POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
-- A case study of a Japanese person in Hong Kong --

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate politeness strategies which a Japanese person applied in a series of intercultural communications. These strategies used in several different situations were examined from a cultural/social viewpoint as well as intercultural pragmatics. This research study also focuses on how people from different cultural backgrounds evaluate a Japanese person's behavior. By analyzing the results obtained from the research, this study investigates how a Japanese person commonly conceptualized politeness in a certain situations, and what that person did to demonstrate politeness in an intercultural environment.

Role-playing activity, questionnaire, and interview were used as research instruments. In the role-playing activities, two actors (one from Hong Kong, and the other from Japan) acted out scenarios, which included potential face-threatening situations. Three different groups of people across two cultures then evaluated the Japanese actor's behaviors by filling out the questionnaire. Interviews were also conducted with some of the participants from these three groups.

The results show that there are significant differences in the evaluation of politeness, not only between two different cultures, but also among people from the same culture. This suggests that some politeness strategies are not necessarily culture specific.

Keywords: Politeness; Strategy; Evaluation; Hong Kong; Japan
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