity (GI) and gender-congruence (GC) as most basically related to the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of gender category.

In this framework, among other aspects of conversation dynamics, it can be assumed that these two gender-related factors of gender-identity and gender-congruence act differently to determine levels of politeness. If Brown and Levinson's

framework is applicable for native Japanese and Korean speakers, both power and distance, and probably to a lesser degree gender, should be observed as strong influential factors on politeness levels, and thus, the mechanism of polite behavior could be much more confidently assumed to be universal, and not attributable to the unique characteristics of young Japanese and Korean populations.

Study #1: Young Japanese men and women

Study #1 investigated levels of politeness using a 2 (gender-identity; male or female) × 2 (gender-congruence: congruent or incongruent) × 3 ('distance'; familiar, unfamiliar and unknown) × 4 ('power'; junior, peer, senior and teacher) decision tree design to analyze Japanese university student politeness levels when selling (asking someone to purchase) a concert ticket in the Japanese language. The present study only set the single situation of asking someone to buy a concert ticket. In terms of ranking of imposition (R), this situation would be considered a moderately serious imposition in Japanese and Korean culture if university students are asking by seniors or teachers who have more power than them.

Participants

A total of 143 Japanese undergraduate students at the university in the area of Hiroshima, Japan participated in the first study. Participants consisted of 56 women and 87 men. Ages ranged from 18 years and 7 months to 30 years and 8 months, with the average age of 139 participants (4 participants did not report their birthday) being 19 years and 10 months with a standard deviation of 1 year and 10 months on the day of the study.

Procedure

A dialogue situation was set for selling a concert ticket on a university campus. Participants were asked to imagine the following situation: 'On the university campus, you are trying to sell a concert ticket. When you approach someone, how much respect would you pay to this person?' Since 'you' are the person who has been trying to sell a ticket, 'you' are considered to be the speaker while the person who is asked to buy the ticket is the listener. Japanese undergraduate students (being 'speaker') were asked to mark a 5-point politeness scale (i.e., dependent variable), from 1 'not polite at all' to 5 'very polite' when talking to different listeners of 'distance', 'power', and 'gender'. Four parameters (i.e., independent variables) were selected for measuring levels of politeness: (1) the speaker's 'gender-identity'

as male or female; (2) the 'gender-congruence' between speaker and listener as congruent or incongruent; (3) the listener's relationship 'distance' as familiar, unfamiliar or unknown; and (4) the listener's 'power' relationship to the speaker as junior, peer, senior or teacher. Participants (being speakers) marked responses for all these cases of different listeners.

Data and analysis

Because the same question was posed to 24 different listeners (2 gender-congruence × 3 distance × 4 power = 24) and was asked to all 143 participants, a total of 3,432 responses were recorded. Among them, 72 missing values (2.097% of the total) were found and excluded from analysis. The data were analyzed using the 'decision tree' analysis with the *Chi-squared automatic interaction detection* (CHAID) algorithm provided by SPSS Version 15.0J, Classification Trees (SPSS, 2006). Kass (1980) originally proposed the CHAID algorithm. The decision tree analysis is designed to select a useful subset of predictors from a larger set of variables. The technique automatically detects significant interaction effects among independent (predictor) variables, by repeating Chi-square tests at each step for categorical variables or *F* tests for continuous variables. It determines the pair of categories for each independent variable (predictor) that is least significantly different with respect to the dependent variable. In the tree-growing process, each parent node splits into child nodes only if any significant interaction is found among independent variables. Every step for splitting nodes uses Bonferroni's adjusted *p* values to avoid Type I Error or 'false positive' which refers to the error of rejecting null hypothesis when it is actually true. The present study applied the decision tree technique to predict a 5-point politeness scale (i.e., levels of politeness) by the four potential factors of gender-identity, gender-congruence, distance and power. A major difference between analysis of variance (ANOVA)[1] and decision tree analysis is found in the hierarchy depicted in a dendrogram: stronger predictors are positioned at higher nodes, while weaker predictors appear lower at the end of the branches. Non-significant predictors are not included in the dendrogram. Branches grow when significant interactions are found in the data. Since the present study focused on the predictions of politeness levels by all four independent variables together, the decision tree analysis was highly appropriate for purpose and requirements entailed in this inquiry. Thus, the results of the decision tree analysis are reported and discussed in the following sections.

Results of decision tree

The results of the decision tree analysis are depicted in the dendrogram of Figure 1, clearly showing a hierarchy of the influential strength of factors upon response politeness in the descending order of distance, power and gender-identity/gender-congruence. The following sections discuss each of these factors.

Factor of Distance

Node #0 of the dendrogram (Figure 1) indicates the overall mean of 5-point scale politeness levels to be 3.71 with a standard deviation of 1.22 among 3,360 responses (143 participants × 24 different listeners — 72 missing values). The decision tree analysis indicated that the most dominant influential factor was identified as distance [$F(2, 3358) = 897.133, p < .0001$]. Native Japanese speakers were more polite to unknown and unfamiliar listeners (Node #1; M = 4.10, SD = 0.99) than to familiar listeners (Node #2; M = 2.92, SD = 1.24). As the decision tree indicated, there was no difference in levels of politeness toward unknown and unfamiliar listeners. Thus, both unknown and unfamiliar listeners were combined together in the decision tree (see Node #1).

Factor of Power

Decision tree indicated that power was also identified as the second strongest influential factor in predicting levels of politeness. As shown in the dendrogram, significantly different levels of politeness were observed for differently powered unknown and unfamiliar listeners [$F(3, 2239) = 90.245, p < .0001$]: teachers (Node #3; M = 4.47, SD = 0.81), seniors (Node #4; M = 4.36, SD = 0.81), peers (Node #5; M = 3.88, SD = 0.99) and juniors (Node #6; M = 3.68, SD = 1.11). As seen in the means of listeners holding different levels of power, the stronger the listener's power, the higher the speaker's level of politeness became. A similar trend was found among familiar listeners although peer and junior were clustered together in the same group (see Node #9), indicating that these two differently-powered listeners elicited the same level of politeness from speakers. Significantly different levels of politeness were found among differently powered familiar listeners [$F(2, 1114) = 105.517, p < .0001$]: teacher (Node #7; M = 3.60, SD = 1.13), seniors (Node #8; M = 3.17, SD = 1.17) and peers/juniors (Node #9; M = 2.44, SD = 1.12).
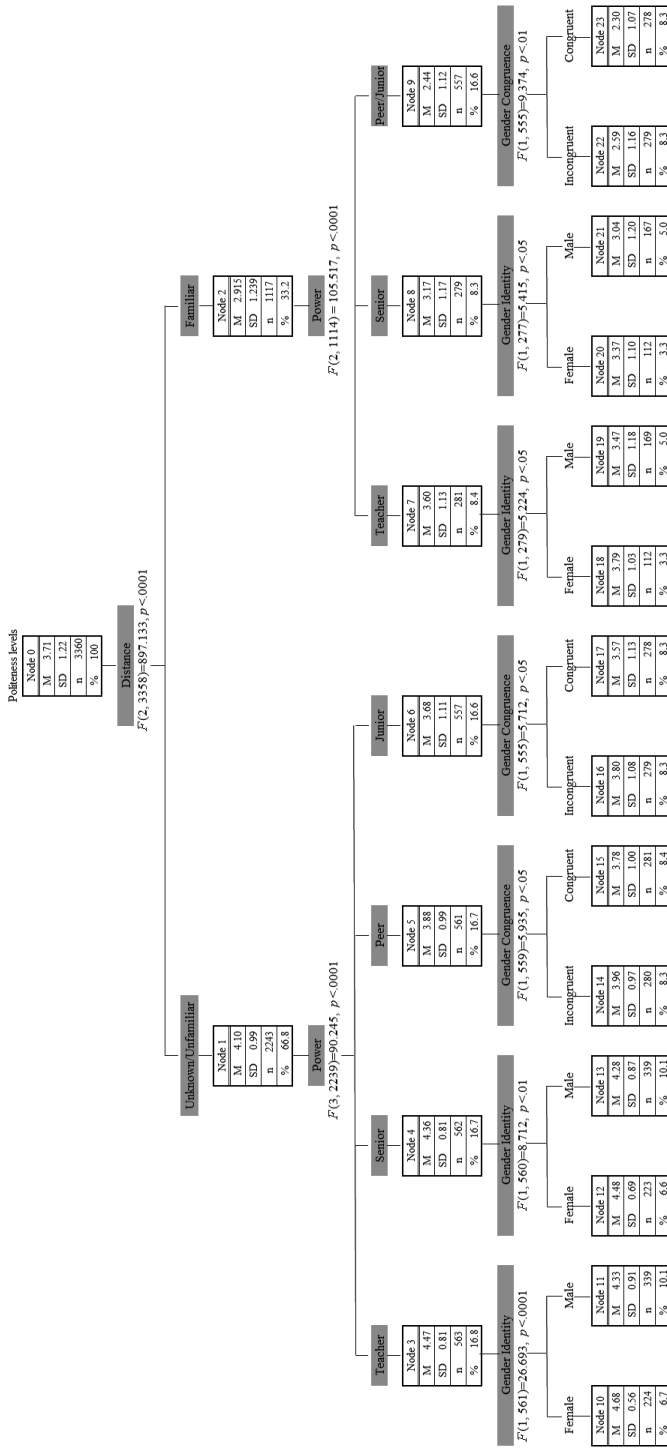
Node 0 — Politeness levels
M 3.71 | SD 1.22 | n 3360 | % 100

Distance: $F_{(2, 3358)}=897.133, p<.0001$

- **Unknown/Unfamiliar — Node 1:** M 4.10, SD 0.99, n 2243, % 66.8
- **Familiar — Node 2:** M 2.915, SD 1.239, n 1117, % 33.2

Node 1 → Power: $F_{(3, 2239)}=90.245, p<.0001$

- **Teacher — Node 3:** M 4.47, SD 0.81, n 563, % 16.8
- **Senior — Node 4:** M 4.36, SD 0.81, n 562, % 16.7
- **Peer — Node 5:** M 3.88, SD 0.99, n 561, % 16.7
- **Junior — Node 6:** M 3.68, SD 1.11, n 557, % 16.6

Node 2 → Power: $F_{(2, 1114)}=105.517, p<.0001$

- **Teacher — Node 7:** M 3.60, SD 1.13, n 281, % 8.4
- **Senior — Node 8:** M 3.17, SD 1.17, n 279, % 8.3
- **Peer/Junior — Node 9:** M 2.44, SD 1.12, n 557, % 16.6

Node 3 → Gender Identity: $F_{(1, 561)}=26.693, p<.0001$

- **Female — Node 10:** M 4.68, SD 0.56, n 224, % 6.7
- **Male — Node 11:** M 4.33, SD 0.91, n 339, % 10.1

Node 4 → Gender Identity: $F_{(1, 560)}=8.712, p<.01$

- **Female — Node 12:** M 4.48, SD 0.69, n 223, % 6.6
- **Male — Node 13:** M 4.28, SD 0.87, n 339, % 10.1

Node 5 → Gender Congruence: $F_{(1, 559)}=5.935, p<.05$

- **Incongruent — Node 14:** M 3.96, SD 0.97, n 280, % 8.3
- **Congruent — Node 15:** M 3.78, SD 1.00, n 281, % 8.4

Node 6 → Gender Congruence: $F_{(1, 555)}=5.712, p<.05$

- **Incongruent — Node 16:** M 3.80, SD 1.08, n 279, % 8.3
- **Congruent — Node 17:** M 3.57, SD 1.13, n 278, % 8.3

Node 7 → Gender Identity: $F_{(1, 279)}=5.224, p<.05$

- **Female — Node 18:** M 3.79, SD 1.03, n 112, % 3.3
- **Male — Node 19:** M 3.47, SD 1.18, n 169, % 5.0

Node 8 → Gender Identity: $F_{(1, 277)}=5.415, p<.05$

- **Female — Node 20:** M 3.37, SD 1.10, n 112, % 3.3
- **Male — Node 21:** M 3.04, SD 1.20, n 167, % 5.0

Node 9 → Gender Congruence: $F_{(1, 555)}=9.374, p<.01$

- **Incongruent — Node 22:** M 2.59, SD 1.16, n 279, % 8.3
- **Congruent — Node 23:** M 2.30, SD 1.07, n 278, % 8.3

Figure 1. Results of the decision tree analysis for Japanese speakers' politeness levels

Factor of Gender-identity

A decision tree depicts these interactive influences as shown in Figure 1. Gender-identity was a significant influential factor on the speaker's levels of politeness for both the higher powered groups of teachers [$F(1, 561) = 26.693$, $p < .0001$] and seniors [$F(1, 560) = 8.712$, $p < .01$] in the case of unknown/unfamiliar listeners. Female speakers (Node #10; M = 4.63, SD = 0.55 to teachers, and Node #12; M = 4.48, SD = 0.69 to seniors) were more likely to be polite to higher powered teachers and seniors than males (Node #11; M = 4.33, SD = 0.91 to teachers, and Node #13; M = 4.28, SD = 0.87 to seniors), regardless of whether listeners were men or women. Similarly, in the case of familiar listeners, gender-identity was also a significant influential factor on the speaker's levels of politeness for both the higher powered groups of teachers [$F(1, 279) = 5.224$, $p < .05$] and seniors [$F(1, 277) = 5.415$, $p < .05$]. Female speakers (Node #18; M = 3.79, SD = 1.03 to teachers, and Node #20; M = 3.37, SD = 1.10 to seniors) were more likely to be polite to higher powered teachers and seniors than males were (Node #19; M = 3.47, SD = 1.18 to teachers, and Node #21; M = 3.04, SD = 1.20 to seniors). Consequently, with no effects of gender-congruence between speakers and listeners, female speakers were more polite in responding to the higher-powered listener groups of seniors and teachers than male speakers. In other words, since the gender of teachers and seniors were irrelevant, this finding simply implies that women were generally more polite to people with higher 'power' than men were.

Factor of Gender-congruence

Decision tree showed the interactive influences as shown in the dendrogram of Figure 1. Gender-congruence was a significant influential factor for both the lesser-powered groups of peer [$F(1, 559) = 5.935$, $p < .05$] and junior [$F(1, 555) = 5.712$, $p < .05$] in the case of unknown/unfamiliar listeners. When the gender of speakers and listeners (Node #14; M = 3.96, SD = 0.97 to peer, and Node #16; M = 3.80, SD = 1.08 to junior) was not congruent, speakers were more likely to be polite to equal or lesser-powered listeners in peer and junior groups than when gender was congruent (Node #15; M = 3.78, SD = 1.00 to peers, and Node #17; M = 3.57, SD = 1.13 to juniors), regardless of whether speakers were men or women. Similarly, in the case of familiar listeners, gender-congruence was also a significant influential factor on speaker's levels of politeness to equal or lesser-powered listeners of peers/juniors [$F(1, 555) = 9.374$, $p < .01$]. No difference was found between peers and juniors. When gender of speakers and listeners was not congruent (Node #22; M = 2.59, SD = 1.16 to peers/juniors), speakers were more likely to be polite to equal or lesser 'powered' listeners of peers/juniors than when gender was

congruent (Node #23; M = 2.30, SD = 1.07 to peers/juniors), regardless of whether speakers were men or women. Therefore, with no effects of speaker's gender-identity, a speaker of a different gender showed more politeness than in situations involving listeners of the same gender with equal or lesser power.

Study #2: Young Korean men and women

Study #2 was administered to Korean university students, using a 2 (gender-identity; male or female) × 2 (gender-congruence: congruent or incongruent) × 3 ('distance'; familiar, unfamiliar and unknown) × 4 ('power'; junior, peer, senior and teacher) decision tree design to analyze politeness levels at the same situation of selling a concert ticket addressed in the Korean language.

Participants

A total of 144 Korean undergraduate students at universities in Kyungnan Area participated in the second study. Participants consisted of 93 women and 51 men. Ages ranged from 18 years and 8 months to 39 years and 3 months, with the average age being 20 years and 7 months with the standard deviation of 2 years and 4 months on the day of the study.

Procedure

The procedure for administering Study #2 was the same as for Study #1, but it was conducted in the Korean language.

Data and analysis

Because the same question was posed to 24 different listeners (2 gender-congruence × 3 distance × 4 power = 24) and was asked to all 144 participants, a total of 3,456 responses were recorded. Among them, 54 missing values (1.563% of the total) were found and excluded from analysis. The decision tree analysis of SPSS 15.0J Classification Trees (SPSS, 2006) was used, setting a 5-point politeness scale as predicted by the four parameters of gender-identity, gender-congruence, distance and power.[2]

Results of decision tree

A decision tree analysis was used to estimate levels of politeness most likely to be reached through the following four factors; distance, power, gender-identity and gender-congruence. The results of the decision tree analysis are depicted in the dendrogram in Figure 2.

Factor of Distance

The decision tree analysis did not include distance in Figure 2 of the dendrogam. This result indicates that, unlike in the case of young Japanese, the factor of distance is not a dominant influential factor for determining levels of politeness for young Koreans.

Factor of Power

The decision tree analysis indicated power as the strongest predictive factor of politeness levels. As shown in the dendrogram, significant differences in levels of politeness were found for differently powered listeners $[F(2, 2276) = 79.833, p < .001]$: teachers (Node #1; $M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.04$), seniors (Node #2; $M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.03$) and peers/juniors (Node #3; $M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.06$). As seen in the means of listeners
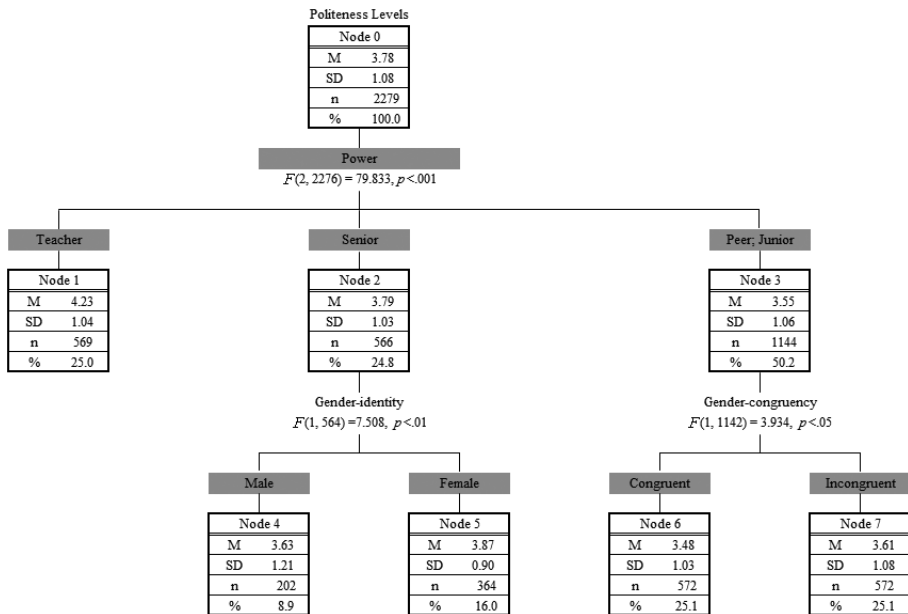

Figure 2. Results of the decision tree analysis for Korean speakers' politeness levels.

holding different levels of power, fundamentally the stronger the listener's power, the higher the speaker's levels of politeness became. Peer and junior were clustered together in the same group because they displayed the similar trend.

Factor of Gender-identity

As seen in Figure 2, the decision tree depicted gender-identity as significantly interacting with the power category of senior listeners [$F(1, 564) = 7.508$, $p < .01$] in resulting levels of politeness that female speakers (Node #5; M = 3.87, SD = 0.90) were more polite than male speakers (Node #4; M = 3.63, SD = 1.21) when talking to senior listeners, regardless of whether listeners were men or women.

Factor of Gender-congruence

As shown in Figure 2, the decision tree showed that gender-congruence was significantly interacting with the power category of peer and junior listeners [$F(1, 1142) = 3.934$, $p < .05$]. With no effects of speakers' gender (i.e., gender-identity), when the gender of speakers and listeners was not congruent (Node #7; M = 3.61, SD = 1.08), speakers were more likely to be polite to equal or lesser-powered listeners than when gender was congruent (Node #6; M = 3.48, SD = 1.03).

General discussion

The present study examined predicting factors on Japanese and Koreans speakers' politeness levels toward listeners of differing power when asking the listener to purchase a concert ticket, with a particular focus on the gender-identity of speakers and gender-congruence between speakers and listeners.

Is Brown and Levinson's framework applicable to young native Japanese and Korean speakers?

As depicted in Figure 1, the decision tree analysis for the young Japanese population revealed listeners' distance to be the most dominant predictor of politeness levels, followed by listeners' power. As suggested by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) regarding the weightiness of face-threatening acts (FTAs) on politeness, distance and power appeared to be major factors, with gender-related factors following these two in strength of predictivity. However, the same situation given the young Korean population revealed contrasting results in which distance was not predictive of politeness levels although power and gender-related factors were

significant predictors. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) framework, Holtgraves and Yang (1990) suggested a similar trend in polite expressions between Koreans and Americans. Likewise, Japanese and Koreans exhibit similar patterns with the exception that Koreans slightly deviated from Brown and Levinson's framework, by displaying null effects of distance. Nevertheless, with an exceptional null influence of distance among Korean population, the present study revealed the existence of a hierarchical structure among multiple parameters closely resembling Brown and Levinson's model.

Can gender-related factors be a major influence on levels of politeness?

As for this question, an exclusive tendency of gender-related factors was revealed among both young Japanese as shown by the dendrogram of the decision tree analyses in Figure 1. The present study investigating politeness among young Japanese and Koreans revealed a tendency that gender-identity was prediction of politeness levels when listeners held greater power (i.e., seniors and teachers) than speakers, while gender-congruence was implicated when listeners held lesser power (i.e., peers and juniors) than speakers. In other words, with no effects of gender-congruence between speakers and listeners, female speakers were more polite in responding to seniors and/or teachers than males. In contrast, with no effects of speaker's gender-identity, a speaker of different gender than the listener showed more politeness than in situations involving the listeners of the same gender. The result of the present study supported the assumption that gender-related power difference results in women's greater politeness than men (e.g., Bodine, 1975; Crosby & Nyquist, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 2001; Holmes, 1995; Ide, 1991; Lakoff, 1975; McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, & Gale, 1977; Shimanoff, 1994; Smith, 1992; Tannen, 1990; Uchida, 1997).

Young Koreans also displayed essentially the same trend exhibited by young Japanese. Gender-identity only appeared predictive of politeness levels when senior listeners held greater power than speakers, while gender-congruence was implicated when listeners held lesser power than speakers. However, no gender-related factors appeared to influence the consistently high politeness level shown to teachers. Null effects of gender-related factors with respect to the high politeness level to teachers could be explained by respect for high social rankings equally by Korean men and women (Eo, 2008).

Brown and Levinson (1987) provided some explanation that the gender factor could be depicted as a part of power and/or distance. They further noted that 'despite the volume of work on sex differences in language, the various possible contributory variables (P, D, R, sex of speaker vs. hearer, etc.) have not been carefully enough controlled …' (p. 32). This comment highlights the importance of

the present study in that the decision tree analysis showed strong gender effects on levels of politeness independently from the other two major factors of distance and power. Therefore, although Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) excluded gender from their formula explaining that their 'framework makes available just a few possible parameters that can account for variation in politeness levels' (p. 30), gender-related factors may be a good potential candidate for inclusion in the formula of Brown and Levinson as $Wx = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + G(GI, GC) + Rx$, with G as gender, GI as gender-identity and GC as gender-congruence. This model may have specific application to 'Asian' populations who are likely to maintain traditional and conservative values associated with gender-related factors.

Why do gender-identity and gender-congruence have exclusive influence on politeness levels?

The present study revealed that young Japanese female speakers were more polite in responding to seniors and teachers than males (i.e., effects of gender-identity). This result shows congruence with the discernment theory (Ide, 1982, 2006) only when considering women's polite attitudes toward greater powered listeners. Ide explained that both Japanese men and women are required to behave politely toward greater-powered people with no individual choice (i.e., discernment or *wakimae*) while in Western cultures each individual can select whether s/he will act politely or not (i.e., volition or *hatarakikake*). In Japanese society, women more often utilize strategies of discernment following the Japanese social norms toward greater-powered listeners than Japanese men.

Since gender-identity did not show any predictivity of politeness toward listeners holding equal or lesser power, regardless of the degree of distance (i.e., familiar, unfamiliar or unknown), predictions based on Ide's discernment theory do not appear to extend to peers and juniors. This overall behavioral tendency of gender-related factors across all levels of power can be more adequately explained by the social structural model of Nakane (1967/1970) describing Japanese society as a 'hierarchical' structure. Both Japanese men and women distinguish levels of politeness depending upon power in Japanese society. However, since gender differences in language usage reflect unequal status in Japanese society as proposed by Lakoff (1973, 1975), Japanese women more often become overly polite to people holding greater power than Japanese men do, but not toward people holding lesser power.

Young Koreans displayed a very high politeness level toward teachers with no effects of gender-related factors. Eo (2008) reported that both Korean men and women are likely to decide levels of politeness depending on higher/lower social rankings while Japanese women regard *uchi-soto-kankei* (inside-and-outside relations) and familiar/unfamiliar as more important factors in determining levels

of politeness than Japanese men. The present study found that teachers in Korea are likely to receive equally high politeness from both Korean men and women while teachers in Japan receive a higher level of politeness from Japanese women than from Japanese men. This contrastive result suggests that the power factor may override the influence of gender-identity in Korean society.

In contrast, gender-congruence was implicated when listeners held equal or lesser power (i.e., peers and juniors) to speakers: Both Japanese and Korean women show more higher politeness than men when talking to listeners of the different gender. It is likely that, once the factor of power is removed from speaker's attention, gender-congruence rises to become active on politeness levels. In previous studies in English-speaking conditions, Fitzpatrick, Mulac, and Dindia (1995) observed that gender-preferential expressions were more apparent in same-gender groups than in the case of mixed-gender groups. Furthermore, Bilous and Krauss (1988) and Mulac (1989) also found that men speak more than women do in mixed-sex dyads. As observed in these English-speaking studies, the effects of gender-congruence in dialogs between people of equal power show similar polite linguistic behaviors across various cultures. It may then be surmised that this aspect of polite behavior might be considered much more 'universal' than a unique characteristic of Japanese and Korean culture.

How do gender-identity and gender-congruence function determining on politeness levels?

Using the framework of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), the decision tree analysis in the present study revealed hierarchical strength of multiple factors in predicting levels of politeness. The question then arises how gender-related factors actually function in dynamic interaction in communication. Suzuki (2007) proposed a framework of two essential scales of polite linguistic behavior of discernment (or *wakimae*) and individual intention (or *hatarakikake*). The results of the present study may be explained by this framework, in which strategies of individual intention (or personal motivation) are used toward listeners with equal or lesser power, while strategies of discernment are used toward listeners with greater power. With these selective influences of discernment and personal motivation, Japanese (and partly Korean) women are required to behave more politely than Japanese (and partly Korean) men toward greater-powered people. However, toward people holding equal or lesser power, Japanese and Korean women can select polite behavior based on individual intention or personal motivation as do Japanese and Korean men.

The two aspects of gender-identity and gender-congruence found in the present study can furthermore be explained by adapting the Communication

Accommodation Theory (CAT), which explores 'the social cognitive processes mediating individuals' perceptions of the environment and their communicative behaviors' (Giles, Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson, 1987, p. 14). CAT successfully provided the theoretical framework for inter/intragenerational communications (Williams & Giles, 1996), reporting that intergenerational communication by young college-aged students was more dissatisfying and less positive than their intragenerational encounters. Satisfying conversations took place when older people accommodated to the needs of the young people while dissatisfying conversation occurred when older people were unaccommodating.

To explore functional description of gender-related factors in communication depending on power in the levels of politeness, the framework of CAT provides the following explanation that higher levels of politeness levels shown by Japanese women may imply their convergent attitudes to higher powered people such as teachers and seniors greater than Japanese men (i.e., the effect of gender-identity). This influential tendency of gender-identity may have been overridden by power among young Koreans, indicating null effects of gender-related factors on the levels of politeness to teachers (but not to seniors). In contrast, when interlocutors hold equal or lesser power, gender-identity does not have any effect on the level of politeness. The higher politeness levels exhibited toward listeners of the opposite gender in the present study among young Japanese and Koreans might be explained by a more convergent attitude toward interlocutors of the opposite gender than toward those of the same gender. In general, the effect of gender-identity (whether the speaker is male or female) comes into play in communication with higher powered listeners because of the needs of convergence for the lesser powered speakers. In contrast, the effect of gender-(in)congruence begins to operate in communication with the equal or lesser powered listeners for the desire to attract the opposite gender. This gender-related shift of attitude depending on power needs to be clarified using situations of authentic interactive communication in future studies.

Using the relatively new statistical technique of decision tree analysis, the present study revealed hierarchies of factors predictive of politeness levels specific to young Japanese and Koreans. Among Japanese, distance was the strongest followed by power and gender-identity/gender-congruence. Among Koreans, however, power appeared to override distance, resulting in the descending order of power and gender-identity/gender-congruence. These results were basically congruent with Brown and Levinson's description (1978, 1987) of politeness theory. The unique findings of the present study rest upon the results of two gender-related factors: Gender-identity appeared to influence politeness levels when listeners held greater power than speakers, whereas gender-congruence was implicated when listeners held lesser power than speakers. The present study, however, only

measured politeness levels of speakers' expressed attitudes toward listeners when university students were asking someone to purchase a concert ticket.

The arguments in the present study were developed on the basis of assumption that the levels of politeness measured by the 5-point scale are linked to honorific linguistic behavior. Differences in both languages are found in various linguistic expressions and behaviors such as address terms (Lim, Tamaoka, & Fukami, 2002), kinship terms (Lim & Tamaoka, 2003), third person honorifics (Lim, Tamaoka, & Miyaoka, 2008), and expressions of gratitude, apology and greeting (Hon, 2007). However, Jung (2005) investigated role language in Japanese and Korean mutual translation of comic books, and reported that gender-specific language features tend to appear in Japanese role language, whereas language features related to age difference is likely to appear in Korean role language. Gender differences frequently found in sentence-final particles and personal pronouns in the Japanese language are not found in the modern Korean language. To address the issue of gender differences in dynamic communication processes, future studies should be conducted to investigate dialogs in various power, distance and gender situations.

Notes

1. A 2 (gender-identity; male or female) × 2 (gender-congruence: congruent or incongruent) × 3 ('distance'; familiar, unfamiliar or unknown) × 4 ('power'; junior, peer, senior or teacher) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on responses of 125 (74 men and 51 women) participants with no missing values. Gender-identity was the between-participant variable whereas other three variables of gender-congruence, distance and power were the within-participant variables. The within-participant factors repeatedly elicited levels of politeness from the same participants, and a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on these three variables. Main effects of distance [$F(2, 246) = 129.272$, $p < .001$] and power [$F(3, 369) = 308.718$, $p < .001$] were significant, while main effects of gender-identity and gender-congruence were not. Seven interactions were significant; namely, power and gender-identity [$F(3, 369) = 5.269$, $p < .001$], distance and power [$F(6, 738) = 146.162$, $p < .001$], distance and gender-congruence [$F(2, 246) = 62.664$, $p < .001$], distance, gender-congruence and gender-identity [$F(2, 246) = 5.037$, $p < .01$], power and gender-congruence [$F(3, 369) = 310.775$, $p < .001$], distance, power and gender-congruence [$F(6, 738) = 270.446$, $p < .001$], and distance, power, gender-congruence and gender-identity [$F(6, 738) = 4.176$, $p < .001$]. The significant main effects of distance and power are also depicted in the decision tree dendrogram of Figure 1. The branches of the dendrogram further reveal interplay of gender-related factors which were also detected by ANOVA's significant multiple interactions. As the significant main effects and interactions found by ANOVA were too intricate to draw a clear conclusion, the decision tree analysis sorts out the interplay of multiple factors.

2. A 2 (gender-identity; male or female) × 2 (gender-congruence: congruent or incongruent) × 3 ('distance'; familiar, unfamiliar or unknown) × 4 ('power'; junior, peer, senior or teacher) ANO-VA with repeated measures of the last three variables was conducted on the responses of 119 (43 men and 76 women) participants with no missing values. As with Study #1, Study #2 also showed that main effects of distance [$F(2, 234) = 68.944$, $p < .001$] and power [$F(3, 351) = 28.318$, $p < .001$] were significant, while main effects of gender-identity and gender-congruence were not. Again, Study #2 indicated seven significant interactions but their patterns were different from Study #1; namely, power and gender-identity [$F(3, 351) = 2.940$, $p < .05$], distance and pow-er [$F(6, 702) = 12.317$, $p < .001$], distance, power and gender-identity [$F(6, 702) = 2.311$, $p < .05$], distance and gender-congruence [$F(2, 234) = 9.054$, $p < .001$], power and gender-congruence [$F(3, 351) = 32.219$, $p < .001$], power, gender-congruence and gender-identity [$F(3, 351) = 2.805$, $p < .05$], and distance, power and gender-congruence [$F(6, 702) = 73.541$, $p < .001$]. As shown in the decision tree dendrogram in Figure 2, the significant main effect of power is depicted in the first branch. However, the significant main effect of distance found in ANOVA was not apparent in the decision tree analysis. ANOVA found significant interactions involving gender-related factors which were also depicted in the dendrogram in Figure 2. Since an ANOVA analysis is sensitive to sample size, a large sample of over 100 as in the present study easily reaches the level of significance which may result in an error of rejecting the null hypothesis even when it is actu-ally correct (i.e., Type I Error). The decision tree analysis employs Bonferroni's adjusted p values in every node splitting step in order to avoid Type I Error. Thus, for the present study, a decision tree analysis was selected as the most appropriate tool for clarifying the complex interplay of multiple factors.

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