

Request strategies among equals in Japanese

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Abstract

This study consists of two parts. In the first part, a speech level shift in Japanese requests is investigated. The focus is on the shift from informal requests to formal requests, as most of the previous studies have focused on the speech level shift from formal forms to informal forms. A speech level shift occurs when interpersonal relationships change, but it can also occur when they remain unchanged. In this study, a speech level shift in the latter case is investigated, power relationship and distance between a requester and a requestee being constant, i.e., close equals. Informal requests are usually used among close equals in Japanese, but formal requests are sometimes used. There are some reasons why formal requests are used among close equals. This study tries to reveal why such equals switch from informal requests to formal requests and how formal requests differ from the informal requests the participants would normally use. In the second part of this study, the request strategies among equals with different degrees of imposition of requested acts are investigated, as degree of imposition influenced the speech level shift most in the first part.

Keywords: Request strategies, Japanese, Equals, Speech level shift

1. Introduction

Considering Japanologists view that Japan is a 'vertical society where relative status difference, even very small, counts as significant, Fukada and Asato (2004: 1997) hypothesize the following for the two variables, power and distance:

In Japanese society, when situations involve an addressee of higher status (or a referent of higher status who is present in the situation), power and/or distance are assigned markedly high values.

This explains the use of honorifics in non-FTA (face-threatening acts) situations. Indeed, the use of formal/informal forms is determined according to the social conditions. According to Ide (1982), social conditions include "social position, power, age and formality." Fukada and Asato (2004) claim that honorifics are used to

mitigate the “high weightiness,” which means a high degree of imposition. Therefore, not only the social conditions stated above, but degree of imposition should also be considered as a variable which determines such linguistic forms as formal/informal forms. I believe that relationship between a requester (S) and a requestee (H) is also a factor which determines the use of formal/informal forms, not only the social conditions stated by Ide (1982). All the above conditions are combined in real life. We choose an appropriate form for a request, considering all these factors.

There may be individual differences, but generally in Japanese we tend to use formal forms when there is a difference in social status (from inferiors to superiors), age between S and H (from younger to elder), when S and H's relationships are not close, when degree of imposition is high, or when a situation is formal. It is likely that we use informal forms in Japanese when S and H are equal in status, when there is no big difference or no difference at all in age between S and H (although there are cases in which formal forms are used to those who are only slightly older than S, e.g., from juniors [*kouhai*] to seniors [*sempai*] at university), when S and H are close, when degree of imposition is low, or when a situation is informal.

Results by Usami (2002), who investigated speech level shifts among Japanese speakers, show that there were downshifts (from formal forms to non-polite forms) when there were no differences in age, or from superiors to inferiors. Upshifts (from non-polite forms to formal forms) occurred from inferiors to superiors.

The above study by Usami (2002) showed that a speech level shift occurred with different hearers. However, some recent studies have shown that a speech level shift occurs where the social conditions remain constant. For example, Ikuta (1983), who investigated speech level shift in Japanese conversational discourse, argues that frequent shifting is observed despite social conditions remaining unchanged. Level shift is often used (1) to signal the flow of empathy between speakers — the use of [-Distant] level coincides with a speaker's attitudinal closeness to his interlocutor at any moment whereas [+Distant] represents his attitudinal distance — and/or (2) to indicate coherence and the hierarchical positioning of utterances in a discourse.

Cook (2006), who examined speech-style shifts in academic consultation sessions between professors and students in Japanese universities, also observed that the student sometimes shifted to the plain form¹, and such shifts have multiple functions.

In the study by Megumi (2002), who analyzed naturally occurring conversation between three Japanese people, a speech level shift was also observed. T and H, who had higher status than K, had no hesitation in constantly using plain forms in the

conversation. On the other hand, K, who had lower status, switched back and forth between *desu/masu* (formal) form and plain form. The speaker with the lower status tended to use *desu/masu* form constantly when initially replying to other participants. Then as he developed or elaborated on his opinion extensively, he used plain forms. If the speaker wanted to receive some feedback from other participants, then again *desu/masu* form was used (2002: 217).

Makino (2002) terms informal forms *UCHI*-forms and formal forms *SOTO*-forms². According to him (2002: 123), formal forms are used to *SOTO*-persons and *UCHI*-forms are used in dependent clauses. Makino (2002) investigated the phenomenon to see how the switching worked in Japanese *SOTO*-oriented discourse. The formal-to-informal switching tended to occur when the speaker expressed his personal feelings as a part of his true feelings, called "*HONNE*" (2002: 131). The switching was one of the most effective pragmatic strategies available in the Japanese language which served to give psychological or modal depth to a propositional message (2002: 131).

Some previous studies reveal what the plain forms mean or when they are used. Cook (2002), using the data from a newspaper article and naturally occurring interactions, examined the use of the Japanese plain form. Her findings show that if the plain form co-occurs with affect keys³, it foregrounds the speaker's affective stance toward the addressee or the referent and is an indicator of informality and/or intimacy (2002: 162).

Cook (1999: 87), who examined naturally occurring data in Japanese in two different social situations, namely, a television interview program and a neighborhood quarrel, also claims that speakers shift back and forth between two forms in most speech situations, if not all. According to her, the *masu* form indexes the speaker's self, which is acting "in role," or the speaker-focused self-presentation, while the plain form indexes the speaker's not acting in a role or an absence of the speaker's self presentation. For example, elementary school teachers alternate between the *masu* and plain forms in talking to their students in the classroom. She (1999: 94) also claims that her analysis can account for the use of the plain form when the interlocutors are not psychologically close, whereas Maynard (1991; 1993) claims that the plain form indexes an intimate relationship.

Usami (1997: 257) explains that the Japanese use an informal speech level in order to show solidarity among fellow members, which decreases formality level. This applies to positive politeness, which has not been found in previous Japanese honorific research.

The first part of the present study focuses on speech level shift in Japanese from informal forms to formal forms among the same people, i.e., close equals, since most of the previous studies have focused on the shift from formal forms to informal forms as seen above, and since some of them have dealt with the shift among different interpersonal relationships. The speech act in this study is confined to requests, as requests were most frequently made in the data collected in the pilot study, which was conducted before the main study. Informal requests are usually used among equals in Japanese, but formal requests are sometimes used, too. There are some reasons why people use formal forms among close equals. Okamoto (1999: 56) maintains that distance is expressed when negative politeness, which is formal, is used among equals. The present study aims to investigate why formal requests are used among close equals, and how formal requests differ from informal requests. This study also tries to investigate the request strategies among equals with different degrees of imposition of requested acts in the second part.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- (1) Why do the participants use formal requests among equals?
- (2) How do the formal requests among equals differ from the requests they usually make?
- (3) How do the participants differentiate request strategies among equals when the degree of imposition differs?

I will report two parts of the present study in the next section. In 2.1, the first part of this study, which investigates a speech level shift in requests, is reported, and in 2.2, the second part, which investigates request strategies with different degrees of imposition of requested acts, is reported. The findings of these two parts are discussed in section 3.

2. The Study

The study reported here consists of two parts. Before the first part of the study, a pilot study was conducted. In the pilot study, nine university students were asked to collect formal requests which they had made to those with whom they normally use informal requests, and they were asked the reasons why they had used the formal requests. The reasons why the participants used formal requests to their equals were as follows: high degree of imposition of requested acts, S's fault, urgency, S's desire to get compliance from H, sending messages to many people and irony. The multiple choices in the first part were designed on the basis of these results. The second part was designed on the basis of the pilot study and the first part.

2.1. Part 1

2.1.1. Participants

53 Japanese university students (13 males and 40 females) (mean age: 20.0; age range: 19-23) served as participants.

2.1.2. Procedure

- (1) The participants were asked to collect formal requests they sent via e-mail to their close equals to whom they normally make informal requests. Most of the data collected in the pilot study were e-mail data. Therefore, the data were confined to e-mail data in order to obtain data consistency, as there may be some differences in the data obtained from different mediums.
- (2) The participants were asked to select a reason why they made formal requests. Based on the results of the pilot study, the reasons which may influence the use of formal requests were given to the participants in the form of multiple choices. The following reasons were included in the multiple choices: (1) The request had a high degree of imposition; (2) S made the request because of S's fault (e.g., S has erased an e-mail message from H and asked H to send it again); (3) S wanted H to comply with the request; (4) The message was to many people; (5) It was irony for H and (6) others (the participants specify a reason if it is different from the above).
- (3) The participants were asked to write a request, if they would make a request to the same requestee to whom they had made formal requests under a condition in which there was no reason (e.g., high degree of imposition) for the use of formal requests.

2.1.3. Data analysis

- (1) The reasons why the participants had made formal requests were classified.
- (2) The requests which were collected by the participants were classified into the following eight request strategies: bald-on-record strategies 1 (B1), bald-on-record strategies 2 (B2), positive politeness strategies 1 (P1), positive politeness strategies 2 (P2), negative politeness strategies 1 (N1), negative politeness strategies 2 (N2), off-record strategies 1 (O1) and off-record strategies 2 (O2) (see Appendix 1). This classification was based on Brown and Levinson (1987), but it was revised by Fukushima (2004). That is, Brown and Levinson's strategies were bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record strategies. In Fukushima (2004), each strategy was further divided into two, depending on the (in)directness and (in)formality. Features, forms and examples of each strategy are

shown in Appendix 1. Formal requests include bald-on-record strategies 2, negative politeness strategies 1, negative politeness strategies 2 and off-record strategies 2, as their features are formal. Informal requests include bald-on-record strategies 1, positive politeness strategies 1, positive politeness strategies 2 and off-record strategies 1, as their features are informal.

- (3) The requests, which the participants would normally make if there were no reason to use a formal request, were classified into the above eight request strategies.

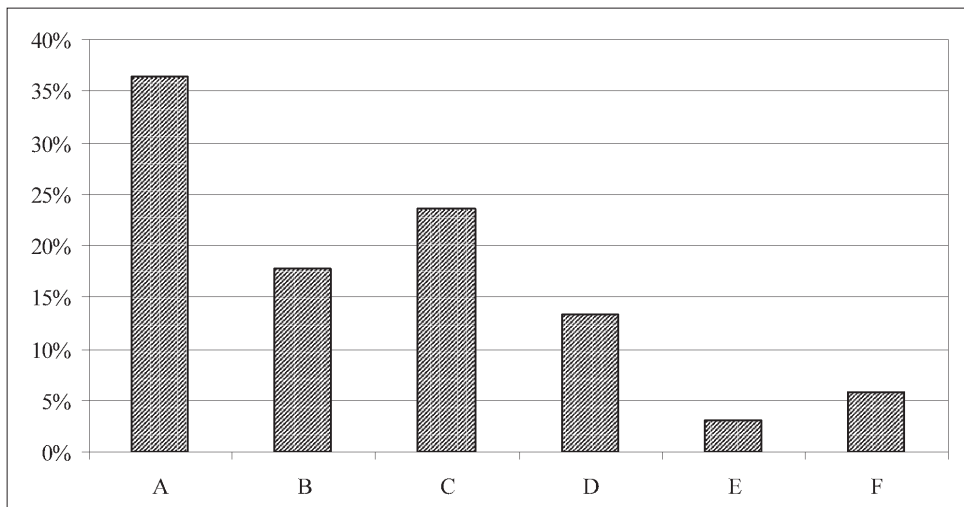
2.1.4. Results

225 requests were collected altogether from the participants e-mail data. In 2.1.4.1, the reasons why the participants used formal requests are analyzed, and in 2.1.4.2, request strategies they have actually used and request strategies they would use if there were no reason for using formal requests, are analyzed.

2.1.4.1. Reasons

Among the reasons why they used formal requests, reason A (The request had a high degree of imposition) (36.4%) was most frequently chosen, followed by reason C (S wanted H to comply with the request) (23.6%), and reason B (It was S's fault) (17.8%). Reason F (others) included the following: "S wanted to express the feeling of being sorry," and "S wanted to make a joke by using formal requests." Graph 1 shows the reasons why the participants used formal requests.

Graph 1. Reasons for the choice of formal requests



A: The request had a high degree of imposition.

B: It was S's fault.

C: S wanted H to comply with the request.

D: The message was to many people.

E: It was irony for H.

F: Others

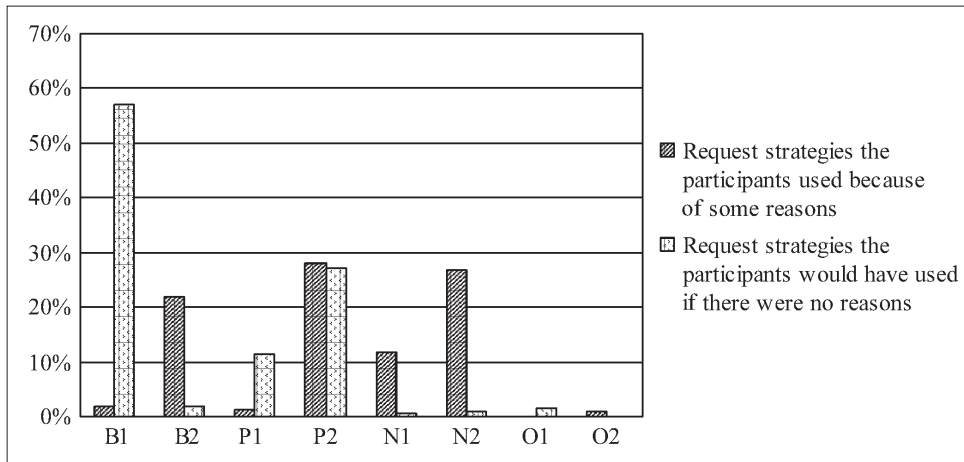
2.1.4.2. Request strategies

Among the request strategies which the participants used because of some reasons stated in 2.1.4.1, positive politeness strategies 2 (28.1%) were most frequently used, followed by negative politeness strategies 2 (26.8%), bald-on-record strategies 2 (21.9%), and negative politeness strategies 1 (18.8%). The participants would have used bald-on-record strategies 1 (57.2%) most frequently, if there were no reasons to make them use formal requests. The participants would have used positive politeness strategies 2 (27.0%) and positive politeness strategies 1 (11.3%) after bald-on-record strategies 1.

A closer look at the results tells us that there are differences in the use of request strategies according to the reasons. That is, when degree of imposition was high, when it was S's fault, and when the message was to many people, no bald-on-record strategies 1 were used at all. When the message was to many people, negative politeness strategies 1 (50.0%) were used most frequently.

Graph 2 shows the request strategies the participants used when there were some reasons (see 2.1.4.1), and the request strategies the participants would have used if there were no reasons to make them use formal requests.

Graph 2. Request strategies



B1: Bald-on-record strategy 1

B2: Bald-on-record strategy 2

P1: Positive politeness strategy 1

P2: Positive politeness strategy 2

N1: Negative politeness strategy 1

N2: Negative politeness strategy 2

O1: Off-record strategy 1

O2: Off-record strategy 2

2.2. Part 2: DCT via e-mail

2.2.1. Participants

60 Japanese university students (10 males and 50 females; mean age: 20.55; age range: 19-23) served as participants.

2.2.2. Instrument

A discourse completion test (DCT) was prepared, based on the results of the pilot study and the first part of the present study. As degree of imposition of requested acts influenced the shift from informal requests to formal requests most frequently in the first part, request situations with different degrees of imposition (high and low degrees of imposition) were included in the questionnaire. The situations were chosen from authentic situations, which were collected in the pilot study and the first part of the present study (see Appendix 2).

2.2.3. Procedure

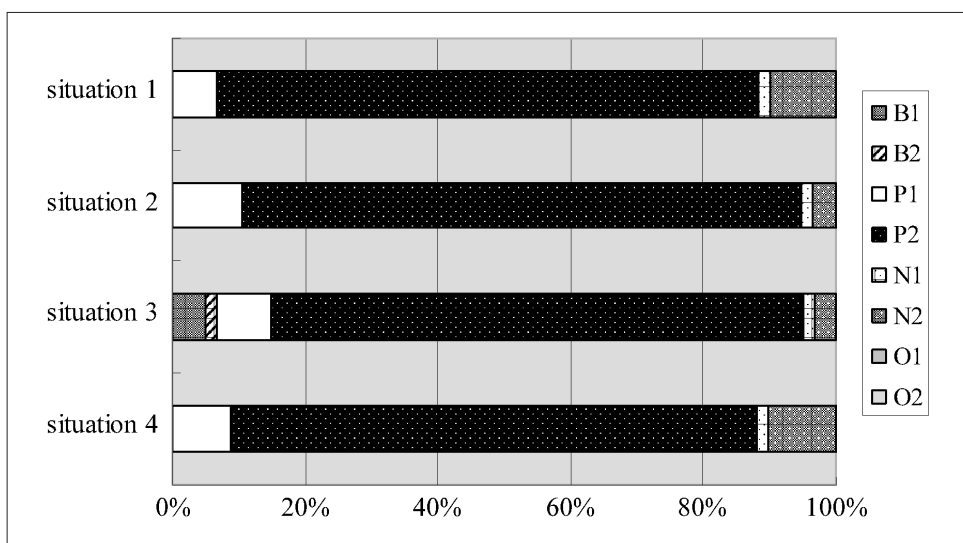
A DCT with four request situations, with high and low degrees of imposition, was distributed to the participants, via e-mail. The participants were asked to read the situations and to send back the requests via e-mail from their mobile phones⁴. By the use of e-mail, the media was controlled.

2.2.4. Data analysis & results

2.2.4.1. Analysis of head acts

Head acts were classified into the eight request strategies (see Appendix 1). Positive politeness strategies 2 (situation 1: 81.7%; situation 2: 84.2%; situation 3: 80.0%; situation 4: 84.5%) were most frequently used regardless of degree of imposition. Positive politeness strategies 1 were also used in all the four situations (situation 1: 6.7%; situation 2: 10.5%; situation 3: 8.3; situation 4: 8.6%). Positive politeness strategies were most frequently used. When degree of imposition was high (situations 1 and 4), however, more formal request strategies (negative politeness strategies 2) (situation 1: 19%; situation 4: 10.3%) were used than in the situations with low degree of imposition (situation 2: 3.5%; situation 3: 3.3%). Only in situation 3, bald-on-record strategies 1 (5.0%) and bald-on-record strategies 2 (1.7%) were used. No off-record strategies were used in all the four situations. Graph 3 shows the distribution of head acts.

Graph 3 . Head acts



B1= Bald-on-record strategy 1

B2= Bald-on-record strategy 2

P1= Positive politeness strategy 1

P2= Positive politeness strategy 2

N1= Negative politeness strategy 1

N2= Negative politeness strategy 2

O1= Off-record strategy 1

O2= Off-record strategy 2

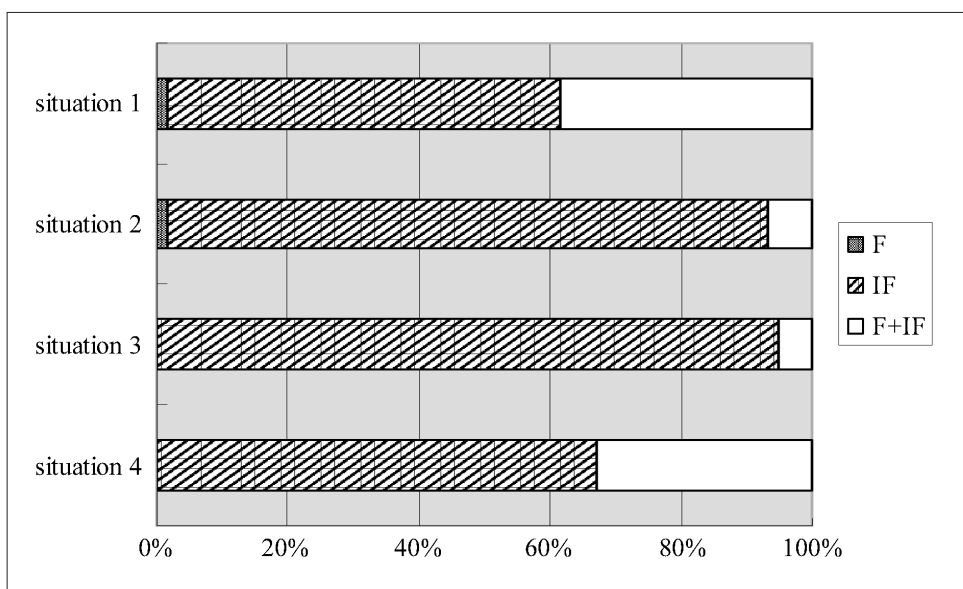
2.2.4.2. Analysis of supportive moves

Supportive moves were classified into formal supportive moves, informal supportive moves and the combination of formal and informal supportive moves. Formal

supportive moves are those with formal forms (e.g., *moushiwake arimasen* [I am sorry.]).

In all the situations, informal supportive moves were used most frequently (situation 1: 60.0%; situation 2: 91.4%; situation 3: 94.6%; situation 4: 67.2%), followed by the combination of formal and informal supportive moves. In situations 1 (38.3%) and 4 (32.8%) with high degree of imposition, more supportive moves with a formal and informal combination were used than in situations 2 (6.9%) and 3 (5.4%) with low degrees of imposition. More formal supportive moves were used in situations with high degrees of imposition, but the participants did not use only formal supportive moves except one in situation 1 (1.7%) and one in situation 2 (1.7%). Graph 4 shows the distribution of (1) formal supportive moves, (2) informal supportive moves and (3) the combination of formal and informal supportive moves.

Graph 4. Formal, informal, and formal & informal supportive moves

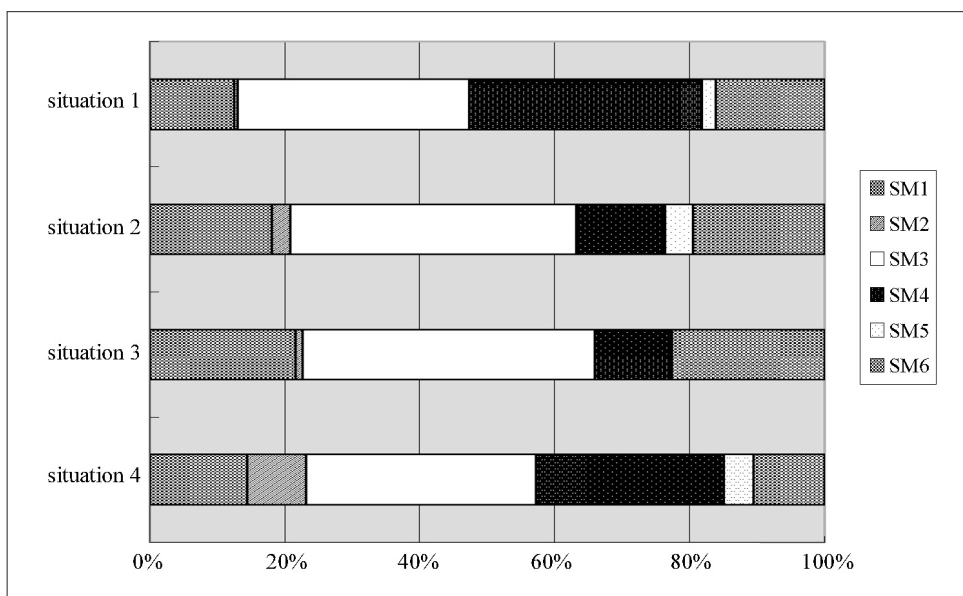


F=Formal supportive moves, IF=Informal supportive moves,
 F+IF=Combination of formal and informal supportive moves

Supportive moves were further classified into the following six, according to the classification by Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989): (1) preparator (e.g., I'd like to ask you something...), (2) getting a precommitment (e.g., Could you do me a favor?), (3) grounder (e.g., I missed class yesterday. Could I borrow your notes?), (4) disarmer (e.g., I know

you don't like lending out your notes, but could you make an exception this time?), (5) promise of reward (e.g., *Could you give me a lift home? I'll pitch in on some gas.*), and (6) imposition minimizer (e.g., *Would you give me a lift, but only if you're going my way*). The results showed that grounders were very frequently used in all the situations (situation 1: 34.4%; situation 2: 42.4%; situation 3: 42.9%; situation 4: 34.1%). In situations with high degrees of imposition (situation 1: 34.4%; situation 4: 27.8%), more disarmers were used than in situations with low degrees of imposition (situation 2: 13.2%; situation 3: 11.2%). In situation 3, no promise of reward (SM5) was found, whereas in other situations SM5s were found, although the percentage was not very high (situation 1: 2.1%; situation 2: 4.2%; situation 4: 4.3%). In situation 4 with a high degree of imposition, more SM2s (getting a precommitment) were used than in other situations (situation 1: 0.5%; situation 2: 2.8%; situation 3: 1.0%; situation 4: 8.6%). Graph 5 shows the distribution of different kinds of supportive moves.

Graph 5 . The kinds of supportive moves

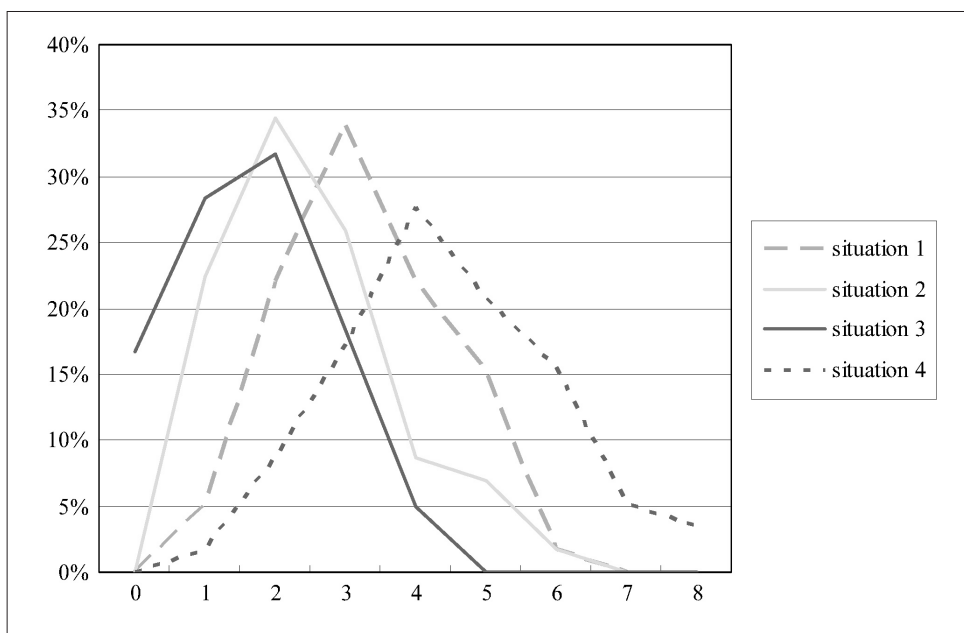


SM1=Preparator, SM2=Getting a precommitment, SM3=Grounder,
 SM4=Disarmer, SM5=Promise of reward, SM6=Imposition minimizer

The number of supportive moves in each request was counted. More supportive moves were used per request in the situations with high degrees of imposition (situations 1 & 4) than in those with low degrees of imposition (situations 2 & 3). In situation 1, three (32.9%) supportive moves were most frequently used in a request, and in

situation 4, four (28.1%) supportive moves were most frequently used in a request. Eight supportive moves (3.5%) were used in situation 4. In situation 2, two supportive moves (34.5%) were most frequently used, and in situation 3, two supportive moves (31.7%) were most frequently used. While supportive moves were always used in situations 1, 2 and 4, 16.7% of the requests in situation 3 were with no supportive moves. The average number of supportive moves in each situation is as follows: situation 1: 3.25; situation 2: 2.48; situation 3: 1.67; situation 4: 4.41. This shows that the participants used more supportive moves in situations with higher degrees of imposition than in those with lower degrees of imposition, having tried to mitigate higher degrees of imposition not only with different kinds of supportive moves as shown above, but also with many more supportive moves. Graph 6 shows the number of supportive moves used in each request in situations 1-4.

Graph 6 . Number of supportive moves



The numbers (0-8) indicate the number of supportive moves used per request.

3. Discussion

3.1. Reasons

Among the reasons why the participants used formal requests in this study, the degree of imposition most influenced the shift from informal requests to formal requests. This may be in line with Fukada and Asato's (2004) claim that honorifics are used to

mitigate the “ high weightiness. ” Honorifics are regarded as negative politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1989: 180-181). Formal requests in this study include negative politeness strategies.

The reason, “ S wanted H to comply with the request ” was the next most frequently chosen one after degree of high imposition which influenced the shift from informal to formal requests. When we make requests, we normally want H to comply with the requests. When the participants absolutely wanted H to comply with the requests, they used formal requests. This shows that formal requests do not necessarily mean polite requests, but they increase the degree of compliance.

The third most frequently chosen reason was that it was S’s fault. By the use of formal requests, S may have wanted to show the feeling of being sorry, because it was S’s fault. This may be similar to one of the reasons found in reason F (others), i.e., “ S wanted to express the feeling of being sorry. ” The participant who wrote this in reason F may have had some different causes other than S’s fault (Reason B). Greater detail was not available, but the reason for the shift from informal requests to formal requests will be clearer if the reason why one feels sorry when making requests can be identified.

The multiple choice reasons in the present study did not include the reason to show distance, as claimed by Okamoto (1999), as this was not found in the pilot study. However, irony, which was found in the pilot study and included in this study as a reason to influence the shift from informal to formal requests (7% of the participants chose this reason), can sometimes express distance. Further investigation of how the reason irony shows distance is needed.

Among the choice of others, reason for making a joke by the use of formal requests was chosen. Usami (1997) claimed that the use of an informal speech level shows solidarity among fellow members. By the use of positive politeness strategies, which are informal, solidarity among fellow members is strengthened. However, the reason found in this study shows that the formal speech level among close equals can sometimes create a joke, which is one of the strategies of positive politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 124). Although this reason of making a joke was not found very frequently, it is worth investigating further.

3.2. Request strategies in part 1

As reported in 2.1.4.1, when there were reasons for the use of formal requests, the participants used such formal requests as N2, B2 and N1. P2 was also used, although they are informal. If there were no reasons for using more formal forms, they would

have used such informal requests as B1, P2 and P1, because of the close relationship between S and H. This shows that the participants used more formal request strategies when there were some special reasons than when there were no such reasons. P2 (an informal and indirect request strategy), however, was used frequently both when there were some reasons and when there were no reasons for using a formal request. This may be due to the following reasons. S and H were equal in status and close. Therefore, S used P2, which is an informal request strategy. Although P2 is an informal request strategy, it is an indirect request strategy. Therefore, it is a more mitigated request strategy than B1 or P1 (direct and informal request strategies). When there were reasons for doing so, the participants wanted to show mitigation with the use of P2, rather than B1 or P1, which they would have used when there were no such reasons.

Among bald-on-record strategies, the participants used B2 when there were reasons for it, and they would have used B1 if there were no reasons. B2 is a direct and formal request strategy. Its form is with "... *kudasai*" (please). Both B1 and B2 are direct, but B2 is formal. Therefore, B2 may have been used when there were reasons why the participants wanted to use more formal request strategies than those they would normally use.

Although asking the participants which request strategies they would use if there were no reasons for using formal requests was hypothetical, it was possible to obtain a tendency for which request strategies would be used. It would have been ideal to compare request strategies which were actually made with different conditions, i.e., the request strategies under situations with some reasons which would influence the shift from informal requests to formal requests and those without any such reasons, but it was impossible to obtain two different situations with the other conditions (power relationship and closeness between S and H) being the same.

3.3. Request strategies in part 2

More formal request strategies were used in situations with high degrees of imposition than used in those with low degrees of imposition. For instance, negative politeness strategies 2 were used frequently when the degrees of imposition were high, and bald-on-record strategies were used when the degrees of imposition were low. Only in situation 3, were bald-on-record strategies 1 used. This may be because the degree of imposition in situation 3 was the lowest among the situations used in this study. However, positive politeness strategies 2 were most frequently used in situations with both high and low degrees of imposition. This may be because S and H were close equals.

There were differences in the use of supportive moves in the formality, kinds and the number when the degree of imposition differed. In situations with high degree of imposition, more formal supportive moves were used than in situations with low degree of imposition. This may suggest that the participants tried to mitigate high degree of imposition with formal supportive moves. However, the participants did not use only formal supportive moves except in two request situations; i.e., they used a combination of informal and formal supportive moves when the degree of imposition was high. This may be due to the relationship with H, i.e., close equals. Normally, they would use only informal supportive moves among close equals, but they used the combination of informal and formal supportive moves when the degree of imposition was high. Therefore, the combination of informal and formal supportive moves suggests a mitigation of high degree of imposition.

More disarmers⁵ were used in situations with high degrees of imposition than in situations with low degrees of imposition. This may be because disarmers may mitigate the degree of imposition more than other supportive moves, such as preparators, which can be just placed in front of requests (e.g., I'd like to ask you something...). According to the results of the study by Fukushima (2007), requests can be most acceptable when the requests are accompanied by disarmers. This means that disarmers can mitigate the request force most among supportive moves. The results of this study coincide with this, which means that disarmers can mitigate high degrees of imposition most. A high degree of imposition was also mitigated with the number of supportive moves used in each request; i.e., more supportive moves were used in situations with high degrees of imposition than in those with low degrees of imposition.

4. Conclusion

A significant factor of the present study was to focus on the speech level shift from informal requests to formal requests, being confined to close equals, as there were no such previous studies to my knowledge. In future studies, however, it is hoped that the speech level shift will be investigated with more varieties of relationship (from superiors to inferiors and from inferiors to superiors) and an investigation on the speech level shift not only from informal requests to formal requests but also from formal requests to informal requests will be conducted. A comparison between the data in this study and the data in future studies will reveal more of the reasons and the meanings of a speech level shift.

Requests were collected through e-mail in this study. In future studies, spoken data will be also needed to further investigate speech level shifts. And the reason, "the

speaker wants to receive some feedback from other participants” found in the study by Megumi (2002) should also be included, if the multiple choices of reasons are given to the participants. A comparison between the e-mail data in this study and spoken data will also be interesting from the perspective of a different medium.

Notes

1. Speakers of Japanese must choose between the so-called addressee honorific *masu* form and the ‘ non-honorific ’ plain form at the sentence-final position. The term *masu* form includes the present (*-masu*) and past (*-mashita*) tense forms, gerund (*-mashite*), and the copular present (*desu*) and past tense (*deshita*) forms. The plain form includes the present (*-u* or *-ru*) and past (*-ta*) tense forms, the gerund (*-te*), the copular present (*da*) and past tense (*data*) forms as well as bare nominals, which are considered to be derived by copular deletion (Cook, 2006: 275).
2. Makino (2002) does not give any specific definition of *UCHI*- and *SOTO*-forms, but I believe that *uchi* and *soto* correspond to in-group and out-group respectively.
3. Affect keys include final particle (interpersonal relation marker), postposing information (floor management device), rising intonation (uncertainty, request for information), vowel lengthening (emotional intensity marker) and coalescence (various affective states) (Cook, 2002: 155).
4. As there may be differences in requests sent from mobile phones and those from personal computers, the participants were asked to send back the requests only from their mobile phones.
5. The speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request (Blum-Kulka, et. al., 1989: 287).

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Appendix 1. Request strategies

Strategy	Feature	Form/Category	Example	English Gloss
Bald-on-record strategy 1	stating the request directly and informally	Imperative (<i>te</i> form)	<i>noto kashite</i>	Lend me your notebook.
Bald-on-record strategy 2	stating the request directly and formally	Imperative + <i>kudasai</i>	<i>noto kashite kudasai</i>	Lend me your notebook please.
Positive politeness strategy 1	stating the request directly and informally	Imperative + particle <i>ne</i> Statement (informal) (Desire) (without Ellipsis)	<i>noto kashite ne</i> <i>noto kashite hoshii</i>	Lend me your notebook, will you? I want you to lend me your notebook.
Positive politeness strategy 2	stating the request indirectly and informally	Interrogative (informal) Statement (informal) (Desire) (with Ellipsis)	<i>noto kashite kurenai?</i> <i>noto kashite hoshiindakedo...</i>	Can t you lend me your notebook? I want you to lend me your notebook, but ...
Negative politeness strategy 1	stating the request directly and formally	Statement (formal) (Desire) (without Ellipsis)	<i>noto kashite itadakitaku zonjimasu</i>	I d like you to lend me your notebook.
Negative politeness strategy 2	stating the request indirectly and formally	Interrogative (formal) Statement (formal) (Desire) (with Ellipsis)	<i>noto kashite itadake masenka?</i> <i>noto kashite itadakitaino desuga...</i>	Couldn t you lend me your notebook? I d like you to lend me your notebook, but ...
Off-record strategy 1	stating the request indirectly and informally	Statement (informal)(Hint)	<i>Kinou jyugyou yasunjatta</i>	I was absent from the class yesterday.
Off-record strategy 2	stating the request indirectly and formally	Statement (formal) (Hint)	<i>kinou jyugyou yasumimashita</i>	I was absent from the class yesterday.

Appendix 2: An English translation of the situations used in the second part

Situation 1

You are having final exams. You are supposed to work part-time today, but you are not feeling well. It will be difficult to work part-time today. You ask A, one of your friends, who attends the same university and works part-time at the same shop, to replace you. A will have a final exam of an obligatory subject. You send an e-mail to A. A's e-mail address is xxx@yahoo.co.jp.

Situation 2

You received your part-time work schedule. According to that schedule, you are supposed to work on the day when you want to visit a company where you want to get a job. You want B, who works part-time at the same shop, to replace you that day. You send an e-mail to B. B's e-mail address is xxx@hotmail.com.

Situation 3

You were not feeling well and were absent from a lecture of English Linguistics. The next day you are meeting a friend of yours, C, who also takes English Linguistics. You want to make a photocopy of C's notes of English Linguistics. C may not need the notes tomorrow, as there will be no exams or papers. You send an e-mail to C. C's e-mail address is xxx@hotmail.com.

Situation 4

You are about to go to a part-time job. You suddenly realized that you forgot to return a book to Professor E. You have to leave home soon and do not have time to go to the university. You want to ask one of your seminar friends, D, who lives about fifteen minutes away from your flat, to come and pick up the book and to return to Professor E. You send an e-mail to D. D's e-mail address is xxx@yahoo.co.jp.