日本語の敬語とポライトネス

Japanese Honorifics and Politeness

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The purpose of this paper is to clarify the fundamental problem in treating Japanese honorifics within the framework of existing politeness theory. Japanese honorifics have been offering significant data to account for politeness universality, but unfortunately, the politeness feature of them is overemphasized in the process. Reviewing how politeness has been treated in pragmatics and how honorifics have been studied in Japanese linguistics, I will argue that politeness and Japanese honorifics overlap to some extent but differ in terms of sociolinguistic and anthropological perspectives. The result will be to indicate the direction of future work, i.e. analysing Japanese honorifics from a cognitive point of view.

Key word : pragmatics
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0. Introduction

As pragmatics gained importance due to the limit of traditional linguistics in accounting for real use and nature of language, politeness has become a central issue for those interested in linguistic phenomena.

The Cooperative Principle (CP) with its maxims postulated by Grice has offered a framework for later norm-based works on politeness, such as Lakoff (1973, 1989), and Leech (1983). Brown & Levinson (1978) brought research on politeness into a central position in pragmatics with an elaborate theoretical work on politeness. Their notion of FTA (face-threatening-act) to account for politeness and their concept of politeness as universal has stimulated many researchers to do empirical researches to try to examine the validity of their theory. Some researchers question universality of politeness and FTA proposed by Brown & Levinson, showing differences in what kinds of behaviours and acts can be seen as polite universality and how politeness itself is perceived in various cultural frameworks. Some researchers argue that the term "politeness" conveys an extremely abstract concept and that it is very difficult to capture its properties or even to define the word.

Against this background, studies on Japanese honorifics have increased in number. From a Japanese perspective, fruitful suggestions have been made (See Hill, et al. 1978, Ide 1982, Matsumoto 1988, 1989) for politeness. The significant question is: are Japanese honorifics appropriately treated in a framework of politeness? In order to provide data for politeness studies, researches on Japanese honorifics need to be reviewed. Studies on honorifics, in fact, have a much longer history since the Edo period in the field of Japanese linguistics than studies of politeness, which have been linguists' major concern in pragmatics only for some twenty years.

This paper shows, first, how politeness has been treated in pragmatics, second, how honorifics have been studied in Japanese linguistics in terms of grammatical features and functions, and third, some outcome of comparing the two approaches. I will argue that politeness and honorifics overlap to some extent but they differ in terms of sociolinguistic and anthropological perspectives. Finally, I would like to clarify the fundamental problem in treating Japanese honorifics within the framework of existing politeness theory. The result will be to suggest the direction of future work, i.e. analyzing Japanese honorifics from a cognitive point of view.

1. Politeness

The Gricean framework has encouraged studies of politeness in pragmatics with many theories built on Grice's Cooperative principle, and his maxims based on rationality. Here I would like to review how politeness is treated by Lakoff (1973,1 989), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987).

1-1 Lakoff

Lakoff (1973) classified rules of politeness into three categories as follows: 1. Don't impose. 2. Give options. 3. Make A feel good - be friendly. Unfortunately, it is not clear where those rules come from or what they are based on. Lakoff's rules of pragmatic competence are more interesting with two principles : 1. Be clear. 2. Be polite. She regards the two as "sometimes coinciding in their effects and reinforcing each other, more often in apparent conflict" (Lakoff, 1973 : 296). It seems Lakoff

considers exchange of information (clarity) and interaction (politeness) to be contrastive or opposite notions, although not to be in complemental distribution, presumably because politeness is not in the scope of Grice's maxims based on rationality and Lakoff equated rationality with clarity in her idea. Lakoff's expanded work based on this proposal appeared in 1989. Showing the difference between courtroom discourses and therapeutic ones, she tries to show that, unlike ordinary conversation, politeness itself is less important because of the specific purposes of these discourses and that politeness, non-politeness and rudeness, treated as a whole, are all working towards those purposes. There must be a more or less strategic aspect of politeness even in ordinary conversation, but Lakoff tries to show such strategic politeness (with non-politeness and rudeness included) more strongly functions in these discourses supported by the technicalities of context in the closed systems, for information purpose rather than for interaction purpose. Lakoff's view suggests that she set up at least two layers of politeness, one is politeness for politeness presumably as a relative one and the other is politeness as one part of a whole set. Referring to the idea that "sometimes...clarity is politeness" in Lakoff (1973 : 297), Agha (1994) points out that "the argument provides no clear criteria for isolating "politeness" (Agha, 1994 : 282, original emphasis) as an empirical phenomenon even in model-internal terms," and this criticism also goes for the two layers she made in those specific discourses. It may be risky to consider honorifics in terms of Lakoff's account of politeness, since it is not clear what she means by politeness. Nonetheless, Lakoff (1973 : 305) concludes that the rules of politeness are, "in their basic form", universal and they are not merely linguistic, but applicable to all cooperative human transactions. If so, Lakoff must think that it should be applied to Japanese honorifics. Nonetheless, it is entirely possible to have clear statements using Japanese honorifics; therefore, her analysis of politeness would not apply to Japanese honorifics. I would like to discuss this issue in 2-1.

1-2 Leech

Leech (1983) accepted Grice's Cooperative Principle and maxims in his theory of pragmatics, and added the Politeness Principle (PP), placing both principles as subdivisions of the Interpersonal Principle. Thus, Leech added another principle to CP, while Lakoff as I showed in 1-1 tried to treat politeness as interaction-purposed in contrast to rationality-purposed clarity, although it is for himself "a necessary complement" (Leech, 1983 : 80). Leech's PP has six maxims as follows:

(1) Tact Maxim (in impositives and commisives)
  (a) Minimize cost to *other*
  (b) Maximize benefit to *other*
(2) Generosity Maxim (in impositives and commisives)
  (a) Minimize benefit to *self*
  (b) Maximize cost to *self*
(3) Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
  (a) Minimize dispraise of *other*
  (b) Maximize praise of *other*
(4) Modesty Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
  (a) Minimize praise to *self*
  (b) Maximize dispraise of *self*
(5) Agreement Maxim (in assertives)
  (a) Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*
  (b) Maximize agreement between *self* and *other*
(6) Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)

(a) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*
(b) Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*

These maxims are, as we can see, ad hoc and open-ended. In fact, having failed with the PP to deal with hedged performatives, implication of silence, and phatic communication, etc., Leech had to suggest a further maxim, Phatic Maxim. Irony and Banter, which is greatly associated with politeness, in addition, had to get another treatment by a higher-order principle. His solving the problems this way is analogous to Grice's way of producing "conversational implicature", dealing with phenomena outside the scope as something exceptional. The difference between Grice and Leech may be that Grice's problematic domain was reduced in Leech's theory.

Japanese honorifics, which are said to have no cognitive meaning themselves, may be classified as cases of Phatic talk in Leech's system. But honorifics are a central issue in Japanese polite linguistic forms, and the existence or absence of honorifics in each sentence and utterance is far more important than the existence or absence of hedged performatives, implication of silence, and phatic communication, etc., which can exist only fragmentarily; i.e. not for every sentence in utterances. Accepting the CP of Grice, which may not be universal, Leech tries to save the CP referring to the difficulty of its application to a variety of cultures and admits that "...different societies operate maxims in different ways" (Leech, 1983 : 80). Thus Leech must have tried to make his pragmatic theory and the PP universal. Unfortunately, his principles and maxims are open to a criticism that they are lacking in cross-cultural validity and fail to account for Japanese honorifics. I will further discuss this issue in 2-1.

1-3 Brown & Levinson

The politeness theory by Brown & Levinson (1987) seems to be the most influential. Accepting Grice's CP, they regard politeness as conversational implicature, and they explicitly state that "politeness has to be communicated" (Brown & Levinson, 1987 : 5). From this standpoint, their theory rejects a norm-based account and goes on to a treatment of the phenomena as strategies. Otherwise, there is no significant difference between Grice's account and Brown & Levinson's account of politeness. The notion of face, public self-image, is introduced to replace the word "politeness", and Brown & Levinson assume that face, or public self-image, is a basic want. Politeness, then, is motivated by a face-preserving purpose. Brown & Levinson divide the notion into negative face and positive face, which are defined as follows:

negative face : the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others. (original quotation marks)
positive face : the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.

Brown & Levinson assume that illocutionary-associated acts are potentially face-threatening-acts (FTA), either to negative face or to positive face, and some are threatening to the addresser, and others, to the addressee. For example, orders and requests, offers, compliments and expressions of envy or admiration are classified as threatening to the addressee's negative-face. Some acts are classified as threatening to the addresser's positive face, such as apologies, acceptance of compliment, confessions, or admissions of guilt or responsibility. In order to determine the level of politeness, they argue that there are three

sociological factors involved[1], relative power (P) of the hearer over the speaker, the social distance (D) between the hearer and the speaker, and the ranking of the imposition (R). The weightiness (W) of an FTA is calculated as follows:

$$W\chi = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R\chi$$

This theory takes honorifics into consideration. Brown & Levinson regard honorifics as "frozen outputs of face-oriented strategies"(23) which are understood by way of conventional implicature and claim that honorifics are "typically strategically used to soften FTAs" (182). Many researchers question their claim for FTAs and its validity of universality showing experimental researches. This issue is discussed in Section 3.

2 Japanese honorifics

It is difficult to find agreement concerning the definition of politeness. This is also true with Japanese honorifics which can refer to phenomena in a narrow range or a wide one. Recently many Japanese grammarians use a word "*taiguu-hyougen*", whose literal meaning is "treatment expressions", and it is used to envisage the whole unified system including honorifics, non-honorifics and vulgar expressions, sometimes including other characteristic expressions of Japanese[2] and sometimes even non-linguistic behaviours. I would like to confine the definition of honorifics here within a traditional range of honorifics. First, I will touch on grammatical aspects of Japanese honorifics, which are often said to be a complicated system. Then, I would like to show what honorific expressions are said to convey in the field of Japanese traditional study.

2-1 Grammatical aspects of Japanese honorifics

Because of the grammatical complexity of Japanese honorifics, the descriptive study of Japanese honorifics originated in the Edo period. Honorifics are linguistically realized in terms of nominal elements and predicative elements.[3] Honorific nominal elements contain person referents (PR)[4] and nouns with honorific prefixes (HP)[5]. Honorific predicate elements consist of subject honorifics (SH) which show respect[6] to the subject of the sentence uttered, object honorifics (OH) which show respect to the object, addressee honorifics (AH)[7] which show respect to the addressee, and humble forms (H) which show respect to the addressee indirectly by lowering the addressee's behaviour or belongings. Some examples are shown below.

(1) watashi-ga iku.
I -Subject Marker go.
I will go.

1 Brown & Levinson state that "... these are not intended as *sociologists'* ratings of *actual* power, distance, etc., but only as *actors'* assumptions of such ratings, assumed to be mutually assumed, at least within certain limits" (1987 : 74).

2 Here I refer to give & receive verbs, sentence-final particles, discourse markers, etc.

3 See Harada(1976) for a detailed description of honorifics in English with a transformational grammatical analysis.

4 For example, in Japanese there are many words for 'I', or 'you', etc., each of which has its own connotation and a level of politeness.

5 I used "prefix", not affix, following Harada (1976) and Ide (1982).

6 I use "respect" tentatively here.

7 Addressee honorifics are also related to formality as shown in 2-2-2. Hence, the respect is also shown to the situation rather than the people involved.

(1') watakushi-ga mairi-masu.
I (PR) SM go(H) (AH)
I will go.

(2) Suzuki-san-ni sensei-no hon-o kaeshi-ta.
Mr. Suzuki -Object Marker teacher's book OM return -PAST

(2') Suzuki-san-ni sensei-no go-hon-o o-kaeshi-shi -mashi-ta.
Mr. Suzuki -OM teacher's (HP)-book OM (OH)-return-(OH) - (AH) -PAST

(1) and (1') share the same proposition, but in (1') for the subject "I", honorific prefixes *watakushi*[8] is used and the verb is changed into a humble form *mai-ru*[9] with an addressee honorific form "masu" at the end. (2) and (2') also have the same propositional content. (2'), in addition, has three honorific forms in it; a honorific prefix[10] is used to show respect to the author of the book, the speaker's teacher, an object honorific form to the object of the sentence uttered, and an addressee honorific form to the addressee or for the formality.

Lakoff contrasted clarity and politeness in a way as shown in 1-1, but these examples above show that, unlike indirect expressions for politeness, clarity of information and expressions of politeness are compatible without any problem. As shown above, sentences without honorifics and with honorifics can share the same propositional content. Leech, shown in 1-2, did not take honorifics into consideration. The Phatic Maxim, with which he seems to indicate supra-propositional factors, is the most suitable to explain Japanese honorifics among his classifications since in Japanese you cannot utter any sentence without choosing a level of politeness. As Matsumoto (1988) points out, that even when an utterance is not related to human relationships or interactions such as "Today is Saturday", it is still necessary to chose a politeness level within the honorific system. The Phatic Maxim of Leech, then, can not account for Japanese honorifics properly.

Nonetheless, only the aspect of politeness seems to be overemphasized among the features of Japanese honorifics. In the next section, I would like to present some other features of Japanese honorifics which are discussed in Japanese traditional linguistics.

2-2 What is conveyed with Japanese honorifics

In this section, I would like to present other features of Japanese honorifics in comparison with politeness. Japanese honorifics have been analysed as "reflecting social structure" (Oishi, 1974 : 23), and use of honorifics as "social human relationship" (Oishi ,1974 : 23) which is generally accepted as being based on *wakimae*, or discernment[11]. In the use of honorifics, five factors are to be mentioned (cf. Oishi 1974):

1. respect, honor
2. formality, public occasions
3. distance
4. refinement, education, decoration, dignity
5. contempt, sarcasm.

I would like to examine these factors in turn.

2-2-1 Respect, honor

Japanese honorifics, *keigo*, literally means expressions of respect and those of

8 *Watakushi* is more polite than *watashi*, and *watashi* is regarded as a neutral form for 'I', while *watakushi* is preferred in more formal occasions.

9 *Iku* (go) is a behaviour irrelevant to the addressee in the sentence, but by humbling the behaviour of the addresser, the addresser shows respect to the addressee.

10 HP has variables such as *o, on, go, mi,* etc.

11 This is introduce by Ide (1978, 1982) to the issue of politeness as a challenging notion to universality of Brown and Levinson's theory.

deference, and this combination gives Japanese native speakers feeling of ties between Japanese honorifics and sense of respect. What matters for honorifics is, however, not the existence of respect but rather "the existence of respectful expressions" (Oishi, 1974 : 11). For example, people will not expect any true respect or honor in Japanese honorifics used in commercialism and business.

The factors conveyed in the use of Japanese honorifics are based on the social structure, and hence, which are usually associated with R, one of the sociological factors proposed by Brown & Levinson. Oishi (1974 : 17) points out that it is also related to power, which seems equivalent to P of Brown & Levinson's theory. Matsumoto (1988) strongly argues that these factors are based on Western cultural individualism and that Brown & Levinson's FTA and R, P and D are not equally applicable to Japanese society in which interdependency is more strongly expected. This aspect of honorifics is indeed controversial for considering politeness.

2-2-2 Formality, Public occasions

In official situations such as asking questions or discussing some points at conferences, honorifics are used even to those people with whom people talk casually in daily situations. Among honorific forms, AH is the most important for showing formality, which is not only related to the addressee but which strongly depends on the situation or occasion of the conversation. Observing the interaction between caregivers and children, Cook (1997) suggests that the children's understanding of the *masu* form (AH) is "presentation of public self" and that it is related to socialization.

Formality of English is described in Brown & Levinson and is realized in terms of linguistic expression, intonation, or behaviour. Senses of formality or public occasions must be related, to some extent, to consciousness of social structure. If the universality of politeness is considered controversial, it might be also necessary to reexamine the definition of formality.

2-2-3 Distance

To strangers or for first meetings, honorifics are used to show distance to avoid over-familiarity. On the other hand, use of honorifics among close friends produces an uncomfortable atmosphere due to the distance conveyed. Brown & Levinson's R, P, and D are defined in terms of mutual assumption of the addresser and the adddressee, hence, psychological factors rather than actual ones. Then, this distance in Oishi is almost equivalent to D in Brown & Levinson. Oishi points out that distance is determined psychologically and consequently is associated with respect or formality mentioned above and refinement and dignity to be discussed below.

2-2-4 Refinement, education, decoration, dignity

Complicated grammatical aspects of Japanese honorifics are sometimes associated with the speaker's educational background and the use of honorifics is taken as a modest attitude, refinement or grace. This could have a further effect of decorativeness on the sentence or the utterance on one hand, and assumed dignity as an educated person on the other hand. This feature of Japanese honorifics has, as far as I know, not been pointed out in the study of politeness.

In order to discuss negative evaluations of the term "politeness", Watts (1992 : 44) mentions a British socio-cultural framework in which it is suggested that in the Augustine age politeness was "intellectual enlightenment and civilization" and, in

addition, that there was a link between politeness and social class and sociopolitical power in the eighteenth-century. Then, is it possible to include "education" or "enlightment" in discussion of politeness, if politeness is treated diachronically? Watts' statement about social class and socio-political power which is regarded as R in Brown & Levinson's theory is especially striking, since it may be more closely related to Japanese honorifics. Watts (1992) traces politeness change in search for the origin of political and tactic aspects of politeness. As an outcome, he argues that "linguistic politeness is subject to changes in the overall structure of society through time" (Watts, 1992 : 48). Watts' purpose is to shed light on politic and tactic aspect of politeness in modern society. However, there could be more implications : Is each constituent of politeness in a certain culture, such as enlightment or education, attributed to the cultural structure, or, is each aspect of politeness considered as a potential politeness feature in any society? I leave these questions to answer in Section 3.

2-2-5 contempt, sarcasm.

Irony as a figure of speech is important for conversational implicature of Grice and for considering politeness. Unfortunately, "irony" is not lexicalized in Japanese although irony itself is observed. With the above-mentioned questions, it may be an issue of social structure. The use of Japanese honorifics could accompany more venomous connotation than irony does. Nonetheless, it is only a matter of degrees and is not directly attributed to the definition of honorifics. This requires more empirical research.

3 Can Japanese honorifics be treated as one part of politeness?

In the second section of this paper, I have discussed phenomena of Japanese honorifics from a perspective of Japanese linguistics rather than within the framework of politeness. Now I would like to go back to the initial question : Can Japanese honorifics be treated as one part of politeness? As we have seen along my examination of honorifics, the answer entirely depends on the definition of politeness with or without the social structural issue. The critical issue is whether or not we will be able to find an overarching concept to postulate politeness. Agha (1994 : 288) argues that honorific usage is independent of politeness because of cultural factors, and Matsumoto (1989), on the other hand, appears to regard cultural factors as merely social variables to be integrated into universal politeness phenomena.

There are two starting points in politeness study with Japanese honorifics: (1) how politeness is linguistically (or non-linguistically) realized in these expressions and (2) how Japanese honorifics are related to what they convey as a systematic device. The gap between the two appears in the more strategic view towards politeness as to be regarded as politic behaviour in Watts (1989, 1992). Japanese honorifics have not received this kind of treatment presumably because the use of honorifics may be more affected by the social position among people or the social structure than the content of the utterance or the sentence.

We have to, then, return to the very fundamental question : what is politeness? In order to say that Japanese honorifics are linguistic realization of politeness, we need more elaborate study to contour the concept of politeness. The notion of po-

liteness seems yet to be refined, and actually it is difficult to envisage the notion of this open-ended phenomenon which requires cross-cultural validity. If we continue to take cultural varieties into consideration, we enter into serious questions of how many varieties and to what depth. If we go on dividing politeness phenomena in accordance with innumerable cultures, namely depending only on external factors, is it ever possible to account for this continuum of politeness? Politeness manifests itself in actions, in linguistic forms, and even in silence. It has counterparts of rudeness on one hand, and is related to irony on the other hand. We need a paradigm shift to account for the whole nature of politeness.

4 Future issues

I would like to suggest a cognitive approach to account for politeness and Japanese honorifics, especially relevance theory based on cognitive psychology. Some studies, using the framework of relevance theory, have successfully accounted for some parts of politeness. For example, Jucker (1988) is considering politeness in the framework of relevance theory which is general enough to cover various aspects of politeness. Watts (1988) is attempting to account for the politic property of politeness from the view of perceived relationship, an internal factor rather than a social one, with relevance theory. Escandell-Vidal (1996), focusing on the context dependency in interpreting politeness, gives a relevance account to politeness. Jary (1998) sheds more light on politeness considering human way of perceiving politeness from a cognitive point of view with relevance theory. Great progress is underway towards accounting politeness within the framework of relevance theory.

I believe that since politeness phenomena and honorifics have something in common, honorifics need to be considered in the framework of relevance theory for a better analysis. I would like to pursue this issue in the next paper.

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