

Speaker's Information Territory and Politeness of Japanese Learners of English

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Some studies on the theory of "speaker's territory of information" (e.g., Kamio, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2002) suggest that native speakers of Japanese are generally aware of territories of information of their own and other people, try to avoid invading other people's territories, and also invite hearers to the speaker's territory by using different forms of sentence modality. This makes Japanese speech sound indirect; using "correct" indirect modality is one of the pragmatic strategies of linguistic politeness in Japanese (Trent, 1997). Building on previous research, this study qualitatively and quantitatively compares the English spoken by Japanese learners of English with that of native speakers of English. The analyses indicate that English produced by Japanese learners is more direct, when viewed through the theory of speakers' information territory. This study of linguistic politeness may contribute to EFL education by enabling students to understand the language culture behind linguistic politeness.

「情報の縄張り範囲」理論 (e.g., Kamio, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2002) によると、日本語母語者は、話している事柄が、自分の情報か、話し相手の情報か、共通の情報かなどの認識を文末のモードで表現している。殆どの日本語母語者は情報の縄張りを意識して「常識的な文末の形」を使う傾向がある。これは文法ではないが語用論的には常識であり、相手の情報の縄張りを侵食しないことは日本語の丁寧さ表現のひとつである (Trent, 1997)。今回のリサーチでは「英語の母語者の英語による会話」と「日本語母語者の英語による会話」を量的質的に分析し、両者がどのように情報の縄張り範囲を意識しているかを検証した。結果として、日本語母語者の英会話では「会話相手の縄張り」「共通の縄張り」を含め直接モードが多く、英語母語者にも認められた会話相手の持っている情報への配慮は低かった。情報の縄張り意識の背景にある言語文化的な丁寧さ表現の違いについて学習者に理解を促すことで英語教育への活用が期待できる。

NATIVE SPEAKERS of Japanese are often perceived to be indirect or ambiguous. There are many factors behind this cliché, for example, the infrequent use of sentence subjects (especially, *I* and *you*), incomplete utterances ending with *ga* or *keredo*—both literally meaning *but* (McGloin, 1981), and the frequent use of indirect expressions such as *kamo/kamoshirenai* [maybe, might], *doomo* [it looks like / it does not work even though we tried] and *janai/janaika* [isn't it] (Yang & Cao, 2005). One important observation is that Japanese speakers most likely do not intend to be ambiguous; they understand each other without serious ambiguities. Thus, Yang and Cao's observation that people are simply trying to appear less assertive and judgmental seems appropriate. However, outside of the Japanese community, this indirectness can be problematic when the speaker's intention is not clear, or the speaker's

contention is misunderstood as being less worthy than it actually is. Being indirect, however, is a universal politeness strategy (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Searle, 1975), which must also be true in Japanese. While knowing how to be polite in the target language is essential for learners, the influence of politeness strategies from the learners' native language has not been studied methodologically. This research investigates whether the politeness level of English spoken by Japanese learners is significantly different from that of native speakers of English. From among many theories of linguistic politeness, the theory of a speaker's information territory is used in this study. Modality expressions of directness and indirectness are called *evidentials*. Thus, this paper is a study of politeness, sentence modality, and evidentiality expressions of English and Japanese speakers.

Background Theories for Indirect Language Theories of Linguistic Evidentiality and Speaker's Territory of Information

The linguistic concept of evidentiality is defined as "the linguistic means of indicating how the speaker obtained the information on which he bases an assertion" (Willet, 1988, p. 55). Examples include:

- I saw /heard John sing. (Speaker had direct perceptual access to John's singing.)
- John was allegedly singing. (Evidence is indirect—hearsay.)
- John was apparently singing. (Evidence is indirect—some unspecified source.) (Papafragou, Li, Choi, & Han, 2007, p. 253)

If a speaker has direct evidence that supports his speech, such as witnessing, he may use direct language forms (see, e.g., Chafé, 1986). If he obtained the information indirectly, such as through hearsay, he may use indirect language forms to show his lack of certainty. The use of evidentials is not grammati-

cized in either English or Japanese; however, speakers of some languages such as Tuyuca in Columbia (Barnes, 1984) show how they obtain information as part of grammar. In English, evidentials are mostly lexical (see Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of English Evidentiality

| Type of evidential | English examples |
|------------------------|---|
| Auxiliaries | may, might, must, would, can, could |
| Adverbs | certainly, definitely, likely, possibly, probably |
| Idiomatic phrases | it looks like, it seems |
| Expressions of hearsay | he told me, according to him |
| Deductions/inductions | because X, A is B |
| Sensory information | I saw, I heard, I smelled |

In Japanese, evidential expressions are mostly used in sentence endings, making the sentences direct or indirect (see Table 2).

Table 2. Examples of Japanese Evidentiality

| Type of evidential | Sub-type | Japanese examples [English translation] |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Direct | Direct sentence ending copulas | <i>da, desu, masu</i> [is, are] <i>mashita, datta</i> [was, were] |
| | Sentences that end with a noun or adjective | <i>Kyoo wa atsui.</i> [Today TOP hot] |
| Indirect | Auxiliaries | <i>hazu</i> [must be, expected] <i>ni-chigai-nai</i> [must, without a doubt] <i>daroo</i> [probably] <i>kamo-shire-nai</i> [maybe, might be] |
| | Hearsay and inference auxiliaries | <i>soo</i> [I heard, I read, I was told] <i>yoo</i> or <i>mitai</i> [it looks like] <i>rashii</i> [it looks like, it seems, I heard, it appears] <i>daroo</i> or <i>deshoo</i> [probably] |
| | Question forms | <i>desuka?</i> , <i>nan desuka</i> ↑, <i>ka</i> ↑, <i>no</i> ↑ [e.g., is? does? do? are?] <i>janaika</i> ↑, <i>janaino</i> ↑ [e.g., isn't? aren't? don't? doesn't?] noun ↑, adjective ↑ |
| | Particles and other expressions | <i>ne</i> ↓, <i>no</i> ↓, <i>no ne</i> ↓, <i>no yo</i> , <i>kedo</i> , <i>n-dakedo</i> , <i>yo</i> , <i>sa</i> , <i>kara</i> , <i>kara ne</i> [softening sentence endings, "explaining" nuance] <i>n-desuka</i> ↓, <i>wake desu ka</i> ↓, <i>da ne</i> [so I understand] <i>ne</i> ↑ [rapportive], <i>ne</i> # [sharing], <i>janai</i> ↓, <i>janaika</i> ↓ [e.g., isn't it ↓, doesn't it ↓] |

Note. TOP = Topic marking particle; ↑ = rising tone; ↓ = falling tone; # = level tone

Regarding direct and indirect sentence endings, Japanese psychologist Akio Kamio (1979, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2002) proposed the theory of speaker's information territory. Initially, he argued that Japanese speakers unconsciously assume four

different information territories when speaking (see Table 3), and suggested that Japanese speakers use direct evidential forms only for information in their own information territory. Kamio (1994) characterized information in the speaker's territo-

ry. In this study, the following modified list of characteristics (as used in Trent, 1997, p. 190) determines if information is solely owned by the speaker. Speakers are supposed to have privileged access to information with the following characteristics:

- information obtained through the speaker's past and current direct experience through visual, auditory, or other senses, including the speaker's emotion or thoughts;
- information about people, facts, and things close to the speaker, including information about plans, actions, and behavior of the speaker or other people whom the speaker considers close, and information about places with which the speaker has a geographical relation;
- information embodying detailed knowledge that falls within the speaker's area of expertise; and
- information that is unchallengeable by the hearer due to its historically and socially qualified status as truth.

Table 3 presents a simplification of the relationship between the Japanese sentence ending forms and information in different information territories proposed by Kamio.

In these sample sentences, the particle *ne* [isn't it?] forms a negative question requesting agreement (rapportive-*ne*) or confirms that information is shared (confirmative-*ne*). *Ne* marks the speaker's intention to provide background information or new information as though already known to the hearer (McGloin, 1980). Thus, *ne* shows the speaker's willingness to share information (McGloin, 1980, 1981; Kamio, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1994); sentences ending with *ne* in B and C territories in Table 3 are indirect. Expressions such as *deshoo* or *daroo* [probably, isn't it?], and *janai* [isn't it?] are also used to express willingness to welcome hearers into the speaker's information territory. The territory of information shared by the hearer seems to be important to the speaker (see Figure 1). This may be related to the group-oriented culture of Japanese society. Studies of anthropology and anthropological linguistics often relate the traditional concept of *uchi* [inside] versus *soto* [outside] with honorific language (e.g., Hall, 1976; Witzel, 1984; Ando, 1986; Ting-Toomy, 1982). Showing respect by not imposing on others is an important politeness strategy (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987). Showing camaraderie (Lakoff, 1974) and presupposing common ground

Table 3. Four Basic Information Territories of Japanese

| Territories of information | Examples of information [English translation] | Sentence ending forms | |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| A. Speaker's information territory | 頭が痛いです。 [I have a headache.] | <i>Atama ga itai desu.</i> head NOM hurt COP] | direct form |
| B. Information is completely shared by both parties | いい天気ですね。 [It is a fine day, isn't it?] | <i>Ii tenki desu ne.</i> good weather COP CONF] | direct form + <i>ne</i> |
| C. Hearer's information territory | お疲れのようですね。 [You seem to be tired.] | <i>O tsukare no yoo desu ne.</i> HON tired seem COP RAPP] | indirect form + <i>ne</i> |
| D. Information is outside of both parties' territories | 明日は雨らしいです。 [I heard it is going to rain tomorrow.] | <i>Asu wa ame rashii desu.</i> tomorrow TOP rain seem COP] | indirect form |

Note. Particles: NOM = nominative; COP = copula; CONF = confirmative; HON = honorific; RAPP = rapportive; TOP = topic

(Brown & Levinson, 1987) are also recognized as politeness strategies, and emphasis on the shared information territory plays a similar role.

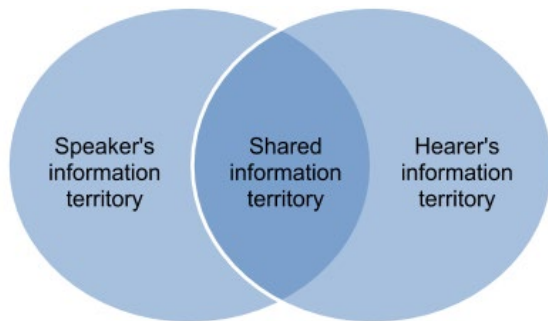


Figure 1. A Japanese Speaker Is Sensitive to the Information Shared With Hearers

Although Kamio (1995) later subdivided territories A and C (see Table 4), his idea significantly explains the indirectness of Japanese: Japanese speakers use direct sentence ending forms (e.g., *da* or *desu*) only with A territory information and use indirect forms for information from other territories. Kamio assumed six different Japanese information territories “given the assumption that information takes values between (and including) 1 (full knowledge) and 0 (no knowledge) on the speaker’s and hearer’s scales” (p. 239). $S > H$ indicates that the speaker assumes that information belongs more to S (speaker) than to H (hearer). $S = H$ indicates that information falls equally into both parties’ territories. $S < H$ indicates that the information is in the hearer’s territory.

Table 4. Six Territories of Information (Kamio (1995), Modified by Author)

| Case | Definition of case | Sentence ending form | Interpretation |
|------|--|--------------------------|--|
| A | $1 = \text{speaker} > \text{hearer} = 0$ | direct form | Speaker’s information territory |
| B | $S = H = 1$ | direct- <i>ne</i> form | Information shared by the speaker and hearer |
| AB | $1 = S > H$ | <i>daroo</i> form | Speaker’s information territory but speaker expects hearer also knows about the topic |
| CB | $S \leq H = 1$ | <i>daroo</i> form | Hearer’s information territory but speaker also knows about the topic less than or as well as the hearer |
| C | $0 = S < H = 1$ | indirect- <i>ne</i> form | Hearer’s information territory; speaker does not have knowledge |
| D | $1 > S, 1 > H$ | indirect form | Outside both parties’ information territories |

To verify Kamio’s theory, Trent (1997) collected conversational data from 94 native Japanese speakers in speech situations including formal discussion, informal chats, public speech, classroom conversation, and courtroom utterances. Nearly 7,000 analyzable sentence ending forms were classified into the six information territories. Quantitative analysis of the data supports Kamio’s theory of speaker’s territory of information,

demonstrating that excluding the speaker's own information territory A, speakers of Japanese use indirect sentence ending forms almost universally (Table 5).

Table 5. The Model of Japanese Evidentiality

| Type of propositional information | Sentence ending evidentials used across all speech situations |
|---|--|
| A. Falls only in the speaker's information territory | direct forms: <i>da, desu</i> direct forms + vocative <i>no, yo, n-da, kedo</i> direct forms + rapportive- <i>ne</i> ↓ |
| AB. Falls in the speaker's information territory, but the hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | tag-questions with falling tone: <i>daroo</i> ↓, <i>janai</i> ↓ |
| B. Falls in both the speaker's and hearer's information territories | sharing <i>ne</i> # confirming <i>ne</i> ↑ tag-questions with rising tone: <i>daroo</i> ↑, <i>janai</i> ↑ |
| CB. Falls in the hearer's information territory, but the speaker has some knowledge | tag-questions with rising tone: <i>daroo</i> ↑, <i>janai</i> ↑ questions: <i>ka</i> ↑, <i>no</i> ↑ |
| C. Falls only in the hearer's information territory | questions: <i>ka</i> ↑, <i>no</i> ↑ |
| D. Falls in neither the speaker's nor the hearer's information territory | hearsay: <i>sooda, kiita, dasooda</i> , etc. inference: <i>yooda, mitaida, rashii</i> , etc. |

Note. ↓ = falling tone; ↑ = rising tone; # = level tone

It can be assumed that, living in the Japanese language culture, Japanese learners of English may transfer this concept of indirect utterances to their English. If so, discrepancies may arise between English native speakers' concept of information territories and that of Japanese learners. Kamio (1990) stated that English native speakers have only two information territories: a territory to which the speaker has direct access and one to which the speaker does not. Kamio argued that a modality equivalent to Japanese-style "direct + *ne*" or "indirect + *ne*" does not exist in English because the mode of English sentences can be interpreted more freely. Kamio (1990, pp. 43-46) listed the following examples to demonstrate that English sentences describing information in both the speaker's and hearer's territories are usually spoken in direct mode:

- It's a beautiful day.
- You've taken good care of me.
- George was released from the hospital.
- Your home is very close to campus.

Through the following examples, Kamio also showed that English sentences describing information out of the speaker's territory are spoken in indirect forms:

- You seem to have forgotten that.
- I hear your son is a medical student at Harvard.
- Isn't your mother from California?
- Your dream may come true.
- Jane looked like she was feeling bad.

Kamio (1990) suggested that English native speakers do not use indirect forms for shared information, unlike Japanese native speakers. However, since this observation was based on Kamio's experiential judgment, analysis of actual data would be useful to identify differences between the use of the two

languages. To this end, the English spoken by English native speakers and Japanese learners of English were compared.

Method

From four lengthy conversations within the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English Part 2 (Du Bois, Chafe, Meyer, Thompson, & Martey, 2003), 1,408 analyzable sentences were collected. Conversation #15 is a conversation between a couple and their friend regarding travelling and family, #16 is between an electronic store salesman and customer, #17 is between two students regarding alternative views of technology, and #24 is between a couple playing games.

From conversational data of 50 Japanese learners of English (three groups of 20, 20, and 10) in college-level speaking classes in 2012, 527 sentences were collected. Data was collected during two classroom activities: (a) in pairs, learners talked about their summer, reported their partner's experiences, and answered questions from their classmates and teacher; and (b) learners talked with the teacher individually. Topics included everyday life, hobbies, relationships, and travel.

Although topics were selected to induce utterances using different territories of information, conversations often diverted to tangential topics. Conversations were recorded. In speech situation (a), each group talked for 30-45 minutes. In speech situation (b), each student had a 10-15 minute conversation with the teacher. Students were encouraged to ask questions and make natural conversation. However, due to the social status difference between teacher and student, learners tended to avoid personal questions in (b), which limited data analysis on some information territories. Levels of learners ranged from beginner to lower intermediate. Evidential forms were analyzed and classified into the six assumed information territories introduced in Table 5.

Results of Data Analysis and Discussion

English Spoken by Native Speakers of English

As Table 6 shows, in territories A, AB, and B, where speakers have authorized access, native speakers of English used fairly direct modes, indicating their belief that direct forms are appropriate when they know the information is true, even when the knowledge is shared by the hearers.

Table 6. Evidential Forms used in English Conversation by Native Speakers of English: Speaker's Territories A, AB, and B

| Types of propositional information | Evidential forms | |
|---|------------------|----------|
| | Direct | Indirect |
| A. Falls only in speaker's information territory | 78.8% | 21.2% |
| AB. Falls in speaker's information territory, but hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | 74.0% | 26.0% |
| B. Propositional information falls in both the speaker's and the hearer's information territories | 84.6% | 15.4% |

Note. See Appendix A for details.

For example, in Extract 1, Joanne describes her Caribbean tour to her friend Lenore. Obviously, Lenore also has been there, so the information is shared, but Joanne uses direct expressions describing the place. So, Lenore reminds Joanne that the information is shared.

Extract 1

Joanne: The...the Caribbean is incredible. (Territory B—direct form)

Lenore: ...Resort.

Joanne: It's just this beautiful, beautiful, blue water. (Territory B—direct form)

Leorne: I know. (Territory A—direct form)
I know the Caribbean is incredible. (Territory A—direct form)

In Extract 2, Joanne talks about her mother, who belongs to Joanne's territory of information (A). However, she also talks in direct forms about her boyfriend Ken when talking to him. Since the matter is about him, even though she is making observations about him, the information should be in Territory AB, not Territory C, due to her close relationship with Ken.

Extract 2

Lenore: So your mother's happy now? (Territory C—indirect form)

Joanne: My mother's never happy. (Territory A—direct form)
My mother wouldn't be happy if everything was. . .
But she's miserable. (Territory A—direct form)
Cause that's just the way she is. (Territory A—direct form)
It's kind of like you, Ken. (Territory AB—direct form)

Ken: That's . . . not at all like me Joanne. (Territory A—direct form)

Joanne: No reason to be miserable. (Territory AB—direct form)

Ken: (SWALLOW)

Joanne: You have no reason to be miserable. (Territory AB—direct form)

Ken: I'm . . . first of all I'm not miserable. (Territory A—direct form)
And secondly. . .

Lenore: He's a happy person. (Territory CB—direct form)

In Extract 2, Joanne's direct expressions to Ken about himself could be considered showing her power and authority over him (Fox, 2001), but similar utterances in Japanese would be expressed indirectly, such as with *janaino?* or *mitai*. Unexpectedly, results showed that native speakers of English tended to use more direct expressions when discussing shared B territory information than when talking about topics in A territory. This may suggest that emphasis on "shared character" is important in English conversation.

For example, in Extract 3, Michael and Jim talk about their common field, technology. While they share this information territory, they also share information in this field. Most of the conversation is in direct forms.

Extract 3

Jim: Yeah, or, because it recognizes your phone number, (Territory B—direct form)

It automatically goes into the computer, finds that, (Territory B—direct form)

Michael: Yeah,

Jim: and, and names the name. (Territory B—direct form)

Michael: That simple.

Jim: Thank you Mister Smith, for calling Pacific Bell. (Territory B—direct form)

Michael: Yeah, right. (Territory B—direct form)

- You know.
- Jim: I am your personal computer representative. (Territory B—direct form)
- Michael: That'd be great. (Territory B—direct form)
- Jim: Well, the networking of computers is getting, uh, such that, you know, almost anything's possible. (Territory B—direct form)
- Michael: Yeah,
That's why I like it. (Territory A—direct form)
- Jim: It's just matrixing, and, just, constantly, building and building, upon building upon building, on these complexities, and building controllers for the . . . (Territory B—direct form)
- Michael: and
- Jim: and building on top of those. (Territory B—direct form)
- Michael: And you're building on the thoughts of the . . . your predecessors. (Territory B—direct form)

Direct forms seem natural as they build their theory of computer philosophy together. In Japanese, however, indirect sharing forms such as *janai?*, *desho?*, or *ne* would most likely be used in similar conversations.

On the other hand, native speakers of English used indirect modes for information in CB and C territories, which are hearer's information territories, and D territory, which consists of third party information (see Table 8). When speaking about CB territory information, speakers predominantly use question forms, and when speaking about C territory information, speakers do not use direct forms even when speakers have some knowledge.

Table 7. Evidential Forms Used in English Conversation by Native Speakers of English: Speaker's Territories C, CB, and D

| Type of proposition | Evidential forms | |
|---|------------------|----------|
| | Direct | Indirect |
| C. Falls only in the hearer's information territory | 8.3% | 91.7% |
| CB. Falls in the hearer's information territory, but the speaker has some knowledge | 52.7% | 47.3% |
| D. Falls in neither the speaker's nor the hearer's information territories | 47.4% | 52.6% |

Note. See Appendix B for details.

Extract 4 is a typical example of talking about territory C information.

Extract 4

- Jennifer: We need a –
- Jennifer: Do you have any sharp objects on you? (Territory C—indirect)
- Dan: No. (Territory A—direct)
- Dan: Keys? (Territory C—indirect)
- Jennifer: No. I need like a little pin or something. (Territory A—indirect)
You have a pencil? (Territory C—indirect)
- Dan: You have anything in your hair? (Territory C—indirect)
- Jennifer: No. (Territory A—direct)

For D territory information, indirect forms are used half of the time. Thus, even though native English speakers do not choose indirect forms as much as Japanese speakers speaking Japanese, both parties seem to share a similar concept of D territory.

Extract 5 is between an electronics shop salesman, Brad, and his customer, Tammy. Tammy is looking for a CD player, and Brad explains how his other customers use their CD players. He uses both indirect and direct forms to express information about his customers' territory. This information, however, may be in his own territory, as professional information.

Extract 5

Brad: They don't play tapes that much. (Territory D—direct)

Tammy: Year, that's the same with me, too. (Territory A—direct)

I'm really into CD's now. (Territory A—direct)

Brad: Unhunh . . . yeah.

Tammy: So . . .

Brad: But they have a couple of these box sets of uh . . . (Territory D—direct)

Tammy: Right.

Brad: Symphonies.

Tammy: Right.

Brad: And, then I think they even have a couple books on tape. (Territory D—indirect)

English Spoken by Japanese Learners of English

The limited data suggest that the learners were predominantly direct in dealing with information that belongs to territories A, AB, and B, to which they had direct access, or where information was shared with their hearers. In Extract 6, speakers Mari

and Junko discuss places they want to visit. Mari uses direct forms about France, which she learned about in class, and does not acknowledge that Junko, who has actually been there, might share that knowledge.

Extract 6

Mari: I like French food. (Territory A—direct)

Junko: Oh, me too. (Territory A—direct)
Have you been to France? (Territory C—indirect)

Mari: No. (Territory A—direct)
I study French language. . . . Yes, since last year. (Territory A—direct)

Junko: Cool. . . Do you learn about French culture too? (Territory C—indirect)

Mari: It is very different from Japan. (Territory AB—direct)
And I want to go Eiffel Tower. (Territory A—direct)
And people are loose, I mean, the time. (Territory AB—direct)
The bus don't come on time. . . (Territory AB—direct)
I don't like it. (Territory A—direct)

While the Japanese learners spoke indirectly in Japanese about shared topics (see Trent, 1997), they used direct English forms for information shared by their hearers (see Table 8). There were not enough analyzable utterances in this study to draw conclusions for territories CB and C information, but as for territory D, third party information, over 65% of the utterances were expressed in direct forms. However, there were certainly indirect expressions when speakers showed psychological distance between themselves and territory D information. In Extract 7, the teacher asked a learner about whom she respects, and the speaker treated the information as Territory D information although she used both direct and indirect modes.

Extract 7

Learner: Ah . . . Neko Hiroshi, runner. (Territory A—direct)

Teacher: I think I know him, mmm, perhaps. (Territory A—indirect)

I heard his name at least. (Territory A—direct)

Is he the one who got a foreign citizenship? (Territory CB—indirect)

Learner: He could not challenge Olympic in Japan, because he, ah, I know that only. (Territory D—direct)

Teacher: Why not in Japan? (Territory D—indirect)

Learner: Maybe . . . maybe, Japan has many strong runners, so he goes to Cambodia and he wants to be a runner. (Territory D—indirect)

I do not know many things, but . . . maybe he, he, his score, it was, he has score don't touch Olympic level. (Territory D—indirect)

Table 8. Evidential Forms Used in English Conversation by Japanese Learners

| Type of propositional information | Evidential forms | |
|---|------------------|----------|
| | Direct | Indirect |
| A. Falls only in speaker's information territory | 97.8% | 2.2% |
| AB. Falls in the speaker's information territory, but the hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | 94.0% | 6.0% |
| B. Falls in both the speaker's and the hearer's information territories | 93.1% | 6.9% |

| Type of propositional information | Evidential forms | |
|---|------------------|--|
| | Direct | Indirect |
| C. Falls only in hearer's information territory | N/A | Data size is too small. Direct form with rising tone (1 time) Question forms (7 times) |
| CB. Falls in hearer's information territory, but the speaker has some knowledge | N/A | Data size is too small. "I think" (1) "I don't know, but" (1) |
| D. Falls in neither the speaker's nor the hearer's information territory | 65.5% | 34.5% |

Note. See Appendix C for detailed information.

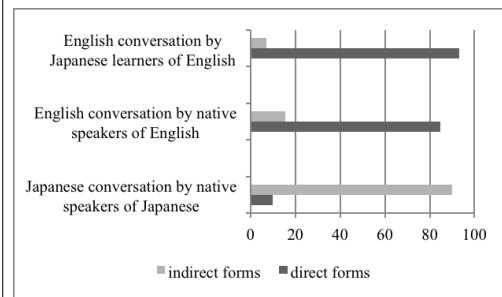
Table 9 compares direct and indirect evidential forms used by three groups of speakers: (a) Japanese learners of English speaking in English, (b) native speakers of English speaking in English, and (c) native speakers of Japanese speaking in Japanese (see Trent, 1997). Differences include:

- Japanese learners speaking in English used direct mode mostly in territories to which they had direct access—A, AB, and B territories—as well as D territory for third party information.
- Native speakers of English used direct modes in territories to which they had direct access—A, AB, and B territories—but were indirect in expressing hearer's information (CB) and indirect half the time in hearer's (C) territory and other people's information territory (D).
- Among the three types of conversations, Japanese spoken by Japanese native speakers was most indirect in all territories of information.

Table 9. Evidential Forms Compared Between Japanese Learners of English and Native Speakers of English

| Type of propositional information | Direct/indirect evidential forms used by speakers |
|---|--|
| A. Falls only in speaker's information territory | <p>English conversation by Japanese learners of English</p> <p>English conversation by native speakers of English</p> <p>Japanese conversation by native speakers of Japanese</p> <p>Legend: indirect forms (light grey), direct form (dark grey)</p> |
| AB. Falls in the speaker's information territory, but the hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | <p>English conversation by Japanese learners of English</p> <p>English conversation by native speakers of English</p> <p>Japanese conversation by native speakers of Japanese</p> <p>Legend: indirect forms (light grey), direct forms (dark grey)</p> |

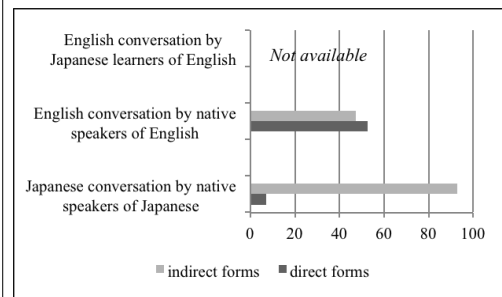
B. Falls in both the speaker's and the hearer's information territories



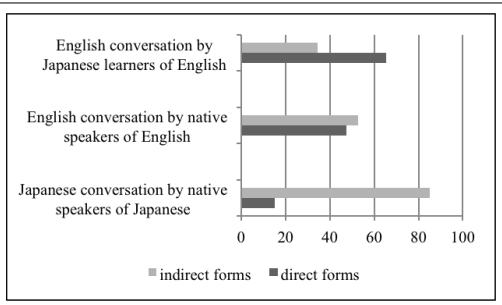
C. Falls only in hearer's information territory



CB. Falls in hearer's information territory, but the speaker has some knowledge



D. Falls in neither the speaker's nor the hearer's information territory



Note. See Appendix D for details.

Table 9 suggests that when speaking in English, Japanese learners did not use language modality to show that they were aware of other people with access to information in AB, B, and D territories. This may cause problems because native speakers of English make more indirect statements for shared information, and therefore, may misinterpret Japanese learners' directness as rude. As discussed earlier, being properly indirect is a basic universal politeness strategy. Speaking in their native language, Japanese learners of English will be carefully indirect toward information in all territories except territory A. No significant language cultural transfer from the learners' native language was observed regarding information territories.

Yet, some learners in this study showed that they acknowledged the possibility that their hearer possessed knowledge about the conversation topic. For example, some learners used the inquiry "Do you know?" as an interjection: e.g., "Yeah, her boyfriend is Shun Oguri, a very famous actor. He is . . . Do you know?" This may indicate that speakers care about their hearers' knowledge on the topic. Similarly, the expression "I don't know" was often interjected as an independent phrase: e.g., "She was accepted by a few universities . . . and they are good . . . Oh, I don't

know." This suggests that speakers felt that their information may not be correct, thus implying a lack of confidence in their information despite their direct speech style.

Conclusion and Suggestions for English Teaching

Several problems may have influenced the results of this study. The data came from 50 Japanese learners and only nine English speaker subjects. Although the English conversations from the Corpus were carefully chosen to represent generally occurring conversations, speakers inevitably had personal word and expression preferences. In addition, 1408 analyzable evidential forms were collected from the nine native speakers of English whereas only 527 were collected from the learners. Naturally, English native speakers talked more than the learners. This may have increased the impact of the native-speaker subjects' personal preference. Thus, future studies need data from more native speakers to reduce the influence of individual predilections.

There are several potential explanations for Japanese learners' use of direct modes in English. Primarily, learners may not have sufficient English skills to express a socially acceptable distance between them and the information they describe. Some examples of skills that would help learners include:

Practical knowledge of modality expressions (e.g., *may*, *might*, *must*, *likely*, *seem*, *look*, *probably*, *apparently*, and *certainly*) would be most helpful. Introductory level learners often do not utilize hedge words to avoid overgeneralizations (e.g., "Japanese are monolingual") and thus tend to sound overly direct. English textbooks, and EFL education in general, tend to emphasize the ability to express oneself, and overlook the importance of appropriately nuancing speech in accordance with social context.

Reporting skills can help make learners' statements more indirect and appropriate. Learners in this study rarely indicated

the sources of their information. This tendency strikes a contrast with native English speakers, who often explicitly acknowledge the source (e.g., “according to the morning paper”) and describe the event in direct forms (Trent, 1998). Introductory level learners used direct modes to express what they knew, and rarely acknowledged their source of information.

It should be emphasized that although Japanese native speakers' usage of indirect Japanese evidentials is most significant, they do not mean to be ambiguous, and although English native speakers use more direct evidentials, this does not mean that they are more aggressive than Japanese speakers. The psychological modality of utterances cannot be analyzed, but the words they choose can; there must be many other factors of language culture that influence the mode of utterances. However, comparing the use of a language by different groups of people may shed light on these factors. Introducing indirect expressions, expressions to show awareness of shared information, the concept of the close relationship between indirectness and linguistic politeness, and the importance of acknowledging information sources may improve learners' ability to deal with social contexts appropriately.

Bio Data

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Appendix A

Supplemental Information for Table 6

Evidential forms used in English conversation by native speakers of English: speaker's territories A, AB, and B

| Type of proposition | Conversation # 15 (3 speakers) | Conversation # 16 (2 speakers) | Conversation # 17 (2 speakers) | Conversation # 24 (2 speakers) |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| A. Falls only in speaker's information territory | direct forms: (229) 84.8% indirect forms: <i>I think/I guess</i> (4) <i>Looks (like)</i> (18) tag question (1) <i>you know</i> (18) | direct forms: (127) 76.5% indirect forms: <i>probably</i> (2) <i>you know</i> (12) <i>I think</i> (4) <i>I mean</i> (6), <i>may</i> (1) <i>maybe</i> (3), <i>would</i> (10) <i>could</i> (1) | direct forms: (47) 53.4% indirect forms: <i>I think</i> (5) <i>you know</i> (36) | direct forms: (66) 93% indirect forms: <i>I think</i> (3) <i>maybe</i> (1) <i>might</i> (1) |

| Type of proposition | Conversation #15 (3 speakers) | Conversation #16 (2 speakers) | Conversation #17 (2 speakers) | Conversation #24 (2 speakers) |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| AB. Falls in speaker's information territory, but hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | direct forms: (53) 71.6% indirect forms: <i>I think</i> (5) question (5) <i>maybe</i> (1) <i>probably</i> (2) <i>kind of</i> (1) <i>you know</i> (7) | direct forms: (36) 76.6% indirect forms: <i>you can</i> (1), <i>like</i> (1) <i>you'd say</i> (1) <i>you know</i> (1) <i>probably</i> (1) <i>I think</i> (5) <i>I believe</i> (1) | direct forms: (50) 69.4% indirect forms: tag question (2) neg. question (1) <i>I think</i> (5) <i>maybe</i> (2) <i>might</i> (6) <i>seems</i> (1) <i>you see</i> (1) <i>could be</i> (1) <i>you know</i> (5) | direct forms: (49) 59.0% indirect forms: question (5) <i>looks like</i> (1) <i>might</i> (1) <i>I think</i> (1) <i>probably</i> (1) <i>I wonder</i> (1) |
| B. Falls in both the speaker's and the hearer's information territories | direct forms: (68) 87.0% indirect forms: <i>I think</i> (4) <i>should be</i> (1) <i>I'm sure</i> (1) question (5) <i>you know</i> (8) | direct forms: (28) 84.9% indirect forms: <i>as you know</i> (1) <i>kind of</i> (1) <i>looks</i> (1) <i>I think</i> (1) <i>should be</i> (1) | direct forms: (60) 90.9% indirect forms: <i>I mean</i> (1) question (4) <i>I think</i> (1) | direct forms: (81) 86.1% indirect forms: <i>maybe</i> (2) question (9) <i>kind of</i> (1) <i>right?</i> (1) |

Note. () indicates the number of occurrences of the particular form. Bold indicates dominant form.

Appendix B

Supplemental Information for Table 7

Evidential forms used in English conversation by native speakers of English: Hearer's territories and third party territories C, CB, and D

| Type of proposition | Conversation # 15 (3 speakers) | Conversation # 16 (2 speakers) | Conversation # 17 (2 speakers) | Conversation # 24 (2 speakers) |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| C. Falls only in hearer's information territory | direct forms: (5) indirect forms: question (44) 86.3% <i>sounds like (2)</i> | direct forms: (1) indirect forms: question (8) tag question (1) 80% | direct forms: (1) indirect forms: question (10) 91% | direct forms: (2) indirect forms: question (34) 94.4% |
| CB. Falls in hearer's information territory, but speaker has some knowledge | direct forms: (18) indirect forms: question (9) neg. question (2) <i>I think (2)</i> | direct forms: (7) indirect forms: questions (3) <i>I wonder (1)</i> <i>maybe (1)</i> <i>sounds like (1)</i> <i>you know (1)</i> <i>hearsay (1)</i> <i>I think (1)</i> | direct forms: (0) indirect forms: question (1) | direct forms: (4) indirect forms: question (3) |
| D. Falls in neither the speaker's nor the hearer's information territory | direct forms: (25) 61% indirect forms: <i>I think (6)</i> neg. question (3) question (2) <i>doubt (1)</i> <i>I don't know, but (1)</i> <i>maybe (1)</i> <i>probably (1)</i> <i>I wonder (1)</i> | direct forms: (4) 50% indirect forms: <i>I think (2)</i> <i>you know (1)</i> <i>like (1)</i> | direct forms: (24) 41.4% indirect forms: <i>may (2)</i> <i>maybe (3)</i> <i>I think (9)</i> <i>seem (3)</i> question (2) <i>probably (3)</i> <i>could (1)</i> <i>you know (5)</i> <i>like (5)</i> <i>I know (1)</i> | direct forms: (2) indirect forms: question (5) <i>sounds like (1)</i> tag question (1) |

Note. () indicates the number of occurrences of the particular form. Bold indicates dominant form.

Appendix C

Supplemental Information for Table 8

Evidential forms used in English conversation by Japanese learners of English

| Type of proposition | Sentence evidential forms |
|---|--|
| A. Falls only in speaker's information territory | direct forms: (279) 97.8% indirect forms: <i>maybe</i> (1) direct forms with rising tone (1) <i>I think</i> (3) <i>I don't know, but</i> (1) |
| AB. Falls in speaker's information territory, but hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | direct forms: (79) 94.0% indirect forms: <i>maybe</i> (1) <i>I think</i> (2) <i>do you know?</i> (2) |
| B. Falls in both the speaker's and the hearer's information territories | direct forms: (27) 93.1% indirect forms: <i>I think</i> (2) |

| Type of proposition | Sentence evidential forms |
|---|--|
| C. Falls only in hearer's information territory | indirect forms: questions (7) direct forms with rising tone (1) |
| CB. Falls in hearer's information territory, but speaker has some knowledge | indirect forms: <i>I think</i> (1) <i>I don't know, but</i> (1) |
| D. Falls in neither the speaker's nor the hearer's information territory | direct forms (78) 65.1% indirect forms: <i>maybe</i> (18) <i>I think</i> (5) <i>I don't know, but</i> (11) <i>do you know?</i> (2) <i>seem</i> (1) <i>sound</i> (1) <i>looks like</i> (1) hearsay (1) <i>I know</i> (1) |

Note. () indicates the number of occurrences of the particular form. Bold indicates dominant form.

Appendix D

Supplemental Information for Table 9

Evidential forms compared between Japanese learners of English and native speakers

| Type of proposition | English conversation by Japanese learners of English | English conversation by native speakers of English | Japanese conversation by native speakers of Japanese (Trent, 1997: 234-244) |
|--|--|--|--|
| A. Falls only in speaker's information territory | direct forms: 97.8% | direct forms: 78.8% | direct forms: <i>(da, desu)</i> 28% direct forms + vocative (<i>no, yo, n-da, kedo</i>) direct forms + rapport <i>ne</i> ↓ |

| Type of proposition | English conversation by Japanese learners of English | English conversation by native speakers of English | Japanese conversation by native speakers of Japanese (Trent, 1997: 234-244) |
|---|--|---|---|
| AB. Falls in speaker's information territory, but hearer <u>may have</u> some knowledge | direct forms: 94.0% | direct forms: 74.0% | semi-direct forms: 88.4% tag-questions with falling tone: <i>daroo</i> ↓, <i>janai</i> ↓ direct forms: 11.6% |
| B. Falls in both the speaker's and the hearer's information territories | direct forms: 93.1% | direct forms: 84.6% | indirect forms: 90% sharing <i>ne</i> # confirming <i>ne</i> ↑ tag-questions with rising tone: <i>daroo</i> ↑, <i>janai</i> ↑ direct forms: 10% |
| C. Falls in hearer's information territory, but the speaker has some knowledge | questions tag questions direct form with rising intonation | indirect forms: 91.7 (including questions 89.7%) direct forms: 8.3% | indirect forms: 97% question <i>ka</i> ↑, <i>no</i> ↑ direct forms: 3% |
| CB. Falls only in hearer's information territory | <i>I think</i> <i>I don't think</i> | direct forms: 52.7% | indirect forms: 93% tag-questions with rising tone: <i>daroo</i> ↑, <i>janai</i> ↑ question <i>ka</i> ↑, <i>no</i> ↑ direct forms: 7% |
| D. Falls in neither parties' information territory | direct forms: 65.5% | direct forms: 47.4% | indirect forms: 85% hearsay: <i>sooda</i> , <i>kiita</i> , <i>-dasooda</i> , inference: <i>yooda</i> , <i>mitaida</i> , <i>rashii</i> direct forms: 15% |

Note. Bold indicates dominant form. ↑ = rising tone; ↓ = falling tone; # = level tone