TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES OF
JAPANESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

BY
RIKA HANAMITSU

2002年2月
Chapter 1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to examine the conflict management styles of Japanese learners of English and the language influence on their styles in order to help them learn how to communicate effectively with people from other cultures. Over the last several decades, a number of studies have examined interpersonal and intercultural conflict management styles (e.g., Cole, 1996; Cupach & Canary, 1997; Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 1997; Rahim, 1983, 1986; Ting-Toomey, 1985, 1988; Ting-Toomey et al, 1991, 2000). Although the researchers have argued that cultural norms and rules strongly influence how people handle conflict, little attention has been paid to the language and language use in which people have to deal with intercultural conflict.

Japanese people have to manage conflict in English in many cases when interacting with people from different cultures. As the previous research shows, Japanese people may use particular conflict management styles because of their cultural background. However, the question remains as to whether certain language skills (e.g., the speaking skill as part of communicative skills) or language proficiency may affect their choice of conflict management styles. How they learned to develop communicative skills in English (e.g., textbooks, activities, etc.) may also have an influence on how they handle conflict in English. If the learners are provided with more opportunities to handle conflict in English classrooms as activities or to learn useful expressions to state different opinions in model dialogs, they may be able to manage conflict in different ways and even more successfully.

This thesis consists of two parts: a literature review and three kinds of studies. In the first part, Chapters 2 to 5, a brief historical overview of the field of
intercultural communication is presented and its contribution to English language teaching in Japan is examined as well. In addition, theoretical frameworks of conflict and styles of conflict management are discussed in relation to concepts of intercultural communication.

The second part includes three kinds of studies on the conflict management styles of Japanese learners of English. In Chapter 6 (Study One), Oral Communication A textbooks are analyzed as preparation for Studies Two and Three. Prior to investigating the conflict management styles of Japanese learners of English with both quantitative (Study Two) and qualitative (Study Three) approaches, the textbooks, which are supposed to focus mainly on settings in everyday life, are examined in terms of conflict situations. In Chapter 7, hypotheses including suppositions and research questions are posited for Study Two to examine the variables that influence conflict management styles of Japanese learners of English: gender, relational distance, personality, and language proficiency. In Chapter 8, the method of the study including the design of the questionnaire is discussed. The results of the questionnaire are analyzed in Chapter 9. In Chapter 10, the method of Study Three, role plays, is explained and the results are discussed in Chapter 11 in relation to the results of Study One. Chapter 12 discusses the results of Studies One to Three and attempts to offer suggestions for English teaching in Japan to develop learners' English skills for successful communication. The final chapter, Chapter 13, deals with characteristics and limitations of the study, and directions for future research.
Chapter 2 Studies on Language and Culture: Trends before Edward T. Hall

In this chapter, the emergence of study on the relationship between language and culture is briefly discussed from a historical perspective, starting with the work of Malinowski (1923). The work of Malinowski is one of the earliest studies on the relationship between language and culture. He examined the functions of language in social interaction and introduced the notion of "phatic communion." He also acknowledged the difference between philologists' linguistic concepts and those of anthropologists, and emphasized the importance of "context of situation" (Malinowski, 1923). His concept of context of situation was taken up by Firth, who emphasized the relationship between language and personality, and developed the concept with a more refined method. He attempted to "link language studies with social human nature," emphasizing "persons and personalities as active participators in the creation and maintenance of cultural values" (Firth, 1957, p. 186).

American Structuralism developed from the anthropological Boas-Sapir model. Whorf's view on the interdependence of language and thought has become known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and his controversial statements have drawn much attention. Whorf's concept of linguistic relativity was often criticized during the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s by followers of Chomsky, who established universal grammar. In the 1990s, linguists and anthropologists reexamined the notion of linguistic relativity. Developments in cognitive science and ethnography enabled them to examine and understand the notion at deeper levels. Whorf also had a great influence on E. T. Hall and contributed to the foundation of intercultural communication.
Chapter 3 A Historical Overview of the Field of Intercultural Communication

In this chapter, as one of the earliest approaches to the field, a brief historical overview of intercultural communication will be discussed based on Hall and his colleagues' work. Since intercultural communication issues emerged in many places at the same time, there are different approaches to the field. The field has also developed in relation to other fields, for instance, discourse analysis, conversational analysis, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, intercultural pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics, and so forth. Hall's work was important in innovating the young field of communication as well as in developing the Foreign Service Institute in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He applied general anthropological insights to specific problems in intercultural interaction and made a remarkable contribution to the establishment of the area known today as intercultural communication.

Intercultural communication as an academic field has changed and been elaborated in various ways over the past fifty years. Based on Hall's and his colleagues' contributions to the field, research topics have extended to intergroup contact and include ethnic identity, interpersonal communication issues such as conflict management, face negotiation, interethnic communication and intercultural communication competence, issues on sojourn including anxiety and uncertainty and ethnocentrism, and so forth. As it began and developed as an interdisciplinary field, intercultural communication will continue to influence linguistics, anthropology, and psychology, and no doubt will grow in significance in the field of foreign language teaching as well.
Chapter 4 English Teaching in Japan and Cultural Perspectives

This chapter examines how culture and communication have been introduced and incorporated into English language teaching in Japan. Especially, the points in the Course of Study revised between 1977 and 1999 are discussed in detail, since there are great changes among the three versions of the guidelines revised during the period in terms of dealing with cultural perspectives for effective communication. Prior to analyzing the Course of Study, a brief history of English teaching in Japan is discussed and the linguistic background of the changes is examined from the viewpoints of culture and communication. The need to develop intercultural communicative competence is also discussed as an important aspect of communicative competence in language teaching.

In the middle of the 19th century, English quickly replaced Dutch as the language used to learn about the West, and as the language spoken with visitors from other countries and in Japan's commercial relationship with the United States. After the Ministry of Education was established in 1871, Western culture was gradually introduced into Japan, mainly through the medium of the English language and encouragement from the government. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, less emphasis was being placed on English because of Japan's growth in the international arena. Although English still remained as a subject in the school curriculum, its role shifted to being necessary for succeeding in university entrance examinations. It is ironic that, at this time, the Grammar-Translation Method, which focuses on the teaching of grammatical rules, became pervasive in English language education in Japan, which had originally been intended to teach communicative skills.
In the 20th century, in addition to the Grammar-Translation Method, the Oral Method and the Direct Method greatly influenced English teaching in Japan. Palmer, who contributed to developing and spreading the Oral Method, considers the learners' objective to be to learn "language as speech," which includes primary speech (listening and speaking) and secondary speech (reading and writing). The Direct Method also emphasizes teaching languages as a means of communication, and everything is taught directly in the target language using pictures and gestures. Both methods have been modified and are used to teach communicative English skills today.

After World War II, the English language immediately regained its former level of popularity and importance along with educational reform in Japan. In 1947, the Fundamentals of Education Act and the School Education Act were announced, and the Ministry of Education published the Course of Study as a tentative plan. In 1952, the Central Council of Education (the Central Education Council) was formed. In 1956, the Ministry of Education instituted English throughout the country as a required subject for high school entrance examinations. The Audio-Lingual Method, which is known as the Oral Approach in Japan, became prominent. The approach, which emphasizes speaking and listening skills, has been relatively successful in Japan. In 1969, the Course of Study for junior high schools was revised to provide learners with opportunities to use language in communicative situations.

In 1977, the Course of Study for junior high schools was revised and compulsory English language classes were reduced. The Ministry of Education promoted various plans for international student exchanges in the 1980s, including
the 100,000 Foreign Students Plan since 1983 and the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, which started in 1987. In the Course of Study revised in 1989, the term "communication" was finally included as a key term in the objectives of foreign language teaching along with "culture" and "international understanding." Some of the striking changes observed in the 1989 version of the Course of Study reflect the recommendation concerning education for international understanding made at the 18th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural, Organization (UNESCO) in 1974. Along with the changes, subjects called "Oral Communication" English were introduced in high schools and the Communicative Approach drew attention as an alternative way to learn English through communication. The communicative competence argued by researchers such as Hymes (1971, 1972), Saville-Troike (1982, 1996), and Gumperz (1982) was emphasized for the first time in language teaching in Japan. The importance of learning culture in order to develop the communicative competence of language learners started to be recognized in the language classroom.

In 1995, the 15th Central Education Council was organized, and its first and second reports on forthcoming educational reforms were issued in July 1996 and June 1997, respectively. The Curriculum Council's final report, issued in June 1998, provided the nation with principles, recommendations and ideas for education for the new century which were to be specifically described in the Course of Study. The revised version of the Course of Study in 1999 gives a detailed explanation of the importance of intercultural understanding in foreign language learning. A new subject called "Ibunka Rikai (intercultural understanding)" has been introduced in
the new guidelines in order to develop language learners' cultural awareness. "Other issues concerning intercultural understanding" in the new guidelines include new content on the topics of settings and personal space between speakers, and other content that highlights different ways of communication depending on the language and culture. The effective use of nonverbal communication such as gestures and eye contact is also mentioned in the section on "English Expression." The importance of communicative competence and intercultural communication in English language teaching has finally been included and properly discussed in the national guidelines for education in Japan after decades of debate on English language education. The result is worth the long struggle, and if the instructions in the Course of Study are effectively put into practice, learners will improve their communicative language skills.

Chapter 5 Interpersonal and Intercultural Conflict

"Intercultural miscommunication and misattribution often underscore intercultural conflict" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 194). As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the goals of foreign language teaching is to help learners overcome difficulties in communication which arise from different communication styles. There are some cultural values people do not share and the differences influence their behavior, including the way they handle conflict.

In this chapter, definitions and features of interpersonal conflict and styles of managing conflict are explained before discussing intercultural conflict. The types and styles of conflict presented in this chapter will be modified and utilized to analyze the dialogs used in English textbooks in Chapter 6. In the next section,
concepts of intercultural communication are examined in relation to intercultural conflict, and issues in intercultural conflict are discussed.

There are different approaches to understanding interpersonal conflict, various types of conflict at different levels, and at least five managing styles of dealing with conflict. These conflict managing styles are dominating, integrating, compromising, obliging, and avoiding. People are likely to share most of the same categories in their viewpoints on conflict. However, their conflict managing styles vary depending on their cultural background as well as gender and generation.

There are four value-based dimensions that provide us with a deeper understanding of different styles in intercultural conflict. Individualism-collectivism values describe different approaches to conflict in contrastive cultures. Power distance also influences our behaviors when we are engaged in conflict. In addition, the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance and masculinity-femininity help us understand various cultural characteristics related to conflict management styles. Furthermore, the difference between low-context and high-context communication explains conflict style differences between cultures and individuals, while the construal of self dimension explains approaches to conflict at the individual level. Finally, differences in conflict styles and facework behaviors are closely related and create different attribution biases and misunderstandings.

These concepts of intercultural communication explain the tendencies of Japanese people's conflict management styles. Japanese culture is one of the most collectivistic and high-context cultures, and many people find a negative orientation in conflict. They tend to avoid conflict in order to maintain relationships and group harmony. As members of the most masculine culture in the masculinity-femininity
index, Japanese people tend to use different conflict management styles depending on the gender role. In addition, Japan has a large power distance culture, which makes it difficult for them to confront their superiors. Furthermore, they are reluctant to engage in conflict because of their strong uncertainty avoidance and face-saving behavior.

Chapter 6 Conflict Situations and Expressions in Oral Communication A

Textbooks (Study One)

As explained in Chapter 4, Oral Communication A, B, and C were introduced in English subjects in Japan along with the revision of the Course of Study in 1989. These three subjects were included in the curriculum in order to improve learners' communicative skills in English. As discussed in Chapter 5, Japanese people tend to be reluctant to deal with conflict due to their cultural background. However, they should be more encouraged to learn how to manage conflict effectively for successful communication.

In this chapter, Oral Communication A textbooks, which are supposed to focus mainly on settings in everyday life, are examined in terms of conflict situations. As presented in the previous chapter, conflict can be categorized into various types and there are at least five conflict management styles. Based on the features and the management styles of conflict, the dialogs in the textbooks are analyzed in order to determine conflict situations which are included in the materials for teaching communication. In addition to the conflict types and management styles, the functions to be taught in the dialog or lesson are considered when examining the textbooks. After analyzing the dialogs, the results are discussed in order to explore
how to teach conflict management effectively as a strategy in communication in English language classrooms.

According to the results, although Oral Communication A textbooks aim at improving basic communication skills, conflict situations, which need more complicated structures than situations without conflict, were observed in model dialogs in 13 out of the 15 selected textbooks. As for the conflict situations categorized by Cole (1996), the opinion conflict situation was observed in 23 dialogs, conflict of interest in 11 dialogs, and conflict of misunderstanding in two dialogs. The situations were categorized into six types and the expressions used in the dialogs were also classified into six groups. The dialogs were made to teach various functions such as how to request, how to ask frequency, and how to show preference other than how to disagree. Various expressions were used in the dialogs depending on the conflict situation and the function to be taught.

These results suggest that conflict situations can be included effectively in many kinds of situations to teach expressions with various functions even at the basic level. Oral Communication A, B, and C classes, which will be introduced as Oral Communication I and II in 2003, are great opportunities for the students to learn cultural differences including different conflict management styles as part of communicative skills. Dialogs should be created to raise the learners' cultural awareness from early stages so that they can realize the positive orientation of conflict, respect and learn from differences, and reach better understanding through managing conflict constructively.

The results of this study also provide a brief survey of the available textbooks in terms of conflict situations, and teachers interested in this topic can use it as a
guide to determine if they need to add supplementary material. In addition, the result of the study can be used to assist textbook writers to include a wider variety of conflict situations in order to provide a better balance of available strategies to students.

The choice of teaching material is basically important, but how to use the material is the most important part that determines the quality of the language classroom. Needless to say, experiential activities are highly recommended in Oral Communication classes. Despite the limitations that have made it difficult for the language teachers to provide such activities to the learners, there are possible solutions to make the best of the teaching material. As part of exercises in the textbooks or as supplementary material, some suggestions can be made. The suggestions include the effective use of films, role plays and simulation games, and non-Japanese teachers' contribution and collaboration with Japanese teachers. The important thing is to help the learners not only speak the language in the classroom but also communicate using the language in a certain situation. One of the difficulties for Japanese learners of English when managing conflict is that they are not used to dealing with it in English (Hanamitsu, 1999). The students will learn from the difficulty by experiencing the conflict situation in English even though it is an activity in the language classroom.

In order to develop Japanese English learners' conflict management skills for successful communication, providing them with opportunities to learn useful and appropriate expressions for conflict situations should be encouraged more in English classrooms. In addition, the learners should experience dealing with conflict in English using the expressions. Practicing English in conflict situations
will enable them to learn the positive orientation of conflict and the creative processes of understanding each other through conflict.

Chapter 7 Hypotheses and Research Questions (Study Two)

In Study Two, four hypotheses including 29 suppositions and seven research questions were posited to examine the variables that, in addition to the languages used to manage the conflict situation, influence conflict management styles: 1) gender, 2) relational distance, 3) personality, 4) English proficiency.

Suppositions were posited for each hypothesis in order to explore each one in detail. Five suppositions were posited to investigate the relationship between the respondents' gender. Nine suppositions were posited to examine how relational distance would influence conflict management styles. The suppositions tested respondents' conflict style preference in two conflict situations: conflict with an acquaintance and conflict with a close friend. Eight suppositions were posited regarding the relationship between personality and conflict management styles. The suppositions examined differences in conflict management styles between interdependent (collectivistic) respondents and independent (individualistic) respondents. Seven suppositions and seven research questions were posited to investigate how language proficiency would affect the respondents' choice of conflict management styles when interacting in English.

Gender

Hypothesis

(1) There will be language influence on the respondents' conflict management styles depending on the gender.
Suppositions

(1.1) Males will report using the dominating style more than females in Japanese interaction.

(1.2) Females will report using the compromising style more than males in Japanese interaction.

(1.3) Males will report using the dominating style more than females in English interaction.

(1.4) Females will report using the compromising style more than males in English interaction.

(1.5) Both males and females will report using the dominating style less in English interaction than in Japanese interaction.

Relational Distance

Hypothesis

(2) There will be language influence on the respondents' conflict management styles depending on the relational distance.

Suppositions

(2.1) Respondents will report using the integrating style more with a close friend than with an acquaintance in Japanese interaction.

(2.2) Respondents will report using the obliging style more with a close friend than with an acquaintance in Japanese interaction.

(2.3) Respondents will report using the compromising style more with a close friend than with an acquaintance in Japanese interaction.

(2.4) Respondents will report using the dominating style more with an acquaintance than with a close friend in Japanese interaction.
(2.5) Respondents will report using the avoiding style more with an acquaintance than with a close friend in Japanese interaction.

(2.6) Respondents will report using the dominating style with an acquaintance less when interacting in English than in Japanese.

(2.7) Respondents will report using the avoiding style with a close friend more when interacting in English than in Japanese.

(2.8) Respondents will report using the obliging style with a close friend more when interacting in English than in Japanese.

(2.9) Less significant difference will be found in respondents' conflict management styles when interacting with a close friend and an acquaintance in English than in Japanese.

Personality

Hypothesis

(3) There will be language influence on the respondents' conflict management styles depending on the personality.

Suppositions

(3.1) Respondents who are interdependent will report using the obliging conflict style more than independent respondents in Japanese interaction.

(3.2) Respondents who are interdependent will report using the avoiding conflict style more than independent respondents in Japanese interaction.

(3.3) Respondents who are independent will report using the integrating conflict style more than interdependent respondents in Japanese interaction.

(3.4) Respondents who are independent will report using the dominating conflict style more than interdependent respondents in Japanese interaction.
(3.5) Respondents who are interdependent will report using the integrating conflict style more when interacting in English than when interacting in Japanese.

(3.6) Respondents who are interdependent will report using the obliging conflict style less when interacting in English than when interacting in Japanese.

(3.7) Respondents who are independent will report using the dominating conflict style less when interacting in English than when interacting in Japanese.

(3.8) Respondents who are independent will report using the avoiding conflict style more when interacting in English than when interacting in Japanese.

Language Proficiency

Hypothesis

(4) Differences will be observed in the respondents' conflict management styles depending on their language proficiency.

Suppositions

(4.1) Respondents with high English proficiency will report using the integrating style more than respondents with low English proficiency.

(4.2) Respondents with low English proficiency will report using the obliging style more than respondents with high English proficiency.

(4.3) Respondents with low English proficiency will report using the avoiding style more than respondents with high English proficiency.

(4.4) Respondents with high English proficiency will report using the obliging style less in English than in Japanese.

(4.5) Respondents with low English proficiency will report using the dominating style less in English than in Japanese.

(4.6) Respondents with low English proficiency will report using the avoiding
style more in English than in Japanese.

(4.7) No significant differences will be observed in conflict management styles of the respondents with the experience of living in English speaking countries for more than two years (n = 28) between Japanese and English interaction.

In addition to the suppositions, seven research questions were asked in terms of the most important reason for choosing a particular conflict management style and the factors of language influence on conflict management styles.

(1.1) What will be the most important reason for choosing a certain conflict management style?

(1.2) Will it be different in Japanese interaction and English interaction?

(1.3) Will it be different for the respondents with high English proficiency and those with low English proficiency?

(2.1) How many respondents will feel that language influences their conflict management style when interacting in English?

(2.2) Will the influence be different for the respondents with high English proficiency and those with low English proficiency?

(3.1) What kind of factors will influence respondents' conflict management styles when interacting in English?

(3.2) Will they be different for the respondents with high English proficiency and those with low English proficiency?
Chapter 8 Method

Study Two (Questionnaire)

In order to test the suppositions and research questions posited in the previous chapter, a survey questionnaire was developed in Japanese and distributed to respondents. The questionnaire was conducted with 320 Japanese students (155 males and 165 females) enrolled in English class at three universities located in Tokyo and Kanagawa. Their average age was 19.30 (SD = .87) years. All of the respondents were taking one or more English classes conducted in English or had experiences of using English in actual communication outside the classroom, and they experienced struggle and frustration when confronting in their second language. The respondents were divided into two groups depending on their English levels. Based on the scores of a placement test conducted at one of the universities, the sample was collected from levels 1 (the best level)-4 for the respondents with high English proficiency and from levels 11 to 14 (the worst level) for the respondents with low English proficiency. In terms of the data collected from the other two universities, the respondents' English levels were equivalent or even higher than the respondents with levels 1-4. Their scores of English language proficiency tests such as Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and Jitsuyo Eigo Kentei [Practical English Proficiency Test] (Eiken) were used in order to determine their English levels. The high level was defined as above 550 for TOEFL, 750 for TOEIC, and pre-1st grade for Eiken produced by The Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP).

In the first section of the questionnaire, the respondents were instructed to fill
out the dependent conflict styles measure in one of the four scenarios in Japanese. The items were selected from the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). The setting in the conflict situation was basically the same, however, the gender of the other conflict interactant and the relational distance varied in each scenario. The respondents were asked to indicate how they would handle the conflict by circling the appropriate number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After completing the dependent measure questions in the first section, the respondents were instructed to give the most important reason from their point of view for their ways of handling the conflict.

The second section consisted of the 10-item independent-interdependent measure. The items were selected from the independent-interdependent scale developed by Yamaguchi (1994) and the Self-construal scale developed by Singelis (1994). The 10 items included shared questions between these scales. As explained in Chapters 5 and 7, the independent-interdependent scale was used to categorize the respondents into either individualistic or collectivistic.

In the third section, the respondents filled out 5 items selected from the 21-item CAI (Communication Anxiety Inventory) Form Trait developed by Booth-Butterfield and Gould (1986). The items from the CAI Form Trait were included in the questionnaire in order to exclude the respondents who were extremely unwilling to communicate with someone on a one-to-one basis. The respondents with the highest score (25) were excluded from the sample.

In the fourth section, the respondents were instructed to fill out the modified version of ROCI-II in a different conflict situation from the first section. The gender of the other interactant in conflict and the relational distance from the
interactant were the same as the first section, but the interactant was an overseas student and the respondents were supposed to deal with the conflict in English. After completing the dependent measure questions in the fourth section, the respondents were instructed to circle the number which indicated the most important reason for them as their ways to handle the conflict in English. Furthermore, the fourth section included two more questions asking if the conflict situation in English affected their ways of handling conflict or not and the reasons for their answer.

The fifth section consisted of a series of demographic questions such as age and sex, and it included questions concerning the respondents' experiences of living abroad (the age of the respondent, the length of the stay, the country, and the language used during the stay). The respondents also answered the question about studying English outside classes at school. Additionally, the respondents were instructed to give the score and the grade of English proficiency tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, and Eiken if they had taken any. Furthermore, the last section included the 9-item self-evaluation for the respondents' English listening and speaking skills.

The total length of each survey was 75 items and required approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Chapter 9 Data Analysis and Results

A series of t-tests were conducted to test the suppositions for each hypothesis. In order to examine the research questions, a series of chi-square tests were conducted comparing the respondents high in English proficiency with those low in
English proficiency.

Gender

The first hypothesis was confirmed and language influence was observed on the respondents' conflict management styles depending on the gender. According to the result of Supposition 1.1, male respondents reported using the dominating conflict management style significantly more than female respondents in Japanese interaction. Concerning Supposition 1.2, although the difference was not statistically significant, females tended to use the compromising style more than males. The results were consistent with the study by Cole (1996) and research by Barnlund (1990), Condon (1984), and Hall (1987) on the highly differentiated gender roles in Japanese culture in which males take dominant roles more than females. Both Suppositions 1.3 and 1.4 were confirmed and statistically significant difference was observed in using the dominating and compromising styles between male and female respondents in English interaction. The results suggest that the dominating style is a feature of Japanese males' conflict management style, and the compromising style is a feature of Japanese females' conflict management style. Supposition 1.5 was also confirmed and the respondents reported using the dominating style less in English interaction than in Japanese interaction. One reason that the respondents reported using the dominating style less in English interaction might be because it would be difficult for them to take the dominant role in English.

Relational Distance

The second hypothesis was confirmed and language influence was observed on the respondents' conflict management styles depending on the relational distance.
Results confirmed Supposition 2.1 and the respondents were significantly more likely to use the integrating style more with a close friend than with an acquaintance in Japanese interaction. The result was consistent with the previous research by Triandis (1995) and Cole (1996) and indicates that the respondents are likely to be more cooperative with ingroup members than with outgroup members. Results failed to confirm Suppositions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4. Significant difference was observed on relational distance in using the obliging style, however, the respondents reported using the obliging style more with an acquaintance than with a close friend. In addition, no significant difference was found with the compromising style between an acquaintance and a close friend. Furthermore, results failed to confirm that the respondents were significantly more likely to use the dominating style more with an acquaintance than with a close friend. In contrast, they reported using the dominating style more with a close friend than with an acquaintance in Japanese interaction. Supposition 2.5 was confirmed and the respondents reported using the avoiding style more with an acquaintance than with a close friend in Japanese interaction. Suppositions 2.6 and 2.7 were also confirmed. The respondents reported using the dominating style with an acquaintance less when interacting in English than in Japanese, and they reported using the avoiding style with a close friend more significantly when interacting in English than in Japanese. The results of Supposition 2.8 failed to confirm that the respondents were significantly more likely to use the obliging style with a close friend more when interacting in English than in Japanese. Supposition 2.9 was confirmed and less significant differences were found in the respondents' conflict management styles when interacting with a close friend and an acquaintance in English than in Japanese.
Personality

The third hypothesis was confirmed and language influence was observed on the respondents' conflict management styles depending on the personality. Suppositions 3.1 and 3.2 were confirmed and results show that interdependent respondents reported using the obliging and avoiding conflict styles more than independent respondents both in Japanese and English interaction. Suppositions 3.3 and 3.4 were also confirmed and independent respondents reported using the integrating and dominating conflict styles more than interdependent respondents both in Japanese and English interaction. The results indicate characteristics of interdependent (collectivistic) and independent (individualistic) people (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ting-Toomey, 1985, 1988, 1998). Supposition 3.5 was confirmed and interdependent respondents reported using the integrating conflict style more in English than in Japanese interaction. Supposition 3.6 was also confirmed and interdependent respondents reported using the obliging conflict style less in English than in Japanese interaction. The results were consistent with the research by Oetzel (1998) in which the language influence on the individual identity is discussed. Supposition 3.7 was confirmed and independent respondents reported using the dominating conflict style less in English than in Japanese interaction. Supposition 3.8 was also confirmed and independent respondents reported using the avoiding conflict style more in English than in Japanese interaction. The results were consistent with the previous study on Japanese college students (Hanamitsu, 1999).

Language Proficiency

The fourth hypothesis was confirmed and significant differences were observed
on the respondents' choice of conflict management styles depending on their English proficiency. Suppositions 4.1-4.7 were all confirmed. The respondents with low English proficiency reported using the avoiding and obliging styles more than those with high English proficiency, and the respondents with high English proficiency reported using the integrating style more than those with low English proficiency. The respondents with high English proficiency also reported using the obliging style less in English than in Japanese. In addition, the respondents reported using the dominating style less in English interaction than in Japanese interaction regardless of their English level. Furthermore, the respondents with low English proficiency used the avoiding style more in English than in Japanese. Finally, the respondents with high English proficiency, but without the experience of living abroad, reported using the obliging style more in Japanese interaction than in English interaction and using the dominating style more in Japanese interaction than English interaction. However, no significant differences were found between English interaction and Japanese interaction on conflict management styles for the respondents who had lived in English speaking countries for more than two years.

Research Questions 1.1-1.3

Research Questions 1.1-1.3 examined the most important reason for choosing a certain conflict management style. Approximately 30% of the respondents answered that the most important reason was "Because maintaining the relationship is important," and "Because it is a chance to understand each other," and "Because I'm not convinced," followed. No significant difference was found in respondents' answers in Japanese interaction. However, there were some significant differences between respondents with high English proficiency and those with low English
proficiency in English interaction. According to the results, 44.4% of the respondents with high English proficiency answered that the most important reason was "Because it is a chance to understand each other." In contrast, only 23.1% of the respondents with low English proficiency selected this reason for choosing a certain conflict style when interacting in English. More significantly, 48.8% of the respondents with low English proficiency answered that the most important reason was their lack of English proficiency, while 13.8% of those with high English proficiency selected that reason.

Research Questions 2.1-2.2

Research Questions 2.1 and 2.2 examined the language influence on the conflict management style. According to the results, 29 (18.1%) of the respondents with high English proficiency answered that there was no language influence on their conflict management style when interacting in English. In contrast, only 2 (1.3%) of the respondents with low English proficiency answered that English interaction affected their conflict management styles. In addition, these two respondents' reason for choosing a certain conflict management style was "Because I'm not good at dealing with conflict either in English or in Japanese." Therefore, all the respondents with low English proficiency felt that the language influenced their conflict management style when interacting in English.

Research Questions 3.1-3.2

Research Questions 3.1 and 3.2 examined factors of the language influence. According to the results, 112 (70%) of the respondents with high English proficiency answered that their lack of English speaking skill was one of the factors of the language influence, and answered on other factors as follows: "Because I
don't know useful English expressions to state different opinions (58.1%)," 
"Because I don't have enough general English skills (45%)," "Because I am not 
confident in my English (43.8%)," and "Because I am not used to interacting with 
foreigners (36.3%)." On the other hand, approximately 87% of the respondents 
with low English proficiency answered that their lack of confidence in English and 
that of English speaking skill were the factors of the language influence. As for 
other factors, the respondents answered as follows: "Because I don't have enough 
general English skills (66.3%)," "Because I don't know useful English expressions 
to state different opinions (65.0)," and "Because I am not used to interacting with 
foreigners (57.5%)." Statistically significant differences were found between the 
respondents with high English proficiency and those with low proficiency. More 
respondents with low English proficiency reported their lack of English speaking 
skill, that of general English skills, and that of confidence in English than those 
with high English proficiency. While only the respondents whose English 
proficiency is high and feel no language influence on conflict styles chose "Because 
I can express myself in English as well as in Japanese." The results suggest that the 
respondents with low English proficiency did not feel confident in English 
compared to those with high English proficiency because of their lack of general 
English skills, especially speaking skill which includes communicative competence. 
On the other hand, the respondents with high English proficiency felt the necessity 
of learning useful expressions to state their opinions which were different from their 
interactant's.

The results presented above will be discussed in relation to the results of 
Studies One and Three in Chapter 12.

26
Chapter 10 Method

Study Three (Role Plays)

As presented in the previous chapter, according to the results of Study Two, the language used in the conflict situation is likely to influence the respondents' conflict management styles. However, the respondents' behavior in actual communication in English needs to be observed as well to examine language factors affecting their conflict management styles. In order to observe interaction patterns and English expressions used in a conflict situation, role plays were conducted with 18 Japanese college students (10 males and 8 females) recruited from a university in Tokyo. The ages ranged from 18 to 22 and the average age was 20.72. They were instructed to talk to the American participants in English on a certain one-to-one conflict situation, and to reach agreement in approximately 10 minutes. After the role plays, they filled out a questionnaire on the role plays.

After the role plays were completed, all tape-recordings were transcribed and analyzed in terms of the Japanese participants' interaction patterns and expressions used in the conflict situation. Issues on language influence, gender difference of the interactor, and relational distance in managing conflict were examined through the results of the questionnaire.

In order to observe language influence more carefully in real interaction, the following four research questions were asked in terms of the factors of language influences on conflict management styles, the participants' interaction patterns, and English expressions used in a conflict situation.

(1) What kind of factors will affect participants' conflict management styles when interacting in English?
(2) Will they be different with the participants for high English proficiency and those with low English proficiency?

(3) What kind of interaction patterns will be observed between the participants?

(4) Will the participants effectively use the expressions observed in Oral Communication A textbooks?

Chapter 11 Data Analysis and Results (Study Three)

In this chapter, the results of Study Three are discussed in relation to the results of Studies One and Two. First, a pre-study conducted with Japanese college students is briefly explained to see what kind of expressions they would use to state different opinions. The purpose of discussing the pre-study with the results of Study Three is to examine the gap between the expressions they know and the ones they can actually use in English interaction. Second, the expressions used in the role plays are compared to the results of Study One. Third, the concluding part of each role play is analyzed depending on the interaction pattern.

Research Questions 1-2

The results of the questionnaire show that many of the Japanese respondents felt the language influence on their conflict management styles. They reported the importance of English speaking skill and the need of learning useful expressions to state different opinions to deal with conflict more effectively in English. Many of the participants with low English proficiency reported their lack of English speaking skill was the most important factor, while many of those with high English proficiency reported that they did not know useful expressions to state different opinions.
As for the gender of the interactant, approximately half of the respondents reported that it influenced their conflict management styles, while the rest of them reported it did not. In addition, most of the participants reported that they would change their conflict management styles if the interactant was their close friend.

In the feedback, many participants mentioned their lack of English speaking skill regardless of their English proficiency. However, some participants with low English proficiency tended not to give in or to become persistent because of their lack of speaking skill.

Research Question 3

The interaction patterns of the role plays indicate that the Japanese respondents with high English proficiency tended to integrate different opinions and agreed if they were convinced when the American participants gave them legitimate reasons. In contrast, the participants with low English proficiency tended to be persistent and did not try to integrate different ideas in spite of the time limit they had. In addition, pause and silence were frequently used by the participants with low English proficiency and it was not clear whether they meant agreement or disagreement in some role plays.

Research Question 4

In comparing with the results of the pre-study, the expressions used by the Japanese participants in the role plays did not have a wide variety, which suggests that their lack of speaking skill as part of communicative skills had influence on their expressions used in the conflict situation. Regarding expressions used in the conflict situation, some differences were observed between the Japanese participants and their American counterparts. The American participants had a
wider variety of negative expressions to show strong or weak disagreement and dislikes. They also used expressions for showing encouragement, while the Japanese participants hardly used them. On the other hand, more expressions to show agreement before disagreement were used by the Japanese participants than the American participants.

Chapter 12 Discussion

In this chapter, general patterns of findings are discussed in terms of the relationship between the respondents' conflict management styles and their gender, relational distance, personality, and English proficiency based on the results of Studies Two and Three. In addition, language influence on their conflict management styles are discussed more in detail based on the results obtained from Study Three. Furthermore, interaction patterns and expressions observed in Study Three are compared to the results of Study One. Finally, future issues are discussed to teach and learn how to communicate effectively through handling conflict in the language classroom.

In Studies Two and Three, the results indicate that the language used to manage the conflict had influence on some conflict styles used by Japanese people as well as gender, relational distance, and personality. The language they had to use had more influence on their conflict management style than the relational distance issue, while the respondents' personality had more influence on their conflict management style than the language they had to use. Regarding the relationship between language proficiency and conflict styles, significant differences were found between people with high English proficiency and those with low English proficiency.
These results suggest that Japanese people should be taught how to deal with conflict more in the English language classroom through communicative activities as well as learning cultural differences in conflict communication styles.

The results of Study Three clarified the respondents' use of the obliging style in English interaction depending their English proficiency. According to the results of the role plays and feedback written by the participants, the respondents can be divided into three groups in terms of using the obliging style when interacting in English. First, the respondents who were grouped as those who had low English proficiency tended to use the obliging style because of their lack of English skills. Second, as Oetzel (1998) points out, some participants might have felt more individualistic when interacting in English, but they might not have had the English speaking skill to integrate different opinions, and thus used the obliging style less and were persistent throughout without changing their minds. Third, the respondents with high English proficiency who felt quite comfortable communicating in English tended to use the integrating style instead of using the obliging style less. The results suggest that the respondents should be taught how to integrate different opinions as well as how to state different opinions and persuade the interactor.

In Study Three, the Japanese respondents with high English proficiency tended to integrate different opinions when the American participants tried to persuade them by giving legitimate reasons. In contrast, the participants with low English proficiency tended to be persistent throughout the interaction. As observed in their interactions, they appear to have had difficulty expressing themselves in English. The feedback given by participants of Study Three illustrates that many of the
participants with low English proficiency could not deal with conflict mainly because of their lack of English speaking skill. The results suggest that the respondents' speaking skill had a strong influence especially for those with low English proficiency on how they dealt with the conflict situation.

Regarding expressions used in the conflict situation, the American participants had a wider variety of negative expressions to show direct or indirect disagreement and dislikes, while the Japanese participants tended to show agreement before disagreement more frequently than their American counterparts. In comparing with the results of the pre-study, the expressions used by the Japanese participants in the role plays did not have a wide variety. The result suggests that their lack of speaking skill influenced the expressions they used in the conflict situation. As the results of Study One show, conflict situations can be included effectively in many kinds of situations to teach expressions with various functions even at the basic level. The results of Studies One and Three suggest that the learners should be provided with more opportunities to practice the language in communicative situations as well as to learn a wider variety of expressions to deal with conflict.

In the questionnaire of Study Three, many of the Japanese respondents reported that the language they had to use influenced their conflict management styles. Among the results concerning factors of the language effect, what the respondents needed to handle conflict more successfully was learning useful expressions to state different opinions to deal with conflict in addition to improving their English speaking skill. The results are consistent with Study Two in the sense that the main factors are the English speaking skill and useful expressions to handle conflict.

Based on the discussion of the results, the following suggestions can be made
for Japanese teachers and learners of English in order to develop their conflict management skills as a strategy for successful communication. Different styles of managing conflict can be introduced as an objective cultural aspect and should be taught in dialogs including various situations in textbooks of communication rather than conversation. Skills in handling conflict will develop the learners' intercultural communicative competence as well. In order to integrate culture and communication in the language classroom to develop the learners' intercultural competence, experiential activities and materials such as films would be helpful. Furthermore, it will be easier for younger learners to participate in skits or role plays including conflict compared to older learners. Finally, teacher training should be reorganized further and teachers' roles should be reassessed in order to teach language, culture, and communication more effectively.

Chapter 13 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although results which would contribute to studies on Japanese people's conflict management styles were found, several limitations should be noted. In this chapter, the limitations of this study and several issues which were not treated here in detail are partly combined to discuss directions for future research.

Study One helps to demonstrate how conflict situations are included in the textbooks to teach English in communication. Introducing conflict in model dialogs is one of the ways to help the learners to realize the positive orientation of conflict, respect and learn from differences, and reach better understanding through managing conflict constructively. Studies Two and Three help to extend theories on Japanese people's conflict management styles by examining their choice of
conflict styles both in Japanese and English interaction with language proficiency taken into consideration.

Several limitations should be noted when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the population of the sample was restricted to college students living around Tokyo area and it may not be representative of Japanese culture. The occupation and regional settings should be carefully taken into consideration when selecting a sample. Second, in Study Three, the distinction between the participants with high English proficiency and those with low English proficiency should be made clearer in terms of the speaking skill. Third, the results of Study One cannot be easily related to those of Study Three because how the participants learned English varies even if they used the same Oral Communication A textbook. The participants' background in terms of how they learned English should be taken into consideration in the future research.

Concerning directions for future research, the first area is to further examine the type of conflict. A wide range of conflict types should be systematically explored and carefully classified in future research. Second, further research has to be conducted in order to explore the use of the compromising style in terms of conflict types, conflict situations, and language influence. The third especially challenging area is individual personality. Along with gender, age, occupation and regional setting, individual personal characteristics should also be given attention. Fourth, competence in intercultural conflict management needs to be explored in relation to language skill along with the cultural value systems involved. Especially, further research should be conducted in order to explore the relationship between the use of the obliging style and language influence and proficiency. In
addition, in order to examine the language influence on the identity and value of individuals, the conflict management styles of the people from individualistic cultures should be also investigated when interacting in Japanese which may make them feel more collectivistic than they normally would. Lastly, textbooks to develop learners' communicative skills should be continuously examined in the future. The textbooks in press for Oral Communication I and II which will be introduced in 2003 may include a wider variety of conflict situations in various settings.

Concluding Remarks

We encounter conflict everywhere and every day. How people handle conflict is strongly related to different communication styles depending on their cultural background. Communication styles are included in subjective aspects of culture which should be taught in foreign language classrooms. Subjective aspects of culture need to be taught in order for learners to realize successful communication using the language through understanding each other. In order to improve language skills for everyday life conversation, learning positive orientation to conflict and practicing the language in various settings will help learners reach better understanding through conflict which has a constructive and creative process. They will not be able to become successful speakers of the global language without facing conflict, struggling through conflict, and, ultimately, learning from conflict.
References


