

Abstract

The purposes of this research were firstly to compare the conversation structure and argument expressions used in Japanese and Thai; secondly, to compare argument strategies used by the Japanese and the Thai ; thirdly, to examine the influence of the four speech act categories(i.e. competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive) on the selection of argument strategies and finally, to determine how the results of two social variables such as gender and relative power of the participants affect the ways the Japanese and the Thais express argument.

The data for this study was from two sources: closed-role play by forty-eight native Japanese and Thai speakers, twenty-four people each, and one hundred discourse completion tests completed by fifty native Japanese speakers and fifty native Thai speakers.

It was found that the argument conversation structures used by the Japanese and the Thai were similar in these three contents- 1) the beginning 2) the argument and 3) the closing. The most important content of conversation was "the argument" which contained three parts- 1) the idea offering 2) the argument expression and 3) the conclusion.

Concerning the argument strategies, it was found that there were twenty-two sub-strategies those could be categorized into three main groups- 1) the group of strategies whose function was to make effective argument. 2) the group of strategies whose function was to encourage good relationships and 3) the group of strategies whose function was not to make effective argument or encourage good relationships. The finding showed that both Japanese and Thais mostly employed those strategies that made effective argument (reasoning and refusing). However, the Japanese employed the strategy that encouraged good relationships more than the Thais especially apology.

According to the analysis of social factors which influence the application of argument strategies, it was found that speech acts and gender affected the application of argument strategies for both Japanese and Thais. The strategy used the most in conflictive speech was refusing; while, the strategy used in other speech acts was

reasoning. Females tended to use strategies in the group whose function was to encourage good relationships more than males did, but the status of the interactors had no effect.