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POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

STUDY OF AMERICAN AND JAPANESE EMPLOYMENT REJECTION LETTERS

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Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
CAUS	causative
CP	Cooperative Principle
DAT	dative
FN	first name
FTA	face-threatening act
GER	gerund
HON	honorifics
HON-h	humble form
HON-r	respectful form
LN	last name
NOM	nominalizer
POL	polite form
PP	Politeness Principle
TLN	title plus last name
TOP	topic marker
T/V	pronominal variants (e. g. tu/vous)

Romanization System Used for the Transcription of Japanese

There are two major systems of romanization used at present: the Hepburn system and the Japanese system *(kunrei-shiki)*. Since this work is written in English, the Hepburn system has been chosen for the trancription of Japanese, as it follows the English pronunciation.

For consistency, long vowels will be transcribed as *ā ī ū ē ō*, although in the Hepburn system *ii* is preferred even when there is no morpheme boundary between the two morae (see the following examples):

suu 'to suck' (2 morphemes) vs. *sū* 'number' (1 morpheme)
shiriizu 'series' (no morpheme boundary) → *shirīzu*

An apostrophe is used for the mora nasal /N/ before 'y' or a vowel:
Cf. *kinen* ('memory') vs. *kin'en* ('no smoking')

1 Introduction

1.1 Objective of the Study

Politeness is a phenomenon that has been drawing a lot of attention in recent years. It is a phenomenon that everyone perceives as natural when communicating in their native language, and only starts to ponder its peculiarities during cross-cultural communication. When learning grammatical structures of a foreign language, honorifics immediately strike the learner's attention. But only when one mistakes the English "Why don't you come over tomorrow?" for a reproach, or starts wondering why the Japanese apologize when giving presents, and wonders even more when they apologize for receiving them, does one actually realize that there is far more involved in the whole business of politeness.

Each culture has a different perception of what is polite, and each language has various devices for expressing politeness. Some situations call for more politeness than others. The importance of politeness increases with the degree of potential offense to the hearer. Rejection is, by its very nature, one of the most offensive speech acts, and if not done politely it is quite likely to negatively impact the hearer's self-image. Therefore, various politeness strategies are employed to minimize its negative impact. To perform a rejection is not easy, even if both parties have a complete understanding of the language and rituals concerning politeness in that culture. To reject someone from another culture without causing offense or misunderstanding is even more challenging.

This study explores politeness strategies employed to convey rejection in two different cultures, American and Japanese, particularly in letters rejecting requests for employment. The analysis of American and Japanese employment rejection letters aims to show that some of the general notions concerning the two languages, such as that the Japanese are much more indirect in their communication than Americans, may not apply to every communicative situation.

1.2 Contextualizing the Present Study

Politeness is an aspect widely discussed in the field of pragmatics, which Leech (1983: 6) defines as *"the study of meaning in relation to speech situations"*. This study falls in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics and pragmalinguistics, as it investigates politeness strategies involved in the realization of the act of rejection in two different languages, American English and Japanese, in an attempt to reveal common and culture-specific features of the discourse. It focuses on the choice of strategies relative to particular social norms and constraints, and their overt language manifestations.

1.3 Current Research on Refusals

Among the speech acts that have received a great deal of attention are requests (e. g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Hill et al., 1986; Kitao, 1990; Yeung, 1997; Fukushima, 2000), apologies (e. g. Coulmas, 1981; Fraser, 1981; Owen, 1983; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984), compliments (e. g. Manes and Wolfson, 1981; Nelson et al., 2002), and increasingly refusals (e. g. Houck and Gass, 1996, Nelson et al., 1996; Gass and Houck, 1999). These studies usually focus either on (a) realizations of a particular speech act in a particular language or in a cross-cultural perspective or on (b) production of particular speech acts by non-native speakers.

Refusals are considered *"one of a relatively small number of speech acts which can be characterized as a response to another's act (e. g. to a request, invitation, offer, suggestion), rather than as an act initiated by the speaker"* (Gass and Houck, 1999: 2). The speaker's response time is limited, which precludes extensive planning and makes the production of refusal quite difficult, considering that the speaker has to pay attention to delivering the refusal in a way that would not offend the hearer.

The type of refusals on which this study focuses differs in two respects. First, the refusals dealt with in previous works are, as mentioned above, immediate responses to an "initiating act" (Gass and Houck, 1999: 2). However, a refusal to grant someone employment (hereafter referred to as the 'rejection') is not usually delivered as an immediate response to the speaker's request, but after thorough consideration. Therefore, it allows the

speaker sufficient time for careful preparation. Moreover, the message is not delivered through a number of short exchanges negotiating the refusal but rather as a carefully worded sequence. Secondly, although most of the recent studies have dealt with spoken language, this work analyzes written rejections. To perform rejection in person is more difficult in the sense that one has to look the hearer in the eye, rather than distance oneself physically. On the other hand, the act can be, and usually is, helped nonverbally. However, in writing such means are not possible; the rejection has to be stated more explicitely.

The present research limits itself to employment rejection letters in order to analyze a corpus which is as homogenous as possible. It was selected based upon the assumption that letters rejecting requests for employment are usually 'form letters' (i. e. the same letter, with slight modifications, is sent to multiple addressees), and thus social factors concerning the addressee do not significantly influence the politeness employed in the letter. A detailed description of the data is in 5.2.

1.4 Cultural Differences

Speakers of the same culture share similar assumptions and backgrounds. These, however, differ between cultures, which results in different perceptions of politeness, and different realizations of the same speech act.

American culture is generally referred to as a culture highly utilizing positive politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987), while Japanese culture is often referred to as *"a prototypical negative-face culture with a strong emphasis on indirectness and politeness in interpersonal communication"* (Takano, 2005: 634, cf. also e. g. Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Fukushima, 2000). Furthermore, in Japanese society, a refusal seems to be considered less sociably acceptable than in America (cf. Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Kasper, 1993). Various studies have shown that in Japanese, direct realizations of acts that impose on the hearer, such as requests and refusals, are quite common when the hearer is of an equal or subordinate status, while indirect realizations have to be employed when the hearer is of a superior status or there is a social distance between the communicators.

It can be thus expected that the American and Japanese rejection letters will reveal different preferences in the realizations of the rejection, employing different politeness strategies. The particular hypotheses are presented in Chapter 5, as they are based on the theoretical findings of Chapters 2–4.

1.5 Organization of the Following Chapters

Chapter Two focuses on various issues concerning politeness. First, politeness is looked at with respect to its role in human communication and then is presented in an overview of some of the major politeness theories. This overview is by no means complete, but provides a basic idea about the various concepts and different approaches used in current research. Some general concepts that can be concluded from the overview are summarized in the following section. The section after that discusses some of the most transparent differences in cultural values relating to the perception of politeness in American English and Japanese.

The next part focuses on the two different aspects of politeness: politeness as a social index and politeness as a strategy. The system of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (despite a variety of criticism) provides a detailed framework of concrete strategies. This framework will be referred to throughout the analysis, thus it is described in more detail.

Since the present study deals with letters, **Chapter Three** gives an overview of the style of American and Japanese business letters, highlighting cultural differences in both language and structure. Basic knowledge of both these elements is essential to understand which politeness means are used for polite and tactful delivery of the rejection, and which are just conventional parts of any letter.

In **Chapter Four**, rejection is described as a face-threatening act and possible methods of minimizing its negative impact upon the addressee are suggested. This chapter also presents what literature on letter writing suggests about writing a rejection.

Chapter Five presents particular hypotheses based on the theoretical findings concluded from the previous chapters, and the research methods employed in this study. The nature of the data, the preparation of the database, and the framework of the analysis are discussed.

After introducing the methodology used, the results of the analysis are presented. After a quantitative analysis of the data, the purpose of which is to determine the most frequent patterns forming the rejection sequences in corpus, the patterns are further analyzed with respect to politeness strategies they utilize.

In **Chapter Six**, the results of the analysis are applied to the hypotheses. Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the findings presented in the previous chapters, and considers their contribution to better understanding of the different notions of politeness in American English and Japanese.

2 Politeness and Its Strategies

2.1 Politeness as Part of Human Communication

Leech views communication as problem-solving (1983: 1). Using language, the speaker tries to find the best way to place a particular message in the hearer's consciousness. The problem the hearer has to solve, on the other hand, is to figure out what the speaker really means.

2.1.1 The Cooperative Principle

To achieve the goal of successful communication it is necessary for the parties involved to cooperate. Part of successful cooperation is for the parties to mutually understand and successfully employ the politeness strategies appropriate for their given situation in order to acknowledge social relationships, maintain harmony, and understand the real meaning of the language used.

Grice (1975) perceives that the need to make each other understood forces the communicators to cooperate. His Cooperative Principle distinguishes 4 categories of maxims and submaxims, which are necessary for achieving maximally efficient communication. They are:

(I) **Maxim of Quantity**
- (a) Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
- (b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

(II) **Maxim of Quality**

Try to make your contribution one that is true.
- (c) Do not say what you believe to be false.
- (d) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(III) **Maxim of Relevance**
'Be relevant.'

(IV) **Maxim of Manner**
'Be perspicuous.'
(e) Avoid obscurity of expression.
(f) Avoid ambiguity.
(g) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
(h) Be orderly.

(Grice, 1975: 45–46)

2.1.2 Politeness: A Departure from Rationality?

It is quite obvious that real language use does not always strictly comply with Grice's Cooperative Principle. Politeness actually seems to be based on a violation of these afore-mentioned conversational maxims, on deviations from rational efforts to achieve maximally efficient communication. Such a violation triggers special interpretive processes through which people can mean more than they literally say, and have this meaning clearly understood, which is a basic mechanism of many politeness strategies.

Grice's theory has been criticized on various grounds. Thomas points out that *"Grice's own definition of the cooperative principle is ambiguous and inconsistent"* (1994: 760), which allows various interpretations. According to Thomas, one of the major reasons for criticism is that *"the very term 'cooperation' is misleading, since what in everyday terms would be seen as 'highly uncooperative' behavior, such as arguing, lying, hurling abuse, may yet be perfectly cooperative according to some interpretations of Grice's (1975) term"* (ibid). Lindblom, however, explains that *"Grice never intended his use of the word 'cooperation' to indicate an ideal view of communication"* (2006: 176), but rather *"was trying to describe how it happens that – despite the haphazard or even agonistic nature of much ordinary human communication – most discourse participants are quite capable of making themselves understood…"* (ibid). Despite being subject to criticism, Grice's theory has provided a good foundation for further studies in various fields, including politeness theories.

R. Lakoff's (1973) politeness rule with a set of subrules, Leech's (1983) Politeness principle and maxims, and Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness strategies complement Grice's framework in the sense that while Grice's conversational maxims are aimed at maximally informative communication and clarity, the politeness rules, maxims and strategies attend to social issues.

2.2 An Overview of Major Politeness Theories

A lot has been written in recent years concerning politeness. Robin T. Lakoff was seminal in modern politeness theory utilizing pragmatic examination. Politeness became a hot topic after Brown and Levinson's *Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena* (1978, revised in 1987 under the title *Politeness: some universals in language usage*), which so heavily influenced this field that many subsequent researchers concentrated on developing or refuting this theory, and few fail to mention it. Another influential framework was proposed by Leech (1983). There have also been some relatively independent theories, but most current works still draw on Brown and Levinson or Leech.

Robin T. Lakoff was one of the first linguists to examine politeness from the point of view of pragmatics. She defines politeness as *"a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange"* (in Eelen, 2001: 2).

According to her 'politeness rule', which addresses the Gricean 'clarity rule',

> […] if one seeks to communicate a message directly, if one's principal aim in speaking is communication, one will attempt to be clear, so that there is no mistaking one's intention. If the speaker's principal aim is to navigate somehow or other among the respective statuses of the participants in the discourse indicating where each stands in the speaker's

estimate, his aim will be less the achievement of clarity than an expression of politeness, as its opposite (ibid 2–3).

Therefore, as already mentioned above, while the primary role of the CP is the most efficient delivery of the information, politeness is concerned with social issues.
Lakoff proposes 3 rules of politeness (ibid 3):

'Don't impose'
'Give options'
'Make [Alter] feel good, be friendly',

which she associates with three basic politeness strategies, common to all cultures, though in varying degrees of intensity. They are: Distance (rule 1), which she characterizes as a strategy of impersonality, prevalent in European cultures, Deference (rule 2) as a strategy of hesitancy, which is most prevalent in Asian cultures, and Camaraderie (rule 3) as a strategy of informality, most obvious in contemporary American culture (ibid 3).

Lakoff's theory of politeness has received criticism for "theoretical weakness" (Fukushima, 2000: 33). Watts et al. point out that *"[w]e are never told explicitly how these three levels of politeness are to be understood, nor … what politeness itself is"* (1992: 6; cf. Yeung 1997: 506). Similarly, Turner comments that, *"her account (i) leaves these rules in this state of imprecision and … (ii) makes no attempt to theorise the notion of context"* (1996: 6).

Geoffrey Leech (1983) deals with politeness as part of 'interpersonal rhetoric'. Building upon Grice, he claims that politeness, which is, with cooperation, necessary to ensure that communication will be successful, involves a violation of Grice's conversational maxims of achieving maximally efficient communication.

Leech introduces his Politeness Principle (PP) and argues that this principle is just as important as the Cooperative Principle (CP), and in some situations PP outweighs CP. While the purpose of CP is to regulate what we say so that the communication can most efficiently reach a given illocutionary or discoursal goal, the PP maintains social balance and friendly rela-

tions, which contributes to enhancing cooperativeness and thus provides a stable and suitable environment for effective discourse (1983: 82).

Leech (1983: 132) proposes the following maxims of his PP:

(I) **Tact Maxim**
  (a) Minimize cost to *other* [(b) Maximize benefit to *other*]

(II) **Generosity Maxim**
  (a) Minimize benefit to self [(b) Maximize cost to self]

(III) **Approbation Maxim**
  (a) Minimize dispraise of other [(b) Maximize praise of other]

(IV) **Modesty Maxim**
  (a) Minimize praise of self [(b) Maximize dispraise of self]

(V) **Agreement Maxim**
  (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
  [(b) Maximize agreement between self and other]

(VI) **Sympathy Maxim**
  (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other
  [(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other]

Negative politeness (an avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness (seeking concord), and thus the (a) submaxims are a stronger consideration than the (b) ones. The Tact Maxim and the Generosity Maxim look at costs and benefits. Since politeness focuses more strongly on 'other' than on 'self', (I) appears to be a more powerful constraint on conversational behavior than (II). The Approbation Maxim and Modesty Maxim consider praise and dispraise. Here again, (III) is stronger than (IV).

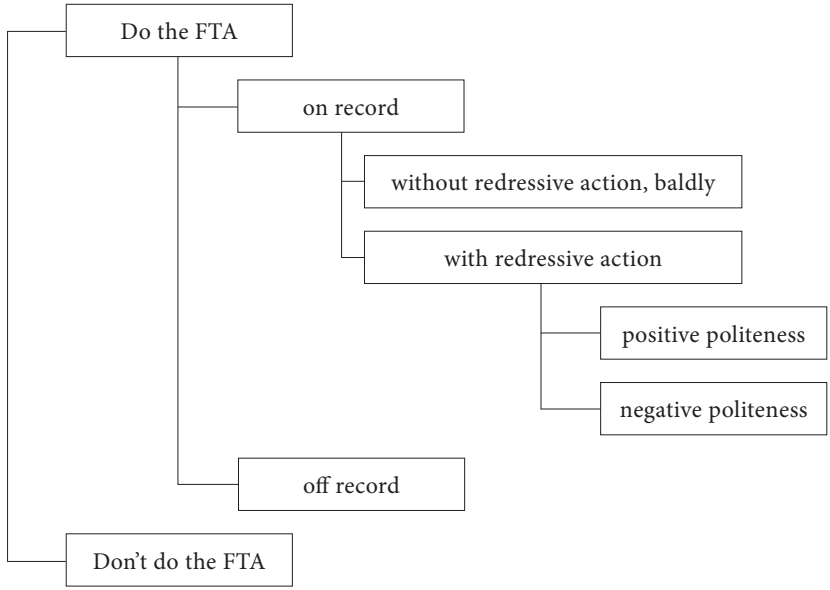
Leech realizes that his PP maxims do not apply to all cultures in equal measure, and states that one of the main purposes of socio-pragmatics is to analyze in different societies the interplay between the various CP and PP maxims (1983: 80).

Leech's concept has been criticized for lacking an explicit definition of politeness (Watts et al., 1992: 6), and also for an indefinite number of maxims (Turner, 1996: 6). Watts et al. argue that it is *"far too theoretical to apply to actual language usage and too abstract to account for either the commonsense notion of politeness or some notion which fits into a general theory of social interaction*" (1992: 7; cf. Yeung, 1997: 506).

Like Lakoff and Leech, **Penelope Brown** and **Stephen C. Levinson** (1978, 1987), in the most influential politeness theory, describe politeness in terms of conflict avoidance. Their theory is based on the concept of 'face', which is the public self-image, held by every competent adult member of society, which consists of two aspects: negative face (the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions) and positive face (the desire for appreciation and approval) (1987: 59).

Their theory suggests that most speech acts inherently threaten either the hearer's or the speaker's face-wants, and politeness serves to minimize such face-threats. It offers several main politeness strategies, the application of which is determined by the 'weightiness' of the combination of three social variables: the power difference between hearer and speaker, the perceived social distance between them, and the cultural ranking of the speech act (how "threatening" or "dangerous" it is perceived to be within a specific culture). Based on these variables, speakers select a specific strategy resulting in one of five possible communicative choices.

Figure 2.1
Possible strategies concerning the delivery of an FTA (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 69)



Positive politeness includes 15 strategies, negative politeness includes 10, and off record includes another 15 variants (see 2.5.2 below)

According to Brown and Levinson, a FTA can be performed either on or off record. 'On record' statements have no other intended interpretation than their literal meaning. The speaker may (1) opt for efficiency, in conformity with Grice's Maxims, or may couch the FTA in (2) friendly (positive politeness) or (3) respectful (negative politeness) language. Generally speaking, positive politeness addresses positive face wants, and negative politeness addresses negative face wants.

The intended meaning of 'off record' statements is different than the literal interpretation, and this indirectness softens and distances the face threat. The speaker cannot be held to be committed to one particular intent,

and the addressee can even pretend not to recognize the FTA as having occurred. Many 'off record' statements (by this definition) are so frequently used that they can no longer be interpreted in more than one way and so are considered to be 'on record' statements despite their theoretical ambiguity.

Once a suitable strategy has been chosen, the speaker chooses an appropriate linguistic means by which the chosen strategy can be implemented.

As might be expected, the Japanese perspective is different. The theories mentioned above, notably Brown and Levinson's, have been criticized by many linguists who study East Asian languages, arguing against a narrow, limited, Anglocentric view of politeness (cf. Matsumoto, 1988; Ide, 1989; Ide et al., 1992; B. Hill et al., 1986; Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1991).

Based on her research into Japanese politeness, **Ide Sachiko**[1] (1989) argues that, in contrast with politeness in Western cultures, the Japanese concept of politeness rests heavily on discernment of and conformity to social conventions, which is an aspect that she claims is neglected by the major politeness theories based on English.[2] This conformity to social conventions is called in Japanese *wakimae*. She describes *wakimae* as adhering to existing social conventions by verbally and non-verbally acknowledging one's ascribed position and acquired role in a given situation (1989: 230, see also Hill et al., 1986). Subsequently, for smooth communication, one needs to be aware of one's status in relation to the addressee and the referent.

Ide distinguishes between two basic aspects of politeness: 'volition' and 'discernment' (terms set up in Hill et al. 1986).

Volition is *"the aspect of politeness which allows the speaker a considerably active choice, according to the speaker's intention from a relatively wider range of possibilities"* (Hill et al., 1986: 348), which is the aspect that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory focuses on.

[1] Japanese and Chinese names are given surname first.

[2] There are, however, linguists who consider Ide's criticism as misunderstanding Brown and Levinson's theory (e.g. Usami, 1999; Fukushima, 2000; Fujita, 2001; Pizziconi, 2003).

'Discernment', which is one translation of the term *wakimae,* she defines as the "*choice of linguistic forms or expressions in which the distinction between the ranks or the roles of the speaker, the referent and the addressee are systematically encoded*" (Ide, 1989: 230).

She claims that while the volitional aspect attends to 'face' wants, the discernment aspect of linguistic politeness concerns the socially obligatory roles and situations. The speaker must not only choose between formal or non-formal speech, he must also decide whether to use an honorific or plain form, and therefore the speaker has no choice but to acknowledge social relationships. In Japanese, there are no utterances lacking acknowledgement of social relationships, even in a sentence that mentions neither the speaker nor the hearer, such as a statement about the weather: "It is a nice day today"[3] (cf. Matsumoto, 1989). "*Since the choices cover such parts of speech as copulas, verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, the discernment aspect of linguistic politeness is a matter of constant concern in the use of language*" (Ide, 1989: 231). If a speaker chooses a plain form instead of an honorific form, this is not the same as what westerners refer to as "neutral" speech. If an honorary form is called for, choosing a plain form is simply rude and inappropriate. "*This use of an honorific verb form is the socio-pragmatic equivalent of grammatical concord, and may thus be termed socio-pragmatic concord*" (ibid 227). Thus, these "discernable" politeness rules, in the same way as grammatical rules, are an integral and unavoidable part of the language.

While discernment is prominent in languages with highly developed honorific systems such as Japanese, it is not unique to honorific languages, but is present in the concept of politeness of other languages, though usually to a lesser extent. Thus Ide defines linguistic politeness as:

> […] the language usage associated with smooth communication, realized 1) through the speaker's use of intentional strategies to allow his or her message to be received favorably by the addressee, and 2) through

[3] When the speaker has a close relationship with the hearer, the plain form of the copula is used: *Kyō wa ii tenki DA ne?* When talking to a stranger or to a person with whom the speaker has a distant relationship, the polite form of the copula is used: Kyō wa ii tenki DESU ne? In a more formal setting, when talking to a stranger or a person with whom the speaker has a distant relationship, an even more polite form is used: Kyō wa ii tenki DE GOZAIMASU ne?

the speaker's choice of expressions to conform to the expected and/or prescribed norms of speech appropriate to the contextual situation in individual speech communities (ibid 225).

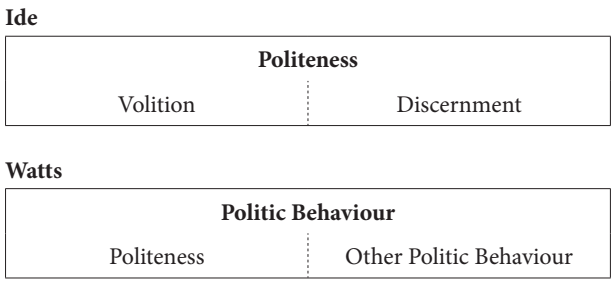
Like Ide, **Gu Yueguo** (1990) stresses that Asian politeness requires conformity to social norms and conventions. Applying the theories of Leech to the Chinese concept of *limao* ('politeness'), he goes further and explicitly connects politeness with an obligation to respect the societal norms of morality. Impolite behavior not only threatens an individual's wants, it also poses a danger to society's needs *"of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement"* (1990: 245). This leads to Gu's four maxims: Self-denigration (denigrate Self and elevate Other), Address (address your interlocutor with a term of address appropriate to the hearer's social status and the speaker-hearer relationship), Tact, and Generosity (ibid). Politeness also involves two principles: of sincerity and balance, which involves reciprocation (ibid 239). The normative aspect of politeness leads Gu to conclusion that *"[i]nteractants can use politeness to further their goals (e.g. redress FTAs), but at the same time are constrained by it"* (ibid 256).

There are also some isolated theories which should be mentioned in a summary of the field of politeness, but which do not further relate to this work. One example is **Richard Watts**. What others refer to as politeness Watts classifies as 'politic behaviour', which is *"socio-culturally determined behaviour directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between the individuals of a social group, … during the ongoing process of interaction"* (Watts, 1989: 135). Within his 'politic behaviour', Watts has his own, very limited category of politeness. Of what others call politeness, Watts includes only the instances of 'politic behaviour' which go beyond merely appropriate behaviour. Thus, according to his definitions, honorifics and terms of address such as the T/V variants, the application of which is socio-culturally determined, in general qualify only as 'politic behaviour' and can only be interpreted as 'polite' when the utterance is more polite than the expected *"socio-culturally constrained forms of politic behaviour"* (Watts, 1992: 52).

Unlike Ide, who considers both 'volition' and 'discernment' to be aspects of politeness, Watts associates politeness only with 'volition', while 'discernment' he considers to be 'politic behaviour' (figure 2.2). He argues that *"wherever volition supersedes discernment in the choice of specific linguistic forms such as honorifics, terms of address, ritualised expressions, etc., we are dealing with politeness phenomena"* (ibid).

This distinction does have its own internal logic, however his definition greatly deviates from most accepted definitions and commonsense notions of politeness. The Japanese, for example, strongly associate politeness with keeping appropriate forms. Although Watts' framework of politeness may be applied to cultures that associate politeness with 'volition', in countries with a strong role of 'discernment' it pushes too far against the accepted understandings of politeness.

Figure 2.2
Ide's and Watts' understanding of politeness



2.3 General Concepts in Contemporary Politeness Theory

A summary of the theories is made more complicated by the fact that, as in many of the arts, the theorists often use different terminology, and when they do use the same terms, they often use the terms differently. Even within the context of one author's work, attempts to classify additional examples by their frameworks meet with frustration.

Most of the above theories explaining politeness are partially based on a criticism of an earlier theory, but it seems clear that they are not really

in conflict. Rather, none of them is comprehensive enough to cover all aspects in all languages. In their explanation of the politeness phenomena, the various theories often approach from different angles, emphasize different aspects, and use different terminology, but they generally have a number of ideas in common:

- Politeness helps maintain harmonious social dynamics.
- The existence of politeness is on one hand universal, but on the other hand the actualization is usually quite culturally specific.
- Polite language can only be understood in the proper socio-cultural context.
- Politeness is situational.
- Some politeness means are required by the culture, and some are chosen by the speaker.

Let us examine these points in more detail. Politeness is a crucial **conflict-avoidance** mechanism. Brown and Levinson base their model on using politeness to minimize face-threats. Lakoff sees the main task of politeness in *"minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange"* (in Eelen, 2001: 2). Leech's maxims work towards avoiding 'disruption' and 'maintaining the social equilibrium and friendly relations'… (1983: 21), while Watts' 'politic behaviour', which includes politeness, is *"directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships"* (1989: 135). Ide connects politeness with 'smooth communication' (1989: 231).

It is also generally acknowledged that politeness is both **universal** and **culture-sensitive**. Linguists who emphasize universality acknowledge the cultural specific applications, and those who emphasize the cultural uniqueness of politeness means explain how these means work towards more universal needs. Although Brown and Levinson introduced "universal" principles such as 'face', and although they have been criticized for being too concerned with proving the universal validity of some aspects of politeness, even they acknowledge that the specifics of face-wants and face-threats are *"subject to cultural specifications of many sorts"* (1987: 13). Leech likewise recognizes that *"different societies operate maxims in different ways"* (1983: 80). Ide points out that 'discernment' is critical for Japanese,

but states that both 'discernment' and 'volition' exist in all languages. Watts, Ide and Gu address specific cultural systems, each with its own notions and rules of politeness, but utilize universal politeness frameworks.

Aspects of politeness such as the existence of 'face', the desirability to avoid face-threats, the need to be able to show respect, and so forth, are valid across cultures, but cultures differ in their understanding (i. e. what threatens face) and manifestation (i. e. how to deal with such face-threats). In Japan, for example, one refers to one's own boss without respectful form of address (without the suffix *-san*, i. e. 'Mr.') when talking about him with someone from a different company. Lowering members of one's in-group, including one's superior, is a means of showing respect towards a person from an out-group. In American culture, on the other hand, this would not show proper respect for one's superior.

This example also shows that politeness is **situational**. Politeness usually includes acknowledging one's position in society and relationship to the hearer. If the speaker presents himself as having a different position or relationship than the hearer is comfortable with, this is considered impolite.

Another feature, prominent mainly in the work of Ide and Gu, is the **normative nature** of politeness. Each particular type of interaction in a culture has certain norms and conventions to be followed, not out of choice, but in order to conform to the expectations of appropriate behavior. Although polite behavior can be a strategic tool for achieving a communication goal, it is often merely an obligatory feature determined by the social rules that have developed over time in that particular culture.

There is a folk notion that Japanese is much more polite than English. However, this deceptive appearance is caused by different norms and conventions. Japanese extensively uses linguistic forms, namely mandatory honorifics, which are by comparison rare in English. Each speech community has its own methods to communicate deference, balance between directness and indirectness, and manifest mitigation and other aspects of politeness.

2.4 Cultural Values Relating to the Perception of Politeness in English and Japanese

In order to achieve an objective and unbiased cross-cultural comparison of politeness, one must rise above one's own ethnocentric view of what is considered polite in order to prevent the use of one's own view of politeness as the standard for judging what is, and what is not, polite in other cultures. Otherwise, one's own ethnocentricity could lead to generalizations such as that Americans are friendly but arrogant and the Japanese polite but insincere.

Let us examine a few of the more striking differences in cultural values which influence language usage in general, and politeness in particular. A hearer naturally considers the politeness of each utterance in the context of his culture, and his cultural background colors his perceptions. So, although we should avoid reliance on cultural generalizations, we do need to recognize that cultural values do influence both the speaker's choice of politeness strategies and the interpretation by the hearer.

Many values traditionally associated with the American culture are often the opposite of their Japanese counterparts. Here are some common stereotypes (cf. Reischauer, 1989; Goldman, 1989; Wierzbicka, 1992, 1997):

American Values	**Japanese Values**
individuality	conformity
equality	hierarchy
autonomous leadership	group decision-making by consensus
self-reliance	interdependence
freedom	duty
self-confidence	self-consciousness
positive self-image	modesty
rationality	sentimentality
directness	indirectness
clarity	vagueness
sincerity	reserve
friendliness	formal respect

The last two items, friendliness versus formal respect, do not at first seem to be in any way opposites, but they are at the heart of a discussion of what politeness is, because they present two ways of being polite, and often one impinges upon the other.

Most Europeans have had first hand experience with the American culture, but some explanation of the Japanese culture may be useful.

Hofstede's 1991 extensive research concerning individualism vs. collectivism (Fukushima, 2004: 373) provides quantifiable evidence for the generally recognized **collectivist** nature of Japanese culture in contrast to the **individualist** nature of western cultures. Although Japan has been undergoing social changes along with the economic ones, Japanese culture can be still said to be more collectivist than western cultures.

Even the concept of *wa*, which is commonly translated as 'harmony', 'peace' or 'concord', and is by many considered the key Japanese value, is usually referred to in association with one's group and has, according to Wierzbicka, unlike the western concept of harmony, clear implications of 'groupism' and 'anti-individualism' (1997: 249). It includes a *"mutual feeling of trust between superior and subordinate"* (Umehara, 1987: 21).

Japanese society is clearly **group-oriented** and a social structure such as a 'company' or 'association' is of primary importance, while the concept of the individual is secondary. That is why, for example, when introducing oneself, a Japanese person gives precedence to the name of his institution rather than his particular occupation.

While in western organizations considerable importance is given to merit, cohesion within a Japanese group is ensured by vertical relationships based mainly on seniority, which results in more pronounced differences in social status and power. The Japanese acknowledge superior social status more openly than the Americans, and the Japanese language, having developed elaborate distance-building deferential devices, supports this system (see 2.5.1.1 below). *"A strong equalitarian ideology of the sort dominant in America works to suppress every conventional expression of power asymmetry. If the worker becomes conscious of his unreciprocated polite address to the boss, he may feel that his human dignity requires him to change"* (Brown and Gilman, 1977: 271).

While the values of equality and autonomy foster the self-assertive attitude of the American culture, the strong bond to a group gives rise to the

self-denying attitude of the Japanese. Wierzbicka (1991: 73) demonstrates this difference in that Anglo-Americans are encouraged to say "I want this" or "I don't want this", while the Japanese are discouraged from expressing themselves in this manner. These features of reservation, hesitation, discretion, together with deference and modesty, are contained in the Japanese concept of *enryo*. The Japanese tend to refrain from expressing their opinions in general, and even more when they disagree. An utterance utilizing appropriate expressions of respect and humility may be still viewed as impolite if uttered in one breath, without expressing regret and hesitancy.

To exhibit *enryo* also means to refrain from expressing one's desires or preferences. Therefore, when asked about one's convenience, many Japanese will first suggest that any time is suitable for them, and if given a concrete suggestion that they cannot actually agree on, they hint that the suggested time is not the best for them.

This self-denying along with **self-degrading** way of communication, accompanied by **indirectness** and **vagueness** of expression in Japanese, may give a feeling of insincerity to Americans, who ostensibly put a great value on **sincerity**. Unlike a Japanese housewife, who will serve a cake that she has made with an apology for offering something so awful, an American housewife may offer it announcing proudly that it has turned out really well this time. While a Japanese woman chooses a phrase complying with *enryo*, an American woman usually feels comfortable expressing her real feelings explicitly. While Americans see the Japanese as being falsely modest, Reischauer (1989: 138) notes that the Japanese often find Westerners "immature" because of the **"frankness"** with which they express their opinions.

A lot of Japanese expressions, indeed, may sound to an American hearer rather insincere. A phrase such as *Okagesama de genki desu*, which is a reply to 'How are you?' and can be literally interpreted as 'Thanks to you I am fine', may seem to Americans a bit farfetched. However, similar cases, though not as pronounced, can ordinarily be found in English as well. The inquiry 'How are you?' has degraded to a common greeting and the salutation 'Dear …', which is used to address a complete stranger in correspondence, could be considered just as insincere.

It can still be concluded, however, that Americans, being by comparison an individualist culture, appreciate the appearance of a sincere and personalized attitude, and are likely to consider 'clichés' a sign of not having made

enough effort. The Japanese, being by comparison a collectivist culture, feel comfortable using the stereotypical expressions, and appreciate another's ability to use them properly.

The above mentioned phrase *Okagesama de genki desu*, along with other very frequently used polite phrases such as *Dōzo yoroshiku o-negai (ita)shimasu* ('please keep me in favor'), reveal another cultural aspect of paying respect to the hearer by expressing awareness of interdependence. Passive and unconditional **interdependence** within the hierarchical relationship is one aspect of the complex and hard-to-translate Japanese concept of *amae* (cf. Wierzbicka, 1992, 1997).

Another cultural principle that is frequently mentioned in connection with Japanese communication is *omoiyari* ('consideration', 'empathy', 'concern for others'). This constant awareness of the need to prevent offence and trouble is demonstrated by the extensive use of apologies. A Japanese person will apologize to maintain a good relationship even when he is not in the wrong. This is deeply engrained in the language, in its formal forms, and is used automatically by native speakers who do not even consider the literal meaning. For example, when entering and leaving a room it is common to use a phrase of apology for disturbing instead of the greetings common to Western cultures. An apology is also used instead of, or together with, a 'thank you' when accepting a present. However, as Mizutani and Mizutani (1987: 133) point out, consideration for others, which is one of the most important factors in polite language, is also conveyed through a variety of expressions of friendliness and concern.

Omoiyari is closely connected with *sasshi*, which can be translated as 'inference', or 'anticipatory perception' and constitutes a very distinctive feature of the Japanese communicative style. Simply put, the speaker often does not express his wish, but the hearer is expected to anticipate it. To use the model of Brown and Levinson, the burden of communication is shifted from the speaker to the hearer who, by anticipating the speaker's intention, spares him from having to complete the face-threatening act. Compared to English, there are many situations when the style of communication in Japanese seems rather intuitive and indirect, and the real meaning is often only implied. For foreigners, who may be aware of this "anticipatory communication" (Lebra, 1976: 123) but ordinarily lack the ability to anticipate,

it is really frustrating at times to decode whether a Japanese person has just agreed or disagreed, or whether or not an offer has been accepted.

Another explanation for this may be found in Hall's distinction between high and low-context communication. As Hall defines it, in high-context communication *"most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message"* (in Fukushima, 2004: 373), while in low-context communication, *"the mass of information is vested in the explicit code"* (ibid). Fukushima suggests that, in collectivist countries, meaning can be communicated more implicitly, as there is a higher reliance upon shared knowledge among their members.

The different principles and values inherent in each culture influence the perception of politeness and way of communication. For Americans, politeness is more closely associated with **friendliness** as shown by an empirical study by Ide et al. (1992). It is polite to include other people in one's group by the use of informal positive politeness (see Brown and Levinson, 1987) to convey friendly attitude, which is demonstrated, for example, by first name address forms.

In Japanese the speaker shows respect to the hearer by strictly keeping **distance** between the two of them by using honorific forms to express respect and indicate deference to the hearer and by using humble forms to lower himself and his in-group members. The same study showed that for the Japanese 'polite' and 'friendly' (*teineina* and *shitashigena*) are not really related concepts and that politeness is rather associated with **appropriateness**.

In recent years, however, this has been changing slightly. A lot of attention has been paid to the way young people now use honorific language. One tendency is to shorten the distance between the speaker and the hearer and to express friendliness, which resembles the American concept of politeness. While some Japanese linguists recognize this change as yet another kind of politeness, others condemn it.

Although, within the younger generation, the differences between Americans and Japanese are diminishing, as they are globally, there often remain strong cultural differences in politeness and formality. For instance, despite the constant contact between cultures, business correspondence in Japanese still keeps much of its traditional cultural characteristics.

2.5 Politeness as a Social Index and as a Strategic Device: Discernment and Volition

It can be concluded from the above theories that politeness is made up of conscious, voluntary, explicitly marked acts and more or less unconscious, obligatory, unmarked acts, in Ide's terms 'volition' and 'discernment', respectively. Both volitional politeness and discernment politeness, which is "a form of social indexing" (O'Driscoll, 1996: 16), are, to varying degrees, present in most, if not all, languages (cf. Hill et al., 1986). As Eelen nicely puts it, in each language *"the ingredients of the politeness system remain constant, only the recipe differs"* (2001: 159).

It seems clear that politeness involves both these aspects, but the border between them is rather vague. Many expressions and language devices that qualify as means of discernment in a certain communicative situation are used as strategic, volitional means in another. While a 'thank you' uttered by a shop assistant as a mere acknowledgement of accepting a payment can certainly be considered a device of discernment, as can be the customer's 'thank you' upon receiving his rightful change, a person who has received help will "really mean" his 'thank you', aiming at accommodating face wants rather than just a response to one's social position in a particular situation.

Most utterances are neither purely one nor the other, but to some extent a combination of the two. English, which does not have as developed a system of honorifics as Japanese, makes use of various speech strategies that fulfill the same function as the honorifics. If they are so conventionalized that most speakers would use them, should they still be considered volitional? On the other hand, even the highly prescriptive system of Japanese honorifics makes use of a large number of "strategic" combinations that control the degree of politeness used.

Another difference between the two kinds of politeness is the amount of linguistic choice. Ide criticizes that Brown and Levinson treat as negative politeness strategies some expressions that she considers 'formal forms', and she argues that they should not be categorized as strategies because, while the use of strategies allows a potentially unlimited number of linguistic expressions, 'formal forms' are 1) chosen from a limited number of possibilities (e. g. *Vous* or *Tu*), 2) socio-pragmatically obligatory, 3) grammatically

obligatory, 4) made in accordance with not only the addressee, but also the speaker and the referent (as opposed to verbal strategies which are oriented only toward the addressee) (Ide, 1989: 227–229).

Irrespective of whether the devices that Ide calls 'formal forms' are included within the framework of Brown and Levinson's theory or should be classified separately, it is clear that they are an important part of politeness and deviating from the normative use of these devices can be intrinsically face-threatening.

2.5.1 deals with discernment politeness, focusing on Japanese honorifics and **2.5.2** concentrates on devices that are primarily strategic.

2.5.1 Politeness as a Social Index

According to Ide, 'formal forms' are devices that show what she calls 'discernment', which is *"oriented mainly toward the wants to acknowledge the ascribed positions or roles of the participants as well as to accommodate to the prescribed norms of the formality of particular settings"* (1989: 231). 'Formal forms' include such language means as honorifics[4], T/V address forms[5], or the choice of address term TLN (Title plus Last Name) in contrast to FN (First Name). Ide also includes devices at the discourse level such as courteous speech formulas, e. g. 'thank you', and 'it's my pleasure' (ibid 226).

In Japanese, honorifics are the main means of social indexing and practically any utterance encodes the speaker's aknowledgement of the addressee's (and/or the referent's) social context. Thus an utterance that fails to employ

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[4] Brown and Levinson define honorifics as *"direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event"* (1987: 179, 276). This is supported by Tanaka (1999), who argues that rather than to express respect, the Japanese honorific system is used to reflect power and control within the relationship.
As to their origin, Brown and Levinson explain that honorifics *"derive from frozen outputs of politeness strategies … where these directly or indirectly convey a status differential between speaker and addressee or referent"* (1987: 179). While Japanese honorifics may have, at some time in the distant past, been politeness strategies, they have through tradition become automatic and socially obligatory in their use, and grammatically encoded in the language. So honorifics are now usually classified as devices of social indexing.

[5] This term refers to the pronominal variants that appear in many European languages: e. g. *tu* (singular) and *vous* (plural) in French, *Du/Sie* in German, *ty/vy* in Russian and *ty/Vy* in Czech.

the honorifics correctly is likely to impinge upon the addressee's negative face.

Let us take a look at Japanese honorifics in comparison to T/V forms, which are also often classified as kind of honorifics (e. g. Neustupný, 1978; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Eelen, 2001), to see that Japanese honorifics are much more complex and situational.

For example, in Czech, which utilizes the T/V forms, in particular ty/Vy, the choice between the two is "prescribed" by social factors such as the age of the two interactants and social distance between them. There may be some situations when the choice is not completely clear and then aspects such as the formality of the situation and character of the speaker (whether preferring a friendly attitude or keeping distance) may contribute to the selection of term of address[6].

However, once the selection has been made, it is kept consistent throughout the interaction. A switch from the V-form to the T-form is possible (upon suggestion by the superior of the interactants and acceptance by the other), but once made, the T-form is then automatic. The opposite switch, from the T-form to the V-form, would be considered impolite in a standard interaction (other than mockery, playing a sort of game, etc.). This exemplifies that to be more "polite" (using a higher formality level) would be impolite (not respecting the close relationship).

So, though there may be times in some relationships when there is a strategic choice as to which system to operate in, usually the choice is clear, and in any case, once one of the two systems has been established, it is no longer strategic, and is used automatically with no special effort involved.

In many respects, Japanese honorifics are similar. Their usage is determined by social factors such as social status, age and sex of the interactants, social distance between them, and also by the formality of the situation and the degree of imposition. This means that their usage can change in the course of an interaction. The degree of imposition is a factor that would not cause a change in Czech from the T-terms of address to V-terms of ad-

[6] Brown and Gilman (1960) identified two basic dimensions, power and solidarity, that determine the relationship between T and V. The formal one characterizes a nonreciprocal usage of T/V between superior and inferior, the latter refers to a symmetrical relationship T/T or V/V.

dress, but in Japanese, impositions may call forth a higher level of honorifics. When asking a favor, apologizing or thanking, a Japanese person may employ honorific terms even when speaking to a very good friend.

Questions of politeness are related to questions of formality. For example, a Czech university professor will talk to a student using the same terms of address during classes and during a consultation; the use of honorifics by a Japanese professor is likely to vary as the formality of the situation varies.

An opposite move, i. e. switching from formal to informal forms, even in a formal situation whenever the speaker takes a speaker-oriented position, is well demonstrated by the following example:

> A student speaking with his professor would use the formal style during conversation. But, if he were stung by a bee while talking, he would use the informal *itai* 'ouch', rather than the formal form *itai desu*, because getting stung is purely a speaker-oriented matter (Makino and Tsutsui, 2001: 43).

This example is perhaps a bit extreme, but there are many situations where the self-orientation of the speaker expresses itself in informal style.

So, in respect to changing levels, Japanese honorifics are very situational and often quite strategic. The rules for their usage seem to be clearly defined and *"once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior is essentially automatic"* (Hill et al., 1986: 348). This seems very true, for instance, in correspondence. However, in a discourse, as the conversation develops, their usage is much more delicate than the use of T/V terms of address. Together with grammatical structures they form myriad possible combinations with distinctions across various criteria.

Let us have a brief look at the Japanese system of honorifics, which is one of the salient characteristics of Japanese.

2.5.1.1 A Brief Description of the Japanese System of Honorifics

The Japanese system of honorifics *(keigo)* integrates morphological, syntactical, and lexical devices. There are two basic types of classification. The less detailed one divides *keigo* into three modes: respectful *(sonkeigo)*, humble *(kenjōgo)* and polite *(teineigo)*. Generally, **respectful forms** are used to express respect[7] and indicate deference to a person or the person's group, activities and things. **Humble forms** are used to lower the speaker, including the speaker's in-group members, and thereby pay respect to the hearer indirectly, through showing the speaker's humility. **Polite forms** are neutral with regard to the target of respect, and thus they are used when a conversational situation is formal, and yet does not require the use of honorific or humble forms.

The second, more precise categorization of Japanese honorifics makes clear distinction between addressee, i. e. hearer, and referent. **Referent honorifics** *(sozai keigo)* can be further subdivided into **respectful forms** (*sonkeigo*, see above) and **humble forms** (*kenjōgo*, see above). They are used to show deference toward the person being talked about, which can but does not necessarily have to be the addressee. **Addressee honorifics** *(taisha keigo)* are further subdivided into two subcategories of **polite forms**: *teichōgo* and *teineigo* (see above). In form, *teichōgo* often, but not always, resemble *kenjōgo*, so the speaker has to be constantly aware whether speaking humbly with respect to the referent or just speaking politely about one's own actions. Thus it makes sense to have two separate categories.

There are also so-called *bikago* ('beautification' + 'words'), which are used for making the utterance sound "refined" or "elegant". These are classified either as a third subcategory of referent honorifics (e. g. Okamoto, 2004: 39, based on Minami, 1987) or as a separate category (e. g. Iori et al., 2000: 322). As they are often used without a direct reference to the referent, here they are classified separately.

The following table summarizes the two most common classifications:

[7] Respect here should be understood in the social sense as acknowledgement of the hearer's or referent's higher position in the particular situation (see p. 23 on discernment).

Figure 2.3
Summary of the categorization of Japanese honorifics (adapted from Iori et al. 2000: 322)

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">5 categories</td><td>3 categories</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Honorifics</td><td rowspan="2">Referent honorifics</td><td>Respectful forms
Sonkeigo</td><td>Respectful forms</td></tr>
<tr><td>Humble forms
Kenjōgo</td><td rowspan="2">Humble forms</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Addressee honorifics</td><td>Polite forms
Teichōgo</td></tr>
<tr><td>Polite forms
Teineigo</td><td rowspan="2">Polite forms</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Bikago</td></tr>
</table>

The following examples (Iori et al., 2000: 314) demonstrate the differences between referent and addressee honorifics:

1) (hearer: Mr. Tanaka)
Sensei wa mō o-kaeri ni natta?
Has the teacher returned yet?

2) (hearer: Mr. Tanaka)
Sensei wa mō o-kaeri ni narimashita ka?
Has the teacher returned yet?

3) (hearer: teacher)
Sensei wa mō o-hiru o meshiagarimashita ka?
Have you (= teacher) had lunch yet?

In example 1, the speaker shows respect towards the teacher (referent) by the use of the respect form *o-kaeri ni naru* 'to return', but speaks informally to Mr. Tanaka (addressee), which is evidenced by the informal ending of the verb *naru* → *natta*. In example 2, the speaker again expresses respect to the referent, but shows respect also to the addressee by the usage of the polite form of the verb *naru* → *narimashita (teineigo)*. In example 3, the

referent and the addressee are the same person (teacher) and thus both *sonkeigo* (the respectful verb *meshiagaru* 'to eat') and *teineigo* (the ending *-mashita*) are used.

As demonstrated by the above examples, the Japanese verb has an important role in expressing politeness. Its modification indicates various levels of politeness. An important characteristic of honorific politeness is indirectness, as the verbal formations in the honorific expressions may involve periphrastic constructions, or suffixes identical in form to the passive and causative morphemes, or both.

The honorific and humble variants of some of the most common verbs are lexically completely different, rather than just morphologically altered. The verb *meshiagaru* in example 3 above is the respectful equivalent of the verb *taberu* 'to eat', the humble one being *itadaku*. However, the majority of verbs, instead, make use of morphologically standard ways of forming honorific and humble forms. Typically, the verb *naru* ('to become') or the passive suffix *-rare* are used for the honorific form (see ex. 2 and 3). Both the verb *naru* and the passive *-rare* are normally used in sentences that require agentless constructions in order to impersonalize the expression. The verb *naru* is used to describe an event as if it happened "by itself", without explicit identification of the agent. This impersonalization and non-control are the basic means of expressing deference through distancing. The humble construction, on the other hand, makes use of the verb *suru* ('to do') and the causative suffix *-sase*, both of which explicitly indicate the agent (cf. Tokunaga, 1992). An expression utilizing the causative form sounds humble since it implies that the speaker is going to do the intended action with the hearer's permission.

Some nouns may function as polite forms either morphologically by the addition of prefixes, the most common of which are the prefixes *o-/go-*[8], or lexically, in that they can be used only politely.

[8] An example of the honorific prefix *o-*: *tegami* ('a letter') – *o-tegami* ('your letter', 'a superior's letter') An example of the respectful prefix *ki-* ('respected') and humble prefix *shō-* ('small'): *kaisha* ('a company') – *kisha* ('your company') – *shōsha* ('our company')

2.5.1.2 The Various Functions of Japanese Honorifics

The term *keigo* (*kei-* meaning 'respect' or 'deference' and *-go* meaning 'language') cannot be properly understood just by the meaning of the two characters. *Keigo* also deals with many aspects of language and behavior other than just respectfulness. If a foreigner understands every instance of *keigo* in this narrow understanding, he will be surprised how polite a housewife is to an apple she has just purchased. Besides intentionally showing respect or socially obligatory deference to the hearer, *keigo* is used to make the speech more formal in a formal setting, or softer and smoother as the subject of the conversation requires. Mizutani and Mizutani point out that the use of "polite-sounding" language is also motivated by *"the speaker's concern for a pleasant tone rather than concern with relative social rank"* (1987: 80). Furthermore, *keigo* has also a grammatical function of distinguishing between what refers to the speaker and what refers to the hearer, as it is impolite in Japanese to address a superior with a 2nd-person pronoun.[9, 10]

Yet another use of honorifics that is not connected with showing respect but rather a personal style, is (as mentioned in 2.5.1.1) so called *bikago*, used particularly by women. A typical example is the addition of the honorific prefix *o-* or *go-* to words such as 'beer', 'an apple' and 'rice', not for the purpose of expressing respect, but merely to make the words sound nicer and more lady-like.

All these functions contribute to politeness in the broad sense, but as they are often translated exclusively in terms of paying respect and showing deference, this misunderstanding leads to the stereotypical conclusion that the Japanese are superpolite.

As a result of these various aspects of *keigo,* and the complexities of factors determining its use, many ways of using the honorifics are available. Additionally, the differences between the levels are often very subtle and difficult to define. Although it is said that the mother tongue is used by a native speaker without much reflection, a 1981–1982 survey by the

[9] Apparently a foreigner was suddenly fired from a Japanese company because he addressed his superior as *anata* ('you'). This story, which many teachers of Japanese are familiar with, can be also found in Tanaka (1999).

[10] There are some polite 2nd-person pronouns, such as *kiden* or *kika* that are used in written language. *Anata,* written in Chinese characters, has also polite meaning in written style.

Japanese National Language Research Institute revealed that no fewer than 86% of respondents felt they had less than adequate skills in using honorific language (Eelen, 2001: 156). The continued westernization of the youth has made this situation even less stable.

2.5.2 Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies, as the word 'strategy' suggests, are based on the speaker's volition rather than prescribed norms. They are thus termed the volitional aspect of politeness. Compared to 'formal forms', the speaker may choose from a wider range of possibilities.

Brown and Levinson developed a detailed list of politeness strategies, which, although often criticized for being ethnocentric, give us a solid extensive framework of linguistic means of expressing politeness. This is the framework that will be used later in this work.

It should be pointed out that Brown and Levinson's understanding of the word 'strategy' includes not only "*innovative plans of action, which may still be (but need not be) unconscious*" (1987: 85), but also routines, i. e. ready--made plans, the application of which is automatic (ibid). According to Hill et al. (1986: 348), all 'positive politeness' and a good part of 'negative politeness' in Brown and Levinson's framework are a matter of volition.

The general notion of politeness is usually associated with what Brown and Levinson term negative politeness:

> When we think of politeness in Western cultures, it is negative-politeness behavior that springs to mind. In our culture, negative politeness is the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA redress. The outputs are all forms useful in general for social "distancing" (1987: 129–130).

As can be seen from part 2.4 (Cultural values), preserving a social distance (negative politeness) is only one aspect of expressing politeness. Another aspect includes positive politeness strategies, which the Americans utilize to a much greater degree than the Japanese. Positive politeness strategies serve not just to redress an FTA, but also to draw the speaker and the hearer

closer and enhance the relationship (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 103). In America it is considered polite to minimize social distance between the speaker and the hearer (unless the hearer is in a superior position).

The following section briefly introduces individual strategies, some in more detail, giving English and/or Japanese examples. The purpose is not to present a thorough account of each single strategy but rather to give a general overview, paying closer attention to those strategies that are frequently used in either language or reveal considerable cultural differences.

2.5.2.1 Positive Politeness Strategies
(Brown and Levinson, 1987: 102–129)

A. Claiming common ground

Strategy 1: Notice, attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods)
Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer)

These strategies soften the impending FTA by creating a friendly environment. Strategy 2 utilizes emphatic expressions such as 'really', 'absolutely', 'exactly'.

> *Hi, John, I brought you coffee. We really appreciate your help last week. No one can split wood like you can. We could not have managed without you. Could you help us again this weekend?*

Strategy 3: Intensify interest to hearer

This strategy draws the hearer into the narration, for example by using the 'vivid present' (which is, according to Brown and Levinson, commonly utilized in positive-politeness conversations).

In Japanese the particle *ne* has a similar function. Its repeated use in informal speech shows that the speaker is anxious to have the hearer listen.

> *Kinō ne, kaisha e ittara ne, Yamada-san ga saki ni kite ite ne, watashi no kao o miru to ne …*
> Yesterday, when I came to the office, Mr. Yamada was already there, and when he saw me … (Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987: 134).

Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers

Some politeness strategies, such as this one, are not always utilized in the same way in the American and Japanese cultures. To include other people in one's own group through the use of in-group identity markers and informal terms of address is a strategy frequently utilized in the American culture. In the Japanese culture, where politeness is based on preserving a social distance between in-group and out-group members, this would be considered inappropriate. This difference can easily be seen in the American and Japanese rejection letters (see 5.4.1 Salutations).

Strategy 5: Seek agreement
Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement

Seeking common ground upon which the speaker can agree with the hearer, for example by highlighting a positive aspect of a negative item, is a method that is used in both cultures.

- *So you like my new dress?*
- *It fits you perfectly.* (rather than 'That is the ugliest orange I have seen in my life.')

Similarly in Japanese:
- *Kono fuku, dō omou?*
  What do you think about these clothes?
- *Ōkisa wa pittari da ne.*
  The size is exact, isn't it? (It fits you perfectly).

Another way of avoiding disagreement is to make one's utterance safely vague by the use of hedges (see negative politeness strategy 2):

- *So you like my new dress?*
- *It's sort of nice.*
- *Kono fuku, dō omou?*
- *Nakanaka ii yo. / Warukunai, ne.*
  It's sort of nice. / It's not bad, is it?

Furthermore, if the issue is minor, a Japanese speaker will often agree, even if he in fact disagrees. This choice is not motivated so much by the desire to agree as by the desire to avoid disagreement.

Americans often mistake the Japanese tendency to say *Hai … hai … hai* (translated as "Yes … yes … yes") throughout e. g. a sales presentation as an agreement on the part of the Japanese. In reality this is not agreement, but rather an acknowledgement that the hearer is listening attentively, following the conversation, and understands what is being said.[11] The uninitiated American is surprised, if not completely confused, by the rejection of "Yes, but …" at the end.

Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground

This strategy includes 'point-of-view' operations, which are methods aimed at reducing the distance between the speaker's and hearer's points of view. This includes, for example, asserting common ground through assuming that the hearer knows something that he cannot possibly know:

I had a really hard time learning to drive, didn't I?
(used in some British dialects; Brown and Levinson 1987: 119)

This strategy has recently become quite spread among Japanese youth, but is not always well accepted by older generations:

Watashi wa, kōhī ga kiraina hito ja nai desuka.
I don't like coffee, do I?

This strategy includes small talk and gossiping before implementing the FTA, particularly requests.

[11] These reply words, called *aizuchi*, play an essential role in Japanese conversation. The hearer constantly encourages the speaker with expressions such as *hai*, *ē*, *un*, *hā*, *naruhodo*, which can be translated as 'yes', 'sure', 'right', 'yeah', 'I see', 'indeed', *sō desu ka* ('Is that right?'), *sō deshō ne* ('That must be so'), and the speaker is always conscious of them, slowing down in the last part of the phrase to invite the hearer to include them. The speaker is likely to feel uneasy at the absense of *aizuchi* as it can mean that the hearer has not understood or does not want to continue the conversation.

Strategy 8: Joke

Joking is a technique that can be utilized in English, for example, in response to a faux pas or even to minimize an FTA of requesting:

> *What has your wife been feeding you lately, beans and onions?* (in response to the hearer's excessively flatulent evening)
>
> *Let's have a look at your wine cellar!* (rather than "Please open a bottle of wine for me.")

In Japanese, one can joke about one's own things, but does not belittle the other's.

B. Conveying that speaker and hearer are cooperators

Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants

This strategy, similar to strategy 1, shows awareness of and concern for hearer's wants as a way of indicating cooperation:

> *I know you need to finish your thesis today, but couldn't you spare just a few hours to write me a letter of recommendation?*

Strategy 10: Offer, promise

In order to "distract" the hearer from potential face threats, the speaker may stress cooperation (or future cooperation) in various areas to demonstrate good will. This can take the form of offers, promises, or suggestions, often with little sincerity of intended fulfillment.

> *We do not have any positions open at this time, but we will keep your application on file for six months.* (See 5.4.4 for more examples of this type.)

In Japanese "false" invitations such as: 'Let's meet again!' or 'Come to visit us when you come to Japan!' are very common, and given just to be polite, even in the absence of any FTA. That they are used just to show

good intentions is quite obvious from the fact that the hearer is often not even given an address or a phone number. The speaker may be shocked if an uninitiated foreigner shows serious interest.

Strategy 11: Be optimistic

This strategy is aimed at minimizing the FTA by presuming the hearer's willingness to cooperate, and a positive outcome:

You'll come to help me on Tuesday, won't you?

I hope you can finish the project this week.

You don't mind if I smoke, do you?

A variation of this is to imply that the imposition is minor:

That wouldn't be too much to ask, would it? (formal)

What's a few dollars between friends? (used in price negotiations)

In Japanese this strategy is possible only between close friends or to a subordinate:

Ashita pātī ga aru kedo, kite kuremasu yo ne?
I am giving a party tomorrow. You will come (for my sake), won't you?

Warui kedo, kono shigoto, ashita made ni onegai. Dekiru yo ne? / Daijōbu da yo ne?
It's bad, but please do this work by tomorrow. You can manage, right? / It's ok, right?

Strategy 12: Include both speaker and hearer in the activity

This strategy uses the inclusive 'we' instead of 'I' or 'you':

We don't like that color, do we? (wife to husband when shopping)

It's time for our medicine! (mother to child or nurse to older patient)

In Japanese the inclusive 'we' is ordinarily used when asking whether the speaker can do something for the hearer; in polite speech it is inappropriate to directly inquire about the hearer's wishes:

Atarashii sētā o katte agemashōka.
Shall we buy you a new sweater?
(= Would you like me to buy you a new sweater?)

Mado o shimemashōka?
Shall we close the window? (= Shall I close the window?)

Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons

The speaker fosters cooperation by involving the hearer in his reasoning process so that the suggestion will be seen as a mutual decision.

Our old rattletrap is not going to last the winter, so isn't it better we buy a new one now?

Let's play another set, we still have time. (If off-record: *We still have time to play another set.*)

This strategy often involves the use of the English construction 'why not do something'. This conventionalized form implies that the speaker asks if there are any reasons against his suggestion, and assumes that there are none, and thus that the hearer will, of course, cooperate:

Why don't you come over tonight?

In Japanese, however, this type of a construction would be taken as a literal and genuine question.

Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity

The speaker highlights (or suggests) an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship.

This is your round. / This is my round.
(An American system for taking turns paying for beers)

C. Fulfilling hearer's want

Strategy 15: Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, co-operation)

The speaker anticipates hearer's wants, tangible or intangible, shows support towards their fulfillment, and makes efforts to satisfy particularly the desire for goodwill.

We wish you good luck in finding a job suitable for your many talents.

Something of this nature is often found at the end of rejection letters (see 5.4.4).

2.5.2.2 Negative Politeness Strategies
(Brown and Levinson, 1987: 131–211)

Negative politeness is essentially based on avoiding or minimizing an imposition, or redressing the imposition, with apologies, deference, various kinds of hedges, impersonalizing, and other devices.

Strategy 1: Be conventionally indirect

The most common form of conventional indirectness that is used both in English and Japanese is indirect speech acts. Although indirect, they are so conventionalized that they can be considered on-record expressions. In the notoriously known English example 'Can you please pass the salt?' the word 'please' indicates that the sentence is not to be translated literally, but as a request. Similarly, in the Japanese utterance *Doa o shimete moraeru*? 'Can you close the door for me?' (lit. 'Can I get the door closed?') the use of the verb *morau* 'receive' makes it obvious that the speaker is making a request rather than questioning the possibility.

The following utterance is an example of another common indirect way of making a request in Japanese:

Purezento nanode, ribon o kakete hoshii'n desu ga.
It is a present so I would like to have a ribbon put on it, but […].

The speaker makes the request by expressing his wish followed by the conjunction *ga* ('but') and falling intonation, with the actual request omitted.[12]

Strategy 2: Question, hedge

Many speech acts contain the speaker's opinions and assumptions. Some of these are potentially FTAs, particularly assumptions about the hearer's beliefs, wants, and abilities. So as not to impose his views on the hearer, the speaker may qualify his statements, either as (1) to their veracity or (2) to the degree of the speaker's commitment to the view.

(1) *Yes, she is kind of beautiful, in a way.* (= She is not my type.) (cf. positive politeness strategy 6)

(2) *I think that she likes you. Maybe you should ask her to dinner.* (But I could be wrong, so I will not be offended if you do not take my advice.)

Perhaps that's a bad idea.

Sono kangae wa amari yokunai'n ja naika to omou'n desu kedo…
I think it isn't a very good idea but…

The stronger the face threat, the more hedging used:

I think you should perhaps start looking for another job. (= I will fire you soon.)

Hedges can be used to soften performatives:

I have to say that was the best dinner I have ever had.

I must ask you to leave now.

[12] It could be argued that this utterance qualifies as an off-record request as it is performed *"in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act"* (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 211). However, a particular context makes it unambiguously on record.

They may soften the illocutionary force of various requests, and usually suggest a convenient and non-confrontational means of declining the request.

Could you help me? (see strategy 1 above).

Please come if you have time!

Yokereba/Yokattara/Dekireba kite kudasai.
If you'd like/If you can, come please.

Hedges come in many forms. Some are encoded in particles (tags in English, the particle *ne* in Japanese). Some take the form of adverbials: 'in fact', 'in a way', 'in a sense', and 'if' clauses ('if you can', 'if you want').

She is pretty, isn't she? (in Japanese*: Kirei desu yo ne*.)

If I were you, I would … (instead of "You should …")

Similarly in Japanese: *Watashi dattara …* (If it were me …)

In Japanese it is polite to refer to numbers and amounts in a nonspecific way to imply a suggestion rather than stating something as a matter of fact:

Ashita atari dō desuka
'How about around tomorrow?' (meaning 'How about tomorrow?)

Itsutsu hodo kudasai.
Please give me about five of them. (meaning 'I want five')

The above hedges detensify the views, but another way to soften a potential face threat is to "exaggerate". Though Brown and Levinson consider these intensifiers as hedges, they classify them under different strategies.

It should be mentioned that more recent authors have various definitions of these terms, and often even have different ones altogether. There is particular divergence concerning the term 'hedge'.[13]

Strategy 3: Be pessimistic

This strategy, which is used both in English and Japanese, is based on minimizing the imposition by the implication that the speaker does not expect a positive outcome:

I don't suppose you could lend me the book.

That would be too much to ask, wouldn't it?

Sono hon o kashite moraemasenka?
Could you not lend me the book?

In Japanese, a negative question is more polite than a positive one, and is more equivalent in meaning to the question tag *You probably couldn't lend me the book, could you?*

Strategy 4: Minimize the imposition

This strategy is based on utilizing expressions that are to minimize the size of the FTA, as in:

[13] Brown and Levinson start with the definition of 'hedge' as a *"particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected"* (1987: 145). This definition includes both detensifiers and intensifiers. However, the term 'hedge' is in many other theories reduced to the former one.
Caffi classifies mitigating mechanisms according to which components of the utterance they affect: 'bushes' concern the proposition, 'hedges' concern the illocution and 'shields' concern the utterance source. In bushes (propositional hedges), *"the focus of the mitigating device is on the propositional content, which is typically made less precise"* (1999: 890). It is usually achieved through diminutives, understatements, minimizers, etc. *"In hedges, the scope of the mitigation centers on the illocution, i. e. on illocutionary force indicators"* (ibid 892). *"[I]n shields, the act is not mitigated by explicit linguistic means, but rather it is dislocated, displaced; there is backgrounding, de-focalization, or even deletion of the utterance source"* (ibid 895) (see Brown and Levinson's 'impersonalization mechanisms' /1987: 273/).
Blum-Kulka has yet another categorization system (cf. 1984: 204).

I just need a moment of your time. (a favorite of door-to-door salesmen)

Warui kedo chotto 3000-en kashite moraenai?
(informal) It is bad but couldn't you, for just a little, lend me 3000 yen?

Tsumaranai mono desu ga, dōzo…
(formal) It's a worthless thing but please [accept it].

In minimizing the gift, the speaker is minimizing the face threat of accepting the gift.

Strategy 5: Give deference

Many deference phenomena are encoded in language structure as 'formal forms' (see 2.5.1). Showing respect to the hearer and humbling the speaker may also be a chosen strategy:

It's probably not what you are used to, but it's the best we have.

Semakute kitanai tokoro desu ga, dōzo (o-agari kudasai).
Lit. It is a small and dirty place but please (come in).

Strategy 6: Apologize

Apology serves as a means of showing regret or reluctance to impose. This can be done through admitting the impingement, indicating reluctance, giving overwhelming reasons or begging forgiveness.

O-isogashii tokoro o mōshiwake gozaimasen.
Sorry [to bother] when you are so busy. (only assuming that the hearer is busy)

I know it is a lot to ask, but you are the only one who can help me.

I am sorry to bother you, but could you please turn down the music.

Though common in both languages, in Japanese this strategy is utilized to a much greater degree. Even if not in the wrong, a Japanese person will apologize to maintain a good relationship (see also 2.4).

Accepting a present also often includes an apologetic expression:

Arigatō gozaimasu. Konna mono o itadaite shimatte, mōshiwake gozaimasen.
Lit. Thank you very much. I apologize for receiving such a thing.

Strategy 7: Impersonalise S and H

The speaker seemingly imposes less on the hearer by avoiding the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. The imposition becomes agentless, and the hearer is not specified as the object of the imposition.

$50,000 would really help the re-election campaign.

A good example that can be seen in many languages is avoiding agents in commands. Another means of avoiding the agent is to utilize the passive voice.

It should be done by Friday. (instead of "You should do it by Friday.")
Kono shorui wa kin'yōbi made ni dekiagatte inakute wa narimasen.
This document has to be done by Friday.

In Japanese, the verb *naru*, meaning 'to become', is used to express that something was decided without specifying who decided it, and can thus be used to avoid responsibility:

Zannennagara fugōkaku to narimashita.
Lit. Unfortunately, it became not passing. (= Unfortunately, you did not pass.)

In English the indefinite pronoun 'one' serves as an impersonal version of 'I' or 'you', often used in conjunction with strategy 8.

Strategy 8: State the FTA as a general rule

Another way of dissociating the speaker and hearer from the imposition is stating it as a general rule, as in:

Shoes are for outside. (Instead of 'Stop running around the house in shoes!')

We just don't do things that way here.

In Japanese, personal pronouns are omitted unless absolutely necessary to avoid misunderstanding, so many sentences sound like general statements. In the following example, only the end particle *yo* indicates that the utterance is directed towards the hearer:

Tēburu ni suwatte wa dame da yo.
Sitting on the table is unacceptable / You cannot sit on the table, ok?

Strategy 9: Nominalize

Nominalization is another way of distancing the speaker and/or the hearer from the FTA.

The production process has quality-control problems. (Instead of 'Your factory is producing a lot of products that have failed our quality tests.')

The requirements of this project were the final product of extensive negotiation. (Instead of 'You have to do it this way, I already tried to get the customer to be reasonable.')

This is used both in English and Japanese and gives the utterance a more formal appearance. However, it should be noted that contemporary letter--writing manuals, both American and Japanese, distain nominalization and advocate the active voice.

Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H

This strategy of explicitly acknowledging indebtedness to the hearer is well utilized in Japanese and is common also in English requests, together with disclaiming indebtedness in offers.

A request in English:

A: If you helped me I would be grateful forever.
B: Oh, it won't take me but a minute.

A: Thanks a lot. I won't forget it.
B: Think nothing of it. / It was nothing. / Don't mention it.

2.5.2.3 Off-record Strategies

If a Japanese person does need to disagree or criticize, he usually does so very indirectly, in compliance with the spirit of *omoiyari* and *sasshi* (see 2.4). The former entails the speaker understanding the hearer, and the latter entails the hearer understanding the speaker. However, because the understanding of the act is subject to more than one interpretation, neither the speaker nor the hearer can be held responsible for the intended meaning, even though the context usually determines the one intended interpretation.

Brown and Levinson classify these strategies according to which Gricean maxim they violate (1987: 213–227):

A. Violation of the Relevance Maxim

Strategy 1: Give hints
Strategy 2: Give association clues

An utterance that seems irrelevant in the particular situation calls for another interpretation. Thus utterances 'The cake is really tasty' and *Sono kukkī, oishisō da ne?* ('The cookie looks tasty, doesn't it?') may be interpreted as a compliment but also as a hint used to request the particular thing.

Itani (1996: 224) gives an example of an indirect request, which is further hedged by the particle *kedo* to even further weaken the force of the request by making the utterance less assertive and leaving more space for non-compliance:

Mō jikan desu kedo…
It's time but … (implying that it is time to go)

To convey a request, the Japanese will often use self-directed statements. Upon being told that the person the speaker intended to talk to is not avail-

able, he may say something like *Sō desu ka. Komatta na.* (lit. 'Oh, really? I'm troubled') (Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987: 36). As the response is directed towards the speaker rather than the hearer, the hearer can choose whether to ignore it or offer some help.

Association clues are hints that are understood by the listener through prior experience with the speaker.

Strategy 3: Presuppose

This strategy is mainly used in implied criticism. 'I cleaned (or stronger: I had to clean) the house again today,' presupposes that the speaker should not have had to do so, had the listener not messed it up.

B. Violation of the Quantity Maxims

Strategy 4: Understate
Strategy 5: Overstate

The following understated and overstated hints are off-record requests to turn on the heat/climatization:

It is a bit chilly here.

I am freezing my ass off.

Chotto samukunai?
Isn't it a bit chilly? / Aren't you a bit chilly? (superior to inferior)

Kyō wa iya ni atsui ne.
It's awfully hot today, isn't it? (superior to inferior)

Understatements are used both in English and Japanese, for example, to lessen a compliment:

A: What a fantastic car!
B: Well, it gets me to work.

Understatements of this kind are less frequently used in English than simple acknowledgement of the compliment, but in Japanese the hearer usually lessens or completely negates any compliments:

A: Ii handobaggu desu ne.
That's a nice handbag, isn't it? (meaning 'You have a nice handbag')
B: Iie, jitsu wa yasumono nan desu yo.
No, it's actually a cheap one.

In English, overstatements can convey an apology, as in:

The roads were a real hell! ('It is not my fault I was late.')

In Japanese, however, it is customary to apologize in a straightforward manner and blame oneself even if it is not one's fault. Such an overstatement might be misunderstood as trying to make an excuse or avoid responsibility, justifying the situation without feeling sorry.

Strategy 6: Use tautologies

Tautologies are sometimes used in an attempt to maintain dignity in an uncomfortable situation and are offered instead of an apology, excuse or explicit refusal.

Business is business. ('I do not want to talk about the moral implications of my actions.')

Kimari wa kimari desu kara (dame desu).
Rules are rules (and that's why it is not possible). (meaning 'I will not make an exception for you.')

C. Violation of the Quality Maxim

By stating something that is obviously not accurate, the speaker puts the hearer on notice that he must find the true meaning of the utterance:

Strategy 7: Use contradictions

He fixed the car but didn't fix it. ('He did a really bad job.')

This structure does not work in Japanese.

Strategy 8: Be ironic

That really helped, didn't it? ('You should not have done such a stupid thing.')

In Japanese such an utterance would probably cause confusion, as it would be understood literally.

Strategy 9: Use metaphors

You are a real angel. ('Thank you for your help.')

Kamisama ni miemasu.
You seem like a god to me. ('Thank you for your help')

Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions

How many times do I have to tell you to pick up your room?

Nankai itta to omotte iru'n desu ka.
How many times do you think I told you?

D. Violation of the Manner Maxim

Meanings that would threaten face may be delivered off record by making them indefinite:

Strategy 11: Be ambiguous

When you have known him as long as we have, you will realize just how trustworthy he is.

Well, someone has been busy! (Either 'You did a lot of work' or the opposite, depending on intonation.)

Strategy 12: Be vague

Chotto yōji ga arimasu.
I have a [previous] engagement. (commonly used to decline invitations)

Strategy 13: Over-generalize

No one manages to do it properly the first time. ('You did it wrong.')

Strategy 14: Displace H

We have received many qualified applicants and cannot employ them all.
('We cannot employ you.')

Strategy 15: Be incomplete, use ellipsis

This strategy is well utilized in Japanese. When giving a negative reply or a negative opinion, the last part of the utterance is frequently omitted in order to show reluctance. If the speaker says Ashita *wa chotto* … ('Tomorrow is a bit …'), the hearer is to understand that tomorrow is not suitable for the speaker. *Koremo kekkō desu ga/kedo* … ('This is also alright, but …') conveys that the customer is not satisfied with the merchandise he has been shown, leaving out the part that he would prefer, for example, something cheaper. As mentioned earlier, in Japanese it is often difficult to determine whether to classify an utterance as indirect or conventionally indirect (see negative politeness strategy 1).

There is a great overlap between the above strategies. Definitive classification of examples is also complicated because even single utterances often contain a composition of various strategies. The following polite request in Japanese utilizes several negative politeness strategies:

Sumimasen ga, shōshō o-machi itadakenai deshōka.
Excuse me, but could I not possibly receive your waiting?
(I am sorry, but could you possibly wait for a moment?)

It starts with an apology (#6), the 'could I not' is a combination of conventionalized indirectness (#1) and pessimism (#3). 'Possibly' is a hedge (#2) on the illocutionary force, and 'for a moment' is a hedge minimizing the FTA itself. The verb 'receive' allows the omission of agent (#7).

Deference is not only conveyed by the selection of strategies (a less formal request would call for different ones), but also by elements of discernment. The verb 'to wait' refers to the hearer, therefore a respectful form *o-machi* is used. The verb 'receive', on the other hand, refers to the speaker, therefore a humble form *itadakenai* is used. *Shōshō* is a polite form, meaning 'a little', i. e. 'for a moment'.

2.5.3 Summary

Section 2.5 has described some basic differences between social index politeness and politeness strategies, and has given examples of the strategies described by Brown and Levinson. While the border between 'formal forms' and politeness strategies is not always clear, it seems reasonable to conclude that politeness means that are socially obligatory rather than situation-sensitive fall within discernment, while those that get activated in connection with an FTA, fall within the volitional aspect of politeness. Nevertheless, these two aspects of politeness need to be viewed as interrelated and complementary.

The selection of politeness strategies used for a particular FTA redress is influenced by the traditional values of the culture, and each language utilizes these strategies to differing degrees. As mentioned before, it is commonly said that English makes frequent use of positive politeness strategies, whereas Japanese more relies on negative politeness and off-record strategies.

3 Business Letters

3.1 Introduction

Looking at the long row of new, recently published letter-writing manuals available at the Harvard University bookstore, it is obvious that, despite the availability of instantaneous electronic oral communication, letters, whether in physical or electronic form, are still an important means of business communication. Letters are in some respects better than other means because there is greater opportunity to plan one's written communication, avoid mistakes, and avoid misunderstandings. Written communication is by nature more formal, and more suitable for carefully worded messages, which leaves a permanent record, for good or ill, which is why much care is given to their composition.

However much important letters are in European cultures, they are even more so in Japan. Until recently, first contact had to be in writing, even if to announce a future phone call.

As do most other things, letters reflect their culture of origin, not only in the language used, but also in form and structure. Both the language and form contribute to the overall impression the letter creates. Japanese managers often complain that their foreign employees can *"chat away just like a Japanese person, but can't cope with a simple letter"* (Business Japanese Forum, 2002: 3). *"With all their competence in Japanese, when it comes to reading a business letter, it's like they're trudging wearily up Mount Fuji – and they're even more hopeless at writing them*" (ibid). This "lament" is just one of many examples of a well known fact that while a good command of grammar and vocabulary can convey a simple message, the subtleties required for favorable reception are often beyond even most native speakers. No home in Japan is complete without a manual on letter writing.

3.2 Language Used in Business Letters

According to contemporary American literature on letter writing, a good business letter is personal, tactful, courteous, clear, conversational, and in-

teresting. It avoids stereotypical expressions. It is positive, "you oriented", and builds goodwill.

Although Japanese manuals on letter writing suggest that it is desirable to include some originality to show one's "real feelings" and sincerity (cf. Miyazono, 2000: 26), for the Japanese a good letter is, first and foremost, written accurately, both in language and style. Clichés and stereotypical phrases are not viewed negatively when used appropriately, in the right place at the right time.

Compared to Japanese, the language used in American letters is much closer to spoken language. Poe advises that *"when you're writing a letter, express yourself pretty much as you would if you were facing your reader"* (1994: 21). His suggestion should not be taken literally, but most authors encourage writing more 'as-you-speak' by avoiding stilted language and 'federalese'.[14]

In Japanese there is a much greater difference between spoken and written language than in English. As honorifics were gradually simplified, the language used in letter writing was simplified as well. Just like in English, recent literature encourages the use of clear and simple language. However, the language used in letters still significantly differs from spoken language. Letters still contain archaic grammatical structures that are unique to letters. There are remarkable differences in lexicon. Letters utilize a great variety of idiomatic expressions and phrases, which are more formal than their spoken counterparts. This is why letters are such a nightmare to non-Japanese people.

Unlike in personal letters, where the level of politeness expressed through honorifics varies in respect to the relationship between the writer and the addressee, the nature of the message etc., the level that is used in Japanese business letters is fairly constant towards the highest level used in personal letters. An even higher degree of politeness in letters burdened, for example, with an apology, can be reached by a maximal utilization of humble and respectful forms and a higher frequency of apologetic words and phrases.

[14] A term coined for stiff, hard-to-understand language of many federal government writers.

3.3 Business Letter Structure

An American business letter typically conforms to the AIDA formula (Attention, Introduction, Direction, and Action). The style of a Japanese business letter has been simplified and is now closer to the western standard, but it still keeps some typically Japanese characteristics; for instance a Japanese business letter routinely includes formulaic expressions of seasonal greetings and good wishes.

Although all components of a letter facilitate a favorable reception of its message, this work shall deal with just those components that directly and linguistically relate to politeness. Letterhead, date, reference number, etc. are integral parts of the letter but do not serve our purpose of describing and highlighting the main cross-cultural differences related to politeness.

3.3.1 Salutations

There is a great difference in salutations in English and Japanese. In English, there is more or less one pattern, consisting of 'Dear' + one of the various forms of address. Addressing by name is preferred over a general title. The pattern 'Dear + title + surname' seems to be the most common formal salutation. If the addressee has no professional or academic title, a courtesy title (Mr./Miss/Mrs./Ms.) is used. Opinions differ on the usage of 'Dear + first name'. While Venolia (1982) claims that it is appropriate for most situations, including the very formal, Poe (1994) and Seglin (1995) suggest that it should be used only for informal letters to a personal friend or close business associate. In simplified letters a salutation can be omitted and the addressee's name appears only at the top as part of the address, but this style is not used much, as personalization is considered one of the key points in composing a good letter. Similarly, the phrase 'To Whom It May Concern' is now used very rarely.

In Japanese, the salutation takes a very different form. It does not include a form of address; the name of the addressee is written on the upper left-hand side. Each salutation, usually translated to English as 'Dear…' has a matching complimentary close. The most common correlative pair is *haikei – keigu*. More formal pairs begin with *kinkei*, *kyōkei*, *kinpaku,*

kintei, or *haitei*, and close with *keigu* or *keihaku*. These expressions are compounds consisting of 2 Chinese characters, one of which means 'respect'. A salutation used in replies, *keifuku*, combines the meanings of 'respect' and 'again'.

An interesting salutation is *zenryaku*, literally translated 'the before [part] omitted', which means 'without preliminary remarks'. The corresponding complimentary close *sōsō* means 'in haste'. This pair is usually used in short letters. What makes it interesting is the fact that, by using it, the writer explicitly states that he is going to omit preliminary remarks concerning seasonal greetings and good wishes. Otherwise, a Japanese letter that does not include some kind of greeting prior to the main message is likely to be perceived as too straightforward and hence impolite. But if the omission is thus "announced", everything is proper and perfectly acceptable. This also supports the idea that in Japanese, an explicitly signaled violation of expectations can give acceptability to otherwise impolite behavior.

In private letters of informal character it is now quite common to open the letter by addressing the person by name + courtesy title (*sama* / *san* / *sensei*, etc.), but business letters maintain the formal form of salutations, without mentioning the person by name.

Figure 3.1
Most common English salutations (based on Venolia, 1982: 61–65, 124–126)

Unknown addresse	Dear Sir or Madam
	Ladies and Gentlemen (formerly 'Gentlemen')
	Dear + generic title (Customer, Contributor, Homeowner etc.)
	Dear + job title (Editor, Registrar etc.)
	Eliminated (just the letterhead)
Known addressee	Dear +courtesy title (Mr./Miss/Mrs./Ms.) + surname
	Dear + title + surname
	Dear + first name

Note: *When writing to an organization rather than to an individual, 'Ladies and Gentlemen' has been increasingly used instead of the previously used salutation 'Gentlemen'.*

Figure 3.2
Most common Japanese salutations (adapted from Business Japanese Forum, 2002: 37)

Both known and unknown addressees	General-purpose forms (e. g. *haikei, kinkei, kintei*)
	Forms signaling abbreviated preliminary remarks *(zenryaku)*
	Forms used in replies to letters (e. g. *keifuku*)

3.3.2 Opening Greetings

While an English business letter follows the structure 'salutation – body of the letter – complimentary close', the standard parts of a Japanese business letter usually include 'salutation – opening greetings – body of the letter – closing greetings – complimentary close'.

In Japanese it is a matter of courtesy to include preliminary greetings composed of one or more of the following: *"a seasonal reference, a hope for the recipient's continued health and prosperity, and a statement of gratitude for help and consideration*" (Business Japanese Forum, 2002: 37). In business correspondence the greetings are usually shorter and more standardized than in personal letters.

Nearly every Japanese letter writing manual includes a multitude of seasonal greetings presented chronographically by the months for their suitable application. The greetings are of various style and length. Some are very poetic and are used mainly in formal personal letters, some are short and idiomatic and used mainly in business letters. In informal letters some writers prefer to write their own seasonal greetings, in formal letters they usually use the standard ones.

The following examples are often listed as examples of greetings for January and February (Business Japanese Forum, 2002: 37):

Figure 3.3

Month	Standard expressions used in business letters	Longer versions used mainly in personal letters
Jan	*Shoshun no kō* In this season of early spring *Genkan no kō* In this season of severe cold	*Shoshun to wa ie kibishii samusa ga tsuzuite orimasu ga, …* Although the calendar says spring, the cold weather continues…
Feb	*Risshun no kō* In this season of the first day of spring (according to the traditional Japanese lunar calendar) *Yokan no kō* In this season of lingering cold	*Ume no tsubomi mo yōyaku hokoronde mairimashita ga,* The plum blossoms have at last begun to bloom…

In business letters the already short form … *no kō* ('in this season of…') can be replaced by the ubiquitous *jika* ('at present'). The seasonal greeting is followed by remarks concerning the addressee and the complete opening greeting can look, for example, as the following:

> *Shoshun no kō, masumasu go-seiei no koto o-yorokobi mōshiagemasu.*
> In this season of early spring I am pleased that you are healthier and more prosperous than ever.

3.3.3 The Body of the Letter

The fact that the standard structure of an English letter does not formally include opening greetings does not mean that the writer proceeds after the salutation directly to the main message. Depending on the nature of the main message the writer decides whether to move to the main information as quickly as possible or rather gradually prepare the addressee for the "news". There is usually an introductory line or paragraph, which introduces the subject or refers to the situation or to the previous letter to which the writer is responding. Similarly, there is usually a closing sentence or paragraph to *"summarize the topic and close on a positive note, encourag-*

ing a positive working relationship with the letter's reader." (Seglin, 1995: 18). The body of the letter will be dealt with again in 4.3 and 4.4.

3.3.4 Closing Greetings

Similarly to the opening greetings, a Japanese letter is not complete without concluding remarks that apologize for haste, or express hope for the addressee's health, the company's development, mutual cooperation, etc. Again, in business correspondence these greetings conform to traditional structures, varying only in the phrases and collocations used.

3.3.5 Complimentary Close

Except for the simplified format, every English letter must include a complimentary close. The proper choice depends on the degree of formality of the letter and also on personal preference. For instance, Poe, for typical business letters, prefers 'Sincerely yours' or 'Cordially yours'.

In Japanese letters, the complimentary close forms a correlative pair with the salutation (see 3.3.1). If the salutation is omitted, the complimentary close is also omitted.

Figure 3.4
Examples of English complimentary closes (based on Venolia, 1982: 67; Seglin, 1995: 19, 20)

Highly formal	Respectfully yours, Respectfully,
Formal	Very truly yours, Yours truly,
Less formal (but still not informal)	Yours sincerely, Sincerely yours, Sincerely, Cordially, Cordially yours,
Informal (when on a first-name basis)	As ever, Best regards, Kindest regards, Best wishes, Regards,

Few readers take much notice of the above-mentioned required components before and after the body of the letter; their inclusion is taken for granted. However, if anything is missing, the letter is considered to be defective or impolite. These components contribute to the overall politeness of the letter, and their lack may cause a negative reception.

4 Rejection in American and Japanese Letters

4.1 Rejection as a Type of Face-threatening Act (FTA)

Rejection, by its very nature, runs contrary to the face wants of the hearer, in particular positive-face wants of approval, esteem, appreciation, valuation, and so forth, and so rejection is intrinsically an FTA (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 65-66). As such, if performed without any redressive action, is most likely to negatively impact the hearer's self-image.

Rejection has an impact also on the speaker's face, on his wants of powerfulness (he is unable to comply with the request), magnanimity (he denies the request), and cooperation. Assuming that the speaker desires to maintain the hearer's 'face' and his own, he will look for a method of minimizing the negative impact of rejection.

4.2 Minimizing the Impact of Rejection

According to Brown and Levinson, an FTA is normally done without any redressive action only if

> the speaker does not fear retribution from the addressee, for example in circumstances where (a) S and H both tacitly agree that the relevance of face demands may be suspended in the interests of urgency or efficiency; (b) where the danger to H's face is very small, as in offers, requests, suggestions that are clearly in H's interest and do not require great sacrifices of S (e. g., 'Come in' or 'Do sit down'); and (c) where S is vastly superior in power to H, or can enlist audience support to destroy H's face without losing his own (1987: 69).

Although there may be situations when rejection may be done without any redressive action, usually some kind of strategy to redress the FTA is employed.

However direct the rejection is, it is not usually done through a single speech act but rather a set of acts, in which the statement of rejection is "embedded" or through which the rejection is implied. In the CCSARP research project (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989), which is one of the most extensive studies conducted to date investigating cross-cultural and intralingual variation in requests and apologies, each speech act sequence is divided into a head act and supportive moves. The head act is *"that part of the sequence which might serve to realize the act independently of other elements"* (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989: 17). Supportive moves are defined as units which precede or follow the head act, modifying its impact (ibid).

The rejection sequence can be classified in the same manner, the head act usually being the statement of rejecton. The supportive moves may involve various strategies of both positive and negative politeness. For example, a statement of rejection may be preceded by an expression of gratitude, interest or agreement (positive politeness strategies) and followed by an apology, admitting the impingement, begging forgiveness (negative politeness strategies) or some kind of offer, promise or an expression of optimism (other positive politeness strategies).

The speaker may prefer an indirect strategy, i. e. an off-record strategy, and convey the rejection through hints, association, and other clues, i. e. through supportive moves.

Similar to apologies (Blum-Kulka, 1984: 206), in the most direct way of rejection the actual statement of rejection is usually preceded by a formulaic expression of regret expressed by the means of a performative verb, such as, for instance, 'I am sorry, 'I regret', or an adverbial such as 'unfortunately' or 'regretfully'.

Within the statement of rejection as well as in its immediate surroundings the speaker can also employ a whole range of verbal means to soften the degree of imposition and the impact of rejection. The more direct the rejection, the stronger the need to be mitigated. Such mitigating may involve both syntactic and lexical means (cf. Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies of conventional indirectness, hedges, giving deference, impersonalizing speaker and hearer etc.).

The structure of a rejection speech act is both situation-specific and culture-specific. *"Every culture has its own repertoire of characteristic speech*

acts and speech genres" (Wierzbicka, 1991: 149) and while one culture, for example, may tend to express a rejection in a certain situation directly, another may prefer a less direct method. While it might be more common to complement a certain type of rejection by an apology in one culture, in another it may be more natural to offer compensation.

The following section presents what literature on letter writing suggests regarding a rejection letter.

4.3 The Style and Structure of an American Rejection Letter

In any letter a poorly worded statement may end up offending the reader, but a rejection letter is already offending by its very nature. In order to lessen the reader's disappointment it is important to tactfully state the rejection in the least offensive way possible. Baugh, Fryar and Thomas emphasize, *"the basic principle of writing refusal letters is courtesy first and refusal second"* (1995: 107).

Politeness involves not only the wording of the rejection itself but also the organization of the letter.[15] Meyer (2001) as well as Baugh, Fryar and Thomas (1995) suggest the following structure of a letter of refusal:

(1) Opening → (2) Explanation of refusal →
→ (3) Statement of refusal → (4) Closing

Seglin's sample letters (1995: 230–237) follow more or less the same pattern.

(1) Opening

As a good opening Meyer suggests to start with agreeing with the reader on some point to create a feeling of working together such as *"We like your approach to the consumer survey on garden tools"* (2001: 25) or a combination of agreement and apology suggesting that the writer would like to help

[15] *"[I]t appears that selection of a set of strategic wants to be realized by linguistic means may also involve the organization and ordering of the expression of these wants"* (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 93).

but cannot, e. g. *"We would be happy to comply with your request for a sample of our new loan forms. May I suggest you write directly to our headquarters office?"* (2001: 26) Another good beginning is with a thank you, setting a tone of courtesy and consideration for the reader such as *"Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to consider you for employment"* (ibid).

Baugh, Fryar and Thomas suggest opening by assuring the reader that the writer has given the request careful consideration and advise not to mention in the first paragraph whether the request has been refused or granted.

(2) Explanation of refusal

Meyer suggests that before stating the refusal it is a good idea to give reasons for it. This makes the refusal more gradual and prepares the reader for it. He also states that the explanation should be straightforward, definite, and reasonable (cf. Baugh, Fryar and Thomas, 1995: 107).

Geffner admits that, *"[w]hile a personal letter explaining specific reasons for an applicant's rejection is professional and preferable, a form letter is more often used as a way to reject in general terms all the unsuccessful candidates"* (1998: 262).

(3) Statement of refusal

Meyer recommends a direct but polite statement of refusal such as: *"We do not have a position open that fits your qualifications"* (2001: 26) or *"I am sorry we cannot provide the information you requested"* (ibid). Baugh, Fryar and Thomas recommend for a refusal of employment something like *"Your qualifications are excellent and show that you have assumed greater levels of responsibility throughout your career. The candidate we are looking for, however, will have a stronger marketing background. For this reason …"* (1995: 43) instead of the (often used) phrase *"We don't feel your qualifications match our job needs"* (ibid). This example follows the order 'explanation → statement of rejection'.

(4) Closing

To lessen the unavoidable disappointment caused by the refusal, Meyer suggests ending in a positive manner, offering some alternative or encouragement to help the reader save face, such as: *"I know you will find a suitable*

position soon" (2001: 27), or "*We will be glad to receive other ideas from you*" (ibid). Baugh, Fryar and Thomas (1995: 107) also recommend closing with a positive statement rather than overly apologizing for the refusal.

Meyer gives the following examples of rejection letters. However, they do not quite follow the recommended pattern. The first example acknowledges the applicant's good qualifications but fails to explain why another candidate has been preferred over him. The second example gives a very concrete explanation, but the rejection is not directly stated.

Dear Mr. Guiterez:

(1) Thank you for considering our opening for a junior accountant. Although your qualifications are good, **(3)** we have accepted another candidate. We will keep your application on file for future consideration.

(4) Best wishes for finding another position that suits your qualifications.

Sincerely,

Dear Ms. Lattler:

(1) Thank you for sending your résumé and giving us the opportunity to consider you for the accounting-manager's position.

Our financial officers have thoroughly reviewed your qualifications. **(2)** They are excellent, but do not quite fit the position we have in mind at the present time. Your technical experience is notable, especially in the area of tax accounting, but right now we need someone who is stronger in supervisory experience.

(4) We will keep your file active, and when promotions create an opening to fit your qualifications, we will write or call you.

Yours sincerely,

(adapted from 2001: 275–276)

It is obvious from these two examples that the suggested pattern is quite general and various realizations are possible within it. The borders between the particular parts need not always be clear, especially when the refusal is only implied (cf. part /3/ in the first letter above).

4.4 The Style and Structure of a Japanese Rejection Letter

A Japanese rejection letter should follow general letter structure, starting with a preliminary greeting concerning the addressee's health or well-being in combination with a seasonal greeting. Suggested openings for the main body generally resemble an English opening. Both include a 'thank you' for applying for the work position. For the statement of rejection Miyazono (2000: 116) suggests that rather than using the word *fusaiyō*, which means 'not employment' and sounds rather harsh to the addressee, it is better to say something like *Go-kibō ni soikaneru*…('We cannot meet your wishes'), *Go-kitai ni soikaneru*… ('We cannot meet your expectations'), or *Konkai wa, saiyō o miokurasete itadaku*… ('Please let us this time forgo your employment').

He also suggests that it is better not to write a detailed explanation of the reasons for not employing the addressee so as not to offend him in some way. In this he differs from the English authors, who advocate stating a straightforward, definite, and reasonable explanation.

Just like in English, the closing is supposed to sound positive and offer encouragement, as in *Kondo no go-kentō o kokoro kara o-inori mōshiagemasu* ('From [the bottom of our] heart we wish you good luck for the future') or include wishes of good health and fortune for the future (ibid).

The structure can be thus summarized as follows:

(Preliminary greetings) (1) Opening → (2) Statement of refusal →
→ (3) Closing (standard closing greetings)

A letter sample adapted from Miyazono (2000: 116):

Haikei

Jika masumasu go-seiei no koto to o-yorokobi mōshiagemasu.
In this season I am pleased that you are healthier and more prosperous than ever.

(1) *Kono tabi wa heisha nyūsha shiken ni go-ōbo itadaki, arigatō gozaimashita.*
Thank you for applying for our company's entrance exam.

(2) *Shanai de shinchō ni shinsa itashimashita kekka, makoto ni zannnen de wa gozaimasu ga, go-kibō ni soikaneru koto ni narimashita node o-shirase shimasu.*
As a result of our careful judgement we are very sorry to inform you that it turned out that we are unable to meet your hopes.

(3) *Kongo no go-kenkō to go-katsuyaku o kinen mōshiagemasu.*
We wish you good health and career success for the future.

Mazu wa go-tsūchi made.
This is mainly to inform you.

Keigu

The writers of correspondence manuals, which are a kind of etiquette manuals, cannot just simply decide the rules and proper manners for writing letters but have to reflect existing social interactions. On the other hand, the manuals, if widely followed, thereby influence reality. So while the manuals try to depict the language reality, they also influence it. The analysis section of this work will also investigate whether the above recommendations are widely followed.

5 Research and Analysis

5.1 Expectations and Hypotheses

The literature and theory on politeness and cultural values suggest certain hypotheses about what will be found in the rejection letters.

1. American letters should be more personal and utilize positive politeness, attending to the person's face wants. The Japanese letters should be more distant and formal, with negative politeness strategies predominating.
2. Because Americans place value on sincerity, frankness, and rationality, their letters should reject the candidate in a more straightforward manner than the Japanese, who in oral communication typically utilize ellipses and indirect strategies for rejecting requests.
3. Direct rejection should come in less variety than indirect methods, which should lead to more variety in the Japanese letters. However, while the Japanese can redress negative messages with honorific forms, the Americans must use a variety of strategies instead of discernment, which should result in a greater variety in the American letters, magnified by the desire to be original.

The purpose of this work is not just to validate or refute these hypotheses, but to explore the particular methods each culture uses to make the letters more "polite".

5.2 The Data

The above theoretical findings and hypotheses were tested on 73 American and 70 Japanese rejection letters collected for this purpose. Since this research deals with form letters, it may be assumed that the letters are little if at all influenced by social factors concerning the addressee. The fact that the form is determined by the company's policy rather than the addressee is supported by the evidence that, in several instances, two virtually identical

letters were written by two different departments of the same company concerning two different employment positions addressed to the same person. Therefore, the collection aimed at a variety of companies and institutions rather than a variety of addressees.

In order to eliminate confounding based on any bias concerning social background, both the American letters and the Japanese letters were collected from comparable sources. In each group of letters, some are addressed to a well-educated middle-aged candidate seeking employment at various companies and universities, and some are addressed to a young university graduate seeking her first job.

Furthermore, the otherwise large collection of letters (over 100 in each language) was reduced to only those cases when the addressee applied for a particular position that was being offered, and was rejected for that offered position, i. e. letters which stated that there was no position available at the moment were excluded as those cannot be considered real rejections.

5.3 Methods of Analysis

Previous studies on refusals utilized various methods of categorizing refusal responses (Nelson et al., 1996; Gass and Houck, 1999). These methodologies, however, dealt with oral exchanges negotiating the refusal over several turns and thus cannot be easily applied in this work. Yeung (1997) researched the written discourse of business letters, examining the effect of Brown and Levinson's social variables on the choice of politeness expressions. However, her method is not applicable either as her method was aimed at a different goal.

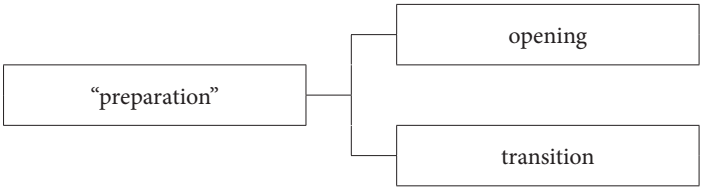
This work focuses on the main body of the letter. However, the salutations, and, in Japanese, the opening and closing greetings were also examined to see if they fit with the hypotheses of this work. These phrases were also dealt with in terms of presence/absence, variety, and type of politeness they utilize.

The rejection sequence in rejection letters in each language often consists of 3 basic parts:

1) a “preparation” for the rejection
2) the actual rejection
3) some “remedy”

The preparation and remedy function as supportive moves. The rejection itself may also include some supportive moves softening its impact.

The preparation phase can be divided into two parts, neither of which is obligatory: an opening, which usually includes an expression of gratitude or acknowledgement of receiving the application, and a transition, which is usually in the same sentence as the rejection or immediately precedes it and therefore was classified as part of rejection for the purpose of analysis.

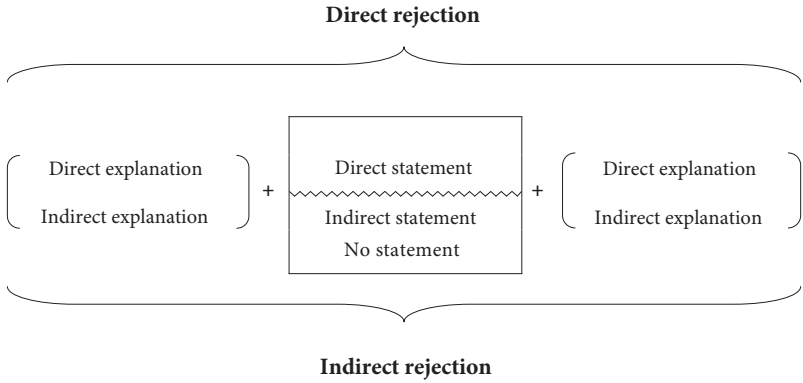


The remedies following the rejection, taking various forms from apology to compensation, were briefly analyzed in respect to Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies to highlight cultural differences in the overall conveyance of the rejection.

The rejection itself is the main focus of this work and was analyzed in detail. The rejections in the English and Japanese samples were compared based on the following criteria:

1) Whether the rejection is direct (explicitly stated) or indirect (merely implied).
2) Whether any explanation is given, and if so, whether it is direct or indirect, and whether it precedes or follows the rejection.

Figure 5.1
Potentional rejection patterns



To differentiate between a statement of rejection and an explanation is subjective, and even more subjective is whether it is direct or indirect. To add for objectivity, parameters for categorization for the analysis of this work must be created, even if they must by nature be arbitrary. Countless criteria are possible, but for the purpose of this work they were determined as follows:

1. Direct statement of rejection (DirR): a statement explicitly mentioning the addressee, i. e. a statement of the kind: 'We cannot accept you'.
2. Indirect statement of rejection (IndirR): a statement not explicitly mentioning the addressee, i. e. a statement of the kind: 'We accepted someone else' or 'The position has been filled'. These are considered not to be explanations, as they do not say why another candidate was chosen over the addressee.
3. Direct explanation (DirE): explicitly mentioning qualifications or other characteristics of the addressee, e. g. 'Your qualifications do not match our current needs'. A rejection of the person's skills is less confrontational than a rejection of the candidate himself.
4. Indirect explanation (IndirE): not explicitly mentioning qualifications or other characteristics of the addressee himself, e. g. 'Qualifications of another candidate more closely meet our current needs'.

Classification according to these criteria generated, in each set of letters, the American and the Japanese, a number of patterns. These patterns were examined in respect to politeness strategies.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Salutations

Figure 5.2
Salutations in the American letters

Dear Mr./Ms. + surname	66%
Dear title + surname	
Dear name + surname	
Dear first name	29%
Dear general word	2%
None (just letterhead)	3%

By far the most common salutation in the American letters was the formula 'Dear Mr./Ms. + surname', the second most common was 'Dear first name'. The combination 'Dear name + surname' is considered to be poor style by authors of correspondence literature, and was infrequent, as were impersonal addresses such as 'Dear applicant' or 'Dear Job Seeker'.

The results go along with the idea that, for Americans, politeness is strongly associated with being personal. Although it is generally known that businesses utilize form letters sent to many addressees with only the name changed, impersonal forms of address are usually avoided. Although most of the letters prefer formal address by surname (whether in combination with Mr./Ms., first name or the title), addressing by first name is also quite common. This demonstrates the effort to express politeness by minimizing social distance, by sounding more familiar. This corresponds with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness 4: Use in-group identity markers.

Unlike the Americans, who put effort into making the letter seem as personal as possible, the Japanese do not attempt to disguise the fact that the letter is sent to more people. In many letters this is obvious at first

glance, as at the top of the page there is a line with a pre-printed Chinese character *-sama* or *-dono*, both meaning Mr./Ms., with the addressee's name filled in by hand. Other letters are addressed as *kaku'i* ('to everyone'), which is used to address the individual members of a group receiving the same letter. More specific versions are *jukensha kaku'i* ('everyone who took the entrance test')[16] and *ōbosha kaku'i* ('applicants'). These roughly correspond to the English 'Dear applicant' or 'Dear Job Seeker'.

The use of salutations in Japanese letters is not obligatory, although quite common, as apparent from the results (figure 5.3). Only 7% of letters contained neither a salutation nor an opening greeting.

Figure 5.3
Salutations in the Japanese letters

Haikei	74%	91%
Kinkei	10%	
Zenryaku	7%	
none	9%	

Figure 5.4
Opening greetings in the Japanese letters

Included	73%
None	27%

Figure 5.5
The ratio of salutations and opening greetings in the Japanese letters

Salutation only, other than *zenryaku*	13%	20%
Zenryaku	7%	
Salutation + opening greeting	72%	
Opening greeting only	1%	
Neither	7%	

[16] In Japanese companies it is common that before the job interview the applicants are given an entrance examination, consisting of a general knowledge test and possibly a motivation essay, and only those who pass are invited for an interview.

Haikei, the salutation most common in any letter, was the one most frequently used here as well, while *kinkei*, which is very formal, was used in 10% of the letters. *Zenryaku*, which signals that the writer will omit preliminary greetings (see 3.4.1), was used in 7% of the letters.

Opening greetings (see 3.4.2) are considered a standard part of a Japanese letter structure, including business letters. They were present in 73% of the rejection letters. A fourth of the letters omitting opening greetings "justified" the omission by the salutation *zenryaku*.

In business letters the opening greetings usually take form of a highly conventionalized formulaic expression. The following is the basic pattern that appeared in most cases and corresponds to the basic pattern described in the literature on letter writing (see 3.4.2):

> *(Jika) masumasu go-kenshō/go-seishō/go-seiei no koto o-yorokobi mōshi-agemasu.*
> (In this season) I am pleased that [you] are healthier and more prosperous than ever.

The maximally simplified seasonal greeting *jika*, which means 'in this season' or 'in this time', was present in most of them. The actual seasonal greetings included:

> *Shunkan no kō*
> In this early spring of lingering cold
>
> *(Sugasugashii) shinryoku no kō*
> In this season of fresh greenery
>
> *Kōsho no kō*
> In this season of approaching heat
>
> *Tsuyu no kō*
> In this rainy season
>
> *Seika no kō*
> In this season of summer heat
>
> *Kokusho no kō*
> In this season of intense heat

Hatsushimo no kō
In this season of early frost

5.4.2 The Letter Opening – The Preparatory Phase for the Rejection

A letter of rejection written in English can easily start like this:

Dear Dr. _____:
I regret to inform you that we are no longer actively considering your application for the business faculty position. There were many fine applicants and consequently we are unable to grant all requests for interviews.

However, such an opening was found only in 4% of the analyzed data. In all the other American letters the main message, i. e. the rejection, was preceded by at least one sentence. As to the type of opening, in 7% of the letters it was an acknowledgement of receiving the application or resume. By far the most frequent opening was an expression of appreciation, a 'thank you', for the addressee's interest in the position. In one case it was combined with an explanation of a delay in reply and in one case with an apology for the same. The table below summarizes the results:

Figure 5.6
Types of opening in the American letters

'thank you' (+ an additional remark)	**86%**	(21%)
'acknowledgement'	7%	
none	4%	
other	3%	

Starting off with a positive 'thank you' attends to the addressee's positive face. It is a way of claiming common ground, common interest, and mutual cooperation. However, since American letters of acceptance never start with a thank you, this opening also signals that the reply is going to be negative. The letter itself actually already signals a rejection as successful candidates are in most cases contacted by phone. (In Japan, letters are

still used, although the trend may be gradually changing.) Therefore, this part should be also considered part of the rejection set, i. e. as one of the supportive moves.

The 'thank you' phrases in the analyzed data were of various length and revealed a various degree of conventionality. The most common way of expressing appreciation was through the formulaic expression 'thank you for'. A less common one was through the verb 'to appreciate'.

The length varied from the very short 'Thank you for your interest in [the company's name]' to more elaborate sentences (examples below), or a couple of sentences, which, in some cases, contained other clues, preparing the addressee for the rejection and gradually leading to it. The following examples demonstrate such a gradual move:

> *Thank you for responding to our recent ad for a Senior Treasury Analyst. We were fortunate to have received resumes from a number of well-qualified candidates.*
>
> *The strong qualifications of many applicants resulted in a hiring process both rewarding because of the extensive talent revealed, and frustrating because we have so few positions with which to enjoy that talent.*
>
> *I appreciate your time and efforts spent in applying for the position.*

The number of applicants and the appreciation for the time and efforts spent signal that a rejection is forthcoming.

Besides the most conventional openings consisting of the 'Thank you for your …' phrase, two different approaches concerning the writer and the addressee could be identified: a formal one, avoiding the writer through passivization or "hiding" him behind the letter, and a personal one, showing personal involvement. The following couples exemplify some differences in the two approaches:

> *<u>This letter will acknowledge</u> receipt of your resume for review against our immediate employment needs here at [the company's name].*
>
> *<u>We have received</u> the information you submitted regarding employment with [the company's name].*

Thank you for your response to our recent applicant search for a Pricing Administrator. Your interest in [the company's name] is appreciated.

Thank you for responding to our advertisement. We appreciate your interest in exploring employment opportunities with [the company's name].

This is to thank you for your patience in awaiting further word concerning your candidacy for the position in our Marketing Department.

We would like to thank you for your response to our recent ad for the position of Product Manager.

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with you during your interview for our Office Administrator position.

In the analyzed data, the number of personalized openings significantly exceeded the formal ones, revealing the effort to establish a common ground with the addressee and make the expression of appreciation seem more sincere.

Another related strategy used was to adopt an addressee-oriented point of view, emphasizing the addressee as agent. Here are three examples of this 'you' approach:

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to consider you for the position of marketing analyst.

Thank you for giving [the company's name] the opportunity to consider your qualifications and explore employment possibilities for you in terms of your interests and of our current needs as an Admissions Financial Representative. We are pleased that you think of [the company's name] as a desirable place to extend your career.

Thank you for submitting your credentials to [the company's name]. We appreciate being considered in your career planning.

These examples demonstrate an interesting point-of-view operation. In reality, the writer is in the position of power – he decides whether or not to accept the addressee. The addressee has no control. By turning the point of view, the addressee is seemingly placed to the position of control – he is the one who decided to apply to that company.

As apparent from the data, also the Japanese consider a 'thank you' to be a good starting point for announcing bad news. It was present in 96% of the Japanese letters. It should be, however, noted that the very same opening is used for letters of acceptance as well (as evidenced by several letters of acceptance collected together with the letters of rejection, and also by Miyazono, 2000: 114).

Figure 5.7
Types of opening in the Japanese letters

'thank you' (+ an additional remark)	**96%**	(4%)
no 'thank you' but with an opening greeting	3%	
neither 'thank you' nor opening greeting	1%	

While the American letters thanked for a variety of things, and in a variety of ways, the Japanese used some variation of only one pattern, thanking for applying, coming to the company or taking the job entrance test:

(Kono tabi wa,) heisha sha'in boshū ni go-ōbo itadakimashite, arigatō gozaimashita.
Thank you for applying for our company's employee recruitment.

This was in several cases preceded by *Senjitsu wa o-isogashii chū* or *go-tabō no tokoro*, which both mean 'when you are so busy', i. e. a kind of apology.

In a few cases the 'thank you' was emphasized by an additional *Atsuku o-rei mōshiagemasu*, which could be translated 'We are really grateful to you'.

Some variety can be observed in the selection of deference expressions used. While the Americans refer to their company by name, the Japanese used three different Chinese character compounds: *tō* + *sha* ('this'+ 'company') and two humble forms, *hei* + *sha* ('worn out' + 'company') and *shō* + *sha* ('small' + 'company'). All three forms are commonly used in Japanese.

Expressing that somebody has done something for us (e. g. applied for a position in our company), can be done in Japanese in two ways: through the verb *itadaku* and *kudasaru*. The former one is receiver-oriented, i. e. 'we

received something from you', the latter one is agent-oriented, i. e. 'you did something for us'. If we match this with the English 'we' and 'you' approaches, then the 'you' approach appeared in a minority of cases (14%)[17].

5.4.3 Statement of Rejection & Explanation of Rejection

Using the criteria described in 5.3, 11 patterns emerged in the American letters, of which 4 were more common than 10%. The Japanese letters contained only 4 patterns, the most prevalent of which was used by 80%. Analysis of the American and Japanese letters revealed the following:

Figure 5.8
Rejection patterns in the American letters

Rejection only: 38%	
DirR	**11%**
IndirR	**19%**
IndirR + DirR	8%
Rejection → Explanation: 33%	
DirR + DirE	3%
DirR + IndirE	8%
IndirR + IndirE	**22%**
Explanation → Rejection: 7%	
DirE + DirR	1%
IndirE + DirR	5%
IndirE + IndirR	1%

[17] In general, when the speaker asked for the action carried out for him, the receiver-oriented verb *itadaku* and its less polite equivalent *morau* are used; when the agent did this action for the benefit of the speaker out of his own will, the agent-oriented verbs *kudasaru/kureru* are used. For this reason, in constructions such as 'thank you for doing sth. for me' at the informal level the verb *kureru* goes with an expression of 'thank you', i. e. *arigatō,* while the verb *morau* goes with a word of apology, i. e. *sumimasen.* In polite speech, however, in the 'thank you for sth.' expressions the verb *itadaku* seems to be strongly preferred over *kudasaru,* irrespective of the fact whether the action was motivated by the speaker or the hearer, which is also apparent in the letters examined (86%).

Explanation only: 21%	
DirE	**18%**
IndirE	3%

Figure 5.9
Explanation and statement of rejection in the American letters

Explanation	**61%**	DirE	22%
		IndirE	39%
Rejection	**79%***	DirR	37%
		IndirR	50%

*Note: 8% of the American letters contained first an indirect rejection followed by a direct rejection, so the number of letters containing rejection statements is lower than the sum of the direct and indirect.

It should be noted that no matter how straightforward the explanation, a direct explanation, without any accompanying statement of actual rejection, is included as an indirect method of rejection by implication. Although it is clear that the addressee has been rejected, it avoids directly saying so. Thus, direct versus indirect methods of rejection can be calculated as follows:

Figure 5.10
Direct vs. indirect method of rejection in the American letters

Direct only	11%
Indirect only	**63%**
Both methods used	26%

The Four Most Prevalent American Patterns

Methods of softening the FTA occurred in all letters and all patterns. The four most prevalent patterns serve to highlight strategies and mitigating devices used.

Direct Statement of Rejection

This is the most explicit and straightforward method of rejection. The addressee is informed that he will not obtain the employment. The direct statement of rejection was used 37% of the time, usually softened by an explanation or a preceding indirect rejection to make the notification less abrupt.

However, 11% of the letters used the direct statement of rejection with neither an explanation nor an indirect rejection. The following examples demonstrate means of softening the formulation to decrease the impact of the FTA within this group:

(1) *We have reviewed your qualifications and regret that we cannot offer you employment at this time.*

I am sorry you were not selected for an interview.

Regrettably, you are not among the top group of applicants who will be invited for an interview.

These routinized formulaic expressions convey the writer's regret for impinging on the addressee's face and thus partially redress it. They are either in the form of a performative verb or an adverb.

(2) *We have reviewed your qualifications and regret that we cannot offer you employment at this time.*

We have now had an opportunity to review the information provided, and have decided that we will be unable to explore further employment opportunities at this time.

This is another way of softening the rejection, claiming inability (a hedge on the illocutionary force of the verb) to employ the applicant. The verb selection in the second example 'decide to be unable' seems to be either haughty or simply poor grammar.

(3) *We have reviewed your qualifications and regret that we cannot offer you employment at this time.*

We have now had an opportunity to review the information provided, and have decided that we will be unable to explore further employment opportunities at this time.

This is another frequent way of softening the rejection, limiting its validity to 'at this time' and thus giving the addressee a hypothetical chance of being successful in the future.

(4) *Although your background and experience is impressive, we do not at this time, plan to pursue your application further.*

Although we will not be pursuing your resume any further at this time, we would like to keep it on file and …

In the two examples above, the focus shifts away from the applicant. The act of rejection is more mildly described as a future lack of action upon the papers received by the company.

(5) *We have reviewed the information that you provided us, and have determined that we are unable to explore further employment opportunities.*

In this example the addressee is completely omitted from the statement of rejection, but the first clause makes it clear that the statement of rejection concerns him.

(6) *We have now had an opportunity to review the information provided, and have decided that we will be unable to explore further employment opportunities at this time.*

This example goes even further as the addressee is not even mentioned.

It may seem questionable to classify this case as a direct rejection, but it is only a small step further than the previous one and not far from a fully explicit version:

We have now had an opportunity to review the information you provided, and have decided that we will be unable to explore further employment opportunities with you at this time.

(7) *Although we will not be pursuing your resume any further at this time, we would like to keep it on file and …*

In this example, the statement of rejection is softened by being placed to a subordinate clause. This way the focus is shifted away from the rejection to

something positive, to compensation. The writer cannot satisfy addressee's face in one way so he stresses cooperation in another (positive politeness strategy 10: offer, promise).

The following is an example of a statement of rejection with a concessive clause:

> *Although your background and experience is impressive, we do not at this time plan to pursue your application further.*

Unlike in the previous example, here the rejection is placed in the main clause so the rejection remains pronounced.

Indirect Statement of Rejection

This method of rejection, surprisingly frequent, might seem quite unexpected from assertive Americans who "appreciate honesty". All rejections in this group are indirect in the sense that instead of an explicit rejection they only imply that the addressee will not be given the employment. They do not mention the addressee in connection with the employment.

Rejections in this group possess various degrees of ambiguity and required inference. Examples 1–3 are least ambiguous; they cannot be interpreted in more than one way:

(1) *Another candidate has now been selected for this position.*

(2) *After reviewing all applications, we will be considering another individual for this position…*

(3) *Although your qualifications are impressive, we received a large volume of resumes and are unable to meet with each applicant for a personal interview.*

In example 3 the concessive conjunction 'although' makes it clear that the second clause includes the addressee.

Examples 4–7 state that someone was or is going to be hired but do not explicitly state that the person is not the addressee.

(4) *The position has been filled.*

(5) *We received applications from many qualified candidates. A review panel has recommended seven applicants continue in the process. At this time, we will limit our review to those candidates.*

(6) *The research analyst position was offered to an exceptionally qualified applicant and the offer was accepted.*

(7) *Your resume was reviewed along with many others during our search for a market research person. We are interviewing some candidates and will make a hiring decision from that group.*

In examples 5 and 7 the demonstrative pronouns 'those' and 'that' signal that the addressee is not one of the selected candidates.

Example 8 is the most intrigue one. It creates the illusion that the selection has not been made, and that there is still a chance to obtain the job. Only the 'We wish you the best in your search for employment' in the next paragraph signals that the candidate has already been rejected.

(8) *We are currently in the process of reviewing applications, and we will contact you if you are chosen to proceed in the hiring process. If you are not selected to advance in the hiring process this time, your application will be kept on file for a year.* (new paragraph) *We certainly appreciate your interest in our Center. We wish you the best in your search for employment.*

Indirect Statement of Rejection Followed by Indirect Explanation

This frequently utilized method of rejection combines various strategies of other methods. The ambiguity of not explicitly rejecting the addressee is clarified by an indirect explanation, which tries to satisfy the addressee's need to know why he has been rejected, in a way that would not offend him.

Compare:

The position has been filled. (indirect statement of rejection)

The position has been filled by someone we feel more closely meets our needs. (indirect statement of rejection with explanation)

Similar to a direct explanation of rejection, the writer gives sincere, objective reasons for not employing the addressee, but pays more attention to his face by turning the point of view to other candidates in order to (usually) avoid any negative statement concerning the addressee.
Compare:

[your background] does not match the requirements of the position as closely as that of other candidates. (direct explanation)

[there are other candidates] whose background more closely meet the requirements of our position. (indirect explanation)

Similarly to the previous methods, the rejection is in many cases partially redressed by assuring the addressee that his application has been given consideration and/or acknowledgement of or appreciation for his qualifications.

We have carefully reviewed your background as it relates to the current opening. However, we have selected several other candidates for final consideration whose background and experience more closely fit our needs.

Careful review has been given to all resumes. At the present time there are other candidates whose overall experience is closer to our needs.

We have carefully reviewed your qualifications and experience. At the present time we are reviewing other applicants whose backgrounds are more closely aligned to the specific requirements of the position.

The following examples also include words of praise:

We have completed reviewing your application. Although we are impressed by your achievements we have decided to pursue the position with candidates whose skills and interests appear to be a closer match with our needs.

I shared your resume with the hiring manager for our marketing position. We were both impressed by your track record to date. We feel, however, at this time that there are other candidates whose background more closely meet the requirements of our position.

Explanation Only Without Statement of Rejection

Rejections in this group (21%) did not give any statement of rejection, but relied on an explanation to infer a rejection. 18% stated that some attributes concerning the addressee (his qualifications, education, experience etc.) did not correspond with the writer's requirements.

The following 3 patterns were identified. While their explanation of rejection is very similar, they differ in the amount of preceding information:

(1) (I regret to inform you) review of credentials → (at this time) not match the specifications of the position

Your resume has been reviewed. We have determined that your qualifications do not meet the requirements of our current opening.

After a thorough review of your credentials, we feel they do not match the specifications of the position as closely as we would like.

(2) (Although) words of praise → not match

Although your background is interesting, it does not match the requirements of the position as closely as that of other candidates.

I found your qualifications to be very impressive, but do not feel they match what we are looking for at this time.

(3) Review → (although) words of praise → (however) not match/not compatible

I have reviewed your resume and am very impressed with your qualifications; however, they are not compatible with our specific needs for this position.

Your resume has been carefully considered in view of our present needs here at … Although we recognize your fine qualifications, we are unable to match them to the requirements of our current job openings.

In the first group of letters the writer assures the addressee that his application has been considered. This serves as a gradual preparation for the bad news and perhaps also serves as a sign of good intentions. In the second group, this is done by a statement of appreciation for the addressee's qualifications (positive politeness). And finally, the third group combines both of these: the addressee is assured that his qualifications have been considered and he is given credit for them.

The following rejection is also an example of a direct explanation of rejection:

(Thank you…) However, <u>we do not feel that you possess</u> the kind of experience that the school requires this time.

The intention behind can be interpreted as an effort to minimize the FTA of rejection by giving the addressee a sincere and objective reason to have him understand and accept the rejection. Due to the selection of words, however, it can be interpreted also as a kind of direct criticism. The writer impinges on the addressee's face by explicitly stating that the addressee lacks something, although softened by 'this time'.

Based on other examples in this group, the above explanation of rejection conveying that the addressee's attributes are not suitable for the writer's needs can be "softened" in the following ways:

(1) *… [your qualifications] <u>do not meet</u> /<u>are not compatible with</u> [our current needs]*

… do not feel [your qualifications] <u>match</u> [our current needs]

Here instead of explicit claiming that the addressee does not possess certain skills, he is only said that they do not match.

(2) … *do not feel [your qualifications] match [our current needs] as closely as we would like/closely enough/as of other candidates*

… at this time, we do not feel [your qualifications] provide the best match with [our current needs]

These explanations are even "softer" as the writer admits at least a partial match.

The following scheme summarizes the "softening" scale:

do not possess → possess but not match → match but only partially

A few letters (3%) went even further and did not directly mention that the addressee lacked something, but rather that some other candidate had what they needed.

Japanese Rejection

The Japanese letter patterns revealed little variety (figure 5.11). 99% of the letters were slight variations of the following basic pattern:

Thank you → (we received a lot of applicants and) as a result of our careful revision… → we regret + rejection → (please understand/ forgive)

In 19% of the letters the pattern was complemented by an explanation, which either preceded or followed the statement of rejection.

Figure 5.11
Rejection patterns in the Japanese letters

Direct Rejection without explanation	80%	**99%**
Direct Rejection followed by explanation	10%	
Direct Rejection preceded by explanation	9%	
Indirect Rejection	**1%**	

Direct Statement of Rejection without Explanation

In the Japanese letters the direct statement of rejection unaccompanied by explanation was by far the most frequent method of rejection. To decrease the impact of the rejection, various means were employed to soften the formulation, as shown in the following examples. The redress is not by indirectness but by mitigation – both syntactic and lexical.

(1) *Zannennagara* …

In almost all letters the statement of rejection was preceded by an expression of regret, which varied from the very short 'regretfully' to 'We are very sorry to say'. As in English, this hedging conveys that the writer is not committed to the rejection, but rather regrets the inevitability of situations and events outside of his control.

The following chart shows the possible combinations as found in the corpus.

(konkai) this time	+	*(makoto ni)* very *(taihen)* very	+	*zannen desu* it is a pity *zannen de wa gozaimasu* it is a pity (more polite form of verb) *zannennagara* regretfully *ikannagara* regretfully

(2) *…fusaiyō o sasete itadakitaku to zonjimasu.*
…konkai wa saiyō o miokurasete itadaku koto ni narimashita.

Both these examples utilize the humble verb form *-(sa)sete itadaku*. The causative suffix *-sase* in combination with the verb *itadaku*, which means 'to receive', indicates that the speaker asks the addressee for permission to do something. Thus the literal translation of the two examples is:

…fusaiyō	*o*	*sase**te***	*itadakitaku*	*to zonji**masu**.*
not employment	ACC	do(CAUS-GER)	receive(HON-h)	would like to (HON-h)-**POL**

…(I/we) would like to receive your permission not to employ you.

*…konkai wa saiyō o miokurase**te** itadaku kotoni nari**mashita**.*
this time TOP employm.ACC forgo(CAUS-GER) receive(HON-h) NOM become-**POLpast**

…this time it turned out that (I/we) will receive your permission to forgo your employment.

(3) *…konkai wa ki'i ni sou koto ga dekimasen deshita.*
…konkai wa kiden no saiyō o miokurazaru o oemasen deshita.

As in English, another way of softening the rejection was to hedge the illocutionary force of the verb by claiming inability to employ the applicant.

…konkai wa	*ki'i*	*ni*	*sou*	*koto ga*	*deki**masen deshita**.*
this time TOP	your request (HON)	DAT	meet	NOM	cannot-**POL past**

This time we were not able to meet your request.

…konkai wa	*kiden no*	*saiyō*	*o*	*miokurazaru o oe**masen deshita**.*
this time TOP	your (HON)	employment	ACC	cannot but/have to forgo-**POL past**

This time we had to forgo your employment.

(4) *…futsūka ni narimashita.*
…kiden no go-kibō ni soikaneru koto ni narimashita.
…go-kibō ni soikaneru kekka to narimashita.

Another mitigating strategy that frequently appeared in the statements of rejection is based on shifting the responsibility for the rejection away from the writer by the utilization of the verb *naru* 'to become'. The construction with the verb *naru* indicates that the speaker is not in control of the action expressed by the preceding verb. This avoidance of self-ascription can be classified as impersonalization (negative politeness #7), or what Caffi (1999) calls a 'shield'. It is also used in combination with the previous strategy: "we are unable to employ you and we are not in control of it" (ex. 2, 3).

…futsūka	*ni nari**mashita**.*
not passing	become/turn out-**POL past**

It became not passing. (You did not pass [the job entrance test]).

…kiden no	***go**-kibō*	*ni*	*soi**kaneru***	*koto ni*	*nari**mashita**.*
Your (HON)	**HON**-hopes	DAT	**cannot** meet	NOM	become-**POL past**

It turned out that we are unable to meet your hopes.

*…**go**-kibō*	*ni*	*soi**kaneru***	*kekka to*	*nari**mashita**.*
HON-hopes	DAT	**cannot** meet	result	become-**POL past**

It became the result that we cannot meet your hopes.

(5) *…<u>go-kibō</u> ni soikaneru kekka to narimashita.*
…<u>go-kitai</u> ni soenai koto to narimashita.
…konkai wa <u>ki'i</u> ni sou koto ga dekimasen deshita.

The words *saiyō* ('employment') and *fusaiyō* ('not employment'), were in many instances "wrapped" into various mitigated lexical choices – bushes (Caffi 1999), such as *go-kibō*, i. e. 'your hope(s)/wish(es)', *go-kitai*, i. e. 'your expectation(s)/hope(s)', or *ki'i*, i. e. 'your will/ wish(es). They form collocations with the verb *sou* 'to meet', or its forms *soikaneru/soenai/sou koto ga dekimasen*, i. e. 'not to be able to meet', respectively.

*…**go**-kibō*	*ni*	*soi**kaneru***	*kekka to*	*nari**mashita**.*
HON-hopes	DAT	**cannot** meet	result	become-**POL past**

*…**go**-kitai*	*ni*	*so**enai***	*koto to nari**mashita**.*
HON-expectation(s)/hope(s)	DAT	**cannot** meet	NOM turn out-**POL past**

…ki'i	*ni*	*sou*	*koto ga*	*deki**masen deshita**.*
will/wishes/request (HON)	DAT	meet	NOM	cannot-**POL past**

(6) *…<u>konkai</u> wa saiyō o miokurasete itadaku koto ni narimashita.*

Another strategy that could be frequently found in the statements of rejection is the utilization of the word *konkai*, i. e. 'this time'. By limiting the rejection to 'this time', the writer, as in English, gives the addressee a hypothetical chance of being successful next time and thus downgrades or softens the rejection.

It should be also noted that in 37% of the letters that contained a direct statement of rejection, the statement had a performative character, as in the following example:

> *…zannennagara konkai wa saiyō o miokurasete itadaku koto ni narimashita node, koko ni go-tsūchi mōshiagemasu.*
> …regrettably, this time it turned out that (I/we) will receive your permission to forgo your employment, and therefore, we are here notifying you.

Explanation of rejection

Japanese explanations, whether preceding or following the rejection, usually concerned the great number of (excellent) applicants and/or the small number of posts available. While some served as an explanation of why there was a selection based only on submitted documents, some were explicit explanations for the rejection.

> *Nanibun, saiyō yotei ninzū ga sukunai ue, ōbosha ga taihen tasū ni agarimashita node, shorui sankō o sasete itadakimashita.*
> The number of persons to employ is small and, moreover, the number of applicants reached a very high number and that is why we had a selection based on submitted documents.

> *Nanibun, saiyō ninzū ga kagirarete orimasu tame ni …*
> As the number of persons to be employed is limited …

> *Honnen wa shūshoku jijō no kibishisa o han'ei shite, taihen ōku no kata no go-ōbo o itadakimashita node …*
> This year, reflecting the severity of the employment situation, we received applications from very many people, and that is why…

A few explanations were surprisingly lengthy, such as the following:

> *Donata mo yūshūna kata ga ōku, kaisha no keiei ga yurusu nara, narubeku ōku no kata o saiyō shitai tokoro ga, go-shōchi no tōri wagakoku no keizai zenpan no jōkyō ga futōmeina naka de, heisha ni okimashite mo,*

nanibun saiyō jin'in ni kagiri ga gozaimashite, konkai wa kiden no saiyō o miokurazaru o oemasen deshita.
There were many fine applicants and if the company's situation allowed, we would like to employ a lot of people, but, as you know, the overall economic situation in our country is unclear and also our company has a limit on the number of persons to employ, and that is why this time we could not but forgo your employment.

[company's name] *to onaji yume o motsu, dekiru dake ōku no kata to shigoto o tomo ni shitai no desu ga, madamada chīsana kigyō yue, subete no kata to iu wake ni wa mairimasen deshita.*
We want to work together with as many people as possible who share the same dream as [company's name], but we are still a small business and that is why we could not [accept] everyone.

Whether long or short, the explanations usually dealt with the company's situation rather than the individual's qualifications.

5.4.4 The Remedy

Not only the concern for the addressee but the want to protect one's own face is a motivating factor for redressing the rejection by some kind of remedy and ending the letter on a positive note. In English the most frequent pattern was offering an alternative in the form of keeping the applicant's resume on file for a certain period of time, followed by an expression of appreciation for the addressee's interest and/or encouragement for the future.

Figure 5.12
Types of remedy in the American letters

Alternative + appreciation/encouragement	**62%**
Alternative	1%
Appreciation/encouragement	30%
Other	7%

Keeping the applicant's resume in the company's active file for up to one year is simply the company's practice aimed at its own needs rather than a concern for the applicant and thus in many cases it is just stated as a matter of fact.

Your resume will be kept on file and you will be contacted should other appropriate positions become available.

Your resume will remain on file at [the name of the university] for a period of six months. Should another appropriate position become available during that six month period, your resume would be reactivated and you would again be a considered applicant.

In many cases, however, it is clear that it is mainly intended as a remedy, to give the rejected applicant possible hope for the future (positive politeness #10). This is done by expressing the writer's interest in maintaining the relationship with the addressee through the use of active voice, the conjunction 'however', which helps to shift attention from the rejection to the remedy, or expressions of assurance or appreciation, such as 'of course', 'be assured', 'we shall be happy':

I would, however, like to consider you further for any other suitable positions, to be filled with an outside hire, which may develop during the next six month. Should a position become available, I will contact you.

Please be assured that should a suitable vacancy occur for which you can be considered, we will contact you.

We will of course retain your application in our files. Should another suitable opportunity develop that could be of interest to you we will recontact you at that time.

While we cannot encourage you further at this time, we will, however, contact you at a later date should a suitable opening occur.

Your resume will be retained for a period of one year and should an appropriate opening develop in the near future, we shall be happy to give you every consideration.

In some letters the probability of future opportunities was stressed by adding the expressions of appreciation for the addressee's interest and/or encouragement for the future through the adverbial 'in the meantime'.

Similarly to the 'thank you' expressions in the opening part of the letter, the final expressions of 'thank you' and 'wishes' varied both in length and content, from standardized to quite original ones. They utilized similar devices as the opening ones, i. e. active vs. passive voice, 'I' vs. 'you' approach, etc.

A standard conclusion:

> *Thank you again for your interest in [company's name] and best wishes in your employment search.*

Examples of more original conclusions:

> *Placing yourself in the right career requires persistence and hard work. Although this is a difficult task, the rewards are clearly worthwhile. We wish you success in your interview process.*
>
> *Thank you for forwarding your resume and your interest in our company. We are always anxious and interested in learning of qualified people, which has been the key to our success. I would like to extend my best wishes for every success to you in locating a satisfactory position.*
>
> *Your love for [name of radio station] has been a tremendous asset to the station. I sincerely hope this particular decision will not dissuade you from continuing your relationship with "people powered radio". I really appreciate your interest in working with [name of radio station] and wish you much success in your career endeavors.*

The Japanese data showed a different approach to the remedy. While the English letters made use of positive politeness strategies, the Japanese letters mainly utilized negative politeness. More than two thirds of the statements of rejection (71%) were followed by an apology in the form of admitting impingement or requesting understanding or forgiveness. Variations of this first example were most common:

Ashikarazu go-ryōshō no hodo / kudasaimasuyō o-negai mōshiagemasu.
We are sorry, but please acknowledge and accept [this].

Go-tabō no chū go-raisha itadaki go-meiwaku o o-kake shita to zonjimasu ga, nanitozo go-yōsha kudasai.
We realize that we caused you inconvenience by receiving your coming to our company when you are so busy, but please forgive us.

Go-kitai ni sou koto ga dekizu makoto ni mōshiwake gozaimasen.
We are very sorry that we cannot meet your expectations.

Sekkaku no go-kibō ni o-kotae dekizu, makoto ni mōshiwake arimasen ga, nanitozo go-ryōshō kudasaimasuyō o-negai itashimasu.
We are very sorry that we are not able to satisfy your wish, but please acknowledge and accept [this].

A remedy in the form of an invitation to a company event or an enclosure of a company product, which can be classified as positive politeness, only occasionally appeared in the corpus as well.

The apology was in most cases (86%) followed by a closing greeting. Usually it was a standard greeting expressing hopes for future good health, progress and career success, in some cases combined with a thank you for having applied (positive politeness).

Kongo no go-kenshō/ go-katsuyaku o o-inori mōshiagemasu.
We wish you (pray for your) future good health/career success.

Only a few letters contained a greeting that was specific to the nature of this situation, such as:

Mappitsunagara, kenkō ni wa kuregure mo ryū'i sare, kuyashīno nai shūshoku katsudō o nasaimasu yō kokoro yori o-inori mōshiagemasu.
Finally, we heartfully pray for you to be attentive to your health and to have an undisappointing job search.

One greeting contained the plural address *minasama* ('everyone'), which is yet another piece of evidence that the letters are not meant to look personal.

Minasama no kongo no go-katsuyaku o kinen shitsutsu, o-okuri itadaita ōbo shorui o o-kaeshi itashimasu.
While we wish you (pray for your) future career success, we are returning the application materials we have received from you.

6 Analysis Summary

The results of the analysis presented in the previous chapter, specifically the various methods and strategies of the rejection letters, shall now be used to test the hypotheses.

6.1 Hypothesis #1

The American letters should be more personal and utilize positive politeness, attending to the person's face wants. The Japanese letters should be more distant and formal, with negative politeness strategies predominating.

Although written for the same purpose, under comparable conditions, and to comparable addressees, the American and Japanese letters gave a very different initial impression. As expected, the American letters usually looked very personal, while the Japanese explicitly showed that they were written identically to each member of a group of people, i. e. the same letter was sent to all the unsuccessful candidates. While the Americans often tried to show "concern" and personalized effort when announcing the bad news, the data indicates that the Japanese understand the addressee to be less uncomfortable being rejected as "one of many" (cf. 2.4).

The American effort to be positive and personal manifested itself throughout many of the letters. Starting with the salutations, the American letters were addressed personally, often by first name, as a gesture of a relationship as equals, or simply to show a friendly attitude, which would be unacceptable to the Japanese, who have to preserve the distance between in-group and out-group, and thus would consider such an address overly familiar and disrespectful. In the American letters, the opening, preparation for the rejection, transitions, and remedies usually utilized positive politeness strategies.

However, there was a wide range of personalization employed. While some American letters showed very personalized approaches, other were written in a formal, impersonal style, highly utilizing passivization and

avoiding personal pronouns. Nevertheless it is safe to say that the personalized approaches exceeded the impersonal ones. In letters that started off in a formal, conventionalized way, some kind of personal touch was included later. The 'you approach' was frequently utilized, stressing the addressee, his point of view, and his qualities.

The most common exception to personalization was in the rejection itself, where the avoidance of mentioning the addressee in association with the rejection was one of the strategies to minimize the face threat.

To counterbalance the negativity of refusal and inadequacy with something positive, the Americans frequently added praise for the candidate's "excellent qualifications", which, although very personal in appearance, lacked any specifics and were, upon closer comparison, remarkably similar, even between letters addressed to the candidate with many years of experience and the new graduate with no qualifications at all.

The Japanese letters were, as expected, quite formal. While the Americans frequently attended to the addressee's positive face wants using expressions of familiarity signaling equal relationship, the Japanese utilized highly formal honorific forms. The formal appearance was even increased by a greater than average use of Chinese characters, even for expressions that are commonly written in *hiragana*.[18] These high level honorifics, used even towards young graduates, who are of lower age and social status than the writers, are attributed to the formality of the situation, but can also be seen as actually a method of attending to the addressee's positive face by showing recognition.

Nevertheless, negative politeness strategies predominated. Keeping distance from the addressee is evidenced by the avoidance of any comments concerning the addressee's skills or qualifications. This supports Mizutani and Mizutani's claim that the Japanese usually refrain from directly commenting on someone else's skills or abilities (1987: 45, 49). Where the Americans took advantage of being able to state something positive, the Japanese offered apologies, often more than once. Some of the more polite openings had an apologetic tone even when thanking the applicant for having applied. Keeping with the principles of *omoiyari* (see 2.4), the

[18] A kind of Japanese alphabet

Japanese expressed "concern" for the applicant by showing awareness of the inconvenience caused. In addition to the conventional good wishes found in all formal Japanese letters, the main remedy was to apologize and beg forgiveness for the inability to meet the applicant's request, quite a different approach than the American positive strategies offering the applicant hope or encouragement. While the American letters displayed a whole range of personalization, from very little to quite strong, the Japanese displayed a wide range on a different scale: the number of traditional formulaic expressions such as opening and closing greetings, included to make the letter "proper".

It could be argued that the Americans only seem to be more personal than the Japanese, because the Americans also send virtually the same letter to all applicants, but this would be to ignore the more significant fact. Of course neither the Americans nor the Japanese are going to write individualized letters. The difference is that the Americans want to seem personal.

When an applicant gets his first letter, which seems so personal, the politeness strategies are likely to have their full effect. The danger of this approach, however, is that a job seeker usually writes numerous applications, sometimes even for different positions at the same company. There would be nothing wrong with receiving multiple identical impersonal letters, but when receiving several identical "personal" letters (as is the case in our corpus), the applicant may feel betrayed by the artificial sincerity.

But Americans may well think nothing about the sincerity of expressions such as 'We are impressed by your excellent qualifications', but just perceive them as nice, socially acceptable, and standard, just as the Japanese do not take literally 'Thanks to you, I am fine'. Certain insincerities are acceptable in one culture, different insincerities are acceptable in another culture, and one must know what is acceptable to his audience. This is also a purpose of cross-cultural studies.

In conclusion, the analysis provided empirical evidence for the validity of this hypothesis.

6.2 Hypothesis #2

Because Americans place value on sincerity, frankness, and rationality, their letters should reject the candidate in a more straightforward manner than the Japanese, who in oral communication typically utilize ellipses and indirect strategies for rejecting requests.

The big surprise of the analysis was that, in the rejection letters, the Japanese were more direct, or, better to say, more explicit in stating the rejection, than the Americans. All but one Japanese letter stated in variously mitigated ways, but always explicitly, that the applicant would not be accepted. The American letters showed a variety of rejecting strategies utilizing various degrees of implicitness and indirectness. But upon reflection, this does make sense. The American need to stay on a positive and friendly note does not lead to an easy method of conveying negative messages to a complete stranger. The Japanese, however, keep their distance and utilize the proper forms and conventions to deliver the message.

In order to avoid the negative appearance of an explicit statement of rejection, two thirds of the American letters conveyed the rejection in ways that required various degrees of inference. However, the desire to "stay away from negatives" interferes with the need to be frank and rational. This latter need manifested itself by more frequently giving reasons for the rejection than the Japanese (61% vs. 19%). In order to further avoid negatives, the explanations usually referred to the addressee indirectly, not explicitly mentioning him. The letters that did contain a direct explanation did not then usually contain any statement of rejection. As it is quite obvious from the explanation that the person is being rejected, there is no need to include an explicit statement as it would be not only redundant but also violate the need to avoid the negative.

It should be noted that one of the differences between the suggestions in the literature and the results of the analysis is in the ordering in the rejection sequence. The importance of the order of individual parts in the realization of a speech act has been stressed by many researchers as well as authors of business correspondence literature. Meyer (2001) suggests the sequence 'explanation of refusal' → 'statement of refusal', which is also supported by the examples given by Baugh, Fryar and Thomas (1995) and Seglin (1995). However, this sequence was found in marginal number of rejections.

Compared to the reasons stated in the Japanese letters, the American reasons were somewhat more specific and appeared more personal (hypothesis #1) as they referred to the applicants' skills and qualifications (whether explicitly or implicitly). But upon close analysis, reasons like 'your skills do not match our current needs' give no real information to the applicant (cf. Baugh, Fryar and Thomas 1995: 43), as the same such reply could be (and probably is) sent to all applicants indiscriminately. So in reality the Americans give no more real information than the Japanese.

Some of the letters that tried to stay away from the negative and substituted the statement of rejection by a poorly worded explanation could be even interpreted as criticism. A statement such as 'Many well qualified individuals made application for the position, and from those applicants, the position has been filled', allows the writer to avoid an explicitly negative message, and does not directly comment on the addressee's qualifications either. But as the addressee knows that he was not even called for an interview, he can easily conclude that he was not considered to be a well-qualified individual.

The Japanese utilize a different strategy in conveying the rejection. Instead of trying to avoid the statement of rejection and seeking various ways of conveying the message indirectly, they state it very clearly and explicitly, and consequently make an effort to redress it. By the selection of proper means of deference, and by the application of various mitigating devices, they try to avoid impinging upon the addressee's face.

Expressing the rejection directly naturally leads to a redress by apology, which is common for the Japanese. This is also why they give very general reasons for the rejection, if at all. While the Americans justify their choice by conveying that the applicant was excellent, but not as suitable as the one chosen, the Japanese companies "blame themselves", referring to an insufficient number of work posts for the great number of applicants, or the company's economic problems, and do not mention any details about the applicants in particular. By saying nothing, they cannot offend anyone. This goes along with what Miyazono (2000; see 4.5 above) says about writing rejection letters, as well as Mizutani and Mizutani's recommendation to use *"less explanation and more apology"* (1987: 49).

The results of the analysis show that not all general cultural tendencies and stereotypes apply to every communicative situation and that they may sometimes be misleading.

6.3 Hypothesis #3

Direct rejection should come in less variety than indirect methods, which should lead to more variety in the Japanese letters. However, while the Japanese can redress negative messages with honorific forms, the Americans must use a variety of strategies instead of discernment, which should result in a greater variety in the American letters, magnified by the desire to be original.

As indicated above, the American politeness strategies seem to be a result of two tendencies. One is to be rational and sincere, which is why they give personal reasons for the rejection. But the other is to stay away from negatives. These two tendencies result in the various patterns of conveying the rejection described in the analysis (see 5.4.3).

However, that this is not the only reason for the variety is obvious from the fact that the other parts of the letters also showed greater variety of expressions and strategies than their Japanese counterparts. The greater variety is partially a result of the effort to make the letters more personal (hypothesis #1) and also original, which can be evidenced in some of the letters (for examples see e. g. 5.4.4).

Although the data contained letters of a variety of different companies, the Japanese rejections were remarkably uniform in pattern, resembling closely the phrases advocated in the literature on letter writing. The formulation of the rejection differed in the repertoire of mitigating devices utilized (as described in 5.4.3), but the structure of the rejection set was virtually identical in all the letters.

The same is true for the other parts of the letter. Most of the letters included the usual opening greetings, which were almost identical in structure and meaning, and an almost identical 'thank you for applying'. Also the closing greetings were, with a few exceptions, limited to the conventional ones used for any occasion, not reflecting anyhow the fact that the person was looking for a job. This supports the idea that form and appropriateness are very important to the Japanese and that stereotypes are not viewed negatively.

Another cause for the differences may be that the two cultures consider the imposition as being of different weight and requiring different degree of

redress, the Japanese considering the act of employment rejection a mere announcement of results. This is supported by the fact that the common Japanese term used for employment rejection letters is *fusaiyō tsūchi*, which can be translated as 'notification of not employment'. In more than one third of the letters the rejection was stated through the performative formulaic expression 'we notify you'. While many of the letters did utilize various means to redress the negative message, the shortest ones were reduced to a polite but pure statement of the result, resembling a lottery ticket announcing that one did not win.

This hypothesis proved valid in the sense that direct rejection did come in less variety of patterns than indirect rejection, although direct rejection predominated in the Japanese letters, rather than as expected in the American letters. The greater variety of patterns in American letters was a result of both indirect methods and greater efforts towards originality.

6.4 Cross-cultural Similarities and Differences in the Realization of Rejection

As apparent from the above, the analysis revealed considerable differences in the realization of rejection and utilization of politeness devices in the two languages. Nevertheless, one common pattern has been identified:

Thank you → we have carefully reviewed your application → we regret to inform you + direct rejection → we wish you all the best

Although this pattern is used both in American English and Japanese, the preferences for its use differ significantly. In Japanese, conveying rejection through a direct statement of rejection unaccompanied by an explanation is by far the most common pattern, which appeared in 80% of the letters, while a corresponding pattern was found only in 11% of the American letters. But even these that shared the same basic patern still usually differed in the means of mitigation and remedies offered. The languages do have some similar means of mitigation, including a formulaic expression of regret, claiming inability (a hedge on the illocutionary force of the verb),

and softening the rejection by limiting it to present. It is possible to create a rejection letter utilizing only means that are acceptable in both cultures, but neither culture would find such a letter particularly attractive or preferable.

7 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in numerous studies that the realization patterns of particular speech acts differ from culture to culture as a result of their different norms and values. Furthermore, in different cultures, the same act may constitute a different degree of imposition. While members of the same culture have an understanding of what politeness strategies to employ and expect in a particular situation, an application of the same means in cross-cultural communication may result in pragmatic failure.

This work explored the realization patterns of employment rejection with regard to American and Japanese perceptions of politeness, and provided empirical evidence that a speech act carried out under comparable social constraints may, in two different cultures, elicit different politeness strategies. Section 5.4.3 gave an account of the particular strategies and mitigating devices utilized to soften the impact of the rejection, and Chapter 6 summarized the findings.

Although it would have to be verified by further research, the results also suggest that an adequate usage of honorifics and other social index politeness devices is essential but insufficient for an appropriate cross-cultural realization of rejection. The analysis revealed different mechanisms underlying the rejection, requiring different politeness strategies. Although one pattern was identified that is utilized both in English and Japanese, the results revealed a substantial difference in preferences.

The utilization of the particular strategies can be explained in light of the values and perceptions of politeness of each culture, but it is not necessarily predictable, as is apparent from the hypotheses and results of the analysis. The findings support the idea that while general cultural notions are important prerequisites for cross-cultural communication, they cannot be universally relied on, but rather need to be re-examined in each particular communicative situation.

Knowledge of the pragmalinguistic aspects of the target language is crucial for cross-cultural communication. It seems to be a common experience that while native speakers usually tolerate phonological, syntactic, and lexical errors made by non-native speakers, they frequently interpret

pragmatic errors as lack of tact or even arrogance or rudeness. Observations, such as that a Japanese person will accept a negative message better without being told the details, are hard to make in real life, but they can be made through comparative studies. This comparative study attempted to contribute to a better understanding of politeness strategies employed in written rejections in American English and Japanese.

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Appendix –
Corpus of Letters Used in the Study

This corpus contains the 73 American and 70 Japanese employment rejection letters that were analyzed in the present study. Letters collected that could not be classified as true rejections were excluded from analysis. The letters are not arranged in any special order other than division by language.

The letters were obtained through different mediums (originals, copies, scanned letters, faxes, and E-mail), and thus resulting in various quality and appearance.

Names of some companies, surnames, and dates were omitted for reasons of privacy.

January 2,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for sending your resume in response to our ad for a Programmer/Programmer Analyst.

Careful review has been given to all resumes. At the present time there are other candidates whose overall experience is closer to our needs. However, if our situation should change, we will be glad to get in touch with you and determine any continued interest.

Thanks for your interest in Ministers Life and best wishes for your career success.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Representative

K/DR/h5/D3
0811050

January 7,

Dear Ms. :

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with you during your interview for our Office Administrator position. Working with the people you spoke with, we have reviewed your background, experience, and interview feedback. Although your qualifications are excellent, we feel that they do not match the job position's requirements closely enough.

We will reevaluate your credentials as future job openings develop. Your résumé will remain in our files for 1 year.

We want to thank you for your interest in Ancept, Inc. We hope you will find the career opportunity you desire soon.

Sincerely,

Ancept, Inc

January 9,

Re: Insurance Sales Trainer

Dear Mr. :

We have received the information you submitted regarding employment with ITT Consumer Financial Corporation. After a thorough review of your credentials, we feel they do not match the specifications of the position as closely as we would like. We will, however, keep your resume on file for future reference and contact you if a suitable opening does occur.

Thank you for your interest in ITT Consumer Financial Corporation.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

RF/tr

February 1,

Dear Mr. ;

Thank you for your interest in the market research position which we advertised.

Your resume is being reviewed with those of other candidates for that position and you will be contacted if we wish to schedule an interview.

In the meantime, we appreciate your interest in the Bremer Financial Corporation, and hope we will have an opportunity to be of assistance.

Sincerely,

BREMER FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.

Human Resources Assistant

LAM:rrh

February 5,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your recent resume concerning employment with FBS Insurance. Your interest is most appreciated.

Although your background and experience is impressive, we do not at this time, plan to pursue your application further. We will, however, keep your resume on file should a future opportunity become available for which we feel you are qualified.

We wish you the best of luck in your job search and again thank you for your interest in FBS Insurance.

Sincerely yours,

Assistant Vice President
Personnel Manager

KL:rsr

February 5,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for the interest you have expressed in CIGNA by responding to our recent advertisement.

We have carefully reviewed your background as it relates to the current opening. However, we have selected several candidates for final consideration whose background and experience more closely fit our needs.

Your resume will be retained in our active file for review against future openings.

Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,

Employment and Placement Services
Human Resource Services Center
CIGNA Corporation

SMJ/emh

February 8,

Thank you for submitting your resume in response to our recent newspaper ad for a Research and Planning Analyst.

Another candidate has now been selected for this position. However, I would like to retain your file and notify you if something should arise in the near future that may be of interest to you.

Your interest in Western Life is appreciated and we wish you the best of luck in your career endeavors.

Personnel Representative

LS/lb

February 11,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your response to our advertisement for a Marketing Research Analyst.

We have now had an opportunity to review the information provided, and have decided that we will be unable to explore further employment opportunities at this time.

Thank you for the interest you have shown in General Mills and we wish you success in finding a position which matches your career objectives.

Sincerely,

Manager of Recruitment

CEC:jaw

February 21,

Dear :

Thank you for giving Fairview-University Medical Center the opportunity to consider your qualifications and explore employment possibilities for you in terms of your interest and our current needs as an Admissions Financial Representative. We are pleased that you think of Fairview-University as a desirable place to extend your career.

Although your qualifications are impressive, we received a large volume of resumes and are unable to meet with each applicant for a personal interview. However, we will retain your application on file for six months and contact you if an appropriate position becomes available.

We appreciate your investment of time and effort, and we welcome your continuing interest in Fairview-University Medical Center.

Sincerely,

Employment Representative

SL:sc

February 27,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your interest in Dataserv, Inc.

We have reviewed your qualifications and regret that we cannot offer you employment at this time.

It is our practice to maintain applicant information in a reference file. We will contact you regarding any future employment opportunities which appear to be compatible with your qualifications.

Best wishes for success in your career advancement.

Sincerely,

DATASERV, INC.

Senior Staffing Specialist

HB:ph

March 5,

Dear :

Thank you for expressing an interest in our recently advertised Marketing Services Coordinator position.

I regret we are unable to further consider you as a candidate for the position. Our needs are such that we cannot utilize your specific abilities at this time. I will hold your resume should a similar position become available in the next few months.

Good luck to you in your job pursuit.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Manager

LG:ss

March 6,

Dear :

Thank you for submitting your application in response to our Financial Planning Analyst position. We now have had an opportunity to review your background relative to this opening.

Although you have many excellent qualifications, we have several candidates who more fully meet the requirements of the position. Therefore, we have decided not to proceed further with your application for this particular opening.

We sincerely appreciate your interest in the Commercial Division.

Sincerely,

HONEYWELL INC.

Staffing & EEO Administrator
Commercial Division

MLC/kmm

March 6,

Dear Mr. ;

Your resume was reviewed along with many others during our search for a market research person. We are interviewing some candidates and will make a hiring decision from that group.

We thank you for your interest in the Bremer Financial Corporation, and hope we may hold your resume for reference as future openings may occur.

Sincerely,

BREMER FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.

Human Resources Assistant

LAM:rrh

March 6,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your credentials to Minnesota Mutual Life. We appreciate being considered in your career planning.

I reviewed your credentials with members of our management staff. At this time, we do not feel your qualifications and interests provide the best match with the requirements of our position. We would like to save your credentials for future consideration in the event a position becomes available where your qualifications better meet our employment needs.

Placing yourself in the right career requires persistence and hard work. Although this is a difficult task, the rewards are clearly worthwhile. We wish you success in your interview process.

Sincerely,

Management Employment

JM:kjl

March 6,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your resume for employment with First Bank System.

We have compared your experience and training to that of the other applicants for this position and have determined that, although your credentials are impressive, we have other candidates whose background more closely approximates our current requirements. Consequently, we will not be pursuing employment possibilities further at this time.

We will retain your resume in our active file. If a suitable opening develops, we will contact you at that time to learn of your interest.

Thank you again for considering First Bank System.

Sincerely,

Corporate Center Personnel

DLS/tc

March 6,

Dear :

Thank you for your inquiry regarding possible employment opportunities at Fairview Community Hospitals.

Your resume has been carefully considered in view of our present needs here at Fairview Community Hospitals. Although we recognize your fine qualifications, we are unable to match them to the requirements of our current job openings. If a suitable position does develop, I will re-contact you at that time.

Thank you again, for taking the time to submit your resume to Fairview Community Hospitals. We appreciate your interest in our organization and wish you the best of luck in your future career.

Sincerely,

Staffing/Communications Specialist

March 6,

Dear Mr. :

We appreciate your recent expression of interest in employment opportunities with Rosemount Inc.

Although your training and experience are very good, we have received applications from several candidates whose qualifications are more directly in line with the specific requirements of our current opening.

We will contact you at a later date should a position open that we feel would be of mutual interest.

Again, thank you for your interest in Rosemount Inc.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Specialist

JHB:jvg

March 8,

Dear :

Thank you for giving Fairview-University Medical Center the opportunity to consider your qualifications and explore employment possibilities for you in terms of your interests as a Medical Records Clerk.

We have reviewed the information that you provided us, and have determined that we are unable to explore further employment opportunities

We wish you success in finding a position that matches your career objectives.

Sincerely,

Employment Representative

BF:sc

March 8,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our employment advertising.

We have reviewed and are impressed with your credentials, however, we are unable to offer you a position at this time. As you realize, we interview many applicants for these positions and must choose candidates whose qualifications most nearly meet our requirements. Your background and training will undoubtedly provide you with many employment opportunities.

We will keep your application in our active file. Should an appropriate position present itself in the near future, we will contact you.

We sincerely appreciate the interest which you have shown in ADC Products and wish you success in pursuing your career objectives.

Sincerely,

Manager, Organization
and Staffing

JCF/jls

13 March,

Re: Family Reception Secretary

Dear :

CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center wishes to acknowledge your interest in the Family Reception Secretary position. We are currently in the process of reviewing applications, and we will contact you if you are chosen to proceed in the hiring process. If you are not selected to advance in the hiring process at this time, your application will be kept on file for a year.

We certainly appreciate your interest in our Center. We wish you the best in your search for employment.

Sincerely,

Program Director

Enclosures

March 19,

Re: Programmer

Dear Mr. :

We have received the information you submitted regarding employment with ITT Consumer Financial Corporation. After a thorough review of your credentials, we feel they do not match the specifications of the position as closely as we would like. We will, however, keep your resume on file for future reference and contact you if a suitable opening does occur.

Thank you for your interest in ITT Consumer Financial Corporation.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

RF/tr

March 19,

Dear :

Thank you for your interest in the Health Information Clerk position at Fairview Flexible Workforce. At this time, we are considering other applicants for the position.

Thank you for your time and we wish you the best.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Employment Representative

March 20,

Dear :

This is to thank you for your patience in awaiting further word concerning your candidacy for the position in our Marketing Department. But also to inform you that a candidate whose qualifications most-closely match the position requirements has been selected.

Please be assured that should a suitable vacancy occur for which you can be reconsidered, we will contact you.

In the meantime, we wish you the best of success in locating a position that will be in line with your career objectives.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Assistant

br

March 25,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our employment advertising.

We have reviewed and are impressed with your credentials, however, we are unable to offer you a position at this time. As you realize, we interview many applicants for these positions and must choose candidates whose qualifications most nearly meet our requirements. Your background and training will undoubtedly provide you with many employment opportunities.

We will keep your application in our active file. Should an appropriate position present itself in the near future, we will contact you.

We sincerely appreciate the interest which you have shown in ADC Products and wish you success in pursuing your career objectives.

Sincerely,

Manager, Organization
and Staffing

BJP/jls

March 28,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for interviewing with NWNL recently for the Staff Systems Analyst position.

We have now completed reviewing your application. Although we are impressed by your achievements we have decided to pursue the position with candidates whose skills and interests appear to be a closer match with our needs.

Your interest in NWNL is appreciated. We wish you very good luck in your search for a suitable and challenging career.

Sincerely,

Sr. Staffing Representative

ML:ct

April 1,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your interest in employment opportunities with The Pillsbury Company.

Unfortunately, other candidates have been identified whose qualifications more closely match the requirements for the position of Investment Analyst. We, therefore, cannot give your application any further consideration.

I am sorry my reply could not be more favorable. Thank you again for your interest and I wish you success in your career search.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

pkh

April 1,

Dear :

We would like to thank you for your response to our recent ad for the position of Product Manager.

We have reviewed a number of candidates for this position, and carefully evaluated each person's work experience, education, and goals as they compare to our needs. At this time, we are not able to invite you in for a personal interview because your qualifications are not commensurate with our job description. We received a number of excellent candidates and our decision was a difficult one.

We will retain your resume in our active file for the next three months so that we may consider you in the event a position develops that matches your qualifications and interests.

Again, Milo, thank you for considering Coordinated Management Systems for your career plans.

Sincerely,

Personnel Manager

ACS/kuj
0008K

April 2,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your resume for the Market Analyst position at North Memorial Medical Center. I appreciate your time and efforts spent in applying for the position. I found your qualifications to be very impressive, but do not feel they match what we are looking for at this time.

We will keep your resume on file if anything else should arise in that line of work. Thank you again for your interest in North Memorial.

Sincerely,

JW/nr

April 2,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your consideration in responding to my recent ad for a Financial Forecasting Analyst.

While I would have enjoyed meeting and discussing your interests and background, time considerations permitted interviewing only those candidates whose qualifications most closely matched the position requirements.

I would, however, like to consider you further for any other suitable positions, to be filled with an outside hire, which may develop during the next six months. Should a position become available, I will contact you.

Your interest in IDS Financial Services Inc. is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Staffing Associate

aca

April 3,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your resume for the business analyst position. Although your qualifications are satisfactory, there are several candidates whose backgrounds more closely fit the needs of the department at this time.

We appreciate your interest in the position and in Honeywell Residential Division.

Sincerely,

Staffing Representative

RG/pra

April 15,

Dear :

I shared your resume with the hiring manager for our marketing position. We were both impressed by your track record to date. We feel,however, at this time that there are other candidates whose background more closely meet the requirements of our position.

We appreciate your interest in IDS Financial Services Inc. and will contact you directly if our situation should change.

Best Regards

Manager of Staffing

GS:smh

April 19,

Re: Financial Manager

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for responding to our advertisement. We appreciate your interest in exploring employment opportunities with the Carlson Companies.

After a thorough review of your credentials, we feel they do not match the requirements and specifications of the position as closely as we would like.

While we cannot encourage you further at this time, we will, however, contact you at a later date should a suitable opening occur. In the meantime, please accept our best wishes for success in finding the type of position you are seeking.

Sincerely,

Director of Recruitment

THB

April 23,

Dear :

Thank you for responding to our advertisement for a position in our Management Advisory Services department. The position has been filled.

However, we would like to keep your resume on file. Should an opening occur in the near future, we will reconsider your qualifications and contact you to learn of your continuing interest.

Thanks again, Milo, and best wishes for continued success.

Very truly yours,

McGLADREY HENDRICKSON & PULLEN

Regional Recruiting Administrator

MVB/jw

April 25,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your time and for your interest in the Financial Analyst position at Abbott-Northwestern Hospital.

After reviewing all applications, we will be considering another individual for this position, but we will keep your application on file for future reference.

May you be successful in finding the employment that you desire.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

DB:ddd

April 26,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your resume in response to Health Resource's advertisement for a Marketing and Planning Manager. The recruitment process took a little longer than anticipated, therefore the delay in responding to your resume.

We have now completed the interviewing process and we have made our selection. I am sorry you were not selected for an interview.

I wish you success in any future employment endeavors.

Sincerely,

Personnel Coordinator

sl

May 13,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your interest in the Senior Research Analyst position at Northwestern National Life Insurance Company.

I regret to inform you, after reviewing your resume and application with the manager of the unit, that your qualifications do not match our specific needs.

Your resume and application will be retained in the Personnel Department and will be reviewed as suitable openings occur.

I wish you very good luck in your search for a challenging career.

Sincerely,

Senior Staffing Representative

ML:kj

May 14,

Dear :

Thank you for sending your resume in response to our ad for Product Marketing. Your interest in employment with Tele-Terminals is most appreciated.

Although we will not be pursuing your resume any further at this time, we would like to keep it on file and contact you should another suitable position become available.

Again, thanks for your interest in Tele-Terminals. We wish you a successful conclusion to your job search.

Sincerely,

Director of Personnel

SB/vs

May 16,

Dear :

Thank you for the interest you have expressed in employment opportunities with the Minneapolis Star & Tribune Company.

We have thoroughly reviewed your qualifications for the Senior Research Associate position. While your credentials appear to be quite suitable, another applicant has been selected whose training and experience more closely meets the requirements of the job.

We will retain your application in our files for a six month period. During this time, should a position become available for which you are identified as a qualified candidate, you will be contacted.

We appreciate your interest in our organization and wish you every success in pursuing your career goals.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

sm

May 29,

Dear :

Thank you for your interest in employment opportunities with RG. Branden's. It is sincerely appreciated.

We have carefully reviewed your qualifications for the position of Financial Analyst. Although you have fine qualifications, we feel that we currently have candidates who are more appropriate and qualified for the position. We will, however, keep your application on file and if a position of mutual interest does develop we will recontact you at that time.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend to you our best wishes for success in your future career. Thank you for your interest in RG. Branden's.

Sincerely,

Director, Personnel

PJN:bz

June 3,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your interest in employment opportunities with The Pillsbury Company.

Unfortunately, other candidates have been identified whose qualifications more closely match the requirements for the position of Financial Analyst. We, therefore, cannot give your application any further consideration.

I am sorry my reply could not be more favorable. Thank you again for your interest and I wish you success in your career search.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

pkh

June 4,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your response to our recent applicant search for a Pricing Administrator. Your interest in First Bank Minneapolis/First Bank Saint Paul is appreciated.

The field of candidates has been carefully reviewed and narrowed. We have identified other applicants whose backgrounds and skills more closely match our needs.

Again, thank you for considering First Bank Minneapolis/ First Bank Saint Paul, and we wish you success in your employment search.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Generalist
Human Resources Group

SS:cal

June 7,

Dear :

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to consider you for the position of marketing analyst with U.S. Insurance Group, a Crum and Forster Organization.

We have carefully reviewed your qualifications and experience. At the present time we are reviewing other applicants whose backgrounds are more closely aligned to the specific requirements of the position.

We wish you success in achieving your career goals.

Sincerely,

Regional Human Resources Manager

June 7,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for applying for the Senior Marketing Research Analyst position. We appreciate your interest and the time you took to apply.

After careful consideration of your qualifications, we have decided that we will not be able to consider you further for this position. We have other candidates who have qualifications that more closely match our present job needs.

Thank you for expressing your interest in the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

Human Resource Representative

DC:ph

June 10,

Dear Mr. ,

I want to thank you for your interest in the research position for the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. The strong qualifications of many applicants resulted in a hiring process both rewarding because of the extensive talent revealed, and frustrating because we have so few positions with which to enjoy that talent.

The research analyst position was offered to an exceptionally qualified applicant and the offer was accepted. We would, however, like to keep your resume on file should we have another research position opening in the future.

Again, thank you for your interest in the position. I wish you the best of luck in your career.

Sincerely,

Director

KAK/mh

June 14,

Dear :

Thank you for your inquiry in Norwest Bank Midland. The position for Financial Reporting manager has been filled. Unfortunately, we do not have any other positions open right now that would utilize your talents.

Thank you again for your interest in Norwest and best wishes in your employment search.

Sincerely yours,

Senior Human Resources Specialist

DY:le

June 18,
Our 127th Year

Dear Mr. :

I want to thank you for your inquiry concerning our Business Manager opening. However, we do not feel that you possess the kind of experience that the school requires at this time.

We are grateful for your interest in Shattuck-St. Mary's and wish you well in your future endeavors.

Warm regards,

Headmaster

JRH/dh

June 21,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for the interest you expressed in the Claim Coordinator position with the Workers' Compensation Reinsurance Association. The position has been filled by someone we feel more closely meets our needs.

I wish you luck in finding a position that is a better match to your qualifications and appreciate your interest in our organization.

Sincerely,

Assistant Treasurer

JHZ/dmb

June 24,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for taking the time to send your resume in response to our advertisement for a Senior Financial Analyst.

Your resume has been reviewed. We have determined that your qualifications do not meet the requirements of our current opening.

We appreciate your interest in Cray Research, Inc. and the opportunity you have given us to consider you for employment. We wish you success in attaining your career objectives.

Sincerely,

Human Resources Associate

PBS/af

June 25,

Dear :

Thank you for your recent letter and resume in response to our ad for an Operations Researcher. We have reviewed your resume with management and are sorry that we cannot offer you further encouragement for employment at this time.

While your qualifications and background appear to be commendable, we have considered a number of fine applicants. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to offer all of them employment.

We thank you for your interest in Consolidated Papers, Inc. and wish you success in fulfilling your goals and objectives.

Yours very truly,

CONSOLIDATED PAPERS, INC.

Professional Employment Manager

June 26,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your credentials to Minnesota Mutual Life. We appreciate being considered in your career planning.

I reviewed your credentials with members of our management staff. At this time, we do not feel your qualifications and interests provide the best match with the requirements of our position. We would like to save your credentials for future consideration in the event a position becomes available where your qualifications better meet our employment needs.

Placing yourself in the right career requires persistence and hard work. Although this is a difficult task, the rewards are clearly worthwhile. We wish you success in your interview process.

Sincerely,

Management Employment

JM:kjl

July 1,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your recent inquiry expressing an interest in the position of Sr. Financial Analyst with B. Dalton Bookseller.

Your qualifications and interests have been reviewed. We are following up with other candidates whose qualifications more closely match our current needs. We will, however, retain your credentials in our active employment files and should a suitable opening develop in the near future, we will contact you to determine your availability and continued interest.

Again, we appreciate your interest in B. Dalton and wish you success in your career endeavors.

Sincerely,

Employment Representative

MK:al

July 1,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your interest in employment opportunities with The Pillsbury Company.

Unfortunately, other candidates have been identified whose qualifications more closely match the requirements for the position of Corporate Planning Analyst. We, therefore, cannot give your application any further consideration.

I am sorry my reply could not be more favorable. Thank you again for your interest and I wish you success in your career search.

Sincerely,

Personnel Representative

pkh

July 1,

Dear ,

Several months ago I received your resume and cover letter for the position of Operations Director at KFAI, Fresh Air Radio. Needless to say your employment history is impressive.

It has been a challenge to find the best fit for this position. In addition to the responsibility of general operations, the ideal candidate should possess hands-on experience with accounting and membership databases and working with culturally diverse communities within the Twin Cities.

Kelly, I have reviewed several remarkable resumes, including yours. At this time, I am faced with the difficult position of informing you that KFAI cannot meet your aspiration of fulfilling the position of Operations Director.

Your love for KFAI has been a tremendous asset to the station. I sincerely hope this particular decision will not dissuade you from continuing your relationship with "people powered radio."

I really appreciate your interest in working with KFAI and wish you much success in your career endeavors.

Respectfully,

July 1,

Dear Job Seeker,

Thank you for expressing interest in employment opportunities at Fortis Benefits Insurance Company. At this time, we are considering other candidates for our current job openings; however, we will keep your resume in our active files for six months. In the event that your qualifications and background are appropriate for any future openings within that time frame, we will contact you. In any event, please accept our appreciation for wishing to include us in your future professional plans.

Fortis Benefits is an Equal Opportunity Employer and we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other classification protected by Federal, state, or local law. The attached questionnaire will be used only in the compilation of data for Affirmative Action reporting that is required of our company by Federal laws governing employers that are Federal contractors.

Completion of the attached data sheet is voluntary and will not affect your opportunity for employment, or terms or conditions of employment, if hired. Identification can be declared at any time prior to, or if applicable, after hire. Please complete the attached data sheet and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Once again, thank you for your interest in Fortis Benefits Insurance Company.

Human Resources & Development
Fortis Benefits Insurance Company

July 2,

Dear :

Thank you for your interest in employment with First Bank System, Inc.

Although your qualifications are impressive, we have been contacted by applicants whose background more closely match the requirements of our current openings. Regretfully, we will not be able to provide you with an employment opportunity at this time.

We do feel, however, that your qualifications might be of potential interest for additional positions we have open at this time. We are therefore, circulating your resume to the Employment Representatives. In the event that there is a position open, they will contact you directly.

Sincerely,

Employment Representative

CZH/had

July 2,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for responding to our recent ad for a Senior Treasury Analyst. We were fortunate to have received resumes from a number of well-qualified candidates.

We have carefully considered your application in view of our current need at Norwest Bank Minneapolis. While your qualifications are impressive, the requirements of our present opening must be met as closely as possible. Consequently, we are unable to pursue employment possibilities at this time.

We will of course retain your application in our files. Should another suitable opportunity develop that could be of interest to you we will recontact you at that time.

We appreciated the opportunity to consider you for our current opening. Thank you again for your interest in Norwest Bank Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

Staffing Representative

July 5,

Dear :

Thank you for applying with us concerning our Marketing Analyst position.

We are sorry that we were unable to make you an offer of employment. We had several well-qualified applicants for the position and our final decision was not an easy one. We will keep your application on file in the event that we have future openings for which you are qualified.

Thank you for your interest in Minnesota Title Financial Corporation and best of luck and success to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Assistant Vice President

CAJ:drh

July 11,

Dear :

Thank you for expressing an interest in our current search for an Asset Liability Manager.

The response to our ad was excellent and we have scheduled interviews with other candidates whose background and experience appear to most closely match the requirements of our position.

Although we will not be scheduling an interview with you at this time, we will keep your resume in our file and contact you if a suitable position develops.

Your interest in IDS Financial Services is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Manager of Staffing

GS:smh

July 18,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for applying for the Assistant Commissioner for Budget Services position in our department. We received applications from many qualified candidates. A review panel has recommended seven applicants continue in the process. At this time, we will limit our review to those candidates.

Your resume will be kept on file and you will be contacted should other appropriate positions become available.

Sincerely,

Administrative Management Director

A/PK/MK/080

July 25,

Re: Marketing Research Specialist

Dear :

We have received the information you submitted regarding employment with ITT Consumer Financial Corporation. After a thorough review of your credentials, we feel they do not match the specifications of the position as closely as we would like. We will, however, keep your resume on file for future reference and contact you if a suitable opening does occur.

Thank you for your interest in ITT Consumer Financial Corporation.

Sincerely,

Home Office
Personnel Administrator

DB/tr

July 25,

Thank you for your interest in the Traffic Assistant with Hubbard Broadcasting Inc. We have filled this position with another candidate whose skills and experience closely match our requirements. If you are interested in other opportunities with Hubbard Broadcasting, please call our Jobline at (952) 253-5780.

In the meantime, thank you again for your interest in Hubbard Broadcasting, and best wishes in your career exploration.

Sincerely,

July 30,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for submitting your resume in response to our advertisement. While your qualifications are quite impressive, we have determined that other candidates have backgrounds which more closely approximate our needs. We appreciate the interest you have shown in becoming a part of our organization.

While we are unable to offer you a position within our organization at this time, we wish you success in your future career endeavors.

Sincerely,

Manager, Corporate Staffing

MP:rp

July 31,

Dear :

Thank you for your interest in employment with First Bank System.

Although your qualifications are impressive, we have been contacted by applicants whose academic and employment background more closely match the requirements of our current openings. Regretfully, we will not be able to provide you with an employment opportunity at this time.

We do feel, however, that your qualifications might be of potential interest to Carol Westly, First Bank System Information Services (FBSIS). We are therefore, forwarding your resume. In the event that Carol has an interest in you, they will contact you directly.

Sincerely,

Regional Division
Human Resources Officer

SLC/had

August 15,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for your interest and subsequent application for the position of Vice President for Financial Plans and Controls. Many well qualified individuals made application for the position, and from those applicants, the position has been filled.

Your resume will remain on file at William Mitchell College of Law for a period of six months. Should another appropriate position become available during that six month period, your resume would be reactivated and you would again be a considered applicant.

If you have any questions or if I may be of assistance in any way, please feel free to contact me. Again, thank you for your interest in our school.

Sincerely,

Personnel and Administrative
Services Manager

BAW:wp
0989Z/0038X

August 23,

Dear Dr. :

I regret to inform you that we are no longer actively considering your application for the business faculty position. There were many fine applicants and consequently we are unable to grant all requests for interviews.

On behalf of Metropolitan State University, I would like to thank you for your interest in the position and your willingness to participate in the selection process. We wish you well in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Director of Personnel
and Employee Relations

JMA/sb

November 12,

Dear Mr. :

Thank you for interviewing with NWNL recently for the Project Coordinator position.

We have now completed reviewing your application. Although we are impressed by your achievements we have decided to pursue the position with candidates whose skills and interests appear to be a closer match with our needs.

Your interest in NWNL is appreciated. We wish you very good luck in your search for a suitable and challenging career.

Sincerely,

Exempt Employment Interviewer

ML:ds

November 27,

Dear :

Thank you for your resume expressing interest in the document clerk position at Halleland Lewis Nilan Sipkins & Johnson.

Your credentials and experience are excellent. However, at this time we have decided to pursue candidates whose qualifications more closely meet our current needs. Your resume will be kept on file for one year should a suitable position become open.

We appreciate your interest in Halleland Lewis Nilan Sipkins & Johnson and wish you success in your future endeavors.

Very truly yours,

Director of Human Resources

December 13,

Dear :

This letter will acknowledge receipt of your resume for review against our immediate employment needs here at North Star Casualty Services, Inc.

The position which you have applied for has been filled. I will continue to hold your resume active for any future positions we may have and will contact you to determine your availability.

Thank you for forwarding your resume and your interested in our company. We are always anxious and interested in learning of qualified people which has been the key to our success. I would like to extend my best wishes for every success to you in locating a satisfactory position.

Sincerely,

Manager,
Personnel & Office Services

ROH/jw

December 14,

Dear :

Thank you for responding to our opening for a Data Processing Manager.

We have now completed our resume and application review. Although your background is interesting, it does not match the requirements of the position as closely as that of other candidates.

We would be pleased, however, to keep your application on file and suggest you contact us again if you see us advertising another position that interests you.

I am certain that your education and record of accomplishments will enable you to find a rewarding and fulfilling opportunity. Thank you again and best wishes.

Regards,

College Programs Representative

PE:pr

Thank you for your interest in employment with Hennepin County and the time you
spent applying for 2CHD840cb035 OFFICE SPECIALIST III - Community Health Department .

We have completed our review of application materials for
2CHD840cb035 OFFICE SPECIALIST III - Community Health Department . We
received many applications from highly qualified people for this position.
Regrettably, you are not among the top group of applicants who will be invited
for an interview. If the hiring supervisor is unable to find a suitable
candidate from this initial group, you may receive notice from us that your name
is being forwarded to the supervisor for consideration at a later date.

Please continue to review and apply for those job announcements which interest
you. Thank you for your interest in Hennepin County.

Cordially,

Hennepin County Human Resources

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for submitting your resume in response to our recent advertisement for a position opening with Republic Airlines. I apologize for the delay in responding to you.

I have reviewed your resume and am very impressed with your qualifications; however, they are not compatible with our specific needs for this position. Your resume will be retained for a period of one year and should an appropriate opening develop in the near future, we shall be happy to give you every consideration.

Thank you for your interest in Republic Airlines.

Sincerely,

Senior Administrator-Employment
Personnel

Dear :

Thank you for your interest in employment with Hennepin County, and for the time
you spent applying for the position of 2DOCC840nam008 OFFICE SPECIALIST III - Adult Probation Division .

We have completed our review of application materials for 2DOCC840nam008 OFFICE SPECIALIST III - Adult Probation Division . Based upon the information we received, we must inform you that your education and/or
experience does not place you among the group of applicants that will be included
in the initial selection process at this time. If the hiring supervisor is
unable to find a suitable candidate from this initial group, you may receive
notice from us that your name is being forwarded to the supervisor for consideration at a later date.

Keep in mind that your experience and training may match other vacancy requirements more closely. Please continue to review and apply for those job
announcements which interest you. Thank you for your interest in Hennepin
County.

Cordially,

Hennepin County Human Resources

Dear ,

Thanks for your interest in the Lead Circulation Coordinator posting at MCAD. We have now chosen someone for the position who we feel will serve us well. We would, however, like to keep your resume on file should a position open that would utilize your skills and background.

We wish you well in your job search.

Sincerely,

Minneapolis College of Art & Design

拝啓　ますますご健勝のことと拝察申し上げます。

さて、先日の当社入社試験には、ご来社くださいましてありがとうございました。

つきましては、慎重に選考を検討いたしました結果、残念ではありますが

ご希望に添いかねることとなりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。

なにとぞ悪しからずご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。

末筆ながら、今後のご健闘を心からお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○年二月十二日

株式会社　○○○○

取締役社長　○○○○

拝啓　春寒の候、○○様にはますますご活躍のこととお慶び申し上げます。
さて、先日は当社の社員採用試験に御出席いただき、誠にありがとうございました。
慎重に選考させていただきました結果、誠に残念ではございますが、今回は採用を見合せさせていただくことになりました。
せっかく御応募いただきましたのに御期待に沿うことができず、大変恐縮に存じております。あしからず御了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。
まずはとり急ぎお知らせいたします。

敬具

平成○年 2月 27日

平成○年 3 月 28 日

堀貿 敬子様

拝啓

貴殿におかれましてはますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は，弊社の社員募集にご応募いただき，まことにありがとうございました。

今回は残念ながら，貴殿のご期待には添いかねる仕儀となりました。

貴殿の一層のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

有限会社○○○○

担当　落合

謹啓　時下ますますご清祥のこととお慶び申しあげます。
このたびは弊社社員募集にご応募いただきましてありがとうございました。
慎重に選考をさせていただきましたが、まことに遺憾ながらご希望に添えない結果となりました。
何卒あしからずご了承賜りますようお願いいたします。
末筆ながら、今後のご多幸をお祈り申しあげます。
敬具

平成 ○ 年４月

株式会社　○ ○ ○
人 事 部 人 事 課

○年4月27日

○○○○　　殿

東京都文京区大塚5－
（株）○○○○
管理部長　○○○



入社選考結果通知の件

拝啓、時下益々ご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。
過日は弊社入社面接試験選考にご足労いただきましてありがとうございました。

さて、この度の選考に際して慎重に審査致しました結果、貴殿の弊社への就職ご希望に関し誠に残念ですが今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。
ご多忙の中ご来社いただきご迷惑をおかけしたと存じますが、何卒ご容赦ください。
尚、ご連絡が遅くなり申し訳ございませんでした。重ねてお詫び申し上げます。

貴殿におかれましては、今後一層ご健闘ご活躍くださいますようお祈り申し上げます。

敬　具

平成　○　年　　5月
株式会社　　○○○○
人事教育課

選考結果のお知らせ

拝啓　新緑の候、ますますご活躍のこととお慶び申し上げます。
先日はお忙しい中、当社の入社試験にお越しいただきまして、誠にありがとうございました。

予想を上まわる多数の方にご応募いただき、本年度は過去最高の倍率となりました。慎重に選考させていただきました結果、大変残念ではございますが、ご希望に添いかねることになりました。ミキハウスと同じ夢を持つ、できるだけ多くの方と仕事をともにしたいのですが、まだまだ小さな企業ゆえ、全ての方というわけには参りませんでした。なにとぞ悪しからずご了承くださいますよう、お願いいたします。

ミキハウスは今後も子供文化を創造していく企業として、微力ながら一歩一歩努力していくとともに、夢を分かちあう仲間をより多く迎えられるような企業となるようがんばって参りたいと思います。

末筆ながら、健康にはくれぐれも留意され、悔いのない就職活動をなさいますよう心よりお祈り申し上げます。　　敬具

拝　啓

平成十三年度社員募集に際しご応募いただき厚くお礼申し上げます。

応募者多数のため、提出していただいた試問表および作文、イラストによる書類選考をおこないましたが、採用人数の都合もあり、残念ながら、ご期待にお添いできませんでした。何卒あしからずご了承くださいますようお願いいたします。

時節柄、いっそうのご自愛のほどお祈りいたします。

まずはとり急ぎご通知まで申し上げます。

敬　具

平成　○　年五月一日

株式会社　○○○○○

人事総務課

○年6月9日

○　○講座（社会学）教員応募者各位

○　○講座幹事

○　○　○　○

このたびは、私共の学部社会科教育講座（社会学）の教員募集に応募いただきありがとうございました。

さて、公募について社会科講座で選考をすすめた結果、このたびは他の方を候補者として手続きを先へ進めることにいたしましたので、お知らせいたします。皆様の今後の御活躍を祈念しつつ、お送りいただいた応募書類をお返しいたします。

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のこととお慶び申し上げます。

このたびは弊社平成１３年度新卒採用試験にご応募いただき、ありがとうございました。

さて、早速ご提出いただきました書類および作文を慎重に検討いたしましたが、誠に残念ながらご期待に添えない結果になりました。

悪しからずご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。

なお、大学の都合で書類が揃わなかった方については十分に配慮して選考いたしましたことを申し添えておきます。

とりいそぎ通知申し上げます。　　敬　具

平成 ○ 年６月１３日

株式会社　○　○　社

総　務　部

○○　○○ 様　　平成○年6月16日

選考結果の御通知

拝啓　梅雨の候、さてこの度は当社社員募集に御応募戴き、誠にありがとうございました。

今回応募者多数につき、種々慎重に選考致しました結果、誠に不本意ではございますが、真意に添い難い事になりました事を御通知申し上げます。

履歴書を返送致しますので、御査収下さい。

こらからの御健勝を御祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成 ○ 年 6 月 19 日

○○ ○○ 殿

○○○出版株式会社
人　事　部

書類選考の結果について

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のこととお喜び申し上げます。

このたびは、当社の社員募集にご応募頂きまして、ありがとうございました。

さて、貴殿の入社ご希望についてを慎重に審査させて頂きました結果、誠に不本意ながら貴意に沿いがたいことになりましたので、ご連絡申しあげます。

どなたも優秀な方が多く、会社の経営が許すなら、なるべく多くの方を採用したいところですが、ご承知のとおりわが国の経済全般の状況が不透明な中で、弊社におきましても、なにぶん採用人員に限りがございまして、今回は貴殿の採用を見送らざるを得ませんでした。

せっかくのご期待に沿うことができず、申し訳なく存じますが、よろしくご了承のほどお願い申しあげます。

ご応募頂きましたことを重ねて御礼申し上げるとともに、貴殿のますますのご発展をお祈り申しあげます。

敬具

平成 ○ 年6月30日

受　験　者　各　位

東京都大田区上池台○－ ○ －○
株式会社　　○　○　研　究　社
人　　事　　部

謹　啓

過日は、弊社平成１３年度定期採用試験を受験していただき、誠にありがとうございました。

実施いたしました一次選考試験の結果を慎重に検討いたしました結果、残念ながら不通過になりましたので、ご通知申し上げます。

ご提出いただきました書類は、当方にて責任をもって処理させていただきますのでご了承ください。

末筆ながら、貴殿のご健勝とご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬　白

書類選考及び面接結果についてのご通知

拝啓

今回、当社社員にご応募頂き有難うございました。
数多くある企業の中より、当社を選んで頂きました事に心からの感謝を申し上げます。

さて、あなたの面接結果につきましては、慎重に書類選考させて頂きましたが、
残念ながら今回はご希望に添う事ができませんでした。

何分にも今回は採用人数が少数の為、採用を見送らざるを得ない事になりました。
貴重なお時間を、わざわざ当社のために割いて下さったにも関わらず、
誠に申し訳なく存じます。

今後ますますご健勝、ご発展あらんことをお祈り致します。

敬具

平成○年6月30日

平成 ○ 年 7 月 6 日

煤賀敬子 様

○○○ 株式会社
総務ディビジョン
○○○○

謹啓　時下ますますご清栄のこととお喜び申し上げます。
早速ですが、此の度は弊社社員採用に際しまして、ご応募いただきありがとうございました。
今回は、多数の方々のご応募があり、慎重に選考させていただきました結果、まことに残念ながら、ご希望に添いかねることとなりました。
なにとぞあしからずご了承くださいますようお願い致します。
今後も弊社では、「手づくりのクロバー」として、お客様に手づくりを楽しんでいただくために、さまざまな試みを行い、そのために皆様のご協力、ご参画を得て行きたいと考えております。
その節には一層のご高配を賜りますようお願い致します。
末筆になりましたが、貴方の益々のご健勝とご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。
敬具

追伸
弊社商品を同封致しましたので、よろしければ使用下されるようお願い致します。
以上

拝啓
過日は採用試験にお越し頂き、誠にありがとうございました。
厳正な審査の結果、残念ながら今回は貴意に沿うことができませんでした。
あしからずご了承下さいますようお願い申し上げます。
今後とも、貴方様のご発展を心よりお祈り申し上げます。
敬具

平成 ○ 年 7 月 10 日

(株) ○○○○
東京都渋谷区笹塚 ○○○ 笹塚センタービル○F
℡03-3378-7051

年7月15日

○○　○○ 様

○○○○　株式会社

拝啓　このたびは当社の社員募集にご応募いただき、ありがとうございました。

ご送付いただいた資料をもとに書類選考をさせていただきました結果、誠に残念ながら、ご希望に添いかねることになりました。

せっかくのご希望ではありましたが、何卒ご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。

末筆ながら、今後のご健闘を心からお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○　年7月１５日

各　　位

○○○○○株式会社
総　務　部

前略　この度は当社の社員募集にご応募いただき、誠にありがとうございました。

ご提出の書類について慎重に選考をしました結果、遺憾ながら今回は貴意に沿うことができませんでした。

何分、採用予定人数が少ないうえ、応募者が大変多数に上りましたので、書類選考をさせていただきました。

折角のご志望にお応えできず、誠に申し訳ありませんが、何卒ご了解下さいますようお願い致します。

一層のご自愛、今後のご健勝をお祈り申し上げます。

以　上

○年　7月　22日

○○　○○ 殿

株式会社　　○○○○
人事課長 ○○　○○

選 考 結 果 の ご 通 知

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のこととお慶び申し上げます。
さて、このたびは弊社の募集に際し、ご応募頂きありがとうございました。
早速貴殿につきまして慎重に選考いたしました結果、遺憾ながらご希望に添いかねることになりました。この件、取り急ぎご通知申し上げます。
わざわざおいでいただきながら、誠に不本意な結論でございますが、あしからずご諒承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。
末筆ながら今後の貴殿のご健闘をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

様

謹啓　盛夏の候，ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

さて，このたびは小社の社員募集にご応募いただきまして，誠にありがとうございました。

種々検討させていただきました結果，今回は見合わせていただくことになりましたので，ここにご通知申し上げます。

なにとぞあしからずご了承のほどお願い申し上げます。　　謹白

○年7月27日

○○ ○○ 様

株式会社○○○○○
総務部長○○○○

試験結果のご通知

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のことお慶び申し上げます。
このたびは、当社の社員採用試験を受験いただき、誠にありがとうございました。
試験の結果につきまして慎重に審査させていただきました。どなたも優秀な方が多く、会社の事情が許すなら、なるべく多くの方を採用したいところですが、なにぶんにも採用人員に限りがあるために、今回は、貴殿の採用を見送らざるを得ませんでした。ご応募いただきましたことを重ねて御礼申し上げると共に、貴殿のますますのご発展をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

事　務　連　絡
平成 ○ 年7月28日

○○ ○○ 様

財団法人　○○○○○センター
総務課長 ○○ ○○

職員採用に伴う筆記試験の結果について

時下ますますご清栄のこととお喜び申し上げます。
さて、先日筆記試験を実施いたしましたが、その結果について慎重に審査、検討いたしましたところ、誠に遺憾ながら採用に至りませんでした。
貴意に添えず申し訳ありませんが、何卒ご了承いただきますようお願い申し上げます。
ご提出いただいた書類を同封しましたのでご査収ください。
末筆ながら今後のますますのご活躍を心よりお祈り申し上げます。

平成 ○ 年8月2日

ご応募者各位

株式会社 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 社
総　務　部

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のことと拝察いたします。

このたびは、当社の社員募集にご応募いただき、ありがとうございました。

さて、ご提出いただいた書類について、慎重に審査・検討いたしましたが、まことに残念ながら、このたびはあなたのご希望にそえないこととなりました。

何ぶんにも、採用人数が限られておりますために、せっかくのご熱意にお応えすることができず、まことに申しわけなく存じますが、あしからずご了承賜りますようお願い申しあげます。

末筆でございますが、当社にお寄せいただきましたご厚情に、深く感謝申しあげますとともに、今後のご健闘　ご活躍を、衷心よりお祈りいたします。

敬　具

○年八月四日

株式会社　○○○○出版社

採用試験結果ご通知の件

拝啓　貴方におかれましては、ますますご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます。

さて、過日の来春卒業見込者の採用試験におきましては、ご足労を煩わし、ご苦労さまでした。

つきましては、貴方の採否に関しまして、弊社の基準に照らし種々慎重に検討・選考をさせていただきました結果、誠に遺憾ながら貴意に添いかねることになりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。

なお、貴方におかれましては、今後とも健康に留意され、個性に応じた職業に就かれ、ご活躍されることを祈念いたしております。

敬具

○ 年　8月　6日

○○ ○○ 様

拝啓　酷暑の候 益々ご健勝のこととお慶び申し上げます。先日は弊社最終面接にお越しいただきありがとうございました。

さて、今回貴殿の弊社就職のご希望に関し、慎重の上に慎重を期して選考を重ねてまいりましたが、残念ながらご期待に添えない結果となりました。

ご来社の際は何かと不行き届きの点も多く、またご多忙の中あるいはご迷惑をおかけしたかと存じます。なにとぞご容赦いただければ幸甚に存じます。

末筆になりましたが、今後一層のご活躍をお祈り申し上げております。

敬具

株式会社　○○○○
管理本部　総務部人事課

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿様

前略

このたびは、小社の求人にご応募いただきありがとうございました。

慎重に検討させていただいた結果、今回は残念ながら不採用とさせていただきたく存じます。

貴方様の今後のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

8月7日

（株）○○書店　採用係

平成 ○ 年8月8日

株式会社 ○ ○ 社
取締役社長

選考結果のご通知

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のことと、お慶び申し上げます。

さて、このたびは弊社の社員募集に際し、ご応募いただきましてありがとうございました。

本年は就職事情の厳しさを反映して、大変多くの方のご応募を頂きましたので募集要項に記載した通り、第一次として書類審査をさせていただくことになりました。

この結果あなた様につきましては、遺憾ながらご希望に沿いかねることとなりました。この件、取り急ぎご通知申し上げます。

弊社を志望していただきながら、誠に不本意な結論ではございますが、悪しからずご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。

末筆ながら、今後のあなた様のご健闘をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成 ○ 年 8 月 11 日

各　位

拝啓　時下ますますご健勝のこととお慶び申し上げます。

このたびは、ご多忙のところ弊社採用試験にご応募いただきまして、誠にありがとうございました。数ある企業の中から弊社に関心をお寄せいただき、貴重なお時間を割いていただきましたこと感謝の念に絶えません。

さて、書類選考の結果につきましては、慎重に詮議を重ね、検討させていただきましたところ、遺憾ながら今回はご希望に添えかねることとなりました。あしからずご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。

末筆ながら、貴方様の今後のご活躍を心よりお祈り申し上げます。

敬　具

株式会社　○　○　社

総務部 総務課

採用担当

平成○年8月17日

○○　○○　様

○○○○ 株式会社
管理本部人事課

＜　選考結果に関するお知らせ　＞

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥の段とお慶び申し上げます。

このたびは、当社にご応募いただきましてありがとうございました。応募者が多数にのぼり、ご返事が遅れまして申し訳ございません。

さて、種々選考の結果、遺憾ながら喜志に沿えなくなりましたのでご通知申し上げます。誠に不本意な結論でございますが、なにとぞご了承下さいますようお願い申し上げます。

お預かりしておりました履歴書を同封しておりますのでご査収下さい。

末筆ながら、今後のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。ありがとうございました。

敬具

平成○年9月2日

○○　○○　様

ご応募の結果について

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のこととおお喜び申し上げます。また、先日は職員募集に際しまして、早速ご応募下さり誠に有難うございました。

さて、今般の応募に対しまして、予想を上回る多数の優秀な人材のご応募があり、選考に苦慮致しましたが、残念ながら不採用とさせていただくこととなりました。

甚だ申し訳なく存じますが、今後のご活躍を心よりお祈り申し上げます。

なお、お預かり致しました履歴書、添付書類等をご返送申し上げます。

敬具

○○　○○ 様

拝啓

貴方様におかれましては、ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は、当社の社員募集に早速ご応募いただき、ありがとうございます。せっかく面接を受けていただきましたが、残念ながら今回はご希望に添いかねる結果となりました。誠に申し訳ございませんが、悪しからずご了承賜りますようお願い申し上げます。

なお、お預かりした履歴書を同封いたしますので、よろしくご査収ください。

末筆ながら、今後のご健勝をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○年9月5日

北九州市小倉南区
株式会社　不動産
総務課　TEL:093-

○○　○○ 殿　　平成○年9月26日

今般、当社社員の募集に関し、ご応募を頂き有難うございました。

面接書類選考の結果、残念ながら不採用と決定致しましたので、

ここに、ご通知申し上げます。

株式会社 ○○○
代表取締役社長 ○○ ○○

〒182-0022
東京都調布市国領町7丁目
36-1-307
○○ ○○ 様

平成○年11月13日
226

慶應義塾人事部人事企画担当

慶應義塾職員採用について（ご通知）

前略　この度は慶應義塾職員経験者採用に応募いただきありがとうございました。

経験者採用の制度による職員募集に対しては、本年度も約400名余に及ぶ多数の応募をいただきました。その中には沢山の優秀な方々がおられました。その為合否に関しましては能力の高さというよりはむしろ慶應義塾の現在と将来の職員組織において不足した能力を補う、という点を中心に判断させていただきました。

以上の観点から、慎重に書類選考をしましたところ残念ながら貴意に沿いかねる結果となりましたことをご通知申し上げます。

末筆ながら貴殿の今後の益々のご活躍を心よりお祈り申し上げます。

草々

12NCE343

平成 ○ 年 11 月 21 日

○○ ○○ 殿

○○○○ 基 金
○○○○○ センター
副所長 ○○ ○○

専任講師応募一次審査結果について(通知)

拝啓

このたびは、当センター専任講師に応募頂きましてありがとうございました。

審査委員会において、ご提出いただきました資料を本に慎重に選考させていただきました結果、遺憾ながら今回は貴意に添えないこととなりましたので、お知らせ致します。

なお、返却希望のあった論文等を除いては、応募書類は返却いたしませんので、ご了承いただきたく、お願い申し上げます。

末筆ながら貴殿の今後のご活躍とご健勝をお祈り致します。

敬具

あなたは、筆記試験の結果残念乍ら不合格となりました。

右　ご通知いたします。

平成十二年六月二十九日

東京都千代田区平河町一の八の三

株式会社　○○○○○社

株式会社　○○○



平成○年○月○日

○○　○○殿

国際学部長　○　○　○　○

教員公募の選考結果について（お知らせ）

この度は，教員公募にご応募いただきましてありがとうございました。
平成○年○月○日開催の会議において選考の結果，残念ながらご期待に添えないこととなりました。
今後のご活躍を祈念いたします。

平成〇年〇月〇日

〇〇 〇〇 様

〇〇 大学　工学部
学科学科長 〇〇 〇〇

拝啓
初霜の候，ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。
さてこの度は当学科××講座教授（助教授，助手）公募に応募下さり誠にありがとうございました。
多数のご応募をいただき本学科にて慎重に審査いたしました結果，誠に残念ではございますが，この度は貴殿のご希望に添いかねることになりました。悪しからずご了承下さいますようお願い申し上げます。
なお，お送りいただきました書類を返送申し上げます。
末筆ながら，貴殿のご健勝とますますのご発展を祈念します。

敬具

平成 〇 年 〇 月 〇 日

各位

拝啓

時下ますますご健勝のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は弊社入社募集にご応募いただきまして、ありがとうございました。

慎重に検討させていただきました結果、遺憾ながら今回はご希望に添いかねることになりました。

ご希望に沿うことができず、誠に申し訳ありませんが、何卒ご了承下さいますようお願いいたします。

今後のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

拝啓

時下ますますご健勝のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は弊社入社募集にご応募いただきまして、ありがとうございました。

慎重に検討させていただきました結果、まことに遺憾ながらご希望に添えないことになりました。何卒あしからずご了解下さいますようお願いいたします。

一層のご自愛、今後のご健勝をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○年○月○日

○○ ○○ 殿

○○○株式会社 ○ 部　　印

拝啓　皆様にはますますご健勝のこととおよろこび申し上げます。

このたびは、当社の社員募集にご応募いただき誠にありがとうございました。

慎重に検討いたしました結果、まことに残念ながら、あなたのご意向に添いがたい結果となりました。

尚、ご連絡が遅れたことを深くお詫び申し上げます。まずは取り急ぎご連絡いたします。

あなたの今後のご発展のほどをお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

○○ ○○ 殿

福岡県○○郡○○町　○○3丁目
○○○○株式会社
技術部

拝啓

益々ご清栄の事とお喜び申し上げます。

先日は、面接へご応募いただき誠にありがとうございました。
ご経歴等につき検討協議致しましたところ、誠に残念ですが今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりましたので、ご通知申し上げます。
貴意に添い得ず誠に申し訳ございませんが、何卒悪しからずご了承下さいますようお願い申し上げます。

なお、ご提出頂きました関係書類はここに同封いたしております。
末筆になりますが、貴殿の今後益々のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のことと存じ上げます。
さて、このたびは当社の入社試験にご応募いただき、ありがたくお礼申し上げます。
筆記及び面接につき慎重に審査いたしました結果、誠に不本意ながらご希望に添いかねることになりました。あしからずご了承くださいますようお願いいたします。
今後のご健勝とご活躍を心からお祈り申し上げます。
敬具

○○ ○○ 様

北九州市 ○ 区 ○ 町○番○号
○○○ 株式会社

化学プラント製造スタッフ採用選考会結果の件　ご連絡

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。
この度は、標記選考会にご来社頂きまして、誠に有り難うございました。
さて、過日実施致しました選考会の結果、誠に残念ながら貴殿の就職ご希望につきまして、ご期待に添うことが出来ませんでしたので、ここに謹んでご通知申し上げます。
貴重なお時間を、わざわざ弊社のために割いて下さったにも拘わらず、誠に申し訳なく存じます
末筆ながら、今後ますますご健勝、ご発展あらんことをお祈り致します。

敬　具

拝啓

この度は弊社入社募集にご応募いただきまして、まことにありがとうございました。

慎重に選考をさせていただきました結果、まことに遺憾ながらご希望に添えないことになりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。

末筆ながら、今後のご多幸をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○年○月○日

○○ ○○ 様

拝啓　ますますご清栄のこととお喜び申し上げます。

さて、先日の当社入社試験には、ご来社くださいましてありがとうございました。

つきましては、慎重に選考を検討いたしました結果、残念ながらご希望に沿いかねることとなりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。なにとぞ悪しからずご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。

今後のご健勝をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成 〇 年 〇 月 〇 日

＿＿＿＿＿様

〇〇〇〇〇

この度、当社に応募頂きありがとうございます。

今回は不採用とさせて頂きます。

〇 年 〇 月 〇 日

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿殿

拝啓

いよいよご健勝のこととお慶び申し上げます。

過日は、弊社社員募集にご応募いただきまして、誠に有難うございました。

さて、貴殿の選考に関し慎重に検討させていただいた結果、誠に残念ですが今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。

ご志望に添うことができませんが、何卒ご了承くださいます様お願い申し上げます。

今後益々ご健勝でご活躍くださいますようお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

所在地

事業主　社　名　　印

氏　名

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

○○ ○○ 様

…

謹啓

貴殿におかれましては、日々ご清祥のことと存じます。

さて、先日は弊社社員採用試験にお越しいただき誠にありがとうございました。

慎重に検討させていただきましたが、今回の選考につきましては、誠に残念ながら貴殿のご意志に添いかねる結果となりました。

末筆ではございますが、今後のご健勝とご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

謹白

拝啓

貴殿にはますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

さてこの度は当学科××講座教授（助教授，助手）公募にご応募下さり，また先日は面接にお越し下さり，誠にありがとうございました。

本学科にて慎重に審査いたしました結果，誠に残念ながら，この度はご希望に添いかねることになりました。悪しからずご了承下さいますようお願い申し上げます。なおご応募いただきました書類をご返送申し上げます。

末筆ながら，貴殿のご健勝とますますのご発展を祈念いたします。

敬具

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

○○ ○○ 様

札幌市 ○○ 区 ○ 条 ○ 丁目
株式会社 ○○○

前略　この度、当社の新規採用にあたっては、ご応募いただき、誠にありがとうございました。
　ご提出の書類につきまして慎重に選考した結果、残念ながら今回は貴意に添うことができませんでした。
　何ぶん、本年は採用人員が少ない上、応募者が多数にのぼりましたので、やむを得ず書類選考をさせていただきました。
　ご提出の書類をここに同封してお返しします。
　一層のご自愛、今後のご健闘をお祈りいたします。

草々

採用試験結果のお知らせ

拝啓 時下ますますご健勝のこととお慶び申し上げます。
さて、今回の弊社入社試験に際しましては、わざわざご来社くださいましてありがとうございました。
つきましては、慎重に審議いたしました結果、誠に残念ながら、応募多数のためご希望に添いかねることになりました。
なにとぞご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。
末筆ながら、今後貴殿のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。
敬 具

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿様

拝啓　ますますご健勝のこととお慶び申し上げます。

このたびは、当社の求人募集に対し、ご応募いただき

ありがとうございました。早速、検討しました結果、残念ながら

ご希望に沿うことができず不採用という結果になりましたので

ご通知申し上げます。

今後のご健勝をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○年○月○日

平成○年○月○日

○○　○○　様

採用試験結果のお知らせ

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。
先日は、当社採用試験にご応募くださいまして、ありがとうございました。
さて、ご応募いただきました試験の結果につきまして慎重に審議いたしましたが、誠に残念ながら今回は惜しくも貴意に添いかねることとなりました。ご期待に添えなくて誠に申し訳ございません。
応募の際ご提出いただきました書類一式お返しいたします。
どうぞお力落としなく、　　様の今後一層のご活躍を心からお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

株式会社　○○○○

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

○○　様

○○○○○

拝啓

時下ますますご清栄のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は弊社入社試験にご応募いただき、ありがとうございました。

慎重に検討させていただきました結果、まことに残念ではございますが、ご希望に添いかねることになりました。

今後のご健康とご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

○年○月○日

○○ ○○　様

拝啓

時下ますますご健勝のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は弊社入社募集にご応募いただきまして、ありがとうございました。

慎重に検討させていただきました結果、まことに残念ではございますが、今回はご希望に添いかねることになりました。

今後のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

○○ ○○ 様

新宿区西新宿 xxx
（株）xxx
人材本部リクルーテイング部

謹啓

貴殿におかれましては、日々ご健勝のことと存じます。
さて、先日は弊社社員採用試験にお越しいただき誠にありがとうございました。
慎重に検討させていただきましたが、今回の選考につきましては、誠に遺憾ながら貴殿のご意志に添いかねる結果となりました。何卒ご了承下さい。
末筆ではございますが、貴殿の今後のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

謹白

平成 ○ 年○月

応募者各位

株式会社○○○○　総務部人事課
東京都千代田区富士見○-○-○
TEL 03(3238)○○○○

謹啓　向暑のみぎり益々ご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます。
過日はお忙しい中、小社の平成１３年度新卒社員募集にご応募下さいまして、誠に有難うございました。
さて、書類選考の結果ですが、これまで複数の担当者により慎重に選考を重ねてまいりましたが、誠に遺憾ながら貴意に添えぬこととなりました。心苦しい限りではございますが、限られた募集人数でもあり、悪しからず御了承下さいますようお願い申し上げます。
末筆ながら、貴殿のご多幸とご健勝を担当者一同心よりお祈り申し上げております。

敬白

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

所 在 地

社　　名

代表者名　　印

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿様

拝啓　ますますご清栄のこととお慶び申し上げます。

過日はご足労を煩わしご苦労様でございました。さて、あなたの就職ご希望の件につきましては、種々慎重選考の結果、まことに遺憾ながら、今回は採用を見合わせざるを得ないことに相なりましたので、ご通知申し上げる次第でございます。

なお、ご来社願いました折には行き届かぬ点も多く、またご多忙のところをいろいろとご迷惑をおかけいたし申し訳なく存じております。今後ますますのご健勝ご発展をお祈り申し上げ右取りあえずご通知申し上げる次第でございます。

なお履歴書その他ご提出の関係書類など、一括同封ご返送申し上げますのでご査収願い上げます。

敬具

様

株式会社○○
人事部

拝啓 ますますご健勝のことと拝察いたします。

さて、過日は当社社員採用試験にご応募をいただきありがとうございました。

選考の結果、誠に残念ですが採用を見送らせていただくことになりましたのでお知らせいたします。

何分にも応募者多数のため意に添えなかったことを、あしからずご了承くださいますよう

お願い申し上げます。

敬具

○年○月○日

○○ ○○ 殿

拝啓

いよいよご健勝のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度は弊社入社募集にご応募いただきまして、誠にありがとうございました。

さて、慎重に検討させていただきました結果、誠に残念ではございますが、今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりました。何卒ご了承下さいます様お願い申し上げます。

今後のご健勝とご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成○年○月○日

○○ ○○ 様

拝啓　時下ますますご清栄のことと存じ上げます。
さて、このたびは当社の入社試験にご応募いただき、ありがたくお礼申し上げます。筆記及び面接につき慎重に審査いたしました結果、誠に不本意ながらご希望に添いかねることになりました。あしからずご了承くださいますようお願いいたします。
今後のご健勝とご活躍を心からお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

株式会社　○○○
担当：　○○ ○○

〇年〇月〇日

〇〇　〇〇　殿

拝啓

時下ますますご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます。

過日は、弊社入社募集にご応募いただきまして、誠に有難うございました。

さて、貴殿の選考に関し慎重に検討させていただきました結果、誠に残念ではございますが、今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりました。何卒ご了承下さいます様お願い申し上げます。

なお、お送りいただきました応募書を同封にてお返しします。

末筆ではございますが、貴殿の今後のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

平成〇年〇月〇日

〇〇　〇〇 殿

〇〇〇大学工学部〇〇学科

学科長　　〇〇　〇〇［印］

教授採用選考審査結果のご通知

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます．

さて，この度は当学科の教授公募にご応募いただきましてありがとうございました．厚く御礼申し上げます．

慎重に審査させていただきましたところ，誠に不本意ながらご希望にそいかねる結果となりましたので，ここにご通知申し上げます．悪しからずご了承のほどお願い申し上げます．

また，ご送付いただきました書類一式を同封いたしましたので，ご査収ください．

今後ともご指導ご鞭撻のほど，よろしくお願い申し上げます．

まずは御礼かたがたご通知申し上げます．　敬具

○○　○○　　様

採用試験の結果について

拝啓　ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

過日は当社採用試験にご応募下さり、まことにありがとうございました。

さて、慎重な選考の結果、まことに不本意ながら、あなたのご希望に沿えない結果となりました。

足からずご了承下さい。

なお、関係書類は別途ご返送致します。

今後、ますますのご健康とご活躍をお祈り致しております。

敬具

平成○年○月○日

○○株式会社
人事部

平成　○　年　○　月　○　日

_____様

○○○○○

拝啓

時下ますますご清栄のこととお慶び申し上げます。

この度、本学科の教官公募に応募していただきましたが、学科の人事教授会において慎重に審議した結果、残念ながら不採用ということになりました。悪しからずご了承下さるようお願い申し上げます。

なお、お送りいただきました応募書を同封にてお返しします。

向暑の折、ご健康とご活躍をお祈りします。

敬具

平成〇年〇月〇日

〇〇大学〇〇学部
〇〇　〇〇 先生

〇〇〇大学工学部〇〇学科
学科長　　〇〇　〇〇［印］

教授採用選考審査結果のおしらせ

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます.
先日はご多忙のところ宇都宮までお越しいただきまして誠にありがとうございました. 厚く御礼申し上げます.
慎重に審査させていただきましたところ，誠に不本意ながらご希望にそいかねる結果となりましたので，ここにご通知申し上げます. 悪しからずご了承のほどお願い申し上げます.
また，ご送付いただきました書類一式を同封いたしましたので，ご査収ください.
先生には一層のご活躍をお祈り申し上げますとともに，今後ともご指導ご鞭撻のほどよろしくお願い申し上げます.
まずは御礼かたがたご通知申し上げます.　　敬具

平成〇年〇月〇日

〇〇　〇〇 殿

〇〇〇大学工学部附属〇〇センター
センター長　　〇〇　〇〇 [印]

拝啓　時下ますますご清祥のことと存じます。
さて、このたびは当センターの助手公募にご応募下さいまして誠にありがとうございました。
慎重に審査させていただきましたところ、誠に不本意ながらご希望に添いかねる結果となりましたので、ここにご通知申し上げます。あしからずご了承のほどお願い申し上げます。
ご送付いただきました書類一式を同封いたしましたのでご査収下さい。
ご専門分野での一層のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます.　　敬具

選 考 結 果

〇〇 〇〇　様

前略

今回は当社の求人に際し、ご応募頂きましてありがとうございました。

選考をさせて頂いた結果、今回の採用は見送らせていただくことになりました。

ご意向に沿うことができず、誠に申し訳ございませんが、何卒ご容赦下さいますようお願い申し上げます。

草々

株式会社　●●●
人事部長　〇〇　〇〇

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿様

株式会社　　○○○

印

ご応募の結果について

拝啓　このたびは弊社社員募集にあたり、早速のご応募ありがとうございました。

つきましては、慎重に選考の結果、まことに残念ながら今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりました。ご期待にお応えすることができず、たいへん申し訳ございません。あしからずご了承下さるようお願い申しあげます。

今後の益々のご健勝とご活躍を心からお祈り申し上げます。

以上とりあえずご通知まで。

敬具

平成 ○ 年 ○ 月 ○ 日

○○ ○○　様

札幌市　○　区 ○ 条 ○ 丁目
株式会社　　○○○○

拝啓　時下益々ご健勝のこととお喜び申し上げます。
　この度弊は、当社の社員募集に際しましてご応募頂き、ありがとうございました。
　さて、先日来慎重に協議いたしましたが、誠に残念ながら、今回は採用を見送らせていただくことになりました。ご期待にそうことがせできず誠に申し訳ございません。
　今後の健闘を心からお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

○ 年○月○日

○○ ○○　様

書院産業株式会社
人事部

拝啓　ますますご清栄のこととお喜び申し上げます。
**　過日は、当社社員採用選考会までご足労をおかけいたしました。**
さて、慎重に選考いたしましたところ、誠に残念ではございますがご期待に添えないこととなりました。
**　何卒、あしからずご了承くださいますようお願い申し上げます。**
末筆ながら、今後一層のご活躍をお祈り申し上げます。

敬具

**　提出いただいた関係書類は、ここに同封いたしました。ご査収ください。**

Mgr. Ivona Barešová, Ph.D.

**Politeness Strategies in Cross-cultural Perspective:
Study of American and Japanese Employment Rejection Letters**

Executive Editor prof. PhDr. Ladislav Daniel, Ph.D.
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