

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine the forms of indirect speech in request, suggestion and command in Japanese, and to investigate the main factors in the choice of direct or indirect means of communication. The data was collected from two sources; 1) being conversations drawn from five contemporary Japanese movie script; 2) answers to a questionnaire administered to 104 subjects regarding their choice of direct or indirect speech in certain interactional situations.

First, the findings from the conversation analysis indicate that indirect speech acts in request were mostly found in polite language, affirmative constructions and interrogative constructions. Indirect speech acts in suggestion were found in interrogative constructions, directive constructions, conditional constructions and conditional constructions. And indirect speech acts in command were found in requesting constructions, interrogative constructions and affirmative constructions.

Second, the results of the questionnaire regarding the factors in the choice of direct or indirect use of language show that in a request situation, age, social factors and intimate relationship between the conversing persons affect the use of indirect speech acts. Besides, request content was a factor in the choice of indirect use of request too. The major factor in choosing indirect speech acts in suggestive situation was the status between the conversing pair. And in command situations, age, intimate relationship between the conversing persons and politeness affects the use of indirect speech acts. The study shows that the main factor to choose indirect speech acts in three situation were the status and the relationship between the conversing couple.