

## DISAGREEMENT STRATEGIES IN JAPANESE

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### ABSTRACT

Within the framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, this research examines how Japanese people express disagreement. With some suggestions for modifications of their theory, questionnaire data were used to analyse the speech act in Japanese. The results show that some typical strategies are employed in order to perform the speech act and some important factors determine the choice of strategies, but the relative importance of each determining factor depends on the situation, and also on the personality of a speaker.

### Introduction

In this paper I will discuss how Japanese people express their disagreement within a framework which is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). The motivation for this research is mainly my interest in cross-cultural communication, especially the cause of its failure. Among various sorts of cross-cultural communication failure, what is focused on here is linguistic failure in understanding what someone implies by what s/he says; in Thomas's term "pragmatic failure" (1983). "Pragmatic failure" sometimes happens even between people who share the same cultural background, but in cross-cultural communication, this failure is the source of more cases of communication breakdown, for the norms of language use sometimes differ from culture to culture.

Being Japanese, my interest is naturally directed toward misunderstandings which involve Japanese culture. One of the problems mentioned by many non-Japanese is that they cannot really judge if Japanese people are agreeing or not, for Japanese people express their disagreement so vaguely, or rather, from foreigners' point of view, Japanese people do not express their disagreement.

One way of achieving better cross-cultural communication is to study a universal principle of language use and consider the cultural variables that are likely to generate "cross-cultural pragmatic failure". In this paper, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory was chosen as the universal principle. There are some arguments against the universality of their theory, for example, those concerned with politeness phenomena in Japanese (Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1988, 1989). However, although some modifications may be needed depending on the cases to which they are applied, as I have discussed elsewhere (Naruse 1993), the principles of their theory are basically applicable to Japanese and, I believe, to other languages. Thus, examining the speech act of disagreement in Japanese, by applying Brown and Levinson's theory, will contrib-

ute towards better cross-cultural understanding.

The aim of this research is therefore to investigate the following questions:

1. What sort of strategies do Japanese people use when they disagree?
2. What sort of factors influence their choice of the strategies including the choice of not disagreeing?

In order to investigate these questions, a questionnaire was used to collect data.

## 1. Theoretical Considerations

In verbal communication, we sometimes experience breakdown because we fail to understand what the other person means by what s/he says, or in other words, what the other person implies. Although we know that if we use an indirect expression to imply some message, it may cause this sort of misunderstanding, we often avoid saying things directly. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that one of the motives for this indirectness is politeness.

They adopt the notion of 'face' introduced by Goffman (1967), by which they mean an individual's need for self-esteem, as a central notion of their theory, and proposed the strategies of politeness that people use in order to mitigate 'Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)', such as requests, orders, and so on.

Considered within this theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson, disagreement is a serious FTA because it is a speech act which expresses a speaker's (S's) dissension from what a hearer (H) said and it carries a great risk of threatening the other's face and injuring their self-esteem. Therefore, in order to be polite, this speech act usually requires some redressive act to compensate for the loss of the other's positive face. Especially in Japanese society, where group membership and "conformity to the group" (Richards and Sukwiwat 1983: p.122) is considered very important, disagreement carries a great risk of threatening the face of not only H but also that of S. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that in normal conversation there are only two situations when Japanese people say 'no': one is when they want to show their modesty and deny a compliment from others, and the other is when they reject another person's self-disparagement (Mizutani in Kindaichi 1991: p.232).

As for the politeness strategies, Brown and Levinson suggest five categories:

- (1) Do the FTA baldly
- (2) Do the FTA with redressive action of positive politeness
- (3) Do the FTA with redressive action of negative politeness
- (4) Do the FTA off record
- (5) Don't do the FTA

However, when we discuss the politeness phenomena of disagreement, (3) cannot be applied because disagreement is a positive face threatening act.

Brown and Levinson also claim that the choice of politeness strategies is determined by the social distance (D) between S and H, the relative power (P) of H over S and the ranking of imposition (R) in doing the FTA. However, as they admit in "Introduction to the Reissue", there seem to be some factors "which are not captured within the P, D, and R dimensions" (1987. p. 16) It is because, as some researchers such as Brown and Fraser (1979), Blum-Kulka and House (1989) point out, social factors like P and D change depending on the situation, and the

relative importance of these factors varies according to cultures. Therefore, the nature of the situation and the culture cannot be neglected when the factors determining the degree of politeness are considered.

Considering these aspects, I propose that the following four factors determine the choice of Japanese politeness strategies:

- (1) H's relative power (P) over S (including relative age)
- (2) social distance (D) between S and H
- (3) formality of the situation (F)
- (4) S's involvement in the topic (I)

From the cultural point of view, P is very important because, as many researchers point out (Nakane 1970, Matsumoto 1988, 1989, Ide 1989 for instance), one of the most important concerns for Japanese people in their relations with one another is their relative position or rank in a group and in a given circumstance. As Nakane points out, group members tend to be linked 'vertically' in terms of age, position and length of continuous service in a certain group. Therefore, relative age and relative rank have great importance when the Japanese choose strategies of politeness.

The formality of a situation should be taken into account when we consider the contextual dimension. The degree of formality can be determined by the setting and purpose (activity type and task or topic) (Brown and Fraser 1979: p.45), and the grade of face loss becomes greater in a formal situation. In addition, the degree of S's involvement in the topic is also influential. When S estimates that her/his interests are going to be harmed if s/he does not disagree, it will encourage her/him to take the risk of face-loss.

In the following section, I am going to analyse the politeness phenomena in the collected data within the theoretical framework argued above.

## **2. The Data**

### **2-1 Method**

A questionnaire was used to investigate how Japanese people express disagreement. Both the questionnaire and the answers were written in Japanese. The questionnaire consisted of seven situations and the informants were asked to write what they would say in each situation (the questions are in the appendix). If they thought they would not say anything, they were asked to say so. The situations were designed in such a way as to investigate the relation between S's choice of strategies and factors which determine the choice. Twenty Japanese people were chosen as informants who ranged in age from their twenties to their fifties.

### **2-2 Strategies**

Among the five strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson, the relevant strategies for analysing these data are "doing FTAs baldly", "positive politeness", "off-record" and "don't do the FTA".

#### **Doing FTAs Baldly**

A few direct disagreements are found from the results of the questionnaire such as:

Example 1 (situation 7)

えー、そんなことない。私すごく好きよ。

Oh, that's not true. I like it very much.

However, usually this strategy is accompanied by another one such as “ask for reasons”.  
For example:

Example 2 (situation 8)

そうかぁ？ よくないよ、ありゃ。どこがそんなに良かったのよ？

Do you think so? It was not good. What was so good about it?

This will be discussed in detail in the part dealing with positive politeness.

Positive Politeness

In carrying out this strategy, “Hedging opinions” (Brown and Levinson 1987: p.116), by using such expressions as “I think”, “I wonder”, “actually” and so on, is used most frequently as shown in table 1. Incomplete sentences ending with “but” are often combined with “I think”, as shown in Example 3.

Example 3 (situation 3)

私はこれは人生の孤独についてだと思いますけど…。

I think it is about loneliness, but...

After the “but”, the utterance could continue in different ways such as “but I may be wrong.”, “I am not sure.” and so on, and it seems that S usually has not decided how to continue before evaluating H's reaction. In some cases informants put a full stop immediately after “*kedo/ga*” (both mean “but”), which may show that since they use these expressions so often at the end of utterances, they do not regard them as incomplete. These conventionalized incomplete sentences are often used in Japanese, and in the questionnaire, they are very frequently used in conjunction with other strategies which will be discussed later.

To “give (or ask for) reasons” (p.128) and more details about the point of disagreement is a technique used as frequently as “hedging”. S can mitigate the FTA by giving a reason, as in Example 4.

Example 4 (situation 6)

でも私の収入は十分じゃないから、できればお兄ちゃんが一緒に住んでくれるといいんだけどなあ。

But since my income is not enough, I wish you could live with them.

On the other hand, asking for reasons and details about the point of disagreeing, as shown in Example 5, can be regarded as a positive-face maintaining act in two ways: giving H a chance to justify her/his opinion and giving S a chance to consider the matter more, so that S does not make disagreement based on limited understanding.

Example 5 (situation 2)

そうですか？もう少し先生のご意見を詳しく言って頂けますか？私が調べたところではイギリスの方が良いように思うのですが…。

Are there? Could you tell me more about them? From what I've read, I think the UK is better, but...

"Token agreement" is also adopted by some informants. In Example 6, the risk of face-threat is quite low because he seems to agree with the H and is only speaking as a "reporter" (Thomas lecture note at Lancaster University: November 1992), and therefore is not responsible for the disagreement.

Example 6 (situation 2)

ええ、私もそう思うのですが、何分親が留学、留学、とうるさくて…。

Yes, I think so too, but, as you know, my parents are pressing me to study abroad so...

On the other hand, Example 7 does not mitigate the threat so much because the degree of agreement is limited by the words "quite" and "for what we can get in this town".

Example 7 (situation 5)

そうね、この町にしては結構良かったけど、あまり本格的とは思えなかったわ。

Yeah, it is quite good for what we can get in this town, but I don't think it is authentic.

One example of the "assert reciprocity" (p.129) technique is found in the questionnaire.

Example 8 (situation 6)

私もできる限りのことをするから、お兄さんも協力してもらえないかしら。

I am going to do as much as I can, so, can't you also cooperate?

In this example, by promising her contribution and asking for H's cooperative action, S claims their cooperative relationship in a group (family) and softens the expected tension caused by the disagreement. In fact, this utterance can also be considered as a request.

Off-Record

The most common technique used in this strategy is "give hints". Questions like "Do you think so?" or "Oh, is that so?" are used by many informants in various situations, and many of them are used to signal imminent disagreement, such as Example 2.

In addition to this technique, there are some others, such as shown in Example 9.

Example 9 (situation 6)

それはそうだし、一緒に住むのがイヤだってわけじゃないけど、兄さんは長男だし、暮らし向きだっていいんだから…。

That's right, and I'm not saying that I don't want to live with them, but, you are the oldest

son and well-off, so...

This is another example of the “be incomplete” (p.227) technique mentioned with regard to Example 3, but the motivation is different. Here, S violates Grice’s “Manner Maxim: avoid obscurity of expression” with the incomplete utterance. She blatantly fails to observe the maxim so that she can avoid the FTA. In this case, the FTA is more serious because she seems not only to be disagreeing but also to be requesting that her brother live with them. Therefore she also uses “token agreement” (“That’s right”) to show that she notices her brother’s positive face, maintains her own positive face with “and I’m not ... with them”, and avoids making the request which can be supposed to be “(so,) can’t you live with them?”.

Another technique which is more indirect is found in Example 10, which can be called the “give hints ambiguously” technique.

Example 10 (situation 5)

(よそを向いて) まあね。

(looking in the other direction) Perhaps so. / Not too bad.

Here he is violating both Grice’s Relevance Maxim and Manner Maxim; what he says in Japanese, “まあね(maane)”, can be interpreted in several ways such as “perhaps you are right” and “the dinner is not too bad” because he avoids giving enough information about the subject of the utterance and therefore the expression is ambiguous. H can only guess what S means with the help of S’s action, such as, looking in the other direction.

Don’t Do the FTA

There are some cases where S gives up performing a FTA and simply agrees verbally or does not say anything, which clearly shows that s/he is “opting out” (Bonikowska 1988). However, there are some cases where S says something which does not verbally imply disagreement at all, but still signals S’s disagreement, like in Examples 11 and 12.

Example 11 (situation 2)

そうでしょうか。それではもう少し考えてみることにします。

Is that so? Then, I will think about it a little more.

Example 12 (situation 6)

違う話を始める。

I would start talking about a different topic.

S can also be interpreted as being convinced by H (in Example 11) and as having failed to hear what H said (in Example 12), and therefore it is difficult to regard these speeches as disagreement. They can be suspected to be disagreement only because of the absence of S’s expression of agreement. However, in Japan responses like Example 11 and Example 12 are often adopted when S is not really agreeing, and therefore they can be considered as a conventionalized implication of disagreement. However, evaluating these responses is as difficult as judging

disagreement from silence.

### 2-3 Relation between S's Choice and the Situation

Table 1 shows the frequency of the strategies used in each situation. It was difficult to categorize the answers as one strategy because there were many answers which were a combination of two or three different strategies such as Example 9 above. In such cases, the part of the utterance which expresses most clearly S's disagreement was that which was classified.

Table 1 S's choice of strategies in each situation

| situation<br>strategies | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 | 6  | 7  | 8  |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| 1. Do FTA baldly        | 0  | 3  | 0  | 2  | 0 | 2  | 3  | 6  |
| 2. Positive p.          |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |
| Hedging                 | 2  | 2  | 10 | 4  | 4 | 0  | 10 | 7  |
| Token                   | 2  | 4  | 0  | 0  | 4 | 1  | 1  | 0  |
| Reasons                 | 0  | 6  | 2  | 3  | 1 | 6  | 3  | 3  |
| Include S & H           | 0  | 0  | 0  | 5  | 0 | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Reciprocity             | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| Total                   | 4  | 12 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 14 | 10 |
| 3. Off-record           |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |
| Give hints              | 9  | 3  | 1  | 5  | 6 | 5  | 1  | 2  |
| Be vague                | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Ambiguously             | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1 | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Incomplete              | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| Total                   | 10 | 3  | 1  | 5  | 7 | 6  | 1  | 2  |
| 4. Don't do FTA         | 6  | 2  | 7  | 1  | 4 | 2  | 2  | 2  |

positive p.=positive politeness    hedging=hedging opinions    token=token agreement  
 reasons=give (or ask for) reasons    include S&H=include both S and H in the activity  
 reciprocity=assume or assert reciprocity    ambiguously=give hints ambiguously    incomplete=be incomplete

Table 2 The determining factors in each situation

| situation<br>factor | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relative power (P)  | 3  | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Social distance (D) | 3  | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Formality (F)       | 3  | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Involvement (I)     | 3  | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| TOTAL               | 12 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 |

Table 2 shows the summary of the explanation of each situation in terms of the determining factors. Each factor is measured on a scale of 1 to 3. If the factor encourages S to perform disagreement, the number of the scale is 1, and if the factor encourages S to employ politeness strategies in order to mitigate the face-threat, the number is 3. Therefore, the seriousness of the face-threat in each situation can be shown by the sum of the numbers.

Two points can be noted from table 1. One is that, in most situations, positive politeness was chosen by more informants than other strategies, and only a few informants chose to disagree baldly. The exceptional cases are discussed later in relation to the nature of the situations.

The other point is that Brown and Levinson's argument that "any rational agent will tend to choose the same genus of strategy under the same conditions" (p.71) is not supported by the results of the questionnaire. Although positive politeness was chosen by more than half of the informants in most situations, it is difficult to say that "they tend to choose the same genus of strategy". It seems to be because of personality differences, and perhaps the "momentary mood" of the informants as Brown and Levinson themselves suggested (p.231-2). For instance, some informants tended to be more polite than others, some tended to regard a certain factor, such as age and power, as more important than others do, and so on. In addition, some informants had a preference for a certain strategy regardless of the difference in the situations. On account of S's psychological and personal differences, it seems to be inadequate to say that Ss tend to choose the same strategy under the same circumstances.

Tables 1 and 2 together show the relations between S's choice of strategies and the determining factors. There is some tendency for informants to choose higher numbered strategies when the seriousness of the face-threat of the situation (shown by the sum of the numbers on the scale) is greater. However, there are some situations, such as situations 2 and 3, where the seriousness of the FTA is the same according to the computed scale, and yet S's choice of strategies is different. From the difference, we can evaluate the importance of a determining factor.

Firstly, let us compare situations 2 and 3. Their totals are the same (both are 9), but while in situation 3, none chose to disagree baldly and seven people chose not to disagree, in situation 2, three people chose to disagree baldly and only two people chose not to disagree. In fact, considering the great risk of the face threat, informants' tendency to express disagreement is quite strong in situation 2. This seems to be because many informants judged their involvement in the topic to take priority over other factors. In other words, they thought their wish to study in England was so important that they chose to disagree baldly or with some redressive expressions in spite of the fact that their lecturer has more power and is more socially distant and so on. On the other hand, seven informants chose not to disagree in situation 3. This can be explained by the low degree of S's involvement, and also by the formality of the situation. In fact, in a Japanese classroom, uttering any kind of opinion, either agreeing or disagreeing with the teacher or fellow students, often carries a serious risk of threatening the S's positive face.

When we compare situations 6, 7 and 8, which are considered to have the same value of face threat, it seems to have been noticeably easy for the informants to disagree baldly in situation 8. This can be explained by the importance of the relative age as a determining factor. Although the P factor is estimated 1 in both situations 7 and 8, the informants seem to have judged there to be a smaller face threat in disagreeing with their younger brother. As for



situation 6, the reason for the tendency of choosing “off-record” strategies cannot be explained only by the determining factors. In spite of the relatively small value of the face threat estimated with the determining factors and the informants’ deep involvement with the topic, only two informants chose to disagree baldly because such disagreement would threaten not only H’s face but also S’s own face. In other words, if S disagrees with her/his brother’s suggestion, namely that S should live with their parents, S will be considered to be insensitive or cruel to her/his parents especially in Japanese society where parents are supposed to live with their children and be taken care of. Therefore situation 6 cannot be treated as equal to other situations in which S mainly threatens H’s face.

#### 2-4 Implications of the Data

In this section, the findings will be discussed from two points of view: firstly, choice of politeness strategies; secondly, the relation between the determining factors and choice of strategies.

Among the four strategies that are relevant to the expression of disagreement, only a few informants chose “do FTA baldly”. Considering the assumption that in a questionnaire informants may sometimes write what they would like to say or they think they should say rather than what they would actually say in a given circumstance, it can be said to be rare for the Japanese to choose this strategy.

“Positive politeness”, especially “hedging opinion” seems to be a popular strategy. In most situations, this was chosen most frequently. In order to mitigate FTAs, many informants combined several ways of hedging, or used them with other techniques, such as “give (ask for) reasons” and “incomplete sentence”. Judging from the data, positive politeness is usually used with other strategies or in combination with the expressions categorised in the same strategy.

“Off-record” was also used very frequently. Many informants used interrogative sentences to imply their disagreement. Interrogative sentences were also used in “positive politeness”, and it seems to be a common way of mitigating the face threat of disagreement. Considering Lakoff’s “rules of politeness” (1973), it is a most appropriate way to express politeness because by using interrogatives S does not impose her/his opinion, gives H the option to restate or does not restate her/his opinion, and S sounds friendly with the rising intonation.

According to the questionnaire, not many informants chose not to do FTAs. However, considering my experience in Japanese society in similar situations to those in the questionnaire, such as a quiet classroom in Japanese schools and universities where very few students volunteer to give their opinions, the small number of informants who chose this strategy raises questions about the reliability of the data.

The responses to the questionnaire raise another issue; some informants chose not to disagree with an ambiguous sign of disagreement. Even when S chooses to “opt out”, there seems to be a culturally conventional way to signal ambiguous disagreement. One example is to say “I will think about it” as shown in Example 11. In fact, it is rather common in Japanese, especially in the case where the disagreement carries the risk of serious face threat, to express agreement in a small degree and add the signal sentence as follows:

#### Example 13

はあ、それではもう少し検討してみます。

Yeah, then, I will consider the matter a little more.

Of course, in some cases, S really means what s/he says, but there are some cases where s/he is expressing disagreement using the sentence as a conventionalised signal. In this case, S is violating Grice's Quality Maxim, and the use of the sentence can be considered as a culturally conventionalised "off-record" strategy, although S is adopting the "don't do FTAs" strategy linguistically. Thus, although Brown and Levinson mention only about the mixture of positive and negative politeness (p.230-231), it is also possible to adopt a strategy between "off-record" and "don't do FTAs".

As for the relation between the determining factors and choice of strategies, it is difficult to judge which are the most important factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies. In situations 2 and 4, I factor plays an important role, but in situation 3 F factor also seems to lead S not to disagree, in addition to the low value of I factor which inhibits S from disagreeing. In situation 8, P factor, especially relative age, can be regarded as an important factor.

What we can tell from the results is that although there is a general tendency for the informants to choose higher numbered strategies when the calculated seriousness of the face threat of the situation is greater, the relative importance of each factor changes depending on the situation. In addition, it was noted that S's personality also seems to influence the choice.

### 3. Conclusions

In this study I have discussed the speech act of disagreement in Japanese within the framework of Brown and Levinson's theory. This speech act carries a great risk of face threat in general, and there are some characteristics of Japanese society which make disagreement a serious FTA, such as respect for conformity to the group, the vertical structure of society and so on. Therefore, in order to perform the act, the Japanese need strategies which can compensate for the face-loss.

From the questionnaire data, it was found that in most of the situations, the Japanese informants use "positive politeness" more often than other strategies in order to carry out the FTA. Within these categories, the sub-strategies, "Hedging opinion", "incomplete sentence ending with 'but'", and "give hints" were used most frequently. It was also noted that many informants used a mixture of strategies, and therefore the frequency of the choice of the above sub-categories is not necessarily high in table 1, in which only the main sentence of disagreement was counted. These strategies were often carried out as interrogative sentences, which also help to mitigate the face-loss.

Some strategic expressions such as "Do you think so?", were used commonly regardless of the situations or informants. They may sound rather an indirect way of expressing disagreement, but to those who know the implication of the expression, these expressions signal S's disagreement. However, to those who do not know the norm to interpret the signals, some expressions especially the ones which belong to an "off-record" strategy, will not be easily understood as disagreement. Therefore, in cross-cultural communication, one needs to be aware of these culturally specific norms of interpretation of language use and try to avoid the expressions

which require those norms.

In order to examine disagreement in Japanese within the framework of Brown and Levinson's theory, it seems to be necessary to modify one point, namely the determining factors for the choice of strategies. In addition to P, D and R, suggested by them, there are cultural and contextual factors which also influence S's choice. Thus, for the present purpose, I have suggested four factors: (1) H's relative power over S (including relative age), (2) the social distance between S and H, (3) the formality of the situation, and (4) S's involvement in the topic. There were other minor points which Brown and Levinson's theory does not capture, such as another mixture of strategies which is not mentioned in their theory, and people's personal difference in the choice of strategies even in the same circumstances. However, their theory was basically applicable to the politeness phenomena examined here.

As I mentioned above, four determining factors for the choice of strategy were suggested in this research. From the analysis of the data, since the degree of relative importance of each factor changes depending on the situation, it is difficult to assess which factor influences the choice of strategy most.

Thus, what I can conclude from this research is quite complex, and it is difficult to propose a general model which answers the question "How do Japanese people express disagreement?" Various strategies are used to perform the speech act, and the choice of the strategies depends on situations and also the personality of the speakers. However, I hope this research shows the general tendency of realisational patterns of disagreement in Japanese; their strong inhibition, several typical strategy patterns, and factors which determine the choice of strategy.

Lastly, I would like to suggest some further research in order to develop what has been discussed here. As mentioned above, I could show the big influence of some determining factors on politeness, but the relative importance of each factor is still not clear. This could be investigated by using a similar questionnaire to the one used for this research, designed in such a way that it contains sets of situations which differ in only one factor. A comparative study between another language and Japanese would also give wider scope to the topic. It might show cases of pragmatic failure more clearly. In addition, if a foreign language, as spoken by Japanese learners, is compared with that language, as spoken by native speakers, the research would also make a contribution to foreign language teaching.

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## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE (translated into English)

What would you say in each of the following situations? If you think you would not say anything, please say so.

Example: You are planning a trip with your friend. You think it is better to go to France by ferry because it is cheaper.

Your friend: It's better to go to France by plane because it is cheaper, isn't it?

You: (example 1) *Well, isn't the ferry cheaper?*

(example 2) *I would not without saying anything.*

1. You are talking about an article in a seminar. You found some data in the article were not properly analysed.

Your lecturer: Get a copy of this article. This is very well-argued.

You:

2. You are talking with a lecturer at your university about your further study. You think you should study at an institution in England because you can get more material and also there is a specialist of the topic you are studying.

Your lecturer: You don't have to go abroad. There are some institutions in Japan where you can study the topic.

You:

3. You are discussing a poem in a literature class. You think this poem is about loneliness.

Your classmate: I think this poem is about death.

You:

4. You are a strike-organizer. You think the answer from the company is not satisfactory and you should go on strike.

Your colleague (as old as you are): The answer from the company is what we wanted. We can stop the strike now.

You:

5. You are talking about an Italian restaurant with your friend. You think their food is not authentic.

Your friend: I went there the other day and I really enjoyed the dinner.

You:

6. You are talking with your elder brother about which of you should live with your old parents. You think he should live with them because he is earning more.

Your brother: I think you should live with them because you live in our hometown and they don't want to leave town.

You:

7. You are talking about pop music with your close friend. You think the latest album of Whitney Houston is one of her best albums.

Your friends: Did you hear Whitney Houston's latest album? She is no good any more.

You:

8. You are talking with your younger brother about the film you saw yesterday. You think it was too superficial and you did not enjoy it.

Your brother: That was great. It was one of the best films I have seen recently.

You: