Recognizing English Politeness Expression

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1. INTRODUCTION

When I started to work part-time, I felt difficulties to use politeness expression. It happened because I didn’t use it in a dairy life. I gradually got used to use it, and I began to work abroad. Then I struggled again. It’s totally different from Japanese politeness expression and English one. For everyone, not only Japanese politeness expression but also English one would be important in the future. I wondered if everyone speak differently depending on some situation properly. Considering that awareness, it would be clear whether the education about English politeness conducts to be useful in the future.

The purpose of this study is how much university students could acquire English politeness knowledge through education until now, and depending on their English academic, how much they understand English politeness culture or recognition. Also, I will analyze the English textbook of junior high and examine the influence for students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(1) Compared Japanese high school students and AET

Nakamasu (1994) examined utterance judgment for high school students and AET. He found that the students used formal expression, and had less-valuation than AET and lack of familiarity. He contends that using inappropriate expression would mislead and be developed a feeling of distrust. English education focused on learning grammatical competence without the purpose or situation. However it’s necessary to know cultural background of native speaker and use different expression depending on the situation. He suggested 1. to recognize English cultural background 2. to teach some expressions depending on the situation 3. to have enough time to have communications.

(2) Character of Japanese Politeness

Cho (203) indicates that Japanese has three type of politeness expression and they use them depending on the person and situation. It calls relative honorifics. They focus on social relationship or friendship such as inside and outside but not age.

(3) Positive Politeness between women and men

Nakamasu (1994) introduced Scarcella’s analysis that positive politeness and negative one. He defines politeness including interaction, familiarity, small talk, funny, repeat as positive politeness and vague, indirect expression, impersonalization as negative politeness. Janet (1995) states that women and men are likely to be used and interpreted very differently in different contexts and cultures. For instance, some compliments may be
accepted as tokens of solidarity by women but experienced as an embarrassment by men.

(4) Judgement of Politeness

Aoki (1988) examined judgement of politeness for native speakers, English teachers and university students in Japan. Accordingly teachers and students had the close answer. Consequently teachers have a great effect on students apparently. The biggest gap of judgement between native speakers and the other group was “May I”, “Could I” and “Could you”. Native speakers judged “May I” politer than the other phrase, but the other group did totally different. Aoki (1987) stated that it may be because Japanese learned “May I” earlier than the other phrases and it was often used by the textbook. Aoki (1988) argued the students swallowed teachers judgement directly. Beyond that, not only their teaching, but also Japanese culture may influent. He pointed out that Japanese students should learn efficiently and properly.

3. METHOD

The subjects of this study will be 60 students, aged between 18 to 20 years old, who major in different course. Similar to the Aoki (1987) study, this study will be used a questionnaire. Firstly, they will fill the questionnaire about how many they can write the English expressions. It means that for one expression, imaging the object, how many kind they can write. Secondary, they will evaluate their expressions according to the five-grade system. Thirdly, showing a lot of expressions including not only politeness expressions but also imperative sentences, they will pick up to third place that they consider the politest expression and also the lowest. They will write the objects that they picked up. Finally, they will be asked their TOEIC score or studying abroad period to measure their English academic ability. It will take 15 minutes.

4. REFERENCES


