Cultural Differences in Thought Patterns between Japanese and English Perceived in Refusal and the Importance of Teaching Rhetoric

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1. Introduction

In recent second language acquisition research, one of the issues is now whether Chomsky's Universal Grammar(UG) approach is applicable to the clarification of the acquisition process (see the summary of the recent studies in V. J. Cook, 1985[1]). While there are ardent researchers who claim universal grammar can be a determinant in the language acquisition process, there are others who think UG has little to do with it. (Gass, 1989)

The idea of universals has been widely applied to other areas such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistic pragmatics, etc. In this paper, I limit my observation to refusal, thereby in the domain of sociolinguistics. First I would like to discuss whether refusal can be discussed in terms of universals among languages or it is better treated as culture-specific. Then, I would like to state the overview on the characteristics of refusal in the Japanese culture in contrast with those of the Western, especially English-speaking communities. In the section following, I, as an English teacher, will state what consequence is resulted when the Japanese students express themselves in English, not knowing the differences in rhetoric, e.g. how to express negative intention, and will bring up the importance of teaching contrastive rhetoric. In the final section I will present the data from the empirical research the author conducted in refusal-letter writing, and argue the importance of teaching rhetoric in the teaching of English.

2. Refusal: universal or culture specific
2.1. Universal approach or non-universal approach

There are some linguists/researchers who try to find some universal features across languages[2], Noam Chomsky being the leader in this orientation. On the pragmatic level of language, Brown and Levinson have shown us through their multilingual analysis some universal principles in politeness (1978, 1987). They claim

there exists "the extraordinary parallelism in the linguistic minutiae of the utterances with which persons choose to express themselves in quite unrelated language and culture." (p. 55) The goal of their elaborate analysis is "to rebut the once-fashionable doctrine of cultural relativity in the field of interaction" (1987, p. 56).[3]

According to Brown and Levinson (1978), there are two kinds of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face is the desire to be recognized and appreciated by others. Negative face is the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions; our need for personal space, free from physical and emotional interruption and imposition. People try to get along with others by preserving these faces of their own, while trying to maintain those of other people. And they claim this tendency is universal in light of politeness across languages.

Following Brown and Levinson, Fraser (1978) has claimed that the strategies for performing illocutionary acts are essentially the same across languages. Fraser uses the term "strategy" to refer to "the particular choice of sentencial form and meaning which the speaker employs in order to perform the intended act" (Fraser 1978, p. 12). When the issue of "universality" is applied in a second language acquisition perspective, such simplistic account of Fraser (1978) is problematic as is cited in Bluma-Kulka (1983):

> Fraser argues that second language learners do not have to learn "how to code their intentions" in their target languages. Once they acquire the linguistic means necessary for realizing their speech acts, they only have to learn the social-appropriateness rules that specify how to choose among avaialble forms in any given context. (p. 38)

There are other linguists, on the other hand, who think universalistic approach is misleading, especially in second language learning and teaching. Bluka-Kulka (1983), for instance, refutes, saying "similarity is illusory and tends to disappear on close analysis" (p. 37). He showed Hebrew expressions in comparison with equivalent English ones and analyzed them in terms of speech act theory. And he listed samples that illustrate how variations from language to language in the linguistic realization of a similar procedure might affect its potential illocutionary force. He concludes:

> ... the way in which the interrelationship among pragmatic, linguistic, and social factors is manifested in language varies considerably from one language and culture to another and that as a result, second language learners often fail to realize their speech acts in the target language both in terms of effectiveness (getting their meaning across) and in terms of social appropriateness. (p. 38)

Rubin (1983), who also opposes the idea of universal approach, demonstrates that forms which appear to be readily translatable from one language to another are found to serve different, and sometimes opposite functions. (Her examples will be discussed in the following section.)

It is safe to assume that rules for appropriate speech behavior vary considerably from one society to another. This means that although second language learners have communicative competence in their native languages, there is no reason to assume that they can successfully transfer this ability into accepted interactions with native speakers of the target language community. It is when native language-culture patterns are inappropriately transferred into a second language-culture or when second-language learners are unfamiliar with the target language-culture patterns that well intentioned second-language learners may appear to be impolite to native speakers of the target language-culture, or worse a serious misunderstanding takes place. (Concrete examples of this kind of misunderstanding will be shown in the following sections.)

Chomsky's UG was first originated in order to explain the innate ability of a child to acquire his/her first language, despite the scarcity of stimulus. Chomsky's primary justification for UG is that it provides the only way of accounting for how children are able to learn their mother tongue (Ellis, 1986). In his argument the 'use' of language or the notion of 'communication' has been ruled out. As Cook (1985) puts it, Chomsky's innateness theory sets up barriers against the real world:

> Competence is separated from performance, grammatical competence from pragmatic competence, acquisition from development, core from peripheral grammar, each abstracting something away from language use (p. 8).

In sum, Universal Grammar disregards the primary function of language: Communication.

The nature of communication, I believe, is culturally relative. People learn their way of communication in their speech communities; they learn through trial and error, what is efficient and suitable in their own speech communities. Therefore, as Wolfson (1983) says, "A nonuniversalistic approach to the analysis of sociolinguistic behavior is by far more realistic" (p. 5).

In the following sections I will limit my observation to refusal in social-interactions and discuss that a nonuniversalistic approach is necessary in sociolinguistic research, presenting more concrete data.

2.2. Difficulty of interpreting "No"

There are heaves of problems we face in today's intercultural communication. Refusal, among those problems, is one of the most difficult and complex problems. Rubin (1983) says, "One of the more important communicative tasks that confront a traveler is the recognition of when a speaker has said, 'No'" (p. 10). Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1985) puts it as "Refusals are major cross-cultural points for many non-native speakers." (p. 2)

One can recall some experiences in living in a foreign country, using a foreign language where the use of "no", or not using it triggers misunderstanding among

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two different cultures or two different languages. There are casual cases where misunderstanding is not so serious, but rather a little comical. A Japanese researcher recalls that when he was offered a drink at a party while he was staying in the U.S., he first refused according to the Japanese manner, hoping that the hostess would ask him again. But she never repeated the offer. So he ended up without a drink throughout the party.

When cases are concerned with world politics or international trade, however, the misinterpretation of "no" could be very significant. Rubin (1983) cites,

> In the United States, negotiations with North Vietnam were often misinterpreted. The President often said: "I'll talk peace *anywhere, anytime.*" I think that one meaning which can be attributed to this sentence is "No, I won't." The reason for this interpretation is that in most United States areas, when a person says "drop in any time," this is not an invitation. Rather, if one really wanted to extend an invitation, one would need to specify when and where to meet. By saying "anywhere, anytime" without being more specific, the President made his willingness to negotiate seem dubious. (p. 11)

Rgarding Japan and U.S. relationships, the case of Mr. Sato, our ex-prime minister, is often cited as in Takahashi and Beebe (1987).

> In 1974, the late Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Sato, when asked by President Nixon whether he could agree to self-imposed restrictions on the export of fabrics to the U.S. Mr. Sato answered, "Zensho shimasu". This translated into English as, "I'll take care of it". When used by politicians, however, this expression actually constitutes a polite refusal in Japanese. Later on, of course, Mr. Nixon became very angry because the Japanese did nothing (p. 133–134).

These two instances show us the interpretation of refusal is not a simple matter to tackle with. It is very deeply rooted in the culture and misinterpretation of it could lead to a serious problem. Having lived several years in such divergent language/cultural communities as the United States and Japan, I firmly believe that communication is culturally relative. What is correct in the way of communication in one speech community is not necessarily correct in others.

3. Refusal in the Japanese culture
3.1. The characteristics of Japanese refusal

We Japanese are said to be inept with the skill of saying 'no'. When we find that there is disagreement between us and opponents, we invariably think of the counter effect it may cause if we flatly say 'no'. The dread of confrontation we are apt to have is described very elegantly and scrupulously by an eminent American journalist Robert Christopher as follows (1987):

> Because of their distaste for confrontation and their ingrained horror of openly embarrassing anyone, Japanese in general find it difficult to respond to any

proposition, however outrageous, with an unqualified "no".

As a result, what is to follow is that we avoid saying a flat "no", and instead, we try to implement the negative intention with alternate expressions that connote negation. This behavior is, of course, not exclusive to the Japanese people, but the tendency of avoiding saying "no" is stronger and the strategies employed are much more varied than, say, English, as Ueda (1974) specifies in her article. She says:

> Japanese 'iie' (which means "no") sounds rather formal and too straightforward. Thus, although there are no linguistic rules against using "iie", people seem to unconsciously avoid using it. (p. 186)

Instead, a variety of expressions are used, depending on the occasion. Ueda found following sixteen alternate ways:

> (1) The equivalent of the English "no", (2) Vague "no", (3) Vague and Ambiguous "yes" or "no", (4) Silence, (5) Counter Question, (6) Tangential Responses, (7) Exiting (leaving), (8) Lying Equivocation, etc., (9) Criticizing, (10) Refusing the Question, (11) Conditional 'no', (12) "Yes, but ...", (13) Delaying Answers, (14) Internally 'yes', Externally 'no', (15) Internally 'no', Externally 'yes', (16) Apology.[4] (p. 186)

This attitude of the Japanese people not to disclose one's feeling is not limited to the aspect of negation, as Christopher (1987) puts it:

> Japanese religiously shun explicit, carefully reasoned statements in favor of indirect and ambiguous ones basically designed not to communicate ideas but to feel out the other person's mood and attitudes.

From this attitude, an untranslatable word such as "haragei" is brought about.

The avoidance of such an open and bald negative expression is, as Nakano (1970) says, rooted in the fear that it might "disturb the harmony and the order of the group".

> Loveday (1983) also states,
> Japanese rhetoric patterns of interaction tend to stress mutuality and the emotive aspects. In fact, "no" almost constitutes a term of abuse in Japanese and equivocation, exiting or even lying is preferred to its use. (p. 171)

Furthermore he states,

> In Japan precise and ordered talk may be considered odd and even 'anti-social'; vagueness, indirectness and 'incompleteness' are felt to be the necessary and appropriate method to structure verbal content. (p. 181)

I feel Loveday's statements are a little too exaggerated. I cite here another sample of exaggeration, but nonetheless it still depicts a fact of the language behavior of the Japanese people. It is an example given by Giveny (1975) on the Japanese indirectness which he found quite annoying:

> "It isn't that we can't do it this way", one Japanese will say. "Of course," replies his companion, "we couldn't deny that it would be impossible to say that it

couldn't be done". "But unless we can say that it can't be done", his friend adds, "it would be impossible not to admit that we couldn't avoid doing it. (p. 150)

I conclude this section with a moderate, yet decisive statement of Takeo Doi (1974), a well-known psychologists:

> The Japanese hate to contradict or to be contradicted—that is to have to say "No" in the conversation. They simply don't want to have divided opinions in the first place ... Japanese hesitate or say something ambiguous when they fear what they have in mind might be disagreeable to others (that is, when they have to say "No".) ... I think this has been deeply ingraind in the Japanese people from times immemorial. (p. 22)

3.3. The characteristics of Wetsern rhetoric

Western rhetoric, in contrast, emphasizes directness and precision. This orientation is reflected in a number of everyday expressions of English such as "Get to the points", "Don't beat around the bush, etc. (Loveday, 1983, p. 181)

This type of Western rhetoric that values directness and precision often conflicts with the cultures that have different orientations in values. For example, Rubin (1983) cites from Applegate (1975) a case of American and Vietnamese.

> ... in Vietnam, if someone a few steps higher asks for information from a peasant, such as: "Is this the way to the station?" the usual response is *do phai* "That must be." The reason for this response, which may not be at all acceptable, is that the peasant wants to avoid contradicting a superior person or doesn't wish to make him/her appear ignorant. If the American assumes the accuracy of the response, he/she may very well be led astray and may become angry and frustrated. For the American, the Vietnamese response seems evasive and the individual judged irresponsible or even deceitful.
>
> Certainly, given the American emphasis on "time is money" the peasant has caused the American considerable loss. On the other hand, the Vietnamese may be puzzled by the American's anger. The Vietnamese peasant feels comfortable because he/she has provided a socially responsible answer.

This is the case in which the fact-seeking mind of the American clashed with the saving-face-of-another orientation minded Vietnamese. This type of conflict is also observable between Japanese people and Western people. Neustupny (1982), who is fluent in the Japanese language and also quite versed with sociolinguistic knowledge of both cultures, touched upon a similar situation between a Japanese person and a Westerner and gives advice to the Westerner as follows:

> たとえば、日本にきたばかりの外国人が毎日新宿駅でのりかえすることを考えよう。私の経験では、このような人が「駅が複雑で、のりかえがむずかしいだろう」と日本人に同情されると、たいてい「いいえ、大丈夫だ」と答える。ほとんどの欧米語ではこのような返答は失礼でない。しかし、日本語ではやはり、このような同情的な問いかけに対しては、「いいえ」

ではなく、「ときどきわからなくなりますね」とか、ある程度肯定的な返事をするのがよい。(p. 106)

What Neustupny is saying here is that in this kind of interrogation, the answer "no" is not impolite in the Western culture, but he advises to answer affirmatively to this type of statement made sympathetically by the Japanese. This interpretation shows that Neustupny is not only proficient in the language, but also he understands the subtle cultural value of the Japanese society underlying speech.

Sakamoto and Naotsuka (1982) look at refusal from a different point of view and describe the Japanese society as mutually dependent, while American society as mutually independent. They say because of this difference, an interesting contrast is observed in refusal:

> In Japan, when someone asks a favor the unconscious polite fiction that "I depend on you", which involves the corollary that "I am helpless without your aid," makes it hard to refuse the request ... But in America, the polite fiction that "you and I are independent" involves the corollary that "if you don't help me, I can cope by myself." Thus, for both parties, a refusal is not such a serious matter. So it is much easer to say "no" without being impolite. (p. 34)

The above statement of Sakamoto and Naotsuka well sums up the contrastive aspects in refusal between two cultures.

4. The necessity of building delivery skills for the Japanese people

The type of behavior and attitude inherent to the Japanese people described in the above sections is nothing to reprimand as long as the domain is limited to Japan. In this highly internationalized world as it is today, however, sometimes it can be a drawback and might create a serious misunderstanding between peoples and nations. The case between our ex-Premier Sato and ex-U.S. President Nixon, cited earlier, was a representative one. Now that commerce between Japan and the U.S. is widespread, there are frequent reports of frustration by Americans because polite Japanese never say no (Tannen, 1984, p. 194). The problem is by now not limited to people who are high-ranking officials in politics, but it is becoming more or less an everyday thing; the problem we ordinary people are concerned about.

Before Loveday's suggestion that Japanese speakers of English need special emphasis placed on 'delivery skills', we need to build the skill of explaining ourselves effectively when we communicate with the rest of the world. In order to foster such an ability, to begin with, we need to be exposed to Western rhetorical tradition. The lack of teaching rhetoric (in Western terms) in the Japanese education is often pointed out. To limit the situation to college-level English instruction, the scarcity of teaching rhetoric is obvious. Harry Burton-Lewis (1988), who has long been teaching English at Tsukuba University says:

> Higher education in Japan has been conspicuously reluctant to give organized

attention to rhetoric. This exclusion is nowhere more evident than in foreign language education, where knowledge of rhetoric is an indispensable tool. (p. 123)

5. Transfer of rhetoric

What is prevalent in the classroom of English composition in Japan is the so-called 和文英訳, sentence-by-sentence translation approach. In this method, students first learn so-called "basic" English sentential structures and supplementary vocabulary items. Students are encouraged to do straight translation exercises from Japanese into English, usually one sentence or two at a time. This is the method which allows students to transfer their L1 competence into expressions in L2 without questioning. This kind of attitude will result in, on the pragmatic level, such a case as cited in Loveday (1982):

> ...a Japanese professor of English said on my leaving his house after tea: "I'm sorry I haven't given you enough attention." He had simply translated the Japanese routine formula for seeing off guests, causing an inappropriate speech act to occur. (p. 6)

What is stressed in the traditional type of composition teaching is the micro-level competence of English. It is important to view the micro-level from the macro-level of English (Yamato, 1987). Nishikawa (1988) ventured to have one of her composition classes translate a whole volume of 「ガラスのうさぎ」 into English. In the process of analyzing the errors made by the students she realized there are particular types of mistakes which she had never concerned about when she was employing the traditional type of sentence-by-sentence translation approach in her class. She comments:

> それまで英作文のための比較的短い和文ばかりを英訳させていた時には余り気にならなかった誤りが非常に目つき、その誤りを分析しているうちにこれは学生の英語力の不足というよりも日英両語の基本的な発想の違いから生じるつまずきではないかと思われてきた。個々の語句や語法の問題もさることながら、その背後にある基本的な発想について表現上大きな転換が必要とされるのではないかと思われる。いわゆる英作文のための問題に使われる短い和文では、主語・述語の関係はある程度明確であるから、大きな間違いは少ない……つまり英語の文法は論理的でかつ明示的に認識されているのに対して、日本語は直感的に理解されており、いちいち分析しないところから両語のズレが生じてくるといえる。(p. 125)

The similar idea is proposed by Robert Kaplan in 1966 when he advocated the teaching of "contrastive rhetoric". He presented diagrammatically the differences in the way text is organized among several types of languages. According to his presentation, the style of English is best described as "linear" and that of Japanese is "turning and turning in widening gyre." EFL teachers are now becoming aware of the differences in rhetoric between students' native languages and English and realize the ignorance of these differences induce the students to write English prose of low acceptability to the native speaker of English. (Oi, 1988)

Despite this awareness that rhetorical aspect of the target language should be taught in the EFL classroom, only a few textbooks that are currently on the market deal with such problems and those instructors who actually venture into this area in their teaching seem to be much fewer.

As a result, Japanese students employ Japanese rhetoric when they write in English. This phenomenon is not limited to the elementary level of EFL. When I am asked to paraphrase an English passage written by a Japanese person who is proficient in English (in terms of grammar), I have difficulty in editing it, because what is wrong is not the grammar but the whole discourse. This person must have translated into English what he/she has written in Japanese originally. There the original Japanese logic is intact; there is no way but to change the whole discourse in order for it to sound logical in English. This shows that sentence-by-sentence translation is inadequate when two different languages are involved: the whole discourse has to be changed in order to meet the inherent logical structure of the target language.

In the section following, I will show the result of a cross-cultural study where transfer of rhetoric from the students' mother tongue is present.

6. Experiment[5]
6.1. The framework of the present study

I have shown that refusals reflect fundamental cultural values and those values are quite different between the Western culture and the Japanese culture. In the present study, I investigated the difference in rhetoric between Japanese and English in the way of writing a refusal letter with the following three groups of subjects:
  (1) Japanese college students writing in Japanese (J–J; n=30)
  (2) Japanese college students writing in English (J–E; n=30)
  (3) Americans writing in English (A–E; n=20)

The reason that I chose this task is two-fold:
(1) In refusal, people have to say, basically what the listener does not want to hear, because the speaker is refusing the request that listener made. So the speaker employs his/her pragmatic competence in order not to embarress the listener too much. This type of pragmatic competence is deeply rooted in culture, so even if people are to write in a second language, they do not easily give up the cultural values found in their mother tongue. Therefore, transfer of pragmatic competence is observable.
(2) Letter-writing was chosen as a task because I speculated that because of the pragmatic purpose (i.e. one has to get one's message across), rhetorical differences might be more intensified than ordinary writing such as expository prose.

The task given to J–E group is as follows:

A group of people from the United States are coming to your town to visit various places of interest. As they do not speak your language, an acquaintance of yours in the American Embassy has written to you informally asking you to be an interpreter for two days for this group. Write a letter refusing this request. (The name of the acquaintance in the American Embassy is Mr. Anderson.)

The Japanese translation version of this task is given to the students in the J–J group. The task given to the A–E group is one modified in order to meet the difference in the situation: The American Embassy instead of the Japanese Embassy and Mr. Tanaka intead of Mr. Anderson.

6.2. Findings and discussion

There are several points where letters written by native speakers of English contrast with those by Japanese students in terms of rhetoric. In this discussion grammatical errors are disregarded and the discussion is only in the light of contrastive rhetoric.

(1) Apology-mentioning:

Fewer than half of the people (45%) in the A–E group mentioned an apology for not being able to work as an interpreter, while the majority of people in the Japanese groups (J–E: 93.3%, J–J: 86.7%) mentioned an apology in one way or another. It is interesting to note that a large percent of the A–E did not consider giving an apology is necessary in this kind of situation. On the other hand, for most of the Japanese people "apology" is prerequisite; it is an essential part of strategy in a refusal letter.

(2) Excuse-mentioning:

In this study, all references expressing "excuse" for not being able to act as an interpreter were put into the following five categories: (1) busy, (2) linguistic incompetence (e.g., my English is too poor), (3) specific reasons, such as, "I'll be out of town that week", (4) unspecified reason (e.g., "due to personal circumstances", and (5) no rason just flatly saying "I'll not be available."

An interesting point is that only four people (20%) in the A–E group stated linguistic incompetence as an excuse. Among the twenty subjects in the A–E group, few people are proficient in speaking Japanese. (I can say so because I know some of them personally, and others indirectly.) The Japanese counterparts, on the other hand, nearly half of the people (J–E: 50%, J–J: 46.7%) mentioned linguistic incompetence. We can learn from this an aspect of American mind that it is not a good idea to mention anything that would show one's inability; it is better to give something else as an excuse rather than discrediting oneself.

Another interesting point is that there are five people in the A–E group who

thought giving an excuse for refusal was not necessary, where there are none in the J–E group and only on in J–J. This should reflect one side of the American mind that for the request made by someone who is merely one's acquaintance, not a friend, nor a mentor, no obligation exists to include their specific excuse to refuse the request. While in the mind of Japanese, refusal, especially asked by someone at the Embassy, is a terribly regrettable matter, and therefore, they feel they have to come up with a good enough, convincing reason.

In this connection, Sakamoto and Naotsuka (1982) state that since Americans do not depend on others as much as Japanese do, refusing is not as a serious matter and say:

> "I'm sorry, I can't" is a perfectly polite response. You don't have to give an elaborate explanation. You don't even have to feel guilty. (p. 34)

(3)   The order of refusal vs. excuse:

The contrast that is observed in this category is that everyone in the A–E group stated their excuses and refusal just once and do not repeat either the excuse or refusal. This reflects the linear style of English writing, diagrammatically pointed out by Robert Kaplan (1966). The Japanese subjects, on the other hand, mention "excuse" preceding "refusal" and mention "excuse" again after the "refusal". This pattern is observed both in the J–J group and the J–E. The pattern the Japanese take even when writing in English, in which they are free to switch back to the earlier statement or they repeat refusal or excuse again, hinders the flow of discourse. (This tendency of the Japanese people to alter their argumentation in their writing is discussed in Oi, 1986)

(4)   The order of positive response vs. refusal:

The positive response before refusal was labeled as "adjunct" in the study of Beebe et al. (1985). This means the positive statement by itself sounds like accepting the request. "Positive response" is something like "Thank you very much for asking me to act as an interpreter" in the present study. It seems to be a universal tendency to put a positive statement before one actually sets out refusing, saying "Unfortunately, I cannot act as an interpreter" in order to soften the negative message. This pattern is observed across the groups in this present study as well. However, putting positive response after refusal is something different. This certainly reflects their regretful-ness, but to the English speaking people, this pattern sounds like "harping on" the matters already settled. And of course, this pattern deviates from the linear style of English. There are none in the A–E group who violate the linear style of English in this sense, while there are four in each of the J–J and J–E groups to fall into this pattern. This can be identified as a case of negative transfer.

7. Conclusion

In this paper I have stated that a non-universal approach is necessary in second language teaching, especially when communicative competence of the target language is concerned. I have shown in refusal, values and rhetoric involved in refusal are different between Japanese people and Western people.

I also stressed that the traditional method of English composition, i.e., 和文英訳, is too limited a method. It is limited because its emphasis on the manipulation and correctness of taught sentence structure ignores the discoursal aspects of writing, and also because straight translation inhibits the students' attempt to generate ideas which are appropriate to Western culture and logic. It is at these discoursal and logical levels that the students tend to transfer Japanese rhetoric and, hence produce writing of low acceptability to the native speakers of English. The instructors should attend to the beyond-the-sentence level of writing and teach the rhetorical differences between Japanese and English.

I have provided some evidence of contrastive rhetoric between the English letter of refusal and the Japanese letter of refusal. I also showed some instances of negative transfer the Japanese students showed when they write in English.

The present study is limited to letter-writing. A different kind of pragmatic competence may be observed in a different kind of setting, such as conversation analysis.

In conclusion, what I want to stress in this paper is well represented in Scarcella's following statement (1984):

It is not enough for teachers to develop their [students'] linguistic knowledge. Instructors must also concern themselves with developing their students' discourse and cultural knowledge as well (p. 684).

Notes

(1) We have to note here that Chomsky himself has not extended the theory of UG to second language learning, apart from occasional scattered allution. (Cook, 1985 p. 2)

(2) There are two approaches to describing linguistic universals. One is Chomsky who seeks to identify linguistic universals by the indepth study of a single language (i.e. English). This approach is called Universal Grammar. The other is Greenberg and his followers (e.g. Comrie) who have set about identifying universals by examining a wide range of languages from different language families in order to discover what features they have in common. This approahh is referred to as typological universals.

(3) In their revised edition (1987) of their earlier version of Politeness (1978), there is a following reference in Introduction:

Much can be found in traditional ethnographic description that bears on this field of concepts, and naturally it may be thought that our universalistic account is an inexcusable cultural denudation, or worse, ethnohentric projection. But our point is that despite the rich cultural elaborations, the core ideas have a striking familiarity.

A statement like this should be a realization of their defense against the attacks made by sociolinguits such as Bluka-Kulka, Rubin and etc., whose claims I cited in the text.

(4) This is, of course, not to say, that only the Japanese language has this way of avoiding saying "no". Rubin (1983) also discusses the different ways of avoiding saying "no". She presents nine different ways which are found in every culture. They are: (1) Be silent, hesitate, show a lack of enthusiasm, (2) Offer an alternative, (3) Postponement (delaying answers), (4) Put the blame on a third party or something over which you have no control, (5) Avoidance, (6) General acceptance of an offer but giving no details, (7) Divert and distract the addressee, (8) General acceptance with excuses, (9) Say what's offered is an appropriate. But she stresses that the form-function relation of each way is different in every culture, therefore, second-language learners have to pay attention to the often-subtle difference.

(5) This is a part of an experiment on which Taeko Sato and I presented a paper at a JACET annual conference in Zentsuji 1987. For more detailed account and full explanation of the experiment, see Oi and Sato, 1990.

Acknowledgements:

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