

Culture and Politeness : Differences of Apology Strategies of the British and Japanese People — Comparison of Young and Older Subjects —

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1. Introduction

Japanese EFL learners have easy access to English education from a wide range of sources including audio visual, authentic material, satellite broadcast, and native English speakers. Young people visit other countries more frequently than before and an increasing number of foreign people come to stay in Japan every year. Many chances for mutual communication provide Japanese students with the opportunity to realize the difficulty of communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. Japanese learners of English often undergo moments of embarrassment and frustration through face-to-face interaction. Some of them, in turn, may choose ethnocentrism, abandoning their efforts to understanding different values and behaviours. On the other hand, some of them may seek to find a way to interpret different cultural values.

People of different cultures tend to convey different communication patterns based on their cultural/social norms and perceptions. For example, people in individualistic cultures use direct communication styles, while people in collectivistic cultures use indirect expressions and inferences are highly valued (Hall, 1976 : 3 ; Triandis, 1994a : 184, cited from Fukushima, 1990 : 122). How politeness is defined in both cultures might be different in mutual interaction. Apologies are one

of the most important polite expressions in Japan to maintain mutual relationships not only as ritualised expressions but as negotiation of conflicts between speakers. However, apologizing tends to cause misunderstanding not only at an individual level but also at a diplomatic level (Murata, 1998) owing to different perceptions and cultural factors (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Sugimoto, 1997). 37

This paper makes a cross-cultural analysis of apology styles in Britain and Japan, in relation to the concepts of 'face' (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Ting-Toomey, 1988, Ting-Toomey & Cocroft, 1994a; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Many researchers have explored the conceptualisation of face since Brown and Levinson defined 'face' as 'the public self-image' (1978: 61). My attempt to make a comparison of negotiating strategies (facework strategies) in apologising is based on Ting-Toomey's Facework Theory (1988) in order to examine social/cultural norms in both cultures. For the purpose of the study, I have focused on two age groups; young subjects aged 18 to 26 (one British female and two Japanese females) and older subjects aged 60 to 70 (one British male/female, and one Japanese male/female). It is hoped that my study will help Japanese EFL learners enhance cross-cultural understanding and become more aware of the different social/cultural norms between the two cultures.

2. Culture and Politeness

2.1. Culture and Communication

2.1.1. Social/Cultural Norms

The term social/cultural norms are frequently quoted in cross-cultural studies to understand culture. However, the concepts of norms have not yet been clearly defined. The notions of social norms have been interpreted by different researchers in different meanings and they are still obscure. Social/cultural norms are often

cited almost as being equivalent with 'culture', 'custom', 'behaviour', 'convention', 'consensus', 'group value' etc. (Horne, 2001 : 3).

Horne (2001 : 4) introduces several notions of norms from sociological perspectives : 'a system of meaning'/'patterns of action emerged from cooperative behaviour.' The most accepted concept of norms is that they are 'statements that regulate behaviour.' Expectations identified by the statements, in turn, emerge in repeated interactions in situations (Horne, 2001 : 4). A set of repeated behaviours is sanctioned as norms in a group. Fine (2001) states norms form a 'frame' and from it, people 'interpret a given situation' to get directions (Cited from Horne, 2001 : 4). If norms are internalised, they are equivalent with values. Salient behaviours which are frequently repeated can turn into 'norms.'

However, if only patterned behaviours are equivalent with social/cultural norms, then the heuristic conceptualisation of norms cannot be explored. What is taken account of is norms are not restricted to 'regularity of patterned behaviours.' As Horne (2001 : 7) notes, they are related to some accepted values of judgement in addition to the regularity. For example, people might take off their shoes inside a house if their shoes are wet with rain. It is due to a regularity. If Japanese people always take off their shoes when they enter a house, it is because of a norm (See Horne, 2001 : 7 ; Weber, 1978 : 34).

If the behaviours of a group are consistent owing to social/cultural norms, then in reverse, it might be possible to assume social/cultural norms in a certain culture and a sub culture by examining expected communication patterns. For example, perceptions and social/cultural norms of British and Japanese cultures might be compared by examining patterned apology styles. Furthermore, different values of age groups (young vs. older) in both cultures might be examined in the results of the investigation, if 'social change leads to new norms' (Horne, 2001 : 26). In terms of methodology, there is little agreement about how to measure social norms,

as there is no consensus about the definition of the concepts.

2.1.2. Cross-Cultural Communication

2.1.2.0. Introduction

The interpretation of cross-cultural communication differs among researchers. I will adopt the following definition: cross-cultural communication is defined as 'comparisons of communication across cultures', whereas intercultural communication entails 'communication between people from different cultures' (Gudykunst, 2002: 19). Communication patterns are implicitly or explicitly affected by culture-specific factors. Systematic theories might exist, whether they are similar or different (Gudykunst, 2002: 26, 27).

Therefore, communication patterns can be predicted and expected by examining 'different cultural dimensions' of each culture, i.e. 'variables.' Two cultural variables are described next.

2.1.2.1. Individualistic/Collectivistic Cultures

Gudykunst and Lee (2002: 27) propose that individualism/collectivism is the major cultural dimension to analyse communication patterns. According to their definition, "individuals' goals are emphasized more than groups' goals in individualistic cultures", whereas "groups' goals, in contrast, take precedence over individuals' goals in collectivistic cultures" (Gudykunst and Lee, 2002: 27). Many Western cultures, i.e. the US, Australian, British, Canadian cultures, have been identified as individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1991). On the other hand, many Asian countries, i. e. China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam have been identified as collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hofstede, 1991 cited from Ting-Toomey & Chung, 1996: 239).

Gudykunst and Lee (2002: 27) note 'individualism/collectivism exists at the

cultural level (e. g. cultural norms/rules) and the individual level (e. g. individual values).' If Gudykunst and Lee are correct, then examining perceptions and cultural/social norms in apology styles help me to understand important cultural dimensions of British and Japanese cultures. However, the social/cultural norms of both dimensions co-exist in any culture, depending on situations, i. e. at individual level, and at group level.' 'One tends to predominate' (Gudykunst & Lee, 2002 : 28). 'Different degrees and forms of individualism/collectivism exist in different cultures' (Triandis, 1995 cited from Ting-Toomay & Chung, 1996 : 240). It indicates that it is too naive to conclude that Western countries are individualistic cultures whereas Asian countries are group-oriented cultures. For example, though Japan is generally categorised as a group-oriented culture, it has individualistic factors as well. For example, Japanese young people have become much more individualistic than other age groups, regarding the relationship to society (Weekly Asahi, 2001). However, it should be examined whether the term 'individualistic' attributes are equivalent or not.

Hofstede (1991 : 53) made a list of individualism index values of 50 countries and 3 regions, stating that there is a close correlation between 'a country's national wealth and the degree of individualism in its culture.' Britain is ranked as 3rd next to the U. S. and Australia, whereas Japan is 22nd/23rd. (cf. South Korea as 43rd, Taiwan as 44th) (Fukushima, 2000 : 122). It indicates Britain is high in individualistic values, while Japan is halfway in individualistic values. Culture is not static and Japanese way of life and their values have changed with the economic development (Fukushima, 2000 : 123). Hofstede (1991 : 57) states that the result of index values is confirmed partly from the fact that Japanese traditional family systems have been in a transition period from traditional extended family systems to nuclear families systems. However, he concludes though the Japan's 'level of per capita income is equal to or larger than Western countries', Japanese society still preserves

its collectivistic factors, in family, school, and workplaces (Hofstede, 1991).

2.1.2.2. Criticisms of Individualism/Collectivism

The distinction of individualism/collectivism is a major dimension of cultural variability. However, some criticisms about the dichotomy of individualism/collectivism are raised. Gudykunst & Matsumoto (1996: 49, 50) claim that there is too much emphasis on the dimension of individualism/collectivism. This is partly because individualism/collectivism is used as 'a dichotomy rather than a continuum.' Furthermore, the term is mainly used to distinguish the cultures of the United States, ('and sometimes England and Australia') and Asian cultures. Other cultures in the world, i. e. African, Arab, Latin cultures, should be taken account of. Therefore, individualism/collectivism should be incorporated with other cultural dimensions, i. e. vertical/horizontal culture or other cultural variability, i. e. uncertainty avoidance (Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996: 49, 50).

Furthermore, some questions were raised regarding the dichotomy of individualism/collectivism defined by North American researchers (Stewart, 1971). Some Japanese scholars propose new views of defining 'collectivism' i. e. 'relationalism' - *aidagarashugi*, 'contextualism' - *kanjin-shugi* in order to construct a framework of Japanese culture (Kumon, 1982; Watsuji, 1934; Yamane, 1987; Hamaguchi, 1982, referred from Nishida, 1976).

2.1.2.3. Power Distance

Another important variable in understanding cultural dimension is power distance. Individuals in high power distance do not 'question their superiors' orders' and do as they are expected to do, whereas individuals in low power distance do not always accept the superiors' order and individuals in low power distance 'want to know why they should follow them' (Gudykunst & Nishida,

1994 : 33). Hofstede's (1991 : 26) Power Distance Scores indicates Japan is ranked 33rd among 50 countries and 3 regions (value scores 54) whereas Britain is ranked 42nd/44th (value scores 35). It demonstrates that Japan is relatively high in power distance, whereas Britain is low in power distance.

Nakane (1970 : 26) states 'the vertical/lateral relation' is a 'basis for group cohesion' and 'even a set of individuals sharing identical qualifications tends to create *difference* among these individuals' in Japanese society (cited from Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994 : 33). For example, factors that indicate vertical relation are age, gender, social status, educational backgrounds, the length of experience etc. Gudykunst & Nishida (1994 : 33) points out that 'a person of higher status may use polite language to person of lower status who is older.' However, it is questionable whether age predominates over social status or not in every situation.

In contrast, the U. S. is regarded as a 'horizontal relationship' society where equal relationships are valued highly. It is very intriguing to examine Britain's dimension. Though British society is composed of vertical stratification, it is likely to be arranged for horizontal relations within the same class. However, more thorough investigation is needed to describe British society.

2.2. Culture, Face and Facework

2.2.1. Brown and Levinson's 'Face' Assumption

Brown and Levinson (1978) propose politeness strategies with the concepts of 'face.' Their notion of 'face' is defined as 'the public self-image' (1978 : 61). The notion of 'face' consists of two desires — the desires to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face) and the desires to be appreciated and approved of (positive face). Strategies to avoid or minimise the face threatening acts (FTA) are described as politeness strategies.

Politeness strategies have been categorised into three divisions: 'positive politeness' (solidarity), 'negative politeness' (the expression of restraint), and 'off-record' (avoidance of unequivocal notion of local imposition). Brown and Levinson attempt to measure the weightiness of the offence in their assessment of an FTA: i. 'The social distance' of a speaker (henceforth referred to as S) and a hearer (henceforth referred to as H) — a symmetric relation ii. 'The relative power' (henceforth referred to as P) — an asymmetric relation iii. 'The absolute ranking' referring to the relation of the particular culture.

Brown and Levinson's model suggests that the bigger social distance between H and S will be assessed heavily in FTA. The greater power differences between H and S will show more serious FTA. Though the social distance and relative power are both important sociological variables, cultural dimensions also demonstrate significant roles in the assessment of an FTA.

Brown & Levinson (1987: 13) notice that the acts of face are specific in cultures, and need cultural elaboration in a particular society, though the fundamental concept of face is universal (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 13).

Brown and Levinson's concept of face and universality have been criticised especially by Asian researchers (Matsumoto, 1988, 1989; Ide, 1989; Ting-Toomey & Cocroft, 1994a). Fukushima (2000: 52) introduces criticism from Chinese and Japanese cultures. Mao (1994: 459-460) criticises that 'the Chinese concept of face emphasises the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgement of the community', whereas the concept of face proposed by Brown and Levinson is centered on the individual's 'wants' and desires', based on individualism. Mao (1994: 459-460) also suggests that Chinese and Japanese concept is similar, noting that both society is 'hierarchical interdependence.'

In spite of a lot of criticisms, Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies are a very influential theory and have widely spread among anthropology, developmental

psychology and psycholinguistics, linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics and communication' (Kasper, 1990 : 193).

2.2.2. Conceptualisation of Face, Facework and Culture

Ho (1976) states that face is 'intrinsically interactive' when others perceive the meaning of the face. It is negotiated through communication behaviour called facework. Ho (1976) states conceptualisation of face is important to understand facework strategies (cited from Ting-Toomey & Cocroft, 1994a, 307, 308).

Ting-Toomey & Cocroft (1994a, 313, 314) suggest that facework used in 'cross-cultural interpersonal communication study' should include strategies in order to apply to cultural studies. Cultural dimensions may be used as an index to explain different facework operation. For example, the values of individualism and collectivism can be employed as an efficient index to indicate different cultural attributes (Ting-Toomey & Cocroft, 1994a : 314). Members of individualistic cultures emphasise 'I' identity whereas members of collectivistic cultures emphasise 'we' identity. 'Individualistic cultures are concerned with self-face maintenance (asserting and defending styles), while collectivistic cultures are concerned with both self-face and other-face maintenance (avoiding, integrating, compromising styles).' 'Individualistic cultures value autonomy, choices, and negative face need, while collectivistic cultures value interdependence, reciprocal obligations and positive-face need' (Ting-Toomey, 1988 : 224). Furthermore, 'members of individualistic cultures will tend to use situational accounts, i.e. explanation attributed to external causes to save face more than members of collectivistic cultures.' In contrast, 'members of collectivistic cultures will tend to use dispositional accounts, i.e. explanation attributed to internal causes to accept face loss more than members of individualistic cultures' (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998 : 199). It indicates members of individualistic cultures are likely to apologise, 'It was raining heavily and the

wind was strong. So your umbrella was broken. I couldn't do anything.' In contrast, members of collectivistic cultures are likely to apologise, 'I'm sorry to break your umbrella. I shouldn't have carried it on such a stormy day.' It is an intriguing communication theory, relying on the dimension of individualistic and group-oriented cultures in spite of some limitations of the theory. Therefore, the in-depth concepts of individualism and collectivism should be explored, based on extensive empirical studies.

2.2.3. Apologies and Communication Styles

Apologies are one of the most important polite expressions to maintain mutual interpersonal relations. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), apologies are mainly negative politeness to remedy the offence to the hearer's FTA by the speaker. It is also simultaneously positive politeness to remedy the loss of the speaker's positive face by the act of apology to the hearer. Holmes (1990: 162, 163) addresses that apology is 'remedial interchange' quoting from Goffman's (1971) definition. Holmes (1990: 162) describes it is a 'potential offense to the victim's negative face, as well as attempting to redress the speaker's positive face loss.' Holmes (1990) categories apology strategies into four patterns: A. an explicit expression of apology; B. an explanation or an account; C. an acknowledgement of responsibility; and D. a promise of forbearance. Holmes states that serious offences need more elaborated apology strategies ('A' strategy combined with other strategies). In contrast, Sugimoto (1997: 104, 105) reports expressing remorse without making any excuse may be considered a sincere (faithful in Japanese connotation) attitude in Japan.

Wierzbicka (1991) points out some suppositions associated with values/norms, i. e. 'directness/indirectness', 'sincerity', 'self-assertion' and 'self-expression', do not always reflect real ways of speaking. Wierzbicka (1991) claims these words are

used without any definition and agreement. In her statement, Japanese ways of saying are expected to be 'being indirect' as polite expressions are preferred in Japanese culture and society. In contrast, Western ways of saying are supposed to be 'being direct.' Being indirect is required to maintain good relationships in Japanese society. Self-assertion, which reflects sincerity and spontaneity in Western cultures, is avoided because of courtesy and consideration in Japan. However, these terms are used differently as 'they have no exact equivalents in other languages' (Wierzbicka, 1991: 71). The findings in the previous studies demonstrate that more Japanese subjects than Western subjects employed direct expressions in some situations (Fukushima, 2000; Sugimoto, 1997; Beebe & Takahashi, 1989b). However, 'being direct' should be interpreted in relation to Japanese cultural values (See Wierzbicka, 1991).

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

The purpose of the current study is to examine perceptions and apology styles in British and Japanese cultures, focusing on two age groups (age 18 to 26 and 60-70). British and Japanese subjects might choose linguistic forms of apology, motivated by their social/cultural norms. If cultural/social norms in the two cultures are different, their perceptions of apologies in various situations might be different. The differences of perceptions, in turn, influence the expected social behaviour. Furthermore, the degree of offences in a given situation, for example, might be affected by the different social and contextual relationships (e. g. role relationships, power distance, age) in both cultures.

Sugimoto (1999: 350) notes that the number of cross-cultural empirical studies on apology styles is very limited. Therefore to examine perceptions

between British and Japanese subjects in the study would be essential in understanding different norms between the two cultures.

The first research questions are :

- 1.1. Do British and Japanese subjects differ in their perceptions of
 - a. the seriousness of offences ?
 - b. how likely the victim is to accept apologies from the offender ?
 - c. the extent to which the offender should apologise to the victim ?

As mentioned before, young Japanese people have become much more westernised than any other age groups in recent years (See The Weekly Asahi, 2001). This tendency is not confined just to the individual level. More and more researchers point out the different behaviours and cultural values from other age groups (Fukushima, 2000 ; Ogawa, 1993). To what extent have they become individualistic ? How does it influence the perceptions of determining contextual factors, i. e. seriousness of offences, in interpersonal relationships ? More investigation should be conducted.

Therefore, the next research questions are :

- 1.2. Do young and older Japanese groups differ in their perceptions of
 - a. the seriousness of offences ?
 - b. how likely the victim is to accept apologies from the offender ?
 - c. the extent to which the offender should apologise to the victim ?

The perceptions of British young and older groups should be investigated, too.

- 1.3. Do young and older British groups differ in their perceptions of
 - a. the seriousness of offences ?

- b. how likely the victim is to accept apologies from the offender ?
- c. the extent to which the offender should apologise to the victim ?

One of the most salient cultural variability is individualism/collectivism. Individualism/collectivism affect communication patterns through social/cultural norms (Gudykunst, 2002 : 28). Individualists are 'primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contract they have established with others.' In contrast, collectivists are mainly motivated by the norms, and duties imposed by collectives, e. g. family, colleagues (Triandis, 1995 : 2). Though both values exist in situation specific to each culture, one of the tendencies is more expected in everyday interpersonal relations (See Triandis, 1995 : 27, Gudykunst, 2002 : 28). The dimension of individualistic/collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995) affects the selection of facework behaviours.

As mentioned before, Ting-Toomey (1988) proposes Face-Negotiation theory (See 2.2.3.). Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998 : 199) propose that 'members of individualistic cultures tend to use self-face autonomy-preserving interaction strategies' more than do 'members of collectivistic cultures.' In contrast, 'members of collectivistic cultures tend to use other-face non-impositional strategies' more than do 'members of individualistic cultures.' If Ting-Toomey is right, then fewer British subjects than Japanese subjects tend to offer compensation or reparation, because they don't want others to threaten their negative face by admitting their failure (See Sugimoto, 1999 : 364).

Furthermore, the cultural variability of power distance is also an important cultural variability (Hofstede, 1991). It influences members' choice of 'horizontal facework', i. e. 'minimizing respect/deference distance' vs. 'vertical facework', i. e. 'maximizing respect/deference distance.' Japan is higher in power distance than Britain (Hofstede, 1991 : 26), though the statement proposed by Hofstede should be

validated regarding what extent social/contextual relationships in each culture affect power distance. (The individualism index, and power distance index listed in his study were obtained by a survey of IBM employees at workplace relationships. The research should be extended to other relationships, i. e. school relationships, family relationships, as a reliable index of cultural comparison.) If Hofstede and Ting-Toomey are correct, then more Japanese subjects than British subjects tend to be sensitive to power difference.

This leads to the next research questions.

- 2.1. Do British and Japanese subjects differ in apology strategies, in relation to power differences (equal P, higher P) ?

Regarding age, different apologetic expressions of age groups are reported (Ogawa, 1993; Miyake, 1993). Miyake (1993) made a comparative study between British and Japanese subjects and points out different apologetic expressions, depending on age, social distance between the speakers and the degree of seriousness (cited from Ide, 1998: 513). More extensive research should be conducted.

This leads to the next questions.

- 2.2. Do young and older Japanese groups differ in apology strategies, in relation to power differences (equal P, higher P) ?

Whether British age groups (young vs. older) demonstrate any different apologetic expressions in relation to power difference should be examined, too.

This leads to the next questions.

- 2.3. Do young and older British groups differ in apology strategies, in relation to power differences (equal P, higher P) ?

3.2. Instrument Design

My instruments are of three types : DCT, a seven-point rating scale, and a semistructured interview.

A questionnaire combined with DCT and seven-point rating scale is adopted (See Appendix 3). DCT asks the subjects to write responses of the offender in the given situations. It is aimed to examine what types of apology strategies, i. e. explicit expressions, the subjects employ in the context. In the current study, eight situations are adopted in order to analyse apology strategies in terms of P (equal P, higher P) based on a pre-questionnaire (See Appendix 1). Every situation is reported from four groups (young/older British groups, young/older Japanese groups) in the pre-questionnaire. Furthermore, it is absolutely necessary that the situations used in the materials should achieve cultural equivalence by careful back translation (Rose, 1994 : 3 ; Triandis, 1972 : 47). The seven-point rating scale asks the subjects to tick the box on the scale to examine the subjects' perceptions regarding seriousness of offences.

A self-administered (a researcher conducts an interview)/semistrucured interview is administered. It is aimed to conduct the in-depth analysis (See Appendix 4).

3.3. Method

3.3.1. Procedures

A questionnaire using DCT and a seven-point scale was administered on British/Japanese age groups in September and November (See Appendix 3). Formats were distributed to the subjects. British respondents were provided with an English version while Japanese counterparts, a Japanese version. The Japanese version was compared carefully to the original questionnaire by back translation. First, an English version of each situation is presented and a Japanese-English

bilingual translates it into Japanese. Next, another Japanese-English bilingual translates 'the Japanese version back into English.' Both of the English versions were compared in order to achieve cultural equivalence (Rose, 1994 : 3 ; Triandis, 1972 : 47). The names of the characters were changed into Japanese male and female names. Some words were changed to fit Japanese cultural backgrounds.

After a questionnaire was administered, an interview (Appendix 4) was conducted on British/Japanese young/older groups in order to probe the social norms concerning the concepts of politeness and apology.

3.3.2. Materials

Two highly reported situations, i. e. time & misconduct/carelessness, were selected from the results of the questionnaire in prior to the study (See Appendix 1, 2). The total responses of school and work relationships were as follows : time, 416 [27%] and misconduct/carelessness, 254 [16%]. Sixteen scenarios (2x2x2x2 factorial design) were constructed based on the situations reported from the subjects. However, as answering sixteen scenarios is speculated to demand too many tasks for the respondents, eight scenarios were selected for the study. As gender is an influential factor, the sex of the victim and the offender in a given situation is the same, while the characters are attempted to be comprised of equal number of males and females in the questionnaire.

3.3.3. Subjects

Time and difficulties in locating suitable subjects for this study necessiated a small sampling. The age range of the young group in the study is between 18-26.

Young Japanese subjects aged 20 were recruited from the third-year students who majored in English literature at Matsuyama University. Young Japanese female (F) subject No. 1 has lived in and around Matsuyama for 15 years. Young

Japanese female (F) subject No.2 has lived in Matsuyama for 17 years. Both of them have worked part-time for more than half a year. A young British subject (F) aged 20 is Welsh living in Reading for six years. She has worked as an administrator for two year.

The age range of the older group in the study is between 60–70, referring to some of the previous research. British older group in the study is designated as 'middle class, British'. The definition of 'middle class' relies on *Contemporary British Society* by Abercrombie & Warde (2000). Unlike British society, Japan is a homogeneous society with no social classification. Japanese older subjects are recruited by the similar criteria of British age group, i. e. mainly jobs that they have/were engaged in. An older male (M) Japanese subject aged 66 is a professor who teaches social sciences at Matsuyama University. He has lived in Matsuyama for 24 years. An older Japanese subject (F) aged 66 is a housewife who has lived in this city since her birth. Older male and female British subjects in their sixties are a retired English married couple. A British subject (M) has worked as an electrician for 41 years and has lived in Reading for 66 years. A British subject (F) has worked as a secretary for 22 years and has lived in Reading for 31 years.

All the respondents in the study participated in the project very positively. Six informants except an older Japanese subject (F) accepted to agree to have their interview recorded.

3.3.4. Results

3.3.4.1. Perceptions of Apology

A 7 rating scale was used to examine the subjects' perceptions (See Figure 3.1.). However, it was found out that the results of the ratings that the subjects chose did not always correspond to what they really perceived to suit their needs. For example, an older Japanese subject (M) often attempted to change the ratings from

2 to 3, or 5 to 6 or the other way round while interviewing. He complained that the ratings next to either side of the extremes were very difficult to select, suggesting that a 5 rating scale was easier to answer. A young Japanese subject (F1) sometimes lacked consistent judgments on differences between what she chose in the questionnaire and what she spoke about in the interview. It might be due to the limit of this method, i. e. different judgments in topics. Some prudent subjects often went back to the former questions to examine the ratings that they answered before. Therefore, the results of the interview became much more important than the original framework in order to make their responses more reliable and consistent.

Two situations of time and carelessness demonstrated almost similar patterns in relation to equal and higher power, though carelessness, i. e. 'spilled coffee on the clothes or a book' was regarded more serious offence than time in the relationships with the higher power (mostly rated 6 or 7).

Young Japanese subjects (F) reported that the seriousness of offence in higher power should increase. Therefore the degree to which the victim should apologise increased in higher power relationships than equal power relationships. They reported that social relationships at a workplace had more power distance than academic relationships. What is intriguing is that they responded that the victims in equal and higher power cases were likely to accept apology (mostly rated 5 or 6). This tendency is also found in older Japanese subjects, too.

A young British respondent also increased the seriousness of offence in the relationships with higher power. However, the degree of seriousness of offence and the extent of apology reported by young British subjects were generally lower than young Japanese counterparts by 1 or 2 ratings. A young British subject selected low ratings in the above-mentioned items especially in equal power relationships (rated 3 or 4). She reported that 'too much apology was not good in Britain.' She also reported that people were the same at workplace relationships regarding

power differences (rated 4). What is interesting is that subjects responded that they were less likely to accept the offender's apology, especially in the higher power relationships (rated 3).

Older Japanese subjects selected the similar degree of offences in equal and higher power relationships (mostly rated 5 or 6). However, the degree that the offender should apologise increased in the relationships with individuals with higher power. An older Japanese subject (F) regarded 'damaged book borrowed from the professor' as very serious because the book was very valuable. In contrast, another older Japanese respondent (M) reported that offences in the social relationships were very serious (rated 7 in higher power relationships). As mentioned before, older Japanese subjects responded that the victims with higher power were likely to accept the offender's apology after all (ranked mostly over 4).

British older subjects were the most sensitive to power differences of all the groups. Their responses involving the seriousness of offence increased more than the Japanese older subjects in the relationships with higher power (2 or 3 up — rated 6 or 7). The degree of apology chosen by older British subjects also increased in higher power relationships, though in some cases it was similar to the situations in the relationships with equal power. Emphasis should be placed that the degree the victim accepted apologies in higher power relationships was very low (rated 2 or 3).

The Results of a 7 rating Scale

Time

Equal Power

Scenario	Question	BY	JY		BO		JO	
No.	No.	Female	Female 1	Female 2	Male	Female	Male	Female
1 S(20) vs. S(20)	1	7	7	5	4	4	7	2
	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	2	2	5	4	3	2
	4	3	5	5	3	5	5	6
	5	3	6	6	5	5	6	7
	8	7	4	5	6	4	5	5
3 S(20) vs. S(20)	1	6	2	5	3	3	7	1
	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
	3	3	2	3	3	5	2	2
	4	3	5	4	3	5	5	6
	5	3	5	6	5	7	5	7
	8	7	4	6	6	4	7	5

Time

Higher Power

Scenario	Question	BY	JY		BO		JO	
No.	No.	Female	Female 1	Female 2	Male	Female	Male	Female
2 T(55)	1	5	5	6	4	4	3	2
	2	7	5	6	6	7	6	5
	3	5	5	4	6	6	3	3
	4	5	7	6	6	6	6	6
	5	5	7	6	6	7	7	7
	8	5	2	5	3	4	7	4
4 S(20) vs. T(55)	1	2	2	5	3	5	7	1
	2	6	6	6	6	7	6	5
	3	4	3	4	5	7	3	2
	4	5	6	5	6	6	5	6
	5	5	6	6	6	7	6	7
	8	3	5	6	2	3	6	4

- Questions :
1. How easily can you imagine the situation occurring ?
 2. What is the status relationship between A and B ?
 3. How close are A and B in this situation ?
 4. How serious is A's offence ?
 5. To what extent should A apologise to B ?
 8. How likely is B to accept A's apology ?

Carelessness

Equal Power

	Question	BY	JY		BO		JO	
No.	No.	Female	Female 1	Female 2	Male	Female	Male	Female
5 S(20) vs. Colleague (22)	1	6	4	5	6	5	7	3
	2	4	5	5	4	5	5	4
	3	5	4	2	3	5	2	4
	4	4	6	4	5	5	6	5
	5	4	7	6	6	5	7	6
	8	4	2	5	6	4	5	6
7 S(20) vs. S(22)	1	5	3	5	3	5	6	3
	2	4	4	5	6	4	5	4
	3	2	2	3	4	5	3	2
	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	6
	5	3	6	6	7	6	6	7
	8	4	6	5	4	3	5	5

Carelessness

Higher Power

Scenario	Question	BY	JY		BO		JO	
No.	No.	Female	Female 1	Female 2	Male	Female	Male	Female
6 S(20) vs. boss(55)	1	3	4	5	6	6	6	3
	2	6	7	6	6	7	7	5
	3	5	6	3	6	7	5	4
	4	4	7	5	7	7	7	5
	5	4	7	6	6	7	7	7
	8	3	3	5	5	7	5	5
8 S(20) vs. T(35)	1	3	3	5	3	5	5	1
	2	7	5	6	6	7	5	5
	3	4	2	4	6	6	2	3
	4	5	6	6	7	7	6	7
	5	6	7	6	7	7	7	7
	8	3	5	5	2	3	5	5

* () indicates age.

- Questions :
1. How easily can you imagine the situation occurring ?
 2. What is the status relationship between A and B ?
 3. How close are A and B in this situation ?
 4. How serious is A's offence ?
 5. To what extent should A apologise to B ?
 8. How likely is B to accept A's apology ?

Figure 3. 1. The Results of 7 Rating Scale

3.3.4.2. DCT

Figure 3.2. indicates the results of DCT. Young Japanese subjects (F1 and 2) tended to combine A and B Strategies. They sometimes used F Strategy, which was not categorized in Holmes's model (1995). A young Japanese subject (F2) employed A Strategy many times at the beginning and the end of the apology. Both of them used honorifics, sometimes combining E1 Strategy in apologizing to the victim with higher power. They pointed out that apologizing honestly and obediently/sincerely (*sunao-ni*) were important especially in the relationships with higher power. Both of the subjects employed B Strategy ; i. e. explanation, in most situations in equal and higher power relationships. One Japanese young subject (F2) offered repair/compensation from the start, while the other Japanese subject (F1) reported that the offender should wait to see how the victim reacted.

A young British subject (F) mostly combined A and B Strategies. When the offender apologized to the victim with higher power, she added 'very' and repeated A Strategy, reporting that the offender should apologise more. She reported that it was not necessary to give reasons when the offender was late for the appointment as the result of oversleeping because the victim wasn't interested in listening to her excuse. She used C and F Strategy one time in each situation.

Older Japanese subjects used A Strategy on almost all the occasions. Sometimes they omitted explanation, though an older Japanese subject (M) reported that reasons for the offences were important. An older Japanese subject (F) often used F Strategy. She reported that the reason should not be explained when the offender apologised to the victim with higher power. Another older Japanese subject (M) reported that sincere apologies were not verbal expressions but how they behaved, adding that the offender should offer repair/compensation to people with higher power. In contrast, the older Japanese subject (F) reported that the offender should offer repair/compensation before apologizing in both equal and higher power

relationships, i. e. replace the book. However, she reported that it was impolite to offer the expenses of the cleaning to the boss who might be much wealthier than the employee/part-time student. She emphasised that apologising politely was very important to people with higher power. Both of them used honorifics in higher power relationships.

An older British subject (M) frequently used B Strategy, i. e. explanation. After the explanation, he sometimes combined A or C Strategy. In the relationships

A. Explicit Expressions of Apology

1. Expression of regret : e. g. I am sorry. I am very sorry. Sorry !
2. Request forgiveness : e. g. Forgive me.

B. Explanation e. g. My watch was slow. I tripped on the steps.

C. Acknowledgement of Responsibility, Accepting the Blame : e.g. It's my fault.
I was wrong. I didn't mean it.

D. An Offer of Repair/Compensation e. g. I will replace the book. I will pay for the cleaning.

E. Promise/Appointment

1. Promise of forbearance e. g. It won't happen. I promise I won't be late next time.
2. Appointment for the next meeting e. g. I would like to meet you again when you are able to.

F. Consideration of Others e. g. Are you all right ? You might be offended.
I hope it's OK. What should I do, then ?

Referred to Holmes' Model (1995)

Figure 3. 2. The Results of DCT

with higher power, he sometimes used C and E Strategies, reporting that apologizing humbly was important. An older British subject (F) mostly combined A and B Strategies. She reported the offender should apologise profoundly to people with higher power. Both of the respondents reported the offender should offer reparation /compensation in both equal and higher power relationships.

3.3.4.3. Analysis

It is premature to describe cultural tendencies of each group at this stage, as the number of the respondents in each group was extremely small. However, some similarities and differences between the groups can be pointed out, based on their responses.

What can be derived from the results above? The subjects' responses indicate that, first, obviously both British groups and Japanese groups were affected by power differences. Four groups responded that they had to apologise more in relation to higher power. However, how they were sensitive to power distance demonstrated differences in expected behaviours that correspond to the social norms. Older British subjects were more sensitive to the power distance than older Japanese subjects, regarding the seriousness of offences. Two older British subjects chose a higher degree of seriousness as opposed to their Japanese counterparts who chose lesser degree of seriousness for the same offences. These results seem to indicate that older British subjects are more likely to be affected highly by power distance than their Japanese counterparts. This needs further in-depth investigation, though. British subjects as well as Japanese subjects indicated they would offer reparation/compensation when something was damaged, which was contrary to my previous speculation. Both British and Japanese subjects used 'other-face non-impositional strategies', admitting their failure. Older British subjects, as well as older Japanese subjects, often offered reparation/compensation, though their negative

face was threatened by others.

In terms of school/work relationships, one young British subject was less likely to be influenced by power differences in work relationships. In contrast, both young and older Japanese subjects tended to be more affected by social differences than school relationships, depending on the situation. It indicates that young British people tend to regard British society as 'horizontal relationship' society. In contrast Japanese people tend to consider that Japanese society is composed of 'vertical relation'.

Secondly, Japanese subjects tended to respond that the apologies of the characters in the scenarios would be accepted if the characters apologised politely. Japanese respondents tended to report that they believed that the degree of acceptance the offender received corresponded to how much they apologized. Sugimoto indicates similar results (1999). This tendency might be related with '*amae*' dependence (Doi, 1971) found in Japanese psychological structures. *Amae* 'is excessively optimistic [dependence], without a proper grasp of the realities at stake, the cause of this misapprehension, presumably, being that the person concerned is allowing wishful thinking (a form of self-indulgence) to get the better of his judgment' (Doi, 1971: 29). More research should be conducted, though. On the other hand, British subjects tended to respond that they thought the offenders were not likely to be accepted, even if they apologised sincerely.

Thirdly, young Japanese subjects' responses demonstrated similar apology strategies to British subjects. Young Japanese subjects used explanations/accounts to explain their reasons for apologies. This indicates that the young Japanese subjects have become westernised and tended to use direct expressions, which are categorised as salient Western communication styles in previous studies. However, 'being direct' should be interpreted from Japanese definitions of cultural norms. More qualitative investigation should be administered, in relation to current Japanese

society.

In contrast, the older Japanese group responded frequently that they used indirect expressions mostly in the relationships with higher power, though direct expressions were also used to clarify the reasons for offences, depending on the situations. An older Japanese subject (F) indicated that excuses for her actions were not desirable when apologising to people with higher power.

Lastly the subjects' responses indicated that their concepts of 'what are regarded as sincere apologies' differed as well. This might be related to the different faceworks between individualistic/collectivistic cultures. The strategy of 'consideration of others' is frequently used by Japanese subjects. It demonstrates that self-effacing strategies are likely to be preferred by collectivistic cultures, i. e. Japanese culture.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research

The study indicates there are some differences in perceptions and strategies between British and Japanese young/older subjects in terms of 'individualistic/collectivistic', and 'power distance' cultural variability. Though the responses of all four group (young/older British/Japanese subjects) indicated that they were affected by power distance regarding school/work relationships, older British subjects were affected more highly by the seriousness of offence than any other group in the relationship to the higher power. However, cultural equivalence regarding severity of rating scales should be taken into account. Responses indicate that the Japanese subjects anticipated that the victim was likely to accept their apologies if they apologised more politely and sincerely. Direct expressions, i. e. explanations, were frequently chosen by young Japanese subjects.

In order to validate the results, more extensive study should be carried out by

increasing the number of the subjects. In terms of older subjects, more respondents should be recruited as these samples need to be selected more carefully than young subjects. The variety of educational, occupational, religious, political influences and family backgrounds tend to affect the perceptions and social/cultural norms that older adults are familiar with. Gender differences should also be taken into consideration as it is an influential factor in forming their perceptions. Finally, approximately the same number of male and female subjects should be recruited for the further study.

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Appendix :

1. Pre-Questionnaire (Extraction)

Questions :

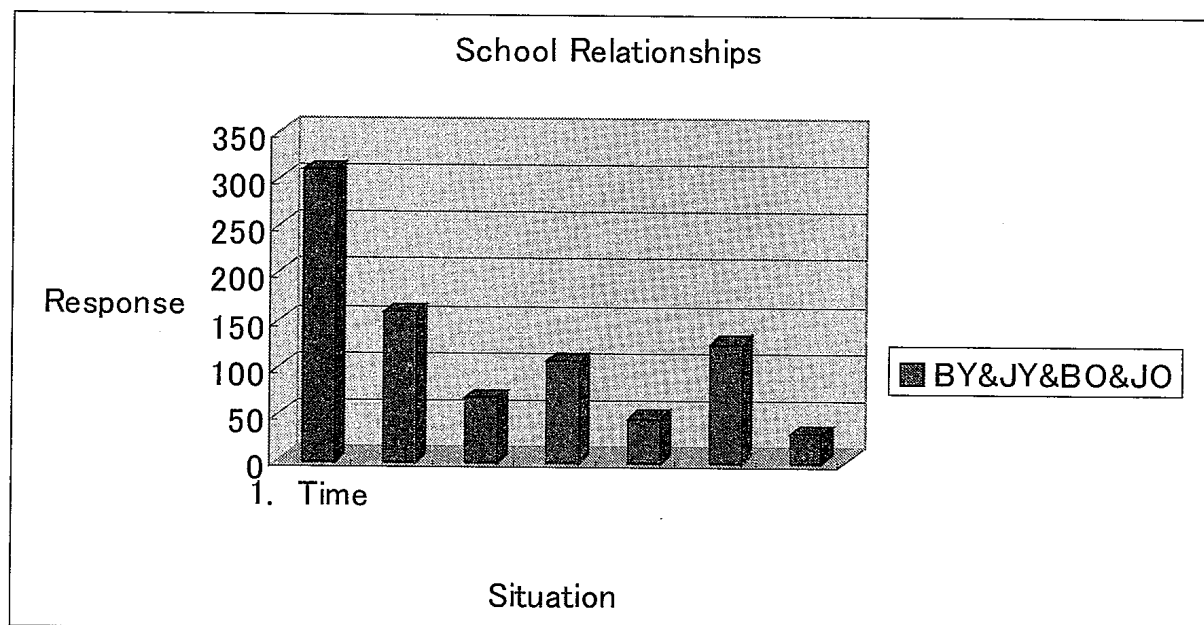
I would like to ask you the situations when you apologised or you were apologised to. Look at Tables 1, and 2. Table 1 asks you about school relationships. Table 2 asks you about workplace relationships. Please fill in spaces (1-3) to the best of your ability, referring to the relationship on the left.

Table 1 School Relationships

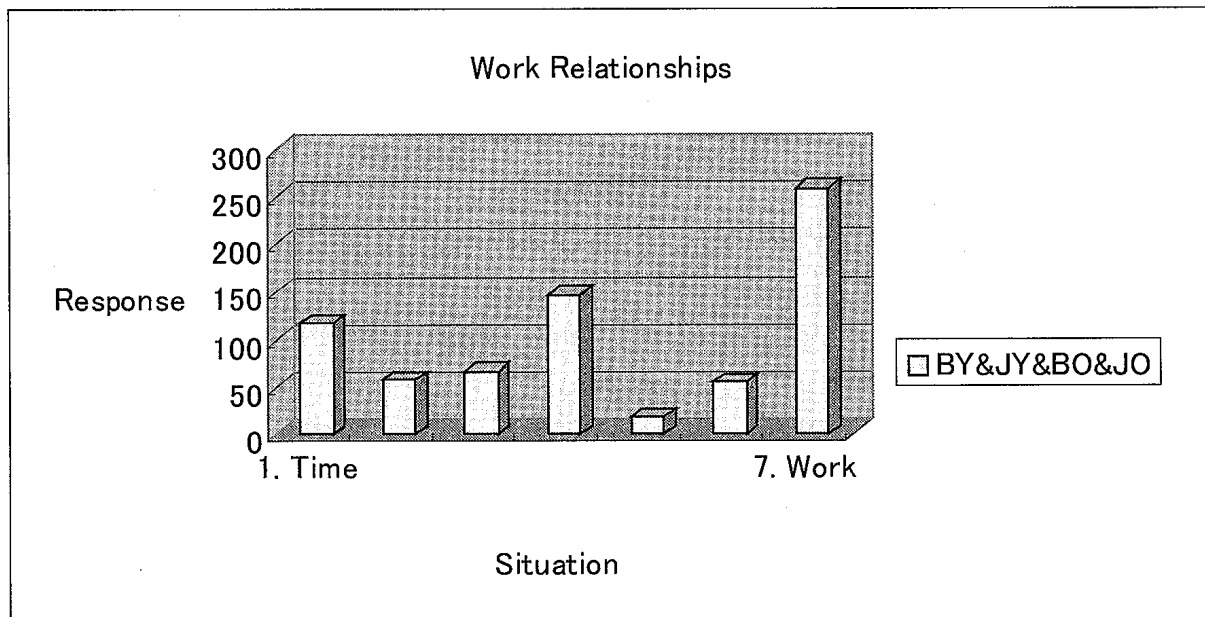
Relationship		Situation	
F r i e n d	You apologised to your friend when —. (you—friend)	E. g.	you didn't return the book to your friend on the day when you promised
		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
	You were apologised to by your friend when —. (friend—you)	E. g.	your friend broke the umbrella that she borrowed from you
		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
T e a c h e r	You apologised to your teacher when —. (you—teacher)	E. g.	you were late for school
		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
	You were apologised to by your teacher when —. (teacher—you)	E. g.	your teacher forgot to return your reports
		1.	
		2.	
		3.	

2. Results of Pre-Questionnaire

Total Number of Responses from Young/Older British/Japanese Subjects



Situation	the Number of Responses
1. Time	309
2. Forgot to do	159
3. Cancellation	68
4. Misconduct/Carelessness	107
5. Misinterpretation/Misunderstanding	47
6. Bad Manners	126
7. Work/Activities	31
Total	847



Situation	The Number of Responses
1. Time	117
2. Forgot to do	57
3. Cancellation	67
4. Misconduct/Carelessness	147
5. Misinterpretation/Misunderstanding	19
6. Bad Manners	55
7. Work	259
Total	721

3. Questionnaire (Extraction)

Please read the following scenarios carefully and tick the box or write your response, as directed.

1. **Dean**, aged 20, is a second-year student at Reading University. He has an appointment with his Course mate, **John**, also 20 in the Library at 9:30 in

the morning. He has an appointment with his Course mate, John, also 20 in the Library at 9:30 in the morning. Hew met John at the Biology class a year ago. They have sometimes talked about their Courses. Dean had asked John if he might borrow his notebook about the Chemistry Course that he had missed. The night before, he set his alarm to wake him in good time. However, as he couldn't sleep well because of the humidity and heart, he overslept. Pedalling his bicycle hard, he hurried to the University but arrived half an hour late and rushed to the Library.

Questions :

1. How easily can you imagine the situation occurring ?

Please tick the box on the scale.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

1 not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 very easily

2. What is the status relationship between Dean and John ? (power difference)

Please tick the box on the scale.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

← lower

Dean = John

→ higher

1 very low	2	3	4 equal	5	6	7 very high

3. How close are Dean and John in this situation ?

Please tick the number on the box.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

1 very close	2	3	4 equal	5	6	7 very far

4. How serious is Dean's offence ?

Please tick the number on the box.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

1 not at all	2	3	4 equal	5	6	7 very serious

5. To what extent should Dean apologise to John ?

Please tick the box on the scale.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

1 not at all	2	3	4 equal	5	6	7 very seriously

6. Do you think Dean would apologise to John ?

Please tick the number.

1. Yes 2. No

1	2

If yes, please answer the following questions (7, 8).

7. What do you think Dean would say to John ?

Write down in the space below.

8. How likely is John to accept Dean's apology ?

Please tick the box on the scale.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

1 would not accept it	2	3	4	5	6	7 accepted easily

4. Interview Questions (Extraction)

(The contents of the interview are as follows. The procedures differ, depending on the situation.)

- About the results of the 7-rated scale :

School Relationships

(Confirming the answers that the subjects chose in the questionnaire)

5. Look at Scenario No. 1 (No. 3, No. 5).

a. What was the status relationship between Dean and John ?

Why did you think so ?

b. If John is 22 years old, older than Dean by 2 years as found in Scenario No. 7, what was the status relationship between the two ?

—If the subject's answer differs,

Why did you choose that ? Does an age difference affect the status

relationships ?

- About DCT
 - a. What do you think Dean would say to John ?
 - b. What does a sincere attitude mean for you ?
 - c. What expressions describe a sincere attitude ?

(この論文は平成13年度国外研究の成果である。)