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*Aspects of Japanese computer-mediated communication : linguistics and socio-cultural perspectives*

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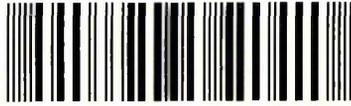
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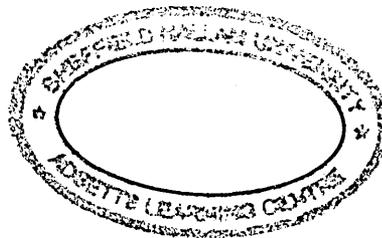
**Linguistic and Socio-Cultural Perspectives**

**Yukiko Nishimura**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of**

**Sheffield Hallam University**

**for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**



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## ABSTRACT

This study discusses Japanese computer-mediated communication (CMC), specifically focusing on messages sent to open-access bulletin board system (BBS) websites. It first compares quantitatively CMC language with speech and writing and finds that interjections distinguish speech from CMC and writing. CMC is distinguished from writing by uses of particles. Uses of auxiliary verbs separate the two target websites, Channel 2 and Yahoo within CMC. Based on the linguistic characterisation of the CMC language, the thesis further discusses qualitatively politeness and impoliteness behaviours in the two target BBS websites with contrasting linguistic features.

This study points out that one theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) can explain impolite behaviour in Channel 2, but not politeness in Yahoo, and that another theory proposed by Ide (1989) can explain polite behaviour in Yahoo, but not impoliteness in Channel 2. A third theory from a discursive approach proposed by Locher and Watts (2005) is shown to be capable of synthesising the two contrasting situations.

In the following chapters, concepts of online community are employed to discuss politeness issues in conjunction with the sense of community. Here differences in discussion topics are found to be relevant to both the sense of community and linguistic choices of polite/impolite language, across the two target websites. Seemingly impolite behaviour in Channel 2, where users have a strong sense of community can be explained by the concept of contextual appropriateness by Watts. Underlying the topics specifically addressed in the thesis, this study also identifies the greater role played by technology in Japanese CMC than in English CMC. It fills a research gap in linguistic study on CMC language in Japanese, politeness and impoliteness research in online context as well as online community studies in Japanese cultural contexts. It is expected to contribute to understanding Japanese CMC linguistically and socio-culturally, as well as politeness and impoliteness and online community research in general.

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## NOTES ON ROMANISATION

Romanisation used for transliterating linguistic examples, personal names in in-text citations and references and the titles of works written in Japanese basically employs the Hepburn System modified by Chio Kaizu (2004) (see her website at <<http://www.halcat.com/roomazi/kaizu-siki/index.html>>). Since Japanese BBS users discussed in the thesis challenge standard Japanese orthography and employ creative, unconventional writing in their messages, the Romanisation used in this thesis is expected to reflect the practices of these users, when their messages appear as examples. The modification of the Hepburn System of Romanisation proposed by Kaizu, which is used in the thesis, employs a principle based on how to represent in *hiragana* syllabary, not based on how expressions are pronounced, except for the grammatical particles, *wa* (は) and *e* (へ), which are transliterated as “wa” and “e” respectively, though these scripts are pronounced as [ha] and [he] when used as part of lexical words (e.g. 話す (はなす) “*hanasu*” meaning ‘to talk’, 塀 (へい) “*hei*” meaning ‘wall’). Below are some examples of the Romanisation used in the thesis.

行動 (こうどう) koudou<sup>1</sup> ‘behaviour’  
どうぞ douzo, どおぞ doozo どーぞ doôzo<sup>2</sup> ‘please’  
コンピュータ (こんぴゅうた) konpyuuta ‘computer’  
コンピューター (こんぴゅうたあ) konpyuutaa<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Though this word can be pronounced as [ko:do:], the Romanisation does not take *koodoo* because the *hiragana* representation has *u* (う) instead of *o* (お).

<sup>2</sup> どーぞ is an unconventional orthography, while どうぞ is the standard way of writing. It is also possible to use どおぞ, which is also an unconventional representation. To represent the unconventional use of the vowel lengthening bar in どーぞ, a diacritic is added on top of the Roman script for the vowel. This representation distinguishes the other unconventional writing of どおぞ, as can be seen in its Romanisation of *doozo*, which follows the basic principle for Romanisation for transliterating *hiragana* syllabary to Roman alphabet.

<sup>3</sup> There are variations on *katakana* representations of some loan words regarding the use of lengthening bar. In コンピューター, the word-final lengthening bar may or may not be used, while the first bar is the standard. Kaizu provides *hiragana* representation for words normally written in *katakana*, to show how they can be pronounced, and following her system, the lengthening bar in *katakana* is represented by repeating the vowel script in Romanisation, as the *hiragana* representation in the parentheses shows.

## NOTES ON ABBREVIATIONS

In the linguistic examples used in the thesis, Japanese scripts appear in the first line, its Romanisation in the second line, a word-for-word or morpheme-for-morpheme gloss in the third line. Their free translation is given below these representations. Japanese scripts appear in the examples, because they are considered helpful to understand the practices of the BBS users discussed in the thesis, as they do not always follow the standard Japanese orthography. The following abbreviations are used in the examples:

COP	Copular
Gerund	Gerundive form
IMP	Imperative form
NEG	Negative marker
Nom	Nominaliser
OBJ/OM	Object marker
PAST	Past tense
PL/PLN	Plain style
POL	Polite style
QM	Question marker
QUO/Quote	Quotative marker
SFP	Sentence final particle
SM/SUB	Subject marker
TM/TOPIC	topic marker

# **Chapter 1:**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1. About This Chapter**

This thesis reports research on Japanese computer-mediated communication (CMC), inspired by studies on English CMC. In this introduction, the chapter first presents motivations for CMC research by clarifying the nature of CMC in contrast with face-to-face (FTF) communication. Also motivations for the CMC study on the Japanese language and culture as non-English CMC are explained. From these accounts on the motivations, the chapter identifies three key issues, namely language, politeness and community, in exploring Japanese CMC. Then the research questions to be addressed in the thesis are presented, followed by a brief description of the thesis organisation. The latter sections of this chapter provide backgrounds to the Japanese language and the two Japanese websites to be studied, to facilitate understanding of Japanese CMC.

### **1.2. Motivations**

#### **1.2.1. CMC and BBS in Contrast with FTF**

CMC is defined as “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers” (Herring 1996a: p.1). Most typically CMC users create textual messages by typing on the computer keyboard to send their messages to individuals. Examples of CMC systems include email communication and Bulletin Board System (BBS) communication to discussion boards. Users read or respond to messages during a shared time, most typically in synchronous chat communication, or at a later convenient time in asynchronous email and BBS communications (see Herring (2001) for more details on sub-types of CMC). It enables people to interact in cyberspace who would otherwise never encounter one another in the physical world, particularly in the

case of BBS communication.

How then does CMC (or BBS as representing CMC) differ from FTF communication? To answer this question is the first motivation of the study within this thesis. An encounter “online” in CMC, as opposed to an “offline” FTF encounter in the physical world, allows people to converse in cyberspace with people unknown to one another. CMC has given birth to entirely different communication phenomena by expanding possibilities of conversation opportunities with strangers.

In conversations that take place in the physical world, many clues are available for participants about the “who they are” of their interactants through sound, sight, smell and touch (if applicable). Most importantly, conversations in such a world are synchronous; participants should physically be present at a certain period of time in a certain place, which greatly reduces uncertainty about who they are talking to.

This is not necessarily the case in CMC. In many cases, participants in CMC conversation, especially in open-access BBS communication, are total strangers except that they find the same conversation site of interest and that they log in to the site where their conversation counterparts’ messages are posted. Conversation is essentially asynchronous, in the sense that one utterance in the form of a message posting may be responded to after a considerable time or at any later convenient time of the respondent. Alternatively, it can occasionally become close to synchronous when the flow of message postings takes place very rapidly. In the physical world, no conversation can be continued in such an asynchronous setting.

Simultaneous utterances, such as interruptions and backchannels are possible in FTF conversation, but not in CMC (see Chapter 4 for discussion of this phenomenon). This is the norm and not an exception in CMC conversation. This salient characteristic of CMC interaction has attracted considerable attention of researchers in many disciplines including linguistics (see Chapter 2 for a brief history on CMC studies).

## **1.2.2. Japanese CMC as Non-English CMC**

Most of the previous linguistic and sociolinguistic studies of CMC have concentrated on English and in the context of Western cultures, as exemplified by Crystal (2001, 2006). This is rather unsatisfactory, since CMC has expanded its scope to various non-Western cultures. The vast expansion of the Internet in recent years leads to flourishing non-English and non-Western Internet communication (see Danet and Herring eds. 2007).

The second motivation of this thesis is to expand the scope of linguistic and socio-cultural CMC research to non-English/non-Western environments, that is, CMC studies in the Japanese language and culture. In fact, this non-English perspective is shown to clarify otherwise unnoticed aspects of CMC in linguistic and socio-cultural domains, which are discussed in the following section on the three key issues (Section 1.2).

Findings from previous studies conducted on English CMC (see Chapter 2) and methodologies (see Chapter 3) have greatly contributed to the undertaking of this present study. Since previous research on Japanese CMC is far too limited (Nishimura 2003a, b), compared with the vast body of research on English CMC, this thesis is designed to fill this gap between Japanese CMC (one example of non-English CMC) and English CMC research.

The preceding account of general features of CMC in the Japanese language has enabled the thesis to identify three key issues to be explored, which include language, politeness behaviour and community. These three key issues are explained below in Section 1.3, beginning with language.

## **1.3. Three Key Issues: Language, Politeness and Community**

### **1.3.1. Language: Spoken versus Written versus CMC**

The first question is how language used in CMC differs from, or is similar to, FTF spoken conversation when CMC users converse in cyberspace. CMC can also be viewed

as one kind of written communication, in that CMC users engage in an act of writing when producing messages by entering words and symbols on the keyboard. We can also ask whether or not the language in CMC may be close to written language. The first key issue is that of exploring in what way the language of CMC resembles or differs from speech and writing in order to characterise CMC.

Since the subject matter of the thesis is Japanese CMC, the Japanese language is obviously a central focus and is analysed throughout the thesis. Insight from the research on Japanese CMC in contrast with spoken and written Japanese may be compared with what has been known about these media differences in English language use. Such a comparison may shed light on the nature of language in CMC in general. This issue of language in CMC in comparison with speech and writing is fully discussed in Chapter 4.

### **1.3.2. Politeness and Impoliteness**

With regard to politeness there are two initial points to be explored. The first concerns specific linguistic and cultural characteristics of the Japanese language, in which the modal system of the language encodes features of politeness, known as honorifics (Ide & Yoshida 1999). With these devices, Japanese speakers are (obliged) to choose an appropriate level of politeness when communicating with others. The choice is expected to be appropriate to the context that can often involve hierarchical interpersonal relations. This can be achieved in FTF, where conversation participants have full access to a number of visible clues. They are able to determine an appropriate level of politeness with these cues, which include age, gender and other personal traits.

However, as the preceding account on the CMC environment indicates, information leading to determining an appropriate level of politeness is not available in BBS communication. It would be of interest to see how Japanese BBS users do or do not differentiate level of politeness in CMC, where clues that help CMC users decide politeness levels are very limited. The use or non-use of politeness features, which can lead to the indication of impoliteness in interaction, can be related to a lack of participant

information or some other factors. This also needs to be accounted for, in order to gain a better understanding of this particular kind of interaction.

The second point on politeness is concerned with how theories of politeness and impoliteness developed in FTF interactions can explain politeness and impoliteness in CMC, especially in the case of a language with the particular honorific system. As noted in the above description of CMC environment, very limited information about conversation participants can be shared among them. The interpersonal relations among these participants can be created and maintained only through message exchanges. The topic of the conversation is the only element that ties participants of presumably diverse backgrounds.

This thesis chooses two “representative” Japanese BBS websites and contrasts them to explain how the participants of these two BBS sites exhibit politeness and impoliteness for keeping the conversation going. This involves the managing of “face” (see reviews on face in Chapters 2 and 5), which is claimed to be a universal in human interaction according to one major theory of politeness (Brown & Levinson 1987). Alternatives to this theory are contrasted and examined in terms of applicability to online contexts in Chapter 5.

### **1.3.3. Online Community**

The third key issue is concerned with the concept of online community, which can be considered as an online space where interactions among conversation participants take place. In particular, the topic of “community,” though sometimes loosely defined, has been one of the major CMC research concerns. Specifically, in what ways do such Internet interactions lead to a formation of an “online community” of shared values and a code of conduct, that is, what are conditions or criteria for community-hood? If such online communities exist, in what ways are they similar to or different from one another and from existing communities in the physical world?

These questions are all the more important in linguistic enquiry into Internet

communication, since language has been and still is the dominant means of Internet interaction, although new multi-media means of interaction such as those found in Second Life and YouTube have emerged. To pose the above questions from a linguistic perspective, we may ask: What are linguistic conditions for online community-hood? How different are online communities from one another and from offline communities? Various measures identifying online community-hood have been proposed and discussed from a sociolinguistic perspective, such as reciprocity and solidarity (Herring 2004a). There have been analyses of the online community of English email discussion groups. One study has explored impoliteness due to the breach of community norms (Graham 2007). It has also been pointed out that in some communities politeness behaviours make the group successful in maintaining community-hood or a sense of community, in the sense that participants are satisfied (Harrison 2000). This implies politeness may be among the most important determinants of a “successful community.”

Taking account of this observation, the thesis seeks to understand how conversation participants build online community-hood through interactions that reflect features of not only politeness but also impoliteness. It will be of interest to explore how politeness and impoliteness in the message exchanges are related to online community-hood in the two target BBS websites, which may exhibit different features of politeness and impoliteness. Such linguistic characterisation of online communities is expected to contribute to community research.

## **1.4. Research Questions**

As has been identified from the preceding discussion on the three key issues of language, politeness and community, the present thesis has specific objectives as expressed by the four research questions below:

- 1) How are the messages in BBS communication linguistically similar to or different from spoken offline conversation and written language? Do

these messages exhibit features of both?

- 2) What are the linguistic differences and similarities in messages between the two representative BBS websites? In other words, how can the variation in the language of BBS communication between the two different websites be described?
- 3) How can theories of politeness and impoliteness developed from sociolinguistic study of offline, FTF interactions explain the politeness and impoliteness phenomena observable through message exchanges on the two different websites?
- 4) Viewing the BBS websites as online communities, how can the polite and impolite behaviours revealed in messages be explained in relation to online community-hood criteria, using the two approaches of computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) and the theory of discernment, or *wakimae*?

The thesis is expected to contribute to clarifying linguistic characterisation of Japanese BBS communication and understanding socio-cultural dimensions of politeness and impoliteness interactions in Japanese BBS communities, by means of explanations grounded by theoretical discussions.

## **1.5. Organisation of the Thesis**

The remainder of this introductory chapter supplies background material: In Section 1.6.1, description on the background to the Japanese language is presented, with respect to the orthography and word-processing, which are crucial in communication conducted through the instrumentality of the computer. Brief notes on Japanese grammar are also supplied. Then in Section 1.6.2, the two target Japanese BBS websites are introduced and explained in some detail.

Following this Introduction chapter, Chapter 2 presents a review of literature

relevant to the pursuit of the research questions described above. Beginning with early CMC studies in social psychology, Chapter 2 discusses CMC research in linguistics, on English and non-English languages, works on politeness and impoliteness both online and offline, and studies of online communities including case studies of the BBS sites to be studied. The final section is devoted to discussion of the technological impact on language, communication and culture. This issue is not specifically linked to particular discussions, but rather ties into the whole thesis underlying various discussions throughout.

Chapter 3 then describes in detail the tools, methods and data utilised in the thesis. This chapter also gives an account of the combined methodologies of quantitative and qualitative approaches, and the corpora consisting of CMC, speech and writing.

Chapter 4 directly addresses the first research question of the linguistic characterisation of Japanese CMC, speech and writing. It also discusses the second research question on the differences between the two Japanese BBS websites under study.

Chapter 5 explores politeness and impoliteness issues, as indicated in the third research question. Chapter 6 addresses the last research question on online community-hood in relation to politeness and impoliteness behaviours. Concluding remarks will be given in Chapter 7. The thesis thus explores linguistic aspects of Japanese BBS communication, leading to socio-cultural dimensions of the phenomena.

## **1.6. Backgrounds**

This section first provides background to the Japanese language (Section 1.6.1) regarding its orthography (Section 1.6.1.1), word-processing (Section 1.6.1.2) and a brief note on its grammar is to follow in Section 1.6.1.3. It also gives descriptions on the two websites under study regarding the history and characteristic features in Section 1.6.2.

### **1.6.1. The Japanese Language**

The introduction of the Japanese language below includes orthography and word-processing, which are directly relevant to Japanese CMC. The sections on

orthography (1.6.1.1) and word-processing (1.6.1.2) have appeared in Nishimura (2003b). Also it explains briefly about its grammar and morphology, as they are needed for the subsequent chapters.

### 1.6.1.1. Orthography

Anyone who wishes to study Japanese as foreign language will face a number of obstacles, such as a wide gap between spoken and written styles, a lengthy list of *kanji* characters to remember in reading and writing, and complicated systems of honorific uses, which are integrated into the grammar (Clancy, 1982). *Kanji* and honorifics even trouble native Japanese speakers. I begin by describing how Japanese speakers write their language typically using four different scripts, namely, *hiragana*, *katakana*, *roomaji*, and *kanji*. In addition to the description of the four scripts, punctuation marks and other symbols are explained, as they are creatively utilised by CMC users.

#### 1.6.1.1.1. Four Scripts

The four scripts used in standard Japanese orthography have the following characteristics. Both *hiragana* and *katakana* are *kana* or syllabary scripts, which use written symbols to represent the sounds of each syllable. Each *hiragana* symbol (e.g., か for *ka*) has its corresponding *katakana* (e.g., カ for *ka*); though the syllable is pronounced the same, its shape is different in the two syllabaries. This is because *hiragana* and *katakana* were created in different ways. *Hiragana* was originally a simplified form of *kanji* (Chinese characters) in a cursive form, while some of the *katakana* symbols were formed by taking some elements of a *kanji* character (e.g., the radical of カ from *kanji*, 加 for *ka*) in an angular form.

Another difference between the two syllabaries lies in their respective functions: *hiragana* is used to represent inflectional endings such as the past and passive. It is also used to write the postpositional particles that show grammatical relations such as the subject and the object of a sentence. It can also be used to write sentence-final particles,

which indicate the speaker/writer's attitude toward the content or the speech situation (this will be discussed in greater detail later). Another use of *hiragana* is to represent native Japanese ideas and objects for which *kanji* characters do not exist. *Katakana*, on the other hand, is used mainly for writing foreign names, loan words, certain adverbs imitating natural sounds (e.g., ワンワン *wan wan* 'bow wow' for dog barking), and so on. Stanlaw (2002) regards *katakana* as a kind of italic script, used to represent words that are "unique and special" (p. 549), including loan words mostly from Western languages and onomatopoeic expressions.

Because *kana* syllabary indicate the sound, it is used to supplement how *kanji* (see below) is intended to be read, in the form of *hurigana*, which are *kana* symbols printed or written in smaller font size at the side or on top of *kanji* characters. When filling out governmental forms, for example, it is customarily requested that important items like names have phonetic transcriptions in *kana* written at the side. Also *kanji* supplied with *hurigana* is often seen in books for young children.

*Roomaji* is the use of the Roman alphabet. One major function of *roomaji* is to transliterate personal and place names and other Japanese words. There are three systems of Romanization: the *Kunrei*, Japanese, and Hepburn. In this thesis, Japanese transliteration is given in modified Hepburn system, which is a closer representation of phonetic orthography than the other two systems (see Notes on Romanisation on page xii of this thesis).

The use of the Roman alphabet is not limited to transliteration: it is used as *eimoji*, English words in Japanese writing, especially in the form of acronyms. For example, *CD* for *compact disk*, *VTR* for *video tape recorder*, and so on, appear abundantly, even in vertical writing, in Japanese newspapers and the like. Though these are originally English words, they are nativized and felt to be part of Japanese vocabulary. Some of them are often used in combination with other Japanese words, such as “OA 機器” *oei kiki* ‘o(ffice) a(utomation) machinery and tools’ in which オフィス *ofisu* ‘office’ and オートメーション *ootomeesyon* ‘automation’ are already part of the Japanese vocabulary of loan

words. The preference for English acronyms over *katakana* representation in Japanese writing, it seems, is due to linguistic economy.

*Kanji* characters were originally borrowed from Chinese, and each character represents a particular meaning. For example, the native word for ‘river’ is normally expressed by the character 川. However, this character can be pronounced in at least two completely different ways: the Japanese reading is *kawa*, and the other reading, modified Chinese reading, is *sen*. The modified Chinese reading is normally applied to Chinese compound words, e.g., 河 *ka* + 川 *sen* = 河川 *kasen* ‘rivers’. When the character 川 is used in isolation, it is normal practice to assign the Japanese pronunciations, which have a single unambiguous meaning. The Chinese reading, in contrast, has many homophones; for example, *sen* can have a number of different meanings in more than 50 words of Chinese origin, e.g., 千 ‘thousand’, 線 ‘line’, 戦 ‘battle’, 船 ‘ship’ 選 ‘selection’, and so on, which are all pronounced *sen*.

In writing verbs, Japanese orthography typically uses a combination of a *kanji* character for the verb stem and *hiragana* for the inflectional ending. For example, in the Japanese verb *warau* ‘to laugh’, the stem, *wara* is written with the *kanji*, 笑, which means ‘laugh’ and the root-form ending, *-u* is given in *hiragana*, う. To form the past tense *waratta* 笑った, the past ending *-tta*, った, is expressed by *hiragana* of two different sizes. The smaller symbol, つ, is used to indicate that the consonant is long, and the normal-size symbol, た, represents the past tense *ta*. Normally the long consonant is phonetically realised by holding the consonant for a moment.

As for the smaller symbols, there are four that are conventionally used, as follows (their *katakana* equivalents are in parentheses). Examples of how each symbol (bolded and underlined here for clarity) is used in an English loan word are given in (1) through (4) below:

- (1) **つ** (ツ) *tsu* as in トツプ *toppu* in transliteration, which means ‘top’
- (2) **ゃ** (ヤ) *ya* as in チェンス *chyansu* ‘chance’
- (3) **ゅ** (ユ) *yu* as in ミュージック *myuuzikku* ‘music’

(4) よ (ヨ) *yo* as in ショップ *shoppu* ‘shop’

Recent innovations in *katakana* representation that are widely accepted include small イ *i* as in パーティ *paateyi* ‘party’. The smaller symbol innovations are mainly found in loan words in *katakana* representation, as described by Stanlaw (2002). Japanese online users, however, use these smaller symbols in *hiragana* innovatively in native words to represent a certain prosodic quality.

Smith and Schmidt (1996) identify *eimoji* and *kigou* in addition to the four scripts in Japanese. *Eimoji* refers to English words, and *kigou* are symbols such as ☆ and ♪. These two additional types appear frequently in comic books (*manga*) and magazines for young readers, and advertisements and signboards of various kinds. Japanese CMC messages also have these additional words and symbols.

#### 1.6.1.1.2. Punctuation Marks and Other Notational Symbols

In addition to orthography, it is important to understand the standard punctuation system of written Japanese. Japanese standard punctuation marks that have English equivalents are as follows:

the period 。

the comma 、

the question mark ？

the exclamation mark ！

single quotation marks 「 」

double quotation marks 『 』

parentheses ( )

the dash —

brackets [ ]

angle brackets 〈 〉

ellipsis dots …

Though mentioned briefly earlier, it should be noted here that both horizontal and vertical writing are possible. In addition to these shared punctuation marks, there are unshared marks and symbols. Below are those used only in Japanese:

emphasis dots or commas, such as きれい in vertical writing and horizontally

きれい *kirei* ‘pretty’ (Not available in text-only online messages)

middle dots, ・, often used to separate items in a list, such as 月・水・金  
*getsu・sui・kin* ‘Mon, Wed, Fri’,

the repetition symbol to form a plural, 々, used to represent the same  
*kanji* that precedes the symbol, as in 山々 *yamayama* ‘mountains’ (cf.  
山 *yama* ‘mountain’)

lengthening symbol, ー, mainly used in *katakana* to represent loan words  
that have long vowels, such as データ, *deeta*, ‘data’

In addition to these shared and unshared marks and symbols, Japanese online users creatively use other symbols and signs that are provided by Japanese word processing software.

#### 1.6.1.2. Word Processing in Japanese

To write in Japanese on the computer, users must use *roomaji-kana-kanji* conversion software such as Microsoft IME or Justsystem’s ATOK, and follow these steps. An image of a Japanese keyboard is provided in Figure 1.1 below.



Figure 1.1: Image of the Japanese keyboard

- a) First, the user enters Japanese words, based on their pronunciation, in *roomaji* in the Japanese input mode.
- b) Second, the conversion software automatically changes the *roomaji* into the *hiragana* syllabary, if the combination of *roomaji* letters has corresponding *hiragana*. (If a single consonant letter, such as “t” or “s”, is entered, it is not changed to *hiragana*, because most of the symbols in the syllabary represent one syllable consisting of a consonant and a vowel, か for "ka"). When the desired word is in *hiragana*, the user presses “enter” to finalize.
- c) In order to convert *hiragana* to *katakana*, the user can press the “*katakana* key” and then presses “enter” to finalize. Or *katakana* can be chosen in step (e) below, where the list of choices includes *katakana*.
- d) In order to use *kanji*, the user presses the “conversion key” (which is often the space key), so that the system will automatically show his or her most recently used *kanji* corresponding to the *hiragana*.
- e) When the most recently used *kanji* is not the intended character, the user presses the “conversion” (or space) key again to get a list of all the other *kanji* characters as well as other symbols and characters that have the same pronunciation of the *hiragana*. The user then chooses the desired character or symbol and presses “enter” to finalise.

Figures 1.2 and 1.3 below show lists of *kanji* candidates that have the sound, sen.

There are 58 choices in all, and all the choices cannot be shown in one frame. In Figure 2, the user has selected the character for "thousand," and the symbol chosen in Figure 3 is used in a place name in Hokkaido, meaning "stringed bead."

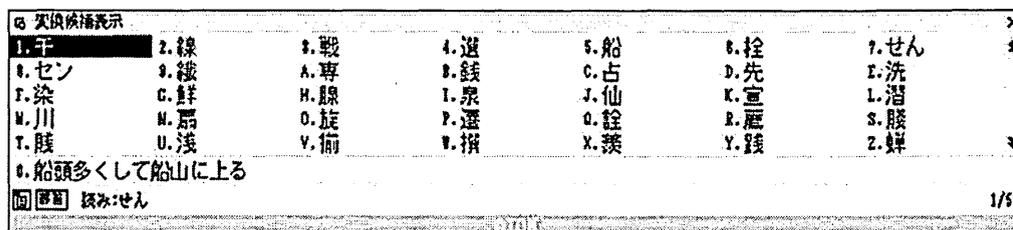


Figure 1.2: Choices for "sen"

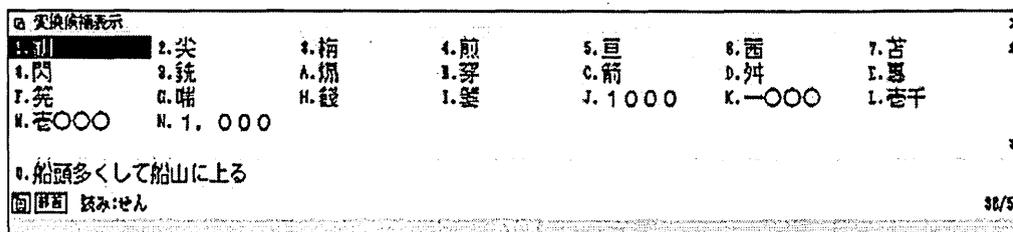


Figure 1.3: Additional choices for "sen"

In creating texts through the conversion software, the script choices available to users are not restricted to those given by the *roomaji-kana-kanji* conversion system. For example, the ATOK conversion software also provides *moji paretto* (a "letter palette") from which users can select various kinds of symbols, marks and letters, such as scientific and mathematical symbols, the Greek and Russian alphabets, phonetic symbols and so on. The software also includes a system that lets users register their handmade scripts and frequently used expressions, and create a personalised dictionary. With these features, Japanese users have a wide selection of scripts and symbols and can enter even complicated symbols very quickly.

### 1.6.1.3. Brief Notes on Japanese Grammar

The following description on Japanese grammar is limited to the areas that are

relevant to discussing the language used in BBS messaging. There are two such areas: one concerns major parts of speech classification of the grammar, the other the particular uses of auxiliaries and particles among the parts of speech relevant to discussions in later chapters. The following description is based on Tsukishima (1964), who summarises several views in traditional Japanese linguistics.

#### 1.6.1.3.1. Parts of Speech

Parts of speech, or word class can be divided broadly into two: independent words (自立語 *jiritsugo*), which can also be unbound or free forms with internal meaning, and ancillary words (付属語 *fuzokugo*), which are bound forms used in conjunction with independent words.

Independent words divide into a conjugable (活用語 *katsuyougo*) class containing verbs (動詞 *doushi*), *i*-type adjectives (形容詞 *keiyoushi*), and *na*-type adjectives (形容動詞 *keiyoudoushi*). A non-conjugable (非活用語 *hikatsuyougo* or 無活用語 *mukatsuyougo*) class contains nouns (名詞 *meishi*), pronouns (代名詞 *daimeishi*), adverbs (副詞 *hukushi*), conjunctions (接続詞 *setsuzokushi*), interjections (感動詞 *kandoushi*) and prenominals (連体詞 *rentaishi*).

Ancillary words also divide into a non-conjugable class, containing particles (助詞 *joshi*) and counter words (助数詞 *josuushi*), and a conjugable class consisting of auxiliary verbs (助動詞 *jodoushi*). There is not wide agreement among linguists as to the English translations of the above terms.

The parts of speech classification is relevant to the thesis in that the linguistic analyses conducted in Chapter 4 utilises this classification of the Japanese grammar. Specifically, when conducting quantitative, corpus-based analysis to the three kinds of language, CMC, speech, and writing, it is necessary to have some kind of measures that can equally be applied to the three different kinds of language as primary linguistic sources. The software used for such analysis can assign parts of speech, and it is necessary to identify what parts of speech the Japanese language has.

Also, the above general description indicates that there are two classes of vocabulary, which are dependent and independent. From this fact, the basic unit used for the parts of speech analysis conducted on English or other languages, namely, the word, is difficult to use in the case of the Japanese language, due to a number of dependent, bound classes of vocabulary. Therefore, the parts of speech analyses need to be conducted not on the word level but on the level of the morpheme, which is the smallest unit that bears meaning. The software utilised for the part of speech assignment works on the morpheme level.

This morpheme-level analysis is necessary in view of another convention in written Japanese, which is not to place a blank space between words or morphemes. Japanese sentences are written without blank spaces, which also make it difficult to analyse the language purely on the word level. These details will be explained in Chapters 3 and 4.

#### **1.6.1.3.2. Auxiliaries and Particles**

It is also necessary to understand how auxiliary verbs work in the Japanese grammar, because the grammar requires the use of certain modality-bearing forms, and the auxiliaries, the most typical devices that designate modality, include those that show levels of politeness. In other words, levels of politeness are encoded most typically by auxiliary verbs at the end of a sentence. All auxiliary verbs are attached to a verbal or adjectival stem form and conjugate as verbs. The auxiliaries include those that designate the level of politeness, realised by *masu* for verbs and *desu* for nouns (nominals) and adjectives. Other auxiliaries include those indicating the tense, passive, causative and negative.

Another class of morphemes relevant to the discussion of the thesis is particles, which include case particles that designate grammatical relations of nouns in a sentence, (e.g. *ga* for subject, *o* for object) and sentence final particles (e.g. *ne* for confirmation of agreement) that reveal the speaker's attitude toward the communicative event. Particles in Japanese are postpositional—they immediately follow the modified component. Other

particles include those that show the topic (*wa*), locative (*ni*), additive (*mo*), coordinating (*to*), and quotative (*to*).

## 1.6.2. History and Characteristics of the Two BBS Websites

This section introduces the two BBS websites under study here, which are Channel 2 and Yahoo! Japan BBS. The background description includes how each BBS website came to be, and several specific features such as user guidelines found on the two sites are explained. Information below is expected to help readers understand the history and characteristic features of the two websites.

### 1.6.2.1. Channel 2

I will first describe Channel 2. Channel 2 was created in May 1999 by an individual named Hiroyuki Nishimura (born in 1976, often addressed as Hiroyuki). According to an interview with him by Inoue (2001), Hiroyuki was an active contributor to an antecedent website called *Amezou*. This site experienced difficulty, and Hiroyuki, an exchange student at the University of Central Arkansas voluntarily set up a new website that eventually took over the former site. Hiroyuki attempted to provide a virtual space for users to share interesting stories, jokes, and the like. He expected that if there was such a space for entertainment on the Internet, enjoyable messages would be posted on his site without his collecting them (Inoue 2001). In her recent interview with Hiroyuki, Kitayama (2008) reports that the BBS website Hiroyuki created had nothing extraordinary about the technology, but what made the BBS site innovative was its openness. Kitayama (2008) writes:

On 2 channel, anyone can start a thread and anyone can post — there's no need to register or log in and no Web handles. There are no censors, no filters, no age verification, no voting systems that boost one thread or comment over another. "I created a free space, and what people did with it was up to them," he says. "No major corporations were offering anything like that, so I had to."

The people of Japan who pass each other wordlessly on the way to work each day suddenly realized they had a lot to talk about. They could argue, berate, complain, insult, opine, free-associate, joke around, and revel in their ability to entertain one other as a completely anonymous collective.

Hiroyuki makes clear in his message to new site users that senders are encouraged to post interesting stories, whether true or fictitious, in view of the vast number of users who enjoy reading them. One famous TV newscaster once referred to the postings on Channel 2 as “(public) restroom graffiti” (Chikushi 1999). Although BBS is generally associated with exchange of useful or practical information and can be similar to discussion forums where serious message exchange takes place (e.g. Collot & Belmore 1996), this website is primarily intended for the opposite.

Channel 2 is a very popular BBS website. It alone attracts almost two thirds of all BBS users nationwide, according to a survey by Web Advertising Bureau (2005). This survey shows that over 14 million users accessed BBS sites including Channel 2 and Yahoo! BBS in September 2005. Some 9.89 million, or over 67 percent of all BBS users accessed Channel 2. Its internal content pages show the number of posts by board on a daily basis, its ranking and parts per million ratio (<<http://stats.2ch.net/suzume.cgi?yes/>>). At 03:31:45 on 18 August, for example, the number of total posts in just three hours reached 2,696,815, and the board ranked No 1, (Newsboard) had some 330,000 posts. Boards are ranked from No 1 to No. 785, which is the current number of boards. The number of posts can be seen by day, week and month in each respective graph (<<http://pv.40.kg/suzume/>>). These figures include access by mobile phones.

One reason for attracting such a large number of people lies in dividing the website into numerous boards depending on topic area. Each board is even further subcategorized by specific small-scale threads that users create. Each board has on average over a thousand topic threads, so almost anyone can find a section that is of interest to him or her. The thread that is accessed most recently is placed at the top in the link list with the number of total posts indicated, a system called “thread floating system,” and some users

compete over which thread comes to the top.

Another reason for Channel 2's popularity is the fact that almost complete anonymity is maintained when contributors send their messages. No email address, ID number or registration password is necessary. Contributors can remain anonymous or use whatever pseudonym they like when sending messages. When they choose to remain anonymous, the sender's name normally appears as *nanashi san* (名無しさん) "Mr./Ms. Nameless," but there are a number of variations depending on the thread and board. For example, if a message is sent to a thread on the Linguistics board, the sender's name usually appears as:

名無し 象 は 鼻 が ウナギ だ!  
Nanashi zou wa hana ga unagi da  
Nameless elephant TM nose SM eel COP PL<sup>1</sup>

This literally means "the nameless elephant has an eel nose," which is a mixed and parodied version of two of the most famous examples in Japanese linguistics: *zoo wa hana ga nagai* (象は鼻が長い) "As for the elephant the nose is long" and *boku wa unagi da* (僕はウナギだ) "As for me, it's eel." To understand the counterpart of Mr./Ms. Nameless on Math board requires some mathematical knowledge. It is *hyaku sanjū ni banme no sosuu san* (132番目の素数さん) or "Mr./Ms. 132nd Prime Number." The answer for the 132nd prime number is 743, and this number can be read via rebus reading as "*nana shi san*," which has the same pronunciation for "Mr./Ms. Nameless."<sup>2</sup>

Matsumura et al (2005) quantitatively show that this kind of anonymity, which they call "nameless anonymity," positively enhances light casual chitchat, while it negatively affects rather serious, solid discussion. Some users who contribute regularly prefer to use set nicknames or "handles"; such people are referred to as "*kote han*," which means users with "fixed handle names." There are also systems that prevent other users from abusing these handles.

<sup>1</sup> For the abbreviations used in the linguistic examples, see Notes on Abbreviations on page xiii of the thesis.

<sup>2</sup> See Suzuki (2003) for a number of board-specific variations of "nameless" poster representations. Also an affiliate website to Channel 2 lists all the variations of nameless representations (<[http://logo.s3.xrea.com/\\_nanasi.xhtm/](http://logo.s3.xrea.com/_nanasi.xhtm/)>).

There are several ways in which interactions among users take place. The most popular way is to refer directly to the individual message number attached to each post. Thus, another participant, or even the same sender, can post his or her response to the message by referring to the author's message number using an angle bracket (>). Such interactions occur in any thread on any board, unless the topic is so limited or outdated that it attracts few people.

Another form of interaction is found in open discussion of message deletions, carried out on the Message Deletion Board. As senders can remain anonymous, the content of messages is not always appropriate for the Internet such as the disclosure of personal information. There are general and board-specific, local guidelines in order to protect individual privacy and maintain ethical standards. Based on such guidelines, certain kinds of messages are subject to deletion. One can submit a request for message deletion accompanied by the reason for the deletion and, if the request is considered to be fair, the message is deleted. However, the deletion of messages is carried out by voluntary users called message-deletion executors appointed by the website creator, and there is much room to debate the validity of decisions on the deletion. There also is a time lapse between filing and actual deletion. Inappropriate messages can remain on the Internet for some time. Then there arise sophisticated (for so young an organization, anyway) debates on what should and shouldn't be deleted. To keep a message or delete it thus concerns the maintenance of the website, and participants actively engage with one another to refine and internalize the discourse. (The issue of user guidelines and website maintenance will be discussed in comparison with Yahoo! Japan BBS later in this section.)

Yet because of this anonymity, there arise situations in which Hiroyuki is sued for the negligence of not deleting messages that cause damage to victims. Also there are posts that could constitute crimes, such as announcing planned bombings. To prepare for these situations, Hiroyuki began to collect IP addresses of message senders in 2003, to submit to police authorities (*Channel 2 Official Guide* 2006). Strictly speaking in this sense, Channel 2 is not an anonymous site, as the poster can be identified through IP addresses

in crime-related situations. For ordinary users, however, these IP addresses are not shown, and it remains a virtually anonymous site. Prior to posting, senders are expected to view and grasp what has already been discussed on the particular thread in which he or she would like to participate. Such considerations force writers to find appropriate outlets and truly consider the audience. If a message is sent to a wrong thread, it is sometimes relocated to its suitable thread or sometimes subject to deletion. To make the flow of message posting as smooth as possible, voluntary message-deletion executors remove or relocate not only messages with inappropriate content, but also these misplaced messages.

Anyone can ostensibly become one of the volunteer helpers if they can get the endorsement of the creator, Hiroyuki. A candidate sends in a short statement of purpose and is handpicked by him at his sole discretion (there is no overseer except for him). Before an ordinary user can function on the website in this capacity, he or she must have a detailed knowledge of the threads, boards and the structure of the website. There are about 250 message-deletion executors, according to Shibukawa (2007). This highly groomed elite is more experienced in the website and can be considered Channel 2's core members.

Technical limitations of the website's overworked server hold the number of messages in one thread to 1,000, after which no more posts are allowed. The retired thread is moved to storage and eventually archived in so-called "data files." If interest in the topic does not wane, users always have the recourse of starting a new thread with the same title and topic as a continuation. When the number of messages approaches 1,000 in certain popular threads, the message sender who happens to have the message number, 950, for example, is regarded as granted to begin its continuation thread<sup>3</sup>. Also one witnesses competition among users who seek to obtain the coveted final message. In fact, even round numbers such as 100 and 200 are so popular that some dialogues concern the topic of who "bagged" what message number.

The initial message determines what is going to be discussed in that thread.

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<sup>3</sup> This number varies, depending on local rules of threads.

Sometimes this original message sender will remain to administer the course of the thread and be senior to subsequent members who read and/or write about it. If this initial message sender posts a confrontational message, then the remaining messages may bear a similar tone.

Channel 2 users' activities are not limited to online; they also get together offline. Some really help others, such as offering voluntary help during the Niigata Earthquake in 2004, while others just act for fun such as pretending to be Neo from the film *Matrix* and marching with 100 men around Tokyo.

As to the public image of Channel 2, Kaigo & Watanabe (2007) state:

Indeed, with all its dysfunctional aspects, Channel 2 [sic] a well-known synonym for "Internet pandemonium" in Japan. Riské or taboo subjects that are usually not discussed in normal face-to-face communication in Japan are popular topics in Channel 2. Another characteristic of the Channel 2 forum is the frequency of direct confrontation among users, in a culture where verbal conflict is considered antisocial and is characteristically avoided in face-to-face communication. Channel 2 has also been a center for venting hatred and discrimination towards others, and it has been associated with illegal and criminal activities. The free access and anonymity of the users shelters the identities of those who post entries; as a consequence, the content of Channel 2 often appears to reflect some of the worst examples of human communication behavior.

It is true that the public image of Channel 2 is rather unfavourable. However, there are other aspects of the website that show a somewhat different picture. A popular love story, *Densha Otoko*, or *The Train Man*, is said to have started around 2004 as a thread on the single men's board on Channel 2 and seemed to change the image. Though there is controversy as to whether the story is based on a real posting or not, this story was later transformed into various forms of entertainment such as novels, theatre, TV drama, film, and comics. *Densha Otoko* is a story about a young man who happened to save a young woman from being molested by drunkard on the train. Since he didn't know what to do after he got a gift from her, he asked for advice from his online friends on Channel 2. Those online comrades sent various helpful hints and encouragement, with which he won

the girl. He was the hope of single men. This story diminished the negative public image of Channel 2, as newer users who had not been interested in Channel 2 knew about the site in a positive way.

The commercial success of *The Train Man* and the growing number of the site users contributed to stable advertisement income for Hiroyuki, (who took the copyright) who can now use over 80 rental servers in California (*Channel 2 Official Guide* 2006; p.198) to smoothly run his website that has grown so gigantic. Before this in 2001, the load on the servers was too heavy and he might have had to close the site. Some Channel 2 users or Channel 2 “dwellers” (many of them like to call themselves residents of XX boards as well as *ni-channeraa* on Unix Board, volunteered to reduce the server load up to one sixteenth in order to help keep their website (Shibukawa 2007; p.205). They thus showed cooperation and support to save their community. Channel 2 now has a system of collecting a small amount of money (US \$33) from individual users to purchase Channel 2-specific browser software, which enables buyers to view archived data files. This contributes to keeping the site financially stable as well as establishing a sense of ownership and responsibility among users. This system has not been employed by previous BBS site managers, and such a way of managing with maximum user participation contributes to keeping such an enormous anonymous site active over nine years.

#### **1.6.2.2. Yahoo! Japan BBS**

Now let us turn to Yahoo! Japan BBS, paying attention to differences from Channel 2. The page about the history on their website, <<http://pr.yahoo.co.jp/history.html>>, first explains about Yahoo! David Filo and Jerry Yang, when they were Stanford graduate students, developed original software to efficiently search and evaluate information on the Internet and established Yahoo Incorporated in 1995. In order to provide the same services of Yahoo! in Japanese to Japanese users, Yahoo! Japan was established in January 1996, in conjunction with SOFTBANK CORP. Yahoo! Japan BBS was created in

July 1998 as a community site for users to exchange their opinions. How this BBS website was created differs greatly from Channel 2. The latter was founded by a charismatic individual while the former by an institution. This seems to have an effect on the management of the website.

When posting a message, users are required to obtain a Yahoo ID, which appears when posting his or her message. The organisers set rules and guidelines and those messages that do not meet the guidelines are subject to deletion. The organisers are part of Yahoo! Japan management and users or message senders are not part of the governing body of message management. Yahoo management also determines areas in which new threads may be established and those that they do not allow. This feature is also different from Channel 2, on which a thread can be established by anyone on any topic, unless there is an overlap in topics. Users do not need an ID, and users themselves determine local rules and guidelines for the thread.

Yahoo! Japan BBS is a large-scale, general BBS website with 17 main categories. Each category, which is roughly equivalent to a “board” in the terminology of Channel 2, is further subdivided into numerous “topics,” which are equivalent to “threads” on Channel 2. The topics remain online as long as there are postings, and some of them date back a few years. When one topic does not receive postings for a certain period of time, the whole topic gets deleted. I made an enquiry into the period necessary for deletion, but Yahoo! Japan management refused to disclose the number of days, for reasons that such disclosure might encourage a dead thread to be kept alive by just sending an empty message. (This will be discussed in Chapter 6.) Since Yahoo! Japan BBS does not have a system for archiving “topics,” a topic that gets 1500 messages, for example, could be deleted if new messages are not posted for about two weeks. This is different from Channel 2, and researchers need to create an archive on their own if certain “topics” are judged as suitable for study.

One obvious difference is the user representation between the two sites. Based on Yahoo user IDs and content analysis of messages, Matsumura’s (2005) study on Yahoo!

Japan BBS identifies four groups of users: leaders, mavens, coordinators, and followers. Hw further found that there are three communication patterns: leader-initiative, leader/follower coordinating, and follower-initiative. Eight out of 15 categories of discussion topics on which no specific knowledge is needed fall on the leader-initiative pattern; five categories with some knowledge needed belong to the second type, leader/follower coordinating; and two categories such as news are follower-initiative, as information seeking by followers constitute many of the posts. It is of interest to see the relationship between the nature of discussion topics and communication patterns. This kind of relation has not been identified on Channel 2, as communication partners are not ascertained.

One other area in which there are marked differences between the two websites concerns user guidelines found on the websites. (Excerpts of user guidelines from Channel 2, Yahoo! Japan and Yahoo! Community services are given in Appendices to Chapter 1.) On Yahoo! Japan BBS, guidelines called “community guidelines” state that users are not exempt from legal responsibilities when content is found to violate civil law. Though basically Channel 2 has the same standard, the difference lies in who determines whether content violates legal responsibilities or not. On Yahoo! Japan as well as Yahoo!, the management determines the legality, while on Channel 2 voluntary users functioning as message-deletion executors perform this task. Message deletion takes place after a petition is filed by whoever witnesses the violation, and the need for deletion is discussed on the public Deletion Board. Thus, Yahoo! Japan can be more regulated and there is not much room for users to take part in management. On the contrary, Channel 2 is self-regulatory and governing.

It would be intriguing to find, between these two target BBS websites, whether there are linguistic and interactional differences, and if so, how can the differences be ascribed. Before going to discussion of linguistic description and interactional characterisation, let us consider what impacts technology, or computer technology and word processing technology in particular, might have on contemporary society.

## 1.7. Wider Social Impacts of Technology

As the descriptions of the two BBS websites in Section 1.6.2 indicate, BBS sites cannot exist without contemporary computer technology in general. In addition to this, on Channel 2, the computer-technology and word-processing technology specifically developed for the Japanese users allow room to play with the language due to sound-based Romanisation input. In interactions Channel 2 users maximally utilise the message creation mechanism enabled by the Japanese word-processing technology to enhance cultural and group identities.

This study thus fits in a larger body of work in CMC studies on issues of language and technology and the social impact of technology. These background issues operate as an underlying theme throughout the thesis. What distinguishes the current BBS technology from previous technology for communication such as the telephone is it enables strangers to communicate and interact; no previous interpersonal relationships are necessary. As stated earlier in this chapter, by looking at how such technology affects or shapes communication and interaction, the thesis seeks to explore how BBS technology is actually used for connecting people, which has not previously been fully understood.

In his book *Conversation and Technology*, Hutchby (2001) discusses at great length how technology impacts interactions, especially spoken interaction, as the constituent word of the title *conversation* implies. Despite his lack of emphasis on the impact of technology on written communication, the author as a conversation analyst holds a view that “there are discoverable rules, procedures and conventions which underlie the orderly production of talk in interactional circumstances” (2001: p.4). It would be of great interest to see how Hutchby would find systems underlying conversations conducted over newer technology such as mobile phones. Specifically, it would be intriguing to see how Hutchby would discuss in what way not only portability but also personalized use of mobile phones would affect underlying interactional patterns. It is also of interest to see whether conversations in the form of BBS message exchanges would have underlying

rules of interactions. Though to find such patterns is beyond the scope of the present thesis, Hutchby's work is an insightful study that helps reflect on the relationship between technology and conversation/communication.

Technological impacts on written interactions are covered in Gottlieb's (2000) account of how the Japanese language can be created and read in digitized format. It seems the role played by technology cannot be underestimated in the case of Japanese due to the complexity of its orthographic system, compared with Western, Roman-based languages. Gottlieb describes the impact of word-processing technology not only on the level of national script policy, but also on individual users' writing activities such as letter writing. It is instructive to reflect on how professional writers and educators reacted to the emergence of the word-processors in the 1980s; today's users, especially younger ones, take it for granted that these machines are available at school, work and many of their homes. Considering the time when this book was written, it has documented well the impact of the word processing technology on Japanese culture and life. Nowadays, however, the impact goes beyond what Gottlieb described, in that word-processed documents and hand-written ones have separate functions and roles in Japanese society. The technological impact of word-processors, therefore, can best be described in historical terms, as many contemporary users may not fully appreciate. From the perspective of the thesis, however, unique uses of the word-processing technology assist some BBS users in forming cultural group identity (Nishimura 2003a). In this respect, the impact of technology should fully be recognised.

Though it seems technology has a profound effect on language and culture, at least in the case of Japan, there are aspects of language that are unaffected by technology. Halliday's (1978) functional view on language helps untangle this relationship. In his functional views, language can be tool of a tool for communication and also tool for thinking. What technology can have impact on seems to be language as a tool for communication, and not as a tool for thinking. What is meant by "language" in the thesis is more specifically language for users to communicate, and this distinction can be

brought by Halliday's view. See Section 2.7 for fuller explorations on these matters, drawing on Hutchby (2001) on technologies for conversation and, Gottlieb (2000) for culture-specific impact on Japanese writers, and Halliday (1978) for general issues on the relationship between technology and language.

## **1.8. Summary**

This Chapter has laid out the motivations of the present study. After identifying the three key issues, the four research questions were also explained. . These questions are summarised as how CMC language can be characterised in comparison with speech and writing, how theories of politeness can explain interactional behaviours of BBS users, and how online communities can be described. In Chapter 2, I offer a review of literature covering the areas of language, politeness and community and the impact of technology on the Japanese language and culture. Chapter 3 describes the methods, tools and the data employed in my analysis. Chapter 4 addresses the first two research questions on CMC language contrasting with speech and writing. Chapters 5 and 6 address the research questions on politeness and online community, respectively. In this way the thesis explores Japanese CMC from linguistic to socio-cultural issues.

# Chapter 2:

## Literature Review

### 2.1. About This Chapter

With a focus on linguistic and socio-cultural dimensions of Japanese CMC, this chapter provides a review of literature in six areas:

- (1) CMC studies in social psychology in the 1980's
- (2) Key interests in CMC among linguists and sociolinguists
- (3) Research on non-English CMC, specifically Japanese CMC
- (4) Politeness theories developed from FTF communication
- (5) Politeness and impoliteness in CMC and online community
- (6) Technological impact on language, communication and culture

This chapter offers a theoretical background and foundation for each of the topics discussed in the thesis. The chapter therefore locates the present study in some 20 years of previous studies, to which this thesis is indebted.

Section 2.2 reviews literature fundamental to an understanding of CMC, by exploring what has been identified in early models mostly in social psychology (e.g. Kiesler, et al 1984). It discusses how the findings from these studies have helped in approaching the target BBS communication under study. Then in Section 2.3 issues and approaches from linguistics including sociolinguistics and pragmatics are reviewed, with an account of how interests have grown and expanded among scholars in these fields (e.g. Herring ed. 1996, Crystal 2001, 2006). In contrast to accumulated research on English CMC, Section 2.4 presents a review of research on non-English CMC with a focus on Japanese CMC (e.g. Nishimura 2003b). Then, to begin extending linguistic research of CMC to socio-cultural dimensions, Section 2.5 reviews politeness and impoliteness theories based on FTF interactions. It then discusses how they can explain online interactions. Section 2.6 further reviews research on online community from

sociolinguistic perspectives and shows how linguistic and socio-cultural approaches to politeness phenomena can contribute to online community research. The final section, 2.7 reviews works on how communications technologies, including word-processing technology, affect language use, communication and culture in general and in the Japanese cultural setting in particular.

The topics discussed in this chapter are selected, as there are two major areas of enquiry—linguistic and socio-cultural. The chapter begins with linguistic aspects and then moves on to socio-cultural areas, because this order of presentation seems most natural in the exploration of my research questions. This flow of topics also reflects the organisation of chapters in the dissertation as well. Within each topic reviews will be made from the perspective of how relevant each work is, or more specifically, in what way the undertaking of the present study is benefited from each of the previous studies and how this project is needed and justified in the light of these works. The final section is not linked to a specific research question addressed in this thesis. Rather, this section explains the issues that originally inspired the entire study of CMC. Throughout the thesis, one key question I have returned to at various points is whether the discussions have bearings on CMC in general or on phenomena specific to CMC in the Japanese language and culture.

## **2.2. Early Studies of CMC**

CMC has attracted scholars in behavioural sciences such as sociology, communication studies and social psychology. Business and organisation researchers as well as composition scholars have also explored the possibilities of practical applications in their respective fields expanded by CMC (Herring 1996a: p. 2-3).

One of the key early studies of CMC was conducted in social psychology in the early 1980s by Kiesler et al (1984). Their work can now be regarded as one of the classics in the not so long history of CMC research. The authors begin with a brief overview on how computer technologies had entered our lives since the early days of limited use by military and scientific/academic communities. Their interests are more on group

processes involving decision-making rather than on individual effects of CMC, as their research seems to have been motivated by how computers can enhance work efficiency in organisations such as corporations and government rather than optimization of individual utility.

In their series of experiments, Kiesler and her co-researchers focus on communication efficiency, participation, and interpersonal behaviour among other areas of enquiry in CMC, and compare this with FTF communication. They find CMC groups are as task oriented as FTF groups and more uninhibited than FTF groups with respect to hostile comments. They discuss these findings in terms of three factors:

- 1) difficulty in coordination from lack of informational feedback
- 2) absence of social cues
- 3) depersonalization from lack of nonverbal cues

This frequently cited study is an important work in that it has excited a number of subsequent studies in the area, and this and those later studies have greatly clarified interactional behaviour and the nature of CMC. These early studies on CMC have expanded and deepened our understanding on how CMC differs from FTF communication (e.g. Spears & Lea 1992, Walther 1996, Katou et al 2007).

Their approaches are mostly experimental, (see Chapter 3 for methodological reviews), and some of their findings may not be applicable to what is actually happening in naturally occurring CMC contexts, where people might behave differently from experimental settings. However, they certainly give frames of reference on which later projects can be and were built. For example, the authors point out depersonalization. It is true that CMC lacks paralinguistic cues such as facial expressions and personal features that can influence FTF communication. But later research (e.g. Rezapak & Cochenour 1995, Walther & D'Addario 2001, Derks et al 2007) identifies emoticons and other devices that can partially supplement some of what is lacking in CMC.

On reduced social cues, our knowledge of conversation partners has a tremendous effect on how and what we communicate in FTF communication. However, limited

knowledge of social backgrounds of CMC interlocutors may not necessarily be a factor that severely causes adverse effects in CMC (Christopherson 2007). Rather it can be non-essential knowledge. It seems as time has passed, general perceptions of CMC may have changed and users of CMC are more aware of these characteristics. They seem to know what they can expect out of CMC at a more mature stage of CMC use now than in the early 1980s. Building on pioneering studies by Kiesler et al and scholars after them, researchers today have better understanding on what is happening in CMC. In this sense the present study draws on Kiesler et al, who provide us with frames of reference on the nature of CMC and what to look for in CMC. The thesis agrees with their concluding remark that “studies of behavioural and social process in CMC will be carried out best as an interdisciplinary effort” (p.1132). This study is an effort from the disciplines of linguistics and socio-cultural linguistics, whose motivations and perspectives are different from those of social psychology, and looks at linguistic and socio-cultural aspects to which social psychologists have not paid specific attention in the complex phenomena of CMC.

### **2.3. CMC Research in Linguistics**

How have researchers in linguistics and its related fields looked at CMC? Despite Aitchison & Lewis' (2003: p.1) claim that “relatively few have investigated the language of the media in any depth,” there surely has been substantial research accumulated for the past 20 or so years on CMC. Androutsopoulos (2006: p.420) broadly classifies linguistic research of CMC into two stages: in the first stage, which he calls the first “wave,” linguists paid attention to structural or linguistic features of the language use uniquely found on the Internet in the 1990s. These studies examined abbreviations, emoticons, and characteristic hybrid styles of spoken and written language. Then in the second stage, or “wave” (Androutsopoulos 2006), methods and concepts developed in FTF sociolinguistics and pragmatics have been employed to investigate phenomena in CMC. The topics explored include gender, politeness, cultural differences and variation studies.

It is quite useful to describe the history of CMC research in terms of these two “waves,” but this distinction may not be applicable to every study conducted in past years. How research developed in reality is more complicated and his category may not really work when looking at individual projects. For example, Yates’ (1996) study (to be reviewed later) discusses the language of CMC in comparison with speech and writing. If the “wave” is determined solely by topical differences, in linguistic features of CMC versus sociolinguistic characterisation of CMC, it is rather difficult to determine in which “wave” to include Yates (1996), who discusses CMC language quantitatively within a theoretical framework of Halliday’s (1978) functional linguistics, and his work goes beyond simple linguistic descriptions of isolated characteristic properties of CMC. In the narrowest sense of the first “wave” in Androutsopoulos’ (2006) classification, it is possible that Yates’ (1996) work can be in the first wave, but at the same time it is sociolinguistically motivated by interests that belong to the second wave. The following section discusses early works in CMC research that can reasonably be considered to belong to the first “wave” of research, such as Crystal (2001), and explores how the present study can be contextualised in these earlier works. The second “wave” will be discussed in Section 2.3.3.

### **2.3.1. First Wave of Linguistic Studies**

One of the earliest studies on CMC that appeared in an academic journal is by Ferrara et al (1991). The authors argue that a concept of “register,” a language variety according to use, helps to account for systematic and stylistic features of CMC. As a pioneering work that investigated language uses in CMC when CMC was spreading into the larger population, this study should be credited with influencing later works, including the present study, as it provided an initial perspective on how CMC studies can be undertaken.

Ferrara and her colleagues conducted experiments with 23 subjects who were computer professionals and their spouses experienced in the use of computers and typing

on the keyboard. Their task was to make travel arrangements, such as asking for information and booking flights, by sending such messages to the “Wizard” as travel agent, who responded to their enquiries. The communication was dyadic and synchronous. The subjects’ message logs were analysed to reveal characteristic linguistic features of what the researchers call “Interactive Written Discourse (IWD).” They identified omissions of subject pronouns, copula and articles among other features compared with standard written practices, and suggested this discourse showing hybrid characteristics of written and spoken language should be regarded as one emergent register of English. The claim about register had, in fact, been presented much earlier by Baron (1984).

Ferrara et al observed individual differences among the subjects who adhered to conventional grammar, spelling and capitalisation and those who did not do so but employed a number of reductions and omissions. The results were not discussed in terms of social variables such as subjects’ age, which ranged from 26 to 56. It would be possible that younger subjects’ logs showed more variations from Standard English writing practices than subjects who were older in age. Such results have the possibility of weakening their claim on IWD as an emergent register.

It is also interesting to note that, from their Figure 1: Frequency of types of Reductions in IWD (p.21), about 35 percent of subjects used article reductions. The rest of the reduction types, such as copula, subject pronoun and contraction/abbreviation did not reach 30 percent. This means the majority of subjects did not use reductions. It was more important for the researchers to show that the reductions appeared rather than the actual percentage of the subjects who employed reductions. One reason for lower percentage of reduction uses may be related to the language used by the Wizard. His messages were excluded from analysis, but in communicating, it is likely that the interlocutor’s or hearer’s speech style could influence the speaker’s, or the message sender’s (Bell 1984) when exchanging messages. Yet despite Standard English presumably used by the Wizard, this study was able to elicit and collect reductions and other features. IWD as a register is a plausible claim, even though those features were not

used by the majority of the subjects.

Also it seems Ferrara et al must have limited their discussion to standard linguistic features. Non-linguistic features often found in CMC such as emoticons were not mentioned. The use or non-use of emoticons may have something to do with the topic of the discourse and the participants' willingness or resistance to use them. The message exchange was not private in nature and needed to take into consideration interpersonal relationship with the Wizard/travel agent. Rather the purpose was to obtain certain specific results on travel arrangements based on factual information. Because of the goal-oriented nature of the topic, it seems the use of emoticons to add emotional flavour to the message did not have room to appear or was not simply necessary, regardless of whether or not the subjects were familiar with them.

Their experimental situation was similar to a one-to-one chat session due to the synchronicity, but differs from what users do in non-experimental, real chat sessions in that users join chat for more personal, interactional reasons. Here in the experiment, the subjects would perform what they were asked to do, and on this point, experimental research might miss what can be found from observing interactions in existing CMC settings. This study by Ferrara et al did qualitatively provide discourse characteristics of CMC and was virtually the first linguistic study on CMC language (except for foresight by Baron), and contributed to clarifying aspects of spoken/written hybrid nature of English CMC discourse.

A more productive approach to the study of CMC language is to explore existing CMC interactions rather than limiting observations to experimental settings. Werry's (1996) study does this and starts to supplement what experimental work might have missed. This study identifies four major linguistic and interactional properties in Internet Relay Chat (IRC), a type of synchronous CMC, which are:

- 1) addressivity
- 2) abbreviation
- 3) paralinguistic and prosodic cues
- 4) actions and gestures

“Addressivity” is necessary in order to clarify whom the message sender wants to “talk” to by providing the intended addressee’s name (or nick name) at the top of each message (p.52). “Abbreviation” is inevitably employed in order to keep up with the rapid flow of talk. This takes the forms of syntactic and lexical clipping and use of acronyms and symbols in messages, each of which consists of as short as 6 words on the average (p. 53). Werry regards orthographic ingenuities as the most interesting and characteristic features of the language used on IRC. They are intended to reproduce such “paralinguistic and prosodic” qualities of FTF conversation as voice, gesture and tone through creative uses of capitalization, spelling and punctuation (p.57). For the last category of “actions and gestures,” participants employ codes and conventions to symbolize gestural qualities of FTF communication, such as ‘hug’ and ‘kiss.’ Adding explicit codes for physical actions to verbal messages makes the IRC language more than simply speech-like (p. 61).

Werry thus finds that participants employ a number of innovative linguistic strategies to compensate for and adapt to the constraints imposed on this mode of communication in order to reproduce the style of FTF spoken language in IRC. One of the key contributions this study provides is the methodological frame of reference for analysing what speakers of other languages, such as Japanese, do in online communication. Especially the sets of orthographic means are completely different in Japanese and IRC is also different from BBS. The insight gained from this article has been usefully applied in analysing Japanese BBS interactions. In fact many of the general features of structural properties are shown to be shared between English and Japanese CMC (Nishimura 2003b).

The issue of CMC language having both spoken and written qualities is discussed quantitatively by two other studies, Collot & Belmore (1996) and Yates (1996), with each study taking a different approach. The Collot & Belmore study is reviewed first.

Collot & Belmore (1996) discuss the language used on BBS, an asynchronous subtype of CMC, specifically focusing on how CMC discourse, which they call

Electronic Language (EL), differs from spoken or written varieties of English. For a descriptive framework, Biber's (1988) multidimensional-multi-feature (MD-MF) approach is employed. This model utilises explanatory factor analysis and identifies six dimensions, each of which is associated with linguistic functions. For example, the first dimension is "involved versus informational production" and a text that has relatively more private verbs such as "believe" is likely to come to the "involved" end of the scale. Along with other linguistic features, the score of 25 genres (such as academic prose, adventure fiction, and so on) on each dimension can be compared. There are overlaps between speech and writing and simple dichotomy is not used in this model but relations between communicative functions and linguistic features are shown in continuum.

The Electronic Language corpus (ELC) consisting of more than a million words from BBS websites is created in Collot & Belmore's study. They find that EL occupies positions relatively closer to interviews and personal and professional letters in Biber's continuum. Collot & Belmore identify three factors for their results:

- 1) degree of common knowledge and interest
- 2) purpose of communication
- 3) three-party roles played by participants, which are the sender, recipient and the audience

Collot & Belmore's study is comparable in part to this present study, as both investigate BBS messages. As has been pointed out in an earlier work (Nishimura 2003a), the purpose of BBS communication is not always to request information. The act of sending messages itself can be a purpose, and such difference in purposes would impact the language use, as commented on in the above discussions of Ferrara et al's and Werry's studies.

The other quantitative study by Yates (1996) compares CMC discourse with speech and writing, but not from an existing methodological framework. Rather, it is based on the theoretical foundation of Halliday's (1978) language functions (see Section 2.7.3 of this chapter). The textuality of CMC genres is contrasted with speech and writing. Since

Chapter 4 of the present study draws heavily on Yates' methodological and analytical approach due to its applicability to Japanese, this work has greatly contributed to the undertaking of the present study. The basic motivation in employing this framework is to enable a comparison among speech, writing and CMC from a corpus-based quantitative approach to Japanese. For more detailed review, see Chapters 3 and 4.

All the above three works after Ferrara et al (1991) are included in one volume (Herring ed 1996). This is an important collection of articles, which can be seen as a milestone in linguistic research of CMC. Reflecting the then state-of-the-art scholarship, Herring foresees the emergence of the second wave of linguistic research. Herring argues in the introduction, "scholarly inquiry into CMC is expanding simultaneously in multiple directions" (1996a: p.3). In addition to the three works reviewed here, the volume includes articles that belong to the second wave, such as cross-cultural aspects of CMC and community formation in online environments. This chapter has limited discussions of those works that have direct bearings on the linguistic aspects of CMC study.

Somewhat more recently, Lewis (2005) conducts a corpus-based analysis of messages sent to open-access discussion boards. Lewis examines online discussion fora, where contributors post their views on political issues on English and French newspaper-affiliated websites. Rather than taking CMC as online conversation or interactive written discourse, Lewis considers it more useful to characterise the language and interaction in terms of dynamic shifts from monologic to dialogic, as this distinction between the two is more salient than the written/spoken distinction.

Lewis observes the nature of messages originally meant to address the large, general readership of the fora (to many readers) changes from monologic to dialogic after receiving responses and exchanging further responses among participants. These interactions in turn become something similar to two-party dialogic "conversation" at a later stage. Lewis notes this is evidenced by more uses of personal pronouns and modal auxiliaries as revealed by Yates' (1996) study.

This article by Lewis provides at least the following four points to consider:

- 1) the topic of non-personal (political discussion in this case) and personal (hobbies in the case of Channel 2) as variable influencing interactions
- 2) at what stage disagreement is communicated in position statements, that is, the monologic stage or dialogic stage; in addition to concessive remarks, whether there is any politeness consideration in stating disagreement and subsequent interactions at the dialogic stage
- 3) technological and institutional settings of the fora determined by the host
- 4) how contrastive online discourse across two different languages can be achieved

Though the last point is not conducted in the present study, this is certainly future topic to explore.

Last but not least in the first wave of linguistic CMC research, Crystal's (2001) *Language and the Internet* should be reviewed. Its second edition was published in 2006, only 5 years after the first edition appeared. During these five years the pace of changes in the Internet environments were so tremendous that a new chapter, "New varieties" is added before the final Chapter 9, "Linguistic Future of the Internet." Other changes and revisions are also made to the first edition (Ranger 2007). Crystal himself foresees the need for an updated edition of the book in his first edition (p. 14). How Crystal treats language in general versus particular languages needs to be commented on from the perspective of the present study.

Given the focus of the thesis on non-English CMC, I have concerns with Crystal's approach to the subject matter, language. Though he clearly states the aim of the book is "to explore the ways in which the nature of the electronic medium...is having an effect on language in general, and on individual languages in particular" (p. 5), it seems that he relies so heavily on English language examples that he misses fascinating phenomena arising from technologically mediated interaction in non-English CMC. One neglected area that should be pointed out is word-processing technology, which is almost transparent and does not need to be mentioned in English CMC. This, however, plays a crucial role in the case of Japanese CMC.

An example of what English CMC research might overlook is given here. In a rather recent discussion of emoticons in English CMC, happy smiley face, ☺, can appear

in several word-processing and mobile phone devices by typing a colon, hyphen and closing parenthesis (Krohn 2004: p. 323). It seems this and the unhappy face (☹), copyright symbol (©) and registered trade mark symbol (®) are the only four examples in English word processing, in which what is typed on the keyboard produces different representations, at least in the Window's Word file, though more of this kind of conversion appears in recent text messaging platforms.<sup>1</sup>

In Japanese CMC this kind of conversion phenomena takes place on a far greater scale whenever Japanese language scripts are produced on the computer, as introduced in Word-Processing in Japanese in Chapter 1. What is typed is a temporary, intermediate representation until it is finalised by pressing the enter key, to bring a final representation different from what are actually entered on the keyboard.

For example, when someone needs to write on the computer a well-known Japanese thanking expression, *arigatou* in the Japanese orthography, ありがとう, s/he first needs to have the Japanese input mode of the conversion software available. Then in order to enter the word phonetically, the user needs to type Roman alphabet scripts corresponding to the Japanese sound. Thus to obtain the first script, あ, s/he types “a.” Then the display will show あ, which is an intermediate stage shown by the dotted underline before reaching the finalised form あ. The user can either finalise the script here or until the whole expression or even a sentence is entered. To enter the next script, り, “r” and “i” are entered, and what the display shows will be “り.” In a similar manner, when “g” and “a” are entered, “が” appears; “to” is entered to show “と” and finally “u” for “う.” It is possible to defer the finalisation after the whole expression is entered. The display will first show sequence of prefinalised forms, ありがとう. By pressing the space key users then can choose intended script out of four possibilities, which are: all in *hiragana*, (ありがとう), all in *katakana* (アリガトウ), combination of *hiragana* and *kanji* (有り難う or 有難う), with different degrees of *kanji* use. By pressing the enter key the choice can be

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<sup>1</sup> I owe this observation to Sarah Louisa Birchley.

selected and finalised (see Smith & Schmidt (1996) for sociolinguistic discussion of different script choices in Japanese orthography).

Thus when any meaningful and sociolinguistically acceptable Japanese expression needs to be created on the computer, word conversion systems need to be employed and widely used ones allow input by Romanization, which is based on roughly how the expressions are phonetically pronounced.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the use of Chinese characters makes the situation even more complicated, due to a large number of homophones. The word processing technology converts what is typed into various options, and users need to choose the intended ones. Remember there are over 50 choices for the *kanji* pronounced as “sen,” as described in Word-processing in Japanese in Chapter 1. Here what is of interest from sociolinguistic perspective will be that basic word-processing technology affords Japanese CMC users room to use the technology for word play based on punning (see Nishimura 2003a). Final forms that are not conventionally recognised as acceptable or joking representations can be produced by the technology, and they are linked to certain group identities. These can provide a basis for sociolinguistically and pragmatically meaningful interpretations. In discussing language and the Internet, observations of such technologically related socio-cultural phenomena are essential in understanding Japanese CMC (see review of Gottlieb (2000) in Section 2.7.2), and there may be similar phenomena in other non-alphabet-based languages.

Following the above discussion it may be better to see Crystal’s overview as being of “English and the Internet,” rather than “language and the Internet.” As a non-native speaker of English, I have several mixed interpretations/reactions. On the one hand readers who are not native English speakers can get to understand detailed aspects of English CMC. I have also found a number of shared features between English and

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<sup>2</sup> It is possible to directly enter Japanese syllabaries, but it is not a preferred way of input for many users. Where one *hiragana* script is assigned to the QWERTY keyboard needs to be remembered, if *hiragana* direct input is to be employed (see Figure 1 for an image of the Japanese keyboard, where each key has a *hiragana* script below the letter of the alphabet). It is an extra burden on memory in word-processing to remember which key has what hiragana. Input by Romanization is the most efficient method of entering Japanese for many Japanese writers.

Japanese CMC (Nishimura 2003b). On the other hand a number of interesting phenomena in non-English or non-alphabet-based CMC cannot be found.

Crystal's work, therefore, reinforces the need for research in non-English CMC, Japanese CMC in particular, in order to fill a large research gap in CMC studies in languages other than English. Such studies will illuminate aspects of CMC that have not been fully recognised by looking at English CMC alone. Most noticeably the role of technology that allows not just converting scripts but is linked to word play and to the issue of cultural group identity can be clarified (see Chapter 6 on online group identity).

Discussions so far have covered mostly the history of CMC studies in social psychology and the first "wave" of CMC research in linguistic, though with some reservations in using the term as presented at the beginning of Section 2.3 before Section 2.3.1. There is another history concerned with the thesis, which is the history of technology and writing practices. Before looking at Androutsopoulos' (2006) second "wave" of CMC research, two recent books, Baron (2000) and Danet (2001a) are reviewed as they take a historical review of language, typography, and technology specific to writing and visual aspects of CMC. Some of the discussions are useful in contextualising the topics covered in the latter sections of this chapter, e.g. on how Japanese CMC research came to be.

### **2.3.2. CMC Research on Typography from a Techno-historical Perspective and Visual Aspects of CMC**

Two recent works of linguistic research, Baron (2000) and Danet (2001a) and additional works that have documented the language, such as Hale & Scanlon (1999) and Raymond (1996) should be mentioned. The latter two are intended as reference books, but can be considered as works that have kept records of ephemeral language on the Internet in printed form. These works have greatly benefited later researchers, as they can consult uncertain usages and meanings that are difficult to find in standard dictionaries. Hale &

Scanlon's work originated from *Wired Magazine* and used to have its own website, but it is no longer available. Raymond's *Hackers' dictionary* has updated editions, accessible at [http://www.ccil.org/jargon/jargon\\_toc.html](http://www.ccil.org/jargon/jargon_toc.html).

Baron's (2000) *Alphabet to Email* describes transition of English writing practices from the 14th century to the present, paying attention to the role of technology such as printing, telephone, telegraph and the computer. This is addressed to linguists, composition professionals and teachers, students of English and to any other laypersons interested in language change particularly in written practices. On current writing practices taking place via the computer the focus is on email as having both spoken and written qualities. Critics would point out that other CMC genres such as real-time chat and World Wide Web are not mentioned (Katunich 2001, Herring 2003). I would also have liked BBS messages to be included in the discussion, from the perspective of the present study. I also consider that the time-constraint imposed in real-time chat sessions might affect language styles much more than asynchronous email writing. Email writers can edit before pressing the 'send' button. In my personal experience of email writing at least in Japanese, of which I have better command than English, I change styles according to the addressee and the content, and thus the style varies from very formal written to casual friendly spoken style. Baron's claim on email having spoken quality needs to be interpreted as email allowing such diversified styles. I trust the author is aware of this, but it seems because of markedly salient spoken quality that feature is stressed. This spoken quality is shared in the data set of BBS messages I am observing.

Of interest to this work is Baron's prediction of how the English language is going to change. Baron's analysis and speculation on how the language has undergone changes over the history of written English is reminiscent of some reflection on how the Japanese language has been changing throughout history. For example, the spoken and written language had completely separate styles until rather recently up to the beginning of the Meiji Era (1868-1912) in Japan. At this time there was a movement called "*gen-bun ittchi*," which literally means "unification of the written and spoken language." In this

movement, novelists including Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909) as representative attempted to write their novels (e.g. *Ukigumo [The Drifting Cloud]* 1887) in the spoken styles of those days, and gradually the style spread and became the basis of present-day written style.

Its second stage is now taking place. The style is referred to by Satake (1980) as “*shin gen-bun ittchi tai*” or “new unification of the written and spoken style.” Satake uses this term from observing youth language having a number of spoken features first in youth magazines and then later in CMC. Other scholars researching CMC language showing spoken features include Miyake (2005a) on mobile phone messages and Kishimoto (2003, 2005) on web diaries (see Section 2.4.2 for review on CMC studies on Japanese). Nowadays such mobile phone message styles appear even in novels, referred to as “mobile phone novels” (NHK 2007).

Baron’s award-winning book thus inspires the author of this thesis with regard to how language undergoes changes and its relation to technology, which is one of the major issues addressed in the present research. Baron’s task is valuable not only for documenting English written practices over the time-span covered and discussing various issues such as authorship and prescriptivism, but also for giving readers from non-English backgrounds an opportunity to reflect on what its counterpart situation would be like in their respective cultures.

Danet’s *Cyberpl@y* (2001a) is a unique book for both specialist and general audiences with a number of enjoyably included colorful illustrations, after 9 years of ethnographic observations and research. Danet explores visual and playful elements in email, chat, IRC and MUD and the World Wide Web as case studies, each of which can be read independently. Danet discusses seriously and scholarly such properties as textual, theatrical and aesthetic aspects of the phenomena under study, which all exhibit playfulness.

This book by Danet is helpful for the present study in exploring the properties of CMC that not very many CMC researchers have paid attention to. There are two issues,

both of which are relevant to the present research. First is the focus on visual aspects in CMC, and second is the focus on playfulness. The first point is of particular importance to Japanese CMC, in which 4 kinds of scripts are used in standard Japanese orthography (see Chapter 1 for description of the four scripts). The variety in script choices has impact on how messages are constructed and interpreted (Smith & Schmidt 1996). Not only the four kinds of Japanese scripts but also a number of additional scripts from other languages (e.g. ξ from Greek, д from Cyrillic) and even non-linguistic symbols (e.g. ♂, ♡, \ (^o^)/ ) altogether form messages that are both textually and visually entertaining and produce rapport-sharing quality in BBS communications. These properties have been observed and reported (Nishimura 2003b, 2007a).

One of the four Japanese scripts, *kanji* can be used as emoticons in Japanese CMC (Nishimura 2003b). Unlike emoticons consisting of punctuation marks and other symbols in English CMC, meanings conveyed by *kanji* emoticons can be identified instantaneously at a glance, as each *kanji* script basically carries meanings. Here visual properties of *kanji* or its shape are highlighted and appreciated more than linguistic uses of *kanji* as words in the context of BBS communication. These are very powerful visual tools to communicate feelings even without considering how they are pronounced. Danet's book allows researchers to recognise the importance of visually identifiable qualities in Japanese CMC.

The second point, playfulness concerns the CMC phenomena that this study focuses on, as BBS interactions that are primarily for enjoyment are under study here. A number of instances of word play can be identified, such as *kanji* punning and unconventional orthography. Substandard literacy can be favoured by members of an online community (Nishimura 2003a). Users seem to employ them because it is fun to do so. These playful practices, because they can be enjoyed by users, all contribute to creating belongingness to the group, and playfulness seems to be one of the key features for community bonding that creates community identity. In other words, playfulness or humour (Baym 1993) verbal, visual or otherwise can be interpreted to contribute to online

community-hood. Danet's study on playful nature of visual representations of CMC phenomena enables the thesis to relate such aspects in CMC to the discussion of online community, which is explored in Chapter 6.

CMC studies can by now be viewed as an extended field of sociolinguistic research where topics such as speech community, gender, and politeness are investigated with concepts and methodologies developed from FTF interactions (see an overview by Androutsopoulos 2006). The study also takes this position, and considers CMC as a field of communication extended by recent Internet technology.

### **2.3.3. The Second Wave of CMC Research**

The second wave of CMC research in related subfields of linguistics is outlined by Androutsopoulos (2006), though the distinction from the first wave may not always be clear-cut. I follow Androutsopoulos, who stresses the need for sociolinguistic research on the "interplay of technological, social and contextual factors in the shaping of computer-mediated language practices and the role of linguistic variability in the formation of social interaction and social identities on the Internet" (p. 421). Theories and methodologies such as conversation and discourse analyses and ethnographic approaches developed in FTF interactions have been employed in CMC settings. Such works from these perspectives include issues of community (e.g. Baym 1998), identity (e.g. Georgakopoulou 1997), and politeness (e.g. Herring 1994, Harrison 2000), to name a few.

Chronologically, Herring (1994) is the earliest attempt to bring a subfield of pragmatics, politeness and gender, to the CMC arena. More recent works in this direction include Paolillo (2001), who examines linguistic variation on an IRC using Milroy and Milroy's (1992) social network framework. Paolillo employs the concept of strong and weak social network ties, using frequency of contact as a measure of tie strength. Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) employ conversation analytic methodology to investigate how "face" in the sense of Brown & Levinson (1987) is negotiated in chat interactions. Herring (2004a) proposes CMDA as a kind of cover term to allow multiple directions of

CMC research, which future researchers can engage in using these various approaches from sociolinguistics and pragmatics to CMC. The present thesis is in line with Herring's position. Chapter 4 of this thesis, in the narrowest sense, can be considered to belong to the first wave describing structural properties the CMC language in the case of Japanese. Chapters 5 and 6 fall in the second wave, in that Chapter 5 extends politeness theories to CMC and Chapter 6 investigates politeness phenomena in online communities. Here in the remainder of the second wave of CMC research, I specifically discuss Locher (2006a) and how her study and these works mentioned above have helped in shaping my thesis. Studies that have more direct bearing to my thesis, namely those discussing politeness, which are Herring (1994), Harrison (2000), and Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) are reviewed in Section 2.5.3.

Locher (2006a) studies the language and interactions between an expert advice-giver, Lucy, whose voice is a mosaic of a group of real health experts, and anonymous advice seekers in American Internet health column. Locher's analysis is on both linguistic characteristics of the language and pragmatic features of messages, which she calls "relational work," such as hedging, empathising and use of humour. She further discusses, based on linguistic and pragmatic analyses of Lucy's voice and advice seekers' letters, especially problem letters, how the identity of this expert advice-giver is formed and how this expert manipulates discursive moves when responding to problem letters.

This study by Locher is a welcome expansion in the second wave of CMC research on several grounds. First, the author has already accumulated solid research in the field of politeness, such as the discussion on power relations in disagreement conversations (Locher 2004) from discursive approach. Her extension of this subject from FTF contexts to online situation is grounded by her knowledge and scholarship in this field of post Brown-Levinson politeness research. Second, methodologically Locher (2006a) combines quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse her online data. Based on both analyses she convincingly presents her findings on the formation of the voice and organisation of advice seekers' letters.

Thirdly, this can be an excellent case study in which the subject matter, health concern, attracts participants, and therefore, allows the thesis author to reflect on how the difference in the subject matter and the difference in the parties involved would affect the users' message creations and overall language used on the sites this study is observing. The language used in this online health forum reflects groups of participating parties who constitute the health column. Locher acknowledges that the creation and maintenance of this Internet column involves several parties such as publisher or the site creator, editors, group of health experts, letter senders, and vast audience who read the columns. Compared with publicly open-access discussion boards, BBS, there are differences with respect to message creation and the relationship among these parties involved. In Locher's study, the response letters are crafted by groups of experts who are professionally trustworthy, though efforts are taken not to sound imposing or authoritative. There is clearly a power relationship between Lucy and advice seekers, who are in the position of asking for help and advice.

This situation is different from the more or less egalitarian landscape of BBS interactions, except for the site manager and/or the thread initiator who exercises certain power over other message senders. Participants are peers, and the content of the messages are interpreted as such, not by someone with authority. It would be of interest how a layperson's advice and subsequent reactions to such advice, which can be found in the messages discussing Japanese speakers' English language learning of the present study (see Chapter 6), might differ from expert's advice and advice-seekers' reaction in Locher's study. Though this comparative approach is not taken here in this thesis, this would certainly be an area for future study.

I find Locher's work useful because it covers an area of Internet interactions that have not previously been paid attention to, namely where power relations exist and yet the advice responders attempt to create unimposing language to meet the purpose of the site, which is to empower readers with correct information to help and enable them to solve their problems on their own.

So far we have seen more or less major works in linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic research on CMC settings that have most relevance to the present study. These studies discuss CMC predominantly in English and other alphabet-based languages (e.g. French by Marcoccia 2004). Androutsopoulos (2006), who identifies publications of CMC research in French, German and Italian (p.431), also stresses the need for such works, saying, “similar publications in other languages no doubt exist, and bringing their findings will be a major task of future scholarship in this area” (p. 431). The present thesis is in support of this endeavour, and the following section will show studies on and in other languages (Section 2.4.1.) and specifically on Japanese CMC (Section 2.4.2.).

## **2.4. Non-English CMC Studies, on Languages Other than English**

### **2.4.1. Non-English CMC Studies**

This section reviews CMC research on languages other than English. I will first look at what languages have been studied. In contrast to the accumulated researches on English language CMC, the amount and range of research on non-English CMC are limited. Among such English-dominant trends in CMC research, what fills this research gap is the themed issue of an online journal, the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (JCMC)* Volume 9, issue 1 in 2003. The central theme of this special issue, edited by Herring and Danet, is “Multilingual Internet” featuring CMC research in languages other than English. The languages explored include not only other European languages such as Swiss, Greek, Catalan-Spanish and Portuguese, but also non-alphabet-based ones spoken in other parts of the world: Gulf Arabic, Chinese (Taiwan), Thai and Japanese. The article on Japanese CMC (Nishimura 2003b) discusses how young Japanese BBS users creatively manipulate the language for CMC, while compensating for and adapting to the limitations of CMC environment in order to share a fun rapport among them.

Another important publication, *Multilingual Internet*, also edited by Danet and

Herring (2007) needs to be mentioned. This is an extended, printed version of the online *JCMC* publication. This book collects additional articles on languages not included in the online journal, such as Chinese (Hong Kong), French, German and Swedish. Another article on Japanese CMC by Katsuno & Yano (2007) specifically discusses emoticons in depth. This work broadens the understanding on Japanese CMC, as the author's own study on Japanese CMC included in this book has a focus on linguistic properties (Nishimura 2007b).

This book explores the ways that the Internet has been changing linguistic as well as social and interactional practices in both synchronous and asynchronous messages to mailing lists, newsgroups and other online fora in different linguistic, social and cultural environments. Also readers of the book are able to understand how local languages are competing with dominant languages on the Internet and how this relates to globalisation (Paolillo 2007). It would have been more desirable if studies on other language situations such as Korea and India had been included. If its second volume were to be compiled, a chapter of interest would be on linguistic situation involving the Internet in India; what would be its linguistic landscape on the Internet among India-based websites, where it is curious to find whether English dominates the Internet or whether there is room for indigenous languages in their variant, anglicised forms to be used on the Internet. Another enquiry of interest includes what the Internet situation would be like in another non-alphabet-based language, Korean; would it be similar to or different from that of Japanese language and culture, and how so? Though there are other languages and cultures that could have been included in this collection, still this book gives us a fairly broad picture of Internet uses in various linguistic and cultural settings of the world.

Works on CMC in languages other than English have appeared rather sporadically. Articles in books and academic journals include studies on code switching in Greek email discourse (Georgakopoulou 1997), comparison of orality in English, Japanese and Korean chat room and newsgroup messages (Focuser et al 2000), French newsgroups conversation structures (Marcoccia 2004), polite interactions in Thai chat (Hongladarom

& Hongladarom 2005) and Swiss-German Internet Relay Chat (Siebenhaar 2006). There are doctoral dissertations, which include the following: On comparison in linguistic features of the four CMC modes of email, Web chat, instant messaging, and SMS (short message service) in Swedish (Segerstad 2002), comparison of FTF conversation with college-based BBS messages in Taiwanese involving dialects from perspectives of identity and language ideologies (Su 2005) and a work written in German on linguistic analysis of Japanese web diaries mostly kept by young people, (Oberwinkler 2006). The present study is a contribution on Japanese, for which there are unexplored areas for study in depth in online contexts.

#### **2.4.2. CMC Studies on/in Japanese**

How, then, has the Japanese language online been studied linguistically as well as socio-culturally? This section offers reviews on research on the Japanese language online. Before the advent of the Internet there were two focused areas that later converged in the study of online Japanese: one is a research area on young people's language and the other on the effect of word-processors on writing, namely technologically supported writing. I explain the latter first. This should be pointed out because the Japanese writers did not experience the stage of typewriting, which has been familiar to Western writers since 1880s or so (Walker 1984). Such technological impact on language as brought on by typewriters and word-processors has not been felt to be as great on extent as Western countries, but it has more significant impact on writing practices among Japanese writers, who employ more complicated script systems (Gottlieb 1994, Smith & Schmidt 1996) than writers in alphabet based languages.

Before word-processors were in common use in Japan around 1995, when the household penetration rate of such writing machinery reached 43.7 percent (Hashimoto 2003), handwriting was the normal practice by individual writers for everyday needs, with pens, pencils, and occasionally brushes. Institutional organizations, such as government, business and schools did employ printing, but the cost and the equipment

was beyond ordinary average Japanese writers could afford (Hashimoto 2003). On the issue of word-processing having impact on writing there was discussion involving educators, professional writers (such as novelists and journalists), and more importantly, national language policy on script uses. The publication of special issues on word-processors in *Nihongogaku [Japanese linguistics]* in 1984 and again in 1988 shows the intensity on the impact on Japanese speakers' writing practices.

As computers with Internet access replaced word-processors used by the general public in later years (Hashimoto 2003), the focus of discussion shifted from the impact of word-processing to that of computer technology connected to the Internet. These issues include globalisation/nationalism and multilingualism. Writers and scholars, such as Katou (2000) and Nishigaki & Lewis (2001), discuss issues surrounding automatic translation and natural language processing, such as digitisation and codification of *kanji*, for example. They express concerns on the future of the Japanese language on how its speakers can survive in the Internet world of English-dominant globalisation.

The other area of enquiry that leads to research on online Japanese came from investigation of the language used by younger generation in Japan. This has been studied by a number of scholars. Satake (1980) is probably the first, who identified young peoples' spoken styles appearing in writing, which he named "*shin genbun itchi tai*" or "new unification of the written and spoken style," after the "unification of the written and spoken" movement back in the late 1880s. He also conducted quantitative analysis on such youth language based on popular magazine articles for young people (Satake 1991). Other scholars' works include those by Yonekawa (1998) on young people's group language in general and Koyano (1994) on campus slang by female students. Yonekawa (2002) discusses language use based on gender, occupation, and even anti-social groups. Koyano specifically studies college girls' language and has a website, <<http://homewww.osaka-gaidai.ac.jp/~koyano/joshidai93.htm>>, on their mostly colloquial uses in the Osaka area (Koyano 1993).

In the 1990s when CMC was referred to as "personal computer communication,"

features of the language used in online environment caught the attention of researchers such as Itou (1993), Asao (1996) and Takamoto (1993, 1997) among others. Itou (1993) describes the chat phenomenon, still new at that time, and ascribed the spoken/written hybrid qualities of the language to synchronicity and interactivity. Asao (1996) points out stylistic features of email initial statements in the sender's self-introduction that are different from letter-writing practices. These phenomena are contrasted with American email styles by Sugimoto & Levin (2000), who compare how American and Japanese users identify themselves and use emoticons in email messages sent to discussion groups. Takamoto (1993) discusses various functions of Japanese emoticons, referred to as "face marks," in email and discussion board messages, at the time when what to call emoticons was not even settled. Takamoto (1997) later describes structural and organisational properties of emails, foreseeing the possibility of emails becoming an important means of communication and the need for studying what forms and expressions are to be used.

After this initial stage of Japanese CMC research in the 2000s onwards, CMC platforms have expanded, and the online population has been constantly on the rise (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Japan 2007). This is not only by means of personal computers but also mobile phones, which have become an indispensable part of Japanese culture, especially among young people. Though social and psychological research on the effect of mobile phones has also appeared (e.g. Itou et al eds. 2005), I limit this review to linguistic and socio-cultural studies on mobile phone messages. Tanaka (2001), Matsuda (2003) and Miyake (2005a, b) among others investigate features of mobile phone messages. Tanaka (2001) compares users' behaviours in exchanging messages by computer versus mobile phone. Matsuda (2008) reports her recent observation on mobile phone messages and finds more uses of templates and more standardisation due to pre-installed predictive function word-processing software, which enables users to input messages with less strokes on the mobile phone. Miyake (2005a,b) studies linguistic features of mobile phone messages and in her later work analyses these messages from the viewpoint of interpersonal relation management (2007).

Besides these mobile phone studies, there is research on web diaries. Matsuda (2001) analyses Japanese web diaries, focusing on the construction of “voice,” and discussed one of the four Japanese scripts, *katakana*, as contributing to “voice” construction. More recently Kishimoto (2003, 2005) also analyses linguistic features of web diaries, which can overlap with blogging. The themes of blogs are discussed in the special issue of *Nihongogaku [Japanese linguistics]* (2007) as well as *Gendai no Esupuri [L'esprit D'Aujourd'hui]* (2000) on diary communications.

Research in other aspects of CMC includes Matsuda (2002), who examines the negotiation of identity and power in email messages written by Japanese teachers of English at colleges and high schools, including analyses of the uses of honorifics. Fais & Ogura (2001) discuss issues on Japanese specific practices and orthographic issues of Japanese email messages when they are translated into English. Yamazaki (2002), based on the messages from Japan-based newsgroup, finds both features of local Japanese discourse patterns and global or English-oriented discourse features. Katsuno & Yano (2002) analyse the face marks or *kaomoji*, the Japanese equivalent of smiley emoticons, used in email and mobile phone messages. In Nishimura (2003b, 2007b) I discuss linguistic and interactional features of BBS communication based on messages sent to fan sites, focusing on the vast variety of scripts used by the Japanese speakers innovatively as key elements that characterise Japanese online communication. In Nishimura (2003a) messages sent to another BBS site, which is also the major site under study here, are investigated from the viewpoint of site-specific features that lead to community of practice, such as *kanji* punning and unconventional vocabulary. There is thus a certain amount of research on structural and linguistic properties of Japanese CMC.

There are differences in CMC messages depending on the modes, such as email, chat, and BBS and mobile phone communications, and it would be difficult to generalise the findings from these above studies. What is still lacking in the literature is a somewhat more general look at the features of CMC language. None of these studies, including my own above, describe the CMC language in comparison with written or spoken Japanese in

structurally comparable ways. There are such studies on English CMC. To Japanese native speakers, the difference between speech and writing might seem so huge that they are treated as if completely different entities. This difference might be considered too obvious for some researchers to undertake such a study. Whatever the reason for this, there is a research gap in previous studies of Japanese CMC. The present study addresses this gap (for details see Chapter 4). It might seem superficially outdated to ask the question on the CMC difference between speech and writing at a stage when CMC studies in general are heading in multiple directions in the second wave of this field. However, this question is one of those fundamental ones that have initially intrigued the author. The answer why this attempt is being made now is quite simple—because this has never been conducted on Japanese CMC in structurally explicit and scholarly convincing ways.

Research on Japanese CMC from a socio-cultural perspective has also been conducted. In Nishimura (2005) I discuss impoliteness in BBS interactions and point out the possibility of differing linguistic behaviour by two variables, namely the topic of discussion (mutual idol or controversial figure) and the participant representation (by handle names or completely anonymous). More recently in Nishimura (2006a, b, 2007a, forthcoming), I focus analysis on impoliteness in BBS messages and explore how the online nature of interaction affects impolite behaviour. Also, interest in Japanese CMC from sociolinguistic perspectives seems to be growing among Japanese scholars; four such studies were presented at the 10th International Pragmatics Conference. Satou (2007) discusses online community from a perspective of narrative theory, which helps users maintain rapport and sense of community. Miyake (2007) investigates young mobile phone users' apology behaviour using questionnaire method and finds that unique Japanese orthography helps them maintain smooth interpersonal relationships. Okamoto (2007) analyses corporate email messages focusing on visual elements such as pictorial signs within a framework of visual grammar. Takenoya (2007) studies BBS messages sent to real estate buying and selling site, based on speech act theory.

These four studies all discuss the CMC phenomena in Japanese cultural settings employing concepts developed in pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Since such studies in languages other than English are limited, they are welcome addition to the body of research in the scholarship of Japanese CMC. Studies on politeness and impoliteness observed in two Japanese BBS websites in comparative terms are also presented (Nishimura 2007c, d, e). The number of works discussing socio-cultural issues in Japanese CMC is very few and the amount of studies empirical or theoretical is still very limited. The present study is a continuation of my previous research and is expected to help advance the understanding of Japanese CMC in this still uncharted field.

### **2.4.3. Works in Japanese Linguistics Contributing to Researching Online Japanese**

In pursuing linguistic as well as interactional descriptions of Japanese CMC messages, I must acknowledge a number of previous works in the field of Japanese linguistics. In particular, since colloquial styles appear very frequently in the BBS messages under study, when interpreting and theorising what I observe, works that should be credited include those by Maynard (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2002, 2004) and Cook (1990, 1992, 1993, 1999, 2006). Maynard in her series of books and articles discusses the Japanese language in discourse. Of particular interest is Maynard's analysis and interpretation on how Japanese speakers express self with various devices in the modal system and other grammatical and pragmatic means in interacting with others. Her data comes not only from conversational spoken interactions, but she also analyses written materials including some online data. Her broad perspective that comes from dealing with both genres is insightful, specifically in interpreting interactional particles *yo* and *ne* and distribution of *desu/masu* forms. Cook also examines a number of discourse features, such as final particles and fillers. These features appear abundantly in the data of CMC discourse, and her findings on these uses are applied to the present study.

## **2.5. Politeness and Impoliteness Studies and CMC**

In this section I review works on politeness and impoliteness in FTF settings from the perspective of how they can be applied to online contexts. The works on politeness reviewed in Section 2.5.1 include Brown & Levinson (1987), Ide (1989, 2005, 2006) and Locher & Watts (2005), among many researchers. I take Brown & Levinson because of their impact on subsequent research, Ide because of her contribution on politeness research on the Japanese language and culture, and Locher & Watts due to overall analytical approach and applicability to online environments. More substantial review on these works will be presented in Chapter 5, where I discuss how the key concept of “face” can be interpreted in CMC contrasting with “face” in FTF contexts. What this current section offers is a brief introduction to its background in the main three studies mentioned above. In Section 2.5.2. I review works on impoliteness mainly by Beebe (1995) and series of works by Culpeper and his colleagues. For impoliteness studies in Japanese I briefly look at Hoshino (1989) and Nishio (2001). Section 2.5.3. discusses the works on politeness and impoliteness in online contexts. I will finally discuss why politeness phenomena should be studied in online or specifically in BBS communications, in which interaction basically takes place among strangers within the online contexts not linked to the “real” or offline world.

### **2.5.1. Politeness Studies in FTF Settings: Three Main Approaches**

Before starting the review here, a brief note on the concept of “politeness” should be mentioned. The notion of “politeness” comes from the English word “polite,” and one possible Japanese equivalent is “*teineina*,” but these two terms do not always correspond and the concepts are not the same. For more details on the differences and similarities in this concept between English and Japanese, see Pizziconi (2007), Lakoff & Ide (2005), Obana and Tomoda (1994) and Ide et al (1992). The findings from these studies above can be summarised as follows: the Japanese concept of politeness covers more on the formalness than familiarity or friendliness, while the English concept includes both. In the

literature of Japanese linguistics discussing politeness, the term is directly transliterated as *poraitonesu*, or ポライトネス in *katakana*, to be used as linguistic terminology (Takiura 2005). There are several views surrounding the concept of “politeness” in linguistics, in addition to everyday usage as social norms such as “good manners,” “considerateness” or “courteousness.” How theories in linguistics or pragmatics have considered politeness is reviewed below.

Scholars on politeness have accumulated a large body of research in FTF communication. They originated from studies in pragmatics (Lakoff, 1973). One of the most influential works has been Brown & Levinson (1987). This is evidenced by the amount of research that their work has excited, not only in pragmatics but also intercultural communication and foreign language education, documented in a 51-page long bibliography edited by DuFon et al (1994). Since the publication of Brown & Levinson’s seminal work in 1987 (originally in 1978), politeness nowadays can be regarded as constituting one major field of study in pragmatics.

Brown & Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness is outlined first. Then a brief summary of Ide (1989) and Locher & Watts (2005) will be give afterwards. Brown & Levinson’s theory is based on Goffman’s (1967) concept of “face” as linguistic universal in maintaining interpersonal relations in human behaviour. Brown & Levinson consider that linguistic behaviour can potentially threaten speakers’ and hearers’ two kinds of “face,” recognised as a human basic desire, namely positive and negative face. The former refers to the want for approval or recognition by and solidarity with others; the latter refers to the want for freedom and independence from others, in a sense of not wanting to be interrupted or imposed on by others. The weightiness or seriousness of face threat,  $W_x$ , on the part of the Hearer by Speaker’s speech act, can be calculated by referring to three variables, namely the distance between the speaker and the hearer,  $D(S,H)$ , relative power relations between the two,  $P(H,S)$ , and the ranking of imposition  $R_x$  in specific cultural settings, represented by the following formula (Brown & Levinson, 1987: p. 76-77).

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$$

Politeness strategies are thus subject to the gravity of face threat.

While this theorization has received sympathy from a number of researchers as a study capturing universal traits in linguistic behaviour, many others also have raised criticism and pointed out problems (e.g. Eelen, 2001). Such criticism is not only from researchers of English cultural background, but also from Asian or Japanese cultural background, in which the grammar of the language encodes levels of politeness, or honorifics, in its modal system.

In Japanese culture, honorific systems play an important role in maintaining interpersonal relations, and honorifics should not be overlooked in the discussion of politeness. Ide (1989) states in addition to politeness strategies as defined by Brown & Levinson, which are employed volitionally by participants, interpersonal considerations achieved through “discernment” or *wakimae* in Japanese culture is needed in discussing politeness. “Discernment” should be included in considering politeness, in view of languages that have honorific system, as the grammar’s modal system requires polite/plain distinction in Japanese. It will be made clear in Chapter 5 that limited aspects of Brown & Levinson’s and Ide’s approaches will provide frames of reference in analysing politeness and impoliteness in Japanese CMC.

Then I outline a more recent move in the field of politeness research that comes from discursive approach proposed by Locher and Watts (2005), Locher (2006b), Spencer-Oatey (2000) and other theorists: These scholars, in principle, view politeness not as statically explainable in terms of face threatening act (FTA) that can be shown in the formula (see above) but as fluid concept negotiated between speaker and hearer. The concept of face is also reinterpreted as close to identity (Spencer-Oatey 2007) in this discursive approach. For more substantial review, see Chapter 5.

### **2.5.2. Impoliteness in FTF Settings**

In sharp contrast to accumulated interests in politeness behaviour, interests in impoliteness or rudeness seem to have appeared only very recently and studies on impoliteness have been limited as yet. Among those few studies, Beebe (1995) considers “rudeness” (her terminology) as everyday strategies and lists such pragmatic functions as making the hearer shut up, taking power over the hearer, and venting negative feelings of the speaker.

Culpeper (1996, 1998, 2005) in his series of studies, and Culpeper et al (2003) theorise impoliteness based on Brown & Levinson’s model. The same criticisms of Brown & Levinson can apply to this framework. Among his works, the most recent article (2005) is most relevant to my study. This article discusses impoliteness seen in *The Weakest Link*, a popular TV quiz show for entertainment. Since one of the websites under study is also for entertainment, how impoliteness is linked to entertainment can be shared with his study. See Chapter 5 for more detailed review on this work.

Studies of impoliteness in Japanese include a descriptive work on abuse and disparaging expressions by Hoshino (1989). Nishio (2001) also discusses impoliteness conceptualizing it as “minus honorific expressions.” Even fewer works on impoliteness have been found in Japanese than in other languages and researches of impoliteness have only just started.

### **2.5.3. Politeness and Impoliteness in CMC**

So far some major studies on politeness and impoliteness in FTF settings have briefly been touched upon. Next research on politeness and impoliteness observed in CMC settings are to be reviewed, including Herring (1994), Harrison (2000), Oliviera (2003), Hongladarom & Hongladarom (2005) Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) and O’Sullivan & Flanagan (2003).

Chronologically, Herring (1994) is the earliest. Herring discusses how differently women and men taking part in online discussion boards evaluated politeness. She

employs concepts of positive and negative face wants theorised by Brown & Levinson (1987) and analysed men and women's messages based on features that would enhance and threaten positive and negative face needs. Herring's analytical methods can provide a framework for analysing politeness features in this online context (see Chapter 5), as she identifies what phenomena constitute positive/negative face enhancement or threats under this environment of professional discussion board. Based on the message content Herring finds that women show politeness more typically than men, while men show violations to negative and positive politeness. Herring considers different criteria work toward the evaluation of politeness, saying: "men flame, at least in part, to regulate the social order, as self-appointed vigilantes on the 'virtual frontier,'" and sees a male system of values "assigns greater importance to freedom of expression and firmness of verbal action than to possible consequences to the addressee's face needs" (p. 292), though she adds a few reservations of this claim.

Harrison (2000) discusses uses of politeness strategies in an email discussion list at a university setting, using Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory. Participants are university teachers of computers and writing. The author finds predominantly many uses of positive politeness strategies and the overall communication/interactions among participants are smooth and successful, by which she means that the participants are satisfied with their interactions. There are FTAs, such as stating disagreement, but they are handled harmoniously.

Harrison's finding that the entire interactions are carried out politely can be contrasted with interactions among participants of already established BBS websites on several grounds as the situations differ in terms of at least 4 factors:

- 1) knowledge about one another among participants
- 2) attitudes toward other participants
- 3) the purpose of the discussion list
- 4) the subject matter of the discussion

These four seem to be relevant to differing behaviour between the participants of

this list and open-access BBS participants. The topics that university lists members discuss include professional matters such as what they do in class, while BBS users talk about their favourite films, actors, and so on. It seems these hobby-related topics share in common an overall agreement but could sometimes have disagreement in some specific details within the discussed topic. The topics discussed by university members could involve disagreement, but because the situation has offline connections, it would be possible but very difficult for this discussion list to collapse due to such disagreement. If discussion members do not share offline context, it would be easier for the list to disappear due to serious disagreement, or any circumstances in which members do not hope to belong. This kind of group behaviour is seen in open-access BBS and is discussed in Chapter 6.

Oliviera (2003) discusses gender-differentiated politeness in a Portuguese university affiliated discussion list, and finds men keep traditional gender roles more than women, while women show more transgression than men.

Herring (1994), Harrison (2000) and Oliviera (2003) discuss interactions in rather closed discussion lists. These works on politeness can be regarded as those investigating interactions among relatively homogeneous participants, who are more or less related to academia and the topics are concerned with university settings or professional matters. In order to see the impact of CMC's expanding communicative potentials on people's use of politeness, it is necessary to analyse interactions of large-scale BBS participants who are considered to have diverse backgrounds. It would be more intriguing to observe interactions in wider, open-access CMC (or BBS) contexts to see how politeness is or is not achieved where participants are strangers.

From a viewpoint of politeness research today, Brown & Levinson's theory, on which the studies reviewed above are based, has received a number of challenges (see Section 2.5.1 and Chapter 5). The concept of "politeness" itself is not agreed upon by researchers. Considering the time when Herring's research was conducted, her work was a pioneering one by a forerunner, as CMC was still a new phenomenon and

sociolinguistic research on CMC was beginning to come out. Harrison's work is a solid application of politeness research to CMC, in line with her predecessor, except for gender issues that are not discussed. The present study takes the same direction, but with different theoretical orientations (see Section 2.5 and Chapter 5).

Hongladarom & Hongladarom (2005) discuss Thai synchronous chat interactions and report that a large portion of messages indicates features of politeness. In view of the percentage of this nation's Internet users at the time the research was conducted, less than 1 percent of the entire population, these participants can be considered to belong to some elite class. Not much diversity among participants can be expected, unlike the situation of diversified participants of publicly open BBS in the case of Japan, where more than 60 percent of the entire population have access to the Internet. In order to see the impact of CMC's expanding communicative potentials on people's use of politeness, it is necessary to analyze interactions of large-scale BBS participants who are considered to have diverse backgrounds in their socioeconomic classes, occupations, age, and other personal features.

Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) employ conversation analytic technique to discuss how politeness phenomena, in particular request making and its reactions, are realized in German chat sessions. They apply to CMC the well-established notion of "preferred sequence" in conversation analysis and equate its realization as achieving politeness. The authors discuss technological limitations of the chat sessions, where features common in FTF conversation, such as overlaps, recycled turn beginnings, collaborative completions, anticipatory completions, interruptions, continuers, and the like cannot be found in web chats. They also observe several "conversations" taking place at the same time. It is rather puzzling that these have already been studied and discussed by Herring (1999), but no mention or reference to such an earlier work has been made when discussing characteristics of synchronous chat sessions. The authors could also have added Cherny (1999) who also discussed turn-taking in chat, though in MUD modes.

While this work by Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm can be evaluated as an extension

of the concept of preference organization to politeness behaviour in CMC context from conversation analytic approach, it is questioned whether considering preference organization can function as a model for politeness. In preference organisation, when a request is made in a conversation, the expected reaction from the recipient is its acceptance and can therefore be considered as a sign of politeness. (Its refusal would be a dispreferred response). It seems within a request sequence, the default or unmarked response would be acceptance. It seems necessary to consider how the recipient accepts the request or even refuses the request, and this should matter more in considering politeness than just meeting the sequence of preference structure. People could still refuse a request politely, or accept it impolitely. There is also technological limitation of synchronous chat, as the interaction goes very quickly and participants may not be able to produce as elaborate a message as they might want to do offline. My point is that equating request acceptance within preference organization with politeness needs to be reconsidered.

A review of Graham (2007), who discusses impoliteness in online context, is to be given in Section 2.6, on politeness and impoliteness in online communities. Still one more work to review in this section is O' Sullivan & Flanagin's (2003) study on 'flaming' and other problematic messages. In this article the authors present a model in which 'flaming' and other problematic messages can be explained. 'Flames,' according to their definition, are "intentional (whether successful or unsuccessful) negative violations of (negotiated, evolving, and situated) interactional norms." The two key features of their model are (1) it incorporates not only the perspectives of the sender and the recipient of messages, but also the interpretations of the third party, which cannot be ignored in considering the CMC context, where posted messages are read and evaluated by those other users in addition to the recipient; and (2) they base the judgment of appropriateness of messages not only by the content but also based on individual's intentional or unintentional violations of multiple levels of norms, such as shared restricted norms between the sender and the recipient, group or local norms, or wider cultural norms, where one level of norms

may not always coincide with those from other levels.

The textual examples identified as flames in Herring's (1994) study can be criticized by the judgment of flames being made by the researcher, an outside third party alone. What Herring calls flames made by men could either be "missed," "failed," "inside," or "true" flames, if O'Sullivan & Flanagin's classification is applied. While difference in perception and production of problematic messages by gender may exist, the authors' framework can also be applied to gender related issues, the most typical being sexual harassment, as O'Sullivan & Flanagin point out its applicability to non-mediated contexts (p. 88).

What can be learned from O'Sullivan & Flanagin (2003) is that in researching Channel 2, in order to gain as many perspectives as possible, this research would need to have some experts who can be well versed and knowledgeable on Channel 2 users' language and interactions. Then senders' own intentions can be supplemented to the meanings of textual message (though of course there is limitation). However, researchers need to be aware of this limitation, as this would be the second best compromise when information from both senders' and receivers' points of view is unavailable.

One other point that was of interest in O'Sullivan & Flanagin was that "norms also exist for interactional channels" (p.86). For some people, certain messages are felt to be more suitable when communicated via face-to-face channels rather than by other means such as phone or letters. Alternatively, the manner in which written messages are constructed also carries interactional norms. For example, though this is not quoted in O'Sullivan & Flanagin, an etiquette book (Baldrige 1983: p.45) says that when sending greeting cards, addresses on the envelope should be handwritten rather than typewritten. Though it is not clear how prevalent such a conception is, communications channels also affect the content and its appropriateness of communication. When trying to understand impact of technology on communication, it seems its impact spreads more than one may realise.

Finally in this section on politeness and impoliteness I would like to mention why

politeness phenomena should be studied in CMC or specifically in BBS communications. In CMC or BBS communications, interactions basically take place among strangers within the online contexts, which are not linked to the physical, offline world. As will be clarified in the review on community studies in the next section, there are a number of different online contexts, in which participants' linguistic behaviours may not differ greatly from those offline or real world, such as the one described by Rheingold (1993). The particular BBS website under study differs from other online contexts in that being a user of the BBS is not something he or she expects to make other people know, due to its somewhat sub-cultural nature, even though it is a very popular BBS site. Users of this site have a strong sense of belongingness, and have developed specialised vocabulary. In their message boards they can express what may not sometimes be uttered in the offline world, especially when the topics are very sensitive or controversial (Onishi 2004). Even such an online context, users interact with others manipulating polite and impolite language including their own specialised diction. Studying linguistic behaviour including politeness and impoliteness can be one way of characterising online communities. Studies on online communities from the perspectives of linguistics are shown to contribute to online community research in the next section.

## **2.6. Linguistic Politeness/Impoliteness and Online Community Studies**

In the first part of this section, 2.6.1, I review studies on online communities, beginning with an overview of the field by Preece & Maloney-Krichmar (2005). Then specific studies on online communities, such as Baym (1993) and Rheingold (1993) and also those on Channel 2 community are reviewed in 2.6.2. Finally in Section 2.6.3 I review important works that can be applied in discussing online communities from the viewpoint of linguistic politeness and impoliteness (Herring 2004a, Graham 2007, Nishimura 2007d, e, forthcoming).

### 2.6.1. An Overview of Online Community Studies

One of the resources helpful for understanding online communities is Preece & Maloney-Krichmar's (2003) comprehensive overview of this field. They give definitions, criteria for online community-hood, and also compare concepts similar to online community such as community of practice (Wenger 1998). Though a comparison with "speech community" is not provided in their work, this is given after this overview, as the concepts should be clarified in terms of how linguistic characterisation helps to understand a community.

Preece & Maloney-Krichmar (2003) point out studies of online communities have attracted scholars in various fields, such as sociology, psychology, social psychology, communication studies, and linguistics. They explain that because sociologists have failed to agree on the definition of "communities," there is also difficulty in the agreement on the definition of "online communities". They present the following as characteristics of online communities:

- Members have a shared goal, interest, need, or activity that provides the primary reason for belonging to the community.
- Members engage in repeated, active participation and there are often intense interactions, strong emotional ties and shared activities occurring between participants.
- Members have access to shared resources and there are policies for determining access to those resources.
- Reciprocity of information, support and services between members is important.
- There is a shared context of social conventions, language, and protocols. (p.2)

They also add other significant features, which could impact interactions online. They are "evidence of people having different roles; people's reputations; awareness of membership boundaries and group identity; initiation criteria for joining the community; history and existence over a period of time; notable events or rituals, shared physical environments; and voluntary membership" (p.2). Characterizations of online communities that have been adopted by many online community researchers are:

“... the concepts of people with shared interests, experiences and/or needs, engaged in supportive and sociable relations, where they obtain important resources, develop strong interpersonal feelings of belonging and being wanted, and forge a sense of shared identity (Jones, 1997 ; Rheingold, 1993; Wellman, 2000, as summarised by Preece and Maloney-Krichmar 2003: p.3).”

This concise statement on an online community is helpful in that it clearly describes what it is, and can be applied to a number of online communities including the ones under study in this thesis.

As a study that discusses communities, “Communities of Practice,” developed by Wenger (1998) should also be mentioned, as this theory is frequently applied in recent sociolinguistic research, particularly in gender research (e.g. Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999). It would be useful to make the distinction clear, concerning to what extent online communities can be considered “communities of practice.” Preece and Maloney-Krichmar (2003) regard communities for professionals as communities of practice in the sense used by Wenger (1998), and they consider this kind of community to be distinguished from other special interest and support communities, in that “members have a shared task and well-defined roles” (p.5). Though such roles and tasks may not consciously be felt by hobby community members, they are given emotional support, information, and discussion. Regarding the tasks and roles in an online community, if participation patterns are taken into consideration, it seems there are members who are more or less controlling the flow of messages and are aware of the roles they play, particularly the initiator of the thread or those who are close to him/her. In this sense, not only professional communities but also hobby communities can be “communities of practice.”

Then a comparison of online community with “speech community” is in order, though it is not included in Preece and Maloney-Krichmar’s (2003) discussion. This concept plays an important role in sociolinguistic research. For example, Gumperz (1972) considers it as a sociolinguistic entity and a fundamental unit of analysis. It can roughly

be regarded as a group of speakers who share a set of norms and rules for the use of language. There are certainly shared elements between speech community and online community. One distinction that needs to be made, however, is that while the former is a concept developed and defined in socio-cultural linguistics and shared linguistic codes and norms are the central focus in sociolinguistic research, the latter is an interdisciplinary concept, in which sharing linguistic norms and rules might not be as essential in the case of online community, though they may certainly be one of the factors that characterises an online community.

When an online community whose linguistic norms and attitudes may not be markedly distinguishable from its larger community in which the particular community is a part of, it is still worth observing as a target of study because it would be of interest for an online community researcher to see how community-hood can be maintained without some overt linguistic means. When an online community has linguistic traits that stand out and can be differentiated from those of a larger community that embraces it, it would be a target of interest to both linguists and online community researchers. The two target communities under study here fall under each of the cases, and how and what linguistic features make an online community hold together and give a sense of belongingness can be a contribution from the field of linguistics to online community research.

### **2.6.2. Case Studies on Online Communities: Baym (1993), Rheingold (1993), and Studies on Channel 2 Community**

There have been a number of specific scholarly works on online communities, which include Baym (1993), who conducted an ethnographic research on fan culture, and Rheingold (1993), who offered detailed description on his experiences at WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link) community <<http://www.well.com/>>, among many other studies. I will also review some studies on Channel 2 community under study in this thesis.

One of the earliest studies is Baym's (1993) ethnographic account on a discussion list among soap opera fans. This study is relevant to my work in that the target

community of her study is a fan community discussing TV drama series. In a similar way, one of the topics of the target communities of the present study is also a motion picture for entertainment.

Baym considers politeness as the key concept that binds online discussion group as community. She quotes a long passage from a member, who addresses how to react to messages that can cause unfavourable reactions and how not to take inflammatory attitudes. This message sender's remark shows considerateness to other members, and Baym talks about "politeness" here in the sense of being considerate to others, not in the sense of Brown & Levinson (1987) or other theoretical frameworks (Brown & Levinson does not appear in the list of references). It seems Baym's interpretation of politeness is shared by what Watts (2003) calls politeness 1, as he distinguishes this as lay person's concept from politeness 2 as theoretical concept. I would like to take a similar attitude toward politeness in ordinary person's interpretation of the term.

This article by Baym is an insightful work in that it has enabled the thesis author to reflect on a number of aspects about online communities, such as technological settings, self-disclosure and politeness, especially because Baym's target of study had common elements with the target websites of this study as being a hobby-related site.

Another study by Rheingold (1993) is also an important and informative work. This study conveys to its readers that there are a number of varied online communities and online activities are different among these. Rheingold describes his experiences in detail, and readers can learn that many of his online activities have links to offline world. Rheingold visited people he got to know from this community. This book helps readers to understand how the online communities enabled by the computer technology is broadening the range of people one person can get acquainted with--a remarkable fact. Within reach in the physical, offline world, the range of one's activities has to be limited by a number of factors. Within the networking system of the computer, however, people can get connected and get to know various other people, and this is what seems most extraordinary in the computer technology. Though Rheingold's description of his

experiences sounded too utopia-like, it was his contribution that he was successful in informing his readers of what it was like to be in an online community.

From Rheingold's description, because almost all kinds activities can be carried out in this online community, the difference between online/offline communities would converge in the presence or absence of a geographical location that a traditional community is based on. In this sense the online community Rheingold describes is very similar to a community in the offline world, except for not being bounded by physical locations. It would be plausible, therefore, that linguistically there would not be very many differences in the way people use the language in the online community Rheingold describes from the uses in the offline world in which Rheingold lives. In this respect, Channel 2 community can be a different world from the offline real world with respect to the language use. Many Channel 2 users do not use the linguistic repertoire outside of their online community so as not to reveal they are Channel 2 users, which is generally considered a somewhat unfavourable social recognition (Onishi 2004). Yet Channel 2 users do interact harmoniously and/or disharmoniously with their co-users in polite and impolite language in their online communities. This accounts for the reason and the rationale for studying politeness and impoliteness behaviour in online communities, because linguistic description of the language used in a community can itself be an important characterisation of an online community.

There have been a limited number of published works on Channel 2 community. Onishi (2004) describes Channel 2 as a vent for Japanese speakers to utter socially unrespectable remarks. Inoue (2001) reports an interview with the site originator, Nishimura Hiroyuki, and explains its history and popularity. Hiroyuki (2007) himself defends his website in his book, explaining why Channel 2 is not going to crash. His answer is because there is always need for people to post messages there. In addition to rather journalistic comments, there are at least two academic studies, one by Kaigo & Watanabe (2007) on how Channel 2 users reacted to video files of a murder scene. It evoked anti-war threads, and what may appear to be an unethical website showed some

conscientious reaction in Channel 2 community.

The other study is by Matsumura et al (2005) on overall Channel 2 messaging activities. Using Structural Equation Model, the researchers measure its popularity by setting up 8 indices for online activities, such as content, activity, interaction, and so on. These indices are quantitatively and automatically applied by computer to 5748 threads that have been classified into 30 categories. After identifying three types of threads depending on the nature, which are discussion, chitchat, and special expression types, the model found positive effect of nameless anonymity on the activity of communication, and negative effect on the depth of discussion, among others findings.

This study by social psychologists intrigues Channel 2 researchers including the thesis author, as it has identified certain aspects of causality of Channel 2 dynamics. However, their study does not cope with clarifying linguistic practices of Channel 2, as the interests of social psychologists differ from linguists, as noted earlier in this chapter on early studies of CMC (e.g. Kiesler et al). To focus on the linguistic features they have not paid attention to, however, would also be important to understand this online community better, as this approach supplements the approaches by social psychologists. There have been very few linguistic studies on the messages of Channel 2 except for Nishimura (2003a, 2006a, b). Building on these works, more research is needed to reveal how interactions take place in the community-specific language and how Channel 2 identities are formed. Chapter 6 discusses these phenomena and examines how such language is used in interaction. An automated computer analysis does not seem to be capable of dealing with such linguistic analysis. Combined with the research from social psychological motivation, this present study from sociolinguistic approach would capture a more comprehensive picture of this unique and popular online community.

### **2.6.3. Research on Politeness/Impoliteness in Online Community**

Here I review two studies that are relevant to conducting the present study. One is Herring's (2004a) article on how online communities can be researched from a CMDA

approach. The other work by Graham (2007) is a study in which impoliteness is analysed in an “e-community” of church-affiliated discussion list.

Herring (2004a) proposes a CMDA approach, not as a theory but as collection of suggestions and possibilities on how online behaviours can be researched linguistically. The approaches include various linguistic perspectives that have been utilised in studies of spoken/written language, conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics, text analysis, and critical discourse analysis. CMDA can cope with linguistic phenomena of both micro and macro levels. Herring’s intended audience are those who have done some study on CMC and those who have made preliminary observation; those who already have some data will even better be benefited from this article, in that it offers an overview of how to conceptualize, design, and interpret a research project. Herring begins with an overview on previous research in this area and then gives a concrete research example, in which two online community studies are contrasted.

Since politeness is one linguistic aspect of online community behaviours Herring is concerned with (see Herring’s 1994 article on politeness, which has already been reviewed in this chapter), she does not specifically discuss this issue in this kind of method article on how online communities can be studied. Herring concludes the article by providing Table 6, which shows “Summary of the CMDA research process” (p.24 of PDF version). This would be of benefit not only to junior researchers who are about to conduct research on online textual interactions but also to researchers with previous experiences, in that Herring’s study can be used as a checklist for current and future projects. Issues of qualitative/quantitative analysis are also raised and Herring’s claim is both approaches are needed in order to arrive at a full understanding of the nature of online social groupings (p. 25). Herring’s article can serve as a guide, not as a direct how-to guidebook, for researchers when they set directions of their own research, such as taking two websites to allow comparison and combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in the case of this present study.

One perspective not overtly found in this article is cultural orientation. Since the

target of my research is not from alphabet-based languages in Western culture, other considerations seem to be needed when CMDA approach is applied. Though Herring claims CMDA is a kind of cover term and such a culture-specific approach can also be included under the CMDA umbrella,<sup>3</sup> some explicit statement could have been made on dealing with culture-specific issues. Herring seems to be aware of the need for researching CMDA in languages other than English from the fact that she is one of the editors of *Multilingual Internet* (Danet & Herring eds. 2007). Since the discernment or *wakimae* theory was added to explain discourse behaviour in Japanese online discourse, it seems Herring took my approach as a challenge to her claim. My position is that in order to reach a fuller understanding of online interactions, additional perspectives not explicitly mentioned in CMDA will clarify and help understand online discourse of any cultural background.

Graham's (2007) work is an excellent extension of sociolinguistic and pragmatic concepts developed within FTF settings to be applicable to a wider environment of an online community. Graham assumes her target of analysis, a church affiliated mailing list as "e-community of practice" (e.g. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999). She explains how community norms are discussed and in her analysis of communicative interactions observes violation from such norms and shows this can be interpreted as impoliteness. She describes the identity of this online community is formed and shared through the negotiation of the community norms. Graham's study thus contributes to research on impoliteness as well, which has been neglected in politeness literature and is an area that needs further investigation.

As has been made clear, Graham's work belongs to the second wave of CMC research within a contemporary theoretical framework, from discursive approach to politeness issues (Locher 2004). The present study of the thesis, though working on a different kind of online community, addresses politeness and impoliteness from a similar

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<sup>3</sup> Comments given to the author's presentation among "Corpora and Methods on CMDA" panel at the 10th International Pragmatics Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2007.

approach.

## **2.7. Technological Impacts on Language and Communication in Society**

This study also fits in a larger body of work on CMC studies on issues about language and technology and the social impact of technology. These background issues operate as an underlying theme throughout the thesis. Therefore this section discusses the relationship between technology and language, specifically its impacts on language and communication, employing Halliday's (1978) perspective. I discuss general issues on technologies for communication focusing on Hutchby (2001) in section 2.7.1, and then consider issues particular to the Japanese language and culture, reviewing Gottlieb (2000) and other studies in Section 2.7.2. Finally in Section 2.7.3 Halliday's (1978) work will be considered from the perspective of unpacking the relationship between language, communication and technology.

### **2.7.1. Hutchby (2001) and Impact of Technology on Communication**

In *Conversation and technology* (2001), Hutchby discusses the relationship between technology and conversation or more broadly communication, drawing on Gibson's (1979) concept of "affordance" (p.14). This concept can roughly mean properties/qualities with which or the environment in which an individual is afforded to perform an action in ways that can both constrain and enhance the performance. Hutchby applies this concept to technologies for communication, or more precisely technologies with, in or by which communications or conversations take place in ways that promote or limit communicative activities.

From the perspective of the thesis, Hutchby's view on the kind of technologies that are dealt with in his discussion seems rather limited to those technologies that are more or less directly related to conversation, as he discusses telephones and computer technologies for IRC with detailed examples. The discussion is centred around those

technologies that have impact on conversation, which typically consists of spoken language. A substantial part of communication activities that take place in written mode could be missing, though Hutchby talks about IRC, which uses typed letters, and can belong to the written mode of communication. Since the title of his book is not “communication and technology,” but *Conversation and technology*, this comment on narrowed focus on conversation or speech may not do justice to his work.

The above remark on less broadly focused target of analysis comes from considering the situation in Japan, where aspects of written communication are inevitable in discussing the relationship between communication and technology (see Section 2.7.2.). Not only in Japan, but also in other parts of the world, written modes of communication have been observed in a number of scenes these days, with text messaging via mobile phones gaining more and more familiarity among users worldwide.

Another aspect not discussed in his book is how alterable the affordance can be. Since the original concept is based on natural environment in which an animal or species can be afforded with the benefit or restriction of the tree or the river, for example, it would be extremely difficult to change such an environment. I mention this in view of how technologies are changing or being changed by efforts to minimize their restrictions. For example, telephones require co-presence of participants, yet answering machines that record messages, to some extent, released the requirement of sharing the time of conversation. Such devices even have uses as denying or restricting the caller hegemony, which designers of the recording facilities may not have anticipated, by keeping the recording faculty on all the time (as a measure against unsolicited calls, taken in my residence at least, but with preannouncement of this setup to those whose calls are welcome). Mobiles phones also freed users from being constrained to physical locations of fixed telephones when using them. Thus changes in affordance take place all the time, and such a perspective might be needed in understanding the relation between technology and communication in society, where changes are particularly rapid and noticeable.

There are at least two levels of impact of current communications technologies: one

is on a rather superficial level. Materiality of artifacts of communications technologies enhances efficiency and convenience on the part of users attempting to communicate and enables spoken and/or written messages to reach their recipient faster and more easily by reducing time and space between interactants. On a somewhat deeper level, as more and newer communications technologies are in wider use, those technologies are getting more and more taken for granted and not felt to be new any more and become part of life. This process can be a lens through which to observe and consider what it is to communicate. Its impact on culture in society, therefore, is that incessant changes in technologies have never given so many perspectives to reflect on the nature of communication as before, either in interpersonal or social contexts. As a result, CMC may not be a special kind of communication, but one form of communication. Researchers should pay attention to how such processes are altering the ways people communicate and behave in society. I agree with Hutchby's argument that "we can learn more about the nature of human communication by observing how it is affected by technology" (2001: p.3).

In discussing how communications technologies impact language, communication and culture, one aspect that should be included is technology for word-processing, in addition to technologies for connecting people, both of which can be part of technologies for communication. It seems word-processing technology may not be included in communications technology in Hutchby's view, as this does not seem to have great impact in alphabet-based cultures, unlike the situation in cultures of non-alphabet-based languages such as Japanese. Let us see the impact of word-processing technology on Japanese language, communication and culture in the next section.

### **2.7.2. Technological Impact on Japanese Language and Culture**

There are several studies on the impact of technology on Japanese language and society. Most of these works discuss word-processing technology, because this technology enabled the Japanese writing to be practically and sufficiently created and read on the computer for general purposes. It is not surprising that the introduction of

word processors excited a number of debates by professional writers, journalists and schoolteachers, as evidenced by two separate publications of special issues of *Nihongogaku [Japanese Linguistics]* journal on word processors in 1984 and 1988. Tanaka (1991) describes the impact of word-processing on Japanese society, focusing on more technological aspects such as how input by Romanisation brings about *hiragana*, *katakana* and *kanji* representations. Unger (1984) was pessimistic about the Romanisation input on the computer, when word processors were invented in the early 1980s, however. Nowadays this technological achievement, once spread among wider population, seems to be taken for granted by ordinary users. As a work that describes more recent relationship between technology and social life, Itou et al (eds. 2005) discusses mobile phones for ordinary users.

Gottlieb (2000) describes in detail how word-processing technology has changed writing practices in the public domains such as government script policies, and also private practices of personal letter writing in Japanese society. This book is informative and useful to understand the socio-cultural impact of word processing technology in Japan. Not only word-processing but also socio-cultural evaluations on other writing tools, such as brushes, pens and pencils are also compared. Such a comparison may not be seen in cultures other than Japanese.

While I welcome this publication, one comment I would like to make concerns greater focus on the government script policies than on contemporary uses of scripts found on the Internet. Though there is actually a section, “*Kanji* on the Internet” in the final chapter, Gottlieb’s discussion is on general issues involving *kanji*, which may cause such possibility as linguistic isolationism from a global perspective. Finer descriptions on how users exploit contemporary word processing technology to link the language to writers’ identity and community bondage, as reported by Nishimura (2003a, b), are not found in Gottlieb’s work.

### 2.7.3. Impact of Technology on Language, Communication and Culture

Halliday's (1978) work can provide a theoretical basis for the preceding discussions on technological impact on language, communication and culture. Halliday sees "two fundamental aspects to the social reality that is encoded in language" (p.2). He explains the two aspects as follows:

Language expresses and symbolizes this dual aspect in its semantic system, which is organized around the twin motifs of reflection and action – language as a means of reflecting on things, and language as a means of acting on things. The former is the 'ideational' component of meaning; the latter is the 'interpersonal'... (p.2)

Let us consider how this distinction of language relates to technological impact. In the forgoing discussions, technological impact in the context of its changeability has been the focus. Following the argument, I may say changes in technologies apply to the latter conceptualisation of language, that is, "as a means of acting on things." As stated in Section 2.7.1, technologies are changing and the way people react to technological changes is also changing. From this, impact on language is limited to language as a tool for people communicating and interacting with others and does not affect language as a tool for thinking.

In other words, it seems possible to consider that technology impacts communication, but not language in its abstract, ideational sense. CMC should be included here, as one form of communication that greatly undergoes technological changes. Then, how is culture to be interpreted in Halliday's terms in relation to technological impact? He further states:

A social reality (or a 'culture') is itself an edifice of meanings - a semiotic construct. In this perspective, language is one of the semiotic systems that constitute a culture; ....

This in summary terms is what is intended by the formulation 'language as social semiotic'. It means interpreting language within a sociocultural context, in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms .... (p.2)

From this remark, culture comprises language as part of the semiotic system. More importantly, however, attention should be paid to the sociocultural context, in which meanings are exchanged among participants. Technological impact, therefore, seems to be culture-specific where individual languages/cultures are concerned. We have seen this in the discussion of word-processing technology greatly affecting the Japanese culture/language, but not English or alphabet-based languages and their cultures. Also culture itself has impact on technologies as well, and the impact seems to be both ways.

Language is a complex entity, comprising a number of concepts. When talking about technological impact, distinction should be made between those areas that are independent of such impact and those susceptible to it. Halliday's perspective clarifies the process of unpacking this. This linguistics thesis follows the attempts to discuss the interrelationship among technology, language, communication and culture.

## **2.8. Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has shown the literature relevant to the undertaking of the present study, from each of the fields discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Specifically, in the discussion of English CMC (e.g. Crystal 2001), I have pointed out the need for non-English CMC research, or Japanese CMC in particular, which could clarify aspects of CMC that may not have been recognised and could eventually contribute to CMC research in general. The reasons and rationale for conducting this project have been communicated throughout the review, which is to address the research gap that has not previously been filled.

The gap is identified in two areas. First, Japanese CMC has not yet undergone comprehensive, systematic linguistic scrutiny in comparison with speech and writing. Second, how theories of politeness and impoliteness account for Japanese CMC users' interactions and how these interactional behaviours relate to online community-hood are left unexplored.

In this review, I have utilised as an organisational framework the first and the

second “waves” of CMC research articulated by Androutsopoulos (2006). In this useful and yet oversimplified descriptive framework, Chapter 4 of the thesis roughly corresponds to the first wave in the most restricted sense, and Chapters 5 and 6 belong to the second wave. Chapter 4, however, could also belong to the second wave of research in that quantitative discussion of Japanese CMC language is also discussed in sociolinguistic terms. I need to cover these two waves, i.e. linguistic features of CMC and the socio-linguistic aspects of CMC in this thesis because Japanese CMC research has not experienced either of the two waves adequately as of yet.

This framework employed by Androutsopoulos (2006) can show a scholastic history of CMC as a discipline. At the same time there is also a socio-cultural history of how typography, technology and writing have changed over time, as described by Baron (2000) in the case of English and Gottlieb (2000) in the case of Japanese. In organising the individual studies reviewed in this chapter, both histories are more or less intertwined, mainly with expositions relevant to English CMC and some aspects of the Japanese counterpart. When reviewing the literature relevant to researching complex phenomenon of CMC, basically linguistic and socio-cultural perspectives have been employed. In doing so the historical outlook mentioned above has also been added to reach a better understanding of the subject matter of the thesis.

In the following Chapter 3, I present reviews on methodology and provide a detailed account on the dataset analysed in this thesis. Chapter 4 will describe a full comparison of CMC language with speech and writing, and Chapters 5 and 6 will explore issues of politeness and online communities. Each chapter will also have a literature review, but with a more specific focus in order to locate the issues to be explored in specific contexts of each chapter.

# **Chapter 3:**

## **Data and Methodology**

### **3.1. About This Chapter**

This chapter outlines the overall methodologies for data collection and analysis employed in the research and describes the datasets and analytic procedures adopted in each chapter. Section 3.2 explains why and how the particular methods were chosen. Then Section 3.3 will explain the data, threads of the two BBS from which the data was selected along with spoken and written data. Section 3.4 will describe analytic procedures including the software employed for the following three chapters.

### **3.2. Methodology**

#### **3.2.1. Rationale for the Methodologies Employed**

The methods selected originate from the research questions:

1. How are the messages in BBS communication linguistically similar to or different from spoken offline conversation and written language? Do these messages exhibit features of both?
2. What are the linguistic differences and similarities in messages between the two representative BBS websites? In other words, how can the variation in the language of BBS communication between the two different websites be described?
3. How can theories of politeness and impoliteness developed from sociolinguistic study of off-line, FTF interactions explain the politeness and impoliteness phenomena observable in message exchanges on the two different websites?
4. Viewing the BBS websites as online communities, how can polite and impolite behaviours revealed in messages be explained in relation to online community-hood

criteria using the two approaches of CMDA and the theory of discernment, or *wakimae*?

The target of investigation is the language (in the form of messages posted) and interactions (in the form of messages exchanged) taking place on established, publicly open BBS websites for general users in the Japanese cultural context. On these websites there is a high degree of anonymity. The level of anonymity on the message boards makes it very difficult to undertake observation, interview or survey based research of the users. Having said this, the focus of this thesis is neither the psychology of the users nor is it the broader sociological aspects of the users beyond that of their observable social interaction within the discussions. Rather the focus is on the observable linguistic and communicative features of their messages in order to first explore the nature of these features (in comparison to speech and writing), and second to see how these function with regard to (im)politeness strategies and community as evidenced in ongoing interaction. Importantly the analyst is encountering the data – bulletin board transcripts – in the same format and manner as the participants themselves, in contrast to the analyst of talk-in-interaction who will often work with a typed transcript of a spoken interaction. Indeed Korenman & Wyatt (1996) state that they consider “reading the transcripts is the same as observing interactions in the e-mail forum” (p.227). Though their data was from a restricted email discussion list, not from publicly accessible BBS websites, this research shares the message/transcript observation method employed in their study.

Channel 2 messages were chosen from archived sources, while messages from Yahoo! Japan BBS (hereafter abbreviated as Yahoo) were collected directly from currently available websites (Yahoo does not use a system of archiving). The research questions require that the corpora be controlled with respect to the topic of discussion. In selecting similar topics the project hoped to limit the extent to which variation in language use, (im)politeness strategies and community would be masked by variations in overall conversational focus. An active topic from Yahoo was selected and then a comparable

topic in the archive of Channel 2 was chosen to allow the comparison. In order to ensure comparable data from the two websites, the most suitable threads that meet the comparability requirement with the Yahoo data were selected from the Channel 2 archiving. More details on how messages were managed and maintained on the two websites are described in Section 3.3.1.

There are two possible approaches to observation of CMC interaction, one in which the researcher joins the discussion and the other in which the researcher is an observer, or a “lurker.” This research takes the latter position partly because of my intention of not interfering with the flow of discussion and partly because of the archived nature of messages from one of the target websites. Though I am aware that a researcher’s participation has a certain advantage in online research, such as outlined by Sharf (1999)<sup>1</sup> and Baym (1993), this was not adopted because of the necessity for controlling the discussion topics that resulted in the use of archives.

### 3.2.2. Ethical Considerations

The use of archived material does not mean, however, that I am exempt from ethical considerations of protecting the message senders’ privacy and rights to their messages. The two BBS websites I study maintain a very high degree of anonymity. As a result, it was impossible to contact each poster and ask for permission to use his or her message in my research. Instead, I contacted the management of one of the websites, Yahoo! Japan BBS on 16 May 2007 to ask for their permission as representative of the message posters, explaining the purpose and nature of research. I also mentioned that the messages would be used with utmost caution to protect each message sender, such as replacing user IDs to pseudonyms. I received their response on 18 May, as follows:

Yahoo!掲示板の各投稿には、投稿者等の著作権が存在する可能性があります。  
弊社といたしましては、法律的判断はいたしかねますので、投稿のご利用に関

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<sup>1</sup> Sharf (1999) describes her experience with a breast cancer list group; she had been a lurker for several months before she joined and then she identified to the list member that she was both a sufferer and researcher. She eventually “harvested” from the discussion to publish her research work.

しましては、ご自身の責任と判断で行っていただき、ご不明な点がございましたら、お近くの専門家(弁護士等)にご相談いただくことをお薦めいたします。

“It is possible that messages posted on Yahoo! Japan BBS fall under the copyright of the individual user. We are not able to make such legal judgements. It is ultimately your responsibility, so use Yahoo! messages at your own discretion. We advise you seek legal council if uncertain.” (Email message from Yahoo management, Enquiry No. KMM14773345I91L0KM 18 May 2007 (author’s translation))

I did not seek out advice from attorneys, as I considered from their remark that Yahoo management did not prohibit the use of their messages for the academic purpose in the way I described.

I wrote to Yahoo management again on 18 November 2007 to ask for their permission to use the above response in the dissertation. In the response I received on 24 November, they avoided indicating whether they agreed or not. They mentioned that they did not consider there to be a problem if the material was used within the boundaries of copyright law. After I consulted a colleague of mine who is an expert on legal matters regarding documents/messages on the Internet<sup>2</sup>, I concluded that the use of the response message above would not harm Yahoo management.

For the other website, Channel 2, on their main portal page <<http://www.2ch.net/>> the originator of the site explicitly states:

2ちゃんねるのご利用は利用者各位のご判断にお任せしています。2ちゃんねるのデータの利用に関して、原則的に自由ですが、2ちゃんねるのデータ自体を利用して対価を取る行為はご遠慮下さい。要するに、2ちゃんねるをモニターして、お金をとってるマーケティング会社の方はご相談頂けないと面倒なことになるかもしれません、、、ってことです。<sup>3</sup>

Use Channel 2 at your own discretion. Data is free in principle, but we request you refrain from data collection for commercial purposes. In short, marketing companies earning money by monitoring Channel 2 may get into trouble if they

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Noriyuki Yasumatsu for providing this interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> After this statement, there is a line addressed to such marketing companies who might get into trouble. The line has a link, and clicking the link leads to the website's creator, Hiroyuki's message, saying, “やあやあ、元気？ひろゆき yaa yaa, genki? Hiroyuki ‘hello, how are you? (from) Hiroyuki.” This kind of joking remark indicates that the site is primarily for entertainment.

do not consult us (author's translation).

Since my purpose was academic research, and not commercial, I considered that Channel 2 data could be used without asking further permission.

Previous studies on CMC took a number of different approaches to ethical issues, depending on a variety of factors such as the research questions, nature and context of data, and level of researcher's participation in the target activities (Yates 1993; Baym 1993; Herring 1996b; Cherny 1999 to name a few). Scholars have endeavoured to discuss problems of researcher ethics. For example, a special issue of the journal *The Information Society* features 9 articles focusing on these issues, with an introduction by Thomas (1996). These and many other predecessors researching online activities have employed a variety of practices for protecting research participants' right and privacy. Ess and other Internet researchers established guidelines (2002) on this matter, regarded as the standard in the field. This work fits within these guidelines.

Given the research questions I am asking here under the specific research environment, obtaining general agreement from the management of Yahoo systems is in line with the common good practices that have been employed by a number of existing previous studies, as has been described by Danet (2001b: p.34). The method of collecting anonymous participants' messages from publicly open websites also follows existing general procedures and precedents, such as Fouser, et al (2000). This present study thus observes these standard precautionary steps for the treatment of the specific data from publicly available BBS websites, and follows fair practices taken by predecessor CMC studies regarding how ethical issues should be addressed. It is also in agreement with the above-mentioned guidelines established by Ess and others (2002) in CMC research.

### **3.2.3. Locating Methodologies in the Field of CMC**

Let me make a few remarks here on the methodology adopted in this study in relation to those methodologies employed in previous studies in the interdisciplinary field

of CMC. Research methodology in many cases is a combination of several specific methods. There are a robust range of methods and approaches used in previous CMC research. Some of these methods are laboratory-based and experimental while some are field-based and observational. Scholars from existing academic disciplines extended their interest to CMC and there are various approaches from such disciplines as psychology (Turkle 1995; Wallace 1999; Joinson 2003), sociology (Smith & Kollock eds. 1999; Wellman & Haythornthwaite eds. 2002), social psychology (Kiesler & Sproull 1992; Walther 1996), ethnography (Baym 1993; Cherny 1999) and linguistics (Herring ed. 1996).

It is also true that the field of CMC draws on studies in subfields of linguistics, such as corpus linguistics, variation, gender and speech community from sociolinguistics, politeness from pragmatics, and conversation/discourse analysis. Depending on each researcher's disciplinary background and the target in question, the methodologies to capture and explain particular online phenomena adopt mixed approaches. Such approaches are further diverged to employ various research methods suitable to each researcher's questions as well as the established methods in each subfield, as found in descriptive/structural study by Werry (1996), corpus-based analysis by Yates (1993), Lewis (2005) and Collot & Belmore (1996), conversation-analytic work by Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm (2006). Herring (2004a) proposes CMDA, and presents sets of methodological approaches that can be applicable to both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Herring (2004b) also shows how content analysis can be used in CMC research.

The above are some of the representative studies undertaken within the interdisciplinary field of CMC. The present research has both numerical and textual elements. The former is intended to reveal general features of the data and the latter to clarify specific interactional forms in discourse. To address different aspects of the data, different approaches or combination of these approaches are taken. To reveal the general characteristics of the data numerically, methods that can explain these aspects are employed, such as corpus-based method employed by Yates (1993). This present study

owes heavily to his work as his study compares spoken, written and CMC corpora in English, and this motivated my enquiry into the case of the Japanese language.

To address textual properties, Herring's (2004a) CMDA method has been the most influential on the present study. Herring includes various approaches from linguistics subfields such as text analysis, pragmatics, semantics, conversation analysis, ethnomethodology, interactional sociolinguistics, and critical discourse analysis (p.18). Among them the approach I follow is the line of pragmatics, as my research questions ask how politeness and impoliteness behaviour in CMC can be explained by different theories of politeness and impoliteness developed from pragmatics of FTF interactions.

When actually implementing the analyses on politeness, Herring (1994) employs a combination of textual analysis of messages sent to academic discussion lists and a questionnaire to list participants. Due to the anonymous and pseudonymous nature of participants in my study, methods that need contact with participants are difficult. Such methods as participant questionnaire and interview by email (e.g. Danet 2001b) are not used, though useful in obtaining background information and reflective comments on messages from participants. In the environment of established, publicly open BBS websites, where no email addresses or contact information is accessible, I therefore need to employ other methods. The purely observational and linguistic methods used in this thesis are employed by a number of CMC studies, such as those found in the collection of articles on CMC edited by Pemberton & Shurville (2000).

Experimental methods also are not suitable, as the focus of my research is on the comparison of "naturally occurring" messages between two established BBS websites with particular attention paid to the topics of discussion. Paccagnella's (1997) method can be categorised as experimental as well as ethnographic as he created a discussion forum on Italian punk music for the purpose of online participant observation. Messages sent to his forum may be "naturally occurring," but this method does not allow a comparison between topics or between websites. This method, however interesting and insightful, is not suitable for the research questions of the present study.

Other experimental methods in which subjects are asked to engage in certain tasks using CMC technology, as employed in earlier studies of CMC by social psychologists (for example, Kiesler et al 1984) are also not suited to respond to the research questions. This is because my research questions attempt to examine the language used in CMC, and in these social psychological studies, the focus was not on the language but rather other aspects of CMC such as group process of decision making, in comparison with FTF interactions. Bordia (1997) presents a synthesis of 18 such experimental studies that compared CMC with FTF. His findings turn to a critique of these experimental methods, which I also share. For example, higher incidence of disinhibited behaviour in CMC is reported in many of these studies. This can be attributed to the population of student respondents in the experiments rather than the medium itself. If a different population of people had participated, different results could have been obtained. The need for field research rather than laboratory study is also stressed. Aside from the lack of interest in the language, experimental methods within CMC research, valuable as they are if designed carefully, are not suitable for the present study. It would have been of interest to linguists to examine textual messages produced and exchanged by participants who showed disinhibited behaviour in these early experimental studies in social psychology.

The best way to gather appropriate data for this study, therefore, is to first explore and observe a large number of messages and then to evaluate and choose the most appropriate portions for analysis (described in the following section). Messages were first copied in text and html format and stored in archived computer files. The data collected was not used for purposes other than the author's research.

### **3.2.4. Rationale for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods**

For the data analysis methodologies, I took two different approaches: a "corpus-based" quantitative approach (Chapter 4) and a "discourse analytic," or qualitative approach (Chapters 5 and 6). The reasons for using two distinct but complementary methods originate from my research questions. In Chapter 4, where the

first two research questions are addressed, the focus is on the entire language used in messages. In order to have an overall view of the structural properties of the messages, corpus-based analysis with parts of speech (hereafter abbreviated as POS) information as units of analysis (the morpheme, in this case) is considered to be appropriate for clarifying the structural characteristics of messages. Since comparison of BBS messages with spoken conversation and written language is also intended, a method that can systematically be applied to the three corpora is necessary. This has been made possible by a computer software tool to carry out the comparison. Details on how analyses were conducted are explained in Section 3.4.

My motivation for using CMC data in the form of a corpus originates from my earlier observation on BBS messages. In Nishimura (2003a), I described BBS users' message exchange as casual conversation among peers attempting to recreate spoken quality in their messages. My findings then were based on qualitative observations. I was intrigued to find how similar online conversations were to offline ones and to what extent differences and similarities between them could be shown in numerically comparable ways. Though the datasets investigated for quantitative analysis in this study are limited in comparison to the study conducted in English by Yates (1993), the datasets are large enough to undergo statistical testing when comparing structural properties of online conversations with FTF conversations.

It is true that the scale of the datasets employed in the present study is not large compared to many contemporary corpora. There are three main reasons for this in addition to the practical unavailability of established large-scale corpora in Japanese (explained in Chapter 4). Treatment of the corpus as a case study is the first reason for the limited corpus size. This is a key case study focusing on an interesting website that is uniquely Japanese. At the time when Yates' study was conducted, not much was known about CMC in general or in English, and to undertake a large-scale study empirically was a useful way to uncover linguistic characteristics of CMC in comparison with writing and speech. With his study in English, and as more works on textual and structural properties

of CMC have been accumulated, it is possible to identify upfront key interesting phenomena and unique language uses. The specific website I have chosen as worth investigating is Channel 2, which I describe in comparison with the other website Yahoo! Japan BBS. Comparatively small corpus size is a result of my intention to investigate online phenomena not as a single target to wholly analyse but as an important and interesting case study of Japanese CMC. Much is still unknown about Japanese CMC; conducting this study will advance understanding of Japanese CMC. Accumulating such case studies on Japanese CMC may even generate new research questions on English CMC or CMC in general that have not yet been addressed.

The second reason for limiting the corpus size is that this dissertation has other research questions to address (see chapters 5 and 6) qualitatively. On the one hand, to undertake a corpus study on Japanese CMC on the scale Yates (1993) conducted could constitute a whole dissertation. I choose to control the size of the corpus that is manageable to leave room for the other questions to be explored. On the other hand, the results from the corpus-based analysis in Chapter 4 provide a firm grounding for the explorations of Chapters 5 and 6. Thus conducting the corpus-based analysis in the present scale is judged as suitable in view of the entire dissertation project.

The third reason for the limited corpus size concerns the performance of the computer software used in the analysis. ChaSen, the software used here to do the tagging, is the most well known and frequently used. However, this system is not fully accurate due to multiple interpretations of morpheme boundaries (see Chapter 4 for the problems of ChaSen). Corrections to wrong assignment of POS were thoroughly conducted manually. Such occasional incorrect POS assignments could be corrected when the size was limited to the present level of study. It was important to keep the corpus size manageable due to the software performance. For the above three reasons the quantitative corpus analysis was conducted of the present scale.

Comparison of CMC corpus of BBS messages with written Japanese also derives from my earlier observations. Although BBS users essentially engage in an act of writing

when they produce messages, the output of “writing” on the computer screen in my observation seemed to be different from what we normally see in the form of written language, such as newspapers, magazines, and even personal letters. I was interested in finding how this medium restricted or enhanced communication online among BBS users through the written or word-processed output of CMC, and how such writing was structurally different from other genres of written Japanese in printed format for general readers. Thus the three-way comparison among CMC, speech and writing is addressed quantitatively based on written, spoken and CMC corpora. This will reveal how the three resemble or differ one another. Differences also seem to exist between the two BBS websites. A corpus-based approach to clarify the variation is taken, because this method can most suitably identify structural differences.

McEnery et al (2006: p.121) warns that the corpus-based methodology is not an all-purpose method for language study. In using this method, the researcher needs to be aware of its limitations. Corpus methods bring out certain aspects of the text in question, particularly what the text producers actually do. When the text producers omit certain features in their text, these features do not appear and corpus methods are incapable of finding users’ avoidance or non-use of linguistic features. This method is also observational and inductive and therefore cannot provide answers to why users do or do not employ certain features. The answers to these questions must be researched by other means. Another important limitation is that the findings from a particular corpus may only be valid for the specific data studied. Caution must be taken not to make unreasonable or excessive generalisation. This does not, however, exclude the possibility of the results’ applicability to other unstudied parts of the websites.

The datasets studied here might be skewed in that they were not sampled from a representative or balanced corpus. The use of messages from particular threads can be justified by the research design in which interactions in the form of message exchanges from this particular subset of the corpus are investigated qualitatively in Chapters 5 and 6. The balanced corpus serves other purposes that are not intended here. Though the data

analysed here is different from the language from courtrooms analysed by Stubbs (1996), analysis of the patterns of morphemes in the text analysed here can “contribute to the understanding of the meaning of the text” (Stubbs: p.3).

It should also be noted that the written language under study here is the Japanese language, which involves far greater complexity than English or other Western languages. While word-processing technology in English seems fairly transparent (what is typed appears on the screen in a straightforward manner), it is not so in Japanese word-processing (see Chapters 1 and 2). Because Japanese uses four kinds of scripts (each with different functions) in its standard orthography, converting pronunciation-based input (Romanisation) in one kind of script entered on the keyboard to *kanji*-based standard representation with multiple scripts on the screen is a necessary process to write on the computer. Such a process may look complicated to speakers of English and other Western languages. Yet word-processing technology gives Japanese speakers/writers room to play with the language. Studying Japanese CMC makes us realise those literate phenomena that are not observable from looking at English CMC alone. Common elements between Japanese and English CMC may lead to uncovering characteristics of CMC in general, while at the same time there are language-specific areas to look at. One possible contribution of this study lies in this area.

Let us now turn to the motivation for the qualitative methods used in Chapters 5 and 6. The analyses are on the fine details of polite and impolite interactions observed in message exchanges, including website-specific and characteristic language uses. Perhaps it is not entirely impossible to conduct analysis numerically by creating categories such as agreement, support, or encouragement. However, there can be overlapping and intricate interactional behaviours in context that might be lost during the process of coding. Chapter 5 will discuss politeness and impoliteness in CMC messages. Chapter 6 will discuss how politeness and impoliteness are related to a sense of online community. Qualitative analyses based on sound theoretical groundings are considered to be more advantageous than quantitatively processed coding, as activities vary depending on the

context. These qualitative analyses are grounded by the structural analysis approach taken in Chapter 4.

Sudweeks & Simoff (1999), after identifying the differences in approaches between quantitative and qualitative methods, present their rationale for integrating the two in CMC research. “The rationale is that the weakness of any single method—qualitative or quantitative—is balanced by the strength of other methods” (p.37). The greatest reason for employing the two in this research lies in this point. That is, the target discourse can be analysed in multiple, more comprehensive and balanced ways if both methods are combined. Limitations in corpus-based quantitative methods can be supplemented by qualitative methods. These qualitative methods can provide answers or clues to interpreting why users do or do not employ certain linguistic features that can be crucial for interactional manipulations on the part of users. Thus the combined methods are expected to enable us to better understand how BBS communication works.

### **3.3. Data**

This section describes the data used in this thesis. Section 3.3.1 presents the details on why and how the particular data for analysis was chosen from various threads among many boards of the two websites. Section 3.3.2 explains both CMC and non-CMC corpora used in Chapter 4, which compares CMC with spoken and written language. Section 3.3.3 presents an account of the CMC messages examined in Chapters 5 and 6.

#### **3.3.1. Data Selection Criteria**

In my previous experiences observing Channel 2 messages, topics were found to play a significant role in interactions and the style of messages. I compared BBS messages from fan sites discussing idols such as film stars and singers with those from Channel 2 discussing a controversial pretender-mathematician (Nishimura 2005). The topics were widely different and the linguistic styles of messages used between these two websites were also quite different.

In this research, it is necessary to control the topics by collecting messages discussing the same topics in order to find linguistic differences between two major Japanese BBS websites. Differences that come out from the two kinds of texts cannot thoroughly be ascribed to the difference in the topics or the difference in websites as explained in my former comparative study. Before I actually started this dissertation research, I had thought to make a cross-linguistic comparison of Japanese BBS messages with English ones, and so the topic had to be popular among both Japanese and English-speaking BBS users. Even without cross-cultural comparison, this requirement of familiarity and popularity of topics for both Channel 2 and Yahoo! Japan BBS has been maintained.

After observing a number of currently active threads from Yahoo! Japan BBS and active as well as archived threads from Channel 2, messages discussing a popular Hollywood film, *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, posted in the summer of 2003 were found to be suitable. That was when the particular Hollywood film was released nationwide and users of the two websites began to discuss the same film. The film is an action/adventure movie in which actors and actresses popular among male and female moviegoers play leading roles; it is rated PG-13 and can be enjoyed by children to adults.

The initial thread on this film on Channel 2 was established in June 2003, and its continuation threads accumulated to over 48 for the next five years (as of this submission as in May 2008). The threads other than the currently active one are archived on Channel 2. The messages on this film were copied from Channel 2 archives, and those from Yahoo! Japan were taken from this thread that has continued to exist since it was created in summer 2003. As an additional reason for choosing this film topic, I am a film fan myself, and a fan of this particular film. As noted by Baym (1993), who studied online soap opera fan group and disclosed herself as a soap opera fan, this is an advantage when interpreting messages because the researcher is also familiar with the film and shares the same interest with the participants.

A second topic was determined during the course of the research. I decided to include English language study for Japanese learners as another topic also commonly discussed on both BBS websites. These two topics are not treated differently in Chapter 4, since the overall linguistic characteristics among Channel 2, Yahoo, speech and writing are the focus of analysis. In Chapter 5, where the focus is on polite and impolite interactions, messages on the film topic alone are sufficient to illustrate differences between the two websites with respect to online interactions of politeness and impoliteness.

The addition of the English language topic in Chapter 6 emerges after the differences in politeness and impoliteness behaviour between the two websites have been investigated in Chapter 5. This is because difference in language styles due to the difference in topics between the two websites is the focus of Chapter 6.

Messages on English language study from Channel 2 threads discuss IELTS (International English Language Testing System) examinations and pros and cons of studying English abroad or in Japan. Yahoo also has a thread for IELTS, and this is used in qualitative discussion in Chapter 6. Messages on English language study from Yahoo! Japan BBS are also taken from the thread of “studying English for adult learners (rather than students).” Though the English language topics do not exactly match between Channel 2 and Yahoo, these messages are considered to belong to the general group of English language study and are considered as comparable.

The decision on using the English language study topic came from my own personal as well as professional interest as a teacher of English to Japanese students. BBS users’ opinions, including struggles, comments, worries, and accomplishments are those that I myself have shared.

### **3.3.2. Data for Chapter 4**

#### **3.3.2.1. CMC Data**

Three kinds of data were analysed in Chapter 4--CMC, spoken and written. Details

on the CMC data used in Chapter 4 are summarised in Table 3.1. below. Descriptions of the spoken and written data are given after the CMC data:

Table 3.1: Details of CMC data used in Chapter 4

Sources	Channel 2 <http://2ch.net>		Yahoo! Japan <http://messages.yahoo.co.jp/index.html>	
Message title	No setting for message title lines provided		Setting for message title available; some titles can be considered as part of message	
Participant representation	Basically anonymous; users can identify themselves by the message number assigned automatically by the system, or they can choose to use some fixed handle names. Certain boards require the poster name be filled, but users can enter any sequence of letters up to a certain limit, and such user names are not binding		Represented by User ID; user registration needed to get User ID; Avatar setting available, but used by limited number of members. It is possible for one user to own 6 different user IDs, and participant count based on User ID may not necessarily reflect the actual number of members.	
Administrator or site manager's control	Messages can be posted and viewed up to the 1000 in one thread; afterwards, a new thread needs to be created as continuation, if interest in the topic remains. Messages are deleted after petition for deletion is sent and approved.		Once a new "topic" [equivalent to "thread" in Channel 2] is set up, administration keeps it on as long as it receives postings; after two weeks or more in which no posting is sent, the "topic" is subject to deletion	
Message format	Text, occasional ASCII art graphics		Text	
Category	Hobby	Academy	Entertainment	Language
Board	Cinema	English	Film	English
Thread	Pirates of the Caribbean	English language study (in Japan or abroad)	Pirates of the Caribbean	English language study (for working adults)
No of messages	4000	2814	1372	563
No of characters	288610	279305	252970	248223
Average length	72.2	99.3	184.4	440.9
Messages sent from	2003/6/2 8:58	2002/6/24 23:28	2003/7/31 4:55	2006/4/25 21:51
Messages sent to	2003/8/17 16:25	2007/3/22 5:00	2006/9/16 23:58	2006/7/18 10:27

### 3.3.2.2. Spoken data

The spoken corpus used in this study is from transcriptions of conversation recordings made available to researchers by Mayumi Usami and her team, and is distributed in a CD free of charge upon request.<sup>4</sup> The transcription method used in this corpus is Usami's own method, Basic Transcription System for Japanese (Usami 2007). Although each researcher should decide how and what to transcribe from the spoken flow of the language depending on his or her research questions and purposes, for the present study, Usami's transcriptions seem to serve the purpose of comparing conversation data with CMC and written data and are used gratefully.<sup>5</sup>

The topics of transcribed conversation vary tremendously, from academic topics such as university classes, professors, job hunting and overseas study to every-day topics such as parties, food, and travel. The topics are beyond my control as long as this particular spoken data is concerned. However, there is a noticeable overlap between the CMC and the spoken corpora on school-related matters such as English language study. Moreover, the structural characteristic of morpheme usage in oral conversation is not likely to be particularly sensitive to topic choice, so long as topics are commonly discussed everyday matters. Since I am concerned with morpheme usage rather than meaning and/or intention, which may be sensitive to topic choice, the choice of this particular spoken corpus does not cause a serious problem in this study.

The conversation participants, in dyads, are mostly university students of the same gender who have been friends. A brief summary of the spoken corpora, provided in Usami (2007) is given below in Table 3.2:

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<sup>4</sup> Usami's motivation behind the distribution of transcription was her belief that preparing transcription from recordings is enormously time-consuming, laborious work, and if researchers could share such spoken data, research using such conversational data could be enhanced. It should be noted that only the transcription is available to researchers, and the recording itself does not accompany the transcription. It was the decision of the production team not to distribute the recording.

<sup>5</sup> Though it would have been desirable if the recording had also been available for more accurate interpretation of the spoken utterances, this transcription without recording works fine for the purpose of the present study, since no phonetic analysis is taking place in this chapter.

Table 3.2: Spoken data profile

Nature of talk	Relationship between dyad	Approximate age of participants	Gender of participants	No of conversations	Length (minutes)	Proportion
Casual	Friends	late teens to mid 20s	Women	26	538	41.4%
Casual	Friends	late teens to mid 20s	Men	10	246	19.0%
Casual	First-time encounter	20s	Women	11	262	20.2%
Phone	Friends	18-23	Both	59	132	10.2%
Thesis supervision	Professor - student	Professors' age unknown, students in 20s	Both	10	120	9.2%
				116	1298	100.0%

A different spoken corpus was available from The National Institute for Japanese Language. However, the majority of its data comes from public lectures and was considered less appropriate for the present study, because the comparison was intended to be with CMC data consisting of BBS message exchanges, which are presumably more comparable to conversations than lectures. This was not used here due to the difference in the genres of spoken material.

### 3.3.2.3. Written data

The written corpus has been created by selecting sources, scanning appropriate articles, and checking the scanned texts. There are three kinds of sources from which the texts have been taken to form the written corpus. The first is entertainment magazines featuring popular films; the second, popular and also semi-professional magazines featuring English language learning and studying English abroad; the third short column essays in popular magazines for the general public on various topics such as the Internet, overseas travel, environment, and economy. The topics in the CMC corpus, which are films and English language study, explain the reason for the first two sources. The third

source is due to the uncontrolled topics in the spoken corpora. It does not cause critically serious problems to include writings on uncontrolled topics as long as they are part of a larger genre of magazine writings.

Magazines articles are chosen because the readership of these magazines is inferred to overlap with CMC users, at least with respect to the film. In the CMC messages under study, names of particular film magazines taken as sources are mentioned. A large-scale study on the language in 90 magazines by the National Language Research Institute (1964) classified magazines into five groups based on the genres of publication. The film magazines chosen here belong to the fifth group of entertainment/hobby. The magazines on English language are considered to belong to the third group of practical purpose/science, and the magazines from the third source go to their second group, popular reading. The remaining two genres studied by the National Language Research Institute are literary magazines and women's magazines. Those kinds of magazines are not considered comparable to CMC and spoken corpora in the present study because topics and the readership are too different from the inferred participants of CMC and spoken conversation.

Other kinds of written publications such as newspaper or books are not chosen because the selection criteria used for magazines are difficult to apply to books and newspapers. The magazines used here are chosen based on the readership and the topics. Newspapers treat various subject matter for the general public, and books vary greatly from topics, authors, readership, genres and many other factors. The magazines used here are considered to work for the present purpose of comparing the language of speech and CMC because inferred readers/participants and the topics of the written publications are considered comparable. The general profile of the written sources is given in Table 3.3 below, and detailed publication information is given in Data References:

Table 3.3: Written data profile

Sources	Year published	No of characters	Proportion
<i>Screen Magazine</i>	2007	64544	14%
<i>Premier Magazine</i>	2003	102217	22%
<i>English Teachers Magazine</i>	2001, 2007	73284	16%
<i>Study Abroad Journal</i>	2006	22175	5%
<i>Weekly Asahi Magazine</i>	1996-1997	109310	24%
Several business magazines	1998	84886	19%
	Total	456416	100%

When the sources were determined, scanning was the next step. From each source, articles such as the main feature articles, interview articles and short columns were chosen to be scanned<sup>6</sup>. When scanning, not included were descriptions (or captions) to photographs, section headings and names of the authors; only prose was included. Also excluded for ChaSen application was data from the table of contents, advertisements and letters to the editor.

To summarise, the data used in Chapter 4 is schematically shown in the following figure:

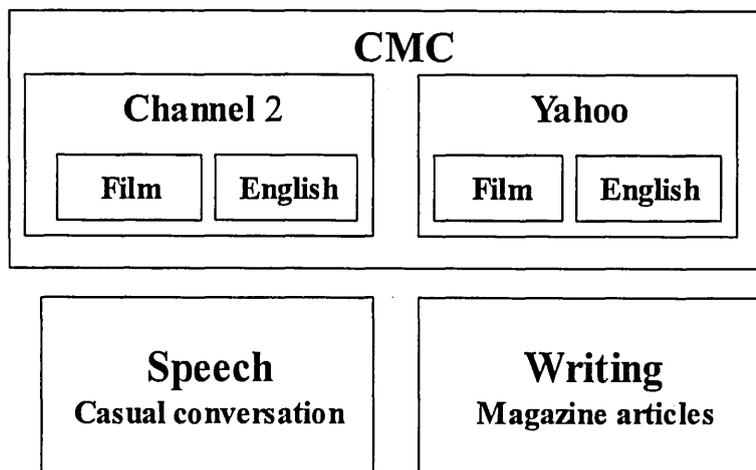


Figure 3.1: Organisation of data used in Chapter 4

<sup>6</sup> Because electronic files of the texts were available for articles in Weekly Asahi and several business magazines, the scanning process did not take place for these.

### 3.3.3. Data for Chapters 5 and 6

#### 3.3.3.1. Chapter 5 data

As has been described, the data used in the thesis is from the two websites, Channel 2 and Yahoo! Japan BBS. Chapter 5 focuses on qualitative analyses of polite and impolite interactions in message exchanges found on these two websites. Table 3.4 below summarises the specific subset of the data used in Chapter 5:

Table 3.4: Profile of BBS messages used in Chapter 5

	Channel 2	Yahoo! Japan BBS
Total number of morphemes	65291	56138
Total number of messages analysed	968	308
Average number of characters per message	67.5	182.3
Average time between messages	1 hour 08 min 30 sec	4 hours 18 min 45 sec
Total Japanese morphemes	25331	28514
Number of actual participants	Unavailable	167

This chapter analyses how politeness is realised in terms of linguistic forms, namely the kind of honorific forms used and the kinds of politeness strategies as linguistic behaviour, in the BBS environment of minimal participant information. It also attempts to examine whether differences in BBS settings such as user guidelines and user representation could affect politeness behaviour among participants. It is necessary, therefore, to choose BBS environments where participant information is hardly available. Interest in the topic will be basically the only shared information available among participants. It becomes important to choose easily accessible, popular BBS websites whose topics can be of interest to a wide spectrum of users, so that people with various demographic backgrounds can participate. Thus two large-scale BBS websites discussing the same topic and messages sent at the same time (summer 2003) are analysed to make the messages as comparable as possible.

The data from Channel 2 was the first thread that discussed the first movie of the

three-sequel film. The data from Yahoo consists of the first 308 messages after the thread was established.

The following figure summarises the data used for Chapter 5:

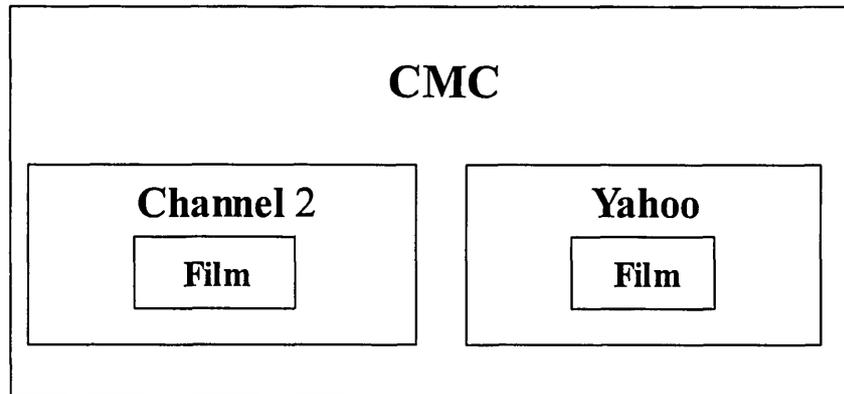


Figure 3.2: Organisation of data used in Chapter 5

### 3.3.3.2. Chapter 6 Data

The data for Chapter 6 is also a subset of the data used in Chapter 4. The data on the film topic is the same that used in Chapter 5. In addition to this, this chapter employs messages discussing English language topics from both websites. The inclusion of the English language topic messages is based on the research design of the chapter. In Chapter 6, two-dimensional analysis is conducted with the vertical axis measuring the agreement to the code of conduct represented by the use of polite features. The horizontal axis represents the degree of online community-hood or sense of online community. Four different groups of messages are prepared out of the entire CMC corpus, namely those messages discussing the film topic from Channel 2, those on the film topic from Yahoo, those on the English topic from Channel 2, and those on the English topic from Yahoo. Details of the specific board/threads from which each of the four groups of data sets is drawn are given in Table 3.5 below:

Table 3.5: Profile of messages used in Chapter 6

Topics	Film		English language study	
	Channel 2	Yahoo	Channel 2	Yahoo
Total characters	65291	56138	113573	106520
Total messages analyzed	968	308	913	308
Average message length	67.5 (characters)	182.3	124.4	345.8
Average time interval between messages	1 hour 08 min	4 hours 18 min	About 36 hours	4.8 hours
Number of participants differentiated by User IDs	Unavailable	167	Unavailable	44

The following figure shows the organisation of the data for Chapter 6:

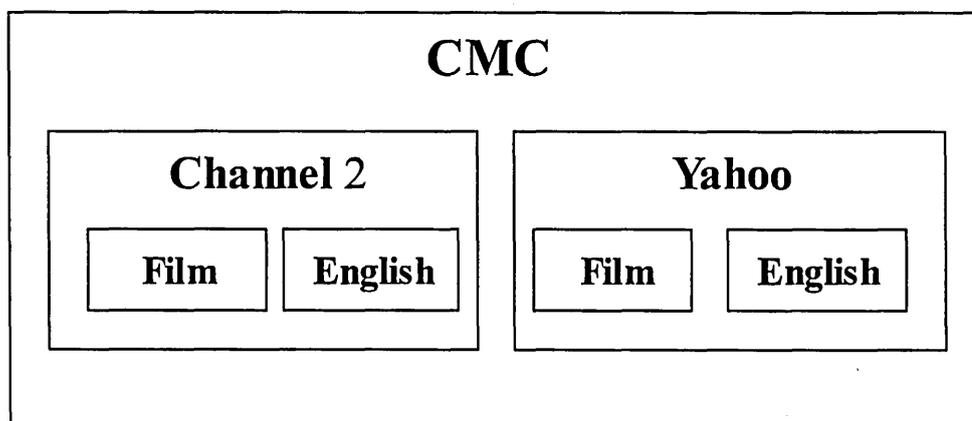


Figure 3.3: Organisation of data used in Chapter 6

For the film topic, the same popular Hollywood film released at the same time is discussed across the two different websites. However, for the topic of English language study, the topics are not strictly speaking the same. Originally both websites had a thread/topic that discussed the same theme of “International English Language Testing System” or IELTS examination, and members discussed how to prepare for the test. Channel 2 started the thread almost 4 years ago. Over the course of that time, there were times when only very infrequent posting took place, but it regained postings and even has its continuation thread on Channel 2. Hence the entire portion<sup>7</sup> of Part 1 of the IELTS

<sup>7</sup> Those one-word messages that were sent for the purpose of keeping the thread in an upper position of the list of threads are excluded.

thread are included for analysis.

On Yahoo, however, the same IELTS topic started in January 2005 and has seen frequent postings up to about the 45th in March of the same year. After this time a posting was made every 8 to 10 days and in some cases the interval was as long as 13 days. The topic is still in existence after a two-year time span, and has reached 169 posts. People expect to keep it in existence even without discussion. When this topic gets deleted, all the past logs will be gone altogether. This phenomenon will be discussed as an example of an almost dead community, with special attention paid to appropriate conducts and what community provides to its members later in Chapter 6.

To supplement the lacking IELTS topic on Yahoo, another discussing English language study of working members in society is used for analysis in this section. Though the subject discussed in Channel 2 and Yahoo is not exactly the same, it belongs to the same area of English language study and is considered equivalent.

The selection of the two different themes of film and English language study needs explanation. The film topic is from entertainment or hobby board/categories of the two websites. Those who participate are considered to be from diverse backgrounds with no common socio-cultural-economic attributes. The only common feature that binds people is the interest in the film.

Basically the same thing can be said about the other topic, English language study. However, this theme will probably be different in nature from hobby or entertainment as this can be a more serious matter and clear goals can be considered. For a hobby topic, it is rather difficult to imagine a clear goal. This topic of English language study can also provide participants with specific answers to questions raised, advice, suggestions, and warnings that they might find useful. In this sense the topic of English language study is more objective-oriented, while the hobby topic may not be as much so. The hobby topic would also have an object, and its primary goal might be the exchange of opinions about the film. Its realisation will take a different form from the goal of English language topic, since one's goal in English language study can be visibly set and shared by a large

number of participants, but about a hobby topic's goal can be diverse and probably not very clear.

Although socio-economic factors, for example, levels of education might differ, participants' age can be different. Since Yahoo specifically mentions working members of society and not students, it is very likely that there are not as many students among the members as compared with the film theme, which would invite moviegoers of all ages and surely include a student-aged population. Since no definitive assumption can be made about the membership population, I see what different linguistic behaviour could be found depending on the two different topics. It would be conceivable that in the English study topic, more cases of information offering, which might involve disclosure of personal information, can be seen in the interaction than in the film topic. Such analysis on the content, which will lead to indicate online community-hood, will be described in Chapter 6.

### **3.4. Analytic Procedures for Each Chapter**

This section explains briefly how analysis is conducted for each chapter. More detailed descriptions of analytic procedures will be provided later in each chapter.

#### **3.4.1. Overall Analytic Procedures Used in Chapter 4**

The general analytic procedures taken in Chapter 4 are as follows:

- (1) Creation of CMC, spoken and written corpora
- (2) ChaSen application to each corpus to identify POS and further subcategories on the morpheme level to prepare for the statistical tests to be applied
- (3) Comparative statistical analysis on morphemes classified by parts-of-speech and their subcategories across each corpus. *Chi* square tests are performed.

As to the amount of the data, the resulting number of morphemes after ChaSen application on the spoken data determines the upper limit of the amount of morphemes in

each of the corpora. This is because the spoken corpus is from transcribed material based on Usami's work, and the amount of data to be used in this study was uncontrollable on the part of the thesis author. Several cleaning processes of the data decreases a certain amount. These procedures, along with the remaining analyses, for each corpus are explained below.

#### **3.4.1.1. Creation of the CMC, Spoken and Written Corpora**

The two CMC corpora came from two major BBS websites in Japan, Channel 2 and Yahoo. Channel 2 messages are from archives. Messages from the first 4 threads (one thread consists of 1000 messages) discussing the *Pirates* film since this thread was established were used as the film data. The English study topic consists of one thread discussing the IELTS examination and two threads on studying English in Japan or abroad. Messages were chosen so that approximately the same number of morphemes could be collected for each topic.

Yahoo film data was taken from the currently active thread on the *Pirates* film, with 1372 messages analysed out of over 1700 messages. This thread is still active and continues to exist on the website as of May 2008. Yahoo English study data was taken from the thread on English language study for adult learners. The thread I used was active at the time of data collection, but now disappeared from the website. The exact date of disappearance is unknown, as this occurred during a time observation was not being made. The number of messages used for analysis was 563 from the total of 1148 messages collected before it was erased from the website.

After the messages were determined, they were cleaned before ChaSen was applied so that only the textual messages created by the sender would remain for ChaSen application. The cleaning process deleted from both sites each message number, the time and date the message was sent and the sender information. In addition, from Yahoo automated messages saying "this message is sent in response to XX [Message number] YY [Message sender's user ID]," and other messages not created by the users but by the

Yahoo system were also deleted. Among the messages that the users created, those messages that consisted only of URLs, ASCII art graphics, and messages written entirely in English were also deleted. When those messages consisting of URLs and English messages having Japanese words or phrases, they were retained, but further cleaning process deleted URLs, English words, and symbols.

So far, the preparation of CMC data is explained. Next I explain how the spoken data was prepared and cleaned. Before ChaSen was applied, the transcriptions of the spoken data were cleaned so that only the actual utterances remain in the data. Items deleted included contextual notes, such as indications of laughter, the duration of silence, voice quality and special symbols used in the transcriptions. Other than these cleaning processes, Usami's basic transcription system, which was intended to conform to the conventions of written language, was retained for ChaSen application.

Two different types of conversations, FTF and phone interactions are included. Since the percentage of the phone conversation in the recording time is comparatively small, I treated the whole spoken data without differentiating the mode of communication.

The written data underwent a similar procedure before ChaSen application in terms of cleaning. When the texts were determined, English words and non-linguistic symbols were deleted.

#### **3.4.1.2. ChaSen Application**

When all the raw datasets from the three corpora were cleaned, ChaSen application was the next step. This software was downloaded from the ChaSen website at Nara Institute of Science and Technology

<<http://chasen.aist-nara.ac.jp/chasen/distribution.html.en> > free of charge.

When this software is applied to Japanese texts, each of the morphemes that make up the whole sentence is assigned a POS. Some POS have subcategories; for example, nouns have over 30 subcategories. The result is given in text format and this needs to be

saved in Excel format for later text mining.

ChaSen identifies the following POS: nouns, verbs, particles, auxiliary verbs (abbreviated as auxiliaries), adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prenominals, and interjections. These were used as variables. Note that these POS do not coincide with the POS classification introduced in Chapter 1. More details on the difference in POS classification between ChaSen's system and traditional Japanese linguistics will be given in Chapter 4.

In addition to these, there was another major category, "symbols," which included full stops, commas, opening and closing parentheses, alphabets, and all other non-linguistic symbols. In the first ChaSen application, the system counted these symbols as morphemes. However, since they are not linguistic morphemes, they were discarded from further analysis of the texts on the second application.

When this software is unable to identify the POS of a certain morpheme, it assigns the "unknown" category. In the initial ChaSen application, there were high percentages of unknown morphemes (5.7 percent for Channel 2, 4.6 percent for Yahoo, 7.3 percent for speech and 3.4 percent for writing), and they were reanalysed and manually assigned appropriate POS. More details on how the unknowns were treated are given in Chapter 4, Section 2.3.

#### **3.4.1.3. Statistical analysis**

In order to determine whether or not CMC is the same as or different from spoken or written language based on the POS ratio obtained from ChaSen, standard *chi*-square statistical tests are conducted. The hypothesis to be tested is:

- (1) The representative Japanese speaker differentiates his or her use of a particular morpheme when communicating in CMC, speaking or writing.

The test is further subdivided into whether the speaker uses morphemes in the same way for all CMC, speaking and writing, and pair-wise tests of the same question between

two of the three modes:

- (2) The representative Japanese speaker differentiates his or her use of a particular morpheme when communicating in Channel 2 or Yahoo.

This is a test of whether the speaker uses morphemes in a particular morpheme category in the same way between two of the three modes.

In order to determine whether the first hypothesis holds or not, the 9 POS categories were considered as relevant categories when conducting statistical tests. Then, to examine the second hypothesis, subcategories of the POS were used. Specifically, within the category of particles, case particles, which are attached to nouns and indicate grammatical relations of the nouns within a sentence, and sentence final particles, which appear at the end of the sentence to indicate the attitude of the speaker, are investigated. Also within the category of auxiliaries, its six subcategories, *da* for plain copula, *ta* for past/imperfect aspect, *nai* for negative, *desu* for polite copula, *masu* for polite verbal ending, and *tai* for desiderative are examined.

As has been clear from the above description, the use of the ChaSen software is critical in this research. Yet, as noted in the statement about “unknown” categories and also those problems associated with software performance mentioned in Section 3.2.4, it does cause some difficulties. The details of the difficulties will be explained in Chapter 4 more fully. However, it should be stressed the problems are not fatal to the research design. They caused the researcher some extra time in tagging and analysis.

### **3.4.2. Analytic Procedures Used in Chapters 5 and 6**

Chapter 5 discusses to what extent theories of politeness and impoliteness developed from FTF interactions can explain these phenomena in BBS communications. Therefore, it is necessary to critically review the theories used for explaining offline interactions. Among many theorists discussing politeness, Brown & Levinson (1987) and Ide (1989) are used as the main framework of the discussion here because they seem to be

able to explain complementary aspects of online interactions. Theories from the discursive approach by Locher & Watts (2005) are also reviewed. Studies dealing with politeness in CMC, such as Herring (1994) and Harrison (2000) are also included. With regard to impoliteness, I look at Beebe (1995) and Culpeper (1996, 2005) although it seems not as much theorising has been conducted in this area as for politeness research.

The data from the two websites described earlier in this chapter will be explained in terms of the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks. Specifically, data showing politeness is distinguished as to linguistic forms or linguistic behaviour. Features for polite linguistic forms are shown to be polite auxiliary verbs and sentence final particles, while features for polite behaviour are seen in positive and negative politeness strategies. For the analysis of polite forms, some numerical analysis is conducted. The textual data from both websites are then given discourse analytic procedures with particular emphasis on how interactions take place. Thus the methods used for analysis begin with a qualitative review of the literature, and then the discourse data is examined in the light of the theories.

Chapter 6 has a focus on the online community-hood of BBS websites with the main framework of Herring's (2004a) CMDA approach and Ide's (1989) *wakimae* approach. I will show first that both the Western approach proposed by Herring (2004a) and the Eastern *wakimae* approach by Ide (1989) are necessary in explaining diversity and identifying the fundamental factors that characterise computer-mediated discourse in the Japanese setting. Second, I argue that the possible determinants for the linguistic variations among BBS groups are the discussion topics. These can explain variations in the agreement to discernment, and the language styles revealed by analysing messages of thanks and insult can explain different degrees of the sense of community. As an example in which online community-hood cannot be maintained, message exchanges on a thread from Yahoo are analysed using a discourse analytic method. Finally I explain that seemingly impolite practices in Channel 2 websites in fact can be a reflection of contextually appropriate "politic" behaviour theorised by Watts (2003).

This chapter employs mostly qualitative discussion of messages with discourse analytic methods. Chapters 5 and 6 are concerned with qualitative analysis of messages and theoretical discussion is also necessary when interpreting the messages.

### **3.5. Summary**

We have seen so far what methodologies and data are used in this thesis and clarified my methodological position in the interdisciplinary field of CMC. Beginning with the next Chapter 4, I will actually demonstrate the data, begin analysis and open the discussion.

I have presented the four research questions at the beginning of the chapter as well as the thesis. They are coherently interrelated, building from one question to the next. Based on the firm grounding of this data and methodology chapter, it is expected that the research questions can fully be answered in the chapters to follow.

# **Chapter 4:**

## **Quantitative Analysis on Linguistic Aspects of Japanese BBS Communication: Spoken-Oriented But Edited-Written**

### **4.1. Background and Objectives**

The study explores how language in CMC is similar to or different from speech and writing. These questions have been motivated by the author's earlier observation of Japanese BBS messages (Nishimura 2001, 2003b). There I reported BBS users' creative efforts to produce messages with unconventional orthography in conversational styles to meet their interactional purposes. While such discourse reminded the analyst of conversation, the medium through which the communication took place was computer technology. BBS participants manipulate language by entering words on the keyboard through word-processing software. This is essentially an act of writing. One question is: can the process and nature of message creation produce CMC messages more similar to writing than speech? It is true that some types of written language have spoken features, such as dramatic theatre (Lakoff 1982) and interview articles in magazines. Is the language of CMC, then, a kind of written language with spoken features added?

The primary questions to be investigated in this chapter are what aspects and/or features of the language in CMC quantitatively resemble or differ from speech and writing. Earlier observation of Japanese BBS messages indicated that there are differences in language use from one website to another (Nishimura 2005). As with variations in linguistic features in offline FTF interactions, variations exist in CMC contexts as well. As noted in earlier chapters, messages are contrasted from two major Japanese BBS websites, Channel 2 and Yahoo. The secondary questions to be asked are how messages

from the two websites differ linguistically from one another in view of variation in sociolinguistic study (Androutsopoulos 2006: p. 424). Thus the chapter makes two sets of comparisons: (1) CMC versus speech versus writing and (2) Channel 2 versus Yahoo.

The present study also employs Halliday's (1978) language functions as background theory. This gives a theoretical framework of language functions of communicative events. This framework seems to facilitate the understanding on the nature of CMC, speech and writing by observing how the factors differentiating one medium from another are related to the language functions Halliday identifies: "ideational" (p.45), "interpersonal" and "textual" (p.46).

This study specifically investigates CMC in the Japanese language. While research on English CMC has accumulated enormously over the past 20 years (Baron 2000, Crystal 2001, Herring ed. 1996), studies focusing on languages other than English have still been limited, even though the world's CMC population is not dominated by English speakers (Danet and Herring eds. 2007). As was pointed out in Chapter 2, there is a huge gap in CMC studies on non-English languages. The present work will begin to address this gap in the field of CMC by analysing CMC in Japanese.

This research is also expected to make methodological contributions to the study of CMC in Japanese, in that it adopts a corpus-based, quantitative approach to the morpheme level. The National Institute for Japanese Language is at the moment constructing a large-scale corpus of written Japanese<sup>1</sup>, which is equivalent to the Brown Corpus of written American English, the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of written British English and the British National Corpus and Co-Build Corpus. Corpus linguistics in Japanese lags behind that on English and other European language (see Wilson et al eds. 2003, which does not contain an article on Japanese). This study can show how corpus work can be conducted on the morpheme level in Japanese (see Chapter 3). It is expected that this work can contribute to (1) still limited CMC studies in Japanese, (2)

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<sup>1</sup> Currently a corpus of approximately a hundred million words in written Japanese is under compilation by the National Institute for Japanese Language in their five-year project called *Kotonoha* (see <http://www2.kokken.go.jp/kotonoha/> for details), which is expected to be completed in 2011. The National Institute of the Japanese Language did produce a large-scale spoken corpus mainly taken from public lectures. Because the sources are lectures, this spoken corpus is not used in this study.

corpus-based methodology for sociolinguistic research in Japanese, and (3) studies on variation in the CMC context.

The organisation of Chapter 4 is as follows. In Section 4.2, literature relevant to the specific areas of Chapter 4 is reviewed. Section 4.3 will briefly explain the data and methodology for this chapter. In the following Section 4.4, the results from statistical tests on the POS distribution figures are presented. In Section 4.5 possible interpretations of the test results will be discussed with respect to what linguistic functions the identified differentiating factors play in each communicative event of the media. Concluding remarks will be given in Section 4.6.

## **4.2. Literature Survey**

Before the emergence of CMC, differences between writing and speech attracted considerable attention (e.g. Ong 1982, Tannen ed. 1982, Ochs 1979). With respect to the Japanese language, Clancy (1982) compared oral and written narratives using the “Pear Story” silent film, in which children were picking up pears. This was shown to speakers of different languages. They were asked to produce written and spoken narratives of the story. Details on this cross-linguistic research project are reported in Chafe (ed.1980). Clancy (1982) investigated differences between spoken and written narratives in Japanese in verb morphology and particles. She discovered that because readers and writers do not know each other, personal involvement as expressed by sentence final particles are eliminated in writing. This is attributed to the difficulty of determining the appropriate level of politeness, as morphological endings for politeness are not used in writing (p. 75). Clancy’s findings on the linguistic characteristics of the two media have been helpful in the interpretation of the results of the three-media comparison in the present study. Furthermore, this work makes me realise the importance of the nature of the production and consumption of written texts. Clancy’s written data seemed to be hand-written, edited only by the authors themselves, and produced upon the request of the researcher for later research purposes. In contrast, the written data used in this study comes from printed and

published sources read and enjoyed by a large (remote) audience and modified by editors who may not be the original authors. These factors need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results, as these production/consumption situations could affect the output product.

In the tradition of Japanese linguistics, quantitative analysis has been conducted on a large scale by the National Institute for the Japanese Language, such as a survey on vocabulary and Chinese characters in 90 magazines published in 1962. In this laborious work at the time when there was far less computational support than today, the authors classified magazines into five groups. This study was specifically helpful in the data evaluation of written Japanese when selecting sources from a wide spectrum of magazines. They also included auxiliaries and particles in their analysis, and I share many of their approaches. This includes counting criteria for reduced forms and conjugatable forms (verbs, adjectives and auxiliary verbs).

Kabashima (1979) investigated percentages of POS distribution among nine different types of discourse, including spoken conversation, novels and newspapers. His analysis of POS ratios unfortunately excluded particles and auxiliaries. For the purpose of comparing CMC, speech and writing the counts of particles and auxiliaries are indispensable, as these two seem to play significant roles in characterising the language uses in the three media. Thus simple comparisons cannot be made with his results. As Hardie says, “comparison of different datasets cannot be assumed to be valid if the datasets in questions have been annotated according to different POS tagging system. (2007: p. 66)” Kabashima’s finding on the general tendency of POS ratio across different discourse types can only be considered a pioneering work of reference.

Linguistic aspects of CMC have been compared with speech and writing in English (Yates 1993, 1996, Collot & Belmore 1996). Among several subtypes of CMC, which include asynchronous email and BBS messages and synchronous chat messages, Collot & Belmore compare BBS messages with speech and writing within Biber’s (1988) multidimensional-multi-feature (MD-MF) model. As reviewed in Chapter 2, they find that

BBS representing CMC is close to interviews and professional and personal letters in Biber's continuum. They identify three factors contributing to these results: (1) degree of common knowledge and interest, (2) purpose of communication, and (3) three-party roles played by participants (sender, recipient and audience). It is unfortunate that there has been no comparable analysis applying Biber's model to analyse speech and writing in Japanese. However, Collot & Belmore's work gives insight on the language use in the three media, especially because their CMC data came from BBS messages and this study also investigates BBS messages. In Collot & Belmore's study, users' purpose of communication was seeking and giving information, while in my present study it is basically for entertainment and interaction. How participants view others on the BBS sites could also influence the way they communicate on the message boards. Such differences in the purposes of communication and the perception of the recipient and audience need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the messages and the test results.

In view of comparative analysis in the quantitative framework, this present study heavily draws on works by Yates (1993, 1996). As his work adopts Halliday's (1978) approach of linguistics to his analysis, discussed in Section 2.7.3 in Chapter 2, this chapter later will also examine some of the results from that perspective. Yates (1996) compares CMC with speech and writing contrasting CMC corpora of his own creation with established large-scale written and spoken corpora. Among other findings Yates discovers that CMC is distinct from speech and writing in personal pronoun uses and modal auxiliary uses. The use of these POS can be shown to highlight differences among the three, and such an approach can illuminate the differences drawn out of the present study.

Because of the unavailability of existing Japanese corpora, and also to meet the specific characteristics of the Japanese language and writing system, I have made two major modifications to Yates' approach. This modified analytical methodology works for analysing Japanese CMC in comparison to speech and writing. The first modification involves creation of smaller corpora of written and spoken Japanese and CMC. Secondly,

while the word is the basic unit of quantitative analysis in Yates' study, the morpheme, the smallest meaningful unit in the grammar of a language, takes this role in this study, because of the Japanese writing convention of placing no blank space between words<sup>2</sup>.

### 4.3. Data and Methodology

Recall Chapter 3, which gave a detailed account of the data and methodology for Chapter 4. The study conducts POS analyses of the morpheme level. Analyses on the morpheme level are made possible by ChaSen computer software, a morphological parser for the Japanese language. This award-winning software (2000) was developed at the Matsumoto Laboratory at Nara Institute of Science and Technology as tool for tagging POS.

ChaSen assigns every morpheme one of the nine POS, which are nouns, verbs, particles, auxiliary verbs (abbreviated as auxiliaries), adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prenominals and interjections<sup>3</sup>. This assignment is applied to CMC, spoken and written corpora in the same way. It should be noted that the ChaSen classification system of POS is different in a few categories from that of traditional Japanese grammar<sup>4</sup>. Also, one POS, for example, nouns, as classified by the software can differ from what is known as nouns in English grammar, as this software includes pronouns as a subcategory of nouns and does not regard pronouns as a major category. As this software works on the morpheme level, it also assigns POS to bound forms such as suffixes. More details on how the software works is explained later in Section 4.3.2.

Then two-fold comparison is conducted across the three kinds of corpora. First, differences among CMC, speech and writing are examined. In doing this, Channel 2 representing CMC is compared with speech and writing, and Yahoo representing CMC is

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<sup>2</sup> Although some texts for first graders in primary schools have blank space between words for very young readers, the practice of placing no blank space is a standard convention in written Japanese.

<sup>3</sup> Strictly speaking, ChaSen gives "fillers" and "other interjections" as separate POS. In this study, the category "interjections" include "fillers" and "other interjections."

<sup>4</sup> For example, in traditional grammar there is a class of words called "*keiyoudoushi*," which are semantically similar to functions of adjectives describing state and so on, but behaves similarly to nouns in terms of form. Because "*na*" is used instead of "*nō*" when modifying other nouns, this class of words is sometimes referred to as "*na*-nominals" (Jorden 1962) or "adjectival nouns" (Martin 1975: p.179). This class is treated as one POS in many studies of traditional Japanese grammar, but within the ChaSen system this class of words is categorised as noun, though the sub-categorisation of nouns clarifies this as stem of *keiyoudoushi*.

also contrasted with speech and writing. Second, within CMC, messages in Channel 2 and Yahoo are contrasted with one another against finer aspects of the variables. This comparison is schematically shown in Figure 4.1 below, which gives all the possible combination of comparisons. The straight line connecting two boxes indicates what is to be compared:

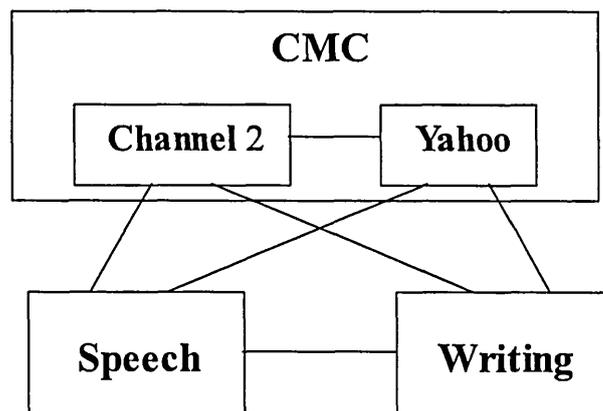


Figure 4.1: Two-fold comparison diagram

General procedures taken in this study are as follows:

- (1) Creation of CMC, spoken and written corpora
- (2) ChaSen application to each corpus to identify POS and further subcategories on the morpheme level to prepare for statistical tests to be applied
- (3) Comparative statistical analysis on the POS classified morphemes and their subcategories across each corpus. *Chi-square* tests are performed.

#### 4.3.1. Creation of the Corpora

In this section, how each corpus has been selected and created is explained briefly. For details on sources and selecting criteria, see Chapter 3. As a preview, the organisation of the corpora used in this chapter is schematically shown in Figure 4.2 below:

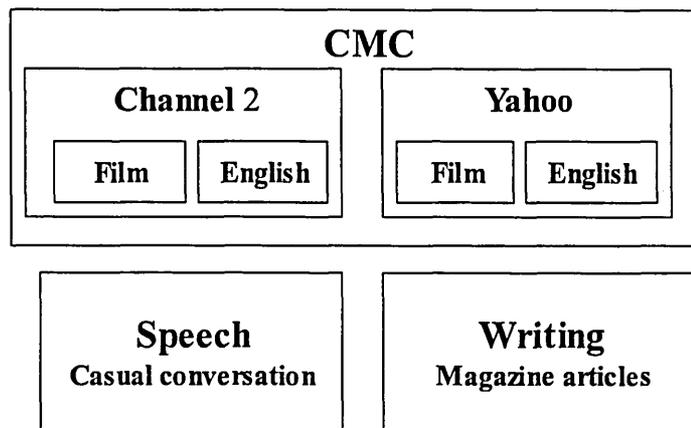


Figure 4.2: Organisation of the three corpora

How each corpus is created will be described next:

#### 4.3.1.1. CMC Corpora

The two CMC corpora came from two major BBS websites in Japan, Channel 2 and Yahoo. Though the actual messages are taken from two kinds of threads, on a film and on English, in this chapter the topics of messages are not differentiated. This differentiation will be relevant only in Chapter 6.

The entire messages used for this chapter underwent a cleaning process before ChaSen was applied. The cleaning process deleted from both sets of messages their message numbers, the time and date of posting and sender information. In addition, from Yahoo automated messages such as “this message is sent in response to XX [Message number] YY [Message sender’s user ID]” were also eliminated. Messages that consisted of URLs, ASCII art graphics, English words and phrases and non-linguistic symbols were also excluded from analysis. A general profile of the two CMC corpora is given in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: General profile of the two CMC corpora

Sources	Channel 2 <http://2ch.net>		Yahoo! Japan <http://messages.yahoo.co.jp/index.html>	
Message Title	No system for Message Titles		System for Message Titles	
Participant representation	Anonymous, referred to by consecutive message numbers		Yahoo User ID, Avatar setting available, but used by few participants	
Message format	Text, occasional ASCII art graphics		Text	
Category	Hobby	Academy	Entertainment	Language
Board	Cinema	English	Film	English
Thread	Pirates of the Caribbean	English language study (in Japan or abroad)	Pirates of the Caribbean	English language study (by working adults)
No of messages	4000	2814	1372	563
No of characters	288610	279305	252970	248223
Average length	72.2	99.3	184.4	440.9
Messages sent from	2003/6/2 8:58	2002/6/24 23:28	2003/7/31 4:55	2006/4/25 21:51
Messages sent to	2003/8/17 16:25	2007/3/22 5:00	2006/9/16 23:58	2006/7/18 10:27

#### 4.3.1.2. Spoken Corpora

As described in Chapter 3, the spoken corpus used in this study comes from transcriptions of conversation recordings made available to researchers by Mayumi Usami and her team.

The topics in this spoken corpus are common ones in daily life. The structural characteristics of morpheme usage in oral conversation are not likely to be particularly sensitive to topic choices when participants talk about everyday topics. The choice of this particular spoken corpus, therefore, is not considered to cause a serious problem in this study. The conversation participants in dyad are mostly university students of the same gender who have been friends. A brief summary of the spoken corpora, based on Usami's (2007) description, is given below in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Spoken data profile

Nature of talk	Relationship between dyad	Approximate age of participants	Gender of participants	No. of conversations	Length (minutes)	Proportion
Casual	Friends	Late teens to mid 20s	Women	26	538	41.4%
Casual	Friends	Late teens to mid 20s	Men	10	246	19.0%
Casual	First-time encounter	20s	Women	11	262	20.2%
Phone	Friends	18-23	Both	59	132	10.2%
Thesis supervision	Professor-student	Professors' age unknown, students in 20s	Both	10	120	9.2%
				116	1298	100.0%

Before ChaSen was applied, cleaning processes deleted contextual notes such as indication of laughter, the duration of silence and voice quality, together with special symbols used in transcription. Since the percentage of phone conversation in the recording time is comparatively small in overall FTF conversation, this study treated the whole spoken data without differentiating the mode.

#### 4.3.1.3. Written Corpora

The written data comes from several sources. See Chapter 3 for details on how they were selected and created. The selection is essentially based on comparability with CMC corpora with respect to topics (films and English language study). The addition of other topics discussed in the magazines for general readers is due to uncontrolled topics of the spoken data. After the sources were determined, processes of scanning and checking followed. Similar cleaning processes used for the CMC data, such as deleting English words and non-linguistic symbols, also took place. The sources of the written corpora are summarised in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: Written data profile

Sources (name of publication)	Year published	No. of characters	Proportion
<i>Screen</i>	2007	64544	14%
<i>Premier</i>	2003	102217	22%
<i>English Teachers Magazine</i>	2001	73284	16%
<i>Study Abroad Journal</i>	2006	22175	5%
<i>Weekly Asahi Magazine</i>	1996-1997	109310	24%
Several Business magazines	1998	84886	19%
	Total	456416	100%

### 4.3.2. ChaSen Application

When all the raw datasets from the three corpora were cleaned, ChaSen was applied. This software was downloaded from the ChaSen website at Nara Institute of Science and Technology <<http://chasen.aist-nara.ac.jp/chasen/distribution.html.en>> free of charge.

When this software is applied to Japanese texts, each of the morphemes that make up the whole sentence is assigned a POS. There are nine categories, which are nouns, verbs, particles, auxiliaries, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prenominals, and interjections. Some POS have subcategories; for example, nouns have over 30 subcategories. The result is given in text format, which needs to be saved in Excel for later text mining.

Among the POS categories, there is a major category, “symbols,” which includes periods, commas, opening and closing parentheses, and all other non-linguistic symbols. In the first ChaSen application, the system counted these symbols as morphemes. However, they were discarded from further analysis of the texts as a variable after the second application.

When ChaSen is unable to identify the POS of a certain morpheme, it assigns it the “unknown” category. In the initial ChaSen application, there was a high percentage of unknown morphemes (5.7 percent for Channel 2, 4.6 percent for Yahoo, 7.3 percent for speech and 3.4 percent for writing), which were reanalysed manually, to assign these

morphemes appropriate POS. More details on how the unknowns were treated are given in Section 4.3.4.

### 4.3.3. Statistical Tests

The overall research design is to investigate whether or not CMC is the same as or different from spoken or written language using the POS ratio as variables obtained from ChaSen. The following is an explanation of the probability model of morpheme usage employed in this study. Firstly, morpheme usage is assumed to be a random variable. In particular, when the subject speaks or writes, “a morpheme potential” falls into one of nine categories of morphemes with specific probability, and becomes a particular morpheme (such as noun). To be precise, the morpheme is a random variable distributed as multi-nominal distribution (probability law). Secondly, the subject is assumed to use a particular mode of morpheme usage (probability law) for particular situation (CMC, speech and writing). Thirdly, the observed frequency in CMC, spoken, and written corpora is realised observation of the random variable (morpheme usage) in a particular situation. Fourthly, the subject is said to use morphemes differently between, say, speech and writing if the morpheme-usage variable of speech is found to be different from that of writing. The *chi*-square test is performed to test the null hypothesis of no difference. The hypotheses to be tested are whether or not:

- 1) The representative Japanese speaker differentiates his or her use of a particular morpheme when communicating in CMC, speaking or writing. (The test is further subdivided into two: the first is to test whether the speaker uses morphemes in the same way for ALL of CMC, speaking and writing, and the second is pair-wise tests of the same question between two of the three modes.)
- 2) The representative Japanese speaker differentiates his or her use of a particular morpheme when communicating in Channel 2 or Yahoo. (This

is a test of whether the speaker uses morphemes in a particular morpheme category in the same way between the two.)

In order to determine whether the first hypothesis above holds or not, the nine POS categories were considered as relevant categories when conducting statistical tests. Then, to examine the second hypothesis, subcategories of the POS were used. Specifically, within the category of particles, case particles, which are attached to nouns and indicate grammatical relations of the nouns within a sentence, and sentence final particles, which appear at the end of the sentence to indicate the attitude of the speaker, were investigated. Also examined were the six subcategories of auxiliaries: *da* for plain copula, *ta* for past/imperfect aspect, *nai* for negative, *desu* for polite copula, *masu* for polite verbal ending, and *tai* for desiderative.

#### **4.3.4. The ChaSen Software and its Problems**

The ChaSen software is critical to the research, which is based on the software's POS assignment. Details on how ChaSen works as a tagging device are given with examples in Appendix 4. A. Here problems that have been identified with this software and problems actually encountered are explained, along with how they were resolved.

Because this software was developed based on written Japanese from newspaper articles, its performance as a tagger is fairly satisfactory on parsing standard written Japanese in both orthography and grammar. This means its performance for spoken Japanese and non-standard, dialectal Japanese poses some problems. Though a number of efforts have been made to increase its parsing precision for spoken Japanese (Uchimoto et al 2004), at the moment the difficulties remain and it is best to deal with them manually.

One problem lies in wrong POS assignments including the “Unknown” category. The wrong POS assignment seems to derive from incorrectly identified morpheme boundary and non-standard usage in grammar, vocabulary and orthography. As to the problem of “unknown” morphemes, there are several causes. One of them is relatively

new words of foreign origin including proper nouns. This kind is comparatively easy to amend by simply searching for Unknowns and replacing them with an appropriate POS such as proper nouns of personal surnames.

Once the software assigns a certain POS to a morpheme, detecting a wrong assignment is no easy task. Mistakes cannot be sought out like “Unknown.” One of the methods for finding wrong POS assignment was, in the case of forms that conjugate, to browse the base form of conjugatable categories (verbs, adjectives, and auxiliaries) in the POS-sorted list and look for unlikely morphemes. These entries are checked in the consecutively sequenced morpheme list (see Appendix 4. B for a sample page of sequenced morpheme list), which gives the environment in which the particular morpheme is used, and there the wrong POS assignment can be identified and corrected. Once detected, they can be fixed rather easily.

One reason for wrong POS assignment is wrong morpheme boundary. This problem caused by wrongly identified morpheme boundary concerns the Japanese orthography, which allows linguistic units to take multiple representations. In other words, an expression can be written either entirely in the syllabary of *hiragana*, *katakana* or such syllabary of *hiragana/katakana* in combination with *kanji*. Wrong POS assignment typically occurs when *hiragana* is involved, which makes multiple, even nonsensical, interpretations possible. When *kanji* scripts are used they stabilise the meaning, and the identification of the morpheme boundary is fairly accurate.

Here is an example of a wrong POS assignment. The two possible interpretations of the morpheme boundary for 見たいよ *mi ta i yo* are first 見たい *mi ta i* + よ *yo* and second 見た *mi ta* + だよ *i yo*. The first interpretation parses *mitai yo* “I want to see it, (really, I’m telling this to you),” which is a combination of 見 *mi* “to look at” and たい *tai* “want to,” plus the sentence final particle “yo” that adds the connotation of the speaker’s attitude. The second segmentation of the morphemes parses as 見 *mi* “to look at” and た *ta*, an auxiliary morpheme indicating the past/completion aspect, which together means “I saw (it),” plus だよ *iyō*, the imperative form of the verb *iru* “to be or to

stay.” Altogether the sentence when parsed this way, “I saw it; stay,” does not make sense.<sup>5</sup>

Here notice also such morphemes as the auxiliaries and sentence final particle are given in *hiragana* in standard Japanese orthography. As wrongly identified morpheme boundaries causing wrong POS assignment are prone to occur when *hiragana* representation is involved, the verbal morphology is one area to look for errors in POS assignment made by the software.

Another type of wrong POS assignment comes from unconventional orthography. For example, the use of unconventional *hiragana* to express a word that is conventionally given in *katakana*<sup>6</sup>, and vice versa, produces wrong POS assignment. For example, when こーひー *koôhiî*, “coffee,” a loan word is conventionally given in *katakana*, コーヒー *koohii*, entered in *hiragana*, こ is identified by the software as the imperfective form of the verb くる *kuru* “come,” ひ as continuative form of the verb ひる *hiru*, “dry up,” which is also an archaic verb and not part of contemporary vocabulary. The two lengthening bars (ー) are identified as unknown. Figure 4.3 below shows how ChaSen does this and compares the result of parsing with standard orthography.

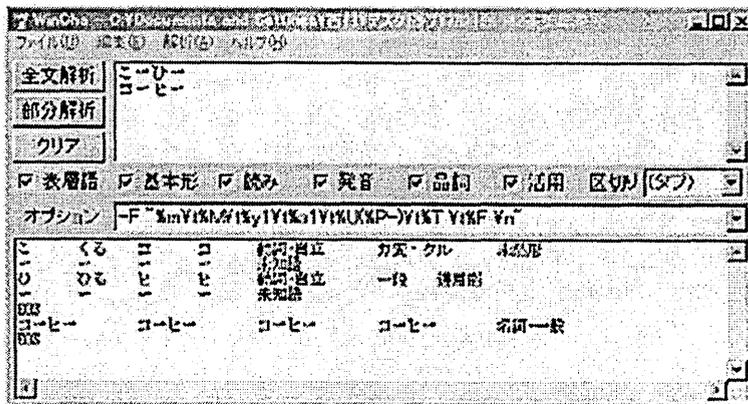


Figure 4.3: ChaSen application image in two orthographies

<sup>5</sup> *Iyo* is also an archaic form, not used in contemporary Japanese (speakers nowadays would use *iro* to express the imperative of the verb *iru*).

<sup>6</sup> For general distinction between *hiragana* and *katakana*, see the section Four Scripts in Japanese Orthography in Chapter 1.

On the other hand, *katakana* representation of words normally given in *hiragana* leads to mostly correct POS as proper nouns, but this is still another area of wrong POS tagging, as this is not always comparable to conventional orthography.

Systematic correction was possible in the POS-sorted spreadsheet, where the stem or the base form of conjugatable classes (verbs and adjectives) are improbable or unexpected words, such as the verb ひる *hiru*. Since this vocabulary is not in contemporary, ordinary use and is a very unlikely word, such words can be identified and corrected. For other types of errors, such as those involving wrong scripts, they were corrected when spotted. Although there may remain a small number of errors in POS assignment especially in the CMC corpora where there are more instances of unconventional scripts, they are not likely to affect my quantitative examination, which is thousands of morphemes.

Non-standard grammar and vocabulary, which includes dialectal forms of the morpheme also cause wrong POS assignment. Specifically, Channel 2 has certain vocabulary that is created, understood and enjoyed only by the users of the BBS site; outsiders may not understand such vocabulary. What can be referred to as Channel 2 dialect<sup>7</sup> also brings about wrong POS assignment. For example, the imperative form of the verb, to read, “*yome*,” is given in a *kanji* that means “bride,” because they share the same pronunciation. The software assigns “Noun” to the morpheme given the Chinese character for “bride,” even though what is meant by the poster is a verb and should be interpreted as “Verb.” The treatment of these instances was to reflect the intention of the message sender, so the POS was changed from Noun to Verb.

Each morpheme, consecutively numbered, is given the value of one at its occurrence, and the total values for each category of the nine variables were obtained by means of Excel’s pivot function. There were 7 Excel files for Channel 2, 6 files for Yahoo, 6 for speech, and 5 for written. The values for each POS in these separate files of each corpus were combined to obtain the grand total values of the POS for each of the corpora.

---

<sup>7</sup> Details on the Channel 2 specific language are explained in Nishimura (2003a)

The text remains in two formats, one in the POS sorted and the other in the consecutive order. The latter keeps the original order of the morphemes in CMC messages, conversation transcriptions and magazine articles and hence was often utilised when checking for errors. A sample of the latter text is given in Appendix 4.B.

#### 4.4. Results

In this section, results of the morpheme counts for each corpus are given before describing the results of the statistical tests performed. The overall morpheme distribution across the four corpora is given in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4: Overall POS distribution

	All Channel 2		All Yahoo		All Spoken		All Written	
Nouns	83664	34.9%	79165	33.0%	63305	26.6%	92350	38.5%
Particles	73842	30.8%	74541	31.1%	65729	27.6%	76023	31.7%
Verbs	35731	14.9%	36358	15.2%	32233	13.5%	33588	14.0%
Auxiliaries	27479	11.5%	31604	13.2%	25200	10.6%	21981	9.2%
Adverbs	6550	2.7%	7108	3.0%	13667	5.7%	5597	2.3%
Adjectives	5908	2.5%	4649	1.9%	5965	2.5%	3775	1.6%
Conjunctions	2663	1.1%	3003	1.3%	6080	2.6%	3275	1.4%
Prenominals	2122	0.9%	2102	0.9%	3615	1.5%	3036	1.3%
Interjections	1448	0.6%	1303	0.5%	22374	9.4%	94	0.0%
Total	239407	100%	239833	100%	238168	100%	239719	100%

Table 4.4 reflects morphemes after those in the unknown categories were processed and assigned appropriate categories. These figures constitute the basis for the following *chi*-square statistical tests.

I now turn to the results of the statistical tests performed. First reported is the three-mode comparison among CMC (Channel 2 and Yahoo), speech and writing; second, pair-wise comparison of all the possible combinations of the four corpora; and finally results of the statistical analysis when subcategories of particles and auxiliaries are taken for examination. *Chi*-square tests discerning distributional difference are performed in all

cases. All tables (Tables A.1 through A. 28) for the statistical tests are relegated to Appendix 4.C in order to avoid interruption of the text by many complex tables.

#### **4.4.1. Are Morphemes Used in CMC, Speech and Writing ALL Alike?**

Tables A.1 and A.2 in Appendix 4.C examine whether the (representative) speaker differentiates between CMC, speech and writing in his or her usage of particular morphemes. The nine categories of morphemes, which are nouns, particles, verbs, auxiliaries, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, pronominals and interjections are considered as variables. Table A.1 takes Channel 2 for CMC, while in Table A.2 Yahoo represents CMC. In both tables, the occurrence frequency of each morpheme category per one thousand morphemes is calculated for CMC, speech and writing.

For each of the four corpora of the three modes, a roughly comparable number of morphemes have been collected and classified to each category: 239,407 for CMC (Channel 2), 239,833 for CMC (Yahoo), 238,168 for speech, and 239,719 for writing. The criterion of “per one thousand morphemes” is adopted here partly because it gives us roughly similar data often encountered in other fields of science such as medicine, and partly because it enables international comparison. For example, Yates (1996: p. 42) employs a similar criterion in his analysis of modal auxiliary uses in large English corpora of CMC, speech and writing.

Both tables soundly reject the null hypothesis that the speaker uses morphemes in the same way across CMC, speech and writing. The *chi*-square test in Table A.1 shows that the null hypothesis is rejected at the significance level of  $p < 0.00$  i.e.  $\Pr(\chi^2 \geq 53.58135568) = 0.00$ ). Thus we can reasonably infer that the speaker in fact differentiates between CMC, speech and writing. It should be noted that what I establish here is that the speaker does not use morphemes in the same way across ALL of the three modes. That is, the rejection of this hypothesis means that at least one mode is different from the other. In the pair-wise comparison below, speech is shown to be different from the other two. The same is true for Table A.2. Regardless of the choice between Channel 2

and Yahoo for CMC, the speaker apparently uses morphemes differently among CMC, speech and writing.

A natural question then arises: In what way are the three modes different? In particular, is there a factor that decisively influences the choice of morphemes among the three modes? The answer to the last question happens to be positive, as Tables A.3 and A.4 indicate. They show that interjections are the most important differentiating factor.

The variable Interjection includes what ChaSen identifies as interjections and fillers. Interjection in general is “a natural ejaculation expressive of some feeling or emotion, used or viewed as a Part of Speech. So called because, when so used, it is interjected between sentences, clauses, or words, mostly without grammatical connexion...” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Fillers refer to “a broad range of utterances ... that do not carry identifiable or relevant propositional meaning” (Maynard 1989: p. 30). What actually are interjections and fillers and their role in Japanese conversation will be explained more in detail in Section 4.5.

Table A.3 (Channel 2 for CMC) and Table A.4 (Yahoo for CMC) report the *chi*-square test of the form of Tables A.1 and A.2 respectively, except for interjections. In both cases, data is now consistent with the null hypothesis that the speaker does not differentiate among the three modes (CMC, speech and writing) in his or her usage of morphemes. If we exclude interjections we can no longer reject the hypothesis of no difference between CMC, speech and writing.

#### **4.4.2. Pair-wise Comparison**

So far I have examined whether all three modes are alike or not in terms of the usage of morphemes. I now turn to pair-wise comparison. In particular, I try to clarify whether CMC is close to speech or writing, or different from both, in the way that the speaker uses morphemes. The *chi*-square test of the null hypothesis of no difference is conducted with respect to all combinations of pair-wise comparison from Table A.5 through Table A.10, which are:

Speech and writing in Table A.5,  
 CMC (Yahoo) and speech in Table A.6,  
 CMC (Yahoo) and writing in Table A.7,  
 CMC (Yahoo) and CMC (Channel 2) in Table A.8,  
 CMC (Channel 2) and speech in Table A.9,  
 CMC (Channel 2) and writing in Table A.10.

The results are summarized in Figure 4.4, where a thick two-way arrow represents that datasets are consistent with the null hypothesis that both ends of the arrow are not different, while a thin two-way arrow with two crossing short lines of negation shows that the null hypothesis is rejected in that both ends are in fact different. Finally, shaded boxes indicate that they are similar (not different from each other).

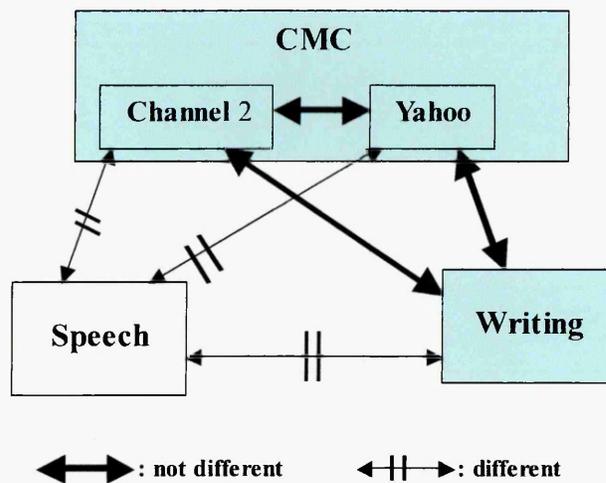


Figure 4.4: All morphemes

Tables A.5 through A.10, summarized in Figure 4.4, reveal that CMC is clearly different from speech. In contrast, CMC is rather similar to writing. In addition, two corpora within CMC, Channel 2 and Yahoo, are not different from each other with respect to the speaker's usage of morphemes.

In Tables A.3 and A.4, I have shown that the most decisive factor in differentiating CMC, speech and writing is interjections: without interjections, the three modes are not different from one another. I now examine whether this is also the case in pair-wise comparison. So I conducted the pair-wise *chi*-square test of Tables A.5 through A.10 *excluding interjections*. The results are reported in Tables A.11 through A.16, and summarized in Figure 3. It is evident that there is no difference between all the pairs, regardless of whether CMC is represented by Channel 2 or Yahoo. Thus, it is confirmed that interjections are a decisive factor to obtain the results reported in Figure 4.5.

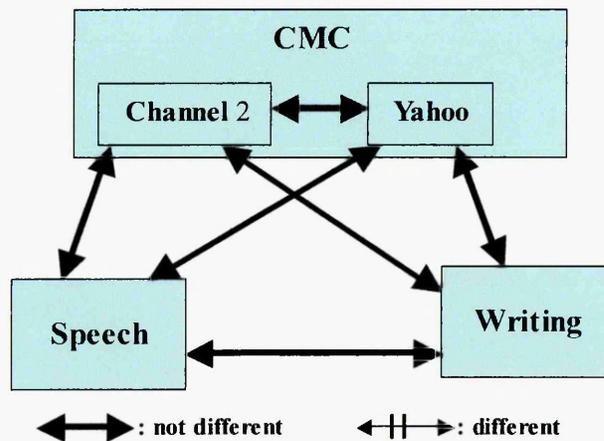


Figure 4.5: All morphemes excluding interjections

#### 4.4.3. “Micro” Structural Difference: Particles and Auxiliaries

Even though difference may not be detected at a “macro” level of all morphemes excluding interjections among CMC, speech and writing, there is still a possibility of difference of a particular category of morphemes on a “micro” level. Here this study focuses on two of the categories, particles and auxiliaries. The datasets are the same as in the morpheme analysis of the previous sections.

##### 4.4.3.1. Particles

Let us first consider particles. Here there are three subcategories: case, sentence

final, and all other. Table A.17 examines whether the speaker differentiates CMC (Channel 2) and speech in his or her usage of these subcategories, while the pair is writing and speech in Table A.18, CMC (Yahoo) and writing in Table A.19, CMC (Yahoo) and speech in Table A.20, CMC (Channel 2) and writing in Table A.21, and finally Yahoo and Channel 2 in Table A.22. In all tables the occurrence frequency is “per three hundred particles” rather than one thousand in the case of all morphemes. The number of particles in my dataset is 73,842 for Channel 2, 74,541 for Yahoo, 65,729 for speech, and 76,023 for writing. The entire number of the morphemes is roughly 240,000 for each of the corpora, while particles are about 74,000, around three tenths of the whole in each corpus. Consequently, I use the “per three hundred” measure to make particle analysis of this section comparable with that of the previous sections.

The results are summarized in Figure 4.6. The speaker seems not to differentiate between Channel 2 and Yahoo in CMC. In contrast, CMC and speech, CMC and writing, and speech and writing are all different from one another. The speaker apparently uses particles differently between them.

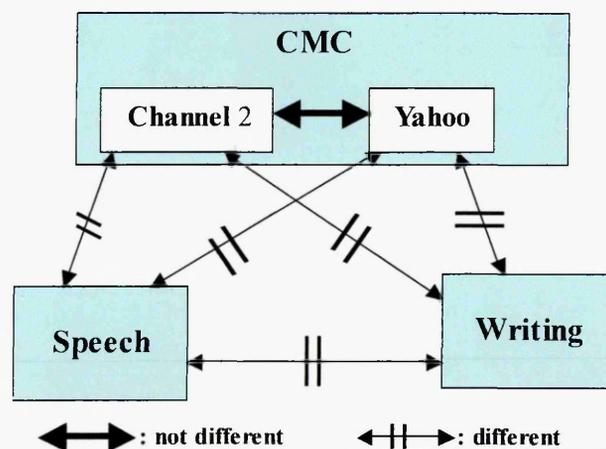


Figure 4.6: Particles

#### 4.4.3.2. Auxiliaries

Finally, auxiliaries are examined in Tables A.23 through A.28. In the case of auxiliaries, there are seven sub-categories: plain copula-*da*, past-*ta*, negative-*nai*, polite copula-*desu*, polite-*masu*, desiderative-*tai* and all other. In a similar way to the preceding analysis of particles, I investigate difference between CMC (Channel 2) and speech in Table A.23, writing and speech in Table A.24, CMC (Yahoo) and writing in Table A.25, CMC (Yahoo) and speech in Table A.26, CMC (Channel 2) and writing in Table A.27, and finally Channel 2 and Yahoo in Table A.28. The number of auxiliaries in my data set is 27,479 for Channel 2, 31,604 for Yahoo, 25,200 for speech, and 21,981 for writing. Thus, the number of auxiliaries is roughly one tenth of the entailer morphemes. Consequently, I use the “per one hundred” measure to make this auxiliaries analysis comparable with the rest of the morpheme analysis.

The results are summarized in Figure 4.7. This figure shows closeness between Channel 2 and speech. The figure also reveals a distinctive characteristic of Yahoo. Yahoo is different from all the other modes in the usage pattern of auxiliaries, even from Channel 2 within the same CMC category.

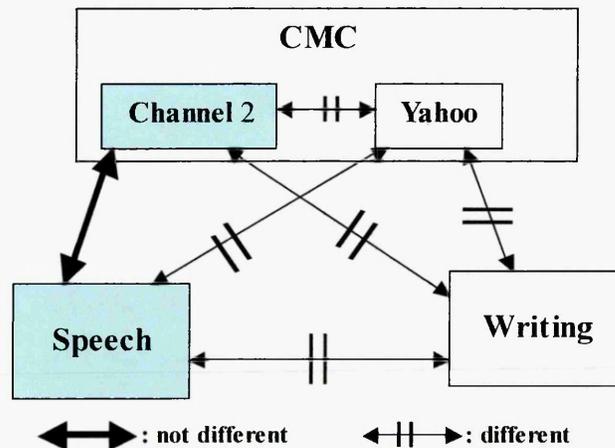


Figure 4.7: Auxiliaries

So far the results obtained from the *chi*-square tests have been reported. In the next

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section these results are interpreted and discussed from linguistic, interactional, and socio-cultural perspectives.

## 4.5. Discussion

### 4.5.1. Overall Comparison

Let us recall now what was the hypothesis to be tested:

(1) The representative speaker of Japanese does not differentiate his or her usage of morphemes among CMC, speech and writing.

(2) The representative speaker of Japanese does not differentiate his or her usage of morphemes between Channel 2 and Yahoo.

The statistical test results when all categories of morphemes are taken into consideration, enable us to consider that s/he differentiates speech from CMC and writing and that the decisive factor that influences the distinction is found to be interjections. This result gives a positive answer to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter--whether CMC is similar to writing.

This result seems to come from the medium-specific characteristic of speech. In CMC and writing, the message sender's interlocutor/audience or the reader of the written text is not physically co-present, but is only remotely present, and there is not much room for the interjections to play a role in the communicative event. In contrast, in speech, where the speaker and the listener share the communicative space, interjections play a crucial role in enhancing the flow of conversation. They indicate that the listener is really paying attention to the speaker and manifest the speaker/hearer's involvement to the conversation situation.

Interjections in Japanese have been found to function as discourse markers (Onodera 2004). Counterparts in English, such as "oh," "well," "you know," and the like have been studied intensively (Schiffrin 1987, 2001). Interjections in the spoken corpus include *un*, *aa*, *nanka*, and the like, and can be equivalent to English discourse markers. It is necessary to look at interjections further in order to understand why they occur so

frequently and distinguish speech from CMC and writing.

Let us look at what lexical morphemes are included in the category of interjections. A list of the top 30 most frequently used morphemes in the spoken corpus is given in Appendix 4.D. The list shows a very high frequency of *un*, which are uttered by the listener and inserted during the turn of his or her conversation partner. In the original transcript by Usami's team, many of them are marked as insertion. This kind of morpheme, *un*, can be considered as backchannels or *aizuchi*.

On backchannels, Maynard says, "A continuous flow of back channel facilitates conversation management between Japanese speakers and listeners, and this continuous feedback in casual conversation is the norm within the Japanese speech community" (1989: p. 177). Maynard's observation on this phenomenon explains the high frequency of *un* and its variant forms (such as *uun*): they are backchannels facilitating a smooth, harmonious conversation. Fillers can be used to "construct the content of the utterance in such a way as to achieve maximum agreeableness to the recipient" (Maynard 1989: p.31). What ChaSen identifies as interjections thus offer important source for achieving "a casual friendly discourse with a pleasant emotional appeal to one's partner" in conversation (Maynard 1989: p.31).

The *chi*-square test results are consistent with what has been observed in conversational interaction; thus this study quantitatively reveals that interjections in fact distinguish speech in casual conversational interaction from CMC and writing.

From the *chi*-square test results excluding interjections, Japanese speakers are considered to use the language in a structurally similar manner, even when the medium of communication changes, except for interjections that facilitate smooth communication. To put it differently, the representative Japanese speaker prioritizes smooth and agreeable communication in FTF communication so highly as to use interjections far more heavily than the other two.

Recall again that the morphemes are considered as linguistic categories of the nine POS and the distribution of the morphemes reflects the structural organization of the

language as a whole. If we only looked at the morpheme use on a macro level as a whole, we would lose sight of finer details. Next let me consider a micro level, that is, subcategories of two of the nine categories, particles and auxiliaries.

#### 4.5.2. Comparison of Particles

The pair-wise statistical test results on the three subcategories of particles indicate that the representative speaker does not make distinction between the two CMC (Channel 2 and Yahoo) in the usage of these morphemes. In contrast, he or she does differentiate morpheme usage between all the rest of the possible combinations, which are Channel 2 and speech, Channel 2 and writing, Yahoo and speech, Yahoo and writing, and speech and writing. These results may again suggest that there exist medium-specific differences between CMC and writing on the microscopic level of particle usage, in addition to the medium-specific differences of speech from CMC and writing on the macro level of interjections discussed in Section 4.5.1. In other words, uses of the subcategory particles clearly differentiate CMC from writing.

In explaining the interjection as the differentiating factor of speech from CMC and writing, the sharing communicative space among conversation participants was regarded as the cause of differentiation. In CMC and writing, the physical communicative space is not shared between the writer and the recipients, and yet the statistical figures tell us that they are different. In what way do the differences exist?

As revealed in the macro analysis, particle usage as a whole does not show differences, and thus we further need to look at the subcategories of particles. Here particles are broken down into three subcategories: case, sentence final and all other particles. Case particles in the subcategories of ChaSen POS are used to express *kaku* (“case”) *jyoshi* (“particle”), and sentence final particles to refer to *shyuu* (“final”) *jyoshi*. Those morphemes whose POS assignment is *kaku jyoshi ippan* (“general”) are counted as case particles, and those which have the POS assignment of *shyuu jyoshi* are entered as sentence final particles in the morpheme count of this chapter. Looking at the comparative

percentages of particle breakdown, which is given in Table 4.5 below, a distinctive pattern of difference surfaces.

Table 4.5: Particle breakdowns

Subcategories	All Channel 2		All Yahoo		All spoken		All written	
Case	21426	29.0%	23579	31.6%	12313	18.7%	28986	38.1%
Sentence final	5520	7.5%	4200	5.6%	12603	19.2%	820	1.1%
All other	46896	63.5%	46762	62.7%	40813	62.1%	46217	60.8%
Particles total	73842	100%	74541	100%	65729	100%	76023	100%

The differences are brought on by two variables, case particles and sentence final particles. While the number of total particles in each corpus is not too different, the figures of the two subcategories, case and sentence final particles differ greatly across the four corpora. Regarding sentence final particles, we can see the very large percentage in speech (19.2%), very small percentage in writing (1.1%), and in between the two, Channel 2 (7.5%) and Yahoo (5.6%) taking the middle position with relatively close percentages within CMC. With respect to the case particles, similar phenomena are observed though in the opposite direction, from the lowest in speech (18.7%) to the highest in written (38.1%), and CMC in the middle (around 30%).

Then what exactly are these particles and what do they do? Martin adds a term “noun postpositions” to refer to particles, saying “Some of the build-up phrases can be SPECIFIED by particles that narrow down (or sharpen) the grammatical relationship of the phrase to the rest of the sentence” (1975: p. 38). These kinds of particles, as characterised by the above quote, are the case particles treated in this chapter, which are shown to have the grammatical function of the subject (*ga*), object (*wo*), goal (*made*), source (*kara*) and so on in a sentence.

On the other hand, sentence final particles, which are also referred to by Martin as “final particles,” add the speaker’s attitude toward the communicative event. They are used, according to Martin, “to impart some additional hint of the speaker’s attitude toward what he is saying—doubt, conviction, caution, inquiry, confirmation or request for confirmation, recollection, etc” (1975: p. 914). Among these particles, *na* and *ne* are

regarded as particles of rapport, as they show the speaker's consideration to the addressees (Uyeno 1971: p. 132). Maynard remarks, "in general, frequent insertion of particles encourages rapport between the conversation partners and achieves a closer monitoring of the partners' feelings" (1989: p. 28).

The category of all other includes the topic particle (*wa*), quotative (*to*), "also," (*mo*), "even" (*sae*), and so on. The Japanese terminology for some of these particles in the "all other" category is *kakari jyoshi*, which directly translates "relational particles," because many of them are used in relation to other elements in a sentence. Here these additional particles are grouped into one, as further subdividing this category does not seem to be necessary in the discussion of comparing CMC and writing.

From these descriptions on two different kinds of particles, case and sentence final particles, the latter play a more significant role in explaining the medium-specific difference between CMC and writing. As has been explained, the function of sentence final particles is to express the speaker's involvement and consideration to the listener in the conversation or partner in a communicative event. It is natural that they occur very frequently in casual conversation in a similar way that interjections are used.

The difference between CMC and writing seems to lie in how the message recipients in the case of CMC and readers in writing are viewed by message senders of CMC and the writers of written texts. Though writing can sometimes be regarded as "written communication", the communicative aspects involving the reader or the audience seems less clear, compared to CMC, in which message exchanges take place frequently and the messages can be addressed to a specific BBS participant. In short, CMC messages are created to "talk to" the addressees, even though they are "written" on the keyboard, while written texts are created not to address specific readers but for a general, abstract and remote audience. In this kind of written communication there will be far less room for rapport, involvement, and consideration to emerge, which explains the small percentage of sentence final particles in the written corpus, and CMC's percentages closer to spoken corpus.

Within the same category of particles, at least two different kinds of particles are included. From the viewpoint of the functions in the sense used by Halliday (1978) these two have different functions. Case particles, which specify grammatical relations of the nouns, are more concerned with ideational functions of language, while sentence final particles, which show rapport and consideration are more directly related to interpersonal functions of language. These will be discussed in Section 4.5.4.

### 4.5.3. Comparison of Auxiliaries

The *chi-square* test results make it possible to discern that the representative speaker of Japanese differentiates use of auxiliaries between even the two CMC corpora, Channel 2 and Yahoo. Also, as depicted in Figure 4.5, Channel 2 and speech are alike with respect to auxiliary usage. This supports my initial observation on the closeness between Channel 2 and speech. Let us look at subcategories of auxiliaries more in detail in order to clarify specifically what variables brings about these results.

Closeness of the two CMC (Channel 2 and Yahoo) was pointed out when discussing the result of particles regarding the sentence final particle usages. However, with respect to auxiliary uses, these two CMC media are found to be different. The seven variables within the subcategory of auxiliaries are: plain copula-*da*, past-*ta*, negative-*nai*, polite copula-*desu*, polite-*masu*, desiderative-*tai* and all other. The auxiliary breakdowns are given below in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6: Auxiliary breakdowns

Subcategories	All Channel 2		All Yahoo		All spoken		All written	
Plain Copula- <i>da</i>	8809	32.1%	5535	17.5%	9111	36.2%	8665	39.4%
Past- <i>ta</i>	7873	28.7%	6896	21.8%	5608	22.3%	6278	28.6%
Negative- <i>nai</i>	3823	13.9%	2742	8.7%	3868	15.3%	2678	12.2%
Polite copula- <i>desu</i>	2217	8.1%	6305	20.0%	2888	11.5%	431	2.0%
Polite - <i>masu</i>	1857	6.8%	6273	19.8%	636	2.5%	516	2.3%
Desiderative- <i>tai</i>	484	1.8%	553	1.7%	592	2.3%	268	1.2%
All other	2416	8.8%	3300	10.4%	2497	9.9%	3145	14.3%
Auxiliaries total	27479	100%	31604	100%	25200	100%	21981	100%

The function of these auxiliary morphemes differs. Plain copula-*da*, attached after nouns, contrast with polite copular-*desu* in the politeness level. However, polite-*masu*, attached to verbs, does not have a corresponding plain form. This is because the plain auxiliary for verbs is realized by “zero” auxiliary, or without attaching anything or with a sentence final particle at best. Past-*ta* can be added to all the rest of the auxiliaries, to express events that have already happened.

Though Channel 2 and Yahoo were similar in the morpheme percentages of case and sentence final particles, these two examples of CMC turn out to be different with respect to auxiliary uses. This difference seems to lie in the predominant use of polite *desu* (20.0%) and *masu* (19.8%) in Yahoo, in contrast to much smaller percentage of *desu* (8%) and *masu* (7%) in Channel 2.

How do we interpret the differences among CMC and why is one similar to speech? To answer this question, we need to take the BBS sites as a kind of “speech community,” as in the case of offline context where variations of linguistic forms are identified. Since the background demographic information of the participants is unidentifiable, it is perhaps not appropriate to apply research methods of this variationist approach directly to CMC. However, the results in Section 4.4.3.2. clearly indicate that variation does exist within CMC. Though more details on online speech community are explained later in Chapter 6, I will point out for now that the variation can be explained by the existence of particular online communities, and that the key to forming online community is the interest of the participants in the subject matter discussed, which determines the site one chooses to post on. The preference for a particular BBS site among BBS users has affected users’ choice in language use on the BBS site. We should consider how these two BBS sites are recognised socially by the users and the vast population in Japan. The answers to these questions will be clarified in the course of the thesis.

As an additional observation on Table 4.6, only Yahoo has a higher percentage of polite morphemes than Channel 2; speech and writing have much smaller figures. The smaller figures for speech and writing seem born of different reasons. As to writing,

remember first the datasets come from published magazines for the consumption of the general public. One study on the uses of plain (*-da*, and *-de aru*<sup>8</sup>), and polite forms (*-desu*) in popular magazine's essay articles (Tsujiura 1960) found predominant uses of plain styles; out of 159 essays, only 6 essays used exclusively polite forms; 48 used exclusively plain forms, 3 used the mixture of the three forms (two plain forms and the polite form) and the rest used mixture of the two plain forms.

Another study on the style difference on Japanese language textbooks in grammar school to high school showed that the plain styles increased from the lowest 2.6 percent for the second-grader reader to 54 percent for the sixth-grade students' textbooks, 58.8% middle-school textbooks and 82.7% for high school students textbooks (Nishio 1961). These studies show the default form in adults' writing is the plain style and the writers in the written datasets seem to have followed the norm. Under the circumstance of default plain style, editors in the publishing field could influence the style choice, should the author have employed the (polite) style that the editors regarded as inappropriate for any one particular publication<sup>9</sup>.

Second, on the small percentage of polite forms in the spoken data, Maynard (1989) states:

Verb forms in the language of casual conversation are characterised by, among others, non-polite forms, frequently accompanied by auxiliary verbs and/or particles. ... Polite endings appear in directly quoted speech spoken to a social superior or in speech that takes place in less casual situations in which normally polite forms are expected (p. 37).

In casual conversation among peers, use of plain forms is also unmarked. Use of polite forms in these contexts could stand out and need some reasons for marked uses. The speakers in the dataset are mostly friends and the conversation is on everyday matters; they exhibit these unmarked uses of plain forms in casual conversations. The spoken datasets used in this study include student-teacher thesis supervision sessions, and

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<sup>8</sup> Though Tsujimura (1960) distinguished *-da* and *-de aru* in his study, here both are treated as plain style, as they contrast with polite forms. *-de aru* style is a variant of plain form, and the difference from *-da* form, is in its bookish, and decisive tone, which the *-da* style may not have.

<sup>9</sup> Anecdotally, authors can use polite styles in the preface and postscripts of books, though the main body of the books should be in the plain style. Also newspaper editors designate the style when they ask authors to write articles for their publication (Kiyohiko Nishimura, personal communication).

the occurrence rate of polite forms in these contexts where hierarchical relations are involved is doubly higher than the than the average, which is 23.1 percent for polite copula-*desu* and 6.1 percent for polite *-masu* forms.

From the discussion above, users in Channel 2 seem to regard their interaction partners as peers, or close friends who they can talk to in plain style. Details of these interactions will be explored in qualitative discussion in Chapters 5 and 6.

#### **4.5.4. From the Perspective of Halliday's (1978) Language Functions**

Within subcategories of particles and auxiliaries, different language functions in the sense used by Halliday (1978) are apparently observed based on the choice of particular morphemes. In the case of auxiliaries, past-*ta*, negative-*nai*, and desiderative-*tai* seem to play the role of “language expressing a content, or what can be referred to “ideational” function: language as expressing the speaker’s experience of the external world, and of his own internal world, that of his own consciousness” (Halliday 1978: p. 45). On the “interpersonal” function of language, Halliday (1978) states, “language as expressing relations among participants in the situation, and the speaker’s own intrusion into it” (p. 46). The remaining three subcategories of auxiliaries, plain copula-*da*, polite copula-*desu*, and polite *-masu* seem to be more concerned with these interpersonal functions, as they signify levels of politeness and formality, and politeness is a concept that is most noticeably present in managing interpersonal relationship.

Case particles seem to embody the ideational function most directly, since the content of a message cannot be expressed explicitly and unambiguously without specifying who does what. Sentence final particles, in contrast, are among those linguistic means that are concerned with interpersonal functions in the terminology of Halliday, as they involve not only the speaker him/herself, but also his or her addressee in that they supply rapport, involvement, consideration and other attitudes toward the hearer in communicative events. Also, recall the interjection, which was found to be the differentiating factor of speech from CMC and writing. It seems that this particular POS

of interjection also carries the interpersonal function together with sentence final particles, as interjection can signal the hearer's involvement in the communicative situations.

When reflecting on what linguistic communication really is, it is not for conveying the contents alone. Rather interpersonal functions are equally or even more important where physical proximity is lacking such as on CMC and written communication. The differences in the three media clarified so far could tell us that since interjection in the form of backchannels in conversation is technologically impossible in CMC, other linguistic means such as sentence final particles and polite auxiliaries embody in CMC the interpersonal functions, which are more easily realised in one medium (speech) than other media (CMC and writing).

One more advantage of employing Halliday's framework is its potential to allow cross-linguistic comparison. Though this perspective is beyond the scope of the thesis, insights available from studies on English have presented directions of the present research and sharpened understanding on how these language functions are realised on the three media by what kinds of linguistic means in the case of Japanese. For a cross-linguistic comparison, a framework that does not depend on particularities of specific languages is necessary, and Halliday's can be such a theory. In this respect, Yates' (1996) finding on similarity of CMC to speech with respect to modal auxiliaries can be interpreted in a similar manner to the situation of Japanese. These modal auxiliaries can be considered as carrying interpersonal functions, which in Japanese are embodied by sentence final particles, which make CMC similar to speech.

For example, in English uses of modal auxiliaries in conjunction with other grammatical constructions, such as "would it be possible to visit...?", "I may be able to visit..." and "I shall visit ..." can encode the speaker's stance or considerations and attitudes toward the hearer or message recipient in a particular communicative situation. Without taking the trouble of directly translating these into Japanese, the Hallidayan framework allows cross-linguistic comparison. The notion of language functions is not considered to be restricted to particular languages, but is a general, universally applicable

concept. By pointing out the fact that interpersonal functions realised by such linguistic means as modal auxiliaries in English can be realised by other means such as sentence final particles in Japanese, language specific analyses on how the functions are realised could enable linguists to clarify yet other aspects in the nature of language and communication in general. I should point out also that such perspectives could be brought about through the comparison of CMC, speech and writing.

Conversely, it would be of interest to see the role of interjections in English, as differentiating speech from CMC and writing in the case of Japanese. Would interjections in the spoken corpus in English play a similar role in facilitating language functions in Halliday's sense? If not, studies of CMC in comparison with speech and writing could potentially shed light on the comparative differences in the flow of conversation between English and Japanese. As has been pointed out, Japanese conversation is filled with interjections including frequent backchannels and fillers. Whether or not this is the case in English conversation could be determined through two-fold comparisons, namely comparison across the media in respective languages and comparison of these results cross-linguistically using a universally applicable framework. Such approaches could enable researches to characterise better the nature of the three different media in general as well as their language specific aspects on the three media.

#### **4.5.5. Summing-up: Results and Implications**

In comparison CMC seems closer to writing than speech in general. Speech has a distinctive variable of interjections, which differentiates it from CMC and writing. Although spoken qualities have been incorporated in CMC in conscious efforts by CMC users, it seems they do not pay attention to interjections, which conversation participants produce unconsciously for enhancing the flow of conversation. Though conversation is very much filled with fillers and interjections, CMC users who attempt to create speech-like messages fail to reproduce interjections in their messages in a way similar to conversation. Thus the language of CMC can be described as "spoken-oriented, but

edited-written,” and what seems to be unconsciously uttered in conversation is not largely expressed in the output messages.

CMC users attempt to create messages with spoken features, or those features they consider to be spoken. Their conscious attempts are manifested by sentence final particles. The incorporation of the sentence final particles seems to do no more than sprinkle spoken flavour and create the atmosphere of conversation. The particle breakdown results of comparison analysis show significant differences between the three media, while the difference between the two CMC corpora is not significant.

Between the two BBS websites, the study finds significant differences in the use of auxiliaries. Among the subcategories of auxiliaries, Channel 2 shows significantly fewer occurrences of polite auxiliaries than Yahoo. The uses of the polite auxiliaries in both spoken and written are also small; they seem to appear in the corpora for different, medium-specific reasons. The reason for the fewer uses in Channel 2 seems to be shared by the few uses in the spoken corpus. Thus, with respect to the subcategory of usage of auxiliaries, Channel 2 is more similar to spoken than written. The difference in polite auxiliary uses between Channel 2 and Yahoo seems to come from how the users in these two websites view their BBS interaction partners and the entire audience in the CMC context, and how these two sites are technologically constructed.

This study identifies interjections as a differentiating factor of speech from writing and CMC. The language of CMC as a whole, based on the corpora investigated, is basically written structurally in terms of the entire POS distribution, though particle uses differentiate CMC from writing. Between the two CMC corpora variations exist on the use of polite auxiliary morphemes.

The variation is not based on parameters that sociolinguistics has developed and employed, including geographical location, occupation, ethnicity, social class, age and gender. When such socio-demographic background information on interaction participants is unavailable, the identifiable information is on the shared interest in the subject matter, and technical settings of the BBS site. Also, social recognition and other

sociological information of BBS sites could be factors to explain the differences. Thus in the context of CMC, other factors that contribute to the differences need to be considered in place of the traditional factors to describe variation. Here the factors of shared interests among participants, technological settings and social recognition of the BBS sites are considered to influence the choice of particular auxiliary morphemes that lead to the existence of variations.

## **4.6. Concluding Remarks**

### **4.6.1. Brief Summary**

This chapter has adopted a quantitative approach to analyse linguistic aspects of CMC contrasting with speech and writing. It has been clarified that language in CMC as a whole is closer to writing than speech and the factor that differentiates speech from both CMC and writing is interjections. This chapter has also identified that uses of particles differentiate CMC from speech and writing. Specifically, sentence final particles explain the huge gap between speech and writing, and CMC is shown to take the middle position in the continuum of speech to writing. Finally, the chapter has clarified that with respect to subcategories of auxiliary uses, i.e. uses of polite auxiliaries, differences within the two CMC corpora have been identified. That is, higher uses of polite auxiliaries occurred in Yahoo.

This present study has demonstrated that with the use of an existing corpus tool quantitative analyses to portray characteristics of CMC, speech and writing in terms of POS ratio can be conducted. Studies on CMC in the Japanese language are still limited and this present work can be one of those that fill the research gap. This study also identified that variation exists between two BBS corpora and suggested approaches to identify and describe variations in CMC contexts. Instead of socio-cultural indicator, topics and purpose of BBS interaction, as well as technological settings need to be taken into consideration.

#### 4.6.2. Potential Limitations and Weaknesses

The present study takes a quantitative approach, but its corpus size is in fact limited, compared to Yates' study (see Chapter 3 for the reasons for this size). Thus the findings are valid as long as the corpora investigated are concerned and should not be understood as generally applicable findings. When taking samples from other sources of BBS or CMC, different conclusions might be drawn. Another possible limitation is that this study relies heavily on the performance of the ChaSen tagger. I would consider that the usefulness of this software far surpasses its shortcomings, though this may be a hurdle for conducting a corpus-based study on much larger scale. I expect this software to be refined further so that the error rate can be reduced. It is expected that this kind of research be conducted with larger corpora of far greater scale when *Kotonoha* Project by the National Institute for Japanese Languages completed several years from now.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, no previous research has conducted an in-depth quantitative comparison between the three different types of media use interaction in Japanese. Thus I had to start by looking at each as a whole to look for broad differences. If there were none, then the media difference wouldn't be an important variable. If differences were found, clearly elements of interaction can be related to differences between the nature of the medium and the nature of language in use.

At the same time, I am also aware of the limitation of medium differences. It may be that people use the language in certain ways not necessarily because of the characteristics of the media; it also could be that there are certain "genres" (e.g. Swales 1990) that may show different language features, even within one medium, such as BBS and blogs in CMC. In such cases, medium difference may not be a factor in characterising language use, and differences in "genres" might explain what could be observed.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, I am not going to discuss these finer details or subcategories of CMC, because that is the hope of my next research project. In fact, instead of the trichotomy of CMC, writing and speech, the texts I have chosen can be

considered as being from online discussion genre, magazine genre and conversation genre. While I am aware that the concept of genres might explain finer aspects of language use, I have explained why I have selected the texts I am using here and I have reasons for utilising media differences as a general framework. Just by looking at the whole, general features can be extracted as a first approximation in characterising Japanese CMC against Chapter may reflect differences in genres rather than media.

#### **4.6.3. Questions Left Unanswered**

This study focuses on structural aspects as identified by POS and their subcategories of the language across CMC, writing and speech. It has not paid attention to lexical aspects of the language in the three media. A cross-linguistic question arises whether the interjection, somewhat an independent POS isolated from the grammar of a language and yet existing in every one, can have a differentiation function between speech and CMC in other languages. There should be language specific features that differentiate CMC from speech or writing, and to identify these features could also be an enquiry of great interest. Though cross-linguistic comparison in CMC is beyond the scope of this present work, this is definitely a topic for future research.

The corpus-based approach employed here has clarified what features are employed in different environments. This does not explain why some features are used in one context and other features in the other. These questions on features showing politeness in particular are to be explored between the two BBS contexts in the next two chapters.

# **Chapter 5:**

## **Politeness and Impoliteness in Japanese BBS**

### **Communication**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

As explained in Chapter 1, issues of politeness in the online environment especially in the Japanese cultural setting pose intriguing questions on how BBS users communicate when clues for determining appropriate levels of politeness are not visibly available. Although there is a dearth of research on Japanese CMC both in linguistic and socio-cultural areas as pointed out in Chapter 2, there have been few attempts to analyse politeness in Japanese BBS settings from the socio-cultural perspective of the second wave (Androutsopoulos 2006) of CMC studies.

In this chapter, I address this gap in the socio-cultural research on politeness in Japanese CMC. To achieve this goal, I draw heavily on research on politeness conducted in FTF settings, as outlined in Chapter 2. A more detailed review from the perspective of applicability to online contexts will be given in this chapter. I then examine a subset of the corpora analysed in Chapter 4.

It has quantitatively been revealed in Chapter 4 that the use of polite auxiliaries distinguishes the two websites under study. As noted in Chapter 3 on the usefulness and limitations of a corpus-based approach, this quantitative analytical method shows features that BBS participants do and do not use, but it does not supply explanation of why they do and do not employ particular morphemes. This chapter attempts to give reasons for the users' behaviour shown in the choice of polite morphemes by applying politeness theories presumably capable of explaining interactions revealed in the messages. To this end, three different theoretical approaches developed in FTF interactions are employed and are to be explained in detail later in this chapter.

Chapter 4 identified the use of polite auxiliary morphemes as the differentiating factor between Channel 2 and Yahoo. To put it in general terms, Channel 2 users do not use polite morphemes, but Yahoo users do. This characterisation, however, overly simplifies the intricate interactional aspect. In fact, polite morphemes are used in Channel 2 messages and some users on Yahoo also mix levels of politeness in their messages. Building on the findings afforded in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 goes further to discuss qualitatively interactional aspects of politeness and impoliteness in the two BBS sites that have not been clarified by the quantitative approach of Chapter 4. These interactional features that cannot be illuminated by a corpus-based quantitative approach can be clarified by a discourse-based, qualitative method focusing on the context in which such particular features appear.

By applying European and Japanese theories of politeness developed in FTF interactions I specifically try to explain politeness and impoliteness in messages sent to BBS websites where very limited information is shared among participants. To make analysis simple and tractable, I chose messages sent to the two most popular Japanese BBS websites in which participants discussed the same topic: a popular film released in July 2003. I examine how linguistic forms of plain/polite styles and interactional behaviour of politeness strategies appear in messages posted on the two sites.

The organisation of Chapter 5 is as follows. Section 5.2 presents backgrounds to the environment of CMC and BBS contexts. In Section 5.3, politeness and impoliteness research from FTF settings is reviewed, and extended to CMC settings. After giving an overview on the definitions of and approaches to politeness in Section 5.3.1, I offer reviews of three major approaches of politeness in Section 5.3.2: (1) Brown & Levinson (1987), (2) the *wakimae* approach by Ide (1989) and (3) the discursive approach as represented by Locher & Watts (2005). Research on impoliteness will be reviewed in Section 5.3.3, and works of politeness studies extended to CMC context will be reviewed in Section 5.3.4. Then, to identify linguistic politeness as revealed by how the polite morphemes are used in messages, Section 5.4 will present analysis of the data. In Section

5.4.1, distributions of the morphemes on the two BBS sites are examined to clarify linguistic politeness. These BBS messages from the two websites are analysed with respect to the linguistic forms of polite and plain styles. Section 5.4.2 will examine behavioural politeness, which is considered to constitute observance or violation of positive and/or negative politeness as defined by Brown & Levinson. Such behavioural politeness strategies revealed by message exchanges is analysed within a forerunner's (Herring 1994) framework. Possible causes for the differences in linguistic forms and interactional behaviours between the two BBS sites are discussed qualitatively in Section 5.5 with examples in context. In the final Section 5.6, based on findings and discussion presented in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, I will show how studies of politeness and impoliteness behaviour in BBS environment can contribute to politeness research by extending analyses to the context of CMC and also CMC research for enhancing understanding of communicative behaviour through the lens of politeness theories.

## **5.2. Some Background to CMC and BBS Contexts**

Investigations of politeness behaviour have taken place so far mostly on FTF communication. Understanding how CMC, especially BBS, differs from FTF communication is necessary, as BBS has greatly expanded possibilities of communicating with participants who are mostly strangers coming from diverse backgrounds. In FTF settings, participants need to be in the communicative space at the time of communication in order to be able to join communicative activities, and such spatial and temporal limitation greatly restricts the entry of participants with demographic diversities in geographical location, socio-econometric class, age and gender. BBS communications, however, do not require participants to be in a certain shared physical space at the time of communication, and accordingly a large number of diverse participants are able to join communicative activities. BBS settings provide an interesting new environment to observe how politeness is realised (or not realised) and how face is threatened or enhanced among diversified participants who are basically strangers engaging in

discussing shared topics of interest.

More specifically, there are two characteristics of BBS communication in contrast with FTF environments that are relevant in considering politeness behaviour. First, when the hearer is a stranger, the shared physical space of a FTF setting provides speakers with sufficient contextual information to determine appropriate communicative styles; clues such as the hearer's gender, approximate age, apparent social class and occupation are visible. If the hearer is not a stranger, but the relationship between the hearer and the speaker is known, even better clues for deciding appropriate communicative styles are available. This is not the case in BBS settings. In BBS communication, where communication is entirely carried out by means of posting and responding to textual messages (Daibou 2005), there is very limited information for participants to determine communicative styles. Information about the hearers' (or other participants') relative age or gender is missing and the only information available is common interest in the topic of discussion. The messages themselves are the only recourse they can rely on when choosing appropriate interactional stances, styles and levels of politeness.

Secondly, the environment of publicly open BBS is created by some initiator or management in order for a large, indefinite number of interested people to be able to engage in discussion of their favourite topics. This means it is possible that because this environment is created with the specific aims of site creators, some details of user guidelines and/or technological settings that reflect the intentions of the site creator can affect participants' expressive behaviour. Possibilities that technological settings have impact on participants' interactional behaviour are also explored.<sup>1</sup>

### **5.3. Review of Major Politeness Research**

As outlined in Section 2.5 of Chapter 2, previous studies on politeness and impoliteness will be reviewed in this section. I first give an overview on several definitions of politeness and approaches to clarify politeness phenomena. I then present a

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1 for descriptions of the two websites on how these two are structured and managed.

review of three major approaches, first by Brown & Levinson (1987), second, the *wakimae* or discernment approach by Ide (1989), and third the discursive approach as represented by Locher & Watts (2005).

### **5.3.1. An overview on the definitions of politeness and approaches to politeness research**

In this overview, I first present the lay concept of “politeness” and/or the definition of “polite” from English and Japanese dictionaries, as they presumably include elements commonly shared among the general public. Then I will show some of the representative politeness researchers’ concepts, approaches, and theories of politeness, based on Eelen’s (2001) work.

The two levels of politeness i.e. “first order politeness” (Watts et al 1992: 3), which is folk interpretation, and “second order politeness,” a theoretical concept, was originally articulated by Watts et al (1992) and succeeded by Eelen (2001), who terms the former “Politeness1” and the latter “Politeness2.” They consider the primary target to be Politeness1, which is defined as the “commonsense notion of politeness,” in contrast with Politeness2, “its scientific conceptualization” (Eelen 2001: 30). My position is in accordance with these scholars, as I also consider researchers’ work is to clarify and explain what ordinary people mean by “polite” in the case of English, and what can be shared in Japanese speakers’ use of its comparable/equivalent concept.

The concepts in the two languages do not exactly match. I first discuss the English concept found in English dictionaries. Then the concepts in Japanese will be examined. When “politeness” or “polite” is used in English, it can mean, “Courtesy, good manners, behaviour that is respectful or considerate of others” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Also *Merriam Webster* (online) states, “a: showing or characterized by correct social usage b: marked by an appearance of consideration, tact, deference, or courtesy c: marked by a lack of roughness or crudities...” Further, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*: (Fourth Edition, 2000) says (online),

“...Marked by or showing consideration for others, tact, and observance of accepted social usage.” From these definitions, “politeness/polite” is shown in linguistic and other behaviours, which can come from motives for maintaining interpersonal relationships. I personally consider “politeness” as showing consideration for others to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships.

As an approximation, when “polite” is translated into Japanese, dictionaries give “*teineina*” and “*reigi tadashii*”, among others (*Kenkyusha Shin Waei Daijiten*). While “*reigi tadashii*” can be similar to “courteous”, and “well-mannered”, the former, “*teineina*” is close to “careful,” “neat,” “tidy” and “attentive to details.” These elements may not necessarily be seen in the concept “polite” in English.

As stated earlier in Section 2.5.1 of the thesis, studies focusing on differences between English and Japanese concepts of “politeness” (Pizziconi 2007, Obana & Tomoda 1994, and Ide et al 1992) find that the Japanese concept of “politeness” includes more of the notion of formality and little of familiarity or friendliness, while the English concept seems to include both. For the subsequent discussions on politeness in Japanese, this difference needs to be kept in mind.

Let us now turn to theoretical notions of “politeness.” In his critique of politeness theories, Eelen (2001) reviews nine politeness theories, though the selection of the researchers discussed can be questioned (Davies 2005, Usami 2008). Beginning with Robin Lakoff, who Eelen views as the mother of politeness research, Eelen (2001: 2) cites, “...a system of interpersonal relations designated to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange” (Lakoff 1990: 34) as her definition of politeness

This way of characterising politeness contrasts with Brown & Levinson’s approaches. They base their exploration of politeness on Goffman’s concept of “face,” which seems central in their framework. Managing not to threaten the face want of others can be interpreted as constituting “politeness,” and they consider this as universal. It should be mentioned that the impact of their work was phenomenal, as they opened up the

debate and excited huge amount of researchers. Further details on Brown & Levinson will be given later in Section 5.3.2.1.

Eelen (2001: 9) also introduces scholarly works not from the Anglo Saxon traditions, such as Gu and Ide. I will focus on Gu's work here, as Ide will also be discussed in great depth later in Section 5.3.2.2. Eelen introduces Gu's (1990) theory as "based on the Chinese concept of politeness," and considers that it has "an aspect that is not found in other frameworks: it explicitly connects politeness with moral societal norms" (Eelen: 9). Another study from non-Anglo Saxon culture is by Blum-Kulka (1992), who "examines politeness in the Israeli-Jewish context" (Eelen 2001: 12). Eelen summarises Blum-Kulka's view on politeness, saying, "...politeness is about appropriate social behaviour as determined by cultural expectations or cultural norms" (Eelen 2001: 13). Here the concept of appropriateness seems more central than conflict avoidance or being well mannered.

Another study included in Eelen's review is Leech (1983), whose theory, Eelen considers, "situates politeness within a framework of 'interpersonal rhetoric'" (Eelen 2001: 6). Eelen concludes Leech's concept is "concerned with conflict-avoidance, which is attested by the specifications of the maxims, as well as by his claim that politeness is geared to establish comity" (Eelen 2001: 9).

Other studies in Eelen's review are by Fraser & Nolen (1981), Janney & Arndt (1992), and Watts (1992). Eelen mentions on Fraser & Nolen, who "present what they label the 'conversation-contract view' of politeness" (Eelen 2001: 13), and about Arndt & Jenney, "[they] denounce the emphasis laid by other theories on linguistic forms, social conventions or situational variables, because this emphasis causes the theories to lose sight of the speakers and hearers involved in communication" (Eelen 2001: 15). On Watts' work, Eelen says, "the theoretical role of emotive communication as a broader context in which politeness is to be situated in Janney & Arndt's framework is assumed by the notion of 'politic behaviour' in Watts' theory" (Eelen 2001: 17) further presents characterisation of politic behaviour as different from politeness: "...much of what the

other theories regard as politeness is construed as politic behaviour, which is the unmarked form of conventionally appropriate behaviour and from which politeness is a marked deviation (Eelen 2001: 20). Eelen closes Watts' conceptualisation by saying, "because politeness is basically a form of politic behaviour both notions must be considered for full understanding of Watts' notion of politeness" (Eelen 2001: 20). Watts' concept of politic behaviour can encompass both polite and impolite behaviour, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Thus there are different views on politeness. In one view, conflict avoidance through face management is central, and in another appropriateness and consideration for interpersonal relations in each cultural setting is considered to play more role in explaining people's behaviour.

Before going to the examinations of the three major approaches to be examined, one additional perspective presented by Usami (2008) needs to be mentioned. Usami classifies various politeness research broadly into two parties: one aims at constructing a universal theory of human communication beyond cultural differences, and the other values cultural diversities to engage in describing discursive realisations of politeness in various cultural settings. It would be useful to have this kind of distinction, as the present study falls on the latter category of describing politeness extended to new settings of CMC in Japanese culture. Both seem to be needed to reach a fuller understanding of the phenomena, as one approach complements the other.

In the following section, three major approaches are discussed in greater depth. Though there is considerable debate about the nature of politeness going on in politeness research, I have selected Brown & Levinson as representing the face management approach for universal theory orientation, Ide because of culture-specific arguments of politeness phenomena, as the Japanese language and culture is the subject matter of the thesis, and Locher and Watts for their focus on appropriateness in interaction.

## 5.3.2. Three Major Approaches

### 5.3.2.1. Brown & Levinson (1987)

As pointed out in Chapter 2, until recently one of the most influential views on politeness, at least in the sense it spawned subsequent research, was presented by Brown & Levinson (1987) as universal in human interaction. Their seminal work is based on positive and negative face derived from Goffman (1967). Nowadays while there are followers, the theory has received criticism on various grounds (Watts 2003, Eelen 2001). One such criticism comes from Japanese linguists (Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1988), which will be discussed in Section 5.3.2.2. More recent criticism in the field of politeness research comes from the discursive approach (to be discussed in Section 5.3.2.3.) represented by Locher and Watts (2005).

Brown & Levinson's claims will now be examined. Recall again the following formula by Brown & Levinson (1987: p. 76-77):

$$(1) W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x,$$

where weightiness of face threat,  $W_x$ , is considered to be the sum of distance between the speaker and the hearer,  $D(S,H)$ , the power relations between them,  $P(H,S)$ , and ranking of imposition in specific cultural settings,  $R_x$ . This theorisation of face threat in terms of the formula has been critically commented on, for example by Terkourafi (2004). She finds operationalisability of the formula problematic by testing it in Cypriot Greek, as extralinguistic perceptions rather than  $D$ ,  $P$ , and  $R$  account for the distribution of politeness strategies (p.121). Mills finds this equation,  $R$  in particular, impossible to use in any real sense.<sup>2</sup> Also, classifications of politeness strategies are overlapping between positive and negative politeness strategies, and the speaker's face is ignored in describing politeness strategies (Meier, 1995). Politeness should be considered to include not only FTA but also behaviour that enhances or supports the speaker's and hearer's face (Shimanoff, 1987). The distinction of whose face is threatened or enhanced is important

<sup>2</sup> Author's personal communication with Sara Mills.

in considering interactions in CMC, as communication in the field of BBS is realised only by posting messages, and this can be a face-enhancing act on the part of the speaker.

The concept of face has also been reconsidered. In Spencer-Oatey's (2000) theorisation, this concept is unpacked as consisting of "quality face" and "identity face" (p.15). The former is equivalent to Brown & Levinson's positive face, but the latter can be various, as people have different social identifies or roles, such as group leader, and in this sense face can be close to identity. Face management is reinterpreted with the concept of rapport management, consisting of two components: management of face and the management of sociality rights (Spencer-Oatey 2000: p.13). Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) discusses face, returning to the original concept by Goffman (1967), and suggests reconsidering the role face plays in social actions including interpersonal relations.

The above discussions all concern face in FTF, offline interactions. Let us return to Brown & Levinson for a moment to see what they actually have said and to what extent their claim can be applied to the online, BBS context. When the target of observation is extended to online interactions, it seems Brown & Levinson's theory can be of limited value for explaining interactions observed in BBS sites that show different distributions of linguistic politeness from the FTF context. Their theory is based on FTF interactions, mostly among people who know each other more or less, in which face threat is centrally focused. The weightiness of the face damage, as represented by the formula, constitutes the core concept of their theory. Brown & Levinson state:

In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. That is, normally everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained, and ..., it is in general in every participant's best interest to maintain each others' face, that is to act in ways that assure the other participants that the agent is heedful of the assumptions concerning face ...

...we are assuming that the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal. (p.61-62, my underlining)

Their concept of face as stated above seems applicable to and has grounds in FTF

environments, where interactants recognise the “social necessity” of observing what is expected for the maintenance of face. At the time when their theory was formulated, this hadn’t envisioned technologically supported communicative settings, in which the “social necessity” might not be felt among participants. In the CMC context, and in publicly open BBS communication in particular, it does not seem to be the case that the “social necessity to orient oneself to the self-image or face” is shared among participants. Even if shared, “social necessity” in the online society or group to cooperate in face maintenance could be weaker, as an online social group could easily be lost (and also created) by not sending messages and the online social relations could disappear, at far less cost in CMC than in FTF. Also the pressure on the part of the participant to fulfil such a social necessity is not strong in online contexts where interactions are limited to the online context only and do not go beyond to the offline, physical world, unlike the WELL community Rheingold (1993) describes (see Section 2.6.2 of Chapter 2).

In such online circumstances, it seems possible that this “social necessity to orient oneself to it [the public self-image or face]” may not be felt as strongly in the online contexts of publicly open BBS as in offline non-CMC contexts. Here it is necessary to clarify what constitutes “social necessity” in the online context. If this were in FTF, there would be a number of circumstances in which an interactant socially needs to care about his or her own face as well as the face of others. This would include, for example, the expectation of greeting, in order to maintain a harmonious interpersonal relationship, if this matters to the subsequent relations between two interactants. Not greeting back in a FTF setting, not fulfilling such a social need could result in the worsening or loss of the relationship. In online contexts, the relationship may not be solid or strong and the relationship could easily be terminated by not sending messages to the online social group. Mills points out, “it is relatively easy not to communicate online to withdraw from communication whereas in FTF communication it would be more face threatening.” Grainger also notes that participants who do not know one another and are not co-present do not have to face any social consequences for not greeting. I agree with the comments

by Mills and Grainger.<sup>3</sup>

Comparatively speaking, in online BBS contexts where strangers interact, one's face might not as easily be threatened and not as vulnerable, because his or her real life face is largely protected by anonymity. Interpersonal relations online are more diluted, which not as many interactants expect to or need to maintain and protect, compared to offline interpersonal relationships. Thus to employ various politeness strategies, positive or negative, might not matter to online interactants who are mostly strangers, and they do not need to be as heedful to others compared with FTF situations. It is true that politeness strategies are found in online contexts, even though one's physical "face" is invisible in CMC. One thing that should be noted regarding the claim about BBS interactants' behaviour in online contexts is a matter of degree, compared to offline interactions.

Another point to consider is the nature, the topic and the purpose of the online discussion. Some topics invite messages that express mutual concerns and worries, and it seems natural to consider that participants sympathise with fellow participants, and do not view them as total strangers but as comrades who share the same concerns and worries. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising but rather natural to find politeness strategies used to show respect and consideration to fellow participants and to indicate they similar concerns. Since it is possible that in BBS communication a large number of topics of different natures and purposes are discussed on various boards, some bulletin boards discussing sensitive matters such as illness may show politeness behaviour. Such boards would show interactional behaviour that is different from that of discussion boards complaining or criticising something. Again the nature of discussion topics inviting sympathetic or confrontational attitudes among participants would be a matter of degree.

The above remark also needs to be interpreted: participants can choose either to show politeness strategies online or not. There is always a choice of not using such strategies and eventually leaving the discussion. This is different from offline interactions. It would cost a great deal to aggravate the interpersonal relations if politeness strategies

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<sup>3</sup> I owe Sara Mills and Karen Grainger for these comments (personal communication).

are not chosen while still remaining in conversation. It seems there would be far less choice on the part of the FTF conversation participants regarding the employment of politeness strategies. They more or less are obliged to employ politeness strategies if they consider it necessary to maintain a harmonious interpersonal relation in the offline world. This is not a matter of free choice, particularly true of Japanese speakers in that the language encodes devices of politeness levels and that speakers are also expected to behave based on what is recognised as appropriate. In online contexts, there is such choice. Having perspectives from online context in contrast enables researchers to conceptualise how implicitly offline interactions are organised.

BBS is a context in which the total weightiness of face threat could be very small.  $D(S,H)$  or distance between the speaker and the hearer in Brown & Levinson's formula seems difficult to estimate and because participants are mostly strangers.  $P(H,S)$  in the formula could be close to zero because of the largely egalitarian nature of participants.  $R_x$  cannot be operationalised in a workable sense.<sup>4</sup> This total weightiness will be discussed more in detail in Section 5.6. In this environment there will be far less possibility and necessity for the speaker to be concerned with the hearer's face, and the need for employing various politeness strategies in order to maintain harmonious interpersonal relations will also be much more limited in the BBS environment among users. Brown & Levinson's theory does not seem to assume a context in which there is no or little social necessity to cooperate in maintaining relations due to the lack of co-presence; creating and maintaining such relations can be of less significance or an option. Studies from the BBS context could point out that there are such contexts in which participants in interactions are not always oriented to and concerned with cooperating with co-interactants to achieve harmonious relations.

However, once interpersonal relationships are established among participants in online contexts, Brown & Levinson's theory on face could be applied as in offline FTF situations. CMC perhaps offers an environment in which people can interact with others

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<sup>4</sup> I owe this observation to Sara Mills (personal communication).

with whom there is limited social necessity to maintain relations and can perform FTAs that they would not do toward those with whom they want to maintain harmonious relationships in FTF situations. In this respect the theory of face might not foresee how people behave in technologically enabled circumstances in which the performance of FTAs might not result in too costly a consequence that people would want to avoid in FTF relations.

### 5.3.2.2. Ide's (1989) *Wakimae* Approach

Brown & Levinson's theory claiming universal applicability has also been criticized by studies on non-Western languages, especially in languages that have honorific systems such as Japanese. As has been outlined in Chapter 2, Ide (1989) states theories of linguistic politeness should include functions played by linguistic forms and speakers' discernment in maintaining interpersonal relations in Japanese culture, where speakers are obliged to choose a certain level of style from the modal system of the grammar (Ide 1989). Matsumoto (1988) also stresses the need for the theory to include the roles played by formulaic expressions and honorific forms. These observations on the Japanese language and culture provide an important perspective in explaining politeness behaviour in Japanese. An approach based on politeness strategies and another one based on linguistic forms that need to be obligatorily chosen can be complementary to each other in describing the overall picture of politeness behaviour in Japanese.

More specifically, Ide (1989) discusses the concept of *wakimae*, or discernment in the discussion of linguistic politeness as complementing politeness research, as follows:

The practice of polite behaviour according to social conventions is known as *wakimae* in Japanese. To behave according to *wakimae* is to show verbally and non-verbally one's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions. In a stable society, an individual is expected to behave according to the status and the role of various levels ascribed to or acquired by that individual. To acknowledge the delicate status and/or the role differences of the speaker, the addressee and the referent in communication is essential to keep communication smooth and without friction. Thus, to observe *wakimae* by means of language use is an integral part of linguistic politeness.

The closest equivalent term for *wakimae* in English is ‘discernment’(Hill et al. 1986: 347-348). 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 will be called the discernment aspect of linguistic politeness, .... (p. 230)

She further says of honorific language that its speaker must constantly make choices either from honorific or plain forms in such parts of speech as copulas, verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs: There is no neutral forms, so the speaker must be sensitive to levels of formality in his/her verbalisation (p. 231), and classifies linguistic politeness in Table 5.1 (Ide’s Figure 2):

Table 5.1: Two types of linguistic politeness

USE (Speaker’s Mode of Speaking)	LANGUAGE (Kinds of Linguistic Device Mainly Used)
DISCERNMENT	<b>FORMAL FORMS</b> honorifics pronouns address terms speech levels speech formulas etc.
VOLITION	<b>VERBAL STRATEGIES</b> Seek agreement Joke Question Be pessimistic Minimize the imposition etc.

Source: Ide (1989: p. 232) Figure 2

According to her framework, a proper use of honorifics is one of the formal forms indicating that one has followed the code of conduct in Japanese society. The specific linguistic devices investigated in this study are *desu* and *masu*, which belong to the category of honorifics in Ide’s Figure 2. *Desu* and *masu* show modality of politeness and formality. Following Ide’s approach, I employ in this study this notion of discernment,

which can explain linguistic politeness by analysing structurally observable features of language use in Japanese BBS contexts.

Ide also mentions the organisation of speaking, which she claims “must be considered in terms of hierarchical structure” (2005: p. 47). In FTF contexts, hierarchical relations are crucial for the speakers’ choice of linguistic forms, and these relations can be judged through physical encounters in the offline environment. In the CMC context, however, they may not be assessed by BBS participants due to the essentially egalitarian nature of BBS environments where co-participants are most typically strangers. Besides, the nature of the topic of discussion may or may not involve hierarchical relations, and depending on the topic the perception of hierarchical relations can vary. In this study, cases where such hierarchical relations are felt less strongly are found, and I compare these cases with other cases in which hierarchical relations among members are perceived more strongly. In doing this, the concept of *wakimae* is essential to understanding verbalisation by Japanese speakers. It will be made clear in the later sections of this chapter that some aspects of Brown & Levinson’s and Ide’s approaches will provide frames of reference in analysing politeness and impoliteness in Japanese CMC.

Let us see how Ide’s claims can explain Japanese speakers’ linguistic behaviour, first in offline contexts and then in online contexts. As explained above, this theory assumes that the overt choices in the construction of clauses can be a reflection of discernment. However, it seems not every speaker of Japanese has acquired discernment. In her discussion on the relationship between honorifics and politeness, she comments on the use of formulas like “good morning” and honorifics that show pragmatically “obligatory” modality. She says “people say ‘Good morning’ in the morning, it just comes automatically in the context” (2005: p.59). Not every speaker of the language, however, would say this automatically. It is something that speakers often need to be overtly taught. Not every speaker of Japanese employs discernment, and a number of young Japanese speakers struggle with the use of honorifics as they have yet to gain confidence in its appropriate use.

In the BBS contexts under study, participants are considered to be from diverse backgrounds and in principle strangers. The theory of *wakimae* seems to explain uses of polite forms. Linguistic behaviour in one of the websites studied, Yahoo falls within what *wakimae* can capture, but not the other site, Channel 2, where language usage is markedly different. To explain this, perspectives other than *wakimae* are needed, and in this sense its applicability is limited to where interactants know what behaviour is expected in order to achieve harmonious communication and relations.

One more note to add concerns the presence or absence of hierarchical structures in online contexts. In open-access BBS contexts, it is natural to consider that there is little sense of hierarchy among participants, because participants' background, age, and other factors that would determine hierarchy are difficult to find. Yet, Ide (2005) states the organisation of speaking in Japanese culture "must be considered in terms of hierarchical structures." (p.47) This remark needs to be qualified by adding the underlined phrase, "in terms of contexts that do and do not involve hierarchical structures" and also the organisation of speaking "in face-to-face context" should be added. It is true that hierarchical structures play a very significant role in the choice of language in Japanese society. However, there are also situations where such relations may not be felt by speakers, and BBS communications are such context where hierarchical relations may be of little relevance.

Ide's contribution to the theories of politeness, especially in explaining phenomena in Japanese, needs to be acknowledged. Researchers on politeness in the Japanese language, including myself, have benefited from her account of how honorifics work and the theoretical positioning of politeness in Japanese. A number of works on politeness in Japanese appeared after Ide's work. Usami (2003) examines Japanese conversational data empirically and proposes discourse politeness; Fukushima (2003) conducted a contrastive study on British and Japanese request behaviour. Szatrwoski (ed. 2004) offers a collection of articles dealing with conflict management in Japanese conversation; Takiura (2005) discusses honorifics from the perspective of politeness theories; and the National Institute

for Japanese Language (2006) discusses how consideration appears in linguistic behaviours.

It is true that politeness can be indexed by the use of honorifics that show pragmatic modality, as they signal levels of deference and formality. Yet the kind of politeness conveyed by these means can be limited, as their interpretations are also context-dependent. It seems necessary to clarify what is meant by politeness. I consider politeness as a way of showing intention to keep good relations with others. This way of conceptualising “politeness” would be helpful in understanding both linguistically coded politeness and politeness encoded by non-linguistic behaviour. Such a distinction would help clarify polite intentions conveyed by superficially non-polite expressions, which are likely to be found in BBS communications.

#### **5.3.2.3. The Discursive Approach by Locher & Watts (2005)**

Still another criticism of Brown & Levinson comes from Locher & Watts (2005), who argue that the politeness theory proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) is not in fact a theory of politeness, but that of face (p.10). Locher & Watts claim Brown & Levinson do not explain what politeness “is.” Locher & Watts’ position is that politeness cannot be predicted by application of a formula, but is a discursive concept negotiated between the speaker and the hearer in interaction, as interpretations of politeness can vary relative to each interactant in conversation.

They propose instead the concept of “politic” behaviour, which can roughly mean “appropriate.” This concept of “politic behaviour” can incorporate both polite and impolite behaviours, the latter of which have been neglected by researchers until recently (Eelen 2001). Locher & Watts (2005) also comment on the general dichotomy between polite and impolite behaviour,” mostly unchallenged in their theoretical discussion of the concept of politeness” (p.13). There are possibilities of a non-polite but appropriate utterance that does not cause negative interpretation. This can be captured in this concept of “politic behaviour.”

My position in this thesis is in agreement with Locher & Watts (2005). In the BBS messages under study, there appear both polite and not so polite interactions. The relationship between “polite” and “politic,” according to Locher & Watts (2005), is that “polite behaviour is always politic while politic behaviour can also be non-polite” (p.12). I find this concept very useful, as it can be used to explain behaviours found on the two BBS sites. Members’ behaviour seen through the impolite language on Chanel 2 can be an instance of contextually appropriate, politic behaviour. It is necessary to clarify what it means to be “politic” or “contextually appropriate” in the CMC environment, where what is normally understood as “context” in FTF environment is lacking. What is meant by “contextually” in the CMC environment discussed here is “in the context of online community,” where there are normative standards and members behave accordingly. Studies on community have been reviewed in Section 2.6 of Chapter 2 and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

According to Locher (in press: p. 1) the discursive approach she takes is in line with literature on identity that follows a postmodernist understanding of the concept of identity as “the social positioning of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: p. 586). Bucholtz & Hall gives a broader perspective that seems to be applicable to online settings as well as FTF contexts. When BBS users post messages, the messages are what actually position who the sender is, and this is the identity of the sender. Identity in online contexts can involve multiple concepts. When meanings are negotiated discursively in interaction through messages, messages as represented in the public sphere of the message boards show “the social positioning” of self and other. Bucholtz & Hall state their definition is deliberately broad and open-ended, and this broadness can capture interactions in BBS contexts as well.

### **5.3.3. Research in Impoliteness**

As pointed out in Chapter 2, few works have appeared on impoliteness. In offline contexts, Beebe (1995) painstakingly collected and kept records of instances of rude

interactions on the street, restaurants and such public places. Beebe classifies the pragmatic functions of rudeness as everyday strategies for making the hearer stop speaking, taking power over the hearer, and venting negative feelings of the speaker. Culpeper (2005) discusses impoliteness found in the TV quiz show, *The Weakest Link*. The two works by Beebe and Culpeper should be differentiated, in that Beebe's data comes from chance occurrences of serious situations from her fieldwork, while Culpeper's come from TV mediated sources. To employ rude or offensive remarks in situations seems to have been inevitable choices in Beebe's study, while the impolite remarks of the participants in *The Weakest Link* can be considered to be as elicited by Ann Robinson, the host of the show. This does not mean that Culpeper's data is not genuine, but the fundamental difference between Beebe's and his study lies in the overall context in which the utterances are produced and interpreted. This distinction is helpful in interpreting BBS data.

On Channel 2, the overall context in which messages are produced and consumed is similar to Culpeper's study due to the presence of audience or the third party. This is an essential element in entertainment. Offensive remarks aiming at attacking face are typically what Beebe observes. Even in TV-mediated or created context, Culpeper (2005) writes, "if the hearer 'takes' a behaviour as intentional face-attack, then that counts as impoliteness" according to his definition of impoliteness (p.69). Culpeper refers to such factors as the "voyeuristic pleasure" (p.68) of why impoliteness might be entertaining. Those who are observing in a safe place are not hurt and can enjoy watching what is going on. In Beebe's situation, on-lookers might get involved if they are close enough and might get hurt. Channel 2 participants, in principle, are in a remote, safe place where no physical contact can occur. They can take advantage of online contexts where they can enjoy watching impolite interactions and can choose to leave the board if the face attack is felt to be directed at them. It is thus of interest to observe how impoliteness in BBS communication functions in message exchanges. This will be discussed in Section 5.5.

### **5.3.4. Research of Politeness in CMC**

As has been explained in Chapter 2, research on politeness in CMC settings includes Herring (1994) and Harrison (2000), who both discuss interactions in English discussion lists, Oliveira (2003), who examines discussion list interactions in Portuguese, and Hongladarom & Hongladarom (2005), who discuss Thai synchronous chat interactions. Section 2.5.3 of Chapter 2 has explained these studies and I now posit this present study as different from them.

What distinguishes the present study from these previous studies of politeness in CMC is that in this study participants are considered to be from diverse backgrounds, while they are from rather homogeneous, restricted population in their studies. It is not surprising to find politeness strategies among the relatively small, limited groups of people with similar backgrounds in their studies. However, when participants are strangers and their backgrounds are unknown, what politeness strategies actually appear and how they are used is intriguing. In the following sections, linguistic politeness in CMC is actually analysed in Section 5.4, and behavioural politeness strategies are examined in Section 5.5 using Herring's (1994) framework.

## **5.4. Analysis of Data**

This section analyses how politeness is realised in terms of honorific forms and politeness strategies in the BBS environment of minimal participant information. It also attempts to see whether differences in BBS settings such as user guidelines, user representation and management involvement could affect politeness behaviour among participants. It is necessary, therefore, to choose BBS environments where participant information is hardly available. Interest in the topic is the only shared information available among participants. It is important to choose easily accessible, popular BBS websites whose topics are of interest to a wide spectrum of users so that various demographic backgrounds are expected. Thus two large-scale BBS websites, discussing the same topic of a popular Hollywood film, were chosen at the same time (summer of

2003). (See also discussion on Baym (1993) in Section 2.6.2, who discusses fan culture in online fora.) The organisation of the data used in this chapter is shown in Figure 5.1 and the general outline of the two websites are summarized in Table 5.2 below (see Chapter 3 for more details about the data used in this chapter and the selection criteria):

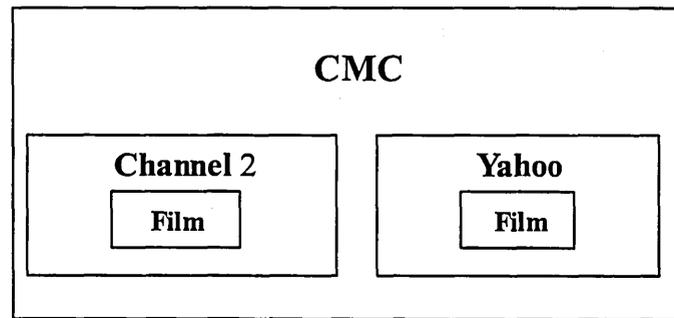


Figure 5.1: Organisation of the data analysed in Chapter 5

Table 5.2: Profile of the two BBS websites for Chapter 5

	Channel 2	Yahoo
Total number of morphemes	65291	56138
Total number of messages analysed	968	308
Average number of characters per message	67.5	182.3
Average time between messages	1 h 08 min 30 sec	4 h 18 min 45 sec
Total Japanese morphemes	25331	28514
Number of actual participants	Unavailable	167

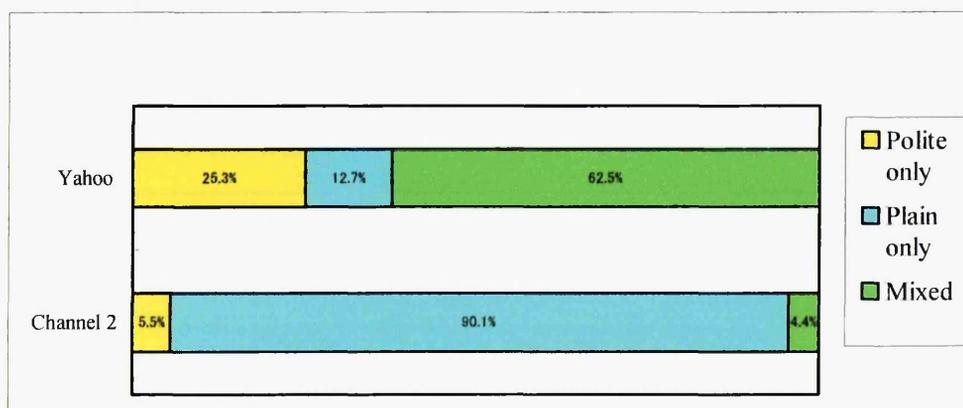
Table 5.2 shows features that are characteristic of the two BBS sites. First, on Channel 2, messages are far shorter, about one third of the length of messages on Yahoo. Second, the frequency of message posting is about 4 times greater on Channel 2 than Yahoo. Thus short messages are sent far more frequently on Channel 2, sometimes approximating synchronous chat among excited users. On the other hand, the fact that each messages is much longer on Yahoo means that well-considered messages are exchanged.

### 5.4.1. Linguistic Politeness

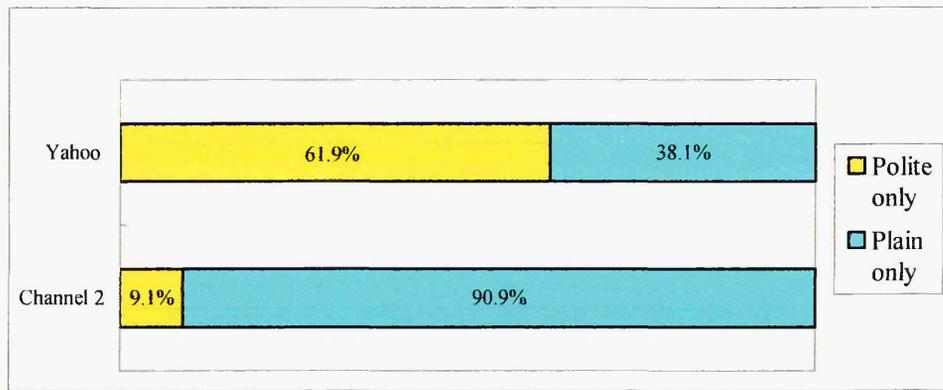
It is necessary to analyse politeness in Japanese from both approaches of linguistic forms and interactional politeness behaviour. Here linguistic forms are analysed first. Japanese is a language with honorific systems in that its modality requires certain forms to be chosen at the end of each sentence. One linguistic feature that is sociolinguistically relevant is the auxiliary morpheme, *desu /masu*, and whether this is used or not is the focus of my analysis. In Chapter 4, where all morphemes were analysed with ChaSen software, all the clauses that contain *desu /masu* were counted and compared for the two BBS sites. Specifically, from the corpora of the two BBS sites, the occurrences of the morpheme *desu /masu* (the surface forms are *deshi*, *desyo*, *desu* for *desu*-series, and *mashi*, *masyo*, *masu*, and *mase* for *masu*-series) are counted and its occurrence rate is calculated against the overall auxiliary morphemes by message and by clause that constitute messages. The results are given in Table 5.3, Graphs 5.1 and 5.2 below:

Table 5.3: Use of polite morphemes in messages and clauses

	By message				By clause		
	Polite styles	Plain styles	Mixed styles	Total	Polite styles	Plain styles	Total
Channel 2	55 (5.5%)	897 (90.1%)	44 (4.4%)	968 (100%)	214 (9.1%)	2131 (90.9%)	2344 (100%)
Yahoo	78 (25.3%)	39 (12.7%)	191 (62.0%)	308 (100%)	1205 (61.9%)	743 (38.1%)	1948 (100%)



Graph 5.1: Distribution of plain, polite and mixed styles by message



Graph 5.2: Distribution of polite and plain styles by clause

As identified in Chapter 4, uses of polite auxiliary morphemes distinguish the two websites. What this chapter attempts to uncover is a more detailed picture of how the polite auxiliaries spread across messages in the two sites.

Table 5.3 and Graphs 5.1 and 5.2 show a sharp difference in the distributions of the polite morphemes. Participants on Channel 2 employ predominantly plain styles, over 90 percent of cases, which include zero morphemes for nominal endings, in addition to the use of *da* for nominal and base form for verbal and adjectival endings. Messages consisting of polite styles and those that mix the two styles are very few in number on Channel 2. In contrast more than two thirds of participants on Yahoo mix both styles in one message. Within messages that combine both styles, a greater number of polite morphemes are used, about two thirds of the cases on Yahoo. Based on these distributions on the use of polite morphemes, it is clear that the choices made by the participants on each BBS site are entirely different.

The phenomenon of one speaker mixing different levels of politeness is not limited to BBS; it is observed in various FTF situations (Maynard 1991a, b, Okamoto 1999, Cook 2006). To see more closely how BBS users mix the two styles, there are cases of one or two plain styles occurring in predominantly more uses of polite endings, typically on Yahoo, and conversely, there are cases of polite forms appearing across far more plain endings, on Channel 2. The former pattern is more common, which is reflected in the

distribution by clause on Yahoo. It is rare that the same number of polite and plain styles is used in one message (18 out of 308 messages in Yahoo).

While I agree with discursive theorists that no linguistic forms are intrinsically polite, I analyse the polite morphemes in the Japanese language as they evoke polite interpretation on the superficial level. On the somewhat deeper, interactional level, they produce a number of different interpretations depending on contexts. These finer interpretations will be discussed in Section 5.5.

#### **5.4.2. Behavioural Politeness Strategies**

In order to observe what politeness strategies are employed as interactional behaviour and examine how they appear in messages, Herring's (1994: p. 279) classification for analysing such behaviour provides a framework. Herring identifies the following:

- (3) +P for enhancing positive politeness
- (4) +N for enhancing negative politeness
- (5) -P for violating positive politeness
- (6) -N for violating negative politeness

Herring's classification of each category is explained below with a brief example to each. Among these, -N needs additional explanation. At the time Herring's article was written, when web space was more costly than now (there was a two-screen length limit on the particular list Herring studied), posting long messages was considered an inappropriate practice and making other list members read a long message violates negative politeness. Examples of Herring's categories includes the following:

- (7) +P -- showing agreement, appreciation, and acceptance and support, responding to other participants' posts. E.g. "... , but thanks" (Herring 1994: p.283).
- (8) +N-- putting clear subject line, and making apology for one's own inappropriate message. E.g. "Sorry to bother you ..." (Herring 1994: p.283).
- (9) -P -- such acts as flaming, personal attack, despising others, making opposing remarks, mentioning other participants' inappropriate behaviour, and declining requests. E.g. "... I couldn't disagree more with this suggestion" (Herring 1994: p.284)/

- (10) -N -- posting a message that is too long, putting obscure, ambiguous titles in the subject line, and making requests that cannot easily be processed. E.g. “Who the hell are ‘we’, ‘edo boy’. I was unaware that ...” Herring’s note says, “[continues another 8 screens]” (Herring 1994: p.281).

Now strategies that are expressed in the Japanese BBS messages under study are explained using the same categories how these observances and violations to politeness.

From Yahoo

(11) +P

[User ID] さん、                    情報                    ありがとう                    ございます!!!  
User ID-san,                    jouhou                    arigatou                    gozaimasu !!!  
User ID-prefix to names    information                    thank you very much  
“Mr/Ms. User ID, thank you very much for your information!!!”

(12) +N

全レス 見て ないので カブっ たら 失礼。  
Zen resu mite nai node kabut tara shitsurei  
All responses see not as overlap if excuse me/sorry  
“As I haven’t seen all the responses, sorry, if there’s some overlap.”

(13) -P

ここって 好きな 人 だけの 感想 の トピック じゃない ですよ ね?  
Koko tte sukina hito dake no kansou no topikku jya nai desu yo ne?  
This QUO fond of person only GEN comment GEN topic COP NEG POL SFP SFP

ただただ 時間 が 長くて、 しかも つまらない から、  
tada tada jikan ga nagakute, shikamo tsumaranai kara,  
simply simply time SM long furthermore boring because,

面白く ない から 嫌 に なり ます。  
omoshiroku nai kara iya ni nari masu.  
interesting NEG because dislike become POL

“This is not a thread for those who like it to post their [favourable] comments, isn’t it? I don’t like it because it was simply long; furthermore it was boring and uninteresting.”  
[Disagreement stated in a very modest, roundabout way]

(14) -N No instance found

From Channel 2

(15) +P

>>

718 さん、ありがとう！

[responding to sender of Message 718] 718-san arigatou!

Thank you, Mr/Ms. [Message sender] 718 !

(16) +N

正直 監督 とか どう でも いいんだ。

Shyoujiki kantoku to ka dou demo iin da

Honestly director and etc how not matter

ジョニデ が 好きで ジョニデ 見たいがためなんだ。

Jyonide ga suki de Jyonide mi tai ga tame nan da

Johnny Depp OM like and Johnny Depp see want purpose COP PLN

ミーハー で ごめん。

Miihaa de gomen

celebrity sheep being sorry

“Honestly, it doesn't matter who the director is.

I like Johnny Depp, and I only want to see Johnny Depp.

Sorry about my being a celebrity hogsheep”

(17) -P

阿保のブス 女 たちが観に行くだろう

aho no busu onna tachi ga mi ni iku darou

fool GEN ugly-looking women Pural SUB see go probably

“Probably stupid ugly women will go to see it [the film].”

(18) -N No instance found

By applying Herring's framework to the smaller corpus investigated in this chapter, this study finds there is a clear difference between Channel 2 and Yahoo regarding violation of positive politeness. Typical behaviours are summarised in Table 5.4 below. This table is intended to show some general tendencies, as there are multiple behaviours in one message, such as thanks and apology, while many messages are neutral regarding face enhancement or threat. Two people conducted the coding; each coder's classifications within the text were checked for any discrepancy, and no contradictory classification was found.

Table 5.4: Typical behaviours of face enhancement and threat

Category	Typical Behaviour	Channel 2	Yahoo
	(Total messages analysed)	968	308
(+P)	Thanks	14	18
(+P)	Agreement	13	8
(+N)	Apology	15	12
(-P)	Insult	44	1

Enhancement of positive politeness applies to both Channel 2 and Yahoo, as expressions for agreement and appreciation are observed on both Channel 2 and Yahoo. Taking into account the larger number of total messages in Channel 2, it can be said that more instances of positive politeness enhancing behaviours are found on Yahoo than Channel 2. Regarding politeness strategies for enhancing negative politeness, expressions of apology are observed in a similar way to positive politeness enhancing behaviour. There are 15 instances in Channel 2 and 12 in Yahoo for the behaviour of apology. The reasons for apology include posting out-of-date messages and not reading the flow of the thread, among other reasons.

One clear difference in the politeness strategy is observed in what threatens positive face. Channel 2 exhibits many instances of despising messages (44 out of 968 messages), while on Yahoo such occurrence is very rare (1 out of the total 308 messages). Violations of negative politeness do not apply to both BBS sites, as Channel 2 does not employ a system for the subject heading; on Yahoo, though this setting is employed no instance of this case was found. Regarding other politeness strategies, it is possible that no salient differences exist between the two sites, or there is no room for such behaviour to appear in the BBS environment.

Before moving on to discuss the differences in interactional behaviours revealed in messages, a few remarks on Herring's classification scheme need to be mentioned with respect to identifying some characteristic features of the online environment of BBS interactions. While there are instances of enhancing positive and negative face, instances

of violations are limited to positive politeness. It seems in the BBS context where interpersonal relations can be very weak and diluted, one's negative face, namely the desire for one's action to be unimpeded by others, seems to be least threatened (provided his/her technological setting works in the way he/she expects it to).

What Herring considered violations of negative face, namely putting an obscure subject line or posting a long message, may not constitute violation of negative face. In online context, reading the post or not is entirely the choice of the BBS participant. It seems those taking part in BBS discussion are not obliged to read or post messages to the board. In BBS context where interpersonal relations are not linked to the offline world, it seems possible to consider one's negative face may essentially be unthreatened, though one's positive face may be damaged. It is also reasonable to consider that the kind of request one BBS member can make may also be limited. Even if a request is made to a large group of BBS members, such a request can be ignored. Making a request itself, regardless of how easy or difficult for it to fulfil, also does not constitute violation of negative face. Herring's framework seems to give clues for characterising one aspect of the online environment; one's negative face is less likely to be threatened, and one's positive face can easily be enhanced by sending messages. This act would satisfy one's want to be approved, as such messages are sent to the sphere of the publicly open discussion board and can be read or seen by a large number of people. It would be face-satisfying to send a message to a board, and even more so if the poster knows that his or her message is read, and most face-satisfying if the message draws a response.

Obviously this type of content analysis takes the data out of context, and makes an assumption that certain grammatical forms in Japanese are by definition examples of linguistic politeness. A more detailed contextual analysis may come up with a richer result. The next section will describe this approach.

## **5.5. Discussion**

Both Channel 2 and Yahoo for the purpose of this study deal with the same topic of

a film released at the same time in 2003. Anyone can access, participate and leave both sites, without disclosing name, gender, occupation, age and so on. Just by looking at these two sites this way, there seem to be no differences. However, when considering the results of polite style usages as linguistic forms and politeness strategies as linguistic behaviour, the two sites exhibit very sharp differences. What accounts for these differences? I will attempt to explain the interactions on these two sites first based on the discernment approach focusing on *desu/masu*, second from Brown and Levinson's theory, and last from the discursive approach.

There is one clear difference in the format of participants and message representation. On Channel 2, message senders are assigned an anonymous name (Mr/Ms. Nameless), which is common and the same for any sender unless he or she chooses to use a certain handle name (see background on Channel 2 in Chapter 1). On Yahoo, each participant must be registered as user of the parent site, and each message sender's user ID appears in every message. A striking difference appears when someone sends a message of response to someone else's message. Every time one message is sent as a reply to an earlier message, then the system of Yahoo automatically gives at the end of the message text the following message:

(19)

これは メッセージ 123 XXさん に対する 返信 です。

kore wa messeeji 123 XX-san ni taisuru henshin desu.”

This TM message 123 user -ID Mr/Ms toward reply message COP-POL

“This is a reply message sent to Message No.123 Mr/Ms XX (user ID).”

Here what needs attention is the way in which the user ID is treated. It is treated just like a personal name, from the fact that “-san” is added to the user ID. This suffix is used for people's names and equivalents. The style used in this automated message also needs attention, --*desu* style. In Channel 2 no such reply protocol exists. The common anonymous name is unchanged and such a message explaining the particular message one is responding to is not given. There is no room for *desu*-ending to appear.

Consider here what it means to use polite styles, *desu/masu* forms. The polite style *desu/masu* is in contrast with plain styles of *da* form for nouns and the base forms for verbs and adjectives. It is obligatory to use one out of the three possibilities in the case of nouns (*desu*, *da* or zero) and out of two alternatives for verbs and adjectives (*masu* or base forms without *masu*). However, which alternative to use in a normal conversational setting is based on the conscious or unconscious choice made at the time of communicative event upon interpreting the context of the event (Cook 1999, 2006, Suzuki 1997, Maynard 1991a, b, Okamoto 1999).

It would not be possible for the Yahoo management that created this automated message to employ plain form, *henshin da*, rather than *henshin desu*. The employment of *da* style would stand out as inappropriate, and this seems to come from cultural, linguistic constraint of how information is encoded in a technology for its users. Such a distinction is not present in English and other western languages. This does not happen in English, since such a statement is given simply as a purely informational fact where there is no room for politeness consideration.

Suzuki (1972: p. 295) mentions that *desu/masu* also signifies formal attitude, and can index formal/informal distinction. It is not very clear why the BBS creator employs this style in giving an explanatory message to the participants, but one consequence of having this setting is about two thirds of the users employ polite styles by default. The function of *desu/masu* styles can add formal tone, and the choice made by the Yahoo management to use *desu/masu* could be an indication of their intention to keep the public sphere of the discussion board in some formal order, though this can be a speculation. Such an interpretation of the functions of *desu/masu* in the automated message set by the management in this particular BBS context may help understand more prevalent uses of *desu/masu* on Yahoo than on Channel 2.

Besides the user ID being treated as if this is a real personal name because of *-san* attached at the end, the quasi person in BBS setting can also explain *desu/masu* use. Though the real name and gender of this quasi person is undisclosed, it is possible that

each participant establishes online identity. Thus the holder of the user ID is not some stranger, but someone with identity recognized by others on Yahoo. It would be natural then to consider not wanting to attack or impose FTA against other participants, who share the same interest in the film. That can be a reason why on Yahoo there are not very many cases of insulting or problematic remarks that would violate other participants' positive face.

Yahoo participants, in fact, employ basically polite and formal form, but within one message mix the two styles of *desu/masu* and plain or zero styles in order to manipulate psychological distances and closeness between the speaker and the intended audience/hearer, as the notion of formality relates to psychological distance. Observe the following example from Yahoo, which mixes the two styles in one message:

(20) a

今週 で 終わりの よう です ね。  
Konsyuu de owari no you desu ne  
this week over seem like COP-POL SFP  
“It looks (this film) is over this week.”

(20) b

寂しい・・・。  
Sabishii...  
lonely  
“(I’m feeling) lonely...”

(20) c

こんなに 何度 も 映画館 に 足 を 運び たい  
Konnani nando mo eiga kan ni ashi wo hakobi tai  
Like this many times movie theatre to leg/foot OM carry want to

映画 は 初めて です。

eiga wa hajimete desu.  
film TM first time COP POL  
“This is the first film I want to go to the movie theatre so many times for.”

(20) d

DVDが 待ち 遠しい です ね、本当に。  
DVD ga machi dooshii desu ne, honto ni.  
DVD SM wait in coming COP POL SFP, really  
“I/we can scarcely wait for DVD, really, don't you think?”

(20) e

今週 最後 に 皆 見 に 行きましょう!

Konsyuu saigo ni mina mi ni iki mashyou

This week last everyone to see go let's POL

“Let’s go to see it together this week for the last time.”

In (20) polite styles are used in four places (underlined) and there is one occurrence of plain style in “*sabishii*.” In (20)b the personal feeling of loneliness is presented in a private tone embodied by the plain style, not from a detached stance realised by the polite formal style of *desu*. In other parts of (20) above, the sender presents in a formal distanced attitude what he or she considers as important to convey and his or her attachment toward this film objectively. Though hearers are invisible in BBS settings, this speaker/message writer seems to visualise many other readers who have similar feelings and talks to them. This is evidenced by the use of two sentence final particles (SFP), *ne* in (20)a and (20)d. This SFP signals an attitude of talking to the hearer (Maynard 1989). More detailed account on SFP will be given in Chapter 6.

The use of plain form for expressing the personal feeling can be interpreted as uttered to self (close to soliloquy; Hasegawa 2005). This speaker seems to indicate by differentiating the use of sentence ending styles. The lines with *desu/masu* style are addressed to the entire readership and the line in plain style is to self. Talking to self could be a realistic visualization of how CMC can actually be performed, as the message writer, in a prototypical situation, sits in front of his/her computer typing the keyboard to enter what s/he feels and wants others to read.

Participants in Channel 2 seem to take a different approach. Observe one message from Channel 2 in (21) below:

(21) a

そんな こと どー だっていい じゃん。くだらねえーなあ。

Son na koto doô datte ii jyan. kudaraneeeênaa

Such a thing does not matter nonsense

“Such a thing doesn’t matter. That’s nonsense.”

(21) b

そんな 答えの 出ない 噂 話 してたつて 時間 の 無駄。

Sonn na kotae no denai uwasa banashi shitetatte jikan no muda

Such answer unavailable rumour doing time GEN waste

“That would be a waste of time talking about such an unanswerable rumour.”

(21) is given in very colloquial tone and shows no polite forms. Between the two alternatives for noun endings, the zero form is used after “waste of time” in (21)b, which even lowers the level of politeness. It is true that there is no setting brought by the creator of the website in which to lead the style to the polite level, but at the same time there is no artificial set-up that would lead to the plain styles either. While it would be difficult to account for the behaviour on Channel 2 in terms of the discernment due to the lack of honorific norm, however, applying Brown & Levinson’s theory helps interpretation.

How can Brown & Levinson’s theory explain the interactional behaviours on these two sites? As explained in Section 5.2, linguistic behaviour can potentially threaten the hearer’s and the speaker’s face (Brown & Levinson 1987). In Brown & Levinson’s theory, the weightiness (W) of threat is the sum of distance (D) and power (P) between the speaker and the hearer and ranking (R) of imposition of the particular act in specific cultural setting. Let us look at how the three constituent elements, D, P, and R can be considered in BBS context.

I will first consider relative power relation between the speaker and the hearer. Unlike FTF environment, BBS participants have much less information about other participants. On the one hand, participants in FTF environment are able to assume social power relations based on the other party’s relative age and appearance by just looking at the addressee. Participants in BBS settings are considered to be in a more equal relationship; it is difficult to assume power relations among them. The same logic applies to social distance. With the absence of background information about other participants in BBS settings, the weightiness that comes from P is close to zero and the social distance can be considered almost negligible.

Next, the ranking of imposition placed on the hearer within the particular cultural

setting is considered. In a speech act that is likely to cause imposition in an environment where interpersonal relations exist solely by means of posting messages, the kind of request that can actually be achieved is of a very limited nature. If a hearer cannot cope with a certain request made by other participants, the cost for not fulfilling the request is also minimal. It is therefore possible to consider the degree of imposition in BBS setting to be far smaller than that in FTF situations.

To take the BBS environment within Brown & Levinson's framework, BBS can be a context in which the total weightiness of face threat is close to zero. This means in this environment there are far fewer possibilities of linguistic behaviour that threatens the hearer's and the speaker's face, and the need for employing various politeness strategies in order to maintain harmonious interpersonal relations will also be very limited in BBS environment than FTF settings. As a result impolite messages are likely to be sent. In fact, on Channel 2, what seem to be impolite messages in plain styles are overwhelmingly used and despising remarks that could potentially threaten positive face of the hearer are found in Channel 2 interactions. This interpretation based on Brown & Levinson, however, fails to account for polite interactions on Yahoo, as BBS contexts can be where total face threats could be minimal and there is no need to use overt linguistic politeness.

Then how does the discursive approach explain these contrasting phenomena? One of Locher & Watts' claims is that "no linguistic expression can be taken to be inherently polite" (2005: p.16), which is expressed by a number of other politeness researchers (e.g. Mills 2003). While I agree with this notion, in some languages I argue certain linguistic forms do evoke politeness, mark or index politeness orientation or the intention to look/sound polite and formal. Typical examples are *desu/masu* auxiliary morphemes in Japanese. What native Japanese speakers feel out of the use of *desu/masu* would be something like "coded" politeness. These auxiliaries overtly index or mark that the speaker is trying to make the utterance sound polite and formal, and in most situations this use is either unmarked or positively marked.

On Channel 2, however, there are instances of *desu/masu* that can be negatively

interpreted. Such an example, in which polite *desu* form (underlined and in bold) is used in a discourse of predominantly plain style as shown in (24)-1 and (24)-2:

(24)-1 a

ヲタ女 たち から してみれば 誰 が 監督 なんて 眼中 になく  
ota onna tachi kara site mire ba dare ga kantoku nan te ganchuu ni naku  
geek women plural from do look if who SM director COP QUT sight in NEG  
“From the perspectives of geek women, they don’t care about who the director is”

(24)-1b

ただ オーランドが でていれば満足 なん だろうな。  
Tada oorando ga dete ire ba manzoku nan darou na  
Simply Orland appear if satisfied COP probably SFP  
“It seems they are simply satisfied with Orland’s appearance”

(24)-1 c

少しは 監督 にも 注目 しろよ ヲタ女 ども。  
sukoshi wa kantoku ni mo chuumoku shiro yo ota onna domo  
A little TM director to also attention do SFP geek women Pru  
“Pay attention also to the director a little, you ugly geek women.”

(24)-2

ジョニデ と オーランド が 出ていれば満足な キモイ ヲタ です が 何か？  
jyonide to oorando ga dete ireba manzokuna kimoi ota **desu** ga nani ka?  
Johnny Depp and Orland SM appear if satisfied ugly geek COP-POL but what?  
“(I’m) an ugly geek woman satisfied with Johnny and Orlando’s appearance, but what?”

(24)-2 uses *desu*, which can be negatively interpreted, due to too formal, distant, cold and standoffish sound, in the middle of plain/non-polite, informal language. In many cases such use is accompanied by “but (so) what?” and carries a provoking atmosphere of protesting or opposing the preceding remark.

Thus *desu/masu* should not be taken to be inherently polite, as many politeness researchers say. The above example, however, shows the speaker takes advantage of *desu/masu*, which enables the polite, distant, and formal interpretation, in order to achieve the interactional goal of protest based on the codified politeness indexed by these morphemes.

In the Channel 2 environment where plain styles dominate and are contextually appropriate, polite styles can be seen as “over-polite” or negatively marked with the

specific effect of implying a contesting attitude. The kind of negatively marked polite styles seem to indicate challenge or protest to those who have previously made disparaging remarks, taking a superficially conceding stance with an honorific form to protest. This is also signalled by an accompanying “so what” after the polite form.

One point I should make about language use on Channel 2 is that the judgement of polite/impolite language is made by participants themselves. I reported elsewhere (Nishimura 2006a) that in a thread on Math Board, its initiator specifically stated that the language on Channel 2 is impolite and asked the posters to use polite language at least on his/her thread. For the initiator, the use of *desu/masu* forms seemed to indicate the polite language. His/her request to use polite language was ignored, as more than 90 percent of the messages ended with plain forms. The concept on the language style used on Channel 2 seems to be shared by users in general, which may account for the overwhelmingly large number of the plain form uses in messages.

On Yahoo, where both uses of polite and plain forms are observed in one message, both forms are within the appropriate usage. Users’ mixture of styles in one message is not a matter of appropriateness or politeness but rather signalling a shift in stance. Polite honorific forms can signal the users’ stance in talking formally and publicly to the entire thread (Cook 2006), whereas the plain form can be interpreted as a private talk aside to self. Thus by changing styles in their messages, participants manipulate interactional stances, such as being a cooperative participant to the site or challenger, or simply allow other users to share the posters’ inner feelings. These interpretations can be made possible by viewing interactions in context as fluid. This interpretation from the discursive approach to politeness can explain participants’ uses of linguistic forms in the two Japanese BBS interactions, where different norms for appropriateness may exist.

## 5.6. Concluding Remarks

BBS communication takes place in an artificial field in the sense that the intention of the BBS site creators can be reflected directly in the site setting and can be manipulated

technologically. That is different from FTF communication among groups of people bound through various social ties including kinship, geographical and occupational relations. Though there may be organisers of communicative events, their influence on participants' communicative behaviours seems far smaller than that of site organisers or creators in BBS communication. Participants' social background is almost totally suppressed, and interpersonal relations can be constructed and maintained only by posting and continuing to post messages.

This chapter has examined in such an environment how politeness and impoliteness are embodied by comparing messages posted on two representative large-scale BBS websites. I have shown that between the two BBS interactions there is a large difference in politeness behaviour and attempted to account for the huge difference. One approach was based on the linguistic forms of polite and plain styles, as the Japanese language has honorific systems that are crucial in understanding politeness (Ide 1989). These features in the Japanese language can be seen much more overtly than in English.

This approach from Japanese sociolinguistics has identified differences between the two fora, where one forum shows politeness features and the other does not. What is of interest is that lack of polite forms is not normally expected to be found in publicly visible discussion arena, though this may be seen in private conversation, among youth or close friends. One of the fora, Yahoo, makes the forum conform to what is expected as a public forum exhibiting politeness features, but not the other. Under this BBS context of Channel 2, though it is also a public discussion board, we have seen private communicative activities taking place in public. This seems to be related to anonymous user representation.

The other approach is based on linguistic behaviour of politeness strategies as defined by Brown & Levinson's theory of face. Face was discussed in analyses operationalised by Herring's (1994) framework. One question that may arise as a result of examining face in CMC concerns the universal claim about face management in human interaction. There are situations where people may not need to be as much concerned with

face management. I may point out one's negative face is least likely to be threatened in anonymous BBS interactions, as not being mindful of other participants does not seem to cause costly consequence, compared with FTF situations. Entering the anonymous BBS site itself can be an act of entry into a world seeking some space of far less imposition, and this may be one of the motivations of people engaging in BBS activities. One's negative face needs to be protected by various strategies where this can be damaged in offline world, and this research on BBS environment may indicate there is such an environment where negative face is not as likely to be damaged as in FTF environment. This applies to the negative face only, and not to the positive face. This can be threatened in BBS as well as FTF.

It is true that Brown & Levinson's theory based on face threat has received a number of criticisms. However, I have used their model in the thesis because their theorisation has given clues for considering contexts where there may not be many social necessities to be concerned with face that would be crucial for considering interpersonal relations. CMC contexts are among such environments. This is my principal justification for using Brown & Levinson's model in considering politeness in CMC.

BBS participants can be strangers because of anonymity and suppressed participant backgrounds. Yet this does not mean there is no interpersonal relations online both positive and negative. When reading messages, they may feel sympathy or confrontation based on the content. Channel 2 users view others as peers, yet they sometimes interact aggressively when they feel their face is threatened, such as in the case of the poster who used the polite morpheme, *desu*. Then, the one who attacked the girl seems to her to be no stranger in a negative sense. Interpersonal relations can be established despite the nature of the medium, and such relations can be found through careful reading of messages.

While the BBS environment can be a space with minimal face threat, it can also be a space with possibilities for the face to be attacked. It is very easy for any user to utter harmful remarks to others. While one's face might be damaged when the attack is directed at him/her, when it is not, such impoliteness can be enjoyed by the rest of the users

(Herring 1992).

This study has found that the kind of politeness exhibited in Yahoo can be explained from the perspective of linguistic forms on the use of polite styles based on Ide's theory of *wakimae* (1989). That is, Yahoo has settings that evoke uses of polite styles. However, this perspective is incapable of explaining impoliteness found in Channel 2, as there are no such specific settings brought by the site creator that can trigger uses of impolite styles. In contrast to this, Brown & Levinson's framework is capable of explaining the impoliteness found on Channel 2, due to decreased necessity to be heedful of others compared with FTF context, but not the politeness of Yahoo. That means one approach, the *wakimae* approach, can explain one phenomenon, politeness on Yahoo, but not able to give a persuasive account to the other phenomenon, impoliteness on Channel 2. The other approach from Brown & Levinson is precisely opposite.

Characterisations of politeness features based on polite auxiliary morphemes and impolite behaviours have been identified above. Questions arise on why it is necessary to use politeness features on Yahoo and not on Channel 2. Why is it worth doing these, or what is the socio-cultural benefit for engaging in such behaviour? It is hard to understand these simply as having to do with keeping harmonious interpersonal relations or gaining advantage in discussion.

One way to solve this is to incorporate the concept of "community." In fact, if interactions on Channel 2 are investigated more closely, the surface impoliteness can be viewed as politeness recognised in that particular community. The discursive approach seems to be able to encompass these phenomena,. What follows in the next chapter is more detailed discussion of politeness phenomena from the perspective of community.

The environment of BBS is a new CMC environment we have not experienced before. Study of politeness and impoliteness in CMC environments can shed light on how people behave in such contexts, and is expected to contribute to politeness research as well as CMC research.

## Chapter 6:

# Japanese BBS Websites as Online Communities

### 6.1. Introduction

In Chapter 5, in addition to linguistic differences in the auxiliary uses, contrasting phenomena have been observed: polite behaviour on Yahoo and impolite interactions on Channel 2. These two contrasting discourses were identified on equally public BBS websites where participant background is unknown beyond shared interest. One explanation based on the discernment theory proposed by Ide (1989) can explain polite behaviour shown in linguistic forms on Yahoo, but not impolite behaviour on Channel 2. Another explanation based on Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory of face can explain impoliteness on Channel 2, but not politeness on Yahoo. These BBS websites do not seem to display the social necessity of respecting other participants' face as in FTF contexts, at least partly due to the lack of co-presence leading to smaller weightiness of face threat. It was suggested in Chapter 2 that the concept of online communities might resolve the seemingly contradictory phenomena identified in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 explores how the notion of online community is capable of reconciling and explaining the contrasting linguistic practices and interactional behaviours.

The topic of "community," though sometimes loosely defined, has been a major research concern. Specifically, in what ways do such BBS interactions lead to the formation of an "online community" of shared values and a code of conduct? That is, what are conditions or criteria for community-hood? If such online communities exist, in what ways are they similar to or different from one another and from communities in the physical world?

These questions are all the more important in linguistic enquiry of BBS communication, where language reveals the dominant means of interaction, although new

multi-media means such as Second Life and YouTube have emerged. To pose the above questions from a linguistic perspective: What are the linguistic conditions for online community-hood? How different are online communities from one another and from offline communities? Various measures gauging online community-hood such as reciprocity and solidarity have been proposed and discussed from a sociolinguistic perspective (e.g. Herring 2004a). There have been analyses of online community in an English email discussion group (Korenman & Wyatt 1996). Another study finds a community with politeness behaviour is successful in maintaining community-hood in the sense that participants are satisfied (Harrison 2000). This implies politeness can be among the most important determinants of a “successful community.”

In the exploration of such aspects of online community, the thesis follows the methodologies and approaches that have been taken by previous studies based on English CMC, especially the Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) approach proposed by Herring (2004a). Herring gives a broad spectrum of discourse analysis paradigms (p.17) on the four domains of language (p.18). Her approach can be described as most typically behavioural, since behavioural characteristics are major gauges of community-hood. This will be examined more in detail in Section 6.2.2.

In addition to Herring’s behavioural approach, this chapter utilises Ide’s discernment or *wakimae* approach. This has been discussed at great length in Chapter 5. In short, the concept of discernment can be expressed as: “The practice of polite behavior according to social conventions” (Ide 1989: p.230). The Japanese language utilises an honorific system wherein one’s code of conduct or *wakimae* is reflected in the use of honorific language as embodied by the features that include polite auxiliary verbs and interactional sentence final particles.

By incorporating perspectives from the *wakimae* theory, this study adds a new dimension to research on online communities, which are not discernable in studies of only about English CMC that have taken place in the West. This dimension is structural as opposed to behavioural. This study investigates whether particular choices in the usage of

honorifics can explain characteristics underlying community. This new dimension may be potentially important in the study of CMC in non-English sites, since other Asian languages have systems of honorifics similar to Japanese.

The present chapter has three specific objectives. The first is to show that structural analysis of Japanese online communities characterised by a sophisticated linguistic system of politeness will add a new dimension to behavioural analysis employing Herring's (2004a) CMDA approach. When combined, these two complementary approaches are capable of explaining a rich variety of interactional features in successful Japanese online communities. Secondly, in exploring possible determinants of particular characteristics of these online communities, this chapter will show that discussion topics are relevant to active choices of politeness levels, and further that overall linguistic styles can be linked to members' sense of community. Thirdly, this chapter examines a unique online community where linguistic and behavioural features reveal widespread impoliteness yet participants seem to share a strong sense of community. Watts' (2003) concept of contextually appropriate "politic" behaviour is shown to reconcile this puzzling coexistence of impoliteness and community.

This chapter has the following organisation. Section 6.2 briefly reviews the concept of online community and criteria for online community-hood. Section 6.3 explains the two major approaches employed here to examine the target communities in the Japanese setting: Ide's *wakimae* or discernment approach and Herring's CMDA approach. Section 6.4 explains the data in four groups of Japanese BBS interactions to investigate linguistic usage in relation to determinants of online community. The two major determinants are (1) the way a particular website is designed and (2) the topic of discussion on a particular website. Here the topic of English language study is incorporated in addition to the film topic to make a 4-way comparison on Channel 2 and Yahoo. Section 6.5 will analyse the data to reveal how these two approaches combined can in a coherent way explain similarities and differences among the four BBS interactions. In Section 6.6, I argue that the dimension that the CMDA approach can explain is a *sense of community*, while the

dimension that the *wakimae* approach can account for is an *agreement to the code of conduct*. The way the website is designed and the topic the website is designed to address are major determinants of relative positioning of the websites in the two dimensional planes of “community behaviour.” These discussions are supported by authentic, naturally occurring discourse data from the four BBS communal interactions. Coexistence of impoliteness and sense of community in a unique BBS community is also discussed here. Section 6.7 gives concluding notes, including remarks that relate the results of this chapter to those of previous chapters.

As an additional note on the terminology used in this thesis, I employ “online” rather than “virtual” community because “virtual” has a connotation that this may not be “real.” However, I argue that communities online are real in the minds of millions of participants and communications/interactions in such communities are perceived as real. That is why many people rejoice or grieve as a result of interactions with the people forming these communities, in the same way communications in the physical world make people happy or sad. Online communities may not have physical material as “offline” communities do but I choose not to treat this as “virtual” they way some researchers have.

## **6.2. Characterisation of Online Community-hood**

I begin this section with a brief historical description of how the notion “community” came to be. Then the notion of online community is contrasted with the notion of “speech community.” Further, I examine requirements of *online* communities, which are to provide sociability, support, and identity.

### **6.2.1. Historical Description of “Community”**

Thurlow et al (2004) present how “community” came to be a subject of study in sociology. They explain “community” comes from a German word, *Gemeinschaft*, and its contrasting concept, *Gesellschaft*, was proposed by a German sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies (1855-1936). According to Thurlow et al (2004: p. 108-109), a community, or

*Gemeinschaft*, is a prototypically rural village where members know one another and there is daily contact, before the industrial revolution. Members are determined by birth in the geographical place where they live. *Gesellschaft*, or “society,” on the other hand, is somewhat an advanced form of *Gemeinschaft*, where human relationships are not as close as those in *Gemeinschaft*. In Tonnies’ evolutionary view on society, a small-scale *Gemeinschaft* advances to become a larger-scale *Gesellschaft* as the community develops and becomes more complex, due to industrialization and urbanization.

In contrast with such a traditional view on community, a dominant view on community among contemporary sociologists is that it is where people’s networks can be formed with advanced means of transportation and communication. Members do not need to be confined to geographical co-location. In this view, “online communities” can be considered as one kind of community in that members form some network, through which they are provided with the kind of support, information and the like. There are a few strong ties of network and many weak ties, depending on the kinds of needs and interest of individual members. Online communities, connected with computer network in the form of chat rooms, BBS, and so on are contemporary communities (Smith and Kollock 1999, Wellman and Gulia 1999).

### **6.2.2. Online Communities versus Speech Community**

Gumperz (1972) views a “speech community” as a group of speakers sharing a set of norms and rules for the use of language. Additional two views, one by Morgan (2001) and the other by Rampton (1998) will also be reviewed.

Though there may be some association with geographic location in speech community, the current state of technologically-mediated communication, globalization, and transmigration challenges the notion of geographical bounded-ness. One view that advocates online interactions as realisation of speech community is presented by Morgan (2001), who considers cyber chat rooms can be a speech community. She notes, “What is shared among its members is knowledge of language ideology and attitude toward

language use. This is evident in cyber chat rooms ... In this case, it is not cyber space alone that defines the speech community. Rather, it is the use and regulation of the codes of chat rooms ... the rules of interaction constitute the identity of the chat room” (p.32). From such a linguistic anthropological perspective, a speech community can exist online, and extended to an online community.

Rampton (1998) also takes into consideration recent changes in communicative events due to technological innovations. He notes “the language and text play an enhanced role in construction of communities” (p.22). In his view, linguistic characterisation seems to play an important role, as his conceptualisation comes from the field of linguistics rather than sociology or psychology. In the latter fields, concepts such as support and sociability rather than linguistic characterisation, may play more role an online community. If Rampton’s approach and sociological approach both are applied to the two communities under study here, Channel 2 can be both an online community and a speech community due to linguistic characterisation, while Yahoo may qualify only as an online community. It can be so if a broader view on Japanese speech community as a whole is taken into consideration. Having a linguistic perspective to describe online community helps identify factors that help compare and distinguish existing online communities, and Rampton’s approach clarifies this possibility.

### **6.2.3. Requirements of Online Communities**

In their introduction to a specially themed issue of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Preece and Maloney-Krichmar (2005) present briefly how online communities have been studied. They also present a more comprehensive picture of online community research (Preece and Maloney-Krichmar 2003). Characterisation of online community that has been adopted by a number of online community researchers is:

“...the concepts of people with shared interests, experiences and/or needs, engaged in

supportive and sociable relations, where they obtain important resources, develop strong interpersonal feelings of belonging and being wanted, and forge a sense of shared identity" (Jones, 1997, Rheingold, 1993, Wellman, 2000, as summarised by Preece and Maloney-Krichmar 2003: p.3) (my underlining)

This characterisation is also adopted in this thesis. Specifically the concepts of "support," "sociability" and "identity" are considered as key to forming a sense of online community. These three concepts have been described by Herring (2004a) as what an online community is expected to provide when criteria for online community-hood are broadly perceived. Now let us see how two approaches, one by Herring and the other by Ide are able to explain Japanese BBS discourse.

## **6.3 Two Approaches**

In this section, both Ide's (1989) *wakimae* approach and Herring's (2004a) CMDA approach are described. Since Chapter 5 has presented a detailed account of discernment here only a brief description is given. After Ide's approach, Herring's CMDA will be explained.

### **6.3.1. Ide's *Wakimae* for Code of Conduct**

Politeness behaviour can be a key factor on maintaining a successful community, and Japanese websites are particularly suited for the sociolinguistic investigation of online community. The Japanese language has one of the most sophisticated linguistically coded systems of politeness, or honorifics. The Japanese society as a whole can be seen as a large "community" having a specific code of conduct to maintain a sense of community, which is crucially related to hierarchical human relations (though they are not so rigid as they may appear). The honorific system of the Japanese language is a reflection of this code of conduct, which can take the forms including *desu/masu* polite auxiliaries, as discussed in Chapter 5. To discern whether a particular behaviour agrees or disagrees with the code of conduct is of utmost importance in understanding the usage of the Japanese

honorific system (Ide 1989, 2005) and its role in maintaining a sense of community.

In addition to the politeness behaviour realised by the use of polite auxiliary morphemes *desu* and *masu*, Chapter 6 further analyses usage of sentence final particles *ne* and *yo*. These particles may be classified among Verbal Strategies in the category of Volition of Figure 2 in Ide's (1989: p.232) framework (refer back to Chapter 5 Table 5.1: Two Types of Linguistic Politeness). They show a structurally observable feature that indicates verbal strategies for linguistic politeness. Discernment is required when Japanese speakers actually use sentence final particles, as there are contexts in which the use of these particles is and is not appropriate. They need to evaluate whether the context, place, addressee and other elements that constitute the communicative event allow use. Ide (1989) explains the difference between discernment and volitional aspects of linguistic politeness, saying, "they are different in that the speaker's focus is placed on the socially prescribed norm in the former and on his/her own intention in the latter" (p. 231). At the same time Ide also mentions that "discernment and volition are points on a continuum" (p. 232), rather than a dichotomy. I consider use of these particles to show more discernment than volition, and analyse in conjunction with *desu/masu* auxiliaries. Employing the CMDA framework I investigate various other verbal strategies that are closer to the volition aspects of linguistic politeness in the continuum later in this chapter.

The sentence final particles *ne* and *yo* are helpful in interpreting the nature of interaction in online communities as they index speakers' judgement on the context and attitudes in presenting message content. *Ne* functions to add the speaker's harmony-oriented attitude of seeking confirmation from the listener and is relevant in a smooth maintenance of community. It is of interest in what way the use of this particle differs across the two topics and the communities. It is possible to say that the more the uses of *ne*, the more members have confirmation-seeking attitude towards their addressees.

*Yo* shows an attitude in which the speaker is giving information that is considered to belong to the "territory" of the speaker (Kamio 1994) and is delivering the information to

the hearer in a way that indexes this attitude to the hearer. Clearly, the use of *yo* signifies that the speaker consciously has the hearer/addressee in mind in creating messages. It is of interest to observe how or with what attitude the message content is conveyed with these particles while exchanging opinions/information in discussions in online communities.

The *wakimae* approach is essentially structural. It presupposes a code of conduct in the Japanese-speaking community and asks whether honorifics and other linguistic markers are properly used in agreement with that code of conduct. Discussions in Section 6.3.2 will additionally show that there are behavioural dimensions in “community-hood.” I take up this issue in the next section and explain how Herring’s CMDA approach is suited to studying behavioural aspects of “community-hood.”

### 6.3.2. Herring’s CMDA Approach for Sense of Community

Herring (2004a: p.14-15) introduces Wellman’s (message posted to AOIR list, 2001) notion of online community criteria, which are to provide “sociability, identity, and support.” After listing five discourse analysis paradigms (text analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics, and critical discourse analysis) that can operate on the four domains of language (structure, meaning, interaction and social behaviour), Herring lists the kinds of behaviours considered to indicate online communities in her Table 5 for each of the language domains. She adds “participation” as a fifth behaviour that would indicate online communities.

Table 6.1: Discourse behaviors hypothesized to indicate virtual community

structure	jargon, references to group, in-group/out-group language
meaning	exchange of knowledge, negotiation of meaning (speech acts)
interaction	reciprocity, extended (in-depth) threads, core participants
social behavior	solidarity, conflict management, norms of appropriateness
participation	frequent, regular, self-sustaining activity over time

Source: Herring (2004a: p.19) Table 5

It is helpful to consider how this table was formulated and some possible weaknesses of the table. Herring, from her background in linguistics, seems to produce the table as her reference to the four language domains of structure, meaning, interaction, and social behaviour. In an earlier table, the kinds of linguistic phenomena and the issues to be investigated on each linguistic domain are described accompanied by methodological descriptions. Herring's intention of presenting Table 5 was to make the analysis operationalisable in conducting online community research from a linguistic perspective.

In attempting to identify how the three online community criteria can be realised in message exchanges, this list can be both helpful and confusing. Helpful in the sense it offers a certain frame of reference for analysing aspects of online community such as the possibility of "jargon" to be linked to identity, confusing because behaviours can be omnipresent or non-present. For example, one kind of online community behaviour, self-disclosure, is missing. This behaviour has been pointed out as one of the most satisfying elements in joining an online community (Korenman and Wyatt 1996). When attempting to classify this, self-disclosure could go either to the "meaning" cell, as its description has "exchange of knowledge," or the "social behaviour" cell, as this can be interpreted as a manifestation of "solidarity" It would be best to approach the behaviours listed in Herring's Table 5 not as an exhaustive list, but as those showing some characteristic behaviours of certain domains of language.<sup>1</sup>

Now with this critique let us consider how Wellman's three criteria can be linked to what Herring lists as discourse behaviours for identifying online community. First, "identity" can be shown in the domain of structure in Herring's table, which includes "jargons, reference to group, and in-group/out-group language." These behaviours can be a realisation of "identity," as they distinguish a particular group from other groups.

Second, Wellman's "sociability" criterion can be directly linked to social behaviour,

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<sup>1</sup> There is also some doubt on the necessity of this differentiation of the language domains in discussing online community behaviours, though.

which Herring considers solidarity. Here the terms, “sociability” and “solidarity” offer similar concepts; it is more useful to consider how sociability criteria can appear in messages. Sociability is considered to be the state of having or seeking some companionship and is very close to solidarity. Its realisation as online community behaviour can take a number of forms, such as frequent postings, and this criterion can be researched through reciprocity as well as exchange of knowledge.

The third of Wellman’s criteria, “support” can be analysed through similar aspects of the behaviours as “sociability,” since supporting someone else or being supported by others presupposes companions and the supporting activities also seem to take place in harmonious conditions. In this sense, there is room for “norms of appropriateness” to be relevant to “support” criteria, as such norms may influence harmonious interactions. Herring’s explanation on the additional category, “participation,” refers to frequent, regular activities over time, and this is considered as prerequisite to the existence of any online communities.

On sense of community, Korenman & Wyatt (1996) report that sharing personal experiences is considered a useful and satisfying aspect of the group and they point out this could lead to “emotional connection with the group” (p. 234). I agree with their perspective and argue that community-hood online can be created when members feel they get the kind of support, advice, information and responses to previously asked questions and requests that they would like to get out of reciprocal exchange of messages. On the part of those who provide rather than receive, they also feel a sense of satisfaction in providing what other members need, which also contributes to the establishment and maintenance of a harmonious, successful online community.

While each of these separate behaviours in Herring’s table gives a frame of reference in identifying how a particular online community meets the criteria, in this study I describe the most typical behaviours for each of the three online community-hood criteria. For the identity criterion, I look at community-specific language uses (jargons). For the sociability criterion, I examine social behaviours seen through speech acts such as

thanking directly relevant to the formation of solidarity. Norms for appropriate conduct are also examined, as it would be of interest to see what conducts are considered as appropriate, and how members react to conducts that are judged as inappropriate.

For the support criterion, examination of how information exchange, especially information involving self-disclosure of personal experiences takes place is the focus. Within the framework of the CMDA approach proposed by Herring (2004a), qualitative analyses based on observations of particular online community behaviours are conducted.

As an additional note, while observing messages posted to the target websites of this study, it should be pointed out that the kinds of behaviours that would presumably be linked to the three criteria may not be of equal significance in the establishment of online communities, in that some behaviours are more basic and indispensable in establishing online communities than others. I have witnessed a community unable to continue due to insufficient participation. While it may seem obvious that a discussion board/thread without postings cannot be considered an online community, it is of interest to see how an online community dies or loses its ground, after establishing its community-hood (to be described in Section 6.5.2.4 in some detail). I would like to make it clear here that the participation is the prerequisite to existence, without which no online community is possible.

## **6.4. Data and Method: Four Groups of BBSs**

Section 6.4 provides descriptions of the specific data chosen for analysis and explains the methodologies employed to investigate linguistic and interactional characterisation of online community in BBS messages.

### **6.4.1. Choice of Four Groups of BBSs**

See Chapter 3 for explanations of the selection criteria for the BBS sites and messages. Some characteristic features including technical settings of the two target website communities are contrasted and summarised in Table 6.2 below:

Table 6.2: Differences in characteristic settings between the two target websites

Communities	Channel 2	Yahoo
Message title	No setting for message title lines provided	Setting for message title available; titles can be considered as part of message in some cases
Participant representation	Basically anonymous, but users can identify themselves by the message number assigned automatically by the system, or they can choose to use some fixed handle names; certain boards require the poster name be filled, but users can enter any sequence of letters up to a certain limit, and such user names are not binding	Represented by user ID and user registration needed to get user ID; avatar setting available, but used by limited number of members; it is possible for one user to own 6 different user IDs, and participant count based on user ID may not necessarily reflect the actual number of members
Administrator or site manager's control	Messages can be posted and viewed up to the 1000; afterwards, a new thread needs to be created as continuation, if interest in the topic remains; messages are deleted after petition for deletion is sent to and approved	Once a new "topic" [equivalent of "thread" in Channel 2] is set up, administration keeps it on as long as it receives postings; when two weeks or more passes with no posting, the topic is deleted
Rules and Guidelines	There are both general rules/guidelines applicable to the entire site set by the administrator and local or board specific rules discussed and determined by local members	The administrator sets these rules and guidelines concerning user behaviours and contents of messages; any viewer/user can make enquiry which can be responded to
Technologically provided setting	To enable viewers easily to see the previous posts to which responding message is posted	When a response message is sent, automatic notice from the system, "this is a message sent in response to message No XX sent by User ID"
Message archives	Up to the end of 2006, users were able to search and view, free of charge, threads no longer viewed because of exceeding 1000-message limit; now some charge is needed to view archived threads	As long as one topic gets posted, it remains on the site, and some long-lasting topic hold over 10,000 messages, and the entire posts can be viewed; no system for viewing and archiving deleted topics.
Message format	Basically text only, except for specific boards that allow animation and audio-visual posts	Text only

As BBS websites, it should be noted that both sites share similar purposes of

providing users with space for entertainment, interaction, and information, and fun though there may be a difference in focus depending on the boards that are part of these large-scale websites. Numerous boards on each of the websites discuss a variety of topics, and goal-oriented topics can involve more exchange of support and/or information, while in interaction-oriented topics whose primary purpose is sharing opinions on hobbies language usage presumably varies. The organisation of the data analysed in this chapter is schematically shown in Figure 6.1 below:

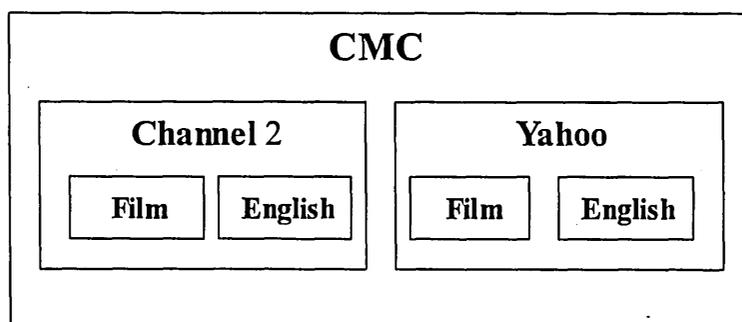


Figure 6.1: Organisation of data analysed in Chapter 6

An outline of the board/threads from which messages are taken is given in Table 6.3 below, and the number of messages analysed is also presented:

Table 6.3: Profile of messages from four BBS communities

Communities	Channel 2		Yahoo	
Topic	Film	English	Film	English
Total messages analysed	968	913	308	308
Total characters	65291	113573	56138	106520
Average message length (characters)	67.5	124.4	182.3	345.8
Average time interval between messages	1 hour 08 min	About 36 hours	4 hours 18 min	4.8 hours
Number of participants differentiated by User IDs	Unavailable	Unavailable	167	44

Table 6.3 shows an overall profile of the data analysed in this chapter. Compare the CMC data analysed in Chapter 4. The CMC data examined in Chapter 4 has the same organisation, but the data set analysed here is a subset from those in Chapter 4. The total number of messages used here is substantially smaller. For example, in the Channel 2 film category, 4000 messages were analysed in Chapter 4, while 968 messages are used for qualitative analysis here.

What is noticeable from this is that messages posted to Channel 2 are far shorter than those on Yahoo. From the viewpoint of the topic, members spend many more words, or almost twice as many, in discussing English language study than discussing the film. The time interval for Channel 2's English study is unnaturally long, largely because this site experienced periods of infrequent postings several times, which are reflected in the prolonged interval (this will be explained later).

As additional notes to Table 6.3 above, the messages used for analysis are those in Japanese. Those that do not use the Japanese language, such as those that are graphically shaped in ASCII art, are written in the English language, or consisting only of URLs and symbols are not included for analysis. Furthermore, quoted words and phrases in messages are also excluded from analysis.<sup>2</sup>

#### **6.4.2. Morphological Analysis of Data Based on ChaSen software**

Analyses of linguistic forms are conducted rather structurally, as this methodology will objectively give figures in numerically comparative terms. Since there are two target BBS websites with two different topics each, such an approach is suited to investigating formally and structurally observable linguistic data in these four different groups.

In order to analyse linguistic forms, a method based on morphological analysis is employed, in a similar manner to what has been conducted in Chapter 4, using the ChaSen software.<sup>3</sup> Unconventionally written words that do not meet the standard

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 3 for data selection criteria and how the data have been cleaned.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapters 3 and 4 for details of its application and problems.

Japanese orthography, and many of contemporary loan words are identified as unknown. Morphemes identified as “unknown” will be discussed in the results section.

One more note regarding the exclusion of messages from linguistic and interactional analysis is that those messages posted solely for the purpose of keeping the thread in existence, are not included for this section of morphological analysis (unsuccessful community will be discussed later in Section 6.5.2.4). Such messages very often consist of only one word, which in many cases is the message number or an expression, “*age*,” which means “raising.” The poster sends this message with the intention of raising the thread/topic to the higher position on the list of threads/topics of the system, and the purpose is not presenting his/her opinion for interaction. In the setting of Yahoo, after a two-week period of no posting, the topic is deleted from the site at the discretion of the management. An enquiry was made as to the length of the time before the thread is deleted, but the reply avoided giving a specific number of days. Their reason was while disclosure of the number of days would gain understanding on deletion by the management, when the number of days is known, this would invite actions attempting to prevent deletion from happening (personal communication with Yahoo management, 24 March 2007). What I observed was exactly the situation of topics avoiding deletion by the management. Messages consisting only of one or two words were posted every 10 days or so in a thread on Yahoo.

Recall the ChaSen results obtained in Chapter 4, where the larger corpora of Channel 2 and Yahoo were compared. The two corpora showed difference with respect to polite auxiliary uses. Here subsets of the Channel 2 and Yahoo corpora are compared and differentiated by the topic of discussion. Statistical testing is not intended here, because a qualitative rather than quantitative approach is more suitable to identify discourse features. To explore aspects that have not been identified by statistical analyses a smaller subset of messages are qualitatively analysed. When features that are not shared among the four communities are identified, more detailed examination is conducted, in order to ascertain whether and how each community under study is different. Community-specific linguistic



features will be addressed to supplement quantitative analysis.

## 6.5. Results

### 6.5.1. The *Wakimae* Approach

#### 6.5.1.1. Preliminary Results on Overall Parts-of-speech Morpheme Distribution

Let us look at the distribution of the morphemes for parts of speech across the four BBS communities, in order to see whether there is difference in the group's use of the Japanese language as a whole. The result based on morphological analysis for the parts of speech distribution is given in Table 6.4 below:

Table 6.4: Distribution of parts of speech across four BBS communities

Communities	Channel 2				Yahoo			
	Film		English		Film		English	
Nouns	8712	35.9%	14594	32.8%	8648	30.8%	16441	31.2%
Particles	7275	30.0%	14115	31.7%	8668	30.9%	16815	31.9%
Verbs	3470	14.3%	6931	15.6%	4414	15.7%	8451	16.1%
Auxiliary verbs	2617	10.8%	5567	12.5%	4202	15.0%	6703	12.7%
Adverbs	932	3.8%	1292	2.9%	781	2.8%	1743	3.3%
Adjectives	591	2.4%	978	2.2%	634	2.3%	1075	2.0%
Conjunctions	254	1.0%	501	1.1%	323	1.2%	697	1.3%
Prenominals	239	1.0%	344	0.8%	252	0.9%	478	0.9%
Interjections	144	0.6%	235	0.5%	143	0.5%	227	0.4%
Total	24234	100.0%	44557	100.0%	28065	100.0%	52630	100.0%

Most of the cells in Table 6.4 do not show marked differences among the four BBS communities. This table is the result of a second ChaSen application; ChaSen first gave a higher percentage of unknown categories (4.3% in Channel 2-Film, 3.0% in Channel 2-English, 1.6% in Yahoo-Film, and 0.8% in Yahoo-English threads). In general, a higher incidence of unknown morphemes on Channel 2 than Yahoo is observed, and this could be considered a reflection of more occurrences of unconventional orthography on Channel 2 than Yahoo. This tendency is discussed in relation to the community-specific

uses of language, which are related to building online community. Also the distribution of auxiliary verbs suggests certain differences between communities, as the percentage of auxiliary verb usage is markedly lower on Channel 2 than Yahoo, particularly for the film topic. Finer aspects of auxiliaries and particles will be examined in later sections.

### 6.5.1.2. Polite Auxiliary Morphemes: *desu* and *masu*

Chapter 4 identified how uses of polite auxiliaries differ between Channel 2 and Yahoo. Similarly, if we look at the auxiliary verb figures broken down into subcategories, we can see details that may show finer aspects of the patterns. Polite auxiliaries, *masu* and *desu* are adopted as the focus, because they belong to honorific system of the language and are directly relevant to indicating discernment or the code of conduct. In order to see the distribution of these two polite suffixes, ChaSen software was applied to the messages discussing the English language and the film topics, and the results are given in Table 6.5 below:

Table 6.5: Distribution of polite auxiliaries in four communities

Communities	Channel 2		Yahoo	
	Film	English	Film	English
Total characters	65291	113573	56138	106520
Total messages	968	913	308	308
Average message length (characters)	67.5	124.4	182.3	345.8
Polite Aux in total Aux	182 (7.0%)	1344 (32.0%)	558 (27.5%)	2831 (42.2%)
All other Aux	2435 (93.0%)	2858 (68.0%)	107 (72.5%)	3872 (57.8%)
Total Aux	2617 (100%)	4202 (100%)	5665 (100%)	6703 (100%)
Polite Aux per Message	0.19 (times)	1.47	5.06	9.19

As a finer analysis of the auxiliary verb to highlight the specific kind of auxiliary morphemes, Table 6.5 shows how the polite auxiliaries *desu* and *masu* are distributed across the four BBS communities. Members of Channel 2 in general use less polite auxiliaries, while those of Yahoo employ far greater for both topics. Comparing the two

topics, the English topic shows more polite auxiliaries than the film topic in both sites.

### 6.5.1.3. Sentence Final Particles

The distribution of the sentence final particles in each of the communities differentiated by topic is summarised in Table 6.7 below:

Table 6.7: Distribution of sentence final particles, *ne* and *yo*

Communities	Channel 2		Yahoo	
Topic	Film	English	Film	English
<i>Ne</i> in total SFP	168 (22.9%)	243 (29.0%)	133 (42.9%)	38 (50.6%)
<i>Yo</i> in total SFP	203 (27.7%)	291 (34.7%)	51 (27.8%)	65 (24.7%)
Other SFP	362 (49.4%)	305 (36.4%)	69 (31.1%)	65 (24.7%)
Total SFP	733 (100%)	839 (100%)	543 (100%)	568 (100%)
<i>Ne</i> per message	0.17	0.27	0.76	1.10
<i>Yo</i> per message	0.21	0.32	0.49	0.54
Total messages	968	913	308	308

From Table 6.7 above, in general, far more uses of *ne* are found on Yahoo than Channel 2 for both topics. On Channel 2, *ne* is not as dominantly widespread in comparison with other sentence final particles (SFP) as on Yahoo, as shown in the percentage of “Other SFP” category. Occurrences of these two sentence final particles based on the total message number are also given, because these figures give us different interpretations. The figures based on the total SFP only show the cases when SFP are actually used and excludes the cases when they are not used. To use such particles is one option and not to use them is another option on the part of the members, and figures based on the total message number reflect cases of including both use and non-use of the particles.

Table 6.7 above includes all these variations on the surface forms. These variations include *ne* in conventional *hiragana*, (ね), *nee*, in which the second *e* as in a smaller script (ねえ), *nee* with regular-sized script of *e* for the second *e*(ねえ), *ne* plus a lengthening bar (ねー), and *ne* in *katakana* script (ネ). For *yo*, there are three variations,

which are *yo* in conventional *hiragana* script (ヨ), conventional writing plus a lengthening bar (ヨー), and *yo* in *katakana* script (ヨ).

#### 6.5.1.4. *Wakimae*, or Discernment of Codes of Conduct

I mention first why I need to conduct structural analysis to argue that there are plural online communities, particularly along the lines of discernment framework. Also, I address why the incorporation of the concept of communities helps explain the two almost polarised behaviours on polite morphemes. Then I discuss the use of *ne* and *yo* in view of how these particles are related to the entire community maintenance.

What can be interpreted from Table 6.4 on the distribution of parts of speech in general is that the message posters belong to a community consisting of speakers of the Japanese language, as there are no marked differences in the majority of the parts of speech between the two target communities in general. However, a closer look at the auxiliary verbs, in Table 6.5, revealed difference in polite morpheme distribution. From this fact, it is possible to consider that within a broader community of Japanese speakers there exist sub-communities whose members perceive the context of community differently from members in other communities, and thus the Table 6.5 shows differing linguistic choices in polite morphemes. The discrepancy is in the area of polite/plain<sup>4</sup> distinction. The parts of speech distribution thus helps to identify what choices in linguistic forms are shared in general and the possibility of differences.

Grounded on this finding, the next stage of research goes to ascertaining where the differences come from. Positing different communities where there are different normative standards for language use is a possible solution to the sources of the differences. Since *masu* and *desu* are relevant in the production and comprehension of politeness behaviour, the differences in the normative standards regarding appropriateness are inferred to exist in this area between the two communities. This line of discussion leads to the existence of plural online communities where normative standards of

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<sup>4</sup> Maynard (1993: p. 150) calls this distinction “formal/abrupt” styles.

appropriate linguistic choices are different from those in the general community of the Japanese speakers. It seems that though the members of the smaller community as speakers of Japanese know the normative standards of the larger Japanese community, they do not use the knowledge in interacting with fellow members in their online communities. Their choice seems to be based on the normative standards of the smaller community that are different from those of the larger Japanese community.

Now I make a few remarks on their use of the sentence final particles, *yo* and *ne*. Table 6.7 shows more uses of *ne* on Yahoo than Channel 2 irrespective of topic theme. As I mentioned earlier, the figures based on total messages show what options members have between use and non-use. The percentages of these two particles out of the total sentence final particles only give us information on the percentages when SFP are actually used, in proportion to all other particles. In order to take a closer look at how they are used, approaches based on measures, such as the total message number need to be taken. The yellow cells of Table 6.7 seem to inform that the use of *yo* for the film topic is about the same across the two BBS communities, and appears more on the English study topic on Channel 2 than Yahoo. However, if we look at the blue boxes based on the total message number, the general tendency shows a pattern similar to that of *ne*, which is more occurrences of *yo* on Yahoo than on Channel 2.

These sentence final particles are not obligatory elements in the sense that the slot for polite/plain modalities is obligatorily filled (even with a zero choice). The pragmatic function of *ne*, according to Cook (1992), is that it indexes the speaker's cooperative and confirmation-seeking attitude. Maynard (1993) considers this particle, since it solicits confirmation, can be regarded as marker for emotional support. Thus, to choose *ne* out of a number of other sentence particles means that the speaker chooses to take a stance with which to carry out communication harmoniously while checking the addressee's understanding and making sure that the information is shared.

*Yo* is also a sentence final particle that relates to the speaker's attitude in presenting information. What separates *yo* from *ne* is that *yo* conveys an attitude in which the

speaker has trust in the information to be delivered, and considers that the information is what he/she is able to dominate and control (Kamio 1994) and it can be trusted. So *yo* can convey roughly an attitude of “I’m telling you this information,” which has the hearer in the speaker’s consciousness. Though the attitudes covered by *ne* and *yo*, are different, what is common between the two is that both presuppose the existence of the hearer. Since information giving takes place very often in BBS communities, the perspectives provided by these two sentence final particles are important in interpreting interactions in online communities. *Ne* can be directly relevant to politeness behaviour, and *yo*, though may not be directly relevant to politeness, can index the speakers’ stance toward other members. By comparing uses of *ne* and *yo*, it is possible to infer that the higher uses of these particles will relate more consciousness of the hearer in the mind of the speaker. It would be possible to regard that more consideration is paid toward the hearer when more *ne* and *yo* are used. Since the uses of these particles are fewer on Channel 2 than on Yahoo, this leads to an interpretation that more members on Yahoo pay respect and consideration than those on Channel 2. Though they may not apparently seem to show as much respect and consideration toward others, members of Channel 2 can be inferred to have other means of stick together. This possibility will be explored further from the behavioural CMDA approach in qualitative discussion of messages.

## **6.5.2. The CMDA Approach**

### **6.5.2.1. Sense of Community: Discourse Behaviours Indicating Online Communities**

Based on Herring’s (2004a) CMDA framework with additional perspectives of online community-hood criteria presented by Wellman (2000), I pose that what distinguishes the two BBS communities is that Channel 2 has community-specific language, while such language is very limited on Yahoo. This feature shared only in this community contributes to maintaining the member identity of Channel 2, which helps develop solidarity among members. Because Channel 2’s unique language is directly relevant to the member identity and solidarity, which are two of Wellman’s online

community criteria, it would be appropriate to consider that Channel 2 is placed higher in the scale of online community-hood or the sense of community among its members than Yahoo, if the remaining criterion of support is considered equal. Let us go over what are the three criteria, how they are linked to community-hood indicating behaviours, and the kind of language used to show the behaviours.

The criterion for identity is indicated by jargons or community-specific, in-group language, according to CMDA approach. Though one can have several identities, what is meant here is the membership identity in a BBS community. This particular identity can be seen through not only the use of community-specific language and jargons, but also through reference to the entire website or to the specific board or thread of the community. The sociability and support criteria can be seen in how sociability is achieved and how support seeking and offering takes place. Sociability is achieved through various kinds of speech acts, including thanks, a typical, positively perceived speech act. Support offering can be observed by examining how the exchange of information such as self-disclosure takes place. The behaviours for the last two criteria can be achieved in either standard language or unconventional, community specific language. But the identity criterion is met almost exclusively by the community specific language. Because of this, members of Channel 2 have a stronger sense of community than those on Yahoo. Evidence to show this is given below with examples.

Discourse behaviours are explained with examples from a sequence of messages extracted from each of the BBS communities, and examples are analysed with respect to (1) community specific language, (2) sociability markers of thanking and (3) activities involving support, such as information exchange. Finally, participation is discussed with an example from one community in Yahoo. This particular thread discussing IELTS can be considered as “dead” with regard of the prerequisite of community-hood, and its possible cause for non-activity is analysed from the message exchanges.

From these observations, I argue that because there are several indicators that show online community-hood, both BBS sites are successful communities where one

community employs a combination of some of elements, while the other community another. Different degrees in the sense of online community among the members are due to the presence or absence of community specific language. Behaviours are delivered linguistically in polite, standard language on Yahoo, and in plain or rather impolite, in-group language on Channel 2. It will be made clear that polite intentions can be conveyed in impolite and unconventional in-group language in an appropriate setting of a successful community on Channel 2.

#### **6.5.2.2. Identity as BBS Community Member—Community-specific Uses of Language**

A close examination of Channel 2 messages shows that quite a few of them are expressions that are uniquely created, used and circulated within the Channel 2 BBS community. Members employ a large number of expressions in unconventional ways. I have analyzed elsewhere these unique linguistic features of Channel 2 community (Nishimura 2003a), which are mostly in lexical and orthographic uniqueness based on punning and shape similarities of scripts. I add here a few other observations on other characteristics that are not included in my previous work.

Because entering Japanese words into the computer is based on how a word is pronounced, and because there are so many homophones in Japanese, the conversion software of Japanese word processing technology sometimes gives unexpected output. In certain cases, those unexpected conversion results gain popularity and get lexicalized in this community, as the purpose of the site is basically for entertainment. Many of them are lexical items such as nouns and adjectives, but in some cases verb conjugations and even terms of first person reference are created on this website as a result of mis-conversion or input error. Since unique language uses have spread widely all over Channel 2, such vocabularies and expressions accompanied by their etymological origins are compiled in the Channel 2 dictionary (Niten Purojekuto 2002, 2003). This section does not comprehensively discuss these unique linguistic uses per se. Instead, the

community-specific uses of Channel 2 language are explained when they appear in messages that show interactional behaviours.

It is true that use of community-specific language makes it difficult for newcomers to join and understand interactions, but they are advised to refer to such reference works as the dictionary<sup>5</sup> mentioned above and messages posted earlier. This way the kind of in-group language is learned, inherited, and disseminated among those belonging to a bounded community.

On the use of in-group language, Brown & Levinson (1987) state, "S [speaker] can implicitly claim the common ground with H [hearer]..." (p.107), and they include this among positive politeness strategies (p.102). Having and using community-specific language can enhance a sense of community, as participants can be conscious of the "common ground" of the community.

The community-specific unconventional linguistic uses on Yahoo are not very many, as can be found from the low percentage of "unclassifiable" in ChaSen's parts of speech result. These few examples include "*topi*" for "topic," and "*kate*" for "category." Members of this community maintain community cohesiveness without the unconventional lexical choices found on Channel 2; Yahoo members employ other means to have the sense of community. Those other means are seen in message exchanges that show sociability and support.

### **6.5.2.3. Sociability and Support Seen through Community Indicating Speech Acts**

Speech acts are those acts performed by using linguistic expressions, and among the many speech acts that have been analysed so far, here the acts of thanking and those including both positively and negatively accepted behaviours from the viewpoint of sociability will be discussed. Positive behaviours include thanking, agreeing, and admiring behaviours, and the negative ones include disagreement, insult, and criticism. I would like to point out that while such speech acts are performed in formal, polite

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<sup>5</sup> Its online version is available at <<http://www.media-k.co.jp/jiten/>>, maintained by a volunteer manager.

language on Yahoo for both topics, they are given in informal, impolite language that also includes the community-specific, unconventional forms on Channel 2.

### 6.5.2.3.1. Thanks as Positively Perceived Speech Act

Both communities show a great deal of this speech act, as there are many messages involving information giving, sharing the same opinion, and simply responding that would invite members to say “thank you” in a variety of ways. The act of thanking is regarded as an FTA that would offend Speaker's negative face by Brown & Levinson (1987). This interpretation is possible when the speaker is obliged to thank someone against his or her will, and in that case to say “thank you” can be an FTA. On the contrary, however, when the speaker is willing to convey thanks to a benefactor, it seems this act cannot be an FTA. On the part of the hearer, if there has been a pre-existing FTA, the expressions of thanks can be used to minimise the FTA. “Thank you,” however, can be uttered without a preceding FTA, simply to show appreciation toward the benefactor of prior event or words. The example discussed in (1) below can be interpreted as a positive politeness strategy, as the poster is grateful to the creator of the thread, and their common want can be addressed. This way, since the face want of both parties can be enhanced with the thanking behaviours by implicitly or explicitly pointing out their common ground, the act of thanking can be solidarity enhancing. Let us observe how “thank you” is expressed on Channel 2 in Example (1) and on Yahoo in Example (2) below. Both messages discuss the film topic:

(1) (From Channel 2: Film #178)

おお スレ が あった ん か い な  
 Oo sure ga atta n ka i na  
 Oh thread SM be-PAST Nom QM SFP SFP  
 Oh, there was (such a) thread, wasn't there

ありがた	や	乙 >	位置
ari gata	ya	otsu >	ichi
be difficult to exist Nom Suffix shortened from <i>otsukaresama</i> >			location= No.1
I'm grateful to you, thank you, Message 1 sender			

(2) (From Yahoo: Film, # 280):

お 返事 あり がとう ござい まし た  
o- henji ari gatou gozai mashi ta  
Beautifying Prefix response be difficult exist HON COP POL PAST  
Thank you very much for your response (for a completed event/action)

Example (1) is posted by the sender of Message No. 178. This poster shows his/her gratefulness to the creator of this entire film thread for the act of creating it. The message is given in an unconventional, Channel 2-specific way. The instances of Channel 2-specific expressions are seen in the unconventional use of the character for “*otsu*” and “*ichi*” (in bold above). The Chinese character for “*otsu*” means the “second” among three items (*kou*, the first, *otsu* the second, and *hei* the third), and semantically it has nothing to do with “*otsukaresama*,” an expression that means “thank you for your labour.”<sup>6</sup> The sender of this message enters the first two syllables of “*otsukaresama*,” and *otsu* alone is understood as a shortened expression of thanks given in this *kanji* among Channel 2 members.

As for the second expression, *ichi* in (1) must be the most recently chosen converted *kanji* from the list of possible characters that has the pronunciation of this word. This way of using different characters with the same pronunciation in order to assign an intended meaning different from what the *kanji* means is an understood practice among the members, as unconventional use of characters based on how the particular *kanji* can be pronounced is common. Because entering words onto the computer is based on how a word is pronounced (see Chapter 1 for word-processing in Japanese), this kind of *kanji* use with irrelevant sense to mean something else is found throughout Channel 2. Channel 2 members have a shared understanding on the use of words based on pronunciation, which comes about as a result of converting a word after its Romanisation is entered. Non-members of Channel 2 might have difficulty understanding what this message means.

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<sup>6</sup> There are pragmatic differences on the uses between *arigatou* and *otsukaresama*, but are treated here as expression of thanks. *Arigatou* etymologically means, “(thank you very much for such a rare) act/thing that is difficult to exist,” and *otsukaresama* literally means, “your honourable fatigue,” and could mean “thanks for your labour.” This may not be appropriate to use to one’s elders.

Shortening takes place a great deal in cyberspace (Werry 1996) and this is one typical case of abbreviation aside from unconventional use of *kanji*.

Example (2) is a response message wherein the poster directly shows his/her intention to thank to a previous poster who responded to a message this poster wrote. Notice also that this message has a number of polite features, such as the beautifying prefix, *o*, and the “thank you” message could have been expressed in a shortened form, such as “*arigatou*” only, but a full expression including honorific *gozai* and polite morphemes *mashi* [continuative form of *masu*] is used up to the tense morpheme at the end. As has been pointed out in the section of discernment, the messages on Yahoo exhibits a number of linguistic politeness. A message to show the same intention to thank is also given by members of Channel 2, though in an unconventional way. From these instances, members of both communities have the intention of showing thanks in appropriate contexts. We can see that both sets of community members invariably show consideration to other members of the community by thanking, but linguistically in very different ways.

In Channel 2 community, because the language circulated on Channel 2 includes words and expressions that are uniquely created and shared among members, they can trust other members on the comprehension of these. From this, a higher degree of community groupness resulting from trust to other member, and the sense of community can be felt more through the use of the community specific language.

#### **6.5.2.3.2. Other Solidarity-enhancing Behaviours**

The above two examples are isolated ones, and I present below an excerpt from a longer sequence of messages. Example (3) is from Channel 2 discussing the English language study. Members here discuss one member’s test score when the result arrives. In this example, the number in the first line (above the line for Japanese scripts) is the message number, which can function as one means of identifying a previous sender:

(3)

13

漏れ B C の IELTS コース 行ってた。  
More B[ritish] C[ouncil] no IELTS koosu itte ta  
I British Council GEN of IELTS course go-Gerund Past  
I was going to the IELTS course at the British Council.

お かげ か どう か 知らん が、1点 ほど あがた  
o kage ka dou ka shiran ga, 1-ten hodo agata  
beautifying prefix indebtness whether or not don't know but, one point about rise Past  
I don't know whether I was indebted to it or not, but my score went up by about one point

14

初期 値 にも よる が、3 ヶ月 で 1 あがる っ て  
Shoki chi ni mo yoru ga, san kagetsu de ichi agaru tte  
Initial value on also depend but 3 months in one rise Quote  
結構 すごいと 思う ぞ。  
kekkou sugoi to omou zo  
fairly great Quote think SFP

Though it depends on the initial value (band level), I think it's fairly great that your band level goes up by one in three months

15 :13: [This message sender is the Sender of Message 13 ]

5.5→6.5 に なり ます た。  
5.5→6.5 ni nari masu ta.  
5.5→6.5 Particle become POL Past  
[My band level] became [from]5.5 to 6.5

でも 漏れ の 行きたい 大学 院 は  
demo more no iki tai daigaku in wa  
but I Genitive go want to Graduate School TM

7 要求 してる ん だ よ ね。。。  
nana youkyuu site ru n da yo ne...  
seven require is being Pres Nom COP PL SFP SFP  
But the postgraduate school I want to go requires [band] 7...

1月 にも いちど う けます。  
Ichi-gatsu ni mo ichido uke masu  
January in also one time take POL  
I will take it again in January

17 :14: [This Message sender is sender of Message 14 ]

>13 [In response to Message 13]  
漏れは 6.5 と っ て 地方 の 院 に 行きます た。  
More wa 6.5 totte chihou no in ni iki masu ta

I TM 6.5 take country GEN graduate school to go POL PST  
I went to a post graduate school in the country after getting 6.5

7 は トレ ナ カタ ヨ。 無念。  
Nana wa tore na kata yo. munen  
Seven TM take able not PST SFP Regret  
I couldn't get 7. It was regretful.

あと 0.5、がんだれ！  
Ato 0.5, gangare!  
Additional 0.5, stick to it IMP  
For another 0.5, stick to it!

18 :13:

>>17 [In response to Message 17]  
応援 ありがとう ね。  
Ouen arigato ne  
Support thank you SFP  
Thank you for your support.

Example (3), consisting of five messages, No. 13 through No. 18 (except for No. 16), contains a number of behaviours as well as the community specific language uses that indicate members' sense of online community. There are three instances of Channel 2 specific language use, which are all underlined above. First, “*more*”, which appeared three times in (3) above (in Messages No 13, 15, and 17), literally means “leakage,” but functions as the first person pronoun of “*ore*,” as a result of mistyping, and it is a lexicalized vocabulary on Channel 2. This came from entering “*ore mo, ore mo*,” meaning “me, too; me, too” very rapidly, and the output of the conversion software gave the *kanji* for “leakage,” and this gained popularity.

Second, sentence ending verbals show unconventional forms, which are *agata* for *agatta* (Message 13) and *nakata* for *nakatta* (Message 17). The conventional way of writing these scripts are あがった(*agatta*) [not あがた] and ナカッタ(*nakatta*) [not ナカタ] respectively. The omission of the small script, *tsu* (つ or ツ) before the final script is what is understood as Channel 2 language. Notice also that *nakatta* (ナカッタ) is represented in *katakana*, whose standard orthography is なかつた in *hiragana*, and in

half-width script (ナカタ), rather than full width-script(ナカタ). All Japanese scripts, given in half-width representation, are identified by ChaSen software as unknown, because this is unconventional.

Another unconventional feature is seen in sentence endings. *Masuta* is used instead of the standard form, *mashita* in Messages 15 and 17. These are polite auxiliaries, and members seem to want to make messages sound polite, yet in their own unconventional way. For *desu*, the Channel 2 variant is *detsu* (でっ), whose example is not found in the excerpt here, but found in the data set.

One more instance of unconventional language is “*gangare*,” which is a non-word outside of Channel 2 context. This comes from the verb “*ganbaru*,” which means “to make an effort” or “work hard.” This verb is most often used in the imperative form, “*ganbare*.” Since the keys for “g” and “b” are placed next to each other on the keyboard, there was an input error in typing the word, and when this appeared in messages on Channel 2, it was well received and gained popularity. In these examples unconventional language is not limited to lexical items but to certain areas of grammar, including verb conjugation and personal pronoun.

In addition to these marked linguistic uses outside of the Japanese standard orthography, in (3) there are instances of solidarity ensuring behaviours, such as the support giver in Message 17, thanks for receiving encouragement in Message 18, disclosing personal experiences regarding the test score in Message 13 and the consequence of getting that score in Message 17, and admiration for achievement other members did (Message 14). These are the kinds of behaviours that indicate that members share a variety of information with their fellow members, and they do so because they feel they are members of the same group.

There are other solidarity enhancing behaviours, such as making apology and expressing agreement. Many of these behaviours are delivered in community-specific language in Channel 2 community, and in generally polite language in Yahoo community. These examples on apology are given in Appendix 6.A. So far we have seen behaviours

that would positively contribute to online community-hood or behaviours for harmonious maintenance. Now the focus will be shifted to adverse behaviour.

#### **6.5.2.3.3. Adverse Behaviours for Online Community Harmony**

Aside from these harmonious linguistic characteristics of these communities, we can also see pictures somewhat different from harmonious community. There are those members who are not always cooperative in community maintenance, regardless of whether they are conscious of it or not. It would be more natural to consider that each community has members who may not be considerate of others or observe rules and guidelines. Just like any community online or offline, people's behaviour in their community is diverse. Now I shift the focus of attention to such behaviours, which can be problematic or may not conform to what is generally expected of community members. In the remainder of this section, I portray instances involving disagreement, criticism and insult, and how such behaviours are handled from the viewpoint of community maintenance.

It very often happens that members disagree. In discussing the film topic, though the sites were originally created for fans to interact with other members who share the same interest, members do not always share the same opinion where details are concerned. The topic thus invites disagreement, and in some instances people criticize others or even give insulting remarks. Similar situations can be seen in the English language topic, especially when members do not like other members' teacher-like way of talking or philosophising about English language study. When these adversary behaviours toward community maintenance reach a certain limit, members might no longer want to participate in quarrelling messages, lose interest and leave the community. I will take a case in which members seem to lose interest in the community, in discussing participation in Section 6.5.2.4.

Now let us consider some excerpts from the four BBS communities. I first examine the Channel 2 film thread. This thread requires IDs when posting messages, but any

sequence of letters can be entered as an ID and can be changed as many times as one posts. In most cases, members do not pay attention to IDs, but when there are problematic members with IDs, these IDs can be useful in clarifying who says what.

In the excerpt given in Appendix 6.B, one poster discusses one of the actors in the film and comments his performance as poor. In relation to this actor who is popular among girls, he/she further expresses that the film is one that is enjoyed by “ugly geek girls.” and over the course of 70 minutes repeatedly sends 11 messages that contain “annoying, ugly geek girls.” Messages under focus are given in Message 111 below:

111 03/06/05 17:39 ID: bF2Wq2zO

どう でも イイ ケド、 ブス オタ が ウザイ 映画  
dou demo ii kedo, busu ota (=otaku) ga uzai eiga  
how nevertheless OK but ugly geek SM annoying film  
It's all the same to me, but it's a film that makes annoying, ugly, geek girls crazy.

This poster is identified with the same ID, bF2Wq2zO in these 11 messages. One of his/her fellow member worries about this particular poster, and asks, “Are you all right?” in Message 122, using Channel 2 jargon:

122 03/06/05 18:42 ID: SoBeWQdl

bF2Wq2zO たそ 大丈夫 か？

bF2Wq2zO taso daijoobu ka

bF2Wq2zO [same as chan] all right QUESTION

[taso(タソ)=tan(タン)=chan, endearment suffix to names, typically used for children]

Are you all right, dear bF2Wq2zO?

Responding to this message, this problematic poster says in Message 125:

125 03/06/05 18:44 ID: bF2Wq2zO

>>122 [Responding to 122]

相手 に しな い でくれ

aite ni shinai de kure

Partner/companion to do-NEG gerund give-imperative

Don't worry over me. [Lit. don't make me your partner]

The focus of the discussion does not shift until some other poster changes the subject in Message 129.

This particular thread is of interest from the theoretical point that utterances are neither inherently polite nor face threatening. This poster seems to create his/her social identity in this community by attacking girls who are “annoying ugly geeks.” Behind this conversation the implicit assumption is that, “I’m a real fan who can appreciate the actor’s more important qualities, while geek girls are superficial fans who are only satisfied with the actor’s look such as his blond hair. This poster thus attacks the girls and insists, “I’m in a better, higher position in the hierarchy of fans, by using what might sound like face threatening expressions such as “ugly” and “annoying”.

A similar analysis of an excerpt from the Channel 2 film thread was reported in Chapter 5 on the use of polite auxiliary morpheme, *desu*, which can be used strategically to protest against an attacker. In that case *masu* does not function to show deference, considerateness, nor politeness; on the contrary it showed some contesting attitude. In the geek girls comment, a similar observation, though in a different direction, can be made in the sense that additional interpretations can be traced from what is linguistically expressed in words. What might superficially sound face threatening may not necessarily be used to really threaten the face of such girls; rather, the poster uses these to construct his online identity as a “real fan” of the actor (rather than the film itself). This can be supported by the poster’s remark in Message 115 that he/she will continue to refer to the topic of “ugly geek girls.” The poster does not value the film, due to his/her assumption that it simply caters to such superficial fans of the actor, unlike the “good” films listed in Message 128, referring to other later “good” films that this actor appears.

This thread is also another example in which power relations based on hierarchies between real and superficial fans are negotiated and created among participants who are presumably strangers. Online discussion participants’ only recourse in evaluating others is the message content. Based on what others are saying in the discussion, posters determine

their attitude to cooperate or contest. From what is posted, participants can claim or compete for a better, higher rank in a hierarchy of fandom, and can be in a position with more power. In conversing with strangers, this thread shows that though participants may be egalitarian on a macro level in BBS interaction, on a micro level, there are power relations based on the content of posts. Because of these features on the micro level, participants are found to negotiate power relations and construct social identities online by using various interactional styles, which can be found through thorough examinations of messages.

Though this community contained what looked like a troublemaker who repeatedly makes seemingly impolite remarks, there is also a fellow member who shows some concern for this poster. In a similar instance as this, another poster shows concern for a troublemaker and gives advice to get out of the problematic situation by using different IDs. This is a case of offering help when another member is in trouble. Interestingly the other poster who offers help identifies this behaviour as a problem of the poster - not as rudeness or offensiveness<sup>7</sup>-- and sees the situation not as a problem for the thread. A poster who produces annoying messages repeatedly often triggers sympathy and leads to building solidarity in the community.

In another instance, there is a particular problematic poster who some members feel bothersome, but some others enjoy. This poster is considered to be a "self-performer" or "self-responder," who posts a message and responds to it as if someone else sends a responding message, engaging in the message exchanges him/herself, in order to make the initial claim look as if it is supported. Since the same ID appeared in all these messages, it was too obvious they were sent by a self-performer. In the beginning, this poster's repeated opinions did not extract support or agreement, and this seemed to motivate this poster's self-performance. Other members comment on his/her lack of knowledge on IDs, and one of them directly says "you're bothersome." The members who enjoy his/her sequence of messages remark that it is quite rare to have such an

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<sup>7</sup> This interpretation was brought to my attention by Karen Grainger (personal communication).

ignorant and un-self-conscious poster who adheres to self-performance, which is lost nowadays, but since it is fun, this advocate says, "I'll watch how his/her self-performance goes. But never come again." This excerpt of these interactions is given in Appendix 6.C. While this kind of behaviour is regarded as annoying and offensive by some, it can also be enjoyed by others and such a situation can be seen as an instance of "voyeuristic" pleasure (Culpeper 2005). In addition to solidarity and support allowing such diversified views can be another reason for joining the online community and hence contributing to online community-hood.

We see there are problematic posters who send disparaging or unwelcome remarks repeatedly. Yet these problematic members do not discourage the entire community from posting--they seem to be tolerated. When problematic messages are not serious violations, as in the cases mentioned above, members can let unwelcome posters pass and ignore them, which is understood as the best practice to deal with such inflammatory remarks among the members of the Channel 2 community.

However, when such problematic messages cannot be ignored on the part of the ones who suffer from these messages, such as a case of disclosure of privacy and/or inclusion of emotionally unbearable content, there are recourses, such as filing a petition to message deletion executors on the Deletion Board of Channel 2 (see Chapter 1 for descriptions of Channel 2), and these deletion executors are voluntary members of Channel 2 community. Though my dataset from the two communities on Channel 2 does not contain such cases where petition for deletion was filed or necessary, I point out here that there are such ways for problem resolution. This system on the part of the members can be another factor for considering online community-hood criteria, which contributes to member's perception on this community and belongingness to it.

In Yahoo community there are not as many instances of disagreement or criticism in the first place. Cases of insulting remarks are seen far less frequently compared with Channel 2, as revealed in analysis of interactional behaviours conducted in Chapter 5. When there are such instances of disagreement or criticism that can be problematic,

ignoring them is the solution. But this does not always work. Members try to persuade troublemakers verbally, and in most cases discussion regains a certain level of smooth flow. Below is such an instance from the Yahoo film thread, in which one poster makes a comment on the film and another poster dissuades him/her from sending a complaint. The entire excerpt of the messages exchange is given in Appendix 6.D. There is a poster in Yahoo film community, and this participant seems to want to know whether s/he should see the film. This poster says, "If this is boring, I will make all kinds of bad remarks about the film." Then another member responds in a cool attitude that opinions on a film should vary; this is a thread where people who have seen it should post, and someone who has not seen it should not come here to make disparaging remarks. The problem maker seems to be persuaded and says in a calm tone that s/he will not plan to see the film for the time being. This example from the Yahoo film thread is a case in which persuasion works, and the interaction does not get rough. In this instance, the poster does not intend to attack the face of a specific member, though members of the community feel offended by his/her remark. Differences in the perceptions of norms for appropriateness seem to come from multiple levels of interpretations, and need further research (as explored by Graham 2008).

Also from the English thread on Yahoo, an interaction deemed inappropriate by the thread initiator occurs. This was corrected by his/her polite interaction. The members involved in the inappropriate behaviour apologised. What was considered as inappropriate by the thread initiator was to discuss matters off topic. The initiator expected the discussion to be limited to ways of improving English for people who did not study when they were students but want to improve now that they are working. The initiator of the thread points this out, and asks those members who have been discussing the undesirable topic to discuss it somewhere else by setting up another thread. In doing this, the initiator gives his/her reason why their subject of discussion should be removed from his/her own thread. In O' Sullivan and Flanagan's (2003) perspective, this case can be the second in their taxonomy (p. 82), in which perspectives of both the sender and recipient are

appropriate, but only problematic from the viewpoint of the third party, who is in this case the thread initiator. Messages showing this interactions are given in Appendix 6.E.

These interactions are certainly not very harmonious, yet it seems they are not problematic enough for the community to fall apart (though there are such cases of breakdown to be discussed later). I argue that a healthy community is where both harmonious and opposing interactions can be seen without losing cohesiveness or sense of community. Such a dynamic interaction is what makes a community more attractive and engaging, than a harmony-only community. One of the reasons for joining a community is to know other people's opinions as well as to express one's own, if the aim of the community is to have lively and interesting discussions. Though a general tendency for opinions in an online community may be to cluster around certain opinions, different, opposing minority views can be tolerated and heard. People do not like to see other people confronting one another in these online discussions, at least on Yahoo, though this may be different on Channel 2, where users may enjoy seeing others fighting.<sup>8</sup> There are reasons for those members who post opposing messages, and being able to send their opinions is another function of online communities. That is, to offer space for members to express their thought in addition to receiving support is the role of BBS.

The cases discussed so far are all those where there are differences of opinions and inappropriate behaviours from the viewpoint of certain members. One thing that is common is that these behaviours are all tolerated by community members in a sense that they maintain interest in the community discussions. In the next section, I describe a case where some members' behaviours did not gain support from other members, but the community seems to have lost membership because of it. Let us first consider participation and then look at details of the interactions.

#### **6.5.2.4. Participation**

On "participation," which is the fifth behaviour among the five discourse behaviour

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<sup>8</sup> This comment was brought to my attention by Patrick Galbraith (personal communication).

categories Herring (2004a) identifies, I regard this as the prerequisite. Without members' regular or frequent postings, online communities lose ground. I would like to briefly report here two cases. In one of them I describe how Channel 2's English language theme, or specifically IELTS, underwent certain periods of very few posting, but later recovered. In the second case, I explain how a Yahoo thread discussing the IELTS exam<sup>9</sup> was seriously affected by infrequent participation and now faces extinction.

The Channel 2 IELTS thread started in November 2002, and several initial reactions to the originator's founding message were not very cooperative, as subsequent posters mentioned that IELTS topic was not appealing, like the TOEFL exam, which is more widely used. There was a period of no posting for 39 days for the longest. However, in December, the 12th message poster said that there were needs specifically for IELTS, and suggested the thread should be continued. Responding to this message, the thread received postings. In fact, one poster said s/he was looking for a thread on IELTS, and expressed his/her expectation for its continuation. Over the two years of its existence there were also several times when no postings were made. Yet more than 74 percent of the total 913 messages (as of 11 May 2006) were sent within 24 hours of a preceding message, regardless of being reactive, interactive or a new message. There did not seem to be clear reasons for people's not sending messages to this thread during these five times. Though this thread was not a very active community, there are continued posting over the past two years, and since it even has Part 2 of the same theme,<sup>10</sup> this thread meets the prerequisite of participation as online community (and hence its morphological data are included in the analyses of this chapter).

Yahoo also had a thread discussing IELTS, which started in January 2005, and virtually died while under observation. There were constant message postings up to the 50th message, but before the posting became scarce, there was a message (No. 36) openly criticizing the previous message content, saying "such a fool who says this kind of thing,"

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<sup>9</sup> The linguistic data from this thread is not included for morphological analyses, because this was considered inactive.

<sup>10</sup> As of 25 May 2008, the thread has 578th message in Part 2 at <<http://academy6.2ch.net/test/read.cgi/english/1164988429/>>.

and demanding the previous poster not to come here again in markedly strong tone without the polite suffix. The poster who was criticized returned a message in Message 43 to the sender of Message 36, saying, “what I said was true, and was an opinion by an expert,” and also demanded that sender of Message 36 should apologize the sender of Message 43 and the expert, also in a harsh tone, without using “-san”, which is normally attached at the end of the user ID, as ID is normally treated like a personal name on Yahoo. S/he did name-calling without polite titles (-san) in a generally polite sounding community. After these exchanges, a couple of newcomers came to the community seeking information about the IELTS exam, but no one seemed to offer information, beyond relevant URL. After the 50th message, no substantial discussion took place; only the message number was sent, just to keep the thread in existence. The hostile interactions seemed to make the other members hesitate to post or discouraged their participation. A rough excerpt showing the interaction in translation is given in Appendix 6.F.

It is of interest, though, there are at least those who expect the thread not to disappear and keeping empty, if not meaningless, posts. It seems to me the community is almost dead, even though it has not disappeared with effort by someone who expects to keep it on the web. This kind of effort can also be seen in Yahoo’s film topic. The effort is painstakingly made by the initiator of this thread. From the case of community loss on Yahoo’s IELTS and also another inactive community, whether an online community thrives or not, or at least continues, is typically due to the effort of the thread initiator or those who eagerly want to maintain it; it does not exist as a natural entity. This should be kept in mind in online community research, as it is up to member whether to stay in or leave a community. Once one’s reasons for coming to the community are lost, participation will be abandoned. This aspect of CMC on how threads die is a neglected area (see Hewitt 2005 in educational settings), and this observation on this BBS community can point out that linguistic impoliteness together with conflicting behaviour can be a contributing cause for an online community to die, though there may be other factors for this breakdown. This can be a contribution to CMC research from linguistic

characterisation of community behaviour.

### 6.5.3. Overall Results

The results from the structural analyses given in sections 6.5.1 and the discussions on behavioural features of the four community interactions given in Section 6.5.2 show a rich array of linguistic variety in the four Japanese BBS communities. The findings are schematically shown in Figure 6.2 below.

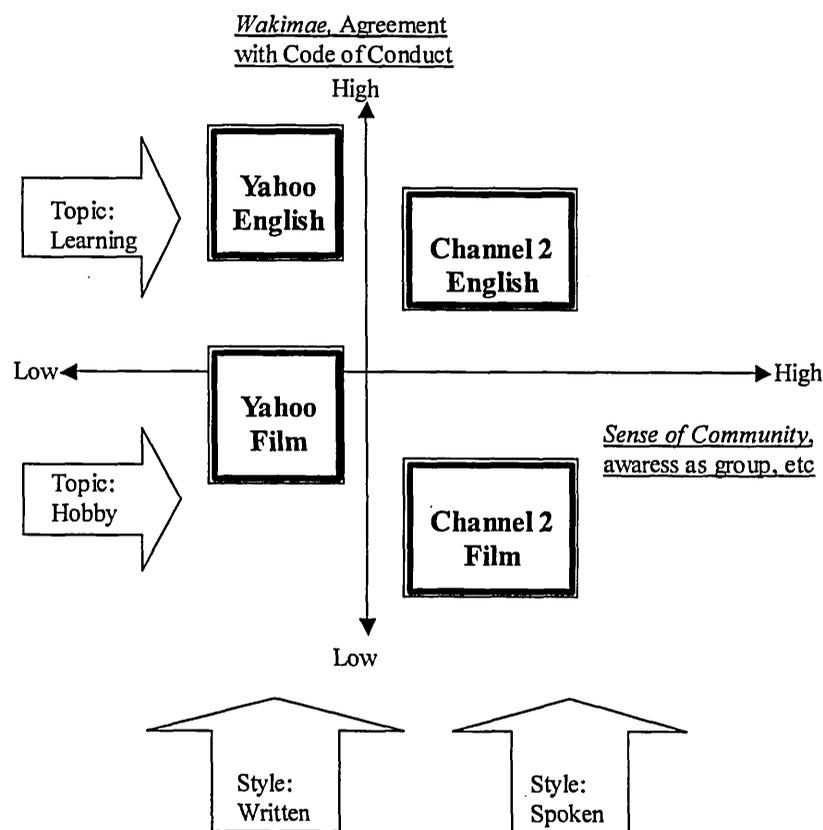


Figure 6.2: Overall results

The vertical axis represents the *wakimae* dimension, showing the degree of agreement with the code of conduct in Japanese speech community. It is measured by structural analyses of honorifics, *desu* and *masu* and sentence-final particles, *ne* and *yo*. Channel 2 employs far fewer polite auxiliary morphemes than Yahoo. Of the two topics,

discussion on the film also involves fewer polite auxiliary morphemes. The results on the interactional sentence final particles (*ne* and *yo*) show the same pattern: fewer uses in Channel 2 than Yahoo and fewer uses in discussing the film than English language.

The horizontal axis of Figure 6.2 represents the relative strength of sense of community or awareness as group, studied in previous research of electronic forum from the viewpoints of CMC and group process (e.g. Korenman & Wyatt 1996) and pointed also in Herring's (2004a) CMDA. Channel 2 is placed higher than Yahoo for both topics, and the reasons can be explained in the following way.

Among the three online-community criteria described by Herring (2004a), to provide identity, sociability and support, Channel 2 has a stronger indication of identity. This is because of the presence of community-specific, unconventional language (Nishimura 2003a) in Channel 2, a marker for identity. Yahoo does not seem to exhibit language features equivalent to this.

The community specific language on Channel 2 is seen in lexical items such as *otsu* in example (1), the grammar of certain verbal endings (*agata*) and personal pronouns (*more*) in example (3). Members can choose to create their messages with or without such special vocabulary and grammar. In their practice of using and interpreting the community-specific language, a strong sense of community bonding is observed. The features shared only in this community contribute to maintaining the member identity of Channel 2.

The remaining criteria of sociability and support are considered to be equal between Channel 2 and Yahoo. Sociability is achieved through various speech acts, including thanks. Support can be observed by how the exchange of information such as self-disclosure takes place. Those behaviours that show sociability and support are invariably observed across the four BBS communities (see Appendices), though some adverse behaviours are also seen in both communities. They are expressed in mostly impolite, community-specific language on Channel 2, and are given in polite, standard Japanese on Yahoo. From these observations, I argue that the presence or absence of

members' linguistic practices specific to a BBS community is the factor that crucially differentiates the relative horizontal positioning of the two sites.

## **6.6. Discussion**

### **6.6.1. On Relative Positioning of the Four Communities**

So far we have looked at how the two BBS sites can be considered online communities in two-dimensional perspectives of discernment and sense of community. We have analysed politeness morphemes and sentence final particles for the dimension of discernment in numerical terms and also behaviour properties of interactions focusing on identity and solidarity markers. In this section three points need to be made; first the reasons why Channel 2 is placed at a higher position on the scale of the sense of community than Yahoo, from qualitative discussion on discourse behaviours, second, how these two communities can be captured from the viewpoints of “community of practice” (Wenger 1998), and third how one of the communities, Channel 2, is related to “speech community.”

As has been explained, members of Channel 2 share a large number of unique language uses known among its members, which are not used outside of this online community (except for limited number of offline output in the print format of the collection of Channel 2 language). The presence of such language can be a clear marker of community-hood for this BBS site, since language use is exclusively seen on this website, and those who use it are considered as members of this community. Yahoo, on the other hand, does not have anything equivalent to the Channel 2 language. Though members of Yahoo community seem to show solidarity by frequent uses of sentence final particles, the difference in the use of particles between the two communities becomes smaller in the discussion of English language study, where more people seem to take an interactive stance by using the particles when discussing English language study than the film. Since the community-specific language directly relates to member identity on Channel 2, it would be appropriate to regard that Channel 2 is placed higher on the scale

of community consciousness.

Then another question that concerns online community will be: though Yahoo is placed lower in the scale of the sense of community, how does this community maintain online community-hood, without marked language features? As stated before, measures by indicating online community-hood, and they are identity, sociability and support. Without the identity criterion, the other two criteria, sociability and support give Yahoo community a fair ground to consider it is an online community, with a shared sense of groupness or sense of community. They are realised by various interactional behaviours, such as sharing personal experiences and opinions among members, and supported by frequent uses of interactional particles. Since each message in the Yahoo community is far longer than that of Channel 2, members employ language abundantly to express themselves. From the excerpts given in the Appendices to this chapter, it would be appropriate to consider these solidarity-showing behaviours frilled with harmony-seeking sentence final particles evidence for online community on Yahoo. Thus we can see different communities employ different behaviours for ensuring online community-hood.

### **6.6.2. From the Perspective of Community of Practice and Speech Community**

In the concept of the community of practice developed by Wenger (1998), members are considered to have clearly recognised tasks and well-defined roles in their community. This would be clearer if the community members consist of professionals, or community activities at a work place. Because the shared goals of the communities under study include providing space to interact among members to share opinions and information through interaction, sometimes, the tasks and roles may not be clearly recognised. Because joint enterprise for which members work together may not always be present, particularly in this online environment, it would be difficult to regard these two communities as communities of practice in the strictest sense. However, in the maintenance of the communities, there are tasks and roles played by voluntary members,

especially on Channel 2. When complaints on problematic messages are filed, voluntary members assigned by the creator of the site take the role of judging the situation and deleting such messages. From this perspective of community maintenance, Channel 2 can be seen as a community of practice, while perhaps Yahoo is less likely to be so, since the problem solving, such as message deletion is left to the system or the management side on Yahoo, and not among community members.

The concept of “speech community” by Gumperz (1972), Rampton (1998) and Morgan (2001) has been reviewed earlier in this chapter and also in Chapter 2. I argue that it is not impossible to regard the Channel 2 community as one instance of speech community. Here only limited description of community-specific language use has been made. If an approach from the perspective of “speech community” is taken, somewhat more ethnographic description might draw interesting results. Though difficulty in conducting ethnographic research remains on the “speech community,” this is an area of future investigation, hopefully including interviews with participants and often offline data, which are beyond the scope of the present thesis.

### **6.6.3. Coexistence of Impoliteness and Sense of Community**

As has been shown in examples from Channel 2 in which the language sounds impolite, users interact sometimes amusingly and other times insultingly using community-specific language. What, then, motivates the use of community-specific language for enhancing community? To answer this question, it is necessary to adopt a broader perspective. It should be noted that the entire style employed in message production seems to be relevant in creating and maintaining the sense of community.

A closer examination of the linguistic traits of BBS communities reveals that the language of Channel 2 is in an informal, colloquial style, including short, fragmentary messages. This resembles conversations among small groups of friends in Japan. This suggests that the informal, private style of Channel 2 “simulates” conversations among friends and thus enhances the sense of belonging to the website group of “online friends.”

By contrast, messages on Yahoo are, in general, almost three times longer, and show more elaborate, complicated structures. In fact, language on Yahoo is given in a style approaching standard written Japanese (albeit more interactional sentence final particles) and can be understood by anyone in the broader Japanese speech community.

There is a mechanism in Channel 2 to maintain its own linguistic style. Before posting messages to communities, one normally reads previously posted messages. This is especially stressed on Channel 2, where posting messages inappropriate to the community, theme or norm is discouraged, or even erased. Messages are thus created in ways that conform to the norms and expectations of the community, which include the style of previously sent messages. Accumulation of such message creation practices contributes to a community specific language style.

In Figure 6.7, the right-bottom “Channel 2 film” displays an interesting feature: It is found impolite. On the Channel 2 website discussing film, there are limited uses of polite auxiliary morphemes and interactional sentence final particles. There are also instances of negatively perceived speech acts such as insults. Such linguistic and interactional impoliteness is in sharp contrast to Yahoo communities and the English topic on Channel 2 itself. However, this thread shows a strong sense of community. This is seemingly inconsistent with the conventional wisdom that politeness seems a key factor in maintaining a successful community, and that impoliteness could potentially destroy an online community.

This phenomenon can be interpreted in the following way. Although the language on Channel 2 may appear impolite in comparison to the polite-sounding language on Yahoo, interactions on Channel 2 reflect the history and normative standards of this online community. The practice of the overall linguistic style, which can be the source of a sense of community has a long history since Channel 2 was created in 1999. In Channel 2 communities, it seems members feel their practice is normal and appropriate in the context of their community.

Members' behaviour can be considered as contextually appropriate “politic”

behaviour, as theorised by Watts (2003). In his framework, the concept of politic behaviour can encompass both polite and non-polite interactions. I consider politeness a way of showing one's intention to keep good relations with others. This way of capturing politeness is helpful in understanding both linguistically coded politeness and politeness encoded by non-linguistic behaviour. Such a distinction helps clarify polite intentions conveyed by superficially non-polite expressions, which are found in BBS communications. In fact, on Channel 2 polite or considerate interactions are identified in a language that looks linguistically impolite to outsiders of the community. Impolite interactions on Channel 2 can also be observed, and yet they seem to be tolerated (or ignored) as community activities and the thread is still successful over long periods. This may have something to do with the entire BBS site being made for entertainment, which can be paralleled with impoliteness as entertainment (Culpeper 2005) that can be enjoyed by members and viewers. In contrast, Yahoo seems to have norms different from those of Channel 2, which are more or less in accordance with politeness generally perceived by the broader Japanese speech community. Thus Watts' concept can synthesise having the sense of community and seeming impoliteness in one online community.

## 6.7. Summary and Conclusion

We have seen the BBS websites from the perspective of online communities. In order to grasp the two target Japanese online communities, which are sub-communities of the larger Japanese community, it is necessary to take a two-dimensional perspective. One is the relative strength of *wakimae* (Ide 1989, 2005) or the degree of agreement with the code of conduct, which Western community researchers have not paid attention to because this can be a notion applied specifically to Japanese communities. The other factor is the relative strength of the sense of community, cohesiveness or sense of belonging, which have been studied by previous online community researchers (e.g. Korenman & Wyatt 1996) within a broader framework of CMDA by Herring (2004a). Each community might have on the deeply underlying level some equivalent of Japanese

discernment, which has linguistic realisation as honorific system on the surface.

The study finds that among the broadly perceived three online-community criteria of identity, sociability, and support, Channel 2 has more features for identity criteria than Yahoo, and from this, Channel 2 is placed higher in the scale of groupness or the sense of community than Yahoo, due to the presence of the community-specific, unconventional language, which is a marker for identity. For the scale of discernment, Yahoo is placed higher in general for both topics than Channel 2, and when the topic is focused, English language study topic requires a higher level of discernment than the film topic. This is because the English language topic involves more elaborate level of sharing personal experiences than the film topic. The basic findings are summarised in Figure 6.2.

In Chapter 6, incorporation of these two notions gave clues for explaining the contrasting situation observed in Chapter 5. One is the concept of community. If Channel 2 and Yahoo are different communities with different values, members behave according to their values. Polite behaviour in Yahoo is a reflection of their values, which impoliteness on Channel 2 comes from their own shared norms and values. What make participants stick together in Channel 2 is shared jargons and norms for appropriateness, which reflect the value and history of the community. The counterpart of Yahoo is the code of conduct, or discernment, which is also shared by the larger Japanese community. The dimension that helps explain is the introduction of another topic, English language study. In this topic, participants share clear goals and under this topic, the difference between the two BBS communities in linguistic as well as behaviour/interactional characteristics decreases. Rather, interactional behaviours show equally similar acts, such as thanks, apology, personal experiences, admiration and encouragement, though the language used in Channel 2 is still plain with many jargons and the language in Yahoo is polite with very few community-specific shared linguistic features. For the film topic, such features as encouragement were not overtly observed. Thus in the two BBS contexts, under appropriate topics for discussion, participants engage in similar cooperative activities such as sharing information, but they do so in totally different linguistic styles.

What does it mean, then, to belong to an online community? I have previously mentioned that those who use community-specific language are considered members of the community. While this characterisation does not qualify for Yahoo due to the absence of community-specific language, some tendencies on the part of thread users can be identified. Participants choose which thread of discussion to join primarily based on the topic. It is likely that browsing what has been discussed on the thread of interest, they might favour some threads over other threads, depending on the content of messages. It seems, however, there are more fundamental criteria underlying the surface topics of discussion. This may be called the social recognition of the site, and the kind of attitude one poster chooses toward that recognition.

Recall Chapter 1, in which background information about Channel 2 was supplied. As the initiator, Hiroyuki intended, the site can be characterised as “entertainment.” Because of this, unconventional orthography and even substandard literacy can be favoured when interactions with such messages are found amusing by users. It is perhaps not surprising that prospective participants react to those sites differently. Some favour funny comical interactions playing with words, while others prefer to keep the standard language when discussing even a hobby topic, not to mention a learning topic. Channel 2 seems to be socially recognised by the general public as a site on which immature users post impolite messages (see Nishimura 2003a for its characterisation). There is a sharp contrast between those who like this site and those who do not. Among those who favour this site, there are differences on the level of participation, including core members of the site, active contributors, and the vast majority of simple viewers.

The term *ni-channeraa*, or Channel 2 users, may explain those who consider themselves as belonging to the community. Since there is no equivalent term for Yahoo users, they do not seem to have a comparable sense of belonging, though sociability and support can be observed. Channel 2 users not only belong to the local thread but also to the entire Channel 2 website, while it seems Yahoo users have a sense of online community only locally on the particular thread in which they participate.. Belonging to

online communities thus needs to be separated into the case of Channel 2 and Yahoo.

We have observed a rich variety of linguistic behaviour in four successful Japanese online communities. This chapter has shown first that neither the Western CMDA approach nor the Eastern *wakimae* approach alone is sufficient in explaining such diversity. Both approaches, in combination, are integral in identifying the fundamental factors that determine computer-mediated discourse in the Japanese setting. Second, I have identified possible determinants for the linguistic variations among the four BBS communities. The difference in discussion topics can explain variations in the agreement to discernment, and overall language styles can explain different degrees of the sense of community. Finally, I have explained that seemingly impolite practices on the Channel 2 website in fact are a reflection of contextually appropriate “politic” behaviour.

This study adds a linguistic dimension based on discernment to the behavioural dimension of Herring's CMDA framework. It can contribute to online community research and eventually to CMC research in that it illuminates how language and behaviour are intertwined. The study also advances politeness and impoliteness research, which it has extended from well-studied FTF communications to scarcely researched online environments in the Japanese cultural setting.

## Chapter 7:

### Conclusion

*Wer fremde Sprache nicht kennt weiß nichts von seiner eigenen.*

“Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832, unsourced

#### 7.1. Introduction

This conclusion begins with an overview of the key findings from each of the chapters presented so far. Dual perspectives, explicit or implicit, have been present on various levels of the discussions throughout the thesis. “Dual” in the sense that a “comparative” stance has enabled the thesis to illuminate and explain issues and phenomena that might not have been recognised if such contrastive perspectives had not been taken, as illustrated by the quote at the beginning of this chapter. “Dual” in the sense of “complementary” perspectives have also contributed to scrutinising the subject matter and strengthening overall findings on solid grounds, as shown in the quantitative and qualitative approaches of Chapter 4. This final chapter includes exploration of future research directions identified through the findings. These can be expected to generate further questions on English and Japanese CMC and on CMC in general and advance our understanding on communicative behaviour in broader perspectives. Based on the findings and discussions presented so far, the chapter concludes with a justification of why the study of Japanese CMC must be undertaken, in the light of research on English CMC or CMC in general, and how it contributes to knowledge.

## 7.2. Summary of Key Findings from Each Chapter

Chapter 1 has introduced the subject matter, Japanese CMC (BBS communication in particular) and presented the key questions that this thesis has attempted to address. It has also provided background to the Japanese language, brief description of its grammar, orthography and socio-cultural context. This background review has included descriptions of the role of technology on writing practices in Japan. Here is an example of the benefit of the contrastive perspective. Those Western writers, who have been used to writing on the computer, may not have fully appreciated the complexity and accentuated role of technology in writing practices for Japanese writers. Japanese writers themselves may be using the technology without realising the technological complexities, once these are taken for granted.

This chapter has provided the background and history of the two Japanese BBS websites under study, Channel 2 and Yahoo! Japan BBS. Dual and analogical interpretations of the two websites also help to explain what these websites are like. One of them, Yahoo! Japan BBS is included in its parent site, Yahoo! Japan. Western Internet users who may not be familiar with this particular Japanese BBS website are expected to infer by analogy to other English-language Yahoo! Sites to see how Yahoo! Japan functions and how its subcomponent site for message boards are structured. The other BBS website under study, Channel 2 may uniquely be found in Japanese culture, and comparison with Yahoo! Japan BBS gives a frame of reference in order for Western readers to understand how Channel 2 is similar to or different from Yahoo! Japan BBS.

Chapter 2 has located the issues to be discussed on the broader map of previous research works relevant to the present research. This review of literature covered historical transitions of CMC research from social psychology (Kiesler et al 1984) to

linguistics (Herring ed. 1996) and on to sociolinguistic studies of English CMC (Locher 2006a) and limited studies of non-English CMC (Danet & Herring eds. 2007). Theories of politeness/impoliteness (Brown & Levinson 1987) and community studies (Wenger 1998) undertaken and developed in FTF offline circumstances have also benefited the thesis, because they allowed extended to analysis of online contexts. One of the works that has had an utmost bearing to the present thesis is Crystal's *Language and the Internet* (2001, 2006). Central focus on English in this study, in a sense, provided the reasons for undertaking the entire research presented in the thesis.

Chapter 3 then has offered the data sets, tools, and methodologies needed for the pursuit of the research questions. As stated above, dual, quantitative and qualitative methodologies that have complemented the undertaking of the research and which have strengthened the arguments have been explained in this chapter. The data sets clarified in Chapter 3 consist of three different corpora, CMC, speech and writing. Chapter 3 has also included description on how each corpus was created. The chapter has presented the methods used in the corpus creation in order for each corpus to be as comparable as possible to allow subsequent comparative, statistical analysis in the next chapter. Here in this chapter, two-way comparative approaches have been overtly present with respect to the complementary methodologies and the data sets created for comparison.

Each of the subsequent chapters have analysed and discussed the data and issues on multiple layers of comparison, in order to respond to the research questions presented at the beginning of the thesis. Let us repeat these questions below:

- (1) How are the messages in BBS communication linguistically similar to or different from spoken offline conversation and written language; do

these messages exhibit features of both? (covered in Chapters 4.)

(2) What are the linguistic differences and similarities in messages between the two representative BBS websites, i.e. how can the variation in the language of BBS communication between the two different websites be described? (covered in Chapter 4.)

(3) How can theories of politeness and impoliteness developed from sociolinguistic study of offline FTF interactions, explain the politeness and impoliteness phenomena observable in message exchanges on the two different websites? (covered in Chapter 5.)

(4) Viewing the BBS websites as online communities, how can polite and impolite behaviours revealed in messages be explained in relation to online community-hood criteria, using the two approaches of CMDA and the theory of discernment, or *wakimae*? (covered in Chapter 6.)

The thesis has thus constantly compared explicitly Japanese BBS users' online interactions and their messages with their offline counterparts on various levels of analysis and discussion. Another contrastive approach that may implicitly underlie the thesis concerns the differences and similarities between the languages and cultures of Japanese and English speakers. These two kinds of comparative stances have been embodied in the actual implementation of the research in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The following sections will go over and clarify what each of these chapters has found.

Chapter 4 has investigated quantitatively linguistic differences and similarities among CMC, speech, and writing in terms of parts of speech distribution. There are three main findings:

(1) The differentiating factor between CMC represented by BBS messages and speech of casual conversation among peers is a group of words that belong to the class of interjections. This result can be schematically shown in Figure 7.1 below:

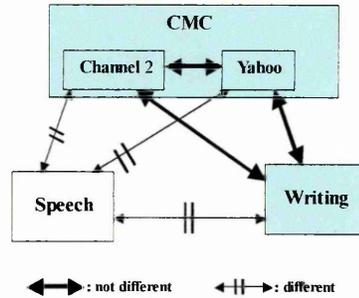


Figure 7.1: All morphemes

If interjections are excluded, the representative speaker of Japanese does not distinguish his or her use of morphemes when communicating in CMC, speech or writing. This finding can be depicted in Figure 7.2 below:

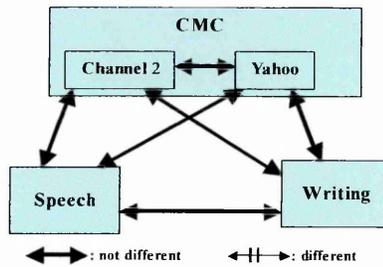


Figure 7.2: All morphemes excluding interjections

(2) The two CMC websites are alike with respect to particle uses, which distinguish them from speech and writing. Thus result is illustrated by Figure 7.3 below:

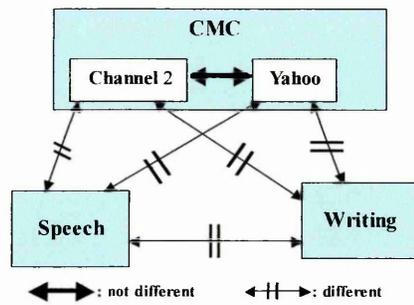


Figure 7.3: Particles

(3) The differentiating factor between the two CMC websites is uses of auxiliaries; yet auxiliaries make Channel 2 and speech similar. Figure 7.4 below shows this finding:

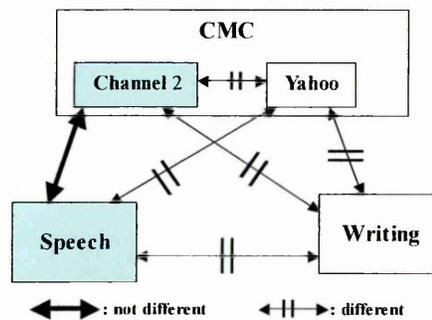


Figure 7.4: Auxiliaries

These findings are now examined one by one. First, the finding of interjections as the factor that distinguishes CMC from speech can be explained by two reasons, one on a clear technological ground and the other somewhat speculative. The first reason concerns the difference in the nature of the medium in which interactions take place. CMC is technologically incapable of incorporating backchannels, in the sense that the messages can only appear chronologically and simultaneous posting is not possible. The second, speculative reason concerns the extent to which the BBS users intend to produce messages that reflect spoken qualities. When looking at the spoken data, it is striking that

Japanese conversation is filled with constant rapport sharing behaviour among the conversation participants by means of verbal backchanneling (probably accompanied by non-verbal nodding), which is one of the major elements that constitute the class of interjections. While the fact that interjections occupy a significant percentage of the spoken Japanese is consistent with prior research on spoken Japanese conducted by the National Institute for Japanese Language (1955), it seems ordinary Japanese speakers may not consciously be aware that they actually produce backchannels to the extent that they actually appear in conversation. Message production can be considered a conscious act of writing by striking the keyboard on the part of message senders. It is not very surprising, therefore, that interjections appear far less frequently than in actual conversation by not consciously encoding or entering such backchannels in textual forms verbally, if backchannels are unnoticed or not felt to exist. If CMC alone had been the focus and conversation had been analysed separately, this thesis would not have reached this finding.

The second finding concerns the uses of case and sentence final particles as distinguishing factors of CMC from writing and also from speech. This finding is rather expected in the light of what functions the two subcategories of particles perform. The case particles designate grammatical relations of nouns, while sentence final particles add the speaker's attitude toward the communicative event including confirmation, rapport, agreement and the like. Because writing does not assume immediate addressees, it is natural that writing exhibits very small percentage for sentence final particles. On the other hand, CMC does assume immediate addressees, and this prompts CMC users to employ a higher percentage of interactive sentence final particles.

Regarding the third finding, on the difference between the two CMC websites, the

study clarified that among auxiliaries the use of polite and plain auxiliaries differentiate the two websites. Linguistic variations between the two websites are found to exist, and these variations can be described in terms of the distribution of auxiliaries. The reasons for such variations cannot be found by simply observing the uses, as warned by McEnery et al (2006) (see chapter 3 on the limitation of corpus methodology). The thesis has sought to provide answers to the question that cannot be answered from the quantitative, corpus approach of Chapter 4, but has sought answers in the latter parts of the thesis, in Chapters 5 and 6.

Once again if CMC alone had been examined, it would have been very difficult to identify that interjections play a decisive role in differentiating conversation from CMC and that particles distinguish CMC from writing. The utilisation of the comparative scheme has been found to be useful in identifying these characteristics.

Now based on the findings in Chapter 4 on the difference between the two BBS websites under study, where a huge discrepancy in the use of polite auxiliaries are observed, we moved on to Chapter 5 and an examination of politeness. This would eventually provide answers to why Channel 2 and Yahoo! Japan BBS exhibit differences that cannot be answered by just observing linguistic features in the corpus, as pointed out earlier in this chapter as well as in Chapter 3.

This difference itself is explicitly examined in comparative terms. In order to provide answers and explanations for this question, the thesis has adopted another comparative standpoint, which is a comparison among theories that can explain FTF interactions first, and how they can be applied to CMC contexts next. The applicability to online interactions is a major factor in evaluating the theories. These theories include those developed from Western academic traditions as well as one that has originated

primarily from Japanese sociolinguistic study. Here another dimension on cross-cultural comparison can be seen in the different approaches that such theories take.

Chapter 5 has found that in order to explain a wide gap in the use of polite auxiliaries between the two BBS websites, one theory from the Western tradition, represented by Brown & Levinson (1978) is capable of explaining the lack of polite forms on the Channel 2 BBS, but not the polite interactions found on Yahoo. This is because the BBS context can be considered a space where the face threat can be minimal and the need for exerting various politeness strategies seems to also be minimal due to weak interpersonal relations. FTA, even when they appear may not cause damage to subsequent relations in the kind of open-access BBS sites for entertainment. This might be different in online communications that have some connections to offline context, such as within academic or professional environments.

Chapter 5 also has found that one theory from Japanese sociolinguistic tradition, proposed by Ide (1989, 2005, 2006) can explain polite interactions on Yahoo because users are considered to follow *wakimae* or “discernment”, which is to conform to what is expected in the context where they communicate, but Ide cannot explain impolite message exchanges on Channel 2, even though these two BBS sites are both open access sites for the general public to enjoy posting and reading messages about the topic of one’s interest, as introduced and described in Chapters 1 and 3.

The above two theories are not successful in their applicability and expandability to both the BBS contexts, in which contrasting behaviours are observed. Chapter 5 then identified a third theory from post Brown & Levinson politeness research called the discursive approach, as represented by Locher (2006b), whose conceptualisation originates from socio-cultural theory of identity proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005).

For reviews on these studies, see Chapter 2 as well as Chapter 5.

The discursive approach views interactions between the speaker and the hearer as fluidly creating and negotiating identity, which is defined as “social positioning of self and other” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: p. 586) in the communicative event. This theory seems to be able to cope with communicative events that take place regardless of CMC or FTF. This is because social positioning, or identity, can be interpreted as realised by how a message sender creates his/her message, because the message itself represents the participant in the online context. In the FTF context, how an utterance is made with all additional non-linguistically supplied information can also index the “social positioning to other.” Chapter 5 thus has been able to provide an answer to the third research question on how theories of politeness can explain interactions in BBS websites.

An individual message sender’s polite/impolite behaviour in interaction can thus be interpreted and explained with the discursive approach, but interactions on the website if viewed collectively would require somewhat different perspectives to explain the linguistic and interactional differences between Channel 2 and Yahoo. The approach that can provide solutions to how to capture and explain differing behaviours on the two BBS websites is to incorporate the concept of online community-hood. Chapter 6 provides an answer to the fourth research question posed at the beginning of the thesis.

Chapter 6 has revealed that structural analysis of Japanese online communities characterised by a sophisticated linguistic system of politeness or honorifics, in terms of discernment or *wakimae* (Ide 1989, 2006) can add a new dimension to the behavioural analysis of Herring’s (2004a) CMDA approach. When combined, these dual, complementary approaches are capable of explaining a rich variety of linguistic features in successful Japanese online communities. In exploring possible determinants of

particular linguistic characteristics of these online communities, this chapter has found that discussion topics are relevant to active choices of politeness levels, and that overall linguistic styles can be linked to members' sense of community. The chapter has also observed a unique online community, Channel 2, where linguistic features reveal widespread impoliteness yet participants seem to share a strong sense of community. This chapter has argued that Watts' (2003) concept of contextually appropriate "politic" behaviour is capable of reconciling this puzzling coexistence of impoliteness and sense of community. The overall findings are summarised in the diagram below:

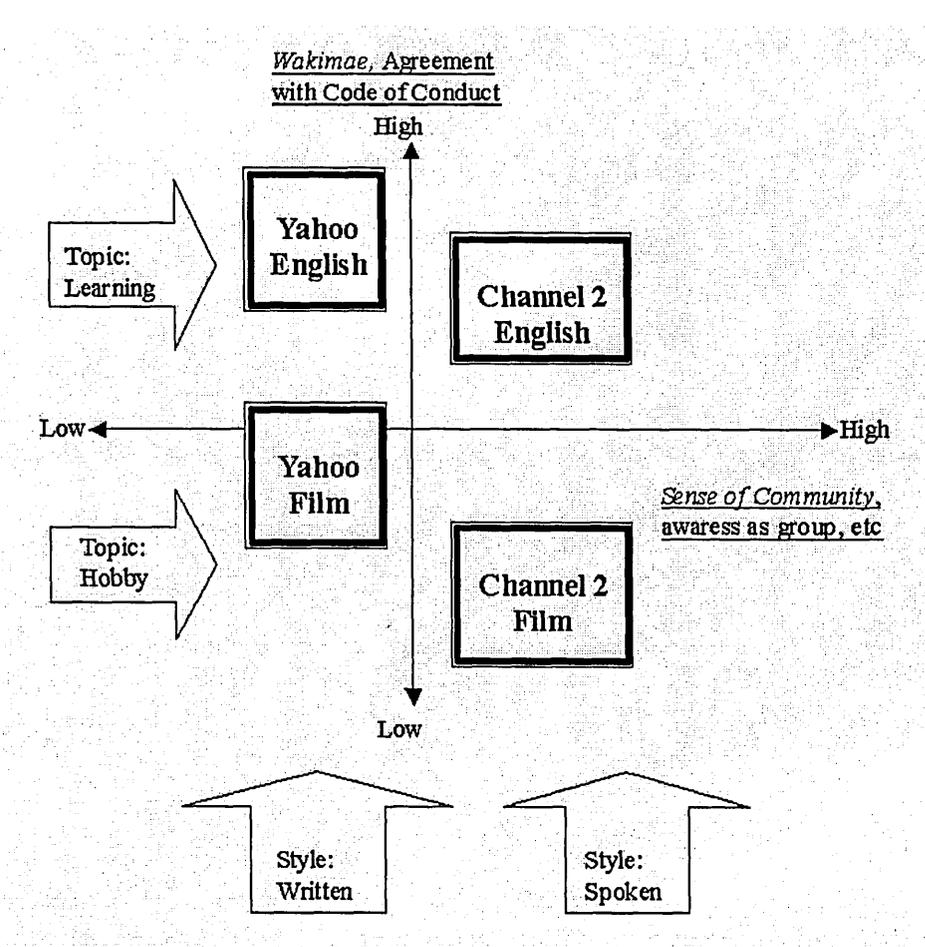


Figure 7.5: Basic results

In exploring the interplay among online community, linguistic and interactional politeness and discussion topics, this chapter has again adopted comparative approaches in two areas. One is concerned with the theories that provide explanation, namely the two complementary approaches of *wakimae* and CMDA. The other area is the choice of discussion topics, film and English language study. The addition of the English language study topic in Chapter 6, compared with the analyses in Chapter 5, has helped to understand the factors that can explain the relative strength of the sense of community. The fact that the discussion topics can be relevant to the degree of agreement to the code of conduct, or *wakimae*, in online communities has been identified by inclusion of the secondary topic in Chapter 6.

What can be drawn from this observation based on the linguistic and interactional differences can be that topics attract participants in these open-access public discussion fora, as well as users choose topics. It would perhaps be more natural to consider that BBS users choose the board where their favourite topics are discussed when visiting and sending messages. This observation is expected to assist online community researchers in their selection of communities and the topics being discussed there, when conducting online community research.

The discussion style on Channel 2 reminds of casual conversation, though the language of BBS is actually very different from FTF conversation, as identified in Chapter 4. The fact that seemingly impolite, casual, plain style is employed in the public sphere of the BBS message board, in sharp contrast to Yahoo, could be seen as an aspect unique to Japanese culture. It would also be possible that Channel 2 users make private the public space when discussing their favourite topics. It would be of interest to see how English speaking BBS users interact in comparable settings and whether informal, private

styles not normally found in public discourse are the norm, as in the case of Channel 2, or somewhat more standard styles more or less appropriate to public discourse can be found in open-access message boards, as in the case of Yahoo.

The above enquiry comes from my interest in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspectives. In line with such exploration, one other enquiry, in view of the role of discernment in Japanese culture, is whether the concept of discernment exists in English-speaking cultures, and in what way discernment can be shown linguistically or behaviourally, if it does exist. I tentatively pose in English discernment probably can not be shown linguistically, but can be shown behaviourally. This is because there are too many linguistic choices for English speakers to use in order to behave appropriately in contexts, unlike Japanese speakers who are obliged to choose at least one level of politeness and formality. English grammar does not force the speaker to choose one certain form or level of politeness encoded in the modal or in other linguistic system, and thus English speakers can exploit a far larger number of forms to indicate the appropriate level of politeness. Behaviourally, the concept of discernment can potentially exist in English-speaking cultures, but more salient concepts such as face management seem to override discernment, as if non-existent. It would be encouraging for Japanese socio-linguists if theories developed in the Japanese socio-cultural environment could shed light on aspects of linguistic behaviour in general FTF setting as well as in CMC.

### **7.3. Justification**

This section presents an account on why the research on Japanese CMC in this dissertation had to be carried out in the light of English CMC and CMC in general. The section thus clarifies what aspects of Japanese CMC are shared with English CMC, and

what other aspects are different from this. Finally the section concludes with how the thesis can contribute to knowledge.

As pointed out in the Chapters 1 and 2, this thesis, focused on the Japanese language, can be seen as a reaction to David Crystal's *Language and the Internet* (2001, 2006). His description of CMC is too heavily dependent on English CMC. One of the constituent words of the title is "Language", and this is not the same as "English". If "Language" in his title refers to language in general, the book should present the material differently, as features found in other languages are missing. This would have made Crystal's book as a work describing language in CMC in general. Taking his work as description on how English speakers communicate on the Internet, the present thesis can hopefully be an informative addition to the literature of CMC studies, in that it presents what Japanese speakers do on the Internet, or in BBS communication in particular, which have previously been largely unexplored. In the terminology of Androutsopoulos (2006), the thesis has thus covered areas that belong to the first wave of CMC in Chapter 4, which examined linguistic structural aspects of Japanese CMC. Discussions in Chapters 5 and 6 on politeness, impoliteness and online communities belong to Androutsopoulos' second wave of CMC studies.

Shared features between Japanese and English CMC can be found, for example, the use of acronyms and emoticons, as reported in Nishimura (2003b). Yet these are realised by language-specific means, such as *kanji* scripts used to bear the role of emoticons in English CMC and add emotional flavour to messages. What is likely to be more intriguing to readers is aspects of Japanese CMC that are different from English CMC.

Obviously Japanese CMC is carried out in the Japanese language. Aside from the linguistic differences per se, the use of this language in CMC brings forth differences

from English CMC in areas that may not specifically be linguistic or communicative. The area is technology, as has already been pointed out in Chapter 2. Through the appropriation of technological expertise that software and hardware manufactures have accumulated, the Japanese language with its four distinct scripts in its orthography, must heavily depend on their ingenuity. This observation on the heavier role of technology is directly relevant to Japanese CMC, as this particular type of communication under study does not exist without its support.

There is another area in which Japanese CMC differs from English CMC. Japanese CMC allows the existence of an online community such as Channel 2, where users play with the typography and literacy practices of the written language in interactions by exchanging messages (Nishimura 2003a). Since the language play is supported by technology as explained above, it seems English CMC does not allow the use of technology to build online community in the same way, though there may be some possibilities in English speaking cultures.

#### **7.4. Future Research Directions**

There are at least two areas for further enquiry on CMC. From the results of Chapter 4: What would the situation be like in English CMC as compared with speech and writing in terms of parts of speech distribution? Do interjections in English play as significant a role of distinguishing between CMC and speech as is the case in Japanese? Is an equivalent English casual conversation among peers filled with interjections in a way similar to Japanese casual conversations?

It is of great interest that Yates' (1993, 1996) study comparing CMC, speech and writing in English shares some common elements with what has been found here, though

his comparison was not based on parts of speech distribution. Yates found, as pointed out in Chapter 4, that personal pronoun use and auxiliary use make CMC closer to speech. Though what are actually encoded by means of auxiliaries in English and those in Japanese are very different, the interpersonal functions that these auxiliaries play in the sense used by Halliday (1978) seem to be shared. Having contrastive perspectives can allow us to explore further what functions are achieved by what linguistic means across different languages. Though this perspective is beyond the scope of the present thesis, this would be an area of interest for future research.

The second area lies in politeness research. Issues of politeness and impoliteness in the CMC environment have attracted interest from politeness researchers recently. From the discussions of Chapters 5 and 6, I may further ask how norms of online communities can be related to assessing polite, politic and impolite behaviours. Also, the studies conducted in this thesis have been concerned with BBS communications where no pre-existing interpersonal relations can be assumed. Yet technologically mediated communications have already been widely used by people with established strong or weak relations, and it would be of interest to see how CMC can be used to manage such relations with a focus on politeness issues. In both areas, enquiries from English and Japanese cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspectives can broaden understandings of CMC and politeness phenomena.

## **7.5. Concluding Remarks**

An advantage of having dual perspectives, explained at the beginning of the chapter, may not necessarily be limited to the knowledge of another language in addition to one's mother tongue, as my beginning quote from Goethe illustrates. The question that comes

from the deepest layer of multiple comparative perspectives is whether people behave differently in CMC or FTF. This question is concerned with general features of CMC against FTF or other modes of communication. It seems there are activities that can only be achieved in CMC, and there are those that people can do only in FTF, while many other activities can be done on both or various media. The researcher's task, therefore, is to clarify how the medium-specific activities are carried out and why, and this task concerned with Japanese BBS communication is expected to have been achieved.

The discussions presented so far are expected to make a contribution to understanding aspects of Japanese CMC from dual perspectives. It is also expected that the thesis will contribute to future CMC research in Japanese or other languages, and will help advance the knowledge on the nature of CMC in general and in culture-specific domains.

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1) *Jitsugyou no Nihon [Business Japan]* April 1998 - August 1999, published monthly by

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2) *Ekonomisuto [Economist]* published weekly by Mainichi, 3rd February to 20 April,

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3) *Syuukan Daiyamondo [Weekly Diamond]* published by DIAMOND, 1998-1999

# Appendices to Chapter 1

## Appendix 1.A: Excerpts from Channel 2 User Guidelines

お約束・最低限のルールって？

Q: What are the minimum rules and promises of conduct?

他人に迷惑をかけるのはやめようということです。。

A: Not to trouble and harm others...

必要以上の馴れ合いは慎むとか、暴言や第三者を不快にする書き込みはしないとか、悪質な削除要請や自己中心的な発言はひかえるとか、どれもむずかしくないことなただけだなあ。

To refrain from posting excessively intimate messages, those that displease/hurt others with abusive remarks, malicious deletion requests, self-centred messages, and so on. These are not so difficult to follow, I think.

また、一般人の誹謗中傷・私生活情報暴露は禁止します。固定ハンドルさんを叩く行為も、最悪板以外の場所では禁止してます。

Also, slander of ordinary people and exposure of their personal life and privacy is prohibited. To attack users with fixed handles is also banned except on Worst Board.

詳しい禁止事項は削除ガイドラインをみてください。。

Please see Deletion Guidelines for more details of what is prohibited and constitutes violations.

ルールを守らないとどうなるの？

Q: What happens if these rules aren't followed?

削除されちゃいますです。。

A: Messages will be deleted.

ほかにも、なにかが起るかもしれないですよん。。 (￣ー￣) ニヤリッ

You never know what might happen... (￣ー￣) <Grin>

明らかなルール違反や削除ガイドライン違反の書き込みをみつけたら、削除依頼（削除整理・削除要請）にご協力ください。。

If you find postings that violate these rules and deletion guidelines, please cooperate with deletion requests...

ほかに気をつけることは？

Q: Is there anything else that I should be careful about?

まず、他人が見て面白いことを書きましょう。大勢の読者がいることを意識してください。

A: Let's post what others would find interesting. Please be conscious that there are many users out there.

サーバやシステムのリソースは無限じゃありません。

スレッドを立てる前に、同じような内容のものがいないか確認するのも忘れずに。。

Resources for servers and systems are not limitless. Before creating a new thread, don't forget to check whether there is a similar thread.

From <<http://www.2ch.net/2ch.html>>

## Screen shots of user guideline pages from Channel 2

Macro333@www.2ch.net  
「ハッキング」から「夜のおかず」までを手広くカバーする巨大掲示板です。。。

使い方 & 注意

全掲示板 & 案内

**2ちゃんねるって?**  
[2ちゃんねるってなに?](#)  
[2ちゃんねるは誰がやってるの?](#)  
[2ちゃんねるはアングラなの?](#)  
[2ちゃんねるは本当に匿名なの?](#)  
[2ちゃんねるをちゃんと知りたいんだけど?](#)

**使用上のお約束**  
[2ちゃんねるって自由な掲示板じゃないの?](#)  
[お約束・最低限のルールって?](#)  
[ルールを守らないとどうなるの?](#)  
[ほかに気をつけることは?](#)

**基礎 & 用語**  
[どうやって利用するの?](#)  
[スレッドやレスを隠すにはどうするの?](#)  
[タグ使用やリンクや画像貼り付けはできるの?](#)  
[「あぼーん」「移動しましたよ」ってなに?](#)  
[「常らし」ってなに?](#)  
[同じ名前の人がたくさん登録してるけど誰?](#)  
[★や◆のついてる名前はなに?](#)  
[「削除屋・削除人」「復讐屋」って?](#)

**応用 & システム**  
[掲示板やスレッドがおかしい。。。](#)  
[削除依頼や要望をだしたい。。。](#)  
[掲示板を追加or分割or閉鎖して欲しい。。。](#)  
[特殊な用語などを知りたい。。。](#)  
[もっと便利に使いたい。。。](#)

**運営ボランティア**  
[削除屋さん・削除人さん](#)  
[復讐屋さん](#)  
[どうしたらボランティアになれるの?](#)

**書けないor読めない!**  
[「本文がありません」「名前いれてち」](#)

2ちゃんねる  
社会・出来事  
学問・教育  
暮らし & 生活  
趣味・文化  
芸能 & 放送  
コンピュータ  
雑談・ネタ  
ツール & その他  
提議掲示板

いろいろな決まり  
削除ガイドライン  
削除依頼の注意

アニメ映画情報  
ゲーム情報  
PCニュース  
私のニュース  
懐かしニュース  
ニュース議論  
ニュース権重  
パカニュース  
社説

世界情勢  
国際情勢  
戦争・国防  
東アジアnews+  
イスラム情勢  
イラク情勢  
ニュース国際+  
deime

案内  
ラウンジ  
カクワラック  
初心者質問  
PC初心者  
2chプロジェクト  
グッズリスト  
ガイドライン  
イベント企画  
2ch証券取引所  
いろいろランク  
資料室  
投票所

運営  
2ch運用情報  
運用情報臨時  
2ch規制情報  
2ch強制議論  
削除要請  
削除整理  
削除議論  
削除知事袋

馴れ合い  
自己紹介  
ほのぼの  
毒・笑い言  
大規模OFF  
定期OFF  
突撃OFF

もっと便利に使いたい...

### 運営ボランティア

削除屋さん・削除人さん

復帰屋さん

どうしたらボランティアになれるの？

### 書けないor読めない

「本文がありません」「名前いれてちょ」

「サブジェクトが存在しません」

「本文が長すぎます」「サブジェクトが長すぎます」

「名前が長すぎます」「メールアドレスが長すぎます」

「改行が多すぎます」「長すぎる行があります」

「レスアンカーリンクが多すぎます」

「スレッド立てすぎです」「しばらくスレッドが立てられません」

「2重カキコですか？」「連続投稿ですか？」

「処理が遅んでいます」「流量制限中」「いろいろ作業中」

「PROXY規制中」「変なホストです」

「このホストは書き込み禁止です」

「BBS名が不正です」「キー情報不正です」

「フォーム情報が不正です」「このスレッドには書けません」

「ブラウザ変ですよん」「Sisで書いてね」

「クッキーをオンにしてちょ」

「このスレッド大きすぎます」

「レス数が〜.1000を超えると表示できなくなるよ」

「ユーザー設定が消失しています」

### 異常事態！

掲示板やスレッドがみつからない...

スレッドが全部or一部消えちゃった...

書き込んでも上がらないスレッドがある...

ツールでログが読めない...

倉庫入りの過去ログって...

アクセス規制になったみたい...

ホスト名orIPが...

いろいろな決まり

### 削除ガイドライン

### 削除依頼の注意

### 削除する人の心得

### 復帰屋さんの心得

### 要望を出す前に

### 2ちゃんねる鉄の掟

出されたご飯は残さず食べる。

転んでも泣かない。

おいらのギャグには大爆笑する。

### 広告について

1日に500万回！の  
バナー広告をだしてみませんか？

詳しくは[こちら](#)へ...

これだけは絶対に読んでおこう！

2ちゃんねるのお約束 [トラブルシューティング](#) [削除ガイドライン](#)

# Appendix 1.B: Excerpts from Yahoo! Japan Community

## Guidelines

### 1. Yahoo! JAPAN のコミュニティーサービスとは

#### 1: What are Yahoo! Japan community services?

コミュニティーサービスとは、Yahoo! JAPAN が提供する、お客様ご自身による文章、写真、動画、音楽などの情報（以下「コンテンツ」といいます）投稿機能や、お客様同士で交流できる機能を有するサービス全般をいいます。Yahoo! JAPAN は、コミュニティーサービスを通じ、お客様が創作や意見を発表したり、お客様同士が交流したりできる場を提供しています。コミュニティーサービスをご利用いただくお客様は、目的やテーマごとにひとつひとつのコミュニティーを形成しているといえます。

Yahoo! Japan enables users to post information content such as messages, photos, movies and music created by themselves and also to communicate and interact. Yahoo! Japan community users form each separate community by themes and purposes.

### 2. お客様の責任

#### 2: User responsibility

コミュニティーサービス上に存在するコミュニティーのルールは、実社会のルールと変わるところはありません。実名による行為か匿名による行為かを問わず、お客様による行動の結果は、お客様ご自身が責任を負います。匿名で行われた行為が、お客様の民事上あるいは刑事上の責任を免除するものではないことをよくご理解ください。コミュニティー内で、どのような行為が許されているのかは、お客様ご自身が、実社会のルールや法律などに基づいてご判断ください。

Community rules are no different from real world rules. Users are responsible for any consequence brought by the users' conduct regardless of performed under real names or pseudonyms. We expect you understand that conduct under pseudonyms do not exempt legal responsibilities. We expect you, users evaluate what conducts can be allowed within the communities, based on real world rules and regulations.

...

### 7. メッセージ機能とその閲覧および削除権

#### 7: Message Functions and rights to view and delete messages

コミュニティーサービスにおけるメッセージ送受信機能は、Yahoo! JAPAN の提供する電子掲示板を通じて提供されます。当該電子掲示板は、メッセージの送信者と受信者および Yahoo! JAPAN の 3 者のみが閲覧できるようになっています（Yahoo!掲示板を除きます）。Yahoo! JAPAN は必要に応じてその内容を閲覧し、利用規約や本ガイドライン等に照らして削除することがあります。

7: Sending and reading messages is provided through Yahoo! Japan's message boards. Messages can be viewed only by sender, recipient, and Yahoo! Japan (except for Yahoo! Japan BBS). We reserve the right to view and delete messages in light of users regulations and guidelines.

Last updated 30 January, 2008.

From <<http://docs.yahoo.co.jp/docs/info/guidelines/community.html>>

## Appendix 1.C: Excerpts from Yahoo! Community Guidelines

### Yahoo! Community Guidelines

Yahoo! Communities (Chat, Message Boards, Profiles, etc....) give Yahoo! members a place to meet, interact, and share ideas with each other. Just like a real community, you may have different opinions than others in Yahoo! communities, and just like the real world, you may face different norms or even legal restrictions when participating in a community based in another country.

The Yahoo! Community experience is best when people follow a few rules. Here are some key ones to remember:

- \* Do not harass, abuse, or threaten other members.
- \* Do not post content that is obscene or otherwise objectionable.
- \* Try to stay on topic. If you want to discuss a topic that is not related to the community area in which you are participating, please go to another topic area or create a new one.
- \* Refrain from using these community services for commercial or advertising purposes, or for any illegal purposes. Please do not "spam" or otherwise post in quantity through automated methods.
- \* Don't post content that infringes the legal rights of others, such as material that is defamatory or that makes use of copyrighted content without permission from the owner.
- \* Adult-oriented content is not permitted at all.

Yahoo! does not edit the content in our Yahoo! Communities. Postings that violate these guidelines or the Terms of Service, which contain additional rules that govern Yahoo! services, may lead to the deletion, without notice, of your Yahoo! ID and everything associated with it, including but not limited to email accounts, clubs, posts, and profiles.

Yahoo! Briefcase: Yahoo! considers the contents of your Briefcase to be the private communications between you and the people you have designated to have access to your Briefcase. Yahoo! will not monitor, edit, or disclose the contents of a except that User agrees Yahoo! may do so:

1. as required by law.
2. to comply with legal process.
3. if necessary to enforce Yahoo!'s Universal Terms of Service and these Community Guidelines.
4. to respond to claims that such contents violate the rights of third parties.
5. to protect the rights or property of Yahoo! or others.
6. to identify or resolve technical problems or respond to complaints about the Service.

Please report any violations of the TOS [terms of service] to our Customer Care group.

From <[http://in.messages.yahoo.com/community\\_guidelines.php](http://in.messages.yahoo.com/community_guidelines.php)>

## Appendices to Chapter 4

### Appendix 4.A: ChaSen Application Details

An image of ChaSen application is given below in Figure A1, with an example that actually appeared in the CMC corpora.

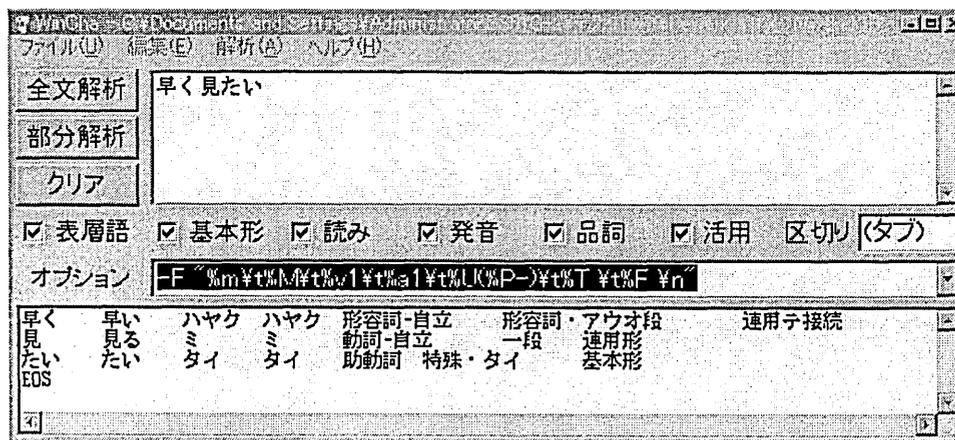


Figure A1: Image from ChaSen

The upper white space is where the text to be parsed is entered, and the entry here is 早く見たい, *hayaku mitai*, “(I) want to see (it) soon.” In the lower white space, the parsed entries appear:

In the first line, the first morpheme, 早く *hayaku* is given. In the horizontal lines, four kinds of forms appear, which are, from the left to right, the surface form, 早く *hayaku*, the base form, 早い *hayai*, reading form, ハヤク *hayaku*, and the pronunciation ハヤク *hayaku*. The last two are given in *katakana* syllabary. Next to these *katakana* entries, the POS, and in this case it is 形容詞-自立 *keiyoushi-jiritsu*, “adjectives-independent”. This means that the particular word belongs to the class of adjectives and also it is an independent morpheme (not bound form). Next to the POS information, is the subcategorised class within adjectives, and the right-most entry

explains the conjugation form.

In the second line, the second morpheme, 見 *mi* “look at” is given as the surface form in the left-most column. In a similar way to the first line, for this entry, next comes the base form 見る *miru* “look at”, reading form and pronunciation 見 *mi*, and POS information, which in this case is 動詞—自立 *doushi-jiritsu* “verbs independent”. Next is its subcategory, which is 一般 *ippan* “general” and the last entry is its conjugation form, which is 連用形 *renyoukei* “continuative form”

In the third line, the next morpheme たい *tai* “want” is parsed. In this case, the surface form and the base form is the same, たい *tai* “want”, and the reading and pronunciation which match with the surface form is also the same タイ *tai* “want”. The POS information in the next column is 助動詞 *jyodoushi* “auxiliary verbs”, and follow the information on the sub-classification and the conjugation form.

## Appendix 4.B: Sample of sequenced morpheme list

Consecutive No	Occurrence	Surface form	Basic form	Reading	Pronunciation	POS	Conjugation	Conjugation form
通し番号	件数	表層語	基本形	読み	発音	品詞	活用	活用形
149	1	これ	これ	コレ	コレ	名詞-代名詞-一般		
150	1	,	,	,	,	記号-読点		
151	1	海賊	海賊	カインク	カインク	名詞-一般		
152	1	映画	映画	エイガ	エイガ	名詞-一般		
153	1	と	と	ト	ト	助詞-格助詞-引用		
154	1	いう	いう	イウ	イウ	動詞-自立	五段・ワ行促音便	基本形
155	1	より	より	ヨリ	ヨリ	助詞-格助詞-一般		
156	1	は	は	ハ	ワ	助詞-係助詞		
157	1	ゾンビ	ゾンビ	ゾンビ	ゾンビ	名詞-一般		
158	1	系	系	ケイ	ケイ	名詞-接尾-一般		
159	1	ホラー	ホラー	ホラー	ホラー	名詞-一般		
160	1	アクション	アクション	アクション	アクション	名詞-一般		
161	1	でしょ	です	デショ	デショ	助動詞	特殊・デス	未然形
162	1	。	。	。	。	記号-句点		
163	1	EOS						
164	1	海	海	ウミ	ウミ	名詞-一般		
165	1	の	の	ノ	ノ	助詞-連体化		
166	1	ハムナプトラ	ハムナプトラ	ハムナプトラ	ハムナプトラ	名詞-固有名詞-一般		
167	1	みたい	みたい	ミタイ	ミタイ	名詞-非自立-形容動詞語幹		
168	1	な	だ	ナ	ナ	助動詞	特殊・ダ	体言接続
169	1	感じ	感じ	カンジ	カンジ	名詞-一般		
170	1	っぽい	っぽい	ツポイ	ツポイ	形容詞-接尾	形容詞・アウオ段	基本形
171	1	。	。	。	。	記号-句点		
172	1	EOS						

## Appendix 4.C: Chi-square Test Tables

**Table A.1: CMC vs. Speech vs. Writing: Channel 2 for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes				
	CMC (Channel 2)	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	63.305	92.35	239.319
Particles total	73.842	65.729	76.023	215.594
Verbs total	35.731	32.233	33.588	101.552
Auxiliaries total	27.479	25.2	21.981	74.66
Adverbs total	6.55	13.667	5.597	25.814
Adjectives total	5.908	5.965	3.775	15.648
Conjunctions total	2.663	6.08	3.275	12.018
Prenominals total	2.122	3.615	3.036	8.773
Interjections total	1.448	22.374	0.094	23.916
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.407</b>	<b>238.168</b>	<b>239.719</b>	<b>717.294</b>
Chi-square =	53.58135568			
Degree of Freedom =	16			
p (significance level) =	0.000006069			

**Table A.2: CMC vs. Speech vs. Writing: Yahoo for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes				
	CMC (Yahoo)	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	79.165	63.305	92.35	234.82
Particles total	74.541	65.729	76.023	216.293
Verbs total	36.358	32.233	33.588	102.179
Auxiliaries total	31.604	25.2	21.981	78.785
Adverbs total	7.108	13.667	5.597	26.372
Adjectives total	4.649	5.965	3.775	14.389
Conjunctions total	3.003	6.08	3.275	12.358
Prenominals total	2.102	3.615	3.036	8.753
Interjections total	1.303	22.374	0.094	23.771
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.833</b>	<b>238.168</b>	<b>239.719</b>	<b>717.72</b>
Chi-square =	54.57559027			
Degree of Freedom =	16			
p (significance level) =	0.000001401			

**Table A.3: CMC vs. Speech vs. Writing: Channel 2 for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	CMC (Channel 2)	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	63.305	92.35	239.321
Particles total	73.842	65.729	76.023	220.3
Verbs total	35.731	32.233	33.588	101.552
Auxiliaries total	27.479	25.2	21.981	70.381
Adverbs total	6.55	13.667	5.597	25.814
Adjectives total	5.908	5.965	3.775	15.648
Conjunctions total	2.663	6.08	3.275	11.814
Prenominals total	2.122	3.615	3.036	8.773
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237.959</b>	<b>215.794</b>	<b>239.625</b>	<b>693.378</b>
Chi-square =	13.60742603			
Degree of Freedom =	14			
p (significance level) =	0.479348			

**Table A.4: CMC vs. Speech vs. Writing: Yahoo for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	CMC (Yahoo)	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	79.165	63.305	92.35	234.82
Particles total	74.541	65.729	76.023	216.293
Verbs total	36.358	32.233	33.588	102.179
Auxiliaries total	31.604	25.2	21.981	78.785
Adverbs total	7.108	13.667	5.597	26.372
Adjectives total	4.649	5.965	3.775	14.389
Conjunctions total	3.003	6.08	3.275	12.358
Prenominals total	2.102	3.615	3.036	8.753
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238.53</b>	<b>215.794</b>	<b>239.625</b>	<b>693.949</b>
Chi-square =	13.54067949			
Degree of Freedom =	14			
p (significance level) =	0.293377			

**Table A.5: Speech versus Writing**

Per 1,000 morphemes			
	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	63.305	92.35	155.655
Particles total	65.729	76.023	141.752
Verbs total	32.233	33.588	65.821
Auxiliaries total	25.2	21.981	47.181
Adverbs total	13.667	5.597	19.264
Adjectives total	5.965	3.775	9.74
Conjunctions total	6.08	3.275	9.355
Prenominals total	3.615	3.036	6.651
Interjections total	22.374	0.094	22.468
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238.168</b>	<b>239.719</b>	<b>477.887</b>
Chi-square =	33.26822945		
Degree of Freedom =	8		
p (significance level) =	0.000055098		

**Table A.6: CMC versus Speech: Yahoo for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes			
	CMC (Yahoo)	Speech	TOTAL
Nouns total	79.165	63.305	142.47
Particles total	74.541	65.729	140.27
Verbs total	36.358	32.233	68.591
Auxiliaries total	31.604	25.2	56.804
Adverbs total	7.108	13.667	20.775
Adjectives total	4.649	5.965	10.614
Conjunctions total	3.003	6.08	9.083
Prenominals total	2.102	3.615	5.717
Interjections total	1.303	22.374	23.677
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.833</b>	<b>238.168</b>	<b>478.001</b>
Chi-square =	25.71228063		
Degree of Freedom =	8		
p (significance level) =	0.0011762		

**Table A.7: CMC versus Writing: Yahoo for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes			
	CMC (Yahoo)	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	79.165	92.35	171.515
Particles total	74.541	76.023	150.564
Verbs total	36.358	33.588	69.946
Auxiliaries total	31.604	21.981	53.585
Adverbs total	7.108	5.597	12.705
Adjectives total	4.649	3.775	8.424
Conjunctions total	3.003	3.275	6.278
Prenominals total	2.102	3.036	5.138
Interjections total	1.303	0.094	1.397
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.833</b>	<b>239.719</b>	<b>479.552</b>
Chi-square =	4.364224318		
Degree of Freedom =	8		
p (significance level) =	0.822858		

**Table A.8: Channel 2 versus Yahoo**

Per 1,000 morphemes			
	Channel 2	Yahoo	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	79.165	162.829
Particles total	73.842	74.541	148.383
Verbs total	35.731	36.358	72.089
Auxiliaries total	27.479	31.604	59.083
Adverbs total	6.55	7.108	13.658
Adjectives total	5.908	4.649	10.557
Conjunctions total	2.663	3.003	5.666
Prenominals total	2.122	2.102	4.224
Interjections total	1.448	1.303	2.751
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.407</b>	<b>239.833</b>	<b>479.24</b>
Chi-square =	0.621753628		
Degree of Freedom =	8		
p (significance level) =	0.999696		

**Table A.9: CMC versus Speech: Channel 2 for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes

	CMC (Channel 2)	Speech	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	63.305	146.969
Particles total	73.842	65.729	139.571
Verbs total	35.731	32.233	67.964
Auxiliaries total	27.479	25.2	52.679
Adverbs total	6.55	13.667	20.217
Adjectives total	5.908	5.965	11.873
Conjunctions total	2.663	6.08	8.743
Prenominals total	2.122	3.615	5.737
Interjections total	1.448	22.374	23.822
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.407</b>	<b>238.168</b>	<b>477.575</b>
Chi-square =	26.17916403		
Degree of Freedom =	8		
p (significance level) =	0.000978655		

**Table A.10: CMC versus Writing: Channel 2 for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes

	CMC (Channel 2)	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	92.35	176.014
Particles total	73.842	76.023	149.865
Verbs total	35.731	33.588	69.319
Auxiliaries total	27.479	21.981	49.46
Adverbs total	6.55	5.597	12.147
Adjectives total	5.908	3.775	9.683
Conjunctions total	2.663	3.275	5.938
Prenominals total	2.122	3.036	5.158
Interjections total	1.448	0.094	1.542
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239.407</b>	<b>239.719</b>	<b>479.126</b>
Chi-square =	3.096179389		
Degree of Freedom =	8		
p (significance level) =	0.928177		

**Table A.11: Speech versus Writing**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	63.305	92.35	155.655
Particles total	65.729	76.023	141.752
Verbs total	32.233	33.588	65.821
Auxiliaries total	25.2	21.981	47.181
Adverbs total	13.667	5.597	19.264
Adjectives total	5.965	3.775	9.74
Conjunctions total	6.08	3.275	9.355
Prenominals total	3.615	3.036	6.651
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>215.794</b>	<b>239.625</b>	<b>455.419</b>
Chi-square =	9.959591026		
Degree of Freedom =	7		
p (significance level) =	0.190875		

**Table A.12: CMC versus Speech: Yahoo for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	CMC (Yahoo)	Speech	TOTAL
Nouns total	79.165	63.305	142.47
Particles total	74.541	65.729	140.27
Verbs total	36.358	32.233	68.591
Auxiliaries total	31.604	25.2	56.804
Adverbs total	7.108	13.667	20.775
Adjectives total	4.649	5.965	10.614
Conjunctions total	3.003	6.08	9.083
Prenominals total	2.102	3.615	5.717
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238.53</b>	<b>215.794</b>	<b>454.324</b>
Chi-square =	5.842781453		
Degree of Freedom =	7		
p (significance level) =	0.558222		

**Table A.13: CMC versus Writing: Yahoo for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	CMC (Yahoo)	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	79.165	92.35	171.515
Particles total	74.541	76.023	150.564
Verbs total	36.358	33.588	69.946
Auxiliaries total	31.604	21.981	53.585
Adverbs total	7.108	5.597	12.705
Adjectives total	4.649	3.775	8.424
Conjunctions total	3.003	3.275	6.278
Prenominals total	2.102	3.036	5.138
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238.53</b>	<b>239.625</b>	<b>478.155</b>
Chi-square =	3.315461023		
Degree of Freedom =	7		
p (significance level) =	0.854368		

**Table A.14: Channel 2 versus Yahoo**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	Channel 2	Yahoo	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	79.165	162.829
Particles total	73.842	74.541	148.383
Verbs total	35.731	36.358	72.089
Auxiliaries total	27.479	31.604	59.083
Adverbs total	6.55	7.108	13.658
Adjectives total	5.908	4.649	10.557
Conjunctions total	2.663	3.003	5.666
Prenominals total	2.122	2.102	4.224
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237.959</b>	<b>238.53</b>	<b>476.489</b>
Chi-square =	0.613805761		
Degree of Freedom =	7		
p (significance level) =	0.9989140		

**Table A.15: CMC versus Speech: Channel 2 for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	CMC (Channel 2)	Speech	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	63.305	146.969
Particles total	73.842	65.729	139.571
Verbs total	35.731	32.233	67.964
Auxiliaries total	27.479	25.2	52.679
Adverbs total	6.55	13.667	20.217
Adjectives total	5.908	5.965	11.873
Conjunctions total	2.663	6.08	8.743
Prenominals total	2.122	3.615	5.737
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237.959</b>	<b>215.794</b>	<b>453.753</b>
Chi-square =	6.733488003		
Degree of Freedom =	7		
p (significance level) =	0.457146		

**Table A.16: CMC versus Writing: Channel 2 for CMC**

Per 1,000 morphemes, and "interjections" are excluded.

	CMC (Channel 2)	Writing	TOTAL
Nouns total	83.664	92.35	176.014
Particles total	73.842	76.023	149.865
Verbs total	35.731	33.588	69.319
Auxiliaries total	27.479	21.981	49.46
Adverbs total	6.55	5.597	12.147
Adjectives total	5.908	3.775	9.683
Conjunctions total	2.663	3.275	5.938
Prenominals total	2.122	3.036	5.158
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237.959</b>	<b>239.625</b>	<b>477.584</b>
Chi-square =	1.901671845		
Degree of Freedom =	7		
p (significance level) =	0.965081		

**Table A.17: Particles: Channel 2 versus Speech**

Per 300 particles

	Channel 2	Speech	TOTAL
Case	71.42	41.04333333	112.463333
Sentence final	18.4	42.01	60.41
All other	156.32	136.0433333	292.363333
TOTAL	246.14	219.0966667	465.236667
Chi-square =	17.32514101		
Degree of Freedom =	2		
p (significance level) =	0.0001729		

**Table A.18: Particles: Writing versus Speech**

Per 300 particles

	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Case	41.04333333	96.62	137.663333
Sentence final	42.01	2.733333333	44.7433333
All other	136.0433333	154.0566667	290.1
TOTAL	219.0966667	253.41	472.506667
Chi-square =	55.83615152		
Degree of Freedom =	2		
p (significance level) =	0.0000000		

**Table A.19: Particles: Yahoo versus Writing**

Per 300 particles

	Yahoo	Writing	TOTAL
Case	78.59666667	96.62	175.216667
Sentence final	14	2.733333333	16.7333333
All other	155.8733333	154.0566667	309.93
TOTAL	248.47	253.41	501.88
Chi-square =	9.402794382		
Degree of Freedom =	2		
p (significance level) =	0.0090826		

**Table A.20: Particles: Yahoo versus speech**

Per 300 particles			
	Yahoo	Speech	TOTAL
Case	78.59666667	41.04333333	119.64
Sentence final	14	42.01	56.01
All other	155.8733333	136.0433333	291.916667
TOTAL	248.47	219.0966667	467.566667
Chi-square =	25.39697672		
Degree of Freedom =	2		
p (significance level) =	0.0000030557		

**Table A.21: Particles: Channel 2 versus Writing**

Per 300 particles			
	Channel 2	Writing	TOTAL
Case	71.42	96.62	168.04
Sentence final	18.4	2.733333333	21.1333333
All other	156.32	154.0566667	310.376667
TOTAL	246.14	253.41	499.55
Chi-square =	15.30713628		
Degree of Freedom =	2		
p (significance level) =	0.0004743		

**Table A.22: Particles: Yahoo versus Channel 2**

Per 300 particles			
	Channel 2	Yahoo	TOTAL
Case	71.42	78.59666667	150.016667
Sentence final	18.4	14	32.4
All other	156.32	155.8733333	312.193333
TOTAL	246.14	248.47	494.61
Chi-square =	0.930539937		
Degree of Freedom =	2		
p (significance level) =	0.6279660		

**Table A.23: Auxiliaries: Channel 2 versus speech**

Per 100 auxiliaries			
	Channel 2	Speech	TOTAL
Plain Copula-da	88.09	91.11	179.2
Past-ta	78.73	56.08	134.81
Negative-nai	38.23	38.68	76.91
Polite copula-desu	22.17	28.88	51.05
Polite -masu	18.57	6.36	24.93
Desiderative-tai	4.84	5.92	10.76
All other	24.16	24.97	49.13
TOTAL	274.79	252	526.79
Chi-square =	9.875417001		
Degree of Freedom =	6		
p (significance level) =	0.129997		

**Table A.24: Auxiliaries: Writing versus Speech**

Per 100 auxiliaries			
	Speech	Writing	TOTAL
Plain Copula-da	91.11	86.65	177.76
Past-ta	56.08	62.78	118.86
Negative-nai	38.68	26.78	65.46
Polite copula-desu	28.88	4.31	33.19
Polite -masu	6.36	5.16	11.52
Desiderative-tai	5.92	2.68	8.6
All other	24.97	31.45	56.42
TOTAL	252	219.81	471.81
Chi-square =	20.83229188		
Degree of Freedom =	6		
p (significance level) =	0.00196632		

**Table A.25: Auxiliaries: Yahoo versus Writing**

Per 100 auxiliaries			
	Yahoo	Writing	TOTAL
Plain Copula-da	55.35	86.65	142
Past-ta	68.96	62.78	131.74
Negative-nai	27.42	26.78	54.2
Polite copula-desu	63.05	4.31	67.36
Polite -masu	62.73	5.16	67.89
Desiderative-tai	5.53	2.68	8.21
All other	33	31.45	64.45
TOTAL	316.04	219.81	535.85
Chi-square =	94.01584399		
Degree of Freedom =	6		
p (significance level) =	0.000000		

**Table A.26: Auxiliaries: Yahoo versus speech**

Per 100 auxiliaries			
	Yahoo	Speech	TOTAL
Plain Copula-da	55.35	91.11	146.46
Past-ta	68.96	56.08	125.04
Negative-nai	27.42	38.68	66.1
Polite copula-desu	63.05	28.88	91.93
Polite -masu	62.73	6.36	69.09
Desiderative-tai	5.53	5.92	11.45
All other	33	24.97	57.97
TOTAL	316.04	252	568.04
Chi-square =	65.40591764		
Degree of Freedom =	6		
p (significance level) =	0.000000000004		

**Table A.27: Auxiliaries: Channel 2 versus Writing**

Per 100 auxiliaries			
	Channel 2	Writing	TOTAL
Plain Copula-da	88.09	86.65	174.74
Past-ta	78.73	62.78	141.51
Negative-nai	38.23	26.78	65.01
Polite copula-desu	22.17	4.31	26.48
Polite -masu	18.57	5.16	23.73
Desiderative-tai	4.84	2.68	7.52
All other	24.16	31.45	55.61
TOTAL	274.79	219.81	494.6
Chi-square =	19.15156304		
Degree of Freedom =	6		
p (significance level) =	0.00391518		

**Table A.28: Auxiliaries: Yahoo versus Channel 2**

Per 100 auxiliaries			
	Channel 2	Yahoo	TOTAL
Plain Copula-da	88.09	55.35	143.44
Past-ta	78.73	68.96	147.69
Negative-nai	38.23	27.42	65.65
Polite copula-desu	22.17	63.05	85.22
Polite -masu	18.57	62.73	81.3
Desiderative-tai	4.84	5.53	10.37
All other	24.16	33	57.16
TOTAL	274.79	316.04	590.83
Chi-square =	52.28376373		
Degree of Freedom =	6		
p (significance level) =	0.000000002		

## Appendix 4.D: Top 30 Interjection Morphemes

Ranking	Tokens	Surface forms	Transliteration n*	Notes and Gloss (where possible)
1	8113	うん	<i>un</i>	backchannel
2	2106	あ	<i>a</i>	
3	2011	あー	<i>aa</i>	
4	1499	なんか	<i>nanka</i>	
5	1456	はい	<i>hai</i>	
6	876	え	<i>e</i>	
7	818	うーん	<i>Uûn</i>	backchannel
8	604	ま	<i>ma</i>	
9	418	へー	<i>Heê</i>	
10	391	えー	<i>eê</i>	
11	334	あの	<i>ano</i>	
12	284	あのー	<i>anoô</i>	
13	259	えっ	<i>e?</i>	
14	209	ふーん	<i>huûn</i>	backchannel
15	180	あっ	<i>a?</i>	
16	157	ごめん	<i>gomen</i>	sorry
17	138	いや	<i>iya</i>	
18	132	そうですね	<i>soudesune</i>	that's right
19	110	ほんと	<i>honto</i>	really
20	108	もしもし	<i>moshi moshi</i>	hello
21	105	ああ	<i>aa</i>	
22	101	まあ	<i>maa</i>	
23	99	なるほど	<i>naruhodo</i>	I see
24	96	う	<i>u</i>	
25	85	ふん	<i>hun</i>	backchannel
26	77	すいません	<i>suimasen</i>	sorry
27	75	ありがとう	<i>arigatou</i>	thank you
28	72	ほら	<i>hora</i>	
29	70	ええ	<i>ee</i>	
30	66	ううん	<i>uun</i>	backchannel

\* In this transliteration, ? is used to represent the smaller script of *tsu* (っ) (intended to show the phonetic quality of glottal stop) in addition to Notes on Romanisation.

## Appendices to Chapter 6

### Appendix 6.A: Apology

There are altogether 13 instances of expressions of apology in the Channel 2 film thread. The poster of Message 470 comments on the theme park related to the Pirates film, and where two of the relevant rides are located within the park. The poster then remarks, “sorry for the wrong thread,” as this thread is intended to discuss the film and not the park. As explicitly stated in the rules and guidelines, members are expected to post messages onto the appropriate threads, one important behaviour to follow in the Channel 2 community. In some cases, messages posted to a wrong thread are removed from the thread and relocated to an appropriate thread. If no existing thread can take care of particular topic, the poster is then expected to create a new thread. Notice also this poster expresses his/her apology in the Channel 2 specific language.

(1)  
470  
スレ 違い スマソ。  
sure chigai sumaso=suman=sumanai=sumimasen  
thread difference non-word=sorry=sorry I’m sorry  
I’m sorry for posting my message on the wrong thread.

*Sumaso* is a non-word outside of the Channel 2 environment, originating from *suman*, which has “n” (ン) at the end, a *katakana* script with a similar shape to *katakana* “so” (ソ). *Sumaso* is given in single-byte letters (スマソ), not the conventional two-byte script (スマソ). Originally, single-byte *katakana* scripts were not favoured in CMC because technologically they used to produce a garbage text depending on the platform and machine. Nowadays, such scripts can show properly, even on the mobile phones, and there is no reason for non-preference. According to a user comment of Channel 2, the choice between single-byte or double-byte *katakana* seems to be an idiosyncratic one, and no particular difference is conveyed between the two choices. This poster’s apology is

made in view of the normative standards of what is appropriate as the Channel 2 members; that is, to post a message in the most appropriate thread.

There are other reasons for apology in Channel 2 community. In the next example below, the poster of Message 446 points out a mistake in the acronym of the title of a different film, gives a correction and says, "sorry." This behaviour can be interpreted this way: the writer of Message 446 caused an offence by pointing out the mistake made by the poster of 445. By mentioning someone else's mistake, and not the poster's own, this poster considers he/she has caused the poster of 445 to lose his/her face and therefore, expresses apology to the poster of Message 445 (not to the entire audience).

(2)

445

BHK は ブラッカイマー より 監督 の  
BHK wa burakkaimaa yori kantoku no  
BHK TM Bruckheimer than director GEN

R・スコット 色 が 強 そう だ けど。  
R. sukotto syoku ga tsuyo sou da ke do  
R. Scott colour SM strong seem COP PL although/but

It looks like BHK has a stronger flavour of director R. Scott than Bruckheimer, but I'm not sure.

446

○ BHD

× BHK …スマソ sumaso = suman = sumanai

non-word sorry sorry

BHD is correct; BHK is wrong... sorry

Note also that the poster of Message 446 is not correcting his/her own mistake, nor is s/he in an authority role to correct it, such as a teacher. Under online circumstances, the role that one poster can play can be very limited, and the role that every poster more or less recognises in BBS context will be that of the thread initiator.

In contrast to the Channel 2 situation, reasons for apology in the Yahoo community are different.

(3)

HK さん こんばんは お 返事 遅く なって ごめんなさい。

HK-san konbanwa o- henji osoku natte gomennasai.  
Poster name greeting beautifying Prefix response late become pardon me  
Hi, HK-san, good evening. I'm sorry my response was late.

There seems to be an implicit rule on this poster in Yahoo that response should be made at an earliest possible occasion. Judging from such a standard, this poster apologises as the response was not made not as soon as the time when this poster considers appropriate.

## Appendix 6. B: Repeated Mention of “annoying, ugly, geek girls”

Channel 2: Film thread

(4) 111 03/06/05 17:39 ID: bF2Wq2zO

どうでも イイケド、ブスオタ がウザイ映画  
dou demo ii kedo, busu ota (=otaku) ga uzai eiga  
how nevertheless OK but ugly geek SM annoying film

It's all the same to me, but it's a film that makes annoying, ugly, geek girls crazy.

112 03/06/05 17:56 ID: Ta8vY8mM

ブス臭い映画に出ても ジョニーは 安泰です。

Busu kusai eiga ni dete mo Joni wa antai desu

Ugly smelly film in appear even Johnny TM safe COP PL

Even if Johnny appears in a nasty fan girl film, he's safe.

114 03/06/05 18:04 ID: bF2Wq2zO

ブスオタク女のウザイ映画

busu otaku onna no uzai eiga

ugly geek woman GM annoying film

A film that makes annoying, ugly, geek girls crazy.

115: 03/06/05 18:05 ID: bF2Wq2zO

ブスオタク女ネタで2ヶ月 頑張ります!

Busu otaku onna neta de ni-kagetsu ganbari masu

Ugly geek woman topic with two months stick to POL

I'll stick to the topic of ugly geek girls for two months [until the film is released.]

116 03/06/05 18:06 ID: bF2Wq2zO

暇な人はブスオタク女の好む映画を

Hima na hito wa busu otaku onna no konomu eiga wo

Free person TOP ugly geek woman GM like film OM

観に行ってください!

mi ni itte kudasai!

watch to go please

Those of you with a lot of free time please go and see the film adored by ugly geek girls.

119: 03/06/05 18:10 ID: bF2Wq2zO

ブスオタク女向けの王子様金髪の

Busu otaku onna muke no ouji sama kinpatsu no

Ugly geek woman for GEN prince blond GEN

オーランドファン の 頑張る映画です。

oorando fan no ganbaru eiga desu.

Orland fan GM stick to film COP POL

It's a film designed to excite ugly geek fans of the blond prince Orlando.

120 03/06/05 18:11 ID:bF2Wq2zO  
ブス オタク 向け の 映画 です!!!!!!  
Busu otaku muke no eiga desu  
Ugly geek for GEN film COP POL  
It's a film for ugly geek girls!!!!

121 03/06/05 18:19 ID:bF2Wq2zO  
オーランド ファン は ブス だったので…  
ooranndo fan wa busu datta no de…  
Orland fans TOP ugly be-past because…  
ブス 氏ね… と  
busu shine… to  
ugly [Lit non-word consisting of Mr. + ne, = imperative of the verb 'to die'] QUO  
Fans of Orland are all ugly anyway, so I say they should just die

122 03/06/05 18:42 ID:SoBeWQdl  
bF2Wq2zO たそ 大丈夫 か?  
bF2Wq2zO taso daijoubu ka  
bF2Wq2zO [same as chan] all right QUESTION  
[taso(タン)=tan(タン)=chan, endearment suffix to names, typically used for children]  
Are you all right, dear bF2Wq2zO?

123 03/06/05 18:43 ID:bF2Wq2zO  
ブス 氏ね  
busu shine  
ugly [imperative of shinu "die"]  
Ugly women must die

124 03/06/05 18:44 ID:bF2Wq2zO  
ブス 女 の 好む 臭い ブス 映画 は  
Busu onna no konomu kusai busu eiga wa  
Ugly woman GM like smelly ugly film TOP  
ブス 臭い から ブスブス だ。  
busu kusai kara busubusu da  
ugly smelly because ugly ugly COP PL  
The crap movies that fangirls all like stink anyway—crappy crap.

125 03/06/05 18:44 ID:bF2Wq2zO  
>>122 [Responding to 122]  
相手 に しな い で くれ  
aite ni sinai de kure  
Partner/companion to do-NEG gerund give-imperative  
Don't worry over me. [Lit. don't make me your partner]

126 03/06/05 18:49 ID:bF2Wq2zO  
ブス は 観 に 行け!  
Busu wa mi ni ike

Ugly TOP see to go-imperative

Go watch, ugly ones!

128 03/06/05 18:52 ID:bF2Wq2zO

我こそ ブスだ と思う 女 は、  
ware koso busu da to omou onna wa,

I emphatic particle ugly COP plain quote think woman TOP

堂々と 観にいきな～

doudouto mi ni iki na～

proudly see to go SFP

If you know you're an ugly woman, go watch with pride

ジョニーは 後の 作品 に 良作 ありで 安泰だ。

Jyonii wa ato no sakuhin ni ryoosaku ari de antai da.

Johnny TOPIC later GEN works among good works exist by safe COPULA PLAIN

Johnny is safe because there are more good films to come later.

129 03/06/05 19:01 ID:uRdUHLuy

スレ の 流れ と 関係 ないんだ けど  
sure no nagare to kankei nai n da kedo

thread GEN flow with relation no NOM COPULA PLAIN but

質問 いい か な

sitsumon ii ka na

question OK INTERROGATIVE SFP

It has nothing to do with the flow of this thread, but can I ask a question?

## Appendix 6.C: Self-performance

From BBS 1: Film

(5) 494 03/06/19 18:28 ID:hfPE3eHL

山咲 トオル ちゃん と 似てる-----  
Yamasaki tooru chan to niteru  
Tamasaki Toru endearment suffix to names with resemble  
He resembles Toru Yamasaki

495 03/06/19 19:07 ID:jK8T7yLP

全然 似て ないし、映画 と 関係 ないし、  
zenzen nite nai si, eiga to kankei nai si,  
not at all resemble NEG and film with relation no and  
おまえ ウザい から 消えて くれ  
omae uzai kara kiete kure  
you annoying because disappear please  
Not at all. This has nothing to do with the film. You suck—disappear

496 03/06/19 19:11 ID:hfPE3eHL

ぜんぜん 似て ます よ。  
Zenzen nite masu yo  
Absolutely resemble POLITE SFP  
He absolutely does.

山咲 似 の 出てる 美形 映画 じゃないです か!  
Yamasaki ni no deteru bikei eiga ja nai desu ka!  
Yamasaki look-alike GEN appearing nice-looking film isn't POLITE INTR  
This is a visually pleasing film in which a guy who looks like Yamasaki appears, right?!

498 03/06/19 19:28 ID:uFl+WDoU

うざい の は ID で 削除 すれば よし、同じやっだ から。  
Uzai no wa ID de sakujo sureba yoshi, onaji yatsu da kara  
Annoying NOM TOP ID with delete do-conditional OK same guy COP PLAIN because  
The loser can be deleted with ID. It's the same guy.

499 03/06/19 19:30 ID:hfPE3eHL

やはり似てる山咲 トオルと オーランド・ブルーム  
yahari niteru Yamasaki tooru to oorando buruumu  
still resemble Yamasaki Toru and Orland Bloom  
I still think Yamasaki Toru and Orland Bloom look alike.

503 03/06/19 21:19 ID:hfPE3eHL

ジョニデ と 山咲 トオル の 海賊 でも イイか な  
jyoni de to Yamasaki tooru no kaizoku de mo ii ka na  
Johnny Depp and Yamasaki Toru GEN pirates Copula also good INTR SFP  
Wouldn't it be great to see Johnny Depp and Yamasaki as pirates?

504 03/06/19 21:26 ID:hfPE3eHL

>>503 [responding to 503]

うん、そうだ           ね! それ は イイ や!  
Un, sou da            ne! sore wa ii ya!  
Yeah, so COPULA Plain SFP! That TOP good SFP  
Yeah, that's right! That's good!

505 03/06/19 21:34 ID:hfPE3eHL

はあ さびしい なー 誰 も いねい よ  
ha a, sabishii naâ dare mo inei yo  
Well lonesome SFP who even not present SFP  
Well, it's lonesome—nobody's here.

507 03/06/19 21:47 ID:hfPE3eHL

あ、ありがとう。  
A, arigatou  
Oh, thank you.

508 03/06/19 21:57 ID:dX9kmvby

自作           さん   うざい       です よ  
jisaku        -san   uzai        desu yo  
self-performer Mr/Ms annoying POLITE SFP  
You, Mr./Ms Self-performer, are a drag.

509 03/06/19 21:58 ID:hfPE3eHL

相手           に しな い よう に  
aite           ni sinai you ni  
Partner/companion to do-NEG manner in  
Then don't pay attention. [Lit. I recommend you not making him/her your partner]

510 03/06/19 22:03 ID:sNRj91SC

ID の 意味 を 知らない 方           が  
ID no imi wo shiranai kata           ga  
ID GEN meaning OBJ know-NEG person-Honorific SUB  
いらっしやる の かい? もしかして。  
irasshyaru no kai? Moshikashite  
exist-Honorific NOM SFP? by any chance  
Is there by chance someone who doesn't know the meaning of ID?

511 03/06/19 22:08 ID:GyQ9kQ+c

亀 レス だ           けど、 ジョニデ       の 金歯       は  
kame resu da           kedo, jonide       no kinba       wa  
turtle response COPULAR plain but, Johnny Depp GEN golden tooth TOP  
向こう の 特集 番組 で 口 を 開けて 見せて  
mukou no tokushuu bangumi de kuchi wo akete       misete  
overseas GEN special program in/by mouth OBJ open-gerund show-gerund

くれる シーン が あった。

Kureru shiin ga atta

Give scene SUB be-past plain

This is a turtle-paced response, but there was a scene on a special program abroad where Johnny Depp opened his mouth and showed his golden tooth.

512 03/06/19 22:09 ID:hfPE3eHL

果てしなく アホっぽい話 です な

hateshinaku ahoppoi hanashi desu na

endlessly stupid-like story COP POLITE SFP

That's a stupid story without an end.

513 03/06/19 22:12 ID:hfPE3eHL

>>511 [responding to 511]

ジョニデ やる ね！ サービス精神 旺盛 じゃん。

Jyonide yaru ne! saabisu seishin ousee jan

Johnny Depp does SFP service spirit full isn't it

Johnny Depp will do it. He is full of showmanship.

その 勢い で 来日 して くれたら いい のに ね。

Sono ikioi de rainichi site kure tara ii noni ne

That power with visit Japan do-gerund give-conditional good NOM SFP

I hope he'll come over to Japan with that same spirit.

514 03/06/19 22:23 ID:ap9oEzvA

これ だけ 無知 で 無自覚な 粘着 も 珍しい な。

Kore dake muchi de mujikakuna nenchaku mo mezurasii na

This extent ignorance and un-self-conscious stickiness even rare SFP

It's so rare to see such an ignorant self-possessed, persistent jerk

一人 芝居 が 面白い から しばらく 見守って みる。(w

hitori shibai ga omoshiroi kara sibaraku mimamotte miru.

one-man show SUB amusing because a while watch try

It's fun to watch this one-man show, so I'll watch for a while longer. (dry laughter

515 03/06/19 22:31 ID:dX9kmvby

hfPE3eHL は 自作 自演。

hfPE3eHL wa jisaku jien

hfPE3eHL TOP self-make self-perform

hfPE3eHL is a self-performer.

516 03/06/19 22:33 ID:hfPE3eHL

相手 しない ように

aite sinai you ni

partner do-negative manner

Then get lost. [Lit. don't be his/her companion.]

517 03/06/19 22:38 ID:hfPE3eHL

>>515

些細なことは気にしないで映画の話 を しましょう。

Sasai na koto wa kini shinai de eiga no hanashi wo shimashyou

Trifling things TOP mind do-negative and film GEN story OBJ do-volitional POLITE

Let's not be bothered with trifles, but rather talk about films.

522 03/06/19 22:57 ID:hfPE3eHL

パイ 乙!

Pai otsu

Pai=bai=bye otsu=otukare sama=thanks

Good bye, thanks (for your hard work)!

524 03/06/19 23:13 ID:hfPE3eHL

マイは 10 枚 持ってる から 売って あげる よ... なーんて ね。ケケ

mai wa jyuu-mai motte ru kara utte ageru yo ...naante ne keke

I TOP 10 [thin flat things] have-present so sell-gerund give SFP as of SFP haha

I have ten [special goods], so I can sell some...As if! (ha ha)

525 03/06/19 23:27 ID:hfPE3eHL

はあ...寂しい スレだ な おい! 誰も いない よ

ha a...sabishii sure da na oi! Dare mo inai yo

Well...lonesome thread COP Plain SFP Hey! Who even exist-negative SFP

Well, this is a lonesome thread! Hey, there's no one here.

526 03/06/19 23:32 ID:9yVkfoJC

え、ああまだ いる けど……。特典、 もう( °Д° ) イラネ から……

E, aa mada iru kedo ..... tokuten, mou ( °Д° ) irane kara .....

Well still be-present but... special goods any more want-negative so...

Well, I'm still here, but... I don't want special goods any more...

527 03/06/19 23:42 ID:hfPE3eHL

おやすみ

oyasumi

[greeting before going to bed]

Good night

528 03/06/19 23:49 ID:9yVkfoJC

おやすみー(\*^▽^\*)/シ

oyasumi--

Good niiiiight

529 03/06/20 15:45 ID:BWUYIHml

昨夜 の hfPE3eHL は 友達 彼氏 の いない

Sakuya no hfPE3eHL wa tomodachi kareshi no inai

Last night GEN ID TOP friends boyfriends GEN without

可哀想な 子 なんだ ね。

kawaisouna ko nan da ne

pitiful child NOM COP plain SFP  
hfPE3eHLfrom last night must be a pitiful kid without friends.

自作 自演 ぶり が 痛々しかった です。  
Jisaku jien buri ga itaitasi katta desu  
Self-make self-perform actions SUB painful to see-past POLTE  
It was hard to watch his/her self-performance.

531 03/06/20 18:15 ID:uSpilvAs  
正直 今 の 時代に 失われた 自演 の 鏡 でした  
syoujiki ima no jidai ni ushinawareta jien no kagami deshita.  
Honesty now GEN age at/in lost self-performance GEN mirror POLITE-past  
Honestly, it was a perfect example of a self-performer lost in our age.

でも もう 二度と 来る な  
demo mou nidoto kuru na  
but (any) more twice come-negative-imperative  
But never come again.

## Appendix 6.D: Persuasion against Problem Maker

Yahoo: film

(6) 78      もし「つまらなかつたら」 KKM      2003/8/13 16:03  
             このトピで、けなしまくってやる。(爆)

If this is uninteresting,[in the subject line]

I'll totally trash this thread. [kanji for explosion]

79 伝わらなかつたようなので sanzen3000sanzen 2003/8/13 19:

もう一度書くが、人が10人いれば10通りの感想がある。  
賛否両論あって当然だし、見た上で不満があれば書けばいいだろう。  
なんでこんな当たり前のことを書かせられるのかよくわからんが。  
私はスターウォーズシリーズを始めとする金のかかったバカ映画  
(注:ほめ言葉)が好きだから  
この映画は面白かつたが、あなたがどんな好みかは知らんし興味もない。  
誰もあなたの首根っこを捕まえて「見ろ！」とはいつていない。  
私はCMを見て、「タイタニック」みたいな感動巨編狙いなのかと  
勘ぐっていたので、いい意味で期待を裏切られたし、  
なかなかの儲けものだったと思っている。  
第一ここは見た人が感想を書くトピではなかつたのか?  
何故見もしない人間が絡んでくるのかわからんな。

It looks my intention didn't get through, so ,[in the subject line]

I'll write it again. If there are ten people, there are ten opinions. It is all too natural to have both supporting and opposing opinions. If you are dissatisfied, you write about it. I don't know why I am made to explain something so obviously apparent. I like stupid big-budget films like Star Wars, so this film was interesting.

I don't know what your taste is, and I don't want to know.

No one grabs your neck and makes you watch it. I wondered after seeing the preview whether it aimed at emotional impact, but in a good way my expectations were belied. I feel it was more than worth the money.

Isn't this a thread where people who saw the film post opinions and comments, above of all? I don't understand why people who haven't even seen it want to pick a quarrel.

80      心配するな      KKM      2003/8/13 21:07  
             今のところ  
             全く見に行く気はないから  
             ちゃんばらを見ても「つまらん」からな。(爆)

Don't worry. [in the subject line]

For the time being,

I have no intention of watching it.

Sword-fights are boring. [kanji for explosion]

## Appendix 6.E: An Inappropriate Behaviour

Discussion of an off-topic subject is considered as inappropriate behaviour by thread initiator, who asks very politely to move to some other thread

Yahoo: English language study

93 Re: (社会人が)英語をモノにする具体的戦 HK\_74 2006/5/7 21:13

まことに申し訳ありませんが、そういう前提の話をお望みなら、別のトピで議論していただけないでしょうか。私は「学生時代にたいして英語の勉強はせず、社会人になってから英語の勉強を始める場合」という前提でこのトピを始めてますので。「学生時代には相当英語を勉強し・・・」というのを聞くと、私のモチベーションがすごく落ちてしまうのです。

[Quote from some other poster, asking to suggest effective training methods practiced by those who studied hard while students]

I'm terribly sorry, but if you want to discuss on the premise that while students they studied hard, won't you please discuss on a different thread? I started this thread on the premise that those who didn't study English as a student start studying English after they are working members of society.

When I hear about people who studied a lot as students, my motivation level goes way down.

94 ゴメン・・・ usa\_dream2005 2006/5/7 21:25

すみません、HKさん。オレも調子に乗りすぎました。

以後気をつけます・・・(>\_<)

Pardon me . . . [in the subject line]

I'm sorry, HK-san. I was wrapped up. I'll be careful about this from now on.

95 失礼しました econsierra 2006/5/7 21:30

すみません、そこまで思いが至らなくて。

[Quote from Message 93 about the motivation level]

I apologise [in the subject line]

I'm sorry I didn't think about it that way.

[Quoting from Message 93 about transferring discussion onto another thread]

わかりました。『英語ができないと嘆く人は何故できないのか』のトピに舞い戻ることにします。あちらでなら嫌がられないと思います、はい。

I see. I will return to the thread, "Why those who complain about not being proficient can't improve" I won't be hated on that thread.

98 usaへ HK\_74 2006/5/8 22:19

usa くんにもで気を使わせてゴメンね。あのレスは私のわがままです。

「学生時代に勉強はしてて」という前提を取り除いての話なら、いくらでも書き込んでね。^^

To u s a [in the subject line]

I'm sorry I even made you feel that way, USA-kun. That response was out of my selfishness.

Please post as much as you want without the premise of studying a lot while a student.

## Appendix 6.F: Dead Community on Yahoo

35 オーストラリアの大学は JDP 2005/2/26 14:17  
「オーストラリアに留学している人」のトピにこういう書き込みがありました。この人の名前からして南半球に住んでいてオーストラリアを知ってる人みたいで、なんか説得力を感じます。

In Australian universities [in the subject line]

[Quote from other thread on Australian universities]

On the thread, "Studying in Australia", there was such a post, and from this poster's nickname, it looks like s/he lives in the southern hemisphere and knows a lot about Australia. I feel it's convincing.

36 こうしたバカもいるのですね bakanakoto\_iuna 2005/2/26 15:16  
JDP はなんでこんな呆れてもものが言えないような投稿をするんでしょうかね。内容がムチャクチャで全然関係がないことを平然として述べている。二度とここに近づくな!!!

There is such a fool, isn't there. [in the subject line]

I wonder why JDP makes such an appalling post that makes all others silent. The content is jumbled, and he/she jumbled states totally irrelevant things. Never come around here again!!!

43 本当の事です JDP 2005/3/5 18:11

何を必死になっているのですか？

オーストラリアカテで知る人ぞ知る southerlander さんはオーストラリア通。それを内容がムチャクチャなどと言っては失礼ですよ。south さんを支持している人も多いのです。私とsouth さんに謝りなさい。

It's the truth [in the subject line]

What are you doing in desperation? On Australia board, everyone knows Southlander-san is an expert on Australia. It's very rude to say the content is jumbled. A lot of people support South-san. You must apologise to South-san and me.

44 先の投稿は JDP 2005/3/5 18:17

bakanakoto\_iuna に宛てたものです。念のため

The previous message was [in the subject line]

addressed to bakanakoto\_iuna, to be precise.

[Note no use of "-san" at the end of user ID, though the message from Yahoo system adds "-san" automatically at the end of user ID.]

[Automated Message]

これは メッセージ 43 JDP さんに対する返信です

This is a reply message sent to Message No 43 by Mr/Ms JDP.