Expressions of Request in the Japanese Language: Requesters’ Considerations for Requestees’ Costs 1)

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of the requester’s consideration for the requestee’s costs on expressions of request in the Japanese language. Subjects described orally (Experiment 1) or in written form (Experiment 2, 3) what they would say in fictitious requesting situations. Experiment 1 showed that when the requests were addressed to an intimate equal-status requestee, subjects employed indirect forms more often as the request size increased. Experiment 2 replicated the above results for the requests addressed to a high-status requestee as well. The Experiment 3 showed that subjects used direct forms more in non-serious situations than serious situations either for an equal-status or a high status requestee. The results of three experiments gave ample support to our general prediction that the more the requester needed to show consideration for the requestee’s costs, the more often he/she would use polite (indirect) forms.

Key words: expressions of request, requestees’ costs, request size, non-seriousness of requests, politeness, linguistic expressions, interpersonal communication.

Each language has a variety of linguistic expressions for request. These expressions differ in directness in which they literally compel the requestee into the requested behavior. As for English requests, (a portion of) Kuno (1977)’s examples are as follows: 1. Please lend me this book. 2. Would you (please) lend me this book? 3. Can you lend me this book? 4. I wonder if you could lend me this book. According to Kuno, 1 is most direct and 4 is most indirect. Leech (1983) argues indirect forms “tend to be more polite (a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be”


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In the light of their literal meanings, these can be classified into imperatives (1-3: “Please open the window.”), questions (affirmative questions, 4-6: “Would you open the window?”; negative questions, 7-10: If translated literally, “Wouldn’t you open the window?”), expressions of desire (11, 12: “I would like you to open the window.”). Expressed in genuine or straightforward fashion (imperative mood), imperatives are obviously more direct than “non-genuine” expressions (questions and expressions of desire).

If viewed differently these forms can be classified into those with honorifics 4) (3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12: The underlined parts show honorifics.) and those without honorifics (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 11). The use of honorifics are also considered to increase the politeness of expressions.

In addition, as mentioned later, requests can be expressed without using explicit conventional forms such as those cited above (e.g. implicating forms).

It has been argued that requests are potentially inequitable for the requester (speaker) and the requestee (hearer). While the requester benefits from a compliant behavior of the requestee, the requestee will have to pay certain costs if he/she is to comply with the request (Clark, 1985). Such costs may include: e.g. time, labor, money, and goods. Therefore in expressing request, the requester needs to pay attention to the requestee in order not to evoke the requestee's antipathy nor to injure his/her feelings; the requester needs to use polite expressions.

The degree of politeness required of the requester varies depending on situations. Leech (1983) has pointed out three factors that influence the likelihood in which indirect, more than direct, forms are used in English. First when the requester is not intimate with the requestee, he/she is more likely to use indirect forms of request. A second factor is relative status: the higher is the requestee’s status the more will requests become indirect. Finally, the amount of cost determined by the size of a request also influences the directness: as the cost increases the requester is more likely to use indirect forms.

This is consistent with the view of Brown & Levinson (1978). They have reported observations of a wide range of polite expressions which appeared in various types of verbal acts of English, Tamil (a language spoken in South India), and Tzeltal (a language spoken in a community in Mexico). They have argued that a requester's choice of polite expressions is affected by the social distance (i.e. intimacy) between the requester and the requestee, the relative power of the requestee over the requester, and the degree of imposition or burden by the verbal act itself.

As for the Japanese language the way in which interpersonal relationship between communicators (i.e. intimacy and relative status) determine polite forms in verbal behavior in general has already been investigated in voluminous studies on hono—

3) The translations are merely rough approximations. Because of the differences of linguistic conventions in formulating expressions of request, these translations may not necessarily retain the same levels of politeness or indirectness as the original expressions.

4) In this paper we will use the term “honorifics” to refer to honorifics in a narrow sense, i.e. honorific systems with exclusive grammatical rules (Kuno, 1977).

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rifics (e.g. Oono & Shibata, 1977). But so far virtually no research has been done on the last one of the three factors proposed by Leech, namely the cost that incurs to the requestee if he/she decides to comply with the request. In this research we will primary focus on this factor.

While Leech’s arguments are based on his intuitions or observations of a few cases, experimental investigations of the suggested variables will allow us to evaluate their analysis in far more systematic fashion.

EXPERIMENT 1

In Experiment 1 we manipulated the size of requests. As the cost increase with request size, the requester will employ more polite forms of request. Because the requester will need to pay more attention to the requestee with the increase of the requestee’s cost (Leech, 1983).

In this experiment we examined expressions of request among intimate equals. In our preliminary study we confirmed that university students (i.e. our population of the subjects) rarely employed honorifics when speaking to intimate equals. Yet there are both direct and indirect non-honorific forms of request. We hypothesized that the subjects would use indirect forms (non-genuine requests: questions and expressions of desire) more often, and direct forms (i.e. genuine requests: imperatives) less often, as the size of requests increased.

Two types of requesting situations can be distinguished: the benefit type and the restoration type. In benefit-type situations, the requester unilaterally benefits if the requestee complies with his/her request; e.g. a request to borrow a book from the requestee, or a request to have the requestee help the requester’s work.

In restoration-type situations the requester requests to repair or restore an undesirable state brought about by the requestee. The examples are: to have the requestee put away his/her baggage which is standing in the way, return goods or money which the requestee has borrowed from the requester, or turn down the requestee’s radio in the midnight. In these situations, the responsibility to perform the request belongs to the requestee him/herself. As a result the requester might not show consideration for the requestee’s cost, and thus might not use polite form of requests even when request size is large. Therefore the effect of request size might be somewhat attenuated in the restoration-type situations compared with in the benefit-type situations.

Method

Subjects Forty-three male undergraduates at a university in Aichi Prefecture.

Procedure Subjects were asked to read scenarios, and to describe orally what they would say if they were in the requester’s place in those scenarios. They were instructed to speak in a style close as possible to their daily usage. In situations where they felt uneasy about making a request they were allowed to say nothing.

Stimulus materials and design Three sets of situations (two benefit types and one restoration type) were employed; in each of these sets the size of request was manipulated. In each situation the requester was about to request the requestee (intimate and of the same age as the requester) to do the following acts: Benefit 1: Lending something to the requestee (large: a first class camera (a), medium: an umbrella (b), small: a pen (c)). Benefit 2: Helping the requester (large: doing time-consuming work (d), small: picking up an eraser (e)). Restoration: Returning something to the requestee (large: twenty thousand yen (f), medium: a technical book (g), small: a ruler (h)). The subjects responded to all the situations in random order.

Results

Manipulation check After all of the oral responses, subjects rated the burden to the requestee in each situation on a seven point scale. Consistent with the manipulation of request size,
the burden to the requestee was rated higher as request size increased (Benefit 1: $F(2, 82) = 440.05$; Benefit 2: $t(42) = 8.09$; Restoration: $F(2, 84) = 87.63$, $p < .001$).

**Categorization of requesting expressions**

Expressions of request generated by the subjects for each of the eight situations were categorized according to the following scheme. (We partially referred to Naka & Muto (1983) in developing the coding scheme.)

A. Conventional explicit requesting forms.
1. Imperatives (IM): Forms with suffix "te" or with "te" plus imperative mood of giving verbs (e.g. kure). e.g. Hon o kaeshite (kure (yo)). (Please return (kaes-) me my book (hon).)
2. Affirmative questions (AQ): Forms with affirmative questions of giving verbs (e.g. kureru) or receiving verbs (e.g. moraeru). e.g. Hon o kaeshite {kureru/moraeru} (ka(na))? (Would you return me my book?)
3. Negative questions (NQ): Forms with negative questions of giving verbs (e.g. kurenai) or receiving verbs (e.g. moraenai). e.g. Hon o kaeshite {kurenai/moraenai} (ka(na))? (If translated literally,) Wouldn't you return me my book?)
4. Expressions of desire (ED): Forms with verbs meaning desire (e.g. hoshii; moraitai). e.g. Hon o kaeshite {hoshii/moraitai} ndakedo. (I would like you return me my book.)

B. Other explicit forms.
1. Blaming forms: Forms of blaming the requestee not doing behavior. e.g. Hon kaesankai! (Return me my book!)
2. Expressions of the requester's (speaker)’s behavior (ESB): Referring to the requester's behavior which can achieve his goal. e.g. Hon o motteikuyo. (I will take this book.)
3. Honorific forms (Explicit requesting forms with honorifics): They could have been assigned into one of the categories mentioned above. But considering the large differences between honorific forms and non-honorific forms, we categorized them separately. Because honorifics appeared only in small number, we dealt with them together.

C. Implicative forms (Expressions implying requests): In some responses, subjects did not explicitly make a request but only implied it. These implicative forms were classified into two types.
1. Expressions of the requester (speaker)’s state (ESS): e.g. Ore ano hon de repooto kakanaito ikenaindakedo. (I have to write a report referring to the book.)
2. Questions about the requestee (hearer)’s state (QHS): e.g. Requesting to return a book, Ano hon yonjatta? (Have you finished with my book?)

**Distributions of expressions of request**

Table 1 shows the frequencies with which different forms of request were used. The frequency was analyzed for each situation set.

Benefit 1: Imperatives (IM) decreased with the increase of the size of requests. Their ratios differed significantly among the situations (Cochran’s Q test. $Q(2) = 42.02$, $p < .001$). All the paired comparisons were also significant at .01 levels (Bonferroni’s t test. a vs. b: $t(42) = 4.55$, b vs. c: $t(42) = 4.37$, a vs. c: $t(42) = 9.83$). Conversely negative questions (NQ) and expressions of desire (ED) increased with the increase of request size. Affirmative questions (AQ) did not change clearly as a function of request size.

Benefit 2: IMs were used significantly more often in the small size requests than in the large size requests (Fisher’s Exact test: $p = .01$). All the paired comparisons were also significant at .01 levels (Bonferroni’s t test. a vs. b: $t(42) = 4.55$, b vs. c: $t(42) = 4.37$, a vs. c: $t(42) = 9.83$). Conversely negative questions (NQ) and expressions of desire (ED) increased with the increase of request size. As for NQs, the trends were reversed.

Restoration: IMs decreased as the size increased ($Q(2) = 10.64$, $p < .005$). Significant differences were found between the Money and the Umbrella ($t(42) = 3.44$, $p < .01$), as well as the Money and the Ruler ($t(42) = 2.91$, $p < .01$). NQs increased with request size. EDs appeared only in the largest size requests.

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5) Although the effects of request size were also significant for NQs in all of the sets, we showed the statistical analysis for IMs only, because the categories are not independent of one another.
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Table 1
Frequency of each style and other indices
(Experiment 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set Situation</th>
<th>Benefit 1</th>
<th>Benefit 2</th>
<th>Restoration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Camera a</td>
<td>Umbrella b</td>
<td>Pen c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQ</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQ</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESB</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honofric</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QHS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set Situation</th>
<th>Responders</th>
<th>Rejector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length a)</td>
<td>Marker b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) The average across the subjects.

Markers In a discourse containing a request, characteristic phrases are often used as markers, signaling a request (Clark, 1979). In this experiment the phrases which follow were regarded to be markers of requests: Warui (kedo), Sumanai (kedo), Tanomu (kara), Moshiwake {nai/arimasen} (kedo), Gomen, and Onegai (dakara). The numbers of markers used are averaged across subjects and shown in Table 1. In the Benefit 2, markers were used more often in the large requests situation ($t(42)=2.64, p<.01$). In the Benefit 1 and the Restoration the usage of the markers did not vary with the request size.

Response length Subjects' responses did not always consist of a single sentence. Additional phrases were uttered before (and sometimes after) expressions of request. As an index of response length, we counted the number of phrases, or bunsetsu (Table 1; Requesting markers were eliminated from counting). In all of the three sets, the responses became significantly longer as request size increased. (Benefit 1: $F(2, 80)=42.75, p<.001$; Pared comparisons, a vs. b: $t(40)=6.38, b$ vs. c: $t(40)=3.60, a$ vs. c: $t(40)=4.70, ps<.001$; Benefit 2: $t(42)=3.01, p<.01$; Restoration: $F(2, 82)=43.58, p<.001$; Paired comparisons, f vs. g: $t(42)=8.34, p<.001$, f vs. h: $t(42)=8.29, p<.001$).

Discussion

Requesting expressions In the two benefit sets, IMs decreased and indirect NQs and EDs increased with increasing request size. These results support our hypothesis.

Among indirect forms, the results of AQs were inconsistent. The reason for this may be that AQs are intermediate regarding indirectness. It is obvious that AQs are more indirect than IMs. However, AQs, presupposing that the requester expects the requestee's compliance (Ueno, 1983), may not be so indirect as NQs which do not have such a presupposition. On the other hand, all EDs except one appeared in the largest size conditions. EDs, without asking for the requestee's verbal response literally, may be highly indirect.

We predicted that the effects of request size, demonstrated in the benefit situations, might be attenuated in the restoration situations. How-
ever, the results in the restoration situations were fairly good agreement with those of the benefit situations. Perhaps subjects thought it important to keep favorite relationship with the requestee and tried not to cause the requestee's negative feelings; accordingly they used indirect forms to show consideration for the requestee's cost even in the restoration situations.

In the restoration situations, however, some forms other than conventional ones were also employed, namely, blaming forms and implicative forms (ESSs and QHSs). As mentioned above, the undesirable state was brought about by the requestee himself in those situations. Therefore some subjects might have used blaming forms in order to reproach the requestee. On the other hand, because the responsibility to restore the undesirable state belongs to the requestee, some other subjects might have thought that the requestee would restore the state without an explicit request. This might explain the use of implicative forms in the restoration situations.

Other indices Makers were used more frequently as the request size increased in the Benefit 2. But this effect did not occur in the other two situation sets. Nonetheless the marker usage varied from set to set. Markers were used quite frequently in the Benefit 2 sets, but rarely in the restoration set. Use of markers seems to be influenced by some factors besides request size.

Responses became longer as request size increased. This was due to use of additional phrases. In the large request conditions various phrases were used in a response, and the same or similar phrases were sometimes repeated in it. Among these additional phrases, following types frequently emerged: expressions of the requester’s state, questions about the requestee's state (these two types implied requests unless explicit requests followed), prefaces, statements to minimize the costs of requests. By using these phrases, the requester is considered to prepare a stage for a smooth acceptance of the requests by the requestee (Okamoto, 1986; Ishikawa, 1989).

EXPERIMENT 2

In this experiment we attempted to replicate and extend the findings of Experiment 1; specifically, we set up situations with high status requestees in order to investigate the variation of requesting forms with honorifics as well. In addition we analyzed expressions in more detail by using a larger number of subjects than in Experiment 1. From this experiment we concentrated our analysis on the variation of conventional requesting forms.

Method

Subjects Two hundred eighty-seven male students in a computer school in Kyoto City.

Stimulus materials and design In each scenario a requester was about to request to borrow a car (large request size) or a pen (small request size) from an intimate equal (equal status) or an elder intimate (high status). The combination of two levels of request size and two levels of the requestees' status resulted in four situations, one of which the subjects responded to.

Procedure Subjects wrote what they would say in the situation described in the scenario.

Results and discussion

Table 2 shows the frequencies of individual expressions in each of the situations. The relationship between situations and individual requesting expressions was analyzed by dual scaling (Nishisato, 1982). The two dimensional location for the expressions and the situations is shown in Fig. 1 (I : $\eta^2=.74$, $\chi^2(35)=295.96$, $p<.001$; II : $\eta^2=.52$, $\chi^2(33)=175.54$, $p<.001$). The first dimension reveals the differential usage depending on requestee's status. That is, the use and non-use of honorifics are very clearly distinguished.

The second dimension is associated with the differential usage due to request size. While all the NQs and the ED as well as both of the large request situations are scattered in the lower half of the plane, all of the IMs and AQs as well as both of
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Table 2
Frequency of each style
(Experiment 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requestee Request size</th>
<th>Equal Large</th>
<th>Equal Small</th>
<th>High Large</th>
<th>High Small</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-te (NH–IM)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tekure (NH–IM)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tekureru (NH–AQ)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-temoraeru (NH–AQ)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tekurehen (NH–NQ)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tekurehenka (NH–NQ)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tekuren (NH–NQ)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tekudasai (H–IM)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-temoraemasu (H–AQ)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>-tehoskindesuga (H–ED)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other conventional forms$^b$</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total$^a$</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ The conventional forms which appeared less than four times in total.
$^b$ The expressions other than conventional forms were excluded from the analysis.

Note: 1. NH: Non-honorific; H: Honorific.
2. The underlined parts show honorifics.

the small request situations are in the upper half. Nonhonorific forms order themselves according to the degree of directness (IMs > AQs > NQs) as was discussed in the discussion part of Experiment 1, although the order of IMs and AQs are reversed for honorific forms.

As for individual expressions, comparing pairs of similar forms (shown by the same superscripts in Fig. 1) with each other, we notice in all cases except for one (a) that the expressions which are considered to be more indirect are located lower than their counterparts. (The reasons for indirectness of these expressions are as follows: By replacing kureru with moraeru (the latter means possibility), non-definitive nuance emerges (b, e). By adding ka, the requester’s intention to question is made on record (c, f). By inserting sho, non-definitive (speculative) nuance is added (d). On

Fig. 1. The two dimensional location of situations (□) and expressions (○) (Experiment 2).
the whole we may conclude that sufficient evidence were obtained on the differential usage due to the request size.

The tendency to use indirect forms to both equal and high-status intimates was also demonstrated by our experiment with oral responses, although the number of the subjects were small \((N=22)\). A third experiment by the author (Okamoto, 1988) was conducted to examine the effects of request size for five types of requestees (1. intimate, equal-status; 2. intimate, low-status; 3. intimate, high-status; 4. non-intimate, equal-status; 5. non-intimate, high-status). For all of the requestees subjects employed indirect forms more often as request-size increased. (In addition, when addressed to the non-intimate requestees, honorifics were employed more often with the increase of request size. This tendency was weak, however.) Okamoto (1988) also demonstrated the resemblance of the results between the two sexes.

**EXPERIMENT 3**

The results of the preceding two experiments supported our assumption that the requester would choose polite requesting forms in order to show consideration for the requestee's cost. This held true even in the restoration situations in Experiment 1. We may say that the requester made much account to the requestees' feelings.

From the opposite viewpoint, we can speculate as follows: when a requester considers that his/her request will not injure the requestee's feelings, he/she will not need to show consideration for the requestee's cost, thus will not use polite expressions. In Experiment 3 we examined a factor that might exempt the requester from his/her consideration for requestee's cost: the non-seriousness of requests.

When a requester makes a request perfunctorily or non-seriously, he/she will estimate the probability of the requestee's compliance to the request (i.e. the requestee's payment of the apparent cost for the requested behavior) is low. Moreover, even if the requestee performs the requested behavior, the requester will be able to attribute it to the requestee's free will. As far as the requestee can judge correctly the requester's non-seriousness from the context, the requestee's negative feelings will not be caused by the request. Therefore the requester will not think it necessary to show consideration for the requestee's cost by using a polite expression. From this reasoning it was predicted that subjects would employ polite forms (i.e. indirect forms, judging from the results of Experiment 2 and the author's (Okamoto, 1988)) less often in non-serious situations than serious situations.

**Method**

**Stimulus and materials** Two stories were used. The seriousness of the requests (non-serious vs. serious) was manipulated within each story.

**Story 1 (Lodging):** The requester was about to request to put him up in his friend's apartment in Tokyo. His request was only perfunctory (non-serious) or he actually needed to stay with him (serious). The requestee was an intimate classmate (equal status) or an intimate senior (high status). Each subject responded one of the four combinations of the seriousness conditions and requestees.

**Story 2 (Posters):** The requester was about to request to show him the requestee's collection of precious old movie posters. The request was only perfunctory (non-serious) or the requester had to make a report on movies referring to those poster (serious). The requestee was a middle-aged man and not intimate with the requester. Each subject responded to one of the two seriousness conditions.

**Subjects** Subjects were male undergraduates (Lodging: 206; Posters: 87) of a university in Aichi Prefecture.

**Procedure** Subjects wrote what they would say in the situation described in the scenario.

**Results**

**Manipulation check** Other subjects (Lodging, \(N=83\)) or the subjects who had participated in the main experiment (Posters) rated the seriousness of the requests. For both of the stories, the seriousness was rated lower in the non-serious
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Expressions of request Subjects responses were analyzed as Experiment 1, except that the classifying system was extended to forms with honorifics. The results are shown in Table 3. In order to contrast genuine requests (IMs) with non-genuine ones (AQs, NQs, EDs), we computed the ratios of IMs to all of the conventional requests and compared those ratios between the two seriousness conditions.

Consistent with our expectations, the ratio of IMs was greater in the non-serious conditions than in the serious conditions for both stories (Lodging, Equal: $\chi^2(1)=22.23$, $p<.001$ (non-honorific forms); Lodging, High: $\chi^2(1)=15.08$, $P<.001$ (honorific forms); Posters: $\chi^2(1)=4.99$, $p<.05$ (honorific forms)) 6). Among indirect (non-genuine) forms, the differences between the conditions were clear only for NQs.

### Table 3
Proportion of each style (Experiment 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Requestee</th>
<th>Equal</th>
<th>Lodging</th>
<th>Posters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N-S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-IM</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-AQ</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-NQ</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-ED</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-IM</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-AQ</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-NQ</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-ED</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responder</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejector</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SH: Non-serious; S: Serious
NH: Non-honorific; H: Honorific

6) Considering the large differences between honorific forms and non-honorific forms, we analyzed them separately. An analysis collapsing the both forms produced essentially the same results.

Discussion

The results obtained in the Experiment 3 confirmed our predictions. As another factor which will exempt the requester from the consideration for the requestee's cost, the requestee's occupational obligation has been pointed out (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Leech, 1983). As far as the requester can assume that the requestee's compliance is within a contract, he/she will not expect the requestee's negative feelings by the request. To test this suggestion, the author (Okamoto, 1989) compared the requesting expressions to a waiter to bring a cup of coffee with to bring another fork instead of the one which the requester had dropped (an oral response experiment). Subjects used indirect forms less in the former case. Ishikawa (1989) has reported similar results as well.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

We confirmed the hypothesis in Experiment 1 and 2 that the requester would use polite forms
more often as the request size increased. We also confirmed that requests became less polite when the requester was not serious in making a request in Experiment 3. These results are consistent with the argument that the requester uses expressions differently in order to show consideration for the requestee's costs.

In regard to each form, IMs were constantly employed less, NQs more, when the requester was considered to need to show much consideration for the requestee's costs (i.e. the large request-size conditions or the serious conditions) than when they were not. The frequencies of AQs, however, were not much influenced by the manipulations of the variables. This may due to the fact that they are located on a midway position of the directness-indirectness scale. Considering together with the results of the author's another research (Okamoto, 1988), it seems safe to say that requesters make their requests polite mainly by indirectness when they need to show consideration for the requestee's costs.

On the other hand, based on the results of this research as well as those of Okamoto (1986, 1988), the differences of forms as a function of interpersonal relations (i.e. intimacy and relative status) can be summarized as follows. Honorifics were used by most of the subjects to high status requestees, by about half of the subjects to the non-intimate equal requestees; indirectness was also emerged to high status and/or high-status requestees, with smaller extent than the use of honorifics.

As mentioned earlier, Leech (1983) has argued that requesting expressions in English vary on one dimension (i.e. directness) as both functions of the requestee's cost and interpersonal relations. In this respect the relationship between requesting expressions and situations in the Japanese language seems to be more complex than that of English.

In the remaining section we will discuss several points left for future research. First, factors which may influence the choice of requesting expressions are not limited to those discussed here. Especially multiple factors seem to affect the use of implicative forms. The author (Okamoto, 1991), based on experiments and observations, has discussed that implicative forms in general tend to be employed when the requestee is obligatory to perform the behavior, and that the selection of sub-types of implicative forms depends on the requester's understanding about what the requestee has been prepared for the behavior (see also Gibbs, 1976; Herrmann, 1983). However, further research should be required to explicate these problems fully.

Second, it is obvious that our results are to some extent specific to the Japanese language. It is needless to say that linguistic conventions formulating requesting forms differ with languages. Furthermore some of situational factors to which requesters attach importance in making requests will differ with cultures.

Our results showed that, although Leech (1983)'s argument on the requesting expressions of English applied fairly well to those of Japanese, it was not sufficient in some respects. To take another example, a recent study by Holtgraves and Young (1990) have demonstrated that in English and Korean requesting forms were perceived differently depending on request size and the relationship between requesters and requestees. However their results also showed some differences in the types of expressions their subjects prefer between the two languages. It is important for future research to distinguish what are universal from what are unique to each language or each culture 7).

Finally, in actual conversation, requests are uttered during interactive processes between a requester and a requestee. Research should also be extended to those total processes (see attempts

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7) Holtgraves and Yang (1990) employed the ranking of politeness strategies advocated by Brown & Levinson (1978). Although the direct comparisons are impossible, their results agree with ours in that more indirect forms were preferred with the increase of request size.
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as of today, Gibbs & Mueller, 1987; Ishikawa, 1989). In order to attain this goal there are many questions which must be solved, including methods of experiments and indices of analysis.

REFERENCES


Okamoto, S. 1988 Factors responsible for different uses of request expressions. Bulletin of the Faculty of Humanities of Aichigakuin University, 18, 7–14. (In Japanese.)


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