

外 国 語 要 旨

A comparative study on the Invitation Discourse between native speakers of Japanese and Chinese: an analysis on speech acts by using the semantic formulas.

HUANG Mingshu

Keywords: invitation, speech act, semantic formula, comparative study, cross-cultural Communication

This dissertation aims to elucidate the features in the Invitation Discourse of Native Speakers of Chinese (hereafter CNS) and Native Speakers of Japanese (hereafter JNS) by comparing the speech acts of the beginning part, inviting part, and ending part in a specific role play scenario (“To invite a friend who is too busy with his/her tutoring job to go cherry picking”). This study aims to contribute to the improvement of Japanese conversation education by shedding light on the potential miscommunication caused by the differences in Invitation Discourse.

The dissertation consists of 5 studies. Study I analyzed the speech acts from the pre-invitation to the beginning of the invitation. Study II analyzed the invitation expressions used by the inviting side. Study III analyzed the reaction to the invitation given by the invited side. Study IV analyzed the speech acts of re-invitation by the inviting side when faced with hesitation or negative responses. Study V analyzed the speech acts of the ending part in the invitation. By observing a series of speech acts, the study aims to capture a big picture of the Invitation Discourse, and further to present similarities and differences between CNS and JNS. The study used “semantic formula” as the analytical framework, which classifies the utterance by its function.

Study I confirmed that JNS used “preceding expressions” significantly more frequent than CNS. Also, as with the speech formulas that formed the preceding part, JNS used “seeking attention”, “greeting”, and “inquiring convenience” significantly more frequent than CNS. The results showed that JNS was building inter-personal relation by laying a foundation of a preceding part in the discourse. On the contrary, CNS was not heavily relying on the preceding part but showing a preference for inviting in a more direct way.

Study II provided evidence that in terms of the frequency of the subcategories within “Requesting for mutual acts”, while CNS was frequently using the “B-d Expressing personal intention: direct”, JNS was relying on “A-b Asking for other’s intention”. Also, about the order of the appearance of the subcategories in “mutual act request”, “Providing information + Requesting for mutual act” was used significantly more by CNS than JNS. On the other hand, JNS was using “introduction + Requesting for mutual act”, “Requesting for mutual act only”, and “Attentive utterance +

Requesting mutual act” significantly more frequent. Based on these results, it was clear that CNS was showing an intention of inviting with the unfolding of the conversation, and was actively engaged in the discourse in order to realize the invitation of the other side.

Study III investigated “Responses” from the invited side in the invitation part. The results showed that CNS was using “Explaining the reasons” significantly more frequent than JNS based on the framework of “semantic formula” of initial appearance. CNS was also using “Requesting for information” more frequent than JNS, which was marginally significant. Meanwhile, JNS was using “Affirmative expression” significantly more frequent than CNS. Next, within the “semantic formula” that made up the “Response”, CNS was using “Requesting for information” significantly, “Explaining the reasons” marginally significantly more frequent than JNS. On the contrary, JNS was using “Wishes”, “Affirmative expression” significantly more frequent than CNS. JNS was using strategies to express happy and positive attitude towards the invitation. It showed their effort in keeping the interpersonal relation.

Study IV focused on the re-invitation within the invitation part. The results showed that 1) in terms of the mean time that the re-invitation conversation happened which lead to the final decision from the invited side, CNS (five times) was significantly more than JNS (three times). 2) In terms of the frequency of the “semantic formula” of the re-invitation that appeared for the first time, CNS was significantly more frequent than JNS in using the “Requesting of the decision” while JNS was significantly more frequent than CNS in using the “Acceptance”. In terms of the “semantic formula” that made up the re-invitation, CNS was significantly more frequent in using “leading utterance”, “Requesting for a decision”, “Requesting for reasons”, “Reducing the burden”, and “Blaming the other side”.

Study V analyzed the strategies that were used by the inviting side within the ending part of the invitation discourse. The results showed that CNS was using “Mentioning of returning of reward” and “Emphasizing the friendship” significantly more frequent than JNS, while JNS was using “Thanking”, “Creating relationship & Courtesy expression” significantly more frequent than CNS. CNS saved the face by accepting the invitation but relied on the “Mentioning of returning of reward” and “Emphasizing the friendship” at the end of the ending part to emphasize the awareness of friendship. On the contrary, JNS was using “Thanking” and “Creating relationship & Courtesy expression” in showing courtesy to the invited part for their acceptance of the invitation. This demonstrated their establishment of interpersonal relation.

Based on the results, we can make the conclusion from the perspectives of the differences in perception as well as the understanding of interpersonal relationship. Specifically, CNS was showing a tendency of using a type of “Prioritizing the achievement of the goal” strategy, which emphasized themselves. On the other hand, JNS was showing a tendency of using a type of “Prioritizing the consideration of others” strategy, which emphasized the interpersonal relation in invitation.