

Quantifying Requestive Imposition : Validation and Selection of Situations for L2 Pragmatics Research

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<https://doi.org/10.15017/5447>

出版情報 : 言語文化論究. 9, pp.135-159, 1998-03-01. 九州大学言語文化部
バージョン :
権利関係 :



Quantifying Requestive Imposition: Validation and Selection of Situations for L2 Pragmatics Research¹

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INTRODUCTION

In L1 communication experiments, researchers have been making utmost efforts to provide subjects with communicative situations which precisely reflect the latter's perception of situational variables involved (e.g., Baxter, 1984; Cody, McLaughlin, & Schneider, 1981). Those variables include status relationship between the interlocutors, social/psychological distance between the interlocutors, and imposition manifested in the situations. The assumption here is that subjects may perceive such situational variables differently from experimenters; in some cases, such difference could give rise to difficulties in interpreting experimental results (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Mischel, 1968). Hence, communication researchers specifically take the following procedures before presenting experimental situations to their subjects for assessment: (1) the situational variable in question is to be operationalized, i.e., to be translated into a set of factors measurable by any subjects to support the abstract notion empirically; and (2) experimental situations are to be established in a way that the situational variable is to be empirically validated as that reflecting subjects' own perception.

In the area of L2 experimental pragmatics, however, a methodological pre-requisite as such has long been neglected. In the discourse completion tests, for example, subjects are first instructed to read the experimental situations and then to write down appropriate utterances in their L2; but those situations have been presented without any validation as to subjects' perception of situational variables in question. In the present study, I will focus on the variable of "requestive imposition" and explore the way in which we could establish request situations accurately reflecting L2 learners' perception of imposition.²

1 This paper is based on Chapter Four of my doctoral dissertation (Takahashi, 1995). I would like to thank my committee members, Drs. Gabriele Kasper, Richard Schmidt, Haruko Cook, Shuqiang Zhang, and Fred Bail, for their constructive feedback and guidance.

2 Situational variables of "status/power" and "social distance (familiarity)" are held constant in the current study.

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Specifically, I assume here an experiment which is intended to examine the effects of differential imposition on Japanese EFL learners' perception of transferability of Japanese request strategies to English request contexts. In this paper, then, the goal is to empirically select relevant request situations which manifest high and low degrees of imposition, respectively. The notion of imposition has substantially been dealt with in Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) face-saving view of linguistic politeness (Fraser, 1990). Hence, following Brown and Levinson, the notion of "imposition" in this study is defined as the interference with the hearer's freedom of action or wants of self-determination.³

The following two steps are taken in the present study: (1) I will operationalize the notion of requestive imposition; and (2) based on the obtained operational definition, I will select request situations manifesting low and high degrees of imposition to be used in the transferability study. In order to operationalize the notion of requestive imposition, the literature of linguistic politeness and social psychology will briefly be reviewed so that possible and relevant factors of that notion can be identified. Since requests are considered as inherently face-threatening and thus "imposing" in nature, any situational factors judged to be crucial in request realization can be regarded as relevant factors of the notion of requestive imposition.

FACTORS OF THE NOTION OF REQUESTIVE IMPOSITION

Literature of Linguistic Politeness: Theoretical Framework

In Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) "face-saving view" of politeness, imposition is one of the factors determining the 'weightiness' of a face-threatening act (FTA). According to Brown and Levinson, the rank order of impositions for negative-face FTAs, such as requests, is greatly influenced and determined by the following conditions: whether the hearers have specific obligations to perform the requested acts; whether they have specific reasons (ritual or physical) for not performing them (i.e., reasons why the hearers shouldn't do them, and

3 The term "imposition" in this study does not incorporate what Matsumoto (1989) called "deferent imposition" as a relation-acknowledging device, a concept distinct from Brown and Levinson's notion of "imposition." Matsumoto (1989) argued against the application of the notion of imposition as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) to Japanese linguistic politeness. Instead, she stressed the significance of "deferent imposition" in Japanese society, where the acknowledgment of interdependence is encouraged. With the notion of "deferent imposition," it is honorable for a requestee (usually, a senior) to be asked to take care of the requester (usually, a junior); and thus the requestee rarely feels imposed on by the request. In this study, however, "imposition" as formulated by Brown and Levinson was shed light on, following the (counter-)argument that imposition interpreted as "interference of freedom" is still operative in Japanese linguistic politeness (see Bruch, 1990).

reasons why the hearers couldn't (easily) do them); and whether the hearers are known to actually enjoy being imposed upon in one way or another.

The above conditions affecting the ranking of imposition thus yielded at least three factors of the notion of imposition. Those were: (1) the hearer's obligation in performing the requested act; (2) the hearer's (social or personal) ability in performing the requested act; and (3) the hearer's enjoyment or willingness in performing the requested act.

In Leech's (1983) "conversational-maxim view" (Fraser, 1990), the Tact Maxim, one of the six Interpersonal Maxim for his "Politeness Principle," is most elaborated and relevant to the notion of requestive imposition. Of the five Tact Maxim scales determining the degree of tact appropriate to a particular speech situation, the following two can be considered equivalent to Brown and Levinson's imposition factor: the Cost-Benefit scale (i.e., the scale representing the cost or benefit of the proposed action to the speaker or to the hearer) and Optionality scale (i.e., the scale determining whether illocutions are ordered according to the amount of choice which the speaker allows to the hearer) (Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, & Ogino, 1986).

Leech argued that, in actual situations, the above two scales (plus the Indirectness scale) are interacting with the remaining two situational scales, the Authority scale (i.e., the scale representing the degree of distance in terms of the power of the hearer over the speaker or vice versa) and the Social Distance scale (the scale representing the degree of familiarity between the hearer and the speaker). With these two social scales, the Tact Maxim stresses the significance of "right" and "duties" in defining the standing of the speaker in relation to the hearer or vice versa.

In view of this line of argument, the politeness theory advanced by Leech provided the following three as the possible factors of the notion of requestive imposition: (1) the cost experienced by the hearer; (2) the speaker's right in requesting; and (3) the hearer's duties in compliance to the request.

Literature of Linguistic Politeness: Empirical Framework

As one of the compliance-gaining studies in making requests in English (as L1), Baxter (1984) attempted to reexamine Brown and Levinson's (1978) typology of politeness strategies and their three situational parameters (distance, power, ranking of imposition). In the process of constructing the data-eliciting instruments (questionnaires), Baxter systematically validated each situational parameter with respect to the subjects' perception. For the variable of imposition, the following four were considered as the factors tapping face threat in request realization: (1) difficulty in compliance; (2) reasonableness with respect to the requestive goal; (3) hearer's ability and efforts in carrying out request; and (4) hearer's self-

esteem damaged by the request.

In the framework of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), Blum-Kulka and House (1989) elicited the data from native speakers of Australian English, Canadian French, German, Hebrew, and Argentinean Spanish. The data were analyzed according to the levels of directness. Those directness strategies then were examined in more depth in relation to the six situational factors which were considered relevant for choice of request form. Of the six factors, the following four were proven to influence a request's level of directness: the hearer's obligation, the speaker's dominance, the speaker's right, and the likelihood of compliance (see also Blum-Kulka, Danet, & Gherson, 1985).

The six contextual factors focused upon in Blum-Kulka and House (1989) were also examined in House (1989). House asked German native speakers to assess the six situational factors. The obtained assessment data were analyzed in relation to the degree of standardization of the request situations, i.e., the extent to which role relations between the requester and the requestee are transparent and predetermined. House found that the standard situations were characterized by relatively high hearer's obligation, relatively high speaker's rights, and relatively low degree of difficulty in making the request. As for the non-standard situations, the opposite direction was found for each of the three situational variables (see House & Kasper, 1987, for similar interpretations of their findings on request strategies with respect to the above three situational variables).

In an effort to assess sociopragmatic factors in request contexts perceived by native Japanese speakers, Japanese EFL learners, and native American-English speakers, Shimamura (1993) shed light on the following three situational factors: (1) the requester's right to make the request; (2) the requestee's obligation; and (3) the likelihood for the requestee to comply with the request. Differing perceptions of "obligation" were identified between the Japanese native/EFL learner group and the American group. Nevertheless, all of the three variables were found to be significantly correlated with the choice of request strategies and the degree of face threat manifested in the situations, respectively.

Literature of Social Psychology: Theoretical/ Empirical Frameworks

From the social psychological perspectives, the Mannheim Model of Speech Production (Graumann & Herrmann, 1989; Herrmann, 1982, 1983; Hoppe-Graff, Herrmann, Winterhoff-Spurk, & Mangold, 1985; Mangold & Herrmann, 1987; Winterhoff-Spurk, Herrmann, & Weindrich, 1986) provided a base for identifying relevant factors of the notion of imposition. The Mannheim Model addressed the issue of context dependency of speech production, primarily by focusing on situational parameters essential to the production of requests.

The principle of the general model postulated by the Mannheim researchers is the "Pars-pro-toto (one of many) principle." According to this principle, what the speaker says (semantic input) constitutes only a part of what he/she means (propositional base). The general model claims that the crucial determinants in selecting the particular components of "propositional base" to obtain "semantic input" are the specific features of the speech situations.

In applying the general model to the production of requests, Hoppe-Graff et al. (1985) proposed the following three conditions, which must be fulfilled by the speaker (requester): (1) the speaker has a primary goal; (2) the speaker assumes that the hearer is basically willing and able to carry out the requested action; and (3) the speaker has the legitimation to oblige the hearer to do the requested action. They argued that requests can be made by verbalizing one of the above conditions (see Labov & Fanshel, 1977, for a similar line of argument).

Hoppe-Graff et al. evidenced (using a protocol analysis) that the following three cognitively represented contextual parameters were actually operative in selecting the request forms: (1) the hearer's ability to perform the requested action; (2) the hearer's willingness to perform the requested action; and (3) the speaker's legitimation to request the action.

Selection of the Imposition Factors for This Study

In order to summarize the review section, the factors obtained from the linguistic politeness literature and the social psychology literature have been integrated as shown in Table 1.⁴ [The factors from the social psychology literature are italicized.]

The higher-order rank has been given to the construct of "reasonableness (or legitimacy)," which subsumes the "hearer's obligation" and the "speaker's right." The "likelihood for the hearer to comply with the request" and the "speaker's difficulty in making the request" have also been placed under the "reasonableness (or legitimacy)." This is because those two factors have cause-and-effect relationships with the "hearer's obligation" and the "speaker's right," respectively: when the hearers have high obligation with respect to the requestive goal, they are more likely to comply with the request; when the speaker

4 The factor "speaker's dominance over the hearer in requestive behavior" (from Blum-Kulka and House (1989) is excluded, however. In the CCSARP framework, only the context-internal factors are regarded as equivalent to the elements of the imposition factor in Brown and Levinson (1978,1987) (Blum-Kulka & House,1989; House,1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Kasper,1989,1990). The dominance factor is one of the context-external factors; and, moreover, this factor is to be controlled in the assumed transferability study. Accordingly, there are no reasons for its inclusion as a candidate for a relevant factor of the notion of imposition.

has a strong right to carry out the request, a relatively low degree of difficulty is felt in making the request (see House & Kasper, 1987; Kasper, 1989).

Furthermore, the following four factors have been subsumed under the “cost experienced by the hearer in compliance”: the “hearer’s ability (or efforts) to perform the requested action,” which entails the “hearer’s difficulty in carrying out the request”; and the “hearer’s enjoyment/willingness to carry out the request” and the “hearer’s self-esteem damaged by the request.”

Table 1. Potential Situational Factors for the Notion of Requestive Imposition.

Theoretical literature	Empirical literature
(No correspondence)	<u>Reasonableness/legitimacy of the request</u> (Baxter, 1984)
<i>Legitimation of the request</i> (Mannheim project)	<i>Legitimation of the request</i> (Mannheim project)
Hearer's obligation (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983)	Hearer's obligation (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; House, 1989; Shimamura, 1993)
(No correspondence)	Likelihood for the hearer to comply with the request (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Shimamura, 1993)
Speaker's right to make the request (Leech, 1983)	Speaker's right to make the request (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; House, 1989; Shimamura, 1993)
(No correspondence)	Speaker's difficulty in making the request (House, 1989)

Table 1. (Continued)

Theoretical literature	Empirical literature
<u>Cost experienced by the hearer in compliance</u> (Leech, 1983)	(No correspondence)
Hearer's ability in carrying out the request (Brown & Levinson, 1987) <i>Hearer's ability in carrying out the request</i> (Mannheim project)	Hearer's ability in carrying out the request (Baxter, 1984) <i>Hearer's ability in carrying out the request</i> (Mannheim project)
(No correspondence)	Hearer's difficulty in carrying out request (Baxter, 1984)
Hearer's enjoyment/willingness in carrying out the request (Brown & Levinson, 1987) <i>Hearer's willingness in carrying out the request</i> (Mannheim project)	(No correspondence) <i>Hearer's willingness in carrying out the request</i> (Mannheim project)
(No correspondence)	Hearer's self-esteem damaged by the request (Baxter, 1984)

Of the factors summarized in Table 1, those which meet either or both of the following two conditions have been decided to be included in the operational definition: (1) they must appear in both the linguistic politeness and the social psychology literature; and (2) they must appear in both the theoretical and the empirical literature. The blocked portions in the table contain the factors which

meet the above criterion. Consequently, the following factors have been included for the operational definition of imposition in the present study:

(1) The speaker's legitimacy in requesting the hearer to do the action.

This subsumes the following two factors:

i) The speaker's right to make the request.

ii) The hearer's (perceived) obligation in carrying out the request.

(2) The hearer's cost (the cost experienced by the hearer in compliance to the request).

This subsumes the following two factors:

i) The hearer's ability to carry out the request.

ii) The hearer's willingness to carry out the request.

Since "hearer's cost" is a higher-order construct, it has to be included here despite its meeting neither of the above conditions.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF IMPOSITION

Based on the factors of requestive imposition identified in the previous section, the imposition in request realizations has been operationalized as the requestive imposition rate in the following formula:

Requestive imposition rate = Speaker's Legitimacy + Hearer's (perceived) Cost

The "speaker's legitimacy" consists of the following two factors:

Speaker's Legitimacy = Speaker's Right + Hearer's (perceived) Obligation

The "hearer's (perceived) cost" has further been defined as follows:

Hearer's (perceived) Cost = Hearer's Ability + Hearer's Willingness

To summarize the above, the following formula has been adopted to calculate the degree of requestive imposition:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Requestive imposition rate} = & \text{Speaker's Legitimacy (Speaker's Right +} \\ & \text{Hearer's (perceived) Obligation)} \\ & + \\ & \text{Hearer's (perceived) Cost (Hearer's Ability +} \\ & \text{Hearer's Willingness)} \end{aligned}$$

The degree of each of the four situational factors is measurable with a 5-point rating scale. Each factor is to be understood on the scale as follows:

Value 5:

- = the speaker definitely does not have the right to request the hearer to do the action.
- = the hearer definitely does not have any obligation to comply with the request.
- = the hearer definitely cannot do the requested action.
- = the hearer is definitely not willing to carry out the action.

Value 1:

- = the speaker definitely has the right to request the hearer to do the action.
- = the hearer definitely has obligation to comply with the request.
- = the hearer definitely can do the requested action.
- = the hearer is definitely willing to carry out the action.

If the obtained summative values are closer to 4 [(1 (Right) + 1 (Obligation)) + (1 (Ability) + 1 (Willingness))] , the degree of requestive imposition is understood as lowest and thus the requestive goal is least imposing. On the other hand, if the summative values are closer to 20 [(5 (Right) + 5 (Obligation)) + (5 (Ability) + 5 (Willingness))] , the degree of imposition is highest and thus the act of request is considered as most imposing.

SELECTION OF THE SITUATIONS

Pre-Experiment

The primary objective of the pre-experiment is to examine the feasibility of the request situations initially constructed for the transferability study. Additionally, it is intended to examine the approximate level of imposition manifested in each situation. The request situations selected in this pre-experiment are to be assessed in terms of the degree of imposition in the experiment arranged in the next section.

METHOD

Subjects

Eight native Japanese speakers (five males and three females) participated in this pre-experiment. All of them were graduate students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Their mean length of residence in the U.S. was 4.25 years,

ranging from 2 years to 7 years, at the time of the experiment. Thus, they were judged to be familiar enough with both the Japanese and American cultures. Their familiarity with both cultures was crucial in that they could determine whether a given request situation is feasible in those two societies.

Materials

Eighteen request situations were prepared. All the situations illustrated the cases in which a college student asks his/her (male) professor to do something for him/her. These situations were constructed based on the information obtained from two Japanese college professors on possible requests to be made by Japanese college students to their professors. The two professors were well familiar with both American and Japanese campus situations. Care was thus taken here to create situations which could be encountered on both American and Japanese campuses. The familiarity between the interlocutors was described as "not so familiar with each other" as often reflected in the relationship between a college professor and a student who is just taking or took his course for credits. Each of the eighteen situations was written in Japanese and printed on a 3 x 5 inch card.

Procedure

Each subject was requested to participate in the experiment individually at his/her most convenient time. The subjects were first instructed to set aside the situations which were judged to be opted out both on American and Japanese campuses or on either of them. After completing this task, the subjects were asked to sort out the situations into three levels of imposition based on their intuitive judgments on the difficulty in making the request: "highly difficult to ask," "difficult to ask," and "easy to ask."

RESULTS

A moderately high mean inter-rater reliability (percentage of agreement) was obtained (Mean: 0.788, ranging from 0.667 to 1.000). Only the situations which were judged to be encountered in both American and Japanese campuses by seven subjects out of the eight were included in the imposition experiment in the next section. Based on this selection criterion, thirteen situations were selected out of the eighteen.

Those thirteen request situations were further examined in terms of the three levels of imposition: High (highly difficult to ask), Mid (difficult to ask), and Low (easy to ask). For each of the thirteen situations, the imposition level which was most frequently assigned by the subjects was decided to be used as the representative level of imposition for the particular situation.

The selected thirteen situations were as follows, with their levels of imposition in the parentheses:

- (1) The "Borrowing Book" situation (Low): asking the professor to lend his book for a term paper.
- (2) The "Marking Problem" situation (Low): asking the professor to correct a few grading mistakes on the exam.
- (3) The "Wrap-up Party" situation (Low): asking the professor to attend the wrap-up party for the seminar.
- (4) The "Dictionary" situation (Low): asking the professor to recommend a good dictionary.
- (5) The "Reference Book" situation (Low): asking the professor to allow him to keep the professor's reference book for a term paper.
- (6) The "Thai Lesson" situation (Low): asking the professor to introduce his Thai friend for learning Thai.
- (7) The "Thesis" situation (Low/Mid): asking the professor to return the term paper as a base for the thesis.
- (8) The "Recommendation" situation (Mid): asking the professor to write a recommendation letter for admission to an overseas university.
- (9) The "Feedback" situation (Mid): asking the professor to give him more detailed comments on a paper.
- (10) The "Appointment" situation (Mid): asking the professor to reschedule an appointment.
- (11) The "Paper Due" situation (High): asking the professor to extend the due date for the term paper.
- (12) The "Make-up Exam" situation (High): asking the professor to give him a make-up exam.
- (13) The "Mid-term Exam" situation (High): asking the professor to allow him to take a mid-term exam one day earlier than scheduled.

Imposition Experiment

The goal of this experiment is to select experimental situations to be used in the transferability study. For the purpose of increasing the reliability of the experiment, two situations are set up for "low" and "high" imposition conditions, respectively. Hence, a total of four request situations ought to be established. Data obtained from the two situations in each imposition group are to be collapsed for a statistical analysis with the mean imposition value of the two representing the particular imposition group.

The following two points should be noted here: (1) the two situations in each imposition group must be significantly similar to each other in terms of the degree of imposition (because data from each situation are supposed to be collapsed

by averaging them); and (2) the two groups of imposition (i.e., the low-imposition situations and the high-imposition situations) ought to be significantly dissimilar to each other in terms of the degree of imposition. Those two points should be confirmed both in the Japanese request context and in the English request context. This is because subjects in the transferability study are supposed to examine the request situations in both languages in their transferability judgments. Furthermore, the imposition perception for the Japanese request situations ought to be significantly similar to that for the corresponding English request situations; otherwise, the results of the transferability of Japanese request strategies to English contexts might be confounded with possible cross-cultural differences in perception of imposition (see Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Shimamura, 1993). The situations to be used in the transferability study thus ought to be validated in every aspect addressed above.

METHOD

Subjects

Sixty-six male Japanese college students were asked to participate in the current experiment. Their mean age was 19, ranging from 18 to 20. At the time of the experiment, all of them were taking general English courses as one of their credit requirements while they were classified as commerce majors.

The subjects were divided into two groups: Group A for the Situational Perception Test-Japanese version and Group B for its English version (see the section of “materials” for more details on this test and its two versions). Group A consisted of 34 students; and 32 students formed Group B. None of them had ever stayed in English-speaking countries beyond one week.

Materials

The questionnaires called “Situational Perception Test (SPT)” were constructed, in which the subjects were asked to rate the designated situational parameters related to the requestive imposition. Two versions of the tests were prepared: one was to assess the imposition parameters in the “Japanese request context” (hereafter, SPT-Japanese) and the other was intended for the “English request context” (hereafter, SPT-English).

The descriptions of the requester/requestee and of their relationship with each other were specified on the cover page as follows:

- (a) the requester is “you” as a college student.
- (b) the requestee is “your professor.”
- (c) “your professor” is a male Japanese in his 40s.
- (d) “you” are not so familiar with the professor, i.e., “you” know him

just because you have taken a course from him or you are currently taking his course. An emphasis was placed on the subjects' rating from their own perspectives as reflected in the term "you."

Each test form consisted of the thirteen request situations, which were selected in the pre-experimental stage above. On a separate page, each situational description was provided, which was further followed by the rating tasks. Both the situational descriptions and the rating tasks were presented in Japanese for the SPT-Japanese version. For the SPT-English version, they were provided in both Japanese and English, i.e., an English translation of the Japanese.

The relevant English translation equivalents of the Japanese situational descriptions were obtained using the "back-translation" technique. This technique was encouraged by Brislin, Lonner, and Thorndike (1973) to validate the cross-cultural equivalence in materials in the area of cross-cultural psychology. One Japanese/English bilingual speaker was asked to engage in the back-translation task. He was a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and a trained translator (Japanese/English). He did not participate in the pre-experiment and thus was not familiar with any of the thirteen situations at all. This bilingual speaker back-translated the English situational descriptions translated by myself into Japanese. The analysis was done with a sentence of the back-translated Japanese and its content as a unit of analysis.

Based on the operational definition of requestive imposition established above, the four 5-point rating scales were provided along with the instructional questions (see Appendix). The specifications assigned to values "1" and "5" were, however, opposite to those established in the operational definition of requestive imposition above. It was judged to be psychologically more natural for the negative statement (e.g., "Definitely I don't think so.") to be represented with the smaller value (e.g., "1") and for the affirmative statement (e.g., "Definitely I think so.") to be characterized with the larger value (e.g., "5"). Hence, in the data analysis, each rating value ought to be converted into the one established in the section of the operational definition of imposition.

Four forms were prepared for the SPT-Japanese version and the SPT-English version, respectively. The presentation order of the thirteen situations was counterbalanced across these four forms.

Procedure

The questionnaires (both the SPT-Japanese version and the SPT-English version) were administered to the subjects in one of their general English classes. For each situation, the subjects were instructed to rate each of the four items (i.e., speaker's right, hearer's obligation, hearer's ability, and hearer's willingness) by following the instructional questions. They were told that no time limitation

was set for this current task. On average, the majority of the subjects completed the task in 30 minutes or so.

Data Analysis

As mentioned above, each rating value was converted in the following manner: 1 --> 5, 2 --> 4, (3 --> 3), 4 --> 2, 5 --> 1. Then, for each situation and for each subject, the requestive imposition rate was computed based on the operational definition of imposition.

Two phases of the data analysis (Phase 1 and Phase 2) were followed in order to address several points presented earlier. In Phase 1, the data obtained with the SPT-Japanese version and the SPT-English version were analyzed by specifically addressing the following two points as the selection criteria of situations: (1) in both the Japanese and English request contexts, the two situations in each imposition group must be significantly similar to each other in terms of the degree of imposition; and (2) in both the Japanese and English request contexts, the two groups of imposition (i.e., the low-imposition situations and the high-imposition situations) must be significantly dissimilar to each other in terms of the degree of imposition. From this phase of analysis, two low-imposition situations and two high-imposition situations were elicited as the potential situations to be used in the transferability study.

The design here involved one factor, "situation," as an independent variable. Hence, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with repeated measures on "situation" (thirteen levels) ($\alpha = .05$) (Type III sums of squares). The dependent variable was the requestive imposition rate. Subsequently, pairwise means comparisons were performed for the situations to be compared ($\alpha = .05$) (Type III sums of squares).

In, Phase 2, an attempt was made to confirm the similarity in imposition perception between the Japanese request situations and the corresponding English request situations selected in the previous phase. As the statistical procedure, a one-way ANOVA was performed ($\alpha = .05$). The dependent variable was the requestive imposition rate; and the independent variable was "request context" (two levels: Japanese/English).

RESULTS

Phase 1

Tables 2 and 3 show the results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA performed on the data elicited with the SPT-Japanese version and the SPT-English version, respectively. The effects of "situation" were found to be significant at $p < .0001$ for both the Japanese and the English request contexts.

In Table 4, the situations in the Japanese request context are ranked from the least imposing to the most imposing, together with their means, standard deviations, and standard errors. The same attempt is made for the situations in the English request context as shown in Table 5.

Table 2. Results of One-Way Repeated Measures ANOVA: Effect of Situation on Imposition (Japanese request context).

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Situation	931.387	33	28.224	31.514***
Subject	2529.679	12	210.807	
Subject(Group)	2648.937	396	6.689	

Note: *** $p < .0001$

Table 3. Results of One-Way Repeated Measures ANOVA: Effect of Situation on Imposition (English request context).

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Subject	1316.017	31	42.452	21.598***
Situation	2386.760	12	198.897	
Subject(Group)	3425.702	372	9.209	

Note: *** $p < .0001$

As indicated in the results summarized in Table 4, the situations of "Marking Problem," "Dictionary," and "Thesis" were relatively less imposing in the Japanese request context. Those three situations were also less imposing in the English request context though they were ranked differentially (see Table 5). This suggested that any two of them might be used as the low-imposition situations in the transferability study. With regard to the high-imposition situations, Tables 4 and 5 show that the "Appointment" and "Paper Due" occupied the same ranks in the Japanese and English request contexts as the most imposing situations. Hence, those two situations could be regarded as the candidates for the high-imposition situations.

Table 4. Means Summary of the Situations Ranked in Terms of Degree of Imposition: Japanese Request Context (from least to most imposing).

Situation	count	Mean	SD	SE	
Marking Problem	34	6.441	2.743	.471	<---
Dictionary	34	6.559	2.710	.465	<---
Thesis	34	6.882	2.422	.415	<---
Borrowing Book	34	8.618	2.663	.457	
Recommendation	34	9.176	2.540	.436	
Reference Book	34	9.500	3.212	.551	
Thai Lesson	34	10.235	3.313	.568	
Feedback	34	10.588	2.787	.478	
Wrap-up Party	34	10.794	2.683	.460	
Make-up Exam	34	11.029	3.128	.537	
Mid-term Exam	34	11.441	3.249	.557	
Appointment	34	13.706	3.070	.527	<---
Paper Due	34	14.412	2.862	.491	<---

Table 5. Means Summary of the Situations Ranked in Terms of Degree of Imposition: English Request Context (from least to most imposing).

Situation	count	Mean	SD	SE	
Marking Problem	32	5.594	2.354	.416	<---
Thesis	32	6.500	3.162	.559	<---
Dictionary	32	7.469	3.370	.596	<---
Borrowing Book	32	8.062	3.689	.652	
Recommendation	32	9.469	3.121	.552	
Wrap-up Party	32	9.594	2.674	.473	
Reference Book	32	9.750	4.056	.717	
Thai Lesson	32	9.938	3.645	.644	
Feedback	32	10.250	3.427	.606	
Mid-term Exam	32	11.000	3.959	.700	
Make-up Exam	32	11.688	3.335	.590	
Appointment	32	13.156	4.017	.710	<---
Paper Due	32	14.375	3.338	.590	<---

In order to conclusively sort out which two would be used as the low-imposition situations or as the high-imposition situations in the transferability study, similarities in imposition manifested in those situations were analyzed. Pair-wise means comparisons were performed on the following paired situations both in the Japanese request context and in the English request context ($\alpha = .05$) :

For the low-imposition situations: "Marking Problem vs. Dictionary,"

"Marking Problem vs. Thesis," and "Dictionary vs. Thesis."

For the high-imposition situations: "Appointment vs. Paper Due."

The results of the means comparisons are presented in Table 6. Note that the pairs' imposition similarities in the legitimacy dimension (Speaker's Right + Hearer's (perceived) Obligation) and in the cost dimension (Hearer's Ability + Hearer's Willingness) were also examined (and presented in parentheses in the table). However, these served as supplementary findings in selecting situations for the transferability study.

Table 6. Results of Means Comparisons in Low-Imposition Situations and in High-Imposition Situations.

Situations compared	df	F	p-value	Similarity
<u>For low imposition situations</u>				
Jap: Marking Prob. vs Dictionary	1	.035	.8513	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(5.794)	(.0165)	(different)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(4.975)	(.0263)	(different)
Eng: Marking Prob. vs Dictionary	1	6.108	.0139	different
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(2.374)	(.1242)	(similar)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(7.253)	(.0074)	(different)
Jap: Marking Prob. vs Thesis	1	.495	.4823	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(.054)	(.8159)	(similar)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(.983)	(.3221)	(similar)
Eng: Marking Prob. vs Thesis	1	1.427	.2330	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(4.844)	(.0284)	(different)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(.005)	(.9450)	(similar)
Jap: Dictionary vs Thesis	1	.266	.6063	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(4.727)	(.0303)	(different)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(10.380)	(.0014)	(different)
Eng: Dictionary vs Thesis	1	1.631	.2024	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(.436)	(.5095)	(similar)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(7.630)	(.0060)	(different)
<u>For high imposition situations</u>				
Jap: Appointment vs Paper Due	1	1.266	.2611	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(4.076)	(.0592)*	(similar)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(.027)	(.8689)	(similar)
Eng: Appointment vs Paper Due	1	2.581	.1090	similar
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(4.220)	(.0562)*	(similar)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(.577)	(.4480)	(similar)

Note: * p-value adjusted by the Greenhouse-Geisser correction

Jap = Japanese request context

Eng = English request context

As one of the selection criteria of situations, in both the Japanese and English request contexts, the two situations in each imposition group must be significantly similar to each other in terms of the degree of imposition. According to the results summarized in Table 6, the “Marking Problem - Thesis” pair best met the above criterion among the candidates for the low-imposition situations. They were similar enough to each other in every respect except the legitimacy dimension in the English request context. Consequently, at this stage, the “Marking Problem” and “Thesis” situations were tentatively decided to be used as the situations representing the low-imposition group in the transferability study.

With regard to the high-imposition situations, the “Appointment - Paper Due” pair satisfactorily met the above criterion. Hence, it was tentatively decided to adopt these two situations as the high-imposition situations in the transferability study.

Before proceeding to the next phase of experiment, however, the other selection criterion of situations ought to be checked here: in both the Japanese and English request contexts, the two groups of imposition (i.e., the low-imposition situations and the high-imposition situations) must be significantly dissimilar to each other in terms of the degree of imposition. To this end, the “Thesis” situation (more imposing than “Marking Problem”) was compared with the “Appointment” situation (less imposing than “Paper Due”) in both the Japanese and English request contexts. As indicated in Table 7, these two situations were significantly different in terms of the degree of imposition both in the Japanese and English request contexts.

Table 7. Results of Means Comparisons: Imposition Situation vs. High Imposition Situation.

Situations compared	df	F	p-value	Similarity
<u>Japanese request context</u>				
Thesis vs Appointment	1	118.329	.0001	different
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(79.733)	(.0001)	(different)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(93.417)	(.0001)	(different)
<u>English request context</u>				
Thesis vs Appointment	1	76.979	.0001	different
(Legitimacy dimension)	(1)	(40.740)	(.0001)	(different)
(Cost dimension)	(1)	(75.709)	(.0001)	(different)

Phase 2

For the low-imposition situations and high-imposition situations selected in Phase 1, it was examined whether the situation in the Japanese request context and the corresponding situation in the English context were not perceived significantly different in terms of the degree of imposition. The results are presented in Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11. These results indicated that, for each situation, the subjects perceived the same degree of imposition in the Japanese request context and in the English request context.

Table 8. Results of One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Request Context on Imposition - "Marking Problem" Situation (Low Imp.) (Japanese context vs. English context).

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Request context	11.838	1	11.838	1.803	.1840
Residual (error)	420.101	64	6.564		(n.s.)

Legitimacy dimension: $F(1, 64) = 1.153$, $p = .2870$, n.s.

Cost dimension: $F(1, 64) = 1.509$, $p = .2238$, n.s.

Note: Japanese context: $N = 34$, Mean = 6.441, SD = 2.743

English context: $N = 32$, Mean = 5.594, SD = 2.354

Table 9. Results of One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Request Context on Imposition - "Thesis" Situation (Low Imp.) (Japanese context vs. English context).

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Request context	2.410	1	2.410	.306	.5819
Residual (error)	503.529	64	7.868		(n.s.)

Legitimacy dimension: $F(1, 64) = 2.821$, $p = .0979$, n.s.

Cost dimension: $F(1, 64) = 4.146$, $p < .05$ (.0459), sig.

Note: Japanese context: $N = 34$, Mean = 6.882, SD = 2.422

English context: $N = 32$, Mean = 6.500, SD = 3.162

Table 10. Results of One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Request Context on Imposition - "Appointment" Situation (High Imp.) (Japanese context vs. English context).

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Request context	4.980	1	4.980	.393	.5330
Residual (error)	811.278	64	12.676		(n.s.)

Legitimacy dimension: $F(1, 64) = .030$, $p = .8639$, n.s.
 Cost dimension: $F(1, 64) = 1.052$, $p = .3088$, n.s.

Note: Japanese context: $N = 34$, Mean = 13.706, SD = 3.070
 English context: $N = 32$, Mean = 13.156, SD = 4.017

Table 11. Results of One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Request Context on Imposition - "Paper Due" Situation (High Imp.) (Japanese context vs. English context).

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Request context	.022	1	.022	.002	.9618
Residual (error)	615.735	64	9.621		(n.s.)

Legitimacy dimension: $F(1, 64) = .001$, $p = .9775$, n.s.
 Cost dimension: $F(1, 64) = .014$, $p = .9073$, n.s.

Note: Japanese context: $N = 34$, Mean = 14.412, SD = 2.862
 English context: $N = 32$, Mean = 14.375, SD = 3.338

From the two analyses above (Phase 1 and Phase 2), the following situations were judged to be validated in terms of the degree of requestive imposition and thus used in the transferability study: [only the English translations are provided below.]

For the low-imposition situations:

(1) "Marking Problem" situation:

"Today, Professor C returned the graded French exam to you. After the class, you and your classmates were talking about the grades obtained. You found out that Professor C incorrectly marked your exam for Questions 1, 3, and 6. Since you studied hard for this exam, you cannot accept these inaccuracies. So, you have decided to ask Professor C to correct your grade on the French exam."

(2) "Thesis" situation :

"You submitted your paper entitled "Rethinking Marx" to Professor F about one month ago. This paper was for his economics seminar. You have been thinking of writing your thesis based on this paper. Professor F knows your intention; and in fact, he promised you that he would return the paper as soon as possible with his comments on it. However, Professor F has so far failed to give it back to you. You need to start writing your thesis in a few days; otherwise, you may not be able to make the deadline for thesis submission. So, you have decided to ask Professor F to return your paper with his comments on it as soon as possible."

For the high-imposition situations:

(3) "Appointment" situation :

"You have an appointment with Professor H, whose seminar you are now taking, at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow. You are supposed to talk with him about a topic for the term paper for his seminar. However, you suddenly need to go to the dentist around the same time tomorrow. It is very hard to change the appointment with the dentist: you cannot take any other time slot for treatment and you are now feeling a great deal of pain in your teeth. So, you really want to go to the dentist tomorrow. You well understand that Professor H is a very busy person; and, in fact, you had a hard time getting an appointment with him. But you have decided to ask Professor H to change the appointment."

(4) "Paper Due" situation :

"You are now writing a term paper for your sociology course. You have been making your utmost effort to write this paper by staying up late every night. But you cannot proceed with this paper as you had expected because you also must prepare for the final exams for your other courses. The paper is due tomorrow; but it seems that you need a few more days to complete this paper. You well understand that professors have to submit grade reports as soon as possible and that it takes a while to evaluate a paper. But you have decided to ask Professor B to extend the due date for the paper anyway."

The two situations in each imposition group were similar in contents. In the "Marking Problem" and "Thesis" situations, a problem on the part of the professor assumed by the student makes him perform a given request. In contrast, it is the student's failure of his time management that leads to the realization of a particular request in the "Appointment" and "Paper Due" situations. In this respect as well, the above four situations were substantially warranted for inclusion in the transferability study.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I attempted to establish a method for selecting experimental situations in the area of L2 pragmatics research. The central tenet here is that situational variables involved need to be empirically validated with respect to subjects' perception prior to a planned experiment. In so doing, by specifically focusing on the variable of "requestive imposition," I first examined the factors consisting of the notion of imposition. The obtained factors then were operationalized so that the abstract notion was quantitatively be measurable by any subjects. By setting up a transferability study as an experimental goal, an attempt was subsequently made to actually establish four request situations based on the operational definition of the notion of imposition. Only through this approach can more unified situational assessments by subjects be obtained; and it could further avoid confounded results arising from the discrepancy in situational perception between experimenters and subjects. The selected four request situations were indeed reflecting subjects' own perception of requestive imposition. But it should also be noted that the degrees of perceived situational imposition observed in the four situations here represented the *students'* perspective, not the *professors'* perspective. In other words, if the same situational validation and selection procedures had been applied to the population of "professor" (or adults other than college students), different findings may have been obtained. This suggests that the imposition variable be validated again before selecting situations for a study which is intended to examine differential effects of imposition on professors' rejecting or complying with students' requests. The way of validating and selecting experimental situations thus ought to be systematically incorporated into L2 pragmatics research.

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APPENDIX

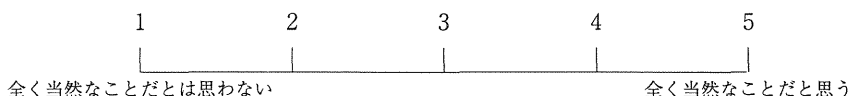
Situational Perception Test in Imposition Experiment

<SPT-Japanese Version>

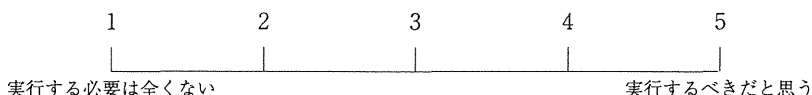
(Excerpt: Case of the "Borrowing Book" Situation)

あなたは心理学のコースのレポートを書いています。このレポートを完成させる為に、『知覚』という本を読む必要がでてきました。図書館にあるかどうかチェックしてみましたが、誰かが既に借り出していました。レポートの提出は4日後なので、今日中に手に入れなければなりません。幸いに、同コース担当のA先生がこの本を持っているということを友達から聞いたので、A先生に借りにいくことにしました。

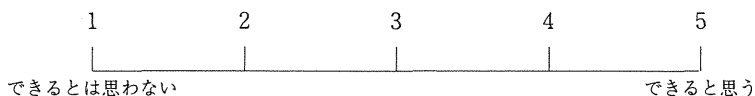
- 1) あなたが上記内容を頼むのは当然なことだと思いますか？



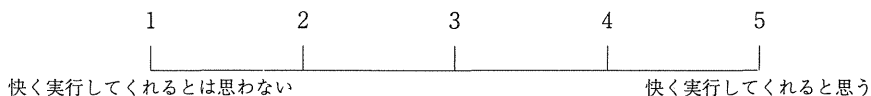
- 2) 先生は依頼された内容を実行するべきだと思いますか？



- 3) 先生は依頼内容を簡単に実行することができますか？



- 4) 先生は依頼されたことを快く実行してくれると思いますか？



依頼負担度の数量化に向けて

第二言語語用論研究における実験対象場面の有効性の実証と選択

高 橋 里 美

第二言語語用論研究における実験方法は、コミュニケーション研究で用いられる実験方法と共通する点が多い。どちらの実験でも、被験者に対し調査対象の場면을提示し、そこで使われる最も適切な言語表現を発話あるいは紙面に記入させるという方法を採用。しかし、コミュニケーション学の領域では、被験者に対象場면을提示する前に、その場면을構成する場面因子（対話者の地位・対話者間の親密度・発話行為上の負担度等）が被験者の知覚を正確に反映しているかどうかを、別の同等の被験者群を使って確認するところから始まる。つまり、実験者と被験者の対象場面（場面因子）に対する知覚が基本的に違っていれば、その実験結果は被験者の調査対象項目に関する実態を正確に伝えているとは言えないのである。第二言語語用論研究では、このような対被験者の実験対象場面の有効性を予め実証しておくという前実験段階での配慮がほとんど為されてこなかった。本研究は、「依頼発話行為における負担度」という場面因子に焦点を当て、この第二言語語用論研究方法上の不備点を改良すべく試みられたものである。具体的には、日本人英語学習者を被験者とし、負担度が異なる英語依頼場面において日本語の依頼慣用法がどの程度転移可能であるかを探る実験を想定した。そして、「依頼における負担」という抽象概念を数量化することによって被験者から見た依頼場面の負担度を統計的に実証し、研究目的に最も適切で且つ依頼負担度において被験者の知覚を正確に反映した依頼場面の選定を試みた。