UCHI-SOTO (INSIDE-OUTSIDE): LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN

CONTEXT FOR THE JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN

LANGUAGE (JFL) LEARNER

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by

Jamie Louise Goekler

Fall 2010

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DEDICATION

To all of us who have become someone else
in order to communicate with someone from somewhere else
while still remaining true to ourselves.

❧

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABSTRACT

UCHI-SOTO (INSIDE-OUTSIDE): LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN

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Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) learners have frequently been exposed to learning materials which are neither contextualized culturally nor linguistically from the target language perspective. This research review addresses the cultural and communicative gaps which exist in many JFL textbooks and enhances JFL students' awareness of similarities and differences between the Japanese culture and their own. To teach JFL from an emic perspective, teachers must first provide students with cultural and communicative content that matches target culture and linguistic norms; students must come to recognize the meaning of *uchi* (insider) and *soto* (outsider) if they are to communicate from an insider perspective. This body of research provides information on cultural, linguistic, and paralinguistic factors essential to communicative competence

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in Japanese. This information will help JFL students develop communicative competence by becoming linguistic and cultural insiders, viewing Japanese from an emic perspective. Students will also learn about the implications of insider relationships and how they influence language and social relations. This research details uchi-soto relationships, hierarchy, honorific language use, communication styles and strategies, gendered language, and *aidzuchi* (Japanese discourse markers and techniques).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

JFL learners are frequently mystified about the implications and complexities of insider-outsider relationships and how they manifest themselves in the Japanese language and culture. After years of Japanese language studies, many students have not been given the linguistic and cultural tools necessary to demystify contextual cues in the Japanese language and culture. The lack of understanding of these contextual cues can lead to communicative incompetence for Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) learners. JFL textbooks often lack contextual reasons for using specific grammar forms and functions. They frequently teach simplified verb forms that may be used only with certain speakers during specific situations without explaining the contextual and cultural reasons for using these specific forms.

The following research questions are investigated in order to enhance understanding of insider-outsider relationships and how they manifest in Japanese language and culture: What cultural, linguistic, and paralinguistic factors do most JFL textbooks lack that would help JFL students develop communicative competence in the target language? How do JFL students develop communicative competence in the target language and what cultural and linguistic factors influence their ability to communicate more fluidly? What are the implications of insider-outsider relationships and how do they influence language and social relations?

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Japan is a collectivist society whose language revolves around a social and linguistic hierarchy. In my experience as a JFL learner and teacher, most JFL textbooks have not taught linguistic forms and functions in context from the earliest stages of learning. As a result, certain grammatical forms and functions may be interpreted by the JFL speaker to mean one thing while in reality, they mean something quite different. As a result, the JFL speaker may feel communicatively competent. However, given the lack of cultural and contextual meanings of forms and functions, the JFL speaker lacks the ability to communicate in a culturally and linguistically correct manner.

In order to better understand Japanese in context and communicate effectively, the JFL learner must be aware of certain linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic and cultural norms. It is my hope that this research on insider and outsider relationships in Japan, and how these relationships are manifest in culture and language, will address many of the informational gaps that even intermediate JFL textbooks tend not to discuss in detail. It is my hope that the teaching implications which are cited in each chapter will help JFL teachers appreciate the importance of insider-outsider relationships and how they are determined in language and society. The chapters encompass insider-outsider (*uchi-soto*) relationships, hierarchical relationships, honorific language use, gender, and *aidzuchi*. Knowledge of these and other cultural and linguistic manifestations allows JFL learners to develop communicative competence in a more contextually correct manner from the beginning of their studies. It is my hope that students will learn the Japanese language from an emic rather than etic perspective. Throughout this study, personal and professional experience is supported by literature reviews on the various topics investigated.

Background

Japanese society is able to keep its culture and language somewhat a mystery to 'foreigners' (*gaijin*) by creating an '*uchi-soto*' or 'in-group/out-group' societal model. If misunderstood, language and culture can be a barrier to the socialization process of non-native Japanese speakers. The word *gaijin* means foreigner or outside person; hence, the sense of outsider exists in the word itself. This thesis reflects the use of language and culture in Japan as a social and linguistic construct. It also reflects research related to the communicative topics rarely found in beginning and intermediate Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) textbooks. This research will assist JFL students with the process of acculturation into the Japanese language and society.

Japanese society relies heavily on social mores different than those of most Western societies. In many societies, ideologies suggest that individual uniqueness is highly desirable as a social construct. In Japan, however, a unique sense of individuality goes against the grain of Japan's vision of a collectivist society in which the needs of the group are seen as more important than the needs of the individual. In Japan, people are very sensitive to the use of language in society; language is a means of promoting cultural identity. The Japanese language, like the society, is characterized by its collectivism. One way in which this group ideology is evidenced is in the hierarchical use of language to demonstrate a complex system of honorifics (Hasegawa & Hirose, 2005).

Although insider and outsider relationships are acknowledged in research and literature related to Japanese culture, their use is not explicitly incorporated in most introductory Japanese as a Foreign Language textbooks. A keen understanding of these *uchi* (insider) and *soto* (outsider) relationships and their use in language would allow

teachers and students to develop a better sense of linguistic, paralinguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural features of Japanese society.

This research addresses a variety of insider-outsider topics, focusing on communicative issues that many JFL textbooks have failed to explain in detail. The lack of information related to these topics in JFL textbooks is the culmination of a literature review that examines ways to communicate more competently using Japanese cultural norms. Cultural and linguistic topics allow JFL learners to develop a working knowledge of how insider and outsider relationships are organized, how they manifest themselves in Japanese society, and how they appear in language.

The research examines *uchi* and *soto* relationships and the myriad subjects that these relationships encompass. Working knowledge of these in-group and out-group relationships offers an emic perspective that enables students to develop a more communicative approach to functioning in the target language and culture. Without this, students will not develop competency in the Japanese language. JFL language and grammar textbooks should introduce topics related to insider-outsider relationships and how they are manifest in language and culture during introductory stages of language learning when linguistic rules are applied. I have noticed that students frequently rely on JFL textbooks to guide them, but the textbooks teach simplified grammar concepts without explaining when or why to use them. Very few of the textbooks that I have used with my students and in my own JFL learning have addressed the complexities of hierarchical linguistic structures and their function within the Japanese group model.

As an example, many JFL textbooks teach the least honorific verb conjugation without explaining when or why to use it. As a result, students learn the most informal

form of the verb, and do not know when or how they may use it correctly to communicate with Japanese people. This less honorific form is used in the beginning stages of Japanese study, often without contextual explanation. Learning a linguistic concept out of context may delay or even permanently interfere with the students' ability to communicate competently using the correct verb conjugation at the appropriate time with the appropriate people in the future. Instead of being a competent speaker, the learner will be an incompetent communicator, placed in the out-group without even knowing how or why this phenomenon occurred.

This study explores major paralinguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural features, using insider and outsider relationships as the theme, and describes the key roles of these relationships in JFL communicative competence. This research is essential in order for JFL learners to understand intercultural, communicative approaches to language learning. Often ignored in foreign language textbooks, paralinguistic features are examined, their roles in JFL learning highlighted. Without significant knowledge of Japanese insider-outsider relationships and their role in language and society, miscommunication between JFL learners and native speakers of Japanese is likely to occur. Learners who understand the implications of insider-outsider relationships behave more like cultural insiders and are more capable speakers of Japanese.

Statement of the Problem

Linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, and cultural features of language affect communicative competency, and speakers' ability to become a cultural insider. The JFL learner is unable to effectively communicate in the target language if he or she

cannot participate in the group ideology. In Japanese, the structure of verbs and other function words can be used to indicate politeness, which is determined in part by whether someone belongs inside or outside a particular group. Unless JFL learners are aware of these features of Japanese and able to recognize and use them effectively, they will not function as cultural insiders. It is my hope that this research will fill in many of the communicative and cultural gaps in many JFL textbooks.

The textbooks that I have used to learn and teach JFL have not included content that allows beginning JFL learners to develop a more emic perspective of the Japanese language and culture. Many students study Japanese in order to study abroad and take jobs in Japan. However, they are frequently ill-equipped to function as cultural insiders in Japanese society. This research encompasses knowledge that JFL learners can use to develop the linguistic and cultural skills necessary to face the day-to-day reality of living and functioning in Japanese society.

Purpose of the Study

Japanese society is able to keep its culture and language somewhat a mystery to 'foreigners' (*gaijin*) by creating an '*uchi-soto*' or 'in-group/out-group' societal model. Language and culture serve as a barrier in the socialization process of non-native Japanese speakers. The word '*gaijin*' means foreigner or outside person; hence, the sense of outsider exists in the word itself. In this work, I reflect on the use of language and culture in Japan as a social construct.

Japanese society relies heavily on social mores different than those of most Western societies. In many societies, ideologies suggest that individual uniqueness is

highly desirable as a social construct. In Japan, however, a unique sense of individuality goes against the grain of Japan's vision of a collectivist society in which the needs of the group are seen as more important than the needs of the individual. Japanese people are very sensitive to the use of language in society; language is used as a means of promoting cultural identity. The Japanese language, like society, is viewed by its collectivism (Hasegawa & Hirose, 2005).

Although information pertaining to *uchi* and *soto* relationships is abundant in research and literature, its use isn't directly stated in most Japanese as a Foreign Language textbooks. These u*chi*' (insider) and '*soto*' (outsider) relationships in Japan allow students to develop a better understanding of the Japanese language and culture. This research will examine *uchi* and *soto* relationships, and the myriad of topics that these relationships encompass. Working knowledge of in-group and out-group relationships allows students to develop a more communicative approach to functioning in the target language and culture.

The thesis explores the importance of major linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, pragmatic, and cultural features in the acquisition of Japanese as a Foreign Language using insider and outsider relationships as the theme, and describes the key roles these relationships play in promoting L2 communicative competence. This research is important in providing JFL learners with a more intercultural, communicative approach to language learning. It also includes paralinguistic features not discussed in the foreign language textbooks that I have used in my JFL classes. Without significant knowledge of *uchi-soto* relationships and their role in language and society, miscommunication will occur between students and native speakers of Japanese. Students who understand the

implications of *uchi-soto* relationships are more capable speakers of Japanese. They learn how to become cultural insiders and communicate clearly on issues, such as insider-outsider relationships, honorific language, gender, hierarchical relationships and *aidzuchi*. Understanding these key issues, among others, helps students avoid linguistic and cultural mistakes that could lead them into the out-group rather than the in-group.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters of research, each focusing on a different topic related to Japanese language and culture. Chapter III focuses on the definition of *uchi* and *soto*, the contextual implications and complexity of insider-outsider relationships in relation to language and culture. This chapter also investigates individual versus collectivist societies to make students more aware of social constructs that may be different than their own. The notion of self in society is investigated as well as the concept of "wrapping" in language and culture. *Uchi*, *soto*, and the meaning of *otaku* are also addressed. An example of American exchange students living abroad with Japanese host families is detailed. This research gives JFL students a better understanding of how they fit into the structure of a Japanese family, and the cultural and language barriers they will face living abroad.

Chapter III focuses on hierarchy in the *uchi-soto* model and details the roles of in-group, out-group and social hierarchy. It also contains information about hierarchical titles that place people within the *uchi-soto* model. Chapter IV focuses on topics related to language and context in the uchi-soto model, discussing issues relevant to language and politeness. This chapter's subsections include the following topics: keigo, levels of speech and politeness, indirectness and politeness, and what activity-oriented and language-oriented politeness means.

Chapter V examines Japanese language and negotiation. Included in this chapter are the following topics: The "Your Japanese Is Good Conundrum," foreigner talk, language, distance and power, negotiating in context, acts that threaten face, and conflict, refusals, apologies and the role of politeness in communication. Chapter VI explores linguistic issues involving syntax and morphology, sentence-ending particles, honorific prefixes, politeness and morae, pragmatics, paralinguistics and JFL learner research. Chapter VII focuses on language differences between men and women: gender and language research, keigo, supragesmental features of gendered speech, gender and lexical distinctions, directness vs. indirectness in speech, sentence-final particles, parts of speech, and negative connotations in gendered speech. Chapter VIII addresses *aidzuchi*, a Japanese back channeling technique, how it is used in spoken Japanese, and its implications. Each of these chapters contains a summary and teaching implications for JFL learners. Finally, chapter IX is composed of an overall summary of research, future research, and recommendations.

Definition of Terms

The following terms written in Japanese are defined by the following scholarly online dictionary, http://linear.mv.com/cgi-bin/j-e/dict, compiled by doctoral student Jim Breen of The University of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. His professional research includes *Corpus-based Extraction of Japanese Compound Verbs, In Proceedings of the 2009 Australasian Language Technology Workshop*, *Identification of neologisms in Japanese by corpus analysis, eLexicography in the 21st century conference (2009)*, and *WWWJDIC - a feature-rich WWW-based Japanese dictionary,*

eLexicography in the 21st century conference (2009). For most terms, I borrow only the meanings that best describe them in relation to their use in this thesis.

- aidzuchi: "(n) {ling} sounds given during a conversation to indicate comprehension; back-channeling" ("aidzuchi," n.d.).

- aimai: "(adj-na,n) (1) vague; ambiguous; unclear" ("aimai," n.d.).

- amae: "(n) depending on other's kindness" ("amae," n.d.).

- bikago: "(n) more refined language through prefixing of "o-" or "-go" to words, and use of appropriate vocabulary" ("bikago," n.d.).

- gaijin: "(n) (sens) foreigner" ("gaijin," n.d.).

- giri: "(n,adj-no) duty; sense of duty; honor; honour; decency; courtesy; debt of gratitude; social obligation" ("giri," n.d.).

- honne: "(n) real intention; motive" ("honne," n.d.).

- ie: "(n) (1) house; residence; dwelling; (2) family; household; (3) lineage; family name" ("ie," n.d.).

- JFL: Japanese as a Foreign Language

- JWL: Japanese Women's Language

- keigo: "(n) honorific; term of respect" ("keigo," n.d.).

- kenjougo: "(n) (ling) humble language" (e.g., itadaku) ("kenjougo," n.d.).

- kotoba: "(n) (1) language; dialect; (2) word; words; phrase; term; expression; remark; (3) speech; (manner of) speaking" ("kotoba," n.d.).

- kougo: "(n,adj-no) (1) spoken language; (2) literary style based on (modern) spoken language" ("kougo," n.d.).

- kudaketa: "(adj-f) (1) easy (e.g., explanation, description); plain; familiar; (2) informal (e.g., greeting, expression); friendly; affable (e.g., person)" ("kudaketa," n.d.).

- L2: Second Language

- nihongo: "(n,adj-no) Japanese (language)" ("nihongo," n.d.).

- ninjou: "(n) (1) humanity; empathy; kindness; sympathy; (2) human nature; common sense; customs and manners" ("ninjou," n.d.).

- omote: (n) (1) surface; (2) face (i.e., the visible side of an object); (3) front (of a building, etc.); obverse side (i.e., "head") of a coin; (4) outside; exterior; (5) appearance; (6) public; (7) first half (of an innings); top (of an inning); (8) cover (for tatami mats, etc.); (9) (comp) foreground ("omote," n.d.).

- onna-rashii: "(adj-i) womanly; ladylike; feminine" ("onna-rashii," n.d.).

- otaku: "(n) (1) (hon) your house; your home; your family; (2) (hon) your husband; (3) (hon) your organization; (pn,adj-no) (4) (hon) you (referring to someone of equal status with whom one is not especially close)" ("otaku," n.d.).

- sonkeigo: "(n) (ling) honorific language" ("sonkeigo," n.d.).

- soto: "(n) (1) outside; exterior; (2) open air; (3) other place; (P)" ("soto," n.d.).

- tatemae: "(n) (1) face; official stance; public position or attitude (as opposed to private thoughts)" ("tatemae," n.d.).

- teineigo: "(n) (ling) polite language (i.e., masu, desu, etc.)" ("teineigo," n.d.).

- uchi: "(n, adj-no) house (one's own); one's household; one's family" ("uchi," n.d.).

- ura: "(n) reverse side; wrong side; back; undersurface; inside; palm; sole; opposite; rear; lining; last half (of an inning)" ("ura," n.d.).

Limitations of the Study

      This study was initiated while I was teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) at California State University, Chico from fall 2006 to spring 2008. Although my students frequently raised questions about the research in this thesis, I was not able to complete the entire body of research until I had left my position as a Japanese teacher at the university. I was not able to complete student surveys during my final semester of teaching. Therefore, I do not have accurate data on how my introductory Japanese students benefited from their knowledge of these various linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, and cultural issues. Several students who studied abroad and worked in Japan after studying Japanese with me for only one semester reported that they felt much more prepared to embrace the Japanese language and culture.

      Topics related to this JFL research are varied and numerous. In-depth research on each topic involved studies conducted, analyzed and synthesized by researchers. Publications included books, journal articles, anthologies, speeches, and other resources. Because I have included research from a wide variety of resources, I believe that the information is accurate. However, I would need to do additional research in order to provide further evaluation of the work examined.

CHAPTER II

UCHI-SOTO/INSIDE-OUTSIDE IN

CONTEXT

Uchi-soto (inside-outside; insider-outsider) encompasses a variety of

sociocultural and sociolinguistic relationships. These relationships are not static, but ever-

changing and determined by one's situational status. *Uchi-soto* is demonstrated in a

variety of ways which reflect one's use of language and even physical space. In language,

uchi-soto relationships are largely determined by politeness markedness noted in

Japanese syntax and morphology. This chapter aims to demystify *uchi-soto* relationships,

provide personal anecdotes relating to these relationships, and demonstrate how *uchi-soto*

relationships are manifest in Japanese language and society. It addresses why *uchi-soto*

exists, who is part of the *uchi-soto* model, and how these relationships are viewed and

determined. In order for foreigners to 'fit in' to the target language and culture, it is

important to recognize and value target language and cultural norms. Insider and outsider

relationships in Japan should be viewed from an insider perspective so that target

language learners know how to communicate more effectively with native Japanese

speakers.

All members of Japanese society have *uchi-soto* membership in groups

determined by factors such as familial relationships, social networks, marriage, and age.

Uchi-soto are based on an anchor point of oneself and one's group, and how far away one

is from the anchor point. In Japan, language operates in a way that shows where one fits within the insider-outsider relationship dichotomy. Although the barriers of *uchi-soto* are invisible, *uchi-soto* becomes "visible" via the choice of levels and styles of speech people select to use in society.

Because Japan is a group-oriented society, group consensus is valued over an individual's uniqueness. During my stay in Japan, and even in my teaching of introductory JFL, the *uchi-soto* topic was never explained in detail in many of the textbooks that I read and used. As a student, this lack of information about *uchi-soto* relationships led me to study Japanese without a keen understanding of the cultural and sociolinguistic implications of language use. The outcome of my initial learning experiences was disappointing, in that I did not realize the proper context of language use when speaking with native Japanese speakers. The personal frustration that ensued from my lack of knowledge of the Japanese culture, society, and language and the importance of these insider-outsider relationships and knowledge of how they function has provided the impetus for this investigation.

Defining Uchi-Soto

The concepts of *uchi* (insider) and *soto* (outsider) may be defined in a variety of ways that encompass social, cultural, and linguistic spheres. *Uchi* and *soto* distinguish Japan by a duality of inside and outside categories. In-groups and out-groups are not only reflected in social and cultural constructs. They are also reflected in language use to determine the status of individuals within these groups. Even more complex, these groups are not static, but dynamic and ever changing, depending on context and social situation.

While *uchi* and *soto* may be reflected in physical space, such as where to place guests in a home, where people should sit at work, or who is allowed to take the first bath, the language one uses is based on societal insider and outsider relationships as well. Linguistically, these relationships are determined mostly by various forms of speech, which are partly determined by verb use and politeness markedness. Rather than the in-group receiving more linguistic politeness, the out-group receives the most politeness in a given situation. Generally-speaking, when speaking with the out-group, one must honor those individuals in speech, while the in-group uses humbling speech. Throughout one's life, 'membership' in one group or another frequently changes, based on new relationships, such as social networks, jobs, marriage, and other factors people encounter throughout their lives.

As Whorf (1956) observed, "the forms of thought are controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which the person is unconscious…the unperceived intricate systematizations of his own language" (p. 252). According to Whorf and Sapir, language and thought are intertwined and inseparable. There is a direct relationship between the particular use of Japanese language, and even grammar, and the relationships of the people involved in communication (McGill, 1987, p. 283). Determining in-groups and out-groups in work and other societal relationships is complex. This complexity is demonstrated mostly by Japanese language use. When speaking about one's own in-group, an individual uses more casual speech. When speaking to another in-group member about his or her family, the same person will use honorific terms to describe his or her family. To sum up the concept of *uchi* and *soto*, Bachnik (1994) writes: "*uchi*/*soto* is a major organizational focus for Japanese self, social life, and language" (p. 3). She

continues, "Thus the organization of both self and society can be viewed as situating meaning, through the indexing of inside and outside orientations" (1994, p. 3). While *uchi* represents "we, us, our group, me, my, I", and is a point of reference and a sort of anchoring point for how one views society, *soto* is a bit more "abstract, objective, and unanchored" (1994, p. 28).

To further exemplify the notion of in-group and out-group anecdotally, Ogulnick (1998) a young American woman living in Japan for two years, recounts the story of a Japanese male friend introducing her to a Japanese woman who wants to be her language partner. While the Japanese woman was standing in front of her, she was essentially forced by her male friend to agree to be the woman's English language partner, even though he did not ask her first. Of course, Ogulnick did not want to hurt the woman's feelings. In her story, *Like a Woman*, she recounts just how upset she was that her male friend didn't ask her first if it was alright to introduce the Japanese lady in order to be her language partner. Essentially, she was forced into a situation she did not want to be forced into. After an internal dialogue, Ogulnick realized that she was living by the standards of her native cultural norms while living in the Japanese culture, which holds fast to collectivist, group cultural norms. She learned that her own feelings really didn't matter in this collectivist society; the group's consensus ruled. I have also come to know what it means to be a cultural 'outsider', and how to navigate this insider-outsider concept that doesn't exist in the same way in our own culture as it does in Japan. It is easy to forget that, as a foreigner, when in Rome, it is best to do as Romans do. In Japan, this means that one must hold on to one's sense of cultural self, while taking a grand leap into a new cultural paradigm in which one's true feelings must often be hidden in order to

fit into the host culture. In addition, one's sociolinguistic knowledge of the Japanese language should be developed in order to be able to develop and maintain relationships with others.

<div align="center">Complexity in Language</div>

Japanese society is able to keep its culture and language somewhat a mystery to foreigners by its use of the *uchi* and *soto* societal model. The Japanese language is complex, embedded within a system of honorific practices which acts as a barrier to socialization for the non-native Japanese speaker. Entering the realm of *uchi* means that one must understand how Japanese people interact with each other.

Hamabata (1990) asserts that:

> [For] the Japanese, the self is outer form as well as inner feeling, social obligation as well as personal inclination. By participating in the *ie* and *uchi*, the Japanese comes to understand himself or herself as partly societal and partly personal; he or she comes to understand that the joining of the societal and the personal leads to fulfillment and that the parting of *giri* and *ninjou* can only lead to tragedy. (p. 51)

This understanding of interaction will cue that language is to be used in a certain way, based on one's in-group or out-group status. Topics related to *uchi* and *soto* relationships, included in my research, are honorific language and its uses and functions, hierarchical relationships and gender, Japanese back channeling techniques, the Japanese sense of *honne* vs. *tatemae* or "inside feelings" and "real intention" vs. "how one really feels" and "public face." Attention to *uchi* and *soto* also touches upon expressions of guilt and shame and gift giving practices. Adherence to Japanese cultural and linguistic norms and practices allow the JFL learner to enter the realm of *uchi* more quickly.

Insider and outsider, hereafter referred to as *uchi* (insider) and *soto* (outsider), encompass a variety of relationships. From their very first encounter with the Japanese, people immediately become part of a societal dichotomy which is foreign to most Western cultures. Since Japan is a collectivist, non-individualistic, and cooperative society, learners must rely heavily on sociolinguistic cues in order to develop an emic perspective. Even modern-day author and columnist Dave Barry (1992) finds Japanese culture difficult to penetrate:

> You can never forget for a moment how different you are. Japan is no melting pot. It's an extremely exclusive club, and the only way to get into it is to be born into it, and that's that. We were told repeatedly by Westerners that no matter how long they've lived in Japan, and how well they've learned the language, there remains a fundamental, perceptible barrier between them and their Japanese coworkers and friends. (p. 207)

Although there appear to be differences in the ways in which Japanese *uchi* and *soto* relationships are viewed from both an emic and etic perspective, the notion of a complex system of insider and outsider relationships exists throughout the world. While *uchi* and *soto* may appear to be a unique social construct, insider and outsider relationships vary from country to country. *Uchi-soto* relationships, however, appear to follow a more complex sociolinguistic hierarchy in Japan than in other countries. Hsu (1975) writes: "Given the vertical and corporate structure of group life, relationships of power and dependence are necessarily asymmetric" (p. 90). This notion of relationships and power is demonstrated in Japan's complex use of honorific speech.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

Japanese society relies heavily on certain social mores which are different than those used in most Western societies. In many societies, ideologies suggest that

individual uniqueness is highly desirable as a social construct. In Japan, however, a unique sense of individuality goes against the grain of Japan's vision of a collectivist society, in which the needs of the group are seen as more important than the needs of the individual. As language is used as a means of promoting cultural identity, Japanese people are very sensitive to the use of language in society. Like the society, the Japanese language is viewed by its collectivism (Hasegawa & Hirose, 2005). According to McVeigh (2000), there are two modes of expression regarding the self. The first mode is the "true self," which can only be divulged in one's in-group (*uchi*) or private (ura) settings. The self that a Japanese person shows outwardly in public (*tatemae*) is reserved for out-group (*soto*), open (*omote*) settings (Wehmeyer, 2002, p. 114).

Frequently, JFL textbooks teach the most colloquial verb forms rather than polite forms and provide no contextual explanations for their use. This makes the JFL learner appear to be an impolite speaker from the outset, using colloquial forms of speech with the wrong people at the wrong time. If the textbooks had explained when each verb form could be used with whom in what circumstances, my experience as a Japanese language student would have landed me in the in-group much more frequently than in the out-group. Extensive training in speech contexts and sociolinguistic issues would allow students to communicate better with other Japanese speakers.

According to Poole (2002), more recent literature regarding Japanese *uchi* and *soto* relations "has followed a vertical model of hierarchy and subordination made famous by Benedict (1946) and later developed in detail with Nakane's (1970) work 30 years ago" (as cited in Poole, 2002, para. 1). Benedict's model depicts "a hierarchical ranking of society based on factors such as age, sex, and status" (as cited in Poole, 2002,

para. 6). After the idea of hierarchical social ranking was reinterpreted by 'experts' on

Japan, Benedict adopted the cultural view of *uchi-soto* described by Brenneis (1994),

who writes, it is a "compelling case for considering space as socially, situationally, and

flexibly defined" (as cited in Poole, 2002, para. 9). He believes that this way of looking at

the *uchi-soto* relationships has cross-cultural implications that can be extended to other

parts of the world.

<div align="center">Self in Society</div>

Although the process is more complex than this, *honne* might be best

described as a person's true feelings, usually only concealed to *uchi* 'members', while

tatemae is a polite front used with *soto* 'members'. Bachnik (1998) claims that *omote* and

ura 'index degrees of distance between self and other' and that they indicate the

'difference' between how one sees oneself and how one views a relationship with

someone else. She also claims that *ura* and *omote* refer to how formal a situation is

(1998, p. 107). For the Japanese, "the self is outer form as well as inner feeling, social

obligation as well as personal inclination. By participating in the *ie* and *uchi*, a Japanese

individual comes to understand himself/herself as partly societal and partly personal";

"he or she comes to understand that the joining of the societal and the personal leads to

fulfillment and that the parting of *giri* (debt) and *ninjou* (social obligation) can only lead

to tragedy" (Hamabata, 1990, p. 51). McGill (1987) further defines *ura* and *omote*.

"*Omote* (Kao: face) is the building of consensus in public presentation, while *ura*

(kokoro: mind, heart, soul) is the process that maintains the private, invisible, secret self"

(p. 289).

Doi (1986), an influential Japanese psychoanalyst who studied Japanese culture and behavior, thinks that, "*omote* and *ura* correspond between the distinction of *soto* (outside) and *uchi* (inside) that is often prominent in the Japanese consciousness of human relations. *Omote* is that which is presented to the *soto*. *Ura* is that which is not presented to *soto*, but kept closed up in *uchi*" (1986, p. 24). Doi also believes that *tatemae* and *honne* are developed from the time of birth through childhood in the home, and then further developed outside. "We speak of the *omote-ura* of things, referring to the two sides of everything, and we also use them as opposing concepts in various combinations with other words" (1986, p. 23). Doi also explains that while *tatemae* exists in *omote*, *honne* is hidden in *ura*, and one cannot exist without the other (1986, p. 37).

According to Doi (1986), Japanese people conceal, select, and even silence the words they use: "Somehow, when I try to put it into words, it sounds like a lie" (p. 31). "To the Japanese, a person who represents an artificial front in order to deceive others is a person with *ura-omote*" (1986, p. 33). "'*Giri*' is "social obligation," whereas its opposite, '*ninjou*', is "the world of personal feelings" (1986, p. 33). In her article, *The Two "Faces" of Self and Society in Japan*, Bachnick (1992) states that "self and society are linked in practice by codes of conduct [*giri* and *ninjou*] with two 'faces,' one social, the other emotional" (p. 5). While *uchi-soto* encompasses distinct meanings of "directional coordinates," they also indicate relativity to the "self and society" (1992, p. 5). While *uchi*, *honne*, *ura*, and *ninjou* are characteristics of the self, *soto*, *tatemae*, *omote*, and *giri* are aspects of the self's interaction with the social sphere (Bachnick, 1992, p. 5).

Wrapping in Language and Culture

Wrapping may also be seen as a distinction of insiderness-outsiderness. Although we may think of wrapping as a way of protecting things, such as clothing protecting skin or packaging protecting its contents, Hendry (1993) also looks at wrapping from a cultural vantage point. Although the gift inside the 'wrapping paper' is important and valued, the overall packaging of the gift demonstrates its significance (p. 27). To people in Western societies, the packaging is a way to conceal the gift, whereas in Japan, the wrapping is a way to refine the gift and "to add to it layers of meaning which it could not carry in its unwrapped form" (1995, p. 27). So, just as language uses linguistic wrapping to reveal its true meaning and intent, gifts use wrapping to reveal significance. Wrapping encompasses a slew of non-verbal communication which Westerners might not understand if they are not aware of its cultural significance. So much of Japan is 'wrapped'. The complex Japanese language is wrapped, Japanese self and thought is wrapped (*honne* vs. *tatemae*; *ura* vs. *omote*). Japanese clothing is a manifestation of physical wrapping. Japanese gardens wrap space. People are arranged in hierarchical relationships, and they are 'wrapped' in physical spaces, as in seating positions in the workplace (Hendry, 1993, p. i). In his study of Japanese gardens, Gannon (2004) comments that the Japanese garden contains four of the same elements found in society: harmony and the proper way of doing things, "emphasizing form and order of processes"; the "combination of droplets or the energies of individuals in group activities; spirit training; and aesthetics" (pp. 31-32). Although *uchi* and *soto* are social constructs, their presence appears in cultural and linguistic practices alike.

My Group vs. Your Group

In Japan, an individual refers to one's own group as *uchi* and to another's as *otaku*. *Uchi* and *soto* are said to constitute "a major organizational focus for the Japanese self, social life, and language" (Bachnik, 1994, p. 3). When it is necessary to speak to someone, instead of using a personal pronoun, one refers to the person as *uchi* and *otaku*, which means 'my house' and 'your house'. This use of language allows people to continue specifying that they belong to a particular group. *Uchi* and *otaku* don't always refer to one's home, as they may also refer to one's group at work, or to another social group to which one belongs. When referring to someone from his *otaku*, however, honorific language is used to indicate that the person with whom he is speaking is an outsider.

The American Exchange Students'
Experience with Japanese
Host Families

In *Language Use and Identity in Contact Situations: An Ethnographic Study of Dinner Table Conversations Between Japanese Host Families and American Students,* Masakazu Iino (1996) found that American exchange students living with thirty different Japanese families code-switched linguistic and cultural behaviors (pp. 136-137). These code-switching behaviors demonstrated an *uchi-soto* relationship in that the families communicated with students in a way that is not acceptable to Japanese society, teaching students to speak incorrectly, using language out of context, ultimately making them part of the out-group. The families tended to modify speech, and even avoided using their dialects when speaking with exchange students.

Focusing on overuse of personal pronouns in the Japanese language, Iino (1996) indicated that although native Japanese speakers avoid this in most conversations, they repeatedly used the word 'anata', meaning 'you', with American students living in their households. They claimed to be bothered by the American students' use of 'you'. However, in conversational transcripts of interaction between the host families and American students, collected by Iino, the families used the word 'you' in many situations in which Japanese people would never use it, leading the exchange student to believe that the use of this personal pronoun was acceptable. Because the pronoun 'you' singles out an individual, it is used only when the person being referred to as 'you' is *soto*, an outsider. Naturally, host students living with Japanese families would also refer to other members of their host families as 'you,' unintentionally connoting that the host family member is an outsider as well.

Group Conscious Language Use

Nakane and Lebra (cited in Tateyama, 2001, p. 201) indicate that the Japanese people are group-conscious. When Japanese out-group relationships operate, they are typically put into the context of hierarchical status. These relationships are complex. The higher group member is at the top of this pyramid, the people below him or her in status use a polite form. Those in the same in-group may use less formal, colloquial language. Olshtain and Cohen (1990) believe that *soto* 'outside/out-group/outsider' are said to constitute "a major organizational focus for Japanese self, social life, and language" (as cited in Bachnik, 1994, p. 3). When it is necessary to speak to someone, instead of using a personal pronoun, one refers to the person as *uchi* and *otaku*, 'my house' and 'your

house' as explained earlier. This form of address allows the speaker and interlocutor to identify their relationship status and organize language use with each other.

In the following excerpt, Hamabata (1990) offers a more complex, real life *uchi* and *soto* situation to explain the complex nature of *uchi* and *soto* relationships, their boundaries, and ability to overlap in society. "The world, therefore, is the *uchi*, first in opposition to *otaku*, then combining with *otaku* to again form *uchi*, which is then in opposition to another *otaku*" (1990, p. 48).

> The *uchi*, however, forms an extremely flexible yet absolutely precise boundary. For, when two people are speaking with each other, they are *uchi* and *otaku*, but should a third person enter the conversation, the original two would have to decide consciously whether the third is the *otaku* in opposition to the original two, who might decide to form an *uchi*. (p. 48)

Hamabata (1990) offers Japanese Americans a communication trick for communicating with Japanese people:

> The trick for a Japanese American, I discovered, is to present oneself as an American—to shake hands and use English—when meeting people for the first time. The hospitable treatment normally accorded guests will then be forth-coming. Once having made one's entrance as a *gaijin* [foreigner], however, it is possible to lose a bit of one's guest status as an outsider by switching into the Japanese mode. (p. 8)

Summary

Uchi-soto encompasses various cultural and linguistic spheres. While Ogulnick (1998) discussed her feelings about thinking in a way that was more Western, she finally understands the importance of understanding how to communicate in Japan's collectivist, group-oriented culture in which the group's consensus outweighs the individuals' consensus. While *uchi-soto* is manifest in communication practices by manipulating speech in order to fit into the correct group, it is also demonstrated in

physical and even emotional space. It is demonstrated through target culture politeness norms, including the use of different levels and styles of speech, target language social and cultural norms, politeness, wrapping physical, emotional, and linguistic space.

Learning to hide one's true feelings (*honne*) and project one's public face (*tatemae*) allows students to understand how to fit into the group model using the target language rather than their own cultural norms. Learning how to think like a Japanese person using target language norms allows JFL learners to communicate more effectively. One way to do this is to refer to people correctly according to Japanese language norms, not Western norms. Another is by deleting personal pronouns when the person one is talking about is understood. Referring to people using certain personal pronouns signals out members of a group, an indication that they are uchi rather than soto members. Knowledge of Japanese use of conversational starters, such as "Your Japanese is good," and foreigner talk helps learners to demystify the target language and culture. It also helps them think like cultural insiders, using target language cultural and linguistic practices rather than their own.

Teaching Implications

Introductory and intermediate JFL textbooks typically lack key information regarding *uchi-soto* relationships and how they are manifest in Japanese culture. Although some JFL teachers may resist teaching such complex topics related to insider-outsider relationships in beginning language classes, they need to be addressed at least anecdotally, because they affect students' ability to communicate effectively with native Japanese speakers. Insider-outsider relationships will determine students' ultimate

success in understanding the Japanese language and culture, which operate synonymously.

Many JFL learning materials start teaching students using a basic polite verb form, less complex in structure, which enables students to use JFL more quickly and easily. Students are not typically told how and why speakers use this basic polite form, so it is frequently used out of context. Other learning materials teach students familiar verb forms in the beginning stages of their Japanese studies. This is especially detrimental, as this form may only be used with very select individuals in society, i.e., peers or close in-group friends. Since JFL learners usually do not belong to a Japanese peer group at the beginning of their studies, they use more polite verb forms when introducing themselves to people—even individuals in their particular age groups. As language is a mechanism used to incite or excite group membership, conversational and relational confusion ensues between speakers when JFL speakers use language incorrectly. Using the proper verb forms is imperative. Improper use of verb forms and other non-native communicative techniques between native and foreign speakers creates psychological conundrums for native speakers. For example, Japanese speakers are unable to tell the true intent of the meaning of what is being communicated by foreigners.

In order for JFL students to operate more effectively with native Japanese speakers, they not only need to have a basic understanding of what verb forms to use and when—they also need to be aware of key social differences between Japan and their own countries. The rules of communication with people from one's own country do not necessarily apply to the rules of communication with people in Japan. Students need to be aware of the different modes of communication acceptable to Japanese society. Insider

and outsider memberships are determined by language use and social norms. Students need to be aware of these norms and to compare them with their own in order to understand how to communicate more effectively.

In addition to oral language, students need to be aware of key paralinguistic modes of communication, including common gestures, body language, and physical distance from other people. A visitor is placed in a Japanese home subject to certain rules which apply to *uchi-soto* membership. The greater the distance from the common living area in the home, the more polite the guest is treated, since the guest is considered an outsider. The reverse is generally true of *uchi* membership.

Teachers who demonstrate the concept of *uchi-soto* and its implications enable their students to understand Japanese language and culture from an emic rather than etic perspective. These teachers help students avoid severe culture shock while preparing them to communicate and function in a manner that is psychologically attuned to the host culture. In order to fit into Japanese culture, students need to be aware of how to integrate within groups, and make decisions with group consent rather than operating outside of groups. JFL learners who know how to live in a way that is culturally acceptable from the beginning of their Japanese studies are more likely to become part of more groups in Japan. Even for students who never intend to live in Japan, learning how to speak and act in accordance with Japanese communicative norms allows more fluid communication with native speakers.

CHAPTER III

HEIRARCHY IN THE UCHI-SOTO MODEL

Social and linguistic hierarchy in Japan is complex. It is determined by

various factors, including one's position at work, in school, and society in general.

Without an understanding of this complex view of society, vertically as well as

horizontally, it will be impossible to speak Japanese correctly in context. Language is

demonstrated hierarchically, based largely on the *uchi-soto* dichotomy. JFL learners must

appreciate this complex hierarchy, how politeness is used, how speech and other cultural

practices are demonstrated to show one's place in society, how linguistics is a key

component of hierarchy in the *uchi-soto* model, what types of hierarchies exist, and how

they are demonstrated.

Hierarchy should be studied before language learning takes place in order to

understand the complex relationships between *uchi-soto* membership and how that

membership is demonstrated in language and culture. Japanese hierarchy is represented

by complex linguistic cues which trigger use of particular levels and styles of speech to

communicate in a manner acceptable to the target language culture. Learning the

similarities and differences between Japanese and Western hierarchies helps JFL learners

to acculturate and communicate more effectively.

Speakers of a foreign language rely on their knowledge of the structure of the

native language, especially if they are unaware of the structure of the target language. In

my case, I had never studied Japanese before, so one common mistake that I made was emphasizing pronouns when their use was unnecessary, or worse, incorrect. Pronoun use tends to emphasize the individual being discussed, making oneself important in an individualistic sense, even referentially. This is cause for dismissal from the Japanese in-group. In Western societies, it is important to mention pronouns or peoples' names in order to distinguish who one is speaking to or about, since it is culturally acceptable to target an individual. Although English requires an overt subject, Japanese usually does not. In Japan, it is best if the individual is not emphasized at all, since an individual feels most comfortable being part of a group. By constantly saying peoples' names or referring to them using referential pronouns, I was stating that these people should be singled out from their in-group. For an entire year, pronoun use kept me from becoming more like a native speaker; it also made me a linguistic and cultural outsider. I learned how to eat with chopsticks, use regular polite and colloquial forms of verbs, ride a bicycle carefully along a busy freeway, and walk in a tight kimono during prestigious and culturally significant tea and wedding ceremonies, bow when necessary, and function in daily life using polite forms of the Japanese language. Nonetheless, I was never able to become 'nihonjinteki' (Japanese-like), even after having lived there as a member of four different Japanese host families for nearly a year.

In-Group, Out-Group and
Social Hierarchy

Japanese is a language of respect. In Japanese, respectful language is observed when speaking to people who are distant from oneself, including strangers, managers, customers, elders, and interestingly enough, one's parents. Nouns which refer to one's

own family members, household items, or other family relationships usually do not take honorific prefixes, whereas nouns referring to an out-group's household require honorific prefixes. Social hierarchy is reflected in the speech of Japanese people, so it is very easy for native Japanese speakers to understand the complexities of in-group and out-group relationships based on language use. Children typically speak to parents using informal speech and to teachers using polite speech; parents are given honorific titles of respect, but not spoken to using honorific sentence-final particles.

In the Japanese home, there is a hierarchy that indicates in-groupness by using names such as '*otousan*' father and '*okaasan*' mother. The 'o' in front of words such as father and mother is an honorary prefix frequently used with family titles. However, 'my father' and 'my mother' are referred to as 'chichi' and 'haha', respectively, when speaking to the out-group. Often translated as "Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Miss," -san is also used as a generic honorific title. A similar address is used with older siblings. 'Older sisters' are referred to as 'oneesan'. An 'older sister' and 'older brothers' are called 'oniisan' in the same manner. Younger siblings are often addressed by first name by the father, mother, or older siblings. The word for younger sister '*imouto*' and younger brother '*otouto*' do not include the honorific suffix –san used with many other names. When parents refer to each other, they frequently do so from the perspective of the children; in this way, husband and wife often refer to each other as 'touchan' or 'kaachan', a familiar term for 'father' and 'mother'. With –chan and –kun, the diminutive forms of –san, the honorific prefix 'o' is dropped. This identifies each member of the family as part of a collective unit rather individual entity. This hierarchical use of titles in

Japanese families is only one way in which the language reflects the social hierarchy.

Outside the home, there are other social hierarchies.

Language used with family members is typically less polite than language

used with outsiders. Ikeda's (2004) suggests that the use of the word 'konnichiwa' to

mean 'good day' or 'hello' or 'good afternoon' is an example of polite language that

would sound strange with family or in-group members (p. 3). Ikeda proposes that this is a

polite way of saying, "talking about today" or "as for today," and the particle 'wa'

attached to the word '*konnnichi*' signifies a politeness.

Hierarchical Titles

Titles of company workers are also referred to in a hierarchical, group

manner. The head of the company is referred to as 'kachou', which acknowledges a

position of authority within the company. *Senpai* refers to a senior relationship, whereas

kouhai refers to a junior relationship at school or work. There is a long list of terms to

describe people in society from top to bottom. Relationships are best described in vertical

terms, with the most authoritative person at the top, the least authoritative at the bottom.

This social hierarchy uses language as a means to distinguish people from each other.

This ideology seems unnatural to Western ways of thinking in terms of social hierarchy.

In Japan, job titles distinguish employees by their authority in the workplace.

In terms of address and reference, the system of Japanese honorifics

encompasses references to people directly or indirectly when speaking about them. Two

kinds of suffixes are linked to first name, family name, or kinship terms. Used as terms of

address, they may not be used alone. A few examples of these suffix-ending terms of

address are *san*, *sama*, *chan*, *kun*, etc. Other kinds of suffixes can stand alone and may represent either a term of address or reference. These include words such as *sensei* (teacher), *kaichou* (president (of a society); chairman), *kyouju* (professor), etc. These stand-alone, honorific terms of address are usually used when the interlocutor's aware of who is being talked about. Wenger (1982) explains that this second group of stand-alone suffixes "could be described as chosen on the basis of achieved status" (p. 45). The honorific suffix *sama* is a highly honorific word frequently used in writing. However, *sama* is frequently heard in places of business as customers are referred to using the most polite forms of speech.

There is a variance of the use of *sama* with family members. Senior family members may be called by title with the suffix *sama* attached. Other families use the diminutive suffixes *chan* and *kun* to refer to younger female and male children in the family, respectively. This extends into society, where other members, such as teachers and family friends use these diminutive suffixes to refer to children. *Chan*, a suffix that indicates cuteness, is used for both male and female infants (Wenger, 1982, p. 46). The suffix is placed after their first names. However, after infancy, boys are generally referred to by the suffix, *kun*, which is not used with girls. After elementary school, boys are generally referred to by their surname with the addition of the suffix, *kun*. There are cases when *san* may be used with the first name of a child or adult woman by close friends (Wenger, 1982, p. 46). However, men are rarely referred to by their first name with the suffix *san*. Between family members and friends, a surname may be used without a suffix, although this is rare, and generally only occurs when males are speaking. Surnames may also be used without a suffix to refer to oneself or to someone in one's

own in-group when talking with people from the out-group (Wenger, 1982, p. 47). Although some of the more popular terms of address have been discussed, this is not a complete list of terms of address and reference. The use of these terms varies, based on factors such as age, gender, and social status.

Social hierarchy helps determine insider-outsider language use. In turn, language use determines the vertical structure of the social hierarchy. This is expressed through a hierarchical honorific means of communication and a vertical structure of referential titles. Other linguistic and cultural phenomena also demonstrate the in-group/out-group societal model apparent in Japanese language and culture. Relational hierarchies in Japanese society are ever changing. Nouns, family names, prefixes, suffixes, honorific titles, language politeness, age and other societal and cultural factors affect how relationships are structured and how communication takes place. With a deeper understanding of how these linguistic and cultural nuances are conveyed in Japanese society, JFL learners will learn how to establish themselves within the cultural and linguistic hierarchy.

Summary

The complex social hierarchy that exists in Japan is determined in large part by speech level, style and politeness. When respectful speech is used, distance between speakers is conveyed. Distance in speech acknowledges a *soto* (out-group) relationship between interlocutors. Hierarchical speech may be found in communication with all social strata, from one's workplace to one's home. Respectful language is reserved for *soto* members, including strangers, managers, customers, elders, and even, to some

degree, one's parents, while less polite, colloquial speech is usually for people in one's

uchi (in-group).

Since language use is a determiner of how relationships are viewed, formed,

and maintained, speakers need to be aware of language mechanisms that determine *uchi*

and *soto* relationships. *Uchi* and *soto* relationships are expressed, in large part, by

Japanese syntax and morphology. Morphemes and grammar largely determine how in-

group and out-group relationships are maintained, since they determine the level of

politeness of the speech act. Hierarchy runs in a vertical manner in society, and the

speech level and style one uses is dependent on numerous factors, including one's in-

group or out-group status, social class ranking (which may be determined by a person's

family structure), social status (based on wealth and age), skill-set, and other factors.

In the home, there is also a social hierarchy determined in part by the use of

familial titles, honorific prefixes, and suffixes. While parents and eldest siblings are

generally referred to with an honorific prefix and suffix attached to their root family term,

younger siblings are generally referred to by first names. When speaking about one's own

family, relationship terms do not contain honorific prefixes or suffixes. In this case, most

relationship terms change entirely, and new terms are used altogether. When speaking

about another person's family, the majority of family relationship terms contain honorific

prefixes and suffixes. Speaking within one's family and with other *uchi* members, there is

typically less polite language use than with *soto* members.

While family and in-group membership have hierarchical ways of determining

relationship status based on language use, company workers are also referred to with

titles in a hierarchical manner. While the head of the company is the *kachou*, denoting his

position of authority, the titles for other company workers run in a vertical manner from top to bottom. Even in society, senior relationships are referred to as *senpai*, while junior relationships are referred to as kouhai in work and school settings. The most authoritative person is at the top of the hierarchy, the least authoritative at the bottom. Suffixes attached to titles or peoples' last names may also indicate varying degrees of politeness in one's social hierarchy.

Social hierarchy may be demonstrated through grammatical parts of speech, selection of family terms, prefixes, suffixes, honorific titles, politeness, age and other societal and cultural factors. When one's status changes to *uchi* or *soto*, one's language must also reflect this change. This may be partially accomplished through syntactic and morphological changes that create different levels of speech, and styles of communication. With a clear understanding of the structure of Japanese society and how language is manipulated to reflect one's *uchi* or *soto* status, an individual can more easily fit into the *uchi-soto* model.

Teaching Implications

While the societal hierarchy does not play a similar role in the communication practices of Western cultures, JFL students must be aware of their "place" within the Japanese hierarchy. One's place in the hierarchical structure dictates the politeness level of language used with in-group and out-group members.

While communicating with the same people, foreigners in Japan may be part of an in-group in one instance and an out-group in another. Because insider and outsider relationships are fluid and dynamic, they change based on the introduction of new

members to a group. While one may comfortably use more casual speech with a friend in a superior position at work with no one else in the room, the speakers may need to adjust their levels of speech politeness if others enter the room and/or listen to their conversation. Even if the new person is not part of the conversation, the communication style may change to accommodate the new relationship hierarchy. The rank and title of the new person within the speakers' proximity must be taken into consideration. The lower ranking person would increase the politeness of his or her speech towards the higher ranking friend. Based on the status of the third person in the room, language would need to reflect the new person's rank and status.

In order to become part of Japanese culture, JFL learners must know how to use certain polite forms of speech to communicate effectively with other Japanese speakers. Without this essential knowledge of language hierarchy, students will not know how to rank themselves in in-group and out-group relationships. Therefore, they will not communicate correctly with native speakers. Failure to understand this ranking system can be catastrophic for the non-native speaker who is eager to communicate effectively in a culturally appropriate manner. JFL learners who understand the functions of various social hierarchies within the family, at school, and in business situations will be more effective in-group and out-group members of society, better able to use the correct communication techniques and speech politeness levels.

CHAPTER IV

LANGUAGE AND POLITENESS IN THE

UCHI-SOTO MODEL

This chapter introduces learners to the importance of politeness in the Japanese language and how that politeness is conveyed by using certain levels and styles of speech, including keigo, to reflect contextual "intent." Politeness is also described in terms of one's ability to be indirect in speech and action in order to comply with Japan's group social model. Finally, this section explains the role of activity-oriented vs. language-oriented politeness, and describes how politeness is demonstrated in Western and Japanese cultures. With knowledge of how politeness is demonstrated in speech and behavior, JFL learners are better able to focus on how to display politeness using Japanese communicative norms, not their own. Knowledge of how to relate and communicate with others using target language and cultural norms opens JFL learners' eyes to the similarities and differences between Japanese language and culture and their own.

Group membership is conveyed through linguistic variation in speech, using either casual or honorific speech and varying levels of politeness. Major factors in deciding what level of politeness to use are age, social relations, social status, gender, group membership, and situation (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987). Social groups use language as a means of establishing their boundaries and identifying their members. As

language use often determines the in-group/out-group status of individuals, its use is extremely important to JFL learners who need to be able to determine when, with whom, how, where, and perhaps most importantly, why.

Japanese uses a system of honorific speech, known as *keigo*. Shinoda (1973) describes *keigo* as Japanese honorific speech levels and styles (p. 66); it is the process by which Japanese speakers differentiate honorifics in speech and writing. Some of these considerations include "social status, age, sex, in relation to the one to whom he speaks, his psychological relationship with the object person or other person involved in his talk, and the degree of familiarity between them" (Shinoda, 1973, p. 66).

Although there is a vertical hierarchical way of structuring the Japanese language, the forms found in JFL textbooks frequently lack detailed context for situational use. A JFL learner may turn to nearly any intermediate-advanced JFL textbook to learn how to conjugate verbs using their appropriate forms. For the purpose of simply understanding the basic levels of honorific speech, I introduce each speech level and give a few examples of real-world applications and basic conjugations. Hendry (1993) states that "*keigo* is also a means by which people can demonstrate their taste and preference in the use of language. With skill, they can wrap themselves according to the image they want to present to the world and the persona they want to express" (p. 65).

Just as the Japanese society has social hierarchies that run vertically, there is also a vertical hierarchy of speech levels that appear to be changing to meet the needs of communicating in modern Japan. The selection of the speech level one uses is dependent on numerous factors, including one's in-group or out-group status (see Chapter I), social

class ranking (which may be determined by a person's family structure), social status

(based on wealth and age), skill-set, and a number of other factors.

Chapter IV concludes with a summary and discussion of teaching

implications. It is my hope that JFL learners will view the target language and culture

from an emic perspective, and communicate more like native speakers using Japanese

norms to achieve competence.

Keigo

Keigo uses a system of honorifics to determine politeness. One must

contemplate the meaning of politeness as a term, and its definition varies across cultures.

Japan's way of demonstrating politeness is often different from other cultures. In addition

to showing politeness via language use, additional considerations regarding politeness

strategies incorporate the topics of geographically varied language varieties with dialectal

differences. The definition for politeness used throughout this discussion of *keigo* will

vary slightly, depending on the researcher. In general terms, politeness will be discussed

in terms of standard, proper hierarchical language use, and cultural appropriateness.

Keigo has been historically classified into three types: exalted, humble, and

polite. According to Mizutani and Mizutani (1987), some of the major factors to consider

when deciding the level of politeness to use in speech are age, social relations, social

status, gender, group membership, and situation. Empirical research suggests that speech

consists of two parts: level and style. Speech levels consist of honorific and neutral

components, while the honorific level consists of exalted, humble, and polite

components. One exalts another who is of higher status. One humbles oneself or one's in-

group while using a different level of speech to demonstrate politeness. In addition, each speech level has a formal and informal style.

Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) describe ways in which respect may be expressed in Japanese. She claims that expressions can be divided into four groups: "expressions showing respect toward a person, expressions showing respect toward a person's belongings (including members of their family), expressions showing respect towards a person's condition, and expressions showing respect toward a person's actions" (p. 81). These expressions of respect are used with people one knows and cares about, but not typically with historical figures, or famous people such as actors, politicians, or scholars. In terms of showing respect toward people, terms of respect are used, including "personal names, family terms, professions, positions, and situations" (p. 81). To make matters a bit more complicated, when foreigner talk enters discussion, JFL learners' host families further complicate language use for the non-native Japanese speaker unintentionally by using forms of speech that they themselves would never use in speech with other native speakers.

Most JFL textbooks teach only the basics of the *keigo* system, with situational uses presented out of context, leaving the JFL learner mystified about *keigo* and its varying levels of politeness. The context of speech interaction is extremely important in order to convey the speakers' correct 'intent' orally and in writing. Nagara (1976) suggests use of the following strategies when teaching *keigo* to JFL learners at an elementary level: 1) As soon as possible, make the students aware of the fact that not all Japanese speech acts are marked in terms of the respectful/pejorative feelings of the speaker toward the hearer (pp. 173-174); 2) In addition to making clear the distinction

between the stylistic variations of formality/informality and the speech level variations or respect/disrespect, introduce the interrelationship of the speakers feelings in terms of these criteria (p. 175); 3) Emphasize the congruity between the degree of humility expressed by the speaker about himself and the degree of politeness expressed toward the hearer (p. 176); 4) Emphasize that there is complete freedom to combine the levels of politeness expressed to the hearer and those expressed when the referent is a third person (p. 179); and 5) Finally, help students to realize that there may be more than one form to express a certain level within the three hierarchies ("I," "you," "he") (p. 180).

According to Wetzel (2004), "in some sense, *keigo* is a modern construct that serves an important ideological function" (pp. 1-2). The simple definition of *keigo* is an honorific term of respect. The reality of *keigo* use is difficult to grasp and use in everyday speech. For JFL learners, *keigo* is a way for people to relate to each other in a hierarchical manner. One immediately knows if he or she is in the in-group, the out-group, on the periphery, or anywhere else in the relationship spectrum with the person with whom he or she is communicating. *Keigo* is a means by which society dictates where one stands within its structure, whether relating the family or honoring the highest ranking official at a company. Without extensive knowledge of *keigo* and how it is used between speakers in society, JFL learners will not be able to recognize which social groups they do or do not belong to. When *keigo* is used, it must be followed by an appropriate response using the honorific verb form specific to the level and politeness of speech. Since relationships are demonstrated through language use and language use embodies the complexity of hierarchical languages, JFL students need to be properly trained in *keigo* and its complex

uses. The next section explains the levels of speech and politeness associated with each level.

<div align="center">Levels of Speech and Politeness</div>

Japanese is composed of various speech levels. Most researchers state that there are four basic speech levels: *kougo* (casual speech), and three honorific levels of speech, all belonging to *keigo* (honorific speech): *teineigo*, also called *teichougo* (polite speech), *sonkeigo* (honorific speech) and *kenjougo* (humble speech). There is an additional linguistic mechanism of politeness, called *bikago* (beautifying speech), which is often used with polite speech (*teineigo*) and honorific speech (*sonkeigo*). Because the roles of Japanese speech levels are not always explained in detail and in context in JFL textbooks, students should be aware of their importance.

Teineigo is the simple polite speech level. Wetzel (2004) describes *teineigo* as "language that indicates an attitude of respect on the part of the speaker for the hearer" (p. 30). The copula, "desu" and verbs that end in "masu" are considered polite verb forms.

Sonkeigo, or honorific speech, is described by Wetzel (2004) to raise the status of the person who is the topic of discussion, regardless of whether that person is the addressee or some third party" (p. 29). She continues by explaining that *sonkeigo* is "used in speaking about the person him/herself under discussion, that person's location, or that person's behavior, character, or condition" (p. 29). *Sonkeigo* often used by people of lower social status to speak about people of higher social status. In some instances, this may include talking to someone about the principal of his or her school, a famous person,

an important leader or historical figure, a boss, or any person of higher social status

located outside of one's in-group. *Sonkeigo* often utilizes different verbs than those

included in *teineigo* (polite speech). When the verbs used are regular, the following verb

pattern applies to these verbs: お(o)＋pre-masu verb base+に(ni)＋the appropriate

conjugation of the verb, なります(narimasu). Some *sonkeigo* do not utilize the *teineigo*

verb pattern (verb stem+ます (masu). These are frequently listed in JFL textbooks and

must be conjugated using their irregular forms.

According to Wetzel (2004), *kenjougo* (humble speech), "expresses respect

for the other or the listener by lowering the status of (humbling) the self or self's side" (p.

30). One humbles oneself when speaking of a person in one's in-group, such as a

company. When one works in a service industry, the customer always deserves the

highest form of politeness. For regular verbs, the following verb pattern applies to

kenjougo:お(o)+continuative base +します(shimasu). Students will need to review

intermediate-advanced Japanese textbooks for irregular forms.

In addition to these levels, *bikago* is used with all speech styles, including

kougo (casual speech). *Bikago* is beautifying speech which utilizes お (o) and ご(go)

before nouns and adjectives. A few examples of *bikago* are ご家族 (*gokazoku*) (honorific

family), お菓子 (*okashi*) (honorific snacks), and お風呂 (*ofuro*) (honorific bath). The

beautifying prefixes, お (o) and ご (go), are always written in hiragana text.

Levels of speech are either direct or indirect, depending on the context: the

relationship of the interlocutors and those who are listening to the conversation. Once

students understand levels of speech, they also need to understand the role of indirectness in communication, and how it is used as a politeness strategy.

<div align="center">Indirectness and Politeness</div>

In-group and out-group relationships may be determined by language use. Anecdotal accounts suggest that Japanese people can manipulate their language use at a moment's notice to seek group approval of a subject before it goes awry, simply by manipulating the sentence-ending verb to "fit" the nature of the conversation. If a Japanese person is discussing a topic that is not well received by others, he or she can change his or her entire to elicit the in-group approval by simply changing the verb that appears at the very end of the sentence. The decision to use a different verb is made possible by the Subject-Object-Verb sequence of the Japanese sentence. I have also had occasion to "feel out" Japanese conversations that were not well received by my in-group by changing the sentence-final verb to meet the group's approval. I have also done the opposite and directly stated what I wanted to say, even if it meets with the groups' disapproval. My directness and Western way of displaying honesty by verbalizing emotions cost me a ten-year relationship with one of my host family members. That being said, I was overly honest, and the topic, without providing additional details, would have been difficult to discuss even among non-Japanese speakers from Western cultures. Indirect speech in Japanese indicates more politeness. More politeness usually triggers the notion of out-group status between speakers.

Ikeda (2004) notes the importance of indirect speech use in Japan. Western societies are typically indirect in regard to culture and speech; Japan takes a more polite

approach to communication because of the in-groupness and out-groupness of the speech

community, and the fact that language use is a mechanism to indicate politeness in

society (p. 3). In one example, Ikeda notes a sign in a park that asks the public not to feed

the koi fish in the pond. In Western societies, one would be more apt to see a sign posted

that reads, 'Don't feed the koi in the pond'. In Japanese, one would read something closer

to the meaning 'Let's not feed the carp' instead of 'Don't feed the carp' (Ikeda, 2004, p.

3). Since language is a mechanism of demonstrating politeness, it is very important to be

indirect when speaking Japanese. Directness goes against the grain of Japanese culture,

so JFL students' knowledge and use of indirectness is imperative. Even looking at

someone in the eyes in a direct manner may be offensive, so other forms of kinesics and

gestures may need to be used in an indirect way. In addition to communicating

appropriately using the correct speech level and style, as well as using indirect

communication strategies, the JFL learner must know the difference between activity-

oriented and language-oriented politeness. Being aware of these two politeness strategies

will enhance the learners' knowledge of native and Japanese communication strategies.

In the next section, activity-oriented vs. language-oriented politeness strategies are

explored. There are cross-cultural differences that will allow JFL learners to understand

more about politeness orientation in their own language and Japanese.

Activity-Oriented vs. Language-Oriented Politeness

JFL learners must learn how to negotiate other paralinguistic issues during

communication. A speech act, such as aggressive tone or a change in pitch, may

determine the level of politeness of English speech, because communication in English

politeness is activity- oriented. However, in Japanese, politeness is language-oriented (Ide, Tsunao, Akiko, & Shoko, 1986b). While the intent of the exact level of politeness used in English may be difficult to demonstrate using language, the listener of the Japanese conversation immediately knows the level of politeness and its indication towards the listener and, depending on the situational context, with those around him or her. To the seasoned user of *keigo* (honorific language use), the exact intent of politeness is determined precisely by these language-internal honorific forms.

      Brown and Levinson (1978) posited a 'politeness rule', based on what the speaker does to the hearer (pp. 61-62). Matsumoto (1988) counters Brown and Levinson's position in her investigation of "face," a vital component of the researchers' theory of politeness. Results of anthropological studies, as well as incorrect predictions which would result from Brown and Levinson's rule were studied, focusing on the Japanese system of honorifics as evidence (p. 403). It is difficult to place Japanese society within Brown and Levinson's theoretical model of politeness, because it is based on the idea that the "basic unit of society is the individual" (p. 405). In reality, Japan is focused on the group societal model, which contradicts the model entirely.

Summary

      In Japanese, politeness is demonstrated in a number of ways and described in terms of language use. Keigo is honorific language that encompasses *teineigo*, also called *teichougo* (polite speech), *sonkeigo* (honorific speech) and *kenjougo* (humble speech). An additional linguistic mechanism of politeness, *bikago* (beautifying speech), is often used with polite speech (*teineigo*) and honorific speech (*sonkeigo*). Understanding keigo and

more colloquial forms of speech enables students to communicate more fluidly using appropriate levels of speech. Determining appropriateness of use is, in many ways, determined by the nature of the *uchi-soto* relationship involving the person speaking, and those who are listening to the conversation.

Indirectness is also a way of demonstrating politeness, and this can be done linguistically as well as paralinguistically. Making eye contact would be considered direct and threatening. Kinesics and gestures often need to be demonstrated in an indirect way. Ikeda (2004) notes the importance of indirect language use in Japan, based on uchi-soto relationships. This politeness strategy extends to written speech as well. In Japan, one may read something closer to, 'Let's not feed the carp' instead of 'Don't feed the carp' (Ikeda, 2004, p. 3).

Activity-oriented politeness is often found in Western cultures. While pitch, tone, and other factors may influence politeness in some cultures, in Japan, language-oriented politeness is evident. Japanese conversations rely on politeness strategies, including keigo and other levels and styles of speech to demonstrate politeness. Whoever is listening to a Japanese conversation can determine politeness levels and influence the communicators' intent in relation to uchi-soto relationships.

While it is important to be aware of politeness strategies and how they are demonstrated in language and culture, it is also important to know how to negotiate these strategies to communicate in a culturally appropriate manner. Chapter five continues the exploration of Japanese negotiation from an emic and etic perspective, allowing JFL learners to communicate fluidly using Japanese norms rather than their own.

Teaching Implications

   Learning Japanese as a foreign language is dependent on students' abilities to use language correctly in a myriad of social situations. In order to operate more effectively as JFL speakers, students must be aware of complex ways of manipulating language to fit the social situation, using appropriate hierarchical language. In beginning Japanese language classes, honorific speech is usually not taught because it requires a complex understanding of syntax, grammar, and hierarchy. If students are aware of the implications of using casual, polite, and honorific speech levels and styles of communication out of context, they will understand why Japanese speakers have a difficult time understanding their true motives and intentions. With a deeper understanding of why and how intent is communicated between Japanese speakers and how hierarchical language is used to communicate with the in-group and out-group, JFL learners will be prepared to learn more about speech levels and styles in future classes. In my beginning JFL classes, I inform students about basic relationships between speech levels and styles, without explicitly teaching them how to use the levels and styles. As they progress to more advanced coursework, they generally engage more comfortably and fluidly in Japanese conversations with native speaking peers.

   Many JFL textbooks teach colloquial speech (*kougo*) when JFL learners are just beginning their language studies. This is done without the sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to determine when it is appropriate to use this least polite speech level. This initial teaching of casual speech style can prove problematic for JFL learners, because they are being given tools to speak with in-group members of a very narrow population of speakers. These include individuals who already belong to one of their in-groups, and

those approximately the same age as the speaker or identified according to other sociocultural factors. Most JFL learners do not belong to an in-group when they first begin to learn Japanese, and this makes it difficult for them to use the most informal Japanese speech style appropriately. In-group and out-group status rely heavily on language politeness to determine in-group/out-group relationships. For example, speakers and listeners using *kougo* (casual speech) may be approximately the same age, in the same in-group, or perhaps siblings living in the same household. Casual speech is much easier to learn, and probably for this reason, it is taught to students earlier than other, more complex honorific forms. In Japanese, one needs to be able to communicate using the appropriate level of complex speech. For the JFL learner, this complexity is difficult to learn. It takes years of study to grasp the language sufficiently to communicate effectively using target language norms.

Since most JFL students learn Japanese in a non-target-language environment with limited opportunity to engage in conversations with native speakers of various ages and social status, it is important that they understand the complexities of the language they will encounter in the target culture. Many JFL students enjoy watching anime and participating in Japanese pop culture. Anime generally uses colloquial speech which is easily picked up by beginning JFL learners, since colloquial forms of speech are grammatically easier to form. JFL students frequently mimic these simple forms of speech without realizing their sociolinguistic and cultural consequences and how such speech is viewed by people in Japanese society. Introducing students to complex language issues and how they operate in Japanese culture will enable them to communicate more effectively as they progress through their studies.

Western students are more direct and individualistic. Students need to understand how to distance oneself in language and society and become part of a group-oriented societal model. Since the reasons for using tone and pitch vary in English and Japanese, appreciating the differences will help JFL learners employ language strategies more relevant to Japanese culture.

Communication strategies are used differently from culture to culture. Japanese speakers have a difficult time understanding foreigners' real intent or meaning when speaking Japanese because of the lack of understanding of levels and styles of speech. They are unable to determine many foreigners' in-group/out-group status during conversation. JFL speakers need to be adept at changing levels and styles using honorific speech correctly to negotiate true intent of meaning (and this is truly difficult, even for people who have lived in the Japanese culture for many years). Otherwise, they will not be able to express what they truly want to say using appropriate hierarchical strategies of speech. Since language is a way for people to negotiate status within a group, the Japanese language is psychologically complex when compared to English, which doesn't rely on hierarchical forms of speech to convey the same meaning and intention.

Teachers who are native or native-like speakers of Japanese and capable of using and explaining native Japanese speaking norms and practices, can teach beginning JFL students how to negotiate meaning and intention in the classroom. Students who are aware of the complex social dynamics are more readily able to approach *keigo* and other sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, and pragmatic features of Japanese. Many of my introductory JFL students who read an earlier draft of *Language and Politeness in the Uchi-Soto Model* claimed that they had a better understanding of differences in

communicative practices and norms in Japanese. While they learned basic colloquial and polite forms of speech as beginning students, they understood when and why they should use these forms in context, even if they were the only forms they were able to use to communicate with other speakers. Most students informed me that they had no knowledge of the hierarchical language structure before studying Japanese and were unaware that the use of such language out of context could inhibit their speaking intentions.

CHAPTER V

LANGUAGE AND NEGOTIATION IN

THE UCHI-SOTO MODEL

While chapter IV explains politeness strategies and how they are used in Japanese, chapter five examines the process of negotiation in Japanese. The chapter begins with a discussion of the common expression, "Your Japanese is good," and how the expression is a Japanese language negotiation technique—a conversational starter. The next topic, foreigner talk, is discussed in its relation to American exchange students and their interaction with Japanese host families. This section explores host families' use of inauthentic language with JFL learners, and how this can inhibit the growth of language learners if they are not aware of this negotiation process. Language and distance in politeness are important topics that are reintroduced to demonstrate language use as power in the negotiation process. The process of negotiating language from an emic perspective is also explored, so that more complicated topics related to face-threatening acts, conflicts, refusals, apologies, and the role of politeness can be explored in more detail. Chapter five concludes with a summary and consideration of the teaching implications of language negotiation strategies.

The "Your Japanese Is Good" Conundrum

Upon traveling to Japan, most foreigners who attempt to say just a few words of Japanese run into the phrase "*nihongo ga jouzu desu ne*." This means, "Your Japanese is skilled." I remember meeting the friends of some Japanese acquaintances. I was repeatedly told, "Your Japanese is skilled." This is a common occurrence in Japan. However, it makes foreigners speculate as to why someone would tell them something that just isn't true. Even though I knew that there was no intention to hurt my feelings, I had to wonder if I could take anything that Japanese people said to me seriously. According to Mizutani and Mizutani (1987), the Japanese people do this for several reasons: 1) They have a difficult time approaching people who are not part of their in-group (*uchi*), 2) They are awed by the fact that a foreigner would be willing to try to learn their language in all of its complexity, and 3) They don't usually judge peoples' inadequacies or praise their abilities when they are supposed to demonstrate respectful behavior.

So, why do Japanese people say things such as "Your Japanese is good"? Basically, they use "*nihongo* ga jouzu desu" as a conversation starter, just as they would ask where one is from, what kind of Japanese food he or she likes, or if he or she has been acquainted with someone before, or how much thinner or fatter one has become since they've last seen a person. My first Japanese host mother visited me after having not seen me for ten years after my initial visit to Japan. She came to my third host family's home to pick me up for lunch. As the door swung open, the first thing that my third host mother uttered to my first host mother was, "Wow, you've put on some weight, haven't you?" And, my visiting host mother was a stick figure, barely weighing in at 90

pounds. So, I know for fact that this conversational starter topic is used between Japanese people in Japan, just as "*nihongo* ga jouzu desu ne" is used as a starter for a conversational topic.

In dialogues between Japanese host families and less advanced-level students of Japanese, Iino (1996) noted that linguistic errors were allowed, some of the families going as far as complimenting the Japanese of the individuals when their Japanese was significantly limited. This complimenting of poor language skills demonstrates another *uchi-soto* relationship which separates non-native Japanese speakers from Japanese society. Students make linguistic mistakes that are not acknowledged, and then told that they are good speakers of the language when the opposite is true. When some host family members were asked why they did not correct the errors made Japanese by non-native speakers, they said that the speakers appeared to be cute, and, therefore, were 'tolerated'. In Iino's research, it is quite obvious that Japanese host families modified their speech, often dramatically. Whereas Iino found that Japanese families often compared Japan to the U.S., Iino notes that their behavior towards the students regarding language use may imply that there was an outsider relationship between guest and host. Ellis (1994) suggests that even though people do not intentionally use foreigner talk, they speak it instinctively (p. 25).

In addition to foreign students making errors that were not corrected by native Japanese speakers, the foreign students' lacked an understanding of how to show gratitude and express apologies cross-culturally. According to Tateyama (1998a), when native Japanese speakers say the word '*sumimasen*', which literally means 'not finished' and is frequently used as an apology, 'thank you' is often implied. According to

Tateyama, foreigners often mistake the word *arigatou* (which means 'thank you') to express gratitude. This use of the word is another example of how learners use language that places them in the *soto* group. *Uchi* speakers of the Japanese language know that there are a variety of factors which must be taken into consideration to express gratitude, such as age, status, and the distinction between in-group and out-group situational contexts between members of society.

Hendry (1993) supports the belief that Japanese politeness is such that most foreigners studying the language are led to believe that they are speaking better than they really are in reality, simply for trying to communicate at all. I have heard from various Japanese individuals that the more proficient foreigners are in Japanese, the less the Japanese people like it. Hendry (1993) wrote, "one distinguished Japanese linguist of my acquaintance claims that he finds it a kind of psychological torture to listen to foreigners speaking Japanese, even 'perfect' Japanese, because he can't understand their 'real intent' " (p. 68). Saying and understanding something in Japanese with the "real intent" in mind requires people to understand the Japanese social norms and language of respect.

Foreigner Talk

When I lived with four host families in Japan, many family members used foreigner talk to communicate with me on a daily basis. My host families knew well the cultural and linguistic patterns of the U.S., so they were able to adapt their cultural and speech patterns to my needs rather than have me adapt to theirs. I often isolated myself with close host family members and their friends. As a result, my Japanese language skills developed more fluidly inside rather than outside the home. I was rarely exposed to

honorific language use in the home, since everyone spoke to each other casually in a familial environment. This was the norm, except for a few instances when businessmen entered the house for a brief time. They were greeted by my host mother in the traditional way with deep bowing and honorific language, called *keigo*. The majority of my language learning was acquired by relying on the host family members to dumb down their speech in order for me to understand it more easily. Even today, nearly seventeen years after leaving their homes, I understand my Japanese host mothers on the telephone better than other native speakers, because they use the same colloquial, informal speech that I encountered in their homes so many years ago. Even other siblings from the same households were and still are more difficult for me to understand, based on the communication styles that I developed while talking with my host mothers, with whom I spoke with more frequently than other family members. Although I cherished the quality and quantity of time spent with my Japanese mothers, I realize now that they used strategies to communicate with me based on my culture and language, not on theirs. For this reason, I did not acquire communicative competence in the sociolinguistic norms that were used outside my host families' homes. Japanese people speak differently with family members than they do with people outside the home, where the complexities of honorific speech begin to take shape. My Japanese speaking and listening ability was actually stunted by not communicating with others outside their homes.

In a dissertation titled *Excellent Foreigner! Gaijinization of Japanese Language and Culture in Contact Situations. An Ethnographic Study of Dinner Table Conversations Between Japanese Host Families and American Students* (1996), Masakazu Iino studied the daily interactions of study-abroad students living with

Japanese host families. He reported that at times, Japanese host family members translated utterances into English at the sentence level. He also reported that foreigner talk was used by host family members during discourse. 'Foreigner talk' is defined as "the modified or simplified language which some native speakers address to second language learners (Lightbown & Spada, 2000, p. 174). Discourse features in the lexicon used by host family members included the use of foreign words, substitution, repetition, and onomatopoeia. With respect to syntax, simplification, avoidance of open-ended questions, omission of particles, avoidance of honorifics, avoidance of informal style, hyper adaptation of normative written forms, and overuse of personal pronouns were reported. In terms of phonology, there were modifications in pronunciation such as slower speech, higher volume, and stress of syllables. In terms of discourse, interactional modifications included confirmation checks and clarification requests, collaborative completion of sentences and discourse, and repetition of misuse. These examples of foreigner talk are just a few of the adaptations that Iino reported in his findings. I chose to discuss these features in particular, because they are more directly associated with sociolinguistic issues related to foreigners being part of the in-group or the out-group model while living in Japan.

The effect that foreigner talk has on the JFL learner is substantial. The learner is not able to achieve an everyday sense of Japanese communicative competence that would be achieved by speaking to Japanese people living outside the host family community. Host family members will most likely be speaking to each other using more colloquial speech. Outside the home, native speakers of Japanese would frequently use

more polite forms of speech, and employ more distancing speech patterns with superiors

and those of their out-group. These are not often encountered in the home.

Language, Distance and Power

Linguistic manifestations of distance can be used to establish status within a

group or to define membership in the group. There is less linguistic distance among those

within a group, and much more with those outside the group. Language can maintain or

degrade an intimate relationship as well. If one of a pair of friends were to suddenly use a

more polite language form, this might be perceived as an insult. Not only is it

linguistically inappropriate, it expresses distance between the friends, and insinuates a

soto-based relationship. The use of distance-forming language in intimate relationships

can be used in a business environment as well. If a member of the business group were to

engage in behavior inconsistent with his status in the group, he could be subtly ostracized

through the use of polite language, while other in-group members remained linguistically

intimate with each other. This would demonstrate that distance existed between the

individual ostracized and the group.

According to Hsu (1975), "given the vertical and corporate structure of group

life, relationships of power and dependence are necessarily asymmetric" (p. 90). Unlike

the sociolinguistic system found in many Western languages and cultures, Japanese

speakers must pay close attention to such sociocognitive factors such as distance and

power. In addition, Japanese speakers must keep their status in mind in relation to the

interlocutor and other outsiders who can hear the conversation being held by the people

engaging in conversation. Pizziconi (2008) argues that Japanese has a way to mark

'situatedness' in conversations. This includes conversational attributes such as "setting (including time, place, circumstances), identity (social and personal attributes, role relationships of speech participants), and effective attitudes" (p. 7).

Negotiating in Context

For visitors to Japan, awareness of the sociolinguistic implications of refusal gestures should be understood, as well as the concept of *honne* and *tatemae* in order to negotiate in a manner that is conducive of the Japanese culture. Many business transactions made by foreigners in Japan go awry when the foreign company does not understand how Japanese people negate situations. They do so politely and indirectly, in order to keep from hurting the "listeners" positive face (Azuma, 1997, p. 1). Instead of saying something such as, "No, we are not interested in your product, but thank you," a Japanese company may say something closer to "we will think about it." To Japanese speakers, the implications of this statement are clearly a polite way to refuse an offer. To an outsider of the culture without the understanding of one's true feelings (*honne*) and one's outward expression of the feelings (*tatemae*), the implications of this statement might indicate a positive outcome, when the opposite is true.

Acts That Threaten Face

Japanese speakers and speakers of other language groups would react differently to acts that threaten face. One must know the sociolinguistic context of acts in order to understand how they threaten face (Matsumoto, 1988, p. 421). To clarify her point, Matsumoto provides an example of an American student saying "how are you?" to a Japanese student he or she is meeting for the first time in a school setting. The speech

form used is the most familiar form possible (*genki ka*), which would make the Japanese

person uncomfortable. When meeting someone for the first time, it is essential to use a

more polite form, which could be "*genki desu ka*" or "*o genki desu ka*," depending on

various factors, including age, rank, etc. In addition to using the most colloquial form of

the expression, "how are you?" the copula is omitted. This would be insulting to the

newly introduced Japanese speaker, given that the two students do not know each other,

and the American student is using the least polite speech possible under these

circumstances. A more polite way to interact with a new student might be "Um, I'm (so

and so). Please treat me well" (Matsumoto, 1988, p. 422). In English, "how are you?"

would have been a perfectly acceptable thing to say to a student one hasn't met before,

but in the case of an American using the polite American phrase, the Japanese student

would most likely be insulted. The expression is stated too directly, and using the

colloquial form of the expression with a stranger is simply too impolite.

Conflict, Refusals, Apologies and the Role of Politeness

So how does one refuse in a polite manner when speaking Japanese? This is a

bit of an oxymoron. Refusing in Japanese can negatively affect face, and for this reason,

it should be done carefully, and in a way appropriate to politeness refusal norms in Japan.

In order to not be imposing, Japanese people frequently play-down the importance of that

they offer others, using such phrases as '*nani mo nai desu kedo*', which literally means

'there is nothing at all available but…' (Hendry, 1993, p. 65). This is a social construct

that Japanese people follow to be polite. When Japanese people are offered something by

someone in other countries, they will often politely refuse whatever is being offered, even

several times, assuming that they don't know how the foreign culture operates. In Japan, one expects to be asked several times, refuse the offer, and then finally, accept.

Kanemoto's (1993) study compared refusal assertion in the U.S. and Japan, and identified three characteristics of Japanese refusals: 1) avoiding a clear refusal, 2) monitoring a third party as a reason for the refusal, and 3) using a fictitious reason for the refusal. While researching requests and refusals in telephone conversations between various American and Japanese speakers, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002) discovered that Japanese speakers, when speaking to other native Japanese speakers, used six types of refusal sequences: excuse, delay-excuse, delay-excuse-alternative, delay-excuse-apology, delay-apology, and delay-promise.

Sadanobu's (2008, p. 59) research results were based upon the analysis of fifty hours of recordings of regular conversations and questionnaires completed by native Japanese speakers. His research suggests that there are two ways to react politely to a situation: 1) "reject the request as soon as possible so that the requester should not waste his/her time," and 2) "show effort to attain request to the requester even if it is not attainable" (p. 59). One of the polite ways to refuse a request in Japanese is to use conversation fillers such as *aidzuchi* (a Japanese back channeling technique) and other utterances used only as indirect mechanisms of refusal.

While the Japanese avoid direct conflict and refusal, which are considered negative ways to communicate, Americans are more direct (Azuma, 1997, p. 1). I have frequently heard Americans say that people in Japan often "lie" about their feelings instead of telling the truth. This way of thinking is a Western construct. Japanese people only show their *honne* to a very few select people in their in-group, whereas they project

their *tatemae* to the world. *Honne* and *tatemae* are a part of the Japanese politeness strategy that encompasses the ideals of harmony in Japan. So, if Japanese people tend to avoid direct conflict and refusal, how do they apologize to one another?

When one thinks of a language's grammar, perhaps the last thing that comes to mind is the psychological relationship between speakers. However, in Japanese, honorific language use is directly correlated with status relationships between speakers and others listening to conversations. It is a key factor in displaying indirectness and apology. Whereas people in Western cultures frequently use spoken expressions, varying intonation, loudness, or other displays of emotion, in Japanese, a grammar construction frequently achieves the same effect. This doesn't mean that indirectness and apology are displayed only by grammar usage, Body language, verbal expressions, and intonation, as well as other linguistic and non-linguistic features may be used.

One finds that the Japanese language is indirect, although the grammar that one uses will dictate the politeness and status of conversation. The subject of the sentence is frequently absent in Japanese, because language is centered on others rather than oneself. As Western languages are characterized by a self-centered language ideology and rigid sentence pattern of subject, verb, and object, JFL learners find that the action appears earlier in the sentence than in Japanese. The Japanese sentence pattern is a subject-object-verb sequence, giving speakers the ability to change a verb, from a negative to a positive or vice versa, mid-sentence. Japanese people use *aidzuchi*, which includes both verbal and non-verbal communication mechanisms. Other methods of indirect communication also exist, since perpetuating vagueness is also perpetuating politeness.

Aimai, or 'vagueness/indirection' is ever present in the Japanese language and culture. It is also an indicator of politeness. When speaking is less direct, people are able to communicate more fluidly. McGill (1987) explains that Japanese speakers prefer to say, "there is this, then there is that," rather than "this caused that" (p. 285). '*Hi-dantei*', which means 'indecision', espouses the principles of "indecision, evasion, and indirection" (McGill, 1987, p. 285), and uses negatives instead of positives to communicate ones' thoughts. McGill claims that '*hi-dantei*' "defines things by defining what they are not" (1987, p. 285). Again, the verbs with affirmative or negative suffixes can signal conversational change mid-sentence, while the listener is sending verbal or non-verbal cues to the speaker about how he or she feels about the topic being discussed.

Groups operate more fluidly when conversations are maintained in an indirect manner (p. 285). According to McGill (1987), "'iiwake' is the principle of "apology" that permeates Japanese discourse" (p. 286). He explains that in order for relationships to be developed, people have to make their own thoughts and feelings less important and "subtly pull the other to 'buy into' the speaker's point of view" (1987, p. 286). McGill compares the psychologies of languages using examples of thought and action sequences in various languages and cultures: "The English think then walk. The French think while walking. The Spanish walk then think. The Japanese apologize for their thinking, and then walk" (1987, p. 286).

In their book addressing communication theory, Whaley, Santer, and Samter (2007) discovered that while Americans tend to make apologies more public, Japanese people tend to apologize privately with in-group members. Americans prefer to be "spontaneous, original, and sincere," whereas Japanese people tend to be more focused

on showing a "correct, or amenable character" (Whaley et al., 2007, p. 244). Japanese

people tend to keep their *honne* (real intention) to themselves, while they convey their

tatemae (public position or attitude) to the world.

Summary

Different communication strategies are manifest in Japanese and Western

cultures. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) proposes that several factors help to explain why

Japanese people tend to say "Your Japanese is good" to foreigners attempting to speak

their language, even when it is not. First, Japanese people have a difficult time

approaching people who are not part of their in-group (*uchi*). Second, Japanese people

are awed by the fact that a foreigner would be willing to try to learn their language in all

of its complexity. And third, Japanese people do not usually judge peoples' inadequacies

or praise their abilities when they are supposed to demonstrate respectful behavior.

Hendry (1993) also supports the idea that Japanese people are being polite when telling

people that their Japanese is better than it really is. He states that a Japanese linguist he

knows feels that "it a kind of psychological torture to listen to foreigners speaking

Japanese," since he cannot understand the foreign speakers "real intent" (p. 68).

Researchers have noted that Japanese host families use foreigner talk with JFL learners,

which creates further "contextual" confusion.

Researchers have discovered that Japanese families hosting American

exchange students use foreigner talk, which may include things such as baby talk, broken

English, and over regularization of a language. Japanese host families made confirmation

checks, clarification requests, collaborative completion of sentences, and incorrect

repetition of incorrect language. According to Ikeda (2004), Japanese and American greeting norms do not correlate. In Japan, in-group members wouldn't say anything to greet each other like Americans say "hello" and "good morning." Instead, Japanese people might use generic greetings, such as "the weather's nice, isn't it?" Another difference in greeting etiquette is that Japanese speakers would not greet each other using a verbal greeting twice in the same day.

Linguistic manifestations of distance allow Japanese people to conform to in-groups and out-groups. Distance establishes politeness, so the level of politeness establishes where one is within the context of the group. Generally, communicating with in-group members is accomplished using more colloquial forms of speech. On the other hand, communication with out-group members is accomplished using more polite and honorific forms of speech. Group membership is complex, as is the use of language in these groups: levels and styles of speech vary depending on who is speaking and who is listening in on the conversation. Language establishes power, and power is evident in language use. The choice of speech levels and styles, among other factors, may be used to maintain as well as degrade relationships. Since relationships run in a vertical manner, sociocognitive factors, such as who is listening to and engaging in the conversation, affect relationships. This distancing in language is used to negotiate meaning between *uchi* and *soto* members. It is a way for Japanese people to live in a collectivist society. Social and linguistic hierarchies determine relationships that occur in the social and linguistic pyramid.

Honne and *tatemae* are part of the negotiation process. This process is much different in Japan than in Western cultures, and for this reason, JFL learners can be easily

confused by the concept: wrapping up and concealing one's true feelings (*honne*) and put

on one's public face (*tatemae*). The group is always central, not the individual, so

tatemae is a way of demonstrating one's membership to the collectivist culture. If people

are unable to express their true feelings to outsiders, how do they react to face-

threatening acts?

Relationships are maintained using politeness strategies, so people need to be

aware of how to react to face-threatening acts cross-culturally. Matsumoto (1988) cited

an example of an American student who said "how are you" to a Japanese student for the

first time, using the most colloquial form of Japanese. The Japanese student was

uncomfortable since they had never met before. For this reason, a polite form of speech

would have been more appropriate. Navigating face using Japanese communicative

norms is challenging to cultural outsiders. This being said, how do Japanese people

refuse something in a culturally appropriate manner?

The sociolinguistic implications of refusal gestures must be understood. Along

similar lines, concept of *honne* and *tatemae* are essential in order to negotiate in a manner

that is conducive of the Japanese culture. Since being polite relies on being indirect,

refusal strategies are indirect as well. Foreign businesses often face trouble in Japan when

negotiation between companies is involved. Japanese people nod their heads and say

"yes," which does not acknowledge agreement. A company wouldn't refuse directly, but

might say something like, "we'll think about it", or "maybe". Japanese people play down

the importance of things in order not to be in opposition. They frequently refuse things

multiple times before saying "yes." Kanemoto (1993) identified three characteristics of

refusal gestures: avoiding clear refusal, monitoring a third party as a reason for the

refusal, and using a fictitious reason for the refusal. Other ways to politely refuse are to use *aidzuchi* (Japanese back channeling technique), which is an indirect ways of refusing. *Honne* and *tatemae* are also a politeness strategy. When apologizing, however, how do Japanese people avoid direct conflict in order to apologize to each other?

Language offers multifaceted opportunities to maintain relationships. Indirectness and apology are displayed in grammar usage, body language, verbal expressions, intonation, and in other ways. Other methods of indirect communication also exist, since vagueness also conveys politeness. *Aimai*, or 'vagueness/indirection', is a cultural construct and students need to be aware of its use as a Japanese communicative strategy. People are able to communicate well when they communicate indirectly. While Americans tend to make apologies more public, Japanese people tend avoid confrontation, making apologies more private and with more in-group members.

Since negotiation is conducted from the context of one's personal experience, it is important that JFL learners know how to negotiate language in a manner appropriate to the host culture. The next chapter focuses on linguistic factors important in the Japanese communication process.

Teaching Implications

Language and negotiation in the *uchi-soto* model covers a host of topics, enabling JFL students to negotiating better in the Japanese culture. After researching various JFL textbooks, and finding that they did not cover these topics, I decided to focus on issues that are relevant to JFL learners, and could be implicitly taught, even at beginning levels of JFL study. This chapter focuses on communication and strategies that

JFL learners must know how to use to negotiate meaning in cultural context. These topics include the true meaning of the expression, "You're Japanese is good"; foreigner talk; language, distance, and power; negotiating in context; acts that threaten face; conflicts, refusals, apologies, and the role of politeness.

Viewing cultures from an emic perspective allows JFL learners to communicate like cultural insiders. If one studies these Japanese negotiation strategies from the perspective of someone living in Western cultures without knowledge of its significance and true meaning, then JFL learners are not competent communicators in Japanese. Using a personal anecdote to explain the significance of the expression, "your Japanese is good," I thought that people were telling me the "truth" as I understood it. In reality, this expression came up many times when my Japanese was "not good." I questioned the truthfulness of the statement and later realized that people were simply using a Japanese communicative strategy that people often use in many Western cultures as well—a conversation starter. Instead of asking how one is doing, one says "Your Japanese is good". When Westerners say, "How are you?" to a total stranger, do they really care how they are? This strategy is very similar and makes sense once students gain an understanding of its significance.

It is very important that JFL students who live with Japanese host families comprehend language negotiation in the Japanese household. I knew very few words when I went to Japan, so naturally, my host families "dumbed-down" language for me so that I could understand them better. They used communication strategies with me that they would not use with people who were fluent in Japanese. They would use the pronoun, '*anata*' (you) a lot in speech, even though this is not a culturally correct way of

using a Japanese pronoun. If Japanese host families use foreign words (which may or

may not be part of Japanese vocabulary), substitution, repetition, and onomatopoeia

incorrectly in order to try to communicate with students, JFL learners need to be aware

that this foreigner talk does not take place in authentic Japanese conversations

(Lightbown & Spada, 2000, p. 174). It is difficult to learn appropriate language when

inappropriate language is being used with students. Host families also used

simplification, avoided open-ended questions, omitted particles, avoided honorifics,

avoided informal style, hyper adapted normative written forms, and overused personal

pronouns. Phonologically, host families modified their pronunciation, used slower

speech, higher volume, and stress of syllables. Host families also modified discourse,

offered confirmation checks and clarification requests, collaborative completion of

sentences and discourse, and incorrectly repeated things. JFL learners unaware of

inauthentic language use may incorporate it into their own lexicon and consciousness,

and believe that it is authentic.

Western languages are generally more direct. The American language used in

the United States is no exception. In Japan, directness is viewed as impolite, so JFL

learners must learn how to operate indirectly using Japanese communicative norms to fit

in to the host culture. The Japanese language syntactically displays politeness, whereas

Western cultures display more activity-oriented rather than language-oriented politeness.

If JFL learners note these differences in communication strategies from the beginning of

their studies, even implicitly, they will more adept in communicating using authentic

Japanese norms. The Japanese language is powerful in that it establishes distance and

politeness and allows people to immediately know which group they belong to. Students

who negotiate in relation to the host culture know how to fit into and use language to be part of uchi-soto groups.

Face threatening acts vary from culture to culture, so JFL learners need to be able to identify them in order to communicate appropriately in Japanese. Conflicts are dealt with differently in cultures, so learners need to know that, generally speaking, Japanese people choose to avoid conflict rather than to directly confront it. Refusing is also done indirectly, instead of directly, as it is usually done in Western cultures. Apologies are made in a way that is different as well, so JFL students should be aware of the strategies Japanese people use rather than those from their native cultures. Finally, politeness is the key to communicating in Japanese. Politeness strategies are not necessarily cross-cultural, so JFL students who are aware of them are able to communicate more fluidly and confidently using Japanese norms.

In Japanese, learning to negotiate in context from an emic perspective saves JFL learners a lot of frustration and keeps them from making incorrect assumptions about the Japanese language and culture. Knowing how to communicate as Japanese insiders allows JFL learners to know what hurdles to navigate when learning Japanese. Finally, this chapter concludes with a chapter summary and teaching implications of these linguistic concepts as they relate to JFL learners.

CHAPTER VI

LINGUISTICS IN THE UCHI-SOTO

MODEL

This chapter introduces and elucidates on the importance of language-oriented

politeness from a linguistic perspective. The linguistic topics were selected because of

their lack of presence in the JFL textbooks that I have used to study and teach JFL. Honor

is displayed in syntax and morphology, determining speech levels and styles as well as

group status. Sentence-ending particles and honorific prefixes are Japanese politeness

indicators. Ogino's (1989) research using Ogino's Quantification Method (OQM)

captures dimensions of honorific expressions in languages. This research examines the

correlation between the politeness of speech level of the speaker and the number of

morae which occur in an expression (p. 188). These linguistic insights allow JFL learners

to focus on linguistic concepts in communication and the honor they convey. Finally,

pragmatics and paralinguistics are investigated, with an emphasis on how they relate to

JFL learners, and when they should be taught. The chapter concludes with a summary

and discussion of teaching implications.

Syntax and Morphology

One way honorific language is displayed is in Japanese syntax. Honorific

morphemes are attached to main verbs. Speakers have a choice of selecting a plain form

or an honorific form. If an honorific form is chosen, an honorific morpheme must be attached to the end of the main verb to show the degree of politeness. If a plain form is to be used, then an honorific morpheme is not attached to the main verb. Through a Japanese Ministry Education Grant (1986-1988), Hori (1988) researched the Japanese language, its function in interpersonal relationships, and role in social adaptation. She suggests that in English, honor is demonstrated outside of syntax, while Japanese internalizes speech level politeness in its syntax. The speaker's intention to display degrees of politeness or not is immediately noted by the listener in the selection of the specific verb form used by the speaker. These specific verb forms will be noted later in this chapter during the discussion of different types of honorific verbs.

Linguistic factors, including syntax and grammar, should also be emphasized in order to become more linguistically competent. In Japanese, even parts of speech follow a system of honorifics, depending on the part of speech, and deference considerations. In his study of universal honorifics, Wegner (1982) determined that the following parts of speech contain honorification: terms of address and reference, pronouns, verbs, nouns, and adjectives (p. 67).

Beginning with the use of pronouns in Japanese, it is acceptable to omit components of the sentence that are already understood. "Although Japanese speakers appear to be ambiguous by being indirect in speech, Westerners often feel that Japanese speakers are being reserved, cautious, and evasive" (Barnlund, 1975, pp. 50-54). There is an enormous sociolinguistic distinction between the uses of personal pronouns in English and Japanese that relate directly to Japan's system of *keigo* use. Interestingly enough, the use of pronouns in Japanese is unnecessary when speaking to or about someone in

context. This is a difficult concept for many native English speakers learning Japanese to understand because it runs counter to English pronoun use. Japanese pronouns also differ in that they function as nouns, as well as pronouns (Harada, 1975, as cited in Wenger, 1982, p. 50). The pronouns that function syntactically as pronouns in Japanese, and not necessarily as nouns, serve to identify noun phrases or give special emphasis (Wenger, 1982, p. 50). These pronouns run in a vertical, hierarchical manner, depending on their situational use. There are numerous personal pronouns that one can use to mean the same thing, but the pronoun selected to address a person follows the vertical structure of *keigo*. People who are lower in seniority should address their higher-ups by rank or title. However, higher-ups address those lower of status by name or with personal pronouns.

Horie, Shimura, and Pardeshi (2006) conducted research on insider and outsider distinctions in Japanese, which included, "a contextual analysis of TV drama and movie script data" (2006, p. 309). They discovered that Japanese personal pronouns are more marked, and tend to be deleted when they are understood in context (2006, p. 299). They also found that the selection of personal pronouns and other nominal expressions are determined "by the differential degrees of empathy between a speaker, a listener, and a human referent mentioned by the speaker, the empathy defined in terms of the notions of *uchi* ('in-group') and *soto* ('out-group')" (2006, p. 309). Specifically, the personal pronoun (e.g., 'you') is usually used when the referent is an outsider. Personal pronouns, such as proper names, are usually used when a referent is an insider. A speaker must be careful not to use a third person pronoun to refer to a person in Japanese because it is a sign that the referent is "not worthy of due recognition and attention" (2006, p. 309). In Japanese, speakers must be aware that the use of pronouns must take into account the

"hierarchy of respect and condescension" (as cited in Jones, Thomas, Singh, & Peccei, 2004, p. 164).

The pronoun, 'I,' (*watashi*) is used by men when speaking formally, whereas women use the same pronoun when speaking neutrally (as cited in Jones et al., 2004, p. 164). This pronoun discussion is not taught in any of the JFL textbooks I have used in my studies. Even though most introductory textbooks introduce pronouns almost immediately, they do so without a contextual explanation of their hierarchical uses in language and society. Nor do they mention the fact that pronouns belong to the complex system of *keigo* and that their misuse may land a JFL speaker into the land of '*soto*,' or outsider, if he or she should use the pronoun incorrectly.

Japanese verbs are also complex in that more than one verb with the same meaning is used with varying speech levels to indicate varied levels of politeness and deference. The correct verb must be selected, depending on the situational context. A school teacher will usually use a polite or familiar verb to speak with a student; the student will usually use a form of the verb for humbling oneself and another honorific form of the verb with the same meaning to express politeness towards the teacher. A lower ranking official will use a more honorific verb to speak with someone of higher status within the group. An older student will speak down to a younger student, while the younger student will use a more polite version of the same verb. A humble form of the verb will be used by a student to speak of himself to a teacher. A description of the various humbling, respectful, polite, and colloquial manners of speech based on a morphologically complex series of verb stem ending-suffixes and honorific words would clarify the complexity of Japanese speech. For example, the verb "say" may be stated

using four different verbs. The plain or colloquial verb is "iu," the basic polite form of the verb is "m*ō*su," the respectful form of the verb is "ossharu," and the humble form of the verb is "m*ōsu.*" The degree of politeness of the verb may be determined by further conjugating the suffix ending into other endings which are more or less formal by degree.

The system of verb usage as a language and sociolinguistic construct is complicated. For this reason, Japan has been able to mystify its captive *gaijin* (foreigner) with this linguistic phenomenon. More often than not, the *gaijin* remains mystified throughout his or her stay in the country—an unsuspecting user of the language with little knowledge of its sociocultural and sociolinguistic implications. The complexity of verbs, their levels of politeness, and the hierarchical structure of the Japanese language require further reading and discussion in order to understand their uses in context. There are entire books dedicated to the study of Japanese verbs, how they are formed, why they are used, and with whom they should be used. Unfortunately, I have yet to find a Japanese textbook used by JFL learners that discusses the complexity of the Japanese language, including its situational context.

The repercussions of using the incorrect verb or verb conjugation are significant for a native Japanese person and *gaijin* alike. The user of the incorrect form of speech becomes an outsider. One example of the effects of this in-out group relationship due to incorrect verb usage is demonstrated in the following real-life example. After having lived in the U.S. as an exchange student for a number of years, my Japanese friend returned to Japan to work. Upon entering the company that hired her, she inadvertently spoke to a higher ranking company employee using the incorrect verb form and thus lost her 'in-group' status within the company. In less than a second, she became

part of the 'out-group.' Soon after, she lost her job. The verb-use situation and its social implications is complex enough to be difficult for the native Japanese speaker who has lived in Japan his or her whole life. In Japan, classes are offered to provide practice in *keigo*, so that students are able to use the proper forms of honorific speech. The next section focuses on the uses of sentence-ending particles and their role as politeness markers in Japanese.

<div style="text-align:center">Sentence-Ending Particles</div>

Rose and Kasper (2001) find that honorific forms of language are typically elongated by tagging on additional morphological sentence-final particles (p. 82). One example of this difference is illustrated in the following utterance: "*tetsudatte kurete doumo arigatou*." This sentence means "thank (you) for helping me." However, it lacks an honorary form of the verb, 'to be' and other honorary morphological structures which are used to convey more respect. The sentence, "testudatte kudasatte doumo arigatou gozaimasu" conveys honor to the listener. Even without knowing Japanese, one will note that 'kurete' is changed to 'kudasatte,' an honorific form of the previous verb, and the addition of 'gozaimasu.' 'Masu' is a polite verb ending, and 'gozai' is the stem of the honorific form of the verb, 'to be.' In the former sentence, there is no indication that the speaker is distancing himself to give the listener respect. In the elongated sentence, the speaker is giving the listener respect, as the longer sentence generally conveys more politeness. The further one distances oneself from the listener by means of morphological, sentence-final particles, the more the listener will be honored and the speaker humbled. A speaker's inability to form the most honorific verb forms and

syntactic, morphological, and social hierarchical linguistic structures makes it more likely

that he or she will be placed in a *soto* or outside context in relation to the group. The

more the speaker is inclined to understand and use the linguistic and social structures of

the Japanese language and society, the more likely he or she is accepted as *uchi* or

insider. This section investigated sentence-final particles; the next section explores the

use of honorific prefixes, called *bikago*.

Honorific Prefixes

Some Japanese nouns and adjectives follow a system of honorifics by

attaching the prefix 'o' (generally to words of Japanese origin) or 'go' (generally to

words of Chinese origin) (Miller, 1967, p. 276). These honorific prefixes are called

bikago or 'beautifying speech.' Like other functions of speech, nouns do not have

varying levels of politeness. Wenger (1982) claims that there are reference honorifics, but

not addressee honorifics in Japanese, except those that can be found in *bikago*. He refers

to reference forms as actor and non-actor and possessive honorifics, which the researcher

claims is a type of actor honorific (1982, p. 57). Wenger discovered that possessive nouns

are "triggered by a head noun that is a socially superior person…" (1982, p. 57). In a

sample of nouns taken from a dictionary, he found that between 10 and 22.4% could have

honorific prefixes. For commonly used nouns, the percentages more than doubled. Actor

honorifics occur more often than non-actor honorifics. According to Wenger (1982),

beautifying nouns occur more frequently than both actor and non-actor honorific nouns.

In addition to using honorific markers with nouns in beautifying speech, they

may be used with other parts of speech, including verbs and adjectives. In his studies of

Japanese adjectives, Wenger (1982) concluded that the prefixes 'o' or 'go,' usually either

of Japanese or Chinese word origin, may be placed in front of adjectives and followed by

the copular 'desu.' He claims that reference types are limited to their beautifying forms

(1982, p. 58). Women generally use more polite words than men, and in doing so, they

add the honorific prefix 'o' to mark words (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987, p. 76). Other

parts of speech, such as verbs, are more complex in use. While this section details how

honorific prefixes are used in Japanese, the section that follows examines research on

how politeness is reflected via the quantity of morae in a given expression.

Politeness and Morae

Ogino (1989) categorizes honorific expressions by assigning "optimal values

to the expression and the hearers," using a system called Ogino's Quantification Method

(OQM). Ogino's research is based on field survey data taken from five-hundred and three

people in the northern island city of Sapporo, Japan. Ogino determined that there is a

correlation between the politeness level of the speaker and the number of morae which

occur in an expression (1989, p. 188). Mora is essentially a unit of sound that determines

the weight of a syllable, using the stress or timing of the syllable. Ogino drew one

exception to the rule of politeness and length of morae. If sentences ending in particles,

such as 'yo,' 'zo,' or 'ze,' are attached to a polite predicate, then the overall politeness of

the expression diminishes. However, if other polite sentence-ending particles such as

'kedo' are attached to the main predicate, then the expression is considered more polite.

The OQM has been used to examine politeness structures of other languages, such as

American English, Mandarin Chinese, Taiwan Chinese, Korean, Swedish, Thai, and

others (1989, p. 196). Ogino states that "the politeness of expression can be estimated by the appearance pattern of the expression toward different hearers" (1989, p. 196).

In addition to addressing politeness strategies and morae, research has also been conducted on pragmatics and paralinguistics in JFL learners' acquisition of the Japanese language. The next section offers insights on the implications of teaching paralinguistic issues to JFL learners.

Pragmatics, Paralinguistics and JFL Learner Research

Cook (cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001) noted that 80% of 120 JFL learners focused on referential content alone when they were given a listening comprehension-related task in Japanese. They were unable to distinguish impolite speech styles and other linguistic features including certain verb forms, sentence-final particles, and polite hedges, such as "I think." Her research led her to ask more questions of the JFL students' teachers, who she found unaware of these features and their linguistic and pragmatic significance. If teachers are unaware of pragmatic significance, students will be unaware of it too. Other researchers, such as Yoshimi and Tateyama (as cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001), have conducted pragmatic research on JFL learners. Findings have led them to believe that pragmatics can be taught in the JFL classroom, if the teacher is aware of how to teach communicative practices.

Carroll (2005) suggests that *keigo* is one of the most difficult things for JFL learners to learn. She believes that even though Japanese people understand the complexities of *keigo*, its uses are deeply embedded in the consciousness of native Japanese speakers. This makes it difficult for the native speaker to deal with errors made

by JFL learners. To the Japanese, the misuse of *keigo* may be similar to the discomfort that ensues when the cultural norms governing space between individuals are violated. Carroll (2005) also suggests that more current research into *keigo* shows that it is used to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and smoother communication between modern day speakers (2005, p. 235).

In her research of academic consultation sessions in Japanese universities, Cook (2006) looked at the social implications of *keigo*, rather than just the linguistic implications of its use in society. She concluded that while "every move that a student makes is his or her choice, passive observation of social rules (discernment) does not exist" (2006, p. 288). Secondly, she pointed out that "social identities are negotiated and created in moment-to-moment interaction" (2006, p. 288) and "participants of the academic consultation sessions didn't always linguistically encode the hierarchical relationship with their professors" (2006, p. 288). Finally, based on her observations of professors and students' interactions, she concluded that "the honorific form is not always a direct index of social status and not used as prescribed by social rules" (2006, p. 288). In sum, pragmatic implications of *keigo* are left up to the individual user as long as the user is a member of society that is fluent in the use of *keigo*.

By means of *keigo*, the Japanese speaker has the ability to linguistically construct his or her speech and writing to create the social outcome that he or she wants to convey. Wetzel (2004) cites several examples of how *keigo* constructs the social identity that speakers want to convey. In the first example, a Japanese teenager using public transportation uses men's talk while loudly conveying to her captive audience that she is rebelling against society's standardized linguistic norms. Another example of the

non-conformist use of *keigo* to construct a social identity is the 'burakumin' or outcaste

societies' refusal to use *keigo* at all. Wetzel also points out that in the 1960s and 1970s,

student demonstrators used the most colloquial form of the word 'you' to refer to police

officers, rather than the polite form, 'honorific police officers' (2004, p. 113).

Summary

Honorific language is displayed in Japanese syntax and morphology.

Morphemes are attached to main verbs to indicate politeness level. If an honorific verb is

selected, then an honorific morpheme should be attached to the end of the verb to show

the degree of politeness. Hori (1988) suggests that in English, honor is demonstrated

outside of syntax, while in Japanese, speech level and politeness is internalized in syntax.

Wegner (1982) determines that terms of reference, pronouns, verbs, nouns, and adjectives

contain honorification (1982, p. 67). While English speakers use pronouns to specify who

is being spoken to or about, Japanese speakers omit components of the sentence that are

already understood. Horie and Shimura (2006) observe that personal pronouns in

Japanese are more marked and tend to be deleted when used in context, and that speakers

must be aware that the use of pronouns must take into consideration the "hierarchy of

respect and condescension" (as cited in Jones et al., 2004, p. 164). One way in which

Japanese demonstrates honor, respect, and politeness is in its use of sentence-final

particles.

Various researchers study sentence-final particles, their forms, functions,

meanings and uses. Rose and Kasper (2001) find that honorific forms of language are

usually made longer by attaching additional sentence-final particles (p. 82). The further

one distances oneself from the listener using sentence-final particles, the more the listener

will be honored and the speaker humbled. Knowledge of the functions of these particles

is important in that they convey degrees of politeness and give context to meaning.

Another way in which honor is demonstrated in Japanese is in the use of

honorific prefixes. Honorific prefixes, 'o' and 'go,' called beautifying speech (*bikago*),

may be added to some Japanese nouns and adjectives to make words more polite (Miller,

1967, p. 276). Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) found that women use more polite words

than men, therefore adding the honorific prefix 'o' to mark words. Wenger (1982) claims

that there are reference honorifics, but not addressee honorifics in Japanese, except those

found in *bikago*. In certain situations, when people want to convey honor, *bikago* may

also be used with verbs. While politeness is demonstrated through sentence-ending

particles and honorific prefixes, researchers have found additional linguistic mechanisms

that convey honor.

According to Ogino (1987), there is a correlation between the politeness level

of the speaker and the number of morae which occur in an expression. Honorific

expressions may be determined by assigning "optimal values to the expressions and the

hearers" (p. 189). He determined that females used more polite speech than males.

Bikago (beautifying speech), or honorific prefixes, attached to certain nouns and

adjectives, also demonstrates politeness. Since women generally use more polite words

than men, they add the honorific prefix 'o' or 'go' to mark them (Mizutani & Mizutani,

1987, p. 76). Honorific language is more complex than colloquial and polite language, so

longer, morphological sentence-ending particles are tagged on to expressions to indicate

politeness. As noted by the research, linguistic politeness is evident in the Japanese

language. Other researchers determine when linguistic, pragmatic, and paralinguistic issues should be taught to JFL learners in the classroom.

Various researchers have studied JFL learners and their awareness of Japanese pragmatics in the classroom. Cook (2006) noted that JFL learners were not able to distinguish impolite speech styles and other linguistic features. Rather, they concentrated only on the content of listening comprehension-related tasks. Yoshimi and Tateyama (as cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001) believe that pragmatics can be taught in the classroom as long as the teacher is aware of how to teach communicative practices. Carroll (2005) suggests that because *keigo* is so complex and embedded in the consciousness of native Japanese speakers, it is difficult for native speakers to deal with communication errors made by JFL learners. Based on her observations of students' and teachers' interactions, Cook (2006) concludes "the honorific form is not always a direct index of social status and not used as prescribed by social rules" (p. 288). *Keigo* gives communicators a way to create the social outcome that they want to convey.

In conclusion, Chapter VI touches upon linguistic topics that have often been left out of many JFL textbooks. This contextualized knowledge of linguistics allows JFL learners to develop and understand communication strategies and practices, and enables them to be more competent speakers, able to function within a group dynamic using target language and cultural norms.

Teaching Implications

JFL learners must learn how to communicate in accordance with Japanese linguistic and cultural norms. To do this, they must be provided with information that is

often left out of JFL textbooks. While research on the stage at which learners should

provide this information is inconclusive, it is agreed that it should be taught to JFL

learners. Cook (as cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001) determined that 80% of JFL learners

she surveyed focused on referential content when they listened to Japanese. Students

could not distinguish impolite speech styles or other linguistic features of pragmatic

significance. My personal inability to function in Japan and understand these polite

speech levels and styles led to personal frustration while I lived with Japanese host

families in. Consequently, I was part of more out-groups than in-groups since group

membership is demonstrated through language use. Years later, after further research into

sociolinguistic and pragmatic issues, I realized the importance of teaching the differences

between polite and impolite communication styles, and the implications of using these

styles.

Syntax and morphology demonstrate politeness in the Japanese language.

Students need to develop command of sentence-ending particles and honorific prefixes

and skill in determining which particles are used and when. Explaining how the number

of morae an expression contains impacts the level of politeness enables students to "see"

politeness markedness in action in the Japanese language. Generally, the longer the

expression, the more polite the expression.

Finally, Cook's research (as cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001) demonstrates that

JFL students lack the ability to identify the speech styles, which determine how students

will interact with Japanese speakers. If JFL students do not know how and when to use

keigo and varying speech levels and styles, they will be unable to communicate their true

intent to Japanese speakers. As a result, Japanese speakers are confused by the learners'

inability to communicate fluidly using Japanese communicative norms. As a result, they will not understand the true conversational intent of the JFL learner.

Language is used to determine fluid group-orientation in Japan. Since language use demonstrates group status, JFL learners must be able to use language in a manner that is contextually relevant to the group in which they belong. They must learn to determine what groups they are a part of, and how to use language to demonstrate group membership. Without knowledge of both linguistic and cultural practices in Japan, and their implicit and explicit uses, JFL students will not be able to navigate the physical and linguistic spheres of uchi-soto. This chapter attempts to demystify some of the linguistic concepts that language textbooks generally fail to explain, and helps JFL learners to become part of social groups using language as a mechanism to enter those groups.

CHAPTER VII

LANGUAGE AND GENDER IN THE

UCHI-SOTO MODEL

Though JFL textbooks teach many of the language features discussed in this chapter, they often eliminate the discussion of which gender may use specific linguistic and stylistic forms. Speech acts cannot be homogenized into one category because they vary according to context. However, there are some notable differences in male and female speech in Japan. In this chapter, the focus is on gendered speech and how different speech acts and forms of communication are used by men, women, and/or both genders. The topics include: systems of address, Japanese honorifics, directness vs. indirectness, sentence-ending particles often used as back channeling in discourse (*aidzuchi*), changes in verb endings, making requests, expressing probability, and common words that describe men and women and their meanings. Since women use more politeness strategies to communicate in society, JFL speakers who use male and female speech out of context face consequences. They should be aware of this from the beginning. Even if learners are not aware of how male and female speech acts vary, their implicit knowledge of different communication styles and strategies will enable them to communicate more fluidly when they reach more advanced levels of Japanese study.

Cruse (2000) notes that English may be considered a natural gender language, because it is possible to predict pronouns based on the sex of the person or thing being

mentioned: male, female, and neuter (p. 273). In other languages around the world, grammatical gender may be used. Latin-based languages have grammatical gender. Speakers distinguish between words, referring to male people and things as grammatically masculine, and female beings and things as grammatically feminine. In the case of Japanese, gender language is limited, and there is no true grammatical gender.

Differentiating men's and women's speech may seem like a sexist phenomenon to Westerners living in a culture that values individuality. In a society in which collectivism is valued over individuality, however, roles are not defined solely by gender, but by vertically-designed hierarchical relationships. Both flexible linguistic and physical movements between in-group and out-group relationships occur between people. Iwao (1993) beautifully sums up the changing roles of women in society. "Perhaps the most fascinating dimension of this study is the way Japanese women themselves have been changing, winning an astonishing degree of freedom and independence quietly and unobtrusively, largely without fanfare of an organized women's movement or over feminism" (p. 2). Perhaps for this reason, women have not seen feminist movements flourish, as they have in the U.S. That is not to say that there have not been feminist movements at all. In 1975, The International Women's Year Action Group was formed to protest such things as media's depiction of women in subordinate roles. Although Japanese women strive for equal rights, culturally, they also participate in well-defined social roles that are important and revered in society.

In early times, women's and men's speech differed in various ways. Women's speech tended to avoid kango, the Sino-Japanese compound words used by aristocratic men (Gengo Seikatsu, 1973; Kokugokkai, 1964; Mashimo, 1969; Nomoto, 1978 as cited

in Shibamoto 1987b). Instead of using kango, women were encouraged to use *nyobo kotoba*, known as soft, feminine speech (Abe, 1995, p. 654). In an article titled *Gendered Language in Recent Short Stories by Japanese Women, and in English Translation*, Lucy Fraser (2008) analyzed five modern, short, fictional stories written by Japanese female authors. The stories included gendered language styles such as *onna kotoba* (Japanese women's language). Fraser concluded that *onna kotoba* is used by the authors "in a variety of ways: in dialogue, to index social identity, to highlight the difference between the social and inner self, and different styles are mixed together for emphasis (p. 17)." In addition, she noted that there are differences in the vocabulary that Japanese men and women use.

<div align="center">Gender and Language Research</div>

According to Mizutani and Mizutani (1987), women may use more emotional expressions than men. Men and women interject themselves in conversations differently, and the tone of a woman's voice is allowed to openly express a wider range of feelings than men (p. 77). Men generally talk with other men using more colloquial, familiar speech, but their level of speech heightens when talking with women. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) claims that men tend to talk more "like women," that is, they are generally more polite when they are around women. Adults generally use a more familiar tone with children and people who are very old and weak, and soften their sentence-endings (p. 78).

In communicating with each other, men and women tend to communicate using different behaviors and strategies. This varies from culture to culture. Abe (1995)

suggests that we study Japanese female speech as "context dependent" and consider immediate speech context rather than stereotyping Japanese female speech as "polite, soft, indirect" and "powerless" as do some researchers (p. 667). Many studies of Japanese women's language focus on the speech used by upper, middle-class, urban women (Abe, 1995, p. 655). Such studies do not shed light on the language used by women of other classes, those from rural areas, or users of other speech dialects, etc. In general, women's language is usually considered more formal than men's language. In speaking formally, women often appear to be well-educated because they use more respectful forms of speech than men. Hendry (1993) states that "Particularly among women, language is used, as elsewhere as a means of assessment of factors such as upbringing and education" (p. 62). According to Azuma, Hess, Kashigawa, and Conroy (1980), verbal expression among the Japanese is "context dependent, indirect, rich in connotation and evasive in denotation" (as cited in Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 213). Often referred to as Japanese Women's Language (JWL), female speech typically reflects a more polite form of language. Politeness is maintained by using honorific speech using sentence-final particles to change one's way of addressing other people and oneself (Brass, 2005, p. 1). In Japanese, distance in speech denotes politeness (McGloin, 1986, p. 22).

In his early research in 1971, Sanada (1979, 1983, 1993) examined the effect of sex, age, and relative status on honorific choice. He found that an "honorific verbal or pronominal form was influenced primarily by the rank of the family of the addressee (irrespective of the individual's addressee's status relative to the speaker" (cited in Shibamoto, 1987a, p. 270). In 1983, however, Sanada reported that "honorification was affected primarily by age, indication of the breakdown of the old *ie* (household) system

and the prewar household ranking system commonly obtained in rural areas" (cited in Shibamoto, 1987a, p. 270). He noted that over time, young men in the community used honorification less in their speech. His research findings indicated that women were more balanced in responding to hierarchical relations, whereas "men respond to a vertical axis of hierarchical social relations in deciding to use honorifics" (Shibamoto, 1987a, p. 271). *Keigo*, the system of honorific speech used by the Japanese, relates the individual to other people's social status. According to Brass (2005), women are thought to speak using more polite and less direct speech, and to use "more standard forms and prescriptively correct grammar (p. 1). In addition, women are known to use a higher pitched voice, referred to as a "service voice" (2005, p. 1). Honorifics may be "addressee honorifics," used to elevate the person being addressed to higher status, and "referent honorifics," used to refer to an in-group's belongings or interactions, or to make the speaker's actions or belongings more humble (2005, p. 1), using respectful (*sonkeigo*), humble (kensongo or kenjōgo), and beautifying (*bikago*) speech.

<div align="center">

Keigo: Femininity or Politeness?

</div>

Although *keigo* is often associated with femininity because of its system of polite, honorific speech, younger women often associate it with 'femininity' instead of politeness. Many young women who want to portray themselves as being more "assertive," do not use *keigo*, depending on the context of the communication situation. Older women still use *keigo* as a means of establishing the sociolinguistic hierarchy due the listener. *Keigo* is used to show politeness and respect for and toward others, but women also use it in other ways.

The Japanese language should probably not be examined only from a linear perspective. Research needs to adopt a diachronic perspective as well. Women strategize when using speech to convey a particular communicative outcome. *Keigo* and women's speech serve various purposes. *Keigo* may be used by an older person to communicate with someone of higher rank at work. Women might use *keigo* as a way to be persuasive, or to be viewed as more educated. When in positions of authority, some women may view *keigo* as feminine. They may choose not to use it in order to represent themselves as more authoritative. Language must always be examined in context and viewed within the process of communication. Communication is not always linear, and communication outcomes will vary according to gender, location, age, and other factors.

In an attempt to correlate social and linguistic phenomena and discover why women use more polite speech, Ide et al. (1986a) made several important discoveries. Various factors are determined by the speaker's gender. They identified 1) "different values for the politeness levels of individual linguistic forms," 2) "different assessment of the distance between interactants (first-level variable)," and 3) "different frequencies of the kinds of interactional pattern (second-level variable)" (p. 35). Although speech level is the key to becoming a fluent, emic speaker of the language, other paralinguistic factors, such as pitch influence female speech.

Suprasegmental Features of Gendered Speech

In addition to gendered speech, suprasegmental features are also characteristic of female speech. These features include high pitch and more extensive use of contrastive pitch-stress patterns as compared to male speech. Female speech frequently utilizes

sentences with rising intonation (Shibamoto, 1987b, p. 28). Kristoff's (1995) "Japan's

Feminine Falsetto Falls Right out of Favor" appeared in *The New York Times*. Inoue

(2002) discussed the article as it relates to female pitch patterns in Japanese (p. 393). In

this discussion, research conducted by male sociologists reported that Japanese women's'

high pitched voices have been decreasing over time due to changes in Japanese women's

status. In order to maintain a balance of femininity without sounding too overly feminine,

women use '*burikko*' speech. This comes from Japanese Women's Language. The word

is contrived from the verb *buru*, which means 'pretend,' and *ko*, which means 'child.'

Burikko is a negative term which denotes immature, girlishness characterized by the

following features: "a falsetto, nasal voice, baby talk, the avoidance of Chinese loans, use

of the "o" prefix, head tilt, onomatopoeic words, and the like" (Brass, 2005, p. 5).

Interestingly enough, after living in Japan for only a short time, I noticed that I used a

higher pitched voice speaking Japanese than I used speaking English. In addition, I also

nodded my head more frequently when I communicated in Japanese, rather than English.

Gender Distinctions in Speech

In her study of Japanese female speech, Shibamoto (1987b) identified

important phonological and morphological differences in Japanese women's speech. She

determined that the deletion of [i] and [r] and the following vowel deletion occurred in

segmental phonology (pp. 27-28). In addition to several morphological distinctions, she

noted gender distinctions in the use of pronouns. Pronoun use not only expresses varying

levels of respect, but also femininity and masculinity. The first-person singular feminine

pronoun is '*atashi*.' The most widely used pronoun by both sexes is '*watashi*.' The most

polite masculine first-person singular pronoun is '*boku*,' the less polite form is 'ore.'

Second person pronouns may also contain gender. The second person

pronoun, '*anata*' places the speaker and referent on different levels of the relationship

hierarchy, indicating that the addressee and addresser are in separate in-groups. Since

men are on top of the relationship hierarchy, they use '*anata*' more frequently than

women (Brass, 2005, p. 5). There are occupational and status terms which take a

feminine marker (Abe, 1995, p. 656). Abe provides two examples of this system of

female markers: '*hu*' is the feminine marker in the words '*kangohu*' (nurse) and '*shuhu*'

(housewife). There are many more of these markers, such as '*onna*' and '*jo*.'

There are distinct personal pronouns which may be used only by men or only

by women. Male first-person singular pronouns include *boku*, *ore*, *wasi*, and *wagai*;

female first-person singular pronouns include *atakusi*, *atasi*, and *atai*. Both male and

female speakers use *watakusi* and *watasi* in formal speech and writing (Shibamoto, 1990,

p. 29). Several second-person pronouns are used only by men, but none are used

exclusively by women. Although '*anata*' and '*omae*' may be used by both genders,

'*kimi*,' '*kisama*,' and '*temee*' are only used by men (Shibamoto, 1990, p. 29).

<div align="center">Lexical Differences in Speech</div>

Noting lexical differences, Shibamoto observes "use of distinct female forms

for specific items, the avoidance of Sino-Japanese compound words, special pronominal

forms, and sex-differentiated forms of reference and address. Several examples of the

lexical terms clearly used only by men are *hara* (stomach), *umai* (delicious), and *kuu*

(eat). Females' lexicon for the same words are *onaka*, *oishii*, and *taberu*, respectively.

Nominals which take the polite prefixes 'o,' 'go,' or 'omi' are usually used by women.

The prefixes 'o,' 'go' and 'omi' are not placed before any of the examples of these male

lexicon: 'bentoo' (lunch box), 'kane' (money), and 'hashi' (chopsticks). The same

lexicon used by women is *obentoo*, *okane*, and *ohashi*, each word containing the

honorific prefix 'o.' Because women use polite prefixes more frequently than men, they

are often thought to use more polite speech than men (Shibamoto, 1987b, p. 28).

Brass (2005) concludes that Japanese dramas demonstrate the usage of

"neutral" Japanese instead of gendered speech, although female characters were reported

to use some stereotypical feminine behaviors of speech, such as sentence-final particles.

The female actors in these roles did not portray mothers or wives, which are the roles

most associated with the use of Japanese Women's Language (JWL).

Feminine Speech

Onna-rashi kotoba, or 'feminine speech' is found in various aspects of the

Japanese language. Research has been conducted in numerous areas of women's' speech,

including pitch, phonology, lexicon, terms of reference and address, sentence-final

particles, word order, deletion of case marking particles, a shift between formal and

informal styles of verbs, and honorific style (Abe, 1995, p. 660). Juschka (2001) reports

various patterns of speech related to sex differences, including interruption, overlapping,

back channeling, hedging, apologizing, terms used by men and women, and even

different non-verbal behaviors such as gestures (Juschka, 2001, p. 34). Since the

population of women in Japan is not homogenous, one must be careful not to over-

generalize women's use of language. There is, for example, a difference between women's' speech in rural and urban areas (Abe, 1995, p. 660). Speech may be more feminine or masculine, and have different language features, but it may also be more direct or indirect.

<div align="center">Directness vs. Indirectness in Speech</div>

Men tend to be more direct, while women tend to be more indirect when speaking. Women frequently use conditional speech softeners (Schonfeld, 2000, p. 1). Japanese people do not directly state that they cannot or will not do something. Instead, they will offer certain suggestions, such as, it may be difficult to do something. An example of this direct vs. indirect speech may be translated as follows: "Well, it may be a little (difficult)." If you hear this in Japanese, what this means in most situations is "no," keeping in mind that the indirectness is a form of social and linguistic politeness. One may also demonstrate politeness strategies by using sentence-final particles.

<div align="center">Sentence-Final Particles</div>

The sentence-final particles 'wa' and 'no' are typical indicators of female speech because they have a softening affect (McGloin, 1986, p. 7). Inoue (2002) and others suggest that the particle 'wa' is notably a female gender marker (p. 394). McGloin (1986) searches for the semantic and pragmatic reasons why these particles are used in feminine speech. Drawing upon Kitagawa's (1977) research, she found that 'wa' isn't used only by females. It is also used by males. The difference between male and female use is in the intonation of the sentence-final particle. McGloin (1986) concluded that women use 'wa' as a particle with rising intonation. Middle aged and elderly men use

'wa' on occasion with falling intonation. For women, 'wa' has an intonation that is highly sustained, and conveys gentle questioning by the speaker (McGloin, 1986, p. 8). 'Wa' and 'no,' she concludes, are used to create rapport and empathy (McGloin, 1986, p. 22).

McGloin (1986) goes beyond explaining the softening and gentling effects associated with 'wa' and 'no' (p. 21). Although they are ways of communicating "option-giving" or "indirectness," they rely on the conversational rapport created between interlocutors (speaker and listener). Women use these particles to develop a sense of "sharedness" between speakers. McGloin (1986) claims that 'wa' "directs an emotional emphasis toward the addressee and thus engenders an emotional common ground with the addressee, while 'no' engenders a feeling of shared knowledge" (p. 21).

There is some variance in the research done on Japanese sentence-final particles. Although these particles have frequently been categorized into feminine, masculine, and neutral forms, some may be used by both men and women, even though they are generally described as used exclusively by men. Abe (1995) examines the particle 'yo,' which is used after an informal verb. 'Yo' is typically considered too masculine for women to use. In her research, however, Abe found that 'yo' is one of the most frequently used particles (p. 663). Uyeno concludes that in declarative sentences, the sentence-final particle 'yo' is used by both males and females, and functions to "claim, advise," or as "a warning" (Uyeno, 1971, as cited in McGloin, 1986, p. 9). 'Yo' may be spoken with rising or falling intonation, depending on what the speaker intends to convey. According to Reynold's research on women's speech (Abe, 1995, p. 664), "speech forms a continuum from women's to men's language with neutral forms constituting the middle ground" (1995, p. 664). Abe explains that neutral forms are not

associated with the sex of the person talking. Reynolds supports the idea that gender marking in speech is categorical.

In Japan, success in maintaining a conversation is in the involvement of the listener and speaker. *Aidzuchi* is one of the ways in which this involvement is maintained, as well as via gestures, and other verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Sentence-final particles is one way in which *aidzuchi* is employed. These involve interlocutors and allow for a more fluid conversation exchange in the Japanese language. These particles are thought to demonstrate the speaker's attitude about a topic and to invite the conversational partner into the topic of discussion. However, Duck-Young (2007) proposes that 'ne' and 'yo' have different functions for involving the conversation partner. He suggests that 'ne' is used to invite interlocutors to more or less 'agree' with the conversation. 'Yo,' on the other hand, indicates that the speaker is "committed to enhance his/her position as the deliverer of the utterance content and his/her feeling toward the partner" (Duck-Young, 2007, p. 363).

In his study of informal male and female speech, Hatano (1954) reported that women produced more adjectival predicates, men tended to produce more verbal predicates, and adjectival predicates were about equal (as cited in Shibamoto, 1987b). "Choice of verb inflections—those affixes that attach to the verb and indicate tense, mode, aspect and, in Japanese, level of formality and politeness—is also said to be constrained by sex of speaker" (Shibamoto, 1987b, p. 31). Shibamoto claims that male speakers speak using fewer predicates "morphologically marked for politeness" than female speakers, and that speakers also use sentence-final particles based on gender (1987b).

Speech differences between men and women are also expressed in the way that sentence-final particles are used. Sentence-final particles follow Japanese verbs, adjectives, or copular verbs (cited in Shibamoto, 1987b, p. 48). Some of these particles are similar to using "tag questions, exclamation points, or expressions of degrees of certainty" (Brass, 2005, p. 5). Sentence-final particle usage in the Japanese language is not based entirely on gender, but context. Some particles are used almost exclusively by one gender or the other. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987) sheds light on the use of particles and the differences between men's and women's speech behaviors, citing specific examples of their usage.

The sentence final particle 'wa' is known to be a particle associated with Japanese female speech; however, the uses and functions of 'wa' warrant further explanation. According to some researchers, women tag on the particle "wa" to indicate emphasis. Sometimes, a combination of these particles is used by both women and men. For example, women and men use the particles, 'ne' and 'yo.' Men may say either '*kurune*' or '*ikuyo*'; however, women tend to say either '*kuruwan*e' or '*kuruwayo*.'

Particles and Parts of Speech

In terms of grammar, both men and women may use plain forms of verbs and –i-ending adjectives. During conversations in which men and women engage in impersonal, polite speech, there are few gender differences in speech (Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987). However, in personal conversations, women typically speak more politely than men with other speakers. With acquaintances, women tend to use more

polite verbs than men. In addition, they frequently use feminine sentence-ending particles. Men typically vary sentence endings more than women do.

Men use the copula 'desu,' which in colloquial speech becomes 'da,' whereas women use the same copula, or add the particle, 'wa,' changing the 'da' to 'dawa.' In the past tense, the same general rule applies for the colloquial form of the copula. For men, the polite past tense form of the copula 'deshita' becomes 'datta' in colloquial speech. For women, the polite past tense form of the copular, 'deshita' becomes either 'datta' or 'dattawa.'

Men generally use nouns or copular nouns, which in some JFL textbooks are called –na adjectives, with the present tense colloquial copula particles dane, dayo, and with the past tense affirmative colloquial copula, dattane, and dattayo. Women, on the other hand, use nouns or copular nouns without the "be" verb or with the present tense of the colloquial copula, "da," with the addition of the particles 'wane,' or with the past tense colloquial copula 'datta' with the addition of 'wane' or 'wayo.' Men use particles 'ne' or 'yo' with nouns or copular nouns, whereas women use the noun or copular noun either without the copula or with the addition of the particles 'wane' or 'wayo.'

In regard to use of the sentence-final particle 'n' plus the copula, 'desu' (n desu) after nouns and copular nouns, men use 'nan desu' in more polite speech. In colloquial speech, they use 'nan da.' After nouns and copular nouns, women use 'nan desu' in more polite speech, and 'na no' in colloquial speech.

After nouns or copular nouns, the particles 'ne' and 'yo' may be added to the 'n desu' sentence endings. After nouns and copular nouns, men may add 'nan da ne' or 'nan da yo.' Women may add 'na no ne' or 'na no yo,' without the copula. Particles may

be used at the end of sentences to either agree or confirm what the speaker stated. Men

usually use the sentence-final particles ze, *yo*, *da yo*, *da*, and *dane* in speech (Brass, 2005,

p. 5).

When men express probability, they use the polite form '*deshou*' or the

colloquial form, '*darou*.' Women, on the other hand, only use '*deshou*,' whether in

formal or colloquial speech, to express the same. To express probability, "I wonder," men

use the particle "kana" more frequently in casual speech. Men use the sentence-final

particle 'na' more frequently than women to express emotion. The sentence-final particle

'na' may be expressed in English more appropriately as an exclamation mark. The

sentence-final particle "*kashira*" is used more frequently by women in casual speech.

Negative Connotations in Speech

Kittredge (1987) lists some Japanese words and expressions that have

negative connotations, describing women past marriageable age: *tekireiki*, *urenokori*,

urekuchi, *ikazu goke*, *yome ni iku*, *endoi* (pp. 136-137). However, when referring to men,

these negative connotations don't exist (as with the term 'bachelor'). While the word

'shinguruzu' may describe both single men and women, the word 'okusan,' which

translates as "Mrs. Interior," is used to talk about another man's wife. There is not a word

to refer to a woman's husband in this way. In addition to these expressions, there are

some notable gender differences in vocabulary use by men and women.

Various words related to males and females contain male Chinese characters

written in front of female Chinese characters. Cherry (1988) provides several examples of

this phenomenon: 'dan' means male, and 'jo' means female. Together they mean 'male-

female,' male appearing to the left-most side of the kanji character, or as the first of the two written characters (1988, p. 23). If people want to refer to men who are not masculine, they use profanity revolving around the word 'woman.' For instance, males and females may both be referred to as *onna no kusatta yo na* (rotten as a woman), which translates more or less as "whimp or sissy" when used to describe a man. According to Cherry (1988), both men and women are offended by the term, *joseiteki*, which means "womanish" (p. 32). Another offensive phrase used to show contempt for a man is *onna ika*, which means 'less than a woman.' There are male words that have negative connotations when used with women, including the term *otoko masari* (male-surpasser) (1988, p. 32).

Summary

Researchers have identified notable differences between male and female speech in Japanese (Abe, 1995; Brass, 2005; Cherry, 1988; Ide et al., 1986a; Inoue, 2002; Iwao, 1993; Juschka, 2001; Kitagawa, 1977; Kittredge, 1987; Kristof, 1995; McGloin, 1986; Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Schonfeld, 2000). Historically, language use by males and females has differed. Distinctions between male and female speech include phonetic, phonologic, syntactic and morphologic changes in speech. In addition to linguistic differences, there are paralinguistic differences in body language and gestures.

Women tend to use emotional expressions more than men and to interject differently as well. While men speak one way with men, they tend to speak differently with women, using more polite speech. Language used by women tends to be more formal than language used by men, since they use more respectful forms of speech. With

acquaintances, women tend to use more polite verbs than men. In addition to differences in speech, women and men approach tone and pitch in different ways for different communication purposes. Women generally use higher pitched voices than men and more contrastive pitch patterns, too. In addition, women may have what is considered a falsetto, nasal voice, tilt their heads more when communicating, avoid the use of Chinese loan words, and use more honorific prefixes, baby talk, and onomatopoeia.

Even parts of speech may be differentiated in Japanese. Some Japanese pronouns may be used only by men or women. In research studies, women produced more adjectival predicates, while men tended to produce more verbal predicates. Shibamoto (1987b) claims that male speakers speak using fewer predicates "morphologically marked for politeness" than female speakers, and those speakers also use sentence-final particles based on gender.

Research indicates that some Japanese words and expressions describing women past a marriageable age have negative connotations. Certain lexical terms relating to occupations and status require a feminine marker when used by women. Various sentence-ending particles, including case markers, postpositions, and question markers, are used more or less frequently, completely or not at all by one sex or the other. The particle 'wa' is notably a female gender marker. The difference between its use by males and females is noted by the intonation of the sentence-final particles.

Other notable differences in speech patterns related to gender include interruption, overlapping, back channeling, hedging, apologizing, differences in terms, and even non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures. While men tend to be more direct, women are more indirect in communication. Men and women even use different words to

express probability. For example, women use the term '*deshou*,' while men may use the same polite form, or '*darou*,' the more colloquial counterpart.

This chapter seeks to identify ways in which gendered speech and communication patterns are manifest in the Japanese language. Gendered language is noted in phonetics, phonology, syntax, and morphology, and may be found paralinguistically in gestures, directness, pitch, intonation, tone, distance and other non-verbal means of communication.

Teaching Implications

There is evidence of Japanese Women's Language (JWL) and feminine speech. Nuances of speech are demonstrated by various means, including systems of address, Japanese honorifics, directness vs. indirectness, pitch, and use of sentence-ending particles as back channeling (*aidzuch*i). In addition, gendered speech is conveyed through changes in verb endings, making requests, expressing probability, and common words that describe men and women and their meanings. Although there are other features of JWL, the most frequently mentioned in the literature are differences between women's and men's speech. Its implications are important to the JFL learner for various reasons, perhaps most importantly, as indicators of one's ability to communicate fluently using Japanese social and communicative norms. Without knowledge of gendered speech, one may be viewed as more feminine or masculine in the Japanese culture. Because women and men are treated differently, gendered speech could have a significant cultural and linguistic affect on the target language learner.

CHAPTER VIII

AIDZUCHI IN THE UCHI-SOTO MODEL

Foreign language instructors frequently ask themselves how to instruct foreign language learners on complex sociolinguistic issues, such as common target language discourse strategies and techniques. They wonder to what degree it is necessary to teach *aidzuchi*, a Japanese discourse back channeling technique. This chapter aims to describe different types of *aidzuchi*, when and how it is used by native and non-native speakers, its cultural significance, gendered uses in speech, cross-cultural implications, and significance in the Japanese language. This section attempts to demystify the *aidzuchi* conundrum faced by JFL learners, and seeks to explain why it is important to learn *aidzuchi*. Although back channeling occurs in both Japanese and English, its use has not been addressed in detail in the JFL textbooks I have encountered in the United States. Its cross-cultural implications have also been largely ignored. For this reason, it is investigated in depth, examining its significance for native Japanese speakers as well as JFL learners.

A phenomenon known as *aidzuchi*, *back channeling, active listening, continuers,* or *reactive tokens* occurs in Japanese (Kita & Ide, 2007, p. 1239). According to Schiffrin (1988), "discourse markers help distinguish boundaries of talk" (as cited in Black, 1998, p. 42). This often refers to dominating talk. Observing the differences

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between Japanese and English uses of back channeling, Maynard (1996) notes that

Japanese "focuses on the whole event" and English "on the individualism" (p. 942).

In Japanese, *aidzuchi* is used more frequently as an active listening technique

in which people move their heads back and forth and utter things such as 'hai' (yes), 'ee'

(yeah), etc. *Aidzuchi* is different than back channeling in English because *aidzuchi* is used

just as much with people who agree with a conversation as it is with people who disagree.

The active listener continues to make gestures and say 'hai' (yes), even if she doesn't

sympathize with the speaker about the conversation topic. In English, it is considered

rude for people to speak over each other or overlap in conversation. In Japanese, the

opposite is true. Frequently, speakers will overlap in conversation, using head nods and

utterances (Hinds, p. 1987, as cited in LoCastro, 1987, p. 105).

Smiling is sometimes used to fill a non-verbal void or silence. At other times,

nods and verbal backchannels are used. Silence may be followed by nods during a

conversation. Nods may fill in spaces where verbal speech is missing. Japanese speakers

generally use back channeling, nods, or other non-verbal communicative behaviors, such

as smiling to fill in the space of the floor negotiation (Kogure, 2007, p. 1288). Kogure

believes that *aidzuchi* plays an important interactional discourse function in Japanese.

Back channeling and *aidzuchi* have sociocultural implications, and their functions vary in

English and Japanese.

Aidzuchi is different than back channeling in English because it is a discourse

technique used as much with people who agree with a conversational topic as with people

who disagree. Researchers claim that there are different types of *aidzuchi*. One group of

researchers claim that there are two types of *aidzuchi*: utterance-internal, demonstrating

"continuation and understanding" and utterance-final (Miyata & Nishisawa, 2007, p. 1255). Iwasaki (1997) classifies *aidzuchi* into three categories: 1) a closed set of non-lexical forms which are vocalic sounds without referential meaning (n, nn, e, ee, a, aa, hai, haa, ha, ho, hoo, hn); 2) a basically closed set of phrasal *aidzuchi* of formulaic responses with more substantive meaning, (hontou 'really,' sou desu ka 'is it so,' usso 'you're kidding,' naruhodo 'I see,' sonna bakana 'unbelievable,' maji 'really'), and 3) an open class of substantive expressions full of referential content, which can take any form of sentence.

Maynard (1997) observes that Japanese speakers shape their conversation around the scene of an event rather than the agent, as in English conversation. In Maynard's 1987 experiment, four native Japanese speakers with intermediate-advanced English fluency, and four American native English speaking university students were paired together to perform research analysis on back channeling and its cross-cultural differences. He placed native English speakers and intercultural English conversational Japanese speakers in a variety of pair conversation groups. From this pair conversational analysis, Maynard was able to identify six categories of functions for back channels. These include 1) "continuer," 2) display of understanding of content, 3) support for the speaker's judgment, 4) agreement, 5) strong emotional response, and 6) minor addition, correction, or request for information.

While Japanese and American English speakers used the six categories, Maynard (1997) found that the reasons for their uses varied. The primary reason for English speakers to use back channeling was as a "continuer," which he described as a

way "to pass up the opportunity to take a speaking turn at a grammatical juncture" ("4.

Context and Functions," para. 3).

Miyata and Nishisawa (2007) based their research on a young Japanese male.

There are two different types of back channeling in Japanese—utterance internal and

utterance-final. According to these researchers, utterance internal *aidzuchi* "is limited in

form and is limited to the function of continuation and understanding" (Miyata &

Nishisawa, 2007, p. 1271). Utterance-final *aidzuchi* is thought to be reactions to the

discussion, "signaling understanding of the thought expressed, the intention behind it, or

expressing a feeling about it" (Miyata & Nishisawa, 2007, p. 1271).

According to Saita (2003), there are five situational types of *aidzuchi* that

come into play when one: 1) accepts new information, 2) is surprised or skeptical about

new information presented, 3) agrees with the person speaking, 4) disagrees with what

the speaker is saying, and 5) is praised by the speaker and giving an unassuming

response. The nodding of the head may occur during any number of situations. What

must be noted is that head-nodding, a gesture of agreement in Western cultures, does not

necessarily indicate that the active listener agrees with what the speaker is saying. As

with verbal *aidzuchi*, nodding is a technique used to indicate that one is paying attention

to what is said during the conversation.

In *A Case Study Examining Back Channelings in Conversations Between

Japanese-British Dyads,* Cutrone (2005) concluded that back channeling is not shared

between cultures, contributes to negative perceptions and stereotyping, and has a negative

effect on intercultural communication (p. 270). He defines backchannels as "listener

responses" (2005, p. 237). The most frequently used back channeling word in his study

was "yeah," which occurred sixty-one times in conversations with Japanese participants and twenty times with British participants. Cutrone (2005) discovered that the Japanese participants in his study back channeled more frequently than British participants in three different contexts: at or directly after a pause (1.3:1), directly after a primary speaker's non-verbal gesture (1.2:1), and directly after tag questions or 'ya know' (1.9:1). In addition, this researcher also found differences in back channeling between male and female Japanese and British speakers. The back channeling mean for female Japanese speakers was 41; the back channeling mean for male Japanese speakers was 33.5. In British speakers, the back channeling mean for females was 11.8 and 19.3 for males. This information provides further evidence of differences in back channeling among different cultures and genders.

Kita and Ide (2007) also agree that use of *aidzuchi*, nodding of the head, and sentence final particles are motivated by cultural values (p. 1243). Two modes of communication during active listening were reported: 1) the paralinguistic gesture of nodding with the head up and down to indicate that one is listening, and 2) a verbalized utterance which the listener uses to demonstrate that he/she is actively listening to the speaker. The active listener continues to make gestures, usually nodding, while saying 'hai' (yes), even if he or she does not sympathize with the speaker on the conversation topic. For JFL learners, this use of *aidzuchi* is complicated, especially if the functional knowledge of *aidzuchi* has not been learned previously. Group consensus is a common Japanese ideology, and the use of *aidzuchi* enables people to play an active part in the speaking-listening group ideology.

Aidzuchi is often difficult for foreigners to grasp because it is an active listening technique learned within Japanese culture by native speakers from infancy. *Aidzuchi* involves verbal discourse and non-verbal gestures, including nods and facial gestures, such as smiling. The more the cultural 'outsider' learns about the use of *aidzuchi*, its various forms, and sociolinguistic functions, the easier it is for the JFL learner to function as a member of the in-group in Japan. After all, it is difficult for JFL learners to be part of an in-group if the conversation comes to a stop because *aidzuchi* isn't used appropriately, or because of cross-cultural miscommunication.

Hiroshi Miyaji (1967), author of *Definition and Usage of Particles in Contemporary Japanese,* defines particles as "…morphemic units which function mainly as syntactic markers" (p. 17). Some Japanese particles operate as *aidzuchi*. For example, 'ne' is a sentence-ending particle used to induce the listener to respond to the speaker. Group consensus is a common Japanese ideology, and the use of *aidzuchi* is one way to become an active part of speaking-listening group ideology. The collective nature of society may also be found in its speech practices. In Japanese, *aidzuchi* is used to make the speaker more comfortable and able to more readily express an individual opinion, which goes against the natural grain of collectivist, cultural practices.

"Harmony in Communication" (n.d.) explains the phenomenon as a culturally innate, psychologically hard-wired method of active listening that just does not occur in American culture. This makes it difficult for non-native Japanese speakers to comprehend why Japanese people frequently use what Americans perceive as common discourse markers:

Those students serious about learning Japanese should be aware that research done at Columbia University recording conversations between pairs of native Japanese and English speakers showed that a lack of *aidzuchi* among the pairs of native Japanese speakers often led to a breakdown in the conversation. These results are a clear indicator of how learning to give the appropriate *aidzuchi* is a crucial step towards being accepted in Japan. ("Harmony in Communication," n.d.)

The rules of discourse markers and their usage ring out loud and clear for native speakers of English, who know how to rule a conversation without even realizing it. Just as the use of *aidzuchi* is innate to native Japanese speakers, discourse markers are innate to native English speakers. *Aidzuchi* acts more like an active listening technique and is used by the listener to show the speaker that he or she is indeed paying attention. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with the topic of discussion is not important.

In a collectivist society, one participates as a member of a particular group. In terms of *aidzuchi*, an individual is again displaying that he or she is engaged in the conversation by being an active listener. According to Schiffrin (1988), discourse markers convey marked dominance by distinguishing the boundaries of talk (as cited in Black, 1998, p. 42). With discourse markers, teachers often control classroom discourse. Likewise, students are able to gain control of talk using discourse markers (Black, 1998, p. 42). Because of the cross-cultural implications of back channeling strategies used in different cultures, it is important to understand their similarities and differences in order to speak the target language.

Cultures and language are closely interconnected. Even though I am a native English speaker, when I speak Japanese, I automatically conform to non-native active listening norms in my L2. When I speak in both Japanese and English (Japanglish) in conversations with Japanese EFL students, I use *aidzuchi* more frequently than discourse

markers. From the perspective of a cultural outsider to Japanese society, some of my conversations with Japanese students appear to be laden with what Black (1998) describes as discourse markers that show marked dominance. I find that I use these so-called discourse markers frequently when speaking Japanese. In fact, these markers appear to be used mostly as *aidzuchi* in my conversations in Japanese.

Aidzuchi must be appropriate to situational type. According to Saita (2003), even though the same responses may be used for various situational types, one must keep in mind that intonation is important when giving the correct *aidzuchi* response. In the case of accepting new information, the active listener can employ several types of *aidzuchi*. In one type, 'hai,' which means 'yes,' is spoken monotonically with no syllable receiving more or less intonation than the other. In a second, 'haa' is said with the highest tone placed over the initial 'ha' and falling tone on the second 'a.' The third, 'ee,' which means "yeah," starts on a high tone and falls on the second 'e.' Again, the popular *aidzuchi* statement, 'sou desu ka,' meaning "oh, really?," or "is that so?" is said with falling intonation, most of the phrase being stated monotonically with the last syllable, 'ka' articulated with falling intonation. If the intonation is mixed and matched incorrectly, the resulting response from the active listener to the speaker is also mixed and matched incorrectly. The same responses may be used in most *aidzuchi* scenarios, so the primary difference in meaning lies in the intonation.

According to Saita (2003), there are four situational uses of *aidzuchi*. First, aidzuchi is used when one is either surprised or skeptical about the new information presented. Just as intonation rises on the final syllable in similar English responses (e.g., really? Is that so? Are you serious?), when there is an element of surprise or skepticism

that the active listener notes, suddenly, a rising intonation is employed on the final

syllable: 'Haa,' 'ee,' and 'sou desu ka.' According to the Saita (2003), the third

situational *aidzuchi* use occurs when one agrees with the person who is speaking. In this

case, the following *aidzuchi* are popularly employed: Flat (monotone) intonation is used

while pronouncing each of the following words: 'hai,' 'ee,' 'ee, ee,' and 'sou des ne,'

which means "that's so, isn't it?" or "that's right, huh." The fourth situational use is when

one disagrees with what the speaker is saying. Numerous popular *aidzuchi* are employed

in active listening. A few of the *aidzuchi* used by the listener to disagree with the speaker

are 'sou desu ka' meaning "is that so?"; 'hontou desu ka' meaning "really?" or "is that

true?"; 'chigaimasu yo' meaning "that's incorrect" or "that's wrong" or "that's not right."

(For more examples of situational uses of *aidzuchi*, see Izumi Saita's work on *aidzuchi* at

the following website: http://www.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/nik/*aidzuchi*/intoapp/). Finally,

according to Saita and Takahashi, the last type of situational *aidzuchi* is used when one is

praised by the speaker and obligated to give an unassuming response. These *aidzuchi* are

spoken in a monotone manner. Some of these situational types of *aidzuchi* include, but

are not limited to, "iie, iie," meaning "no, no"; "tondemo arimasen," meaning "don't

mention it"; "iie, zannen," meaning "no, unfortunately"; "mada, mada desu," meaning

"not yet."

In her research on *aidzuchi*, LoCastro (1987) cites Hata's (1982) case study

(written in Japanese) of an Australian woman who had studied Japanese for only two and

a half years, and was considered to be a "successful communicator." He proposed that the

key to her successful speaking was not her command of grammar and vocabulary, which

were not fluent, but rather her frequent use of *aidzuchi* during communication.

Collectivism and cooperative effort are a huge part of the Japanese culture. Since *aidzuchi* is a discourse technique that uses cooperative effort between listeners and speakers, it is no mystery that the woman was considered a "successful communicator," based on her adherence to this Japanese discourse technique, rather than rules of grammar or vocabulary use.

Summary

Aidzuchi, or Japanese back channeling, is a phenomenon which occurs cross-culturally, but is not necessarily shared between cultures. If one is not careful, he or she may impose his or her own native language back channeling norms on target language back channeling norms, which would be stereotypical and have a negative effect on communication in the target language.

Aidzuchi appears in various forms. In English, it is considered rude for people to speak over each other or overlap in conversation. In Japanese, the opposite is often true. Japanese speakers generally use back channeling, nods, or other non-verbal communicative behaviors, such as smiling, with each other to fill in the space of the floor negotiation (Kogure, 2007, p. 1288). *Aidzuchi* is different than back channeling in English, because it is a discourse technique used as much with people who agree with a conversational topic as with people who disagree. *Aidzuchi* is a cultural back channeling technique that uses cooperative effort between listeners and speakers, so even non-native Japanese speakers who use *aidzuchi* correctly may be considered good Japanese speakers, even if they do not have good command of grammar.

Researchers agree that there are different types of *aidzuchi*, both verbal and nonverbal, utterance internal and utterance final (Iwasaki, 1997; Miyata & Nishisawa, 2007). Researchers define *aidzuchi* in a variety of ways: active listening, continuers, reactive token sounds, formulaic responses, and an active listening technique in which people move their heads back and forth and make utterances. *Aidzuchi* is also considered a continuer, a display of understanding, an offer of support for the speaker's judgment, a minor addition or correction or request for information. It also acts as a strong emotional response. *Aidzuchi* is employed when one is surprised or skeptical about new information presented, agrees with the person speaking, disagrees with what the speaker is saying, is praised by the speaker (the active listener must give an unassuming response), and is either surprised or skeptical about the new information presented (with rising intonation employed on the final syllable). *Aidzuchi* acts as a listener response, demonstrates an understanding for what's being said, and offers moral support to the person speaking to show agreement or disagreement. It is used as a sentence-ending particle to induce the listener to respond to the speaker and to accept new information.

Cutrone (2005) noted that Japanese participants back channeled more than British participants in a variety of contexts. He also found that Japanese female speakers employed more *aidzuchi* in discourse than males. In his research of English back channeling in British, English speakers, he found that males used more back channeling than females. This suggests that there is some cultural evidence that back channeling among genders may vary from culture to culture.

While back channeling occurs in languages around the world, the ways in which it is employed in cross-cultural communication varies. Back channeling devices

and reasons for using those devices often varies. Their significance should be carefully considered in order to avoid stereotyping back channeling and other discourse techniques cross-culturally.

Teaching Implications

Aidzuchi is a key discourse element in speaking Japanese. As the research demonstrates, although researchers define the number of functions and uses differently, there is agreement that *aidzuchi* is a discourse technique that is used differently than English back channeling. It is a cooperative means used by listener and speaker of Japanese to converse in a culturally appropriate manner. *Aidzuchi* is of considerable importance to JFL teachers and learners. It is not a topic that is readily encountered in the JFL textbooks I used as a student, nor in the elementary-intermediate JFL textbooks I used in my teaching. By incorporating the research included in this chapter into JFL textbooks, learners will be better equipped to use *aidzuchi*, a vital Japanese discourse technique, to speak Japanese more fluidly and competently. This will allow JFL speakers to enter the '*uchi*' or "in-group" when speaking JFL with native speakers.

When this vital discourse technique should be taught has not been established conclusively. Looking more closely at the research findings, I would deduce that a thorough understanding of the functions and uses of *aidzuchi* is necessary to become a competent Japanese speaker. Native English speakers should be wary of the difference between English and Japanese back channeling norms, because, according to research, there are obvious cross-cultural differences in the uses of back channeling techniques. Although more research into *aidzuchi* is needed, especially in the area of JFL

communication, it is my hope that academic writers will incorporate the concept of

aidzuchi in JFL textbooks at all levels. Students would benefit from an explanation of its

sociolinguistic and cultural importance. It would also be helpful to include vital live

audio and video recordings of *aidzuchi* used in context by native Japanese speakers, so

that JFL learners outside of the target language environment may "experience" multiple

varieties of *aidzuchi* in context among varieties of speakers in different in-group and out-

group relationships.

While English speakers generally communicate their intentions in a more

direct manner, Japanese speakers are generally less direct, less verbal and quieter than

English speakers. They avoid talking about their feelings. Japanese speakers use more

back channeling devices and more politeness strategies in communication that have an

effect on face. Communication differences should be addressed with JFL students from a

Western and Japanese perspective in order for students to engage in communication that

meets the target language norms rather than their native language norms. Japanese use

aidzuchi more in Japanese conversations than English-speakers use back channeling in

English conversations. Many of my Japanese friends have noted that they are

uncomfortable speaking English, because they do not know how or when to back channel

appropriately. Likewise, JFL learners who are aware of the notion of back channeling,

but don't know how and when use it in Japanese speech, find the experience equally

frustrating.

By examining cross-cultural communication strategies in English and

Japanese conversations, students will be more aware of communication differences.

Teaching *aidzuchi* will help more advanced JFL speakers maintain conversational fluidity

by increasing their understanding of back channeling norms. For less advanced JFL students, awareness of the norms and different back channeling techniques in both languages will increase their ability to communicate better cross-culturally. Even if communicative strategies using *aidzuchi* are not explicitly taught in beginning JFL courses, knowledge of its function will allow JFL learners to pick-up on back channeling cues and participate in communicative norms different than their own.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Japanese textbooks lack clear explanations of the implications of using

linguistic forms and functions. It is essential that JFL students be aware of the cultural,

linguistic, and paralinguistic features of the language in order to develop communicative

competence and speak more like native speakers. When students learn various levels and

styles of speech, the resources they use are often missing from the curriculum. After

several semesters of Japanese studies, many students are able to "grammatically

function" in Japanese. However, they lack the background necessary to use them

correctly in context. As a result, instead of developing communicative competence from

the beginning of language study, the student is frequently unable to identify why and with

whom the forms, functions, levels and styles of speech are used. In order to maintain

communicative intent, JFL students must be provided with contextualized examples of

language use. Because many JFL textbooks lack implicit and explicit explanations of

language use, students often develop language skills based on incorrect assumptions. As a

result, they do not know how to correctly navigate language use in the *uchi-soto* societal

model that exists in Japan and are unable to communicate in a culturally and

linguistically appropriate manner.

JFL students develop communicative competence in JFL by learning about their own cultural and linguistic norms, and comparing and contrasting them to Japanese norms. As Japanese in-groups and out-groups are dynamic and ever changing, JFL learners need to be aware of subtle changes in language use. Students must be well versed in *uchi-soto* relationships, the role of hierarchy in Japanese culture, and how language is used as a means of communicating not only language, but intent. One may think that "Your Japanese is good" literally means that his or her Japanese language skills are sufficient. In reality, the person is relating to the student in a culturally appropriate, polite manner. In reality, the comment may simply be a conversation starter, just as people from Western cultures talk about the weather. Students must be aware of cultural, linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic and pragmatic issues relevant to Japan in order to communicate from an emic perspective.

JFL students must understand the importance of communicating from the perspective of a collectivist, group-oriented culture. *Uchi-soto* is conveyed in language use by identifying the particular group people belong to. In addition to being evident in language, uchi-soto is demonstrated in physical as well as emotional space. It is evident in the use of politeness strategies and in levels and styles of speech. Uchi-soto is also evident in social and cultural norms, and in the wrapping of physical, emotional, and linguistic space.

Japanese *uchi* and *soto* relationships are influenced by linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, pragmatic, and cultural factors. Insider-outsider relationships (*uchi-soto*) are manifest as a system of hierarchical language use that reflects one's position within dynamic and ever-changing in-groups and out-groups in

society. Although researchers haven't clearly identified to what extent Japanese pragmatic and paralinguistic features should be taught, it is agreed that they should be taught, at least to some degree, by teachers who have extensive knowledge of how and when to use them.

Students who learn Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL), but who are not given the skills to use language in context are unable to express themselves using native communicative norms. Carroll (2005) suggests that *keigo*, a system of honorific language that has different levels and styles of speech, is a way for people to communicate more smoothly and create an atmosphere of mutual respect (p. 235). In her research, Cook (2001) observes that JFL learners are not able to distinguish between impolite speech styles and other linguistic features.

Japan's complex social hierarchy and *uchi-soto* status may be determined in large part by speech level, style, and politeness. Within the society, hierarchy is vertical. The speech level and style one uses is dependent on numerous factors, including in-group or out-group status, social class ranking (which may be determined by a person's family structure), social status (based on wealth and age), skill-set, etc. Since language use is a major determiner of how relationships are viewed, formed, and maintained, speakers need to be aware of language mechanisms that determine *uchi* and *soto* relationships. Social hierarchy may be demonstrated in grammatical parts of speech, selection of family terms, prefixes, suffixes, honorific titles, politeness, age and other societal and cultural factors. When one's status changes to *uchi* or *soto*, one's language use must also reflect this change. When hierarchy is understood, a contextual understanding of language use will follow.

Japanese has various levels and styles of speech, including honorific speech, known as *keigo*. *Keigo* is honorific speech used to distance oneself from the speaker, signaling one's out-group status. In general, the more polite language use is, the greater the distance between interlocutors. This conveys the interlocutor's status as an out-group member. In addition to *keigo*, paralinguistic and pragmatic features of communication come into play. These influence JFL learners' ability to reach *uchi* status. Foreigner talk may also be used by native speakers. It can act as a barrier to the native socialization process and overall communicative competence of JFL learners, because it often includes baby talk, broken English, and over regularization of language. In Japanese host families, research has revealed use of confirmation checks, clarification requests, collaborative completion of sentences, and incorrect repetition of incorrect language. Beyond foreigner talk, cross-cultural differences in greetings and even gestures further complicate the JFL learners' ability to grasp Japanese like a native. Even tone and intonation vary between English and Japanese and may not be applied cross-culturally. Conversational intent may be skewed by placing one's native language and sociocultural norms on the target language and society.

While Western society reveres individualism, Japanese society reveres collectivism and values society in a group-dichotomy. While hierarchical language is used to establish invisible physical barriers, it establishes vocalized barriers of orientation using hierarchical language revolving around politeness, which indicate one's in-group or out-group status in relation to other groups. While politeness establishes distance, distance reflects politeness.

Since Japanese people communicate indirectly, they avoid conflict using conversation fillers, such as *aidzuchi* and other utterances, as mechanisms of refusal. Westerners tend to be more confrontational, while Japanese people tend to avoid direct conflict and refusal. While Americans tend to make apologies more public, Japanese people tend to apologize privately with in-group members. They tend to keep their *honne* (real intention) to themselves, while they convey their *tatemae* (public position or attitude) to the world. Different communication strategies are used in Japanese and Western cultures. Because JFL learners do not always comprehend cross-cultural differences in communication strategies and techniques, it is difficult for Japanese people to understand the intent of JFL speakers (Hendry, 1993, p. 68). Much of the speaker's intent is codified in language use.

Honorific language is displayed in Japanese syntax and morphology. Hori (1988) suggests that, in English, honor is demonstrated outside of syntax, while in Japanese, honor is internalized in syntax. Wegner (1982) determines that parts of speech contain honorification (p. 67). Pronoun use is also different in that it signals that a member is an individual and not part of a group. Horie et al. (2006) also conclude that personal pronouns in Japanese are more marked and tend to be deleted when used in context (p. 299). Speakers must be aware that the use of pronouns takes into consideration the "hierarchy of respect and condescension" (Jones et. al, 2004, p. 164). Researchers have also identified gender distinctions between male and female speech (Abe, 1995; Fraser, 2008; Ide et al., 1986a; Shibamoto, 1987a).

Some distinctions between male and female speech include phonetic, phonologic, syntactic, and morphologic changes. Paralinguistic differences in

communication by men and women encompass body language and gestures. While women use more emotional expressions than men, they interject differently, too. Men generally speak differently with each other than they do with women. While language use by women is generally viewed as being more polite with acquaintances, men generally speak with each other less formally. Men and women use pitch and tone differently. Women usually use higher pitches and have more contrastive pitch patterns than men. Women also use a falsetto, nasal voice, and more baby talk. They avoid the use of Chinese loan words, use more honorific prefixes and onomatopoeia, and tilt their heads more when communicating. Men and women may use different sentence-ending particles, case particles, lexicon, and speech patterns, including interruption, overlapping, back channeling, hedging, apologizing, vocabulary, and even non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures. While women use a more polite form, 'deshou,' to express probability, men may use the polite or colloquial version of the same word, 'darou.'

Native speakers of Japanese use *aidzuchi* to maintain fluid conversations. *Aidzuchi*, a Japanese back channeling technique, is a phenomenon which occurs cross-culturally, in many ways not necessarily shared between cultures. Researchers have found that Japanese *aidzuchi* appears in various forms and reflects cultural values (Izumi, 1990; Kita & Ide, 2007; LoCastro, 1987; Miyata & Nishisawa, 2007; Saita, 2003). While in English, it is considered rude for people to speak over each other or overlap in conversation, in Japanese, overlapping must occur to signal to the speaker that the listener is actively participating in the conversation. Japanese speakers generally use back channeling, nods, or other non-verbal communicative behaviors, such as smiling to fill in the space of the floor negotiation (Kogure, 2007, p. 1288). *Aidzuchi* is so important in the

Japanese language that conversations can stop abruptly if it is not employed. Common types of *aidzuchi* include verbal and non-verbal back channeling and utterances. *Aidzuchi* acts as a listener response, demonstrates an understanding of what is being said, offers moral support to the person speaking, conveys agreement or disagreement, and induces the listener to respond to the speaker and accept new information. Since back channeling devices and reasons for using those devices often vary, their significance should be carefully considered in order to avoid stereotyping back channeling and other discourse techniques cross-culturally.

<div align="center">Future Research</div>

This research review has limitations and should not be the only supplementary information provided in JFL classes. In an effort to keep research discussion fairly concise, I have not addressed other topics which contribute to an emic perspective of target language and cultural norms. These include onomatopoeia, gestures and other means of paralinguistic communication, historical linguistics, and popular myths and beliefs.

The purpose of this research review is to develop students' awareness and understanding of various in-group and out-group relationships. It is also designed to help learners develop an emic perspective of Japanese language and culture so they function more like native speakers. In order to improve the effectiveness of the research review as a learning tool for learners, it could be used in conjunction with a current JFL textbook that adheres to the guidelines of the National Standards for Foreign Language Education. Although the Standards were developed primarily for K-12 learners, the concepts may be

easily adapted to use in classrooms with adult JFL learners. Classroom applications could then be assessed and analyzed for their effectiveness.

I used an early draft of the research review with university students for the purpose of increasing their knowledge of concepts often omitted in JFL textbooks. The effectiveness of this content on learning outcomes was not investigated. Research is needed to examine the effectiveness of incorporating research related to insider-outsider relationships in language classes and textbooks for JFL learners. The aim of such research would be to extend its application in JFL learning and teaching. Information could be presented in university courses as a supplement to the textbook. Students and teachers could be surveyed and observed to investigate the inclusion of specific themes and topics.
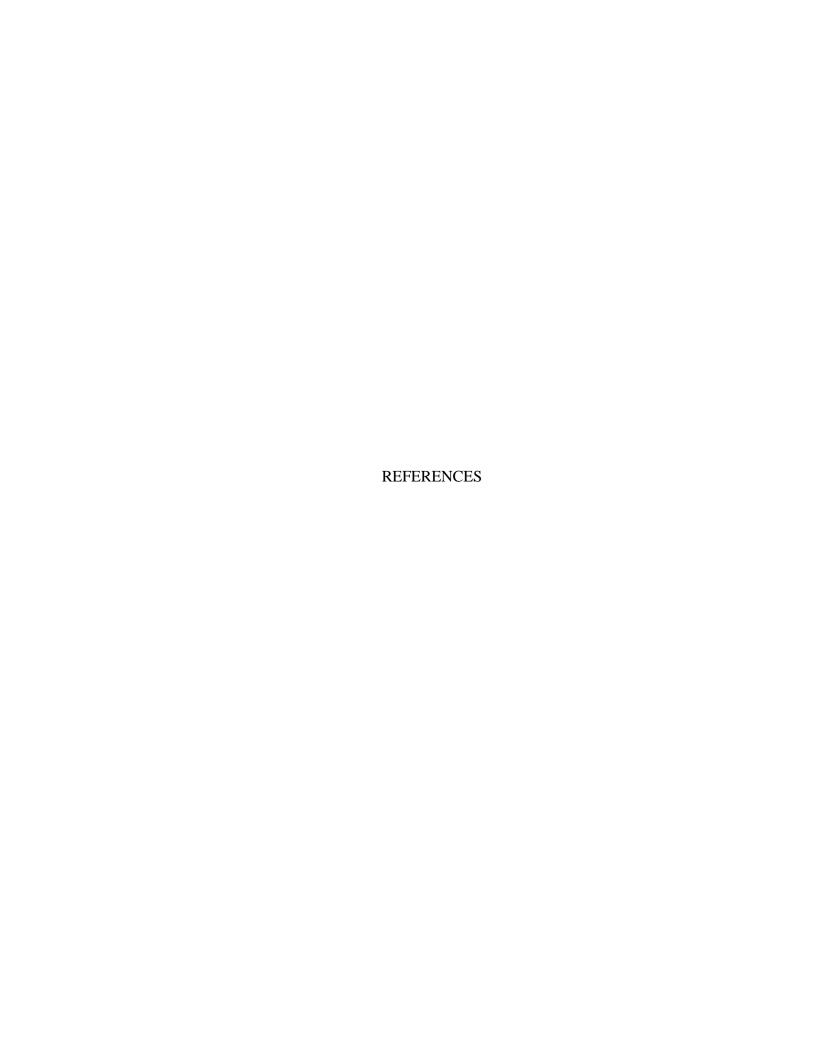
<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

In Japan, language and culture are synonymous. JFL learners must develop a keen understanding of Japanese linguistic, sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, pragmatic, and cultural norms different from their own, in order to operate like cultural insiders and operate fluidly between *uchi* and *soto* dichotomies. It is my hope that this research will encourage more textbook writers and educators to explain cross-cultural, linguistic and paralinguistic similarities and differences in English and Japanese, and their implications for JFL learners. Learners need contextualized examples of language use. Educators must address many issues related to teaching JFL in context, starting with *uchi-soto*, communication strategies, male and female speech, and *aidzuchi*. My dream is to see a larger community of JFL educators immersing their students in target language cultural

practices that will enable them to communicate in Japanese using appropriate language, cultural norms, and practices from an emic rather than etic perspective. JFL learners will then be able to communicate as cultural and linguistic insiders and more easily communicate their true conversational intent with native Japanese speakers.

Note

Usage of the word "Western" is not meant to imply an ethnocentric point of view in this research study. I have used the word to indicate countries where English is the native language: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, South Africa, and New Zealand.

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