

# Response strategy changes depending on the interlocutor's face-saving and face-threatening acts: A DCT study

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## Abstract

This study aims to reveal how response strategies change depending on whether the interlocutor previously has taken *face-saving act* (FSA) or *face-threatening act* (FTA), and at the same time to demonstrate effects of interpersonal and situational factors on the response strategies. Utilizing a discourse completion task (DCT) on Japanese college students, we investigated three factors of (1) interlocutor's preceding FSA and FTA, (2) power relation and (3) distance (familiarity), within two types of situations differing in terms of the locus of responsibility. Content analyses of the data revealed that the participants preferred to describe what had happened, rather than to make judgments as to the locus of responsibility. This result suggests that they may try to avoid being perceived as judgmental to the interlocutor when talking about who is responsible for an incident.

## 1. Introduction

As a member of society, every individual has *face*. Goffman (1967) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself" (p. 5). Face is also described by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) as a 'basic want' consisting of *positive face* and *negative face*. Positive face refers to a want to be approved of, while negative face concerns a want not to be disturbed. All members of society are supposed to make appropriate consideration of other members' faces, as well as their own faces. Goffman claims that the negotiation of multiple faces, called *facework*, is regulated by the principle of reciprocity, because face can only be satisfied by others, not by oneself.

Although the reciprocity principle expects that individuals make effort to save both their own face and others' faces, when one interacts with another, their goals are not always the same, i.e., sometimes saving one's own face may automatically threaten another's face. Goffman (1967) discusses a more delicate balance that actual facework requires successfully sustaining interpersonal relationships. Thus, a FTA does not necessarily bring an immediate retaliation, because the recipient of a FTA may be afraid of a breakdown of the interpersonal relationships with the actor, and then may turn a blind eye to the FTA. The present study is an attempt to explore how verbal responses are realized depending on the previous FSA and FTA by the actor, focusing on Japanese college students' norms reflected in a discourse completion task (DCT).

### 1.1. Reactions to an Interlocutor's Face-Saving and Face-Threatening Acts

A large amount of previous studies have investigated verbal responses to FSAs and FTAs in detail. For instance, one of the typical FSA to another is complimenting, which directly augments the positive face of a person who receives the compliment (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). From the viewpoint of the reciprocity principle, a recipient of a compliment should in return save the complimenter's face. When recipients accept a compliment, it then implies that they also respect their own positive face. During such an exchange, if the recipient's face has only been respected, the complimenter's face is overlooked. In this one-way action, the complimenter's face and the recipient's face are not well-balanced. Therefore, as a response to a compliment, self-disapproving strategies, such as avoidance, disagreement, rejection, etc., are sometimes preferably selected in order to maintain balance of the two parties' faces (e.g., Burnland & Araki, 1985; Herbert & Straight, 1989; Tang & Zhang, 2009).

On the other hand, one typical FTA to the interlocutor is a complaint (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Contrary to a compliment, a complaint denigrates another's positive face. Cupach and Carson (2002) argue that the face-threatening nature of a complaint influences the reactions of a complaint recipient. In actual interactions, however, a recipient of a complaint is not always able to break off the relationship with the complainer. If the complainer is a person with stronger power, such as a professor, boss, client, etc., the recipient often has to tolerate the complaint. As Goffman (1967) describes, everyone prefers to receive good reputation from others in a society, so the recipient may try not to show disgraceful feelings to a powerful complainer.

Although the above studies demonstrate delicate face management processes in responses to either FSA or FTA, there appears to be a lack of studies about how reactions differ depending on the interlocutor's previous face-saving and face-threatening acts. The present study then focuses on differences in response strategies to an interlocutor's preceding FSA and FTA produced in a comparable situation. Specifically, we explore exchanges to pursue the locus of responsibility between the two interlocutors, such that, verbal responses to the other's preceding FSA and FTA can be compared in a same setting. Within interactions pursuing the locus of responsibility, one would assume the interlocutor admitting fault (i.e., *self-disapproving*) as FSA to oneself, while the interlocutor's claim of innocence (i.e., *self-approving*) as FTA to oneself.

### 1.2. Factors Influencing Selections of Response Strategies

Facework can be viewed as the process in which people try to keep a balance between multiple faces during social encounters. Therefore, a realization of facework should be viewed as a result of interactional effects caused by multiple factors, which can be explained as facework behaviors summarized by the Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) model. Following Goffman's (1967) concept

of facework, Brown and Levinson conceptualized a face-redressing (i.e., politeness) strategy which is suitable to the degree to which an act is face-threatening to the interlocutor. In order to estimate the degree of a face-threatening act (FTA), they propose three factors using the following formula:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

where  $W_x$  is the *weight* of a FTA,  $D$  refers to the *distance* ( $D$ ) between speaker and hearer,  $P$  refers to the *power* ( $P$ ) the hearer has over the speaker, and  $R_x$  refers to a value that measures the degree to which FTA <sub>$x$</sub>  is rated as an imposition in the culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 76–77).

A major issue in the literature has been to demonstrate how the interpersonal factors of power and distance affect facework (or politeness) behaviors, focusing on various speech acts (e.g., Guan, Park, & Lee, 2009 for apology; Becker, Kimmel, & Beville, 1989; Gagne, 2010; Holtgraves, 1994 for requests; Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Locher, 2004 for disagreement; MacGeorge, Lichtman, & Pressey, 2002 for advice; Holtgraves, Srull, & Socall, 1989 for assertion; Holtgraves, 1986 for questions). These studies showed an overall influence of power and distance, and regarding power effects, individuals select careful verbal strategies when they converse with superiors. However, after publication of Brown and Levinson (1978), opposing results have also been reported concerning effects of distance. For instance, some studies (e.g., Baxter, 1984; Holtgraves, 1986) argue that individuals become more polite to familiar people than those unfamiliar. In response to these conflicting reports, Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced the revised version of politeness theory allowing the degree of affection to be confounded with the factor of distance. In the present study, we set the factor of distance as familiarity between speaker and hearer.

Besides power and distance, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) subsume all potential variables influencing facework into the factor  $R$  (ranking of imposition); thus, the concept of  $R$  is rather miscellaneous. Brown and Levinson (1987) define  $R$  as “culturally and situationally defined *ranking of impositions*” (pp. 76–77), so that  $R$  includes both situational and cultural factors. As a situational factor influencing face-considering strategies, questionnaire studies by MacGeorge, Lichtman, and Pressey (2002) and Sillars (1980) revealed that one’s recognition of responsibility in a given situation has a significant influence upon response strategies among native English speakers. Therefore, this study compares the differences caused by the locus of responsibility.

### 1.3. On the question of responsibility

There are two basic options when pursuing the locus of responsibility; namely,

claiming that one is right and the other is at fault, or vice versa. Further, one may make this claim in an explicit or implicit way, or avoid making any claim. Communication scholars have been paying attention to the speech act of apology, a communication pattern characteristic to Japanese people. Sugimoto (1998) pointed out that Japanese, compared to Americans, differentiate a wide variety of apology strategies according to relationships between the speaker and the recipient. This implies that Japanese do not like bothering the others' feelings, as many earlier studies depict Japanese as seeking social harmony and avoiding conflict (e.g., Benedict, 1954; Doi, 1971/1973; Hall, 1976, 1984; Hofstede, 1980; Lebra, 1976; Nakane, 1967/1970; Triandis, 1995; Yamada, 1997).

However, Tanaka, Spencer-Oatey, and Cray (2000) have observed that Japanese, unlike Canadians and British, likely refuse to apologize unless they accept responsibility for having committed a fault. Although Tanaka et al. (2000) do not clarify the reasoning behind this result, one possible interpretation is that the more Japanese value social harmony, the more they will require the interlocutor to take cooperative attitude with themselves. If that is the case, a substantial negative reaction would occur when Japanese, who are certain about their innocence, take offense at unreasonable accusations. Even though Japanese are eager to seek social harmony, it is not the case that all Japanese have the same needs, interests, goals, beliefs or behaviors. To the extent to which Japanese are incompatible with each other, conflict on the question of responsibility should be inevitable in their interactions (Krauss, Rohlen, & Steinhoff, 1984). Consistent with Tanaka et al.'s (2000) finding, Gudykunst and Nishita (1993) also reported that Japanese are likely to mention duties and obligations to persuade others, while Americans do not. These studies suggest that native Japanese speakers may place special emphasis on who has the responsibility in a given situation. Based on the above findings, this study focuses on the effect caused by the speaker's recognition about whether or not one is at fault (i.e., responsible) in a given situation.

#### 1.4. Rationale of the present study

The present study aims to reveal the differences of response strategies related to the interlocutor's preceding FSAs and FTAs, and to demonstrate interpersonal and situational factors influencing these differences. As discussed in the previous sections, it is assumed that response strategies delicately vary depending on the interlocutor's preceding contrasting acts, interpersonal relationships, and the situation.

To explore various aspects of the linguistic realization of facework, linguistic pragmatists have been using a wide range of data such as natural conversations, role-plays, corpora, literary writings, questionnaires and discourse completion tasks (DCTs), according to each researcher's purpose (see Jucker, 2009; Kasper,

2000). Data-collecting methods are selected depending on the extent to which researchers control their informants' language production and/or perception. In order to reveal actual processes of how people interact with each other, an ideal way may be to record natural conversations (e.g., Georgakopoulou, 2001; Golato, 2003; Holmes, 2000; Jacobs, 2002; Locher, 2004; Saft, 2004; Yuan, 2001). However, within naturally occurring data, it is difficult to extract both FSAs and FTAs given by the same speaker in the same situation. Role-playing approach, on the other hand, allows eliciting both of the FSA and FTA in more interactive and authentic ways than questionnaires and DCTs do (e.g., Cohen & Olshtain, 1981, 1993; Kasper, G., & Dahl, 1991; Roever, 2011; Sasaki, 1998; Taguchi, 2006). However, the objective of the present study differs from these previous role-play studies in that it is an attempt to compare responses by different interlocutors in the same situations. With the role-playing approach, it is impossible to ask all participants to bring multiple interlocutors to be hypothetical interlocutors whom we will set in our scenarios.

The approach of DCT allows researchers to have greater control over many different variables, despite authenticity not being guaranteed (e.g., Billmyer & Vardhese, 2000; Blum-Kulka, 1984; Limberg, 2009; Rose, 1992, 1994; Rose & Ono, 1995; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Ting-Toomey, Gao, Trubisky, Yang, Kim, Lin, & Nishita, 1991; Turnbull & Saxton, 1997; Yuan, 2001). DCTs would miss participants' unconscious ways to express their intentions. However, it is not possible to insure authenticity and generalizability in data at the same time. Despite its weakness, DCT is useful to observe participants' norm consciousness about facework. Therefore, by utilizing DCT, the present study investigates the following three factors influencing response strategies by native Japanese college students, within two types of situations differing in terms of the locus of responsibility: (1) interlocutor's preceding FSAs and FTAs, (2) power and (3) distance, to be discussed in more detail below.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Participants**

The sample included 30 male and 26 female ( $N = 56$ ) undergraduate students enrolled at a university in Hiroshima prefecture, Japan. All participants were native speakers of Japanese. Their ages ranged from 19 years and 8 months to 26 years and 10 months ( $M = 22.13$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ). The participants volunteered to participate in the study immediately after class time at the university. All participants received financial compensation for their participation.

### **2.2. Materials and Procedure**

Participants completed a discourse completion task (DCT) which involved two situations where participants and a hypothetical interlocutor were in trouble. The situations were developed in order to be as close to actual experiences of

young Japanese college students as possible. The two situations differed depending on whether the participant was supposed to assess the fault lying with the interlocutor (Setting 1), or both the participant and the interlocutor (Setting 2). For both situations, the interlocutor provided an explanation of the incident to a third person(s). We set the interlocutor's two contradictory explanations as *self-approving* (i.e., face-threatening to the participant) and *self-disapproving* (i.e., face-saving to the participant).

Setting 1 was a situation where the participant was supposed to only assess the interlocutor at fault. In this setting, participants were asked to imagine that they were working part-time in a restaurant and one day an expensive chair had been damaged by rain because another co-worker (i.e., the hypothetical interlocutor) had forgotten to shut a nearby window. Later the co-worker explained what had happened to the manager of the restaurant (i.e., the third person). The co-worker's explanation was presented in the following two ways: (1) "I thought [participant's name] had closed the window." (i.e., self-approving) and (2) "I'm sorry, I didn't close it." (i.e., self-disapproving).

In Setting 2, the participant was supposed to assess both the participant and the interlocutor were at fault. Participants were asked to imagine that they guided a relative (i.e., the hypothetical interlocutor) to the place of their cousin's wedding but they each arrived late to the party because the relative had been late to their meeting and the participant got lost on the way there. After the party, the relative explained what had happened to other relatives (i.e., the third persons). The relative's explanation was presented in the following two ways: (1) "We were late because [participant's name] was lost on the way here." (i.e., self-approving) and (2) "I'm sorry; I was late at the station." (i.e., self-disapproving).

The question-reply sequence considered the following interpersonal relationships with the hypothetical interlocutors: factors of power (P) and distance (D). Conditions of P were differentiated between "older" as higher-powered interlocutor and "younger" as lower powered interlocutor, while D was differentiated between "the interlocutor with whom you have talked much" as familiar interlocutor and "the interlocutor with whom you have not yet talked much" as unfamiliar interlocutor. In this way, P (i.e., two conditions of older and younger interlocutors) and D (i.e., two conditions of familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors) were measured using four (i.e., two conditions of P  $\times$  two conditions of D) hypothetical interlocutors per setting. Participants were asked to write down responses to all types of hypothetical interlocutors. Since there were two types of settings and two types of the interlocutor's utterances of self-approving and self-disapproving (the factor of the interlocutor's preceding act) with the four types of hypothetical interlocutors each, participants completed responses to a total of 16 different cases (i.e., four hypothetical interlocutors  $\times$  two settings  $\times$  two interlocutor's utterances). By the combination of the 16 conditions and the 56 participants, we obtained a total of 896 responses.

Completion of the DCT with a paper-and-pencil format took approximately twenty minutes in the classroom where the participant had taken the class. The original version in Japanese and its English translation are given in the Appendix.

### 2.3. Coding Procedure

An original coding scheme of response strategies was developed specifically to extract characteristics of interaction about the locus of responsibility. Although there were some previous schemes (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1984; Cohen & Olshtain, 1981), our scheme was created to accommodate the data resulting from the present DCT which investigated differences of verbal responses depending on whether the interlocutor's preceding act was self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) or self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving). Moreover, this was not a taxonomy of variation in speech forms, but rather a content-based categorization of verbal responses in terms of how the messages relate to facework, especially in the exchanges about who should be responsible for the given incident.

As summarized in Table 1, four types of broad categories were set up: (1) yes-no response, (2) attributing responsibility, (3) referring to inappropriate behavior, and (4) off-topic comment. The first category, yes-no response, was intended to code responses which began with 'yes' (*hai/un* in Japanese) or 'no' (*iie/ie*). This category was established because some responses began with yes/no responses, but others did not. It therefore consisted of two sub-categories (i.e., strategies) of 'yes' and 'no.' The second category, attributing responsibility, refers to strategies which explicitly assess who should be responsible for the given accident. We coded expressions like 'responsible' (*-no sekinin*), 'wrong' (*-ga warui*), and 'fault' (*-no sei*) for this category. It included three sub-categories (i.e., strategies) depending on who should be responsible: the participant, the interlocutor, or both parties. The third category, referring to inappropriate behavior, was intended to depict strategies which did not explicitly assess who should be responsible, but instead mentioned behaviors which had caused the given incident. In Setting 1, "inappropriate behavior" represents anyone's failure to check whether or not the window was closed. In Setting 2, on the other hand, "inappropriate behavior" represents the interlocutor's being late to the meeting place and or the participant's getting lost on the way to the wedding party. This category, like the second category, consisted of three sub-categories (i.e., strategies) in terms of whose behavior was mentioned: the participant, the interlocutor, or both parties. Lastly, the fourth category, off-topic comment, refers to strategies which are unrelated to indications about who should be responsible. In such strategies, participants did not make direct responses to the interlocutor's initial assessments about the issue of responsibility. This category included 'apology' (*sumimasen/ gomen-nasai/ mooshiwake arimasen* 'I'm

sorry'), 'unavoidability' (*shikata nai/ shoo ga nai* 'It can't be helped'), and 'future improvement' (*kongo ki o tsukemasu* 'I'll be more careful in future'). Nevertheless, the latter two strategies, 'unavoidability' and 'future improvement', were excluded from the analysis because their frequencies were too low to apply.

A total of nine types of participants' response strategies were subject to the present analyses. A detailed coding manual for all types of response strategies is presented in Table 1. It was common for our participants to use multiple strategies in combination within a single response, i.e., the number of strategies in each of the 896 responses (i.e., 16 conditions  $\times$  56 participants) ranged from 1 to 7 ( $M = 1.94$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ), which resulted in a total of 1,659 response strategies. To ensure the consistency of strategy categorization, we randomly selected 189 strategies, representing approximately 10 percent of the total 1,659 response strategies which were coded by the first author, and calculated the coefficient of inter-coder reliability between the first author and a trained research assistant. These 189 response strategies were coded with the overall percent of agreement totaling 96.3 percent. An overall inter-coder reliability coefficient calculated using Krippendorff's alpha (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007; Krippendorff, 2004) was 0.96 (a 95% confidence interval ranged from 0.93 to 0.99). As shown in Table 1, coefficients for each category ranged from 0.96 to 1.00. All these coefficients were larger than 0.95. Therefore, we considered these values to be reliable.



Table 1. The Coding Manual for Response Strategies

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I. Yes-no response (Krippendorff's  $\alpha = 1.00$ , 95% CI = 1.00-1.00): The message provides no substantive information more than positive/negative response toward the interlocutor's preceding acts. Examples include:

1. Yes: *"Hai, sono toori desu."* [Yes, it's true.]  
 2. No: *"Te."* [No.]

II. Attributing responsibility (Krippendorff's  $\alpha = 0.97$ , 95% CI = 0.94-1.00): The message explicitly states who should be responsible for the given incident. Examples include:

3. Self-responsibility: *"Watashi no sei desu."* [I'm at fault.]  
 4. Interlocutor's responsibility: *"Anata ga warui to omou kedo."* [I think you were wrong.]  
 5. Both sides' responsibility: *"Futari no sekinin desu."* [We are both responsible for it.]

III. Referring to inappropriate behavior (Krippendorff's  $\alpha = 0.96$ , 95%CI = 0.89-1.00): The message points out someone's inappropriateness with concrete description of his/her behavior in the incident. Examples include:

6. Self's behavior: *"Watashi ga michi ni mayocchatta n desu."* [I got lost on the way.]  
 7. Interlocutor's behavior: *"Socchi ga machiawase ni okurenakereba yokatta n dayo."*  
 [You shouldn't have been late for the meeting place.]  
 8. Both sides' behaviors: *"Dochira mo kakunin o okotarimashita."* [Neither you nor I checked (the door had been locked).]

IV. Off-topic comment (Krippendorff's  $\alpha = 1.00$ , 95%CI = 1.00-1.00): The message does not directly mention who was to blame. Examples include:

9. Apology: *"Mooshiwake arimasendesita."* [I'm sorry (for the trouble).]

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## 2.4. Analysis

The present survey investigated how the participants alter their response strategies depending on the interlocutor's preceding contrasting acts, the interlocutor's power, and the distance with the interlocutor, within two different settings in terms of who should be responsible for the incident. The three independent variables arranged in a 2 (i.e., the interlocutor's preceding act of self-approving and self-disapproving)  $\times$  2 (i.e., higher powered and lower powered interlocutor)  $\times$  2 (i.e., familiar and unfamiliar interlocutor) design were examined per setting, from the perspective of a dependent variable set as the frequencies of the nine types of participant response strategies organized by the four types of broad categories. All three independent variables were within-participant variables (i.e., repeated measures).

In order to explore the rank order of significance among the three factors (i.e., independent variables), the interlocutors preceding contrasting acts, power, and distance, we conducted decision tree analyses for each of the two settings, using SPSS Decision Trees, version 16.0 (SPSS, 2006). The methodology aims to select a useful subset of predictors in descending order from a larger set of

independent variables with respect to a dependent variable. This tool is built on the basis of CHAID, or *chi-squared automatic interaction detector*, originally proposed by Kass (1980). According to SPSS (2006), CHAID automatically chooses the independent variable which has the strongest interaction with the next highest one. In the tree-growing process, each parent node splits into child nodes if a significant main effect or 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 the null hypothesis when it is actually true. In the present study, because a dependent variable was categorical data (i.e., frequencies of participants' response strategies), chi-squared tests were employed for growing the decision tree, which was called *classification tree analysis*.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. Overall Results of the Classification Tree Analysis**

To investigate how young Japanese college students change their verbal responses depending on the interlocutor's contrasting acts, classification tree analyses were conducted based on frequencies of the aforementioned nine types of response strategies. We investigated influences of the three factors (i.e., independent variables) of the interlocutor's preceding acts, power, and distance for each of the two different settings in terms of whether the participant was supposed to assess the interlocutor was at fault or both parties were at fault. Results revealed that the factor of the interlocutor's preceding act was the strongest predictor for participants' response strategies in both of the two settings. The influence of the interpersonal relationships of power and distance factors did not have consistent influences. The next sections describe the detailed results of the classification tree analyses, and the following residual analyses of response strategies in both settings.

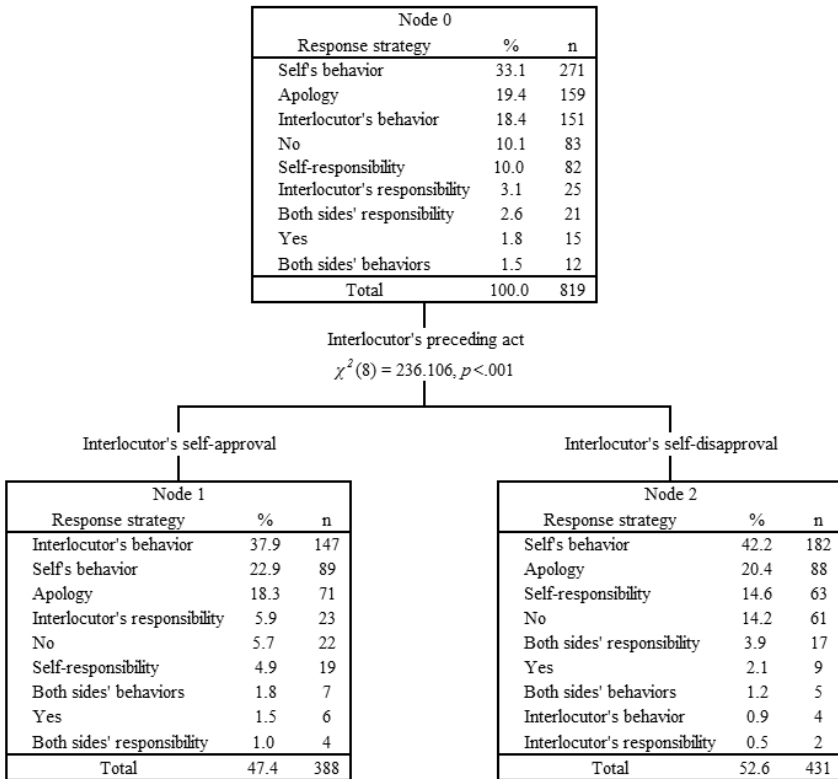


Figure 1. Dendrogram of the classification tree analysis for response strategies in situations concerning self-responsibility: Setting 1 where the participant is supposed to assess that the interlocutor is at fault.

### 3.2. Results of the Classification Tree Analysis in Setting 1 Where the Interlocutor Is at Fault

In Setting 1 where the participant was supposed to assess that only the interlocutor was at fault for the incident, the factor of the interlocutor's preceding contrasting acts was the only significant predictor for participants' response strategies [ $\chi^2(8) = 236.106, p < .001$ ], as shown in Figure 1. The two types of the interlocutor's preceding acts of self-approving (i.e., face-threatening to the participant) and self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving to the participant) each created a child node (i.e., Nodes 1 and 2) from the viewpoint of the nine types of response strategies. Node 1 revealed frequencies of the response strategies in the case of the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act. In this case, 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "interlocutor's behavior" in Figure 1) was the most frequent response strategy (37.9%).

Node 2, on the other hand, indicated a result of response strategies to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act. In this case, 'referring to the self's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "self's behavior" in Figure 1) was the most frequent strategy (42.2%).

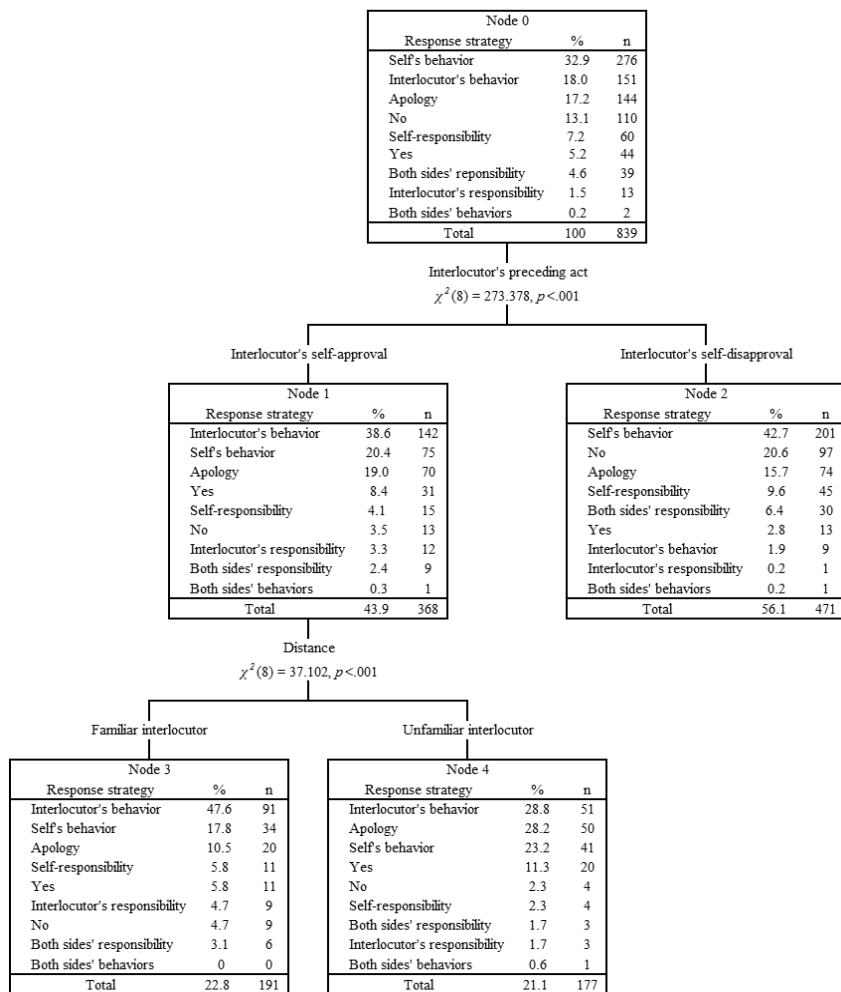


Figure 2. Dendrogram of the classification tree analysis for response strategies in situations concerning self-responsibility: Setting 2 where the participant is supposed to assess that both parties are at fault.

### 3.3. Results of the Classification Tree Analysis in Setting 2 Where Both Parties Are at Fault

In Setting 2 where the participant was supposed to assess that both the participant and the interlocutor were at fault for the incident, the two factors (i.e., independent variables) of the interlocutor's preceding contrasting acts and distance with the interlocutor had significant influences on participants' response strategies, as shown in Figure 2. In this setting, as in Setting 1, the factor of the interlocutor's preceding acts of self-approving (i.e., face-threatening to the participant) and self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving to the participant) was the strongest predictor for the participants' selection of response strategies [ $\chi^2(8) = 273.378, p < .001$ ]. In responses to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act (Node 1), 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "interlocutor's behavior" as Figure 2) was the most frequent (38.6%). In response to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act (Node 2), on the other hand, 'referring to the self's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "self's behavior" in Figure 2) was the most frequent (42.7%). In addition, the distance factor had a partial influence on participants' response strategies to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act [ $\chi^2(8) = 37.102, p < .001$ ]. In response to a familiar interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act (Node 3), 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "interlocutor's behavior" in Figure 2) was the most frequent strategy (47.6%). On the other hand, in response to an unfamiliar interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act (Node 4), the two response strategies of 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "interlocutor's behavior" in Figure 2) (28.8%) and 'apology' (28.2%) almost had the same ratios as frequent strategies.

### 3.4. Residual Analysis of Response Strategies Depending on the Interlocutor's Preceding Contrasting Acts

In order to explore detailed effects caused by the strongest predictor of the interlocutor's preceding acts, we further conducted residual analyses (Haberman, 1973) on differences of frequency among the nine types of participants' response strategies. Adjusted standardized residuals for each response strategy were calculated depending on the interlocutor's preceding acts of 'self-approval' (i.e., face-threatening to the participant) and 'self-disapproval' (i.e., face-saving to the participant). Table 2 summarizes the values of the adjusted standardized residuals in the case of the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act per setting. Values in the other case of the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act were shown as redundant because this calculation procedure necessarily provides equal values in magnitude and opposites in plus and minus signs between the two conditions of the independent variable. This means that a strategy with a positive value in Table 2 represents a

frequent response strategy to the interlocutor's self-approval (i.e., face-threatening), compared to the interlocutor's self-disapproval (i.e., face-saving). Conversely, a strategy with a negative value in Table 2 represents a frequent response strategy to the interlocutor's self-disapproval (i.e., face-saving), compared to the interlocutor's self-approval (i.e., face-threatening).

In Setting 1 where the participant was supposed to assess that only the interlocutor was at fault for the incident, strategies of 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "interlocutor's behavior" with a residual value of 13.62,  $p < .001$ ) and 'attributing interlocutor's responsibility' (presented as "interlocutor's responsibility" with a residual value of 4.54,  $p < .001$ ) were significantly frequent for responses to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act, compared to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act. Alternatively, strategies of 'attributing both sides' responsibility' (presented as "both sides' responsibility" with a residual value of -2.63,  $p < .01$ ), 'no' (with a residual value of -4.02,  $p < .001$ ), 'attributing self-responsibility' (presented as "self-responsibility" with a residual value of -4.63,  $p < .001$ ), and 'referring to self's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "self's behavior" with a residual value of -5.86,  $p < .001$ ) were significantly frequent for responses to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act, compared to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act. In addition, strategies of 'referring to both sides' inappropriate behaviors' (presented as "both sides' behaviors" with a residual value of 0.77, *ns.*), 'yes' (with a residual value of -0.58, *ns.*) and 'apology' (with a residual value of -0.77, *ns.*) revealed no significant differences between the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) and self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) acts to the participant.

Table 2. Adjusted standard residuals of response strategies depending on the interlocutor's contrasting acts of "self-approval" (i.e., face-threatening) and "self-disapproval" (i.e., face-saving)

Setting 1: A ruined chair in a restaurant (the interlocutor is at fault)		Setting 2: Being late for a wedding (the participant and the interlocutor are at fault)	
Response strategy	Adjusted residual (self-approval)	Response strategy	Adjusted residual (self-approval)
Interlocutor's behavior	13.62 ***	Interlocutor's behavior	13.72 ***
Interlocutor's responsibility	4.54 ***	Yes	3.65 ***
Both sides' behaviors	0.77	Interlocutor's responsibility	3.55 ***
Yes	-0.58	Apology	1.26
Apology	-0.77	Both sides' behaviors	0.18
Both sides' responsibility	-2.63 **	Both sides' responsibility	-2.68 **
No	-4.02 ***	Self-responsibility	-3.06 ***
Self-responsibility	-4.63 ***	Self's behavior	-6.82 ***
Self's behavior	-5.86 ***	No	-7.27 ***

*Notes:*

1: Values of adjusted standard residuals are shown on the side of "self-approval." They are equal in magnitude and opposite in plus and minus signs on the other side of "self-disapproval."

2: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

In Setting 2 where the participant was supposed to assess that both the participant and the interlocutor were at fault for the incident, strategies of 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "interlocutor's behavior" with a residual value of 13.72,  $p < .001$ ), 'yes' (with a residual value of 3.65,  $p < .001$ ), and 'attributing interlocutor's responsibility' (presented as "interlocutor's responsibility" with a residual value of 3.55,  $p < .001$ ) were significantly frequent responses to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act to the participant, compared to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act. In contrast, strategies of 'attributing both sides' responsibility' (presented as "both sides' responsibility" with a residual value of -2.68,  $p < .01$ ), 'attributing self-responsibility' (presented as "self-responsibility" with a residual value of -3.06,  $p < .001$ ), 'referring to the self's inappropriate behavior' (presented as "self's behavior" with a residual value of -6.82,  $p < .001$ ), and 'no' (with a residual value of -7.27,  $p < .001$ ) were significantly frequent responses to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act compared to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act. Strategies of 'apology' (with a residual value of 1.26, *ns.*) and 'referring to both sides' inappropriate behavior (presented as "both sides inappropriate behavior" with a residual value of 0.18, *ns.*) revealed no significant differences between the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) and self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) acts to the participant.

#### 4. Discussion

Utilizing a discourse completion task (DCT), the present study examined young Japanese college students' norm consciousness on response strategies which vary depending on whether the interlocutor previously has taken a face-saving (i.e., self-disapproving) or face-threatening (i.e., self-approving) act. For this purpose, we constructed three factors of (1) the interlocutor's preceding contrasting acts, (2) the interlocutor's power, and (3) the distance with the interlocutor, using two different settings in terms of who should be responsible for the incident. A series of classification tree analyses based on repeated chi-squared tests and a post-hoc examination by residual analyses revealed that the strongest predictor for the our participants' response strategies is the interlocutor's preceding utterance of either face-saving (i.e., self-approval) or face-threatening (i.e., self-disapproval) acts to the participant. Factors concerning interpersonal relationships of power and distance do not have consistent influences on their strategies. These differences in the interlocutor's preceding acts can be explained in the light of Goffman's (1967) and Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) facework models. The following sections describe the processes whereby Japanese college students appear to be motivated to change their response strategies towards others.

##### 4.1. Differences Depending on Whether Only the Interlocutor Is at Fault, or Both Participant and Interlocutor Are at Fault

The participants in the current study tend to select response strategies of 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' and 'attributing the interlocutor's responsibility' to the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act, more often than they do to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act in Setting 1 where participants do not recognize their own fault. In Setting 2 where participants recognize faults of both parties, on the other hand, they tend to select the response strategies of 'yes,' 'referring to the interlocutor's inappropriate behavior' and 'attributing the interlocutor's responsibility' to the interlocutors' self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act. The finding that participants frequently mention the interlocutor's inappropriate behaviors and attribute responsibility to the interlocutor throughout the two settings suggests that Japanese college students do not accept the interlocutor's self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act when they recognize the interlocutor's fault. Nevertheless, only when they recognize their own fault as well as that of the interlocutor (i.e., Setting 2), it seems that they feel they have to endure the interlocutor's authoritative act and are constrained to say 'yes' as an immediate reaction to the interlocutor's utterance. The recognition of self-responsibility thus seems to be differential for their selection of response strategies to the interlocutor.

Meanwhile, in response to the interlocutor's self-disapproving (i.e., face-



saving) act, the current participants tend to select strategies of ‘referring to self’s inappropriate behavior,’ ‘attributing self-responsibility,’ ‘no’ and ‘attributing both sides’ responsibility,’ regardless of whether or not the participants recognize their own fault. If they use these strategies when they do not recognize their own fault (i.e., Setting 1), their words contradict their recognition. In such a situation, a higher priority seems to be placed on face management rather than the recognition of an actual situation. Once they see the interlocutor’s face being devalued, these young Japanese college students seem to be motivated to save the interlocutor’s face, no matter who is responsible for the trouble.

The strategy of ‘referring to the self’s inappropriate behavior’ is frequently used by our participants, not only in response to the interlocutor’s self-disapproving (i.e., face-saving) act, but also in response to the interlocutor’s self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act. The participants use this self-damaging response strategy even when the interlocutor takes a challenging act to them. However, they do not always select only one strategy to respond to the interlocutor, but almost always bring multiple strategies together in a response. Particularly to such a challenging interlocutor, they may use the self-damaging strategy as a preface to the complaint to the interlocutor, as seen in an example, “*Tashikani tashoo wa mayotta kedo, moto wa to ieba XX (the interlocutor’s name) san ga okureta noga ookina genin desu yo* (It’s true I got somewhat lost, but the primary cause was your being late).”

For participants, it is a typical face-threatening act (FTA) to the interlocutor that they pursue the interlocutor’s responsibility, in the light of Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) politeness model. Their use of the self-damaged strategy of ‘referring to self’s inappropriate behavior’ represents a strategy to redress the degree of the FTA to the interlocutor. If the participants threaten only the interlocutor’s face and do not threaten their own face, equilibrium between the face values of the two parties cannot be maintained. They should threaten their own face by ‘referring to the self’s inappropriate behavior’ in order to avoid this imbalance between the two parties.

#### 4.2. Pursuit of Issues Concerning Responsibility

It is common that our participants prefer strategies of ‘referring to someone’s inappropriate behaviors’ rather than those of ‘attributing someone’s responsibilities,’ no matter what the interlocutor’s preceding act is, and no matter who is responsible for the trouble. Referring to someone’s behavior does not directly reflect a claim of who bears responsibility, but instead indicates a confirmation of facts, which is the basis for rational judgment of who bears a responsibility. In other words, the participants tend to clarify situations so that their assessments can be persuasive for their interlocutors. To provide a clear basis for an assessment of issues of responsibility can function as a means to show sincerity to the interlocutor, while at the same time as a means to assert the authority of

their own statement. Although to point out one's fault for a trouble is a face-threatening act to one's own positive face, to point out an undeniable fact concerning the trouble can be interpreted as an act of self-defense. This is therefore an efficient strategy and a way to reconcile conflict between one another's faces. This seems to be the way in which young Japanese college students respect the reciprocity principle of facework (Goffman, 1967), which is a requirement for being a member of society.

It is also common that our participants frequently use the strategy of apology, no matter what the interlocutor's preceding act is, and no matter who is responsible for the incident. Goffman (1971) says that apologies in nature represent splitting of the self into a blameworthy part and a part that stands back and sympathizes with the blame giving. As clearly noted by Goffman (1971), by apologizing one inevitably assumes the fact of being engaged in an inappropriate behavior which deviated from the cultural norm. In Setting 2, participants indeed recognize their fault in that they got lost on the way to the wedding party. This setting therefore includes the wrong self. By apologizing, "the self can split itself into two parts, the part that is guilty of an offense and the part that affirms a belief in the offended rule" (Goffman, 1971, p. 113). In Setting 1, on the other hand, participants do not recognize their fault because the person who failed to lock the window is not the participant, but the interlocutor; however, the participant and the interlocutor were the last two to leave the restaurant. This circumstance may make the participant feel solidarity with the interlocutor. In other words, the self-identity and the interlocutor's identity are clumped together in the use of apology in this setting. This behavior can be interpreted as a kind of collectivistic behavior, which Triandis (1995) defined as "a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation, and so on)" (p. 2).

#### 4.3. Interpersonal Influences on the Selection of Response Strategies

Of the two factors regarding interpersonal relationships of power and distance, only the factor of distance shows a partial influence on the Japanese college students' response strategies to the interlocutor's preceding self-approving (i.e., face-threatening) act, when they recognize that both parties of participant and interlocutor are at fault (i.e., Setting 2). This suggests that if the participants are afraid of being blamed for their fault, they have to select response strategies by taking into consideration interpersonal relationships with the interlocutor.

The factor of power has no significant effect throughout all conditions in the present DCT. However, it would be premature to conclude that power relationships have nothing to do with the participants' pursuit of responsibility. The present scenarios dealt with a limited scope of superior and inferior relationships among young Japanese college students in order to accommodate our participants. Since the interlocutor was a co-worker in Setting 1 and a relative in

Setting 2, our participants might not imagine considerable age difference with the interlocutors. We still must continue further investigations with particular focus on the effects caused by the power relationships.

## **5. Conclusion**

On the basis of findings obtained from the present discourse completion task (DCT), we observe that young native Japanese college students seem to have a norm that they should change their verbal responses depending on whether an interlocutor's preceding act is face-saving (i.e., self-disapproving) or face-threatening (i.e., self-approving) when pursuing the locus of responsibility. In response to the interlocutor's face-threatening (i.e., self-approving) act to the participant, they seem to adjust strategies according to whether or not they are at fault for an incident. In response to the interlocutor's face-saving (i.e., self-disapproving) act, on the other hand, they may place higher priority on saving the interlocutor's face rather than pursuing the interlocutor's responsibility because the interlocutor's face is already devalued. Findings also provide a suggestion that young Japanese college students' verbal responses in exchanges concerning issues of responsibility are characterized by the strategies of 'referring to someone's inappropriate behavior' and 'apology,' both of which indicate feelings of sincerity and solidarity between speaker and hearer.

Nevertheless, these interpretations were depicted from the data obtained from a small group of native Japanese college students. The next path of study is to demonstrate strategies used by Japanese speakers in an older age group, and by speakers of other languages. Furthermore, in order to reveal differences in response strategies depending on the interlocutor's contrasting acts, the present study focused on two types of interlocutor's preceding acts (i.e., FSA and FTA) within a single DCT survey. However, the actual sequences of verbal responses would be more complicated when observing authentic conversation data (e.g., Hayashi, 1996; Mori, 1999, Pomerantz, 1978, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). Complementary studies utilizing role-plays and/or natural conversation analyses are necessary in order to understand how individuals engage in facework in actual spontaneous interactions.

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Masato Takiura, Shingo Tokimoto, Minoru Nakau, Youngmi Choung, Michael Mansbridge, Arthur Meerman and Kerry Hull, as well as the three anonymous reviewers, the journal editor Yasuhiro Shirai and the associate editor Junko Mori, for providing a lot of invaluable comments on earlier versions of this article. The authors also thank to Hiromu Sakai for his help in data collection. This study was funded by JSPS KAKENHI Grants 24652080, 23320106, and 20520468.

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## **Appendix. The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) Used in the Present Study**

In the DCT, the hypothetical interlocutors' utterances were nested in sets of relationship made by combination of (1) the interlocutor's preceding act (i.e., self-approving and self-disapproving), (2) power factor (i.e., the interlocutor is

older or younger) and (3) distance factor (i.e., the interlocutor is familiar or unfamiliar). Participants were asked to freely write down their expressions for the responses. Notes in parentheses were not presented to participants in the actual questionnaire. Original version was written in Japanese. Both of the original version and its English translation is presented as follows. The English translations were back translated into Japanese, and no significant problems were found.

### *Original Version in Japanese*

これから 2 つの場面についてお尋ねします。あなただったら、それぞれの場面で、相手の発言に対してどのように対応しますか。どのように言うかイメージし、その通りに書いてください。回答に正解・不正解はありませんので、率直に答えてください。

#### 場面 1 (相手に責任がある)

あなたは、あるレストランでサービスのアルバイトをしています。まじめに働いて、責任ある仕事も任されています。今日出勤したら、窓際に置いてある革張りの高価な椅子が、雨に濡れていたんでしまっています。どうやら昨日から窓が開けっぱなしになっていたようです。昨夜最後に帰ったのはあなたともう 1 人のアルバイトです。2 人で戸締りをして帰るときに、もう 1 人が「こっこのほうの戸締りは大丈夫みたい」と言ったのを聞いて、店を後にしました。あなた自身は確認をしませんでした。2 人で店長に昨夜のことを話します。

#### 相手の発言 (1) (自己肯定的態度)

「この人 (あなた) がきちんと戸締りの確認をしてくれませんでした。」

- ① この相手がよく話をする先輩の場合：(年上・親しい)
- ② この相手がよく話をする後輩の場合：(年下・親しい)
- ③ この相手があまり話をしない先輩の場合：(年上・親しくない)
- ④ この相手があまり話をしない後輩の場合：(年下・親しくない)

#### 相手の発言 (2) (自己否定的態度)

「私がきちんと戸締りを確認しなかったのが悪かったです。」

- ① この相手がよく話をする先輩の場合：(年上・親しい)
- ② この相手がよく話をする後輩の場合：(年下・親しい)
- ③ この相手があまり話をしない先輩の場合：(年上・親しくない)
- ④ この相手があまり話をしない後輩の場合：(年下・親しくない)



## 場面2 (両方に責任がある)

今日はいとこの結婚式です。あなたが、遠方から来る親戚を駅まで迎えに行き、式場まで案内することになっていました。充分余裕をもって待ち合わせ時間を決めました。ところが、その親戚が待ち合わせに遅れた上に、思ったより駅から式場までの道のりが遠かったこともあり、到着したときには、もう結婚式が始まっていました。式の後、他の親戚があなたたち2人に嫌味を言います。

## 相手の発言(1) (自己肯定的態度)

「この人(あなた)が道をよく知らなかったみたいで、間に合いませんでした。」

- ① この相手がよく話をする親戚の場合：(年上・親しい)
- ② この相手がよく話をする親戚の場合：(年下・親しい)
- ③ この相手があまり話をしない親戚の場合：(年上・親しい)
- ④ この相手があまり話をしない親戚の場合：(年下・親しい)

## 相手の発言(2) (自己否定的態度)

「私が待ち合わせに遅れたので、間に合いませんでした。」

- ① この相手がよく話をする親戚の場合：(年上・親しい)
- ② この相手がよく話をする親戚の場合：(年下・親しい)
- ③ この相手があまり話をしない親戚の場合：(年上・親しい)
- ④ この相手があまり話をしない親戚の場合：(年下・親しい)

*English Translation*

The following is concerned with two different situations. Should you be in either of these situations how would you most likely respond? Please try to make your own utterance, and then write it down for each of the hypothetical interlocutors. There are neither correct nor incorrect answers in this questionnaire. We would appreciate your honest answers.

## Setting 1 (The interlocutor is at fault):

You work at a restaurant as a part-time worker of some importance with your part-time co-worker. One day when you arrived, an expensive leather-covered chair had been found ruined by the rain that fell through the window nearby which was supposed to be closed at the end of a day. You and your co-worker were the last to have left there the night before. When you were leaving, you had asked the co-worker "Is it all right around you there?" The co-worker answered "Yes, maybe, it's all right." So, you did not check the window around the co-worker's side for yourself. The restaurant manager, then, asked both of you

on the situation the night before.

Your co-worker's utterance #1 (Self-approving act):

"I thought [participant's name] had closed the window."

Case 1: To older co-worker with whom you have talked much. (older, familiar)

Case 2: To younger co-worker with whom you have talked much. (younger, familiar)

Case 3: To older co-worker with whom you have not as yet talked much. (older, unfamiliar)

Case 4: To younger co-worker with whom you have not as yet talked much. (younger, unfamiliar)

Your co-worker's utterance #2 (Self-disapproving act):

"I'm sorry, I didn't close it."

Case 1: To older co-worker with whom you have talked much. (older, familiar)

Case 2: To younger co-worker with whom you have talked much. (younger, familiar)

Case 3: To older co-worker with whom you have not as yet talked much. (older, unfamiliar)

Case 4: To younger co-worker with whom you have not as yet talked much. (younger, unfamiliar)

Setting 2 (Both sides are at fault):

Today, you are going to attend a wedding party of your cousin. You are supposed to guide a relative of yours to the party place, receiving the relative at a station at an appointed time, a time of a sufficient allowance for the beginning of the party. However, the relative came late to the station and you were lost on the way there. The party was already going when you got there. After the party, some of the older relatives at the party made some criticism to both of you.

Your relative's utterance #1 (Self-approving act):

"We were late because [participant's name] had been lost on the way here."

Case 1: To older relative with whom you have talked much. (older, familiar)

Case 2: To younger relative with whom you have talked much. (younger, familiar)

Case 3: To older relative with whom you have not as yet talked much. (older, unfamiliar)

Case 4: To younger relative with whom you have not as yet talked much. (younger, unfamiliar)

Your cousin's utterance #2 (Self-disapproving act):

"I'm sorry, I was late at the station."

Case 1: To older relative with whom you have talked much. (older, familiar)

Case 2: To younger relative with whom you have talked much. (younger, familiar)

Case 3: To older relative with whom you have not as yet talked much. (older, unfamiliar)

Case 4: To younger relative with whom you have not as yet talked much. (younger, unfamiliar)

## 相手のフェイス保持行為とフェイス侵害行為に応じた応答ストラテジーの変化：談話完成タスクによる検討

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### 要旨

本研究は、相手が先に自分に対してフェイス保持行為（face-saving act）をとったかフェイス侵害行（face-threatening act）をとったかによって選好される応答ストラテジーがどのように変わるか、またその選択に対人関係や状況に関わる要因が応答ストラテジーにどのように影響するかを検討した。日本人大学生を対象とした談話完成テストの分析を通して、先行する相手の行為に応じて応答ストラテジーが異なることを例証した。とくに、どちらに責任があるかを直接述べるより、問題となっている事柄に関わる事実を整理しようとする傾向がみられた。