

配慮表現が人間関係づくりに及ぼす影響

— 年代・関係の違いによる日本語ポライトネス表現の比較および考察 —

Influences of Thoughtful Expressions on Human Relationship Development:

A Comparison and Study of Japanese Expressions of Politeness According to Differences
in Age and Relation

Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to seek gentler expressions for better human relationships, and to focus on their usage in daily life. Difficulties in interpersonal communication sometimes cause verbal misunderstandings which could result in distrust and possible breakdowns in human relationships. It is not uncommon for inadequate communication to lead to the inability to build stronger relationships and better relations between countries. What kinds of words and/or expressions should be employed to make people emotionally involved in interpersonal communication exchanges and what words and/or expressions are found to be offensive or repulsive? A study of how to communicate, how to speak and what to express in order to influence the feelings and actions of others in Japanese is worthwhile.

Chapter 1 focuses on communication and thoughtful expressions, and a discussion as to why kind and friendly expressions are necessary to cultivate better

relationships. Chapter 2 focuses on differences in linguistic views between age groups and genders from a preceding study. Chapters 3 to 6 focus on data collected from 229 language survey questionnaires from age groups ranging from subjects in their 20s to 70s and with consolidated data analysis and results. At the time of collection, each age group was further divided into two large groups, with one with younger subjects from their 20s to early 40s and an older group with subjects from their late 40s to 70s. It could be determined that a difference in usage of words and/or expressions existed between the two age groups. It could also be assessed that there was a difference in usage between the two large groups some extent. It was supposed that those over their mid-40s and below them differ due to social backgrounds. One case for the survey is about a convenience store clerk and a customer meeting for the first time in a shop and interacting over a shopping bag. The other case was a meeting scene where one person is reluctant to be invited to an expensive meal. It contains situations in which the other person is close or not, and senior to the other, friend or junior to the other. The results of this analysis were rather different from what was expected in advance. Younger people refuse without hesitation to their close friends and in the case that the other is senior, too. They have expressions with apparent thoughtfulness, considering future relationships. If the other is not familiar with them, they are deliberate in refusing their senior counterpart in the situation. However, as a result, it also turned out that

the expressions to refuse friends are somewhat cold-hearted. Finally, towards all the people other than younger people who are not familiar, they are conscious of future possibilities but clearly refuse expressing politely on the spot.

If their counterpart is older, senior subjects make a rather cold refusal on the spot. If they are familiar with their friends of the same age, they answer in a polite way and express their true feelings. No consideration is given to all others except close friends. It turned out that if the other is even older than them, they would not be able to meet for a high-priced meal unless they were close to each other. These were particularly impressive and surprising results. In Chapter 7, a comprehensive analysis of results is considered from the perspective of politeness as to what kind of thoughtful expressions are desirable. Focusing on the data analysis of the language survey, after considering sympathetic perspectives such as considerate expressions, polite Japanese expressions, and politeness, it is clear there are differences due to gaps in age and sense of distance in human relationships.

The difference between the two age groups in the results of the language survey is reflected from a modern social background. There is an increasing demand for warm, people-friendly, thoughtful communication. Considerate expressions and polite expressions are based on verbal communication that values an awareness of the feelings of others. In some cases, those who deliver messages may be under a great deal of

stress. It is necessary to scrutinize the delivery of any information or messages in order to maintain balanced expressions to be considerate of and kind to others in order to build trust and better relationships. However, sending and receiving words and/or expressions while building and maintaining relationships is the most important issue. In addition, it is important to work with closely related academic fields such as cognitive linguistics and psychology, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the use, importance and impact of thoughtful expressions while communicating in Japanese. Another goal of this study is to benefit the local community with further development of this study in order to facilitate better communication and relationships.