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Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) in Advanced Non-Native English Speaker (NNES) Emails: A Study of Interlanguage Pragmatics

Thomas AMUNDRUD

(Department of English, Nara University of Education)

(Received April 26, 2012)

Abstract

This paper presents a discourse analytical study of interlanguage pragmatics regarding the politeness strategies used in three elicited business emails by an advanced non-native English speaker (NNES), and evaluates them according to politeness theory as developed from Brown and Levinson (1987). First, the paper outlines politeness theory and the notion of face-threatening acts (FTAs). Then, it profiles and summarizes extant research into the three face-threatening illocutionary acts studied - requests, apologies, and refusals - as well as contemporary research into the English, Japanese, and interlanguage pragmatics of politeness in writing, focusing on emails and business contexts. The participants, experimental setting, and results of the current study are then described, with the participant responding by email to three role-play vignettes, and her responses compared to a native speaker (NS) control. The three research questions posed in this study are: whether the participant would show more Negative Politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) than the NS control; whether the participant would show greater politeness overall than the control; and whether the participant can be said to conform to English-language pragmatic norms for each of the three illocutionary acts performed. Only the last of these questions was answered partially negative; overall, however, the advanced level of the learner’s English pragmatic competence was confirmed. Although limited by its small scale and other factors, this study suggests that Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory retains validity, and indicates possible directions for further studies into the pragmatics of NNES emails.

Key Words: interlanguage, email pragmatics, face-threatening acts (FTAs), advanced non-native English speakers

1. Introduction

Pragmatics studies the linguistic choices speakers make, the constraints they face in their choices, and the effects these choices have on their interlocutors (Crystal, 1997, p.301). However, since in email writing, interlocutors are not visible, what strategies do non-native English speaker (NNES) writers use when facing difficult email situations? This paper will first summarize the politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) governing face-threatening acts (FTAs), then briefly profile three FTA-inducing illocutionary acts - requests, apologies, and complaints - before discussing the often-conflicting research on interlanguage pragmatics, especially regarding writing, and in reference to Japanese L1-English L2 interactions particularly. It will subsequently describe the current study, examining the elicited email data of an advanced Japanese L1-English L2 subject negotiating three simulated FTA-inducing situations, and compare them against an English L1 native-speaker (NS) control. It will close by analyzing the results and discussing the limitations and possible implications of this study towards emerging English L1 pragmatic standards of email composition.
2. Literature review

2.1. Politeness strategies and FTAs

Brown and Levinson (1987) define “politeness” as the behavior through which interlocutors maintain face during interactions. According to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness, “positive face”, which corresponds to Positive Politeness, reflects “the desire for approval from others” and is ideally characterized by behavior between intimates (p.101); however, “negative face”, which corresponds to Negative Politeness, attempts to prevent others from imposing their desires upon the speaker, and is characterized by “respectful or deferential behavior” (Baba, 1999, p.25). Since self-esteem is encouraged in the US, Positive Politeness is commonly found amongst American data, while Japanese data, coming from a society where group harmony is valued above individual achievement, usually exhibits more Negative Politeness (ibid., p.26).

Brown and Levinson (1987) also postulated that the greater the distance between interlocutors, the power of the receiver, or the degree imposed by the act, the greater the force of the FTA. Brown and Levinson (1987) hold that speakers will generally use more Negative Politeness strategies when the risk of an FTA is great (p.91); in interactions involving L1 Japanese speakers, the values of distance, power, and rank are heightened, thus leading to the greater prevalence of Negative Politeness in Japanese society (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.245; see also Scollon & Scollon, 2001).

Brown and Levinson (1987) has since been criticized as based on Anglophone norms, and as potentially “paranoid” since it presumes every communicative act as fraught with face-threatening peril (Kasper, 1990). Moreover, other concepts of “face” may allow richer conceptualities, and avoid the seeming either/or polarity of Positive vs. Negative politeness (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003). Nevertheless, Brown and Levinson (1987) remains a useful basis for intra- and intercultural gradations of politeness to be discerned (Ellis, 2008; Harris, 2003; Kasper, 1990), though there is growing consensus noted in Bremner (2006) that “contextually embedded data” is necessary for analyses grounded in social realities.

2.2. Three face-threatening illocutionary acts: Requests, apologies, and complaints

2.2.1. Requests

Requests are attempts by a speaker to get the hearer to do or to stop performing an action for the speaker’s sake (Ellis, 2008, p.172). Amongst their illocutionary and sociolinguistic features are that the speaker must first want the request performed, believe the hearer able to assent to the request, and believe that the request will not be granted without request (ibid.). There are a number of “strategy types” by which requests may be realized, and requests themselves are subject to internal or external modifications that mitigate or strengthen their force. Finally, since requests by definition involve imposition (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989, in Ellis, 2008, p.172), they require significant “face-work” depending on the interlocutors’ relationship.

In surveying three longitudinal studies, Kasper and Rose (2002, p.140) found five stages in L2 request development. Of particular interest here are the final three: the unpacking stage, where formulaic expressions are analyzed for further nuance; the pragmatic expansion stage, whereby syntax is expanded, permitting more mitigation; and the fine-tuning stage, where the force of requests are more closely aligned with the contexts, goals, and participants.

2.2.2. Apologies

Apologies can be considered a face-saving act since they entail the speaker taking responsibility for some action or lack thereof. Unlike the other illocutionary acts profiled here, apologies impose on the speaker, rather than the hearer. Osbain and Cohen (1983 in Ellis, 2008, p.183) derived the basic strategy for apologies, which entail: the central statement of apology, and elaborations such as explanations, acknowledgements, or offers of repair (ibid.).

Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross (1996) found that advanced Japanese learners tended to show more positive than negative transfer in their study of apology transfer differences between tertiary intermediate and advanced Japanese learners of English, and their American and Japanese NS peers. The authors conclude that the advanced learners are more able to adapt American-style pragmatic responses, though acknowledge that while they are unlikely to adapt L1 strategies in unfamiliar situations, they may nevertheless lack the ability to respond naturally (pp.180-181).

2.2.3. Complaints

Complaints are FTAs that involve the speaker expressing censure to a hearer about a past or
continuing act which she believes effects her poorly (Trosborg, 1995, p.312). Olshtain and Wienbach (1993) distinguished four preconditions for a complaint to occur: first, the hearer must commit a socially unacceptable act (SUA); the speaker must consider the SUA as unfavorable; the speaker's expression must be related to the SUA, and therefore be censure; and, since the speaker believes the SUA legitimately loosens the cooperative bonds between her and the hearer, the speaker thus believes she has the right to request redress.

Olshtain and Wienbach (1993, p.111) then discerned a five-point scale of complaint severity, from below reproach (1), to “explicit complaint” (3), to immediate threat (5). Tatsuki (2000) found in a clinical study of Japanese university students that, while their L1 scale of complaints regarding hypothetical instances correlated those found by Olshtain and Wienbach (1993), the Japanese students’ L2 English complaints were much more severe and excessively forceful due to insufficient L2 pragmatic ability.

2.3. Politeness in writing

In written texts, “the linguistic expressions of politeness are not only the primary vehicles of politeness, they are the only ones” (Pilegaard, 1997, p.240). Following, then, are key findings on politeness in NS English and Japanese writing, and of the challenges faced by L2 English writers. Given the business focus of this paper, and especially in light of research that there may be a reduction in politeness used in emails versus other forms of writing (Murphy & Levy, 2006) and that in business, in particular, email has emerged as a “hybrid form” of writing incorporating both spoken and written pragmatic elements (Kankaanranta, 2005) whose rules are not yet settled (Chen, 2006), the following studies are focused, when possible, on business-based composition.

2.3.1. Politeness in NS English business writing

Pilegaard’s (1997) corpus study of British English business letters found that politeness strategies are used to “prepare the ground” for the letter’s request, to redress the request’s FTA, and to “round off” the letter external to the illocutionary purpose of the text. Moreover, following initial contact, in which positive politeness strategies predominate, negative politeness is more common to maintain the mutual and obligations between parties. The relative use by interlocutors of negative versus positive politeness also depends upon their standing within the relationship, as sellers do more positive face-work than buyers. Finally, the Gricean maxims of clarity and brevity are strongly followed once a relationship has been established (pp.240-242).

In their study of Australian and Korean views of politeness in intercultural emails, Murphy and Levy (2006) found that the Australian respondents saw politeness as integrated into emails via orthography, clarity, and text structure, as well as through the use of correct titles, formal openings and closings, and the reduction of inappropriate intimacy. However, Kankaanranta’s (2005) survey of recent studies on NS and NNES English business emails suggests, perhaps due to the convenience and rapidity of email exchanges, that brief requests are increasingly common (pp.102-115). It would therefore appear that the pragmatics of NS English email writing is not yet settled.

2.3.2. Politeness in NS Japanese speech and writing

Japanese is renowned for its vast array of politeness mechanisms, ranging from the lexical and grammatical choices of keigo, or honorific speech, to discourse choices in oral communication, shown through linguistic and non-linguistic backchanneling, and less frequent and more spaced turntaking (Watanabe, 2004). Formal Japanese business letters are also characterized by the use of format and language to “maintain the appropriate relationship between reader and writer” (Jenkins & Hinds, 1987, p.336). Business letters are often replete with keigo, following the social distance and hierarchy between sender and receiver. However, despite the formal rules governing written Japanese business composition, it is possible that, given the innovations found in contemporary informal online L1 Japanese communication (Nishmura, 2006), Japanese business emails may not follow the same formalism described by Jenkins & Hinds (1987), though there are apparently no extant English-language studies to confirm or refute this.

2.3.3. Interlanguage pragmatics in writing

Since different languages realize their politeness systems differently, we can therefore expect some degree of interlanguage sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic difficulty or ‘failure’ (Thomus, 1983), especially amongst interlocutors whose politeness orientations are so divergent.

Carrell and Konneker (1981) found in a rank-order
test of politeness strategies using NS American and ESL learners that the learners seemed “oversensitive” to politeness distinctions (p.28). Maier (1992), however, found that business writing by NNES tended to be more direct and less formal than NS, which may lead to negative perceptions of NNES writers; Murphy and Levy (2006) corroborate this. Moreover, Maier (1992) criticized Carrell and Konneker (1981) as not based on actual, contextualized data, but on an item-response test. More recently, Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) also found in a study of NS and NNES American university student emails to professors that the NS students were more adept at writing “e-polite” messages, and that the NNES students relied more heavily on direct than indirect requests.

3. Current study, methods, and analysis

3.1. Participant profile

W is a 25-year old Japanese L1 woman who is also the wife of the author. She is an advanced English L2 user, with a grade of Pre-1 on the STEP Eiken test, equivalent to an 80 on the TOEFL iBT (STEP, 2010). W first formally studied English in junior high school, where she became fond the language. She then participated in a short study-abroad in Australia, and, in high school, took part in a year-and-a-half long exchange program in the US. After returning to Japan, W studied Linguistics with an English concentration at a senmon gakko, or career college. She then completed a Bachelor’s degree in Linguistics from a major prefectoral university, and also earned secondary school teaching certification in English. She met the author in 2006, and married in 2008.

After graduation, W taught English for a year at a private high school in Kyoto. She is currently tutors English privately, and works part-time at a preparatory school for primary and secondary school-aged children. She also occasionally does freelance Japanese-English, English-Japanese translation.

3.2. Procedure and research questions

The participant was requested to respond by email to three freelance translation-related vignettes (Appendix A). I assert that these hold the status of “role plays” in comparison with prior research in interlanguage pragmatics (e.g. Kasper & Dahl, 1991) because they are elicited learner data of communicative situational simulations (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 86) without real-world consequences (Ellis, 2008, pp.165-167). These vignettes were designed to require the subject to use the three illocutionary acts (requests, apologies, complaints) described above, while also targeting situations the subject had previously experienced in her freelance translation work where I, as her husband, had assisted in composing email responses.

The subject was asked to simulate her actual working environment. Therefore, as a freelancer, she wrote her emails when she had time, and with her normal business email account. W acknowledged that she had seen my emails for her where I had previously dealt with late payments or submission delays, but stated that, as requested, she had not studied them before or while completing the research tasks.

Ellis (2008, p.169) asserts that state-of-the-art studies in interlanguage pragmatics triangulate via learner L2 data, and equivalent L1 data in the target language and the learner’s L1. Due to practical constraints, this study does not include equivalent Japanese data. However, to approximate Ellis’ (2008) criteria, I wrote control responses to the same vignettes under similar conditions as W for an approximate NS English comparison; since I do not work in freelance translation, however, this control may lack face and external validity.

Thus, following the above literature profiled, this paper poses the following research questions:

RQ 1: Will, as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987), the participant’s sample show more Negative Politeness than the control?

RQ 2: Will, following Carrell and Konneker (1981) and contra Maier (1992) and Murphy and Levy (2006), the participant’s sample show greater levels of politeness than the control?

RQ 3: As an advanced learner, to what degree can the participant be said to conform to English-language pragmatic norms for each of the three illocutionary acts performed vis-a-vis Kasper and Rose (2002), Maeshiba et al. (1996), and Tatsuki (2000)?

3.3. Data analysis

3.3.1. Situation 1

The subject was asked to explain the reason for a delay in completing a difficult translation job, to apologize, and to ask for an extension. Although the
central illocutionary act was an apology, it also required a request as a part of the offer for repair.

Minus the greeting and closing, most of the 111 words of W’s two-paragraph email (Appendix B.1) comprise mitigation and offer for repair. Moreover, this email, like the other two, was “rounded off” (Pilegaard, 1997) using the greeting, paragraph and indentation, and closing format of a business letter, thus satisfying Murphy and Levy’s (2006) Australian subjects’ requirements for email formatting. As I did not specify the perimeters of the job that was overdue, W fabricated an automotive-related translation assignment, explaining that as this was an unfamiliar field, she needed more time to research the proper terminology. W emphasized the necessity of this for proper execution of the task, and specified a deadline.

However, the head act of apology does not occur until the final sentence of the second paragraph. Nevertheless, the criteria for requests (Ellis, 2008) are clearly met in that mitigation and for the apology FTA requires W’s request for an extension to be granted, and belief that such latitude is possible is evinced by the subject’s inclusion of reasons for the delay.

In contrast, the control email (Appendix B.2), minus greeting and closing, was only 44 words long, with one longer and one two-sentence paragraph. It starts with the head act of apologizing, and then mitigates the FTA through explanation and the offer of repair. It also starts the two-sentence paragraph offering to answer any questions before reiterating the apology before the closing.

3.3.2. Situation 2

Here, the subject was paid half the contracted rate for a completed translation, and therefore had to email the payroll department of the translation company for resolution.

The subject’s 62-word, one-paragraph response (Appendix C.1) starts with a negative politeness act, expressing deference through thanks for the received payment before pointing out the error and requesting redress, as per Olstein and Weibach (1993). It therefore does not appear to be “excessively forceful”, in contrast to Tatsuki (2000). In contrast, the 57-word control response (Appendix C.2) is bald and on-record (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.60), with no starting mitigator before asking the staff to check that the correct payment was sent. However, both the subject and the control emails cite the contract as the agreed-upon social norm (Trosborg, 1995) that the translation company violated.

3.3.3. Situation 3

Here, the subject was presented with an urgent job that she might not want to take because of extenuating circumstances; moreover, the company did not offer a higher rate. The subject could therefore choose to either refuse the job, or to renegotiate for a higher rate, both of which would involve a potential FTA.

In her 75-word, one-paragraph response (Appendix D.1), W requests a higher rate; moreover, her response adds a further complication in offering to do either some or all of the work, depending upon the rate offered. It first starts with a negative politeness move of thanking for the offer, and then, following this and a further mitigation (“...but I am currently busy with other projects...”), refusing the job at the current rate. “However,” it continues, transitioning to the request, a solution is possible. The force of this request is mitigated through a downgrader to “please kindly consider” and respond, thus displaying fine-tuning as specified in the final stage of interlanguage pragmatic request development (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

The 51-word, two-paragraph control response (Appendix D.2) also begins with a deferential “thank you”, and also attenuates the force of the request for a higher rate through extenuating circumstances. Unlike the subject’s response, however, the control does not explicitly refuse the initial offer but, in stating the circumstances and requesting a higher rate, does so implicitly, which may be an instance of the NS English tendency for indirectness in emails noted by Biesenbach-Lucas (2007). Also, unlike the subject’s email, the control email sets a hypothetical rate for completion of the work. However, like the subject, the control also downgrades the request with a closing asking the company to consider the counteroffer.

4. Results, limitations, and discussion

The first two research questions appear to be answered in the affirmative, though while Carrell and Konneker (1981) appears to be vindicated in this paper, the small sample size used limits generalizability. The subject does use more negative politeness strategies, and in fact more politeness strategies overall, than the control, though in the third situation, their usage is the same. The reasons for this cannot be discerned from this
study, though they may include gender, interpragmatic transfer (Maeshiba et al., 1996) or social distance (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Although studies have found women opt for more negative politeness strategies, emphasizing deference, Kasper (1990) points out that such may be a simplistic reading because females may, rather, see their roles more as members of a community or relationship.

Only the third research question may be answered partially negative in that, for the first situation requiring an apology, the subject did not write the head act until nearly the end of the email. However, as she wrote “I apologize again for the delay”, this apparent oversight, which might result in sociolinguistic failure in an actual business interaction, may be due more to carelessness than evidence of interlinguistic pragmatic ignorance. Otherwise, the rest of this apology, and the illocutionary acts performed by the subject for Situations 2 and 3, all fit the English NS pragmatic norms outlined in the literature above, though Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) appears to be corroborated by the subject’s directness as opposed to the control in Situation 3.

Given the informality of NS English email noted (e.g. Chen, 2006; Kankaanranta, 2005), it is possible that the control sample may be more suited to English L1 email styles than the more polite responses of the subject. As there are myriad cultural, gender, situational or other factors that may influence such politeness choices, however, this difference should not be construed as an error, at least not without further comparison against a larger corpus of NS and NNES data.

5. Conclusion

In closing, this small study suggests that Brown and Levinson (1987) may still be able to explain the differences in politeness between Japanese and Americans in English. Moreover, given her conformity to the requirements for all three illocutionary acts with one notable discrepancy, the subject’s status as a very advanced English L2 user appears confirmed. Nevertheless, further study is needed to determine whether an ‘overabundance’ of politeness in NNES email might itself be in error.

References
Chen, C. (2006). The development of e-mail literacy: From writing to peers to writing to authority figures. Language Learning & Technology, 10(2). p. 35 – pp. 55
Dear Mr. Booth,

Subj: Regarding the deadline extension for translation project

To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>

Please read the following scenarios. Answer each in a separate email. Please use the email account you normally use for translations <zzz@yyyy>, and email each of your answers to <thomas.amundrud@zzz> with an appropriate subject heading, followed by (scenario #), using the correct number of each scenario. As we’ve discussed, you may use dictionaries or spelling check software, but please do not copy from reference materials. Thank you for your help!

1. You have been asked to complete a lengthy translation in a short amount of time. The translation has taken significantly longer than you had anticipated. Email Mr. Booth of the translation company and politely ask for an extension, explaining the reasons for the delay.

2. You have just received payment for a translation job. Upon confirmation, however, you notice that you have received half of the agreed-upon amount. Write to Ms. Montenegro of the payroll department at the translation firm and request the correct payment.

3. You have been asked by a small company whom you have worked for in the past to do a lengthy translation in a short amount of time. You are quite busy at the moment and would prefer not to take the job, but you know the company is desperate. They are not paying any higher than their normal rate, however. Write the company head, Mr. Hodgins, to refuse the job OR to negotiate a higher rate.

Appendix A - Research vignettes

Three email tasks

Please read the following scenarios. Answer each in a separate email. Please use the email account you normally use for translations <zzz@yyyy>, and email each of your answers to <thomas.amundrud@zzz> with an appropriate subject heading, followed by (scenario #), using the correct number of each scenario. As we’ve discussed, you may use dictionaries or spelling check software, but please do not copy from reference materials. Thank you for your help!

1. You have been asked to complete a lengthy translation in a short amount of time. The translation has taken significantly longer than you had anticipated. Email Mr. Booth of the translation company and politely ask for an extension, explaining the reasons for the delay.

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3. You have been asked by a small company whom you have worked for in the past to do a lengthy translation in a short amount of time. You are quite busy at the moment and would prefer not to take the job, but you know the company is desperate. They are not paying any higher than their normal rate, however. Write the company head, Mr. Hodgins, to refuse the job OR to negotiate a higher rate.

Appendix B.1 - Subject’s reply to Situation 1

To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>
Subj: Regarding the deadline extension for translation project

Dear Mr. Booth,

The translation project that you have assigned me is taking much more time than I had expected. Like I have told you when you first contacted me for this offer, I don’t have a lot experience in this field of auto industry; therefore it requires me to look for and read some reference materials in order to make sure that technical terms and phrases are commonly and correctly used.

Please do understand that these procedures are necessary and kindly let me know if you can give me an extension. I am certain that I can give you the complete document by 12:00 PM in EST. I apologize again for the delay.

Sincerely,

Appendix B.2 - Control reply to Situation 1

To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>
Subj: Apologies for the delay!

Dear Mr. Booth,

I’m very sorry, but the last translation you sent has been quite complicated. Given the standards of the client, I would appreciate another day to make sure it’s completely satisfactory.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I apologize for the delay.

Sincerely,

Appendix C.1 - Subject’s reply to Situation 2

To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>
Subj: Regarding the payment

Dear Ms. Montenegro,

Thank you for your payment that I have just received for my previous translation project. However, it seems like I have only received half of the agreed-upon amount; as it’s written on our project contract, the sum of agreed payment is $300. I have only received $150. Please investigate as soon as possible and let me know how we work through this.

Sincerely,

Appendix C.2 - Control reply to Situation 2

To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>
Subj: Query regarding last payment

Dear Ms. Montenegro,

Could you please check that I received the correct payment for my last job with the company? According to my records, I believe I was supposed to get twice the amount that I received. If you have any questions, please let me know and I’d be happy to send a copy of the contract and relevant emails.

Thank you for your help,

Appendix D.1 - Subject’s reply to Situation 3

To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>
Subj: Regarding the job offer

Dear Mr. Hodgins,

Thank you for the job offer. I would very much like to take the offer but I am currently busy with other projects; however, If you can give me higher rate, since it is in such short notice, then I may be able to take all of it or the first two short documents (“Marketing 1” and “ABC offers”) depending on the rate you offer. Please kindly consider and let me know what you think.

Best regards,


To: Thomas Amundrud <thomas.amundrud@zzz>
Subj: Urgent job
Dear Mr. Hodgins,

Thank you for your recent offer. Given the short amount of time, I was wondering if we could renegotiate my rate. The last job I did came to $.02 per word. How about I do this one for $.05 per word?

Please let me know if this is acceptable for you.

Sincerely,

【日本語要旨】

上級ノンネイティヴ英語話者のEメールにおけるFTA

－言語間の語用論研究－

アムンド トーマス 奈良教育大学英語教育講座（英語教育学）

これは、ボライトネスストラテジーに関する言語間の語用論の調査で、ある上級ノンネイティヴ英語話者の3つのビジネスメールを用いたものである。考察にはBrown and Levinson（1987）のボライトネス理論を使った。本論文はまずFace-threatening acts（FTA）の理論の概要を通じている。次に、近年の3つのFTA発語内行為（「依頼」「謝罪」「拒否」）に関する研究、更に、ビジネスに焦点を当てたライティングにおけるボライトネスの語用論についての概要を述べている。続いて参加者、設定、現段階の研究結果が述べられている。

3つのビジネスロールプレイタスクを参加者に提示し、参加者のEメールによる回答を母語話者のものと比較した。この研究で明らかにしたい3つの点は、上級ノンネイティヴの参加者が母語話者よりもネガティブボライトネスを使う傾向にあるか、上級ノンネイティヴ参加者が全体的に母語話者に比べボライトネスを使うか、ノンネイティヴの参加者が、英語の3つの発語内行為規範を従っているのか、という点である。全体的に見て、参加者の英語における語用論的言語能力も進んでいることが明らかになった。今回は、被験者の数が少ないが、本研究はボライトネスの理論の妥当性と、今後のノンネイティヴ英語話者のEメールによる語用論研究の可能性を示唆したものであると言えよう。