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Relation	

Sequential Organization of L2 Complaint Strategies by Japanese and Thai Learners of English

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The speech act of complaints has received less attention in previous studies compared to other major speech acts, such as requests. Olshtain and Weinbach (1993, p. 108) explained the speech act of complaints as being "usually addressed to the hearer (H), whom the speaker (S) holds, at least partially, responsible for the offensive action." Since then, Olshtain and Weinbach's definition has been applied in numerous studies as the classic definition of the speech act of complaints. Additionally, Trosborg (1995) stated that the speech act of complaint occurs when speakers directly or indirectly express unsatisfied or negative feelings toward hearers responsible for their feelings. Considering the statements above, this speech act functions to express, to the hearer, feelings of dissatisfaction or to blame them for having opinions different from the speaker's. In the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), complaining is considered a face-threatening act (FTA) that threatens the hearer's face and criticizes the hearer. Further, Shimizu (2016) suggested that the speech act of complaint threatens both a positive face, where the speaker wishes to be positively evaluated by others, and a negative face, where the speaker does not want to be threatened by others.

The speech act of complaint is directly realized when its form matches its intent. It is also indirectly performed when its form does not match its intent, such as using other forms of speech acts (Searle, 1979; Shimizu, 2009). For instance, the complaining strategies proposed by DeCapua (1998) and Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) include *requests for repair*, *criticisms,* and *accusation and warning,* which are not regarded as complaining in terms of form, but in terms of intent. Therefore, the use of this speech act can make it difficult to determine whether an utterance is a speech act of complaints or something else (Laforest, 2002). Considering this, it is extremely challenging for second language (L2) learners to realize the face-threatening speech act of complaint, especially as their pragmatic knowledge is inferior to that of native speakers. Thus, studies on speech acts, especially complicated speech acts such as complaining, are required to develop better methods for L2 learners to gain pragmatic knowledge and realize appropriate speech acts. However,

little is known about how L2 learners compose complaints, considering contextual differences.

BACKGROUND

There have primarily been two types of research on the speech act of complaints: production-based research and perception-based research. However, despite rich findings concerning the realization of complaints following Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), little is known about how native speakers perceive EFL learners' complaints (Tatsuki, 2000). In addition, even fewer studies have focused on the sequential organization of complaint strategies; that is, how each move consisting of complaint strategies (direct and indirect) is arranged in the speaker's utterances.

Production-based Studies on L2 Complaints

Studies on the speech act of complaints have focused on the use of complaining strategies by L2 learners. Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) claimed that complaints comprise three parts: opening, head act, and adjunct. Regarding the head act, they proposed a five-category scale of complaining strategies, ranging from direct to indirect: (a) *below the level of reproach,* (b) *expression of annoyance or disapproval*, (c) *explicit complaint*, (d) *accusation*, and (e) *warning and immediate threat*. In their study, they collected data using a discourse completion test (DCT) and compared the use of complaining strategies by learners of Hebrew with its use by native speakers of Hebrew. The results showed that the use of complaining strategies by both groups varied among (b) *expression of annoyance or disapproval*, (c) *explicit complaint*, (d) *accusation* and (e) *warning*. Additionally, the learners tended to choose strategies with a low risk of face-to-face threat.

Using his strategies, DeCapua (1998) analyzed the use of complaining strategies and the tendencies of vocabulary use in the head act by 50 German learners of English and 50 American native speakers of English. This research differed from that conducted by Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) in that DeCapua added an indirect speech act of complaint using request forms, such as *requests for repair* or *requests for demand*. One finding in this study was that while learners had the tendency to use the complaining strategies of *justification*, the native speakers hardly used this strategy, suggesting that since the learners used *justification* in the case of their native language, German, this knowledge triggered pragmatic transfer in their complaints in English.

Additionally, Rinnert, Nogami, and Iwai (2006) compared the strategic use of complaints in English by Japanese learners of English and American native speakers, in terms of initiators, complaints, and requests. They also conducted a comparative study of complaints in Japanese by native speakers of Japanese, complaints in English by Japanese learners of English, and native speakers of English, in terms of their strategy use. The results revealed that very few Japanese EFL learners used initiators, compared with the other two groups. This implies that Japanese EFL learners tend to experience pragmalinguistic failures when realizing complaints in English, especially in situations with different social powers between the hearer and the speaker.

Trosborg (1995) used role-playing to examine the complaint strategies of Danish EFL learners and British native speakers of English. The results revealed that Danish EFL learners tended to use certain limited strategies, mitigation, and few adjuncts, indicating that Danish EFL learners were not capable of realizing complaints, considering social relationships.

Previous production studies on L2 complaints suggested that L1 transfer and the lack of proficiency created distinct differences between the uses of strategies and words in complaints of native speakers of English and those of EFL learners. Moreover, the latter tended to use limited strategies, wording, and number of components.

Perception-based Studies on L2 Complaints

With regard to perception-based research, a study by Murphy and Neu (1996) was centered on perception in the speech act of complaining. They examined how 27 American native speakers of English judged the appropriateness of complaints realized by 14 Korean EFL learners. This was in reference to research by Cohen and Olshtain (1981), who investigated English native speakers' judgment of the appropriateness of the speech acts performed by German EFL learners. The results revealed that Korean EFL learners tended to choose strategies of *accusation* and *warning*, thus resulting in the American participants judging the complaints made by Korean EFL learners as aggressive and inappropriate.

While conducting a production study of L2 complaints, Rinnert et al. (2006) also examined how native speakers of English judged the complaints realized by speakers of Malay. They also analyzed the complaints by native speakers of English and Malay based on the eight levels of politeness described by House and Kasper (1981). The participants were asked to complete a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, which consisted of one situation with eight different complaints concerning the levels of politeness. One of the findings showed that native speakers of both English and Malay were highly likely to judge indirect complaints with mitigated expressions as ineffective because of their ambiguity. Further, they tended to consider direct complaints as effective, since their points were clear and assertive.

Studies on Sequential Organization of Speech Act Moves

Every speech act has a set of unique realization patterns that often differ across cultures; people request and apologize differently in different languages and cultures. To date, a number of studies have identified specific variations in the types and frequency of moves in speech act production and perception. However, little attention has been paid to how each speech act is composed; that is, how a set of moves of a speech act, such as a request, is organized in a certain sequence. Each language has its unique expressions and sequences in conversational discourse. A series of studies researching the link between human relationships in social settings and patterns in conversational discourse have emphasized the concept of sequence organization (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). According to these studies, sequences of conversation do not proceed randomly, but comprise a certain chain of initiating and responding actions between interlocutors. Subsequent research has focused on speech interactions between two or more speakers.

Among the very few studies on the sequential organization of speech acts is that by Robinson (2004), which focused on the preference organization of apologies. Using the method of conversation analysis, the author looked into the sequential organization of explicit apologies in naturally occurring conversations in American/British English, examining the data from a range of naturally occurring, recorded, and videotaped interactions to demonstrate the following:

1. Apologies can occupy a number of different sequential positions other than first parts of adjacency-pair sequences, with difference implications for the organization of apologizing as an action.
2. When apology units initiate a sequence of action and when apologizing is the primary action being accomplished, apologies are first parts of adjacency-pair sequences (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).
3. Apologies index particular offenses and embody a claim to have offended someone, which implicitly includes an admission of personal responsibility for the offense.
4. As first-pair parts, apologies have a preference organization . . . such that preferred responses mitigate or undermine, and dispreferred responses endorse apologies' claims to have caused offense.
5. Apology terms can be used to accomplish non-apology actions.

(Robinson, 2004, p. 292)

It would be quite rare for one speech act to be performed with a single utterance or move, especially in sensitive, face-threatening social interactions, such as complaints and apologies; rather, it is usually realized with multiple moves and turns. For example, complaints are often expressed by stating a series of offensive actions and facts that may have caused dissatisfaction or negative feelings in the speaker. Furthermore, the arrangement of a sequence of subtypes of speech acts is likely to be affected by the speakers' cultures as well as personal preferences. It is often said that the Japanese people tend to apologize too often, as though it is regarded as a social lubricant to avoid confrontations and to smooth the flow of interactions. Further research is, thus, needed to address whether complaint expressions have a preference organization, and how different sub-moves shape the action of complaining.

Research Questions

Previous studies on L2 complaints show how L2 learners realized the complaining speech act by focusing on linguistic features and complaining strategies. Additionally, they revealed that L2 learners tended to use different strategies and linguistic features from native speakers due to the influence of L1 transfer. However, few studies have closely examined how L2 learners of English compose complaints depending on different contextual settings. Despite English being used as a global language in an English-as-a-Lingua-Franca environment, little is known about the similarities and differences in the complaints realized by L2 learners with different cultural backgrounds. To this end, this study aims to examine the following research questions:

1. How do Japanese learners of English compose the speech act of complaints?
2. How do Thai learners of English compose the speech act of complaints?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the complaints of Thai and Japanese learners of English?

METHOD

Participants

A total of 110 learners of English as a foreign language — 80 Japanese and 30 Thai students — were recruited in this study. They were all third- or fourth-year undergraduate students, between the age of 20 and 22 years. The average age was 20.5 years. Based on their TOEIC scores, their English proficiency was judged to be intermediate. This is equivalent to the Common European Framework of Reference Levels B1 and B2 (Verhelst et al., 2009).

Japanese Group

The Japanese group comprised 80 education majors: 28 English major students and 52 students who were not English majors but wished to apply for an English teaching license after graduation. Among the English major students, 12 had studied at a UK university and spent 15 weeks (4 months) for the intensive study of English in the previous year.

Thai Group

The 30 students in the Thai group were from a national university of technology in North Bangkok. Their majors varied, from multimedia, culinary arts and design, entrepreneurship, and hotel and restaurant management to innovative media production, international management, and marketing. None had experienced an extensive period of stay in an English-speaking environment.

Materials and Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected using a written discourse completion test (DCT), including four academic settings manipulated in terms of social status (power) and psychological distance (distance) between the speaker and the hearer. In accordance with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the following four types of situations were developed in terms of two variables: power (P) and distance (D).

Participants were asked to complete the DCT and write how they expressed complaints in English in the four specific settings in Table 1 (see Appendix for the full version of the materials used in this experiment). Both groups were given the same material in English. They answered the test in two stages: 1) in the first stage, they decide whether to actually express their complaints; in other words, they can choose to opt out of articulating their complaint, namely, by choosing not to perform the speech act (Bonikowska, 1988); and 2) in the second, if they choose to voice their complaint, they have to mention what they would choose to say in English.

TABLE 1. Four Settings

Situation	Interlocutors	Content
Q1. +P/+D	Student to unfamiliar professor	Essay grade
Q2. +P/-D	Students to familiar tutor	No feedback
Q3. -P/+D	Student to unfamiliar student	Disturbing sounds
Q4. -P/-D	Student to his/her friend	Returning a textbook

The data of the Thai students were collected in May 2018, and that of Japanese students in November 2018. The participants answered the test during class hours without using a dictionary. Most finished the DCT within 30 minutes.

Criteria for Analysis

Based on Shimizu (2016), all the complaint strategies in the written DCT data were coded from (a) to (g), following the list below (Table 2):

TABLE 2. Categories and Examples to Code Strategies

Category	Example
(a) Opener	I think you probably know why I've called you into my office today.
(b) Confirmation	Is there a problem with getting to work on time?
(c) Explanation	This is the third time you've been late this month.
(d) Threat	Every time you're late, it is a step closer to losing your job.
(e) Request of repair	Please make a better effort to be punctual.
(f) Social norm	At this office we place a lot of importance on punctuality.
(g) Sympathy	I know that you are a hard worker and we appreciate your professionalism.

Note. Examples are in the setting where a boss talks to a subordinate who was late for work for 30 minutes, excerpted from Shimizu (2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Frequency of Opting Out

The first question in the DCT was whether the participants would say something to the interlocutor. Both nationality groups had similar percentages of participants who chose to opt out from complaining, at 45% and 42% for Japan and Thailand, respectively. However, the proportions differed depending on the scenes (Table 3). As shown in Table 3, the percentage of Japanese participants who chose to opt out varied from 28% to 80% depending on the scene, but that of Thai participants hovered around 40% (37% to 47%). Scene 3, involving the complaint toward an unfamiliar student, was the one where participants in both groups opted out the greatest number of times. Unlike the other three scenes, the interlocutor was assumed to be a person totally unacquainted with the participants, making the participants hesitant to complain. This inclination was more significant among Japanese participants. Indeed, they opted out more toward an unfamiliar professor in Scene 1 than toward a familiar professor in Scene 2, implying that familiarity was an important factor for Japanese participants in deciding to opt out. Similarly, they opted out more with an unfamiliar professor (Scene 1) than with a familiar professor (Scene 2) and more with an unfamiliar student (Scene 3) than with a familiar friend (Scene 4). This phenomenon might indicate the concept of in-group and out-groups (*uchi-soto*) in Japan, a concept that is similar to social distance in politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In Scene 3, the Japanese participants possibly recognized the student as an unacquainted and disinterested stranger, whose bad behavior in the library was not their responsibility to correct.

TABLE 3. The Percentages of Opting Out

	Total	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4
Japanese (N = 80)	46%	53%	33%	80%	28%
Thai (N = 30)	42%	37%	43%	47%	40%

Note. Scene 1 (+Power/+Distance), Scene 2 (+Power/-Distance), Scene 3 (-Power/+Distance), Scene 4 (-Power/-Distance)

The Frequency of Strategy Use

The proportions of strategy use frequency for the complaint speech act by the two nationality groups are shown in Figure 1 and Table 4. The overall tendency was similar for both groups; the major strategies are: (a) opening, (c) explanation, and (e) request for repair. Among the three major strategies, the biggest difference between the groups was (a) opening. Japanese participants used more opening strategies (29%) than Thai participants (16%). For example, Japanese participants greeted and introduced themselves to an unfamiliar professor saying "Excuse me. I'm XXX. I take your class." (JP15) or asked for the interlocutor's time by saying "Hello, do you have a time now? It doesn't take you hours just few minutes I'd like to confirm something. Is that okay?" (JP4). By contrast, Thai participants used higher proportion of explanation (e.g., "because I think my score may have some mistake." Thai10, Scene 2), requests for repair (e.g., "Is it possible if you can finish your feedback within 3 days?" Thai 8, Scene 4), and sympathy strategies (e.g., "I am so thankful that you listen to me" Thai1, Scene 3).

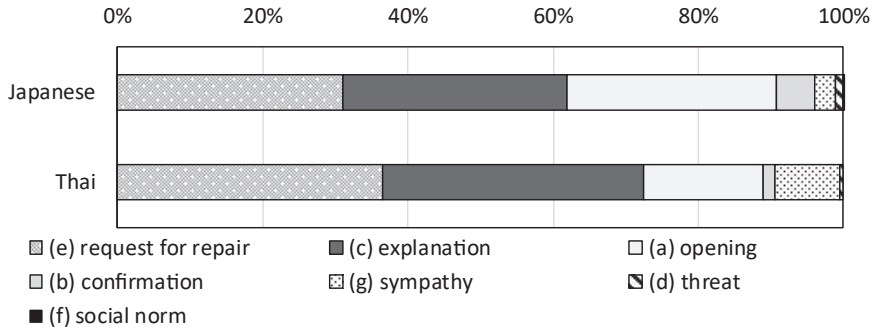

FIGURE 1. The Proportion of Whole Complaint Strategy Uses by 80 Japanese (560 Strategies) and 30 Thai (189 strategies) Learners of English

TABLE 4. The Percentages of Whole Complaint Strategy Used by 80 Japanese (553 Strategies) and 30 Thai (202 Strategies) Learners of English

	(a) opening	(b) confirmation	(c) explanation	(d) threat	(e) request for repair	(f) social norm	(g) sympathy
JP	29%	5%	31%	1%	31%	0%	3%
TH	16%	2%	36%	1%	37%	0%	9%

The proportion of strategies for each scene is shown in Figure 2. This reveals that the opening strategy is more common among Japanese participants than Thai participants in every scene. The latter used fewer

opening strategies, particularly in Scene 4, when they talked to a familiar friend. Without an opening, they explained the situation that caused their dissatisfaction and directly requested repair.

As can be seen from the excerpts of Japanese participants' opening strategies above, Japanese participants tended to start their utterances with an opening strategy, whereas this was not observed in the Thais. Thus, the order of strategy use would be another perspective for analyzing the differences between the two groups.

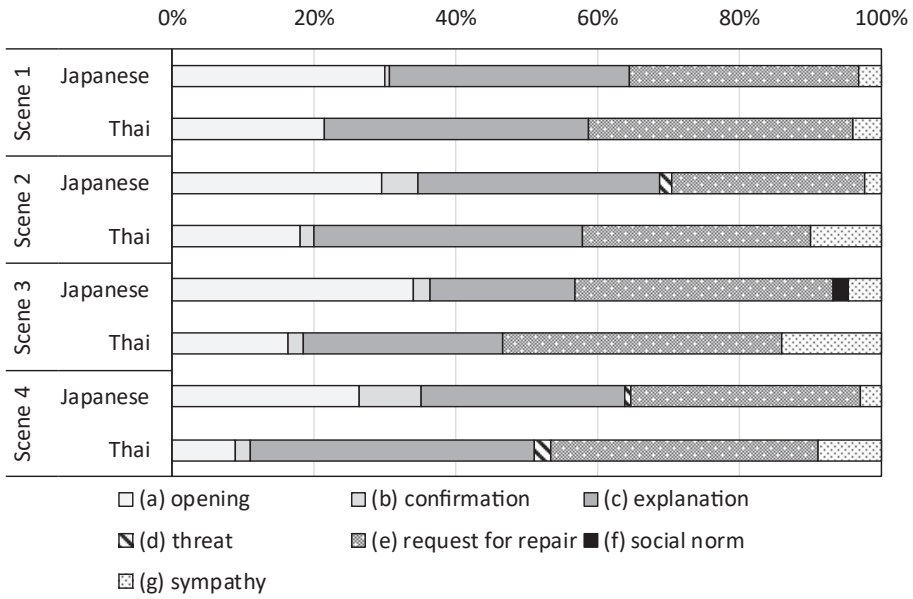

FIGURE 2. The Proportion of Complaint Strategy Uses by Japanese (*N* = 80) and Thai (*N* = 30) Learners of English by Scene

The Order of the Complaint Strategy Use

As mentioned in the previous section, it is unclear with what strategy Thai participants start their complaint speech acts. Table 5 shows the order of complaint strategies appearing in each DCT scene. Participants first decided whether they would say something or opt out of saying something. When the Japanese participants chose the former, they started to compose their complaints with an opening. The tendency of request for repair strategy usage was more significant among the Thai participants in all the scenes as compared to their Japanese counterparts; nevertheless, the tendency differs slightly depending on the interlocutor. In Scenes 1 and 2 – when talking to a professor – more than 30% of Thai participants started with an opening, followed by an explanation of the situation and/or request for repair; by contrast, 30% of them started straight away with a request for repair in Scenes 3 and 4 – when talking to a same-aged student. For example, they started a request for repair directly by saying, "Can you return my book?" (Thai10, Scene 4). Unlike the Japanese participants, who valued social distance and decided to opt out, Thai participants varied their expressions according to the power relationships. Further research is required to determine the impact of cultural background in this regard.

TABLE 5. The Percentages of the Appearance Order of Each Strategy by Scene

Strategy	Japanese							Thai						
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
Scene 1														
(a) opening	46%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(b) confirmation	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(c) explanation	0%	40%	6%	8%	0%	0%	0%	7%	40%	10%	3%	0%	3%	0%
(d) threat	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(e) request for repair	1%	5%	34%	6%	5%	0%	0%	20%	23%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(f) social norm	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(g) sympathy	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%
Opt out	53%							37%						
Scene 2														
(a) opening	65%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(b) confirmation	0%	0%	8%	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(c) explanation	1%	65%	4%	5%	0%	0%	0%	7%	40%	7%	7%	0%	3%	0%
(d) threat	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(e) request for repair	1%	3%	43%	8%	6%	0%	0%	17%	10%	23%	0%	3%	0%	0%
(f) social norm	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(g) sympathy	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	0%	7%	0%	0%	3%
Opt out	33%							43%						
Scene 3														
(a) opening	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(b) confirmation	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(c) explanation	0%	6%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(d) threat	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(e) request for repair	1%	13%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	30%	17%	7%	3%	0%	0%	0%
(f) social norm	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(g) sympathy	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Opt out	80%							47%						
Scene 4														
(a) opening	70%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(b) confirmation	0%	15%	6%	1%	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(c) explanation	3%	26%	30%	13%	5%	0%	0%	13%	37%	7%	3%	0%	0%	0%
(d) threat	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(e) request for repair	1%	30%	23%	23%	6%	3%	1%	27%	17%	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%
(f) social norm	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(g) sympathy	0%	1%	0%	4%	3%	0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Opt out	28%							40%						

CONCLUSION

Although previous studies have investigated complaint-making strategies (e.g., DeCapua, 1998; Rinnert et al., 2006), the present study is significant in that it compares two nationality groups, both of which learn English as a foreign language. In today's global age, we should strive to avoid misunderstandings by comprehending each conversation style and the background thereof. The present study compared EFL learners' supportive strategies between two nationalities, Japanese and Thai, using written DCT data on four scenes to deliver (or not to deliver) complaints toward an un/familiar professor or student in academic settings.

The study revealed that the two nationality groups shared similarities in three major strategies: opening, explanation, and request for repair. However, Japanese learners hesitate to deliver complaints to unfamiliar interlocutors, and when they do, they use more opening strategies before explanation and request for repair. By contrast, Thai learners tend to make their request for repair directly toward same-aged interlocutors, but use more emotional words to show sympathy and appreciation towards them. This study discussed these differences from the perspective of Japanese and Thai cultures, and social power relationships. For comfortable communication between two nationality groups, cultural differences in language use must be considered and tolerated.

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Appendix: Discourse-Completion Test

Q1 Complain about your essay grade (+Power/+Distance/Academic)

You are taking a course with a professor for the first time. When you receive your first essay back you are not at all satisfied with the grade. You have read the course criteria for essays and you strongly think that your essay has not been graded correctly. You go to the professor's office. What do you say to him/her?

Q2 Having no feedback from your tutor (+Power/–Distance/Academic)

You have recently submitted a final draft of your graduation thesis to your tutor. In this department it is expected that all students will get feedback on their thesis before working on the final version. However, your tutor has missed the deadline for this feedback by more than one week and you began to be frustrated. You go to his/her office. What do you say to him/her?

Q3 Disturbing sounds of Internet phone (–Power/+Distance/Academic)

You are working on an essay in the computer room at your university. At the computer next to you a student (who you don't know) is making an internet phone call and speaking loudly. You are not happy about this as it is stopping you from concentrating on your work. What do you say to the student?

Q4 Asking friend to return your book (–Power/–Distance/Academic)

You are taking one course together with a good friend of yours. Your friend lost his/her course book and asked you if s/he could borrow your copy for a few days to catch up with some course reading. However, s/he keeps forgetting to return it to you and you need it for the end-of-course exam. What do you say to him/her?

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ABSTRACT

Sequential Organization of L2 Complaint Strategies by Japanese and Thai Learners of English

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This study aimed to investigate complaint-making strategies used by Japanese and Thai learners of English. Complaining, an expression of dissatisfaction or disapproval toward others' past or ongoing actions, is a highly face-threatening act. However, previous studies have paid less attention to this speech act as compared to other major speech acts, such as requests. Additionally, given that English is used as a global language, in an English-as-a-Lingua-Franca environment, it is important to examine whether L2 learners with different L1/cultural backgrounds use similar or different complaint-making strategies. In this study, Japanese and Thai university-level learners of English took a discourse completion test (DCT), which manipulated social status (*power*) and mental distance (*distance*). The DCT comprised four situations in academic contexts (e.g., complaining about an essay grade to a professor). Data were analyzed regarding the frequency of linguistic characteristics appearing in core information called head acts and surrounding information called supportive moves. Further, the sequential organization of explicit complaints in complaint-making strategies was also analyzed as a way of identifying culture-specific patterns of preference organization. Preliminary analysis indicated that Thai learners expressed complaints more directly, whereas Japanese learners tended to use more supportive moves before producing the head act. These results suggest that different L1/cultural backgrounds influence L2 speech act performance. The present study contributes to our understanding of the social and sequential organization of talk in cross-cultural interactions and its potential effects on intercultural miscommunication.

要　約

不平表現方略の順序構造―日本人とタイ人英語学習者を対象にした比較研究―

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本研究の目的は，日本人・タイ人英語学習者の不平表現方略を調査・比較することである。「不平」とは，他者の過去や現在の行動に対する不満や不賛成を表現するものであり，深刻なフェイス侵害行為のひとつである。しかしながら，従来の研究では，依頼に代表される他の主要な発話行為と比較して，不平の発話行為はあまり研究の焦点となっていなかった。また，英語がグローバル言語として使用されている English-as-a-Lingua-Franca 環境では，異なる母語や文化的背景を持つ L2 学習者が，不平表現方略を同様に使用しているのか否かを検証することは重要であると考えられる。本研究では，日本人とタイ人の英語学習者を対象に，社会的地位（Power）と心理的距離（Distance）を統制した談話完成テスト（discourse completion test; DCT）を実施した。DCT は，アカデミックな文脈における 4 つの状況（例：エッセイの成績について教授に不平を言う）で構成された。調査で得られた筆記データは，主要行為部（head act）と呼ばれる中核的な情報（例：私の評価が悪い理由を教えてください）と，補助手番部（supportive move）と呼ばれる周辺情報（例：こんにちは，お邪魔しますが，今，時間ありますか）に現れる言語的特徴の頻度の観点から分析された。さらに，両言語話者による不平表現方略を構成する上述の情報の出現順序についても分析された。その結果，タイ人学習者は不満をより直接的に表現するのに対し，日本人学習者は主要行為部を示す前に，より多くの補助手番部を提示する傾向があることが明らかになった。これらの結果は，母語や文化的背景の違いが L2発話行為の遂行に影響を与えることを示唆している。特に，本小論は異文化誤解に影響を与える可能性のある，方略の出現順序構造の特質を特定することに役立つと期待される。