Interactional Sociolinguistic analysis of Argumentative Strategies: between Japanese and Korean graduate students

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Abstract

This study examines how Korean and Japanese graduate students or professors express disagreement and manage argument in an online video conferencing class. The study operates within the interactional sociolinguistic framework of discourse analysis and analyzes strategies in terms of a continuum ranging from the most mitigated to the most aggravated disagreement. Using both linguistic and paralinguistic criteria, this study illustrates how power (status) and cultural context as factors shape and reflect the choice of disagreement strategies. Furthermore, this study indicates that how disagreement was used to serve pedagogical aims in educational context. Results show that Korean M.As rarely disagree with the course constructors or Ph.D while some aggravated disagreement was found in Japanese student when disagreeing with a professor. Furthermore, professor’s various questions are used to serve pedagogical aims. Therefore, this study contributes to research which posit that the speech action of disagreement is constrained by cultural and contextual constraints (power) and point to the academic context and educational purpose of disagreement as significant factors affecting choice of disagreement strategies.

1. Introduction

In a growing number of college classes across the country, instructors are using electronic communications to augment in class discussion with an ongoing, online dialogue between students about class-related topics. This study describes the findings of a study that collected data from graduate students who discussed a given set of topics via video-conferencing (VC) over the semester. In VC, students actively participate in class, sharing their experience and exchanging opinion, develop critical thinking skills, experience transforming learning, and reflect on their thinking and knowing to solve problems while educators are facilitators of learning, rather than givers of information (Cranton, 1994; Mexirow, 1991). Therefore, diverse points of view and opposing views are expressed and there is also the possibility of interpersonal conflict within which arguments can arise. As a result, this study will address related issues of interpersonal conflict such as
argument and disagreement by investigating academic classroom discourse in English among Japanese and Korean students and professors.

A few studies on disagreement in academic discourse have examined how students from different culture disagree with other students or professors in the formal classroom setting. The purpose of this study was to examine how speakers from different countries with different status relationship tend to disagree in classroom discussions. The analysis offered an opportunity to compare student's expressions of disagreement used to professors with expressions of disagreement used to their peers. However, these factors are not sufficient to account for all means for expressing disagreement because pedagogical context and purpose affected the expression of disagreement in ways that could not be explained by the difference in interlocutors in terms of power and culture. In this regard, this study will illustrate the complexity of power and cultural context as factors influencing the choice of disagreement strategies and point to the institutional context and educational purpose of disagreement as significant factors affecting choice of disagreement strategies. In addition, this study will conduct qualitative analysis from the interactional sociolinguistic perspective. More specifically, it will address the following research questions:

1. How do power relationship, culture and academic context influence on choice of disagreement strategy?
2. What is the specific difference among Japanese and Korean participants?
3. What is the educational implication or purpose of disagreement among Japanese and Korean participants?

2. Disagreement
2.1. Defining disagreement

Lots of researchers have various views about argument and disagreement. Kakava (2002) defines that disagreement falls under the general category of opposition, and involves the negation of a stated or implied proposition. He also defines the form of disagreement as the activity for the exchange of more than two oppositional turns when challenging and offering support for a position. Thus, it will always occupy the second conversational turn of an adjacency pair. In particular, in the context of academic discourse, this general definition of disagreement would include a disagreement that occurs when the propositional content at issue is a verifiable fact (i.e. Takahashi and Beebe's correction 1993) as well as a disagreement over disputable positions or viewpoints (Schiffrin, 1985: 45).

2.1.1. Positive and negative value
Lots of scholars report positive and dispreferred evaluations of disagreement (Schiffrin, 1984; Katriel, 1986; Kotthoff, 1993; Heritage 1984; Talyor and Cameron, 1987). Kopperschmidt (1985 as cited in Song 1994) points out that disagreement is an indication of interlocutors' willingness to solve problems and conflicts without the use of force. Furthermore, Simmel (1955) believes that expression of conflict is a means of avoiding major communication breakdowns because of suppressed cases of conflict to preserve superficial harmony. As a result, Katriel (1986), Bilmes (1988), Kakava (2002) and Kotthoff (1993) claim that disagreement has the preferred status of disagreement, especially within the context of an argument. As a result, disagreement serves as a social practice that is pervasive and preferred because it is expected and allowed.

On the other hand, Sacks (1973) and Pomerantz (1984) defines disagreement as a dispreferred-action turn shape as a response to an assessments. In this case, disagreement emerges as a disaffiliative or dispreferred turn and action that may affect an individual's wants not to be like. Therefore, it is structurally marked, displaying a dispreferred turn features such as silence, delays, request for clarification, particle repeats, and other repair initiators, and turn prefaces (1984: 70).

2.2. Cultural context (Korean and Japanese)
In Asian cultures such as Korean or Japanese, people try to disagree as indirectly and politely as possible because they perceive the situations and the purposes of disagreement as threatening to a relationship that threatens solidarity (Ito, 1989; Watanabe, 1990; Song, 1994; Wang, 1998). Particularly, in Korean culture, the society is generally characterized as conservative, hierarchical, so importance of politeness and harmonious interpersonal relationships has traditionally emphasized and it has exhibited social expectations for avoiding confrontation. Therefore, Koreans make efforts to initiate resolution and end conflicts (Song, 1994).

Similarly, Kruass et al. (1984: 3) state that for the past several decades, Japan had been a hierarchical society with strong collectivity unity and cooperation and harmony have emphasized. Therefore, they have underlying motivations such as saving face, avoiding conflict, and maintaining harmony (Watanabe, 1990 as cited in Kakava, 2002). Thus, instead of using declarative statement, Japanese express a premise, proposition, information, or a fact in a statement accompanied by a request for confirmation. On the other hand, Jones (1990 as cited in Kakava, 2002) found that the participants discussed controversial topics, used explicit expressions of conflict, sustained their conflict by focusing on the issues, and very rarely compromised. However, seldom did participants express anger, instead, participants either reframed it as play or chose another topic. When the interaction
was framed as play, the confrontation was allowed to continue because it was not seen as overt confrontation.

2.3. Power relationship
Then, how disagreement is understood in different cultures is reflected in the ways people handle the situations in which disagreements arise. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker chooses a strategy appropriate to the weight of the face-threat of a given act. They acknowledge that the degree to which a given act rates as face-threatening and the social importance accorded to power are culturally determined and may also vary according to situation within a culture (Brown and Levinson, 1987; 76-79, 244-251). Particularly, in some settings with institutionalized power, more powerful participants use more direct forms of disagreement, including manipulative or loaded questions, whereas less powerful participants use more hedges and mitigation (Fairclough, 1989; O'Donnell, 1990; Walker, 1987). As a result, it might be true in a university setting because professor over students has the institutionalized power based on greater knowledge, academic status, and age, as well as on the professor's responsibility for assigning grades. In contrast, students do not have an institutionalized right to disagree since they do not possess the same knowledge or skill as a professor. Thus, a student's disagreement with a professor is potentially a face-threatening act that challenges the professor's knowledge. Particularly, the relative status of student and professor in Asian culture does not encourage student to be expressive or outspoken, despite rapid social changes recently (Wang, 1998).

2.4. Pedagogical purpose and educational context
While power accounts for some aspects of the natural data, other factors are also at work, primarily the importance of pedagogical context. Particularly, power relationships are not enough to account for how professors use disagreement as a teaching device in the elicitation sequence. When professor uses elicitation as part of an inductive technique to check student's knowledge or to encourage students’ participation, their disagreement with students is framed as indirect questioning with the purpose of leading students to discover the point of the lesson for themselves (Miller 2000).

3. The Study
3.1. Subjects\(^1\)

\(^1\)Korean master will be transcribed as KM, Korean Ph.D as KPh, Korean professor as KP, Korean student as KS and Japanese side is vice versa.
Participants are presented in Table 1 as above. The subjects in this study comprise two groups; one group is Korean graduate students and professor in Korea and the other group is Japanese graduate students and professor in Japan. The class has 6 Japanese students which range from 22 to 36 years old: one male Ph.D, five M.As and one female Japanese professor from department of English education in Japanese side. On the other hand, there are 20 Korean students which range from 25 to 41 years old: five female Ph.Ds, 15 M.A and one female Korean professor from department of English language and English literature in Korean side. Japanese professor is a native Japanese speaker in her late fifties while Korean professor in her mid thirties is a bilingual. Furthermore, most of participants are quite advanced English speakers because majority of them had an experience to study in the English speaking country.

### Table 1. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Korean</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ph. D</td>
<td>Prof.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ph. D</td>
<td>Prof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Procedures

3.2.1. Data collection

I collected data form KCCDLP\(^2\) data from the 16\(^{th}\) of April to the 12\(^{th}\) of June in 2003. The data is from a corpus of video-taped classroom discourse in English on the distance learning graduate course through video conferencing between Waseda and Korea University. The class session was held twice a week for 9 weeks and approximately 40 hours. From 40 hour observation, I extracted and transcribed, which were composed of different excerpt containing opposition. This class took place in a university class, a formal setting, in which most of the discussions were regulated by the professor, who mostly controlled the turns of talk and the change

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\(^2\) KCCDLP is an on-line distance learning project in English between Waseda and Korea university
of topics. The class sessions were a good forum for the investigation of opposition, because students discussed assigned readings and naturally expressed their often opposing views with their fellow students and their professor, as opposed to just lecture by the professor.

This study will conduct qualitative analyses from the interactional sociolinguistic perspective which views discourse as interaction. Therefore, I analyzed a limited number of entire conversations or substantial episodes within conversations (Schiffrin, 1996) because conversations was an ongoing, moment by moment structured event an linguistic and paralinguistic variances direct participants in their creation of conversation (Song 1994). Thus, I used audio-taping, video-taping, note-taking and transcribing these conversations.

In order to verify some interpretations and elicit further information, I used playback method which asked participant as necessary to explain their behavior during the conversations. However, since I couldn't meet Japanese students face to face, I gave an on-line questionnaire through e-mail to all Japanese students at the end of the semester, so that I could get information regarding their status, age, and background (see questionnaire is attached in Appendix B). In this way, I could understand their reactions to one another's behavior, and the way they perceived the maintenance of talk. Since I was originally considered as a member of these classes instead of an outsider, participant observation method provided me, as a researcher with an opportunity to observe the behavior of participants more closely, to know the participant better, and to have insights into the norms of interaction in the settings. However, I avoided the influence of direct observation on participants' verbal actions to obtain spontaneous natural speech from informants. In order to help analyze the data, I took notes of content of classes and write as much as possible of the exact words used in any interchanges, even though much of it was not disagreement.

The episode which I mostly focused on discussions about issues were such as world English, ethnography of communication, intercultural communication since these proved to be the most argumentative topics and had many students participating in them. One of the frequent found interactions was exchanging information as well as disputable viewpoints.

2.2. Data analysis

In order to analyze the data, I combined and modified Miller (2000) and Kakava's (2002) category of the disagreement strategies and grouped them as mitigated, neither strengthened nor mitigated, and strong disagreement. Since strategies can not be always clear cut into direct or indirect, lots of researchers analyzed strategies in a continuum ranging from the most mitigated to the most aggravated disagreement (Song, 1995; Kakava, 2002; Miller, 2000). The taxonomy of
disagreement of linguistic and paralinguistic markers are shown in Figure 1 as follows.

**Figure 1. The taxonomy of disagreement (linguistic and paralinguistic criteria)**

- **Neither strong nor mitigated**
  - no explicit linguistic or paralinguistic criteria
    - i.e. contradictory statement
    - verbal shadowing
  - both strong and mitigated
    - i.e. imperative with laughter, humor
  - challenging tone with downtoners (‘I think’)

- **Mitigated**
  - humor, laughter
  - positive comment
  - partial agreement
  - questions
  - ‘I think, I don’t know’
  - downtoners
  - verbs of uncertainty
  - pause, delay
  - soft volume
  - pitch falling
  - slow tempo

- **Strong**
  - rhetorical questions
  - intensifier
  - personal, accusatory ‘you’
  - judgemental vocabulary
  - accelerated tempo
  - high pitch
  - contrastive stress
  - quickness to respond
  - loud volume

According to Miller (2000), he categorizes the strategy based on explicit linguistic marker. However, Kakava (2002) believes that paralinguistic markers play an important role in making the argument intense or soften. For example, 'I think' as a hedge could be employed with contrastive stress or challenging tone, then, this tone renders it more intense. Therefore, I analyzed data in terms of both linguistic and paralinguistic markers. However, although there are also nonverbal ways of expressing disagreement, they're beyond the scope of research here.

Considering mitigated disagreement, the speaker may use humor, positive comments, partial agreement (while this is true. this is not the case), questions, hedges such as preface (I think, I don't know), downtoners (maybe, not necessarily) and verb of uncertainty (seems) for linguistic marker. As for paralinguistic marker, pauses, delay, soft volume, pitch falling and slow tempo mark mitigated challenges.

In the category of strong disagreement, disagreement is strengthened by means of rhetorical questions, intensifiers (actually, really), overt feature of negations (no, not), use of the personal you with imperative or judgmental vocabulary
As for paralinguistic marker, prosodic features such as accelerated tempo, high pitch, contrastive stress, raising tone, quickness to respond and loud volume make it intensified and strong challenge.

However, some disagreements are neither mitigated nor strengthened in terms of explicit linguistic or paralinguistic criteria for strong and mitigated strategy. Thus, this is placed in the middle of the continuum (to various degrees) and belongs to neither strong nor mitigated (or strong yet mitigated). Nevertheless, this is disagreement because the content contradicts a previous utterance. Furthermore, if a contradiction repeats a previous speaker's utterance with changed words or intonation to indicate disagreement, this is designated as verbal shadowing.

On the other hand, there are other occasions when both strong and mitigated linguistic or paralinguistic markers are employed together. I also placed them in the middle of the continuum. For example, if strong strategy such as imperatives (You need to memorize it) is followed by lots of laughter or used with playful tone then, it belongs to neither strong nor mitigated strategy because the strong directives is softened. As a result, this study will discuss result with some representative strategies that are found in the Japanese participant data first.

4. The Result and Discussion

4.1. Disagreement

Table 2. Major findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Betw. JSP</th>
<th>Cooperative by agreeing to disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betw. JS &amp; KS</td>
<td>Threatening act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betw. KS</td>
<td>Rarely disagrees with higher status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP</td>
<td>Direct disagreement with humor, playful tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>Soft disagreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Betw. JSP = between Japanese student + Japanese professor, Betw. JS & KS = between Japanese student & Korean student, Betw. KS = between Korean student

Figure 2. Functions of disagreement
4.1.1. Disagreement between Japanese students

I'll show episode 2 that, in many cases, disagreement came as a first response to an assessment and has not preaced with dispreference markers and that disagreement was sustained but did not threaten the interpersonal relationship of the participants. This is a characteristic feature of social arguments. Furthermore, the following example is a representative one of Japanese student's explicit disagreement followed by accounts and the floor is more collaborative with multiple contributions with two more Japanese participants. Particularly, these two features are mostly found in Japanese side. The following discussion is about if English should be an official language in Japan or other EFL contexts (For transcription conventions, see the Appendix)

**Episode 1**

1. **JPh1**: so, I think in the domestic matter, we don't need english, but we have to...
2. relate with other countries. so, we need english to the international relationship. so,
3. that's the problem, we have to divide the purpose of english as a official language
4. JM1: personally, I don't think it's necessary for us to make english as an official

5. language because it creates another problem. actually social, society relation to

6. social problem as I mentioned fist of all, the problem of english divide...(line omitted). the

7. government have to prepare document= yes. concerning for japanese

8. JPh: = redundant

9. JM1: people, english language version is not necessary

10. JP: but, in this global society=. lots of american people want to know our legal

11. system =

12. JM1: = yeah yeah = yeah

13. JM1: but, not all legal system or all document should necessarily translated in

14. english. it's a sometimes, sometimes waste of time and energy

15. JM2: I agree with your opinion. I read article saying that japanese economy....

16. (line omitted). we don't have a kind of tactic to negotiate in english (line omitted).

17. JM1: so, you mean lack of proficiency is not matter whether it's official language or not

18. JM2: right, thank you (everyone laugh)

On line 4-5, JM1 explicitly frames his oncoming talk as disagreement with JPh's opinion which supports English as an official language, by saying 'personally, I don't think it's necessary.' Interestingly, JPh who got challenged by JM1 is cooperatively responding to JM1, saying 'redundant' at JM's midrange. Note that JPh indicates his opinion (in 1-3) in some part with necessity of English as an official language for international matter which is different from JM1's opinion. Then, JM1 frames his ensuing talk with another explicit form of disagreement (line 9) 'English version is not necessary.' Consequently, JP disagrees with JM1 through oppositional marker 'but' (line 10-11) and points out the importance of global society. In response to JP's disagreement (line 13), JM1 undermines the professor's disagreement using downtoners, saying 'but, not all legal system, sometimes.' Before JM1's disagreement with JP, JM1 (line 12) is cooperative by agreeing to JP's disagreement by responding partial agreement 'yeah, yeah.' Thus, in this case, disagreeing among Japanese participants is not perceived as face-threatening act but social action since they're cooperative to respect each other's point.

4.1.2. Disagreement between Japanese and Korean student

Compared to disagreement between Japanese participants, disagreement between Japanese and Korean is rather dispreferred and face threatening acts because they avoid a direct disagreement, keep silence and delays the response. Episode 2 illustrates that KM1 is asking to Japanese side if there are 15 ways of saying 'no' in Japanese and Japanese professor and students didn't show direct disagreement but
implies a part of disagreement using question, silence and downtoners and giving series of personal examples. Therefore, they employ mitigated strategy.

Episode 2
1. KM1: I found out the book for Japanese. There are examples for 'no' they have at least 15 ways of saying 'no'.
2. KP: (talking to Japanese side) Do you have 15 ways of saying 'no' at least?
3. JM1: For example, what is example?
4. KM1: I couldn't find an example, but there are have speech style indirect....
5. (line omitted) when they're speaking English other foreign language
6. (silence)
7. JM1: Maybe, Japanese is ...(line omitted). There are lots of implications. So maybe 15 is possible, but we don't know about, well, I'm sorry.
8. JP: Who said, who said there are 15 ways of saying no? (everyone laugh)
10. KP: Deborah Tannen. She is ... (line omitted)
11. JP: Is it included in book we're reading?
12. KP: No, no, no, ... no
13. JP: Sometimes, we say "yes" when we mean "no," (line omitted) we don't agree with it, (line omitted), but we don't reveal I don't agree with it, (looking at Japanese side), nae?
14. KM1: Actually, written in this book, instead of saying no, Japanese tend to say like "I disagree with you" or "you're wrong" instead of just express in the no.
15. (silence)
16. JM2: In connection with Japanese saying "no," it's my personal experience. I like to use "maybe" for example...(line omitted)
17. JM3: And one more example is that I will call you or I'll tell you alter, in that case, most of the case, we're meaning 'no'...(line omitted)
18. JM2: In face to face communication, we don't like to reject some the other's proposal...(line omitted)
19. JP: And we often say perhaps=
20. JM2: = perhaps, yeah
21. JP: Do you have this kind of statement if you don't want to commit yourself, you usually say 29. 'no' directly?
22. KP: (looking at KS) What do you think? ... I'll think about it or
23. JP: Yes, perhaps, also we laugh = (everyone laugh)
24. KP: = but, in relationship
25. JP: = maybe, the author who pointed out there are 15 ways of saying no, maybe correct if we count for this
KM1 (line 1) starts with a question of 'if there are 15 ways of saying no.' In response to KM1, JM1 and JP doesn't seem to admit this fact immediately (line 8-9), instead delays the response by employing 5 mitigators (maybe, possible, we don't know, well, I'm sorry). On line 15-16, JP describes Japanese way of saying 'yes' and 'no' and emphasize that Japanese don't show their disagreement directly. However, disagreeing with JP, KM1 didn't use any direct disagreement marker, instead she gives counterevidence from the book (line 17-18) saying that Japanese actually use the expression 'I don't agree with you,' 'you're wrong.' This is exactly opposite from JP's prior statement (line 16), indicating Japanese don't reveal their disagreement. Since KM1's disagreement is not followed by any explicit marker, nor is it prefaced with any pauses or hesitations, it belongs to neither strengthened nor mitigated strategy. However, Japanese answers with silence implying that they don't agree with KM1's statement. According to Song (1995: 64), silence is the most non-confrontational way of disagreeing. Furthermore, the defensive value of silence is that participants can avoid losing face by not uttering negative or confrontational statements (Tanne 1985, 1990). After silence, JM2 gives his personal experience to make it personal (line 20-21). Furthermore, JM1 shifts point of view (line 20) from 'Japanese' to 'my personal experience' because JM1 tries to avoid direct disagreement with KM1. On line 24-25, JM1 softly claims that 'we don't like probably to reject some, the other's proposal' which seems to be counterclaims against KM1's prior statement. Finally, JP partially agrees with KM's Japanese 15 ways of saying 'no', by using downtoners (maybe) twice. As a result, disagreement between Korean and Japanese students is softened using a number of mitigators (maybe, possible) to save the addressee's face.

4.1.3. Disagreement between Korean MAs

Differently from Japanese students, Korean students are not cooperative toward person who disagrees with oneself. The most characteristic between Korean MAs is that they use rather strengthened disagreement, followed by clarification question and rhetorical questions. According to Song (1995, 1996) and other scholars (Miller, 2000; Gruber, 2001), various questions function as both strong and mitigated disagreement. This example also illustrates competition for interactionally negotiable goods. As a result, disagreement between Korean MAs is viewed as a social action. Following episode is showing that three Korean MAs are discussing about teaching culture. While KM1 is doubtful about teaching culture due to a difficulty of generalization, KM2 and KM3 are disagreeing with KM1.

**Episode 3**

1. **KM1**: for my experience, I think it is very important to educate the students about
2. cultures from various countries.. I couldn't get any real cultures from the classes.
3. **KM2**: I think your point is good, but I think my opinion is a little pessimistic about teaching culture in school because there is culture difference, but I think it's kind of tricky to state certain or describe certain culture. (line omitted). so, what I think should teach universal etiquette manner or politeness. that's what I think=

4. **KM3**: how do you think what is universal manner?

5. **KM2**: oh, what is universal?

6. **KM3**: uh, uh

7. **KM2**: uh, I heard there is business etiquette course. (line omitted), they meet together and there is certain kind of way nobody, most people don't feel uncomfortable. that could be ..

8. **KM1**: but, certain kind of way is also another generalization?

9. **KM1** (in 2) starts with telling her experience that she didn't get any education about cultures from class. In response to KM1, KM2 mitigates her disagreement (line 3-5), initially giving a positive comment about KM1's statement (your point is good) and later pointing out that difficulty of describing certain culture. She also claims that teaching universal politeness should be recommended. Immediately following KM2, KM3 (in 7) raises questions as implicit disagreement (how do you think what is universal manner?), by implying that KM1 is doubtful about existence or definition of universal manner. After repeating KM3’s questions (in 8), KM2 (in 10-11) explained that universal politeness is a certain kind of way most people don't feel uncomfortable. Quickly responding to KM2, KM1 asks question (in 12) that challenges the KM2's view (but, certain kind of way is also another generalization?). This is not a true question that expects an answer, but as a rhetorical question that challenges the current speaker's view to imply disagreement (Georgakopoulou, 2001: 1984). Note that earlier line 3-5, KM2 disagrees with describing certain culture but, she is currently claiming that certain kind of cultural way could be taught in class. In this episode, it can be said that Korean M.As employs rhetorical questions and quickly respond and makes the argument intense.

4.1.4. Disagreement between Korean M.As and Ph.D.

Among three Korean MAs who disagree with KPh, only one MA confrontly disagrees with Korean Ph.D. several times. However, KM hardly escalates her disagreement because KM doesn't counterstate to KPh as a third move which is essential part for conflict development. In many cases, conflicts remain blocked in this phase and no conflict develops. Therefore, among Korean MAs, disagreement with higher status serves as a face threatening act and dispreferent status.
1. **KPh**: so, we have to figure out the first what cause major miscommunications between you know two speakers ... (line omitted) I think that's what we have to teach first as a teacher. that's my answer my opinion to your question.

2. **KM**: you have to teach first...

3. **KPh**: do I have to speak again ?

4. **KM**: I think, my opinion is if teacher knows all differences about the culture. (line omitted) I think if you can try perfect, then you'd better not to try clumsy cultural behavior to fit into another culture=

5. **KPh**: =how can we know all cultural typical speech acts of all different countries, it sounds impossible to me which is not supposed to know all = the appropriate speech act of the all cultural =

6. **KM1**: = yes, so

7. **KPh**: that's why I just figure out what kind of foreign language student might not to use, (line omitted) what kind of context (line omitted) the then, third, we have to find out some kind of, some discourse which will cause some kind of miscommunications ... (line omitted)

Female KPh is responding to KM1's questions (line 1-3) of how teacher can teach student speech act. Starting with hedge 'I think' as a mitigated strategy, KM1 (in 6) states a little different idea from KPh in that teacher had better know all differences about the culture. Immediately following KM1, KPh (line 9-10) intensifies her position by asking rhetorical opposing questions (how can we know all cultural typical speech acts) and using judgmental vocabulary 'impossible.' Therefore, KPh strongly disagrees with KM1 by employing quickness to respond, rhetorical questions and raising tone. On line 12, KM1 tries to say something, but KPh interrupts and insists her prior statement (line 13). As a result, KM1 fails to escalate her disagreement since she couldn't develop counterstatement for further discussions.

### 4.1.5. Disagreement by Japanese professor

The most striking differences between the student and the professor are that positive comment and humor are mostly used by professors when disagreeing with student than did student disagreeing with professors. Especially, Japanese professor employed direct disagreement (imperatives) with humor, or playful tone providing lots of laughter among participants. In this way, JP mitigates her direct disagreement, and it belongs to strong yet mitigated strategy.

In episode 5, Japanese professor is using strong yet mitigated strategy. KP brings an issue for the importance of learning to teach to the camera. However, JP directly disagrees with this point and with JM1 through playful tone, followed by
laughter. JM1 also softly disagrees with JP by using pause and mitigators (*but, well*).

**Episode 5**

1. **KP**: learning to teach to the camera is also important skill... (line omitted),
2. but it's a skill that used to be acquired. it's not easy to talking to camera
3. **JM1**: well, um
4. **JP**: (looking at JM1) *if you don't read your manuscript, then you can look at the camera*
5. (everyone laugh)
6. **JM1**: but, uh, well... the location of the camera is very important factor, when we
7. think about learning to talk to the camera, so if you place the camera, what ...
8. (line omitted) naturally you can talk to the camera, also scripts should be displaced
9. near the camera (everyone laugh)
10. **JP**: newscast= (everyone laugh)
11. **JM1**: = newscast, so we can teach learning to camera (everyone laugh)
12. **KP**: ok, that's a good idea
13. **JP**: *one of the teaching point for this class is to make your natural speech*...
14. *so, don't look at the manuscript, remember the main point* (everybody laugh)
15. **JM1**: manuscript, yeah

KP starts with statement (in 1-2) that the learning to teach to the camera is an important skill. Consequently, JP disagrees with KP's opinion. However, JP (line 4-5) avoids confront disagreement, instead, it is directed at JM1. While JM1 is trying to say his opinion about camera, looking at JM1, JP (line 4-5) interrupts him, and use directive with the personal 'you' ('if you don't read your manuscript, then you can look at the camera'). Confronted to JP, JM1 mitigates his disagreement (in 7-9) using downtoners such as *but, uh, well* and pause and he states that scripts should be displaced near the camera. However, JP repeats (line 14) her point later on using direct imperative, 'don't look at the manuscript, remember the main point.' In this case, JP strongly conveys her disagreement with JM1 using personal *you*. However, since her strong disagreement accompanies playful tone, it is mitigated and belong to neither strong nor mitigated.

**4.1.6. Disagreement between Japanese student and Japanese professor**

Difference between Korean and Japanese student is that while 80% of Japanese students disagree with professor (5 out of 6 people), Korean students rarely challenge professors or Korean Ph.D students (4 out of 20 people, 20%). Furthermore, there are some examples of strengthened disagreement of only Japanese students with professors. Thus, among Japanese students, disagreeing with professor is perceived as a more social act rather than a threatening act. The issue in episode 6 is a Japanese greeting rule of answers and caller on telephone
Female JM1 disagrees with JP twice by using mitigators and questions.

**Episode 6**
1. **JP**: normally, I ask whether they're health or not
2. **JM1**: um, ah: sometimes... if we're very intimate, we do that, but: uh:m, well, I don't do that
3. actually, sometimes, I do if the answerer know me...(line omitted) if not, I don't do that
4. (silence)
5. **JP**: I used to phone, Mr. xx one of my ph.d. student, everytime, I phone his house, his mother answer that phone and kind of show some sort of irritation
6. (line omitted) so, I said (line omitted), how about your blood pressure? (everyone laugh)
7. and she began to melt. (line omitted) she is very friendly (everyone laugh)
8. **KP**: ok
9. **JM1**: but, I think it is very unusual for younger generations because if you are ask
10. something like that, we think we're intrusive sometimes, I think
11. **KP**: uhm
12. **JM1**: don't you think so? only me? (everyone laugh)
13. **KP**: can anybody here think about any generational differences? what do you think about?
14. **JP**: I think this kind of thing shows the difficulty of ethnography of study of methodological?
15. **KP**: sure
16. **JP**: uh, kind of general sequences, (line omitted) very difficult to generalize
17. **KP**: right, That's a very good point, uhm uhm
18. **JP**: but, still there must be lots of xx sang's way of, xx's type of speech acts, so,
19. if we can categorize xx sang. This is xx sang (everyone laugh)... (line omitted)
20. how typical xx sang is in Japanese young generation, then, we can claim that your speech pattern is general, but you are not so typical (everyone laugh)
21. **JM1**: oh, really?

JP (line 1) explains that she greets answerer by asking about health condition. Confronted to JP, JM1 positions herself in an analogical situation (in 2-3) 'if we're very intimate' and avoids direct disagreement with professor, being prefaced with pauses, hesitation (um, uh, well), downtoners (sometimes) and partial agreement (if we're very intimate). However, JM1 finishes her turn with strong disagreement (overt features of negation) by saying 'I don't do that actually' (in 2-3) and makes self-repetition to emphasize her view. After silence, JP tells about her personal experience with her Ph.D student (in 5-8) to protect and defend herself and construct dialogues 'how about your blood pressure?' But, JM1 rather makes challenging tone (line 10-11) to intensify her stance with an oppositional marker 'but' and negative evaluative lexical items 'intrusive' and she further upgrades her
assessment to point out that it's not younger generation's characteristic. Her strategy is less direct than openly disagreeing with someone, but is strong enough, since it widens the base of an argument to point out one of the key concept of politeness, 'generational gap.' However, JM1 finishes her turn with the hedge 'sometimes, I think' (line 11). In this case, some mitigators accompanied the markers that strengthened the force of disagreement. Probably, JM1 may feel that her strong disagreement may qualify as strong face threat to the professor. Since nobody responded about this issue, JM1 makes a confirmation seeking question (line 13) in order to justify her proposal and strongly counters JP's prior challenge, by asking other Japanese students 'don't you think so ? only me ?' Later, KP (line 14) opens the floor for other students to think of generational difference.

In response to KP, JP points out the difficulty of generalization of ethnography of communication approach (line 15-16). Finally, JP rechallenges JM1's point (line 20), shifting the issue of the generational gap into JM1's personal matter, implying that that's 'only xx sang's way.' Then, JP intensifies her position (line 23) by employing exclusive pronoun 'you,' overt feature of negation 'not' and judgmental vocabulary 'typical' ('you're not so typical'), implying that JM1 is not typical Japanese young generation. However, since JP’s direct disagreement always utters with playful tone, it lessens face threat of JM1 and it elicits her not to retreat her statement. In this regard, JP's disagreement using humor serves as a more social act. However, it could be explained that JM1's disagreement potentially threatens the professional knowledge of the professor since JP didn’t retreat her statement either.

4.1.7. Disagreement by Korean professor

The two professors have observed in their roles not only as professor in class discussion but also peers in academic talks. Particularly, KP takes a role as moderator or facilitator rather than peers in academic talks while JP tends to take a role of peers in academic talks. In KP's role as a moderator, she distributes the turn-taking, and seek to direct it towards a constructive pedagogical goal, and as a facilitator, she elicits student's participation (or disagreement) through her mitigated question or indirect statement.

Interestingly, Korean professor almost never used strong disagreement to students or peer professor except when a simple correction of fact was at issue. Following episode shows KP's swift and strong disagreement with JPh but no polite frills is attached. In episode 7, JPh and KP are discussing about difference between American and British English. Here, KP strongly disagree with JPh's statement, by using overt feature of negation ('no') repeatedly in order to correct a fact as an crucial issue.

(1) Episode 7.
1. JPh: so, american english or british english is maybe standard, so we didn't have to divide
2. which one...(line omitted) there is no difference =
3. KP: = no, no, no, there is difference.
4. there are subject verb agreement difference in american english and british english too. so,
5. there are grammatical differences
6. JM1: public is, public are
7. KP: right, that's a good example
8. JPh: It's a matter of noun ?
9. KP: right, for instance, collective noun .. (line omitted)

In first turn (line 2), JPh utters that there is no difference between American and British English. Immediately following JPh, KP (in 3) denies JPh statement with strong intensifier 'no, no, no, there is difference’ and points out there is subject verb agreement difference (line 4). In this case, when KP disagrees with JPh’s opinion of differences between American and British English, it is necessary to verify the fact as an issue before further discussion. The reason is that either of them can be a standard English, regardless of difference. Note that it's totally opposite from JPh's statement in that American and British English can be standard English because of no difference. This is an important concept of world English in that a variety of English should be respected and could be one of the standard English. For this reason, KP may correct it strongly and immediately.

On the other hand, KP employed question techniques, instead of directly disagreeing with participants. According to Levinson (1992), questions elicit participants to further develop their argument. Following episode is that KM is criticizing about Korean people's exclusive focus on pronunciation to be a nativelike and KP gives a different view employing indirect statement and display questions.

(2) Episode 8
1. KM1: yes. native like means pronunciation also vocabulary and their way of speaking
2. and also cultural thing like pragmatic things can be considered to be a native speakers and
3. native like English, but in korea, they only focus on the pronunciation, I think.
4. KP: you can think about pronunciation is very very clear external indicator about what
5. people think in terms of proficiency. Think. about this, is it better to have perfect
6. pronunciation and bad grammar or perfect grammar and bad pronunciation ? which kind of
7. person do you think would appear to be more proficient in english ?
8. KM2: poor grammar but good pronunciation
9. KP: pronunciation is an indicator of something ... (line omitted)

According to KM1 (in 1-3), she points out Korean people's overemphasis on pronunciation rather than vocabulary and ways of speaking in English. Instead of
directly disagreeing with KM1, KP starts to explain about the value of pronunciation as a clear external indicator (line 4-5). She (in 5-7) also uses the display question to elicit closer approximation to the target answer (is it better to have perfect pronunciation and bad grammar?) and KM2 (in 8) is replying 'poor grammar but good pronunciation.' In this episode, KP uses question as a softening disagreement not only out of politeness but also to lead students to discover the point of the lesson. For this discovery technique to work, it is essential that student continues to answer question. Therefore, KP's pedagogical aim of the lesson determined the form of the disagreement. If professors use aggravated disagreement to their students to teach in classes little student participation will be expected as a result. Korean professor observed in this study has a great deal of student participation in their classes, probably in part because she does not close discussion by using aggravated disagreement to students. On professor's part, avoidance of aggravated disagreement is one of her elicitation strategy.

5. Conclusion and implication
This study indicates that the complexity of factors influence choice of linguistic or paralinguistic markers of disagreement in academic settings. It is important to note that all types of strategies were found in all participants, but in this study, I more focused on the differences. The most striking differences can be accounted for by the asymmetrical power relationship between professors and students. In this study, Japanese professor tended to use more humor when disagreeing with students than did students disagreeing with professors. Thus, Japanese professors' greater use of these particular strategies served to lessen the face threat of the students and her disagreement strategy viewed as a social act.

On the other hand, disagreement between Japanese students had the highest number of turns, and exchanges in several oppositional turns among themselves. Interestingly, there were some examples of strengthened disagreement with professor mostly by Japanese students. Based on these findings about Japanese interactional patterns, disagreement is an interactional ritual that does not necessarily threaten solidarity and is preferred in this particular academic context. Moreover, Japanese participants were very cooperative by agreeing to disagree through backchannel, repetition of the interlocutor’s utterance. On the other hand, their disagreements were mostly rather direct but collegial and not openly hostile.

On the contrary, I found a different orientation to opposition by the Korean students. This context was more on the hierarchical rather than the interactive. Differently from Japanese participants, Korean students rarely disagreed with professor or Ph.D students, if do, they employed mitigated disagreement. Even though supportive alignments or stances were also found, being supportive is of
secondary importance among Korean participants. As a result, the main difference between Japanese and Korean participants was that floor was more collaborative with multiple contributions, among Japanese students. Furthermore, dispreference for disagreement was observed between Japanese and Korean participants. Thus, most of the time, disagreement was preaced with dispreference markers or postponed. However, it became preferred status if followed by lots of laughter or playful tone.

While power relationship and cultural context account for some aspects of the natural data, the academic context also influence on choice of disagreement in the corpus. For instance, Korean professor mostly used softened questioning or statement as an inductive teaching technique to elicit student's participation (or disagreement) for active discussion and to lead student to discover the point of the lesson for themselves. In this regard, factors such as power and culture do affect the choice of disagreement strategies, but in complex ways that emerges through the particularities of institutional context.

Having discussed the most important differences and similarities, I should also point out that speaker variation was observed. Although I have argued for the disagreement strategy found in participants, I am not suggesting that all Japanese or Korean speakers will display similar tendencies. The result was confirmed by responses to questionnaire for participants. Most of Japanese students replied that they didn't care about status difference in the academic discussion, but they would always speak politely to people. This may have led to their characterization as emotionally active, competitive but polite in disagreement. On the contrary, most of Korean students stated that they felt uncomfortable to disagree with Ph.D or professors because of their higher status as well as their competent knowledge and experience. Therefore, they may be more hesitant and dispreferred to disagree with higher status.

Interestingly, both Japanese and Korean participants tended to agree that they felt more comfortable to disagree with their side. According to my survey, several reasons may lie in that they had a shared speech style or interpretation of their utterance, they had a close relationship and had a chance to talk after class. Therefore, this fact affected their choice of disagreement strategy. Moreover, participants in survey also pointed out that some major difference could emerge due to the medium, gender and age. Particularly, respondents in my survey state that the most difficulty for discussion in this video conferencing medium may be that they don't know when to interrupt to ask questions or disagree because they could not always see others in screen. These factors seem to be also crucial to determine the form of the disagreement. In this regard, future research needs to consider these factors as well.
Nevertheless, majority of the participants agreed that regardless of power concern, disagreement should be recommended about controversial issue to prevent a prejudice, learn new perspectives through disagreement, develop critical thinking and active participation and solve problems and conflicts particularly in academic context. Thus, disagreement shouldn't be perceived as a face threatening act because the best and most challenging education moves toward conflict rather than trying to avoid it (William, 1996).

On the other hand, how to disagree without hurting someone's feeling is also a crucial issue in this particular intercultural context since they're not close enough to understand each other. Even though majority of participants in my survey admitted that disagreement should be encouraged in academic context, they felt intimidated or nervous when someone directly or offensively disagrees with themselves. In this regard, mitigated or neither strong nor mitigated strategy are strongly recommended.

Furthermore, the finding ways to disagree to understand each other and teaching how to disagree in this academic intercultural context are necessary and challenging to the teacher or participants for the curriculum. In this regard, ongoing future research will provide us with a much broader picture of how disagreement is negotiated in discourse.

References


Tannen, D (1990). *Silence as Conflict Management in Fiction and Drama: Pinter’s Betrayal and a Short Story, Great Wits*. In Allen Grimshaw. 260-280


Appendix A. Transcription symbols (modified from Tannen, 1984)

The following transcription conventions apply:

a = Equal sign shows latching (second voice begins without perceptible pause) and overlap (two voices heard at the same time)

b. Arrow to the right indicates the speaker continues

c. [?] Indicates in audible utterance

d. Underline highlights point of analysis in this study

e. CAPS indicate very emphatic stress

f. ? marks yes/no question rising intonation

g. ! indicates exclamation

h. : indicates lengthened vowel sound

i. , marks phrase-final intonation (more to come)

j. . marks sentence-final falling intonation

[comments added for clarity]

j. . . . noticeable pause

Appendix B. Questionnaire:

1. Name and age:

2. Gender: female ( ), male ( )

3. Status & Job: Ph.D ( ), M.A ( )/ i.e. school teacher or full time student

4. Course you're taking: Wednesday ( ), Thursday class ( ), both ( )

5. Experience to live in English speaking countries: Yes, No
   If yes, then what was the purpose to stay there?

6. Past experience of video conferencing (VC): Yes, No
   If yes, what kind of class did you take?
   what did you like or didn't like about VC?

7. Think about actual situation that your classmate or professor is raising one’s opinion in academic discussion. But, you have a different opinion with your classmates or professor. Would you disagree with your classmates (M.A, Ph.D) or professor? If yes, how would you disagree? (think about your experience)

   Professor:
   Ph.D:
   M.A:

8. If professor or Ph.D. or M.A. disagree with your opinion, and you think still you’re right and their points aren’t persuasive and logical at all, then, would you try to defend yourself and still challenge them?
You can choose either (1) or (2) or answer both.

(1) If yes, how and when are you going to defend yourself?
why are you going to defend yourself?
(2) If no, why and when aren’t you going to defend yourself?

Professor:
Ph.D:
M.A:

9. Do you feel more comfortable to disagree with M.A. than professor or Ph.D in academic discussion or it doesn't make any differences?

10. Do you feel more comfortable to disagree with Japanese students than with Korean students or it’s about the same? and why? how differently would you use disagreement strategy with them? (give examples)

11. Imagine that while you're voicing your opinion in academic discussion, your classmates or professor raise a different opinion to you. Then, do you feel more threatened, attacked or embarrassed by professors or Ph.D's disagreement than M.A students? or same?

12. Are you satisfied at our video conferencing class between Waseda and Korea University? If yes, what do you like the most? If no, what don’t you like it? what can be improved?

13. What do you think about talking one’s different opinions toward your Korean or Japanese classmates or Korean or Japanese professor in academic discussion? should it be recommended or not, and give the reason.

14. You may actively participate in our discussion session or may not.
What is the most difficulty for you in our discussion session?