

## Lesson 1 (80 min.): Analysis of request strategies

### 1. [Situation]

What kinds of request situation are difficult? (e.g. To whom? About what request? When?)

Why do you think they are difficult?

### 2. [Affective factors] Some factors greatly influence the level of 'politeness.'

- ( relative status )
- ( closeness )
- ( severity of imposition )

Making requests is *a face-threatening act*. Try to make requests carefully and politely.

### 3. [Strategies for natural requests]

3.1 Let's take a look at NNS's requests (L1-3) and NS's ones (L1-4).

Japanese learner's cases:

The following are role-plays between a Japanese learner of English and a native English speaker. Read them and answer the following questions.

- Describe the situations of requests. (e.g., the purpose of the request, the status of both speakers)
- Explain any problems you found. (But ignore grammatical mistakes.)

#### Situation 1

JPN: Excuse me. John: Yes? JPN: Can I borrow your pen? John: Sure. Here you go. JPN: Thank you. John: No problem.	1. Situation  2. Problems
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#### Situation 2

JPN: Hi, John. John: Hi, Tom. How are you doing? JPN: Fine, thank you. How are you? John: Good. JPN: Ah, I'm now doing my writing, and I want you to correct this. John: Sure. JPN: So can I have an appointment? John: You can come anytime during my office hours tomorrow. JPN: Really? John: Yeah. JPN: Uh, I'll be at 3 o'clock tomorrow.	1. Situation  2. Problems
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John: Sounds good to me. JPN: Okay. John: See you then. JPN: Thank you. See you.	
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### 3.2 [Polite requests]:

*Polite requests* are often (more **indirect**) and (**longer**).

### 3.3 [Directness]: (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989)

#### a) ( **Direct** ) strategies

- 1) Giving an order  
- *Close the window.*
- 2) Showing that a speaker is requesting or expressing willingness  
- *I would like to ask you to close the window*
- 3) Showing speaker's desire  
- *I want you to close the window.*  
- *I would appreciate it if you could close the window.*

#### b) ( **Indirect** ) strategies

- 4) Suggesting  
- *How about closing the window?*
- 5) Asking about a hearer's ability  
- *Can you / could you close the window?*  
- *Will you / would you close the window?*  
- *Would you mind closing the window?*
- 6) Hints  
- *You have left the window open...*  
- *It's cold here.*

### 3.4 [Modifications]: The following techniques soften the force of the request. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989)

#### Change of grammatical choices:

- a) ( **Question** ): *Can you pass me the salt?* (vs. Pass me the salt.)
- b) (Negative question): *Can't you pass me the salt?*
- c) ( **Subjunctive** ): *Could you pass me the salt?* (vs. Can you pass me the salt?)
- d) ( **Present progressive** ): *I am wondering* if you could mail this for me. (vs. I wonder if...)
- e) ( **Past tense** ): *I wanted* to ask you about this. (vs. I want to ask you...)
- f) ( **combination of above** ): *I was wondering* if you *couldn't* mail this for me.

#### Softening words and phrases:

- g) Clean your room, (**please?**).
- h) Clean your room (**a**) (**bit**) before dinner.
- i) Could you (**possibly**) lend me your book?

- j) Do you ( think ) I could borrow your book?
- k) Do you ( mind ) if I borrowed your phone?
- l) ( Would )( it )( be ) OK if you help me?
- m) I ( was )( wondering ) if you could write it for me.