

CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF POLITENESS

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This paper investigates aspects of the concept of politeness in Japanese and American cultures. Ten Japanese and ten American adults in Tucson, Arizona answered three questions. The first question asks the informants to consider what the term "being polite" means in their culture. The second question asks informants to judge whether the ten items of which it is comprised are considered "polite"/*teineina* in their culture. These ten items describe certain acts based on either negative or positive politeness strategies shown by Brown and Levinson (1987). Informants must judge if each given act is considered as "polite"/*teineina* in their culture. The third question asks informants to consider to what degree other adjectives such as "well-mannered"/*reigitadashii* and "friendly"/*shitagashigena* are similar to "polite"/*teineina*.

The results suggest that: 1) the basic concept of politeness is similar for Americans and Japanese; 2) although both cultures regard negative-politeness acts as more polite than positive-politeness acts, Americans are more likely than Japanese to perceive positive-politeness acts as polite; 3) the American term "polite" tends to have a wider range of meaning including "considerate" and "friendly" in addition to "well-mannered" and "respectful," whereas the Japanese term *teineina* tends to be confined to "well-mannered" and "respectful."

This research is significant in that it explores the similarities and differences between the Japanese and American concepts of politeness from new perspectives. These involve incorporating Brown and Levinson's notion of positive and negative politeness and modifying Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino, & Kawasaki's (1992) research methods.

Introduction

Understanding politeness is crucial in order to explore pragmatic aspects of language as well as to facilitate second/foreign language learning. A substantial number of studies have investigated various aspects of politeness cross-culturally (DuFon, Kasper, Takahashi, & Yoshinaga, 1994). Many of them have contributed to a better understanding of politeness by either cross cultural analysis of "polite" linguistic behaviors, (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1990; Duranti, 1992; Hill and Hill, 1978; Ikuta, 1983; Johnson, 1992; Loveday, 1981; Marier, 1992; Pavlidou, 1994; Pilegaard, 1997; Suple 1994; Wetsel, 1988) or theoretical discussions on the nature of politeness (e.g., Brown and Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1990; Gu, 1990; Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983; Mao, 1994; Matusumoto 1988; Scollon and Scollon, 1995). Although these studies have also indirectly or partially contributed to the exploration of how people conceptualize politeness, fewer studies (e.g., Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, & Ogino, 1986; Ide, Ogino, Kawasaki, Ikuta, & Haga, 1986; Ide et al. 1992; Kitao, 1990) have focused on an examination of how the definition of politeness corresponds and/or differs among cultures.

Such an analysis of the definition of politeness allows us to understand how it may be cross-culturally conceptualized and understood. This, in turn, may result in more successful intercultural communication.

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Important research that is closely related to a cross-cultural analysis of the concept of politeness was reported by Hill et al. (1986) and Ide et al. (1986). They conducted quantitative, questionnaire-based research on the uses of request forms by Japanese and American college students. In their results they claimed that the two cultures share the fundamental concept of politeness i.e., that the use of politeness strategies is based on “discernment,” the minimal social obligation that people should meet in their interaction.

In 1986, Ide et al. suggested politeness might be a universal concept that regulates human behavior. In a later study (1992) they drew distinctions between Japanese and Americans definitions’ of politeness by examining the term “polite”/*teineina* against other adjectives such as “well-mannered”/*reigitadashii* and “friendly”/*shitagashigena*. By having the informants evaluate certain human behaviors in terms of those adjectives Ide et al. concluded that whereas Japanese and American notions of politeness are fundamentally the same, they differ with respect to whether or not the notion of “polite”/*teineina* overlaps with the notion of “friendly”/*shitagashigena*. The present study attempts to further explore similarities and differences in the concept of politeness of Japanese and American people¹ from a new perspective by incorporating Brown and Levinson’s (1987) positive and negative politeness strategies and by modifying Ide et al.’s (1992) research methods.

Research Questions

Three specific questions will be addressed in the present research. First, it inquires as to how Americans and Japanese generally conceptualize being polite to others. Second, it investigates how Americans and Japanese evaluate actions based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) positive and negative politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson proposed a universal mechanism of politeness by adopting Goffman’s (1967) notion of face -- “the public self image that [interactants] want to claim for themselves” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 62). In their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson regard face as interactants’ wants and claim that face has two forms: positive and negative. Positive face is the interactant’s desire that his/her wish be ratified, understood, liked or admired by some particular others. Negative face is defined as the interactant’s wish that his/her freedom of action not be curtailed by others.

Brown and Levinson further introduced the construct “face threatening acts” (FTAs) to demonstrate the mechanism of politeness. There are two types of FTAs: acts that threaten positive face and those that threaten negative face. Positive face threatening acts disregard the interactant’s desires e.g., when an addresser expresses disapproval or criticism of an addressee. Negative face threatening acts disregard the interactant’s freedom of action and include orders, requests, suggestions and threats. Brown and Levinson proposed that politeness is the addresser’s strategy for minimizing or redressing FTAs in order to save the face of the addressee. Thus, positive politeness is referred to as a strategy to minimize or redress positive-face threatening acts; that is in positive politeness the speaker demonstrates that he/she respects at least some of the hearer’s desires by showing social closeness, solidarity and reciprocity. On the other hand, in negative politeness acts, the speaker displays that he/she recognizes and respects the hearer’s negative face wants by maintaining social distance and demonstrating an unwillingness to impede, bother or intrude upon the hearer. Brown and Levinson further define specific positive and negative politeness strategies as follows:

Positive politeness strategies:

- 1) Notice, attend to H (= the hearer) (his interests, wants, needs, goods)
- 2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
- 3) Intensify interest to H
- 4) Use in-group identity markers
- 5) Seek agreement
- 6) Avoid disagreement
- 7) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
- 8) Joke
- 9) Assert or presuppose S (= the speaker)'s knowledge of and concern for H's wants
- 10) Offer, promise
- 11) Be optimistic (when requesting)
- 12) Include both S and H in the activity
- 13) Give (or ask for) reasons (implying "I can help you" or "you can help me")
- 14) Assume or assert reciprocity (when requesting)
- 15) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

Negative politeness strategies:

- 1) Be conventionally indirect
 - 2) Question (when requesting), hedge (to soften or weaken the statement, to avoid decisive statements)
 - 3) Be pessimistic (when requesting)
 - 4) Minimize the imposition
 - 5) Give deference (e.g., by using honorifics)
 - 6) Apologize
 - 7) Impersonalize S and H (e.g., use of passive voice)
 - 8) State the FTA (= face-threatening act) as a general rule (when regulating, warning, rejecting)
 - 9) Nominalize (more nouniness is more formal)
 - 10) Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H (explicitly claim S's indebtedness to H when requesting, or disclaim any indebtedness of H when offering)
- (pp. 103-211)

Brown and Levinson further remarked that America² is a positive politeness culture and Japan is a negative politeness culture. Intrigued by Brown and Levinson's distinctions between the two cultures I question whether or not, on a conceptual level, Americans tend to emphasize positive rather than negative politeness and if Japanese do the opposite. Although Brown and Levinson's claim that America is a positive politeness-oriented culture and Japan is a negative politeness-oriented culture is intuitively attractive, it has not been empirically verified. This study is intended to provide evidence of Brown and Levinson's assumption by conducting a conceptual-level inquiry in order to determine how members of each culture evaluate positive and negative politeness acts. For example, if it is found that Americans consider positive politeness acts as being more polite than negative politeness acts -- and Japanese do the opposite -- that would be considered evidence that America is a more positive politeness-oriented culture than Japan.

Lastly, the present study examines how Americans and Japanese define the term “polite”/*teineina* against other related adjectives such as “well-mannered”/*reigitadashii*, “considerate”/*omoiyarinoaru* and “friendly”/*sitasigena*. Although this analysis is similar to Ide et al. (1992), the present question attempts to examine the perception of the adjective “polite” in relation to other adjectives, whereas Ide et al. investigated the perceptions of “polite” and other adjectives in relation to a set of human social acts/behaviors, and analyzed the relationships between those perceptions.

Method

How people conceptualize politeness should be investigated through observation of actual polite linguistic behaviors and by performing discourse and ethnographic analyses. However, conceptions of politeness may also be examined by using questionnaires because it is a perception-level inquiry, not an inquiry as to how people behave. Thus, this study will employ questionnaires and quantitative analysis to investigate subjective definitions of politeness.

Furthermore, although results from questionnaire-based research, in general, do not necessarily predict behaviors, they may contribute to explaining observed behaviors. In the present case, thus, it is believed that the results from this research will contribute to a better explanation of the linguistic behaviors of politeness between America and Japan.

Participants

Ten Japanese adults and ten American adults who lived in Tucson, Arizona were asked to participate in the research. All the Japanese respondents but one were graduate students at the University of Arizona. Their ages ranged from late 20’s to 40’s: three were in their 20’s, six were in their 30’s and one was in her 40’s. Eight of the American informants were female and two were male. Nine of the ten American respondents were graduate students, also at the University of Arizona. The tenth planned to enroll in a graduate program the semester following data collection. Their ages also ranged from late 20’s to 40’s: four were in their 20’s, five were in their 30’s and one was in her 40’s. Eight of the informants were female and two were male.

Materials

Three types of questions were provided to the subjects (see Appendices), since triangulation of data increases the credibility of research (J. H. Hill, personal communication, April, 1996). The first question (Q1, Appendix A) asks for the definition of “polite.” However, since it was assumed that a question such as “How do you define polite?” would be difficult for informants to answer, the question was constructed as follows: “If you were to explain to your child ‘be polite to others,’ how would you do it? Please include some examples.”

The second set of questions (Q2, Appendix B) provided nine kinds of acts/behaviors³ and requested the informants to judge the degree to which each act/behavior was considered polite in their culture by choosing one out of five possible answers: 1) “Yes, it’s almost always considered as ‘polite’;” 2) “In some situations it is *not considered* as ‘polite’;” 3) “In many situations it is *not considered* as ‘polite’;” 4) “No, it is not considered as ‘polite’;” 5) “I am not sure.” It was assumed that through this set of questions, we could determine how Japanese and Americans conceptualize politeness relative to social behavior. The

acts/behaviors were drawn from Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive and negative politeness strategies. From the fifteen positive politeness strategies six were selected, and from the ten negative politeness strategies three were selected. These selections were made because it was relatively easy to construct concrete and natural scenarios to represent them. The general setting for the acts/behaviors is an encounter between a student and a professor because Hill et al.'s (1986) and Ide et al.'s (1986) research studies indicated that both American and Japanese university students felt obliged to be polite in interactions with professors.

I did not construct specific scenarios or dialogues for acts/behaviors for two reasons. First, I was concerned that the words of the character in the scenario, particularly in Japanese, would affect the informants' judgements. Since Japanese demonstrates substantially various expressions for one meaning (e.g., praising a professor on his/her clothes) in terms of the level of politeness by employing a variety of honorifics and a distal copula, the character's words, not the target act/behavior could affect the informants' judgements and skew the data. Second, the use of personal names might promote a particular positive or negative response. Thus, I constructed only general contexts for the acts/behaviors, excluding characters' utterances and specific personal names. I also provided answers that allowed the respondents to judge to what degree the act/behavior is considered polite rather than just whether or not it is polite at all.

However, among the nine acts/behaviors there are variations in terms of specificity. For example, Number Three is relatively specific whereas Number Five ("A student apologizes") is general. The reason for this kind of variation is that it was difficult to narrow down some acts/behaviors such as apologizing and telling jokes to a specific situation while keeping the context natural and neutral. For example, a scenario such as "When a student is late for an appointment with a professor, the student apologizes" is too self-evident to be useful here. A scenario such as "When a student borrows a book from a professor, the student apologizes" may cause informants to wonder if apologizing is appropriate and polite in this context, and they may not be able to give an answer. A scenario such as "A student apologizes to a professor for no specific reason" conveys a somewhat negative connotation. Therefore, for Numbers Five and Six I decided to provide a general act/behavior without specifying the context.

The third question (Q3, Appendix C) requests the informants to rank several adjectives in terms of similarity/dissimilarity to "polite"/*teineina*, with a ranking of 1 being most similar. The following seven adjectives were selected from the ten used in Ide et al.'s (1992) research: "considerate"/*omoiyarinoaru*, "casual"/*kidoranai*, "appropriate"/*tekisetuna*, "pleasant"/*kanziyoi*, "well-mannered"/*reigitadashii*, "friendly"/*sitasigena*, and "respectful"/*keiinoaru*. The informants were also invited to add other adjectives similar to "polite"/*teineina* and to rank them together with the seven that were selected. It was assumed that the ranking system would enable the informants to easily give judgments by making direct comparisons between the adjectives.

Results and Discussion

Question 1 (Q1)

As Tables 1a. and 1b. show, similar patterns have been found between the American and Japanese answers.

Table 1a. The results of the Americans' answers to Q1

Category	Number of Responses
Say "Please," "Thank you"	5
Ask permission ("May I...?") Do not make demands ("I need to...") / Do not impose on others when making a request	3
Use names in greetings (e.g., "Hi, Akiko" not just "Hi")	1
Treat other people the way you want to be treated / Consider how other people feel before you say or do something	4
Help someone if she needs help / Offer something if she needs it	2
Don't interrupt when adults are talking -- ask "Can I say something?"	2
Share your toys	2
Tell a white lie	1
Don't hit anyone	1
Pay attention when people are talking to you	1
Be grateful for what other people do for you and express it	1
Respect other people's thoughts, ideas, and values	1
Be happy for other people's successes, and sympathize with other people's hardships	1
If seated, stand up when an adult enters / Stand when being introduced	1
Don't make loud noises in public places or crawl around on the floor	1
Don't burp, pass gas, etc. in public	1

Table 1b. The results of the Japanese' answers to Q1

Category	Number of Responses
Take care to use proper language / Say "Please," "Thank you"	8
Don't make others uncomfortable / Make others comfortable / Consider how other people feel	3
Be kind to others / Help someone if she needs help	2
Treat others' things nicely -- don't throw them away	1
Pay attention when people are talking to you	1
Keep a promise	1

That is, the most frequently stated category of answers to the question of "If you explain 'be polite to others' to your child, how would you explain it?" was related to expressions/words/language (e.g., "Say 'please,' 'thank you'") in both the American and Japanese answers. Also, the second most frequently stated category consisted of advice on how to be considerate of others' feelings (e.g., "Treat other people the way you would like to be treated" or "Consider how other people feel before you say or do things around them or to them") in both the American and Japanese answers. These results suggest that the basic concept of politeness is shared by American and Japanese people.

Question 2 (Q2)

In both the American and Japanese questionnaires the total scores of answers regarding each act/behavior were added up. Then each total score was divided by the number of respondents to give the mean score. A score of 1 indicates that the given act/behavior is considered most likely to be polite while a score of 4 indicates that the given act is regarded least likely to be polite (scores of 5 were omitted).

Table 2 summarizes the results. All the negative politeness based acts/behaviors were rated 1.50 or less by both American and Japanese informants. In addition, small differences (0.4 or less) rated were found between the American and Japanese mean scores in the negative politeness based acts/behaviors. These results indicate that both the American and Japanese informants regarded the positive politeness acts/behaviors. Moreover, it was found that the informants perceived the negative politeness acts/behaviors to a similar degree.

On the other hand, the positive politeness acts/behaviors had higher mean scores than the negative politeness acts/behaviors, indicating that basically the positive politeness acts/behaviors were not perceived to be as polite as the negative politeness acts/behaviors were. As for gaps between American and Japanese mean scores, large differences (more than 0.5 except Number 2) were observed. The American informants rated the positive-politeness acts/behaviors with smaller numbers than did Japanese informants. These findings suggest that Americans perceive positive politeness acts/behaviors as being more polite than Japanese people do.

Table 2. The mean scores of answers for Q2 by Americans and Japanese

	Americans	Japanese
P 1) praise clothes	2.00	2.60
P 2) give more backchannels	2.77	2.40
P 3) tell amusing stories	1.88	3.20
N 5) apologize	1.25	1.33
P 6) tell jokes	2.33	3.20
N 7) use formal expressions	1.50	1.10
P 8) not use formal expressions	2.30	3.60
P 9) call by nickname/first name	3.10	3.70
N 10) minimize imposition	1.11	1.00

Note: P = positive-politeness based; N = negative-politeness based; 1 = most likely to be polite; 4 = least likely to be polite

Question 3 (Q3)

Responses were added up on respectively ranked numbers of adjectives. Results are summarized in Table 3. The results show eight out of ten American informants regarded “considerate,” “well-mannered,” and “respectful” as very close to “polite” (ranking them as 1 or 2) whereas only “well-mannered” and “respectful” were regarded as very close to “polite” among Japanese informants (ten informants ranked “well-mannered” as 1 or 2 and seven informants ranked “respectful” as 1 or 2, but only four informants ranked “considerate” as 1 or 2). Also, four Americans regarded “friendly” as relatively close to “polite” (ranked it as 2 or 3), whereas no Japanese informant regarded “friendly” as close to polite. Concerning

“casual,” “appropriate,” and “pleasant,” the patterns of the American and Japanese responses were similar.

Table 3. The number of responses for the ranks of adjectives

Adjective\ Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
considerate	8	1	1	0	0	0	0
<i>omoiyarinoaru</i>	2	2	3	1	2	0	0
casual	0	0	1	3	1	2	3
<i>kidoranai</i>	0	0	2	1	1	5	1
appropriate	2	1	5	2	0	0	0
<i>tekisetuna</i>	0	2	3	2	1	0	1
pleasant	0	2	2	1	1	4	0
<i>kanziyoi</i>	0	4	1	3	1	1	0
well-mannered	6	2	0	2	0	0	0
<i>reigitadasii</i>	7	3	0	0	0	0	0
friendly	0	2	2	0	4	2	0
<i>sitasigena</i>	0	0	0	2	3	3	2
respectful	3	5	2	0	0	0	0
<i>keinoaru</i>	3	4	1	1	1	0	0

Note: 1 = similar to “polite;” 7 = dissimilar to “polite.”

From these results the following points can be understood. The Japanese *teineina* has a narrower sense than “polite;” the meaning of *teineina* is confined to “well-mannered” and “respectful” (particularly, “well-mannered”), and clearly excludes the meaning of “friendly.” However, for Americans, “considerate,” “well-mannered,” and “respectful” are related to “polite.” Also, the American “polite” allows for the inclusion of “friendly” more than *teineina* does.

Conclusion

The present research has suggested the following points. American and Japanese people share a basic concept of politeness which includes using proper language/words/expressions (e.g., saying “please” and “thank you”) and showing consideration for others (i.e., not making them uncomfortable by one’s behavior or words). However, the American and Japanese concepts of politeness have a different range. The American concept includes more elements and tends to allow more room for positive politeness than does the Japanese concept (i.e., the Japanese concept tends to include only negative politeness). Also, the American concept includes the meaning of “considerate,” as well as “well-mannered” and “respectful” whereas the Japanese concept includes only “well-mannered” and “respectful.”

Probably the most interesting finding of this study is that both the American and Japanese respondents regarded negative politeness strategies more likely to be polite than positive politeness strategies. Although in the introduction I assumed that the American informants would evaluate the positive politeness acts more highly than negative politeness acts based on Brown and Levinson’s claim of America being a positive-politeness culture,

this was not the case. Moreover, it is important to note that the American and Japanese informants judged the negative-politeness acts similarly while a large gap was found between the two groups in their evaluation of the positive-politeness acts. These facts suggest that if cross-cultural differences in the conceptualization of politeness exist, they may be only attributed to how positive politeness is perceived -- negative politeness may have very little to do with the differences.

Finally, the present research shows that Brown and Levinson's descriptions of America as a positive politeness culture and Japan as a negative politeness culture does apply at the conceptual level. The most crucial contribution of this research, however, is this: the American concept of politeness permits positive politeness but does not regard positive-politeness strategies as more polite than negative politeness strategies. On the other hand, the Japanese concept of politeness -- while it tends to be confined within negative politeness -- does not evaluate the negative politeness strategies more likely to be polite than the American concept.

Limitations/Suggestions for Further Research

The present research contains at least the following limitations. First, No. 5 in Question 2 (Q2) should have been presented with a more specific context, since three informants out of twenty marked 5 ("I am not sure") and commented, "depends on the context/ situation." Second, more acts/behaviors in Question 2 (Q2) should be provided in a future survey. Particularly the number of negative politeness act/behaviors should be increased in order to achieve equivalence in number of positive- and negative-politeness acts/behaviors (only three kinds of negative-politeness acts/behaviors, in contrast to six positive ones were examined in the present research). Third, the first question (Q1) in the English questionnaire ("If you explain 'be polite to others to your child, how would you explain it? Please include some examples.") may not be appropriate because a few informants commented, "I don't have a child." The question should have been changed to, "If you were trying to explain 'be polite to others' to a child, how would you do it?"

Finally, since the number of participants in the present study is small the findings should be considered preliminary. Since this research did not undertake statistical analyses, it is not certain whether or not differences (and similarities) in the Japanese and American concepts of politeness are significant. Future studies should incorporate statistical analyses to make the results more convincing. Despite these limitations, it is believed that the study has contributed to a better understanding of politeness theory and phenomena through the several important observations and insights gained.

Author

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Notes

1. This research focuses on the norms of middle-class highly educated adult Americans and Japanese.
2. Strictly, Brown and Levinson note "the western U.S.A." (p. 245).
3. Although the number of acts was supposed to be ten, since I accidentally dropped one act (No. 4) in the Japanese questionnaire, nine were actually used for comparison and analysis.

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Appendix A

Thank you very much for your cooperation!!

Your Sex: M / F

Your Age: 20's / 30's / 40's

Your Specialization:

Please answer the following questions. Please answer in the order of Q1, Q2, and Q3.

Q1. If you explain 'be **polite** to others' to your child, how would you explain? Please include some examples.

Appendix B

Q2. In general, when a student communicates with his/her professor, are the following acts considered as '**polite**' in America? Please answer by choosing one (circle the number) among 5 options.

- 1) A student praises a professor on his/her clothes.

1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
 2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
 5. I am not sure.
- 2) A student gives exaggerated backchannels to show his/her interest in the professor's talk.
1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
 2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
 5. I am not sure.
- 3) When a student borrows a book from a professor, the student makes the atmosphere relaxed by telling amusing stories, and then asks the professor to lend the book.
1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
 2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
 5. I am not sure.
- 4) When a student borrows a book from a professor, the student shows hesitation by behavior and/or words.
1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
 2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
 5. I am not sure.
- 5) A student apologizes.
1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
 2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
 5. I am not sure.
- 6) A student tells jokes.
1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
 2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
 4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'

5. I am not sure.

7) A student uses formal expressions, and keeps a certain distance from a professor.

1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
5. I am not sure.

8) In order to show friendliness to a professor, a student does not necessarily use formal expressions.

1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
5. I am not sure.

9) A student calls the professor by a nickname or first name to show friendliness.

1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
5. I am not sure.

10) When a student borrows a book from a professor, the student emphasizes minimizing imposition on the professor, for example, by saying "I would like to borrow your *book for just one or two days.*"

1. Yes, it's almost always considered as 'polite.'
2. In some situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
3. In many situations it is *not considered* as 'polite.'
4. No, it is not considered as 'polite.'
5. I am not sure.

Appendix C

Q3. Please number at the beginning of the following words from most similar in meaning to 'polite' (No. 1) to not very similar to 'polite' (You can put the same number on multiple words if you cannot differentiate the degree of similarity to 'polite' among them).

If you think that other words are also similar to 'polite,' please add those words to the following list of words, and number them.

considerate
casual
appropriate
pleasant
well-mannered
friendly
respectful

Thank you very much again for your precious time!!