

Interactional Sociolinguistic analysis of Argumentative Strategies Between Japanese and Korean graduate students and their Instructors

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Abstract

This study examines how Korean and Japanese graduate students or instructors express disagreement and manage argumentation 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 disagreements. 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. Results show that Korean students in their master's degree program rarely agree with the course instructors or doctoral students, while some aggravated disagreement was found in Japanese students when disagreeing with instructors. Furthermore, instructors' various questions are used to serve educational purpose. Therefore, this study gives support to the claim 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

During the past years, various aspects of conflict episodes in discourse analysis have been investigated (Brenneis, 1988; Gruber, 1996) in different contexts such as legal, institutional, and workplace settings (O'Donnell, 1990; Philips, 1990; Maynard, 1985), in family talk and family dinners (Schiffrin, 1990; Vuchinich, 1990; Muntigl and William, 1998), as well as in talk shows and phone-in broadcasts (Bilmes, 1999; Hutchby, 1999). According to many discourse analysts, the major characteristics of disagreement communication turned out to be face threatening acts (Muntigl and William, 1998). In this respect, disagreements are dispreferred responses because they jeopardize the participants' drive towards an interpersonal consensus (Pomerantz, 1984). Moreover, it is believed that disagreement by nature is a face threatening act that jeopardizes the solidarity between speaker and addressee (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Schiffrin, 1984; Wierzbicka, 1991).

Questions, however, have certainly been raised regarding its cross-cultural applicability as a notion in disagreement. In some cultures, such as Greek cultures (Kakava, 1993; Schiffrin 1984), disagreement is viewed as an indication of solidarity between interactants. Thus, people tend to disagree with others directly, which they believe to show their concerns for their interlocutors. Conversely, in Asian cultures, such as Korean or Japanese (Ito 1989), people try to disagree as indirectly and politely as possible because they perceive the situations and the purpose of disagreement as threat to a relationship. As a result, it could be argued that people from diverse cultures perceive disagreement differently which makes them choose different strategies to various degrees.

In relation to choice of disagreement strategy, Brown and Levinson (1987: 76-79, 244-251) imply that more direct strategies of disagreement would be used in preference to less direct strategies when the speaker has a greater power than the addressee. Moreover, they acknowledge that the degree to which a given act rates as a face threatening act and the social importance accorded to power are culturally determined and may also vary according to situation within a culture. As a result,

social context affects the frequency of particular types and both individual and cultural differences influence the choice of particular negotiating strategies (Saville-Troike, 1986:150).

Particularly, others have argued for the importance of situational factors such as interactional goals or purposes that determine not only the expected and socially acceptable content of an interaction but also the choice of disagreement strategies (Fraser & William, 1981; Fraser, 1990; Kuo, 1992). For instance, when speakers indirectly construct their disagreement in a debate context, it cannot be believed that they try to minimize face threats or impositions to their interlocutors. As these disagreements arise out of the participants' need to jointly decide under negotiation, this inevitably raises the participants' commitment to different perspective as a part of the argumentative process, as opposed to emphasizing their difference in opinion. As a result, the occurrence of disagreements does not seem to pose a threat to the participants' relations. Furthermore, this interactional purpose of disagreement in this specific context forms the driving force of a preference for indirect disagreements (Georgakopoulou, 2001: 1989). In this regard, this study will indicate the interrelations of culture and power as starting points for examining how disagreement is expressed and point to the educational purpose and an academic context within which the disagreement occurs that exert powerful influence on how the disagreement is expressed.

On the other hand, it has been surprising that a few studies on disagreement and negotiation in academic discourse have examined how students from different ethnic backgrounds disagree with other students or professors in the formal classroom setting (Kakava, 1993). As a result, the purpose of this study was to examine how participants with unequal status from two different countries - Korea and Japan - tend to disagree in classroom discussions specifically, first, investigate the characteristic of disagreement from two different cultures; second, compare the specific difference among two groups - Korean and Japanese; lastly, discover the status of disagreement in the specific context and interactional purpose in ways that could not be explained by the difference in interlocutors in terms of power and culture. This study was undertaken to conduct a qualitative interactional sociolinguistic analysis and investigate linguistic as well as paralinguistic markers of disagreement specifically in an academic context because many studies focused on conversational sequences or preferred structured patterns preferred by interactants when disagreement occurs (Bayraktaroglu, 1992; Kotthoff, 1993; Pomerantz, 1984)

2. Disagreement

Disagreement is one of the most commonly occurring speech events in people's daily lives. The act of disagreement has been investigated within the framework of speech act theory (Sornig, 1977), discourse analysis (Schiffrin, 1984, 1985; Kakava, 1993, 1995), conversational analysis (Sacks, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984; Kotthoff, 1993) and politeness theory. This study takes interactional sociolinguistic discourse analysis as a starting point for investigating disagreement as it is expressed in natural settings. Although many research in disagreement have closely related concepts such as argument/argumentation, debate, confrontation, conflict talk, disputes, oppositional exchanges (Grimshaw, 1990), the definitional problems do not fall into the scope of this study due to the ambiguous boundaries between them. Thus, these terms are used interchangeably in this study.

2.1. Defining disagreement

Many researchers have various views about argument and disagreement. Kakava (2002) defines disagreement as falling under the general category of opposition and involving the negation of a stated or implied proposition. He also defines a form of disagreement as an 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 adjacent pair.

In particular, in a discussion context, the typical entry structure of a conflict episode is a three step sequence. The sequence comprises the following moves: first move is A's statement; second is B's counterstatement (i.e. disagreement with A's statement) and third is A's counterstatement to B (i.e. disagreement with B and/or possibly insisting on A's statement) (Maynard, 1985; Muntigl & William, 1998; Kotthoff, 1993; Goodwin, 1990). Maynard (1985) and Gruber (1998) argue that the occurrence of the third move by A is crucial for establishing a conflict episode because if A performs any other action than a counterstatement to B in the third position, no conflict develops. Furthermore, in the context of academic discourse, this definition of disagreement would include a disagreement that occurs when the propositional content at issue is a verifiable fact (Takahashi and Beebe, 1993), as well as a disagreement over disputable positions or viewpoints (Schiffrin, 1985: 45)

2.1.1. Positive and negative value

A positive attitude toward arguing is claimed by many scholars (Bilmes, 1988; Kakava, 2002; Katriel, 1986; Kotthoff, 1993). In particular, Kopperschmidt (1985) points out that disagreement is an indication of the interlocutors' willingness to solve problems and conflicts without the use of force. Furthermore, Simmel (1955) believes that an expression of conflict is a means of avoiding major communication breakdowns by preventing suppressed issues of conflict to preserve superficial harmony. With this respects, disagreement has the preferred status of argumentative strategies. As linguistic evidence, this preferred features that identified were sustained disagreement or competitive overlaps and latches for interactional negotiation (Schiffrin, 1984: 316). Therefore, disagreement is not an action that threatens social interaction, but serves as a social practice that is pervasive and preferred.

On the other hand, Pomerantz (1984) Sacks (1973) and defines disagreement as the 'dispreferred- action turn shape' and response or turn to an assessment. In this case, disagreement emerges as a disaffiliative or 'dispreferred action turn shape' that may affect an individual's wants not to be like. Therefore, these dispreferred actions are structurally marked, displaying dispreferred features such as silence, delays, request for clarification, partial repeats, other repair initiators, and turn prefaces (Pomerantz, 1984: 70). Other scholars, however, without necessarily referring to the dispreferred status of disagreement per se, have claimed that one's attitude towards disagreement and its means may vary by other contextual parameters such as cultural norms, (Johnstone, 1986; Kochman, 1981; Modan, 1994; Tannen, 1990, 1998), and situational constraints (Brown, 1990; Kakava, 1994a, b; Song, 1993; Yaeger-Dror).

2.2. Contextual constraints

2.2.1 Cultural context

Many studies have placed more emphasis on the cultural contexts in which disagreement occurs; in some cultures, disagreement can be considered as a form of sociability that reflects solidarity, while in other cultures, it is a form of dispreferred action that threatens solidarity.

A positive attitude toward arguing in public domains is reported by many anthropologists. Schiffrin (1984) finds disagreement among American Jews of East European descent as a social argument as a speech activity because they sustained disagreement and had active competitions for negotiation but did not threaten the interpersonal relationship of the participants. Moreover, Katriel (1986) finds among Sabra Israelis that direct connotation is a positive norm in argument because speakers assume that listeners take the speaker's direct talk as sincere and natural.

On the other hand, 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 which would

ultimately threaten solidarity (Ito, 1989; Song, 1994; Wang, 1998; Watanabe, 1990). Particularly, in Korean culture, society is generally characterized as conservative and hierarchical. Hence politeness and harmonious interpersonal relationships have traditionally been emphasized and society has created social expectations for avoiding confrontation. Therefore, Koreans make all effort to initiate resolution in order to end conflicts quickly (Song, 1994).

Similarly, Kruass, Rohlen and Steinhoff (1984: 3) state that for the past several decades, Japan had been a hierarchical society with strong collective unity that emphasizes cooperation and harmony. Therefore, the Japanese often have underlying motivations such as saving face, avoiding conflict, and maintaining harmony (Watanabe, 1990). As a result, instead of using declarative statements, Japanese express a premise, proposition, information, or a fact in a statement accompanied by a request for confirmation.

On the other hand, Jones (1990) argued that the participants who discussed controversial topics used explicit expressions of conflict, sustained their conflict by focusing on the issues, and very rarely compromised. However, participants seldom did express anger, but instead, participants either reframed their response 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. Furthermore, their expectations about argument presume reaching an inclusive conclusion which is different from American's exclusive conclusion (Watanabe, 1990).

As discussed, this has shown the concept of disagreement and choice of disagreement types could be different according to the cultural relativity. However, other scholars claim that the use of argument strategies is also bound up with other factors such as the interactive goals, participant's relations of power and affect and other contextual factors (Grimshaw, 1990; Kuo, 1992).

2.2.2. Power relationship

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. Moreover, they acknowledge that the degree to face-threatening and the social importance accorded to power are culturally determined and may also vary according to different situations within a culture (Brown and Levinson, 1987; 76-79, 244-251). For instance, the relative status of student and professor in Asian culture does not encourage students to be expressive or outspoken, despite the rapid social changes recently (Wang, 1998). Specifically, in 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 the professor and student relationship has the marks of institutionalized power based on greater knowledge, academic status, and age, as well as the professor's responsibility for assigning grades.

In contrast, students do not seem to 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. However, any further research on disagreement as well as on other face threatening or dispreferred acts needs to be context sensitive (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Gu, 1990; Kotthoff, 1993). In this way, such analyses will shed light not just on the types of devices for doing disagreement in different local contexts but also on the interrelations between the act of disagreement and interactional goals or purposes that may be locally in play. As a result, part of contextualization of a face threatening act should involve looking into its interrelations with local interactional goals and

functions.

2.2.3. Educational purpose and argument context

Several studies have investigated specific contexts in which disagreements occur and have reported findings that contradict Pomerantz's dispreferred concept of disagreement. In Atkinson and Drew (1979)'s study of judicial discourse, disagreement is the preferred response used as a form of direct or unmitigated disagreement. Similarly, in psychotherapy groups, Krainer (1988) claims that the expression of discord is expected since disagreement, complaints, and dissatisfactions should be discussed in the open. She also found both strong and mitigated challenges in her data. As a result, especially, within the context of an argument, disagreement has the preferred status (Blims, 1988 & Kotthoff, 1993) because it is bound up with interactional norms or purposes of argumentation in the activity that is engaged in.

Regarding the purpose of disagreements in argument context, disagreements are central acts in the participants' interactional encounters as well as major negotiating bids in their most common activity types of talk. Furthermore, they are vital in the process of constructing the participants' alliances and stances vis-a-vis third parties talked about, their assessments of events and states of affairs. With this respect, the production of disagreement is not entirely reliant on the participant's relations of power but on the joint scrutiny of different points of views (Georgakopoulou, 2001: 1886-7). The reason is that the outcome in an argument is not made by a single interlocutor's view, but shared by participants' joint perspectives. In this regard, the occasion of disagreement does not seem to pose a threat to the participant's relation. Furthermore, indirectness for constructing disagreement can be accounted for in terms of the need for participants' joint investigation of different perspective and avenues of reasoning as part of the argumentative process, negotiation, opinion exchanging and debate, as opposed to emphasizing their difference in opinion. In other words, it leads participants to use indirect or mitigated disagreements that subsequently allow for teamwork in perspective building.

On the other hand, indirect or mitigated strategy can be used as inductive and participation techniques. For instance, when instructors want elicitations from students in order to check their knowledge or to encourage their participation, instructors, instead of directly disagreeing with their interlocutors, employ indirect questioning with the purpose of leading students to discover the point of the lesson for themselves (Miller, 2000).

In view of the above findings, this study will investigate the disagreement strategy within power and cultural context as first factors influencing the choice of disagreement strategies and point to the argument context and educational purpose of disagreement as significant factors affecting choice of disagreement strategies. Therefore, all these parameters of culture, participant's power relations and norms of argumentation can be proposed for contextualized studies of disagreement. Moreover, such studies can shed further light on the ways in which these parameters orchestrate to shape the production of disagreement in local contexts.

3. The Study

3.1. Subjects¹

¹Korean master will be transcribed as KM, Korean Ph.D as KPh, Korean instructor as KP, Korean student as KS and same as the Japanese side.

In order to collect a corpus of the most realistic data possible, all participants were chosen from two real graduate courses – a distance learning class and a sociolinguistic class – in preference to a more controlled experiment. Participants were invariable from both classes. These particular classes were selected for a number of reasons. First, in real, organized academic life, disagreement arises naturally whereas a participant’s disagreement is subject to real and significant consequences. Second, because I am an original member of these classes, the presence of a researcher does not cause participants to modify their behaviors. Third, all are graduate students, from departments of English linguistics and English education, who are quite advanced English speakers.

The subjects in this study are comprised of two groups; one with Korean graduate students and a instructor at Korea University in Korea and the other with Japanese graduate students and an instructor in Waseda University in Japan. The majority of participants are previously acquainted since they already had a chance to meet through the former VC sessions or conference. The distribution of participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants

Participants	Korean			Japanese		
	MA	Ph. D	Instr.	MA	Ph. D	Instr.
Male	1	–		4	1	
Female	8	4	1	1	–	1
Audience	6 (female)	1 (female)				
Total	21			7		

The class has six Japanese students whose ages range from 22 to 36 ; one male doctor, five masters and one female Japanese instructor who is from the Department of English Education on the Japanese side. On the other side, there are 20 Korean students whose ages range from 25 to 41: five female doctors, 15 master and one female Korean instructor from the Department of English Language and English Literature. Of these students, 17 Korean participants are audience members who only audit the class without enrollment. The Japanese instructor is a native Japanese speaker in her late fifties while the Korean instructor is in her mid thirties and is bilingual. Furthermore, most participants are quite advanced English speakers because the majority of them had an opportunity to study in an English speaking country.

3.2. Procedures

3.2.1. Data collection

The data was collected from KWCCDLP data (Korea University-Waseda University Cross-Cultural Distance Learning Project) from April 16, 2003 through June 12, 2003. KWCCDLP is a collaborative project, which is internet-based video conferencing (VC) to provide graduate students and faculty with an opportunity to engage in intercultural learning experience without the need for participant’s relocation to the same place, as well as to motivate them to use English as a communication

tool. The overall goals of the project were to expand participant's perspectives in their own and the partner country, to critically examine assumptions related to cultural issues in Korea and Japan, and to develop participant's familiarity and comfort with VC as a medium that supported collaborate learning and as a means to enhance professional relationships. Real graduate courses – distance learning class for Wednesday and sociolinguistic class for Thursday - were conducted in this project, and thus, cross-cultural academic interactions could be promoted in this medium.

The class session was held twice a week for 9 weeks and was approximately 40 hours in length over the semester. From the total 40 hours of my observation (16 hr for Wednesday and 28 hr for Thursday class), notes were taken for VC sessions containing opposition, all were recorded on videotape and sessions were transcribed and compiled in the KWCCDLP database. In order to help analyze the data, I took notes of the class content and, to my best effort, wrote them in verbatim as words were used in any exchanges, even though much of it did not involve disagreement. This class was a graduate school class, a formal setting, in which the instructor, who mostly controlled the turns of conversation and the change of topics, regulated most of the discussions. The class sessions were a good forum for the investigation of opposition because students discussed assigned readings, thus naturally expressed their own and often opposing views with their fellow students and instructors, in contrast to just being lectured by the instructor.

The video conferencing equipment used in this project consisted of a camera, a control panel, a large screen and two microphones at each side. Although many participants were intimidated at first, being camera shy and self-conscious, it is likely that VC brought participants together as a member of a team because participants were actively encouraged to express opinions and diverse points of view. However, sometimes the participants had difficulty knowing when to interrupt to ask questions because they could not always see others preparing to ask questions. During the VC sessions, each team from Korea and Japan was expected to bring discussion questions and to have a brief presentation about assigned topics for class before the main discussion.

This study will conduct qualitative analyses from the interactional sociolinguistic perspective which views discourse as interaction. Therefore, I analyzed a limited number of eight substantial episodes within conversations (Schiffirin, 1996) as conversations were an ongoing, moment-by-moment structured event in that linguistic and paralinguistic variances lead participants to create their conversations (Song, 1994).

In order to verify some interpretations and elicit further information, playback method was employed, which asked participants, as necessary, to explain their behavior, assumptions and expectations during the conversations. For instance, if necessary, the current speaker was asked if the question was a true question which expected an answer or if it was a rhetorical question which challenged the current speaker's view. She/he was also asked why this strategy was employed, in order to categorize types of strategy, to understand interrelations between the act of disagreement and other contextual factors (i.e. interactional purpose, power relations) and to characterize the disagreement strategy (i.e. social act, face threatening act). As I could not meet Japanese students face to face, I created and distributed an online questionnaire, through e-mail, to all Japanese students at the end of the semester, in order to get information regarding their status, age, and background (see questionnaire attached in Appendix B). Through this process, I could understand the participant's processes of making inferences, their reactions to one another's behavior and the way they perceived the maintenance of talks. The 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 better insight into the norms of interaction in this setting because I was originally considered a member of these classes, instead of an outsider. However, the participants in the classes were not informed that I was specifically interested in disagreement activity in order to obtain natural data.

The most focal discussions were of issues such as English status as an official language in EFL context, teachability of culture, universal politeness, the criteria of native like speech and others. These topics were proved to be the most argumentative topics with the most student participation. One of the reason could be that many participants as non native speakers are sensitive to acquisition of native English culture as well as of native English. Different from Korean, most of the Japanese had so strong opinion about acceptance of non-native English that it leded active discussion topics. However, Korean and Japanese participants were reluctant to provide opposing opinions regarding the partner country's culture (i.e. Japanese 15 ways of saying 'no'). Therefore, if there was a disagreement, it was mitigated.

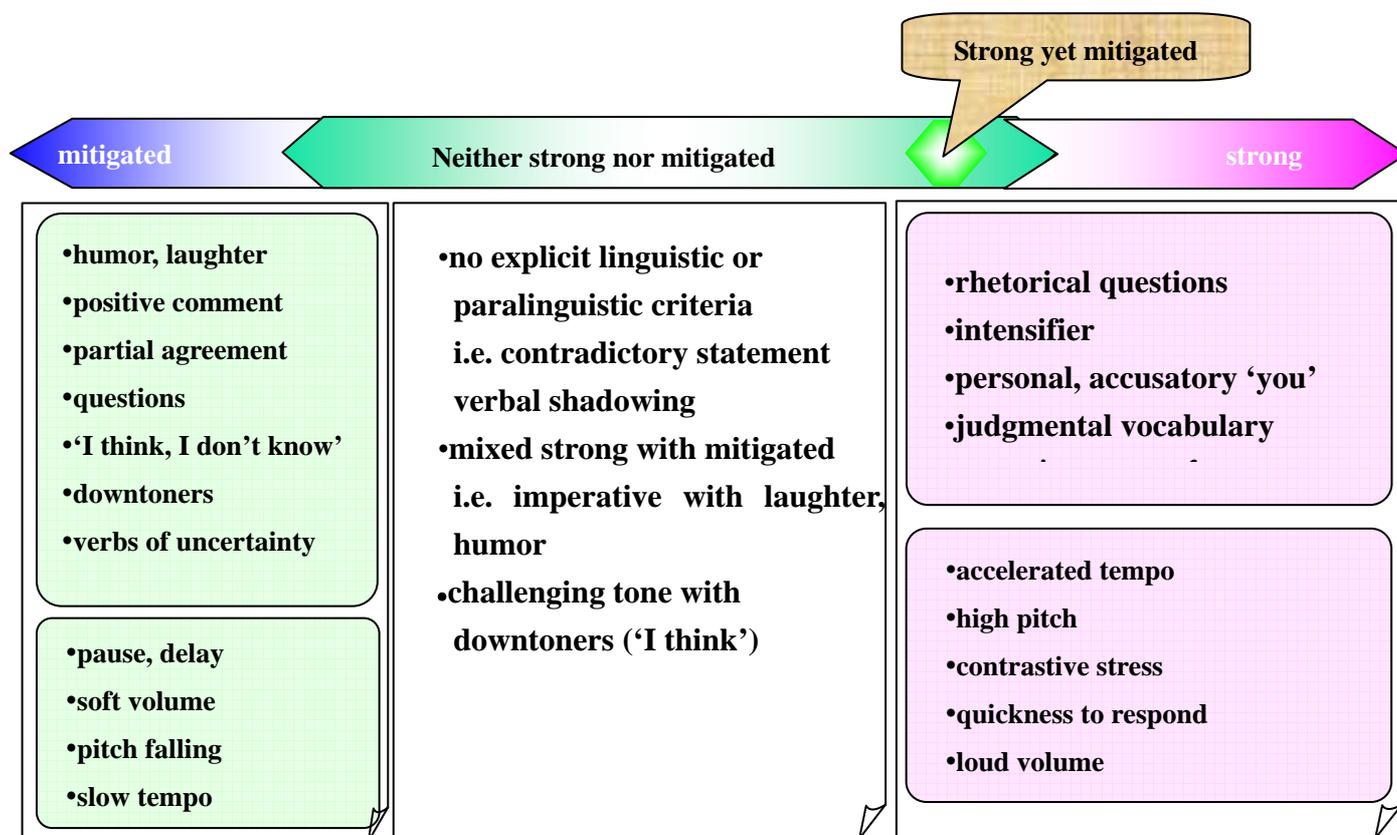
3.2.2. Data analysis

The data was combining Miller's linguistic markers and Kakava's paralinguistic markers with some modifications. Since disagreement strategies cannot always be clear cut into direct or indirect, they were analyzed in a continuum ranging from the most mitigated to the most aggravated disagreement and grouped as mitigated, neither strengthened nor mitigated and strong disagreement (Kakava, 2002; Miller, 2000; Song, 1995). In addition, the data was coded according to the identifiable linguistic and paralinguistic forms. One of the frequently found interactions was the exchange of information as well as disputable viewpoints.

The data was first analyzed following Miller's model (2000) with some modifications. The disagreement strategy in this model was organized into three categories based on the presence or absence of identifiable linguistic markers: softened, neither softened nor strengthened and strengthened. Particularly, the category of softened disagreement was further subdivided using Brown and Levinson's distinction between positive and negative politeness. However, Brown and Levinson's two types of politeness were not accounted for in this study since their dichotomy was dubious in terms of cross-cultural applicability. For instance, Americans' indirectness of disagreement or refusal to engage in an argument was negatively interpreted as cold, haughty, and secretive to Greeks while it was positively perceived by the majority of Americans as giving the addressee the opportunity to make an offer, show her generosity or eager to be of help (Tannen & Kakava, 1992: 23).

Secondly, paralinguistic markers were also added to analyze the data. It is believed that paralinguistic markers play an important role in making the argument more intense or softer based on intonation contours, turn shapes, and patterns of sequences of talk (Goodwin, 1983; Kakava, 2002). 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. Although there are also nonverbal ways of expressing disagreement, they are beyond the scope of research here. The taxonomy of disagreement strategies are given in Figure 1 as shown below.

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



Regarding mitigated disagreement, the speaker may use humor, positive comments, and partial agreement (*while this is true. this is not the case*), questions, hedges such as a preface (*I think, I don't know*), down toners (*maybe, not necessarily*) and verb of uncertainty (*seems*) for linguistic markers. As for paralinguistic markers, 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 (*impossible*). As for paralinguistic markers, prosodic features such as accelerated tempo, high pitch, contrastive stress, raising tone, quickness to respond and loud volume make it intensified and a strong challenge.

Some disagreements, however, are neither mitigated nor strengthened in terms of explicit linguistic or paralinguistic criteria for strong and mitigated strategy. As a result, these responses are placed in the middle of the continuum (to various degrees) and belong 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” (Miller, 2000: 1094)

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 (*You need to*

memorize it) is followed by lots of laughter or used with a playful tone, then, it belongs to neither strong nor mitigated strategy because the strong directives are softened.

In order to investigate the characteristics from each groups within power relations and cultural context; first, a noticeable status difference was divided into two groups: student and instructor. In this study, each country's student data was a point of departure while instructor's characteristics would be mentioned at the end. Then, cultural context was individually attached to each groups such as Japanese student, Korean student, Japanese and Korean student, Japanese instructor, Korean instructor. Specifically, disagreement from the perspective of context and purpose were lastly addressed in Korean instructor's data. Furthermore, the status in episode will be specified in detail. As a result, this study will discuss results with some representative strategies that are found mostly in the Japanese students first.

4. The Result and Discussion

4.1. Power relations and cultural context

4.1.1. Disagreement between Korean master students

The most common characteristic between Korean masters is that they use rather strengthened disagreement terms, followed by clarification questions and rhetorical questions. According to Song (1995, 1996) and other scholars (Miller, 2000; Gruber, 2001), various questions can function as either strong or mitigated disagreements. Showing totally opposite response from that of Japanese students, Korean students are not cooperative toward people who disagree with them. Particularly, between equal status, this illustrates competition for interactionally negotiable goods. As a result, disagreement between Korean masters is viewed as a social action. The following episode shows three Korean masters discussing how to teach culture. While KM1 is doubtful about the teachability of culture due to the difficulty of cultural generalization, KM2 and KM3 are disagreeing with KM1 (For transcription conventions, see the Appendix).

Episode 1

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
4. culture in school because there is culture difference, but I think it's kind of tricky to state
5. certain or describe certain culture. (line omitted). so, what I think should teach universal
6. etiquette manner or politeness. that's what I think=
7. **KM3:** = how do you think what is universal manner?
8. **KM2:** oh, what is universal ?
9. **KM3:** uh, uh
10. **KM2:** uh, I heard there is business etiquette course. (line omitted), they meet together and 11. there is certain kind of way nobody, most people don't feel uncomfortable. that could be ..
12. **KM1:** but, certain kind of way is also another generalization ?
13. **KP:** ok, we're running out of time

KM1 (in 2) starts out talking about her experience that she did not get any education on cultures from the class. In response to KM1, KM2 mitigates her disagreement (line 3-5), initially by giving a positive comment about KM1's statement (your point is good) and later pointing out the difficulty in describing certain cultures. 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 questions the 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 manner of acting to make sure 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 kinds of cultural ways could be taught in class. In this episode, it can be said that Korean masters employ rhetorical questions and quickly respond making the argument intense.

4.1.2. Disagreement between Korean master and doctoral students

Among three Korean masters who disagreed with Korean doctors, only one master confronted directly and disagreed with the Korean doctoral student several times. However, KM hardly escalated her disagreement because KM did not want to counterattack a KPh for a third time, which is an essential part for conflict development. In many cases, conflicts remain blocked in this phase and no conflict develops. Therefore, among Korean masters, disagreement with higher status serves as a face threatening or a dispreferred act.

Episode 2

1. **KPh:** so, we have to figure out the first what cause major miscommunications
2. between you know two speakers ... (line omitted) I think that's what we have to
3. teach first as a teacher. that's my answer my opinion to your question.
4. **KM:** you have to teach first...
5. **KPh:** do I have to speak again ?
6. **KM:** I think, my opinion is if teacher knows all differences about the culture,
7. (line omitted) I think if you can try perfect, then you'd better not to try
8. clumsy cultural behavior to fit into another culture=
9. **KPh:** = how can we know all cultural typical speech acts of all 10. different
10. countries, it sounds impossible to me which is not supposed to know all
11. = the appropriate speech act of the all cultural =
12. **KM1:** = yes, so = yes, it's hard, so
13. **KPh:** = that's why I just figure out what kind of foreign language student might not to use,
14. (line omitted) what kind of context (line omitted) the then, third, we have to find out some 15. kind of some
15. discourse which will cause some kind of miscommunications ... (line omitted)

Female KPh is responding to KM1's questions (line 1-3) of how a 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 a 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 uses judgmental vocabulary, seen by the word, 'impossible.' Therefore, KPh strongly disagrees with KM1 by employing quickness to respond, rhetorical questions with 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 because she could not develop a counterstatement for further discussions.

4.1.3. Disagreement between Japanese master and Japanese doctoral students

Contrary to the Korean students, Japanese students hardly showed any difference when interacting with students of equal or higher status in their side. Episode three will be shown that in many cases, disagreement came as a first response to an assessment and was not prefaced with dispreference markers. Thus, disagreement was sustained but did not threaten the interpersonal relationship of the participants. This is a characteristic feature of social arguments. Particularly, the following example is representative of one Japanese master student's explicit disagreement with Japanese doctoral student followed by accounts and the floor is more collaborative with multiple contributions with two more Japanese participants. Notably, these two features are mostly found on the Japanese side. The following discussion is about whether English should be an official language in Japan or other EFL contexts.

Episode 3

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 system
11. **JM1:** = yeah yeah = yeah, but, not 12. all legal system
12. or all document should necessarily translated in english. it's a sometimes,
13. sometimes waste of time and energy.
14. **JM2:** I agree with your opinion. I read article saying that japanese economy....
15. (line omitted) we don't have a kind of tactic to negotiate in english (line omitted).
16. **JM1:** so, you mean lack of proficiency is not matter whether it's official language or not
17. **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 was 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 opinion 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 10), JM1 undermines the professor's disagreement using downtoners, saying 'but, not all legal system, sometimes' (line 11-13). Before JM1's disagreement with JP, JM1 (line 11) 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 a face-threatening act, but a social action because they are cooperative and respect each other's point of views.

4.1.4. Disagreement between Japanese master student and Japanese instructor

Being observed mostly in Japanese side, episode four shows a representative example of strengthened disagreement with Japanese instructor by Japanese student. A big difference between Korean and Japanese students is that while 80% of Japanese students disagree with and then challenge a professor (5 out of 6 people), Korean students rarely challenge professors or Korean doctoral students (4 out of 20 people, 20%). Thus, among Japanese students, disagreeing with an instructor is perceived as more of a social act rather than a threatening act. The issue in episode four is a Japanese greeting rule of telephone conversation between answerers and callers. Female JM1 disagrees with JP twice by using mitigators and questions.

Episode 4

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

JP (line 1) explains that she greets an answerer by asking their 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 the 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 a self-repetition to emphasize her view. After a silent pause, JP tells others about her personal experience with her doctoral student (in 5-8) to protect and defend herself and construct dialogues 'how about your blood pressure?' But, JM1

makes a 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 a characteristic of younger generations. Her strategy is less direct rather than openly disagreeing with someone, but it is strong enough, since it widens the base of an argument to point out one of the key concepts of politeness, the '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 felt that her strong disagreement would qualify as a strong face threat to the professor. Because nobody responded to 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 differences.

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

4.1.5. Disagreement between Japanese and Korean participants

Compared to disagreement strategy used in Japanese participants, Japanese and Koreans participants employ mitigated strategies with each other; they avoid a strengthened disagreement by remaining silent and delaying their responses. However, because of the highest number of oppositional turns during whole interactions, it cannot be solely reliant on identifiable structural markers to conclude that their disagreement serves as a dispreferred or face threatening acts. The fifth episode illustrates that KM1 is asking the Japanese side if there are fifteen (15) ways of saying 'no' in Japanese and the Japanese instructor and students did not show direct disagreement but imply partial disagreement by using questions, silence, downtoners and giving a series of personal examples. Therefore, they employ a mitigated strategy.

Episode 5

1. **KM1:** I found out the book for Japanese. there are examples for 'no' they have at
2. least 15 ways of saying 'no'
3. **KP:** (talking to Japanese side) do you have 15 ways of saying 'no' at least ?
4. **JM1:** for example, what is example ?
5. **KM1:** I couldn't find a example, but there are have speech style indirect...
6. (line omitted) when they're speaking English other foreign language
7. (silence)
8. **JM1:** maybe, Japanese is ...(line omitted). there are lots of implications. so maybe 15 is
9. possible, but we don't know about, well, I'm sorry
10. **JP:** who said, who said there are 15 ways of saying no ? (everyone laugh)
11. **KM1:** (bringing the book from a bag) I brought a book by Deborah Tannen.
12. **KP:** Deborah Tannen. she is ... (line omitted)

13. **JP:** is it included in book we're reading ?
14. **KP:** no, no, no, ... no
15. **JP:** sometimes, we say "yes" when we mean "no," (line omitted) we don't agree with it,
16. (line omitted), but we don't reveal I don't agree with it, (looking at Japanese side), nae ?
17. **KM1:** actually, written in this book, instead of saying no, japanese tend to say like
18. "I disagree with you" or "you're wrong" instead of just express in the "no"
19. (silence)
20. **JM2:** in connection with japanese saying "no" it's my personal experience, I like to use
21. "maybe" for example...(line omitted)
22. **JM3:** and one more example is that "I will call you" or "I'll tell you later," in that case, most 23. of the case, we're meaning 'no'....(line omitted)
24. **JM2:** in face to face communication, we don't like probably to reject some the other's
25. proposal. (line omitted)
26. **JP:** and we often say perhaps =
27. **JM2:** = perhaps, yeah
28. **JP:** do you have this kind of statement if you don't want to commit yourself, you usually say
29. 'no' directly ?
30. **KP:** (looking at KS) what do you think ? ... "I'll think about it" or
31. **JP:** yes, perhaps, also we laugh = (everyone laugh)
32. **KP:** = but, in relationship
33. **JP:** = maybe, the author who pointed out there are 15 ways of saying "no," maybe correct 34. if we count for this
35. **KP:** ok

KM1 (line 1) starts with a question of 'if there are fifteen ways of saying no in Japanese.' In response to KM1, JM1 and JP do not seem to admit this fact immediately (line 8-9), instead delays the response by employing five mitigators (maybe, possible, we don't know, well, I'm sorry). On line 15-16, JP describes the Japanese way of saying 'yes' and 'no' and emphasizes that Japanese do not show their disagreement directly. However, disagreeing with JP, KM1 did not 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 do not reveal their disagreement. As 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, the Japanese answer with silence implying that they do not 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 maintaining silence, JM2 gives his experience to make it more personal (line 20-21). In addition, JM1 shifts the 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 counterclaim 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.

However, it can not be entirely stated that disagreement serves as a face threatening act between them due to their highest oppositional turns (35 turns) among whole interactions. Participants may have chosen the mitigated strategy as a tool in order to keep their discussions. Thus, mitigators can be taken as a part of argumentative process to draw participant's agreed on stance (Georgakopoulou, 2001, 1897). As a result, participants employ mitigated strategy of disagreement in order to negotiate and draw a shared perspective jointly for teamwork. Furthermore, it could be argued that this is bound up with the interactional purpose of argumentation in the activity that is engaged in.

4.1.6. Disagreement by Japanese professor

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

In the sixth episode, the Japanese instructor is using a strong yet mitigated strategy. KP raises an issue, which is the importance of learning to teach in front of a camera. However, JP directly disagrees with this point and with JM1 through a playful tone, followed by some laughter. JM1 also softly disagrees with JP by using pauses and mitigators (*but, well*).

Episode 6

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 a statement (in 1-2) that learning to teach in front of the camera is an important skill. Consequently, JP disagrees with KP's opinion. However, JP (line 4-5) avoids direct confrontational disagreement, instead, it is directed at JM1. While JM1 is trying to say his opinion about the camera, looking at JM1, JP (line 4-5) interrupts him, and uses a directive with the personal 'you' ('if you don't read your manuscript, then you can look at the camera'). Confronting 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 by using a direct imperative, 'don't look at the manuscript, remember the main point.' In this case, JP strongly conveys her disagreement with JM1 using directive. However, due to her strong disagreement that accompanies playful tone, it is mitigated and belongs to neither the strong nor mitigated categories.

4.2. Interactional purpose and context

4.2.1. Disagreement by Korean instructor

The two instructors were observed in their roles not only as instructors in classroom discussions but also as peers in academic discussions. Particularly, KP takes a role as moderator or facilitator rather than as participants in academic discussions with students, while JP tends to take a role of participants in discussions. In KP's role as a moderator, she distributes the turn-taking, and seeks to direct it towards a constructive pedagogical goal, and as a facilitator, she elicits student's participation (or disagreement) through mitigated questions or indirect statements.

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

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. there are subject verb agreement
4. difference in american english and british english too. so, there are grammatical differences
5. **JMI:** public is, public are
6. **KP:** right, that's a good example
7. **JPh:** It's a matter of noun ?
8. **KP:** right, for instance, collective noun .. (line omitted)

At first turn (line 2), JPh utters there is no difference between American and British English. Immediately following JPh, KP (in 3) denies JPh's statement with the strong intensifier 'no, no, no, there is a difference' and points out that there is a 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 can be made. The reason for this is that either of them can be standard English, regardless of difference. Note that it is entirely opposite from JPh's statement that American and British English can be standard English because of no difference. This is an important concept of world English because many countries speak English in their own ways, and this should be respected and could be a part of 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. The following episode shows KM criticizes Korean people's exclusive focus on pronunciation to be native like and KP gives a different view employing indirect statements and display questions.

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 Koreans' overemphasis on pronunciation rather than vocabulary and ways of speaking 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 a 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 a student actually answer the question. Therefore, KP's pedagogical aim of the lesson determined the form of the disagreement. If professors use aggravated disagreement toward their students when teaching in class, little student participation would be expected as a result. The Korean professor observed in this study has a great deal of student participation in her classes, probably in part because she does not close discussion by using aggravated disagreement to students. On the professor's part, avoidance of aggravated disagreement is one of her elicitation strategy.

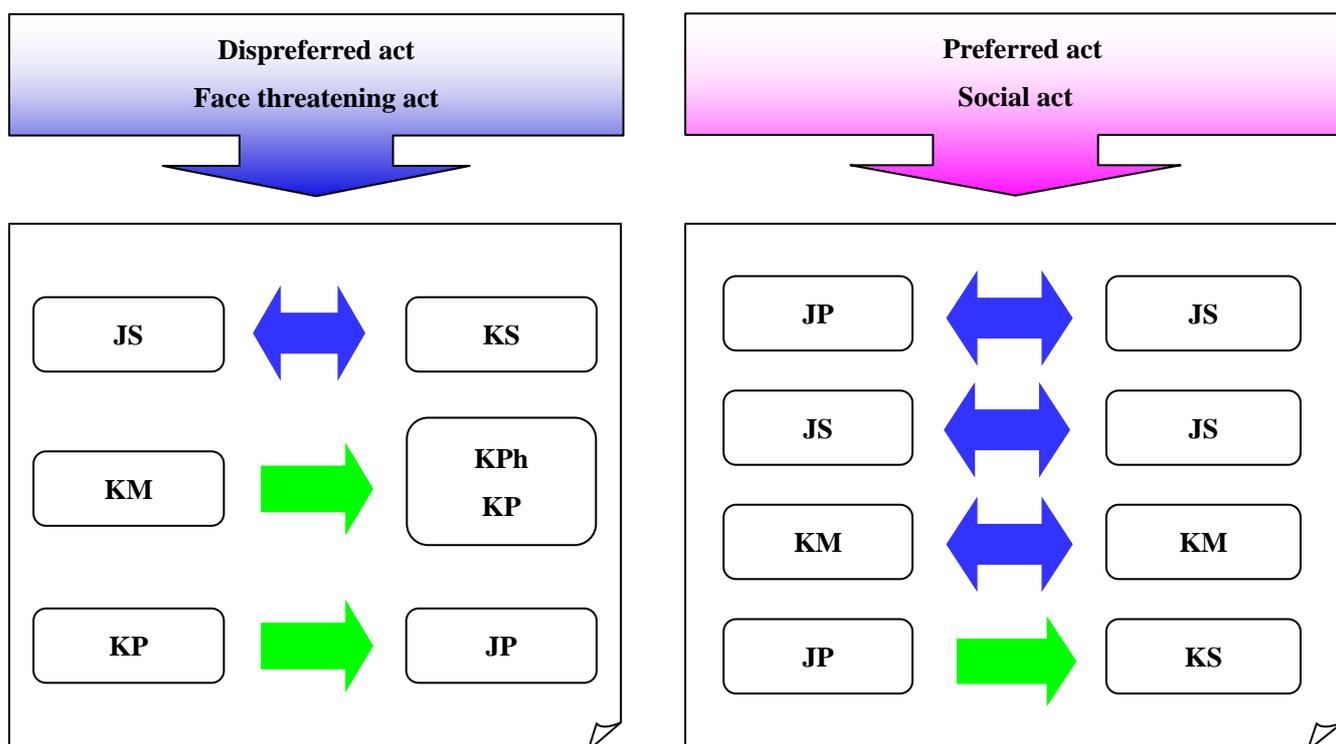
So far, we have observed eight episodes and major findings in disagreement. Table 2 and Figure 2 will summarize the major characteristics and functions of disagreement as follows.

Table 2. Major findings

Betw. JSP	Cooperative by agreeing to disagree
Betw. JS & KS	Hesitations, delay, pause, downtoners
Betw. KS	Rarely disagrees with higher status
JP	Direct disagreement with humor, playful tone
KP	Soft disagreement

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



JS↔KS = Japanese student speaking to Korean student or vice versa

KM→KPh or KP = Korean master speaking to Korean doctor or Korean instructor

JP↔JS = Japanese instructor speaking to Japanese student or vice versa

JS↔JS = Japanese student speaking to Japanese student or vice versa

KM↔KM = Korean master speaking to Korean master or vice versa

5. Conclusion and implication

This study indicates the interrelations of factors influencing choice of linguistic or paralinguistic markers of disagreement in academic settings. Considering this result, the study has presented data of opposition strategies found in the middle of the continuum that ranged from aggravation to mitigation. In order to compare the characteristics from each groups, this study was primarily concerned with the differences although all types of strategies were found in all participants. Therefore, the most striking differences can be accounted for by the asymmetrical power relationships and cultural differences. For instance, the Japanese instructor tended to use more humor when disagreeing with students than did students when disagreeing with the instructor. Thus, the Japanese instructor's greater use of these particular strategies served to lessen the face threat of the students and their disagreement strategy was viewed as a social act.

On the other hand, a different orientation to opposition was found by the Korean students. This context was more on the hierarchical rather than the interactive. Differing from Japanese participants, Korean master students rarely disagreed with the instructor or doctoral students and if they did, they employed mitigated disagreement. Even though supportive alignments or stances were also found, being supportive is of secondary importance among Korean participants. However, Japanese participants were very cooperative and supportive by agreeing to disagree with the interlocutors through back channeling, request for clarification and repetition of the interlocutor's utterance. Thus, their disagreements were not openly

hostile but collegial and rather direct. As a result, the main difference between Japanese and Korean participants was that the floor appeared more collaborative with multiple contributions among Japanese participants. Furthermore, contrary to Korean participants, Japanese master students rarely showed differences when disagreeing with equal or higher status – master, doctoral or instructor. Interestingly, there were even some examples of strengthened disagreement with professors or doctoral students mostly by Japanese master students. Based on these findings on Japanese interactional patterns, disagreement is an interactional ritual that does not necessarily threaten solidarity and is preferred in this particular academic context.

On the other hand, most of the time, dispreference markers for disagreement were observed between Japanese and Korean interactions. Disagreement was prefaced with dispreferred markers - hesitation, repeats of questions, downtoners - being postponed temporarily. Nevertheless, it was a hasty conclusion that the disagreement among them served as a face threatening or dispreferred act since their oppositional turns were sustained the most during the whole interaction. Thus, it could be explained in terms of other factors such as interactional purpose and specific context. According to my survey, participants feel they need to jointly decide on issues to formulate an agreed on stance because of teamwork in perspective building. Hence, they chose mitigated disagreements to foreground their different perspectives as part of the argumentative process, joint investigation and negotiation. In this way, participants could reach their inconclusive conclusion, maintaining their interaction and exchanging their opinions.

In addition, there is another occasion of using mitigated questioning or statement. For instance, the Korean instructor mostly used softened questioning or statements 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 complicated ways that emerges through the particularities of institutional context.

Having discussed the most important differences, I should also point out that speaker variation was observed. The finding of this study was confirmed by responses to a questionnaire for the participants although it can not be said that all Japanese or Korean speakers will display similar tendencies. Most of the Japanese students replied they did not 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 and competitive but softened in disagreement especially to Korean participants. On the contrary, most of Korean master students stated that they felt uncomfortable disagreeing with doctoral students or instructors because of their higher academic status as well as their competent knowledge and experience. Therefore, they may be more hesitant and prefer not to disagree with those in higher status.

Interestingly, both Japanese and Korean participants felt more comfortable when disagreeing with their side. According to my survey, several reasons may lie in that they had a shared speech style or interpretation of their utterance and that they had a closer relationship and had the opportunity to talk after class. Therefore, this fact affected their choice of disagreement strategy. Moreover, participants in the survey also pointed out that some major differences could emerge due to the medium, gender and age. Particularly, respondents in my survey responded that most difficult problem, in this video conferencing medium, would be that they did not know when to interrupt to ask questions or to disagree because they could not always see others on the screen. These factors seem to be crucial to determine the form of the disagreement strategy. In this regard, future research needs to consider these factors as well.

Nevertheless, the majority of the participants agreed that regardless of power concerns, disagreement should be recommended for controversial issues to prevent prejudice, to learn new perspectives through disagreement, develop critical thinking and active participation skills and to solve problems and conflicts, particularly in an academic context. Thus,

disagreement should not 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 as they are not close enough to understand each other. Even though the majority of participants in survey admitted that disagreement should be encouraged in an academic context, they felt intimidated or nervous when someone directly or offensively disagreed with them personally. In this regard, mitigated or neither strong nor mitigated strategies are strongly recommended.

So far, this study has described and explained how Korean and Japanese participants use language to express disagreement and to manage verbal conflicts in naturally occurring classroom discussions. Specifically, this study has shown how interactional goals, context and other contextual factors, such as the dynamics of interpersonal relations reflecting social status, influenced the choice and interpretation of argumentative strategies and the development of verbal conflicts. This study, hence, demonstrates the importance of socio-cultural issues and the interrelations of other contextual factors across cultures. Furthermore, this study maintains that the choice of disagreement strategy does not necessarily satisfy the goal of achieving politeness because it can be affected by other factors.

Regarding socio-cultural issues, miscommunication or communication breakdowns between Asians and Westerners have been found in both private and formal contexts (Scollon and Scollon 1991, as cited in Song, 1994). Thus, this study will contribute to understanding interactional style of Asian speakers and find out differences between Asian and western cultures. Furthermore, by analyzing interactional patterns and discussion style of Korean and Japanese participants, this study provides empirical data for the study of miscommunication and contributes new information to facilitate cross-cultural communication. With this respect, this study also provides insights for mutual understanding in cross-cultural communication with Koreans or Japanese in other dimensions in the future.

In addition, this study has implications for the teaching and learning of discussion skill as a communication strategy in English. In order to prevent misunderstanding each other, particularly in this intercultural academic context, understanding other culture's expressions and finding ways to disagree are necessary and challenging to the teacher or participants. Thus, especially in Asian society, this study points out that teaching discussion strategy in English could be recommended. Upon consideration of the above, ongoing future research will provide us with a much broader picture of how disagreement can be negotiated in academic discourse.

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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 inaudible 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
- i. [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. Do you have any experience living in English speaking countries: Yes, No
If, yes, 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 an actual situation that your classmate or professor raised an opinion in academic discussion. But, you had 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 a professor, or Ph.D. or M.A. disagree with your opinion, and you still think 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 an M.A. than a professor or Ph.D during academic discussion or it doesn't make any difference ?

10. Do you feel more comfortable to disagree with Japanese students than with Korean students or is it almost 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. 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 ? How can it 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 have actively participated in our discussion session or may not have.

What was the biggest difficulty for you in our discussion session ?

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