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.’
   a) ( )
   b) ( )
   c) ( )
   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.
   1. Describe the situations of requests. (e.g., the purpose of the request, the status of both speakers)
   2. Explain any problems you found. (But ignore grammatical mistakes.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 1</th>
<th>1. Situation</th>
<th>2. Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JPN: Excuse me.</td>
<td>John: Yes?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 2</th>
<th>1. Situation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JPN: Hi, John.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John: Hi, Tom. How are you doing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPN: Fine, thank you. How are you?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
John: Sounds good to me.
JPN: Okay.
John: See you then.
JPN: Thank you. See you.

2. Problems

3.2 [Polite requests]:

*Polite requests are often (more               ) and (              er ).*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) ( ) strategies</th>
<th>b) ( ) strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Giving an order</td>
<td>4) Suggesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Close the window.</em></td>
<td>- <em>How about closing the window?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Showing that a speaker is requesting or expressing willingness</td>
<td>5) Asking about a hearer’s ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>I would like to ask you to close the window</em></td>
<td>- <em>Can you / could you close the window?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Showing speaker’s desire</td>
<td>6) Hints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>I want you to close the window.</em></td>
<td>- <em>You have left the window open...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>I would appreciate it if you could close the window.</em></td>
<td>- <em>It’s cold here.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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) (): *Could* you pass me the salt? (vs. *Can you pass* me the salt?)
d) (): *I am wondering* if you could mail this for me. (vs. *I wonder if…*)
e) (): *I wanted* to ask you about this. (vs. *I want to ask you…*)
f) (): *I was wondering* if you *couldn’t* mail this for me.

Softening words and phrases:

- Clean your room, (**           **).
- Clean your room (**       **) before dinner.
- Could you (**            **) lend me your book?
- Do you (**             **) I could borrow your book? ➔
- Do you (**              **) if I borrowed your phone? ➔
- (**         **) (**          **) OK if you help me?
- I (**            **) if you could write it for me.

3.5 Supportive sentences: modify the above main request sentence.

a) Ask the potential availability of the hearer or ask for the hearer’s permission to make the request.
   - *Are you busy right now?*
   - *Do you have a minute?*
   - *I have a question to ask you.*
   - *Could you do me a favor?*

b) Give a reason or an explanation for your request.
   - *I missed class yesterday. Could you give me a handout?*

c) Promise a reward for the hearer if the request is carried out.
   - *Could you give me a lift? I’ll pay for gas or take you out for dinner.*

d) Reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by the speaker’s request
- (A: Maybe, I should have some time this weekend.) B: This weekend works fine.
- Whatever works for you.

Modifications are key to the indirect, polite requests.

4. [Practice making requests]

   Situations: the borrowing of: a pen, a quarter, one hundred dollars, a car, or a precious book from either a close friend or a professor

5. [Discourse Analysis]

   5.1 Native speaker’s cases: Compare a Japanese learner’s requests with those of a native speaker.

   **Situation 1:** Borrow a pen from your close teacher (Prof. John Smith).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&lt;A Japanese learner of English&gt;</th>
<th>&lt;A native English speaker&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JPN: Excuse me.</td>
<td>NS: Excuse me, Professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof: Yes?</td>
<td>Prof: Yes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPN: Can I borrow your pen?</td>
<td>NS: I forgot my pen today…do you happen to have an extra one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof: Sure. Here you go.</td>
<td>Prof: Yes, as a matter of fact I do. Here you go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPN: Thank you.</td>
<td>NS: Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof: No problem.</td>
<td>Prof: You’re welcome.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

   **Situation 2:** Make an appointment to see your close teacher (Prof. John Smith) in order to ask about your study.
### Structures of NS’s request discourses

#### A casual request

1. Getting attention
2. (Supportive sentences)
3. Requesting
4. Thanking

#### A careful request

1. **Getting attention**
2. (Small talk)
3. **Supportive sentences**
4. Requesting with modifications
5. **Thanking**
6. (Closing a conversation)