



Title	A Conversation Analytic Study of Synchronous Online Interactions between International and Japanese University Students using English: A comparison of turn-taking, silences and apologetic utterances
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## 論文内容の要旨

氏 名 ( 平松千明 )	
論文題名	<p>A Conversation Analytic Study of Synchronous Online Interactions between International and Japanese University Students using English: A comparison of turn-taking, silences and apologetic utterances</p> <p>(留学生と日本人大学生との英語による同期型オンライン交流の会話分析的 研究: ターンテイキング、沈黙、謝罪の発話の比較)</p>
<p>論文内容の要旨</p> <p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>This study investigates differences of communication style between Japanese and international university students, focusing on aspects such as turn-taking, silences, and apologies. Through a qualitative case study approach, the research aims to clarify how cultural background influences communication style and the potential for miscommunication or misunderstanding. Seven focus groups, mixed of Japanese and international students, engaged in an online English conversation. The conversations, lasting approximately one hour, were recorded and analyzed using conversation analysis. Some of the results challenged previous literature and contributing to the field. Two Japanese students took more than 80 turns, which is comparable to the number of turns taken by international students who led the conversation in other groups. This result challenged previous literature suggesting that Japanese students experience difficulties in actively participating in English conversation, thereby presenting novel and significant findings. Moreover, the extant literature posits that Japanese culture values silence, two Japanese students in this study attempted to break silence. The online modality could have affected their willingness to communicate, as it facilitated interaction with international students even when they were not residing in Japan. Additionally, the convenience of the online modality, allowing participation from home, may have contributed to mitigating pressure compared to face-to-face interactions. The findings of this research offer valuable insights into how cultural backgrounds shape linguistic patterns and communication styles across different societies. This study contributes to cross-cultural communication research by providing insights into Japanese and international student's communication styles and emphasizing the</p>	

importance of cultural awareness. Emphasizing communication and cross-cultural communication skills is crucial for promoting active participation among Japanese students. It is significant to focus on these aspects rather than solely on English proficiency in language instruction within Japanese educational settings.

本研究では、日本人と留学生のコミュニケーションスタイルの違いを、ターンテイキング、沈黙、謝罪の側面に焦点を当てて調査する。質的研究のアプローチを通して、文化的背景がコミュニケーションスタイルにどのような影響を与え、ミスコミュニケーションや誤解の可能性があるのかを明らかにすることを目的としている。日本人と留学生からなる7つのフォーカス・グループがオンライン英会話に参加した。約1時間の会話は録音され、会話分析を用いて分析された。その結果、従来の文献を覆すような結果が得られ、この分野に貢献した。2人の日本人学生が80回以上のターンを取り、これは他のグループで会話をリードした留学生が取ったターンの回数に匹敵するものであった。

この結果は、日本人学生が英会話に積極的に参加することが困難であることを示唆する従来の文献を覆すものであり、斬新かつ重要な発見を提示するものであった。さらに、従来の文献では、日本文化は沈黙を重んじるとされているが、本研究では2人の日本人学生が沈黙を破ろうとした。オンラインという形態は、日本に在住していない留学生とも交流を容易にするため、日本人参加者のコミュニケーション意欲に影響を与えた可能性がある。さらに、自宅から参加できるオンラインの利便性が、対面での交流に比べてプレッシャーを軽減することに貢献した可能性もある。本研究で得られた発見は、文化的背景が、異なる社会間の言語的パターンやコミュニケーションスタイルをどのように形成しているかについて、貴重な洞察を与えるものである。本研究は、日本人と留学生のコミュニケーションスタイルに関する洞察を提供し、文化的認識の重要性を強調することで、異文化コミュニケーション研究に貢献するものである。日本人学生の積極的な参加を促進するためには、コミュニケーションと異文化コミュニケーション・スキルを重視することが重要である。日本の教育現場における言語指導において、英語力のみに焦点を当てるのではなく、このような側面に焦点を当てることは重要である。

## 論文審査の結果の要旨及び担当者

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## 論文審査の結果の要旨

Title of the thesis: A Conversation Analytic Study of Synchronous Online Interactions between International and Japanese University Students using English: A comparison of turn-taking, silences and apologetic utterances

Located in the field of sociolinguistics, this study focuses on the communication style of Japanese students speaking in the English medium compared to international students using an online modality. The starting point for the study was Hiramatsu's own observation that even Japanese students with a high level of English language proficiency often appear to experience anxiety when speaking English.

The aim of the study was to clarify how the cultural background of Japanese speakers of English influences communication style and the potential for miscommunication or misunderstanding. There were 2 main research questions: 1) How does communication style differ between Japanese and international students? 2) What are the aspects of Japanese communication style that may make it difficult for Japanese speakers of English to communicate when engaging with native and/or non-native speakers of English? There were 6 sub research questions: i) How do students try to take turns or offer turns to another student? ii) How is this different between Japanese and international students? iii) How do Japanese and international students deal with silence during a conversation? iv) How do Japanese and international students behave when the silence occurs during the conversation? v) How many times do students apologize? vi) Are there any differences between international students and Japanese students?

The data collection was conducted via seven online focus groups with equal numbers of Japanese and non-Japanese students who were asked to choose topics for discussion from a list sent to them by the researcher in advance. The researcher stayed in the background with her camera off and microphone muted, only playing a facilitating role at the beginning and the end of the online meeting. The focus groups were recorded, and only the audio data was analyzed. A Conversation Analysis (CA) approach was used to analyze the interactions between members of each focus group targeting turn-taking, reactions to silence and use of apologies. One unplanned element of the study was that it was planned prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but was conducted during it. As such, the study also offers a historical record of the difficulties faced by qualitative researchers during this period. Hiramatsu details the hurdles she had to overcome to conduct this study, and this is an interesting aspect of the study.

The research results were largely in line with previous studies (Japanese students generally took fewer turns, were more likely to apologize preemptively, and they were less likely to break a silence, suggesting that the online modality did not greatly impact the flow of

communication). However, there were some notable exceptions with two Japanese students taking multiple turns, and another two Japanese students who frequently broke silences. In all four cases, the students had reasonably extensive overseas experience. Hiramatsu's pre-study observation that English language proficiency did not necessarily predict communication behaviour was also confirmed when looking at students around turn-taking, breaking of silence and use of apologies in this study. Students who apologized for their 'poor English' (all Japanese students) were low turn-takers. The microanalysis of the data shows how students communicate in English on daily topics using an online modality. There is more in this data than has been brought out in the thesis and so, hopefully, we can expect additional publications. Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of how cultural expectations impact communication style and offers insights that may be of help to language educators in classroom settings.

The thesis is written in English and is made up of six main chapters, plus an Introduction and a Conclusion. The Introductory chapter sets up the research problem and outlines the approach that will be taken to address this. It is well written and informative. Chapters 1 and 2 are literary review chapters. Chapter 1 is split into two parts looking at the literature on internationalization of higher education and issues around student mobility. Chapter 1 Part 1 of the literature review chapter focuses on the literature on the internationalization of education. It examines some of the barriers highlighted in the literature to Japanese students participating more in international programs and projects. It stresses the importance of internationalization as a part of higher education strategy at the leading universities in Japan. Although the review is not extensive, Hiramatsu pulls out the particular interest points relating to Japan, including the centrality of internationalization in education policy, but the tendency to focus implementation narrowly on student mobility and tailor-made international programs. The second part of this section focuses on barriers to Japanese students' participation in the project of internationalization. In terms of the current study, linguistic and language confidence barriers are emphasized. Attention is also paid to cultural norms that inform communication style.

Chapter 1 Part 2 focuses on challenges faced by Japanese students in studying abroad and in their communication with international students. It explores the literature on the challenges that Japanese students face when studying abroad. The chapter then looks at the literature on intercultural competence and sensitivity, introducing some of the key literature. The second part of this section focuses on the challenges faced by international students generally, not just Japanese students, when abroad, including adjustments issues, health adjustments, financial strains and linguistic barriers. Hiramatsu then goes on to introduce theories of cultural adjustment. Both parts of the literature review chapter show a high level of engagement with both English and Japanese literature in the field. The chapter is well constructed and well written.

Chapter 2 offers an examination of the sociolinguistic literature on cross-cultural communication with a focus on turn-taking, silence, apology. There is a detailed analysis of turn-taking and silence focusing on the cultural particularities of the communication style of Japanese speakers. Hiramatsu introduces three important concepts: The turn construction component (TCC), the turn-allocation component (TAC) and the transition relevance point (TRP). Each is defined and the rules for turn-taking are introduced and compared across cultures. The idea of turn-taking against a backdrop of 'silent participation' is also introduced. We learn that silence is valued for Japanese speakers and can be viewed as a means of participation. The literature introduced show that Japanese speakers experience less discomfort than, for example, American or British speakers with silence, so there is less internal pressure to break a silence. This review chapter introduces the key concepts and

ideas that drive Hiramatsu's research.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology and data collection methods. The study was conducted between July 31, 2020, and April 21, 2021, when the COVID-pandemic lock downs were at their height. The challenges of recruitment given the crisis that was on-going in the world were outlined in detail in this chapter. Finally, 23 students were recruited for the study, and they participated in the study as 7 focus groups; 13 Japanese and 10 international university students who had pursued an education in Japan or abroad. The process of recruitment and the adjustments made due to the pandemic are of interest in their own right.

Chapter 5 presents the results. For the analysis of turn-taking, the results were summarized in Table 8. This analysis showed that, with the exception for one group, the international students spoke more frequently, and the Japanese students took a more passive role. However, in one group, Group 7, there were two Japanese students who took more turns than the international students. The international students were both female and from Vietnam, and the study showed that the Vietnamese students were also low turn-takers. Nevertheless, the number of turns taken by the two Japanese students in Group 7 was higher than most of the international students even in the other groups. Three students, all Japanese, expressed anxiety about their English. Both international and Japanese students offered opportunities for turn-taking to others.

Instances of silence caused by a pause, where the same student takes over, or a gap, when a new speaker takes over were examined. The results were presented in Table 10. This revealed that Japanese students were less likely to break a gap than international students. However, there were two Japanese students who broke a silence gap as frequently as the international students. The final section looked at Apologies. Occasions where 'sorry' was used to indicate not hearing properly (the equivalent of 'pardon' were not included in the analysis. Table 11 presented the results of this analysis, including the number of times students offered an apology by each group's member. The interview data is interesting and shows how the different members deliver apologies in this natural conversation. There was no clear distinction in the number of apologies made by members (varying from zero to five times) based on whether they are Japanese or international students, but the former used preemptive apologies more.

The final summary for the three areas of analysis recognized that two Japanese students were frequent turn-takers, and their turn-taking activities were not distinguishable from the international students. Two Japanese students who expressed anxiety about their English took far fewer turns than the international students. It was notable that the female Japanese students in each group did not take the lead at any time in the conversation. It is also notable that the two female Vietnamese students exhibited a communication style very similar to the female Japanese students, suggesting the interaction of gender norms and culture that cannot be simply divided into Japanese vs international. The data in this chapter is presented clearly and the preliminary analysis is solid.

Chapter 6 is the discussion chapter. This revisited the results and made some attempt to link the findings to the extant literature in the field. Given the micro-level analysis of the focus group data, far more could have been brought out in this section. The online modality of the focus groups was a key part of the methodology, and yet the importance of this was barely touched upon in the discussion, instead it was included in the concluding chapter.

Overall, the examiners felt that the research was well designed and executed, and the focus group interviews generated rich data. The analysis was done well and provided detailed insights into how the students made communication in this online setting. Given the aim of the thesis, we would have liked to have seen a greater development of how the different styles impacted communication and any conclusions about the impact of the online modality.

Perhaps the biggest strength of the analysis is the highly micro-level insights from the focus group sessions about how the members interact. This data is rich and presented very well. In addition, given that this research was carried out in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we also judged that the detailed description of the difficulties the researcher faced in setting up her research during COVID also contributes to the growing body of 'pandemic' literature. Hiramatsu has published part of this thesis in a peer reviewed journal with another part under review. One section has also been published in the Kyosei Studies Journal.

The examiners agree that this thesis meets the standard for a PhD in Human Sciences.