

Direct and Indirect Communicative Styles

A Study in Sociopragmatics and Intercultural Communication
Based on Interview Discourses with
Norwegian and Japanese Business Executives

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Summary

Key words: intercultural communication, communicative style, (in)directness

In step with globalization, the field of intercultural communication has received increasing attention. In the literature, the Japanese are commonly portrayed as 'indirect' as opposed to Scandinavians, who are described as 'direct', with communicative failure between the two as an expected outcome. With the aim of providing business people and others with practical knowledge about cultural variation however, claims, such as these, are frequently presented without an empirical base.

With these preconditions in mind, the present qualitative study both investigates Japanese and Norwegian business executives' meta-linguistic perceptions of communicating with the other, and analyses their transcribed discourses with special reference to directness. The material consists of thirteen semi-structured interviews with Norwegian business executives residing in Norway, but with long standing contact with Japan. These were followed up with forty-one interviews with Norwegian and Japanese business executives in Japan. On the one hand, the aim has been to build up a body of data based on Japanese and Norwegian experience as a nuance to the East-West business communication primarily conceptualized by American research tradition. Secondly, by using discourse analysis, the study has worked to empirically test the claim that the Japanese are more indirect than Norwegians. Using styles belonging to the field of intercultural communication as a point of departure, four styles denoting degree of directness were identified: *exacting*, *upfront*, *elaborate*, and *understated styles*. By adding linguistic devices proposed to weaken or strengthen the illocutionary force, that is, to cause a proposition to appear more or less direct, to these four styles, they have been operationalized and thus, become equipped to test the Japanese and Norwegian interview transcriptions for stylistic variation. This kind of empirical evidence may help raise the general scientific validity of the field of intercultural communication, and may also raise people's awareness of stylistic nuances above that of essentialist stereotypes.

The results have not been able to add validity to the claim that the Japanese are more indirect than the Norwegians. In fact, what is the most marked feature in this study is how much individuals' styles differ, regardless of similarities such as nationality, age, status, the location, the topic, or degree of acquaintance with the interviewer. However, a study in a limited frame such as the current one, does not attempt to contest that 'the typical Japanese' is probably more 'indirect' than 'the typical Norwegian'. In fact, the results may be interpreted as supporting a claim that Japanese business executives with the shortest and most distant contact with 'Western' (low context) business executives tend to apply a style similar to that proposed to be a 'Japanese style' by other scholars. However, the results also indicate that Norwegian business executives may be more likely to encounter 'non-typical' Japanese colleagues or customers, as those with longer and closer contact with 'Westerners' tend to apply a more upfront and elaborate style than otherwise. On the other hand, the results do not find any significant difference in directness among the Norwegians relative to their length of stay in Japan. However, the results are interpreted as finding variations in attitude to style shifting that might be linked to acculturation processes. Analysing the Norwegian discourses in light of the Japanese has further resulted in the identification of a particular Norwegian communicative style, which may be characterized as upfront, but having fewer intensifiers than those normally attributed to the style. This might contribute to a discussion on variations in Norwegian communicative styles, a field of previous limited research.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation

According to many theories within the field of intercultural communication (cf. chapter two), Norwegians (Scandinavians) are perceived as *direct* and the Japanese as *indirect* in *communicative style*¹. Based on this assumption, one might assume that it is especially difficult for Norwegians and the Japanese to communicate. With these preconceptions in mind, a pilot study in Norway was followed up by interviews of forty-one Norwegian and Japanese business executives with long standing business relations living and working in Tokyo in order to draw on their experiences especially related to communication. However, during the interviews, I found that not only was it interesting to hear what they had experienced and their feelings about it, but the way they put it came as a surprise. Thus, although this research project started out with the aim to learn more about Japanese and Norwegian business relations, the interest in communicative styles was a result of field observations, which is not an uncommon start for qualitative research (cf. chapter 5). The informants were all business executives interviewed at their offices answering similar questions, and yet their 'styles' were very different. In addition, some of the Japanese informants talked about their opinions and attitudes in a much more 'direct' manner than I had anticipated. A Japanese native, who read the transcribed material, even called it 'aggressive' and sometimes 'arrogant'. One may measure someone perceived as 'loud' by measuring the vibration of his vocal cords. But how does one measure someone perceived as 'arrogant' or 'direct'? On this background I have arrived at the following research questions.

¹ *Communication style* is a term used in various academic fields, such as pedagogy, marketing, and communication studies, including media communication and intercultural communication. The term *communicative style*, on the other hand, seems to be limited to linguistics (Gumperz 1982; Selting 1999; Barnlund 1975), and will be discussed further in 1.4. Other similar terms found in the field of linguistics are *conversational style* (Tannen 2005), which concerns the style in the interchange between interlocutors, and *Communicator style* (Norton 1983), which is tied to the various 'personalities' different speakers project through style labelled *dominant*, *argumentative*, *animated* and so on.

1.2 Research questions

- i. What experiences do Norwegian and Japanese business executives have when communicating with each other?
- ii. Do Japanese and Norwegian business executives perceive themselves as opposite with respect to direct and indirect communicative styles?
- iii. What does directness and indirectness in communicative styles refer to in linguistic terms?
- iv. Are the Japanese and Norwegian business executives in this study opposite with respect to direct and indirect communicative styles?

Whereas questions (i) and (ii) examine directness and indirectness from a metalinguistic perspective, that is, how the speakers view their own and others' behaviour, question (iv) measures the same speakers' transcribed discourses applying the instruments found in the answer to question (iii).

An important premise for this study is that it investigates the styles of a given number of people at a given point in time, and possible variations between the two national groups do not claim to apply to all Japanese or all Norwegians. In fact, this study could be seen as a general critique of the static cultural styles in some of the major works in the field of intercultural communication (chapter two). Instead, I believe that a study on variations in individuals' communicative styles even in a limited frame such as in the current one, will help raise people's awareness of stylistic nuances above that of cultural stereotypes.

1.3 Methods

The content of the interviews has been analysed using *content analysis* incorporating Flanagan's (1954) *Critical Incidents Technique* and *cluster analysis* as described by Tesch (1990) (cf. 5.5.4). Ideally, but not always realistically possible, this method encourages the development of hypotheses and categories based on the informants' own statements instead of the observer's interpretations based on existing norms. This might be especially important when studying Japanese communicative style, which is subject to many myths and anecdotal evidence.

Studies have found that the Japanese become more direct when they use English (Yoshino & Hayashi 2002)². In most cases, when the Japanese and Norwegians communicate in a business setting, they use English and not Japanese or Norwegian, which were the languages spoken in the present interviews. Thus, it is important to stress that although the content of the interviews is business related, the linguistic material is not business communication between business associates, but based on interviews with the author.

For its linguistic style, the material has been analysed with the aid of a *linguistic content analysis* (cf. 5.5.5). A key denominator is that analysis is a continuous circular and inductive process between theories and data until the emergence of ‘patterns’ has been reached. An example of linguistic content analysis is described in the process of finding and operationalizing the conceptual framework for this study below.

1.4 Conceptual framework

From the viewpoint of pragmatics, Hickey (1989:1-5) defines style as what distinguishes one utterance from the other when both denote the same, or approximately the same, thought. A style must be repeated, that is, it must be systematic and characteristic of a text. Finally, style is the result of choice of linguistic features³, made from among a range of available possibilities offered by a given language. The problem of defining directness and indirectness on a meta-linguistic level such as ‘style’ is that it is probably impossible to provide an exhaustive definition. Thus, there are definitions that cover linguistic, paralinguistic, and rhetorical devices applied by the speaker or between interlocutors (Tannen 1981, 2005), those that include prosodic devices (Lomax 1977, Selting 1999), and those that include psychological aspects such as degree of self-disclosure and depth of involvement (Barnlund 1975). A particular style is not necessarily a static entity. There seems to be substantial evidence that people use language much more creatively than essentialist categories suggest (cf. 3.2). However, in order to do a linguistic analysis on style, one needs working definitions.

² I have not been able to find any Norwegian study which measures whether Norwegians are more direct or indirect when they speak English.

³ This study will use the term *feature* to mean ‘characteristic’ as in: “Frequent hedges is a marked feature of the indirect style”. For concrete linguistic expressions used in a certain style, Labov (1984) opts for the term *markers*. However, it seems that the most frequently used term is *devices* (Lakoff 1973, Holmes 1984, Brown and Levinson 1987, Clemen 1997, Tannen 2005, Schröder 2010), and this will be the one used in this study. A linguistic device is defined as a device that is lexical or grammatical (e.g. hedge, intensifier) as opposed to a paralinguistic device (e.g. laughter, pauses) or a rhetorical device (e.g. verbosity).

Hymes (1974:440) points out that “the criterion of a *significant speech style* is that it can be recognized, and used, outside its defining context, that is, by persons or in places other than those with which its typical meaning is associated, or contrasted with relation to the persons and places with one or more other styles”. Without some kind of classification, different categories of style cannot be identified. Consequently, even those who maintain that people shift style cannot study this shift because they do not know what the shift is from. In want of an all-embracing definition of direct and indirect communicative styles, this study limits the scope to four styles, which are introduced shortly and further elaborated on in chapter two.

According to Grice (3.3), people are direct when they adhere to the *Cooperative Principle*, which means that they are sincere, relevant, brief and orderly, and give neither too little nor too much information than required. However, upon transcribing my data it became clear that those who had been commented on in the interview notes as ‘direct’ were not only those who were direct in the Gricean sense, such as the Norwegian who states: “Norwegian quality, it is not good enough in Japan”. It was also those who seemed ‘assertive’ like the one who mimics people from a certain Norwegian city by saying: “Here I am and everyone else shut up <laughter>” where the choice of “shut up” and the mocking laughter might be said to be more than required. In the literature of intercultural communication, two direct verbal styles were identified that seemed to be able to differentiate the two types of directness in the examples above. They are those that I refer to as the *exacting* and the *upfront* styles, but originally presented under various names (cf. 2.5.1). They are contrasted with two indirect styles; the *elaborate* and the *understated* styles. The *exacting* style is explained by descriptive adjectives such as ‘literal’, ‘clear’, and ‘to the point’, the *upfront* style is portrayed as ‘frank’, ‘forthright’, and ‘confrontational’, the *elaborate* style as ‘expressive’ and ‘elaborated’, and the *understated* style as ‘implicit’ and ‘vague’. The two indirect styles seemed to match those in my study who were friendly and elaborate, but not assertive on the one hand, and those who were reserved and cautious on the other.

The weak point about the styles above is their vague descriptions. In order to be able to use them as tools in the analysis of Japanese and Norwegian texts, it is necessary to identify the linguistic and rhetorical devices the styles apply in order to sound exact, upfront, elaborate, and understated. Hickey (1989:1-5) above argued that a style must be repeated, that is, it must be systematic and characteristic of a text. The way I see ‘repetition’ in this study, is first of all to identify iterative choices of certain devices over others in a given text, and second, to identify similar set of choices to these in the discourses of the other participants. Similar sets

are grouped into 'styles', in this case, related to the four styles constituting the working definition of 'style' in this study. If the boundaries between the styles are found to be relatively stable, it will be possible to discuss what directness and indirectness refer to in linguistic terms, and subsequently, who is more or less direct in style. However, there is also a possibility that some speakers do not match any of the four styles, or that styles overlap too much to form clear categories.

Lastly, I will discuss what might be the reasons for such differences in style even though the contexts were similar. However, I must stress that the latter will be based on what the speakers themselves offer as explanations for their particular styles coupled with explanatory models from intercultural communication (chapter two) or pragmatics/sociolinguistics (chapter three), because no researcher has direct access to the speakers' minds. Selting (1999) distinguishes between the notions of 'styles of speaking', which is a single speaker's use of style to express social standing and identity, and 'styles of conversation', which are styles used in interactions such as ways of taking turns, back-channelling, etc. This study is about 'styles of speaking' rather than about 'styles of conversation'. This is not to say that I'm not aware that the interviewer influences how an interviewee speaks, but that I am mainly preoccupied with the speaker's stylistic choices, not the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee.

There are PhDs written about one single linguistic device (e.g. Itani (1996), on *hedges*). A delimitation of this work is that the focus on style, which might be defined as a meta-level in linguistic research, makes it impossible to go equally deep into the theoretical foundation of each linguistic device characterizing a style.

1.5 State of the art

1865 marks the year when the first Norwegian ship called at Yokohama port. Since then, shipping related industries continue to play an important role in business relations between the two countries. By 2007, at the time when I did most of my interviews, the Norwegian embassy had thirty-one Norway related companies listed in the Tokyo area with a total of 24 Norwegian representatives, which is a low number compared to our Scandinavian neighbours. In addition to shipping and seafood, Norwegian companies in Tokyo trade in Norwegian telecommunications, material production, recycling systems, health care solutions, furniture,

and tourism. Despite this long standing relationship, previous studies on Japanese-Norwegian business communication are limited in number. The only works I have found which touch on business culture and business communication between the two countries are Baumgarten (2005), Nakajima & Arnesen (1999), and Hole (2006), but none of these are written from a linguistic perspective.

Since the emergence of the field of intercultural communication in the 1950s and especially after the Second World War, the time when the Japanese economy grew to become the only economic superpower outside the West⁴, the majority of English publications have been written from an Anglo-American cultural viewpoint with Japan exemplifying 'the Other'. When a Scandinavian businessman is preparing for a business trip to Japan, he picks up one of the books about how to do business with the Japanese, predominantly written by Anglo-American authors and reads about how 'we' do business in Japan. It is not that everything in these books is irrelevant to Scandinavians. However, Norwegian business executives in Japan might have different experiences from those reported in the textbooks which could contribute to a fuller picture of 'the West'.

It is my impression that research on communicative styles has decreased somewhat since the 70s and 80s. A reason might be that postmodernism with its focus on constructionism (3.2) has perceived 'style' as too static a notion to be worth investigating. However, as long as style is found to have an effect on communicative encounters, I value it as an interesting and useful research topic. In sections 2.6 and 2.7 we will see that claims about Japanese, and especially Norwegian, communicative styles are subject to much anecdotal evidence. The present study aims to add nuances to the way one might expect the Japanese or Norwegians to speak.

Styles are often best noticed in contrast to other styles. Thus, analysing the Norwegian texts in light of the Japanese texts is especially useful when one of the languages and value systems under investigation is the researcher's own. Thus, rather than being a discourse analytical comparison between Japanese and Norwegian, hypotheses about Norwegian communicative styles are tested against hypotheses about Japanese, and vice versa, with the ultimate aim to raise our general knowledge about linguistic manifestation of styles. To my knowledge, a study targeting Japanese and Norwegian communication has not been done before.

⁴ The terms *West* and *Western* are generalizations based on philosophical rather than geographical lines, i.e. the culture group where Greek philosophy, Christianity and modern science had its offspring and/or which is highly influenced by it. Since the main focus in literature for business purposes has been on North East Asia and

1.6 *The fields of inquiry: Linguistics and Intercultural Communication*

The study draws on theoretical knowledge from the two fields of linguistics and intercultural communication. Although some might describe intercultural communication as a sub-field of linguistics, this study distinguishes them for two major reasons. Firstly, communicative styles are seen mainly as cultural styles in intercultural communication (2.2) versus a focus on situational or personal strategies in linguistics (3.2). Secondly, the main focus on directness in the field of linguistics tends to be on ‘clarity’, and research on indirectness on ‘deference’ (3.3 and 3.4). Thus, Brown and Levinson (1987:245) argue that the focus in research on how a proposition is being weakened rather than strengthened might be due to the fact that so much research has been conducted in the Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere, a culture where weakening the illocutionary force is seen as more socially appropriate and important than boosting it. In the field of intercultural communication, on the other hand, the scope seems wider (2.5.1), but limited to geographical or cultural areas as exemplified below.

Ting-Toomey (1985:81), from the field of intercultural communication, defines style as: “The overt manifestation of one’s cognitive orientation [...] the behavioural verbal and nonverbal means of expressing oneself”. However, the styles introduced in 1.4 are not about individual stylistic variations but rather *cultural styles* tied to whole geographical or cultural areas. Thus, for instance the *exacting* and the *upfront* styles are claimed to be predominantly used in American and Northern European cultures, which would apply to the Norwegian one. Especially interesting to a Japanologist is the *understated* variant called *the Japanese style* (Barnlund 1989; Midooka 1990) which seems to be an extremely static and persistent notion about Japanese otherness (cf. 2.7.).

Edward T. Hall came from an anthropological research tradition and laid the theoretical foundation for the field of intercultural communication in collaboration with linguists such as George L. Trager. Thus, whether one calls intercultural communication a sub-field of anthropology, a sub-field of linguistics, or an autonomous field, the influence from the two fields of anthropology and linguistics/communication studies is strong. For that reason, it comes as a surprise to anthropologists nowadays that traditional views of culture and communication still seem to have such a strong grip on the literature produced under the label

Singapore, “Eastern cultures” in those publications is often limited to the cultures of Japan, South-Korea, China (Hong Kong), Taiwan, and Singapore, i.e. cultures influenced by Chinese philosophy and Buddhism.

intercultural communication. In the *Encyclopaedia of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (2003:517) under the section named “Anthropology” the anthropologist Ulf Hannerz writes that:

A further practical field which emerged in the late twentieth century as a profession in itself is that of ‘intercultural communication’ which offers training and consultancy in the handling of concrete situations of cultural difference, and, putting it somewhat dramatically, of ‘culture shock’. This field has links to several academic disciplines, but to a considerable degree it draws on a more or less anthropological conception of culture – of a type, it may be added, that many anthropologists might now find rather old-fashioned and clumsy.

The concept of culture that Hannerz calls “old-fashioned and clumsy” is the belief that every culture has an observable, describable and static essence, a view of culture frequently termed *essentialism*. With postmodernism in mainstream anthropology, the essentialist view of culture has been replaced, by and large, by a constructionist view where culture is viewed as a dynamic entity that can influence, be chosen, adopted, or negotiated depending on different variables such as context and power relationships. The same trend can be found in sociolinguistics (Labov 1972; Gumperz 1982). Dahl (1995:35ff.) suggests that the reason why the same discussion has not taken place in intercultural communication, may be because of its incorporation into the newly established communication departments during the 1990s. Thus, it was influenced more by organizational communication, inter-ethnic, inter-racial, and group communication rather than by anthropology and linguistics. Another reason might be the practical approach of the field. Categories of human behaviour are constantly in danger of being used by practitioners in the form of a ‘simplified version’ that is, omitting all those who were observed to be border-line or ‘fuzzy’ examples in the original work. However, when it comes to work on intercultural communication, it is not only the practitioners but the theorists themselves who are criticized for omitting ‘fuzziness’. Blommaert (1998:2) argues that the reason is due to the fact that whereas anthropological theories are based on observations of ‘real’ speech in ‘real’ situations through fieldwork:

Quite a few well-known and widely read books on intercultural communication do not provide a single real case analysis, not even a single example of real-life data of people talking to one another.

Upon examining the intercultural communication theories presented in chapter two, I am inclined to agree with Blommaert on this account. It is true that many of the books may be meant as textbooks or practical books for people of all professions interested in intercultural issues, but it is notable how rarely claims are linked to empirical data material. In

Blommaert's view (1998:5), the answer to higher credibility in the field lies in "a detailed and nuanced analysis of concrete communicative events", and that is what this study aims to do.

Both *sociolinguistics* and *pragmatics* study language in social contexts and represent reactions to the structuralist linguistics outlined by Ferdinand de Saussure, which sees meaning existing in signs alone. Pragmatics is concerned with studies of how context contributes to meaning of linguistic categories. However, if we look at how language is used strategically to stir involvement or create a feeling of intimacy between interlocutors, then it takes us into the area of overlap between pragmatics and sociolinguistics, frequently referred to by the term *sociopragmatics*, which probably is the most accurate term for this study. Aijmer & Andersen (forthcoming 2011:1) define sociopragmatics broadly as "how social and cultural factors are brought to bear in language practices, and how they influence pragmatic strategies which are manifested by linguistic forms in particular communicative contexts". Further, methods such as *discourse analysis* offer methodology for a detailed and comprehensive analysis of concrete communicative events. An empirical study serves to problematize general notions of 'cultural styles'. It may further, as mentioned before, help increase our general knowledge about the linguistic manifestation of different styles, and particularly, contribute to a fuller picture of Norwegian and Japanese styles.

1.7 Outline of the dissertation

Chapter two and three contain the theoretical base of this study. The stand taken in this study is that although it is likely that people become socialized into preference for certain styles to a degree that one might talk about 'cultural styles', it is also vital not to ignore personal and situational nuances. Thus, chapter two introduces the notion of 'cultural style', and the rest of this study aims to modify that view.

Chapter three elaborates on theories about directness and indirectness within the field of linguistics. Chapter four links the theories from the two fields in order to operationalize the conceptual framework for analysis. Chapter five presents the corpora and addresses methodological issues. Chapter six analyses the content of the interviews in order to provide answers to research questions (i) and (ii). This chapter also acts as the context to better understand the many quotes in the linguistic analysis in chapters seven to ten. These are

followed by a discussion in chapter 11, which aims to provide answers to research questions (iii) and (iv). Chapter twelve concludes.

2 Directness and indirectness in the field of intercultural communication

2.1 Introduction

In the introduction (1.2), this study was positioned as a general critique of the static cultural styles in some of the major works in the field of intercultural communication. While we uphold this critique, this chapter examines existing theories about Norwegian and Japanese communicative styles, a search that requires at least a preliminary acceptance of a notion of people socialized in similar environments showing a preference for similar styles to a degree that might be called a 'cultural style'. Part 2.2 places the idea of style of whole geographical or cultural areas within a linguistic anthropological research tradition.

Further, the terms directness and indirectness in the field of intercultural communication are placed under the categories *high and low context communication*, without any clear delimitation between the terms. Thus, when Hall (1987) describes the Japanese style as 'high context', it implies indirectness but also covers more. In order to be able to 'measure' *emic*⁵ research on Norwegian and Japanese communicative styles with regards to directness and indirectness (2.6 and 2.7), one must thus compare them to all the parameters of high and low context communication displayed in sections 2.3 to 2.5.

2.2 Cultural styles

Essentialism originates with philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato and is a belief that every culture has an observable, describable, and static essence. Essentialist thinking in anthropology made it possible to observe, categorize, and compare cultures. Inspired by philosophers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), who claimed that language determines thoughts and that people who share the same language, ergo the same thoughts, values, and norms, should be studied as distinguishable autonomous entities of culture, early

⁵ An *emic* approach to cultural studies is culture-specific, i.e. to understand behaviour within one specific culture. An *etic* approach is culture-general, i.e. aiming to incorporate the behaviour of many cultures into one theory (Pike 1967).

anthropologists such as Boas in the United States and Malinowski in the United Kingdom went out in the field to observe and describe non-European cultures. The strongest proponents of this so called *cultural relativism* were those of the *culture and personality school* and the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* (Barnard 2000:119).

The culture and personality school is a direction within socialization studies that arose principally in the United States in the 1930s. It is a theory that is especially involved in how personality is moulded by culture applying psychoanalytic principles to ethnographic material. Culture, in turn, is abstracted configurations of idea and action patterns found by observing the individual's behaviour (Sapir 1957:205). Inspired by Sapir, the works of anthropologists such as Bateson (1936) and Benedict (1934) are mentioned as demonstrating this perspective of how personality types are created in socialization. In *Patterns of Culture* (1934), Benedict develops the idea that culture can be analysed as a macro psychological pattern, that is, cultures can be identified on the basis of collective personalities, emotional style, and aesthetics, which she refers to by the collective term *ethos* (Hylland Eriksen & Nielsen 2001:62). However, with this notion of *cultural personality*, Benedict takes a step away from Sapir's focus on the individual and into an interest in culture as a stable, observable, and classifiable personification on its own grounds.

By nature essentialism creates distinctions, frequently in the form of polar opposites, not gradations. *Functionalism* and *structural functionalism* are associated with names such as Malinowski, Firth, Radcliffe-Brown, Lévi-Strauss, and in linguistics, de Saussure. According to Barnard (2000:61), structural-functionalism tends to be concerned less with individual action or needs, and more with the place of individuals in the social order, or in fact with the construction of the social order itself. Individual differences are only interesting when they can be grouped into categories. Johnstone (1996:11) argues that structural linguistics is partly rooted in ideologies of nationalism of the nineteenth century since a nation was partly defined linguistically. Similarly, Blommaert (1995:13) gives historical reasons for the development of intercultural communication a century later parallel to decolonisation and the civil right movement in the USA which triggered renewed interest in cultural identity/ethnicity. Thus, it seems that a search for national or ethnic identities fosters a focus on patterns with impermeable frontiers, something that we will see for instance in the 'creation' of 'the Japanese style' in part 2.7.1.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf 1956) holds that every language has been influenced by the culture where it is spoken and that language in its turn shapes thought and experience in that culture. The main question is whether Whorf should be understood in the sense that language and thought influence each other, referred to as *linguistic relativism*, or that language shapes thought, referred to as *linguistic determinism* (Holtgraves 2002:152). The latter view particularly strikes at the core of man's free will. In Whorf's own words (1956:214): "no individual is free to describe nature with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even while he thinks himself free".

The anthropologist Edward T. Hall is often considered to be the founding father of the field of intercultural communication (Rogers et al. 2002:1). In 1949 president Truman gave a speech calling for the United States to aid third world countries, and Hall was asked to provide training in culture and communication issues for those heading abroad. Together with linguists such as George L. Trager, Hall aimed "to build up a body of data and methodology that would enable us to conduct research and teach each cultural situation in much the same way that language is taught" (Hall 1959:36), and thus, make the training useful regardless of which country the trainee was heading for. Hall's view on culture seems to correspond to a linguistic relativistic view of Whorf's work. Hall argues that "everything man is and does is modified by learning and therefore malleable. But once learned, these behaviour patterns, these habitual responses, these ways of interacting gradually sink below the surface of the mind and, like the admiral of a submerged submarine fleet, control from the depths" (1976:42). The part of culture that is out-of-awareness thus becomes rules that not yet have been formulated linguistically (Hall 1992:7), but are observable to others. Hall treats culture in its entirety as a form of communication, "communication is culture, culture is communication" (Hall 1959:186). Whorf's claim that man is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even while he thinks himself free corresponds to the way Hall sees how unconscious behaviour patterns lead us to act or speak in certain ways.

2.3 *High context and low context*

Hall's third book titled *Beyond Culture* (1976) introduces theories on *high context* and *low context communication*, and is possibly Hall's most cited work. This is how Hall (1976:79) explains the difference between them⁶:

A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code.

Hall is inspired by Bernstein (1971), who distinguishes between communication in working class families using a *restricted code* and communication in middle class families using an *elaborate code*. In working class families, what one can say and how depends on one's position in the family, and the members of the family have a strong sense of social identity with shared expectations and common assumptions which makes elaboration both unnecessary and disruptive. In middle class families, on the other hand, members have a larger degree of autonomy, and therefore speakers are forced to elaborate their meanings and make them both explicit and specific. Hall believes that *high context communication* resembles *the restricted code* in the sense that having a shared context means that verbal language can be limited to a minimum. Bernstein's critics have understood 'restricted' as a code harbouring some kind of deficiency and have interpreted it as inferior to the elaborated one. Thus, some might jump to the conclusion that Hall believed that high context communication, such as for example the Japanese one, is inferior to low context communication. Tannen (1982:16) however, suggests that the addition of background information also is a kind of 'elaboration' which makes it possible to be verbally restricted. After extensive field work in various high context cultures (Hall 1992), Hall seems to harbour a genuine respect for high context communication as he finds it more economical, fast, efficient, and satisfying than low context one (Hall 1976:101). However, a serious criticism of Hall's work is that his difference-focused approach encouraged a negation of similarities in research (Rogers et al. 2002:18). Some would argue that the theories in intercultural communication such as high context and low context are not to be interpreted as opposites but rather continuums on a scale. However, as long as expressions such as "high context cultures", "high context individuals", and "high context people" are used without any

⁶ High and low context also refer to aspects that have to do with management, the legal system, values and beliefs about work and relationship, and so on, but this study only addresses those aspects that have to do with communication.

modifications even in major works within the field, how else can it be understood than dichotomies rather than nuances?

2.4 High and low context cultures

The amount of information the speaker leaves out of the utterance does not only depend on the degree of shared experience and knowledge between the communicators, but on whether a communicator is socialized into a *high* or *low context culture*. Hall (1976:91) suggests that German-Swiss, Germans, and Scandinavians are lower contexted than Americans, whereas Chinese and Japanese are above. Rosch and Segler (1987:60) have taken this further by making a context ranking of cultures based on Hall's descriptions (Figure 1). With a reference to Tirkkonen-Condit (1987), Victor (1992:160) argues that the Scandinavian category excludes Finland.

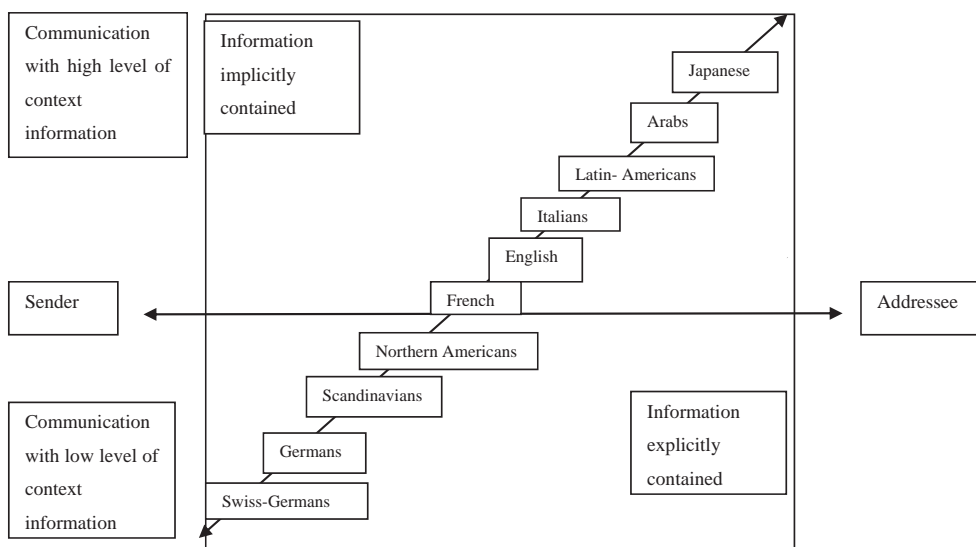


Figure 1: High context and low context cultures (from Rosch and Segler 1987:60)

Rosch and Segler claim that the source of this ranking is Hall (1976), page 91 and 102. On page 91 we find that Hall states that “American culture, while not on the bottom, is toward the lower end of the scale. We are still considerably above the German-Swiss, the Germans, and the Scandinavians, [...] China, the possessor of a great and complex culture, is on the high-context end of the scale”. Further, on page 109 Hall argues that “The Gauls have never been

easy for the northern Europeans, the Americans, or the English to understand. The answer may be that French culture is a mixture of *mélange*, of high- and low-context institutions and situations”, and finally on page 112, both the French and the Japanese are perceived as “higher in context than in the United States, the difference is this: The entire French system is a mixture of high- and low-context situations. In Japan, the over-all approach to life, institutions, government, and the law is one in which one has to know considerably more about what is going on at the covert level than in the West”. There are no claims about the Arabs, Latin-Americans, or the Italians in Hall 1976. However, in Hall & Hall (1987:8) we find that the “Japanese, Arabs, and the Mediterranean peoples who have extensive networks among family, friends, colleagues, and clients, and who are involved in close personal relationships, are high-context” and on the same page that “low- context people include the Americans and the Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians, and other northern Europeans”. I have not been able to find anything about the Latin-Americans, and beyond these descriptions I cannot find that Hall himself has suggested any sort of scale, which makes one question how it is possible to make a rigid scale based only on the quotes above. Even more questionable, this scale made by Rosch and Segler seems to be used often in textbooks in intercultural communication as if it was Hall’s work. Thus, two textbooks on intercultural communication in Norwegian (Fife 2002; Dahl 2001) both use the scale with certain additions and with reference to Hall 1976. Fife (2002:137) has added Africa and China ahead of the Middle East and below Japan, and Dahl (2001:76) has inserted Spain between Italy and Latin-America. Further, one might question to what degree universal theories, that is theories about communicative behaviour in a whole country (e.g. the French), group of countries (e.g. Scandinavia), a continent (e.g. Latin Americans) or people defined by a common language (e.g. Arabs), can be drawn from a sample of personal experiences. Thus, it seems that attributing this scale to Hall (1976) without adding a reference to Rosch and Segler (1987) creates the impression that Hall’s theories are more rigid than they were intended to be. In fact, Hall (1976:91) suggested that even though people in different cultures tend to prefer one over the other, high and low context communication exists in all societies, an additional comment very rarely mentioned in textbooks in the field.

2.5 High and low context communication

Inspired by Hall, various authors have added aspects that they call ‘styles’ to high or low context communication. These are summed up in Table 1.

Low context communication	High context communication
Efficient when communicating with strangers/people with little shared context	Efficient when communicating with people who are not strangers/people with much shared context
Often used in families/societies which encourage independence	Often used in families/societies which encourage interdependence
Meaning of words the same regardless of context	Meaning of words depends on context
<p>Direct styles: A way to be taken seriously and ensure clarity (Levine 1985), and used either when there is little attention paid to other-face concerns (seen from a high-context perspective) (Barnlund 1989, Martin & Nakayama 1997), or in order to show respect, honesty, and openness (seen from a low-context perspective) (Ting-Toomey 1999)</p> <p><i>Exacting style:</i> literal, articulated, precise, exact, clear, to the point, factual</p> <p><i>Upfront style:</i> frank, forthright, honest, open, confrontational, assertive, persuasive</p>	<p>Indirect styles: A way to show art, refinement, politeness, expressiveness, to protect against confrontations, and to maintain social bonds through common communicative codes (Levine 1985). The more other-face concerns, the more indirectness (Ting-Toomey 1999)</p> <p><i>Elaborate style:</i> rich, expressive, elaborated with over-assertions, verbal exaggerations, metaphors, similes, flowery expressions, elaborate rhythm, proverbs and cultural idioms, strings of adjectives, and repetitions</p> <p><i>Understated style:</i> implicit, interpretive, vague, approximate and imprecise with subtle messages, hints, understatements, indirection, circumlocution, pauses, and silences</p>
<p>Other styles: <i>Linear style.</i> The communication progresses systematically along a straight line until the point is made.</p> <p><i>Person-oriented style.</i> Strangers and non-strangers are dealt with more or less the same. Strives for a symmetrical interaction.</p> <p><i>Self-enhancement style.</i> “Authentic” facework, i.e. to be exacting and upfront is valued because of more self-face concerns. Indirectness sometimes seen as evasive and dishonest. Self-promotion is accepted.</p> <p><i>Speaker-oriented style.</i> Communication is sender and goal oriented; the sender is responsible for getting meaning across. The listener expects clear explanations. Silence often viewed as empty pauses.</p> <p><i>Detached and idea-oriented style.</i> Issues are discussed with calmness and objectivity. It is believed that ideas can be attacked without also attacking the person from whom the idea came.</p>	<p>Other styles: <i>Non-linear style.</i> A discussion proceeds in a roundabout way and incorporates many details until the point is reached.</p> <p><i>Status-oriented style.</i> Strangers are dealt with ritualistically and/or very politely. Stresses an asymmetrical interaction. If needing to know a stranger; seeks information to find common ground. Language differs for insiders and outsiders when it comes to degrees of politeness/formality and titles.</p> <p><i>Self-effacement style.</i> Courtesy has precedence over truthfulness. Public truth differs from private truth because of more other-face concerns. Directness sometimes seen as blunt and insensitive. Restraints, hesitations, and modest talk preferred.</p> <p><i>Listener-oriented style.</i> Communication is receiver and process oriented. The listener should be able to read between the lines. Silence is communication.</p> <p><i>Attached and relationship-oriented style.</i> Issues are discussed by showing personal concern both for the topic and for the persons interacting. Ideas and the person from whom the idea came cannot be separated.</p>

Table 1: Styles in high and low context communication (Model based on Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988; Victor 1992; Samovar & Porter 1997; Ting-Toomey 1999, 2005; Paige et al. 2006).

Different authors have presented similar styles under various names. For the sake of brevity, I have chosen one name for each style. The two styles direct and indirect are characterized by descriptive adjectives found in the text describing the direct/indirect style in 2.5.1.

Whereas Bernstein (1971) and Hall (1976) explained different styles based on family (insiders) versus outsiders, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988:106) argue that high and low context communication is more commonly related to the two larger socio-cultural dichotomies: *collectivism/individualism* and *low/high degree of uncertainty avoidance*⁷. Individualistic cultures encourage independence. In collectivistic cultures on the other hand, the member's main duty and sense of self is the way he or she manages to protect the group by preserving its values and traditions. According to Hofstede (2001:148), "Uncertainty-avoiding cultures shun ambiguous situations". Therefore, people in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance develop rules and rituals for every situation in which they might find themselves, including interacting with strangers (Gudykunst & Kim 2003:75). On the other hand, people in low uncertainty avoidance cultures have a higher tolerance for ambiguous situations, and therefore fewer communicative tools to deal with unfamiliar situations or people.

Comments to each of the 'styles' in table 1 follow below.

2.5.1 Direct style/ Indirect style

In a seminal study on directness and indirectness, Levine (1985) explains directness as a result of a modern, complex society where being to the point, clear, simple (i.e. not to say more, nor less, than required), and objective has become necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings. In American cultures, he states, "the meaning of a word must be precisely determined before it can be used seriously" (Levine 1985:28). Indirectness characterized by ambiguous language with embellishments harbouring multiple associations and rich shades of emotions on the other hand, is tied to traditional values of art, refinement and politeness and serves various functions. One is the idea that formulaic language is more evocative and therefore can give a person a deeper sense of insight than mere facts. The other is that it allows the speaker the

⁷ Important etic studies on individualism/collectivism are Triandis and Hui (1986), Triandis (1995), Hofstede's (2001) four value dimensions collectivism vs. individualism, power distance (high or low), uncertainty avoidance (high or low), and masculinity (high or low), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1997:8-10) seven dimensions based on Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) work on cultural value dimensions, who prefer the term 'communitarianism' to collectivism.

opportunity to be subjective, affective, and expressive. The third is that ambiguity can serve a protective function in that it prevents direct confrontation, and the fourth is that vagueness serves a socially binding function in that two persons may share a common understanding of the appropriate use and interpretation of ambiguous codes (Levine 1985:29ff.).

Victor (1992:139), who discusses high and low context communication in a business context, replaces the terms *explicit* and *implicit* from Hall with *direct and indirect*:

To the extent that members of low context cultures rely on verbal self-disclosure to communicate their primary message, they can be seen as *direct*; to the degree that members of high context cultures rely on means other than verbal self-disclosure to communicate their message, they can be seen as *indirect*.

Victor (1992:156) describes low context communication as 'literal', meaning that "words are allowed little variations in meaning regardless of context" and high context communication 'interpretive' in the meaning of context-dependent.

Whether a direct or an indirect utterance is favourably valued seems to be closely related to the concept of *face*⁸. Ting-Toomey (2005) operates with three types of face; *self-face*, which means protecting one's own image, *other-face*, which stands for concern and consideration for interlocutor's self-image, and *mutual-face*, i.e. concern for both parties' image or for the relationship. The less attention paid to other-face concerns, the more direct the style. Whereas some focus solely on face as the act of preserving one's own prestige or outward dignity (e.g. Victor 1992:159), Ting-Toomey (2005:77) argues that facework is not only about preserving one's own face, but also about giving others face. The more other-face concerns, the more indirect. To Ting-Toomey (1999:94), the Chinese expectations of face are as follows:

For the Chinese, individuals who are sensitive to their parents' needs, speak subtly or implicitly, act as good listeners, and are aware of facework and emotional work in developing interpersonal relationships are considered competent communicators. Conversely, individuals who are disrespectful of their parents' needs, speak bluntly or explicitly, and are insensitive to mutual facework issues are considered incompetent communicators.

It seems to be a common belief within the field that concern for face is closely connected with collectivistic traits, whereas concern for clarity is connected to individualistic ones (Wiseman & Koester 1993:143). However, to individualists, exemplified by Americans, the underlying

⁸ As the concept of face (*mianzi* (*mien-tzu*), *lien*) is deeply embedded in Confucianism, it is no surprise that an early international contribution came from a Chinese scholar (Hu, Hsien Chin 1944). Goffman adapted the concept further (1967), but East Asian scholars such as Stella Ting-Toomey (2005, 2006), who is especially known for her work on the Face-Negotiation Theory (2004), continue together with other East Asian scholars (Oetzel et al. 2000, 2001) to give important contributions to the field.

assumption of self-expression is that “each person is different and that to confront such differences is the best way to respect and integrate them” (Barnlund 1989:113). This is supported by Martin and Nakayama (1997:157) who state that:

Many English speakers in the United States hold the direct style as the most appropriate in most contexts. This is revealed in sayings like “don’t beat about the bush”, “get to the point”, and “what exactly are you trying to say?” Although “white lies” may be permitted in some contexts, a direct style emphasizes honesty, openness, individualism, and forthrightness.

In this sense, the Americans’ expectation of face work is related to being honest. In high context cultures on the other hand, facework frequently means the ability to disguise your thoughts:

Courtesy often takes precedence over truthfulness, and this is consistent with the cultural emphasis on maintaining social harmony as the primary function of speech. This leads members of collectivistic cultures to give an agreeable and pleasant answer to questions when literal, factual answers might be unpleasant or embarrassing (Gudykunst & Kim 2003:217).

Thus, facework in a high context culture may be perceived as dishonesty, evasiveness, or excessive flattery by people in low context cultures, and facework in a low context culture may be perceived as blunt and insensitive in a high context one. This is likely to have an effect on how directness and indirectness are perceived in these societies.

Ting-Toomey (2005:78) argues that:

While individualists tend to engage in low-context, direct styles (e.g., from *verbal explicit style* to *verbal upfront style*) of facework management, collectivists tend to engage in high-context, indirect styles (e.g., from *verbal understated style* to *verbal effusive style*) of facework negotiation.

She does not explain the meaning of these terms further. However, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) provide descriptions of similar styles but under different names, that is, *exacting* instead of *explicit*, *succinct* instead of *understated*, and *elaborate* instead of *effusive*. The *upfront style* is the same for both.

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) argue that people in moderate uncertainty-avoidance, high-context cultures, i.e. many Middle Eastern cultures, tend to use an *elaborate style* which is characterized as the use of rich, expressive language with an abundance of metaphors, similes, flowery expressions, elaborate rhythms, long arrays of adjectives, proverbs and cultural idioms, repetitions, and verbal exaggerations. The purpose is “to negotiate relational equality and social harmony” (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988:106). Almaney and Alwan

(1982:84) add that “An Arab feels compelled to over-assert in almost all types of communication because others expect him to”. Expressive language can involve both the use of exaggeration and animation, and the French, Latin Americans, and Africans also tend to use the elaborate style (Gudykunst & Kim 2003:221).

Further, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) claim that people in low uncertainty avoidance, low-context cultures, i.e. many Northern European and US cultures, tend to use the *exacting style* which echoes the concept of Grice’s quantity maxim (cf. 3.2). They do not specifically divide exacting and upfront into two separate direct styles, but the following quote contains both:

Members of low uncertainty avoidance, low-context cultures have the lowest apprehension level in unpredictable situations. They can, therefore, afford to be exacting and up-front in their verbal communication style. They can approach new situations confrontatively, without verbal elaborations or understatements, and they can afford to be “authentic” in their facework negotiation process. The cultural value of “honesty” may be the primary goal in their face negotiations. (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988:108)

Referring to Okabe (1983), American communicative style is characterized by “a preference to employ such words as *absolutely*, *certainty*, and *positively*” (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988:100). Americans are occupied with ‘tough talk’, meaning a person who is concerned with her/himself in ‘I-talk’, whereas the elaborate style is concerned with ‘sweet-talk’, which means to be nice and accommodate oneself (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988:103ff.) Thus, the way I interpret the difference, the exacting style does not engage in verbal elaborations, but the upfront style, which aims for confrontative ‘I talk’, uses expressions such as ‘absolutely’ and ‘certainty’ to underline the point.

People in high uncertainty avoidance, high context cultures, i.e. many Asian and American Indian cultures on the other hand, tend to use the *succinct style* characterized by indirection, circumlocution, pauses, and silences. The purpose is to place the burden of understanding on both the speaker and the listener and thus function as a mutual face-saving act. The message is presented as mere hints while actively monitoring the reactions of the listener, and the listener is expected to pick up the meanings behind the words. Gudykunst & Kim (2003:221) apply the term *understated style* as they state that: “An understated style [...] involves extensive use of silence, pauses, and understatements in conversation”.

Whereas the theories above place Northern European and the US culture under the same style, Samovar & Porter (1997:313) differentiate between them:

[...] negotiators from North America are likely to bluntly assert such things as “This is unacceptable”. [...] Other signs of the direct style of North American negotiators are that they often avoid silence, tend to speak loudly, interrupt frequently, and often complete sentences for others. European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, Sweden, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, and Belgium generally conduct business in a formal and articulate manner. They expect and value the same in return. Soft tones and small moderate displays of emotions are typical.

To sum up, the intercultural communication field calls a style where the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code *explicit*, *exacting*, or a *direct* style. However, the term *direct* is also used to describe a style where the communication is approached confrontatively, a style which Ting-Toomey (2005:78) calls a verbal *upfront style*. The term *indirect* is used to describe two different approaches. One is called a *succinct* or an *understated* style, and the other, an *elaborate* or an *effusive* style. In both, different strategies aim to camouflage the real intention of the speaker in the context either by overstating/over-expressing/over-asserting or by understating/under-expressing/under-asserting. These are the styles that will constitute the conceptual framework in this study.

The other aspects of high and low context communication will be elaborated on briefly below.

2.5.2 Linear style/ Non-linear style

Kaplan (1966), who was one of the first to point to cultural styles in communication (DeVries et al. 2003:3), explains the linear style in English as follows: “An English expository paragraph usually begins with a topic statement, and then, by a series of subdivisions of that topic statement, each supported by example and illustrations, proceeds to develop that central idea and relate that idea to all the other ideas in the whole essay, and to employ that idea in its proper relationship with the other ideas, to prove something, or perhaps to argue something” (Kaplan 1966:4). Ting-Toomey (2006:368) uses the term *spiral* linked to high context cultures to refer to the opposite of the linear style. Hinds (1980), who followed up Kaplan’s theories with Japanese data on the other hand, calls the Japanese style *circular*. So do Paige et al. (2006:130) who describe *circular* communication as follows:

In circular communication, the person rarely states the point directly. Instead, a discussion proceeds in a roundabout way and incorporates many details until the point is reached. This way of communicating is similar to how stories are told.

Since there does not seem to be an agreement as to a unified term to describe styles which are not linear, I shall employ the term *non-linear* in keeping with the practice of Dodd (1998:329).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997:89) use the term *diffuse*, which they argue is “sometimes called high context”, to explain a tendency to ‘circle around’ the stranger in order to build trust and shared context before getting down to business. The opposite, which they call *specific*, is “sometimes called low context” and implies getting “straight to the point, to the neutral, objective aspects of the business deal, and if the other remains interested then you circle around getting to know them in order to facilitate the deal”. This may be linked to 2.5.6 below, contrasting a detached and idea-oriented to an attached and relationship oriented style. My understanding of high and low context communication is broader than that of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (cf. table 1).

2.5.3 Person-oriented style/ Status-oriented style

A *person-oriented verbal style* stresses a symmetrical interaction where people tend to treat each other with informality and casualness. They prefer first-names, direct address, and strive to equalize the language style between the sexes (Ting-Toomey 1999:106ff.). On the other hand, the *status-oriented verbal style* focuses on an asymmetrical interaction by use of formal codes of conduct, titles, honorifics, and ritualistic manners in order to create a predictable interaction climate. People in low context cultures with low *power distance* value the person-oriented style higher than people do in cultures with high power distance. Hofstede (1994:28) defines power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”. In cultures with a high PDI (power distance index), hierarchy is looked upon as the natural order. In cultures with a low PDI, people believe that inequality in society should be minimized, all should have equal rights and equal chances, and no one should receive more respect on the basis of age or status alone. The fact that the Japanese and the Norwegians are placed at the opposite ends of Hofstede’s power distance scale is likely to be reflected in the level of formality in their respective communicative styles (cf. 2.6 and 2.7).

2.5.4 Self-enhancement style/ Self-effacement style

According to Ting-Toomey (1999:107), the *self-enhancement verbal style* emphasizes the importance of boasting about one's accomplishments and abilities, and is reflective of many Western individualistic cultures. *The self-effacement verbal style*, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of humbling oneself via verbal restraints, hesitations, modest talk, and the use of self-deprecation concerning one's effort or performance, which often takes the form of ritualized politeness. I do not find support for these styles in other works within the field. On the contrary, Hofstede (2001) disagrees with Ting-Toomey that the self-enhancement style is a marked feature of western individualistic cultures. According to Hofstede (2001:279ff.), cultures with a high score on the scale of *Masculinity*, value assertiveness and ambition whereas cultures with a low score such as for example the Scandinavian countries, are more relationship- than ego-oriented, and both men and women are encouraged to show modesty rather than assertiveness and ambition. The discussion related to Norwegian business behaviour in chapter six will give support to one of these claims.

2.5.5 Speaker-oriented style/ Listener-oriented style

There seems to be much agreement on the claim that silence serves different purposes in different cultures (Basso 1970, Hall 1983, Tannen & Saville-Troike 1985, Hasegawa & Gudykunst 1998). With the *speaker-oriented style* (Ting-Toomey 1999:101), (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988 call it an *instrumental style*), the burden is on the sender to make the message clear with assertiveness and persuasion as possible verbal tools, and is a style that dominates in low context communication. With the *listener-oriented style* (called *affective style* by Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988) the burden is on the receiver to read between the lines, and is a style that dominates in high context communication. Whereas some high context cultures avoid and even distrust verbal self-disclosure, people in low context cultures often dread silence because they feel uneasy when they have to interpret communication that does not rely on words (Victor 1992:153; Ting-Toomey 1999:110). This style is especially interesting in relation to 'the Japanese style' where extensive use of pauses and silence are claimed to be important features (2.7.2.3 and 2.7.2.4). Silence (pauses) will be tested on the Japanese and the Norwegian data in chapter eight.

2.5.6 Detached and idea-oriented style/ Attached and relationship-oriented style

Ting-Toomey (2005:78) argues that whereas collectivistic, high context individuals are “likely to see the person, the content goal, and the relationship content goal as an intertwined package”, individuals in low context cultures tend to see a discussion as purely instrumental, that is, they separate issues and persons. This is in line with the two contrasting verbal styles⁹ by Paige et al. (2006:131) called attached and relationship-oriented versus detached and idea-oriented, which they describe as seen in table 1. This might further be linked to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (1997:9) dimension ‘neutral’ versus ‘emotional’, where the former states that human interactions should be objective, and the latter that human interactions should be subjective and personal. Thus, research on German communication shows that the German style is direct and confrontational in that they use defence more in conflict situations than e.g. Americans do. It is important to discuss issues thoroughly and completely in a direct communication style, and this is possible because what one discusses are facts and sorting through facts, not the persons involved (Oetzel et al. 2001:253), i.e. a detached and idea-oriented style.

2.5.7 Summary of styles in high and low context communication

The styles above are described as essentialist ‘traits’ that are of a definite and stable number observable in a given culture, and people in that culture can be expected to use those styles. There is little attention paid to an individual’s possibility or ability to choose style strategically or instrumentally, that style can be more or less unconsciously negotiated, adapted, and ‘played with’, that people can go in and out of styles depending on the situation, the topic, and the people involved, or that the repertoire of styles can change or increase in number throughout life. I will return to these constructionist notions of style in chapter three. Further, as mentioned in chapter one, a weakness of these theories, mostly authored by researchers from the field of speech communication/communication studies, is that one cannot find that the anthropological methods of participant observation and field work used by Boas, Sapir, Whorf, and partly by Hall have been followed up in these later studies. By this I mean that with a few exceptions, (Hofstede 2001, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997), empirical methods are not stated explicitly in the works mentioned in this section, which

⁹ Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi and Lassegard (2006:125-132) introduce four verbal styles: 1) direct/indirect, 2) linear/circular, 3) detached/attached, and 4) idea-oriented/relational-oriented.

raises the question of their general scientific validity. However, as long as one is searching for ‘cultural styles’, I find them valuable as a point of reference for the following discussion on Japanese and Norwegian communicative styles.

2.6 Norwegian communicative style

Rosch and Segler (figure 1) placed Scandinavia as one of the lowest contexted on the scale. Hofstede (2001:215) and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997:51) place the Norwegians as predominantly individualistic. In table 1, I listed the different styles that high and low context communication is assumed to encode. This raises the question of how these descriptive parameters relate to the Norwegian communicative style. As far as I know, these comparisons have not been done before. Even though much writing on Norwegian communicative style is not based on empirical research, it may still provide relevant material for a discussion.

The following sections will look into different sources about Norwegian values and communicative behaviour and discuss whether these can be said to be high or low context communication.

2.6.1. Norwegian indirectness

One of few linguistic studies on Norwegian communicative style is from Larsen (1984:169), who examines behaviour patterns and communication in a village in western Norway. She argues that in farming societies in the region “there exists an ideology that everyone is the same, and that no one should believe themselves better, [...] the communication is first and for all characterized by discretion/circumspection [*forsiktighet*], [...] to ruin relationships is avoided at any cost, and one wishes to give the impression that one is a decent person who lives up to local ideals. This implies exercising modesty” (my translation).

An example between two wives (Larsen 1984:169) (my translation):

- Eg har no høyrte rykte om at oppvartinga på grendakvelden ikkje var vanleg kost.
- Å. Det va no ikkje så mykje.
- Eg forundrast ikkje om det var du som stod bak.
- Å, det kan no vera so.
- Og alt saman var heimagjort, etter som dei sa.

- Vel, eg har no sånt å gjera etter at han Ola døydde.
- Eg er iallfall forbinda på at du har slikt tiltak. Fjøsen skal no takast to gonger dagleg han og.
- Det kunne no vore meir mat der, f.eks. noko ekstra til borna.

- I've heard rumours that the food at the local feast was quite something
- Oh, it wasn't all that great
- I wonder if you weren't behind it
- Well, that might be so
- And all was homemade, they said
- Well, it's the kind of thing I've got time for since Ola died
- I'm impressed by your energy though. The cowshed needs work twice a day and all
- There could have been more food, for instance something extra for the children

The example above is like a competition in modesty. *Det var jo ingenting* [that was nothing] is a normal reaction to praise in Norwegian. As early as in the old Norwegian/Icelandic collection of poems called *Håvamål* (The High One's Lay) recorded in Iceland during the 13th century, cautious communication was encouraged (translated into modern Norwegian by Mortensson-Egnund 1994, English translations by Thorpe 2009):

Av sin eigen klokskap	Of his understanding
Skal ingen kytte,	no one should be proud,
men halde tanken i taum.	but rather in conduct cautious.
Når du gløgg og tagal	When the prudent and taciturn
i gardane sviv,	come to a dwelling,
du kjem ikkje brått i beit.	harm seldom befalls the cautious.

Modesty does not only apply to conversation but also to other questions such as when to leave (translated into modern Norwegian by Mortensson-Egnund 1994, English translations by Thorpe 2009):

Gange skal du,	A guest should depart,
gjest ei vere	not always stay
alltid på einom stad.	in one place.
Ljuv vert lei som lenge sit	The welcome becomes unwelcome,
kyrr på annans krakk.	if he too long continues
	in another's house.

According to Larsen (1984:169-171), other typical characteristics of communication found in the farming community in western Norway are initial greetings which involve talk about the weather, and information that is sought and given by extensive use of hints such as e.g. the first sentence in the quote from Larsen (1984:169). Other persons are referred to by nicknames, understatements are preferred to exaggerations, and devices such as repeating what the other interlocutor has said, i.e. appearing to agree, is preferred to disagreement. In a comparison of how

Norwegian and Hungarian children issued directives such as asking for juice, Hollos and Beeman (1978) found that Hungarian children typically used direct imperatives (*give me juice*) whereas the Norwegian children tended to favour indirect approaches such as *jeg er så tørst* 'I am so thirsty', *har du saft* 'have you got juice', or *kan jeg få litt saft* 'can I have a little juice'. In an earlier study in the same Norwegian village (Hollos 1970), adults were found to pass requests, criticism, and gossip through informal anonymous networks.

Today, some Norwegians might find this way of thinking long gone. Others will recognize it easily, especially those who live in or have been socialized by parents from smaller communities. A man remembers that his older brother used to tell him not to dress so that people notice you, and to eat plenty at home before you go for a visit. The latter is traceable back to *Håvamål* (Translated into modern Norwegian by Mortensson-Egnund 1994, English translations by Terry 1990):

Ein dugleg åbit
skal du eta jamleg,
når du på gjesting vil gange.
Då slepp du sitja
svolten og kei,
så du maktar lite å mæle.

A man does well to eat a hearty meal
before he visits friends,
or he sits around glumly acting starved
and finds words for very few.

When a child comes home from a birthday at a classmate's house and announces that s(he) has eaten four hamburgers, an ashamed parent might exclaim "*du må ikkje eta dei ut av huset!*" [do not eat them out of their house!]. Since all Norwegian families nowadays have enough for themselves even after their children's birthday party is over, it is modesty and politeness, not material wealth that is at stake here.

If one asks a Norwegian in the street about Norwegian communicative style, he will most likely answer with a counter question "where exactly are we talking about?" A long and mountainous country has resulted in a large variety of dialects and probably also communicative styles, although research within the field of linguistics on this matter is too scarce to state this with certainty. Humour is one such aspect which is often considered to depend on the area. In Western Norway, understatement and irony are frequently used as humorous devices. Are Kalvø, a Norwegian comedian, recalls how Einar Førde, the former manager of the Norwegian National Television, did not necessarily greet an employer with

hei (hi) when he met him in the elevator, but was just as likely to say something in line with “don’t you have anything better to do than to hang around here you lazy sod?” (*Du har ikkje noko betre å gjere enn å stå her og henge, din slaur?*) (personal communication). This type of humour with a sting is called *venagnag* (nagging a friend) in some areas, and can only be used to people who know that its underlying premise is a friendly verbal challenge only used to someone believed to share enough context to avoid a literal interpretation.

The Norwegian communicative style portrayed this far bears all the traces of high context communication. Even the humour depends on a shared context in order to understand the underlying meaning. One might thus expect to find similarities between Norwegians and the Japanese. Åke Daun (1986), a professor of ethnology at Stockholm University, published an article comparing the Swedes to the Japanese with the title “The Japanese of the North, the Swedes of Asia”. Although written about the Swedes, Daun’s work (1986, 1994) is a possible starting point to also look for similar traits between Norwegians and the Japanese.

According to Daun (1994:74), the first trait Swedes and the Japanese have in common is collectivism in the sense that there exists a strong belief in the community, i.e. the people, the local community, or the country. According to the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002 (<http://www.ssb.no/ssp/utg/200405/07/>), Norwegians are among those in Europe with the highest rate when it comes to trust in people as well as in social institutions. This tendency to identify oneself with the community also means a high participation rate in public activities, such as singing in the local choir or training children in the local sports club after work for free, called *dugnad* (collective unpaid community work) in Norwegian. What might be considered the negative flip of the coin is named *Janteloven* (the law of Jante), authored by Aksel Sandemose (1933), which in one sentence could be explained as “do not think that you are better than us.” The pressure to conform to the rules of the community finds a correlation in the Japanese proverb which says that the nail which stands out will be hammered down.

Another common trait according to Daun (1994:75) is a tendency to avoid conflicts. In a recently published book about intercultural competence in Norwegian, Bøhn and Dypedahl (2009:74) comment about a Norwegian’s tendency for the same (my translations):

Many Norwegians are [...] perceived as showing evasive behaviour to conflicts because they prefer a non-confrontational communication style. Thus in the worst cases it can be somewhat of a guessing game to figure out what people “really mean” about this, that, or the other.

In Habert and Lillebø (1988:81), which is a collection of quotes from eighty business executives from eighteen different countries about their impressions of their Norwegian business partners, a British business executive agrees:

Conflicts rarely arise, as the management style in Norway is essentially non-confrontational.

According to Daun (1994:76), Swedes hesitate to oppose the established order, and character traits such as being stubborn, obstinate or aggressive are frowned upon. Modesty in the sense that one does not state one's opinions too strongly, talks in a soft voice, does not cut in on or make oneself heard above another speaker, and 'mumbles' one's name when introducing oneself with a hand shake are all examples which are perceived as very amiable in a Swedish context, and lack of these are easily judged as self-centredness or as being pretentious and boastful. Røkaas (2000:113) claims that "to many Norwegians the idea of making a lot of noise is the same as calling attention to oneself, which is considered vulgar". According to Fife (2002:148ff.), a Norwegian textbook on intercultural communication, and Habert and Lillebø (1988) Norwegian communication traits could be summed up as follows:

Norwegians:

1. Need much personal space and believe others do the same
2. Are afraid to bother other people [*ikke være til bry*]
3. Wish to manage on their own if possible
4. Value a peaceful and quiet atmosphere
5. Think that private time is "holy", i.e. draw a clear line between work time and private time.
6. Need some time to themselves
7. Think that to talk while others are talking is impolite
8. Believe that one should not talk unless one has something to say, i.e. 'empty talk' [*tomt prat*] should be avoided
9. Dislike boasting
10. Prefer soft speech and soft laughter

Based on fieldwork in different Norwegian social groups, Gullestad (1992:184) argues that independence [*selvstendighet, uavhengighet*] is the key notion of Norwegian individualism, and is connected to the values of self-sufficiency, self-control, and peace and quiet, which is a state of mind best attained by a walk alone in nature (Gullestad 1992:208).

'Empty talk' could be what others consider to be small talk. A Turkish trade officer and an Australian business executive (in Habert & Lillebø 1988: 102) comment as follows:

Norwegians are very direct and to the point. In this part of the world (Turkey) we greet and usually talk about a side subject, then we move slowly to the main topics.

I've found in Australia that the Norwegian businessman tends to go straight into business, into dollars and cents, rather quickly.

Gray (2005:57) argues that in Norway one does not greet a stranger out of fear of threatening the negative face by intruding on his or her personal space. Fife (2000:71) agrees by adding that the Norwegian communication pattern toward strangers is similar to that of collectivist cultures such as Japan in that there is little self-disclosure and few patterns of greetings toward strangers. I will argue that this does occasionally also include people one does know. Norwegians go to such great lengths not to intrude on others that at times it might result in people not greeting even acquaintances unless they are sure it is not an inconvenient time for the one who is about to be greeted.

A German business executive has observed that:

Norwegians rarely shake hands; they usually just say *hei* and no more. Often they don't even say *hei*. This is typical when Norwegians meet each other, for instance in a bus line or an elevator (Habert & Lillebø 1988:60).

It must be added here that Norwegians always shake hands when introducing themselves to newcomers. However, in a situation such as meeting an acquaintance in the elevator, only a nod or a smile causes no offence.

Norwegian communication used to have many standard expressions and greetings for different occasions. In the western region eighty years ago it was not uncommon to greet someone who was sitting with *signe kvila* [bless the break] and to someone standing *statt i freden* [stand in peace]. Entering a house where someone was eating was greeted with *signe maten* (bless the food), and someone working with *signe arbeidet* [bless the work]. These days many such greetings are gone. Even expressions such as *god dag* (cf. *bonjour* (French)) or *god ettermiddag* 'good afternoon' are considered too 'stiff', which leaves one with *hei* 'hi' even to older people. The Norwegians' limited number of conventionalized verbal acknowledgement strategies toward strangers (Røkaas 2000:117) coupled with a resistance to use them, is quite understandably often judged by foreigners as aloofness or lack of politeness (Aambø 2005). A Vietnamese professor resident in Norway (Longva 2005:79) has experienced that Norwegians' comment to such 'meaningless' greetings as 'how are you' is frequently: "But it's fake", meaning that unless one really wishes to know how someone is feeling, one should not throw words around like that. In this respect, Norwegian communication is very different from Japanese, which still has an abundance of set phrases and greetings for different occasions aimed to encourage interdependence rather than

independence. Fretheim (2005:145) argues that “the gross misunderstanding” that Norwegians do not pay attention to the negative and positive face wants of their interlocutors is perhaps due to the fact that so little research has been conducted on the way politeness is reflected in the Norwegian language. Recently a number of studies have found that both the Swedes (Pedersen 2010) and the Norwegians (Aambø 2008; Hulleberg Johansen 2008) use the word *takk* ‘thank you’ more frequently and in different contexts than is the case in English. Frequent use of *takk* even to family and close friends such as *takk for maten* ([thank you for the food], said after the meal), *takk for sist* [thank you for last time (we met)], *takk for turen* [thank you for the trip/walk], *takk for lånet* ([thank you for the loan], said upon returning the borrowed object), *takk for meg* ([thank you for me] (thank you for having me), said when one leaves a party) *takk for laget* ([thank you for sharing time together], says to the other guests but not the host upon departing), and *takk for i dag* ([thank you for today], added to “good night”) causes bewilderment among people who use other or no words on these occasions.

The last aspect which Daun claims to be a common trait between the Swedes and the Japanese he calls “cleanliness” (1994:71). By this he means keeping things clean and orderly. One example is the fact that both the Japanese and the Swedes take off their shoes before entering a house. The same is normal practise in Norway. However, if we think of ‘order’ as the need for order and regulations and look at Hofstede’s (2001:151) uncertainty avoidance scale, which implies that the higher on the scale the stronger the need for order, rules and regulations, we find that both the Swedes and the Norwegians are medium to low on the scale whereas the Japanese are high. In the pilot project for this study, some of the Norwegian business executives interviewed about their Norwegian-Japanese business relationships made comments such as:

Nordmenn er flinke til å improvisere
‘Norwegians are good at improvising’

Nordmenn er mer fleksible og kutter noen svinger
‘Norwegians are more flexible and cut some corners’

These were undoubtedly meant as praise. In Norwegian there is a phrase called *å ta ting på sparket* [to take things as they come]. Attempts to find positive Japanese translations of this phrase proved almost impossible, because the translations which one might be able to use such as *oomaka ni keikaku o tateru* ‘to plan roughly’, at least within a business setting, has negative connotations of sloppiness. Meyer (2001:4), who examined symbolic patterns of everyday life in the three Scandinavian countries in the first half of the 20th century, found

that the Swedish way of life was portrayed both by native and foreign writers as more instrumentally rational and with a higher emphasis on punctuality, cleanliness, and order than the Danish and Norwegian one. In Norway, organizing was more spontaneous, and one relied on informal networks to get things done. A modern Norwegian business executive gives the following 'proud' description of Norwegian decision making:

We make decisions right away, and begin discussing (the implementation) after the decision has taken place. This sets off, in practice, creative processes in our organization, and we can see that quite clearly (Søderberg & Vaara 2003:79).

This far Daun's description of Swedes was often found to be, but not always, applicable to the Norwegians. Although books which portray business collaborations between firms in the three Scandinavian countries portray many similarities, they also describe differences which occasionally lead to conflict. Søderberg and Vaara (2003:62), who investigate what stereotypes Norwegians, Swedes, Finns, and Danes in a merger between banks in the four countries have about each other, found that Swedes are frequently seen as consensus-driven, Finns as action-oriented, Danes as negotiating merchants, and Norwegians as people who go straight to the point in decision making. When it comes to communication, Ekwall, a Swedish management consultant offers this description of differences (my translation):

In Sweden we filter the words before we open our mouth. Then, when the Danes say "it goes straight to hell", the Swedes are terrified. The Swedes would suggest that "it should probably be looked into or there might be a problem later". [...] Danes and Norwegians give more orders than the Swedes. In Sweden you are not given an order, you are asked: "Would you mind having a look at this when you have time?" [...] Danish sounds very hard and direct to Norwegians and Swedes. In a Danish discussion between people who know each other, one could very well say: "Shut up and let me finish". That means "I'll finish and then it's your turn". In Sweden it is terribly harsh to address others with "shut up". Scandinavians who talk together in their respective languages, soon learn to see the nuances. When they speak English to each other, on the other hand, these nuances are lost [...](Weiss 2008:38).

Norwegians frequently see themselves as somewhere between the Swedes and the Danes (Søderberg & Vaara 2003:69-83), less consensus-seeking, conflict averse, and bureaucratic than the Swedes, and less business-driven, opportunistic, and confrontational than the Danes.

2.6.2. Norwegian directness

American culture, while not on the bottom, is toward the lower end of the scale. We are still considerably above the German-Swiss, the Germans, and the Scandinavians (Hall 1976:91).

Hall does not consider Norway a high context culture, but rather one of the lowest contexted on the scale. Hofstede (2001:215) and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997:51) also place the Norwegians as predominantly individualistic, although less so than the Americans, the Danes, and the Swedes. How does this correspond to the evidence for high context communication presented in this chapter so far?

According to Lewis (2006:248) meetings in Norway are:

frank, healthy occasions where people get quickly to the point and get feelings off their chest in a good-humored fashion. Deviousness is taboo and once everyone has obtained a clear view of the big picture, agreement is usually achieved.

Indirect communication is by nature devious for those who expect clarity. It seems that in business, the Norwegians are direct in the sense that they prefer a linear and detached idea-oriented verbal style (cf. table 1). Mole (2003:84) claims that in Norwegian business communication, understatements, exaggerations, irony, and flippancy are rare. In fact, to be factual is also highly praised outside a business setting. Set phrases such as to *holde seg til saken* 'stick to the point', and *ikke gå rundt grøten* [don't walk around the porridge] 'don't beat about the bush' support this claim. Aas (1996:51) gives general communication advice to Norwegians by using a phrase that describes the ideal to be factual (to call a spade a spade) whereas indirectness is described a "half sung song", leaving one waiting in bewilderment or frustration for the rest (my translations):

Misunderstandings and unnecessary worries often follow in the wake of [*halvkvedede viser*] 'half sung songs' [...] It is best to [*kalle en spade for en spade*] 'call a spade a spade' and also say unambiguously and clearly those things that might appear as matter of course if they are important (to you).

According to Hofstede (2001:215), Dutch informants have similar scores to the Norwegians on all dimensions except on individualism, where the Dutch score is higher than that of the Norwegians. Vossestein (2001:65) characterizes the Dutch society as follows:

In the Dutch society, everyone has the right to say what they think, no matter their social position, so opinions are easily voiced [...] Dutch criticism is barely concealed and certainly not expressed in euphemisms: good is good, bad is bad.

With Norwegians in general being somewhat less individualistic, one might imagine that the Norwegians state their opinions less directly than the Dutch. However, I believe the following explanation from Vossestein (2001:67) will be well understood in Norway as well:

Dutch opinions may come across very direct and strongly. Yet the speaker only feels (s)he is being honest with you.

In a course on intercultural communication given by the author, Norwegian students were asked to write down what their parents often told them when they were children. Under communication topics their answers confirm the Norwegian values already mentioned:

Be honest and show respect, remember to say thank you, do not cut in when other people are talking but wait until it is your turn, think before you speak, lower your voice, do not laugh so loudly, and be always true to your words, if not, it is better not to speak at all.

Vossestein (2001:28-39) argues that the Dutch also have an indirect side in that the preferred Dutch communication style is modest, approachable, and democratic, and as a communicator you should “be or do whatever you want, but don’t boast of it”. Thus, in a customer-client situation, if the customer is perceived as haughty or superior in any way, a shop assistant may become obstinate. Abe Auestad (2005:195), a Japanese resident in Norway, is of the impression that Norwegian service personnel first and foremost wish to appear natural, and thus easily feel that they are ‘faking it’ if they are too service-minded, as if service is a kind of bribe.

Another factor is that power distance is low in Norway (Hofstede 2001:87), which means that the Norwegians believe that everyone should be as independent as possible, and that inequality in society should be minimized. In Norway, there has never been an unbridgeable gap between top and bottom in society, and the peasants’ condition has been far more egalitarian than in the other two countries (Meyer 2001:4-6). Low power distance affects the Norwegian communicative style:

Most of what can be classified as obligatory markers of positive politeness in many other languages (“Sir”, “Madam”, addressing people by their title, the traditional V (vous)/ T(tu) distinction) would be perceived as either comical or a sign of insincerity if transplanted into the Norwegian conversation. What is felt like cajoling is generally resented (Fretheim 2005:145).

There are no obvious linguistic gender differences, and titles are kept to a minimum. However, in business, both the use of first names and surnames are common. This suggests that the Norwegians prefer a person-oriented style (table 1). The following is a comment from a German business executive (Habert & Lillebø 1988:62):

Norwegians today use almost exclusively the informal *du* (you) form. It has become increasingly popular to use first names, with the relationship between secretary and boss being of no exception. Titles are rarely used, and foreigners should not feel insulted when

Norwegians do not address them as Dr. or Mr. so-and-so. They simply address you with your last name and think nothing of it.

“Does anyone think that a secretary should address the boss differently to other people?” would most likely be a Norwegian reaction to the quote above. Lack of honorifics might give a blunt impression, especially in written communication where courtesies are kept to a minimum. A Dane in Habert and Lillebø (1988: 137) gives the Norwegians the following advice:

Please also note that the often abrupt Norwegian writing form should in letters be done more in detail, especially when it concerns subjects where you do not fully agree.

Røkaas (2000:115) states that when Norwegians speak English, interference from Norwegian such as frequent use of imperatives and the word *kan* ‘can’ instead of ‘could’ or ‘would’ as in *kan du kjøpe det for meg?* ‘can you buy it for me?’, comes across as a bossy obligation and not a friendly request to many Americans.

2.6.3. Both high and low context communication

Bøhn and Dypedahl (2009:74) report on an impression of Norwegian communicative style as being both high and low contexted:

For those with a generally good knowledge of Norwegian communication styles, it will normally be possible to understand what is being communicated between the lines. For those coming from the outside on the other hand, it can often seem that many Norwegians have a peculiar mixture of a very direct and a very vague way of communicating.

Gullestad (1989:116) argues that Norwegian culture is predominantly individualistic but that individualism co-exists with a strong collective sense of similarity/equality. Contrary to languages such as English and French, the Norwegian word *likhet* carries both the meaning of ‘sameness/similarity’ and the meaning ‘equality’, i.e. that equality is associated with collectivist uniformity rather than individualism. Norwegians tend to think that similarity ensures equality in the sense that for instance a common, free education system for all children ensures that everyone gets a more or less equal share of the cake. As a consequence, both school and work environments encourage cooperation rather than competition. If we look at Hofstede’s (cf. 2.5.4) dimension of *masculinity*, we find that Norway and Sweden are the least masculine on the scale, meaning that even though they are otherwise described by Hofstede as individualistic cultures, they are more relationship- than ego-oriented, and both

sexes should exercise modesty rather than assertiveness and ambitiousness. Thus, even if Norwegians are rated as predominantly individualistic, a focus on relationships between equals and therefore coupled with little competition, might result in less verbal directness in the assertive, upfront sense of the word.

2.6.4. Summary of the Norwegian style(s)

We have not discovered one specific 'Norwegian style', and the findings in section 2.6 are not conclusively either high or low context. We have seen that in these theories, traditional Norwegian communication bears many traces of high context communication, which is non-linear and listener-oriented by the use of many indirect devices such as extensive initial greetings before getting to the point, hints, circumlocution, understatements, hedges, and seeking information via third parties which indicates an *understated* indirect style. The main concern seems to be not to bother others, to avoid confrontation, and not to appear to believe that one thinks oneself better than anyone else. It is also a way to show that you know the social code. Modesty indicates a self-effacement style rather than a self-enhancement style.

However, lack of small talk in the Norwegian business style implies that relationship-building is not looked upon as essential for success. People are more ready to defend honesty than others' face, which might lead to a direct communicative style, but there is also a tendency to avoid conflict which might result in an indirect style. Norwegian business communication tends to be linear and detached and idea-oriented, i.e. separating person and facts. A direct style is used to be efficient, to avoid misunderstandings and thereby unnecessary worries for the listener, and in order to be true to one's words (honest).

These findings make it difficult to pose any hypothesis about how the Norwegians in the present study may speak. The style with the least indicators is the *elaborate style*. The summary here is based on a few empirical studies and much anecdotal evidence. I expect that the further analysis in chapters seven to nine will contribute to increase our empirical knowledge about Norwegian style(s), if such exist.

2.7 Japanese communicative style

Rosch and Segler (1987:60) placed Japan as the highest contexted on the scale (figure 1). Hofstede (2001:215) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997:51) place the Japanese as highly collectivistic. When contrasting American and Japanese communicative styles Hall & Hall (1987:122) argue that:

Americans communicate directly and look at the other when they speak. These highly valued communication styles are unnerving to the Japanese, whose whole manner is marked by indirection. [...] Japanese try to gather information without asking questions, and they talk around a subject. For Japanese, frankness and bluntness are taboo; even exactness is to be avoided because it is considered arrogant and impertinent.

Does this then mean that the Japanese cannot be explicit or upfront?

Since the stagnation of the Japanese economy in the early 90s, foreign works on Japan have had a tendency to advise the Japanese, who are now viewed less as strangers, to choose those management styles which best ensure efficiency or maximize profits regardless of cultural origins. The literature from the same decade, which sees Japanese communication less as a static national style and more in terms of relational and situational variables, might be a trend in the same direction to see the Japanese as a diverse group influenced by context. However, the polarized image that the Western approach is direct and that of the Japanese is indirect seems to have been given something of an enshrined status (Miller 1995:144), and is certainly a popular folk model both in Japan and in the West. Attempts to widen the perspective to include more than indirectness into 'the Japanese style', has not managed to rid books for business executives and students interested in Japan such as Hall & Hall (1987), De Mente (1993, 2004), Hodgson et al. (2000), Nishiyama (2000), Lewis (2006), and Mole (2003) of the one-sided version. They all portray the Japanese with one single style, the one called the *understated style* in table 1.

Table 1 listed how high and low context communication is thought to be coded. This poses the question of whether the Japanese communicative style is high context in all contexts, or if research exists that modifies the view. Before I attempt to answer these questions, I will discuss why the Japanese communicative style has been seen as solely indirect.

2.7.1 The history behind the ‘Japanese style’

Japan was the first non-Western society in the 20th century to become an economic competitor to the United States, the largest economy in the West. As a consequence, much intercultural communication literature has come to model ‘the East’ on Japanese communicative style as opposed to ‘the West’ exemplified by the Anglo-American style, making it one of the cultures in the world where most examples of a high context culture are taken from. Miller (1995:143) lists twenty-one major works from the 70s and 80s contrasting Japanese and American culture, and finds that fourteen of these stress the indirect-direct dimension as a major difference, making it one of the most popular and deeply held beliefs about Japanese and Americans. The following is a ‘typical’ description of the Japanese seen from an American point of view:

Americans routinely complain about certain Japanese communication habits: (1) The Japanese are so polite and so cautious that you never know what they are thinking. They do not say anything and keep on nodding smilingly as if they are agreeing, even though they have doubts and disagreements. (2) The Japanese use vague words and ambiguous expressions and expect others to draw conclusions. (3) The Japanese are too formal and seem to always weigh the meaning of this or that. (4) The Japanese are notoriously slow in making decisions. (5) The Japanese are always apologizing, even when there seems to be nothing to apologize for. (6) The Japanese use silence when they wish to avoid a direct answer (Nishiyama 2000:9).

On the other hand, the American style is seen as problematic in Japan because they tend to “blow their own horn” too loud, brag about their personal accomplishments, become too friendly too fast, and too quick to tell jokes (Nishiyama 2000:57). In Japanese general use there are two terms, ‘wet’ and ‘dry’, that are frequently used to describe the difference between the Americans and the Japanese:

The Japanese commonly characterize their own communication style as “wet,” and that of North Americans as “dry.” These terms seem to imply a bias: They connote that the former style is steeped in feelings and the latter is not, although the reverse is also likely from the North American point of view. Nevertheless, we gain a sense that the two styles are radically different, given each culture’s impressionistic images of the other (Donahue 1998:125).

Referring to Yamada (1992:130), Donahue specifies the differences between ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ further:

The Americans expect to “get down to business”, and the Japanese feel they are inattentive and unsupportive, indifferent and do not listen. The Americans wonder why the Japanese are overly accommodative in that they keep agreeing when they don’t really mean it and wonder if it is because they are going to pull a sly move.

In chapter seven, I return to these concepts and terminologize them further based on the informants’ own descriptions where they argue that both Norwegians and Japanese are ‘wet’.

In the opening statement at the first international conference on intercultural communication between American and Japanese scholars held in Japan in 1972 (Condon & Saito 1974), John Condon expressed concern about the fact that so often Japanese behaviour is compared to that of the USA because “that comparison frequently leads to the conclusion that Japan is a most unusual culture” (Condon & Saito 1974:13). The American occupation of Japan following the end of World War II resulted in a sudden increase in the contact between the two countries. The following decades as fierce competitors on the world market, led to something that historians might view as a new and unusual effort on the part of a Western culture to understand non-Western communicative patterns. At the same time, to the Japanese, Western communication came to be synonymous with the Anglo-American’s style, and in comparison, the Japanese style obviously had to be viewed as more indirect. Lewis (2006:511) argues that “the Japanese themselves use language in a completely different way from the rest of us”. It is tempting to speculate on whether the Japanese style would have been described equally different or unique if the largest economic competitors in the 20th century had been for instance Japan and China instead of Japan and the USA.

The tendency to portray Japan as a cultural opposite is not new in Western literature. From the time of the Victorian travellers until the 1970s (Littlewood 1996, Sugimoto 2003) Japan was seen as a country with an exotic, unique culture incomprehensible to a Western mind. Rosen (2000) finds that admirers tended to portray the Japanese as a people with highly sophisticated taste and social skills. Critics, on the other hand, saw a totalitarian and hierarchical society with hidden feudalism, and people willing to sacrifice themselves and their individual freedom for the group, company, or their country. Through these descriptions one can spot Edward Said’s (1978/1994) *Orientalism* where the West is rational, democratic, and dynamic, and the Orient irrational, mystical, despotic, and statically bound to traditions:

It is this element of magic that the Japanese warriors owe to the eastern origins. Even though Japan is now thoroughly modernised and full of men wearing dapper western suits, there is a lingering suspicion that it harbours oriental secrets of a kind likely to put the west at a disadvantage. Somehow the Japanese can do things we can’t (Littlewood 1996:33).

In Edward T. Hall’s book on Japanese business culture (Hall & Hall 1987: 43), Japan is presented in the following way:

Japanese society is organized and functions according to military tenets. We are referring to traits such as the strong hierarchical structure; insistence on following the chain of command; daily acknowledgement of differences in rank between individuals; an obsession with loyalty; deep personal attachment; emphasis on the performance of the group (a major contrast to

European individualism); willingness to make both individual and group sacrifices to reach a major objective, strong feeling of identity, and loyalty to those within the group, in contrast to those who do not belong (clear-cut lines between insiders and outsiders); a belief that the organizational objective is the *raison d'être* for existence; and strategic ways of thinking (both in business and in government).

In the interest of a simplified and more manageable reality, these stereotypes ignore conflicting evidence, and geographical and cultural distance have a tendency to leave them unchallenged and even a welcome simplification of reality to many students and researchers alike. However, although theories and models are simplifications by nature, it is important to remember that works on Japanese culture and communication were originally based on real, experienced communication difficulties between people with considerably different social expectations and communicative styles.

Irrespective of whether the Japanese have been portrayed in a positive or negative light, both have aimed to keep Japan different (Littlewood 1996:24). Interestingly enough, it is not merely books by foreign authors that have depicted the Japanese as different. Iwabuchi (1994) argues that the Japanese themselves have stressed this difference in what he calls 'self-Orientalism':

While Orientalism enjoys the mysterious exoticism of the Other, self-Orientalism exploits the Orientalist gaze to turn itself into an Other. It is something like declaring the Japanese possess the secret and ability to read the stereotype. Japan is not an inferior Orient any more, and, no less importantly, has become pleurably exotic to the Japanese themselves.

Right after the Second World War 'Japaneseness' was also regarded as an obstacle to Japan's democratization by the Japanese themselves. At the same time, the war defeat made the Japanese more sensitive to how they were being viewed by the West. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) by Ruth Benedict was the first foreign book translated into Japanese after the war which aimed to describe Japanese character and attitudes. Especially her differentiation between guilt and shame inspired Japanese scholars to investigate Japanese interpersonal and communicative characteristics. As the economy grew into what is frequently termed the *Japanese economic miracle*, a wish to regain pride and identity in the 'Japaneseness' coupled with a search for an explanation of the economic success, which could not entirely be explained by western modernization theories and thus had to be explained by culture, led to a new genre in Japan often included under the collective term *Nihonjinron* (theories about the Japanese). Although part of this literature has been criticized for harbouring nationalistic and speculative ideas of uniqueness (Dale 1990, Befu 2001), we also

find some of the most prominent works on Japanese interpersonal attitudes and behaviour from scholars such as the psychiatrist Takeo Doi (1973, 1974) and his presentation of *amae*, the sociologist Chie Nakane's (1970, 1974) description of vertical societies in Japanese institutions, and the anthropologist Takie Sugiyama Lebra (1976, 2004) who examines the concepts of *ura* [back] and *omote* [front], *uchi* [inside] and *soto* [outside] in relation to social relationships. One could argue that the choice of Japanese terms to explain Japanese patterns of thought and social structures simply reinforces the Oriental myth, but Doi (1974:25) argues from a cultural relativistic point of view that "for intercultural communication to be really fruitful, each culture has to be understood from its roots", and such roots are found in Japanese terms used to comment on human attitudes and behavior in Japan long before Doi's and Lebra's work and whose meaning cannot be covered by a single English term. If we look at Hall's book on Japanese business communication (Hall & Hall 1987:61) for instance, we find that they too use Japanese terms such as *amae*, *ura*, *omote*, *uchi*, *soto*, *haragei*, *honne* and *tatemae* to describe and, possibly, 'mystify' the Japanese.

2.7.2 Japanese Indirectness

Doi (1974:22) addresses the reasons for the Japanese ambiguity:

Japanese just don't talk much – even at a conference for Japanese only. But they are congenial to one another. They usually spend a long time fishing for clues as to where each stands on the question at issue, so that they can somehow reach unanimous agreement, which is very important to them. [...] It is a token that the mutuality of all the members has been preserved. In other words it is a token satisfaction of *amae*.

For the lack of an accurate English translation, Doi (1974:18) uses the phrase "sweet dependency" to describe *amae* as mutual feelings of belonging and shared expectations in interdependent relationships. Sensitivity to the atmosphere pervading human relationships causes the Japanese to "say something ambiguous when they fear what they have in mind is disagreeable to others" (Doi 1974:22). Singer (1973:46) argues that "the Japanese language is admirably equipped for such a [indirect] style of life. Rich in ambiguities, elusive terms, indefinite constructions, it is a tool more for withholding and eluding than expressing and stating." Doi (1974:23) agrees by stating that "the fact that the Japanese language is so constructed to be particularly conducive to the effect of ambiguity is well known". The renowned Japanese linguist Masayoshi Shibatani (1990:389) however, dismisses it as just another myth:

It must be pointed out that all languages are equally sufficient in expressing logical relations that obtain in the mundane sphere of daily life. Yet, each culture has its own standard as to how explicitly such relations must be stated. In other words, what is logical or illogical is not the language itself but the cultural patterns that are responsible for what appear to the outsiders to be illogical or vague usage.

Whether it is grounded in a practical and pedagogical way to present Japanese communication patterns as an entity, or it is because one believes in the uniqueness of the Japanese way of communicating, the idea of a 'Japanese style' is stated explicitly or implicitly in all works on Japanese communication, and the indirectness is characterized first of all by honorifics (*keigo*), ambiguous expressions, silence and/or lack of explanation, and frequent use of hesitations, pauses, laughter and smiling (Nakai 2002). Unlike the theories on high and low context communication and Norwegian communication presented earlier, linguists using methods of discourse and text analysis seem to have played a more active role in defining the Japanese style as presented below.

2.7.2.1 Honorifics (*keigo*)

Japanese linguists' traditional approach to politeness is centred on *keigo* (honorific speech level) (Usami 2004:6). Even though *keigo* has undergone many changes since the first half of the 20th century (Mizutani & Mizutani 1987:1), communicative interactions rely heavily on the ability to choose the proper level of politeness depending on relative age, social status, social relation, gender, group membership, degree of intimacy, or situation. In daily life one usually juggles between three degrees of formality; informal, formal and honorific. For example students tend to use *keigo* when giving a student presentation but informal form when chatting with the same students afterwards.

Keigo marks social deference in a formal situation or when speaking to someone who does not belong to one's close acquaintances. However, it can also signal politeness and rapport between a superior and an inferior in the same ingroup. In a seller/customer situation where the customer has the superior position as illustrated in the commonly used phrase *okyakusama wa kamisama desu* 'the customer is God', the seller can use *keigo* to a client as a strategy to attain his aims (Donahue 1998:145). People in egalitarian cultures might think that to use linguistic forms which honour the other party or to humble oneself is dishonest flattery or handing oneself the inferior position, but Lebra (2004:63) argues that to show respect for others through refined *keigo* is to "validate self-respectability by display of social competence

or status”. It may thus be regarded as relating to social identities and rhetorical finesse. Donahue (1998:143) suggests that Japanese honorifics are rather as a system of etiquette, i.e. a wish to appear civil and refined, than a system of respect. Compared to the styles presented within the intercultural communication field, the status-oriented style is internalized on all levels in the Japanese language. Hofstede (2001) places the Japanese high with respect to the four dimensions collectivism, power distance, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance.

2.7.2.2 *Ambiguous expressions*

In conversation, a sentence is typically open-ended and vague, suggestive of the speaker’s hesitancy to make an explicit assertion before the listener’s agreeableness is assured. A discourse, then, is a fragmented, indeterminate, equivocal statement, which, if removed from the context of the speaker-listener interaction, sounds absurd. Missing here is a continuous, coherent, assertive speaker – the “I” of Western-language-based discourse (Lebra 2004:25).

Japanese vagueness is frequently linked to the concepts of *Honne* [real thought] versus *tatemae* [front]. The latter characterizes a tendency to refrain from speaking one’s mind or revealing one’s true feeling (*honne*) in situations where it is not evaluated as mature or proper to do so, such as for example in front of superiors and elders or in the beginning of new relationships. This indicates a self-effacement style (table 1). Several scholars (Donahue 1998:262, Shibatani 1990:127) point out that ‘vague’ must not be confused with unintelligible since it is intelligible to those who recognize the conventional codes.

According to Mizutani & Mizutani (1987:33-34), there are two major ways to show indirectness in Japanese. One way is to suggest something instead of stating it directly. Japanese is a S-O-V language, and negation or modality is added to the verb stem. One of the most common ways to be indirect is to negate the final verb as in *ocha demo nomimasen ka* ‘wouldn’t you like a cup of tea or something?’ The other way is to avoid being exact and leave some margin for choice to the listener by the use of words such as *gurai* ‘about’, *nado* ‘and so on, or something’, *bakari* ‘about, only’, *kamoshiremasen* ‘maybe’, and *demo, nanka* ‘or something’. They claim that compared to Westerners, Japanese are often thought to overuse these expressions and avoid giving exact numbers. Mizutani & Mizutani (1987:37-44) also report on a tendency to apologize, to belittle or blame oneself, or express weakness as in *doomo umaku ikanai* ‘somehow I just can’t do it well’ as a matter of courtesy. This also means to be modest on behalf of one’s ingroup. Thus, a Norwegian woman who visited a

Japanese friend's home for the first time was greeted by the friend's mother with "thank you for being friends with my selfish daughter".

The Japanese are often accused of avoiding a negative answer, and Ueda's (1974) article called *Sixteen ways to avoid saying "no" in Japan* is one of the most frequently cited articles on Japanese communication. Even the Japanese themselves occasionally complain about it (Haberman 1988). Japanese words meaning a negative such as *iie* (*ie, ya*), *nai*, *chigau*, and *dame*, often appear blunt or 'childish', except when there is no danger of face-threat. Maynard (1997:157) suggests that an explanation to the general conflict avoidance in Japan is due to the fact that "even the Japanese have bought into the myth of harmony". Donahue (1998:217), on the other hand, argues that conflict is avoided because the "Japanese seem to take criticism or disagreement too personally", which would then suggest an attached and relationship oriented style (table 1) in which persons and issues are not easily separated.

Japanese is known to be a so called 'pro-drop language' meaning a language in which certain classes of pronouns may be omitted when they are in some sense pragmatically and syntactically inferable. Sentences can have their subjects missing, and transitive verbs can have their objects missing (Kuno 1996:17). The first person pronoun 'I', which is the personal pronoun with the highest animacy¹⁰, is avoided not only because it is grammatically viable, but because the speaker does not wish to appear assertive. The second person pronoun 'you', the third person pronouns 'he, she', and the first person plural 'they' are normally either left out, or substituted by names or titles. Tsuda (1984:135), who studied conversations between shop assistants and customers in Japan and in the United States, found that although some of the customers used *anata* 'you' in initial exchange, it was generally avoided. The Japanese shop assistants on the other hand, avoided 'you' by addressing the customers as *okyakusama* [honorable guest], *okusama* [honorable wife], *sochirasama* [honorable there] or surname + *sama* 'Mr/Ms + surname' if the customer was known. All in all, they used a much larger variety of address forms than in English.

Yamada (1997:72-74), who observes business meetings between Japanese and Americans, finds that Japanese business meetings frequently start with a longer prelude before getting down to business. Hinds (1980), who followed up Kaplan's theories with Japanese written data, describes the Japanese style as 'roundabout' and frequently without a head lead, which

¹⁰ Animacy (n./animate (adj.)) is a term used to grammatically or semantically classify nouns based on how sentient or alive the referent of the noun in a given taxonomic scheme is. In such a system, personal pronouns generally have the highest animacy with the first person being highest among them.

indicates a non-linear style (table 1). However, Donahue (1998:148) criticizes Yamada's work for basing her conclusions on a Japanese meeting without any written agenda (*uchiawase* (informal in-house meeting)), as opposed to an American meeting with a written agenda, something that also Yamada herself (1997:74) realized will have an effect on the proceedings. Likewise, Donahue (1998:225-245) argues that Hind ignores important contextual differences in the Japanese and the English newspaper articles which he bases his arguments on, and that the so called 'inverted pyramid format' in much newspaper rhetoric is a professional technique unrelated to culture (Donahue 1998:245). Thus, it seems that more research is needed if one is to make a cogent claim about a Japanese non-linear style substantially different to a 'Western' linear one.

2.7.2.3 *Hesitations, pauses, and open endings*

With respect to Japanese communicative style, Mizutani & Mizutani (1987:30) claim that "expressing one's reserve by sounding hesitant is essential to being polite, perhaps even more so than using polite expressions". Compared to English, Japanese speech shows greater use of ellipsis, i.e. omissions of words (Donahue 1998:165). Final particles and fillers, such as *ne* 'isn't it, right', *kedo* 'but', and *ga* 'but' make an utterance open-ended, as a gesture of modesty, in avoidance of self-assertion (Lebra 2004:25). Open endings/incomplete sentences can also be to leave out the final verb such as in *doozo* 'please' [sit down] (Mizutani & Mizutani 1987:25-28). Humble self-suppression is further demonstrated when a discourse is fragmented into phrases and sub-phrases, which allows the listener opportunity to insert supportive utterances (Lebra 2004:24). Types of hesitations range from complete silence to lengthened continual sound, or pauses filled with hesitation fillers (Nakai 2002:106).

2.7.2.4 *Silence*

Ishii (1984:65) formulates what might be viewed as a stereotypical belief of Japanese uniqueness as follows: "To the Japanese, language is *a* means of communication, whereas to the people of many other cultures it is *the* means". According to Lebra (2004:184), words are associated with deception and pretence to the Japanese, and a person of few words, especially a male, is in high regard. Based on such set phrases as *haragei* (to feel/understand/communicate through the belly), Lebra (2004:183) argues that Japanese truthfulness, frankness, and sincerity is localized in the internal organs, viz. the heart (*kokoro*)

and the belly (*hara*). The bipolar stereotype of the intuitive and emotional Japanese in contrast to the cold and overly rational Westerners is a good example of 'self-Orientalism' (Iwabuchi 1994) and lacks substantial empirical proof. *Ishin denshin* which is translated into 'telepathy' but which is understood as the everyday way people understand each other without being verbally explicit, probably exists everywhere in conversations between people with shared context, but what might be different in Japan is the expectations put into getting your message across by such means.

According to Lebra (2004:181-185), silence in a Japanese setting signals different things depending on whether the other interlocutors are ingroup friends or family (*uchi*), or whether they are ingroup elders, superiors, or belong to an outgroup (*soto*). In the former, common references might make talk less necessary. Since increasing intimacy also gives more room for the individual to state his true feelings, silence might also signal apathy, animosity, or defiance. A Japanese woman married to an Englishman stayed silent for a whole week resigned over the fact that her husband could not anticipate what was wrong without her having to tell him (personal communication).

In the second group where the interlocutors are superiors or relative strangers, silence plays an important role in signalling respect, consideration, and modesty. In an asymmetrical relationship, silence from an inferior might signal constraint and the superior's silence dignifies demeanour. The senior has the right to initiate speech (Neustupný 1987:74).

There are however situations where one should not be silent for too long in Japanese. Akasu & Asao (1993:101) argue that "Japanese utterances tend to be short. Japanese speak for a length of approximately twenty syllables and then wait for the interlocutor to give a signal to proceed". Japanese conversations rely heavily on frequent verbal and nonverbal backchannel cues called *aizuchi* in Japanese. Mizutani (1988) found that the Japanese in her study gave back-channelling cues twice as often as the Americans, and Kobayashi (2001) finds that Norwegians are in between the two. Yamada (1997) calls the type of communication where the listener is responsible for the flow of speech 'listener-talk' as opposed to 'speaker-talk', and argues that Japanese conversations rely on listener-talk or what Ting-Toomey (1999:101) called a listener-oriented style (table 1).

2.7.2.5 *Smiling and laughter*

A late 19th century's foreign resident in Japan, Lafcadio Hearn (1894), (cited in Hodgson et al. 2000:108) elaborates on the Japanese smile:

A Japanese can smile in the face of death, and usually does [...] It is an elaborated and long cultivated etiquette. It is also a silent language [...]. The smile is taught like the bow. [...] But the smile is to be used upon all pleasant occasions, when speaking to a superior or to an equal, and even upon occasions which are not pleasant; it is part of deportment. The most agreeable face is a smiling face; and to present always the most agreeable face possible to parents, relatives, teachers, friends, well-wishers, is a rule of life [...]

He further claims that “any effort to interpret it according to Western notions of physiognomical expression would [not be successful]”, but looking at the explanation above, I wonder if it is not exactly what he has done. Lebra (2004:58) argues that smiling is limited when talking to people who are superiors or outside one's ingroup, because those situations call for a serious countenance. Therefore, the Japanese will be less likely to use humour and jokes as rapport markers in formal settings. Donahue (1998:131) agrees: “Just as Americans hold up the ‘silent type’ as a traditional male ideal, ‘seriousness’ is an important attribute of the Japanese male. In the Japanese workplace, the so-called ‘sunny personality’ is far less desirable in males than it would be in an American setting”. The sunny personality, he argues, is rather viewed as a female ideal in Japan. Nakai (2002:108) gives an example of a conversation between a Japanese female student and a native English-speaking interviewer where the Japanese girl laughs at the beginning, the end, or both in each utterance talking about her part time job, interests and Japanese customs. 66% out of 170 male and female university students, who were asked to listen to the text, said they would probably have laughed in the same place, and put the reasons for the laughter down to a way of alleviating tension and making a good impression. Nakai (2002:110) argues that this type of laughter, which functions as a defence mechanism and causes one to laugh apologetically even when one is not in the wrong, is used more frequently by the Japanese compared to some other cultures. Jones (1990:305, cited in Maynard 1997:157), found that Japanese co-workers used style switching, repetition, parallelism, and laughter as an attempt to turn conflict into playfulness in order to reduce tension in a conflict situation.

2.7.3 Japanese Directness

There is, however, also research pinpointing Japanese directness. According to Nakane (1970, 1974), the Japanese use distinctly different communicative styles depending on the closeness of the relationship. Her widely read book, *Japanese Society* (1970), was based on the original Japanese essay: *tate-shakai no ningen kankei – tanitsu-shakai no riron* ‘Personal Relations in a Vertical Society – A Theory of Homogeneous Society’ (1967). Frequently criticized for its lack of empirical basis and thus, a tendency to overlook conflicting evidence, one must bear in mind that it was not published in an academic journal and thus, aimed to present some conclusions in an easily understandable manner (Oliver 2010). She distinguishes between three different groups; (1) people within one’s group, i.e. the inner circle of intimacy, (2) those whose background is fairly well-known, and (3) those who are unknown, i.e. strangers.

If we turn to Nakane’s first group, which constitutes those who identify themselves as belonging to the same ingroup, intimacy reduces the need for verbal self-disclosure, and therefore communication tends to be swift and kept to a minimum (Nakane 1974:126). Midooka (1990), who divides Japanese interpersonal relations into four categories inspired by Nakane (1970) and Yoneyama (1971), calls the first group *ki no okenai kankei* (very intimate relationships) and argues that since hierarchy is of little concern in this group, there is minimal focus on politeness strategies, which means that people tend to say what is on their mind (Midooka 1990:484). However, based on questionnaires distributed to approximately 900 students in the USA and in Japan, Barnlund (1989:111) found that the level of self-disclosure increases with higher level of intimacy in both countries, but that the Japanese tended to be more formal, i.e. exercise less self-disclosure than the Americans regardless of degree of intimacy. According to Barnlund (1989:119), the different expectations of the Japanese and the Americans as to how much self-disclosure is necessary in order to give a feeling of intimacy may lead a Japanese to be put off by an intimacy that s(he) perceives as somewhat imposed on him/her by the American and the American to be put off by what s(he) perceives as a distance maintained by the Japanese.

It is in Nakane’s second group, viz. those whose background is fairly well known, that style becomes formal and communication is highly determined by rank, age, experience, and wisdom. Midooka (1990:482) divides Nakane’s second group into *najimi no kankei* (acquaintances) representing familiar relationships but not that of fellows or allies, and *nakama* (fellow, mate). The first could be exemplified by co-workers in other departments in

a large company, the second by co-workers you work with on a daily basis. Foreigners in Japan find it easy to form *najimi* relationships (Midooka 1990:482). In these relationships dependence on the communicative situation is smaller, and the need to consider hierarchy and mutual obligations (*on* and *giri*) is smaller, and the quantity of honorific terms and expressions is high. Whereas verbal formality signals polite distance in the *najimi* group, used in a *nakama* group it is rather a rapport building device (Matsumoto 1988, cf. 3.9). The hierarchical system in a *nakama* group affects the use of indirectness and directness (Midooka 1990:483). People often state their opinions and feelings directly toward those in equivalent or lower ranks, but people very seldom do the same toward superiors. On the contrary, people in inferior positions tend to use more indirect and honorific language toward their superiors, and avoid opposing their superiors' opinions or disobey their orders. Aoyama (2002), who observed workers and customers at a coffee shop in Osaka, found that customers and older workers used more direct request strategies while younger workers used more hints. Since interlocutors in *najimi* groups are viewed the same way as superiors in the *nakama* group, one also hesitates to voice one's own opinions or feelings in this group. Takai and Lee (2003) asked Japanese graduate students to picture a person in each of the four groups presented by Midooka, and to choose between the strategies 'blunt directness', 'polite directness' (direct but cautious), 'third party mediation', 'flattering', 'hinting', or 'avoidance' in different interpersonal situations. They found that directness increases with the level of intimacy, and that polite directness, indirect hinting, and flattering was mostly preferred by people in a *najimi* relationship.

When it comes to the last group, viz. strangers, Nakane (1974:128) claims that the Japanese lack communicative strategies for strangers and therefore might avoid or act in a hostile manner towards them. Midooka (1990:484), who calls this last group '*muen no kankei*' (no relationships), argues that the lack of relationship means little awareness of hierarchical structure which again leads to minimal concern for politeness strategies. Avoidance is documented by Barnlund (1989:63) who found that when Japanese and Americans college students were asked how often they talk to strangers, more Japanese responded with "never" and "seldom" than the American informants. This is supported by Takai and Lee (2003:16) who found that their informants who were graduate students, preferred avoidance as a strategy when dealing with strangers, and saw it as a result of students lacking sufficient social experience to deal with strangers compared to elders. On the other hand, Matsumoto and Kudoh and Takeuchi (1996:85) looked at individualistic-collectivistic attitudes, values, and

behaviour in the four different social relationships family, close friends, colleagues, and strangers and found that Japanese students were more collective toward strangers, i.e. treating them as ingroup, than adult workers. They see this as socio-cultural shift for a growing individualism in Japan, and are claiming support from several national surveys. Regardless of different explanations, Takano and Osaka (1999:325), who criticize fifteen major works on Japanese collectivism, might be right in their critical claim that in Japan, where social expectations of adults are fairly different to that of university students, a study which relies on university students alone might not be able to say much about the Japanese as a group.

2.7.4 Summary of the Japanese style(s)

Since more of the research on Japanese indirectness is based on text and discourse analysis, it seems possible to validate a 'Japanese style' described as an indirect style with honorifics, hedges and other modifying devices which soften the message, limited use of first and second person pronouns, frequent hesitation fillers and pauses, open endings, and apologetic laughter. The claim is that it is Japanese cultural and social codes that encourage this type of communication. Further, upon comparing the emic research on the Japanese style to the different aspects of high context communication, there is a strong indication that 'the Japanese style' has a clear preference for all the aspects of high context communication, that is, a status-oriented, self-effacement, listener oriented and attached and relationship-oriented style (table 1). Since there seems to be much agreement on this style both by the Japanese and the foreign researchers, I can hypothesize that there will be many Japanese with this style, that is, the *understated style* in the data for the present study. On the other hand, there are no indications in favour of an elaborate style.

The empirical evidence that the Japanese can also apply a more direct style depending on age, status, and degree of intimacy, is very limited, and thus, less convincing. Whereas the Norwegian theories suggest that directness is used for purposes of clarity, efficiency, and honesty, the Japanese theories emphasize the fact that some are direct because their social position allows them to. Directness means to "say what is on their mind" (Midooka 1990:483ff.) with less regard to honorific language and fewer "hints" (Aoyama 2002), but does not state anything about which linguistic or rhetorical devices this directness implies. I expect that further analysis in chapters seven to nine will contribute to increase our empirical knowledge about Japanese style(s).

2.8 Summary of chapter two

In this chapter we have looked into essentialist theories on *high and low context communication*, the terms related to *directness* and *indirectness* within the field of intercultural communication. Many practitioners find these theories useful when teaching about culture differences, but in danger of being too simplistic versions of the reality to be rendered scientific. Chapter one argued that empirical analysis of discourse could strengthen their claim or create a more nuanced picture of communicative variation within a community. This is also true for the anecdotal arguments about Norwegian and Japanese communicative styles. I hope that this study will be helpful in these regards. In the next chapter, I turn to the field of linguistics to see how directness and indirectness is understood and look for linguistic coding properties needed to operationalize the conceptual framework on directness and indirectness as presented in part 2.5.1.

3 Directness and indirectness in the field of linguistics

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the theoretical foundation of directness and indirectness within the field of linguistics. The terms *direct* and *indirect* are used in different areas of linguistic research. Tannen (2005) uses them in connection with *conversational style*, Searle (1969, 1979) as examples of *speech acts*, and Lakoff (1973) and Brown & Levinson (1987) in relation to *strategies*. Although not within the scope of this study, the terms are also used in connection with direct and indirect quotes (reported speech) (Coulmas 1986).

Upon examining texts from intercultural communication and linguistics (general linguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics) about variation in how people speak, I found a clear tendency that whereas the texts from intercultural communication only applied the term *style* to explain these variations, the writers within linguistics tended to use the term *strategy* more often than *style*. More concretely the field of linguistics uses the term in concepts such as in *grand strategy of politeness* (Leech 2007), *positive and negative politeness strategies* (Brown and Levinson 1987), *face-saving strategies* (Schröder 2010), and *camaraderie strategies* (Lakoff 1973, 1979). Section 3.2 will discuss the possible reasons for preference for the term *strategy* as opposed to *style* in the field of linguistics.

Sections 3.3 to 3.9 will look into theories about how and why people opt for a direct or an indirect style.

Section 3.10 lists the linguistic devices various authors have proposed that are frequently applied to make a statement more or less direct. The reason for the selection will be explained there.

3.2 Strategies

In the introduction (1.4), the term *style* was perceived as a collection of linguistic items, that is, a term denoting the choice of verbal, nonverbal, and prosodic devices characteristic for an individual or a group of individuals. However, the term is not without ideological implications.

By using *style* in a context of cultural variation, the speakers of a given style tend to be viewed as more or less captive and passive users of that style, as we have seen in chapter two. By opting for the term *strategy*, on the other hand, the speaker is perceived as someone able to prescribe identity to himself by his choice of style or seen as using a style strategically to achieve something.

Since the 1970s, the focus within linguistics has turned to a focus on *style shifting* rather than on a static notion of style. To *variationist sociolinguists*, style shifting usually has to do with variations in style depending on social groups or settings (e.g. male vs. female, school versus home, doctor versus patient), regions (dialects), or social classes (sociolects). Labov (2003:234) points out that “there are no single-style speakers” because people tend to change style depending on the distribution of power or the feeling of solidarity among the interlocutors, the wider social context, or the topic. In this sense, style shifting is a predictable and measurable shift out of class/dialect to a standard norm. *Interactional sociolinguists* such as Gumperz (1982), Giles and Powesland (1975), and Bell (1984) on the other hand, are more occupied with the relational and recipient meaning of style, that is, how the immediate surrounding context influences style choice and style shift. The most radical constructionists reject any notions of style because the term itself gives connotations of determinism and constraints. Whether a variationist or an interactional sociolinguist, *constructionism/constructivism*¹¹ opens for a possibility that the individual, at least partially, is in position of choosing his own style, and thus, the focus turns from style to strategy. However, it is important to stress that even though a style shift is observable to the researcher, it is not necessarily a conscious choice by the speaker. Thus, the term *strategy* here refers to both conscious and unconscious choices of style.

In the same way that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has made researchers question to what degree a person is able to think outside the framework of his own language, the question arises to what degree people are free to choose style. Bourdieu (1977) believes that construction always happens inside an unavoidable structure of tacit habits, i.e. ‘habitus’, inaccessible to direct examination and change. Others will claim that Bourdieu places too many restrictions on peoples’ potential to vary style. For instance, metalinguistic awareness

¹¹ *Social constructionism* and *social constructivism* are strongly related concepts as they both state that objects/phenomena and consciousness/sense making are constructed through social activity. However, whereas *constructionism* focuses on objects and phenomena created through social forces, *constructivism* focuses on how each person perceives the world differently and actively creates their own meanings from events (Burr 2003:19ff.).

through communicative competence¹² gives people opportunity to ‘play with’ languages and styles that are not originally ‘their own’ (Coupland 2007:99 ff.). Thus, researchers seem to acknowledge that, for instance, a Japanese individual is able to shift away from an indirect ‘Japanese style’, but researchers disagree on how free they believe he is to do this.

Johnstone (1996:93) criticizes the constructivist view that linguistic variation can be fully accounted for on the basis of social and contextual facts. She claims that people inhabit their own ‘personal style’ distinct from any other. That is why, for example, a comedian is able to imitate a certain person so that this person is recognizable to the audience. This is in line with Sapir, who argues in his seminal work *Speech as a Personality Trait* (1927:894) that:

It is not difficult to see why it is necessary to distinguish the social point of view from the individual, for society has its patterns, its set ways of doing things, its distinctive ‘theories’ of behaviour, while the individual has his methods of handling those particular patterns of society, giving them just enough of a twist to make them ‘his’ and no one else’s.

Sapir (1957:205) sees culture as something gradually discovered by “the culture-acquiring child” who from the very beginning interprets, evaluates, and modifies every cultural pattern so that no two people are equally influenced by it. If we take this notion of a personal style as a base, it poses the question of whether cultural modification of one’s style continues into adulthood. Many of the informants for the present study have been living for a substantial length of time in another culture, which poses the question if this has affected their communicative style in any way. Can for instance the Japanese become more direct in style as a result of long time contact with direct, low context communicators? I am aware that this is in a way an essentialist relativistic question based on a belief that a Japanese initially has a certain ‘habitual’ style, but Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936:149) take a similar stand in their classical definition of *acculturation* as it is seen as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups”. Barker (2008:216) explains identity as “the consequence of acculturation”. Thus, although acculturation is a term normally used about adult individuals who enter a new and unfamiliar culture and undergo a degree of new cultural learning, it is a similar process to the enculturation¹³ process of Sapir’s “culture-acquiring child”. One might then conclude that

¹² Knowledge about the acceptability and appropriateness of language use in culturally significant settings (Gumperz & Hymes 1972: vii)

¹³ *Enculturation* is the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms of a culture or group by a person, another culture, etc.

since people are modified by new cultural learning throughout their lives, their repertoire of communicative styles is also likely to change over time. It seems that there is substantial evidence to suggest that change does occur (cf. Sam & Berry 2006). However, it still poses the question of whether a person loses his old style while adapting to a new, or whether he can maintain both. In what has been called *straight line assimilation* there is the view that foreigners over time will become more and more similar to those of the host members of the country of residence (Sam 2006:18). However, according to Berry (2006:34ff.), such changes can take place to a larger extent through *assimilation* or to a lesser through *integration*. In the case of integration, the foreigner will preserve some of his/her cultural integrity while assimilating some of the host culture's values and communicative styles. Much work on acculturation in the last decade, such as e.g. Rampton (1995), finds that people socialized in an environment with multiple cultures go in and out of these cultures depending on situations, interlocutors, and type of speech act. The question of acculturation is a particular topic for discussion in chapter eleven.

Sapir (1957:194) holds that when attempting to describe something familiar, the locus of interest tends to be on individual differences whereas when describing the unfamiliar the focus is rather on cultural patterns. Tannen (2005:6) agrees that we are inclined to think of our own behaviour as being reactions to other people's behaviour, whereas we tend to think of other people's behaviour as absolute, which means that we imagine our own behaviour as dynamic and the other's as static. This might again be the reason why intercultural communication, which focuses on examples where at least one of the participants has a culture unknown to the observer, tends to define speech variation in the term of *style* whereas linguistics that often uses examples from the same language and culture as the author, tends to opt for the term *strategy*.

Among such individual socio-pragmatic strategies, we find directness and indirectness.

3.3 Directness

“The point of departure for much work in pragmatics has been Grice's (1967) conversational maxims which govern contexts in which talk is direct” (Tannen 1981:222)

To Grice (1967), understanding an utterance consists of knowing the sentence meaning and recognizing the speaker's conversational rules in order to understand the speaker's intentions and implied (*implicated*) meaning. However, in order for the hearer to correctly interpret (*infer*) the speaker's intentions, there needs to be an agreement (*cooperation*) on certain definite rules (*maxims of conversation*) which Grice calls *the Cooperative Principle*.

Cooperative Principle:

- The maxim of quantity: The speakers should be as informative as is required. They should give neither too little nor too much information.
- The maxim of quality: Speakers are expected to be sincere; say only what they believe to be true (what corresponds to reality).
- The maxim of relation: To say only what is relevant to what has been said before.
- The maxim of manner: To be brief and orderly, and avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

An utterance which adheres to these four maxims is described as direct. Directness is linked to the speaker's intent to present a clear, unambiguous message. The hearer assumes that the speaker observes the four maxims, and thus allows him to draw inferences about the speakers' implied meaning. When a speaker is not following a maxim (i.e. is not being direct) but believes that the hearer will appreciate the meaning implied, he is *flouting* the maxim. When a speaker is not following the maxim in order to deceive the hearer, he is *violating* the maxim.

The following interchange took part in Norwegian on a fine Sunday morning between a Norwegian and a Japanese woman named Tomoko, who had lived for a few months in Norway (translated into English):

- (1) Norwegian: Tomoko, would you like to come for a walk?
Tomoko: No

Tomoko had probably heard that "Norwegians are direct". She upheld the maxim of quantity by saying no more nor less than what she thought was required, the maxim of quality by saying the truth, the maxim of relation by answering the question, and the maxim of manner by being brief and orderly. An appropriate answer in Norwegian would have been something like "*det ville vært fint, men jeg kan dessverre ikke i dag*" 'that would have been nice, but unfortunately I can't come today' with a regretful expression and tone of voice, which is flouting all the maxims except the maxim of relation.

The speaker can plan his linguistic manoeuvres carefully in order to achieve his goal, but there is still no guarantee that the hearer will infer/cooperate and act according to the speaker's intention. According to Sperber & Wilson (2006:184), speakers should do their best to "make the contextual effects of their utterances easy to recover", that is, as clear as possible. However, communication is only successful when "the audience interprets the evidence (i.e. utterance/discourse (my interpretation)) on the intended lines" (ibid: 188). In section 3.9 we will see that this might be a special challenge in intercultural communication. However, even in intracultural communication¹⁴ unalloyed clarity in line with Grice hardly exists, Lakoff (1973:297) claims. In the example above, Tomoko did make interpretation easily accessible as there is minimal room for misunderstanding. In many cases however, people deliberately or intuitively increase the hearer's processing effort by an increase in implicatures because of social and/or affective considerations. This leads us over to indirectness.

3.4 Indirectness

Linguistic indirectness is frequently linked to the notion of *indirect speech acts* (Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1979). Their focus is on what linguistically distinguishes an indirect speech act from a direct one. The terms necessary to explain the difference are presented below. According to Searle, a speech act generally, but not always, performs these four acts at the same time:

The utterance act, which corresponds to Austin's *locutionary act*, means to produce a meaningful utterance on a phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic level.

The propositional act is what the sentence predicates or refers to. *Propositional meaning* refers to a unit of meaning regardless of what the speaker intends to do with it, e.g. "the cat ate the meat" has the same propositional meaning as "the meat was eaten by the cat". *Propositional attitude* means that the speaker encodes his or her attitude to the proposition (Crystal 1997:313) as in e.g. "unfortunately the meat was eaten by the cat" which adds the speaker's mental content to the proposition.

The illocutionary act is the act performed in saying something. The *illocutionary point* refers to the function or the purpose of the speech act (Holmes 1984). Thus, the illocutionary point of "open the door" is to get someone to do something. The term *illocutionary force* refers to the strength with which the illocutionary point of a speech act is presented. Vanderveken (1985:185) holds that "most illocutionary points can be achieved with different degrees of strength", which is in line with Holmes (1984) who holds that the illocutionary force can be

¹⁴ Communication between people socialized in a similar environment of values and norms.

either attenuated (weakened) or boosted (strengthened) by the use of linguistic and rhetorical devices.

The perlocutionary act refers to the effect it has on the hearer's thoughts, feelings or actions. The hearer's understanding of speaker's intent or speaker's response that he has understood, is called *the perlocutionary force*. When Grice (1957:385) states that "a speaker S meant something by X is to say that S intended the utterance of X to produce some effect in a hearer H by means of the recognition of this intention", it only means that the speaker sees his own intent (the illocutionary act). There is no guarantee that it will lead to the desired perlocutionary act if the conventions of that speech community are not being met. Such conventions Austin (1962) calls *felicity conditions*; a conventional understanding of who can utter which words under which circumstances, that these procedures are executed both correctly and completely, and that the speech participants have the right intentions. An utterance is successful (felicitous) when the felicity conditions are not violated.

Vanderveken (1985) distinguishes between 'literal speech acts' (direct) and 'non-literal speech acts' (indirect). A direct speech act such as e.g. "open the door" is 'literal' in that the illocutionary point is in the surface illocutionary act. A 'non-literal speech act' means that the speaker intends to perform a different illocutionary act from the one that is expressed literally. For example "can you open the door?" is literally a question that only requires a yes or no answer. In order to understand that it is a request and not a question, one needs to infer the implicit speech act. Searle (1979:32) argues that the hearer is able to do this inference because "in indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer".

Thus, one way of understanding indirectness is that the illocutionary point is in the underlying, i.e. 'non-literal' speech act. Another is degree of strength in the 'literal act'. The data for this study builds on interviews where the speakers (the interviewees) are aware that they have to answer the questions so that they are intelligible to the hearer (the interviewer), and thus, non-literal acts are found to a very limited extent. Thus, it is the degree of strength by which they state their attitudes and opinions that is the focus of this study, and which is further defined in the following section.

3.5 *Weakening and strengthening*

If we take Grice's Maxims (1975) as the scale of measuring maximum economical, rational, efficient, and 'direct' speech, then there are two major ways to flout the Maxims without placing its force in an underlying illocutionary act:

- 1) Weaken the illocutionary force
- 2) Strengthen the illocutionary force

Holmes (1984) uses the terms *attenuating (weakening)* versus *boosting (empathizing)*. This study has opted for *weakening* versus *strengthening* which are terms inspired by Brown & Levinson (1987:147) who use the terms *weaker* and *strengtheners* with the following definition: "Strengtheners (those that mainly act as emphatic hedges, *exactly* or *precisely* or *emphatically*) and weakeners (those that soften and tentativize what they modify)". Brown & Levinson use the terms only to mean certain lexemes. Holmes (1984:345) however, interprets the concept *weakening* as the way "to decrease the illocutionary force of the proposition" and *boosting/emphasizing* (strengthening in my term) as the way "to increase the illocutionary force of the proposition", and this study will do the same. Thus, in this study, the following terms and definitions are used:

Weaker¹⁵: Any linguistic or rhetorical device that weakens the illocutionary force of the proposition.

Strengtheners: Any linguistic or rhetorical device that strengthens the illocutionary force of the proposition.

Lin (2010:1173) proposes the term *pragmatic force modifiers* to cover both an increase and decrease of the illocutionary force. She finds that the problem with a two-fold distinction between weakeners and strengtheners is that one tends to ignore the fact that the two often interact in discourse. As always with dichotomies, I agree with Lin that they must be used cautiously, but in this study the aim is indeed to distinguish the styles that use more weakeners than strengtheners to those that do the opposite, without thereby claiming that a style with many weakeners has no strengtheners at all. Thus, in this particular study, it is important to maintain weakeners and strengtheners as two clearly distinguishable categories.

¹⁵ Others would use the term 'hedging' here (e.g. Markkanen & Schröder 1997) to mean both the strategy of weakening the force, the impact it is likely to have on the hearer, and the linguistic devices used to do the hedging. This study has chosen only to use the term 'hedge' for linguistic devices.

For specific lexical items, this study employs the terms *intensifier* (3.10.1.1) versus *hedge* (3.10.2.1), which is the original pair used by G. Lakoff (1972:13). Lakoff first used the term *hedge* to mean items that increase or decrease the validity of the proposition. For example the lexeme *a little* can make the content of the utterance/sentence appear more or less true or more or less ‘fuzzy’ to the hearer (Lakoff 1972:147) as in the following example:

(2) My sister is *a little* taller than me.

A little is not a precise description in adherence to Grice’s Maxims. On the one hand it could be understood to affect the propositional meaning in the same way as *approximately* does. On the other hand, it could also be understood as the speaker’s propositional attitude and mean something like “my sister is not that much taller than me”.

In the following utterance however, the phrase *a little* has a different function than in example (2):

(3) Do you speak Japanese?

Yes, *a little*.

Without *a little*, the utterance may appear blunt and boasting even though it adheres to Grice’s Maxims. G. Lakoff (1972:31) himself seems to suggest a wider use of *hedge* as he refers to R. Lakoff’s (1972) work and explains how the utterance “I suppose that Harry is coming” is a “*hedged assertion*” and “won’t you open the door” is a “*softened request*”. This study uses the term *hedge* in this wider sense.

To sum up, the term *intensifier* (e.g. *extremely, really*) in this study is understood as one of many possible *strengtheners*, and the term *hedge* (e.g. *a bit, somewhat*) is one of many *weakeners*. A list of strengtheners and weakeners is proposed in section 3.10.

The illocutionary force can be directed towards the content or the social meaning (Holmes 1984:348). Thus, a weakener does not only weaken the force of the other lexical items in the utterance, but also may reduce the anticipated negative effect of the speech act on the hearer. For example, the clause ‘a bit’ in a statement such as “you’re *a bit* late” does not only state the degree of delay, but also reduces the criticism. A strengthener too, such as in “you’re *really* beautiful today”, does not only reinforce the other lexemes, but may be interpreted as an expression of friendliness and camaraderie toward the hearer.

The degree of the strength has to do with the speaker's attitudes and emotions, expressed through the term *involvement*. Gumperz (1982:1) understands *involvement* as the interlocutors' observable active participation or engagement in conversation. In this study involvement is understood as the interlocutors' inner mental state in conversation in line with Chafe (1985:116). According to Chafe, there are three focuses of involvement: 1) involvement of the speaker with what is being talked about, 2) self-involvement of the speaker, and 3) interpersonal involvement between the speaker and the hearer. Thus, people strategically opt for one or the other style because of:

- 1) The speaker's involvement in the **content** of the proposition.
- 2) The speaker's involvement in presenting a **self-image**.
- 3) The speaker's involvement in the **addressee/the relationship**.

These three focuses are the attention of the following sections.

3.6 The speaker's involvement in the content of the proposition

In most discourse contexts there exists two potentially conflicting interests: "to be clear, get the message across unambiguously so that the other can respond to it without uncertainty; and to be socially responsive, aware of their own and another's needs as human beings to be treated as competent and likable, and to feel that way themselves" (Lakoff 1990:168). Thus, stylistic choices such as the degree of verbal explicitness or verbal expressiveness often depend on whether focus is primarily on the message content or on interpersonal relations.

According to Martin & White (2005), stylistic choices are affected by the speaker's *attitude* to and *engagement* in the subject matter. They divide the speaker's attitude in to *affect* (the speaker considers the content positive or negative), *judgement* (the speaker thinks the content is good or bad), and *appreciation* (the speaker likes/dislikes it). *Engagement* has to do with factors such as those exemplified below (based on Holmes 1984:347, my examples). All examples have its force strengthened by intensifiers (3.10.1.1):

- a. Express the degrees of belief (I am *absolutely* sure)
- b. Express the degrees of desire (I'll *most definitely* go)
- c. Express the degree of strength of feelings (I like him *very much*)
- d. Express the degree of commitment (*I am sure* I'll finish on time)

- e. Express the degree of seriousness (I am *very* serious)

However, the way a message is performed is not only a result of the speaker's attitude to or engagement in the content. It is also about the impact the speaker wishes the message to have on the hearer. According to Hickey (1989:8), style is about the linguistic and extra-linguistic devices a person uses in order to express a message with more or less expressive, affective or aesthetic emphasis in order to "bring about certain internal changes in the receiver". This 'change' can be to convince him to do something. For example, the speaker believes that by stating that "the film was *fantastic*" rather than "it was a good film", he can better convince the hearer to go and see it for himself. On the other hand, strengtheners move the hearer as it creates images in his mind, and thus, increases the involvement in a story. Thus, the speaker will choose whatever style he believes is the most beneficial one in order to clarify, emphasize, or stir involvement in the message he wants to project.

Detachment is a term frequently used as the opposite notion to involvement and is "devices which serve to distance the language from specific concrete states and events" (Chafe 1982:45). It is used when the focus is on information content and the speaker aims to be objective, factual, and to convey new information with as much accuracy and clarity as possible. Biber & Finegan (1989:108) calls this type of communication a 'faceless style' because there is no focus on relational concerns.

Different ways of showing involvement and detachment are analysed in chapters seven to ten.

3.7 *The speaker's involvement in presenting a self-image*

In a world of social encounters, every individual is expected to show both self-respect and sustain a standard of considerateness toward others (Goffman 1967:10). *Face* in Goffman's term is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman 1967:5). *Face-work* is "the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent of face" (Goffman 1967:12). That is, during a conversation, a person will attempt to say and do only what is consistent with his own self-image (e.g. I am a direct person), and the listeners interpret this on the basis of the self-image that they believe him to have.

People have a need to protect their own face, but they also have a need to be seen, which is why despite the danger attached to it, people frequently decide to show their involvement openly and even assertively. Katriel and Dascal (1989:286) argue that when a proposition is asserted the speaker: “a) commits himself or herself to the truth, and b) holds that proposition at the centre of his or her consciousness”. Assertion is associated with open, honest, direct, frank, and spontaneous self-expression, but self-expression in the absence of considerateness is often considered aggressive and impolite. Toulmin (2003:11) points out that a man who asserts something intends his statement to be taken seriously and adds: “A man who makes an assertion puts forward a claim – a claim on our attention and our belief”. That is why the hearer so easily experiences it as an impingement. Not only does the assertion prompt the hearer to become involved in the sense of asking for his or her attention, it also invites the hearer to question his or her beliefs. However, an assertion may be perceived differently depending on the message content. For instance, Wilson and Gallois (1985) found that negative messages were consistently rated as much more assertive and socially less appropriate than positive ones.

On the basis of observation of laughter-talk in interaction, Partington (2006:97) observes that people speaking to an audience seem to have two principal sorts of face: a *competence face* focusing on assertion and an *affective face* focusing on affiliation. According to Partington, when the person who has been asked to answer chooses to do so with a competence face, this is because he wishes to persuade the hearers that he is capable, authoritative, and in control. This is typically used when information is transactional in nature and the situation is relatively formal. Too much humour could undermine competence face and is therefore avoided. However, to put on a competence face is not always compatible with the expression of ingroup solidarity. Through an affective face, on the other hand, the speaker first and foremost aims to persuade the hearers that he is non-threatening, congenial, and good to be around by using ingroup strategies. Affective face is typically used when information is interactional in nature and when the situation is relatively informal. Partington (2006:98) claims that the two faces are incompatible. One either has to choose to appear authoritative with the risk of appearing non-affiliative, or choose to appear congenial and risk not being taken seriously.

Partington’s theories are further discussed in chapter seven.

3.8 The speaker's involvement in the addressee/the relationship

Indirectness is almost exclusively anchored in *politeness* (Held 2005:131), linked to the concept of *face* (Goffman 1967, Brown and Levinson 1987, Leech 1983, 2007) and the opposing social needs of *closeness* versus *distance* (Lakoff 1973, Tannen 2005). The following theories are used extensively in the analysis both providing linguistic devices proposed to weaken or strengthen the illocutionary force (3.10), and proposing explanations to why speakers apply a certain style.

3.8.1 Rules of Politeness

The fact that more often than not people avoid saying exactly what they mean is because there are important social reasons for not doing so. Thus, Lakoff (1973) proposes a two-fold 'Rules of Pragmatic Competence':

1. Be clear
2. Be polite

Number one; to be clear, corresponds to Grice' Cooperative Principle. About number two; be polite, Lakoff (1973:297) argues that:

When clarity conflicts with politeness, in most cases [...] politeness supersedes: It is considered more important to avoid offence than to achieve clarity.

How something is said, depends on the speaker's assumptions about his relations with the *hearer* (the hearer's feelings about him, his feelings about the hearer (s), hearer (s)' rank relative to his), his real-world *situation* as he speaks (e.g. how crucial is the information he tries to convey, how formal is the situation), and the extent to which he wishes to change either or both, or reinforce them (1973:296). Lakoff proposes three 'Rules of Politeness' (1973:298):

1. Don't impose (distance)
2. Give options (deference)
3. Be friendly (camaraderie)

The following example (4) serves to illustrate these three rules:

(4) You don't have a car and need to go to IKEA. Your friend has a car.

Rule 1: "I need to buy something at IKEA but I don't know how to manage without a car"
(distance)

Your friend can choose to overhear the hints. Your friend doesn't seem to like what s(he) hears and you can pretend you were talking to yourself.

Rule 2: "I understand very well if you are busy, but you couldn't possibly drive me to IKEA could you?" (deference)

Hedges and circumlocutions make it easy for your friend to say no if it is inconvenient to him.

Rule 3: "Why don't we take your car and go to IKEA and do some shopping?"
(camaraderie).

You appeal to mutual friendship and benefit.

Rule 1, *distance*: Lakoff argues that *don't impose* can also be understood as remaining aloof. Only the context can help interpret whether the intended meaning is not to intrude as a sign of politeness or indifference.

Rule 2, *deference*: Whereas distance is impersonal, deference is indecisive (Lakoff 1990:36). It can be used when the speaker is unsure of what he is asserting, or he is sure, but does not want to offend the hearer. In any case, such sentences leave the final decision as to the truth of the sentence up to the addressee (Lakoff 1973:300). Both rule 1 and rule 2 employ many linguistic devices which weaken the illocutionary force (3.10). According to Lakoff (1975:66), rule 2 can be used with either of the two other rules whereas rule 1 and rule 3 are mutually exclusive.

Rule 3, *camaraderie*: produces a sense of equality between speaker and hearer that will make the hearer feel good provided that the speaker is already equal or higher in status than the hearer. Opposed to rule 1 and 2, people use the camaraderie strategy under the assumption that interaction and connection are good in themselves and that openness and niceness are the greatest signs of courtesy (Lakoff 1990:38). However, camaraderie can also be conventional (e.g. have a nice day!) and does not always reflect the speaker's true feelings. Rule 3 employs many linguistic devices which strengthen the illocutionary force (3.10). A person can speak directly and convey to the hearer that "we understand each other, we don't have to stand on ceremony with each other" (Lakoff 1975:68). However, camaraderie also has elements of indirectness as one might have an opinion but choose not to state it for the sake of building rapport. The camaraderie/rapport benefit of indirectness is the pleasant experience of getting one's needs met, not by dominating the other, but by appealing to solidarity, common ground, and shared interests.

Tannen (2005:20), who built her work on conversational styles on Lakoff's theories, groups distance and deference under one heading which she names *defensiveness* and camaraderie under the heading *rapport*. This two-fold distinction is in line with Lakoff (1973:301) when she argues that rule 1 and 2 can be combined to signal distance, but finds rule 1 and rule 3 to be mutually exclusive. Figure 2 sums up Lakoff's and Tannen's terms. The further to the right on the scale below, the stronger the emotional involvement between the interlocutors. It is important to stress that Lakoff did not see the strategies of distance, deference, and camaraderie as hierarchically ordered but rather as points on a continuum of stylistic preferences (Tannen 2005:20).

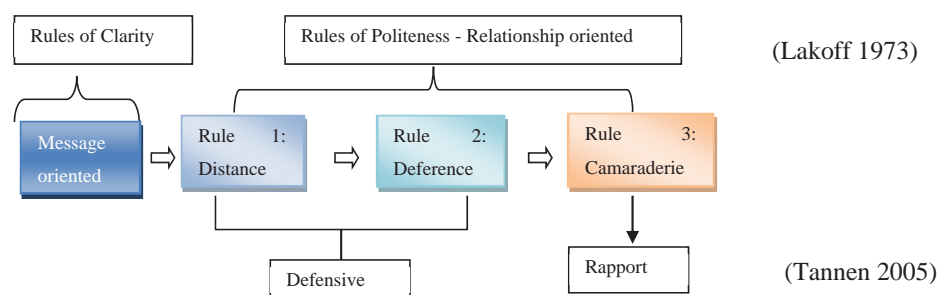


Figure 2: Pragmatic competence from message to relationship oriented (author's model based on Lakoff 1973 and Tannen 2005)

Based on the experiences acquired through this project, I propose that the four communicative styles from table 1 may be placed in figure 2 as follows:

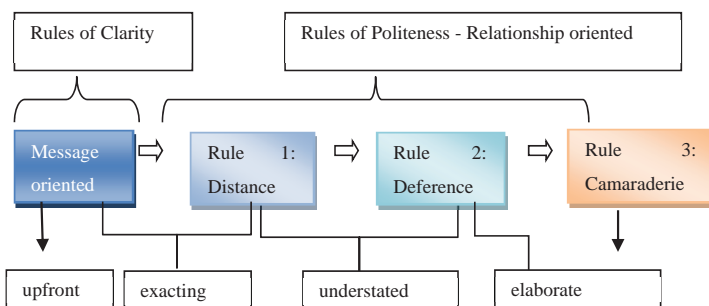


Figure 3: Pragmatic Competence from message to relationship oriented; Comparison of the four styles (author's model)

This is further elaborated on in chapters seven, eight, nine, and eleven.

Tannen (2005) argues that people with a camaraderie strategy as their broad operating principle use what she calls a *high-involvement style*, a style marked by many strengthening devices which signal enthusiasm and friendliness (3.10) such as exaggerated use of items such as ‘brilliant, wonderful, terrible’, many personal questions, ‘Machine-gun questions’¹⁶, exaggerations such as e.g. “I’d much rather not eat than not sleep”, back channelling cues (‘oh God, uhuh, right, mmm, oh yeah?’), rapport building comments (‘I do that too’), and tags (‘you know’). People with a defensive strategy as their broad operating principle on the other hand, tend to use a conversational style she terms *high-considerateness style*. People with this style prefer impersonal topics until better acquainted, the pacing is relatively slow, turn taking has few overlaps in order to allow others to finish a line of reasoning or give themselves time to think, and there are many weakening devices which serve as mutual face savers (3.10). The way I interpret Tannen, these styles are seen as ‘personal styles’ (cf. Johnstone, section 3.2) rather than strategic choices, which means that they cannot easily change. The analysis of styles in the present study is based on one single interview with each person, which does not lend support to a notion of ‘personal style’. However, a question about how stable a style might be is discussed in relation to the speakers’ own comments about their styles in chapter eleven.

3.8.2 Politeness strategies

The work of Brown and Levinson (1987) is based on Goffman (1967, 1981), Grice (1967, 1975), and Lakoff (1973). Their claim is that it is a universal characteristic across cultures that speakers wish to maintain *face*¹⁷. Face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987:62), is two-fold:

1. *Negative face*: The want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his actions be unimpeded by others.
2. *Positive face*: The want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.

¹⁶ A machinegun question being identified linguistically as a question with high pitch, reduced syntactic form, fast rate of speech, and directness of content (Tannen 2005:91).

¹⁷ The notion of face is derived from Goffman. However, Watts (2003:105) argues that Brown and Levinson’s notion of face is different from Goffman’s: “Brown and Levinson work from the concept of wants based on what they call ‘personality’, which an individual has developed prior to the interaction, whereas Goffman works from a notion of the on-going construction of the individual’s self-image contingent on social factors.” Further, many Eastern scholars (Matsumoto 1988, Gu 1990, Ide 1989, 1993) criticize Brown & Levinson for focusing entirely on face-protection. The Asian concept of face stresses both the need to give and to protect face (cf. Ting-Toomey’s three types of face-work in part 2.5.1).

A *face threatening act* (FTA) means an act that threatens the positive and negative face of the speaker or the hearer. Brown & Levinson suggest five possible ways to deal with face threatening acts. Example (5) below contains possible answers to a request for a date, a potentially face threatening situation. When someone goes *on record* there is no or minimal doubt about what is meant, such as in answer A1, A2, and A3 below. When someone goes *off record* on the other hand, there is an element of doubt about what is meant as in A4 and A5 below.

(5) Q: Would you like to go out with me on Saturday?

A1: Yes

A2: Yes, of course!

A3: Yes, if you have time

A4: You've just come to the letter M in your address book, have you?

A5: That would be nice, but

Strategy one: Bald on record strategies

The first answer (A1) above is an answer in accordance with *bald on record strategies*. To act baldly is to be as direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise as possible and corresponds roughly with Grice's Cooperative Principle or Lakoff's 'Rules of Clarity'. According to Brown and Levinson, this is done normally only in cases where the speaker is vastly superior in power to the hearer, where the danger of hurting the hearer's face is considered minimal, and when there is an agreement that urgency or efficiency at the moment is more important than face. Bald on record strategies are similar to Lakoff's rule 1: *distance* in that the speaker aims to stay emotionally detached.

Unless the speaker's wish to do an FTA with maximum efficiency, i.e. to be bald on record, is greater than the wish to preserve one's own or other's face, the speaker will try to minimize the face threat by way of *positive politeness* or *negative politeness strategies*. In short, positive politeness strategies use strengthening devices, and negative politeness strategies use weakening devices. The devices Brown and Levinson propose are presented together with those suggested by other scholars in section 3.10.

Strategy two: Positive politeness strategies

Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of the hearer by demonstrating closeness and solidarity and is similar to Lakoff's rule 3: *Camaraderie*. Positive politeness strategies can be violations of the maxim of quantity such as "Yes, of course!" (A2 above) when "yes" is a sufficient answer in Grice's terms. Brown and Levinson (1987:101-129)

classify positive politeness strategies under three subsections; strategies to claim common ground, strategies to convey that the speaker and the hearer are co-operators, and strategies to fulfil the hearer's wants. The strategies listed under 'claim common ground', which are the strategies best noticed in the present data, are:

1. Notice, attend to the hearer by way of compliments etc.
2. Exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer by way of expressions such as 'marvellous' and 'extraordinary', 'for sure', 'really', and so on. A characteristic of positive politeness is the tendency to exaggerate, which is often manifested by "choosing words at the extremes of the relevant value scale" (Brown & Levinson 1987:116).
3. Intensify interest to hearer by way of telling a good story, the vivid present, direct quotes, tag-questions, expressions that drag the hearer into the conversation such as 'you know', 'see what I mean?', and 'isn't it', and exaggerate facts (you always do the dishes!).
4. Use in-group identity markers such as address form, language, dialect, jargon/slang, ellipsis.
5. Seek agreement by way of "safe topics", repeating the hearer etc.
6. Avoid disagreement by appearing to agree, "white lies", hedges.
7. Presuppose, raise, assert common ground by way of gossip and small talk.
8. Joke

However, this study proposes that some of these devices are used to show involvement in the message content and in presenting a self-image as much as to enhance the relationship with the hearer. I return with more details in chapter seven.

Strategy three: Negative politeness strategies

This group of strategies is oriented toward the negative face of the hearer by demonstrating distance and avoiding intrusion on the hearer's territory by not assuming that the hearer should comply with the speaker's needs such as in A3 above. It is similar to Lakoff's rules one and two, which Tannen (figure 2) calls the *defensive* rule of politeness. The more effort that is put into preserving the hearer's face while at the same time getting the speaker what he needs, the more polite the strategy is. Negative politeness strategies can violate the maxim of manner by being imprecise or vague.

Strategies four and five: Off-record strategies and 'Not to do an FTA'

Positive and negative politeness strategies modify, i.e. weaken or strengthen the proposition. When a speaker goes *off-record* on the other hand, he leaves most of what is said in the context similar to what Vanderveken called a 'non-literal speech act' (cf. 3.4) (examples A4 and A5 above). As mentioned in 3.4 on the non-literal act, off-record strategies such as hints and avoidance strategies such as silence, withdrawal, or change of topic play minor roles in the text based on interview answers.

Brown and Levinson (1987:60) maintain that people tend to choose a strategy relative to the degree of the face threat according to the following dimensions:

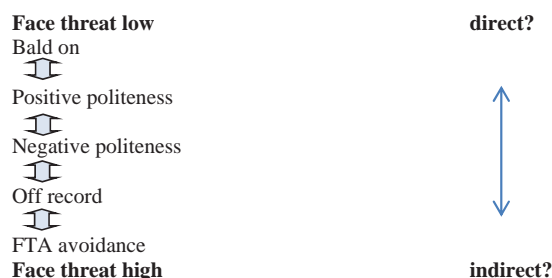


Figure 4: Brown and Levinson's strategies with regards to degree of face threat (Brown and Levinson 1987:60), with additions about degrees of (in)directness (based on Leech 2007)(author's model)

Leech (2007:169) sees Brown and Levinson's strategies as "ranging from bald on record performance of the FTA through indirect strategies to its non-performance", which places Brown and Levinson's strategies on a scale from more to less direct as illustrated with an arrow in figure 4 above. The way I interpret this, is that figure 4 illustrates degrees of directness/indirectness when it comes to degree of explicitness as in "the more conclusively a communication act supports a particular interpretation, the more directly communicated the information in question is; and conversely: the poorer the evidence for a particular interpretation, the more indirect the communication" (Bond et al. 2006:67). It is not difficult to see that, in this interpretation, a bald on-record statement (open the window) is more 'direct' than an off-record strategy (it is warm in here, isn't it). However, which one that might be more direct of positive and negative politeness strategies is not so clear, and is something I discuss in relation to the elaborate and the understated styles in chapter eight. Tannen (1981:222) argues that "in actual interaction, (Grice') maxims do not answer but rather set the questions: How much is 'necessary'? Which words will be 'clear'? What is deemed 'relevant'?" What this suggests is that (in)directness is a matter of degree rather than absolutes, and further, that it depends on the hearer's perception of necessity, clarity, relevance, and appropriateness relative to the norms of the society. The latter is also of concern for Leech in the following section.

3.8.3 Politeness Principle

Leech (1977, 1983) builds on Grice', Austin's, and Searle's work and demonstrates how utterances can be arranged on a continuum from less polite to more polite both in form and in content depending on the degree of cost to the hearer which he calls the *Tact Maxim*, or in later works (2007:180) *Pragmatic Constraints*: "The more cost to the hearer, the less polite, the more benefit to the hearer, the more polite" (Leech 1983:132). By 'cost to the hearer', he means that a request that gives the hearer little opportunity to turn it down, such as in the bald on record example a) below, is an utterance with higher cost to the hearer and thus less polite than for example utterance f).

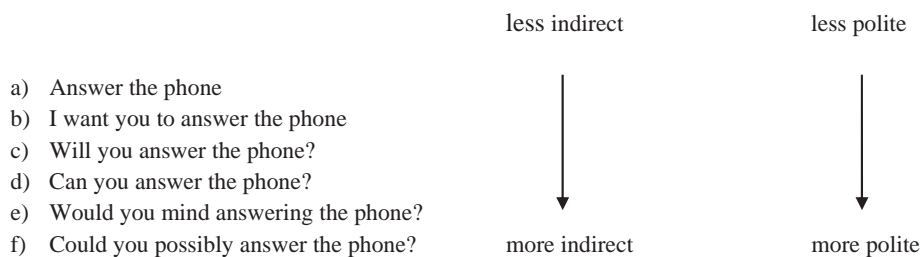


Figure 5: (In)directness in form (figure from Leech 1983:108)

Thus, the lexico-grammatical form of words and semantic interpretation of utterances can be ordered on a scale, not because the form itself is intrinsically indirect or polite, but because it is the form that gives the hearer the most option to turn the request down.

The content can also be classified on a continuum from more to less or not polite:

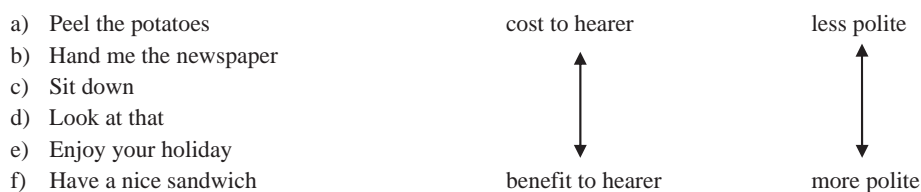


Figure 6: (In)directness in content (figure from Leech 1983:107)

Even though these sentences are all directives, they are more or less polite in accordance to the *Tact Maxim*. Many of these choices are not made out of *semantic politeness*, i.e. cost or benefit to the hearer, but out of *pragmatic politeness* which Leech (2007:174) understands as "politeness relative to the given norms in a society".

As we see in the figures above, relative directness or indirectness is not only a matter of form but also of content. For instance, to weaken the force of “peel the potatoes” with “could you possibly peel the potatoes” might still be interpreted as too ‘direct’ if the request is deemed improper by the hearer. This might also be linked to Wilson and Gallois (3.7) about how negative messages tend to be rated as more assertive and socially less appropriate than positive ones. I return to this in chapter eight, when I discuss how a text is not always perceived as indirect in spite of numerous weakeners.

3.9 Criticism and comments

The way I understand Leech, he would claim that figure 4 also illustrates degrees of politeness since bald on record strategies were defined as those posing more cost to the hearer than negative politeness strategies which can more easily be ignored. However, Wierzbicka (1985) observes that bald on record imperatives (*sit! sit!*) are used in polite situations in Polish, and Matsumoto (1988) argues that the motivation for using negative politeness has a different intention of social acceptance rather than protecting one’s territory in Japan. Blum-Kulka (1987) found that when native speakers of English and Hebrew were asked to rank different request strategies to move one’s car on a scale between most/least direct and most/least polite, the Hebrew speakers ranked performatives (*I would like to ask you to move the car*) among the direct statements, but still saw it as high up on the scale of politeness. Thus, in an intercultural context it seems to be problematic to claim that figure 4 illustrates degrees of politeness, and this is an important point because it seems to be the main objection of many scholars to Brown and Levinson’s theories.

Except for Tannen’s theories on ‘personal styles’ (3.8.1), the theories in this chapter centre on stylistic choices depending on how important the following strategies are for the speaker:

- The speaker’s wish to be clear
- The speaker’s wish to display his attitude toward the content
- The speaker’s wish to display his engagement in the content
- The speaker’s wish to stir involvement in the content
- The speaker’s presentation of a self-image (involved, detached (objective, factual), competent, congenial, considerate, high status etc.)
- The speaker’s protection of his/her own face
- The speaker’s protection of the hearer’s face
- The speaker’s wish to enhance the hearer’s face
- The speaker’s wish to protect/enhance the relationship with the hearer

- The speaker's wish to deal efficiently and appropriately with the situation

In an intercultural context, the question arises as to whether these strategies are equally emphasized in all societies, and whether similar strategies lead to similar stylistic choices. We have seen above that this might not be the case. Seen from the intercultural communication perspective, an additional strategy might be added to the list above. It is the wish to present oneself in accordance with a 'cultural/national' self-image. That is, when a Japanese individual applies a 'Japanese style', it might be because he identifies with the communicative norms which he perceives as those of his community.

Brown and Levinson (1987:136) state that "most of the ways of making indirect speech acts appear to be universal or at least independently developed in many languages". Further down the page however, they seem to modify their claim by adding that ways of being indirect are theoretically indefinite in number, not all indirectness devices are equally conventional or idiomatic in the language, and not always syntactically marked. Leech (2007) believes that the sociological factors determining the choice of strategies are fairly general to human societies but that cultures vary in how important the different factors are considered to be, and which norms (or styles in this case) these choices are expressed in. His view seems to coincide with Matsumoto, Wierzbicka, Blum-Kulka and the authors from the intercultural communication field whose works aim to expand research to more than the Anglo world.

The intercultural communication field's most important contribution to linguistics is to see theories on communication in the light of cultural variables. However, seen in the light of linguistics such as e.g. the theories of Brown and Levinson, the intercultural communication theories seem too simplistic. If people in English, Tamil or Tzeltal speaking communities, which are the cultures Brown and Levinson draw examples from, have the possibility to choose from five main strategies (3.8.2), i.e. bald on record, on record positive and negative politeness, off-record or not to do an FTA, it seems plausible to believe that the Japanese or the Norwegians have the same strategies at their disposal. The fact that the Japanese have only two choices; either negative politeness or off-record, i.e. *the understated style*, seems too limited a view seen in the light of the linguistic theories where the focus is on personal or situational strategies rather than on cultural style.

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988:106), mentioned in connection with the exacting, upfront, elaborate, and understated styles in 2.5.1, argue that in the view of Grice's maxim of quantity, one might say that the Arabic style uses overstatements, the Northern European and American

style neither more nor less information than absolutely required, and the Asian style understatement, which seem to imply that such styles as the Arabic or the Asian ones state more or less 'than required', an argument which can only, at best, make sense to Europeans and Americans. Thus, it is natural to suspect the maxims to be a low context invention. Criticism of Grice's maxims is summed up by Horn and Ward (2006:8) as follows:

professional linguists and ethnographers, [...] have at times concluded that Grice's maxims are trivial, naïve to the point of simple-mindedness, and/or culture-dependent (if not downright ethnocentric), and they fail to apply to phatic and other non-information-based exchanges.

In many ways what best characterizes the styles in intercultural communication, except the *explicit style* (table 1), is that they flout Grice's maxims. Cutting (2008:37) argues that "when speakers flout the maxim of relation, they expect that the hearers will be able to imagine what the utterance did not say, and make the connection between the utterance and the preceding one(s)". However, speakers belonging to different cultures might not be able to pick up on these underlying codes, and the lack of relation might rather be perceived as evasiveness, avoidance, or distraction, i.e. violating the maxim instead of flouting it. For instance, people in high context cultures frequently flout the maxim of quality because courtesy and facework are values considered more important than stating one's honest and straightforward opinion. Cutting (2008:38) further claims that "those who flout the maxim of manner, appearing to be obscure, are often trying to exclude a third party". In this view, all high context communication excludes outsiders since this type of communication implies a shared context and a shared understanding of the communicative style.

The basic difference between linguistic and intercultural communication theories is that intercultural communication would put the emphasis and linguistic expression of strategies down to cultural determinates, the field of linguistics would claim that they are personal or situational choices. It seems that the validity of the theories described in chapters two and three much depends on the researchers' general philosophical and ideological view of culture and communication. This study does not aim to make any conclusion about whether people in specific cultures do have an essential style or whether style is something strategically or unconsciously constructed and re-constructed through social participation because there is probably some truth in both. In my view, there is no opposition in being socialized into favouring particular styles and at the same time being able switch to others. The problem only arises when the entire focus is on one perception to the disadvantage of the other.

3.10 Linguistically encoded weakeners and strengtheners

This section examines how weakeners and strengtheners are linguistically encoded and form a framework, that is, a list of linguistic devices that will be used in the analysis in chapters seven to chapter ten. As is described in more detail in 5.5.4 and 5.5.5, content analysis in qualitative research means that categories are arrived at inductively through an on-going dialogue between the data and the theory. Thus, the selection of the categories below is a result of examining various theories about linguistic devices believed to ‘colour’ the proposition into various communicative styles combined with an examination into the frequency and context-dependent function of those particular devices in the corpus.

3.10.1 Strengtheners

3.10.1.1 Intensifiers

Crystal (2008:248) defines intensifiers as “a term used in some grammatical classifications of words to refer to a class of adverbs which have heightening or lowering effect on the meaning of another element of the sentence”. Others distinguish those with a weakening effect from those with a strengthening effect. To those who opt for a distinction between lexical items with a weakening and a strengthening effect, the latter is called *intensifier* (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005, Leech 2007), *marker of intensity* (Labov 1984:48), *intensifying modifier* (Brown & Levinson 1987:104), *booster* (Holmes 1984), *upgrader* (House & Kasper (1981), or *emphatic particle* (Chafe 1982:47). Others again divide intensifiers into two different strengthening effects. Murphy (2010), for instance, distinguishes between *amplifiers*, which consist of adverbs that scale a quality up, and *booster*, which is a lexical item that express a viewpoint more assertively. In this study I follow Tagliamonte & Roberts (2005) and Leech (2007) and call both *intensifiers*.

According to Labov (1984:43), *intensity* means “the emotional expression of social orientation toward the linguistic proposition: the commitment of the self to the proposition”. Scholars add various lexical categories to the notion of *intensifiers*. Labov (1984:45) adds quantifiers (e.g. *always*, *never*, *most*, *many*), Holmes (1984:353) adjectives such as *sure* and *certain*, and Besnier (1990:424) modal verbs such as ‘*must* do it’, ‘*will* do it’.

This study uses intensifiers with the following meaning:

An **intensifier** is a lexical item, compound, or phrase which strengthens the illocutionary force of the proposition.

Some, such as swear words, might be termed *lexical intensifiers* because they intrinsically intensify any proposition. *Sugoku* ‘very’ in Japanese and *veldig* ‘very’ in Norwegian also seem to be intrinsic intensifiers, but even these do not always intensify the illocutionary force (cf. 7.9). Thus, each item must be interpreted in the context in which it appears. For instance, in section 7.2 I discuss the Japanese item *yappari* ‘surely’ which in some cases seemed to intensify the illocutionary force, but in others did not. The scholars mentioned above seem to agree that there is no closed set of markers of intensity and that most intensifiers are not lexical intensifiers but rather context sensitive devices (Labov 1984:48, Zeller Mayer 1991:44, Clemen 1997:236). Further, intensity markers tend to cluster and reinforce each other (Labov 1984:53, Holmes 1984:363). Thus, since hedges and intensifiers vary between languages, are not intrinsically semantically encoded, and rather depend on context and situation, it seems to be impossible to make an exhaustive list of them. Therefore, the items and expressions listed in the Japanese and Norwegian tables on intensifiers are not meant to be complete lists of intensifiers in Japanese or Norwegian, but chosen on the basis of how they appeared in the context in this particular corpus.

Function: The main function of intensifiers is to strengthen the illocutionary force of the proposition. They express enthusiastic involvement in what is being said (Chafe 1982:47) and aim to underline the message content. Another function is to show one’s competence (Partington 2006). Brown & Levinson (1987:106) see lexical items such as *for sure*, *really*, *exactly*, and *absolutely* as so called *positive politeness devices* in order to exaggerate interest, approval, and sympathy with the hearer. However, Holmes (1995:77) points out that when intensifiers are used to intensify the effect of an utterance with negative intentions towards the hearer, they cannot be seen as a politeness device but rather reinforces the distance between the interlocutors.

3.10.1.2 *Exaggerated facts*

Brown and Levinson’s (1987:107) positive politeness strategy aimed to intensify interest to the hearer covers what they call ‘exaggerated facts’ (e.g. *I’ve never heard such a row; You always do the dishes; There were a million people there tonight*). In Tannen (2005:109), we find this “exaggerated” response by a speaker of a high-involvement style to someone who

explains that he has problem sleeping: *Not sleeping enough is terrible [...] I'd much rather not eat than not sleep*. Exaggerated fact is not a specific linguistic device but rather has to do with how new information is presented. The way I understand the difference between exaggerated facts and a verbose expression is that the first over-generalizes a fact/statement, and the latter over-specifies, that is, uses more words than necessary according to Grice's cooperative principle (3.3) in order to create images. Example (6) was uttered by a Norwegian and may serve as an illustration:

(6) <S11> risk taking *doesn't exist* (exaggerated fact) in the Japanese society right, if you make a mistake it's *off with your head* [*hodet av*] (verbose expression) <S/11>

“Doesn't exist” leaves no room for nuances and is an example of exaggerated facts whereas “off with your head” is a metaphor and thus, a verbose expression. Exaggerated facts are not about creating images, but are used to underline the content message. Further, exaggerated facts are most noticeable when they are used in potentially controversial topics. In this study exaggerated facts are most noticeable when used in critical comments about the Japanese or the Norwegians.

Function: To highlight the assertion by over-generalizing it.

3.10.1.3 Verboesity

Tannen (1982:24-28) lists frequent use of tropes (metaphors), imagery, details, repetitions, and narratives as devices that signal play and involvement. Verboesity in this study covers *infused* items, metaphors/idioms, lexical intensifiers (swear words), repetitions, reduplications, onomatopoeias. What these have in common is that they do not only intensify the force of the proposition like *intensifiers* do, but add flavour and vividness that enhance the creation of associations and images in the hearer's mind.

Infused items: Brown and Levinson (1987:104) call items such as *marvellous*, *extraordinary*, and *amazingly* “intensifying modifiers”. However, in this study there is a need to distinguish between using *intensifiers* such as *very* in an utterance such as “she is *very* pretty” as opposed to opting for an adjective such as “she is *gorgeous*” instead, because the *upfront style* (table 1) seems to apply the former but not the latter (cf. chapter seven). Martin & White (2005:141) explain an item such as *very* in “*very* pretty” as an item where the strengthening is performed by “an isolated, individual item which solely, or at least primarily, performs the function of

setting the level of intensity”. *Very* functions to intensify *pretty* whereas *gorgeous* is intrinsically more intensified than *pretty*. The lexeme *gorgeous* is “fused with a meaning which serves some other semantic function” (Martin & White 2005:141). The lexeme could be placed on a semantic scale of up-scaling (intensifying) and down-scaling as follows:

Looks alright (down-scaling) – *pretty* – *gorgeous* (up-scaling)

The item *gorgeous* is semantically an isolated term to *pretty*, and harbours different connotations. I call adjectives such as ‘gorgeous’ *infused adjectives*¹⁸. Nouns such as e.g. *villa* instead of *house* and verbs such as e.g. *love* instead of *like* could be defined similarly to ‘gorgeous’ above. These are referred to as *infused [noun/verb]*.

Idioms/metaphors: Idioms or idiomatic expressions are terms used in grammar and lexicology to refer to a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted (Crystal 2009:236). Many idioms are *metaphors*. In this study, I adhere to Lakoff’s (1993) definition of ‘conceptual metaphor’ where a metaphorical expression is the target domain of ontological mapping across underlying conceptual domains (the source domain). Thus, when someone refers to herself as a ‘chameleon’ (the target domain) it is because to her (and to most people if the metaphorical expression is conventional), the conception of a chameleon is not only that of the animal that has the ability to change colour to match the surrounding context, but also that of a person who easily blends in (source domain). Some metaphors¹⁹ are conventional idioms. Other metaphors are unconventional or idiosyncratic. Metaphors are frequently employed to strengthen the illocutionary force of the proposition (Martin & White 2005:147).

Repetitions: Repetitions cover everything from recurrent patterns of sound to words, phrases, sentences, and larger chunks of discourse (Tannen 1996:19). Intensifying repetitions can also mean a list of semantically related terms (e.g. *immature, irresponsible, disgraceful, and misleading*) (Martin & White 2005:144). Reduplications and onomatopoeia in Japanese are also repetitions with the nuances defined below. In this study, repetitions are studied on all

¹⁸ Martin & White (2005) do not apply the term *infused adjective*, but explain such an adjective as “infused intensification”. The term *superlative* which is frequently used for these adjectives in common language, is restricted to the grammatical inflection of adjectives (e.g. *most beautiful*) in the field of linguistics (Crystal 2009, Huddleston & Pullum 2002). Lakoff (1975) calls items such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’ and ‘cute’ an *empty adjective*, but I do not find that her term has been followed up by others. Chafe (1982:47) calls items expressing “enthusiastic involvement” *emphatic particles* but refers only to intensifiers such as ‘just’ and ‘really’.

¹⁹ Lakoff uses the term *metaphor* to mean the process of mapping the source domain to the target domain, and the term *metaphorical expression* to mean the concrete linguistic realization of that mapping. However, this study applies the term *metaphor* for both, which is in line with the majority of the other researchers mentioned under *verbosity*.

levels of discourse from repetition of an individual lexical item to for instance repeating the point of the story twice.

Reduplication means that a lexical item is repeated twice (e.g. *long long ago*), and is an iconic device with intensifying function. The difference between repetition and reduplication is that whereas repetition only has an intensifying function, reduplicative compounds such as *long long ago*, *shilly-shally*, and *I understand less and less* also are idiomatic expressions in a given language in the same ways as conventional metaphors are, and add ‘colour’ to the text.

Onomatopoeia refers to conventional mimetic expressions of natural sounds. These are called *giseigo* ‘phonomimes’ (e.g. *poko poko* (sound of a hungry stomach)) in Japanese. Some Japanese linguists, such as e.g. Shibatani 1990:153, applies the term onomatopoeia to also cover *gitaigo* ‘phenomimes’ and *gijoogo* ‘psychomimes’, which are usually but not always (e.g. *jiito* ‘for a long time’) reduplications of a word or part of a word. In this study, I have chosen to limit the term onomatopoeia to mimetic expressions of natural sounds, and to apply the Japanese terms to the Japanese text. *Giongo*, *giseigo*, *gitaigo* are similar to reduplications in that they mostly consist of a reduplication of a lexeme (e.g. *poko poko* ‘hungry’), but a single lexeme *poko* does not exist. *Poko poko* ‘hungry’ does not have a strong intensifying effect, but adds ‘colour’ to the text.

Function of verbose expressions: Verbosity can have both a strengthening and a weakening function. When used with a strengthening effect, it may mark ‘peaks of involvement’ or ‘climaxes’ in the story (Selting 1994:375), enhance the novelty of one’s expressions, or hold the audience’s interest (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005:281). Idiosyncratic metaphors may create a ‘colourful’ self-image. Others use formulaic metaphors which build on traditions and serve a socially binding function (Tannen 1982:5, Ong 2003:35). Brown and Levinson (1987:104) see items such as e.g. *fantastic* and *horrible* as expressions with a social function, to exaggerate interest, approval, and sympathy with the hearer. When used with a weakening effect on the other hand, verbose expressions may add a sense of ‘non-seriousness’ or playfulness to the proposition. The term ‘non-seriousness’ is borrowed from Chafe (2007:65) who defines the term as “elicited by an appraisal of a situation as something not to be taken seriously”.

Repetition used by the speaker can have the function of keeping the floor, stalling, persuading, or signalling humour, play, and involvement (Tannen 1996:51). Ong (2003:34) holds that in oral communication thought is presented in rhythmic patterns such as repetitions and

formulaic language, and functions to retain and retrieve carefully articulated thought, and keep both the speaker and the hearer surely on track.

Brown and Levinson's off-record strategies (1987:211ff.) use linguistic and rhetorical devices such as metaphors, irony, rhetorical questions, understatements, and tautologies, which they argue aim to show deference rather than rapport. Sifianou (1997:164) however, finds that in Greek, off-record strategies give the hearer an opportunity to show helpfulness and generosity without being directly asked, and argues that it signals positive politeness as it is frequently used among closely related people, and communicate to the hearer their belief in similar social value and common desires. She further finds that off-record strategies such as understatements, overstatements, tautologies, irony, contradictions, metaphors, and rhetorical questions, are not necessarily used out of a concern to minimize impositions, but rather as a means to tell a lively story, emphasize a certain issue, or provoke the hearer's involvement.

3.10.1.4. *Personal stories*

Oral communication tends to place the topic in a familiar context and makes topics personal (this is what I think it means, this is how I feel about it) by drawing reference to the storyteller's own experiences rather than being presented in abstract and general terms (Ong 2003:42, Tannen 1982:6). Tannen (1996:104) holds that storytelling is a "key element in the establishment of interpersonal involvement in conversation," and that the use of *direct quotes* in stories aims to intensify this involvement.

A *personal story* in this study is defined as a story where the speaker draws on a personally experienced incident in order to illustrate a point and which is usually specified in time or place. Often the stories start with a clue such as "the other day" or "once I experienced that". Thus, these are stories that point to a specific event witnessed by the speaker, whereas those who do not tell stories talk generally and are personally detached about a topic. Sometimes it is a longer, elaborated story. At other times it is just a short reference to something personally experienced in order to illustrate a point. The following is an example of how an answer moves from a general statement to a personal story. It is a Norwegian answer to question 6E about whether the Japanese like to improvise or not:

- (7) <N09> As to (question) E, I would say they do not like to improvise (general description). But sometimes I do, so in fact they have started to do it sometimes because they see that I do it@@ (personal description). So, he, one of my colleagues, we work very close and he erm, I

see that he has started to do it a bit now because he sees that I do it... (the start of a personal story). </N09>

Direct quotes is what Maynard (1996:211) calls *multivoicedness* which means that the speaker who tells the story, 'imagines' being the characters in it at the same time. Labov (1972) holds that when speakers tell a story they communicate the point of the story by means of external or internal evaluation. External evaluation is to make comments such as pointing to the topic with remarks such as "and now comes the point" or add how they feel about it with comments such as "when he said that, I got really mad". Typical internal evaluation is direct quotations which are "strategies that build on interpersonal involvement to create the sense of identification or involvement with characters and tellers of stories" (Tannen 1982:8).

Function: Brown and Levinson (1987:117ff.) present jokes, small talk and storytelling with direct quotes and the 'vivid present'²⁰ as a positive politeness strategy in order to presuppose/raise/assert common ground. Tannen (2005:40-41) argues that people with a high-involvement style are most comfortable with personal topics, frequently talk about personal matters to new acquaintances, and tell many stories. A function of telling a story is to encourage the hearer to tell his. A detailed story sets a scene which provides a sense of authenticity, both by testifying that the speaker recalls the details, and by naming recognizable people, places, and activities. Stories, placed in time and space, build on a sense of identification between the speaker and the hearer (Tannen 1996:104). Lastly, they contribute to the point of the story and play a role in the speaker's presentation of self (Tannen 1996:137).

3.10.1.5 *Rapport markers*

Some items such as tags (*isn't it*) seem to be intrinsic rapport builders as they are typically used in conversations or written dialogues, and not normally when speaking to oneself. This study will refer to these as *rapport markers*. Holmes (1984:353) mentions lexical devices which appeal to the hearer's experience and knowledge such as 'you know', 'you see', 'as you know', 'and you know what I mean', interrogative structures (e.g. *isn't she lovely?*),

²⁰ *Vivid present* such as e.g. "I went there to talk to him, and then the man *says*..." conveys a sense of immediacy aimed to heighten the hearer's involvement in the story (Tannen 1996:104). Because tense is only placed on the final verb in a Japanese utterance, I found it difficult to determine vivid present with certainty in the Japanese text. In the Norwegian data, the *vivid present* is commented upon when it appears in a quote in the analytical chapters, but it was not counted.

exclamations (*isn't that great!*), and tag statements (e.g. that was a lark *that was*). Rapport markers also include what Brown and Levinson (1987:106) call *in-group identity markers* which in this study means to use the hearer's first name, the second person pronoun *you*, or ingroup language. In this study in-group language means that the Japanese mix in English or Norwegian to the Norwegian hearer, and the Norwegians use Norwegian. Gossip and small talk (Brown & Levinson 1987: 117), jokes (Brown & Levinson 1987:124), and colloquial language (Lakoff 1979:65) are other frequent rapport markers.

Rapport markers in this study cover any lexical item with a slightly longer rising intonation which seem to ask for the speaker's involvement or confirmation (marked [?] in the English translations) including the Norwegian and Japanese equivalents of the tag-questions 'isn't it, you know', the use of English or Norwegian by the Japanese (the Norwegians naturally used Norwegian to a fellow Norwegian, and might not be considered a rapport marker), the second person pronoun addressing the hearer or hearer's first name, and the use of colloquial language (this includes cases when the Japanese use plain style and idioms, and the Norwegians used dialect expressions that they believed the hearer would know and appreciate). I also argue for personal stories that function as rapport markers (cf. chapter seven).

Function: Unlike the other devices mentioned this far, the function of rapport markers is predominantly directed toward the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, not the content or the speaker's self-image.

3.10.1.6 *First person pronouns and mental verbs*

Animacy (n.)/animate (adj.) is a term used to grammatically or semantically classify nouns based on how sentient or alive the referent of the noun in a given taxonomic scheme is. In such a system, personal pronouns generally have the highest animacy with the first person being highest among them. According to Chafe (1982:46), involvement is more than anything manifested in the speaker's frequent reference to her or himself (*I, me*), the group that he identifies with (*we, us*), and references to the speaker's own mental processes (e.g. *I had no idea, I can recall, I thought*). Dahl (2000:47) calls verbs denoting a person's mental states and acts *mental verbs*, and argues that they are verbs that frequently co-exist with personal pronouns.

Since Japanese is a so-called ‘pro-drop language’ (2.7.2.2) the average number of personal pronouns must be assumed to be lower in Japanese than in Norwegian or English even in a text with many strengthening devices. However, some of the Japanese businessmen in this study have been working with foreigners and speaking English or Norwegian for a long time and might have been influenced by it by using more personal pronouns than what is common in idiosyncratic Japanese. This is discussed further in chapter seven.

Function: The first person pronoun ‘I’ together with mental verbs may signal openness, involvement, and a willingness to take personal responsibility for the proposition by stating the agent explicitly (Luukka & Markkanen 1997:169). According to Chafe (1982:45), personal pronouns are used with the highest frequency in informal, spoken discourse. When it comes to an overt use of first person pronouns in Japanese, Lee and Yonezawa (2008) claim that they are used by the speaker in order to state a contrast (she does, but I do not), to signal personal involvement (I think so), to take the floor (now it’s my turn), and to signal how the speaker views the social relationship as there are several first person pronouns referring to different degrees of formality (cf. 7.7). Thus, to apply the first person pronoun overtly in Japanese when it is not really required, adds an emphasis roughly equivalent to stressing a subject in spoken English, or italicizing it in written English (Yamada 1997:25).

3.10.2 Weakeners

3.10.2.1 Hedges

As mentioned in part 3.5, the term hedge was first used by Lakoff (1972) to mean to make a lexeme more or less ‘fuzzy’. However, as the term was adopted by pragmatists and discourse analysts, a *hedge* has come to mean ways to modify the harshness or hostility of the force of one’s actions (Fraser 1980). Those furthest away from Lakoff’s original definition, are those who use the term *hedging* to mean both the strategies and the devices used in politeness, indirectness, mitigation, vagueness, and understatements (Clemen 1997:239). For instance, Markkanen & Schröder (1997:5) see hedges as “modifiers of the writer’s responsibility for the truth of the propositions expressed or as modifiers of the weightiness of the information given, or the attitude of the writer to the information”. The problem with the term *hedge/hedging* is that it has come to encompass almost any means, strategically or linguistically, to weaken the force of the proposition. Many researchers have attempted to narrow the scope. House &

Kasper (1981:167) use hedges as a subclass of *downgraders* only to mean adverbials, and Murphy (2010:47) uses hedges only in the meaning originally assigned by Lakoff (1972). This study uses the term *weakening* to mean the strategy of weakening the illocutionary force and leaves the term *hedge* for the linguistic devices. Thus, this study uses the term *hedges* only with the following linguistic meaning:

A **hedge** is a lexical item, compound, or phrase which weaken the illocutionary force of the proposition.

Different scholars list different lexical items as hedges: Adverbs such as *maybe, perhaps, probably, somewhat* (Holmes 1984, 2008:298), quantifiers (*some, a little, a bit, more or less, or so*) (Besnier 1990), hedging adjectives (e.g. *insignificant/minor* problems) (Clemen 1997:243), modal verbs or verb phrases which signal a contrast in mood by the help of auxiliary verbs such as e.g. *may, will/would, can/could*, modality with negation such as e.g. *couldn't you* (Clemen 1997:243), and verbs such as *suppose, guess, think, wonder* (Brown and Levinson (1987:145)²¹. Markkanen & Schröder (1997:6), Clemen (1997:235), and Holmes (1984:363) stress that hedges in the same way as intensifiers, are not intrinsically or lexical weakeners but must be interpreted in context. Based on the theories above combined with an examination of how lexemes or linguistic expressions are interpreted as weakening the illocutionary force in the context where they appear, the majority of what is termed *hedge* in this study are adverbs, particles, and verb phrases.

Function: Hedges are used more when the focus is on the socio-emotional concerns than on the task. Hedges are used to modify the weightiness of the information given and the speaker's attitude to the information (Markkanen & Schröder 1997), to convey the speaker's lack of full commitment to the propositional content of the utterance (Vande Kopple 1985), to make the sentence more acceptable to the hearer and thus, increase the chance of ratification (Hübler 1983), and to protect both the speaker's own face from potential anger or humiliation and the hearer's face from imposition (Brown & Levinson 1987). Hedges are marked features of what Tannen (2005) calls the *high-considerateness style* (3.8.1). Lakoff (1975:54) sees the use of hedges predominantly as women's way of apologizing for making an assertion and of reinforcing social distance from the hearer. Holmes (1990), on the other hand, sees the use of hedges as frequently used by women as positive politeness devices to signal solidarity with the addressee.

²¹ For a more extensive list, see e.g. Clemen 1997:243.

3.10.2.2 Hesitation fillers, pauses, and open endings

A *hesitator* (Sifianou 1992, House & Kasper 1981), a *filled pause* or *hesitation filler* is, according to Crystal (2008:188), a term referring to a non-silent pause, that is, a hesitation which has been filled, and therefore also the term 'hesitation filler' (e.g. *erm* in English). A pause in this study is defined as 3 seconds without sound (cf. 5.5.3). An *open ending* signifies an incomplete sentence (e.g. *I would like to do it but.*)

Function: Watanabe (2002) finds that there are two contrasting approaches to fillers; those who see them as pauses filled with sound and regard them more or less as communication defects (e.g. Christenfeld 1994), as opposed to those who believe that fillers convey information about the discourse structure or the speaker's attitude (e.g. Schiffrin 1987). House & Kasper (1981:168) see items such as *erm* and *er* as "deliberately employed malfunctions" in order to prod the hearer about the speaker's hesitancy about performing a speech act. However, hesitation fillers also have a social function in that they help avoid the embarrassment of lengthy pauses, and they make the utterance appear less direct (Sifianou 1992:179). The latter is in line with Lakoff (1975:66ff) who holds that *hedges*, *hesitations*, and *euphemisms* are frequently used to avoid coming head on with one's own ideas. Tannen (2005:88) calls a slow pace with many and longer pauses, fillers, repetitions, and re-phrasings of one's own words 'buffer language' and typical for the high-considerateness style (3.8.1).

Hesitation fillers, pauses, and open endings were important features in the description of 'the Japanese style' (2.7). Maynard (1989:24) delineates fragmentation in the form of pauses, hesitation fillers, and open endings as one major feature of Japanese conversation. These function to show the speaker's hesitancy and uncertainty in expressing himself, but also to invite the hearer into the conversation (e.g. *ikitai kedo* '(I) would like to go but' (what do you think?)), which is a typical feature of what Yamada called *listener-talk* (cf. 2.7.2.4), that is, the type of communication where the listener is responsible for the flow of speech.

3.10.2.3 Disclaimers and self-repairs

This study handles disclaimers and self-repairs under the same section.

Disclaimer is a term used to make reservations concerning the validity or importance of the proposition that will follow. In this study, I define disclaimers as appearing before the utterance as a way to signal doubt that what the speaker is about to say will be correct,

interesting, or important (e.g. '*I don't know if this is relevant for your thesis but the Norwegians are [...]*').

The term *self-repair* in discourse analysis refers to the speaker's own attempt to "make good a real or imagined deficiency in the interaction" (Crystal 2008:413). In this study, I define self-repairs as coming in two major forms; an immediate rephrasing of an expression (e.g. 'it is big, *I mean not small*'), or an additional correction, clarification, or reservation concerning the previous statement (e.g. 'Japanese are indirect, *at least those I am working with*').

Function: According to Holmes (1984:359), using disclaimers signals the speaker's reservation concerning his or her warrant for the speech acts which follows. A similar function is that of apologizing for a possible intrusion (e.g. *I don't want to bother you but [...]*) which are ways to show reluctance and hesitation to impinge on the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987:186).

According to House & Kasper (1981:168), tokens such as 'I mean' and 'actually' may be used in order to restore harmony in cases where the speaker is afraid he has conducted a face threatening act. Lakoff (1975:54) argues that self-repairs even appears in cases where the speaker is certain and there is no danger of offence, but the tag appears anyway as an apology for having made an assertion.

3.10.2.4 Confirmation-seekers

Seeking confirmation means that the speaker is seeking the hearer's support when claiming validity for the proposition. It is difficult to determine whether the speaker in an utterance such as "it is very different, *don't you think*" is really seeking the hearer's confirmation. Therefore, in the data texts, utterances with a tag-question such as that above were only interpreted as such when accompanied by a slightly longer rising intonation which seemed to ask for the speaker's confirmation.

Function: Tannen (2005) sees a tendency to ask frequently for confirmation (*am I right?*) as a marked feature of the high-considerateness style. Lakoff (1975:66) argues that question intonation and tag questions (e.g. *isn't it?*) are rule 2 related devices (cf. 3.8.1) to ask apology for possibly being too assertive when in fact it is something one is certain about.

3.10.2.5 Pronouns with less animacy

Luukka & Markkanen (1997:169) state that “when choosing implicit reference, the writer/speaker is indirect, avoids taking responsibility, and avoids direct reference to the source of information”. ‘Implicit reference’ means, among other things, that the agent is either left out through e.g. agentless passive constructions (e.g. *something should have been done*), or that the first person pronoun ‘I’ is replaced by pronouns with less animacy such as the generic pronoun (e.g. *one* might say that), the third person neutral pronoun (e.g. *it* will be shown that), or plural pronouns (e.g. as *we* all know) whereby distancing the speaker from and including others in sharing responsibility for the assertion. In this study, preference for the first person pronoun ‘I’ is compared to a preference for generic pronouns and the first person plural ‘we’. However, this examination is limited to the Norwegian corpus because since dropping the pronoun is the norm in Japanese, the lack of ‘I’ cannot be used to identify the *understated* style in Japanese.

Function: According to Besnier (1990:425), *it* and *one* are hedging devices used for the purpose of affective distance or social depersonalization. Lakoff (1975:65) sees these together with hypercorrect forms, authorial *we*, passive constructions, titles, and last names as devices used in her rule 1: *Distance* in order not to impose or to remain aloof. To Brown and Levinson (1987:190), a person shows reluctance and hesitation to impinge on the hearer by avoiding the personal pronouns *you* and *I* and instead uses passive voice and other pronouns. House & Kasper (1981:168) understand ‘agent avoider’ as the speaker’s attempt to avoid personal attack.

3.11 Summary of chapter three

This chapter has examined the concepts of directness and indirectness from a linguistic point of view. Whereas directness in the field of intercultural communication was associated both with clarity (*explicit style*) and forthrightness (*upfront style*) (table 1), directness in linguistics seems to be predominantly associated with clarity as defined by Grice’s conversational maxims. Indirectness is different from directness in the sense that the speaker chooses to weaken or strengthen the illocutionary force in the surface illocutionary act (a ‘literal act or to be ‘on-record’) or to be ambiguous by not stating the illocutionary point or only part of it in the surface illocutionary act (‘non-literal’ or ‘off-record’). Thus, both weakeners and

strengtheners are linked to indirectness rather than directness. The theories on directness and indirectness in the two fields are further compared in chapter four.

4 Linking linguistic devices to the four styles

Directness and indirectness in chapter two were linked to four distinct communicative styles which I referred to as the *exacting*, the *upfront*, the *elaborate*, and the *understated styles*. These have been chosen as the conceptual framework for this study. However, in order to operationalize these styles, we need to make some assumptions about their respective linguistic manifestations. As a point of departure, we will compare the list of weakeners and strengtheners in 3.10 to the descriptions of the exacting, upfront, elaborate, and understated style set out in table 1. Comments to table 2 follow below.

DIRECT	Linguistics: Strengtheners and weakeners in 3.10	Intercultural communication: Table 2.2 on direct & indirect styles
A	Strengtheners: Intensifiers, personal stories (with direct quotes), verbosity (infused adjectives and other infused items, metaphors, idioms, repetitions, reduplications, onomatopoeia), exaggerated facts, rapport markers (tags, lexical devices which appeal to the hearer's experience and knowledge, interrogative structures, in-group identity markers such as first names, second person pronoun, in-group language, colloquial language, and information only shared by the in-group such as e.g. jokes), first person pronouns, mental verbs	Direct exacting style: literal, articulated, precise, exact, clear, to the point, factual.
B		Direct upfront style: frank, forthright, honest, open, confrontational, assertive, persuasive.
C		Indirect elaborate style: rich, expressive, elaborated with over-assertions, verbal exaggerations, metaphors, similes, flowery expressions, elaborate rhythm, proverbs and cultural idioms, strings of adjectives, and repetitions.
D INDIRECT	Weakeners: Hedges, hesitation fillers, pauses, open endings, disclaimers, self-repairs, confirmation-seekers, pronouns with less animacy	Indirect understated style: implicit, interpretive, vague, approximate and imprecise with subtle messages, hints, understatements, indirection, circumlocution, pauses, and silences.

Table 2: Weakeners and strengtheners compared to the direct/indirect styles in table 1 (author's model)

A: The exacting style

From a linguistic point of view, the main purpose of being direct is to get the message across with maximum clarity and minimum need for interpretation (Grice 1967, Lakoff 1973), which

means that both weakeners and strengtheners must be avoided. The style described as “literal, precise, exact, explicit, and clear” in the intercultural field is likely to be the one corresponding to this view of directness.

B: The upfront style

If we compare the strengtheners to intercultural communication theories we find that strengtheners have features in common with **both directness and indirectness** in the intercultural communication field.

On the one hand, compared to Grice’s minimalistic view on directness, the ‘direct’ *upfront style* characterized as “frank, forthright, honest, open, confrontational, assertive, and persuasive” (table 1), not only has a rational wish for clarity, but also an affective wish to share one’s thoughts upfront, and if necessary be, confrontational, as one’s own intentions and thoughts are better noticed when they are somewhat exaggerated or underlined. In 2.5 we referred to descriptions of a direct style with many lexemes such as ‘absolutely’, which indicates a direct style strengthening the illocutionary force more than the exacting style. In addition, this type of directness was proposed to have many references to the agent ‘I’ (2.5.1). The motivation is not only self-disclosure (assertive, capable, authoritative, in control) (cf. 3.7) sometimes combined with a desire to affect the other’s opinions (persuasive) (cf. 3.6), but also a wish to engage actively and personally in sharing ideas (open, honest, frank). Looking at the description of the strengthening devices in 3.10.1, *intensifiers*, *exaggerated facts*, *first person pronouns*, and *mental verbs* might be those most likely to accommodate these needs. According to Ting-Toomey (2.5.1), directness is employed when there are no other-face concerns. However, the term ‘upfront’ in an English-Norwegian dictionary (Engelsk ordbok 2011) is translated into *åpen* ‘open’, *rett på sak* ‘head-on’, and *oppriktig* with connotations such as ‘genuine’ and ‘sincere’ (cf. 9.3), which might be said to have positive connotations. Nevertheless, from the intercultural viewpoint this type of directness is used with the least chance of offence or threat among people with a low need for uncertainty avoidance (cf. 2.5), who favour symmetrical interactions (cf. 2.5.3), and who are familiar with separating person and ideas (cf. 2.5.6), i.e. a typical trait of individualistic cultures.

C: The elaborate style

On the other hand, the ‘indirect’ elaborate style (table 1) exemplified by Middle Eastern cultures also has traits similar to the strengtheners listed in 3.10.1 such as metaphors, similes

(i.e. open endings), flowery expressions (i.e. verbosity), idioms, and repetitions, devices which have been placed under the collective term *verbosity* in 3.10. Thus, these are devices that we can assume to find in an elaborate style. Even though ‘exaggeration’ is a tool they also have in common with the *upfront style* described above, the ‘exaggeration’ by way of metaphors, flowery expressions, and cultural idioms are not meant to show assertiveness but rather signal relational equality and negotiate harmony by way of camouflaging one’s intentions and thoughts in rhetorical patterns which might seem exaggerated to outsiders (cf. 2.5.1). Sifianou (3.10.1.3) suggests another function, namely to employ verbosity in order to tell a lively story, emphasize a certain issue, or provoke the hearer’s involvement. Further, based on Lakoff’s camaraderie strategies (3.8.1), Tannen proposes a ‘high-involvement style’ characterized with many personal stories, exaggerations, and rapport building cues. ‘Camaraderie’ has further been linked to positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 3.8.2) and ‘affective face’ (Partington, 3.7), which are based on similar motivations to be relatively informal, non-threatening, congenial (good to be around, open, nice, friendly), and interactional in the sense of aiming to build rapport. Thus, *rapport markers* (3.10.1.5) might be a device linked to this style.

D: The understated style

By using weakeners, one does not avoid saying what one wants, but tries to do it as tactfully as possible by the use of the devices in 3.10.2, which weaken the statement and makes it appear less assertive. Similar linguistic devices are typical for the *understated style* often exemplified by cultures in East and South East Asia (table 1). Lakoff (1975:70) and Brown and Levinson (1987:245) call countries such as Britain and Japan typical deference cultures, that is, cultures that use weakeners more than strengtheners. Thus, the ‘Japanese style’ (2.7) is characterized by frequent use of devices such as honorifics, hedges, and other modifying devices which soften the message, limited use of first and second person pronouns, frequent hesitation fillers and pauses, open endings, and apologetic laughter. Researchers seem to agree that the understated style is a typical trait of collectivistic cultures high in uncertainty-avoidance and power distance (cf. 2.5.1). However, Tannen (3.8.1) found similar traits in individualistic societies in the style she called the ‘high-considerateness style’. In order not to impose their intentions strongly on the interlocutors and also give themselves time to get to know the other party before getting too close, speakers with a high-considerateness style avoid personal topics and beat about the bush by using hedges, frequent pauses, open endings, and many fillers. Thus, other-face concerns are not necessarily the only driving force when

using this style. The devices mentioned above are those that we can expect to find in the understated style.

From this comparison, we can make the following hypotheses:

- The *exacting style* can be expected not to apply many devices which strengthen (part 3.10.1) or weaken (part 3.10.2) the illocutionary force, and thereby adhere to Grice's maxims.
- The *upfront style* can be expected to use more of the devices in part 3.10.1, which strengthen the illocutionary force.
- The *elaborate style* too can be expected to use more devices which strengthen the illocutionary force. Data analysis will be helpful in order to clarify the distinction between the upfront and the elaborate styles.
- The *understated style* can be expected to use more of the weakening devices in part 3.10.2.

These hypotheses will be tested against the Japanese and Norwegian data in chapter seven to eleven. The question is whether there are any particular devices listed in table 3 that are used more in one style than in the other, and to what degree the styles differ or to what degree they overlap.

		exacting	upfront	elaborate	understated
Strengthening devices in part 3.10.1	Intensifiers	Less	More	More	Less
	Personal stories				
	Verbosity		✓	✓	
	Exaggerated facts				
	Rapport markers				
	First person pronouns				
	Mental verbs				
Weakening devices in part 3.10.2	Hedges	Less	Less	Less	More
	Hesitation fillers				
	Pauses				
	Open endings				✓
	Disclaimers				
	Self-repairs				
	Confirmation-seekers				
	Personal pronouns with less animacy				

Table 3: Hypotheses about which linguistic devices are linked to the four styles

5 Methods and corpora

5.1 Qualitative research

Both the purpose of this study and its methods for data collection and analysis represent a *qualitative* approach. The sample size is small (41 individuals) collected through semi-structured interviews, and the data are interpreted through content analysis. The study is generalizable in the sense that the linguistic tools (choice of linguistic devices and analysing methods) employed to interpret a person's communicative style are transferable to other similar studies. The weakness of a qualitative study is that even though the researcher finds support for her findings in other similar studies, the research procedures are less standardized and the findings more dependent on the researcher's subjective interpretation than is the case with, for instance, statistical data (Dörnyei 2007:41). The strength, on the other hand, is that by an in-depth study of each particular subject, the researcher is closer to both the subject and his/her text and stands a better chance of understanding the complexity of that person's communicative style than she would have achieved through for instance a survey, which at best could only gain insights into a person's perceptions of his/her own communicative style.

In quantitative research using standardized methods, the quality criteria *reliability* and *validity* are meant to ensure that a replicated study obtains the same result as the original one. In qualitative research, different researchers, participants, and context might influence the process and lead to somewhat different results even though the same method and theoretical framework are used. Thus, instead of adopting the quality criteria from quantitative research, this study will employ the taxonomies of validity in qualitative research proposed by Maxwell (1992) as a guide to establishing a credible research outcome. In the following, I present Maxwell's taxonomies with comments about how they were followed. Further, comments are made on cases where a recommendation could not be followed in full, and state what measures were taken to compensate for this.

- 1) *Descriptive validity* stands for the factual accuracy of the researcher's account. Whereas *positivism*, the model of science commonly used in a quantitative approach, treats facts as existing independently from the activities of the participants (Silverman 2010:102), the qualitative researcher sees facts as constructed in particular contexts by

particular people in accordance with a *constructivist* scientific model (Silverman 2010:108). In such a view, objectivism in scientific research does not exist (Fog 2004: Ch. 9). However, qualitative researchers make an effort to describe the participants, the context, the methods, the material, and the process with as much accuracy and detail as possible. In this process, a research log is a useful tool, and was also used for this study. Dörnyei (2007:58) suggests that *multiple investigators* collect and interpret data in order to avoid one researcher's subjective interpretation. In order to accommodate this, I asked a native speaker of Japanese to listen to and comment on the recordings which we discussed afterwards. The questions he was asked to reflect on were these:

- i. What is your general impression of the informant?
 - a. friendly, unfriendly, uneasy, relaxed...
 - b. Why this impression? Because s(he) says:...
- ii. Any linguistic particularities?
 - a. Dialect, word(s) s(he) uses very much, high/slow pace etc.
- iii. Do you think the informant is 'a typical Japanese'?
 - a. Why/why not?

Upon sharing our impressions, there were times when a way of expressing something had brought no negative reaction in the researcher, but was deemed inappropriate or rude by the native speaker. This illustrates how important and how tacit the conventions Austin calls *felicity conditions* (cf. 3.4) are to communication, and how different our tacit knowledge about appropriateness is. His comments will be included where relevant to the analysis.

- 2) *Interpretive validity* means that the researcher "seeks to comprehend phenomena not on the basis of the researcher's perspective and categories, but from those of the participants in the situation studied" (Maxwell 1992:289). Thus, the participant's own voice must be strong through direct quotes and choice of terms. However, no researcher has direct access to the participant's mind, and therefore there is always an element of construction²² on the part of the researcher in how the data are selected and organized. Another strategy to ensure interpretive validity is to ask for participant's feedback (Dörnyei 2007:58). It is a much recommended principle in content analysis to repeat the process of data collection and data analysis several times so that the

²² In a constructivist view, the observer has his own tacit beliefs by which he observes and analyses the empirical data (Fuchs 2001:15).

interviewees have time to reflect on their answers and can correct prior mistakes or add new insights, which in turn gives the researcher a chance to ask for feedback on her findings. However, due to the geographical distance to Japan and maybe more importantly, the time schedule of the business executives as on average, it took seven weeks from the preliminary request to some of the Japanese participants until an interview could take place, a follow-up interview was considered unrealistic. Instead, the findings of a person's particular style were compared to what s(he) her/himself had said about her/his communicative style during the interview (cf. 11.2).

- 3) *Theoretical validity* means that the data should generate a level of theoretical abstraction that finds support in already established theories within the field. This study aimed to achieve this through the use of a research log and a circular analysis between data and theory and between the data itself in a content analysis as described in 5.5.4 and 5.5.5 below.
- 4) *Generalizability*, in Maxwell's view, does not mean general validity to larger contexts as the term is used in quantitative research, but rather that the main ideas and the process of one particular study might be transferable to another. When the method used is the interview, *internal generalizability*, that is, understanding the nature of the situation and the relationship during the interview is important because the researcher meets the informants for too short a time to draw inference to other situations or other people. This study aimed to give a detailed and truthful account of the process from data collection, via transcription and analysis until presentation of results adhering to general scientific principles.
- 5) *Evaluative validity* is about how accurately the research account assigns value judgment to the phenomenon. A linguist can look at outward displays of involvement and attitudes through styles and strategies in order to make certain interpretive frames relevant and available for the interpretation of an interlocutor's talk. However, I take the same stand as Selting (1994:376) who argues that "linguistic analysis can deal neither with the investigation of 'real' involvement and its relation to a person's inner psychological world, nor with the inner significance of meanings of emotions or emotional communication. These are, and must remain, the task of psychologists and psychoanalysts". Therefore, any suggestions about 'why' the participants speak as

they do are made only tentatively. Instead, the presence of the informant's own voice is strong.

5.2 Interviews as a method for data collection

To collect data through an interview is one of the most common techniques in qualitative research. The more structured the interview is, the more the interviewer can ensure that the interviewee focuses on the target topic. At the same time, such structuring limits the spontaneity in the responses. This study opted for a semi-structured interview because by asking the interviewees to answer the same questions, the content could more readily be compared. On the other hand, the interview guide is not fully structured because the researcher wanted to elicit as much spontaneous talk from the speakers as possible.

Concerning the latter, an interview situation is not an ideal setting for spontaneous talk and I had anticipated that it might restrain the participants into speaking more formally and cautiously than they would normally. In fact, Labov (2003:234) states that "we know that, as long as we are asking questions and receiving answers, the speaker is using a relatively "careful" or "consultative" style" which is different to that used to friends and family". Looking at the large variation in communicative styles in the results, however, it seems that, contrary to my beliefs, the context caused limited constraints. An advantage of using interviews in multicultural research is that the interview setting carries some predictability in that the interviewees know more or less what is expected of them, and, I believe there is relatively little cultural variation in these expectations between the Japanese and Norwegians.

Observer's paradox (Labov 1972) is another possible constraint which means that the observer (or interviewer in this case) can constrict the speaker's language production in some way. The Japanese informants tended to start out at a very slow pace, probably because they were not used to speaking Japanese to a foreigner and were not sure of her level of proficiency. By the second question however, they seemed to have gained their 'normal' pace. One might suspect that the speakers would adopt a communicative style similar to that of the hearer, but again, the large variation in style in the results testifies against it. On the contrary, when listening to the tapes, it becomes obvious that it is rather the interviewer who adapts her pace and choice of words to match with the speaker's. In the words of Söderberg and Vaara (2003:37): "the researcher takes on the role of a fellow traveller." Kvale & Brinkmann

(2009:68) argue that when the interviewer is perceived as a fellow traveller it is because the interview and the later analysis are seen as interwoven phases in a construction of knowledge with emphasis on the narrative told.

The Social desirability bias means that during an interview speakers tend to answer what they think is the 'appropriate answer' either to the interviewer or in accordance with social norms (Dörnyei 2007:141). One might suspect that the Japanese informants in particular would exhibit a certain degree of caution in criticizing Norwegians or the Norwegian way in front of a Norwegian interviewer. The fact that many of them criticized quite freely, somewhat surprised the interviewer. A possible explanation could be the interviewer's inferior position in age and status as Japanese superiors tend to be more direct to inferiors (cf. 2.7.3). However, even the participants of the same age did not seem to care. Thus, another explanation may be that because the interviewer spoke Japanese and obviously was familiar with Japanese culture coupled with the fact that she is not normally part of the business world, might have made them view her as partly an insider on the one hand, and as a neutral observer on the other.

The location of the interview in time and space seems to have an effect on how the questions were perceived and the answers presented. At least in this study, the Norwegians in the pilot study being on their home ground and with their experiences of living in Japan behind them seemed to 'simplify' their experiences more in black and white than did the Norwegians in Japan. Being on home ground also seems to have influenced the Japanese in Tokyo in that they never talk about how they could adapt to or better understand the Norwegians whereas the Norwegians in Tokyo did. There is more about this in chapter six.

Lastly, the interviews were conducted at the informants' work places, an environment which in itself might have some influence on the language, such as e.g. the level of formality. In this study however, the variety of the communicative styles within the same workplace environment suggests that the location did not have a significant effect on the style used. However, this is not the same as to presume that the informants therefore use the same strategies or styles when they meet other business executives in a business context where gains and losses are part of the context.

5.3 Ethics

The Data Protection Official for Research has been notified about the project which, adheres to the guidelines grounded in the Personal Data Act (<http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern>).

5.4 The pilot project

The pilot study was interviews conducted in spring 2007 in Bergen and Oslo among thirteen Norwegian business executives with long experience in doing business with the Japanese. Seven of them have been stationed in Japan, but except for one who recently returned to Norway, the experience of living in Japan is distant in time.

Dörnyei (2007:75) argues that a piloting stage in qualitative research is not as essential to test out the research tools as it is in quantitative research. However, I believe it is important in order to obtain some grounding about the ‘culture’ that one is about to enter, in this case the Japanese-Norwegian business world. In addition, the aim of the pilot study was to learn about which critical issues were common in the Norwegian-Japanese business environment in order to prepare an interview guide for data analysis in Japan. The interviewer had prepared ten questions but did not follow them strictly as the interviewees tended to have many stories to tell. Thus, one might say that it was a relatively open or semi-structured interview lasting from an hour to an hour and a half.

The answers from the pilot study were analysed by the use of a *content analysis*, a method that is explained in detail in part 5.5.4. The results formed the basis for the interview questions used during data collection in Tokyo.

5.5 Data collection in Tokyo

The data material for this study was collected from the interviews of 41 Japanese and Norwegian business executives in Tokyo during the autumns of 2007 and 2008. The reason for interviewing Norwegian and Japanese business executives in Japan was two-fold:

- 1) To examine whether the general impression from the pilot study would be confirmed, or whether the answers in the pilot study conducted in Norway were a result of geographical distance to their Japanese colleagues and customers.

2) To see if the Japanese informants could shed light on, or provide some explanations for the statements from the Norwegian business executives in Norway.

Thus, the interview guide was not created to find evidence for variation in communicative styles or strategies but aimed to encourage interviewees to talk about their work experiences communicating with the Norwegians/Japanese. The interest in directness and indirectness and ultimately communicative styles was a result of field observations which is not an uncommon start for qualitative research described as a method with an emergent research design meaning that “the research focus is narrowed down only gradually and the analytic categories/concepts are defined during, rather than prior to, the process of research” (Dörnyei 2007:37).

The data were collected in Norwegian and Japanese using a Norwegian and a Japanese interview guide.

5.5.1 The interview guide and the interviewing process

One question asked in the pilot study was whether the informants were familiar with the terms *intercultural* or *cross-cultural communication*. I found that this question placed restrictions on the informants in that so far they had to a large degree indulged in exciting stories from their long experience of doing business with the Japanese, but here was an academic question about terms that made them somewhat ill at ease. Also it was not necessary to ask further since it became clear that none of them had ever heard about the terms. The final interview guide looked like this (translated into English) (Norwegian and Japanese versions in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2):

Interview guide

1. For how long and under what circumstances have you been working with [Norwegians/Japanese] professionally?
2. Your age: 20-29 · 30-39 · 40-49 · 50-59 · 60-69
3. Are you a seller or a buyer?
4. How do you communicate with your [Norwegian/Japanese] business partners or colleagues?
E-mail, telephone, meetings, other?
5. What are your experiences communicating with [Norwegians/Japanese] professionally?
6. An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your [Norwegian/Japanese] business partners or colleagues?
 - A. a. state vaguely what they want · b. state clearly what they want
 - B. a. formal · b. informal
 - C. a. thorough · b. less thorough
 - D. a. concerned with details · b. look at the overall situation

- E. a. do not like to improvise · b. like to improvise
 - F. a. often show emotions at work · b. do not often show emotions at work
 - G. a. often appear to ask colleagues for advice · b. seem to take many decisions on their own
 - H. a. must be asked twice · b. enough to ask once
7. Do you speak or behave differently when you speak to a [Norwegian/Japanese] compared to a [Japanese/Norwegian] national?
 8. Does the use of English affect the way you communicate?
 9. Has the way [Norwegians/Japanese] behave or speak affected the way you behave or speak in any way?
 10. Do you think knowledge about someone's culture is important in order to do business with them?
 11. How have you acquired skills to do business with [Norwegians/Japanese]?
 - a) books
 - b) internet
 - c) course/special training
 - d) learned from colleagues or other acquaintances
 - e) learnt through trial and error
 - f) do not see the need for special skills
 - g) other
 12. Is it your impression that [Norwegians/Japanese] you have met have knowledge about the [Japanese/Norwegians]?
 13. A former Japanese ambassador to Norway said in a speech that Norwegians should do more business with the Japanese since we are so alike. What are your thoughts about that?
-

Question 1 was a 'safe' starting point for the interviewee and gave an opportunity to get to know each other, relax, and build common ground. It was also important for the researcher to know how long the informants had been living abroad because it became an important issue both in understanding how they spoke and how they perceived the world around them. Question 2 was asked because age, at least in a Japanese context, is related to status which is also an important factor in understanding values and communicative styles. Question 3 was necessary to ask given the fact that the position of the customer is very different from that of a seller in Japan. Question 4 was important in order to limit the scope to a business context. Except for two or three cases, when the informants talked about "them", they did not mean Japanese or Norwegians in general, but "my Norwegian/Japanese colleagues or customers". Especially to the informants who had many stories to tell, question four tended to blend into the next. Question 5 was made open because the interviewer wanted to elicit the interviewees stories and 'critical incidents' (cf. 5.5.4). However, one third of the Japanese informants did not understand such an open question and the interviewer had to rephrase it by using the original question from the pilot study which was: "Have you experienced anything enjoyable, problematic or surprising in communicating with the Norwegians in business?" Question number 6 was based on the results from the pilot study. The main aim was to find whether the issues that occupied the Norwegians in the pilot study the most, also were the ones felt as the

most critical issues to those working in Tokyo. One might argue, and to a large extent I agree, that to give a limited choice between A or B is not a good technique in qualitative research. However, the average Japanese interview lasted 40 minutes, and the average Norwegian 1 ½ hours which gave the informants time to elaborate on their answers by adding such comments as “the customers are A because..., but my colleagues are mostly B”. Thus, although I am the first to admit that multiple choice questions could limit more than clarify, I rather prefer asking them in an interview situation with relatively more time at hand, than in a questionnaire. I also believe that the findings from this question confirmed the impressions from the pilot study and strengthened the impression of which are the central issues or problem areas in the Norwegian/Japanese business community. Questions 7 and 9 asked the informants to make observations on their own behaviour, and seen in retrospect, are quite impossible questions to answer. Therefore, the interviewer frequently followed up with questions such as “when you return to Japan/Norway, does anyone tell you that you have changed?” or “it is often easier to see that one has changed when someone from home is visiting for the first time. Have you ever made such an observation?” Despite the problems with these types of questions, the answers turned out to be some of the most interesting in the interview. Question 8 was only asked in the first round of interviews in autumn 2007 (28 interviews) and skipped when conducting the remaining thirteen in autumn 2008. There were two reasons for this. First, many of the informants overlooked this question because they had already been through the role of using English in question 7. Secondly, the Japanese translation turned out to be misleading (I had a native speaker do it for me, but purely due to my lack of experience, I did not do any second translation or back translation) and the Japanese informants did not understand the question. Question 10 was based on a Norwegian study (Colbjørnsen, Drake and Haukedal 2001) where only 13% of the 3690 Norwegian “managers” who participated in a survey believed that they need more insight into other cultures in order to do business. Question 11 was asked in order to learn to what degree business executives receive in house training before going abroad. Questions 12 and 13 were usually answered together and gave useful insights both into how they looked at their own and other countries, and turned the focus from looking at opposites to looking at similarities. All in all, as an afterthought, although the final interview guide had been made significantly more open than the first draft, I would have preferred it to have been even more so. However, as mentioned about question 5; when I did make it open, some informants found it difficult to remember or sort out their experiences.

The interviews ended with a question about whether there was anything more they would like to add, but usually they did not.

5.5.2 The informants

The data for this study has been collected from 20 Norwegians (17 male, 3 female) and 21 Japanese (15 male, 6 female) informants. All informants live and work in the Tokyo area.

The different sampling strategies to choose from are mainly divided between a homogeneous sampling where the participants share important experiences relevant to the study, or a maximum variation sampling which aims to select a large variety of experiences within a community (Dörnyei 2007:127-128). This study has chosen the former for two reasons. One is that since language use and language interpretation are highly influenced by context, it would be impossible to reach any results with theoretical validity from such complex data as those that would be generated from interviews conducted in different contexts such as e.g. to include students or to conduct interviews in an informal setting after work. The other reason is connected to *saturation*, which means that one collects data as long as new data seem to gain new information (Dörnyei 2007:244). The more homogeneous the sampling group is, the sooner one is likely to reach saturation (Dörnyei 2007:127). Since the informants for this study were selected from similar contexts, i.e. the business environment in Tokyo, the researcher noticed that the second round of interviews conducted in autumn 2008 did not yield much new information but strengthened the impressions from the interviews conducted in autumn 2007, which means that saturation had probably been reached by then. Therefore, further interviews were not found to be necessary.

The informants are similar in that they all live in Tokyo, they all work in business (mostly in sales), and they were all interviewed in their offices. However, there are also differences. Differences in gender, age, and title have been documented to have strong influence on the Japanese' style (cf. 2.7), but less so on the Norwegian style (cf. 2.6). Further, the informants vary with regards to length and quality of contact with the Norwegian/Japanese culture, which I argue have an impact of degree of directness/indirectness. After searching whole-heartedly for Japanese and Norwegian female business executives, I found only a few (9/41). Since there are few women in my material, I have chosen not to emphasize the literature on differences in the use of directness and indirectness in male and female communication. The

informants also vary with regard to type of profession. For example, working in shipping or in advertising might encourage different styles in the work place. However, I have not been able to find literature that address different communicative styles in different professions in Japan and Norway. Finally, anecdotal evidence in Norwegian suggests that dialects vary with regards to communicative style, but due to lack of empirical evidence, it will be difficult to discuss it in this study.

5.5.2.1 The Japanese informants

11 of the Japanese informants are over 50 years old, and clearly higher in status than the interviewer who is in her early 40s. The remaining ten informants are in their 40s (seven) and their 30s (three).

Six of the informants work in large Japanese trading houses and have been stationed in Norway as part of their career path; five of them also in other countries in addition to Norway. They are all in their 50s, which means that they are high up in the company hierarchy, i.e. their title has the word general manager (Deputy General Manager, Assistant to General Manager), or president (President, Executive Vice President) in it. One has the title “Administrative Officer” in English and *riji* (理事) in Japanese, which is a high level administrative title, and another has the English title “Senior Corporate Officer” and in Japanese *torishimariyaku* (取締役), which is a title right below the president level. Five of these were transferred to Norway for a period of 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 years. One has not lived in Norway but 9 years in the USA and in Singapore. As employees of trading houses they are involved both in buying and selling products.

Thirteen of the Japanese work or have worked for a Norwegian company in Japan and two have worked for a Norwegian company in Norway. Most have worked for the Norwegian company since the 90s, but there are two who started in the early 80s and have worked about 25 years for the Norwegians. Those who had lived the longest period of time in Norway (but back in Japan at the time of the interview), resided there for 31, 17, 12 and 10 years. Titles vary more among those employed by Norwegian companies, from president, vice president, and general manager to title unknown because they did not hand over a business card.

One informant is working for an international company in Tokyo and has contact with Norwegians through a project with Norwegian leadership. Seven of the informants have never

worked abroad. Six of these work for Norwegian companies in Tokyo, and one runs her own company as distributor for Norwegian products. She is the only informant who runs her own company. An overview of the Japanese informants is to be found in Appendix 4.

5.5.2.2 The Norwegian informants

In figure 1 the term *Scandinavians* was used with a common reference to Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Finns, and Icelanders. Even though to an outsider the Scandinavian culture and communication style may seem homogeneous, several Scandinavian studies (2.6.1) stress the differences. Therefore, the Scandinavian informants selected for this study were all Norwegians. As mentioned in the introduction, of the twenty-four Norwegians working for companies listed by the Norwegian embassy in Tokyo at the time of the interviews, eighteen were interviewed for this study. The remaining two Norwegians worked in American firms.

Among the Norwegians, 17 out of 20 are in their 30s and 40s. Compared to the Japanese informants, some have very high status to be in their 30s and early 40s with titles such as *general manager*, which is translated into the Japanese title *buchoo* ‘general manager’, *executive director* translated into the Japanese title *senmu* (専務), which in larger companies is third in power below the president and the vice president, and *president*, which is translated into the Japanese title *daihyoo torihikuyaku shachoo*. Titles vary a great deal and direct translations of foreign business titles into Japanese are sometimes preferred to titles in the Japanese hierarchy such as *technology manager* written *manaajaa* in the Japanese alphabet *katakana*, and *sales and marketing director* and *director of strategic market development* written *direkutaa* in Japanese. Two run their own companies, two work in an American and one in an international company, and the rest in Norwegian firms. Thus, none of the Norwegians work in Japanese companies, even though one of the American companies has Japanese leadership. One who works in a Norwegian company’s immediate boss is a Japanese, and three previously had Japanese bosses.

Nine of the twenty Norwegian informants speak fluent Japanese. They have been living in Japan for 37 (one person), 19 (one person), 16 (two persons), 14 (one person), 12 (one person), 11 (one person), and 5 (two persons) years. Most of them came to Japan as students or soon after graduating from University, married a Japanese citizen, and stayed on in Japan.

The remaining 11 informants who do not speak Japanese have been in the country for 6 ½ (one), 5 (one), 4 (one), and the remaining eight people from 2 ½ years to 6 months. Only two are in Japan on short term contracts and therefore know that they will return home after their contracts have ended. All Norwegians work in promotion/sales of Norwegian products. An overview of the Norwegian informants is to be found in Appendix 3.

5.5.3 Recording and transcription

The interviews were recorded using an IC Recorder and then transcribed. Since this research looks for verbal coding properties, prosodic features such as intonation and stress have not been marked, except for emotionally charged segments that have been underlined because they signal degree of involvement. Further, non-verbal signals were not marked except for pauses and hesitation fillers mentioned in 2.7 as characteristic of the Japanese communicative style. Lastly, this study does not focus on the conversation process between two participants but aims to identify and describe the linguistic devices used by particular persons and thus, turns of talk have not been marked. These are the transcription tools used:

ELFA Transcription Guide (7/2004) with modifications

Utterance begins	<N1>
Utterance ends	</N1>
Names of participants	The Norwegians: <N + a number 1-20> The Japanese: <J + a number 21-42> The interviewer is marked <interviewer>
Uncertain transcription	(text)
Unintelligible speech	(xx)
Reading aloud	<READING> text <READING>
Switching into a foreign word:	<FOREIGN> text <FOREIGN>
Laughter	@ @
Laughter-talk	@text@
Brief pauses while speaking 1-2 sec ²³	,
Pause 3 sec	.
Pause 4 sec or longer	<P:05>
Rising intonation used when clearly addressing the hearer (only used in the Japanese transcriptions)	[?]

²³ In the original ELFA Transcription Guide (7/2004), a comma marks a brief pause while speaking 2-3 seconds, and a period mark marks a pause of 3-4 seconds. My impression is that if I had marked a 3-second break with comma, there would have been so few period marks in my sample that it was not needed. It seems to me that the overall pace in my samples was higher than the texts the ELFA Transcription Guide was originally created for.

Hesitations:

In the original ELFA Transcription Guide (7/2004) they suggest to use these hesitation marks: er for the sound /*öö*/, erm for the sound /*(ö)m*/, and ah for the sound /*aa*/. I use these when I translate Norwegian and Japanese texts into English in the analysis.

The following Japanese hesitation fillers are all translated into [erm] in English:

[e(et)to (o)]	え (っー) と(ー)
[ee]	えー
[aa]	あー
[n][nn]	ん (ー)
[uun]	うーん
[ano(o)]	あの (ー)
[ma(a)]	ま (あ) (erm, well)
[oo]	おー
[uu]	うー
[nto]	んと
[soo desu ne]	そうですね

Norwegian hesitation fillers are transcribed as *erm*, *ee* or *e* and translated into English as ‘erm’, ‘er’ or ‘e’:

<i>erm</i> / <i>(ö)m</i> /
<i>ee</i> / <i>öö</i> / (<i>ee</i> is written ‘er’ in English)
<i>e</i> / <i>ö</i> /

The latter, *e* /*ö*/, is used for a sound that is added to a word such as in:

Du vet e, den tidligere statsminister Koizumi, han e, han var jo en veldig populær kar her.
‘you know /*ö*/, the former prime minister Koizumi, he /*ö*/, he was a very popular guy here.’

Lexical items from Norwegian dialects that are not usually seen in written text have been modified into standard written *bokmål* or *nynorsk*.

The answers to Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q10, Q12, and Q13 were transcribed. Since the purpose of Q1, Q2, and Q3 was to establish the informant’s background, the answers to those were not. Question 8 was omitted on the basis of translation problems (cf. 5.5.1) and question 11 omitted because it has no relevance to the research questions (1.2).

5.5.4 Content analysis

Content analysis is a reflective method frequently used in qualitative research when analysing the content of communication. The method was used both on the pilot study content and the content of the data collected in Tokyo. In this work, *content analysis* is used incorporating Flanagan's (1954) *Critical Incidents Technique* and *cluster analysis* as described by Tesch (1990).

The critical incident technique (Flanagan 1954) is a technique invented to collect data on observations previously made and reported from memory, and on the grounds that reporting of facts regarding behaviour is preferable to the collection of interpretations, ratings, and opinions based on general impressions. Thus, according to Flanagan, the most valuable parts of a text are those where the informant tells his personal stories/experiences, and his feelings and opinions about them. Reporting should be limited to those behaviours which according to competent observers make a significant contribution to the activity, and creating categories should then have this as the starting point. Masumoto (2004:5), who analyses interviews of Japanese and Americans employees in a Japanese company, defines 'critical incidents' as follows: "All reports that either explicitly or through tone of voice and emotional intensity were identified as 'critical incidents'". In the current study, this technique influenced the type of questions asked in the interview guide, the interviewer's attitude during the interview, and the selection of themes for further inspection.

Masumoto (2004:5) continues to explain her method as follows: "The transcripts were examined to identify recurrent themes [...] and closely related themes were grouped together following a cluster analysis" where upon she refers to Tesch (1990). The way the term *cluster analysis* is used by Tesch is very different to how it is used in corpus linguistics where clustering stands for "the analysis of how language systematically clusters into combinations of words" (Murphy 2010:42). Tesch (1990:64) explains it as a practical tool to perform a qualitative content analysis. Ideologically it draws on *ethnographic content analysis* as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in that the categories are not established prior to analysing the data, and analysing is the process where the researchers go back and forth between data and conceptualization. It further draws on *Phenomenography* (Marton 1981, 1986) in that the researcher tries to map/categorize how different people explain what is going on around them, and does not focus on the researcher's interpretations and explanations. The

name of the categories should preferably relate to the meaning, not to the researchers interpretation of the meaning. The following is a summary of Tesch's steps for analysis:

1. Analysis and data collection run parallel and drive each other on.
2. The analysis process is systematic and comprehensive but not rigid. The analysis process ends when new data no longer generate new insights.
3. The researcher takes memos throughout the process, especially to try to avoid one's own presuppositions in the interpretation work.
4. The whole text is read through first. The text is then segmented into relevant and meaningful units, while the connection to the whole is maintained. A meaningful unit is "a part of the description whose phrases require each other to stand as a distinguishable moment" (Tesch 1990:93), and can be a topic, a statement, or a fact.
5. Any meaning units which show similarities are clustered together and categorized. It is difficult to handle more than forty categories at the same time. Some categories might relate to the conceptual framework or to a research question, but the organizing system is by and large derived from the data themselves.
6. Data are being read and re-read in order to find commonalities or regularities. Comparing and contrasting help forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning data segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, and finding negative evidence.
7. The categories are modified and refined until a satisfactory system is established, which eventually will lead the researcher to see the constituents of the phenomenon, i.e. the emergence of patterns (Tesch 1990:68).
8. This process is not standardized and only limited by the creative involvement of each individual researcher.
9. However, the researcher must adhere to scientific principles.
10. The final goal is the emergence of a larger consolidated picture presented as a summary, a description of patterns and themes, a proposed hypothesis or theoretical concept, or as a solution to a problem.

Ideally, this method requires the researcher to suspend all prior theoretical notions and rather see if any theory or hypothesis can be developed directly from the patterns found in the collected data in a so called *grounded theory construction* (Glaser and Strauss 1967:2ff). This is believed to put fewer mental constraints on the observer. However, a linguist will always have language structures and communication strategies at the back of their mind when

listening to other people talk, and a lecturer of Japanese culture and communication is apt to meet the Japanese with certain expectations as to which strategies and styles they are most likely to use. In addition, it is difficult not to automatically compare data to already existing categories such as those of Hofstede or Hall (cf. chapter 2). Thus, the final categories might have been somewhat influenced by prior knowledge and I believe it might be somewhat unrealistic to claim that one can do research by abandoning all prior knowledge.

As a result of doing a content analysis on the answers from the pilot study, the following nine categories are those that are used in chapter six with the following definitions:

- *(In)directness*: If the statement reveals something about a message being stated implicitly or explicitly as in Hall's definition of high and low context communication in 2.3.
- *(In)formality*: If the statement reveals something about social hierarchy or a person-oriented versus a status-oriented verbal style (2.5.3).
- *English*: If the statement reveals something about the use of English.
- *Thoroughness*: This category is similar to the category called *details* in that it deals with how thoroughly a task is performed (into what level of details), but also covers for instance how carefully you are to answer all e-mails or to what degree plans, projects, or schedules are planned/prepared thoroughly or roughly (the word used in Norwegian was *omtrentlig* which means 'approximately' or 'roughly'). Thus, it emphasizes how something is done (thoroughly or approximately) rather than what the task focuses on (details or the overall situation).
- *Details*: If the statement mentions details explicitly.
- *Improvisation*: If the statement can be related to high or low uncertainty avoidance (2.5).
- *Emotions*: If the statement reveals something about emotions.
- *(In)dependence*: If the statement reveals something about social network (not hierarchy) and degree of collaboration related to decision making.
- *'Asking twice'*: The original Norwegian word here was *mase på* which is translated into 'nag someone, go on about something' (Engelsk blå ordbok 2007) which refers to the hearer's perspective. When used from the speaker's perspective, the expression means having to ask more than one had expected to do. In the interview guide the

English translation became “must be asked twice” and in Japanese “must be told repeatedly”.

Seen in retrospect, by making the categories more gradient (e.g. more direct – less direct), the interviewees would not have been forced to make such strong claims about ‘the Other’. In order to compensate for this, the final analysis in chapter six lists an answer *ab* which refers to those answers where the interviewee would not give a general answer about all their Norwegian or Japanese colleagues or customers, but either did not know what to answer or stated that it depended on the person. I return with more detailed descriptions of what *ab* relates to under the various categories in chapter six.

Another factor is that no matter how much one strives to create clear categories, they are seldom mutually exclusive. Thus, the category indirectness can have something to do about the category formality, and so on. I return to this in chapter six.

Cluster analysis on the data from the pilot study resulted in the categories used in question number six in the final interview guide. When analysing the data material from Tokyo, cluster analysis was particularly used on the answers to questions four and five, which were the most open questions in the guide and tended to elicit more ‘critical incidents’ through personal stories and opinions. An important principle in content analysis is that it is the words that the participants themselves use to describe their reality that form categories. Therefore, when the results are presented in chapter six the voice of the participants will be strong through direct quotes and names of categories. Especially since Japanese culture has been subject to so much prior research, it is tempting to immediately link findings to already existing categories such as those presented in chapter two, with the risk of not noticing those opinions and thoughts in the text that are different to or even contradict mainstream knowledge. Therefore, it seems particularly important to follow the principles of content analysis when dealing with the Japanese culture. However, although I refrain from using established theories when presenting the results, a brief discussion about how the informants’ quotes relate to the theories in chapter two follows at the end of chapter six (6.5).

5.5.5 Linguistic content analysis

When content analysis is used on language, content means the linguistic content. Content analysis originates from the quantitative analytical method of counting words, phrases, and

grammatical structures that fall into specific categories in written text (Dörnyei 2007:245). The emphasis is on discovery and description, including search for contexts, underlying meanings, patterns, and processes, rather than mere quantity or numerical relationships between two or more variables (Altheide 1996). A fundamental change in the method when used in qualitative research is that categories are not predetermined but are arrived at inductively through analysis. By reading and re-reading a text an impression is gradually formed which eventually leads to a hypothesis or a theory.

Content analysis means that the analysis is an on-going dialogue between the data and theory, and between the data themselves. The pre-analysis of the text started out by colour coding the lexical items that seemed to weaken or strengthen the illocutionary force in the text in order to better understand what linguistic and rhetorical devices had made the text appear 'direct' or 'indirect'. Computer programs such as *Tinderbox*, *HyperResearch*, *NVivo*, or *The Ethnograph* were not used because the sample was not bigger than could be handled on paper. Thereafter, those expressions that seemed to give a certain 'flavour' to the text or those where the speaker sought confirmation from the hearer were marked. This preliminary analysis of the text was then compared to theories on linguistic coding properties used either to weaken or strengthen the proposition of a text (cf. chapter three). I must stress that this is not a linear process, but a circular process from text to theory and back. For example, in the data there were speakers who used many strengtheners that the interviewer perceived as 'close and congenial' and those with many strengtheners who were perceived as 'distant and assertive', and the researcher made the following note in the research log:

Those who seem most direct (meaning that the face threat was largest) are the speakers who have few 'rapport markers' and 'direct markers'. They seem frank (sometimes too frank) and seem to concentrate on giving an interesting answer. But those who feel 'closest/most intimate' are those who have both many 'rapport markers' and many 'direct markers'. Those who according to the theory should be 'typical Japanese' are those who use few 'direct markers' but many 'indirect markers'. They do not seem so close but considerate.

'Direct marker' was later called 'intensifiers', and 'indirect marker' was later called 'hedges'. 'Rapport markers' was a term used to identify those items that seemed to function to build rapport with the hearer. The three-fold distinction between *indirect*, *direct* and *rapport markers* was a result of analysing the data, but later found support in the theories of Partington (2006) on the two different faces *affective* and *competence face* displayed through means of Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategies (3.8.2). Thus, while the theories

shed light on the data, analysing the data, in turn, made some theories appear more useful than others.

The process was not only a circular process to and from data and theories. It was also a circular process between Norwegian and Japanese data. For example, having analyzed the Japanese data and found that intensifiers were very clearly linked to being 'direct' and hedges to being 'indirect', it came as a surprise to find that the Norwegians did not follow this pattern. Thus, a number of times during the process, I was forced to go back through the whole process again searching through the data and the theories to reach new understanding. As in bullet point seven in Tesch's description of content analysis (5.5.4): "The categories are modified and refined until a satisfactory system is established which eventually will lead the researcher to see the constituents of the phenomenon, i.e. the emergence of patterns". However, there is something between theory, data, and method that Morse (1994:10) calls 'magic' as she reflects on the question: "when does the scientist know that she knows?" and argues that: "the scientist can backtrack to explain lines of thought, patterns and introspection [...] Nevertheless, these pre-existing conditions do not explain how knowing was achieved. Knowing [...] is to a certain extent a "black box" phenomenon: We can identify input and output, but what happens between the two is something unknown" (Morse 1994:13). Thus, no matter how well the qualitative researcher aims to describe her process accurately, there is something between data and method that one might call 'creative intuition' which is not open to inspection. However, as other works on intuition have also stressed (e.g. Gladwell 2005), intuition is not reliable without substantial knowledge about a subject matter, and therefore does not permit methodological or intellectual sloppiness (Morse 1994:15).

As mentioned above, content analysis originates from the quantitative analytical method of counting words, phrases, and grammatical structures that fall into specific categories in written text. Thus, content analysis allows for both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Tesch 1990:25). However, a marked difference between using numerical methods in quantitative and qualitative research is that whereas numbers in the former undergo a statistical analysis adhering to standardized principles for such use, the conclusions in quantitative analysis of numerical data are subjective rather than statistical. A qualitative study, such as this, does not have a sufficient amount of data to be used statistically, and thus, tables function to illustrate the points made and give the reader the opportunity to test the validity of the claims. In this study, counting words, e.g. how many hesitation fillers does an informant use compared to others, is used in combination with the cluster analysis described

above in order to help form the constituents of the phenomenon and the emergence of styles. The results of the linguistic analysis are presented in chapters seven to eleven.

5.6 Presentation

The analysis contains many Japanese or Norwegian quotations with English translations. Presenting the results in English caused a number of difficulties. A too literate translation is in danger of becoming unintelligible. A translation into idiomatic English on the other hand, might lose some important stylistic cues in the first language. To overcome these obstacles, words in square brackets [] mark what is literally said in Japanese or Norwegian, and words in parentheses () mark English words in the translations which are not in the original Japanese or Norwegian text. English or Norwegian words used by the Japanese informants are written in *italics* in the translations. Emotionally loaded segments are underlined. The items that the author wishes to emphasize are marked in accordance with her description either in grey, **bold**, or in a box. Most quotations are written in the original language with English translations underneath. However, long Norwegian or Japanese transcripts are placed in appendix five, especially when the point is believed to be comprehensible even without a detailed transcription in the original language.

The tables are made in accordance with the guidelines of Johannesson (1993:178ff). The ‘total word count’ is based on the number of lexical items in the text after the interviewer’s comments and longer stretches of English or Norwegian in some of the Japanese texts have been erased. The sum of devices used by each person is summarized below each column and written in percentage of total word count. The apparatus used to detect devices, is *WORD2010*’s ‘*find*’ button, but followed up by investigating each find with respect to whether it does serve a strengthening or weakening purpose in the text. A person with sixteen stories in a long text is different from sixteen stories in a short text. Therefore, even though it might appear somewhat counter-intuitive, personal stories (each story counted as one, regardless of length), but also verbose expressions, exaggerated facts, and disclaimers/self-repairs, frequently constituting more than one lexeme, have been summed up and written in percentage of total word count. Because one personal story has the same percentage as one intensifying lexeme, the score between devices cannot be compared, but a person’s score on a particular device can be compared to other people’s score on the same device. The following table is an example of a possible table of Norwegian intensifiers with explanation.

	Mr. R N01	Mr. Sam N02	Mr. Næ N20
<i>Helt</i> 'completely'	2	6	21
<i>Fullstendig</i> 'completely'		1	
<i>Ekstremt</i> 'extremely'			3
TOTAL	2	7	24
Total word count	4966	5633	7172
Total in %	0.04	0.12	0.34

Mr (male)+ initials+ N(orwegian)+ number

A person's total number of intensifiers

Percentage of a person's intensifiers relative to his/her total word count

Tables are followed by an average score, which is calculated by adding all “total in %” (i.e. in the case above, $0.04 + 0.12 + 0.34 = 0.50\%$) and dividing the sum on the number of participants ($0.50\% : 3 = 0.17\%$).

6 Perceived closeness and distance in communication between Norwegian and Japanese business executives

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the content of the pilot study interviews conducted in Bergen and Oslo in spring 2007 (cf. 5.4), and the interviews from the data collection in Tokyo in autumn 2007 and 2008 (cf. 5.5) in order to find answers to research question (i) and (ii) (1.2). The chapter also serves as the context for better understanding of the many quotes in the linguistic analysis in chapters seven to eleven.

Compared to the following chapters, in which I study texts, the analysis in this chapter may be said to be on a meta-level as I categorize and analyse other people's opinions about their reality, with the problems attached to this as mentioned in 5.2. The informants' opinions sometimes relate to colleagues and at other times to customers, and the informants' answers do not always specify whom they are talking about.

After conducting a content analysis, nine key areas were identified with the working definitions presented in 5.5.4. The categories are not mutually exclusive. That is, (in)directness has often something to do with (in)formality, and the use of English is connected to both (in)directness and (in)formality. When it comes to the categories thoroughness (6.2.4), details (6.2.5), and improvisation (6.2.6), they were mostly answered consecutively and with little hesitation, and thus, could have been analysed as one category. However, since they formed three different questions in the interview guide used in Tokyo, I have chosen to separate them here, aware that they are strongly related and often overlap.

The analysis aims to find the informants' most critically felt issues, and thus, tends to focus on the problem areas, that is, the differences or perceived distance between the Norwegians and the Japanese. I find it interesting that a question meant to be emotionally neutral such as "what are your experiences communicating with the Japanese/Norwegians professionally" (question five in the interview guide) tended to give more answers that focus on the negative, that is, the problem areas rather than on the positive aspects. Thus, whereas questions four, five, and six in the interview guide elicited answers about perceived differences, question

thirteen (cf. 5.5.1 for the interview guide) turned the focus to perceived similarities. Thus, the title “perceived closeness and distance in communication between Norwegian and Japanese business executives”.

Since it is content and not linguistics that is the focus in this chapter, quotations have been translated without fillers and repetitions in order to make them easier to read. All translations from Norwegian and Japanese into English are mine.

6.2 Findings from the pilot project

As described in section 5.4, only Norwegian business executives participated in the pilot study.

Examples of quotations from the nine key areas are listed below in accordance with how often they appeared in the informants’ texts (original Norwegian transcriptions in appendix six).

Quotes have been placed under the category that best seem to cover their main idea, but the quote might in addition add information about one or more of the other categories. In order to make it clear whom the informant is referring to, I have placed the nationality in brackets where necessary.

6.2.1 (In)directness (20 comments in total)

- (8) Whereas others would state their discontentment at once, the Japanese make a note of it, wait and retreat at the first legal opportunity.
- (9) If requests are continuously met with “unfortunately the boss has got the flu” or “it is not convenient at the moment” it signals that the deal is not good enough (to the Japanese).
- (10) The problem is that if one does not meet the Japanese importer frequently, he will always say “everything is ok” and one can never know if that is the case or not.
- (11) If one drives them (the Japanese) too hard, they will respond “we will go back and study”.
- (12) It was no use telling them (the Japanese) what to do. Then nothing happened. Rather ask several times something in line with “if they could perhaps think of something that could be done about it” with some suggestions, and then would come back with suggestions.

- (13) One has to discuss until the end (with the Japanese). One cannot break it off with “ok, then we’ll do it that way”. It is better to end the meeting and continue the next day.
- (11), (12), and (13) might also have something to do with Norwegian willingness to make quick decisions as opposed to the Japanese need for thoroughness and details (6.4.3 and 6.4.4).
- (14) It is unhealthy to spend too much time with the Japanese. It automatically influences you; the fear of face loss, avoiding confrontations, indirect communication. I think there is much larger acceptance among the Japanese to let you be yourself than we think. To become Japanese fits poorly into our organization with innovation and aggressive marketing.
- (15) The Scandinavians are more quarrelsome.
- (16) My style, regardless of whom I am talking to is to always be open, report what we have done, show results, talk about good and bad experiences. I do that everywhere. In negotiations with the Japanese, I put facts on the table, with others I insist more on my demands.
- (17) The Japanese distributor had sold a product for a price below what we had agreed on. When upset it is necessary to say: “If this happens again, the contract will terminate. Sign here to say that you have understood”. It is important not to be embarrassed about the Norwegian way.

6.2.2 (in)formality (12 comments in total)

- (18) Then we went to Tokyo. We greeted the president. Those in important positions sat on our right. The young ones sat on our left. It was they who talked, because if someone is to make mistakes, it had better be the juniors. In a Norwegian setting it is always the boss who does the talking [...]. We spent four days negotiating. The fourth day we signed. Then finally the president came to greet us. There was no explanation.
- (19) A top manager will rarely decide against what has been decided prior to the meeting, because that would signal that the operative had not done a thorough enough job.
- (20) If a top manager meets another top manager, the meeting is only a formality. If someone from middle management comes to Japan, he meets the operative staff and will be very well taken care of.
- (21) There are layers of formalities, ‘*honne*’ and ‘*tatemae*’²⁴. If you want to know ‘*honne*’, you have to go out for a drink after work.

²⁴ *Honne* [real thought] versus *tatemae* [front] characterize a tendency to refrain from speaking one’s mind or revealing one’s true feeling (*honne*) in situations where it is not evaluated as mature or proper to do so, such as for example in front of superiors and elders or in the beginning of new relationships (cf. 2.7.2.2).

(22) This was in the middle of the eighties and I was in my early thirties which meant that I was actually a bit too young to be sent to Japan as the firm's highest representative.

(23) The Japanese say "we like to work with the Norwegians because there are so few superintendents" (sic) (supervisors).

6.2.3 English (10 comments in total)

(24) The (Japanese English proficiency) level has improved considerably. Oral communication is a problem. Written communication is never a problem.

(25) I write Mickey Mouse English (to the Japanese); I like, do you like? I agree, do you agree?

(26) I must say the same thing once, then repeat it, then reconfirm.

(27) I often use pen and paper and illustrate with drawings while I speak.

(28) I write mail with bullet points and ask them to confirm that they have understood one and one point. They are experts at misunderstanding. But they are better in written than in oral communication.

(29) There is much misunderstanding because of the language. I have to use simple [*banal*] English.

(30) The department managers I had contact with (in Japan) could speak English but not always the customers.

(31) What confuses Norwegians who come to Japan is that they believe they have understood, return home and write a report, and then later understand that the Japanese have a different interpretation of the decisions made.

6.2.4 Thoroughness (9 comments in total)

(32) The Japanese are much better prepared for meetings. They do their homework.

(33) The Japanese always go to the greatest possible length in order to find the best solution.

(34) They (the Japanese) almost drove us mad. They could spend a day doing tests, but the final product was very good.

(35) (As a Norwegian dealing with Japanese customers) it is better to say "I will check and see what I can do" even if you know that it is not possible [is unrealistic]. You must always show that at least you are trying. You cannot say no.

- (36) Service has a much wider definition (to the Japanese). Even if the bus has already arrived (at the hotel where the tourist group is staying), the Japanese employee at our (guide) office calls the tour guide (at the hotel) to say that the bus has arrived even if it means that the tour guide must go back to the reception to take the phone instead of taking care of the guests and the luggage. Norwegian politeness tends to lead us to think that now the tour guide is busy so I will not disturb him/her.
- (37) The Norwegians are laidback [*omtrentlige*] – things will work out somehow. That is typically Norwegian.
- (38) When we get questions (from the Japanese customers) it is not good enough that hobby engineer N guesses something. You have to be thorough with the specifications. In Norway people would be satisfied with a more or less accurate [*omtrentlig*] answer.
- (39) When Japanese send a mail to a Norwegian supplier to order something, the Norwegian will send the product, but not a mail to say that it has been sent. The Japanese had maybe expected a mail that it has been sent, but the Norwegian does not understand why, because the main thing is that the goods have been shipped. Why spend time telling someone that it has been sent when the customer will discover that anyway when he receives it.

6.2.5 Details (8 comments in total)

- (40) The Japanese are extremely detail oriented. It drives me mad!
- (41) They (the Japanese) take all details equally seriously.
- (42) Because the Japanese are so good at details, one can safely leave the logistics to them. Marketing on the other hand, one should not leave to the Japanese. We had a slogan we used all over the world: “Expand your car” (about roof boxes). The Japanese didn’t understand the slogan and suggested instead: “Wind making” which they thought meant a trend setter.
- (43) To ask about details can be a game. It is important not to lose your temper and to be decisive.
- (44) My culture is brutally direct [*rydelig*]. I see the big picture. The Japanese see all the details. Sometimes I have to say “enough is enough”. It is difficult to avoid the interpreter padding that out.

Example (44) above is also about (in)directness.

6.2.6 Improvisation (8 comments in total)

- (45) When things have been decided, there is resistance to change (among the Japanese). They are so loyal to decisions that they march on without thinking about whether it is a good idea or not.
- (46) The Japanese strongly dislike being surprised. If surprised, the reaction will often be to talk a lot about non-essentials.
- (47) The Japanese believe the worst will happen [*krisemaksimerer*].
- (48) Norwegians are good at improvising.
- (49) Norwegians are more flexible and cut some corners.

6.2.7 Emotions (7 comments in total)

- (50) We receive some emotional adjectives (from the Japanese). It is we Norwegians who do not use those words, but we understand when things are serious without stating it that strongly. [...] When a Japanese person does get angry, he completely loses it. The boss, who was an older man, threw papers at me and called me the worst of things.
- (51) We have been scolded for not being reliable, for not having control, for not keeping our promises. They feel that we fooled them. The Japanese are emotional; pride, face, face is emotional. They lose face with their customer. They cannot take it out on customers or others in the company. Sometimes we feel that we are their outlet. They often tell us about their grievances which are often totally non-objective/without relevance.
- (52) The stereotype is that the Japanese have faces of stone, but this does not mean that they cannot be emotional. It is about how “you have disappointed me” as in a Confucian father-son relationship [...] and if one brings that (kind of) message back to Norway unchanged, it will not be understood. If one wants to make a complaint in Norway, one has to provide technical evidence; what went wrong? Have you used it in a wrong way? Often with negative burden of proof, while in Japan it is enough to say “I am disappointed”.

6.2.8 (In)dependence (7 comments in total)

- (53) In Norway you can have a meeting with an engineer who can answer about many different aspects of the production and even make some decisions without asking his boss.
- (54) In large companies (in Japan) there can be twenty people in a group where each person is responsible for his part of the ball point pen.
- (55) On his own, a Japanese representative does not have a quorum.

(56) I was more pushy than usual when the Japanese manager for the European division said: “You don’t negotiate with me alone”. He presented what his group had already agreed on and the problem was that I pushed beyond that.

6.2.9 ‘Asking twice’ (2 comments in total)

(57) The Japanese have a roundabout language [...] it takes time to understand “what does he mean now?” You have to ask twice [*mase*].

(58) You have to repeat and repeat, tell, repeat, ask (the Japanese) for confirmation. With large distributors, it can become silent. There are many questions and few answers. In those cases it is wrong to become Japanese and not dare to ask. We say: “We have to know where we are in the process, or we cannot give you any information”.

6.3 Findings from the data collection in Tokyo: Questions four and five.

Questions one to three in the interview guide were initial questions about age, occupation and length of experience, and will not be analysed. In this section, I present, compare, and discuss the answers from questions four and five (5.5.1 for the interview guide).

The answers to the two questions tended to overlap. Because they were the first relatively open questions after three introductory questions, they seemed to bring out the issues that most occupied the informants. Applying a similar cluster analysis to the one used in the pilot project (cf. 5.5.4), answers to what occupied the interviewees living and working in Tokyo the most in order of frequency, i.e. how often it was mentioned, were collected under the following key areas. The numbers in parenthesis refer to the corresponding key area in the pilot study answers (6.2).

The six areas that occupied the Norwegians the most in questions four and five in order of frequency were:

- 1) Differences in communicative style; directness versus indirectness (6.2.1)
- 2) The use of time: Japanese meetings and decision making processes
- 3) The Japanese’ lack of improvisation (6.2.6)
- 4) The Japanese customers
- 5) Issues concerning quality, thoroughness and details (6.2.4/6.2.5)

6) Issues concerning the use of English (6.2.3)

The six areas that occupied the Japanese the most in questions four and five in order of frequency were:

- 1) Differences in communicative style; directness versus indirectness (6.2.1)
- 2) Hierarchy versus egalitarianism in the work place (6.2.2)
- 3) Issues concerning the use of English (6.2.3)
- 4) The use of time: Norwegian e-mails
- 5) The Japanese customers
- 6) Issues concerning quality, thoroughness and details (6.2.4/6.2.5)

Miller (2.7.1) found the indirect-direct dimension as a major difference between the Japanese and Americans. From the list of 'critical incidents' above, we see that both the Japanese and the Norwegians seem to think of the direct-indirect dimension first when they are asked about what experiences they have communicating with each other. Other issues that concern them both, although to different degrees, are the Japanese customers, issues that have to do with quality, thoroughness and details, and the use of English. However, whereas the Norwegians are concerned with Japanese meetings and decision making processes and what they perceive as Japanese lack of improvisation, the Japanese on their part have more comments about Norwegian e-mail responses and the Japanese hierarchical structure in the work place relative to the Norwegian flat structure. The latter was often praised.

If we compare these answers from the Norwegian business executives in Tokyo to those in the pilot study, we see that (in)directness is the most critically felt issue to both groups. English is not felt as problematic to the Norwegians in Tokyo as to those in Norway possibly because it is easier to communicate face to face and because more of the Norwegians in Tokyo also were familiar with Japanese. Further, Japanese emotions and having to ask the Japanese repeatedly to get things done, do not seem to be 'critical issues' to the Norwegians in Tokyo. Finally, the Japanese lack of improvisation or inflexibility seems to be felt more by the Norwegians in Tokyo than those in Norway. Further comments and direct quotes illustrating the key areas above will be incorporated in sections 6.4.1 to 6.4.8 below.

6.4 Findings from the data collection in Tokyo: Question six.

Question 6 was based on the nine categories from the pilot project, but reduced by one. That is, the category ‘the use of English’ formed a separate question number eight in the final interview guide (cf. 5.5.1). Thus, comments concerning the use of English will be presented in section 6.6.

Sections 6.4.1 to 6.4.8 below present and discuss the answers to the sub-questions A-H in question six combined with interviewees’ quotes from questions four and five.

6.4.1 (In)directness

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

A. a. state vaguely what they want · b. state clearly what they want

	a	b	ab ²⁵	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	10	8	2	
Japanese about the Norwegians	2	17	2	

Table 4: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about (in) directness

As illustrated above, most of the Japanese perceived the Norwegians as generally direct (the 17 *b*-answers) even though less so than the Danes or the Americans (the two *a*-answers). The Norwegian kind of directness implies that it is easy to know what their intentions are; “this is what we want”, they make an effort to explain things thoroughly and only ask about things that are unclear to them. The Norwegians are described as “frank”, “straight” ‘straightforward’, and *ronriteki* ‘logical’, meaning that they say “A and B, therefore C”. The Japanese informants’ description of the Norwegian style suggests an exacting, speaker-oriented, detached and idea-oriented style (table 1). The fact that in a meeting, Norwegians only state what they want, however, sometimes causes the other party to feel the need for more background information, something that is related to the categories *thoroughness* (6.4.3),

²⁵ The answers *ab* to question A means that the informant stated that directness/indirectness depended on the personality of the person, who they are talking to, or what their position is (seller or customer, from a large or small company).

detail (6.4.4), and *improvisation* (6.4.5). Several Japanese informants comment that they would have wished for more information before a meeting from their Norwegian colleagues, everything from exact date and time of arrival to any written information and data relevant to the meeting sent well in advance:

- (59) <J23> For example, when people are coming, they don't say how many are coming, we don't know. Maybe two, maybe three, and when they come, they are four, they don't particularly care do they, about such things. </J23>

The Norwegians, on the other hand, fear that their Japanese colleagues do not always ask even when they do not understand, and occasionally seem reluctant to state their opinions if they are afraid it will be negatively interpreted. Instead of a direct “no”, the Norwegian Mr K has experienced that rejections are covered up in “*uklarheter*” ‘ambiguities’ and decisions “*treneri*” ‘prolonged’ and describes how in the following example:

- (60) <N04> Instead of saying no, you can either avoid answering or ask a lot of questions, and then you can keep doing that for months and kind of keep a dialogue going without saying no. [...] For example if it is a junior, he will be reluctant to say that it is impossible [...] then I will keep discussing how it can be done [...] and then it is very difficult (for him) to answer (me) and then there is no answer. Maybe it is the Norwegian way (of doing things) but if I ask a question in a mail or something I expect either yes or no or that things will be done, and if there is no immediate hurry, that is, that things have to be done in two weeks or something, I don't follow up by asking them again because I trust they will get back to me, but in Japan it is more like when you haven't heard anything for two weeks, you have to follow up, and then maybe you get a whimper [*klynk*] about it being impossible, and then I think “why didn't you say so in the first place?” because we could have done it differently [...]. </N04>

Thus, some Norwegians voice frustration over an indirect style that leads to a lack of straight answers, but two Norwegians utter appreciation for a style that does not force one to “*ha så skarpe albuer*” [have such sharp elbows] ‘be as aggressive’ as in other places they have worked.

Interestingly, however, according to table 4, eight of the twenty Norwegians stated that the Japanese are predominantly direct. For three of them, this means both colleagues and customers, for the others it refers only to customers. Since all the Norwegians work in sales, they are naturally occupied with Japanese customers whom they describe as *vanskelige* ‘difficult’, *kravstore* ‘demanding’, and *urimelige* ‘unreasonable’. It is perhaps also interesting to note that the Japanese who work in sales also describe the Japanese customers in similar terms as ‘spoiled’, ‘picky’ and *urusai* ‘noisy/a nuisance’. In Japan, customers are above the seller in the work hierarchy and therefore allowed to complain, scold and demand (cf. 6.4.2

about (*in*)formality). A Japanese informant explains that in Japan a seller must keep very close contact with the customer and expect to *herikudaru* ‘humble/self-deprecate’ himself in front of the customer.

Ms O <N06>, a Norwegian project coordinator on a project in Japan for about six months, is frustrated about her Japanese customers. Together with Mr Ka, a Japanese co-coordinator whom I also interviewed, she supervises the European programmers who have come to Japan to install a new software programme for a Japanese insurance company. Ms O often finds the customer’s demands completely unreasonable and way beyond what a European customer would demand:

- (61) <N06> It goes like this, erm, we are doing tests now and, and usually we say to the client go ahead and do the tests [...], but here we have had many and long discussions on how they should conduct the tests, and even now when they have done tests for three, four months, we still discuss how they should perform the tests, and a Norwegian customer would just have decided all that themselves, and made their own plans, and decided on what level of detail they should test [...] but here they hand all the responsibility back to us and we have to tell them in detail what to do, we are not used to that so we don’t have any methodology for it [...]
</N06>

The collision here between the Norwegian and the Japanese thinking can be explained by the other categories; The customer’s high demands on the seller by (*in*)formality (6.4.2), and the degree of testing by the categories *thoroughness* (6.4.3), *details* (6.4.4), and *improvisation* (6.4.5). There is also an element of Norwegian independence in decision making that differs from the Japanese interdependence (6.4.7 on (*in*)dependence).

Ms O feels she has to constantly defend her team and she finds little willingness to compromise:

- (62) <N06> I have tried to tell them that this is not necessary, we just waste time doing it, yes but you have said you would do it they tell me, yes but that was before I knew how much time it would take and now, now my opinion is that we should not, yes but you said so, period.
</N06>

Here Ms O voices the Norwegian attitude to details versus efficiency that will be further elaborated on in 6.4.3 on *thoroughness* and 6.4.4 on *details*. The client seems especially keen to know who is to blame when a mistake is discovered. Emotionally loaded segments are underlined:

- (63) <N06> It often seems that they are looking for exactly who to blame and then at least that person has to say that he is sorry@@. [...] I try to protect my people, they don’t have to know which one of us has made a mistake </N06>

Ms O has lately come to realize that this eagerness to find a scapegoat might not only be due to cultural differences but also a question of who is to pay. In her opinion, the contract does not specify that well enough. Still, she believes that even a more detailed contract could not have prevented the error because “the supplier has much more responsibility here”. Her story also elaborates on different expectations of the Japanese and the Norwegian leadership style:

- (64) <N06> [...] and then, the next thing that happens is that they complain about this or that person, or about me not having enough control over them and not telling them exactly what to do. </N06>

The last example from Ms O gives a good picture of the Norwegian versus the Japanese way of thinking:

- (65) <N06> And then they are terribly quick to conclude that things are our fault and, we have had a couple, a three or so cases this last week, where they have come with a list of mistakes or another, “and this quality is much too bad, let’s stop all testing”, and then when we have gone through [it] (the list), there might have been one (real) mistake out of (the) six [...] I wrote them that e, when they discover such things they should be so kind as to approach the one they know is responsible for [it] (the mistake) so that misunderstandings could be cleared, and that they would save both our and their own time, so I haven’t received any reply to that then, so I believe they might have accepted it@@, we’ll see next time. </N06>

First, Ms O and her team have been blamed by the client for six mistakes when all they have found is one. One mistake is not acceptable to a Japanese client. Secondly, she asks them to turn to the programmer responsible for the mistake and interprets the lack of answer as consent. In a Japanese hierarchical business culture the project manager is responsible for any mistakes made by those below and is therefore the one who will have to answer for any mistakes made by the subordinates. The lack of an answer is just as likely because the clients do not understand Ms O’s way of thinking.

Thus, the Japanese customers seem to be very direct when they make complaints. The problem is that in a seller-customer relationship in Japan, the seller, which is Ms O in this case, is not at liberty to be equally direct in return (cf. 6.4.2 on *(in)formality*). Thus, even though she thinks of her communicative style as professional, honest and fair, it is interpreted as hostility by the Japanese customers. This is the point made by her Japanese co-worker, Mr Ka, whom I asked to help me shed some light on the situation. Having to deal with the same customers, he starts by pointing out that he is impressed by Ms O’s ability to stay calm because personally he also finds this customer particularly difficult. However, he finds that Ms O’s usual tactic to do “whatever she can to explain and convince” by saying “no it is not like that” (e.g. example (62) above) does not work well because if one makes arguments, the

other party will come up with counter arguments, and Japanese customers, or Japanese businessmen in general, do not like debate, and thus the atmosphere deteriorates, he explains. Ms O also tends to explain to the client openly about the process, problems, and quality issues and Mr Ka thinks it is unnecessary to make apologies to the clients by telling them why things are not going as planned. Whether one likes it or not, it is not a matter of whether the customer is right or wrong in Japan. Because the buyer and the seller are not on equal footing, it cannot be a debate of whose fault it is. As a seller one stands a better chance of success by saying something in line with: “*ossharu koto wa yoku wakarimasu ga, demo koo dewa nai deshoo ka*” ‘I understand your argument very well, but isn’t it probably like this?’ or “*koo kamoshiremasen*” ‘maybe like this’. He also stresses the importance of a close contact with the client before and after meetings through *nemawashi* ‘informal information sharing’ and socializing. To build business relationships over an after hour drink called ‘*nominikeeshon*’ [*nomi* ‘drink’ + (commu) *nikeeshon* ‘communication’] is also mentioned by others:

(66) <J22> In addition to communication, there is *nominikeeshon* in Japan. *Nominikeeshon* is important, and [...] once a month or once a week is ok, but there is a problem when it becomes daily </J22>

‘*Nominikeeshon*’ is important because the Japanese state their attitudes and opinions more freely in those settings. One might call it a Japanese arena for indirectness and informality. I will return to this in part 6.4.2 on (*in*)formality.

The expressions suggested by Mr Ka above may seem too vague to someone with a more exacting style such as Ms O (cf. chapter nine). Mr Vå, a Norwegian manager who has lived in Japan for fourteen years and seems to have employed more of a Japanese style however, holds that when a Japanese subordinate or a customer has a problem, a “*bombastisk*” ‘blunt’ answer from a foreigner such as “no, this I don’t think is a problem, why don’t we do it like this?” will just provoke. One is better off acknowledging the problem by saying for instance “I understand what you say and maybe we should look into it further and yes, we will see, if there are ways to address this problem” and then come back to it and discuss it at a later stage, possibly a private talk. And he adds: “Sometimes it is a real problem, and sometimes it is, maybe more like, things that are perceived as a problem, that may not be so, and sometimes, after some time the problem kind of goes away [...] because one has gotten used to the situation, so that it doesn’t feel like a problem anymore”. He is aware that this style can be frustrating to Norwegians who rather say “ok, here is a problem, is it a problem or not, let us look into it” and who enjoy quick solutions, but he believes in Japan one is better off taking

things more “*suksessivi*” ‘step by step’. Thus, although there were several informants in the pilot study who argued that it is more beneficial to use a direct style when doing business with the Japanese (6.2.1), none of the Norwegians working in Japan suggest something similar and the story from Ms O seems to contradict this view. It seems that the style suggested by Mr Vå, might be more advantageous when doing business in Japan.

6.4.2 (In)formality

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

B. a. formal · b. informal

	a	b	ab ²⁶	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	10	1	9	
Japanese about the Norwegians	5	12	4	

Table 5: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about (in) formality

Table 5 shows that only half of the Norwegians perceive the Japanese as generally formal. The fact that so many see them as both formal and informal (*ab*) is due to the factors mentioned in the following quotation:

(67) <N02> formal, informal, it depends a lot, *honne*²⁷ and *tatema* as it is called, how well you know them and, I must say some of the nicest and most informal persons you can possibly meet are the Japanese [...] especially after work although even at that time important things go on when you go out for dinner etc., they are so, [...]one of those things that really fascinates me about the Japanese is how little pompous [*selvhøytidlige*] they are, [...] and how self-ironic they can be, and no, it is just terribly nice [*hyggelig*], when you are on the inside [*baksiden*] (*honne*) so to speak, [...] so that is one of the reasons why I enjoy so much staying here @he@. But if you are on the outside [*den andre siden*] of course they are formal. </N02>

I was interested to know if the Norwegians who answered *ab* (formal at work, informal after work) generally have more contact with their Japanese colleagues after work than those who

²⁶ The Norwegians’ *ab*-answers all relate to the impression that there is wide gap between Japanese formality at work and toward strangers versus their informality after work and towards people they know well. The Japanese’ *ab*-answers relate to individual variations.

²⁷ Cf. example (21)

answered *a* (formal), but I could not find such a correlation. However, those who do talk about the after work experiences with the Japanese, all talk of these experiences as very positive ones as in the following example:

- (68) <N08> When we are at these company outings, it's just fantastic fun, I've never experienced anything like the one we had last spring, they just become so different, so personal, incredibly cool, I've never experienced a company party like that one@@ </N08>

The Norwegian informants focus on acting or speaking in a formal or an informal manner. The Japanese informants, on the other hand, are more occupied with '(in)formality' as different social structures at the work place. Thus, eight of the Japanese are preoccupied with the difference between the Japanese hierarchical versus the Norwegian 'flat' social structure. "Norwegians are frank and do not care about titles", one says, and another: "Norwegians do not have hierarchy and are friendly". These are positively loaded comments. According to a Japanese female informant, Ms A:

- (69) <J31> One has to be cautious around Japanese@@. What the relationship is and position and. Because Japanese, especially the elder, the men, are very sensitive@@, yes@@. </J31>

She has a Norwegian boss and adds:

- (70) <J31> I think it depends on the person, but if we take the traditional Japanese older man [*ojisan*]@@, I think it is difficult to work for him, un, un, especially when doing something outside your primary tasks, you have to be careful@@, un. Norwegians really seem to focus on the work and on the tasks that need to be solved. For instance, if a mistake has been made, they don't spend time on such scary things as who is the responsible one@@. I feel the focus is rather on how to solve the problem. </J31>

The quote above seems to illustrate the difference between a *detached and idea-oriented style* versus an *attached and relationship-oriented style* (2.5.6). Using English also means that one can be less concerned with hierarchy, which seems to be a relief:

- (71) </J31> It is easier to write in English @@, erm, [...] in the Japanese language you have to be cautious about so many things, relationships and hierarchy and so on [...] English is more direct, I write whatever I like to write </J31>

Another Japanese informant agrees: "*Sonna ni baka teinei ni suru hitsuyoo wa gaikokujin ni taishite wa nai n da kedo*" 'to foreigners it is not necessary to use such [stupid] (excessive) politeness'. A woman comments that in Japanese you have to adjust your language to a person's title, whereas when speaking English she is less preoccupied with titles. That English

is more ‘direct’ here might be linked to (*in*)formality and to *keigo* ‘honorifics’ (2.7.2.1). This will be further discussed in part 6.6.1.

Interestingly, we see in table 5 that one forth of the Japanese perceive the Norwegians as relatively formal. They do not elaborate on it further but Mr Bi <J32> says something that might give a possible clue. In the following quote he talks about the years he worked in a Japanese subsidiary in Norway and his relationship with his Norwegian colleagues:

(72) <J32> When I come close to someone, I really speak in friendly terms, but we didn’t get that close really. There was some difference in the way the Norwegians spoke to each other and the way they spoke to me. To me they spoke very politely, friendly and gentleman-like, but as soon as they turned to someone else it was “hi Tom”. Well, until one knows each other, that can’t be helped, I guess. </J32>

It might be that the Norwegians’ general perception of the Japanese causes them to be more cautious, indirect, and formal around them. Another possible explanation is that Norwegians are not perceived as very informal to the Japanese who tend to model foreigners on the outgoing Americans.

6.4.3 Thoroughness

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

C. a. thorough · b. less thorough²⁸

	a	b	ab ²⁹	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	20			
Japanese about the Norwegians	3	16	1	1

Table 6: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about thoroughness

²⁸ The original Norwegian terms here were not gradient. The Norwegian terms borrowed from Norwegian quotes in the pilot study were *nøyaktig* ‘accurate, precise’ versus *omtrentlig* ‘approximate, rough’.

²⁹ The Japanese *ab*-answer argue that degree of thoroughness differ from case to case without elaborating on it further.

The following issues concerning e-mail, meetings, or decision making are thought to relate to thoroughness. Answering e-mails quickly and without fail is thoroughness in the sense of professionalism. Meetings and decision making on the other hand, are more related to thoroughness in the sense of the need for details (6.4.4) and the unwillingness to improvise (6.4.5). For a more thorough description of the similarities and differences between the categories thoroughness and details, see their working definitions in 5.5.4.

E-mail, meetings or decisions are topics also related to time in the sense that they are mentioned in a discussion on what is either efficient or unnecessarily time consuming and uttered with a certain amount of affect by the interviewees.

E-mails

The first one who mentioned that Norwegian e-mail responses are slow was Ms To, a Japanese informant:

(73) <J35> Also e-mails, well, even when I phone it's like that, well even if they say like "I'll do it!", if a Japanese says "I'll do it", it's quite common that it means getting done today already, but when it comes to the Norwegians even if they say "I'll do it", I don't know when will that be?@@ For example, even if they say at what time it will be done, depending on such things as "ah, the family has got the flu" or "I have to go on holiday" the deadline gradually becomes irrelevant@@.</J35>

Norwegian values that place free time and family care side by side with work was mentioned in section 2.6 on the Norwegian style. Four other Japanese agreed that Norwegian e-mail response is slow, but two of them also added that they think that the time frame in Japanese business is too tight. In Japan, e-mails are usually answered the same day, or the following day at the latest. Two informants voiced astonishment over the fact that they do not always receive an answer at all. One works as a contact person between the Japanese and the Norwegian market, and is just now experiencing that he has contacted a Norwegian firm on behalf of an interested Japanese buyer, but not received an answer despite repeated attempts. According to another, the secretary sends him the bill and says that the documents will be sent from the forwarding agent, but he never receives them. This might be in line with the comment in the pilot study (example (39)) that Norwegians tend not to send a notification that the goods have been shipped because in their mind the job is done. The following comment from the Norwegian Mr K in (60), repeated here as (74), says something about how tight contact a Norwegian thinks one should keep after requesting something by e-mail:

(74) <N04> I don't follow up by asking them again because I trust they will get back to me.
</N04>

The quote above may be seen in the light of a Norwegian tendency to avoid impingement, an issue that will be thoroughly discussed in chapter nine.

A Japanese informant talks about the Japanese tendency to think in the frame of 'nice to have' whereas Norwegians think in the frame of 'need to have'. 'Nice to have' will make the Japanese seller provide a customer with more than he requested, whereas thinking in the frame of 'need to have' will provide the customer only with what he asks about:

(75) <J35> for example if you talk about cheese, @it seems as if@ there is really only one company (in Norway); *Tine*, so even if one doesn't concern oneself with (the question of) competitive edge, it doesn't matter so therefore well, it is enough only to consider what someone *needs to have*, yes, and that is ok if you only do domestic sales, but if you want to bring Norwegian products to Japan to sell, if you don't adapt yourself to a certain degree to the Japanese way, your products will not be imported and sold on the Japanese market. </J35>

The same informant mentioned that she had noticed that the interviewer was accustomed to Japanese ways as she had attached CV, project description, and interview guide to her mail requesting an interview. In turn, the interviewer received quick replies with a detailed map of how to get to the office attached to the Japanese mails.

The only Norwegian comment about Japanese e-mails is an observation of a large number of internal e-mails for the sake of information sharing in Japanese companies.

Meetings

Half of the Norwegians working in Japan voice frustration over the number and length of meetings in Japan, with meetings being described as "inefficient", "do not always have a clear goal or agenda", "very, very long", "only going through things that everyone already knows, and one does not achieve anything" and being "a hidden cost about working in Japan". They seem to be more about receiving and exchanging information than a real discussion, and also result in long working hours:

(76) <N17> especially with afternoon meetings [...] there are probably few Norwegians who will not try to round up the meeting and rather arrive at a quick decision in order to finish in time [...] here in Japan I have experienced many examples of meetings that maybe start at five in the afternoon and then we sit there for two, three hours into the evening and discuss something [...] there are not necessarily major disagreements [...] but it can be a complex matter so there are many things that have to be discussed through [...] and from our point of view when we think

hwe had finished, we kind of just keep sitting there in order to be polite and not rush off, and then new issues [*moment*] keep coming up, so, that is one of those things you just have to accept </N17>

The fact that people hesitate to leave even though the meeting is over, might be linked to formality. A Norwegian manager commented that he had learned not to finish work too late in order to give his subordinates the opportunity to leave. The Japanese informants all state that Japanese prefer face-to-face meetings to e-mails and telephone calls, and if possible will walk over to talk to a customer directly rather than phone. With too much use of phone calls and e-mails there is a danger of distancing the relationship, they feel. Mr Bi, a Japanese manager, explains that the reason why meetings do not have the form of an open debate is because much of the discussion has already been done formally and informally prior to the meeting. He is rather frustrated about Norwegian meetings where anyone regardless of rank is allowed to voice their opinion resulting in people often repeating what others have already said, which in his view constitutes an inefficient use of time. However, a younger Japanese male voices appreciation over the fact that Norwegians are not afraid to voice their opinions without too much worry about whether it is a good idea or not, because it might result in one good idea that no one had yet thought of. In Japan, he says, mainly the managers and those who have been asked to present a topic speak, and the others are reluctant to do so.

Decision making

The Norwegians feel that decision making is slow in Japan, but also find a sense of comfort in the fact that the implementation phase is often quick and the final product very well prepared:

(77) <N17> This has often led to problems between firms in Japan and in the West, the Western companies feel very impatient, all these meetings again and again with the Japanese in order for them to be able to reach a decision [...] and when they have made a decision, they expect everything to move at an enormous speed, and if not perfect then at least relatively friction free, and then there is often the problem that we can make quick decisions, but it is not always sufficiently carefully prepared [*gjennomarbeidet*], so the advantage with the Japanese system is that even if one spends some time on meetings, when decisions are reached, the implementation is relatively uncomplicated [*smidig*] </N17>

The Japanese have no comments relating to Norwegian decision processes.

6.4.4 Details

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

D. a. concerned with details · b. look at the overall situation

	a	b	ab ³⁰	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	19		1	
Japanese about the Norwegians	3	13	5	

Table 7: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about details

If we look at the three tables; table 6 on thoroughness, table 7 on details, and the following table 8 on improvisation, we see that there was little doubt about any of these not among the Norwegian neither among the Japanese, and that these were issues that were perceived as clear opposites by both the Norwegians and the Japanese. The three sub-questions were mostly answered consecutively and with little hesitation by the Japanese and in one flow of agitation by the Norwegians as in the following example from the Norwegian Mr T:

- (78) C. a. thorough · b. less thorough
 <N04> Yes it's thorough, yes yes it's so, yes, I can hardly bear to talk about it even, it is, you don't get anywhere@@ </N04>
 D. a. concerned with details · b. look at the overall situation
 <N04> Yes it is (text)deta(text), they are so concerned with@@, don't even have to ask </N04>
 E. a. do not like to improvise · b. like to improvise
 <N04> No, improvise doesn't exist@@, I've never come across it@@, it's, no.</N04>

Details and thoroughness are related. The following quote is from Ms To, a Japanese working in a Norwegian company:

- (79) <J35>When one sends goods, one puts it in a box right, well, then, when that box arrives in Japan by air or by sea it happens that it's been torn and becomes a problem for the distributor. From the Japanese point of view the box is damaged, so maybe the product (inside) is damaged too. Therefore they wish to change the box. However, if we see it from the Norwegian viewpoint, the box is not the product, it merely protects the product under way, and it has happened that they have said "why do we have to answer these kinds of questions?"

³⁰ The Norwegian *ab*-answer argues that how occupied a person is with details depends on his role in the company. The Japanese *ab*-answers state that this depends on individual differences or the task at hand, and one argues that that Norwegians are occupied with both, but more "selective" about details than the Japanese.

Japanese are people who aim at 100% quality so, if one box out of the hundred sent causes a problem, then it is a major problem. However, in a typical Norwegian way of thinking they would say: “We have sent a hundred, so if one or so is damaged, well, that can’t be helped”, um@@.</J35>

“Norwegian quality is not good enough in Japan” is one Norwegian comment. Another Norwegian expresses frustration:

(80) <N14> Maybe we tend to play down [*bagatellisere*] many things, they don’t do that here, so, no matter how small, it is a problem then, and must be dealt with immediately.</N14>

Even though there is some frustration among the Norwegians about the Japanese need for details and thoroughness when this is combined with a lack of flexibility, there is also considerably admiration for these qualities regardless of the length of time they have spent in Japan. The words used by the Norwegians in these comments are that Norwegians are *slumsete/slurvete* ‘sloppy’ and that there is something to be learnt from Japanese thoroughness.

Ms T, a Norwegian who has been in Japan for sixteen years, tells the following story:

(81) <N15> They found a hair in the box and there was a complaint [...] we sent it over to Norway, and they did not understand anything, a hair, isn’t it just to take it out? We sent out a new product without inspecting it first, and they found another hair, and then we had to start inspecting [...]</N15>

Ms T tells this story with a certain amount of irony, but also accepts that these products are sold at a higher price in Japan than in Europe. As we see in the quote above, most Norwegian customers would not care about a hair. When Norwegian customers do complain about a product however, Ms T argues that one can try talking to them and make them calm down. A Japanese customer on the other hand, expects perfection and is accustomed to the right to return anything she does not find to be in a perfect state.

Another similar story can be found in chapter eight about when a Norwegian company was going to install new PET bottle machines in Japan. The Norwegian engineers had to conduct over two hundred tests in advance, but the result is that after one year in use, no complaints about the new machines have yet been filed.

6.4.5 Improvisation

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

E. a. do not like to improvise · b. like to improvise

	a	B	ab ³¹	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	20			
Japanese about the Norwegians	3	16	1	1

Table 8: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about improvisation

There was no Norwegian informant who did not stress ‘not’ in “they do not like to improvise”. Under E we also find the less diplomatic comments such as *japanere tenker ikke ut av boksen, de er ikke kreative* ‘the Japanere do not “think outside the box”, they are not creative’, *de er ikke så gode på problemløsning* ‘they are not very clever at problem solving’, *de er omtrent like hele bunten, det er ikke noe individualitet vet du* ‘they are more or less the same the whole bunch, there is no individuality you know’, and *de vil være som alle andre* ‘they want to be like everyone else’. They are portrayed as *konforme* ‘conformist’, *engstelige* ‘worried’, and *risikoaverse* ‘risk averse’.

(82) <N03> We had an example with a customer who wanted to know how much the new program could perform [...] so we gave an estimated number. Maybe we could have made a better job and communicated it clearer, but this customer got completely hung-up on this (estimated) number, the machine had to perform that exact number, but whether that number was x documents per second or x plus thirty, it had no practical relevance to the customer in the big picture. And the other Japanese at our office said: We must show the customer that we can make that particular number, and then I say: But why can’t we just tell the customer that that particular number is not important? Then I think practically, that number has no relevance, and they think completely the opposite; that we must show the customers that number, and spend a lot of time and energy on something that is not important. Then I ask them why we have to do it, and they say: “We have to do that”. “But why?” “We have to”@@. Then I begin to scratch my head. </N03>

Also, three of the Japanese informants stress frustration over Japanese lack of flexibility. However, four of the Norwegians show understanding by explaining that Japanese workers

³¹ The Japanese *ab*-answer states that this differ from case to case without elaborating on it further.

always have to report to someone above them, and that there is little tolerance for failure in the Japanese system. One believes that there is no reward in the Japanese system for “moving out of the box”, and another points to the small chances of being forgiven and keeping your job if you fail³²:

- (83) <N13>You know <name of company> made products from milk that was two days expired [...] You know all these incidences where you must ask forgiveness (in public), God forbid!, That will be the end of (employment) [*kroken på døra*], (whereas) in other countries one can say: “Well, I’m sorry, well you know, I screwed up on that one”. </N13>

Thus, some of the Norwegians understand why the Japanese are afraid to do things they have not done before or accept something that has not been thoroughly planned, but still it seems to frustrate them a great deal. The Japanese frustration is rather tied to what they perceive as Norwegian lack of thoroughness and details as described in 6.4.3 and 6.4.4.

Ms To <J35>, a Japanese woman working with Norwegians, elaborates on the difference between Norwegians and Japanese when it comes to planning a garden party at work. The evening before, someone might be wondering what to do if it rains the following day:

- (84) <J35> and the Norwegians will say let’s wait until tomorrow and see if it rains first. Then, if it looks as if it is going to rain the next morning, they start organizing to buy a tent or think of what to do. @@The Japanese think that it is ok to have it outdoors, but if it rains we need this and this and this. They definitely have a backup plan. Well, it is like this with enterprises too [...] if plan A does not work, we move to plan B. If plan B doesn’t hold, we follow plan C. And after finishing this kind of planning, they set out. </J35>

This is also related to the previous categories of *thoroughness* and *details*. A Norwegian woman working at the same place as Ms To shows understanding when she explains that even though being able to improvise is an important value to Norwegians, to the Japanese it is a sign that things are out of control because things have not been planned well enough.

³² This story from January 16, 2007 can be read about on <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nb20070116a1.html>.

6.4.6 Emotions

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

F. a. often show emotions at work · b. do not often show emotions at work³³

	a	b	ab ³⁴	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	2	12	6	
Japanese about the Norwegians	12	7	1	1

Table 9: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about emotions

As we see in table 9, contrary to the Norwegians in the pilot study, Japanese outburst of emotions were not considered ‘critical incidents’ to the Norwegians living in Tokyo. A Norwegian in the pilot study stated that they have received e-mails where they “have been scolded for not being reliable, for not having control, for not keeping our promises”. I asked the Japanese middle man who works between that particular Norwegian company and the Japanese sellers if he understood the reason for such emotional outbursts. He suggested it might be due to a frustration over not being able to express or understand English properly. Since the Japanese business structure relies on relationship building through meetings and after work socializing, one can imagine that the geographical distance to Norway coupled with a tighter time frame and more demanding customers in Japan, and somewhat slower e-mail response in Norway possibly causes more emotional stress. Generally, the Norwegians in Tokyo see the Japanese as factual and serious at work, and congenial after work. One Norwegian comments that “in general I believe that the Japanese appreciate a bit more of formality at work, some foreign customers chat a lot (during work hours)”. From table 9 we see that the number *a* versus *b* in the Japanese answers about the Norwegians, is smaller than in tables 4 to 8. Thus, it seems that difference in emotion is not felt as much as the other issues this far, and might imply that the Japanese and the Norwegians in Tokyo on this point do not see the others as that much different to themselves.

³³ The original Norwegian text was not gradient but rather read something in line with a. gladly show emotions at work, b. apply themselves to be factual and not show emotions at work.

³⁴ Both the Norwegian and the Japanese *ab*-answers state that this is a factor with individual differences, and one Norwegian claims that Japanese customers and supervisors show emotions more than the Japanese in other positions.

6.4.7 (In)dependence

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

- G. a. often appear to ask colleagues for advice · b. seem to take many decisions on their own

	a	b	ab ³⁵	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	17	1	2	
Japanese about the Norwegians	9	11	1	

Table 10: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about (in)dependence

The clear impression from table 10 is as stated by one Norwegian: “It seems that nothing is decided by one person in Japan”. However, another elaborates on this by pointing out that this should not be understood to mean that the Japanese seem to lack authority when acting on their own: “They do not appear dramatically different (to us Norwegians) as if they lack authority. I just believe it is this covering-your-back-thing”. By ‘covering-your-back-thing’ he means that his impression is that the Japanese are afraid to act on their own because making mistakes has more severe consequences in Japan than in Norway, something that was also elaborated on in 6.4.5 on *improvisation*.

A Norwegian manager comments that he has to specify work tasks in more detail to Japanese subordinates than what he is used to, and another that the Japanese subordinates come to him seeking confirmation more than he is used to from other countries he has worked in. On the other hand, a superior in Japan who asks his subordinates for advice is considered weak, a Norwegian middle manager says and adds: “So they must think me weak@@”. According to a Japanese informant, you do not only ask colleagues and especially superiors for advice, but also keep them informed about what you are working on because Japanese companies are not departmentalized and thus, everyone in the firm is supposed to be informed:

(85) <J38> In Japanese firms you cannot say “I don’t know” as in for example “that person is handling it so I don’t know”. “Aren’t you in the same company? Isn’t it the same department?”

³⁵ One Norwegian *ab*-answer and the Japanese *ab*-answer hold that this factor depends on the size of the company. The second Norwegian *ab*-answer claims that that workers in Japanese companies tend to ask superiors for advice but that superiors do not ask the subordinates the same.

How can you say such a thing?" Even if you don't know, you will check and tell the customer "the person in charge is not in, but it's like this" </J38>

Opposed to this, a Japanese man says about communication in Norwegian business organizations that: "Internal communication is extremely lacking" in Norwegian business organizations, by which he means that information is departmentalized and not open to everyone. A Japanese woman who used to work in Norway comments that she appreciated the freedom the Norwegian supervisor gave her, but sometimes wondered if she was on the right track as she was left on her own much of the time.

A Japanese informant argues that:

(86) <J38> Harmony is important to the Japanese, but to Norwegians independence is more important, don't you agree? Every person has his opinion [...] they dislike to depend on others, don't they? The Japanese value that everyone is together, everyone @depends@ on each other one might say </J38>

The difference here can be linked to collectivism versus individualism (2.5). Compared to table 10, this comment might seem somewhat stereotypical. In fact, about half of the Japanese think that Norwegians frequently ask colleagues for advice. However, they also think that Norwegians are given more authority when for example acting as the firm's representative in a meeting than would be the case in Japan. Therefore, in a meeting with the Japanese, a Norwegian might ask for answers to questions that the Japanese counterparts have not been prepared for, and therefore cannot answer. The other half see Norwegians as often taking decisions on their own. "Norwegians talk as independent persons, the Japanese as the firm", is one Japanese comment. As a consequence, a Norwegian representative in a meeting might state that: "Yes, I think that will be ok" without having confirmed it with his colleagues or supervisors. The Japanese who think he speaks 'as the firm', are bewildered when they later receive a mail from the Norwegian that after checking with the home office it could not be done after all.

6.4.8 ‘Asking twice’

Question 6: An earlier project characterized people as being primarily a. or primarily b. How would you characterize your Norwegian/Japanese business partners or colleagues?

H. a. must ask twice · b. enough to ask once³⁶

	a	b	ab ³⁷	No answer
Norwegians about the Japanese	6	10	4	
Japanese about the Norwegians	4	10	7	

Table 11: Norwegian-Japanese experiences about ‘asking twice’

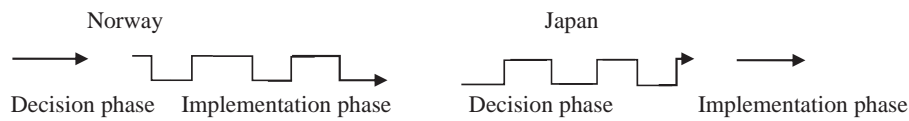
In table 11 we see that ten of the Norwegians find that it is normally enough to ask Japanese once to get things done. Ten of the Japanese think the same about the Norwegians. The large number of *ab*-answers in table 11 is due to the fact that this issue was seen as highly depending on personalities. Thus, both the Norwegians and the Japanese in general do not feel that they have to ask many times to get things done. Consequently, this does not seem to be any critical issue in the working lives of those situated in Tokyo. If anything, the Norwegians tend to say that if anyone has to be asked twice, it is not the Japanese.

A Norwegian illustrates this when during a decision process, the Norwegians and the Japanese will normally start inquiring about what is going on. The drawing underneath looks like the one he drew while talking.

(87) <N05> ‘We have often described two different methods: The Japanese plan, this far (draws a long and winding line which means the decision phase) and then they implement them, this far (draws a short line which means the implementation phase). We Norwegians, we in a way plan, this much (draws a short line which means the decision phase), and then we implement like this (draws a long and winding line which means the implementation phase), right, and then if you are going into a preliminary phase, then the Norwegians will experience this (points at the Japanese’ winding decision phase line) as things that makes you need to ask more than once, whereas the Japanese, when you are here (points at the Norwegians’ winding implementation phase line), then it is suddenly the Norwegians you need to ask more than once, because they have many ambiguities in the implementation (process).’ </N05>

³⁶ The original Norwegian expression here was *mase* ‘ask twice’ which is explained when defining the categories in 5.5.4. The Norwegian text was a. must ask twice, b. must not ask twice.

³⁷ The majority of the Norwegian and the Japanese *ab*-answers argue that this factor depends on individual variation. One Norwegian claims that who has to ask whom depends on where they are in the process (cf. example (87)).



This quote is very similar to quote (77) under the category *thoroughness*, and could just as well have been placed there. The point here is that differences in decision making makes it necessary for both parties to keep asking what is going on.

6.5 Distance

Table 12 sums up the answers the majority of the Japanese and the Norwegians gave to each of questions A to H above. The answers strongly suggest that the Japanese and the Norwegian business leaders in Tokyo see themselves as opposites on most of the ‘critical’ issues voiced by the business executives interviewed in the pilot project including directness/indirectness.

Research question 6; A-H	The majority of the Norwegians about the Japanese	The majority of the Japanese about the Norwegians
A	a	b
B	a	b
C	a	b
D	a	b
E	a	b
F	b	a
G	a	b
H	b	b

Table 12: Norwegian and Japanese majority answers to research question 6

Compared to the Norwegians in the pilot study, the Norwegians interviewed in Tokyo were equally concerned with the different use of direct versus indirect communicative style, with the Japanese’ at times excessive concern for details and unwillingness to improvise, and with the Japanese system which rarely allows for independent decisions. Further, they shared the same admiration for and sometimes frustration over Japanese thoroughness. When Norwegians in Tokyo answer letter *a*, and the Japanese *b*, it corresponds to the hypothesis made on the basis of the pilot project answers and the theoretical knowledge about the Norwegians and the Japanese (sections 2.6 and 2.7).

However, the Norwegian informants in Tokyo did not share the opinion that the Japanese have to be asked twice which is why both are marked with the letter *b* in table 12 above. Further, based on the pilot study, I had anticipated the Norwegians in Tokyo to find the Japanese rather emotional (question F). Since they did not for the possible reasons discussed under 6.4.6 on *emotions*, the order of letter *a* and *b* is the opposite to the rest on letter F in table 12 above.

The Norwegians in Tokyo voiced great appreciation for the Japanese' after work informality and friendliness. On the other hand, they saw the number and length of meetings and how to deal with Japanese customers as more 'critical' issues than those working in Bergen and Oslo, which is natural due to the increasing closeness to Japanese colleagues and customers.

The Norwegians interviewed in Norway seemed to judge the Japanese from a greater distance by criticizing the Japanese more directly both in style and content than those living in Tokyo. On the other hand, especially those with long experience in Japan seemed to have a better ability to understand the logic and benefit of the Japanese style, and together with the Japanese informants could help shed light on problems and frustrations mentioned by others. Further, we notice that whereas the Norwegians in Tokyo are preoccupied with their own style and how it can be adapted to the Japanese environment, the Japanese being on their home court, do not discuss how the Japanese style can be adapted to the Norwegian style but merely elaborate on their general impression of their Norwegian colleagues.

If we compare the informants' opinions and attitudes in section 6.4 to the theories of Hall (1976) and Hofstede (2001) in chapter two, it becomes clear that the differences in direct versus indirect communicative style voiced in the answers to question A (directness versus indirectness) can be seen in light of how the Japanese are placed with a high and Norwegians with a low context communicative style in figure 1. The answers to question B (formality) reflect the fact that Japanese and Norwegians are on the opposite ends of the power distance scale (cf. 2.5.3). The differences revealed in the answers to question C (thoroughness), D (details), and E (improvisation) can be seen as a result of the Japanese and the Norwegian differences in the need for uncertainty avoidance, and the differences between independent versus interdependence reflected in the answers to question G can be understood on the basis of individualism versus collectivism (cf. 2.5). However, as we have seen, neither the Norwegians nor the Japanese answers were unanimous, and can therefore only be viewed as tendencies with many individual and contextual differences.

6.6 Other questions

Questions 7 and 9 (cf. 5.5.1 for the interview guide) are discussed in connection with a discussion on whether style is static or adaptable in chapter eleven. This section elaborates on the answers to questions 8, 10 and 11 because they are first of all interesting for their content and will not be dealt with further in later chapters on linguistic issues.

6.6.1 Question eight

Question eight asked about what effect English has on Japanese-Norwegian business transactions. Several of the Norwegians describe the Japanese market as “*modent*” ‘mature’ meaning that compared to for instance the Chinese, the Japanese know how foreigners work, their own systems are stable and predictable, and most of the Japanese interviewed are comfortable with speaking English. However, using English still seems to be a source of both joy and frustration in their daily working lives. Seven of the Japanese voice that they become more direct when they speak English, either because in their opinion the English language in itself is more direct, because of their English proficiency which allows for less nuances than when they speak Japanese, or because they can feel they can state more directly what they think in English than in Japanese. We here see that the Japanese display two different categories for understanding the connection between directness and the use of English. On the one hand English is seen as a language with fewer lexicalized expressions for formality and hierarchy (*keigo*) (cf. 2.7.2.1). On the other hand, using English enables the informants to distance themselves from Japanese social codes and thereby display their *honne* ‘true feelings’ more openly (cf. 6.4.2 on *(in)formality*). A third reason for being more direct in English has to do with fluency. The Japanese appreciate that the Norwegians, not being English native speakers themselves, make an effort to speak uncomplicated English. This seems to create a more person-oriented (2.5.3), symmetrical interaction which enhances closeness (cf. next section about closeness). On the other hand, the Norwegians feel that they are forced to speak “banal” English (6.2.3) which probably leads to increasing directness on the Norwegian part. Six of the Norwegian informants mention that the Japanese English proficiency level can be a source of frustration. Even if Japanese colleagues speak English well, the Japanese customers do not always do (6.2.3, example (30)), and using interpreters can lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

6.6.2 Question ten

Among the eight who answered this question in the pilot study in Norway, only the two who had most recently been living and working in Japan answered “of course” and “if someone disagrees with this, they probably haven’t lived abroad” to the question about whether one need insight into cultures in order to do business successfully. Thus, most of the interviewees in the pilot study agreed with the majority of the respondents in Colbjørnsen, Drake, and Haukedal’s survey (5.5.1). They gave answers which seems to indicate that they do not regard cultural differences important such as “for a seller it is important, not for an importer (as me)”, “our Japanese colleagues in Japan are more or less similar to us”, and “no, I have never felt the need to learn about other cultures”. Some also seemed to have reached a conclusion that it is better not to think about cultural differences with comments such as “one can easily get lost in trying to understand (the others). It is better to be yourself”, and “Japan has been made unnecessary complicated; the frustrated ones are those who think they have to become Japanese (in order to do business with them)”. A hypothesis one could make on the basis of these answers is that they believe that to use a Japanese style must lead to assimilation, not integration (3.2). In chapter eleven I address some Norwegian informants who seem to be able to go in and out of styles without causing them to feel that they lose their identity. These are exclusively Norwegians with many years’ experience in Japan, and they have integrated a larger repertoire of styles into their behaviour.

When interviewing Norwegians in Japan however, only three answered that they do not think it is important to learn about culture because “I don’t think the Japanese culture is different (to any other)”, “business has become more and more international”, and “it is not necessary when you are only in Japan for a short period”. The other seventeen however, answered a clear affirmative because: “it is disrespectful/arrogant not to”, “it is important in order to build relations”, “you need it to know what makes them tick”, “it’s important in order to know what buttons to push”, “the product is only half of what you sell”, “it is a kind of ‘cultural empathy’”, and “I don’t only learn about the culture because I have to; it’s terribly interesting too”.

Whereas the Norwegians in Japan seemed to see cultural knowledge as something of a survival kit to succeed in Japan, all the Japanese except one think it is important to learn about the other’s culture, not as a survival kit but rather as a friendly gesture. It is important in order to “have things in common to talk about”, “to know where the other is coming from”, and “to

manage a ‘smooth communication’”. However, the focus is on outward signs of culture such as Norwegian family and work values, education, religion, traditions, food, and history. Only one who used to live in Norway seemed to be interested in culture for the same reason as the Norwegians in Tokyo, namely that you have to be flexible and *go ni itte wa go ni shitagae* ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’ in order to succeed in different cultures.

6.6.3 Question eleven

This question was asked because I wanted to know how many of the business executives had received any intercultural training before going abroad. The majority of both the Japanese and the Norwegians answered d) “learned from colleagues and acquaintances” and e) “learnt through trial and error”, with a) “(learnt through) books” on a third place (mostly travel guides), and only two of the Japanese and none of the Norwegians said they had received any training before being sent abroad or starting to work in a foreign company. No one answered alternative f) “do not see the need for special skills”, confirming the answers from question ten that all informants in Tokyo find it important to learn something about culture.

6.7 Closeness

This section is based on the answers from question thirteen, often intermingling with question twelve (5.5.1 for the interview guide).

Despite the obvious differences described in section 6.4, both the Japanese and the Norwegians seem to experience a sense of closeness on a personal level reflected in the answers to question thirteen about possible similarities between the Norwegians and the Japanese. The most common expression used by the Norwegians to explain what they mean is that “none of us are *brautende*”. *Brautende* is a negatively loaded word that means to be smug and talk loud and boastfully (*Nynorskordboka* 1986). The opposite to being *brautende* is reflected in the following quotations from the Norwegian interviewees:

- (88) <N19> We are quite reserved, we Norwegians, generally, so we don’t especially like to boast, the Law of Jante still has a strong position in Norway, so to *være frampå* ‘be aggressive’ is something both Norwegians and Japanese generally dislike. </N19>
- (89) <N01> We are maybe more sort of *beherska* ‘calm’, the Americans are more *oppfarende* ‘quick-tempered’. </N01>

- (90) <N05> I have put up a (cultural) axis between Japan and America, and then Norway, at least that is what I think, lies much closer up to Japan. </N05>
- (91) <N03> According to my colleagues [...] we are maybe not so *skrâsikre* 'dead sure', and have a temperament maybe more similar to the Japanese. </ N03>
- (92) < N16> We are somewhat humble, and that goes down well in Japan even though you can get much done using other strategies too. </ N16>
- (93) <N13> The standard of living is high in both countries, and businesswise we are pretty disciplined and honest and erm, I guess we can trust each other to a large extent</N13>
- (94) <N19> I think the Norwegians generally have a reputation for being quite reliable, there is little corruption and so on. </N19>
- (95) <N04> You don't have the aggressiveness, perhaps (thinking) more (about) common interests, we have the Social Democratic Party, here they build on other things but [...] the Japanese too don't push their way past everyone else. </N04>
- (96) <N11> We are somewhat more socially oriented, like the Japanese, much of the motivation for the things we do is because we feel it is the right thing to do, that we contribute, of course personal gain is important to everyone but, it is not necessarily always the most important factor, it is rather that you work with something that you feel has a purpose, that you make products that are beneficial for the society [...] Very few Japanese do something only because it gains them personally but rather because it gains the company, the society or whatever, so I think, that motivation for common interests is a strengthening factor (between us) . </N11>

The expression used by three of the Japanese to describe the same feeling of closeness is that both the Norwegians and the Japanese are 'wet'. By adding the informants' comments from this study (examples (97) to (100)) to the descriptions of the terms 'wet' versus 'dry' by Donahue (1998) and Yamada (1992) in part 2.7.1, I suggest the following table:

Wet	Dry
Focus on long term business relations; personal	Focus on business transactions; impersonal
Warm	Cold
Win-win (cooperation)	Win-lose (competition)
Accept short time losses for long time gain	The economic situation decides. The primary aim is to earn money now.
See beyond contract to help in trouble	Contract is contract: "Sorry, our hands are tied"
'Soft' communicative style	'Tough' communicative style

Table 13: The concepts 'wet' and 'dry' (author's model based Donahue (1998) and Yamada (1992) in 2.7.1, and the description of three Japanese informants)

The following quotations are how three Japanese business executives explain the terms ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ in relation to the Norwegians. In these examples we see that ‘the others’, that is those who are different, are now “the Americans”.

- (97) <J26> What we have in common is that [...] The Norwegians aim to know their counterpart, to know the Japanese, they make a real effort, we are very thankful for it, [...] because the Japanese too make an effort to understand others, we have that in common, I think. In addition we are both fairly *wet*, Americans are quite *dry*. For instance, if someone has a problem businesswise, “well, let us help” even if it does not say in the contract, “let us find a solution together”, that is what *wet* means and what the Japanese like more than anything. </J26>
- (98) <J26> We call it ‘*wet*’ and ‘*dry*’, well, I don’t know whether it is a Japanese expression or if it also exist in English, but ‘*dry*’ means (being) cold: “Contract is contract, that’s all” and ‘*wet*’ means to consider the counterpart’s feelings as in: “Contract is contract but I really want to understand your position so, I do my best to support, cooperate with you” and not cut the contact but rather cooperate to find a solution to the problem even if it means changing a part in the contract. If the other party really needs help, one tries to help. [...] The Europeans and especially the Americans are *dry*: “Contract is contract, that is not my business, finished.” However, both the Japanese and the Norwegians aim to help if someone is in trouble, I feel that the Norwegians have the most of this kind of sentiment in Europe, more than the Germans, the French, and the English, that’s why I enjoy doing business with them </J26>
- (99) <J29> We have done business with the Norwegians since the 1960s and they know Japan extremely well, which makes it easy to communicate with them, and they understand the Japanese mentality well. The Norwegians are quite *wet* compared to other Europeans. [...] By ‘*wet*’ I mean someone with a long term relationship, and someone who does not only think about business, but also can have a talk over a drink, and when one goes out to drink for an evening, one does not only talk business but also about other things which make communication easier later, and then erm, the Japanese are not very good at English and have their own special way of looking at things I guess, and it seems to me that the Norwegians manage to adapt to this [*ukeireru*] when they communicate (with us). In addition, even though we all live in a society with contracts, when there is a disagreement they are able to see the other’s viewpoint and search for a middle ground that can satisfy both parties. [...] There are tougher countries [...] when we do business with people there it usually leads to disputes [*kenka*] and a hostile atmosphere. On the contrary, the Norwegians have a fairly soft approach </J29>
- (100) <J22> In 1998 it was decided to stop the container service we had been doing for many years in the Pacific, and the well over ten people who had been working there had to be fired. Aware that the Japanese mentality is different, the manager of the head office, yes, the manager, flew over to Tokyo to explain the situation to the employees. When I saw that I thought our mentalities are really similar. [...] In cases where the Japanese branch of an American company is losing money on the other hand, the company is closed in one word “bang” without even a greeting. That is what we call ‘*dry*’ </J22>

Table 13 above is the author’s attempt to unite earlier descriptions of the terms (2.7.1) to the new descriptions found in these data in order to illustrate the perceived similarities between the Norwegians and the Japanese in terms of how business is conducted.

Several Japanese informants also mention personality traits that the Japanese and the Norwegians have in common. The parts in italics were uttered in Norwegian:

(101) <J28>The Japanese are the formal ones. Norwegians are, erm, informal but, you know what, maybe they are not, erm, if they are informal but not informal, (they are) *more reserved the first time. But then Norwegians are*, you understand ‘Bukkiraboo’? Do you know the word ‘Bukkiraboo’? *Straight to the point. So for me, it’s good you see.* The Japanese don’t say things straight, don’t you think? There is ‘honne’ and right, they always hide, don’t they? Therefore I’m no good at it. Um, but Norwegians are rarely like Americans or Spanish, not like them. *A bit more reserved the first time*, you know? But, informal. Erm, er, because they are gentle. Do you understand ‘soboku’? *Conservative, don’t you think? The same as the Japanese who also are conservative in a way, not like the Americans and the Spanish right? Not the same, if you understand.* </J28>

Soboku rather means ‘unsophisticated, naïve, simple’ but is being explained here by the English word “conservative” which is also used by others with the connotations of old fashioned or traditional. An informant likens Norwegians to *inaka no ojisan* ‘men [uncles] from the countryside’. Three others use the same metaphor on the grounds that Norwegians are perceived as “*sore hodo perapera tte yaranai n dakedo*” ‘not so talkative/smooth talkers [but]’, “*hijoo ni anshinkan ga aru*” ‘((one can) feel very much at ease with (them)’, “gentle”, and “*konservativ*” ‘conservative’. These descriptions end with “and so are we Japanese” or “similar to us”. One man likens the Norwegians to his in-laws from the northern area of Japan whom he praises for being shy but extremely “*shinrai ga dekiru hito*” ‘people that one can trust’.

These impressions about the Norwegians strengthen Hofstede’s (2.5.4) theory that Scandinavians are low on the masculinity scale, that is, are relationship- rather than ego-oriented, and that both men and women are encouraged to show modesty rather than assertiveness and ambition, which in communicative style means the soft approach that Ting-Toomey (1999:107) calls the ‘self-effacement verbal style’ (2.5.4). Since the self-effacement style is normally a feature of high context communication, it further strengthens the impression that Norwegians are both high and low context communicators even in a business setting, and that this aspect of high context communication seems to be what brings the Norwegians and the Japanese together despite the differences. Thus, the Norwegians probably do well to maintain their traditional communicative style when doing business with the Japanese.

6.8 Overview of the following linguistic analysis of style

In chapter six we reported on the speakers' own perceptions about their relationship with the 'other'. From the pilot study answers (6.2) and the answers to the questions four and five (6.3) we find that, in order of frequency, the direct-indirect dimension seemed to occupy both the Japanese and the Norwegians the most when they are asked about what experiences they have communicating with each other. However, even though the Norwegians were described as predominantly 'direct' by the Japanese, only half of the Norwegians (10/20) described the Japanese as predominantly 'indirect' (table 4), which questions the dichotomies of chapter two.

In the following chapters seven to ten I analyze their spoken texts in relation to the four styles *exacting*, *upfront*, *elaborate*, and *understated* operationalized by the linguistic devices listed in 3.10, and with the aim of providing answers to research questions (iii) and (iv). In chapter eleven I return to the meta-level and compare the linguistic analysis to how the speakers themselves describe their own styles, that is, whether style is perceived as part of their identity or something chosen strategically for instrumental purposes.

Until now the four styles have been presented in this order: *exacting*, *upfront*, *elaborate*, and *understated*. However, since the exacting style is identified as a style applying few of the devices the other styles use, we must first establish the devices used in the other three styles before analysing the exacting style. Thus, the order of the following chapters will be as follows:

Chapter 7	The upfront and the elaborate styles
Chapter 8	The understated style
Chapter 9	The exacting style
Chapter 10	Laughter and the four styles
Chapter 11	Discussion of the four styles

7 The upfront and the elaborate styles

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the *upfront* and the *elaborate styles*, both characterized by a high number of strengtheners (chapter four). Whereas devices that characterize an understated style have been proposed through such studies as those conducted on the ‘Japanese style’ (2.7), the hypotheses made about the upfront and the elaborate styles in this study, are not established theories but hypotheses proposed by comparing the theories from the two fields in chapter four.

As the upfront style was believed to be motivated by the type of assertive self-disclosure described in 3.6 and 3.7, we hypothesized in chapter four that the devices *intensifiers*, *exaggerated facts*, *first person pronouns*, and *mental verbs* might be those most likely to accommodate these needs. Further, in chapter four we hypothesized that the devices *verbosity* and *rappor markers* might be those best equipped to fulfil the need to be relatively informal, non-threatening, congenial (good to be around, open, nice, friendly), entertaining (Sifianou, 3.10.1.3), and interactional (building rapport), motivated by the description of the elaborate style in table 1, and compared to the devices proposed by Tannen (2005), which are linked to ‘camaraderie’ (Lakoff, 3.8.1) and positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 3.8.2). *Personal stories* is a device that might be linked to both the upfront and the elaborate style, as it, according to its description in 3.10.1.4, both function to illustrate a point and to create interpersonal involvement.

Neither the Norwegian nor the Japanese style(s) in chapter two gave any indications of an elaborate style. However, upon analyzing the Japanese and Norwegian texts, I found that the informants who used many strengthening devices, that is, those who displayed their personal opinions or attitudes openly and enthusiastically, tended to create two distinctly different impressions, one that of being assertive and upfront and the other that of elaborateness and camaraderie. My problem however, was similar to that of Partington (3.7); viz. how to distinguish the two since they both use strengtheners but create such a different impression. In this chapter I discuss this issue in relation to the Japanese and the Norwegian data.

Many of the informants in the present study have been living for a substantial length of time in another culture, which poses the question whether this has affected their communicative style in any way. Thus, the data will be compared to the length of contact or time spent in Japan or another high context culture or in Norway or another low context culture.

In part 7.16, I discuss these findings in light of Partington's theories about two faces of positive politeness (cf. 3.7). Further, I discuss to what degree Partington is right in that the two faces are incompatible with each other. According to Partington, one either has to choose to appear authoritative with the risk of appearing non-affiliative, or choose to appear congenial and risk not being taken seriously.

7.2 Intensifiers in the Japanese corpus

Table 14 shows the distribution of the most frequently used expressions in the Japanese corpus assumed to intensify the proposition in the given context. See 5.5.5 for more details on the selection of items. In addition to adjectives and adverbs, they include the sentence final particles *yo* and *ne*, which are given more details in section 7.6.

	Mr Da 122	Mr Ma 123	Mr Ta 124	Mr Na 125	Mr Ni 126	Mr Sa 127	Mr Su 128	Mr Ya 129	Mr No 130	Ms A 131	Mr Bi 132	Mr Mi 133	Mr D 134	Ms To 135	Mr Mo 136	Ms Kyo 137	Ms Ne 138	Ms Ko 139	Ms Taka 140	Mr U 141	Mr Ka 142	
<i>yappa(ri-shi), yahari</i> 'as expected, surely'	27	4	5	13	12	30	2	13	1	1	20	5	15	23	4	18	3	49	7	16	6	
<i>mochiron</i> 'of course'				5	3	9	4	14	2		1	1	1			2	1	14	1		1	
<i>yo</i> (emphatic sentence final particle)	62		2	23	1	139	9	26	12		29	12	4	27	1	3	3	3		17	24	
<i>yo ne</i> (emphatic sentence final particle)	53	11	11	30	2	38		4	3	8	31	8	26	11	3	11		4	1	3	18	
<i>kitto</i> 'surely'				1	1					2	3					1	2					
<i>zettai</i> 'absolutely'	4	2			1	2					1	1		2				1	2			
<i>tashika ni</i> 'certainly, truly'	2				2			1									3				1	
<i>(mono)sugoi(ku)</i> 'very, extremely'	4	1	5	13	12	7	2	5	3	9	16	14	2	7	1	11	29	38	6	8	1	
<i>hiyoo ni</i> 'very, extremely'	13	2			3	45		3			4	13	4					2		28	3	
<i>tottemo</i> 'very'					10							1	1				1	1				
<i>taihen</i> 'terribly'					4	1			1													
<i>mattaku</i> 'completely'	5		1	1	2	1		1		1				1				2		1		
<i>zenzen (nai)</i> 'not at all'	5	2		6	2					2	1						1	5	1	1		
<i>hontoo ni</i> 'really'					3	5				2	2		1	4			4	4	1		1	
<i>kichitto</i> 'exactly'					5	3				1	1											
<i>chanto</i> 'exactly'				2		16				1	1				1	2		1	1		3	
TOTAL	175	22	24	95	58	299	17	67	22	27	110	54	54	80	10	48	48	125	18	74	58	
Total word Count		19673		2971		4290		7125		12485		26891		3155		7823		2559		5166		10893
Total in %		0.89		0.74		0.56		0.76		0.81		1.11		0.54		0.86		0.86		0.52		1.01

Table 14: Intensifiers in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 0.74%. It is calculated by adding all “total in %” and dividing the sum by the number of participants.

Accurate translations of the lexical items are set out in the examples of use listed below. Examples are only from the corpus, and thus, do not cover all possible uses in general Japanese.

Examples of use:

- (102) <J26> 一番多いのは—やっぱりミーティングかな、一番多いですね </J26>
'Meetings are [*yappari* 'surely/as expected'] the most (frequent way to meet) (I) guess, most of those'

The adverb *yappari* (formal: *yahari*, very casual: *yappa*, *yappashi*) 'still, nevertheless, after all, as expected, as I thought, surely' is used when an action turned out to be in accordance with the speaker's expectations as in 'he is always late so [*yappari* 'as expected'] he is late today too' or when the speaker decides on something as a second thought or despite what is expected, as 'I planned to go to Japan, but because I am busy, it is [*yappari* 'after all'] impossible'. By starting an utterance with *yappari*, the speaker signals that what follows is something already known to the hearer or something generally known as in the first use of *yappari* in (103) below. Additionally, all three examples of *yappari* in examples (102) and (103) have an intensifying function and may be translated into 'surely, certainly'. In example (104), on the other hand, *yappari* seems to be more of a weakener, giving the speaker the opportunity to avoid a direct and straightforward presentation of his or her view while soliciting empathy which, according to Maynard (2005:300), is another frequent use of *yappari*.

- (103) <J32> 日本語も一のすごい丁寧な言葉ってあるんですよ、たっくさん、で、イギリスも日本も小さな島国で、で、やっぱり階級があったわけですよ、で、貴族とか、日本だって、昔貴族いましたからね、で、こういう人たちとしゃべるときに、やっぱりそういう非常に polite な、could you kindly if you have, そういう言い方が、イギリスも日本もね、必要だったんですよ、</J32>

'Japanese also has really polite words [*yo*], a lot, and, both England and Japan are small islands and, [*yappari* 'as one knows, surely'] they had social hierarchy [intensifying particle *yo*], and, aristocracy and the like, Japan too, had aristocracy in the old days right, and, when talking to such people, [*yappari* 'as expected/surely'] that kind of extremely *polite*, *could you kindly if you have*, that kind of wordings, both in England and in Japan right, was necessary [*yo*]

My point here is that the different interpretations of an item, *yappari* in this case, are not because the item itself is intrinsically either weakening or strengthening the illocutionary force of the proposition. Rather, it is the context that gives the hearer clues to its interpretation. In (103) many other intensifiers strengthen the impression of *yappari* as an expression of assertiveness. In the following example (104) however, many hesitation fillers and other hedges seem to weaken the impression of the item, so that it is no longer translated into ‘certainly’. It is the answer to a question about whether living abroad has made one change.

- (104) <J29> いやーそれはだから、ないですよ、うーん、それは残念なからないかな、
やっぱりー、ま、何というかな、ま、</J29>

‘[mild contradiction discourse marker] that is therefore, not (something I did) [yo], [erm/yes], it’s a pity (but one) might (have to) say (that I did) not, [*yappari*], well, how can (I) put it, well’

With these reservations in mind, we will continue examples of how the other lexemes in table 14 were used in context to intensify the proposition:

- (105) <J25> 一番いいのはもちろん顔をあわせることが、ミーティングをするのが一番いいですけど</J25>

‘The best is [*mochiron*] ‘of course’] to meet face to face, to hold a meeting is best but’

- (106) <J32> 日本ではフリータとかっていうんだけど、そういう人が増えてきたよね、
で、そういう人が増えてきた理由はたっくさんあると思うんだけど、その一つの理由は、
そういう人は大概ね、お金持ちなんだよ、家が、</J32>

‘In Japan [it] (part time employees) are called *furiita*³⁸ [but] (and), (the number of) those kinds of people have increased [yo (intensifying particle) *ne* ‘isn’t it/right’] and I think there are many reasons why (the number of) those people have increased but one reason is that the majority of those people [*ne*] are rich [yo], the families (are)’

The particle ‘yo’ and ‘yo ne’ will be elaborated on further in section 7.6.

- (107) <J25> 日本人と結婚してるんだけど、日本のことを分かっていない、さそうに見える人はいますから、んーそれはー、どうしてかなあと思うんですけどね、その人があまり、興味がないんでしょねきつと。</J25>

‘There are those [people] who are married to a Japanese and (still) don’t seem to have understood Japanese [things] (ways), so that is, how come I wonder but [*ne*], those people probably are not very interested [*ne*] [*kitto*] ‘certainly, surely, for sure’]

- (108) <J22> 絶対相手の文化はし、知っておいた方が、絶対いいでしょうね</J22>

³⁸ The word *furiita* comes from ‘free arubaita’ (*arubaita* is a German loanword *arbeiter* ‘worker’ but means a part time worker in Japanese) and refers to a special class of part time workers.

‘[*zettai* ‘definitely/absolutely’] to understand the partner’s culture is [*zettai* ‘definitely/absolutely’] good I guess [*ne*] ‘

(109) <J22> 確かに上手じゃないですね </J22>

‘(they) are [*tashika ni* ‘certainly, truly, definitely’] not good at [it]’

(110) <J26> 日本語も一のすごい丁寧な言葉ってあるんですよ、たっくん </J26>

‘Japanese also has [*monosugoi* ‘really, extremely, enormously’] polite words [*yo*], a lot’

The next example is from a person who also speaks Norwegian and therefore adds the Norwegian word *familie* ‘family’.

(111) <J38> その一、ファミリーいわゆる familie っていう一、その感覚一、を一、何というのかな、すごく大事にするんだな、する国民だっていうのは、うーん、うーんすごくいい事だと、うーん、思う </J38>

‘They are people who, how can I put it, [*sugoku* ‘very, extremely’] (much) value the sense of family or *familie* as it is called, yes, yes a [*sugoku* ‘very, extremely’] good thing, I think’

(112) <J22> メールなんかで本社から来るのは、非常に strong で、straight なのがあるんですよ </J22>

‘For example some of the e-mails that come from the head office are [*hijoo ni* ‘very, extremely’] strong and straight (forward) [*yo*]’

(113) <J26> 日本人のことをよく知ろうということ、勉強を一生懸命しておられる、でそれは、とっても我われにとっては一、あの、大変、ありがたい？、立派なこと？ </J26>

‘To aim to understand the Japanese, to study (them) hard is [*tottemo* ‘very’] to us a [*taihen* ‘very’] appreciated, praiseworthy thing’

(114) <J26> 大変、大変うれしいですね、僕ら日本人にとっては、英語でノルウェー人と、ん。 </J26>

‘[*Taihen, taihen* ‘very/terribly, very/terribly’] joyful [*ne*], for us Japanese, [to speak] English with the Norwegians, yes.’

Taihen ‘terribly’ is used as in *taihen ureshii desu ne* ‘(I) am terribly happy’, where *taihen* is a degree adverb. *Taihen* was also used as *taihen desu ne* ‘it’s hard’ (adjective) but was then not counted.

The next example is an answer to the question: Do you talk or behave differently when you speak to a Norwegian or other foreigner compared to when you speak to a Japanese?

- (115) <J26>いや、あの一、あれですね、もう 10 年、20 年もノルウェー人と一緒に仕事してるから、同じだね、そういう意味ではまったく同じだと思いますね <J26>

‘No, erm, that [ne], I have now been working together with Norwegians for as long as ten, twenty years so (it’s) the same [ne], in that sense it is [mattaku ‘completely, totally’] the same I think [ne] (whether I work with Norwegians or Japanese)’

Mattaku ‘completely (not)’ was found both in sentences such as *mattaku onaji* ‘completely similar’ and *mattaku chigau* ‘completely different’, both were counted.

- (116) <J22> 子供は英語もノルウェー語もぜんぜんできないで行ったんですけど <J22>

‘We went with the children [zenzen ‘not at all’] being able to speak neither English nor Norwegian but’

Zenzen found both as *zenzen atarimae* ‘completely natural’ and *zenzen mondai nai* ‘no problem at all’, both were counted.

- (117) <J26> 相手が本当に困っていたら、助けてあげよう <J26>

‘If the partner is [hontoo ni ‘really’] in trouble, (they) will help’

- (118) <J26> 自分の意見きちっとあって、要するにお父さん、お母さん、学校、友達ね、自分の意見をきちっと、そうそういうことはすごく勉強したね <J26>

‘(The Norwegians) [kichitto ‘exactly, accurately, neatly’] have their own opinion, that is, father, mother, school, friends [ne], their own opinion [kichitto] I [sugoku ‘very much’] learned from that’

- (119) <J42> 日本の project manager は、で本当は、全体を見てね？、さっき@言ったように@、スケジュールどうりちゃんといつてるかとかね、人がちゃんと、とかね、モラルがどうかとかね、ま、社長みたいなもんですよね@@ <J42>

‘In reality a Japanese project manager is supervising it all [ne], @as I explained earlier@, whether things are going [chanto ‘exactly, properly, neatly’] according to schedule, whether people are [chanto], and so on, how the moral is etc., well, like a company director [yone]@@’

Other comments: *Kanarazu* ‘surely’ and *dooshite mo* ‘by all means’ were found only once each and therefore not counted.

7.3 Exaggerated facts in the Japanese corpus

Among the strengthening devices listed in 3.10.1.2, *exaggerated fact* might be said to be the rhetorical device most threatening to the hearer's face because opinions/facts are stated without leaving any room for nuances as in the following extracts.

Mr Bi <J32> works for a large Japanese company and was stationed in Norway from 1999 to 2004. Words in the Japanese text written in the Roman alphabet are English words which are not usually part of the Japanese vocabulary and marked in italics in the translation.

- (120) <J32>うん、長い、@@ディベート、**すごく**ディベートが長いですね。そして年齢も *title* も関係ないですね。 </J32>
<interviewer> ぜんぜん関係ないですか。 </interviewer>
<J32> んーと思うな。ノルウェーの人は一あの、若い人でも、*senior class* でも、ディベート好きですね、だから、なかなか *settle* しないですよ、*compromise* しないですね、時間かかりますね。 </J32>

'Yeah, (they are) long. @@ debates, (it's) [*sugoku* 'extremely'] debates are long [*ne*]. Age and *title* don't matter [*ne* 'right']
'Doesn't matter at all?'
'No, I don't think so [*na* (modal particle)]. The Norwegians erm, the young too, the *senior class* too, like debates [*ne* 'right'], so therefore, (they) don't come to a conclusion [*settle*] [*yo* (intensifying particle)], (they) don't *compromise* [*ne* 'right'],(it) takes time [*ne* 'right']

As a hearer, one would like to ask: "You do not seriously mean all Norwegians always, do you? Be specific!" But, the purpose is not to be objective or specific, but to be open and frank. One modal particle '*na*' is not enough to modify the assertiveness. The exaggerated facts are further strengthened by the use of intensifiers (marked in grey). The function and intensity of the particles '*yo*' and '*ne*' will be discussed in 7.6. The following is another example of exaggerated facts from the same speaker:

- (121) <J32>で、さっきも話したけど、ノルウェーの人は、一人でやるのが好きですから、毎日毎日ディスカッションしたり、こう隣に座っていっしょに仕事をするって嫌いだからね。 </J32>

'Well (I) talked about this earlier but the Norwegians like to do things on their own so therefore they dislike to sit next to each other and work together or discuss things [every, every day] (day after day) like this [*ne* 'right'].'

Again, there are no nuances, and adjectives such as 'like' and 'dislike' add to the exaggeration. Mr Bi works in the oil industry. He has lived abroad for 13 years in different countries, and ends the interview by saying (intensifier marked in grey):

(122) <J32>日本で油が出たら、**きっと**私は日本から動かなかったと思うけど。
</J32>

‘If Japan had oil, [*kitto* ‘for sure’] I would not have [moved away from] (left) Japan I think but.’

Exaggerated facts are most noticeable to the hearer when the content is somewhat controversial, i.e. there is a danger of causing someone’s loss of face. Mr D <J34> has been the Japanese distributor for a Norwegian firm since 1990 and its manager since 2002. From 1985 to 1994 he lived in the USA. Despite his mild and friendly appearances his straight forward opinions sometimes made me jump as at the end of the following quote:

(123) <J34> 我われね、一般的にね日本人てのディテールからはいって、つみあげていって、ビルディングしていくちゅうかね。だか、ノルウェー人の人ってまず夢があって、それからどうやっていくかって反対に(xx)、だから、ノルウェー人のがいろんな可能性があるかもしれないんすよね、でも成功率が低いけど、</J34>

‘We Japanese generally [*ne*], for the most part [*ne*] Japanese start from details and build on from there as you build a house [building] right. But, Norwegians (do it) the opposite (way), start with a dream and then (think) how to go from there, therefore, to put it the other way around, the Norwegians might have many opportunities [*yo ne*] though the success rate is low, [but]’

This might not seem very assertive to some, but compared to the Japanese with an understated style who will be presented in chapter eight, the ending: “but the success rate is low” lacks the hedging lexemes that would be typical for the ‘Japanese style’, and the open ending “but” is not enough to hedge the all-inclusive assertion made about the Norwegians.

Another example is Mr Ma’s <J23> answer to question 5; “What are your experiences communicating with [Norwegians/Japanese] professionally?” Many informants spent half their interview time answering this question, but Mr Ma’s answer is:

(124) <J23>ま、そらビジネスだからねー、困ったこともあるしー、うれしかったこともあるしー、いろんなことがあるけれどお、ま、ノルウェー人はうそをつかないね、あまり、イギリス人と違う、と思う、んー、素朴、正直、だと思えます。</J23>

‘What are your experiences communicating with Norwegians professionally?’

‘Well, that’s business right, there are problems and there are joys and there are all sorts of things, well, Norwegians don’t tell lies right, not much, unlike the Englishmen, (I) think, yes, simple³⁹ and sincere, I think.’

³⁹ See more about the lexeme *soboku* in example (101).

The interview with Mr Ma lasted only twenty minutes, half of the usual time for the Japanese interviews (cf. appendix 4), and his style might possibly be a consequence of a busy schedule. When a text has exaggerated facts but fewer intensifiers as in Mr Ma's text, the impression is an upfront style closer to an exacting style. We will return to this in chapter nine.

Other examples of exaggerated facts are:

- (125) Norwegian quality is a quality without details, (but with a great concept).
 There is no competition in Norway.
 Norwegians seem nervous when they are not close to a telephone.
 (Oslo) was not exactly convenient (like Tokyo).
 Even though the Norwegians understand the Japanese way, they pretend not to.
 Norway is very far away, both geographically and when it comes to what interests people have.
 Trains in Norway are terribly late.
 If you cannot talk about sports, you cannot have a smooth conversation (with a Norwegian).

Thus, exaggerated facts can be said to be a marked feature of an upfront style, the aim of which is assertive self-disclosure and persuasion as described in 3.6 and 3.7. The illocutionary force can be further strengthened by the use of intensifiers.

Table 15 shows the number of exaggerated facts in the Japanese corpus.

	Mr Ka J42	Mr U J41	Ms Taka J40	Ms Ko J39	Ms Ne J38	Ms Kyo J37	Mr Mo J36	Ms To J35	Mr D J34	Mr Mt J33	Mr Bi J32	Ms A J31	Mr No J30	Mr Ya J29	Mr Su J28	Mr Sa J27	Mr Ni J26	Mr Na J25	Mr Ta J24	Mr Ma J23	Mr Da J22
Exaggerated facts	-	3	-	29	-	-	-	1	6	10	13	-	3	-	10	13	-	3	2	7	-
Total word Count	9315	9191	3633	16536	9760	9710	3008	8874	4737	6176	10893	5166	2559	7823	3155	26891	7125	12485	4290	2971	19673
Total in %		0.03		0.30				0.01	0.13	0.17	0.12		0.12		0.32	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.24		

Table 15: Exaggerated facts in the Japanese corpus

The total number of exaggerated facts identified in the Japanese corpus is 100. The average number (divided by all the speakers) is 4.76 (0.07%)⁴⁰, but we also see that, among these, nine speakers state none.

⁴⁰ As discussed in 5.6, to calculate rhetorical devices such as exaggerated facts, verbosity, and personal stories normally containing more than one lexeme against the total word count might seem counter-intuitive, but it was done in order to see the frequency of a rhetorical device relative to the text length. However, it must be stressed that the percentage cannot be compared to linguistic devices such as intensifiers containing only one lexeme.

7.4 Verbosity in the Japanese corpus

The following are examples of verbosity found in the Japanese material:

Infusing adjectives: *daisuki* [intensifying prefix *-big* + ‘like’] ‘love’, *rippa* ‘impressive’, *taihen* ‘horrible’, *subarashii* ‘fantastic’, *happi* ‘happy’, *muda* ‘wastefully’, *shinjirarenai* ‘unbelievable’, *kakkooi* ‘neat’

Idioms/metaphors: *snake* ‘snake’(cf. ex. (128)), *kushon* ‘cushion’ *absorber* (about the role as middleman between Norwegian leadership and Japanese customers) (idiosyncratic expression), *nominikeeshon* (*nomi* ‘drink’ (verb stem) + [(*komyu*)*nikeeshon* ‘communication’]) which is a blend denoting the importance of drinking and communication in Japanese business, *wet* (cf. 6.7), *bukkiraboo* [break a bow brusquely] ‘blunt’ (cf. ex. (101)), *karitekita neko* [borrowed cat] ‘a person who is mild, quiet, and cautious’(cf. 11.2), *maruku osamaru* ‘settle something in a [round (edge-less)] non-confrontational manner’, *tsume ga amai* [the final stage is sweet⁴¹] ‘not follow something through, slack off towards the end’, *okanekuimushi* [an insect⁴² that eats money] ‘a person who spends a lot of money’, *ammoku no ryookai* [silent understanding] ‘to understand tacitly’ (only used about people who have much shared context), *fuwaraidoo* [the vibration of thunder that vibrates in others] ‘to follow something or someone blindly’, *kidoairaku* [happiness anger sadness joy] ‘an emotional person’.

Giongo, gitaigo and giseigo: These items, which are underlined below, normally appear as a single lexeme or repeating a lexeme twice. Below we see that they are frequently uttered by one or two additional repetitions. *Nikoniko* (smiling), *komakai tokoro mo pichipichipichi to (suru)* ‘do things ‘thoroughly’’, *jibun no iken o pishitte, shikkari motte ite* ‘having one’s own ‘firm’ opinion’, *iken o kichitto motteru* ‘having a ‘firm’ opinion’, *chokochokochoko to meeru o irete* ‘send mail ‘assiduously’’, *iitai koto wa pyoopyoo iu* ‘to say what one wants ‘pyoopyoo’ (idiosyncratic?)’, *dondondondon atarashii michi o aketeikeru* ‘open new ways ‘at a steady pace’’, *jiito* ‘for a very long time’, *guchagucha iu* ‘grumble’.

Repetitions: Repetitions found in the examples above come in the form of repeating one word as in (121): “*every, every day*”, or in (120): “*Yeah, (they are) long. @@ debates, (it’s)*”

⁴¹ Sweet in Japanese also can have the connotations weak (not using all one’s force), lenient, or mild.

⁴² A person described as an insect seems to frequently have negative connotations in Japanese such as e.g. *nakimushi* [cry insect] ‘a crybaby’, *yowamushi* [weak insect] ‘coward’, or *ojamamushi* [nuisance insect] ‘nuisance’.

[*sugoku*] debates are long [*ne*].”, or repetitive sentence construction as in (120): “don’t compromise *right*, takes time *right*”. See example (129) for yet other repetitions.

Reduplications: *Motto motto* ‘more and more’, *mainichi mainichi* ‘every every day’ are probably reduplications in the Japanese material. Other repeated items that frequently created an exaggerated and intensified impression such as “*soo soo soo soo soo*” [so so so so so] ‘it is, it is’, “*iya iya iya iya*” ‘no no no no’, *okke okke* ‘okey okey’, and *onaji onaji* ‘same same’, are not.

Onomatopoeia: *wa* (ワーツ) *te iu* ‘says wow’, *ga* (ガツ) *to sugu magaranai* ‘does not turn quickly’ (idiosyncratic?), *baan* (バーン) *to iu* ‘says it (assertively) with a bang’, *supa* (スパツ) *to deru* ‘appear quickly’, *doon* (ドーン) *to deru* ‘appear with a bang’, *boke* (ボケッ) *to shite iru* ‘not paying attention, not attentive’

Lexical intensifiers: There are no examples of swear words in the Japanese sample.

The following table shows the distribution of verbose expressions from the Japanese data.

	Mr Da J22	Mr Ma J23	Mr Ta J24	Mr Na J25	Mr Ni J26	Mr Sa J27	Mr Su J28	Mr Ya J29	Mr No J30	Ms A J31	Mr Bi J32	Mr Mi J33	Mr D J34	Ms To J35	Mr Mo J36	Ms Kyo J37	Ms Ne J38	Ms Ko J39	Ms Taka J40	Mr U J41	Mr Ka J42
Verbose expressions	44	-	-	-	12	62	7	-	10	-	10	5	-	-	-	-	74	14	-	-	-
Total word Count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.22				0.17	0.23	0.22		0.39		0.09	0.08					0.76	0.08			

Table 16: Verbose expressions in the Japanese corpus

The total number of verbose expressions identified in the Japanese corpus is 238. The average number (divided by all the speakers) is 11.33 (0.11%), but we also see that, among these, twelve speakers employ none.

On the basis of how the elaborate style was described in table 1, we hypothesized in chapter four that verbosity might be a characteristic of this style. In a text that has no or few exaggerated facts and many verbose expressions such as for instance that of Mr Da <J22> and Mr Ni <J26>, the result is a playful and non-threatening impression. The following is an

example from Mr Da where he elaborates on how Japanese acquaintances frequently believes he is a foreigner because his name is somewhat rare, he speaks English very well, states his thoughts and feelings openly, and addresses strangers with less hesitancy than the average Japanese.

(126) <J22>この間、この間ですね、あの一ちょっとある reception に、うちの奥さんと出たんですよ、その人初めて会ったんですけどもね、え一言うんですよ、**あんたは本当に100%日本人？**って、</J22>

‘The other day, the other day [*ne*], erm a bit, (I) came to a certain reception together with my wife [*yo*], it was the first time to meet that person but [*ne*], erm (when) (he) says [*yo ne*], **are you really 100% Japanese**, (he) says’

Similar to Mr Ni, whose example can be found in (129), Mr Da does not hesitate to share personal information about his family or about his own feelings, and the use of the direct quote “are you really Japanese” (marked in grey) adds colour and vividness to the text.

The following is an example from Mr Sa <J27> where he comments on his experiences talking to foreigners on the phone. He sprinkles his text with verbose expressions such as repetitions (marked in grey), direct quotes (marked with quotation marks), and onomatopoeia (marked in italics in the translation).

(127) <J27> 彼らは自分たちの言いたいことをこうまとめておいて、「<name>さんこれ<name>、**これは何だ、これは何だ**」って「**これもやれ、あれもやれ**っ」、んで「なるほど」と、であと終わってから「あーしまったあれ俺言えばよかった」って[...]**あの西洋人はうまい、自分の主張はパッパッパッパッ**とこう、[...]で日本人はボケっとしている@からね@、後から、「おいおい、ちょっと待てよ」ちゅって「一方的じゃねーか」とか、後で思う</J27>

‘[They] (the foreigners) sort what they want to say ahead (of phoning), “Mr <name>, this, <name>, **what about this, what about this**”, [(they) say], “**do this, do that**”, and “I see” [(I) say], and afterwards, “oh bother, that’s what I should have said” [...] those foreigners are good, they state their thoughts like *pah pah pah pah* [...] and Japanese are [*boke*] (not following) @right@, and afterwards, “hey hey wait a minute! [*yo*]” [(we) say (colloquial)], “isn’t it (only the foreigner who get to talk) [one-side] (colloquial)” we think afterwards’

Even in texts such as those of Mr Sa <J27> and Ne <J38> with a high number of exaggerated facts, an even larger number of verbose expressions (five times more in Mr Sa’s case) helps neutralize the exaggerated facts, and restore a congenial atmosphere (at least if the exaggerated facts are about a third party, as in Mr Sa’s text).

In an upfront style however, verbosity tends to cause another effect. This is illustrated by an example from Mr Mi <J33>, who had high scores on intensifiers and exaggerated facts. In the following example the exaggerated facts target the Japanese:

(128) <J33>外国人に対する会話の方が一自分の気持ちが *straight* に言えるね、で、日本人だと多分、日本人っていうのは *snake* だから、あの自分も *snake* にならないと一、なかなかうまくいかない。</J33>

'In conversation with foreigners (one) can say one's feelings *straight* [*ne*], and, Japanese maybe, the Japanese are *snakes* so, erm if one does not become a *snake* oneself, (the conversation) does not go very well.'

The metaphor *snake* here I understood to mean something in line with being sly. Texts with many exaggerated facts and few verbose expressions appear 'serious', upfront, and assertive. By adding verbosity on the other hand, the speaker adds a sense of 'non-seriousness' to the text which somewhat softens the seriousness into playfulness and artistry. As mentioned under part 3.10.1.3, 'non-seriousness' means that by way of different devices, the speaker signals that a statement should not be taken too seriously. In Mr Mi's example above however, the metaphor 'snake' does not manage to soften the assertiveness because the imagery is used as part of the phrase stating an exaggerated fact. Therefore the verbose expression rather has a strengthening, and mocking effect on the exaggerated fact. When a person chooses to apply an upfront style, he is not afraid to exaggerate by 'exaggerated facts', but can even strengthen his proposition further by adding intensifiers and verbose expressions to the claim. We return with more examples of this is the Norwegian data in (173).

Thus, I propose two different effects of verbose expressions depending on whether they are part of an exaggerated fact or not. If we compare table 15 and 16, we find that there are six speakers who employ both exaggerated facts and verbosity: Mr Sa <J27>, Mr Su <J28>, Mr No <J30>, Mr Bi <J32>, Mr Mi <J33>, and Ms Ne <J38>. Thus, it becomes important to know whether their verbose expressions strengthen the intensity into the impression of an upfront style or weaken it into an impression of an elaborate style.

Upon closer inspection, we find that sixty-one of Mr Sa's sixty-two verbose expressions (61/62) are not part of a phrase expressing an exaggerated facts, and thus, mainly function to add playfulness and imagery to the text. The same is true for Mr No (10/10) and Ms Ne (66/74). The impression of these speakers is that although they exaggerate and over-specify some facts, their texts have so much verbosity that add flavour and drama to the story that it

makes them appear more personal as to say “this is just my story and you don’t have to take it too seriously”. Thus, an elaborate style without any exaggerated facts gives the most congenial and non-threatening impression, but even the assertiveness in a text with exaggerated facts can be modified by the use of an even higher number of verbose expressions not part of the phrase expressing the exaggerated fact. The result is an impression of a speaker who is not afraid to state his personal opinions and might even wish to convince the hearer about his views, but as mentioned in relation to ‘camaraderie’ in 3.8.1, the camaraderie/rapport benefit of indirectness is the pleasant experience of getting one’s needs met, not by dominating the other, but by appealing to solidarity, common ground and shared interests.

For Mr Su, on the other hand, the number is (0/7), which means that all of his verbose expressions add intensity and mockery to the exaggerated facts. The same is true for Mr Mi (0/5) and half of Mr Bi’s ten verbose expressions (5/10). Thus, for those who give an upfront rather than an elaborate impression, verbose expressions tend to be fewer in number and mainly function to strengthen the force of the exaggerated facts.

7.5 *Personal stories in the Japanese corpus*

Mr Ni <J26> has been described as having a style with verbosity but no exaggerated facts, causing a congenial and non-threatening impression. He has worked with Norwegians through his job in a Japanese trading house since 1983, and was stationed in Norway for two periods with a total of ten years. He often returns to how well he and his family enjoyed living in Norway. The next example is his answer to the question (6G): How would you characterize your Norwegian business partners or colleagues; a. often show emotions at work and b. do not often show emotions at work?

- (129) <J26>うん、あのね、親しい人—は感情をよく表しますね、親しくなるとね、だから、僕の友達をよく感情を表す、それこそいい意味で、悪くなくて、いい意味でね、あのね、日本の東北の人に似ているんですよ、ノルウェー人って、あの—、東北に行ったことありますか？日本は沖縄もあるし、それから東北もあるでしょ？あの—Shy なんですけど、東北の人はね、**すごく**、だけど、一度友達になると、心を**ずっと**、あの—、**こうずっと**、心をたくさん表してね、友達になる、だから**すごく**信頼ができる、最初はあ、ちゅうちょして、shy なんてね、言葉をあまり交わさないんだけど、友達になった瞬間に、**ふか—い**関係？と、あの—、気持ちがこう—、表面じゃなくて、それはノルウェー人もそうなんじゃないかなと思いますね、わたし

の家内が岩手県から来てるんです、で、僕が岩手の家内の、お父さんお母さんとか、とても大好きなのは、あの、やっぱり誠実？、とっても、誠実ってわかりますか。誠実で一、で一あの、アットファミリーっていうかな、家族的でね、困ったことあったら、助けてくれる？、だけど、それには時間がかかる、そういう関係になるにはね、という一ノルウェー人だと思うな、とってもそういうのすきですね、ん。感情をよく表す、だから、ま、感情をよく表すということかな。<J26>

'Um, you know what, (the Norwegians) who are close often show feelings [*ne* 'right'] [?], as (one) grows close, therefore, my (Norwegian) friends often show feelings, in a really positive sense, not negative, in a positive sense [*ne*], you know what, **Norwegians are similar to people from Toohoku**⁴³[yø], erm, have (you) been to the *Toohoku* area [question particle], in Japan we have *Okinawa* and then also *Toohoku* [*ne*][?], erm **(they) are shy but**, people from *Toohoku* [*ne*], [*sugoku* 'extremely'], but, once (you) become friends (with them), (their) heart [*zutto* 'forever'] erm, (like) this [*zutto* 'forever'], (they) show so much of (their) heart [*ne*], and (we) become friends, so (I) can trust them [*sugoku* 'very much'], in the beginning **(they) are reluctant and shy [*ne*]**, and do not exchange much words (with you) but, as soon as (we) have become friends, (it's) like a *dee:p* relationship [?], erm, the feelings are like this <makes a wide circle on his heart>, not superficial, aren't the Norwegians also like that, (I) wonder [*ne*], my wife comes from Iwate prefecture, and, the reason why I [*daisuki* 'love'] her mother and father and all of them at home in Iwate so much, erm, (they are) [*yappari*] [*seijitsu* 'sincere, honest'] [?], [*tottemo* 'very much'], do (you) understand *seijitsu* [question particle]. (They in *Iwate*) are '*seijitsu*', and erm, maybe (it) is called *at family*, family-like right, if (you) have any problems, (they) help [?], but, to come there takes time, **Norwegians are like that** (I) think [modal particle], (I) like that [*tottemo* 'very much'] [*ne*], yes. (They) often show emotions, so therefore, well, (one) can say that (they) often show emotions then [modal particle].'

As mentioned in 3.10.1.3, repetitions function to signal humour, play, involvement, and help keep both the speaker and the hearer on track. Repetitions found in the example above come in the form of repeating one word as in “(their) heart *forever* erm, (like) this *forever*” or a phrase as in “*in a really positive sense*, not negative, *in a positive sense*”. Repetition can also be to state the same point twice, as in the segments marked in bold above. Finally repetition is used to round up a whole statement by returning to the beginning as in “Norwegians are similar to people from Toohoku [...] Norwegians are like that” (marked in bold). Personal stories in an elaborate style seem to strengthen the bond between the interlocutors both because the speaker allows the hearer insight into his personal sphere, experiences, and feelings, and because personal stories builds a sense of identification between the speaker and the hearer (3.10.1.4).

⁴³ *Toohoku* is the Northern Province on the main island in Japan. *Iwate* is a prefecture in the *Toohoku*. *Okinawa* is in the south.

However, if we look at functions of including personal stories in a text in 3.10.1.4, we see that in addition to the socially binding function, a story can also function to contribute to the point of the story and play a role in the speaker's presentation of self. Thus, stories are also used by those with an upfront style such as in the following example from Mr Bi. (direct quote is marked in grey in the English translation):

- (130) <J32>ノルウェーに行く前は、ミーティングね、他所の会社とかいろんな人が集まったミーティングで、だれかがわたしと同じ意見言うと、あわたしも彼といっしょですって言って、おしまいだったけど、ノルウェーから帰ったらやっぱり、わたしはこう思いますって、いうようになりましたね<J32>

'Before (I) went to Norway, (at) meetings right, at a meeting where different people from other companies [and so on] gathered, if anyone says the same as (what is) my opinion, it ended with me saying *ah I agree with him*, but after I came back from Norway [*yappari*], (I) have started to say *this is what I think* [*ne*]'

Table 17 shows the distribution of personal stories in the Japanese corpus.

	Mr Da J22	Mr Ma J23	Mr Ta J24	Mr Na J25	Mr Ni J26	Mr Sa J27	Mr Su J28	Mr No J30	Ms A J31	Mr Bi J32	Mr Mi J33	Mr D J34	Ms To J35	Mr Mo J36	Ms Kyō J37	Ms Ne J38	Ms Ko J39	Ms Taka J40	Mr U J41	Mr Ka J42
Personal stories	16	-	-	1	4	14 + first part of the interview tells his life story	3	5	1	4	3	-	2	-	1	18	6	-	3	1 (on the interviewer's request)
Total word Count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	2589	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.08	-	-	0.01	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.20	0.02	0.04	0.05	-	0.02	-	0.01	0.18	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.01

Table 17: Personal stories in the Japanese corpus

The total number of personal stories in the Japanese corpus is 82. The average number is 3.90 (0.04%). Those with the most personal stories told are Mr Da <J22>, Mr Sa <J27>, and Ms Ne <J38> with predominantly elaborate styles. In contrast, ten people told none or only one in spite of many personal experiences they could have shared. We return to these in chapter eight on the understated style.

7.6 Rapport markers in the Japanese corpus

Maynard (2005:287) calls the lexical item *ne* ‘isn’t it, right’ an *interactional particle* because it usually signals or solicits agreement and confirmation. When a speaker uses *ne* he assumes that the hearer also knows, which may signal a sense of intimacy. The main difference between particle *yo* and *ne* is that *ne* “invites validation by her interlocutor” as in (131) whereas *yo* takes “the stance of authority on the part of the speaker that is not open to negotiation on the part of the hearer” as in (132) (Morita 2002:227), and is therefore not defined as a rapport marker here (author’s examples):

(131) *Okaasan, ginkoo e ittekuru ne*
 Mother, bank to go and return [*ne*]
 ‘mum, I go to the bank, all right?’

(132) *Okaasan, ginkoo e ittekuru yo*
 Mother, bank to go and return [*yo*]
 ‘mum, I go to the bank!’

However, below I aim to explain why the particle *ne* ‘isn’t it, right’ cannot automatically be defined as a rapport marker.

Table 18 shows the distribution of the particle *ne* in my data. As we can see Mr Bi <J32> uses *ne* 1.64%, and Mr Ni <J26> 1.39%, which both are very high compared to an average of 1.12%.

	Mr Da 122	Mr Ma 123	Mr Ta 124	Mr Na 125	Mr Ni 126	Mr Sa 127	Mr Su 128	Mr Ya 129	Mr No 130	Ms A 131	Mr Bi 132	Mr Mi 133	Mr D 134	Ms To 135	Mr Mo 136	Ms Kyō 137	Ms Ne 138	Ms Ko 139	Ms Taka 140	Mr U 141	Mr Ka 142
ne ‘isn’t it’	275	27	55	116	99	467	45	117	60	51	179	43	85	70	25	79	38	42	33	72	127
Total word Count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9515
Total in %	1.40	0.91	1.28	0.93	1.39	1.74	1.43	1.50	2.35	0.99	1.64	0.70	1.80	0.79	0.83	0.81	0.39	0.25	0.91	0.78	1.36

Table 18: The particle ‘ne’ in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 1.12%.

I argue that the discourse particle *ne* seems to have different functions when it is used by Mr Bi or by Mr Ni. Below is an extract from (129), repeated here as (133), where I have translated the particle *ne* into what might tentatively be Mr Ni’s reasons for using it:

(133) <J26> Um, you know what, (the Norwegians) who are close often show feelings [*ne* 'don't you agree'] [?], as (one) grows close, therefore, my (Norwegian) friends often show feelings, in a really positive sense, not negative, in a positive sense [*ne* 'do you understand what I mean?'], you know what, Norwegians are similar to people from Toohoku [*yo*], erm, have (you) been to the Toohoku area [question particle], in Japan we have Okinawa and then also Toohoku [*ne* 'as you know'] [?]</J26>

The particle *ne* here seems to be used signal or solicit agreement and confirmation as mentioned by Maynard (2005:287) above, or it aspires to “establish the proposition expressed as common ground” (Itani 1996:165).

If we look at an extract from (120), repeated as (134) from Mr Bi however, the particle *ne* cannot automatically be translated into ‘isn’t it’ in the sense of seeking agreement and does not even seem to solicit confirmation because the speaker knows that the hearer has never taken part in a business meeting with Norwegians:

(134) <J32> Yeah, (they are) long. @@ debates, (it’s) [*sugoku* ‘extremely’] debates are long [*ne*]. Age and *title* don’t matter [*ne*]. </J32>

Ne here rather seems to function more as a rhetorical question, which is a question posed for its persuasive effect. Why does not Mr Bi use *yo* instead?:

(135) yeah, (they are) long. @@ debates, (it’s) [*sugoku* ‘extremely’] debates are long [*yo*]. Age and *title* doesn’t matter [*yo*].

Katagiri (2007:1317) claims that *yo* denotes something the speaker has accepted and therefore does not need to confirm with the hearer, that is, the speaker is merely giving information. According to Katagiri (2007:1319), *ne* has a stronger force than *yo* in directing the hearer’s attention toward the actual scene. In example (134) the speaker takes it upon himself to regard the proposition as relevant to the hearer and thereby presumes common ground without hearer’s consent, and therefore may appear even more face-threatening to the hearer than example (135).

Thus, it seems that whereas Mr Ni uses the particle *ne* to build rapport through asking for the hearer’s consent, Mr Bi uses it to draw attention to his message and possibly persuade the hearer to agree, which is something that defines intensifiers rather than rapport markers.

Since it is difficult to distinguish the two types of *ne* in the texts, the particle was not used as a measure of rapport with one exception: Any lexical item with a slightly longer rising intonation which seemed to ask for the speaker’s involvement or confirmation was marked

with a question mark in the transcriptions (marked [?] in the English translations). This especially occurred after lexical items such as the verbs *omoimasen*[?] ‘don’t you think?’, *wakaru/wakarimasu*[?] ‘do you understand?’ and *shitte ru*[?] ‘do you know?’, but most frequently on tags such as *ne/yo ne/deshoo/soo deshoo*[?] ‘isn’t it?’. The preliminary tag question *ano ne* ‘you know what?’ did not always come with rising intonation, but was counted as a rapport marker. The use of the interviewer’s first name was also added to the table. The second person pronoun *anata* ‘you’ and names are often left out in Japanese conversations without causing a feeling of distance. Therefore, to use someone’s first name, might have an intensifying effect in the same way as Yamada (3.10.1.6) argued that stating Japanese personal pronouns when not using a subject is the norm, gives an emphasis equivalent to stressing or italicizing a subject in English.

Table 19 shows the distribution of other rapport markers in the Japanese sample.

	Mr Da J22	Mr Ma J23	Mr Ta J24	Mr Na J25	Mr Ni J26	Mr Sa J27	Mr Su J28	Mr Ya J29	Mr No J30	Ms A J31	Mr Bi J32	Mr Mi J33	Mr D J34	Ms To J35	Mr Mo J36	Ms Kyō J37	Ms Ne J38	Ms Ko J39	Ms Taka J40	Mr U J41	Mr Ka J42
[item] [?]	59	4	6	18	64	176	16	6	32	9	33	34	9	20	2	28	104	243	20	6	77
<i>ano ne</i> ‘you know what?’	4				5	3	2	1	2			2					3				1
<i>ne</i> [?] ‘isn’t it?’	9		1		3	57	2		12			11		1		1	6	6		2	51
<i>desho</i> [?] / <i>soo deshō</i> [?] ‘isn’t it?’	6				7	6	3		4	2	6	4				1	15	1	1		12
<i>yo ne</i> [?] ‘isn’t it?’	1												3							1	3
<i>to omoimasen</i> [?] ‘don’t you think?’												1									
<i>wakaru</i> [?] / <i>wakarimasu</i> [?] ‘do you understand?’	8						3								2	1	1				6
<i>shitte ru</i> [?] ‘do you know?’													1								
<i>Kristin</i>					2		3					1	1			3		1			
Total	87	4	7	18	81	243	29	7	50	11	39	56	9	23	4	34	129	251	21	9	150
Total word count	19673		2971	4290	12485	7125	26891		2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.44		0.14	0.16	0.14	0.90			0.09	1.95	0.36	0.91	0.19	0.26	0.13	0.35	1.32	1.52	0.58	0.10	1.61
English words in the text	285	-	39	23	96	581	HN + HJ	16	HE + HJ	31	122	166	45	54	-	18	28N/3E	15N/17E	52	4	62

Table 19: Rapport markers in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 0.64%

When we compare table 18 to table 19, we see that even though Mr Bi <J32> over all used the particle *ne* more than Mr Ni, none of his *ne* are marked with a slightly longer rising intonation asking confirmation from the hearer, which suggests that it denotes assertiveness rather than rapport in his case.

In the table above, Mr Ni <J26>, Mr Sa <J27>, and Ms Ne <J38>, characterized as more elaborate in style than for instance Mr Bi <J33>, Mr Ma <J23>, and Mr D <J34>, have higher scores on rapport markers, something which is natural since the elaborate style emphasize rapport building more than the upfront style (chapter four). However, similar to how a high number of verbose expressions could neutralize and restore a non-threatening atmosphere in a text with many exaggerated facts, rapport markers have a similar function in the texts of Mr Su <J28> (see example (101) for a quote from him) and Mr Mi <J33> (cf. (128)). Thus, an assertive upfront style can be somewhat modified or appear less dominating by asking for the hearer's feed-back, contribution, or consent by the way of rapport markers. However, as we discussed in relation to the particle *ne* 'isn't it' above, rapport markers are also in danger of presuming common ground without expecting the hearer to disagree.

Further, in table 19 we also counted the number of English words used by the Japanese informants. J stands for Japanese, E for English, and N for Norwegian. HN means that about half of the text was in Norwegian, HJ that about half was in Japanese, and HE that about half of the text was uttered in English. We see that except for Mr Bi <J32> and Mr Ka <J42>, those who use many of the other rapport markers in table 19, also blend in much English or Norwegian in their text, indicating that these languages may function as rapport markers. By this I mean that by using English or Norwegian, the Japanese speaker signals a bond of familiarity or intimacy with the hearer or the hearer's culture. Further, we see that those who blend in English or Norwegian the most, also have the longest and closest contact with low context cultures (table 22), indicating that these styles have something to do with the speaker's international orientation. We return to this in section 7.8.

7.7 Personal pronouns and mental verbs in the Japanese corpus

As mentioned in 3.10.1.6, Japanese is a pro-drop language which means that personal pronouns may be omitted when they are pragmatically or syntactically inferable. However, this does not mean that Japanese does not have personal pronouns. Whereas Norwegian has

one lexical item denoting the first person pronoun (*jeg/eg* ‘I’), Japanese has several items depending on the speaker’s gender, age, status or familiarity relative to the hearer, and formality of the situation. Key expressions for identifying oneself are *watakushi* ‘I’ (very formal), *watashi* ‘I’ (formal in “masculine” style, formal and casual in “feminine” style), *atashi* ‘I’ (casual, used by female speakers), *ore* ‘I’ (blunt, almost always used by a male speaker), and *boku* ‘I’ (casual, almost always used by a male speaker) (Maynard 2005:233).

Table 20 shows the distribution of personal pronouns in the Japanese data. *Watashi* and *boku* have the highest frequency in my material, which indicates that the interview must have been considered neither as a highly formal, nor as an informal occasion by most of the informants.

	Mr Da J22	Mr Ma J23	Mr Ts J24	Mr Na J25	Mr Ni J26	Mr Sa J27	Mr Su J28	Mr Ya J29	Mr No J30	Ms A J31	Mr Bi J32	Mr Mi J33	Mr D J34	Ms To J35	Mr Mo J36	Ms Ky J37	Ms Ne J38	Ms Ko J39	Ms TaKa J40	Mr U J41	Mr Ka J42
<i>atashi</i> ‘I’																4	1	21			
<i>watashi</i> ‘I’	16	1	7	30	5		2	1	1	11	26	5	3	8	1	29	50	19	6	25	2
<i>watakushi</i> ‘I’	1											3	1								
<i>boku</i> ‘I’	81	7		7	9	75	21	5			7	3	5		1						12
<i>ore</i> ‘I’						27	1	1													
TOTAL 1.pers pronouns	98	8	7	37	14	102	24	7	1	11	33	11	9	8	2	33	51	40	6	25	14
Total word count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.50	0.27	0.16	0.30	0.20	0.38	0.76	0.09	0.04	0.21	0.30	0.18	0.19	0.09	0.07	0.34	0.52	0.24	0.17	0.27	0.15
<i>anata</i> ‘you’ (addressing the interviewer)	1				2				1												
<i>Kristin</i> (name)					2	3						1		1		3	1				
<i>bokura</i> ‘we’	6			5	7		2			2											7
<i>wareware</i> ‘we’	6			4				1		3		1	2	1							
TOTAL all pronouns	111	8	7	37	27	109	27	9	3	11	38	12	10	11	3	36	51	41	6	25	21
Total word count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.56	0.27	0.16	0.30	0.38	0.41	0.86	0.12	0.12	0.21	0.35	0.19	0.21	0.12	0.10	0.37	0.52	0.25	0.17	0.27	0.23

Table 20: Personal pronouns in the Japanese corpus

The average score on the first person pronouns *atashi/watashi/watakushi/boku/ore* ‘I’ is 0.26%. The average score on the total number of pronouns is 0.29%.

Other personal pronouns identified in the material were *bokura* ‘we’ (casual, almost always used by a male speaker) and *wareware* ‘we’ referred to by Maynard (2005:240) as a formal, archaic style. Here *wareware* is used in the meaning of ‘we Japanese’ or ‘we at the office’. In my data, only three speakers address the hearer by the second person pronoun *anata* ‘you’ as in the following example:

(136) <J26>日本人にとってはわかりやすい英語でしょ？。あなたの英語も100%理解できる英語でしょ？</J26>

‘(Norwegians’) English is easy to understand for (us) Japanese right [?]. Your English is also 100% intelligible (to me) right [?].’

In Japanese the second person pronoun *anata* ‘you’ can be used to strangers who are of the same status or inferior to the speaker (Hashiguchi 1998:59), but normally in Japanese, one would rather say to a hearer: “<Name of hearer>’s English is also 100% intelligible”. Thus, the second person pronoun ‘you’ cannot be counted as a rapport marker in Japanese.

There are ten speakers above the average of 0.26% on first person pronouns ‘I’. If we look at the seven with the highest scores on first person pronoun ‘I’ in the table above (Mr Da <J22>, Mr Na <J25>, Mr Sa <J27>, Mr Su <J28>, Mr Bi <J32>, Ms Kyo <J37>, and Ms Ne <J38>), five of these (Mr Da, Mr Sa, Mr Su, Mr Bi, and Ms Ne) have been found to have many other strengthening devices such as exaggerated facts, verbosity, or rapport markers in the previous sections.

In the two following examples Ms Ne <J38> combines many first person pronouns with colloquial language and other types of verbosity (e.g. ‘strange foreigner’ (idiom)) and many rapport markers (marked by [?]) in the frame of a personal story, all of which add to her elaborate style. The second text has many repetitions (e.g. “I don’t know one doesn’t know oneself right, I am only me so, I right”), rapport markers such as e.g. *ano ne* ‘you know what’ and *ne* ‘isn’t it’, and direct quotes (e.g. “sorry and thank you for your help”). Before the following sequence the informant told the interviewer that some people at work have said she is like a foreigner. Explicitly stated first person pronouns are marked in grey:

(137) <J38>会社で、うーん、変な外国人がうちの会社にはいます、わたしです、み
たいな@@、なので、わたしは日本多分日本人？の感覚ではない？、と思う、うーん
</J38>

'At work, [filler], (the colleagues say things) such as there is a strange foreigner at our office, it's me (they are talking about)@@[like], so, maybe I [don't have Japanese sensibility] (don't think and behave like a Japanese) [?] (I) think, [yes/erm].'

The interviewer asks her what she thinks is the reason for that, and she answers (emotionally loaded segments are underlined):

- (138) <J38> あのね、私も聞いたの、その<informant's surname> って、私名字 <informant's surname> だから、<informant's surname> って外国人みたいですねっていうから、どんなところなんですか？、わたし分かん自分で分からないね、わたしはわたしでしかないから、わたしがね？、こう一、普通にしてるんだけど、聞いたら、そのお休み、まず、日本の有給って一、えーとわたしは、今年始めて二年目なので一、一年間で13日しかないのね一、ノルウェー6週間あるでしょう？、で、休みを一、2週間まとめて取ったりとかってノルウェー普通でしょう、日本じゃ考えられない、でしょ？で、だけど、わたしは一、2週間取って一、で、私の仕事？、は、会社の他の人がやらないといけないんだけど一、すみませんねじゃおねがいしまーす、っていって、さようなら一っていって、私は行っちゃうわけよ、多分一、その感覚が理解できない？@@。</J38>

'You know what, I've asked (about that) too, that <N (surname)>, my surname is <N> so therefore, (some) say that <N> sounds foreign so, [what parts] (what do they mean)[?]. I don't know I myself don't know [ne], I am only me so, I [ne] [?] sort of, am acting normally but, when (I) ask, (they mention) those holidays, first of all, Japanese holidays, erm I, am in the second year since (I) started (working for this company) so, (I) have only 13 days (holiday) a year [ne], Norway has six weeks don't (they) [?] So, to take two weeks holiday in a row or anything like that is normal in Norway right, in Japan it's unthinkable, isn't it[?] So, but, I [contrastive topic particle], take two weeks, and then someone else at work has to do my job, sorry and thank you for your help, (I) say and good bye [(I) say] and I'm gone, med andre ord, (they) cannot understand that way of thinking[?]@@'

However, among those above average on first person pronouns in table 20, there are two who have never lived abroad (Mr Na <J25> and Ms Kyo <J37>), and below average there are two who have lived in low context cultures for twelve and thirteen years and recently returned (Mr No <J30> and Ms Ko <J39>), which indicates that there are also individual differences to be found in the frequency of first person pronouns.

If we turn to the most frequently used mental verbs in the Japanese corpus, we find the verbs *omou* 'think' and *kanji(ru)* 'feel', the latter also in the forms of *~kanji ga suru* 'I feel that~' and *~to iu kanji* 'a feeling that ~'.

	Mr Da 122	Mr Ma 123	Mr Ta 124	Mr Na 125	Mr Ni 126	Mr Sa 127	Mr Su 128	Mr Ya 129	Mr No 130	Ms A 131	Mr Bi 132	Mr Mi 133	Mr D 134	Ms To 135	Mr Mo 136	Ms Kyō 137	Ms Ne 138	Ms Ko 139	Ms Taka 140	Mr U 141	Mr Ka 142
<i>omou</i> ('I think')	97	27	24	74	24	70	8	34	11	24	28	15	8	10	11	39	52	81	26	33	21
<i>kanji</i> (ru), 'I feel'	15	-	1	6	1	9	-	2	1	22	-	1	8	7	4	5	4	23	5	9	4
Total	112	27	25	80	25	79	8	36	12	46	28	16	16	17	15	44	56	104	31	42	25
Total word count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3653	9191	9315
Total in %	0.57	0.91	0.58	0.64	0.35	0.29	0.25	0.46	0.53	0.89	0.26	0.26	0.34	0.19	0.50	0.45	0.57	0.63	0.85	0.46	0.27

Table 21: Mental verbs in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 0.49%.

In 3.10.1.6, Dahl (2000:47) calls verbs denoting a person's mental states and acts *mental verbs*, and argues that they are verbs that frequently co-exist with first person pronouns. In the following, I suggest that the mental verbs identified in the Japanese text are not primarily strengtheners denoting personal involvement and assertiveness.

Ninomiya's (1986) statistical analysis of Japanese dialogues shows that the verb *omou* (think) predominantly co-occurs with first person subjects, and one could then imagine that it mainly denotes personal involvement or assertiveness. However, like English, *omou* both has a connotation of uncertainty (wonder, suppose, guess, imagine, suppose) and a connotation of certainty (be of the opinion, intend to). It can also be used as *~to omoimasu* 'think that' in indirect reported speech:

- (139) *ikitai to omoimasu*
V[Aux. marking the speaker's desire] [quotation particle] V[final]
'(I) think that (I) want to go'

When used as in the example above, the speaker gives the hearer the opportunity to listen in on his or her internal mental thoughts and attitudes, thereby signalling closeness and intimacy. On the other hand, *~to omoimasu* 'think that' also functions as a hedge to make the communication less domineering or assertive even when there is little need for doubt:

The strategy of framing one's expression by *omou* 'think' creates the impression that the speaker is not too brash, tactless, or domineering. Rather, *omou* softens the force of the assertion and creates for the speaker the kind of personality that is likely to be, given the specific situation, favoured and readily accepted by the listener (Maynard 1996:220).

Maynard (1996:223) suggests that the way to interpret the illocutionary force of the mental verb *omou* ‘think’ must depend on “the kind of meaning and illocutionary force attached to or suggested by the expression of ‘saying’ or ‘thinking’ in the frame”, which I understand to mean that the interpretation of this verb is context sensitive in the same way as we discussed in relation to intensifier (3.10.1.1).

However, in addition to being context sensitive when interpreted in a Japanese text, the fact that *omou* denotes both uncertainty/distance and certainty/intimacy also raises some interesting translation issues when being translated into a language such as Norwegian. That is, Norwegian has several different words *tenker* ‘think’, *tror* ‘suppose/imagine’, *tror* ‘believe’, *mener* ‘in my opinion’ and *synes* ‘in my opinion’ with very different degree of assertiveness which all could be translated into *omou* in Japanese. The first two, *tenker* ‘think’ and *tror* ‘suppose/imagine’, denote non-assertiveness, the second interpretation of *tror* ‘believe’ is more assertive, and the two latter *mener* and *synes* ‘in my opinion’ are assertive. In (140) below, *omou* is even translated into a *være sikker på* ‘be sure of’. When translating the verb *omou* from Japanese to Norwegian, it is not always easy to choose the Norwegian verb with the most appropriate level of assertiveness. In the following example, one cannot decide definitely to what degree the speakers use the verb to signal uncertainty or whether it is their firm opinion:

- (140) <J32> 日本で油が出たら、きっとわたしは日本から動かなかったと思うけど。
</J32>
‘Hvis Japan hadde olje, er (jeg) sikker på at jeg aldri hadde forlatt Japan [men]’
‘If Japan had oil, (I think/I am sure I would never have [moved away from] (left) Japan [but (sentence non-final particle)].’
- (141) <J38> そうなのがすごくよかったと思う、うーん。 </J38>
‘Det [den slags ting] var veldig bra, synes jeg, ja’
‘That was splendid (I) think, yes’
- (142) <J34> ノルウェー人の人もそうだと思いますね。 </J34>
‘(Jeg) tror/mener nordmenn også er slik [ne]’
‘(I) think/my opinion is that Norwegians too are like that [ne].’

- (143) <J31>ノルウェー人はよく親しみを見せるために、冗談をよく使うと思います
が、</J31>
'Nordmenn bruker ofte spøk for å vise vennlighet **tror** (jeg) men,'
'Norwegians often use jokes to show closeness (I) **think** but,'
- (144) <J40>日本人は、あの、most picky people in the world かな、**と思いませんか?**
@@ </J40>
'Japanerne er, erm, kanskje (de) mest kresne mennesker i verden, **tror/synes (du) ikke?**'
'The Japanese are, erm, maybe the most picky people in the world, **don't (you)**
think[?]@@'

The use of a first person pronoun signals involvement. Thus, because the speaker in example (140) uses first person subject *watashi* 'I' together with the intensifier *kitto* 'surely', I have translated *omou* into an assertive "er jeg sikker på" 'I am sure that'. In sentence (141) there is no first person pronoun, but the assertiveness reveals itself in the sentence ending with *uun* 'yes', which can be a hesitation filler, but which here together with the intensifier *sugoku* 'extremely' rather seems to signal strong involvement and an affirmative conclusion to her thoughts. In (142) too, the impression is that the speaker has no doubt even though he states it with less assertiveness than the foregoing examples. The sentence final particle *ne* is an assertive *ne* (cf. 7.6). In (143) however, the speaker seems less assertive because of the non-final sentence particle *ga* 'but' which gives a hint to *omoimasu* having a hedging function here. Sentence (144) is loaded with hedges; *ano* 'erm' is a hesitation filler, *kana* 'isn't it/ I wonder' is a sentence final particle which denotes doubt, and the verb *omou* 'think' is negated into 'don't (you) think' with a question particle *ka*. Here the speaker is hedging in many different ways but still addresses the hearer directly at the end with a tag *to omoimasen ka* 'don't you think?' which signals intimacy. The overall impression is of a person who wishes to be friendly but distant at the same time, which makes it exceptionally difficult to decide the degree of and the direction of the illocutionary force and hence, which verb in Norwegian to translate the Japanese verb *omou* 'think' into. Thus, these mental verbs can probably not be used to measure assertiveness. Instead, the utterance in Japanese that gave the most assertive impression was that ending with a finite verb regardless of whether it was a mental verb or not as in the following example:

- (145) <J33> 決めてから動くまでに時間掛かる (finite verb), 我々は決めるまでに時間
間が掛かる (finite verb)。</J33>

‘(With Norwegians it) takes time from (things have been) decided until (they) are up and running, with us it takes time to decide.’

7.8 Summary and discussion of the Japanese findings

Table 22 marks each speaker’s number of strengtheners above average in the previous seven tables 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 (first person pronouns).

Name	Total number of strengtheners above average	Years in low context cultures	First contact with Norway
J22 Mr Da	5	2	1980
J23 Mr Ma	2	9	1985
J24 Mr Ta	1	0	1996
J25 Mr Na	2	0	1996
J26 Mr Ni	5	10	1983
J27 Mr Sa	6	3	1982
J28 Mr Su	6	31	1966
J29 Mr Ya	2	8	1980ies
J30 Mr No	6	12	1981
J31 Ms A	0	0	1997
J32 Mr Bi	4	13	1990ies
J33 Mr Mi	4	0 (education through American school in Japan)	1999
J34 Mr D	3	8	1990
J35 Ms To	1	0	2001
J36 Mr Mo	0	0	1999
J37 Ms Kyo	1	0	1999
J38 Ms Ne	5	17	1988
J39 Ms Ko	3	13	1991
J40 Ms Taka	0	0	1997
J41 Mr U	2	8	1994
J42 Mr Ka	2	0	2002

Table 22: Summary of strengtheners in the Japanese corpus

Looking at table 22 above, we find that ten speakers have three or more strengtheners above average, which means that they strengthen the illocutionary force too much to appear exacting or understated. I find it interesting that all of these are among those who have been living for

the longest period of time in a low context country and/or had the longest and closest contact with low context language and culture as the manager for a Norwegian company in Japan. This poses the question of whether an upfront or an elaborate style in the Japanese sample is a result of influence from, or an identity tied to low context culture. What I imply here is that the speakers' style may have changed through a long term contact with low context individuals. I return to this in section 11.2 where the speakers themselves discuss their own style.

However, another possibility is that the style change was more temporal. By this I mean that the high frequency of first person pronouns is an inference from being used to speaking English or Norwegian with foreigners such as the interviewer, even though in this particular interview the language was Japanese. As we see in table 18, some of the participants found it problematic to speak Japanese to me throughout the interview because they are so used to speaking English or Norwegian to foreigners. However, even if the change is temporal, it is still those with the longest experience communicating with low context individuals who switch style. In chapter eleven, we return to this topic when we investigate how the speakers themselves explain their style. Thus, I argue that an elaborate or upfront style in the Japanese corpus may be due to their international experience and orientation. One clear exception is that of Mr Ya <J29> (cf. table 22) with neither exaggerated facts nor verbose expressions in spite of eight years in the UK and in Norway. He elaborates on why he has not changed in spite of a long time abroad in example (206) in chapter eight. The particular characteristics of these two styles become clearer when we compare them to weakening devices in the following chapter

The preceding analysis has aimed to illustrate how the upfront and the elaborate styles are graded but yet in many cases clearly distinguishable categories. That is, exaggerated facts are the strengthening devices with the maximum face-threat because of its uncompromising nature. These can be strengthened further by the means of intensifiers, verbose expressions that turn them into mockery, and be combined with overtly stated first person pronouns that signal that "this is my opinion, I am taking full responsibility for the statement". The more of these devices, the more the hearer perceives the style as an *upfront* one. However, just as we will see in chapter eight that hedges can weaken an assertive statement, an increasing number of verbose expressions not linked to exaggerated facts together with rapport markers can remove some of the 'serious' and uncompromising nature of the upfront style. When these devices manage to weaken the assertiveness, the style appears less upfront. On the other end

of the scale is an elaborate style with no exaggerated facts, causing an impression of someone playful and accommodating through verbose expressions, rapport markers, and personal stories that builds rapport, solidarity, and common-ground. If we look at table 22 above, we find that all of those with many strengtheners are above average on intensifiers (except Mr Su), making also intensifiers a marked feature of the elaborate style. We discuss the relationship between these two styles further in 7.16.

7.9 Intensifiers in the Norwegian corpus

Table 23 shows the distribution of the most frequently used expressions in the Norwegian corpus assumed to intensify the proposition in the given context. See 5.5.5 for more details on the selection of items.

	Mr-R N01	Mr-San N02	Mr-M N03	Mr-K N04	Mr-G N05	Ms-O N06	Mr-S N07	Mr-N6 N08	Mr-H N09	Mr-N N10	Mr-L N11	Ms-B N12	Mr-I N13	Mr-E N14	Ms-T N15	Mr-Sv N16	Mr-Va N17	Mr-Nie N18	Mr-J N19	Mr-Ne N20
<i>helt</i> 'completely'	2	6	5	4	9	19	14	17	17	6	10	4	4	1	10	8	12	4	21	21
<i>fullstendig</i> 'completely'		1																		
<i>ekstremt</i> 'extremely'				3			1				3	1		1		2	5		5	3
<i>enormt</i> 'enormously'																	5			
<i>fryktelig</i> 'terribly'		5					1					4			11				1	2
<i>voldsomt</i> 'terribly'						4											2			
<i>førfjerdelig</i> 'terribly'		1				1	4				1	2		1			2	3		
<i>utrolig</i> 'incredibly'	1	3	2	4	1			3	6		1	2	1			1	1			
<i>absolutt</i> 'absolutely'	1				2	1	4	6	1		3			1		2	1	1	3	1
<i>desideret</i> 'definitely'													5							
<i>definitivt</i> 'definitely'	3															1	14			
<i>selvfølgelig</i> 'of course'		4		5		2	2	2	3	3	12	5	8			4		1	3	5
<i>klart</i> 'clearly'	5	4	0	3	8	2	3	6			5	4		1	1	45	8	9	6	4
<i>rett og slett</i> 'simply'	3		1	3	1		2		2	2	3	1	9		3	2		2		1
<i>skikkelig</i> 'really'					1			1	4	1					6		1	2		
<i>virkelig</i> 'really'		1				1		2			1		7		2	10	4			
<i>masse</i> 'lots of'	1		2	7	3	4	5	1			4	1			20		2	4	1	6
<i>veldig</i> 'very'	29	35	60	24	16	2	22	75	44	14	26	98	22	6	1	69	60	43	63	19
TOTAL	45	60	70	53	41	36	58	113	77	26	69	122	56	11	54	144	117	69	103	62
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	0.91	1.07	1.44	0.77	0.50	0.74	1.42	1.53	0.78	0.64	1.10	1.28	1.05	0.45	0.78	1.47	0.95	0.89	1.71	0.87

Table 23: Intensifiers in the Norwegian corpus

The average score is 1.02%. Since the average Norwegian interview lasted twenty minutes longer (72 minutes, appendix 3) than the average Japanese one (55 minutes, appendix 4), the difference between the average Japanese and Norwegian score is only interesting when the difference is substantial.

Examples of use below (emotionally loaded segments are underlined). The examples are only from the corpus, and thus, do not cover all possible uses in general Norwegian.

(146) <N06> me må fortelja dei heilt nøyaktig kva dei skal gjera </N06>

'We have to tell them completely exactly what to do'

The word *helt* 'totally' is counted when it is a degree adverb such as in *helt klart* 'for sure' [completely sure]), *helt sikkert* 'surely' [completely sure]), and not counted when it appears in utterances such as *helt til toppen* 'all the way to the top', or *ikke helt* 'not quite'.

(147) <N02> Japan var et fullstendig lukka land i 250 år </N02>

'Japan was a completely isolated country for 250 years'

(148) <N19> du må være ekstremt detaljorientert </N19>

'you must be extremely detail oriented'

(149) <N17> bruker (du) enormt mye tid på å liksom komme frem til en beslutning </N17>

'(One) uses an extreme/enormous amount of time to kind of reach a decision'

(150) <N15> de er fryktelig formelle </N15>

'They are terribly formal'

(151) <N06> våre japanske kolleger dei er jo voldsomt greie </N06>

'Our Japanese colleagues, they are [*jo* (intensifying discourse marker)] terribly nice'

The discourse marker *jo* may refer to something assumed generally known, but often seems to add an intensifying function with the same connotation as 'clearly' or 'of course'.

(152) <N18> det er enkelte personligheter som er forferdelig vanskelige </N18>

'There are some individuals who are terribly difficult'

(153) <N09> men han er, utrolig detaljert </N09>

'but he is, incredibly detailed (oriented)'

(154) <N01> Så jeg prøver absolutt å tenke på de tingene der </N01>

'So I absolutely try to think about those things'

(155) <N13> (de) desidert legger vinn på å være saklig og ikke vise følelser </N13>

'(they) definitely try to be factual and not show emotions'

- (156) <N01> de er jo definitivt opptatt av detaljer </N01>
 ‘They are [jo] definitely occupied with details’
- (157) <N19> jeg snakket selvfølgelig japansk etter å vært her så pass lenge </N19>
 ‘I speak Japanese of course after having been here this long’

Selvfølgelig is used when the speaker finds something obvious, but also frequently when one says something with an ironic undertone as in the following example:

- (158) <N06> og han sa det selvfølgeleg rett ut sant, nordmann og @seier no alt rett ut@, og då vart det fæla ballade </N06>
 ‘and he said it straight (from the horse’s mouth) of course, Norwegian and @says everything straight@, and then there was a terrible uproar’

The word *klart* is counted when it means that something is obvious and similar to the use of ‘of course’ and not when it appears in utterances such as *klart mål* ‘a clear goal’, *snakker klart og tydelig* ‘talk clearly’, *jeg har aldri klart å [...]* ‘I have never managed to [...]’.

- (159) <N16> så er det klart det er interessant </N16>
 ‘so clearly it is interesting’
- (160) <N11> klart noen ganger så er jo skaden skjedd </N11>
 ‘clearly sometimes [jo] the damage is done’
- (161) <N13> det kan du jamt gløkke, det det går rett og slett ikke det </N13>
 ‘you can just forget it, it’s simply impossible’ [it]’
- (162) <N09> han vart skikkelig irritert </N09>
 ‘he became really annoyed’
- (163) <N17> da kan de bli virkelig erm, opprørt </N17>
 ‘then they can become really erm, upset’
- (164) <N15> masse bråk og tull og tøys </N15>
 ‘lots of fuss and nonsense’
- (165) <N16> konkurransen er jo veldig sterk i Japan </N16>
 ‘the competition is [jo] very strong in Japan’

The word *veldig* ‘very’ is used with such a high frequency that one might suspect it to function more like a filler to some. However, my impression is that it does make a difference

in the illocutionary force as in the following example where an informant is speaking about different styles when writing e-mails:

(166) <N07> noen vil ha det **veldig** kort, og jeg foretrekker også **veldig**, ekstremt korte, ikke høflige e, mailer, men e, mens andre er **veldig** verbale e, litt sånn, verbiose </N07>

'some wants them **very** short, and I too prefer **very**, extremely short, not polite er, mails, but er, whereas others are **very** verbal er, somewhat verbose'

Even though *veldig* 'very' is frequently used with an intensifying function, it is also found in phrases such as *ikke så veldig* 'not so very' which is counted in chapter eight on hedges. Seven of the Norwegians also had examples of a double or triple repetition of *veldig*:

(167) <N08> Det tror jeg er veldig **veldig veldig** viktig </N08>

'That I think is very **very very** important'

Sikkert 'surely' was omitted from the list because it is not clear that it strengthens the statement. In the following example it could be interpreted as 'surely' or as 'probably':

(168) <N15> Så det der er en sånn merkelig kommunikasjonssituasjon, og som **sikkert** fryktelig få har vore opp i </N15>

'So that is a strange communication situation that **surely/probably** terribly few have experienced'

7.10 Exaggerated facts in the Norwegian corpus

Mr N <N10> frequently exaggerates about the Japanese, the Norwegians and himself. Exaggeration here means that facts are over generalized in that there is no room for nuances or discussion:

(169) About Japanese quality:

<N10> Hvis du for eksempel skal bygge en (text)fly(text), en landingsbane på på en flyplass, han skal være, 2.0 kilometer, og når du da måler den når den er ferdig og den er 2.01 kilometer, så er han feil, selv om det ikkje spiller noen rolle, </N10>

'If you for instance are going to build an (text)air(text), a runway at an airport, and it should be 2.0 kilometres long, and when you measure it when it's completed and it is 2.01 kilometers, then it is wrong, even if it doesn't matter'

About Norwegian quality:

<N10> norsk kvalitet, det er ikkje godt nok i Japan. </N10>

‘Norwegian quality, it is not good enough in Japan’

About Japanese mentality:

<N10> En nervøs japaner er @@, en mann som ikkje smiler@@.</N10>

‘A nervous Japanese is@@, a man who doesn’t smile@@’

About the mentality of people from Bergen (Norway):

<N10> Her er eg og alle sammen, alle andre holder kjeft@@. </N10>

‘Here I am and everyone (else), everyone else shut up@@’

About the Japanese:

<N10> Altså du har forskjellige folk men, de er forholdsvis monotone.
</N10>

‘Well you have different people but, they are relatively monotonous.’

About the Norwegians:

<N10> Nordmenn tror de er veldig internasjonale men@@, de er ikkje så internasjonale tror eg då. </N10>

‘Norwegians believe they are very international but@@, they are not so international I think [then]’

About himself and Japanese concern for details:

<N10> Bare at det kan være litt for mye detaljer, da, da går jeg gal@@.
</N10>

‘Just that there can be a bit too many details, then, then I go mad@@.’

Other examples of exaggerated facts found in the Norwegian corpus are:

- (170) Yes@@, it is completely, completely different.
It’s just nonsense.
It is so obvious that it’s almost unnecessary to mention it at all.
One doesn’t achieve anything.
I was left with zero hobbies, zero time (when working in Japan).
It is the best experience I’ve ever had.
(The Japanese are) hyper formal.
(To be able to speak Japanese) means nothing, it means nothing in a work context.
(Japanese sojourners) are pretty spoiled.
The Japanese are very fond of meetings.
Well, (Japanese decision making) isn’t built on logic.
The Japanese never take a decision.
No one can leave the office before the boss does [...] there is so much wasted time, it is wasted energy, there is so much waste.

Table 24 shows the number of verbose expressions and exaggerated facts in the Norwegian corpus.

	Mr R N01	Mr San N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr Nø N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Mr E N14	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr VA N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Nøe N20
Exaggerated fact	-	13	11	39	-	8	-	1	54	18	43	25	19	23	66	-	-	6	-	29
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %		0.23	0.23	0.56		0.17		0.01	0.55	0.44	0.69	0.26	0.36	0.95	0.95			0.08		0.40

Table 24: Exaggerated facts in the Norwegian corpus

The total number of exaggerated facts in the Norwegian corpus is 355. The average number is 17.75 (0.29%). However, among these, six state none.

7.11 Verbosity in the Norwegian corpus

The following are examples of verbose expressions found in the Norwegian material:

Infused adjectives/adverbs: *cillioner (sånne apparater)* ‘cillions (such devices)’, *fantastisk fantastisk (opplevelse)* ‘fantastic fantastic (experience)’ (reduplication of ‘fantastic’), *vill (jubel)* ‘wild (applause)’, *Kjempeartig* [intensifying prefix *-kjempe* ‘giantly’+ ‘fun’], *kjempealvorlig* [intensifying prefix *-kjempe* ‘giantly’+ ‘grave’], *kjempenervøse* [intensifying prefix *-kjempe* ‘giantly’+ ‘nervous’], *fly forbanna* ‘livid’, *grusomme og fæle* ‘grusome and horrible’, *(forferdelig) fornærma* ‘terribly’ (intensifier) + ‘insulted’, *(forferdelig) sur* ‘terribly’ (intensifier) + ‘sour/bitter’, *skittent og grisete* ‘dirty and filthy’, *bråkete arrogante blærete (norske ungdommer)* ‘noisy arrogant stuck-up (Norwegian youth), *(heilt) vilt* ‘totally’ (intensifier) + ‘wild’, ‘way out there’, *keitete* ‘clumsy’, *(helt) knust* ‘totally’ (intensifier) + ‘devastated’, *hodeløst* [without a head] ‘without thinking’, *(det irriterer meg) hemningsløst* ‘(it annoys me) out of my wits’.

Idioms/metaphors: *morgenfugler* ‘early birds’, *vi norske er litt enstøinger* [one/alone+dwelling] ‘we Norwegians are a bit loners/eccentrics’, *(Japanere har) sjablon i hodet og tenker ikke ut av boksen* ‘have an imprint in their heads and do not think outside the box’ (idiosyncratic expression?), (the Japanese advertising business is on a *stenaldernivå*

‘stone age level’, *feie under teppet* ‘sweep (smth) under the carpet’, *mellom barken og veden* [be between the bark and the wood] ‘be between the devil and the deep blue sea’, *fæla ballade* ‘terrible hullabaloo’, *Nazi-regimet til nabokona* ‘the Neighbour wife’s Nazi regime’, *one man show* (English expression), *ofte er det en, the big noodle som tar en avgjørelse* (English expression) ‘often it is, the big noodle who makes a decision’, *hata trynet på han* ‘hated his mug’ (colloquial expression), *piggene ut* [spikes out] ‘bristle’, *tråkker i salaten* [step into the salad] ‘put one’s foot in it’, *noe dritt* ‘some shit’ (colloquial expression), *holder kjeft* ‘shuts up’ (colloquial expression), *kameleon* ‘chameleon’ (cf. 11.2), *å stikke huet fram* ‘put one’s head out’ (colloquial expression), *jeg fikk grenet meg til det* ‘I whined my way’, *gir blaffen* ‘don’t give a damn’ (colloquial expression), *gå gærnt* ‘go wrong’ (colloquial expression), *ikke akkurat noen høydare* ‘not exactly what we do best’ (understatement) (Swedish expression).

Repetitions: The Norwegians use repetitions in the same ways as the Japanese both in repeating an item such as in “*møtene er også ofte veldig veldig lange*” ‘the meetings are often very very long’ or repeating a phrase or the point twice. Mr L <N11> with an elaborate style particularly uses many repetitions in his text. In the extract below he talks about how you have to adapt when you live in Japan (repetitions are marked in grey and emotionally loaded segments are underlined):

(171) <N11> og så er det dette med selvfølgelig at i og med at du er så mange, og bor så tett sammen, og at samfunnet må, må fungere, de altså du er jo krødd sammen i alle kanter og bauer, du kan ikkje være individualist, du kan ikkje stikke deg fram, du kan ikkje være annerledes, du må være konform, du må bite i deg disse tingene, så du kan ikkje, du kan ikkje være <interrupted by the interviewer> </N11>

‘and then there is this, of course, [that] since [you] (there) are so many (people in Japan), and (they) live so close together, and the society has to, has to function, they well, one is [jo] squeezed together on all sides, you cannot be an individualist, you cannot stand out, you cannot be different, you must be conform, you must pocket your (frustration), so you can’t, you can’t be <interrupted by the interviewer>’

Together with verbose expressions such as *krødd sammen på alle bauer og kanter* ‘squeezed [colloquial expression] together on all sides’ and *bite i deg* ‘pocket your (frustration)’, Mr L seems to use repetitions as a playful rhetorical device to dramatize his story. This is different to how Mr K with an upfront style in example (175) utilizes repetitions in order to underline his main point.

Reduplications: *rusk og rask* ‘rubbish’. The adverbs *veldig* ‘very’ and *mye* ‘much’ were the lexical items most often repeated twice in the Norwegian material. However, I am not sure if

	Mr R N01	Mr Sam N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr Nø N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Mr E N14	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr Vå N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Ne N20
Verbose expressions	-	6	28	16	-	5	28	44	26	10	71	48	38	19	52	-	-	2	-	80
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %		0.11	0.58	0.23		0.10	0.68	0.59	0.26	0.25	1.13	0.50	0.71	0.79	0.75			0.03		1.12

Table 25: Verbose expressions in the Norwegian corpus

The total number of verbose expressions in the Norwegian corpus is 473. The average number is 23.96 (0.39%). However, five employ none, and these are the same as those who stated no exaggerated facts in table 24.

As was mentioned in connection with the Japanese data in 7.4, verbose expressions in an upfront style are usually part of the phrase expressing the exaggerated fact and add a mocking effect. Thus, they do not soften but rather intensify the criticism as in the following statements (verbose expressions are marked in grey):

- (173) A whole battalion [bataljon] of well-known companies arrived
 You could almost see through their heads [se gjennom huet på dem] because they were never outdoors, a really good sign of an unhealthy lifestyle.
 (Norwegians) pack their things [pakker sammen] and leave [samme søren] no matter how damn busy they are.
 We can't sit and spoon-feed them everything [inn med teskje]
 The Japanese commercial industry is on a Stone Age level [stenaldernivå].
 The Japanese perceive us Norwegians as a bit brutal [brutale], and (people) who can cope with low temperatures [tåler my kulde] We are a bit gruesome and awful [grusomme og fæle] and the like.
 We just say we do it like this, and that too is shocking [sjokkerende] (to the Japanese). They can't manage [fikser ikke] that either.
 My other colleagues from the West, they have no idea ha'kke helt grepet om] how to behave appropriately in Japan.
 Why can you not swim in the sea September the first?, [no], the sea is closed [havet er stengt], right? That's @just how it is@.
 Norway is a bit barbaric [barbarisk] and a bit e@, that is, a tiny little bit of finesse [bitte lite gran finesse] would have been nice@@.
 (Japanese female) are people with a (great) [nydelig 'beautiful'] education, really smart [smarte] people who just sit there and do nothing.

If we compare table 24 on exaggerated facts to table 25 on verbosity, we find that the following speakers are above average both on exaggerated facts and on verbosity: Mr L <N11>, Mr I <N13>, Mr E <N14>, Ms T <N13>, and Mr Næ <N20>. Under closer inspection, fifty-six of Mr L's seventy-one verbose expressions (56/71) are not part of any exaggerated fact, which means that they mainly function to create non-threatening vividness, artistry, and playfulness. The same is true for Mr I (33/38) and Mr Næ (74/80). Mr M <N03> (22/28) and Ms B <N12> (44/48) show the same tendency, but are also below average on exaggerated facts, which causes an even less threatening style. These tell fun and elaborated stories with twice as many verbose expressions as exaggerated facts, which similar to the Japanese with an elaborate style neutralize the assertiveness and create a congenial atmosphere. However, the danger of many verbose expressions is to appear flippant, something a woman is aware of when she disclaims her story with: *dette her er en historie satt litt på spissen då men* 'this is a bit of an exaggeration then but'. Mr Nø <N08> and Mr S <N07> have only one or no exaggerated facts, and might be said to be the most congenial and non-threatening of all of those with verbose expressions in the Norwegian group.

However, when it comes to Mr E <N14> and Ms T <N15>, the number of verbose expressions not part of an exaggerated fact is (2/19) and (25/52), which means that most (or more) of their verbosity function to strengthen the exaggerated fact and create an upfront impression. The following example is from Ms T.

(174) <N15> I Japan, vanligvis, erm, og du fikk jo klager på den minste ting, erm, du hadde en en sånn koffert med en dukke i der dem fann ett hårstrå i og det var klage, da skulle de returnere og da skulle de ha en ny en, og e, vi logga det jo i vårt klagesystem og sender det over til Norge og e, dem skjønner jo ikkje hva de klager på, et hår, det er jo bare å ta det ut liksom@@. <N15>

'In Japan, usually, erm, there were complaints about the slightest things of course, erm, there was this suitcase with a doll in it (for resuscitation training) where they found a hair, and there was a complaint, then they demanded that it be returned and then they demanded a new one, and e, of course we logged it into our complaint system and send it over to Norway and e, of course they don't understand what the complaint is all about, a hair, obviously one just removes it of course@@.'

The discourse markers *jo* and *liksom* here together with laughter seem to add an ironic meaning in the sense of 'obviously, of course, as everyone knows'. I return to the function of laughter in chapter ten. Verbosity is also found in prosodic stress "slightest things ", repetitions "then they demanded that it be returned and then they demanded a new one", vivid

present “we logged it into our complaint system and *send* it over to Norway”, and direct quote “obviously one just removes it of course”. Ms T stated her opinions but with so much verbosity that the hearer was unsure of whether they were to be taken seriously. However, verbosity did not seem to serve a need to be congenial but rather to underline the story content and create an ironic distance to the events. The number for Mr H is (7/26), Mr N (1/10), and Mr K (3/16), Ms O (2/5), and Mr San (6/6). Mr H <N09> employs almost the double of exaggerated facts compared to verbose expressions, and only seven of his twenty-six verbose expressions (7/26) were not part of an exaggerated fact, which gives a predominantly upfront expression. An example of his text can be found in (187).

7.12 *Personal stories in the Norwegian corpus*

Mr K <N04> is above average on exaggerated facts and below on verbosity. He grew up in Norway with a Japanese father and now works in a Japanese company. The following example contains a short personal story with a direct quote from his father. He also uses repetitions (marked in grey) but these do not seem to dramatize but rather frame his assertive and unmasked opinions (original Norwegian transcript in appendix five).

(175) <N04> all the prejudices against Japanese business culture I experience as if it is, it is much more extreme in reality, well [*altså*] if, you have seen movies, I don’t know if you have seen that movie about that Belgian woman⁴⁴</N04>
 <interviewer> No, I haven’t seen it but I know what you are talking about </ interviewer>
 <N04> Well [*altså*] there are lots of such erm, my father² he is always like no, that’s so exaggerated and typically that sort of Western perceptions of Japan and right, but he has never really worked in Japan, so when I come to Japan I feel that it is, it is [*jo* (intensifying marker)] even more extreme in real life, so that is my impression then, so you are you could have written books that are even more, black and white and even more, so. </N04>

To compare his short story to the long and elaborate story of Mr Næ <N20> in the following example might provide a vivid illustration of the difference between a story told in a more upfront style versus more elaborate style. Mr Næ’s story aimed to exemplify what he had perceived as Japanese’ reluctance to improvise. Direct quotes are marked in grey. The original Norwegian text is placed in appendix five.

⁴⁴ The movie referred to is *Fear of Trembling*, a French-Japanese comedy based on Amélie Nothomb’s autobiographical novel *Stupeur et tremblement* (1999) about a European woman’s unsuccessful attempt to find her place in a Japanese work hierarchy.

- (176) <N20> ‘I and a Dane who was consultant for Norwegian pelagic industries, were going to Osaka on the Shinkansen and had a translator with us, and there was suicide on the Shinkansen so there were delays, and thousands of people then who, were affected by it, erm, and then we waited there for an hour and wasted (our) time at Tokyo station and then we were afraid of being late and had started to be a bit stressed we he and I, and then the trains [*jo* (discourse marker)] started going again, many of them to Osaka <interrupted by the phone>. Then then then the trains starts going again, and many are going to Osaka, and of course [*selvfølgelig*] thousands of people have found something better to do and have skipped their train reservations of course [*selvfølgelig*] but when the trains start to move again the Dane and I are standing there saying *what the hell here is a train for Osaka it is not ours*, she says *no I understand that I say obviously [*det er jo klart at*] now the trains [*jo*] start to move after an hour delay and then our train will be number ten for example, but the fact is [*jo*] we have a meeting and here the trains start to leave for Osaka, can’t we then we just jump on one you know, that must be possible after all they [*jo*] are going to Osaka it says [*jo*] says [*jo*] there bound for Osaka yes but it isn’t ours, no I realize that but there must be hundreds of people who have done something else now who haven’t taken their train, so then we get on board sort it out with the conductor and get a ticket, it’s two hours, no it is not ours she says and the Dane was completely mad [he] [*jo*], <DANISH> damn if I can take this <DANISH> like that right, so she wouldn’t board a train [she], because it says 879, we have Nozomi 879, she says <whispers> I know that, I say (xx), but there is a train here, right, not possible <whispers> like that erm right , it’s [*jo*] an interesting case.’ </N20>*

The extract above has all the markings of a personally involved narrative; repetitions, vivid present (and then the trains *started* going again, many of them to Osaka [...] then then then the trains *starts* going again), and direct quotes. There are intensifiers such as the adverbs *selvfølgelig* ‘of course’, and *det er jo klart* ‘obviously’, infused items such as the adjectives *vill* ‘wild’ and *stressa* ‘stressed’, and the verb *hoppe på* (*et tog*) ‘jump on (a train)’, the lexical intensifiers *men fanden* ‘what the hell’ and *fanden ikke* ‘damn not’, the metaphor *kaste bort tiden* ‘waste time’, and exaggerated facts such as *tusenvis av mennesker* ‘thousands of people’. The discourse marker *jo* may refer to something assumed generally known, but the high frequency of the item *jo* here seems to add intensity to the discourse.

In addition to verbosity decreasing the ‘seriousness’ of their proposition, those with an elaborate style tended to add disclaimers such as these from Mr Næ <N20>: *Det synes jeg er fint* ‘that I think is good’, *føler jeg da* ‘I feel [then] (at least)’, *for min del* ‘on my part’, *det har jeg alltid synes er litt sånn* ‘I’ve always thought it’s a bit like that’. The disclaimers modify the claim by indicating “this is just my story”, but also function as a rapport builder as the hearer is allowed to get to know the speaker in person. We will return to disclaimers as a weakening device in chapter eight.

	Mr.Næ N20	Mr.J N19	Mr.Nie N18	Mr.Vå N17	Mr.Sv N16	Ms.T N15	Mr.E N14	Mr.I N13	Ms.B N12	Mr.L N11	Mr.N N10	Mr.H N09	Mr.Nø N08	Mr.S N07	Ms.O N06	Mr.G N05	Mr.K N04	Mr.M N03	Mr.San N02	Mr.R N01
Personal stories	4	-	3	6	-	13	3	4 + the first part of the interview his life story	11	5	-	16	6	4	4	-	7	4	4	-
Total word count	7172	6043	7746	12305	9791	6959	2422	5339	9529	6281	4090	9907	7405	4099	4856	8165	6921	4865	5633	4966
Total in %	0.06		0.04	0.05		0.19	0.12	0.07	0.12	0.08		0.16	0.08	0.10	0.08		0.10	0.08	0.07	

Table 26: Personal stories in the Norwegian corpus

The total number of personal stories in the Norwegian corpus is 94. The average number of personal stories is 5 (average percentage is 0.07%). Five people told 0 stories.

7.13 Rapport markers in the Norwegian corpus

The use of the Norwegian tag question *ikke sant/sant* 'isn't it' and *vet du/du vet* 'you know' are displayed in table 27.

	Mr.Næ N20	Mr.J N19	Mr.Nie N18	Mr.Vå N17	Mr.Sv N16	Ms.T N15	Mr.E N14	Mr.I N13	Ms.B N12	Mr.L N11	Mr.N N10	Mr.H N09	Mr.Nø N08	Mr.S N07	Ms.O N06	Mr.G N05	Mr.K N04	Mr.M N03	Mr.San N02	Mr.R N01
<i>sant</i>		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>ikke sant</i>	16	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>vet du</i>								5												
<i>du vet</i>									21	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	16	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	26	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total word count	7172	6043	7746	12305	9791	6959	2422	5339	9529	6281	4090	9907	7405	4099	4856	8165	6921	4865	5633	4966
total in %	0.22	0.13	0.01	0.23	0.85	0.01	0.08	0.49	0.12	0.56	—	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.08	0.45	1.52	0.23	0.02	—

Table 27: Norwegian tag-questions

The average score is 0.26%.

Other examples of rapport markers are *skjønner du* ‘you see’, and *tenk deg det da* ‘imagine that’, but only uttered once each.

The average score on tag-questions in table 27 is low (0.26%) compared to the Japanese in table 18 on the particle *ne* ‘isn’t it’ with 1.12%. Only Mr K <N04> has a similar high score to the Japanese, and in Norwegian his frequent use of *ikke sant* ‘isn’t it’ together with *på en måte* ‘in a way’ seems highly excessive. The phrase *på en måte* ‘in a way’ tended also to be used either with a very high frequency or not at all⁴⁵.

(177) <N04> da vi skulle lave, erm, et sånt kundemagasin for Mazda, så var det sånn på en måte, altså ikke sant det det er på en måte, alle markedene da, ikke sant, USA og Europa og Australia ikke sant alle på en måte, kjøper argumentene og så er det ett møte, ikke sant ett stort møte i erm, i ikke sant i Hiroshima da...<N04>

‘when we were going to make, erm, sort of a magazine for customers on behalf of Mazda, then it was sort of in a way, well you know it is in a way, all the markets then, you know, USA and Europe and Australia you know everyone in a way, buys the arguments and then there is one meeting, you know one big meeting in erm, in you know in Hiroshima then...’

Mr I <N13> is the only one who uses many *du vet* ‘you know’ which was interpreted as an inference from English because he has been living in the USA for many years and also adds many other words from English to his text such as *businessvis* which probably derives from the English phrase ‘business wise’:

(178) <N13> i Amerika, du vet amerikaneren *businessvis* er en del, har en del kortere, lunte enn, enn nordmenn e, <N13>

‘In America, you know the American business wise is a bit, have a bit shorter, fuse than, than Norwegians er’

In this corpus the Norwegians do not include the hearer by addressing her directly as much as some of the Japanese did (table 19). However, instead of giving an explanation in the form of cultural differences, which would have needed more research to be validated, it is a possibility that the Norwegians sharing language, culture, and experience of living in Japan with the interviewer, took it for granted that the interviewer understood. Tannen (3.10.1.4) argues that stories placed in time and space build on a sense of identification between the speaker and the hearer. Since the Norwegian interviewer had shared experiences through living in Japan, there

⁴⁵ Twelve of twenty-one Norwegian speakers used *på en måte* ‘in a way’ never or once. Mr K <N04> used it 69 times, Mr G <N05> 56 times, and Mr Gi <N16> 48 times. The discourse marker *jo*, on the other hand, was used by all speakers from 15 to 160 times regardless of style. Thus, the frequency of these items seems to depend more on individual taste than on function.

is a possibility that personal stories functioned as a rapport marker with the aim to indulge in similar experiences.

7.14 Personal pronouns and mental verbs in the Norwegian corpus

Norwegian has two official written languages; *bokmål* and *nynorsk* with slightly different personal pronouns. In both of them, personal pronouns have nominative and accusative inflections as illustrated below. Norwegian generic pronouns are *man* and *en* in bokmål, and *ein* in nynorsk. However, the second person singular pronoun *du* ‘you’ is also commonly used with general reference in Norwegian (Johansson 2007:183).

Singular	Subject form 'bokmål'	Subject form 'nynorsk'	Object form 'bokmål'	Object form 'nynorsk'
1. Person	jeg	eg	meg	meg
2. Person	du	du	deg	deg
3. Person	han/hun/den/det	han/ho/den/det	ham/han/henne/ den/det	han/henne/den/det
Plural				
1. Person	vi	vi/me	oss	oss
2. Person	dere	de	dere	dykk
3. Person	de	dei	dem	dei

	Mr R N01	Mr Sam N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr Nø N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Mr E N14	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr VA N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Nø N20
TOTAL <i>jeg/eg</i> 'I'	67	176	103	109	149	125	127	105	344	91	79	355	94	48	132	77	140	113	123	229
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	1.35	3.13	2.12	1.58	1.83	2.57	3.10	1.42	3.47	2.23	1.26	3.73	1.76	1.98	1.90	0.79	1.14	1.46	2.04	3.20
<i>du</i> 'you/one'	87	36	49	191	173	9	62	76	68	91	147	142	74	24	103	149	123	109	76	77
<i>vi/me</i> 'we'	43	39	68	70	122	84	24	112	85	11	42	6	26	27	99	171	121	101	47	53
<i>man</i> 'one'	21	18	23	5	2		8	70	1		8			1					31	52
<i>en</i> 'one'											6	7								
TOTAL 'you/one, we, one'	151	93	140	266	297	93	94	258	154	102	203	155	100	52	202	320	244	210	154	182
Total Word Count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	3.04	1.65	2.88	3.84	3.64	1.92	2.30	3.48	1.56	2.49	3.23	1.63	1.87	2.15	2.90	3.27	1.98	2.71	2.55	2.54
<i>du</i> 'you' (addressing interviewer)	1	1	1	1	8			3	4		1	2	4				21		4	
TOTAL Pronouns	219	270	244	376	454	218	221	366	502	193	283	512	198	100	334	397	405	323	281	411
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	4.41	4.79	5.02	5.43	5.56	4.50	5.39	4.94	5.07	4.72	4.51	5.37	3.71	4.13	4.80	4.06	3.29	4.17	4.65	5.73

Table 28: Personal pronouns in the Norwegian corpus

Table 28 shows the distribution of the first person pronoun *jeg/eg* 'I', the first person plural pronoun *vi* 'we', and the two generic pronouns *man* and *en* 'one' in the Norwegian data.

In addition, the second person pronoun *du* 'you' is mostly used with a generic meaning, but some speakers also used it to address the interviewer. I return to the latter in chapter eight.

The average score on the total number of pronouns is 4.7%. The average score on the first person pronouns *jeg/eg* 'I' is 2.10%. The average score of *du* (generic), *vi*, *man*, and *en* is 2.58%. Whereas the Norwegian average score on pronouns was 4.7%, the Japanese score was only 0.3% which illustrates the fact that Japanese is a pro-drop language.

Dahl (2000:55) finds in Swedish that typical 'mental verbs' such as *tänka* 'think' and *tro* 'think', and *tycka* 'think, be of the opinion, feel' have about six times as many first person singular as second person singular subjects. Table 29 shows the mental verbs and verbal expressions used frequently by the Norwegians in my corpus to denote personal attitude or opinion. The question posed is whether first person pronouns seem to co-exist with mental verbs to signal involvement.

	Mr R N01	Mr Sam N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr No N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Mr E N14	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr VA N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Nie N20	
<i>(jeg) må si</i> '(I) must say'		4																1		1	
<i>vil (jeg) si</i> '(I) will say'		3	1			1	2		8	1					5		3	2	2		
<i>mener</i> 'mean, think, opine'		4		1	1	6			5	3		2	1			2	2			1	
<i>synes</i> 'think, opine'	1	18	6		11	2	6	11	12	6		15		1	2	3	2	5	10	41	
<i>tror</i> 'think, believe'	9	18	15	8	11	30	5	15	69	15	42	22	4	8	18	19	13	10	42	35	
<i>tenker/tenkte</i> 'think/thought'			12	2	6		6	4	18	3		26	2	4	4	7	4	3	6	6	
<i>føler/følte</i> 'feel/felt'			2	4	5	1	1	2	15		6	12		4	3	3			3	6	
TOTAL	10	47	36	15	34	40	20	32	127	28	48	77	7	17	32	34	24	21	63	90	
Total word Count		4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %		0.20	0.83	0.74	0.22	0.42	0.82	0.50	0.43	1.28	0.69	0.76	0.81	0.13	0.70	0.46	0.35	0.20	0.27	1.04	1.26

Table 29: Mental verbs and verbal expressions in the Norwegian corpus

The average score on mental verbs is 0.61%.

Examples of the Norwegian mental verbs and verbal expressions in use:

(179) <N02> *jeg må si* de, noen av de mest uformelle og hyggelige personer du kan treffe er jo japanere </N02>

'I must say they, some of the most informal and nice people you can meet are [jo] the Japanese'

(180) <N02> Ja du er litt mer forsiktig i måten du spør på og snakker på ee, *vil jeg si*, ja. </N02>

'Yes you are a bit more careful in the way you ask and talk er, I [will] (would) say, yes.'

(181) <N10> så e, men e, det er jo veldig dårlig det hvis det blir dårlig kjemi mellom, en kunde du har her i Japan da e, har du, jeg mener da mener jeg du har i utgangspunktet @@, ikkje gjort det riktig, </N10>

'So e, but e, it is [jo] very bad [that] if the chemistry becomes bad between, a client you have here in Japan then e, you have, I mean then I [mean] (think) you haven't started out@@, not done it right.'

In (181) there are two different uses of the verb *mener*; the first is the same as in the English utterance 'I mean' which is a hedging self-correction, the second is stating one's opinion firmly as in 'then my opinion is that' in English. Only the second type of *mener* has been counted as a verb stating personal attitude or opinion.

(182) <N12> eg synes japanere ofte spør kolleger om råd </N12>

'I think/it is my opinion that the Japanese often ask colleagues for advice'

(183) <N12> tenker at sånn sett var det bedre, at me faktisk hadde gjort det da </N12>

'(I) am thinking that in that respect it was better, that we in fact had done it then'

(184) <N12> eg følte meg respektert </N12>

'I felt respected'

(185) <N06>eg trur eg har, forklaringa og det er at e </N06>

'I think/believe I have, the explanation and that is that er'

(186) <N12>trur eg kanskje </N12>

'I think maybe'

In (185) the person strongly believes she has the explanation. In (186) she is much more in doubt, which we also see from the added intensifying adverb *kanskje* 'maybe'.

Of these mental verbs, those which denote strong assertiveness are *vil jeg si* [will I say] 'I would say', *mener* [mean] 'in my opinion, I think,', and *synes* 'in my opinion, I think'. By the

use of the verb *må* ‘must’ in *må jeg si* ‘I must say’, the speaker relieves himself from some of the responsibility for the proposition by making it sound as if he has been forced against his will. The verbs *tenker* ‘think, reflect’ and *føler* ‘feel’ reflect the speaker’s mind without adding assertiveness, and the verb *tro* ‘think’ can either be interpreted as a medium assertive ‘I believe it is so’ or a non-assertive ‘I suppose it is so’.

If we compare table 28 to table 29, we find that among the eight speakers above average on first person pronouns, seven of them are also above average on mental verbs. This supports Dahl (1997) in his argument that first person pronouns and mental verbs tend to co-function in order to signal personal involvement. In 3.10.1.6, a high frequency of first person pronouns combined with mental verbs denote a willingness to express one’s own thoughts explicitly and take personal responsibility for one’s statements, which is characteristic of an upfront style, and we saw that the Japanese with a similar style did. However, if we compare the Norwegians illustrating an upfront style in the previous sections such as Mr K <N04>, Mr H <N09>, Mr N <N10>, Mr E <N14>, and Ms T <N15> to table 28 above, we find that only Mr H <N09> clearly prefers first person pronouns to those with less animacy such as ‘we’, ‘you’, and ‘one’. I discuss this further in chapter eight.

Mr H <N09> has the highest frequency of both first person pronoun ‘I’ (table 28) and mental verbs (table 29). He is the only Norwegian informant with a Japanese boss, and the following quote is about when he first started working with this boss:

- (187) <N09> Vi er fem stykker i avdelinga da, at da var klokka kanskje en åtte og så, sa jeg at jeg begynner å bli sliten jeg tror jeg går hjem, det var helt i begynnelsen og jeg måtte lære alt på nytt og det var veldig mye å gjøre, men så var jeg, veldig sliten og så e, nei, du må sitte til tolv. Og så sa jeg hvorfor det? Jo for vi har jo deadline i morgen, så sa jeg jeg vet det men e, alle har jo forståelse for at jeg er ny så e, jeg vet ikke om jeg klarer, jeg, for jeg var jo litt på etterskudd så han, han ville at jeg skulle bli ferdig, men jeg sa at jeg klarer ikke, jeg er sliten og må dra hjem@@. Og da ble han skikkelig @forbanna@ og så sa han at, du må sitte til tolv hver dag, og du må sitte på lørdag og søndag, nei jeg, da ble jeg irritert, så jeg kjefta på og sa du kan ikke holde på å si sånn, alle gjør jo sitt beste uansett, og hvis jeg ikke greier det nå første gangen å bli ferdig i tide så e, er det ok tror jeg, fordi det er ingen, det er jo ikke sånn eksamen det er jo bare det er jo bare et møte </N09>

‘We were five at the department at the time, then maybe it was around eight o’clock and then, I said I’m starting to be tired I think I’ll go home, it was right in the beginning and I had to learn everything from scratch and it was very busy, and I was very tired and then erm, no you must stay until twelve. And then I said why? Because we have a dead line tomorrow, so I said yes I know but, everyone understands that I am new so, I don’t think I can, I , because I was a bit behind schedule so he wanted me to finish, but I said I can’t, I’m tired and have to go home@@. Then he got really @livid@ and then he said that, you must stay until twelve every

day and you must work on Saturday and Sunday, no I, then I got annoyed, so I scolded him and said you can't go on saying such things, everyone is doing their best, and if I can't finish on time the first time then it is ok I think because no one, it's not an exam it's simply it's only for a meeting'

The quote above has twenty-three *jeg* 'I'. After the meeting the next day, the boss asked him out for a drink in the evening. He had never had a foreign subordinate before and expected that Mr H might be the type who only does things his own way. He offered an apology and Mr H answered: *det er greit men e, prøv å ikke bli sånn, i framtida @da sa jeg@* 'It's ok but e, try not to become like that in the future @then I said@'. Some might jump at this upfront manner of talking to one's boss and suspect Mr H of being a difficult type to work with. Mr H's style could be evaluated as 'egocentric' in the sense that he does not hide his personal involvement. Or, it could be interpreted as open, honest and frank. Involvement is displayed through personal narratives with direct quotes, intensifiers (*veldig* 'very', *skikkelig* 'really'), intensifying discourse marker (*jo*), infused adjectives (*forbanna* 'livid', *irritert* 'annoyed', *sliten* 'exhausted'), infused verbs (*kjefta på* 'scolded'), and repetitions (e.g. *du må sitte til tolv hver dag, og du må sitte på lørdag og søndag* 'you must stay until twelve every day and you must stay (in) on Saturdays and Sundays'. The fact is that Mr H was generally perceived as calm and easy-going by his colleagues. Since this incident he has been on good terms with his boss, the only one who is, according to another colleague.

7.15 Summary and discussion of the Norwegian findings

Table 30 marks each speaker's number of strengtheners above average in the previous seven tables 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 (first person pronouns), and 29.

In table 30 there are fifteen speakers with three or more strengtheners above average. All in all, the Norwegians had higher average scores on all strengtheners except tag-questions. Even though some of this may be explained by the average length of the Norwegian interviews (cf. 7.9), the larger score is especially evident in the number of people who tell more than one personal story, and in the overall number of verbose expressions and exaggerated facts, which means that the Norwegians with an upfront or an elaborate style display their involvement through personal opinions and attitudes more vigorously than the Japanese with a similar style. However, I find it interesting that during the interviews it was the Japanese with an upfront or an elaborate style, not the Norwegians, that I felt displayed the most vigour, which tell us

something about how a style can have even more effect when it is not expected. Since the Japanese were not expected to be very explicit about their opinions or attitudes, those who did, were noticed more than the Norwegians with a similar style.

name	Total number of strengtheners above average	Years in Japan at the time of the interview
N01 Mr R	0	2 (+ 4 yrs in China)
N02 Mr San	3	6 ½
N03 Mr M	5	1 ½
N04 Mr K	3	2 ½
N05 Mr G	0	16
N06 Ms O	3	½
N07 Mr S	4	19
N08 Mr Nø	3	1 ½
J09 Mr H	4	2
N10 Mr N	3	12
N11 Mr L	6	4
N12 Ms B	5	5
N13 Mr I	5	37
N14 Mr E	4	½
N15 Ms T	3	16
N16 Mr Sv	2	5
N17 Mr Vå	0	14
N18 Mr Nie	0	5
N19 Mr J	3	11
N20 Mr Næ	4	2 ½

Table 30: Summary of strengtheners in the Norwegian corpus

An interesting difference between the Norwegians and the Japanese is that those who state many exaggerated facts, less verbosity (and the verbosity is to a large degree part of the exaggerated facts, cf. 7.11), and few rapport markers such as Mr H <N09>, Mr N <N10>, Mr E <N14>, and Ms T <N15> all have scores below average on intensifiers (table 23). Thus, a high number of intensifiers does not seem to be an important factor when determining the Norwegian upfront style. This rather indicates an exacting style, and is something that is discussed in chapter nine.

I frequently hear Norwegians argue that contact with Japanese people, language, and culture has affected them so that even when they speak Norwegian, they tend to have become more indirect than they were before. If we compare the number of strengtheners in table 30 above to length of time spent in Japan, we find that among the Norwegians who have been from ½ to 2 ½ years in Japan, all have at least three strengtheners above average, indicating an upfront/elaborate style. However, if we look at the seven Norwegians who have been living more than ten years in Japan, we also find five with at least three strengtheners above average, which means that they are not noticeably influenced by the ‘Japanese style’ when they speak Norwegian. The remaining two have a style more similar to ‘the Japanese style’, and are further discussed in chapter eight.

7.16 The upfront style and the elaborate style versus Partington’s theories

According to Partington (3.7) there are two distinctly different ‘faces’ both applying many strengtheners. When a person chooses to apply a *competence face*, this is because he wishes to persuade the hearers that he is capable, authoritative, and in control. Through an *affective face*, on the other hand, the speaker first and foremost aims to persuade the hearers that he is non-threatening, congenial and good to be around. My impression of the upfront versus the elaborate style is the same.

Figure 7, which is based on that of Lakoff and Tannen (figure2), places the *elaborate* and the *upfront style* together with the competence face and the affective face, and these choices are explained below.

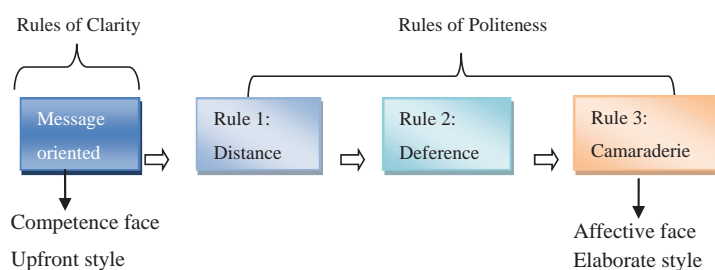


Figure 7: Pragmatic Competence from message to relationship oriented; Comparison of the upfront and the elaborate styles (author’s model)

Brown and Levinson (3.8.2) argue that positive politeness strategies are used in order to “exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer” or “intensify interest to the hearer”. Lakoff’s *Rules of Politeness* (figure 2) are based on discourses where there is a mutual interest to accommodate each other, or in Tannen’s words; to have a high degree of involvement. It seems that what Tannen means by high involvement, is involvement with the other participants. However, according to Chafe (1985:117), strengtheners can also be used to signal interest “in the message”. Thus, in my data there are those who have many traces of the *high involvement style*, that is, many intensifiers, personal stories, exaggerated facts, personal pronouns and mental verbs, but few or no rapport markers. This may be due to being primarily involved in the message, and is the style I have called the *upfront style*.

In chapter four I argued that compared to Grice’s minimalistic view on directness, the upfront style does not only bear a rational wish for clarity, but also an affective wish to share one’s thoughts upfront, and if necessary be, confrontational, as one’s own intentions and thoughts are better noticed when they are somewhat exaggerated or underlined. Thus, we see a high frequency of first person pronouns denoting personal involvement and responsibility, and many intensifiers and exaggerated facts that enhance the effect of the statements. From the intercultural viewpoint this type of directness is a typical trait of individualistic cultures. However, this study also finds the upfront style among the Japanese interviewees.

One can only speculate on why for instance Mr Bi with an upfront style never uses infused adjectives or metaphors. Mr Bi has a higher status in the business hierarchy, and might feel obliged to appear ‘serious’. However, Mr Da, who uses more verbosity, is of equal status. Partington (2006:97) found that too much humour could undermine competence face and was therefore avoided. Verbosity too tends to have an essence of playfulness about it which might be interpreted as ‘non-seriousness’ or flippancy by those with an upfront style.

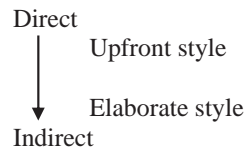
To put on a competence face is not always compatible with the expression of ingroup solidarity (Partington 2006:97). The native Japanese who assisted me on quality checks of the Japanese transcriptions said about Mr Bi that *tokidoki, ue kara mono o iu yoo na inshoo o ukeru* ‘sometimes he gives an impression of arrogance’. During a dinner table conversation, such as the one Tannen (2005) bases her theories of high-involvement style on, it might be insensitive not to be involved with the others and merely focus on what you have to say. However, in an interview situation it is perhaps not necessary to consider the interviewer’s face in the same way. Just the same, most of my informants were aware of other-face even in

an interview situation, either by the use of hedges in order not to impose their own opinions on the listener, or by the use of rapport markers in order to build common ground and show friendliness. Those who did not however, were not necessarily being impolite, just upfront.

Brown and Levinson's description of *positive politeness* amounts to a list of possible devices available to those who wish to be considered congenial or to give others amiability (3.8.2). What makes showing competence face a risky business from a social point of view is that the only positive politeness devices they use from that list are items with an intensifying function ('for sure', 'really') and exaggerated facts which underline the message itself. A positive message might then be tolerated, but as Wilson and Gallois (3.7) observed, negative messages are often rated as more assertive and less socially appropriate. Generally, people who choose to put on a competence face choose to apply fewer of the positive politeness strategies available to them, especially those who are obviously most beneficial for the hearer, such as tag questions and other rapport markers. Consequently, they are in greater danger of appearing inconsiderate or impolite. On the other hand, those who apply an affective face, exercise more of the linguistic and rhetorical devices from the list, and therefore stand a better chance of appearing friendly and polite.

In chapter two the intent of the *elaborate style*, which was described as elaborated with "over-assertions, verbal exaggerations, metaphors, similes, flowery expressions, proverbs and cultural idioms, strings of adjectives, and repetitions" (table 1), was a wish to disguise one's actual intents in order to protect his own or the other's face (2.5.1). I agree that the use of verbosity may have such an effect by making the statements less 'serious' and thereby less face-threatening. However, based on the analysis, I would rather argue in line with Sifianou (3.10.1.3) that the speaker's reasons for using an elaborate style seemed to be in order to entertain by means of a lively story, both because of the self-image they wished to display, and in order to strengthen the bonds between the interlocutors as they both become emotionally involved in the story.

If one imagines a discourse that closely adheres to Grice's Cooperative Principle as 'direct', then one could argue that the more devices one uses for affective or social purposes, the more the cooperative principle is being flouted or violated, and thus, the elaborate style which uses more positive politeness devices than the upfront style, is more 'indirect' than the upfront style and vice versa, and illustrated as follows:



However, even though the upfront style is placed as more ‘direct’ than the elaborate style with regards to clarity, the elaborate style might be perceived as more ‘direct’ by those who are not familiar with it or not expecting it. I return to this in chapter eleven.

Partington (2006:98) believes that the competence face and the affective face are incompatible. One either has to choose to appear authoritative with the risk of appearing non-affiliative, or choose to appear congenial and risk not being taken seriously. If we look at the Japanese and the Norwegian data in this section, we find that although verbosity has been found to signal ‘non-seriousness’ in the elaborate style and exaggerated facts have been found to signal ‘seriousness’ in the upfront style, there are those who use both much verbosity and many exaggerated facts indicating that the competence face and the affective face might not be incompatible after all.

However, my impression based on the analysis is that exaggerated facts do increase the danger of appearing non-affiliative, and the more verbose expressions and rapport markers a text has, the more the face threat of exaggerated facts is neutralized. Thus, a person who wishes to appear competent will express his message directly, but because he is also concerned about the impact his message might have on his audience, he softens it by the use of verbosity and rapport markers. However, an increasing number of verbose expressions, in turn, put the speaker in danger of appearing ‘non-serious’, and in that respect one might say that the two faces in their extremes are incompatible. When not in extreme cases, more positive politeness strategies will make a direct statement gradually less direct.

8 The understated style

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the *understated* style. In table 1 it was defined as “implicit, interpretive, vague, approximate, and imprecise with subtle messages, hints, understatements, indirection, circumlocution, pauses, and silences” and was found to be the style most similar to what is frequently termed *the Japanese style* (2.7).

The Japanese style is described as a high context style with frequent use of honorifics. Since the interview situation in this study seemed to be interpreted by the Japanese informants as moderately formal (cf. 7.7), honorifics were not used at all, and are therefore not a focus in the following analysis.

The other devices described as features of the Japanese style such as hedges, hesitation fillers, pauses, open endings, apologetic laughter, and a limited use of first and second person pronouns are listed as *weakeners* in chapter three (3.10.2), and will be tested on the data (apologetic laughter will be discussed in chapter ten). Brown and Levinson (3.8.2) explain them as devices predominantly used as *negative politeness strategies*, which are strategies that do not assume or presume that the hearer is able or willing to meet one’s needs, and therefore minimize the imposition by expressing doubt as to whether one’s statement is acceptable and appropriate to the hearer.

The Norwegians (2.6) have been described both as high and low context communicators. In this chapter I test the weakeners listed in part 3.10.2 on the Japanese and the Norwegian data in order to find to what degree the Japanese and the Norwegian informants can be said to have an understated style.

Another interesting topic of examination is to what degree the understated style hypothesized to employ many weakeners but few strengtheners (table 3) is clearly distinguishable from the two preceding styles, the upfront and the elaborate style, which we have seen in chapter seven employ many strengtheners, but which have yet to be examined with regards to weakeners.

8.2 Hedges in the Japanese corpus

Table 31 shows the distribution of the most frequently used hedges in the Japanese corpus assumed to weaken the proposition in the given context. See 5.5.5 for more details on the selection of items. Accurate translations of the lexical items are set out in the examples of use listed below. Examples are selected from the corpus, and thus, do not cover all possible uses in general Japanese.

	Mr Da 122	Mr Ma 123	Mr Ta 124	Mr Na 125	Mr Ni 126	Mr Sa 127	Mr Su 128	Mr Ya 129	Mr No 130	Ms A 131	Mr Bi 132	Mr Mi 133	Mr D 134	Ms To 135	Mr Mo 136	Ms Kyō 137	Ms Ne 138	Ms Ko 139	Ms Taka 140	Mr U 141	Mr Ka 142	
<i>kana</i> 'maybe, I wonder'	15	6		10	12	45		62	9	18	3	7	6	12	7	20	20	16	12	16	7	
<i>nan ite-to iu (no) kana</i> 'how can I put it, I wonder'	4	1		3	2	3		17	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	8	17	10	1	12	5	
<i>kamoshire(nai-masen)</i> 'maybe'	7	1	2	6	4	3		7		5		1	7	2		7	9	4	4	1	12	
<i>tabun</i> 'maybe'	4			4	1			7	1		7	8		5	2	3	6	1	4	6	9	
<i>a(n)mari (nai)</i> '(not) very'	18	5	1	11	6	33	4	11	1	4	6	2		8	2	16	1	9	3	14	32	
<i>chotto</i> 'a little, a bit'	13		2	19	6	36	3	10	5	1	6	5	6	8	2	15	5	10	6	22	28	
<i>sukoshi</i> 'a little, a bit'	3		2	6	2	3	1	4	5	1	3	1				1		7			1	
<i>sonna ni (nai)</i> '(not) so very'	1	2		4	2	4				3	2					4	2	1	11	1	2	
<i>deshoo (ka, ne)</i> 'is (I) wonder'	6		1	4		5					1				1	1	1		1		1	
Expressions with <i>daroo</i> 'is (I) wonder'	2	1		10		28		7	1	1	1	1		2		9	8	5	3	2		
Expressions with <i>ja nai (ka/kana)</i> 'isn't it,(I) wonder'	11			2	3	9		1	1					1	1	1	3	1			1	
TOTAL	84	16	8	79	38	169	8	126	24	36	31	26	20	40	20	83	71	74	35	73	98	
Total word count		19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %		0.43	0.54	0.19	0.63	0.53	0.63	0.25	1.61	0.94	0.70	0.29	0.42	0.42	0.45	0.67	0.86	0.73	0.96	0.79	1.05	

Table 31: Hedges in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 0.65%.

- (188) <J29>えーそういう意味では話しやすいというのかな<J29>
'erm, in that sense (one) can [*kana* 'maybe'] say it is easy to talk (with them)'

Kana 'maybe, (I) wonder' is a sentence final particle composed of the exclamatory sentential particle *na* (Makino & Tsutsui 1995:193) and the question particle *ka* indicating either a self-addressed question or a question posed to others about something one is uncertain about, and

translated into ‘I wonder’ in English (Makino & Tsutsui 1995:90). *Kashira* ‘(I) wonder’, which Makino and Tsutsui (1995:92) claim is a female counterpart to *kana*, was only used once by Ms To <J35> as she, half joking, ends a statement with:

- (189) <J35> それで答えになってるかしら、@@。 </J35>
 ‘did that [become] (make) an (ok) answer, [*kashira* ‘(I) wonder’]

As we can see from table 31, where male is marked with Mr and female with Ms, the average number of the particle *kana* in the female text is higher than that of the male. *Kana* is frequently used in the phrase *nan to iu kana* [what QP say (I) wonder] ‘how can (I) put it’ as in the following example:

- (190) <J29> ノルウェー人は、あー何というかな、あの、かなり *wet* だね </J29>
 ‘The Norwegians are erm [*nan to iu kana* ‘how can (I) put it (I) wonder’], erm, quite *wet* [ne]’

Other variants in the material of *nan to iu ka na* are: *nan te yu n desu ka ne*, *nan te iu n daroo*, *doo ittara ii kana*, (*kore*) *nan daro (o)*, *nan dakke*.

- (191) <J42> 日本の客さんにはその方がいいかもしれないですよ </J42>
 ‘Japanese customers [think that alternative is good] (prefer that) [*kamoshirenai* ‘maybe’][yo ne]’

Other variants in the material of *kamoshirenai* are: *kamo* ‘maybe’ as in *daijoobu kamo* ‘maybe (it’s) ok’, a colloquial abbreviation of *kamoshirenai*.

- (192) <J42> 多分@なんかいも@あると思うんだけどー </J42>
 ‘[*Tabun* ‘maybe’]@ (I) [have] (experienced) that many times@, (I) think but’
- (193) <J42> ま、日本人もそうだけど、いやと思ってもあまり顔には、出さずに </J42>
 ‘well, Japanese are like that too but, even if (they) don’t like (something), (they) [don’t *amari* ‘so much’ show] (it) [in the face]’

When used as a hedge, *amari* ‘so much’ is linked to a negative verb as in *V-zu/nai* ‘is not’.

- (194) <J42> これはちょっと難しいですよ </J42>
 ‘that’s [*chotto* ‘a bit’] difficult [yo ne]’
- (195) <J39> 態度変わるかな少しはうん変わると思う </J39>
 ‘(my) behavior change [*kana* ‘maybe’], yes, does [*sukoshi* ‘somewhat, a bit’] change, (I) think’
- (196) <J25> ま、ちーさなことで、そんなに大きな問題ではない </J25>
 ‘well, it’s a minor thing, (it) [isn’t *sonna ni* ‘such a’] big problem’

When used as a hedge, *sonna ni* is linked to a negative verb as in [*sonna ni* ‘so much’ *nai* ‘is not’]

- (197) <J25> 五番の質問はそんなんでいいでしょうか@@ </J25>
‘Is that a good (enough answer) to question five, [*deshoo ka* ‘[is] (I) wonder [question particle’]@@’
- (198) <J25> で一返事が来ないって<sucking teeth>うりたくないんだろうかなと思って、@@ </J25>
‘and (the fact) that there is no reply, <sucking teeth> is (that because they) don’t want to sell, [*daroo kana* ‘[is] (I) wonder’]@@’

The sound marked with <sucking teeth> in the example above is a paralinguistic device to signal uncertainty or reluctance to state one’s thoughts. Expressions in the material which used the auxiliary verb *daroo(o)* with the meaning ‘is/how/why (I) wonder’ and counted were: *daroo na*, *doo daro*, (*doo*) *daroo (ka) na(a)*, *doo nan daroo na*, and *dooshita n daro*. *Deshoo/daroo* (often shortened to *desho/daro* in colloquial speech, *daroo* mostly used by men but sometimes also by women in my data) are tentative forms of copula *desu* ‘to be’. It would often be used to weaken a statement from *ashita ame ga furu* [tomorrow rain [NP] will fall] ‘It is going to rain tomorrow’ to *ashita ame ga furu deshoo* [tomorrow rain [NP] may fall] ‘It may be going to rain tomorrow’. However in my data I frequently find *deshoo* used assertively too as in the following example where *desho* is being uttered with falling intonation:

- (199) <J32> だから statoil とか hydro とか、あんな大きい会社の staff がその statoil の CEO と staff が毎日 free talking してるかって言ったら、多分しないでしょう、ん、ね、やっぱり manager とかせいぜい general manager と話すぐらいでしょ。 </J32>

‘So if we talk about the employees in such huge companies as Statoil and Hydro, (about) the staff and the CEO talking together every day, they don’t do that *deshoo* ‘do they’, er, [*ne* ‘right’], [*yappari* ‘surely’] more or less only the manager and the hard working general manager speak *desho* ‘don’t they’.

The speaker is not wondering if he is right, and *deshoo/desho* functions more as a device with a persuasive function similar to that of the assertive *ne* elaborated on under 7.6. Therefore *deshoo* without a question particle *ka* or other items aimed to weaken the statement, was not counted as a hedge.

The last item is *ja nai kana* [Vnegative [question particle] kana] ‘isn’t (I) wonder’. Expressions in the material which use *ja nai* ‘is not’ with a question particle *ka* or together

with *kana* 'maybe, (I) wonder' and were counted were: *ja nai kana*, *ja nai n desu ka (ne)*, *ja nai n ja nai kana*, *nai ja nai ka*.

(200) <J25> やる気がないんじゃないかなと思ったり、</J25>
 'I'm thinking that (they) don't feel like doing it, [*ja nai kana* 'isn't it (I) wonder']

This is an example of double negative: 'don't they feel like not doing it, I'm thinking'.

8.3 Hesitation fillers, pauses, and open endings in the Japanese corpus

Table 32 shows the distribution of hesitation fillers in the Japanese material. See part 5.5.3 for the hesitation fillers written in Japanese. All are translated into 'erm' in English.

	Mf-Da J22	Mf-Ma J23	Mf-Ta J24	Mf-Na J25	Mf-Nf J26	Mf-Sa J27	Mf-Su J28	Mf-Ya J29	Mf-No J30	Mf-A J31	Mf-Bi J32	Mf-Mi J33	Mf-D J34	Mf-To J35	Mf-Mo J36	Mf-Kyo J37	Mf-Ne J38	Mf-Ko J39	Mf-Taka J40	Mf-U J41	Mf-Ka J42
e(et)to	3			8		1		6	1	6		1	2		4	13	8	4	1	16	
ee	32		3	29	4		2	42	6	2	3	3	1				10	3	2	8	
aa	9	3		4	5			9	1	6	7		2		3	4	8	8	10	2	3
n	25	12	1	15	9	132	5	70	10	33	13	11	7	100	10	44	1	42	23		6
uun		1	1	4	1	4	3	4		3	3	2	2	4	6	16	58	47	11		2
ano(o)	59	2	33	97	51	205	7	36	17	28	43	26	6	12	21	35	18	48	29	85	22
ma(a) 'erm, well'	37	10	3	20	7	17	2	68	6	1	5	3	11	41	11	18	5	16	2	22	70
oo	1			3				12			1					1				1	1
uu					2		3	1	4												5
nto								1	2	1					1	2				1	1
soo desu ne [so is right] 'erm'	14		2	9	3	4		1	1	9	2	1	4	8	1	7	1		9	3	7
TOTAL	180	28	43	189	82	363	22	250	48	89	79	47	35	165	57	141	109	168	87	138	117
Total word count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.92	0.94	1.00	1.51	1.15	1.35	0.70	3.20	1.88	1.72	0.73	0.76	0.74	1.86	1.90	1.45	1.12	1.02	2.40	1.50	1.26

Table 32: Hesitation fillers in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 1.39%.

If we compare the tables on hedges and hesitation fillers, we find that, except for a few cases, speakers are either above average on both hedges and hesitation fillers, or below average on both.

Table 33 sets out the number of pauses lasting 3 seconds or more (marked in text by period mark) (see part 5.5.3 for a more detailed explanation). The texts with the most period marks also have the most registered pauses longer than 3 seconds (marked with <P:04> as e.g. in example (230)).

	Mr Da J22	Mr Ma J23	Mr Ta J24	Mr Na J25	Mr Ni J26	Mr Sa J27	Mr Su J28	Mr Ya J29	Mr No J30	Ms A J31	Mr Bi J32	Mr Mi J33	Mr D J34	Ms To J35	Mr Mo J36	Ms Kyo J37	Ms Ne J38	Ms Ko J39	Ms Taka J40	Mr U J41	Mr Ka J42
Period marks	158	38	48	57	43	15	30	93	35	56	45	95	72	45	83	69	80	57	75	46	73
Total word count	19673	2971	4290	12485	7125	26891	3155	7823	2559	5166	10893	6176	4737	8874	3008	9710	9760	16536	3633	9191	9315
Total in %	0.80	1.28	1.12	0.46	0.60	0.06	0.95	1.19	1.37	1.08	0.41	1.54	1.52	0.51	2.76	0.71	0.82	0.34	2.06	0.50	0.78

Table 33: Pauses lasting 3 sec. or longer in the Japanese corpus

The average score is 1%.

Four of the speakers above average on pauses in table 33; Mr Ya <J29>, Ms A <J31>, Mr Mo <J36>, and Ms Taka <J40> also had high scores on hedges and hesitation fillers, and gave an impression of slow pace and many hesitations and reservations. However, in table 33 we find that Mr Ma <J23>, Mr D <J34>, and Mr Mi <J33>, found to state many exaggerated facts in chapter seven, have many pauses too. They seemed to talk with involvement until they did not have more to say, and then they went silent. Thus, it seems that many and long pauses may not exclusively define an understated style.

Further, even though open endings are a common feature of Japanese conversational style (2.7.2.3), there are remarkably few in the data for this study. One can only speculate about why, but one reason might be that in an interview the speakers feel the responsibility to keep the information flowing and thus, pause as little as possible, and rather fill pauses with hesitation fillers and repetitions. The only informant I found to use open endings with any frequency was Mr Mo <J36>, who was also the Japanese informant with the most period marks in table 33, and the one with most pauses lasting longer than 3 seconds. In 2.7.2.3 hesitancy in Japanese was explained as a politeness strategy. However, it is also possible that the reason for Mr Mo's hesitancy is due to the fact that he was the interviewee who had had the least contact with foreigners, in spite of the fact that he was working in a Norwegian company, and therefore was reluctant to answer my questions. Thus, the interview only lasted 28 minutes, whereas the average for an interview was 55 minutes (cf. appendix four). The following answers from Mr Mo have open endings.

(201) <J36>うん、あの、ちゃんとその英語、だからしゃべれないですけどお、しゃべれようとしたら、なんかこう聞いてあげようっていう、気持ちは皆さんもってますから一、そういうのはすごく。 <J36>

‘yes, erm, that English, I can’t speak (it), but if I try to speak it, everyone seems willing to sort of listen (to me) so, that’s very.’

(202) <J36> そういうのはたまに、ありますけど。 <J36>

‘That happens sometimes but.’

8.4 Hedge or hesitation filler?

There is a question about whether for instance expressions with *kana* ‘(I) wonder’ such as for instance in example (190), viz. “The Norwegians are er [what to say] (how can (I) put it) I wonder), erm, quite *wet* (I) guess [ne]” has predominantly a weakening function, or whether it is just a hesitation filler that gives the speaker time to think. I placed *kana* as a hedge in table 31. Maynard (1990:258) however, places it as a hesitation filler together with items such as *maa* ‘erm’, *ano* [that over there] ‘erm’, *eeto* ‘erm’, *ee* ‘erm’, and *nanka* ‘or something, like’.

The point I would like to make here is that it is not always easy to determine whether an expression is a hesitation filler, i.e. gives the speaker time to think, or a hedge, i.e. softens or wraps up the statement, but it might not be essential to the discussion on whether a text is indirect or not. Rather, what is important is that a text with many hesitation fillers and hedges gives an indirect impression compared to a text with few of these. Thus, I believe it is the overall number of devices that weaken the illocutionary force that is important in determining whether a text is indirect or not rather than whether an item is a hesitation filler or a hedge.

A comparison between the following two examples might illustrate the point. Example (203) is from Mr Ma <J23>, found to employ many exaggerated facts and first person pronouns, but few intensifiers in chapter seven. Here he gives his impression of his Norwegian trading partners. Hedges and hesitation fillers are marked in grey.

(203) <J23> たとえば、たとえば、**んー**、人が来ますと、何人で来るかは言わない、わかんない、二人かな、三人かなといって実際に来たら四人来るとか、別に気にしないね、そうゆうことはね、とか、時間**んー**もそんなに、**何**というかな、あの絶対にまもらない、日本人みたいにそんなに几帳面じゃないよね<J23>

‘for example, for example, **erm**, when people are coming, (they) don’t say how many are coming, (we) don’t know, will it be two [*kana* ‘(we) wonder’], will it be three [*kana* ‘(we) wonder’], and when they actually come, they are four, and so on, (they) don’t particularly care do they, about such things right, and so on, they are also not [*sonna ni* ‘especially’] **erm**, **how** can I put it, absolutely worried about being punctual (open ending), they are not [*sonna ni* ‘especially’] punctual like the Japanese [*yo ne* ‘right’]’

The text contains only three weakening devices (marked in grey). In the extract above we also see that *kana* ‘(we) wonder’ and *sonna ni* ‘(not) so very/(not) especially’ seem to have relatively little weakening effect in the text.

The next extract is that of Mr Ya <J29>, and is of approximately the same length as that of Mr Ma above. If we compare the two, we find that the same weakening devices are used but in a much larger number in (204), giving the hearer an impression of a speaker who aims to soften his statements to a much larger extent than Mr Ma above. The speaker is elaborating on why he feels communication between Norwegians and Japanese runs smoothly. Hedges and hesitation fillers are marked in grey, and open endings are placed in a box.

(204) <J29> 何というかな、えー会話はずみやすい、んー、えー、それからー、ま、日本人は、あまり英語が上手じゃないわけだけれども、ま、あーそれからー、ま、日本特有のね、考え方もあるだろうけども、まそういうのを、その何というかな、えー、受け入れながらね、会話をしてくれるというのが、ま、ノルウェー人なのかなと、んー、ーいう気がするな、んー、</J29>

‘how can (I) put it, erm conversation runs smoothly, erm erm, and so, well, the Japanese are not very good at English but, well, erm and so, well, (I) guess there are special Japanese ways [ne], ways of thinking [but] (and), well those things, how can (I) put it, erm, to consider (the Japanese way of thinking) while talking (to the Japanese), well, that might be (particular for) Norwegians (I) wonder, erm (I) feel perhaps, erm’

The text has twenty-one weakeners. As explained in 5.6, words in parentheses () mark English words in the translations which are not in the original Japanese text but filled in to make the English text intelligible. If one reads the text without them, it is easier to understand how much the speaker has left unsaid. In addition, the text has many ‘how can (I) put it’ which might be a filler or a hedge, but which I interpreted as adding to the speaker’s overall tendency to weaken his proposition. Thus, hesitation fillers do not only function to give the speaker time to think, but also to sound less assertive.

The example above was that of Mr Ya <J29>. He has the highest score both on hedges and hesitation fillers in the Japanese corpus. He works for a large Japanese trading house. From 1998 to 2001 he was stationed in Norway. In the following extract he talks about what it is like to communicate with Norwegians compared to other people from Europe. It not only illustrates his frequent use of hedges and hesitation fillers (marked in grey) and open endings (placed in a box), but also is a good example of a non-linear style (cf. 2.5.2), that is, how to talk about something in a round-about manner:

- (205) <J29> んー、たとえばあー、もっと厳しい国もね、もちろんあるから、えー、これだめと、ね、えー、いう、い言出す人もたくさん、ま、世の中にはいる、そういう国もあるんだ[けども]、まそれに比べるとその、そういう意味では非常に仕事が、しやすいっていうのかな、んー、という気はしますよ、んー、でま、よく言うんだけどこの、それをね悪く言うとな、ね、あの一、えーま、ある特定のちょっと、国があって、その人は日本人が大体、厳しい育ちだなと思ってるわけですよ、ね、もうちょっとあの、ヨーロッパの南の方の、国の人とかね、こわいよと思ってるわけですよ、で、その人達と仕事をするとな、なんか問題があると、必ずまー、んー必ずというかな、ま喧嘩になるのというのか、すぐこの敵対的に、話し合いをするわけですね、それに対してノルウェー人ちゅうのは、その一、アプローチがかなりソフトなんです。
</J29>

'erm, for example, e:rm, (there) are of course tougher countries too [ne] so, erm, if not it's no good [quotation particle] [ne], erm, (they) say, there are also many people, well, in (this) world who say, such countries exist [but], well, compared to that [those], in that sense working (with the Norwegians) is extremely, easy one might say, erm, (I) feel [yo], erm, and well, (people) often say but [these], to put it negatively, [ne], [ne], erm, er well, there are a bit particular countries, which people Japanese usually, wonder if they had a tough upbringing [yo], [ne], people from a bit further erm, to the south of Europe and so on [ne], (they) are scary [yo] (we) think [yo], and, when we do business with those people, if there are sort of trouble, usually well, erm, maybe one can say usually, well there will be a fight or, it quickly turns into this aggressive conversation [ne], compared to that the Norwegians, that approach of theirs is quite soft.'

Mr Ya could have simply stated that people from South Europe have an aggressive style unnerving to him, but instead he takes much time to circle in the problem with many hesitation fillers and some hedges. Even though he was stationed abroad for as many as 8 years, he has not become more direct in style. This is something he elaborates on in the next example which is part of the answer to question number nine in the interview guide about whether communicating with Norwegians or other foreigners has affected him in any way:

- (206) <J29> いやーそれはだから、ないですよ、うーん、それは残念ながらないかな、やっぱりー、ま、何というかな、ま、向こう行ってた時も、その一、日本の会社の駐在員で行ってるから、えー、その違いは理解して、うらやましいなと、おー、は思う[もの]の、んー帰ってきたらやっぱりもうもとのね、えー状態に戻るわけだから、すぐにま adjust@@してるよね、んー、なかなかだから、あの、変わったということはない[けども]、</J29>

'no er, (the answer) [that] is thus, 'no' [yo], erm, which might be a pity, [yappari], well, how can (I) put it, well, even when I went [there] (to London), [that], it was as the representative for a Japanese company [so], erm, (I) understood the difference (between Japanese indirectness and the directness of people in London) and (I) envy (those who are direct) [but], erm when you

return (to Japan) (you) [yappari] go back to your erm original [condition] (way of behaving and thinking) so, (you) soon well, adjust@@ (to your old ways) [yo ne], erm, (so you) haven't particularly changed but'

Mr Ya uses a form of first person pronoun (*watashi/boku/ore*) only seven times during the entire interview (table 20), which is the lowest percentage of all the informants. As we can see from his quotes (204) – (206), he states his personal opinions somewhat reluctantly by way of many hesitation fillers, hedges, open endings, and use “the Japanese” as the agent rather than himself. His discourse has no personal narratives placed in time and place, no verbose expressions such as reduplications, metaphors, or infused adjectives, and no exaggerated facts. Thus, Mr Ya can be said to have a ‘typical’ *understated style*.

Another example of a similar style is that of Ms Taka <J40>, a woman in her fifties who has been the distributor for a Norwegian product in Japan since 1997, has the highest score on hesitation fillers in table 32. When someone with an understated style repeats a word or phrase, it is not because of involvement but rather to avoid assertiveness. Since others have mentioned that Norwegians take too much time responding to e-mails, I ask Ms Taka if she has noticed any difference in communicating with Japanese and Norwegians on e-mail.

(207) <J40>やー、特に、んー、特にはないですね、ただ、あの一、ノルウェー人か、何か、そのライセンスとかはね、Eメールで送ってくるんですけども、その時には、たとえば、ちょっと違うライセンスが来た時でも、まずありがとうって言ってからー、でもこれはちょっと違うっていうふうに出したり [?], そういうふうにもそういうふう @@気を使います@@、うん、うん。 <J40>

‘no, not especially, erm, not especially [ne], only, erm, the Norwegians is it?, erm, [those] licenses and such [ne], is sent (to us) by e-mail but, then, for example, even when a little different license [came] (is being sent to us), after initial acknowledgement of receipt, (I answer) like but isn't this something a bit different [?], (I) am like that, always @careful@ like that, yes, yes’

It is not easy to know the extent of the problem here. Ms Taka minimizes the problem by a repeated “not especially”, and continues to hedge the problem with *tada* ‘only’, *chotto* ‘a little, a bit’ and many hesitation fillers, marked in grey, and asking questions marked with [?] instead of stating. The only possible intensifier in the entire text is *itsumo* ‘always’ in *itsumo soo* ‘always like that’ placed at the very end of the answer. Laughter here seems to function together with all the other hedges and fillers to minimize the illocutionary force of the utterance. I will return to the function of laughter in chapter ten.

8.5 Disclaimers and self-repairs in the Japanese corpus

Disclaimers and self-repairs, generally defined in 3.10.2.3, have been concretized through investigating the Japanese text, and will be presented below. A typical Japanese disclaimer was to start the utterance with the reservation such as *ippanteki ni ne...* ‘generally (speaking), right [...]’. An other example of disclaimers in the Japanese corpus is to start by making reservations concerning one’s general competence, or one’s competence in giving an interesting, useful, or correct answer as in the following examples:

- (208) <J33> 質問で正しいのかどうか分からないけれどもー <J33>
‘I don’t know if this answers the question but’
- (209) <J25> えー、これはね難しいな、説明しにくいんですけど<J25>
‘erm, this is [*ne*] difficult [*na* (modifying particle)], difficult to explain but’
- (210) <J35> どうでもいい話なんですけど、<J35>
‘This is not important but’
- (211) <J29> @こう言っていていいのか知らないけれども@ <J29>
‘I don’t know if I can say it in this way but’
- (212) <J29>それは悪く言うとね<J29>
‘negatively stated’
- (213) <J29> こう言っていていいのか知らないけれども、<J29>
‘I don’t know if I can put it this way but’
- (214) <J40> ちょっとよく説明できるか分からないんですけども<J40>
‘I don’t know if I can explain this well but’

In a few cases these come in a self-deprecating manner such as in:

- (215) <J37> 私の言い方も、あんまり、上手じゃないかもしれないけど<J37>
‘I might not be very good at expressing myself but’

Whereas a disclaimer comes before a statement, a repair is a way to correct an item or a statement after it has been uttered. The following self-repairs in the Japanese corpus re-phrase the statement believed to be too strong into a weaker one:

- (216) <J25> これは、あのー困ったりする、困るケースがあると思います。<J25>
‘These things, erm worry (me), there are times when this worries (me).’
- (217) <J25> 日本のことをわかっていない、さそうに見える人はいますね。<J25>

'there are those (Norwegians) who do not understand Japan, people who seem not to (understand).'

(218) <J39> (ノルウェー人は) よく感情は、よく、よくとは思わないけど</J39>
'(Norwegians) often show feelings, often, not often I think but'

(219) <J29> 必ずま、んー必ずというかな</J29>
'usually well, erm is it usually, I wonder'

However, to repair a statement also means that the speaker added a correction, clarification or reservation to the already uttered statement. The repair could be explicit as an apology for the previous answer placed at the end of the utterance as in the following quotations:

(220) <J25> 五番の質問はそんなんでいいでしょうか@@ </J25>
'Is this an ok answer to question five?'

(221) <J32> こういう言い方がいいのかなあ、</J32>
'Is this the right way of putting it, I wonder?'

(222) <J37> 別にアメリカ人を悪く言うつもり@はないんですけど@。</J37>
'I @[don't] (didn't) really mean@ to say anything bad about the Americans but.'

Other sentence final repairs found in the Japanese material are such as:

(223) <J25> ま、ちーさなことで、そんなに大きな問題ではない。</J25>
'well, it's a minor thing, it's not such a big problem'

(224) <J25> そういうこともあるんですけど。</J25>
'such things exist too but.'

(225) <J25> というケースがあります。</J25>
'such cases exist'

(226) <J25> 中にはそういう人がいると思います。</J25>
'there are such people among us, I think.'

(227) <J42> それは別にノルウェー人とかね関係ないんだけど、ノルウェーとかね、一般的にね。</J42>
'that doesn't especially relate to Norwegians but, Norway and right, generally right.'

(228) <J41> そういう感じがしましたね、一般的な傾向としてね。</J41>
'this I felt right, as a general impression right.'

(229) <J38> @分からない@けど。 </J38>
'(but) I don't know.'

The most frequent type of repair was to limit the statement to certain people, places or times. An example is from Mr Ka <J42>, who is working on a project where he is assisting a Norwegian project manager in dealing with a Japanese customer. In the following example he is asked to describe the Norwegians he has been working together with, and he answers:

(230) <J42> たとえばねえ。あまり、はっきりいやと言わないですね@@<P:04>。 ね<P:04>。
あとねえ、ま<name of Norwegian colleague> だけかもしれ@ないけど@、ま、我慢強い
ですよ。分かりますか我慢強い? </J42>

'for example [*nee*]. (The Norwegians) don't express (their) disapproval so clearly [*ne*]@@<P:04>. [*ne*]<P:04>. You know what, well @maybe it is only <name of Norwegian colleague> but@, well, (they/she) are/is [*gaman tsuyoi ne* 'patient, right']. Do you understand 'gaman tsuyoi' [?]'

He is signaling a certain reservation about the validity of his statement by adding "maybe it is only Ms <name of Norwegian colleague> but".

Other similar reservations in the Japanese corpus were such as: *hito ni yotte* 'depending on the person', *aite ni yoru* 'depending on the other interlocutor', *watashi ga shitteiru tsukiatta hito no naka de* 'among the people I know and have spent time with', *boku no tomodachi wa* 'my friends', *bumon ni yoru* 'depends on which department', *sukunakutemo fune no sekai de wa ne* 'at least in shipping', *case by case desu ne* 'case by case', *toki to baai ni yoru* 'depends on time and place', *tachiba ni yotte* 'depends on one's point of view'.

Other frequent ways to limit the scope was to state who one compared the statement to:

Ma, nihonjin ni kurabereba 'well, compared to the Japanese...', *demo*, *amerikajin to kurabereba* 'but compared to the Americans...', *demo*, *hoka no gaikokujin no hito to kurabereba* 'but, compared to other foreigners', *doitsujin ni kuraberu to* 'compared to the Germans...'.

Yet another way was to limit the scope to one's own experiences:

(231) <J37> 私が感じたノルウェー人の人のほうが、 </J37>
'In my feeling the Norwegians (are)'

(232) <J42> っていうのはま、僕、の感覚からするとね </J42>
'which is well, based on my perspective.'

(233) <J41> 私の経験でいうと。 </J41>
 ‘to say it (based on) my experience.’

(234) <J40> そういう印象があったんです。 </J40>
 ‘that was my impression.’

(235) <J40> そういう感じがしたんですね。 </J40>
 ‘that was how I felt.’

Table 34 shows the number of disclaimers and self-repairs in the Japanese corpus.

	Mr Ka J42	Mr U J41	Ms Taka J40	Ms Ko J39	Ms Ne J38	Ms Kyo J37	Mr Mo J36	Ms To J35	Mr D J34	Mr Mi J33	Mr Bi J32	Ms A J31	Mr No J30	Mr Ya J29	Mr Su J28	Mr Sa J27	Mr Ni J26	Mr Na J25	Mr Ta J24	Mr Ma J23	Mr Da J22
Disclaimers & self-repairs	20	15	13	5	5	10	15	6	19	5	6	10	2	17	8	4	5	20	-	-	5
Total word count	9315	9191	3633	16536	9760	9710	3008	8874	4737	6176	10893	5166	2559	7823	3155	26891	7125	12485	4290	2971	19673
Total in %	0.21	0.16	0.36	0.03	0.05	0.10	0.50	0.07	0.40	0.08	0.06	0.19	0.08	0.22	0.25	0.02	0.07	0.16			0.03

Table 34: Disclaimers and self-repairs

The total number of disclaimers and self-repairs is 190, and the average is 9.05 (0.15%).

8.6 Confirmation-seekers in the Japanese corpus

In section 7.6 we discussed the difference between using the particle *ne* ‘isn’t, right’ as a rapport builder as in ‘don’t you think so too?’, and *ne* ‘isn’t it, right’ as a means to persuade the hearer or make sure that he is listening. We defined those examples of *ne* followed by a slightly lengthened rising intonation marked by [?] as a rapport marker. However, *ne* [?] ‘isn’t it?’ can also be used to seek confirmation with the hearer as a way to weaken any possible imposition of the speaker’s ideas on the hearer (3.10.2.4). I found it very difficult to distinguish *ne* used as a rapport builder from *ne* seeking confirmation. Even during the interview, I found it difficult, as in the following example where I am talking to Mr Ka <J42>. The text is a disclaimer to avoid generalizing about all foreigners. Tag questions followed by a slightly lengthened rising intonation are marked in grey.

- (236) <J42> 外国人にもいろんな人がいるっ@ていうのがあ@、分かりました、僕だから、
 </J42>
 <interviewer>あ、なるほど、hmmhmm</interviewer>
 <J42> そうでしょ？だから見た目は、みんな結構一緒@だけど@、だから、日本にいとー、<P:02> ま、アメリカ人、とね？、ヨーロッパ人、って言う言い方するじゃないですか、で、ヨーロッパはもう、い@ろいろいるでしょ？@ で、僕らはヨーロッパ人っていうけど、ヨーロッパ人っていないですよ、</J42>
 <interviewer>うん、hm、いない</interviewer>
 <J42> @いないでしょ？ね？@ 僕らはヨーロッパ人って、ね、言いますけど、ヨーロッパ人っていう人はいない、で、皆ノルウェー人@か、イギリス人かー、ね@、</J42>

'I realized @the fact that@ there are many different people among foreigners too, I so'

'Oh, I see, uhum uhum'

' [soo desho? 'isn't it so?'] To the eye everyone looks quite similar@ but@, so, when in Japan <P:02>, well, you have the expression 'American', [ne 'right?'] (and) 'European', haven't you [question particle], and, there are @different people in Europe [desho? 'isn't it?']@, and, we say 'Europeans' but, there is no such thing as 'Europeans' [yo ne 'isn't it']' </S42>

'(No) [Yes], hm, there isn't'

'@There isn't [desho? 'right?'] [ne? 'right?']@ We say Europeans, right, but there are no 'Europeans', all are 'Norwegians @or, Englishmen or, right@'

The speaker knows that the hearer knows Europe. When the speaker says: "we say 'Europeans' but, there is no such thing as 'Europeans' right", the hearer interprets it as a question seeking confirmation and answers: "No, hm, there isn't" marked in bold in the example above. Even at the time of the interview, I was not certain if Mr Ka was asking for confirmation, or whether it was just a tag-question expecting my agreement. Since it proved difficult to distinguish one use of *ne* from the others, it could not be counted as a confirmation-seeker in this corpus, and no other expressions which seemed to signify a confirmation-seeker were found. This does not mean that confirmation-seekers are not used as weakeners in Japanese, but that it requires further research on a larger material.

8.7 Summary and discussion of the Japanese findings

Table 35 marks each speaker's number of weakeners above average in the previous tables 31-34.

Name	Total number of weakeners above average	Years in low context cultures	First contact with Norway
J22 Mr Da	0	2	1980
J23 Mr Ma	1	9	1985
J24 Mr Ta	1	0	1996
J25 Mr Na	2	0	1996
J26 Mr Ni	0	10	1983
J27 Mr Sa	0	3	1982
J28 Mr Su	1	31	1966
J29 Mr Ya	4	8	1980ies
J30 Mr No	3	12	1981
J31 Ms A	4	0	1997
J32 Mr Bi	0	13	?
J33 Mr Mi	1	0 (education through American school in Japan)	1999
J34 Mr D	2	8	1990
J35 Ms To	1	0	2001
J36 Mr Mo	4	0	1999
J37 Ms Kyo	2	0	1999
J38 Ms Ne	1	17	1988
J39 Ms Ko	0	13	1991
J40 Ms Taka	4	0	1997
J41 Mr U	3	8	1994
J42 Mr Ka	2	0	2002

Table 35: Summary of weakeners in the Japanese corpus

If we compare the summary of strengtheners in table 22 to the summary of weakeners above, the first thing we notice is that nine of the ten speakers with three or more strengtheners employ no or no more than two (only Mr D) weakeners above average in table 35, which means that they weaken their assertiveness to a limited degree.

On the other hand, five speakers with three or more weakeners above had none or no more than two strengtheners above average in table 21: Mr Ya <J29>, Ms A <J31>, Mr Mo <J36>, Ms Taka <J40>, and Mr U <J41>. This means that those with a predominantly understated

style avoid exaggerated facts and verbosity, refrain from any overt use of first person pronouns, and hesitate to impinge on the hearer by the use of rapport markers and personal stories. Based on this description we might also include Mr Na <J25>, Ms Kyo <J37>, and Mr Ka <J42> with two weakeners above average, although the two former have rather high scores on first person pronouns, and the latter high scores on rapport markers. Even in a text with some strengtheners such as theirs, whether a person's style appears predominantly understated or not, depends on to what degree the weakeners manage to camouflage the strengtheners.

Thus, in the Japanese corpus we can clearly see that the understated style is opposite to the upfront/ elaborate style. Those with an understated style apply more of the devices described as typical for 'the Japanese style'. We see that except for Mr Ya <J29> and Mr U <J41>, those with an understated style have not lived abroad, which might indicate that they are primarily influenced by 'the Japanese style'.

There are some that have few scores on both strengtheners and weakeners such as Mr Ta <J23> and Ms To <J35>, and to a lesser degree Mr Ma <J23>, Mr Na <J25>, Ms Kyo <J37>, and Mr Ka <J42>. These are to various degrees closer to an exacting style, which means that they display their thoughts and opinions with more personal distance and cautiousness. Among these, only Mr Ma has lived in a low context culture.

In some cases such as in the case of Mr Ka <J42>, many strengtheners in the form of rapport markers combined with many weakeners in the form of hedges and disclaimers makes him appear both congenial and non-assertive. This is even truer for Mr No <J30> who has six strengtheners and three weakeners above average. These are the only clear contrasts to the strengthener/weaker opposition mentioned above. These give an overall impression of what one might term *considerate friendliness*, and I return with a more thorough description of this in the Norwegian summary below (8.13).

8.8 Hedges in the Norwegian corpus

Table 36 shows the distribution of the most frequently used hedges in the Norwegian corpus assumed to weaken the proposition in the given context. See 5.5.5 for more details on the selection of items. Accurate translations of the lexical items are set out in the examples of use listed below. Examples are collected from the corpus, and thus, do not cover all possible uses in general Norwegian.

	Mr-R N01	Mr-Sun N02	Mr-M N03	Mr-K N04	Mr-G N05	Ms O N06	Mr-S N07	Mr-Nø N08	Mr-H N09	Mr-N N10	Mr-L N11	Ms B N12	Mr-I N13	Mr-E N14	Ms T N15	Mr-Sv N16	Mr-VÅ N17	Mr-Nie N18	Mr-J N19	Mr-Nie N20
<i>vet ikke</i> 'don't know'	2	2	5	13	9	7	4	2	9	5	1	7	3	1	1	2	7	3	7	2
<i>kanskje</i> 'maybe'	9	16	25	20	29	11	10	43	24	17	15	28	19	10	13	26	51	9	31	9
<i>i alle fall</i> 'at least'	2	3		1	4	3		1	4	6		3		1	1	4	2	1		
<i>i hvert fall</i> 'at least'	1		5		10		4	6	8	4	4	9	1	5	8	2	14	3	2	1
<i>holdt jeg på å si</i> 'I was about to say'		4			3				1											2
<i>ikke nødvendigvis</i> 'not necessarily'		2		2	1		1	6								1	12	1	1	1
<i>for så vidt</i> 'basically'	1	1			3	2		1	1							3	9	3	1	3
<i>generelt</i> 'generally'	4		3			1		1	6			9	1			5	26	1	6	3
<i>vel</i> 'probably, (I) guess'	2	17	11	3	8	6	6	4	6	6	1	6	13	3	27	13	38	10	2	6
<i>nesten</i> 'almost, nearly'	1	8	2	2	4	1	2	4	18	1	5	1	7		2	4	19	2	12	1
<i>ikke så veldig</i> 'not so very'	1						1	9			5		1	1				6	5	
<i>lit</i> 'a little, a bit'	27	24	37	23	75	7	27	46	125	17	34	24	8	22	27	60	48	17	30	25
TOTAL	50	77	88	64	146	38	55	123	202	56	65	87	53	43	79	120	226	56	97	53
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4836	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9539	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	1.01	1.37	1.81	0.93	1.79	0.78	1.34	1.66	2.04	1.37	1.04	0.91	1.00	1.78	1.14	1.23	1.84	0.72	1.61	0.74

Table 36: Hedges in the Norwegian corpus

The average score is 1.31%.

(237) <N04> Nei, nei, altså det er erm, altså⁴⁶, jeg vet ikke det er kanskje noe med den japanske måten å jobbe på da</N04>

'No, no [*altså* (discourse marker)] it is erm, [*altså* (discourse marker)], I don't know it [is] (has) maybe something [about] (to do with) the Japanese way of working [on] then'

⁴⁶ The discourse marker *altså* is translated into 'then, so, therefore, well' (Engelsk-Norsk/Norsk-Engelsk blå ordbok (2011)) and used frequently by people of all four styles. Because of the repetitive use here it seems to signal hesitation.

(238) <N19> kanskje litt mer gammeldage da, ofte ikke liker erm, nesten ingen liker forandring men de kan kanskje like forandring, enda mindre enn de fleste gjør, erm, </N19>

‘maybe a bit more old fashioned then, often don’t like erm, almost no one likes change but they can maybe like change, even less than most do, erm’

Similar to the Japanese adverb *tabun* ‘maybe’ and the verb ending *kamoshirenai* ‘maybe, may, might’ in table 31, the Norwegian adverb *kanskje* ‘maybe’ is used so much that one might suspect it of being a lexical hedge. However, it is also used in utterances such as *da var klokka kanskje en åtte* ‘then the time was maybe eight’ and *så er det kanskje, to tre som er veldig aktive* ‘then there are maybe, two three who are very active’ which is not weakening the whole proposition but merely doubting the time and the number. When doubting time or number it was not counted as a hedge.

(239) <N10> fordi at e, eg tror i alle fall at det er en av de grunnene, i alle fall noe eg har funnet ut at hvis du skal bo i Japan, så må du av og til ee, godta det du ikkje forstår, og hvis du ikkje gjør det så kan du få problemer av og til så. </N10>

‘Because [that] er, at least I think that that is one of the reasons, at least something I have found out that if your are to live in Japan, then you must sometimes er, accept what you do not understand, and if you don’t do that then it can lead to problems sometimes so.’

(240) <N05> den skal være e, den skal ikke være, holdt på å si, for pushy og for direkte men men klar i i, synes jeg i hvert fall at </N05>

‘it should be er, it should’t be, I was about to say, too pushy and too direct but but clear in in, at least I think that’

The expressions *i alle fall* and *i hvert fall* could in Norwegian also be used to strengthen the proposition as in e.g. *jeg kommer i hvert fall ikke* ‘I am definitely not coming’. However, in this corpus, all occurrences had weakening functions and were typically part of a disclaimer as in the examples above. The expression *holdt jeg på å si* ‘I was about to say’ might function as a filler more than a hedge as in this example:

(241) <N02> jeg har ikke noe inntrykk av at de fleste [...] som jeg gjerne ikke har møtt før holdt jeg på å si, spesielt, vet noe spesielt om nordmenn, hvorfor skulle de det holdt jeg på å si @he@ <P.06>. </N02>

‘I don’t have the impression that most people [...] those that I [filler] haven’t met before [I was about to say], especially know anything about Norwegians in particular, why should they [that] [I was about to say] @he@’

(242) <N17> japaneren sier ikke nødvendigvis sin e, oppriktige mening, erm for de er litt redde for at det skal, oppfattes negativt </N17>

'The Japanese do **not necessarily** state their e, honest opinion, erm because they are a bit afraid that it will, be negatively perceived'

(243) <N01> det har du jo for så vidt her og </N01>

'**basically** you have that here too'

(244) <N17> så er de jo **generelt** veldig formelle </N17>

'then they are [jo (discourse marker here marking 'as everyone knows')] **generally** very formal'

(245) <N17> selv om de vet **vel** mindre om nordmenn enn om en del andre </N17>

'even if they **probably** know less about Norwegians than about some others'

(246) <N09> Jeg vet ikke helt fordi@@ jeg føler at i visse situasjoner så er jeg **nesten** litt japansk, i min væremåte </N09>

'I don't really know because@@ I feel that in certain situations [then] I am **almost** a bit Japanese, in my behaviour'

(247) <N18> ellers så er det **ikke så veldig** store sånn, kulturelle forskjeller egentlig synes jeg, internt i hvert fall da </N18>

'otherwise [then] there are **not so very** big sort of, cultural differences really I think, at least within (the company) then'

(248) <N09> siden jeg ikke er så e, **veldig** god i japansk så e, **kan** det bli **litt** sånn språkproblemer i blant </N09>

'since I am not so er, **very** good at Japanese so er, there **can** be a **bit** sort of language problems sometimes'

Others:

The term *helst* 'preferably' was used as a hedge only in a few cases, such as in this example: <N17> *så det bør en helst unngå e, med japanere da* </N17> 'so, one should preferably avoid er, that with the Japanese then'. However, it was also used as in "*ikke noe som helst*" 'nothing at all' and in "*hvilket som helst annet land*" 'any other country' and was therefore not counted.

The terms *liksom* 'like, sort of' and *egentlig* 'actually' as in <N05> *stiller litt egentlig litt e, litt upassende spørsmål* </N05> 'asks a bit, actually a bit er, a bit inappropriate questions' seem to be used more as fillers, meaning that they add so little weakening function to the proposition that they were not counted.

8.9 Hesitation fillers, pauses, and open endings in the Norwegian corpus

Table 37 shows hesitation fillers used by the Norwegian informants.

	Mr R N01	Mr Sam N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr Nø N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr Vå N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Ne N20
erm	30	1	23	127	24	19	5	17		6		31	76	66	202	380	170	90	94
ee	8	26	10		7	14	20	20	4	15	31	11	3	4	2			3	
e	33	79	131	33	178	43	87	96	127	89	95	54	163	87	100	166	224	147	88
Total	71	106	164	160	209	76	112	133	131	110	132	96	242	92	170	370	604	317	181
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	1.43	1.88	3.37	2.31	2.56	1.57	2.73	1.80	1.32	2.69	2.10	1.00	4.53	2.44	3.78	4.91	4.09	3.00	2.00

Table 37: Hesitation fillers in the Norwegian corpus

The average score is 2.7%

Mr M <N03> and Mr E <N14> have most of their hesitation fillers linked to the sound *e* added to the preceding word. Since they have fewer other hesitation fillers, the use of *e* here might denote more of a slow pace than hesitation in their case, which is also something we see in their high score on pauses in the following table 38.

	Mr R N01	Mr Sam N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr Nø N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr Vå N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Ne N20
Period mark (.)	194	138	148	83	129	94	76	162	177	108	55	86	57	169	96	46	151	71	77
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	3.91	2.45	3.04	1.20	1.58	1.94	1.85	2.19	1.79	2.64	0.88	0.90	1.07	2.43	0.98	0.37	1.95	1.18	1.07

Table 38: Pauses lasting 3 seconds or longer in the Norwegian corpus

The average score is 1.87%

Whereas half of the Japanese informants pause less than 1% of total word count (table 33), only four of the Norwegian informants pause less than 1% and seven pause over 2% and even

as many as 3% of total word count. In addition to three second pauses marked by period marks, all the Norwegians except one (Mr Vå <N17>) made from three to twenty pauses lasting from 4 to 27 seconds without hesitation fillers (marked with <P:07> as in example (250)). Mr Vå's pace, on the other hand, seemed extremely rapid, but when we compare him to the Japanese informants, his pace is average. The following is his story about the process of installing new PET bottle/ reverse vending machines in Japanese stores. With the new machines, the customers will be able to use an IC card which they also use to buy groceries at the store. However, before the new machines can be placed at the various locations in Tokyo, they have been asked to perform as many as two hundred tests on them. These tests include such things as what happens if you have put the IC card in the machine and the electricity in the supermarket shuts down, or what happens if the customer forgets his card in the machine and leaves without it.

(249) <N17> systemet fra et brukersynspunkt, har jo fungert utrolig bra, for de har liksom, testet det og vi fant en god del erm, feil og sånt og, vi hadde, masse erm, heftige diskusjoner, som primært jeg måtte ta da med, de norske ingeniørene for å få de til å gjøre forandringer i softwaren, de kunne bare ikke se, noen av disse problemstillingene ja vel hvis noen, erm hvis noen, hvis noen erm, glemmer kortet i kortleseren og så går vekk fra maskinen og så mister poeng ja nei det er jo, da er det jo deres feil og liksom hvorfor skal vi, det er jo også, noe da som japanerne ikke vil akseptere, så men e, så så e, det er, det er en del positive e, aspekter, antageligvis erm, erm beste fremgangsmåten ville være å ha en sånn sunn blanding da av, Japans e, grundighet og, kanskje noe raskere beslutningsprosess erm, så men, det ser ut som om det er vanskelig å finne en sånn@@, mellomløsning, så det e, ok erm, vet ikke skal vi gå videre på listen her hva er dine erfaringer med å kommunisere med japanere i jobbsammenheng erm </N17>

'seen from the customer's viewpoint the system has functioned incredibly well, because they have sort of, tested it and we found a good deal of erm, faults and so on and, we had, lots of erm, passionate discussions, that primarily I had to take with, the Norwegian engineers in order to get them to make changes in the software, they just couldn't understand, some of the problem issues ok if someone, erm if someone, if someone erm, forgets the card in the card reader and then leaves the machine and then loses credit points ok that is [*jo* (emphatic particle)], then it is [*jo* (emphatic particle)] their own mistake and sort of why should we, that is [*jo* (emphatic particle)] also, something [then] that the Japanese will not tolerate, so but e, so e, there are, there are quite a deal of positive e, aspects, probably erm, erm the best way would be to have [such] a healthy mix [then] of, Japan's e, thoroughness and, maybe somewhat quicker decision process erm, so but, it looks like it is difficult to find such a@@, middle way, so it e, ok erm, (I) don't know should we continue with the [list] (interview guide) here what are my experiences communicating with Japanese in the line of work erm'

Mr Vå has no pauses lasting as long as 3 seconds. In fact he does not pause for more than maximum 2 seconds even when he changes topic. At the same time, he has very high scores both on hedges and hesitation fillers, which indicates similarity to the Japanese corpus in that

many and long pauses might not be a marked feature of an understated style. He is driving the story forward with an abundance of hesitation fillers (marked in grey), and holds the floor with open endings *så* ‘so’, *og* ‘and’, and *men* ‘but’ and repetitions (e.g. *so er, there are, there are*) marked in bold. Mr Vå relates that in Norway and other countries where they have PET bottle machines the ordinary procedure would be to test until it is ”roughly ok”, place the machines out on location, and later adjust them if necessary. As manager of the Tokyo office, he has had many discussions not only with Norwegian colleagues in Japan but also with the people at the head office in Norway trying to explain to them that this is something required in Japan and that to find faults after the machines have been placed in the supermarkets would not only look bad for the company’s reputation, but logistically be very time consuming. Now the machines have been in use for one year, and they have yet to receive a single complaint or a single reported error.

Contrary to Mr Vå, Mr R <N01> has second highest scores on pauses in table 38, but low scores on hesitation fillers in table 37. He comes from the north of Norway, is working in fish exports and has been in Japan for two and a half years. Before Japan, he spent four years in China working at a Norwegian firm there. The following extract is his answer to question 9; has the way Japanese behave or speak affected the way you behave or speak in any way? Full stops are placed in a box.

(250) <N01> Ja, det, det @tror jeg nok ja@, jeg har vært her to og et halvt år så. Jeg håper at jeg kanskje har tatt med meg noen av de positive tingene med, altså det her med, kanskje med, kvalitet, detaljer. Erm, de har jo veldig sterk, altså god integritet i forhold til, det de gjør.
</N01>

<interviewer> Det er liksom veldig profesjonelt sant? </interviewer>

<N01> Ja, de er det, og service e, holdninga ja <P:07>. Så jeg prøver absolutt å tenke på de tingene der, når jeg, da har å gjøre med andre, enn japanere, og det har jeg tenkt å ta med meg og <P:05>. Så e. Nå er jo jeg heldig sånn sett at jeg kommuniserer med amerikanere ofte og av og til med nordmenn og så, så at e jeg ikke blir for japansk@@. </N01>

‘Yes, that, that@ I suppose (it has) yes@, I have been here two and a half years so. I hope that maybe I have picked up some of the positive things, that is, these things about, maybe about, quality, details. Erm, they have [*jo* (discourse marker)] very strong, that is, good integrity in regards to what they do.’

‘It’s kind of very professional right?’

‘Yes, they are, and the service e, the attitude yes <P:07>. So I absolutely try to think about those things when I, then deal with others, than the Japanese, and [those things] I have thought to take onboard and <P:05>. So e. I am [*jo* (discourse marker)] lucky in the sense that I talk to Americans often and sometimes to Norwegians too so, so that I don’t become too Japanese@@.’

Even in this short extract he has 6 full stops but only one hesitation filler *erm* and two hesitation fillers *e*. He seems very comfortable with silence. He says that he is glad that he also spends time with Americans (he works in an American company) so that he does not become too Japanese. I ask him if he thinks it is a drawback to become too Japanese, and he says that he does not wish to become too indirect especially because his American colleagues have already noted that they think he is too indirect and maybe then difficult to understand. In light of the Japanese informants analysed, what is interesting here is that whereas they hardly had any full stops and filled up every pause with an abundance of different hesitation fillers, Mr R does not fill his pauses. Thus based on this particular study, it is not possible to conclude that Mr R's silence is due to influence from the Japanese, who according to the theory mentioned in 2.7.2.4 should be comfortable with frequent silences. The Japanese (table 33) were not silent. Rather than being influenced by Japanese, one must look elsewhere for an explanation and probably outside the scope of this study.

Mr R is rather low on hedges, which might give the impression of an exacting style with a slow pace rather than an understated style. However, he is very cautious about stating anything assertively, that is, there are no exaggerated facts and many disclaimers and self-repairs, and he therefore comes across as cautious and understated as illustrated in the next example where he gives his answer to question 6E, about whether Japanese like to improvise. The majority of the Norwegians answered briefly: “*de liker ikke å improvisere* ‘they do not like to improvise’” to this question (cf. 6.4.5). However, Mr R cautiously comments (emotionally loaded segment is underlined):

(251) <N01> nei jeg har i hvert fall, sjelden, det kan jo hende at de erm, de kan være litt fleksible de er ikke, definitivt uflexible altså, bestandig, det finnes unntak der men det, jevnt over så liker de ikke å improvisere. </N01>

‘no at least I have, rarely, it could be that they are erm, they can be a bit flexible they are not, definitely not in-flexible [discourse marker], always, there are exceptions there but [that], on the whole they do not like to improvise.’

8.10 Disclaimers and self-repairs in the Norwegian corpus

As we will see below, similar types of disclaimers and self-repairs as those found in the Japanese text were also identified in the Norwegian text. Explicitly uttered disclaimers in the Norwegian corpus were such as “even if you cannot [*skjære alle over en kam* ‘apply the same

yardstick to everybody’]”, and “*Jeg vil ikke generalisere her men* ‘I don’t like to generalize here but’”, and “*for å sette det på spissen* ‘to put it simply’”.

Disclaimers in the form of starting by making reservations either concerning one’s general competence, or one’s competence in giving an interesting, useful, or correct answer were as follows:

(252) <N17> Det har du sikkert hørt fra veldig mange andre </N17>

‘I’m sure you have heard that from many others’

(253) <N04> altså jeg vet ikke hvor mye selvinnsikt der er her da </N04>

‘well, I don’t know how much self-knowledge there is in this then’

(254) <N05> den delen kjenner ikke jeg, så det er kanskje det blir litt sånn platt case det her da.

</N05>

‘I’m not familiar with that part so this might be sort of an unsophisticated example but’

(255) <N05> Jeg vet ikke om jeg har noen eksempler på det men </N05>

‘I don’t know if I have any examples of that but’

(256) <N11> Dette vet du sikkert meir om enn meg men </N11>

‘I think you know more about this than me but’

(257) <N07> Hva vet jeg. Ikke noen ekspert på det men </N07>

‘What do I know. Not an expert on that but’

(258) <N16> eg har lest veldig lite i han (boka) men </N16>

‘I have read very little of it (the book) but’

Self-repair in the form of re-phrasing a statement:

(259) <N17> Nå de er veldig, litt meir sammensveiset. </N17>

‘Now they are very, a bit more bonded together.’

(260) <N17> litt, eller til tider erm, noe vagt </N17>

‘a bit, or at times, somewhat vague’

(261) <N17> men i alle sånne, erm eller i de fleste situasjoner </N17>

‘but in all such, erm or in most situations’

- (262) <N16> hver dag, telefon det erm er nesten hver dag </N16>
 ‘every day, a phone call it erm is nearly every day’
- (263) <N01> nå snakker jo ikke jeg, helt flytende, eller så veldig mye japansk så </N01>
 ‘[now] I don’t speak, [completely] fluently, or so very much Japanese so’
- (264) <N01> jeg har ikke hatt noe problem med det her, ikke noen store problem nei </N01>
 ‘I haven’t had any problems with this, no big problems no’
- (265) <N02> Jeg er jo enig, jeg er jo litt enig </N02>
 ‘I [discourse marker] do agree, I do agree a bit’
- (266) <N18> antyda, knapt nok antyda </N18>
 ‘hinted, barely hinted’

Self-repair also appeared in the form of adding a correction, clarification or reservation. The repair could be explicit as an apology for the previous answer as in:

- (267) <N05> Ja det var kanskje ikke så godt forklart men. </N05>
 ‘Yes, that was maybe not well explained but’
- (268) <N10> Det er heller ikkje noe eg har tenkt igjennom </N10>
 ‘That is also something I haven’t thought about’

Examples of other sentence final repairs in the Norwegian data were:

- (269) <N17> men igjen, det er store forskjeller der også </N17>
 ‘but again, there are large differences (when it comes to) that as well’
- (270) <N16> ja, ja satt på spissen ja, ja </N16>
 ‘yes , yes having put it simply yes, yes’
- (271) <N20> men da er jeg veldig bastant altså </N20>
 ‘but then (having said that) I leave no room for nuances then’
- (272) <N06> men det gjere ein vel dei fleste plassar </N06>
 ‘but that happens most places, I guess’
- (273) <N09> men det vet eg ikke om er typisk japansk det kan jo være over alt sikkert </N09>
 ‘but I don’t know if that is typical Japanese, it could probably happen anywhere’

(274) <N09> I hvert fall meir enn nordmenn vil eg si, men du har jo begge deler blant nordmenn og </N09>
'at least more than Norwegians, I would say, but you have [discourse particle] both (aspects) among Norwegians too'

(275) <N01> men det er jo forandring </N01>
'but things are changing'

Another frequent type of sentence final repair was to weaken one's statement by limiting it only to one's own experience as in: *føler jeg da* 'I feel, at least', *for min del* 'on my part (at least)', *som i hvert fall jeg har erfart* 'which at least is something I have experienced"', *pleier jeg i hvert fall* 'at least I do', *tenker jeg i hvert fall* 'I think, at least', and *slik føler jeg i hvert fall* 'I feel, at least'.

A repair frequently meant to limit one's claim to certain people, certain places, or certain times as in the following examples that were uttered after a statement but not necessarily at the end of a sentence.

(276) <N10> i hvert fall, nå snakker jeg om de som jeg har jobbet med </N10>
'at least, now I'm talking about those that I have been working with'

(277) <N09> kolleger stort sett da, her da </N09>
'colleagues mostly then, here then'

(278) <N09> Jeg ser i alle fall noen av dem som jeg jobber med </N09>
'I see (that) at least some of those who work for me'

(279) <N10> i hvert fall ikkje i bilbransjen </N10>
'at least not in the car industry'

(280) <N12> kommer an på kor godt du kjenner japanerne </N12>
'it depends how well you know the Japanese'

(281) <N12> det har jo med personlighet å gjøre </N12>
'it depends on the personality'

(282) <N12> men det kommer jo an på ka situasjon du havner opp i </N12>
'but it depends on the situation you are in'

(283) <N05> i en del tilfeller </N05>
'in some cases'

(284) <N10> stort sett da </N10>
'most of the time then'

Table 39 shows the number of disclaimers and self-repairs in the Norwegian corpus.

	Mr Ne N20	7	7172	0.10
	Mr J N19	10	6043	0.17
	Mr Nic N18	10	7746	0.13
	Mr Vå N17	46	12305	0.37
	Mr Sv N16	23	9791	0.24
	Ms T N15	-	6959	
	Mr E N14	3	2422	0.12
	Mr I N13	1	5339	0.02
	Ms B N12	8	9529	0.08
	Mr L N11	1	6281	0.02
	Mr N N10	8	4090	0.20
	Mr H N09	8	9907	0.08
	Mr Nø N08	8	7405	0.11
	Mr S N07	19	4099	0.46
	Ms O N06	4	4856	0.08
	Mr G N05	21	8165	0.26
	Mr K N04	1	6921	0.02
	Mr M N03	4	4865	0.08
	Mr San N02	8	5633	0.14
	Mr R N01	14	4966	0.28
Disclaimers & self-repair		204		
Total word count				
Total in %				

Table 39: Disclaimers and self-repairs in the Norwegian corpus

The total number of disclaimers and self-repairs is 204, and the average is 10.2 (0.15%).

Mr J <N19> has spent nineteen years in Japan and must have much to tell, but still does not elaborate in verbose story telling. He is very high on the scale of intensifiers and uses many personal pronouns ‘I’ and mental verbs denoting assertiveness. In this sense he resembles someone with an upfront style. However, what makes his text appear more understated than upfront is because he has also very high score on hedges (table 31) and repairs larger chunks of text as marked in grey in the abbreviated extract below (original transcription in Norwegian in appendix five):

(285) <N19> Well, I think the Japanese can be very different from each other, among those I have been working with, and I have worked with erm, actually Japanese can be a bit more, erm, kind of, maybe a bit old fashioned, often don’t like erm, almost no one likes change but they can maybe like change, less than most, erm, [...] On the other hand there are Japanese who have maybe a bit more experience from abroad and, are a bit more efficient and, in a way, or maybe effective in the western way then. </N19>

Mr J uses many hedges and repairs when discussing the Japanese because as his first comment about them ends: “but I don’t like to generalize because there are very many efficient Japanese companies too so”. However, when he makes comments about Norwegians, the number of intensifiers increases as in: “the Japanese discuss, especially with strangers [then] (they) discuss very little politics and such things, erm, on the other hand [then] it seems that in Norway [...] there are extremely many who have, opinions about this or that, even if maybe they have very little background knowledge about it at all then”. Thus, an important

function of weakeners is to show consideration and modesty, but we have also seen that it can be used when the speaker is feeling uncertain about the topic at hand as in the case of Mr Mo in examples (201) and (202), and in the case of Mr J above, in order not to generalize about a topic.

8.11 Confirmation-seekers in the Norwegian corpus

The Norwegian who seeks confirmation from the hearer the most is Mr G <N05>. The following are examples from him:

- (286) *det veit jo du som har reist til det landet her i ung alder* 'you know this who came to this country at a young age (too)'
Er ikke det din erfaring? 'Isn't that your experience (too)?'
så jeg vet ikke om det er like relevant for deg 'I don't know if this is equally relevant to you?'
Gjør det ikke det Kristin? 'doesn't it, Kristin?'
Ikke sant? 'isn't it true?'
Jeg vet ikke hva de andre har sagt til det men 'I don't know what the others have said but'
Hva er din erfaring da? 'What is your experience then?'
Eller gjør du det som kan bedre japansk enn meg? 'or do you, who know Japanese better than me?'

Mr Vå <N17> is the interviewee with the longest experience and the highest status of the Norwegian interviewed in Japan. Even so, his text uses the disclaimers: *som du sikkert har hørt fra andre* 'as you have surely/probably heard from others' seven times during the interview. Further, he seeks confirmation from the hearer by utterances such as *det har sikkert du også den tiden du var her* 'surely/probably you have (the same experience) too (from) when you were here' and *det har du sikkert også funnet i litteraturen du har lest* 'surely/probably you have found [that] (the same) in the literature you have read'.

Further, in table 28 we find that very few use the second person pronoun *du* 'you' with direct reference to the interviewer. In a face to face conversation addressing the hearer and seeking confirmation are considered necessary back-channeling cues or encouraging turns of talk, but in the interview situations they were hardly used at all. When it was used, it was either to seek agreement as in the examples of Mr G and Mr Vå above, or to refer to an earlier statement by the interviewer as in "as you said earlier [...]"

Those who apply the most confirmation-seekers, Mr G and Mr Vå, are among those with the highest scores on hedges and disclaimer/self-repairs, which gives an impression of an

understated style. However, the over-all low number of identified confirmation-seekers in this corpus is too small, and requires further studies on a larger corpus.

Table 40 shows the number of confirmation-seekers in the Norwegian corpus.

	Mr R N01	Mr San N02	Mr M N03	Mr K N04	Mr G N05	Ms O N06	Mr S N07	Mr Nø N08	Mr H N09	Mr N N10	Mr L N11	Ms B N12	Mr I N13	Mr E N14	Ms T N15	Mr Sv N16	Mr Vå N17	Mr Nie N18	Mr J N19	Mr Ne N20
Confirmation-seekers	1	-	1	-	7	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
Total word count	4966	5633	4865	6921	8165	4856	4099	7405	9907	4090	6281	9529	5339	2422	6959	9791	12305	7746	6043	7172
Total in %	0.02		0.02		0.09		0.02			0.03		0.01	0.02				0.02		0.02	

Table 40: Confirmation-seekers in the Norwegian corpus

The total number of confirmation seekers is 16, and the average is 0.8 (0.01%).

8.12 Personal pronouns with less animacy in the Norwegian corpus

If we return to table 28 on Norwegian personal pronouns in chapter seven, we see that there are some speakers who seem to prefer the first person pronoun *jeg/eg* ‘I’ in order to signal personal involvement and a willingness to take responsibility for the proposition (marked in bold), and there are others who prefer the pronouns *du* ‘you’ (with generic reference), *vi/me* ‘we’, *man* ‘one’, and *en* ‘one’ whereby distancing the speaker from and including others in sharing responsibility for the assertion (marked in bold).

Since the informants very rarely addressed the interviewer, the pronoun *du* ‘you’ had a generic reference as in the utterance *så generelt så kan du nok si at det er* ‘so generally you might say that it is’. Most of the informants used the first person plural ‘we’ with reference to “we Norwegians” in the answers to question thirteen, and with reference to “we at the office/we the colleagues” in the other answers. Two exceptions are Mr G <N05> and Mr Sv <N16> who also use ‘we’ with a generic reference as in “*skal vi se, viss vi sier to til fem ganger i året* ‘let us see, if we say two to five times per year’”.

Dahl (1997:10) finds that the generic pronoun *man* ‘one’ in Swedish is the third most frequent pronoun after first and second person pronouns and comes before first person plural *vi* ‘we’. In this study, the first person pronoun *jeg/eg* ‘I’ had 2786 occurrences, the generic pronoun *du*

'you' 2035, and the first person plural pronoun *vi* 'we' 1351. The generic pronoun *man* 'one', which came before *vi* 'we' in the Swedish corpus, however, is used much less in the Norwegian corpus with only 240 occurrences, and the other generic pronoun *en* 'one' even less with only 13. However, this finds support in Johansson (2007:175) who found that the most common Norwegian translation of the English generic pronouns 'you' and 'one' was the second person singular pronoun *du* 'you', and not *man*. Altenberg (2005) argues that the second person pronoun *du* 'you' seems to be used less as a generic pronoun in Swedish than in Norwegian and that the Swedish use of the generic pronoun *man* 'one' has a wider range of correspondences than the Norwegian *man*. Upon comparing Swedish and Norwegian texts, Johansson (2007:195) also found this to be true. One could add that not all Norwegian variants use the word *man* 'one', a word perceived as somewhat archaic and best suited for formal written or spoken *bokmål*.

In 7.14 it was emphasized that not all Norwegians with intensifiers and exaggerated facts giving an upfront impression, or those with an elaborate story sprinkled with verbosity, seemed to wish to display their personal involvement through first person pronouns and mental verbs (cf. table 28). According to Lakoff (1975:65), hypercorrect forms, generic pronouns, authorial 'we', passive constructions, titles, and last names are devices used as politeness strategies, i.e. not to impose, but also to remain aloof. 'Aloofness' might have to do with a wish to be formal, objective, and personally detached (cf. 3.6). Even some of those with many weakeners, such as Mr G <N05>, might use it for another reason than to avoid impingement in the following example (original Norwegian transcript in appendix five):

(287) <N05> Well when, when erm, Norwegians communicate with the Japanese then, there are usually no problems and **we** talk a bit more calmly than **we** usually do, and the like but, to me at least it is very important that **we** are constantly clear about, about the message, to the Japanese, because it is a big enough challenge to really understand, how **we** think, and what strategy and, so on **we** have, if **we** in addition should wrap up (the message) in unclear, formulations.

</N05>Mr G <N05> works in a business that assists Japanese and Norwegian businesses and his interview contain much advice to Norwegian businessmen. With his 16 years in Japan, the interview could have been filled with personal stories, but it is not. Similarly, Mr G distances his text from his own experiences by using 'we' as referring generally to Norwegians. The interview starts with a phrase which indicates that his aim is to be factual and informational rather than to tell his personal story:

(288) <N05> Ja, jeg har mange ee, kulepunkter her erm, </N05>
'Yes, I have many er, bullet points here erm.'

Mr L <N11> who is a colleague of Mr G and was found to have as many as six strengtheners above average in chapter seven however, starts out with a distant 'you', but slips into first person pronoun 'I', personal stories, exaggerations, verbosity (e.g. *slappe på å levere* 'relaxed [lenient] on delivery') and repetitions (e.g. *de maser på oss, på meg* 'they have to ask us twice, ask me') in the following answer to question 6H about whether the Japanese have to be asked twice:

(289) <N11> Ee, de må nok ikke mases på, når når vi har blitt enige om en prosess, med tidsplaner og leveranser, så leverer de alltid så det er sjelden du må mase på de, det tror eg ikkje eg har opplevd faktisk, e snarere tvert imot, de maser på oss, på meg, fordi at vi er litt mer slappe på å levere. </N11>

'Er, They probably do not need to be asked twice, when we have agreed on a process, with time tables and deliveries, then they deliver always so it is seldom you need to ask them twice, in fact I don't think I have ever experienced that, rather the other way around, they have to ask us twice, ask me (twice), because we are a bit more relaxed on delivery.'

On the other hand, after a series of 'I', a sudden return to 'you' has the effect of including or one might even think impinging on the hearer:

(290) <N11> Ja i Japan så er det det, heilt klart, så eg oppfører meg annerledes her enn eg gjør i Norge. Om det påvirker ka i, hvordan eg oppfører meg hjemme det, det vet eg rett og slett ikkje, eg tror ikke det altså, så eg, svitsje, ikkje personlighet nødvendigvis men væremåte heilt klart, mm, det må du jo gjør. </N11>

'Yes in Japan so it is, obviously, so I behave differently here than what I do in Norway. Whether it influences what in, how I behave at home [it], [it] I simply don't know, I don't think so [discourse marker], so I, switch, not personality necessarily but behaviour obviously, uhm, you have to do that.'

I interpreted 'you' here to be generic. Intensifying lexicals are *heilt klart* 'obviously' and *rett og slett (ikkje)* 'simply (not)' and emotionally loaded items are underlined. From being very personal and somewhat searching for words, Mr L suddenly changes to the verb *må* 'have to/must', which denotes obligation or necessity, and includes everyone by the pronoun *du* 'you'. Even though *du* 'you' here is with a generic reference, because it is similar in form to the second person pronoun *du* 'you', the hearer is suddenly drawn into the discussion in a way she had not anticipated. Why does he do that? Upon examining the whole text, I find that to Mr L this is not an uncommon way to round up an answer; to return from personal to impersonal, from informal to formal, possibly because in his mind his personal comments have somehow drifted from the formality of the interview setting.

8.13 Summary and discussion of the Norwegian findings

Table 41 marks each speaker's number of weakeners above average in the previous tables 36-40 + those above average on pronouns with less animacy in table 28.

Name	Total number of weakeners above average	Years in Japan at the time of the interview
N01 Mr R	4	2 (+ 4 yrs in China)
N02 Mr San	2	6 ½
N03 Mr M	5	1 ½
N04 Mr K	1	2 ½
N05 Mr G	4	16
N06 Ms O	1	½
N07 Mr S	4	19
N08 Mr Nø	3	1 ½
N09 Mr H	1	2
N10 Mr N	4	12
N11 Mr L	1	4
N12 Ms B	0	5
N13 Mr I	2	37
N14 Mr E	3	½
N15 Ms T	2	16
N16 Mr Sv	3	5
N17 Mr Vå	4	14
N18 Mr Nie	3	5
N19 Mr J	4	11
N20 Mr Næ	0	2 ½

Table 41: Summary of weakeners in the Norwegian corpus

If we compare the summary of strengtheners to the summary of weakeners, we see that among the fifteen with at least three strengtheners above average in table 30, nine have no or no more than two weakeners above average in table 41.

On the other hand, the four who had no strengtheners above average in table 30, show three or four weakeners above average in table 41. They are Mr R <N01>, Mr G <N05>, Mr Vå <N17>, and Mr Nie <N18>. These with a predominantly understated style avoid exaggerated facts and verbosity, prefer pronouns with less animacy than 'I', and hesitate to impinge on the hearer by the use of rapport markers and personal stories. Based on this description, we might

also include Mr Sv <N16>, although above average on rapport markers, and Mr J <N19>, even though above average on first person pronouns.

Thus, for fifteen Norwegian speakers there seems to be a relatively clear opposition between strengtheners and weakeners similar to that found in the Japanese corpus. However, for the remaining six Norwegian speakers, the situation is different, and is elaborated on below.

Except for Mr No <J30>, none of the Japanese with three or more weakeners had more than three strengtheners too. However, if we look at the overview of the Norwegians with at least three scores above average on the strengtheners, and especially high scores on intensifiers, personal stories, and verbose expressions in chapter seven, we find that Mr M <N03> also has five weakeners above average, Mr S <N07> has four, and Mr Nø <N08> has three. When many strengtheners such as verbose expressions and rapport markers are coupled with many weakeners such as hedges or disclaimers/self-repairs, there is a style with a double dose of politeness, that is, both positive and negative politeness (3.8.2). Thus, at least to this hearer, this variant created the most relaxed and friendly atmosphere of all the interviews for this study, and gave an impression of *considerate friendliness*.

Further, Mr N <N10> and Mr E <N14> with three and four strengtheners, and especially high scores on exaggerated facts, also have three and four weakeners above average in table 41. Thus, I propose that even though many weakeners characterize an understated style, weakeners are also used to weaken the other styles. An observed reader might have noticed that the average score on hedges in the Norwegian material is 1.31% (table 31), and considerably higher than the Japanese average score on hedges of 0.65% (table 36), which might lead one to wonder whether the Norwegians are more indirect than the Japanese. However, whereas those labelled with a predominantly understated style in the Japanese material use approximately twice as many hedges as the other Japanese, the Norwegians labelled with an understated style above apply approximately the same amount of hedges as the rest. When hedges are used to weaken the assertiveness of a predominantly upfront style, it will be described as *hedged assertiveness*, and I return with more examples of this in chapter nine.

In figure 1, Scandinavian cultures were defined as markedly low context, even more so than the Americans. Thus, it is interesting to find that at least five out of twenty Norwegians may be defined with predominantly an understated style, meaning that they have high scores on at least three weakening devices, tell no or very few personal stories, use exaggerated facts and

verbosity to a minimum, and seem to prefer pronouns with less animacy than ‘I’. All the Norwegians interviewed have plenty of intercultural experiences they could have shared with the interviewer, and most of them do. Therefore, not sharing a story can be said to be a feature of an understated style. Despite having been in Asia from six to nineteen years, why do Mr R <N01>, Mr G <N05>, Mr Sv <N16>, Mr Vå <N17>, Mr Nie <N18>, and Mr J <N19> display so little involvement through personal narratives and verbose expressions and instead, weaken their proposition? It might suggest that a long time spent in Japan has led the Norwegians to apply ‘the Japanese style’, that is, an understated style, more. Those mentioned above have all spent at least five years in East-Asia. However, among the seven who have been more than ten years in Japan, we also find such speakers as Mr S <N07> (19 years in Japan), Mr I <N13> (37 years in Japan), and Ms T <N15> (16 years in Japan) with personal stories and exaggerated facts and/or verbosity, which means that a long time in Japan does not automatically make one more indirect when speaking Norwegian.

Finally, we see that some of the speakers who have spent the longest time in Japan such as Mr G <N05> (16 yrs in Japan), Mr S <N07> (19 yrs), Mr Vå <N17> (14 yrs), and Mr J <N19> (11 yrs) use many disclaimers and self-repairs. As described in relation to example (285) above, these speakers seemed to use disclaimers and self-repair more when talking about the Japanese than when talking about fellow Norwegians. This might be because they have been too long in Japan not to see all the nuances, and are reluctant to give simplified versions of ‘us (Norwegians/Westerners)’ versus ‘them (the Japanese)’. However, there were also those Norwegians who did not seem to mind stating exaggerated and often critical facts about the Japanese in spite of a long time in the country (table 30).

8.14 Which indirect style is more ‘indirect’ or more ‘friendly’?

We have defined the elaborate style as a style using many of the strategies Brown and Levinson (1987) placed under the collective term *positive politeness*. Further, we have found that the understated style uses many *negative politeness* strategies. Both positive and negative are called *politeness strategies*, meaning that they have primarily social purposes. In figure four in chapter three, I proposed a figure ranging Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies on a scale of (in)directness on the basis of Leech (2007:169), who saw Brown and Levinson’s strategies as “ranging from bald on record performance of the FTA through indirect strategies

to its non-performance”. In chapter seven I argued that the upfront style is more direct than the elaborate style on the basis that the upfront style employs fewer politeness strategies than the elaborate style. However, is the elaborate style more ‘direct’ than the understated style? This question is discussed by looking at two examples; Ms A <J31> and Mr Nø <N08>.

Ms A <J31> is well above average on both hedges (table 31) and hesitation fillers (table 32), pauses frequently (table 33), and is above average on disclaimers and self-repairs in table 34. Thus, one might say that she has a ‘typical’ understated style. She is working in a Swedish-Norwegian firm and has never worked abroad. Unlike most of the others with an understated style, she tells one concrete personally experienced story with a direct quote. The following example is an extract from that story. Hedges are marked in grey.

(291) <J31>だから、すごく independent だからかもしれないです、自分はOKなんですけれど、日本の人にとっては、えっそれで大丈夫なのって@@思うのかもしれないですね、ん<P:10>。たとえばあのあした、あの、あ来週だ、<name of Norwegian colleague>はお客様と出張があるんですね、でそれは港に、ターミナルをお客様に見せるために、だか行くんですけど、最初は<name of Norwegian colleague>は自分だけ？で連れて行くつもりだったんですね、でも、ターミナルの人が日本の人なんですけど、外国人だけなんですかって@@、いうことで、あの、彼としてはぜんぜん問題ない、自分がつれていけばOKと思ったけれども、日本の方はやはり、それではちょっと不安なので、私と一緒にいくことになったりとかですね、やはり、そういうだからこう自立してるのかなーと感じたんですね、うん、でも、日本の方はそういうのに結構@驚くのかもしれない@、うん、はい。<J31>

‘So, Norwegians are perhaps very independent, they think it is ok themselves, but to Japanese; oh is it really ok that way [?]?@@ they think maybe [ne], uhm <P:10>. For example erm, tomorrow, erm, ah it’s next week, <name of Norwegian colleague> is going out (to look at a site) with a client [ne], and that is at the port, in order to show the client the terminal or something, he goes (there), but first <name of Norwegian colleague> had intended to bring the client there alone [?] [ne], but the man at the terminal is a Japanese; Only a foreigner [?]?@@ he says, erm, for <name of Norwegian colleague> this was no problem at all, he thought it was ok to take the client alone, but the Japanese felt nevertheless, a bit anxious about it so, it has ended with me going along with them [ne], [yahari], that sort of thing I have felt that maybe (the Norwegians) are independent [ne], yes, but, Japanese are @maybe quite surprised@ at those things, yes, uhm’

It is not only hedges that make Ms A’s story less direct. She seeks confirmation instead of making a statement in utterances such as: “They think it is ok themselves, but to Japanese; “oh is it really ok that way?”@@ they think maybe”. Others might rather say: “They think it is ok themselves, but not the Japanese”. In the last sentence she says: “But Japanese are

maybe quite surprised at those things” where the word “surprised” probably is somewhat of an understatement compared to the frustration the people working at the port felt.

The Norwegian Ms A is referring to in her story is Mr Nø <N08>, a person who was also interviewed for this study. An extract from him telling the same story might illustrate the difference between an understated and an elaborate style (the Norwegian original text in appendix five):

(292) <N08> I had this [*utrolig* ‘amazing, incredible, absurd’] experience [here] yesterday, we are going to, some customers will visit us next week [...] and then I have communicated with those who run this terminal and [run] this centre and said that yes, we’ll be there at nine thirty, [and then] we meet and would like to have a short guided tour around the terminal first and then we would like to have a short tour around this, centre, and then we would like to invite you for lunch, and then we might leave around twelve, and then I said who would come, erm and some such things, in order to start a dialogue, and then it was completely silent for three days, and then, yesterday he called a Japanese here, and (he) was very worried, very worried, he did not know who was going to be the tour guide really, and it was I who had written to him about it, no no very worried about it, he did not know what to do he understood, no what is it you want me to do [?], it’s like this e, we arrive half past nine, we would like to have a tour at the terminal and then, no he did not understand what to do, like this ok, then I put up (a plan), every five minutes, that that that that that that that, and then we talked this morning ah, perfect, yes yes no problem he would take care of everything and <ENGLISH> *full understanding* <ENGLISH> and ah, quite [*utrolig* ‘amazing, incredible, absurd’] [emphatic discourse marker]@@ <N08>

The most marked difference between version (291) and (292) is that in the latter the agent’s involvement is much more visible through many adjectives and adverbs with intensifying and exaggerating functions (e.g. *utrolig* ‘amazing, incredible, absurd’, *veldig* ‘very, extremely’, *helt utrolig* ‘quite amazing/incredible/absurd’, *perfekt* ‘perfect’), repetitions of the discourse marker *da* ‘then’ driving the story forward, high pace, direct quotes where he even mimics the language of the speaker (the quote in English), and prosodic stress (underlined), none of which is found in (291). However, maybe the most marked difference is the use of repetitions on all levels of discourse; on word level (e.g. ‘no no’, ‘very worried, very worried’) to repeating the plan for the day twice.

The fact is that both the understated style and the elaborate style violate Grice’s cooperative principle by either overstating (i.e. strengthening the illocutionary force) or understating (i.e. weakening the illocutionary force), thus both violating Grice’s criteria for being ‘direct’. The main goal of the understated style is not to impose through deference and keep a distance, whereas the elaborate style aims to create closeness through camaraderie. However, the elaborate style can also have a form of deference in that it ‘covers up’ the message in ‘non-

seriousness'. In that sense, both the understated style and the elaborate style are defined as 'indirect' as illustrated in figure 8 below, where the two styles are placed in the figure based on Lakoff (1973) first presented as figure 2.

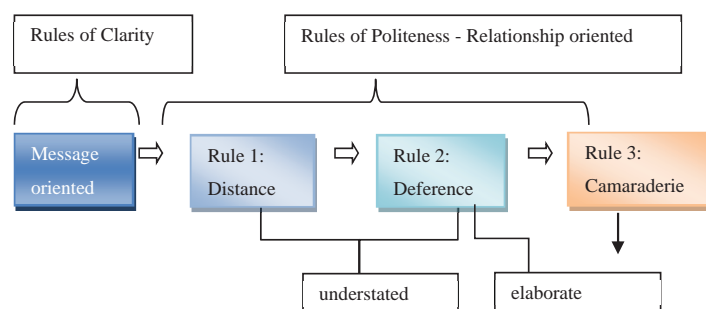


Figure 8: Pragmatic Competence from message to relationship oriented; Comparison of the understated and the elaborate style (author's model)

In 3.8.2 I referred to Bond et al. (2006:67) who define indirect as “the poorer the evidence for a particular interpretation, the more indirect the communication”. Because of more open endings and questions instead of statements in example (291) it might be more difficult for the hearer to infer the speaker's true meaning than in example (292), making the former more indirect than the latter. It seems likely that the more devices associated with the understated style used in a proposition, the more difficult it is for the hearer to process the message. A higher number of the strengtheners used in the elaborate style on the other hand, do not seem to significantly alter the interpretation process. Thus, in this sense, I believe it is correct to argue that the understated style is more indirect than the elaborate style. However, much verbosity in the elaborate style might result in a decrease of credibility to some hearers.

Further, both styles show social concerns, but Lakoff (3.8.1) argues that the emotional involvement between the speakers is stronger with an elaborate style than with an understated style, which poses the question whether Mr Nø in example (292) above generally would appear more 'friendly' to the hearer than Ms A in example (291). Lakoff (1973:303) argues that when two cultures differ in their interpretation of the politeness of an action, it is not because they do not have the same three rules of politeness as described in 3.8.1, but different orders of precedence for these rules. Thus, what this means is that whether the hearer appreciates the type of involvement displayed in the elaborate style or rather prefers the cautiousness in the understated style depends on his or her expectations. As mentioned before

in 2.7.3, Barnlund (1989:119) argued that the different expectations of the Japanese and the Americans as to how much self-disclosure is necessary in order to give a feeling of intimacy may lead a Japanese to be put off by an intimacy that s(he) perceives as being imposed on him/her by the American, and the American to be put off by what s(he) perceives as a distance maintained by the Japanese. Lakoff (1973:302) finds that in American society rule three; *camaraderie* takes precedence over rule one; *distance* and rule two; *deference* (3.8.1) when the aim of the conversation is to create closeness. When a Norwegian is in a state of camaraderie, rule one or two (even though not offensive as such), will create an awkward feeling of distance. Matsumoto (1988), on the other hand, holds that the rules of politeness must be looked at differently from a Japanese point of view. The strategy of camaraderie (in the form of plain and neutral forms) exists in Japan between equals, but outside these situations a camaraderie strategy threatens rather than serves to maintain face. "The absence of camaraderie in a deference relationship may cause the style to resemble a distance strategy, but the resemblance is only superficial", Matsumoto (1988:424) claims. Negative politeness such as honorifics and conventional/formulaic expressions of politeness on the other hand, is not to create a distance, but rather a way to strengthen relationships in a vertical society, that is, to acknowledge one's dependence on others and show that one knows one's proper place. Thus, to sum up, directness can be measured to a certain degree on the basis of explicitness in linguistic form. However, to what degree 'friendliness/camaraderie' is perceived as too 'direct' in the meaning of 'coming directly in one's face' or not, depends on people's expectations. I return to this in chapter eleven, where I suggest that the elaborate style seems to be perceived differently by the Norwegians and the Japanese.

9 The exacting style

9.1 Introduction

Until now we have described styles that in some way or the other display involvement in order to enhance the importance or the vividness of the message content, in order to project a certain self-image, or in order to give or protect face. The opposite of involvement, *detachment*, is primarily used when the speaker aims to be objective, factual, and to convey new information with as much accuracy and clarity as possible (3.6). Biber & Finegan (1989:108) called this type of communication a ‘faceless style’ because they claim that there is no focus on relational concerns. The validity of this claim is discussed in section 9.3 below.

The style most closely related to this description of detachment is that of the *exacting style*. In table 1 it was described as literal, articulated, precise, exact, clear, factual, and to the point, and was found to be the style most closely related to Grice’s *Maxims of Conversation*. In the theories on the Japanese style presented in 2.7, there were no comments pointing to an exacting Japanese style. Part 2.6.2 on the Norwegian style, on the other hand, indicated the possibility for an exacting style. In fact, Jonassen (1983:289) claims that “detachment seems to be a crucial and basic personality trait of the Norwegian modal personality”, referring both to emotional and physical detachment (need for privacy).

In linguistic and rhetorical terms, ‘detachment’ means that there is less reference to the speaker’s direct experiences, greater abstractness by the use of e.g. generic pronouns, and less fragmentation by way of repetitions, fillers, open endings and so on. The speaker is less concerned with linguistic richness through intensifying expressions, idioms, narratives, direct quotes, etc., and there are fewer weakeners as these are also expressions of involvement, that is, involved in camouflaging the message content (Tannen 1982, Chafe 1982, 1985). At the end of chapter four, I hypothesized that the exacting style does not apply many devices which strengthen or weaken the illocutionary force, that is, few or any of the devices mentioned above. In this section I test this hypothesis against the data in order to find how it may be identified among the Norwegians and Japanese in this study.

9.2 *The exacting style in the Japanese corpus*

The main argument in this section is that the exacting style is a gradient concept, or in Lakoff's (3.3) words: "unalloyed clarity in line with Grice hardly exists".

An exacting style requires a speaker to have low scores on all the weakening and strengthening devices listed under 3.10.1 and 3.10.2. For instance, the Japanese Ms To <J35> states only one exaggerated fact, something that does not qualify her for a 'typical' upfront style, and no verbosity, which does not make her a 'typical' representative for the elaborate style. What she did have, however, was self-repairs, which at first glance gave an impression of someone with an understated style. The following is example (75), here repeated as (293), where she ends with a self-repair (marked in grey), attempting to modify the whole preceding statement. The concepts *nice to have/need to have* are defined in connection with example (75). There are original transcripts in appendix five.

(293) <J35> In Japan [*ne*], if you don't have what is called *nice to have*, you cannot stand out (in the competition) with other companies [*yo*], because there are so many companies and so many similar products, but, in Norway, erm, for example if you talk about cheese, @it seems like@ there is really only one company: *Tine*, so even if one doesn't compare competitive advantages, it doesn't matter [*yo*], so therefore well, it is enough only to consider what (someone) needs to have, yes, and that is ok if you only do domestic sales, but if you want to bring Norwegian products to Japan to sell, if you [*yappari*] don't [*chanto*] adapt to a certain degree to the Japanese way, your products will not be imported and sold on the Japanese market, However this *nice to have* has gone somewhat out of proportion in Japan lately, yes, well Norway is Norway, extremely lacking in some ways [?], yes so it feels like to mix the two and divide in half would be the best [*yo*], yes. </J35>

Through analysis however, it was discovered that Ms To, in fact, is below average on all weakening devices except for hesitation fillers (table 32). And further, except for intensifiers, she is also below average on all strengthening devices (table 22). Thus, the somewhat 'distant' impression she gave, probably did not first of all have relational concerns in the form of deference, but rather signaled distance in the sense of being factual, objective, and detached.

The example of Ms To illustrates a style with too few of the devices characterizing the other styles to be defined as one of them, but, even so, it does not mean that the frequency of weakening and strengthening devices are nil. This is true for everyone labeled with an exacting style in this study.

Mr Ta <J24> has scores below average on all devices, both strengtheners and weakeners, and might be determined as the one with the most ‘typical’ exacting style both in the Norwegian and in the Japanese samples. Mr Ta’s <J24> answer to question (Q5) is short:

(294) <interviewer> ノルウェー人とビジネスの会話をするときに、どんな経験をしましたか。
</interviewer>
<J24> あまり@@普通のビジネスで、そんな、「ええ？」っていう経験はありません、
はい。</J24>

‘What are your experiences communicating with Norwegians professionally?’
‘Not much@@ in ordinary business (situations), I haven’t experienced so many [what?] (surprises), (no) [yes].’

When Mr Ma in example (124) gave a similar short answer to question five, I hypothesized that his upfront style close to an exacting one might be due to haste. There are some indicators that Mr Ta’s reason for being short might be due to lack of involvement in the subject matter. The following extract is his answer to question ten about whether he believes knowledge about someone’s culture is important in order to do business with them:

(295) <J24> たとえば、日本で ok でも、ノルウェーでやってはいけないっていうことはありますよね、それは絶対</J24>
<interviewer> それはたとえばどういうことですか。</interviewer>
<J24> あの一、ノルウェーはちょっと分からないですけど、たとえば東南アジアで、子供の頭に手を置くというのは、no good ですよね、そういうことはもう、前もって、ええ、あの一、勉強しとかないと、@@ええ </J24>

‘for example, even if it’s (something that is) *ok* in Japan, there are things that (one) should not do in Norway [*yo ne* ‘right’], that’s absolutely’
‘For instance what sort of things?’
‘Erm, I don’t know Norway very well but, for example in South East Asia it is *no good* to pat children’s head [*yo ne* (emphatic particles)], if one yes, erm, doesn’t learn such things beforehand, @@ yes’

During the interview it became clear that Mr Ta did not have much direct contact with the Norwegians and therefore might not have felt that he could differentiate them well from other foreigners, something that was necessary in order to answer the questions.

9.3 *The exacting style in the Norwegian corpus*

Having defined the exacting style as a style which does not apply many weakeners or strengtheners, the Norwegian informant who comes closest to this definition is Ms O <N06>. She is 4th lowest on intensifiers, 3rd lowest on hedges, and well below average on hesitation fillers, verbose expressions, and exaggerated facts (cf. summaries in tables 30 and 41). The interview with Ms O centres itself around her experiences as a project manager stationed in Tokyo for half a year at the time of the interview. She seems to have one of the most difficult jobs of the interviewees, struggling to satisfy the Japanese clients without making the European computer programmers on the team feel too pressurized and discouraged by the client's constant criticism. In spite of her frustration, her stories contain few intensifiers, few exaggerated facts, and little verbosity. Her voice is also found in the examples (61) to (65) in chapter six.

In the following extract where the Japanese clients have discovered that one of the European programmers under her supervision has forgotten about a course he is going to give in two days, Ms O elaborates on how she views the typical Norwegian communicative style as striving for accuracy and honesty even if it might mean that the speaker loses face.

(296) <N06> og då, e oppdaga dei at han ikkje visste at han skulle halda kurs ein eller to dagar etterpå, og han sa det selvfølgelig rett ut sant, nordmann og @seier no alt rett ut@, og då vart det fæla ballade då at ikkje eg hadde interne prosessar som sikra mot slike ting, så så då, då skulle det betydd at eg skulle ha passa på at han hadde lese heile mailen sin@@. Så e, ja så, da blir alltid oppstyr rundt det, heima ville det vera eit slags ja vel så synd, greit nok, ferdig med det, vidare@@. </N06>

'and then, e they discovered that he didn't know that he was to give a course one or two days later, and he of course said it exactly as it was right, Norwegian and @says [jo] everything without mincing his words@, and then there was a terrible fuss [then] (about the fact) that I didn't have internal processes that secured against such things, so so then, then that should have meant that I should have watched over him and made sure that he had read his entire mail@@. So e, yes so, there is always a fuss around (these things) [it], at home there would be sort of a ok too bad, fair enough, that's done and over with, (let's) move on@@.'

Despite being under pressure, Ms O utilizes only a few intensifiers and infused items; *selvfølgelig* 'of course', *fæla ballade* 'terrible fuss', *oppstyr* 'fuss'. The longer stretches marked in grey are set in hypothetical past tense, which seems to distance the responsibility of the action from the speaker. The laughter too seems to signal a sort of detachment with an undertone of resignation. I discuss this laughter further in chapter ten.

“Norwegian and says everything without mincing his words”, she says. To say something without mincing his words when the aim is to show integrity and respect is called *oppriktighet* in Norwegian, and is a term which literally means something said up front and accurately. According to *Norske Synonymer* (Gundersen 2010), synonyms to *oppriktighet* are *alvorlig* ‘sincere’, *ekte* ‘genuine’, *redelig* ‘fair’, *sannferdig* ‘truthful’, *usminket* ‘plain, not made-up’, *likefram* ‘straightforward, direct’, and *åpen* ‘frank’. It seems that this type of communication is what Ms O herself believes best suited for most situations:

(297) <N06> eg **trur** at viss me vise følelsar, altså me hadde no han som vart heimsendt og da var jo fordi, eller han viste jo kor sint han blei, og da likte dei jo ikkje då, så **eg trur** nok at me skårar på å vera rolege og saklege ja, men det gjere ein vel dei fleste plasser@@. <N06>

‘I think/believe that if we show feelings, that is, we had this guy who was sent back (to Europe) and that was [jo] because, [or] he displayed [jo] his anger, and they didn’t like that [then], so I believe [nok] we score more points being calm and factual I guess yes, but you do that most places I guess@@.’

Ms O values communication that is “calm” and “factual”. The adjective ‘factual’ was also used to describe the exacting style in table 1. The discourse markers *jo* and *nok* here refers to something that is commonly known.

The extracts from Ms O are examples of someone aiming to be informative, sincere, relevant, brief and orderly in line with Grice. However, in chapter seven we also saw that she has relatively high scores on the first person pronoun *eg* ‘I’ (table 28) and mental verbs such as *eg trur* ‘I think’ and *eg meiner* ‘I think/I am of the opinion that’ (table 29), which demonstrates a straightforward, or one might call it ‘oppriktig’, display of opinions. Thus, in her case, *trur* ‘think’, marked in grey in the example above, usually means ‘I believe/I am of the opinion’ rather than ‘I think/I guess’.

The upfront style normally differs from the exacting style in that the speaker displays involvement through intensifiers and exaggerated facts. This was the case with the Japanese employing many strengtheners in chapter seven, and is also how the style was first introduced in chapter two as frank, forthright, honest, open, confrontational, assertive, and persuasive. However, if we mark those which with more exaggerated facts than verbosity in chapter seven, we see in figure 9 that all except one (Mr San) are low on intensifiers, and lowest of all is Ms O. The average for hedges and intensifiers is marked by a dotted line.

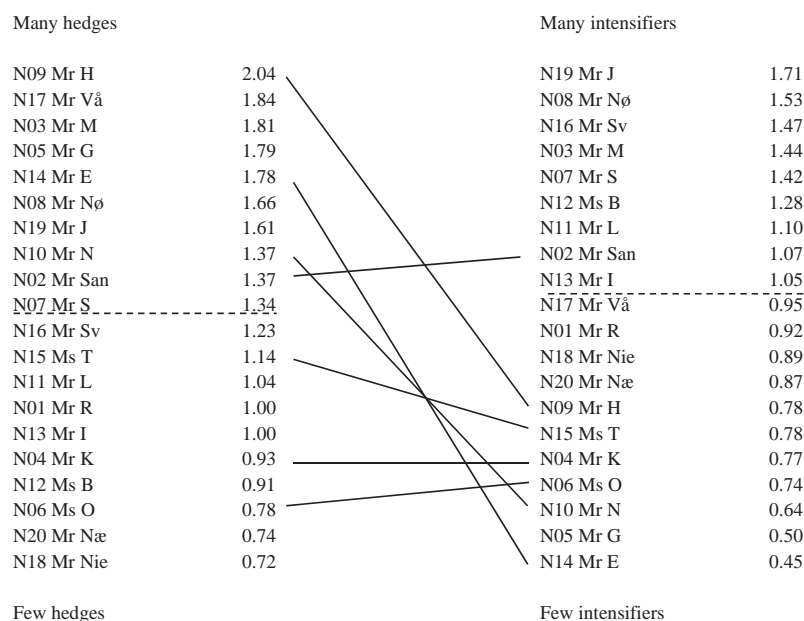


Figure 9: Hedges and intensifiers in the Norwegian upfront style

Thus, there seems to be a tendency among the Norwegians to have an upfront style with few intensifiers, which means an upfront style closer to the exacting style. This corresponds well with the view presented by Ms O in example (297) above that it is better to be “calm” and “factual” when stating one’s opinions, than to be intense. This kind of soberness further finds resonance in the description of the Norwegian communicative style presented in section 2.6.

Wierzbicka (1994) suggests that cultural differences in communicative styles can be made sense of by discovering the tacit value orientations underlying how people speak. Using this ‘Cultural Script Model’ to examine the texts concerning Norwegian communicative styles collected under section 2.6, I propose the following underlying value orientations. The names in parentheses are the works referring to the different value orientations in section 2.6. The phrase “people think that” is borrowed from Goddard (2000).

Norwegian ‘people’ think that:

- everyone is the same (Larsen 1984, Gullestad 1989)
- no one should believe themselves better (Sandemose 1933, Larsen 1984)
- people like to manage on their own (Gullestad 1992, Fife 2002)

- one should not be a bother to other people (Fife 2000, 2002, Gray 2005)

One might imagine then, that these underlying values (scripts) lead to the following communicative norms:

Norwegian ‘people’ think that a well behaved communicator:

- *should say what is on his mind* because people are equals
- *is modest in conversation* because he does not think himself better
- *hesitates to involve others* because people like to manage on their own
- *does not display excessive involvement and keeps communication to a minimum* because one should not be a bother to other people

Values and norms as those above possibly explain why the Norwegian upfront style shows less linguistic manifestations of involvement than the upfront style described by Ting-Toomey (2.5.1) or that found among the Japanese with an upfront style. The Japanese with a style closest to an exacting style, such as Mr Ta and Ms To (9.2), were distinguishable from those with an upfront/elaborate style because they had zero or one strengthener above average, whereas those with an upfront/elaborate style had mostly three to five (table 22). However, in the Norwegian sample, the exacting style was not distinguishable from the upfront style, but rather gradations of no less than three strengtheners. However, the strengthener those with an upfront style did have low scores on, was the device *intensifiers*. Thus, I propose to call this specific Norwegian style an *exacting upfront style*.

In the introduction we referred to Biber & Finegan (1989:108) who call the exacting style a ‘faceless style’, meaning that there is minimal concern for *face* (3.7 and 3.8.2). According to Lakoff (3.8.1), the *Rules of Clarity* are usable only in situations where polite conversation is not felt to be required, which poses the question of whether those who predominantly use the exacting style do it because they do not feel the need to be polite. However, in Lakoff (1973:303) she contradicts herself by arguing that the *Rule of Clarity* can be seen as a subcategory of politeness rule number 1: *Distance – don’t impose*. Consequently, in her view, the purpose of the exacting style can be seen as a means not to impose, or as she says; “to get the message communicated in the shortest time with the least difficulty, that is, to avoid imposition on the addressee by wasting his time with meandering or trivia, or confusing him and making him look bad” (Lakoff 1973:303). Brown and Levinson (1987:130) argue that “there is an element in formal politeness that sometimes directs one to minimize the

imposition by coming rapidly to the point”. This coincides with the Norwegian values of keeping communication to a minimum because that is what a considerate communicator does. This interpretation contradicts the notion of the exacting style as ‘faceless’.

According to Holmes (2008:11), language has two functions that one might argue is particularly pervasive or basic; to convey information, and to express feelings. In general, the more a message is referentially oriented, the less it tends to express feelings. The exacting style is more than anything referentially oriented and aims to be factual and objective. The upfront style, on the other hand, highlights the message by adding an affective component. As mentioned before (3.8.1), Lakoff holds that the further to the left on figure 2 (figure 10 below is a modification of figure 2), the weaker the emotional involvement between the speakers. I will argue that the message conveyed by the means of an exacting style (e.g. ‘sit down’) and the message conveyed with an upfront style (e.g. ‘sit down, for Christ’s sake’) appear equally direct in the meaning of being clear, but that the message uttered with an upfront style is more visible to the hearer in the sense that it carries more force through affecting both the hearer’s logics and emotions. Thus, the upfront style in greater danger of damaging the hearer’s face is placed further to the left than the exacting style in figure 10.

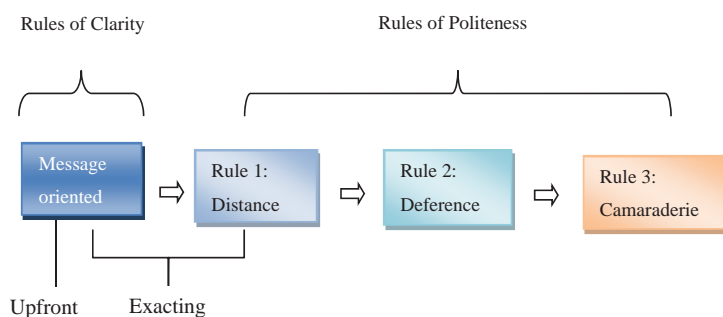


Figure 10: Pragmatic Competence from message to relationship oriented; Comparison of the upfront and the exacting styles (author’s model)

However, even though I argue that the exacting style might aim to be more concerned with face than the upfront style, Lakoff (1973:298) also claims that *Rule 1: Distance* can be interpreted by some as ‘aloof’ because of the lack of involvement displayed. If we look up the item ‘detachment’ in the Oxford Thesaurus of English (2005) we find the synonyms *objectivity, neutrality, and impartiality* but also *dispassionateness, aloofness and indifference*. Thus, the Norwegians with the exacting upfront style aim for objectivity and

dispassionateness in order not to impose as a result of their norms for a calm and factual communicative style, but there is a danger that they may come across as aloof or even indifferent.

The question is how to balance the need to be *oppriktig* ‘frank, straightforward, truthful’ in content with communicative minimalism in form without causing damage to someone’s face. If we look back at figure 9, we see that all Norwegians with many exaggerated facts have higher scores on hedges than on intensifiers, meaning that there is a tendency to weaken the assertiveness into what I described as ‘hedged assertiveness’ in chapter eight. This finds support with Bøhn and Dypedahl (2.6.3) who pointed out that “it can often seem that many Norwegians have a peculiar mixture of a very direct and a very vague way of communicating”. The following examples from Mr N <N10> were first presented as example (169) of exaggerated facts in an upfront style:

(298) About Norwegian quality:

<N10> norsk kvalitet, det er ikkje godt nok i Japan. </N10>

‘Norwegian quality, it is not good enough in Japan’

About Japanese mentality:

<N10> En nervøs japaner er @@, en mann som ikkje smiler@@.</N10>

‘A nervous Japanese is@@, a man who doesn’t smile@@’

About the Japanese:

<N10> altså du har forskjellige folk men, de er forholdsvis monotone. </N10>

‘well you have different people but, they are relatively monotonous.’

About the Norwegians:

<N10> nordmenn tror de er veldig internasjonale men@@, de er ikkje så internasjonale tror eg då. </N10>

‘Norwegians believe they are very international but@@, they are not that international I think [then]’

The first two examples do not have any weakeners and appear direct. The last two examples, on the other hand, have a disclaimer (‘well, you have different people but’), a repair (‘I think, then’), and hedges (‘relatively’, ‘(not) that’) marked in grey. In fact, in figure 9 above, we see that Mr N is rather high on the scale of hedges. In addition, he is midrange when it comes to hesitation fillers (table 37), causing an overall indirect impression if it had not been for the

many exaggerated facts (table 24). Those who displayed this detached exacting upfront style with many weakeners, were the most difficult to categorize into one specific style. Whether to categorize it as an understated style or an upfront style seems to depend on whether the weakeners are capable of obscuring the message enough to minimize the face threat. If not, the hearer's overall impression is that of assertiveness. In spite of high scores on hedges, one may still come across as somewhat 'blunt'. Leech (cf. 3.8.3) argues that not only how you say something, but also what you say can be perceived as more or less direct depending on the cost to the hearer. Thus, referring to Leech, aiming not to impose through linguistic form does not necessarily make up for an unpleasant/face-threatening content.

9.4 Summary of findings on the exacting style

Lakoff argues that unalloyed clarity hardly exists, and my impression from examining the material for this particular study is the same. Thus, there is no one with a 'pure' exacting style in the meaning of no weakeners or strengtheners. Further, I suggest that whereas the Japanese with the most exacting style tentatively use it because of haste, disinterest/lack of knowledge in the content matter, or with an intention of personal detachment and objectivity, the Norwegian *exacting upfront style* is first of all a communicative style grounded in Norwegian values of respect for autonomy and personal space.

10 Laughter and the four styles

10.1 Introduction

In the theories on the Japanese style in chapter two, ‘apologetic laughter’ was mentioned as a frequently used weakener in Japanese (2.7.2.5). Thus, laughter was the only paralinguistic device together with pauses that was transcribed for my project, and in this section I discuss the findings.

Through methods such as conversation analysis, laughter has been found to be more than a stimulus-response to humour. Provine (2000:26) found in his study that the speaker often laughs more than those who are listening, showing that laughter accompanies one’s speech more often than merely as a reaction to other people’s talk. Thus, laughter is also an intentional social action both with regards to display, negotiation, and interpretation of someone’s identity, and in order to create, maintain, or terminate interpersonal relationships (Glenn 2003:2). Speaker laugh is tied to the phenomenon called *laughter-talk*, that is, “the talk preceding and provoking, intentionally or otherwise, a bout of laughter” (Partington 2006:1). Provine’s study revealed that only ten to twenty percent of the things said prior to the laugh was humorous, the rest was not. Besides being humorous, Besnier (1990:427) argues that “in many societies, laughter, whose co-occurrence with verbal interaction is carefully timed, serves as a distancing mechanism between its producers and co-occurring events”, whereby signalling emotions such as embarrassment or shame.

In 3.10.1.1, we discussed whether intensifiers are intrinsically strengthening the proposition or not. We saw that scholars seem to agree that there is no closed set of markers of intensity. Further, intensifiers tend to cluster and reinforce each other. The same might be true for how the speaker’s laughter is interpreted in the text. For instance, in a text with many hedges, laughter might have a tendency to be interpreted as apologetic laughter. In this chapter I look into these matters with regards to how laughter may be interpreted in the four identified styles.

10.2 Frequency of laughter

The following tables show the distribution of laughter in the participants' speech. When the laughter appears after a speech, it is marked by @@ (both @ have been counted). When it appears simultaneously with speech, it is marked by @ [text] @ (counting both). The Japanese frequency of laughter is displayed in table 42.

Mr Ka J42	156	9315	1.68
Mr U J41	20	9191	0.22
Ms Taka J40	30	3633	0.83
Ms Ko J39	72	16536	0.44
Ms Ne J38	54	9760	0.55
Ms Kyo J37	97	9710	1.00
Mr Mo J36	28	3008	0.93
Ms To J35	148	8874	1.67
Mr D J34	84	4737	1.77
Mr Mi J33	26	6176	0.42
Mr Bi J32	39	10893	0.36
Ms A J31	91	5166	1.76
Mr No J30	38	2559	1.49
Mr Ya J29	106	7823	1.36
Mr Su J28	12	3155	0.38
Mr Sa J27	151	26891	0.56
Mr Ni J26	16	7125	0.23
Mr Na J25	170	12485	1.36
Mr Ta J24	54	4290	1.26
Mr Ma J23	4	2971	0.14
Mr Da J22	168	19673	0.85
@			
Total word count			
Total in %			

Table 42: Laughter in the Japanese corpus

The over-all Japanese average is 0.92%. Those with exacting/upfront/elaborate styles laugh on an average 0.78%, and those with an understated style 1.14%. The Norwegian frequency of laughter is displayed in table 43.

Mr Nae N20	8	7172	0.11
Mr J N19	24	6043	0.40
Mr Nie N18	122	7746	1.58
Mr Va N17	88	12305	0.72
Mr Sv N16	101	9791	1.03
Ms T N15	124	6959	1.78
Mr E N14	26	2422	1.07
Mr I N13	20	5339	0.38
Ms B N12	106	9529	1.11
Mr L N11	16	6281	0.26
Mr N N10	42	4090	1.03
Mr H N09	128	9907	1.29
Mr No N08	48	7405	0.65
Mr S N07	40	4099	0.98
Ms O N06	74	4856	1.52
Mr G N05	4	8165	0.05
Mr K N04	50	6921	0.72
Mr M N03	16	4865	0.33
Mr San N02	174	5633	3.09
Mr R N01	60	4966	1.21
@			
Total word count			
Total in %			

Table 43: Laughter in the Norwegian corpus

The over-all Norwegian average is 0.97%. Those with exacting/upfront/elaborate styles laugh on an average 1.02%, and those with an understated style 0.83%.

What we can read from this is that the Japanese and the Norwegians laugh approximately equally much. However, whereas it is those with an understated style that laugh the most in the Japanese corpus, it is rather those with an exacting/upfront/elaborate style that laugh the most in the Norwegian corpus. This poses the question of whether their laughter signifies the same.

10.3 Laughter and the understated style

According to Chafe (2007:74), who studied the role of laughter in non-humorous situations, feelings of awkwardness may cause the speaker to laugh, and such situations include those where laughter may be used to minimize or apologize for a real or potential face threat. Nakai (cf. 2.7.2.5) argues that Japanese ‘apologetic laughter’ functions as a defence mechanism and causes one to laugh apologetically even when one is not in the wrong, something he believes is used more frequently by the Japanese compared to some other cultures.

In section 8.14 we discussed the understated versus the elaborate style using Ms A <J31> as an example of the understated style. The quote from Ms A (291), partly repeated here as (299), ends with laughter. Laughter is marked with @ and in grey.

(299) <J31> So, Norwegians are perhaps very independent, they think it is ok themselves, but to Japanese; oh is it really ok that way [?]**@@** they think maybe [ne], um <P:10>. For example erm, tomorrow, erm, ah it’s next week, <name of Norwegian colleague> is going out (to look at a site) with a client [ne], [...] but the man at the terminal is a Japanese; Only a foreigner [?]**@@** he says, erm, for <name of Norwegian colleague> this was no problem at all, he thought it was ok to take the client alone, but the Japanese felt nevertheless, a bit anxious about it so, it has ended with me going along with them [ne], [yahari], that sort of thing I have felt that maybe (the Norwegians) are independent [ne], yes, but, Japanese are **@**maybe quite surprised**@** at those things, yes, um </J31>

Here laughter appears after the sequences when Ms A refers to something Japanese have said or thought. Laughter seems to apologize for the Japanese, but it is possible that it is the

weakening devices such as hesitation fillers, hedges (*perhaps, maybe, a bit*), and questions instead of statements that makes one interpret it as ‘apologetic laughter’.

In chapter eight I discussed that disclaimers and self-repairs weaken one’s claim by making reservations. It can be explicit as an apology for the previous answer, or it can be reservations concerning one’s general competence or one’s competence in giving an interesting, useful or correct answer. It seems that ‘apologetic laughter’ has a similar function. If we look at an example from the Norwegian Mr Nie <N18>, we see that he combines laughter with hesitation fillers, hedges (e.g. ‘a bit’, ‘I think maybe’), open endings “the customer felt the same **and**”, and a self-repair “because he erm, **to me** he seemed to be too informal” in order to weaken his claim. The quote is his answer to question 6B about whether one has to ask the Japanese twice to get things done (original Norwegian transcripts in appendix five):

(300) <N18> We had a erm, senior employee here for a while and once, once when we went to meet a customer he met a former junior [*kohai*]. It was a bit awkward [*ubehagelig*]@@, because he erm, to me he seemed to be too informal then, and I think maybe the customer felt the same and, erm </N18>

In the Japanese corpus, seven of the nine speakers above average on disclaimers/self-repairs (table 34) are also above average on laughter. In the Norwegian corpus only two of the seven speakers above average on disclaimers/self-repairs (table 39) are also above average on laughter. Thus, there are those Norwegians with even more weakeners than Mr Nie in chapter eight, such as Mr Vå <N17> and Mr G <N05>, who are below and even very low on laughter in table 43. This suggests that the tendency to use ‘apologetic laughter’ in the understated style is not as strong in the Norwegian corpus as it is in the Japanese one. In the Norwegian corpus the highest frequency of laughter is rather linked to those with an exacting upfront style such as e.g. Mr San <N02>, Ms O <N06>, Ms T <N15>, and Mr H <N09>. I turn to them next.

10.4 Laughter and the upfront style

In contrast to more relationship oriented styles, those with an upfront style might risk appearing non-affiliative to the others’ feelings, but they are associated with the message at

hand and ‘seriously’ aim to make the message and their feelings about it as clear as possible, as in the following example, which is an answer to whether the Norwegian informant thinks his Japanese colleagues or business associates are thorough or not:

(301) <N04> ‘Yes it’s thorough, yes yes it’s so, yes, I can hardly bear to talk about it even, it is, you don’t get anywhere@@’ </N04>

Other examples are:

(302) <N15> (They) are thorough, mhm@@, you’ve heard that one before, I guess@@, ninety per cent@@. </N15>

(303) <N02> so that’s sheer nonsense, @ *he* (laughing sound)@ </N02>

(304) <N14> it is obvious, then, that they @haven’t@ understood a thing </N14>

In these examples, laughter seems to assert, underline, and even sometimes ridicule. In section seven we saw how verbosity, which normally has a weakening effect by displaying ‘unseriousness’ and playfulness, in combination with exaggerated facts turned out to strengthen and add a mocking effect to the statement. The same seems to be true with laughter here. We see a similar tendency in the following example from the Japanese Mr Bi <J32>, first presented as example (120), here repeated as (305):

(305) <J32> ‘Yeah, (they are) long. @@ debates, (it’s) [*sugoku* ‘extremely’] debates are long [*ne*]. Age and *title* don’t matter [*ne* ‘right’]. </J32>

In this example, the laughter appears after a statement about the Norwegians. Together with other strengthening devices such as exaggerated facts and intensifiers such as *sugoku* ‘extremely’ and *yo* (intensifying particle) it seems to add to the criticism of the Norwegians.

In chapter seven the Norwegians with an upfront style appeared less afraid to be perceived as ‘non-serious’ than the Japanese with a similar style, due to a higher number of personal stories and more verbosity. The high use of laughter by the Norwegians with an upfront style might add to this impression. We also find uses of understatements that are meant to be entertaining in addition to assertive such as:

(306) <N15> We sat there and had to explain ourselves for five hours, that was fun@@. </N15>

(307) <N14> They (the Japanese) are a bit reserved and polite then to put it that way@@.
Extremely polite. </N14>

(308) <N12> it had to appear as if I needed the man@@ </N12>

However, there are examples that suggest that also someone with many intensifiers and exaggerated facts, such as e.g. the Japanese Mr D <J34>, adds laughter as a means to repair a statement, i.e. ‘apologetic laughter’. Mr D has the second highest score on disclaimers and self-repairs in table 34, and the highest score on laughter in table 42 above, something which makes one suspect that these devices serve a similar function. The following is a quote from him (original Japanese transcript in appendix five).

(309) <J34> Well, **generally speaking** [*yo ne*], when one compares those Americans, Americans, Europeans and Japanese, well **this is generally speaking but** [*ne*], Europeans, well, this also includes Norwegians but, (they) are between Americans and Japanese (I) feel@@ </J34>

Here disclaimers, marked in bold, together with other weakening devices such as hesitation fillers ‘well’ and open endings ‘but’ appear together with sentence final laughter, and heighten the chance that the laughter will be interpreted as a weakening rather than a strengthening device. In the same way that we have argued that the upfront style can be weakened by hedges and disclaimers (cf. 9.3), ‘apologetic laughter’ weakens Mr D’s assertiveness. Thus, even though Mr D in example (309) and Mr Bi in example (305) both appear upfront through intensifiers and exaggerated facts, I propose that the laughter functions to weaken the proposition in Mr D’s case and strengthen the proposition in Mr Bi’s case.

10.5 Laughter and the elaborate style

Brown and Levinson (1987:124) place telling jokes as a positive politeness strategy. Thus, one might imagine that those with an elaborate style with the most rapport markers would laugh the most. However, if we look at those with the most verbosity, personal stories, or rapport markers such as e.g. the Japanese Mr Ni <J26>, Mr Sa <J27>, and Ms Ne <J39>, or the Norwegians Mr Nø <N08>, Mr L <N11>, or Mr Næ <N20>, their frequency of laughter in tables 42 and 43 is low.

In chapter seven I described the elaborate style as a style aiming to show that you are good to be around by displaying an affective face, in order to entertain by adding colour to your text, or it can be used to somewhat weaken the illocutionary force into playfulness or non-seriousness. If we apply this to laughter, we see primarily two uses of laughter by those with an elaborate style. The first is laughter in connection with telling something funny which entertains and invites the hearer to laugh. Example (292) from Mr Nø <N08>, here partly repeated as (310), ends with laughter:

(310) <N08> I had this [*utrolig* 'amazing, incredible, absurd'] experience [here] yesterday, we are going to, some customers will visit us next week [...] and then, yesterday he called a Japanese here, and (he) was very worried, very worried, he did not know who was going to be the tour guide really, and it was I who had written to him about it, no no very worried about it, he did not know what to do he understood, no what is it you want me to do [?], it's like this e, we arrive half past nine, we would like to have a tour at the terminal and then, no he did not understand what to do, like this ok, then I put up (a plan), every five minutes, that that that that that that that, and then we talked this morning ah, perfect, yes yes no problem he would take care of everything and <ENGLISH> *full understanding* <ENGLISH> and ah, quite [*utrolig* 'amazing, incredible, absurd'] [emphatic discourse marker]@@ </N08>

Mr Nø seems to use laughter in order to underline what an amazing/incredible/absurd story it was or as a rapport marker, to encourage the hearer to share in the fun.

The other type of laughter frequently found among those with an elaborate style might also be called a self-repair as it usually modifies the preceding statement. It could be explained as a way to weaken the elaborate style into what I termed 'considerate friendliness' in chapter eight. Thus, those with an elaborate style sometimes seem to wish to disassociate themselves from the message as statements end with laughter in clauses such as: '@as I was saying@', 'any way@@', and 'what do I know@@', which seems to signal that "this is just my opinion, do not take it too seriously". This is somewhat similar to what Goffman (1981:317) calls 'bracket laugh', a type of laughter he finds radio announcers frequently use to state that what they have been saying is not part of the text proper, and should therefore not be taken too seriously. In a very few cases (two Norwegians), this way to weaken the statement by 'non-seriousness' results in self-deprecating jokes which might act as a way to soften the proposition, signal modesty, and build rapport as the speaker invites the hearer to laugh on his behalf. The following is an example from Mr S <N07> and the answer to question nine about

whether the way Japanese behave or speak has affected him in any way (original transcript in appendix five):

- (311) <N07> no yes, yes a bit but not so very much either, but I guess I have heard that, yes, that I have changed, but some say that I'm exactly the same, like, Japan is, because I gained a bit of weight they (the Norwegians at home) said, yes, you are keeping well, they said, Japan@ has been good to you@ </N07>

10.6 *Laughter and the exacting style*

What most distinguishes the exacting style from the rest is that there are fewer of both weakening and strengthening devices. Thus, we might suspect that those with an exacting style laugh the least. However, the Japanese Mr Ta <J24> and Ms To <J35>, and the Norwegian Ms O <N06>, who were identified with the most typical exacting style in chapter nine, are well above average on laughter. Thus, based on this corpus, one cannot conclude that those who have been identified with an exacting style also laugh the least. Their laughter might be called 'resigned laughter', as the aim to be factual and personally somewhat detached seems to colour the laughter as well. The following examples are those of Ms O <N06> from examples (296) and (297), here repeated in abbreviated versions as examples (312) and (313).

- (312) <N06> [...] he of course said it exactly as it was right, Norwegian and @says [jo] everything without mincing his words@, and then there was a terrible fuss [...] then that should have meant that I should have watched over him and made sure that he had read his entire mail@@. So e, yes so, there is always a fuss around (these things) [it], at home there would be sort of a ok too bad, fair enough, that's done and over with, (let's) move on@@. </N06>

- (313) <N06> [...] so I believe [nok] we score more points being calm and factual I guess yes, but you do that most places I guess@@. </N06>

Laughter in these cases appears at the end of a story as if to say "well, what more can I say" or "what can I do?"

10.7 Summary of findings on laughter and the four styles

Sometimes the speakers' laughter did not appear to serve any other function than to give time to think in the same way as hesitation fillers do, or because the speaker did not know what more to say. However, the aim of this chapter was to look into those cases where laughter seems to function to weaken or strengthen the illocutionary force together with the other weakening or strengthening devices mentioned in earlier chapters.

I have suggested that in the understated style, laughter frequently tends to weaken the force of the proposition, in the upfront style to underline and sometimes ridicule, in the elaborate style to signal humour which builds rapport or signals 'non-seriousness', and in the exacting style to signal 'resignation'. Further, I have suggested that it is the overall number of weakening, strengthening or rapport building devices in the text that probe these different interpretations, not the laughter itself.

11 Discussion of the four styles

11.1 Directness/indirectness and the four styles

In section 2.7 about the Japanese style, Japanese directness was linked primarily to a person's age, status, or familiarity with the hearer. The majority of interviewees in this study were older, male, on a managerial level, and one might say, of a higher status than the interviewer, but contrary to what is proposed in section 2.7, this did not make them uniform in any way. In fact, what is the most marked feature in this study is how much their styles differ, regardless of similarities such as nationality, age, status, how well they knew the interviewer, the location, or the topic. The following table sums up the devices that have been used to define the exacting, upfront, elaborate, and the understated styles. The number of speakers with each style is based on the summaries in chapters seven to nine.

	Number of Japanese informants	Number of Norwegian informants	Linguistic and rhetorical devices	Paralinguistic device: Laughter
Exacting style	13-16	14-16	Low frequency of strengthening and weakening devices.	Laughter may signal resignation
Upfront style			High number of intensifiers, personal stories, exaggerated facts, and first person pronouns. Low frequency of hedges, hesitation fillers, disclaimers, self-repairs, and personal pronouns with low animacy.	Laughter may signal assertiveness and sometimes 'mockery'
Elaborate style			High number of intensifiers, personal stories, verbosity, rapport markers, and first person pronouns. Low frequency of hedges, hesitation fillers, disclaimers, self-repairs, and personal pronouns with low animacy.	Laughter may signal 'non-seriousness' and camaraderie
Understated style	5-8	4-6	High number of hedges, hesitation fillers, disclaimers, self-repairs, and personal pronouns with low animacy. Low frequency of intensifiers, personal stories, verbose expressions, exaggerated facts, rapport markers, and first person pronouns.	Laughter may signal 'apologetic laughter'

Table 44: Summary of linguistic, paralinguistic, and rhetorical devices in the four styles

Styles tend to be viewed in relation to other ways known to the speaker or the hearer to convey a similar message in a similar situation. The *exacting*, *upfront*, and *elaborate* styles are not oppositions, but rather graded categories. By adding more intensifiers and exaggerated facts to the text, an exacting style gradually appears more upfront. Such a variation between an *exacting* and an *upfront* style was found in the Norwegian material to the extent that I called it a specifically Norwegian *exacting upfront* style. That was a style with fewer intensifiers than an upfront style, and more exaggerated facts than an exacting style. Verbosity added to a text, might soften the impact of any upfront assertiveness, but only in cases where the verbosity is not predominantly part of the exaggerated facts. A rapport marker, whose aim is to increase the feeling of closeness between the speaker and the hearer, further softens the text. Many personal stories with much verbosity and many rapport markers, but with few or no exaggerated facts, create the playful and congenial impression of an *elaborate* style.

Whereas these three styles do not have impermeable frontiers, the *understated* style seems to be much more of an opposition to the other styles, as it has many of the devices the others have few of, and vice versa. Some employ weakening devices to soften the impact of many strengtheners. When they succeed, the impression is also that of an understated style, but when they do not, the predominant impression is that of an exacting, upfront, or elaborate style.

The four styles have been placed in the figure based on Lakoff (figure 2) first presented as figure 3 as follows:

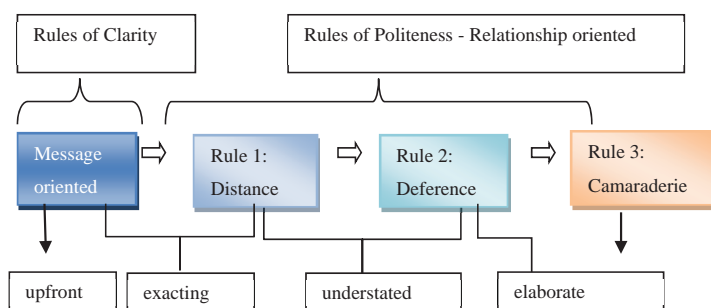


Figure 11: Pragmatic Competence from message to relationship oriented; Comparison of the four styles (author's model)(copy of figure 3)

Figure 11 shows that the different style choices are the result of strategies aiming for clarity, distance, deference, or camaraderie. The main purpose of an upfront style is to underline the message. In addition, an upfront style is chosen by those who wish to portray themselves as competent, something which is done by the use of intensifiers, exaggerated facts, first person pronouns, and mental verbs.

The exacting style also focuses primarily on the message by neither inserting many weakeners nor strengtheners that obscure the message. However, it might also aim to avoid imposition on the hearer by being brief and to the point. It is chosen by those aiming to be clear, factual, objective, and emotionally detached.

The main goal of the understated style is not to impose, something that is achieved through the use of hedges, hesitation fillers, disclaimers and self-repairs. The speaker wishes to appear non-assertive and modest.

The elaborate style aims to create closeness or camaraderie through the use of rapport markers (tag-questions, colloquial language, in-group language, the hearer's first name), verbosity (infusing items, metaphors and idioms, onomatopoeia, *giseigo/gitaigo/giongo*, repetitions, reduplications, lexical intensifiers), and personal stories with direct quotes. The speaker of an elaborate style wishes to portray himself as a congenial and an affective person. However, the elaborate style can also have the effect that it 'covers up' the message in 'non-seriousness', just as the understated style 'covers' the message in hedges and other weakeners. In that sense, both the understated style and the elaborate style are 'indirect'. On the other hand, the upfront and the exacting styles are the most direct, as they are the styles that do the least to 'cover up' the message.

However, there are some indications that the Japanese and the Norwegians in this study perceive the four styles differently when it comes to (in)directness. This is elaborated on below.

A marked feature of the understated style (cf. table 44) is that it has few or none of the devices the upfront and the elaborate styles have, such as intensifiers, personal stories, verbose expressions, or exaggerated facts. Thus, those Japanese with an understated style, i.e.

'the Japanese style', can be expected to have high scores on hedges and low on intensifiers. In figure 14 below, I have drawn a line from the five with the highest score on hedges to their score on intensifiers. The average for hedges and intensifiers is marked by a dotted line

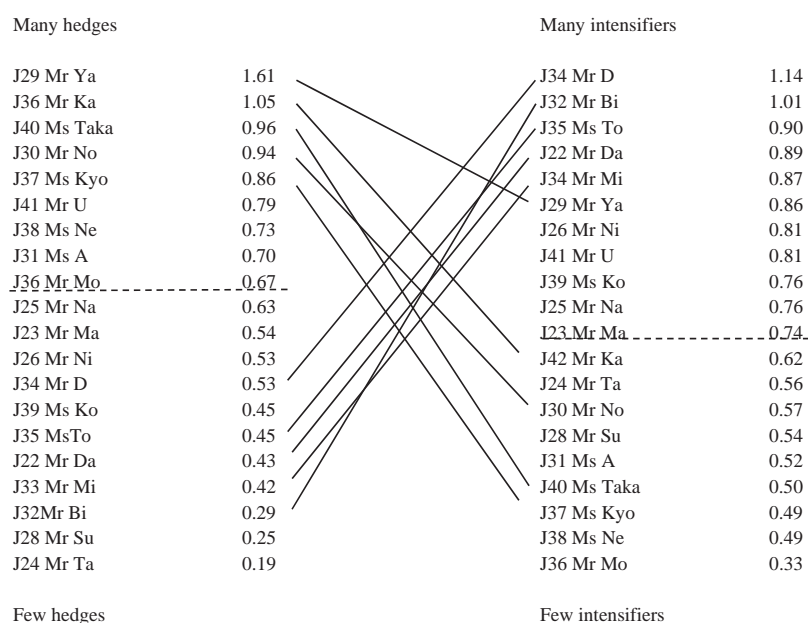


Figure 12: Hedges and intensifiers in the Japanese sample (based on tables 14 and 29)

Four of these five have an understated style, which means that they also employ many other weakeners. On the other hand, we find that the five with the highest scores on intensifiers have very low scores on hedges⁴⁷. These have all be labeled with an exacting, upfront, or elaborate style and thus, employ many other strengtheners. Thus, one might say that the understated style is the opposite of the other three styles, and it seems that this is also how the style is perceived by the Japanese as illustrated in figure 13. A tentative interpretation might be that the Japanese either use predominantly the understated 'Japanese style' or they have

⁴⁷ In order to illustrate the point best, lines were only drawn on those with the highest scores on hedges/intensifiers. Below there are also for instance those with an exacting style with low scores on both hedges and intensifiers, but they are not the focus here.

strategically chosen or are influenced by low context communicators to minimize weakeners and increase the use of strengtheners in an exacting, upfront, or elaborate style.

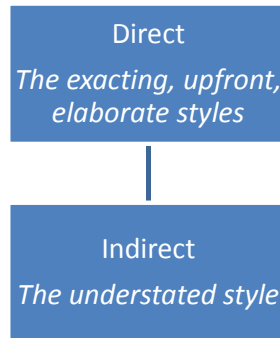


Figure 13: The Japanese' metalinguistic perception of the four styles (based on the interviews)

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (cf. 2.5.1) classified the elaborate style as a feature of high context communication. The fact that the Japanese seem to view it as a rather 'direct' approach, that is, as a style that imposes on the hearer, is in line with the discussion about how camaraderie is viewed as more imposing in Japan than in the USA or Norway (cf. 8.14).

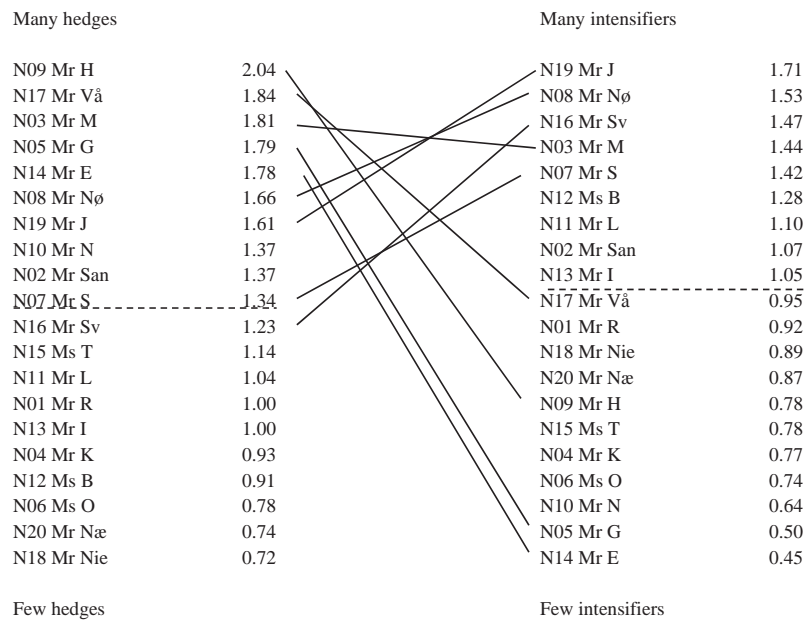


Figure 14: Hedges and intensifiers in the Norwegian sample (based on tables 22 and 34)

If we move to figure 14 and look at the five Norwegians with the most hedges, we see a similar pattern to the Japanese, with one exception, but the line between hedges and intensifiers is less steep in the Norwegian case. If we turn to the five Norwegians with the most intensifiers on the other hand, we see that they also have relatively high scores on hedges. The average is marked with dotted lines.

Intensifiers in the Norwegian sample were used predominantly only by those with a more elaborate than an upfront style. Thus, the Norwegians seem to distinguish between either using many intensifiers as a way to show social involvement through an elaborate or an understated style, or aiming to be factual and content focused with few intensifiers through an upfront or exacting style. Thus, the Norwegians see the understated and the elaborate style as indirect, i.e. fleshing out statements for social purposes, and perceive the upfront and exacting style as direct as they are not fleshing out the statement. It is as if there exists an idea that one either shows competence through 'seriousness', or social concerns through 'non-seriousness'. Ting-Toomey (cf. 2.5.1), who first presented the four styles, sees them similarly to the Norwegians. That is, two direct styles; the exacting and the upfront styles, and two indirect styles; the elaborate and the understated styles. However, it is possible that the Norwegians with an upfront style less verbose than that described by Ting-Toomey, will see the elaborate style as even more indirect and emotionally loaded than those who use many intensifiers themselves

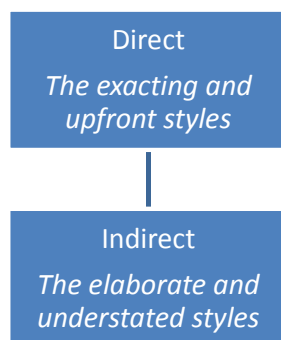


Figure 15: The Norwegians' metalinguistic perception of the four styles (based on the interviews)

11.2 *Styles or strategies from the speakers' own points of view*

Figure 11 explains style preferences on the basis of different strategies. For instance, one might imagine that Mr Ni <J26>, who has been labelled with an elaborate style, employs this style because he wishes to portray himself as congenial and good to be around, or it might be, as we have suggested, because he identifies with low context language and culture. However, it poses the question of how far-reaching are the conclusions one can draw. Was this just a style he chose to employ during the interview, or is it a style tied to his identity? As mentioned before (5.1), there are limitations to how much a linguist can investigate a person's inner psychological world, but I believe the speakers themselves have provided some clues in their answers to questions seven and nine in the interview guide which were:

7. Do you speak or behave differently when you speak to a Japanese/Norwegian compared to a Norwegian/Japanese national? (or: other nationalities)?

9. Has the way the Japanese/Norwegians behave or speak affected the way you behave or speak in any way?

If we look back at figure 11, we find that style choices are not explained on the basis of cultural styles, but rather on strategies. Styles are chosen depending on which is considered best at getting one's message across, what style best matches the self-image one wants to present, and what style deals most efficiently with the situation and ensures a good relationship with the hearer. The latter was the focus in the following informants' answers to questions seven and nine. They are those Norwegians who have been in Japan less than five years. Constructionist ideologies in sociolinguistics introduce the idea that style shifting can be done more or less consciously (cf. 3.2). A Norwegian business executive, Mr K <N04>, comments on finding the balance between whether or not to adapt to the style of the Japanese colleagues and customers (original transcripts in appendix five):

(314) <N04> Well, I adjust of course as much as can be done, erm or, based on what I think is beneficial to me@@ [...]. Well, I don't bow in the same way (as the Japanese) but that is because erm, [...] maybe I wish to show strength rather than respect [...]. Internally (in the company) it is also about who bows the least or the most and in a way, how you place yourself in relation to the others, so well, I try to find a balance [...]. Sometimes it is beneficial to play the *gaijin*⁴⁸ role to the full, but also be Japanese to the extent that you show respect, not to be

⁴⁸ *Gaijin* is the Japanese word for a foreigner, often perceived as an outgoing American used to debates and top-down decision making.

aggressive [*brautende*], [...] and then it varies a lot depending on who you talk to, I think.
<N04>

Mr K changes style according to his self-image in relation to others and in accordance with that which is most beneficial to himself coupled with a willingness to shift style in order to please, if necessary. In these cases, style is not a static entity but something you use for instrumental or strategic purposes. One might also say that the style shift is temporal, and that the speaker knows when he shifts style and when he is ‘himself’. Similar comments to those of Mr K above are found among other Norwegians who have been in Japan for a relatively short period of time. Ms O <N06> tries to be more cautious and “use more polite phrasings if it doesn’t seem too misplaced [*malplassert*] to myself” which indicates that she consciously, maybe strategically, and sometimes somewhat unwillingly adapts her style. All the Norwegian informants comment that they are more polite, more cautious [*forsiktig*], more formal and serious, avoid provocations and direct criticism, and listen more when around the Japanese, but since they have not been observed communicating with the Japanese, this study cannot validate their claim. They also state that they talk about different topics with the Japanese, especially avoiding politics. Mr Næ <N20> adds that he modifies his body language. All of these comments suggest that style is being adapted strategically and instrumentally, and that the speakers know when they adapt and when they are ‘themselves’. With their fellow Norwegian interviewer they employed all styles. When Mr E <N14> is asked if he has changed, he answers: “Noo, I hope not@@. I’m Norwegian I, and that I will always be”. The latter leads us over to the Japanese with an understated style.

If we look at the eight Japanese identified with an understated style in chapter eight, i.e. the style most similar to ‘the Japanese style’ (2.7), we find such answers to questions seven and nine as “I admire the Norwegians who can talk more directly [*sutoreeto*]” (Ms A <J31>), “I understand the difference (between those who are more direct compared to those who are indirect) and find it enviable but” (Mr Ya <J29>), “I have not reflected on any differences” (Mr Mo <J36>), “I can be more direct in English because the English language is less formal” (Mr Ka <J42>), (but thus, not in Japanese). Mr Na <J25> appreciates Norwegian meetings where everyone offers their opinion head on, regardless of rank. He tries to adapt to the Norwegian way when talking to Norwegians, but adds that the Japanese have different rules. Mr U <J41> makes he speaks more “logically” meaning “A, then B, therefore C” when he talks to foreigners, and Ms Kyo <J37> states that “when I talk to foreigners I feel I

overstate/exaggerate [*oogesa*] my opinions and needs, and if I had done the same with Japanese, it would have sounded too direct”. Through these answers we can read that the Japanese with an understated style might admire different styles, but do not use them, at least not when speaking Japanese. Instead, their understated style seems tightly knit to the Japanese language and their Japanese identity.

If we turn to the Japanese speakers who have been identified with an upfront or an elaborate style on the other hand, we find comments about being direct without limiting it to talking to foreigners. The fact that those with upfront or elaborate styles describe themselves as “direct” strengthens the hypothesis made in 11.1 that they perceive both these styles as direct. Mr Da <J22> claims that “I do tell ‘honne’, what I really want to say”, Mr Ni <J26> learned in Norway “the dignity of having a personal opinion and principle”, Mr Su <J28> maintains he does not beat about the bush [*rett på sak*], and Mr No <J30> admits that after six years abroad he feels like a stranger in Japan, but adds that he is the same whether he speaks to a Norwegian or a Japanese, because “that is because I am Japanese, you see, that nature not so much drastically changes”. Mr Bi <J32> claims that he states his opinion regardless of whether people around him are of higher rank or not, Mr Mi <J33> states his feelings directly as a result of having been socialized in an American school system in Japan, and Ms Ne <J38> gives a lively description of how her frankness makes the other Japanese at her office call her a foreigner. In order to act more Japanese, she tries to become “a borrowed cat” [*karitekita neko*], an expression used about someone who tries to be silent, serious, and modest, that is, in her view, Japanese, in front of other people. Ms Ko <J39> reports about how staying in Norway taught her to express her opinions directly, and Mr Sa <J27> states that “I’m not rude towards others, but I don’t have to use that much excessive [*baka* ‘stupid’] politeness to foreigners”, implying that he might use more polite phrasing to fellow Japanese. In the quotes above, there are indications that the speakers most exposed to low context languages and cultures, are aware that they are more direct than their fellow Japanese, and that this difference is a conscious, and one might even say, somewhat proud part of their identity. Some state clearly that this directness is used regardless of whether they talk to foreigners or to Japanese people. It would have been interesting to know if they really are, but that is outside the scope of this study.

Among the Norwegians who have spent a long time in Japan (from six to sixteen years), we find similar claims about permanent change as those above. Mr San <N02> states that “after so many years in Japan I behave a bit more Japanese even when I speak to Germans or Norwegians” (he now works in a German company). When I ask him what he means by ‘a bit more Japanese’, he answers: “a bit more cautious in the way I talk [...] maybe a bit more polite even”. Ms B <N12> comments that “when we return (to Norway), Norwegians may seem direct, and I (to them) often seem too indirect, too polite, and too cautious”, and Mr G <N05> holds that “it has in a way affected my personality and my personality has in a way adjusted itself a bit to the surroundings”. Mr N <N10> argues that “I’ve been such a long time in Japan that I have been a bit influenced both here (in Japan) and there (in Norway)”, and Mr Vå <N17> admits that “returning to Norway is always a culture-shock to me”.

Even though the Norwegians above claim to have become more indirect, only Mr. Vå and Mr G have been labelled with an understated (‘Japanese’) style when they talked to their fellow Norwegian interviewer. That might be because among the Norwegians who have spent much time in Asia, we find yet another notion of style. Mr Vå <N17>, who claimed Japan has influenced him to the extent that returning to Norway is a culture shock, adds “I adjust my behaviour depending on whom I talk to”. Ms B introduces the notion of people shifting styles like chameleons change colours: “Personally I think the experience I had working with Germans, living with Italians, and going to a Japanese school made me something of a chameleon, so I am very different in different settings”. In the following quote Mr R <N01>, is talking about switching between a Japanese style and a Norwegian style in the same way as you switch from one setting to another on a dial⁴⁹ (original transcripts in appendix five):

(315) <N01> It is just like turning a dial [*bryter*] @to and from depending on whom you@ are talking to [...]. Yes it is, it is hard to switch in the beginning, and you get frustrated, you easily become frustrated when you have to, have to turn that dial@@, but when you have done it a couple of times, then you continue (to do it) without thinking about it. <N01>

These comments are all from Norwegians who have spent more than five years in Japan. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits’ (1936:149, cf. 3.2) original definition of acculturation was that it is seen as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original

⁴⁹ Whereas a ‘switch’ tends to mean something you switch on or off, a ‘dial’ refers to a switch with more than two parameters, such as for instance an oven knob.

culture patterns of either or both groups”. According to the relativist view, personality is moulded by the culture an individual is being socialized into. If we look at the people with an identity of a ‘dual’, one might say that they have been moulded by several cultures which have become an integral part of them.

Thus, the participants have provided us with different explanations about their own styles. One is an essentialist view which limits one’s behaviour to Japanese and Norwegian conventional styles. When the Norwegian Mr E states that “I am Norwegian I, and that I will always be” or the Japanese Mr No maintains that “that is because I am Japanese, you see, that nature not so much drastically changes”, they adhere to an essentialist understanding of style as a definite and stable entity observable in a given culture. The second view is uttered by those who believe they have changed style in a way so that they cannot easily return to the style they had before. For instance, Ms B holds that when she returns to Norway, Norwegians seem to find her style too indirect and polite. The same is true for those Japanese who have been identified with a ‘non-Japanese style’, and who claim that they are direct regardless of whom they are talking to. A third is a constructionist view where people shift style for more or less conscious strategic purposes, as in the case of Mr K in example (314). However, this temporal change has no effect on their perception of a static personal style that is who they ‘really’ are. A last possibility is that people accumulate many styles over the years, and that they change between them more or less unconsciously and increasingly effortlessly.

In the beginning of this section I asked whether Mr Ni with a ‘typical’ elaborate style always has this style, or whether it was a style chosen for the interview. Looking at the answers above, there are several possible interpretations. One is that he chose this style during the interview because he valued it as the most appropriate, efficient, or natural way to talk to a ‘Western’ interviewer, but knew that it was not his ‘real self’. Another possibility is that this is his ‘personal style’ that he employs in most situations. Whether discourse analysis would validate the notion of such a personal style is another matter, and a possible topic for another study. A last possibility is that being exposed to many different communicative styles over the years has provided him with a repertoire of styles. When meeting new acquaintances, he chooses a style, more or less unconsciously, without perceiving it as not being ‘himself’. It seems that this last interpretation is only applicable to those with long exposure to other cultural styles,

and would be interesting to compare to general acculturation processes studied by researchers in other fields.

12 Conclusions

Bearing in mind that this is a qualitative study which bases its findings on twenty-one Japanese and twenty Norwegian individuals, the result of the analysis is interpreted as follows below.

Research questions (i) and (ii) presented in chapter one were:

- i. What experiences do Norwegian and Japanese business executives have communicating with each other?
- ii. Do Japanese and Norwegian business executives perceive themselves as opposite with respect to direct and indirect communicative styles?

In chapter six the Norwegian and Japanese business executives were asked about their experiences communicating with each other. They experienced each other as different in a number of areas. The ‘critical incidence’ that occupied the Japanese and the Norwegians the most by number of frequency was the difference between directness and indirectness, which means that they did indeed experience the different emphasis on directness/indirectness to be a problematic communicative difference between them. However, eight of the twenty Norwegians stated that they perceived the Japanese as predominantly direct, especially referring to their Japanese customers. Despite differences, what brings the Japanese and the Norwegians together is the high context feature called the *self-effacement style*, which means that both perceive the other as relationship-oriented and non-assertive. Thus, the directness of the Norwegians is somewhat softened by calmness and modesty, or what was also referred to as *wet* (6.7).

To the Norwegians, Japanese thoroughness, concern for details, and resistance to improvisation, which among other things lead to frequent and prolonged meetings and long decision processes, is something to admire, but also goes against their idea of efficiency, and causes considerable frustration. The Japanese on the other hand, are somewhat concerned about whether Norwegian thoroughness is good enough in the Japanese market, and find the Norwegian e-mail response too slow. Norwegian independence versus Japanese

interdependence and Norwegian informality versus Japanese formality are other perceived differences, without causing the same amount of stress.

- iii. What does directness and indirectness in communicative styles refer to in linguistic terms?

This study has aimed to identify directness and indirectness in linguistic terms. The instrument created by linking linguistic devices to the four styles serving as a working definition of direct and indirect styles has proven useful in identifying the styles of the speakers in this corpus. It may be used to distinguish styles in other communicative events such as in meetings between Japanese and Norwegian business executives. Such meetings would occur in English, something that might influence the style choices together with the formality of the occasion and the seriousness of the matter at hand. Figure 16 illustrates the four styles with regards to directness and indirectness.

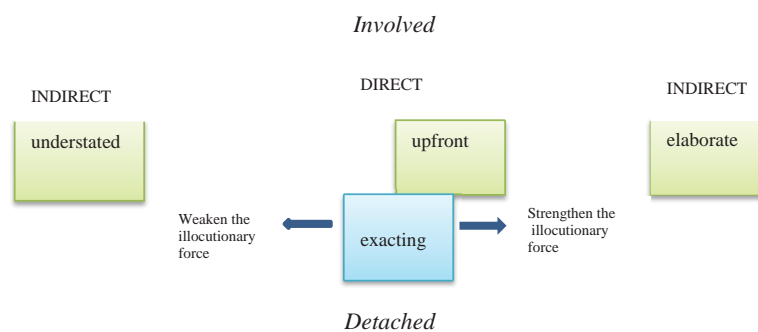


Figure 16: Direct/indirectness related to the four styles

Both the exacting and the upfront styles are direct, but whereas those with an exacting style aim to be personally detached, those with an upfront style wish to display personal involvement through strengthening devices. I have argued (7.16) that by increasing the devices that either weaken or strengthen the illocutionary force, a text becomes gradually

more indirect. Thus, the elaborate style, that applies more strengthening devices than the upfront style, is more indirect than the upfront one.

The introduction to the present study posed the question of whether it is possible to ‘measure’ directness and indirectness by aid of linguistic and rhetorical devices, and by limiting the scope to the four styles under investigation, four ‘measurable’ styles have been distinguished, even though the speakers may be more or less ‘typical’ representatives of their style. However, analysis has also discovered that to define a style as indirect in form, does not necessarily mean that all speakers perceive it as indirect (11.1).

- iv. Are the Japanese and Norwegian business executives in this study opposite with respect to direct and indirect communicative styles?

If we look at table 44, which is an overview over the stylistic representation of the Norwegian and Japanese speakers in this study, we see that contrary to common belief (cf. 2.6. and 2.7), there are both Japanese and Norwegians within all categories of style, and the number of Norwegian and Japanese speakers with an understated style is also more or less the same. Thus, in this particular study one cannot conclude that the Japanese are indirect, that is, understated, and the Norwegians direct. One way of looking at this might be to conclude that that there is no such thing as a ‘cultural style’. However, this study has suggested that the style used by the Japanese with the shortest and most distant contact with low context language and culture is probably the style most influenced by Japanese norms and values. That is an *understated style* that is similar to ‘the Japanese style’ portrayed by a number of Japanese and foreign scholars in part 2.7. Further, I have argued for what I called an *exacting upfront style*, often somewhat weakened by hedges, being rooted in Norwegian norms and values, and found support in the theories in part 2.6. More research on Norwegian communicative styles is required in order to find how widely used such an exacting upfront style really is in Norwegian society. However, these arguments do not explain those with a diverging style.

Thus, this study does not contest that the ‘typical’ Japanese style probably is more indirect than the conventional Norwegian one. However, what this study has aimed to verify through empirical analysis is that it is not sufficient to learn about the ‘typical’ Japanese. Looking at

table 44, we see that there is probably a greater chance that a Norwegian business executive will communicate with a ‘non-typical’ Japanese colleague, because there are Japanese business executives with long and extensive contact with ‘Westerners’⁵⁰, used to speaking English, and with an identity linked both to high and low context culture and communication. The Japanese Mr Da <J22> illustrates what happens if business executives are guided only by the simplified version of typical Japanese or typical ‘Westerners’ (original transcripts in appendix five):

(316) <J22> Norwegians think that one cannot speak so directly to the Japanese, so therefore they try to speak as indirectly as possible. Then, what happens next, is that the Japanese who hears it, thinks that the Norwegian does not have a very firm opinion about the matter since he puts it that indirectly. </J22>

<interviewer> He is expecting it to be direct? </interviewer>

<J22> Yes, so therefore he would have understood it better if it had been direct, but the Norwegian thinks that to put it directly is impolite, so he puts it indirectly, and it sounds extremely vague [mild] to the Japanese and they think that this is what he really means. And I understand this (since I am a middleman between my Norwegian colleagues and the Japanese client). </J22>

<interviewer> So the Norwegian should say it more clearly? </interviewer>

<J22> I suggest that they put it more clearly. So, in the meeting the Norwegian representative and I sit across from the (Japanese) client. And, the Norwegian uses an indirect expression right. But, being a colleague, I understand what he really wants to say. However, put indirectly, the client interprets it as such (literally), and thus, a misunderstanding occurs. That is, the Japanese understands (the message) based on the idea that Norwegians, or foreigners in general, put things directly. So, afterwards I have to explain that he said this, but that was only out of concern for being impolite. Yes, it has to do with different perceptions of cultures right, yes, it’s interesting [yo] @@, I think [ne]. </J22>

The Norwegian does not state his opinions head on out of concern for the Japanese, and the Japanese who is expecting directness, does not understand that the Norwegian does have a firm opinion behind his vagueness. We see here that knowledge about ‘the prototypical other’ is not always helpful. What this study has aimed to do, is to nuance the picture so that one does not ignore individual or situational differences in intercultural communication.

⁵⁰ Cf. Footnote 4

Appendix 1: The Norwegian interview guide

1. I hvilken tidsperiode og i hvilken forbindelse har du jobbet med japanske forretningsforbindelser?
2. Din alder: 20-29 · 30-39 · 40-49 · 50-59 · 60-69
3. Er du i hovedsak kjøper eller selger?
4. Hvilken type kommunikasjon/korrespondanse har du med dine japanske samarbeidspartnere?
E-post, telefon, personlig møte, annet?
5. Hva er dine erfaringer med å kommunisere med japanere i jobbsammenheng?
6. En tidligere undersøkelse jeg gjorde beskrev visse personer som forholdsvis mer a eller b.
Hvordan vil du beskrive dine japanske samarbeidspartnere?
 - A. a. Antyder hva vil ha · b. sier klart hva vil ha
 - B. a. formell · b. uformell
 - C. a. Nøyaktig · b. omtrentlig
 - D. a. Opptatt av detaljer · b. opptatt av det store bildet
 - E. a. Liker ikke å improvisere · b. liker å improvisere
 - F. a. Viser gjerne følelser · b. legger vinn på å være saklig og ikke vise følelser
 - G. a. Virker som spør ofte kolleger om råd · b. virker som tar mange avgjørelser alene
 - H. a. Må mases på · b. må ikke mases på
7. Oppfører du deg annerledes eller snakker annerledes når du kommuniserer med japanere i forhold til norske (eller andre) samarbeidspartnere?
8. Påvirker bruken av engelsk kommunikasjonen?
9. Har japansk væremåte/ måte å kommunisere på påvirket din væremåte?
10. Har du følt behov for å skaffe deg innsikt i andre lands kulturer for å kunne handle med dem?
11. Hvordan har du lært deg å jobbe med japanere?
 - A. Bøker
 - B. Internett
 - C. Gått på kurs/fått opplæring
 - D. Fått info fra kolleger eller andre kjente
 - E. Lært gjennom prøving og feiling
 - F. Synes ikke jeg trenger å lære noe spesielt
 - G. Annet
12. Har du inntrykk av at japanere du har møtt vet noe om nordmenn?
13. En tidligere japansk ambassadør til Norge sa i en tale at nordmenn burde handle mer med japanere for ”vi er jo så like”. Hva tenker du om det?

Appendix 2: The Japanese interview guide

1. いつから、どんな関係でノルウェー人とかかわっていますか？
2. 年齢 20代、30代、40代、50代、60代
3. ビジネスでは買う側ですか、売る側ですか。
4. どうやって相手とコミュニケーションしますか。
E メール、電話、ミーティング、そのほか。
5. ノルウェー人とビジネスの会話をするときに、どんな経験をしましたか。
6. 私がおこなった前のプロジェクトでは、人が a 寄りか b 寄りになりました。～さんのノルウェー人のビジネスの相手はどのように見えますか。
 - A. a. 欲しいものをほのめかして言う／b. 欲しいものをはっきり言う
 - B. a. 礼儀正しい／b. 親しみやすい
 - C. a. 厳密な計画をたてる／b. おおまかで、おおよその計画をたてる
 - D. a. デイテールを大切にする／b. 全体的に見る
 - E. a. しっかり計画的に進むのが好き／b. いろいろな状況に柔軟に対応できる
 - F. a. 感情をよく表す／b. 仕事では感情は関係ないと思っているようだ
 - G. a. 同僚とよく相談するようだ／b. 相談しないで一人で決める場合が多いようだ
 - H. a. 繰り返して言わせられる／b. 一回でわかってくれる
7. ノルウェー人や外国人と会話をするときに、日本人に対する時と違う言葉づかいや態度をする事がありますか？
8. コミュニケーションをとる上で、英語を使う事で何か効果がありますか
9. ノルウェー人とかかわってきたことで、何か影響を受けたと思いますか？
10. ～さんがビジネスの相手と取引をするときに、その相手の文化を知ることは必要だと思いますか。
11. ノルウェー人や外国人と仕事をするために、何か準備をしましたか？
 - A. 本
 - B. インターネット
 - C. 研修
 - D. 同僚や先輩に聞く
 - E. 挑戦と失敗から学ぶ
 - F. 特別な準備は必要ない。
 - G. そのほか
12. ノルウェー人のビジネスの相手は、日本人について何か知っているという印象がありますか。
13. 以前、ノルウェーにいた日本大使が、スピーチで「日本人とノルウェー人は似ているから、もっと交流をするべきだ」と言いました。どう思いますか。

Appendix 3: The Norwegian informants

Name	Male (M)/ Female (F)	Age: 70-79 60-69 50-59 40-49 30-39 20-29	Title: Top management/ Middle management/ Regular employee	In sales (S) /in purchasing (P)	Company: Norwegian/ Japanese/Other	Years in Japan at the time of the interview	Speaks Japanese	Date and time of interview
Mr. R N01	M	30-39	middle management	S	American	2 yrs. (+ 4 yrs. in China)	no	26.11.07, 1:12:02
Mr. San N02	M	50-59	company's manager in Japan	P	Before Norwegian, now German company	6 ½ yrs.	no	10.10.07, 1:17:52
Mr. M N03	M	30-39	middle management	S	Norwegian	1 ½ yrs.	no	26.09.07, 1:29:43
Mr. K N04	M	30-39	middle management	S	American company with Japanese leadership	2 ½ yrs.	no	06.11.07, 1:42:48
Mr. G N05	M	40-49	regular	S	Norwegian	16 yrs.	yes	29.10.07, 1:34:01
Ms. O N06	F	40-49	middle management	S	International	½ yrs.	no	17.11.07, 43:07
Mr. S N07	M	40-49	manager of own company	S	Norwegian	19 yrs.	yes	08.11.07, 1:09:17
Mr. Nø N08	M	30-39	top management	S	Norwegian- Swedish company	1 ½ yrs.	no	07.11.07, 1:18:18
Mr. H N09	M	30-39	middle management	none	Norwegian- Swedish company	2 yrs.	some	07.11.07, 1:19:26
Mr. N N10	M	40-49	top management	S	Norwegian	12 yrs.	yes	17.11.07, 1:01:45
Mr. L N11	M	40-49	regular	S	Norwegian	4 yrs.	no	31.10.07, 53:30
Ms. B N12	F	30-39	regular	S	Norwegian	5 yrs.	yes	05.12.07, 1:45:40
Mr. I N13	M	70-79	chairman	S	Norwegian	37 yrs.	yes	06.11.07, 2:14:30
Mr. E N14	M	40-49	regular	S	Norwegian	½ yrs.	no	12.12.07, 31:40
Ms. T N15	F	40-49	Middle management	S	Norwegian	16 yrs.	yes	25.04.08, 1:15:52
Mr. Sv N16	M	30-39	company's representative in Japan	S	Norwegian	5 yrs.	no	15.05.08, 1:21:06
Mr. Vå N17	M	40-49	company's manager in Japan	S	Norwegian	14 yrs.	yes	05.11.07/ 08.10.08, 33:50/55:45
Mr. Nie N18	M	30-39	regular	S	Norwegian	5 yrs.	yes	08.10.08, 1:34:40
Mr. J N19	M	30-39	middle management	S	American	11 yrs.	yes	10.10.08, 1:19:44
Mr. Næ N20	M	30-39	company's manager in Japan	S	Norwegian	2 1/2 yrs.	no	06.10.08, 46:41

Appendix 4: The Japanese informants

Name	Male (M)/ Female (F)	Age: 70-79 60-69 50-59 40-49 30-39 20-29	Title: Top management/ middle management/ employee	In sales (S) /in purchasing (P)	Company: Norwegian/ Japanese	Years in low context cultures	First contact with Norway	Date and time of interview
Mr. Da J22	M	50-59	Top management	both	Norwegian	2 yrs. in Norway	1980	1.10.2007, 2:03:09
Mr. Ma J23	M	50-59	Top management	S (to Norway)	Japanese	8 yrs. in Norway, 1 yrs. in London, 1 ½ yrs. in Mexico	1985	24.10.2007, 22:40
Mr. Ta J24	M	40-49	Top management	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	0 yrs.	1996	24.10.2007, 20:51
Mr. Na J25	M	30-39	regular	S	Norwegian	0 yrs.	1996	29.10.2007, 46:42
Mr. Ni J26	M	50-59	Top management	both	Japanese	10 yrs. in Norway	1983	29.10.2007, 44:39
Mr. Sa J27	M	60-69	Company's manager in Japan (now retired)	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	3 yrs. in the USA	1982	30.10.2007, 2:35:53
Mr. Su J28	M	60-69	Company's manager in Japan	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	31 yrs. in Norway	1966	31.10.2007, 1:22:46
Mr. Ya J29	M	40-49	Top management	S (to Norway)	Japanese	3 yrs. in Norway, 5 yrs. in London	1980ies	01.11.2007, 46:16
Mr. No J30	M	50-59	Top management	S (to Norway)	Japanese	6 yrs. in Norway, 6 yrs. in London	1981	01.11.2007, 40:10
Ms. A J31	F	40-49	Middle management	S (to Japan)	Norwegian- Swedish	0 yrs.	1997	07.11.2007, 39:06
Mr. Bi J32	M	50-59	Top management	S (to Norway)	Japanese	5 yrs. in Norway (totally 13 yrs. abroad)	1990ies	09.11.2007, 52:18
Mr. Mi J33	M	50-59	Company's manager in Japan?	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	0 yrs. (educated at American school in Japan)	1999	13.11.2007, 53:34
Mr. D J34	M	40-49	Company's manager in Japan	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	8 yrs. in the USA	1990	27.11.2007, 35:24
Ms. To J35	F	40-49	regular	S(to Japan)	Norwegian	0 yrs.	2001	24.10.2007, 43:47
Mr. Mo J36	M	40-49	regular	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	0 yrs.	1999	09.10.2008, 28:00
Ms. Kyo J37	F	30-39	regular	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	0 yrs.	1999	09.10.2008, 50:48
Ms. Ne J38	F	40-49	regular	S (to Japan)	Norwegian	17 yrs. in Norway	1988	10.10.2008, 1:02:40
Ms. Ko J39	F	30-39	regular		Norwegian	13 yrs. in Norway	1991	06.10.2008, 1:05:15
Ms. Taka J40	F	50-59	Manager of own company	S (to Japan)	Japanese	0 yrs.	1997	06.10.2008, 22:05
Mr. U J41	M	50-59	Top management	P	Japanese	6 yrs in the USA, 2 yrs in Belgium, 9 months in Singapore	1994	02.10.2008, 36:05
Mr. Ka J42	M	40-49	Top management	S (to Japan)	international	0 yrs. (some time in China & Singapore)	2002	10.10.2008, 1:51:32

Appendix 5: Original transcripts

Example (175)

<N04> alle fordommene mot japansk forretningskultur opplever jeg som at det er, det er mye mer ekstremt i virkeligheten, altså hvis, du har sett filmer, jeg vet ikke om du har sett den filmen om hun der belgiske </S04>

<Interviewer> Nei, eg har ikkje sett den men eg veit kva du snakkar om </ Interviewer >

<N04>Altså det er masse sånn erm, faren min han er alltid sånn nei det der er så overdrevet og det er typisk sånne der vestlige oppfatninger om Japan og ikke sant, men han har egentlig, aldri jobbet i Japan, så når jeg kommer til Japan så føler jeg at det er, det er jo enda mer ekstremt i virkeligheten, så det er min oppfatning da, så du er du kunne ha skrevet bøker som er enda mer, sort hvitt og enda mer, så, </N04>

Example (176):

<N20> jeg og en dansk, person som var konsulent for norsk pelagisk industri, skulle til Osaka med Shinkansen og hadde med oss, translatør, og det var selvmord på Shinkansen så det var forsinkelser, og tusenvis av mennesker da som, ble berørt av det, erm, og så sto vi der en time og kasta bort tida på Tokyo stasjon og så var vi redd for å bli for seint og var begynt å bli litt stressa vi han og jeg, og så begynte jo togene å gå igjen, mange av dem til Osaka <avbrutt av telefon>. Da da begynner togene å gå igjen, og mange skal til Osaka, og selvfølgelig har jo mange tusen mennesker funnet noe annet å gjøre så de har hoppet av den togplasseringen sin de hadde selvfølgelig, men da togene begynner å gå igjen så står jo han dansken og jeg og sier ja men fanden her går jo en til Osaka det er ikke vårt, sier hun nei jeg skjønner jo det sier jeg det er jo klart at det er jo nå begynner jo togene å gå etter en times forsinkelser så vil jo vårt være nummer ti for eksempel, men vi har altså et møte og her begynner togene å gå til Osaka, kan vi ikke da hopper vi bare på et da vet du, det må vi jo kunne gjøre de skal jo til Osaka det står jo der det står jo der skal til Osaka, ja men det er ikke vårt, nei jeg er klar over det men det er jo sikkert hundrevis av mennesker som ikke har gjort noe annet her nå som ikke har tatt toget sitt, så da går vi om bord og så finner vi ut med konduktøren og så kjøper vi billett, det er to timer, nei det er ikke det vi skal ha, sier hun og dansken han var jo helt vill han <DANSK> dette finner jeg meg sku fanden ikke i <DANSK> sånn ikke sant, så hun ville ikke om bord i et tog hun, fordi det står 879, vi har Nozomi 879, sier hun <hvisker> det vet jeg, sier jeg (xx), men det går tog her, ikke sant, går ikke <hvisker> sånn erm ikke sant, det er jo en artig case. </N20>

Example (285):

<N19> Nei jeg tror mange japanere kan være veldig forskjellige også da, blant de jeg har jobbet med, og jeg har jobbet med erm, egentlig japanere kan være litt mer e, erm, liksom, kanskje litt mer gammeldagse da, ofte ikke liker erm, nesten ingen liker forandring men de kan kanskje like forandring, enda mindre enn de fleste gjør, erm, [...] Ja, på den annen side så kan, så er det jo japanere som har kanskje litt mer erfaring fra utlandet og, liker å gjøre ting på en litt mer effektive og, på en måte, eller effektive på den vestlige måten da kanskje </N19>

Example (287):

<N05> Altså når, når e, nordmenn kommuniserer med japanere, så, går det som regel fint og flott og vi snakker litt roligere enn vi pleier og, og sånn men, jeg er i alle fall veldig opptatt av at vi hele tiden er tydelige på, på budskapet, overfor japanere, fordi det er nok av utfordringa i å forstå egentlig, hvordan vi tenker, og hvilken strategi og, så videre vi har, hvis vi i tillegg skal bake det inn i uklare, formuleringa. </N05>

Example (298):

<N08> jeg hadde en utrolig opplevelse her i går, vi skal, vi får noen kunder på besøk neste uke. [...] og så har jeg da kommunisert med de som driver denne terminalen og driver dette senteret, og så sagt at ja,

så kommer vi klokken halv ti, og så møtes vi og så vil vi gjerne ha først en liten omvisning på terminalen og så vil vi gjerne ha en liten omvisning på dette erm, klargjøringscenteret, og så vil vi gjerne invitere dere på lunsj, og så drar vi kanskje igjen klokken tolv, og så sa jeg hvem som skulle komme, erm og litt sånne ting, for å starte en dialog, og så var det helt stille i tre dager, og så, ringte han i går til en japaner her, og var veldig bekymret, veldig bekymret, han visste ikke hvem som skulle være turguide egentlig, og det var jeg som hadde skrevet til han om det, nei nei veldig bekymret for det, han visste ikke hva han skulle gjøre han forstod, nei hva er det du vil jeg skal gjøre? Det er sånn e, vi kommer halv ti, vi vil gjerne ha en omvisning på terminalen og så, nei, han skjønte ikke hva han skulle gjøre, sånn ok, så satte jeg da opp, hvert femte minutt, det det det det det det, og så snakket vi i dag tidlig ah, perfekt, ja ja ikke noe problem han skulle ordne alt og full understanding og aa, helt utrolig altså@@. </N08>

Example (75), repeated in example (293):

<J35>日本っていうのはね、nice to have というのがないと、ビジネスでその他と差別化をはかれない、んですよ、いっぱい会社もあるしね、同じ商品もいっぱいあるから、だけど、ノルウェーっていうのは、あの、たとえばチーズって言ったら、もう本当に Tine のチーズしかないような感じ@になっているから@、だから別に差別化を図らなくても、いいわけなんですよ、んーだからま、その need to have だけやればいいと、うん、ということはある、でー、ただ、それぞれの国にいる分にはそれでいいんだけど、じゃ、ノルウェーの物を日本にもって行きたいとなったときには、やっぱりある程度日本流の、なにやり方に、あの、ちゃんと、変えてもらわないと、日本ではやっぱり売れないし、受け入れてもらえないし、ただ日本っていうのは今それがちょっと nice to have のところが行き過ぎているところはある、過剰するところが、うん、で、ノルウェーはノルウェーで極端に足りないときがある？、ん、だから本当ね二つあわせてね割るのが一番いいような気がするんですよ、んー。 </J35>

Example (300):

<N18> vi hadde en e, senior ansatt her en stund, så en gang, en gang vi var og møtte en kunde så møtte han en tidligere, <JAPANSK>kohai</JAPANSK>. Det var litt ubehagelig@@, for han erm, for meg så virka det som han var, for lite formell da, og det tror jeg kanskje kunden syntes og, erm </N18>

Example (309):

<J34>ま、一般的にあれですよ、そのアメリカーの人と、アメリカ人と、ヨーロッパの人と、日本人と比べたときに、ま一般的にあれですけどね、ヨーロッパの人、ま、ノルウェーもそうですけどー、アメリカと日本の間って感じ@@ </J34>

Example (311):

<N07> Nei ja, jo litte grann men ikke så forferdelig mye heller, men jeg har nok hørt det ja, at jeg har forandra meg, men noen sier at jeg er akkurat den samme liksom at, Japan er, fordi jeg ble litt tjukk så sa dem ja du holder deg bra sa dem, Japan @har vært snill med deg@, så </N07>

Example (314):

<N04> Nei altså, jeg tilpasser meg jo selvfølgelig, så godt det lar seg gjøre, erm eller, ut fra hva jeg mener er hensiktsmessig da@@, [...] altså, jeg bukker ikke på samme måte men det er altså fordi erm [...] det er mulig at jeg har mer lyst å vise styrke enn, enn erm, enn respekt, [...] hvis du snakker om internt, så er det jo, også hvem som bukker mest og minst og så videre og det er på en måte erm, erm, da er det så, da er det hvordan du stiller deg selv overfor de andre, i selskapet [...]. Nei altså, jeg prøver å finne en balansegang der da, [...] noen ganger er det en fordel å spille *gaijin*-rollen fullt ut, men, å erm, å være så pass japansk at du på en måte, viser respekt og erm, ja at du ikke er brautende [...] og så varierer det veldig ut fra hvem jeg snakker med da, tror jeg. </N04>

Example (315):

<N01> (Det er) akkurat som å skru en bryter @fram og tilbake etter hvem du@, hvem du snakker med. [...] Ja den e, den er tung å så skru rundt til å begynne med, og du blir frustrert, du blir lett frustrert når du må, må skru på den bryteren@@, men e, når du har gjort det noen ganger så, da gjør du det uten å tenke deg om.</N01>

Example (316):

<J22>ノルウェー人が見る日本人というのは、日本人はあまり日本人にたいしてあまりストレートに言うてはいけないっていう考えかたがあって、で、だからなるべく indirect な、言い方をしようとするわけですね、そうすると、今度それを受けとる日本人は、あ、ああいうふうに言った、indirect に言ったから、あまり強い意志ではないんだなって今度とっちゃうわけですね、うん。</J22>

<interviewer> Direct を待ってるから。</interviewer>

<J22>そう、そう、だから Direct で言うて、くれたほうが分かるんだけど、ノルウェー人にすれば、direct に言うて失礼だと思うね、impolite だと思うから、だから indirect にこういうわけでしょ、すと日本人は受け取ったら、非常にマイルドな表現だから、彼はそれが本当の意思なんだと、思っちゃうわけ、じゃ、そこがぼくが分かるわけね。</J22>

<interviewer>じゃ、ノルウェー人にはきける</interviewer>

<J22>はっきり言いなさいと</J22>

<interviewer>言うの</interviewer>

<J22> や、や、言った方がいいよと、suggestion はするわけですよ、でも、会議でね、だか僕との会社の人間、ノルウェーから来た人間こういるでしょ？、お客さんが目の前にしているでしょ？、だから、その人はあの indirect に表現するでしょ？、でも、彼らが言うてるのは、僕らは身内だか、身内 family でしょ？、だから、言いたいことが分かるわけですね、でも、indirect に言うから、彼らはそのまま受け取るわけですよ、というのは、ノルウェー人っていうか一般的にいう外人？、foreigner はストレートにものを言うから、そういうふうを受け取っちゃうわけですね、だから、そこで差が出てきちゃう。だか、僕はあとで、補足説明をしなくちゃいけない、あれはこう言っていましたけど、ストレートに言うて、失礼かなと思った、配慮ですよと、うん、それはやっぱりそのカルチャーの差ですよ、うん、面白いですよ@@だから@@、と僕は思っていますね <P:12>。 </J22>

Appendix 6: Norwegian transcripts from the pilot study

Norwegian transcripts of examples (8) to (58) in section 6.2.

6.2.1 (In) directness

(8) Mens andre ville ha sagt ifra med en gang at de var misfornøyd, registrerer japanerne det, venter og så fjerner deg ved første lovlige måte

(9) Hvis etterspørsel etter å komme hele tiden blir avvist med at "sjefen er dessverre forkjølet" eller "det passer ikke" signaliserer det at dealen var for dårlig.

(10) Problemet er at hvis man ikke ser den japanske importøren ofte, vil han alltid si "alt er i orden" og man får aldri vite om det er det eller ikke.

(11) Viss en kjører på for hardt, vil japanerne si "We will go back and study"

(12) Nyttet ikke å gi beskjed om at det og det skulle gjøres. Da skjedde det ingenting. Måtte heller si noe sånt som "om de kanskje kunne se om de kom på noe de kunne gjøre med det" flere ganger, ispedd forslag, så kom de tilbake med forslag.

(13) Nødt til å diskutere ferdig – kan ikke bryte av å si "ja da gjør vi det sånn". Må heller avbryte møtet og begynne på igjen neste dag.

(14) Det er usunt å være for mye sammen med japanere. Automatisk tar du på deg noe av det japanske; redselen for å tape ansikt, unngå konfrontasjoner, indirekte kommunikasjon. jeg tror det er mye større aksept enn vi tror blant japanere (for å være seg sjøl/norsk). (Å bli for japansk) passer dårlig i vår organisasjon med innovasjon og offensiv markedsføring.

(15) Skandinaver er mer krangleverne.

(16) Min stil uansett hvem jeg snakker til, er å alltid være åpen, si hva vi har gjort, vise resultat, snakke om gode og dårlige erfaringer. Det gjør jeg overalt. Overfor japanerne legger jeg fram tingene i forhandlinger, overfor andre står jeg mer på krava

(17) den japanske distributøren hadde solgt en vare under den minstepris som var avtalt. Når man blir skuffet, bør man si "Skjer det igjen, så opphører kontrakten. Signer her på at du har skjont det". Det er også viktig å ikke være flau over det norske.

6.2.2 (in)formality

(18) Så reiste vi til Tokyo. Vi hilste på presidenten. De som betydde noe, satt til høyre. De unge satt til venstre og det var de som snakket fordi hvis noen skal gjøre tabbene, kan det være juniorene. I en norsk setting er det alltid sjefen som snakker [...] (Vi) ble sittende i fire dager å forhandle. Den fjerde dagen signerte vi. Da først kom presidenten og hilste. Det ble ikke gitt noen forklaring.

(19) En toppsjef vil svært sjelden gå ifra det som er bestemt før møtet for det ville da signalisere at de operative ikke har gjort en grundig nok jobb.

(20) Hvis en toppsjef møter toppsjef er møtet kun er formalitet. Kommer det en fra *middle management*, blir han veldig godt tatt vare på og møter de andre operative.

(21) Det finnes et lag av formaliteter, *honme* og *tatema*. Hvis man vil vite *honme*, må man være med ut etter jobb.

(22) Dette var på midten av 80-tallet og jeg var i begynnelsen av tredveårene, altså egentlig altfor ung til å bli sendt som sjef til Japan.

(23) Japanerne sier: "We like to work with the Norwegians because there are so few superintendents".

6.2.3 English

(24) Nivået blitt mye bedre. Muntlig problem. Skriftlig aldri noe problem.

(25) Skriver "Mikke Mus"-engelsk. "I like...Do you like...? I agree...Do you agree...?"

(26) Må si det – gjenta – bekrefte det.

(27) Bruker mye blyant og papir og tegner mens jeg snakker.

(28) Skriver mail som punkter, kategorier og underpunkter og ber de bekrefte ett og ett punkt. Mestere til å misforstå. Men de er bedre skriftlig enn muntlig.

(29) Det er en god del misforståelser på grunn av språket. Må bruke banal engelsk.

(30) Avdelingssjefene jeg hadde kontakt med kunne engelsk men ikke alltid kundene.

(31) Det som ofte forvirrer nordmenn som kommer til Japan er at de tror de har forstått, kommer hjem og skriver rapport og så skjønner de at de og japanerne har ulik oppfatning av hva som er bestemt.

6.2.4 Thoroughness

(32) Japanere er mye mer forberedt til møter – de gjør alltid hjemmeleksen sin.

(33) Japanere strekker seg alltid lenger. For å finne den beste løsningen.

(34) De holdt på å drive oss til vanvidd, kunne bruke en dag på å teste [...], men det endelige produktet var veldig bra.

(35) Bedre å si "skal sjekke og se om det lar seg gjøre" selv om det er urealistisk. Må alltid vise at en i alle fall prøver. Kan ikke si nei.

(36) Servicebegrepet mye videre. Selv om bussen er kommet, ringer likevel de japanske ansatte på kontoret vårt tilbake til reiseleder for å si at nå er bussen der, selv om det betyr at reiseleder må gå inn igjen i lobbyen å ta telefonen istedenfor å ta seg av gjestene og bagasjen. Norsk høflighet tilsier å tenke at nå er reiseleder opptatt og ikke forstyrre mer.

(37) Nordmennene er mer omtrentlige – Det ordner seg nok. Det er særnorsk!

(38) Men når man får spørsmål [...], holder det ikke at hobbyingeniør N setter seg ned og tipper men man må ha nøyaktig spesifisering men i Norge ville de være fornøyde med et omtrentlig svar.

(39) Når en japanere sender en to mail til en norsk forhandler for å bestille noe, sender nordmannen varen men ingen mail for å si at det er sendt. Japaneren hadde kanskje ventet en mail om at det var sendt, men nordmannen skjønner ikke hvorfor, for varen er jo sendt. Hvorfor bruke tid på å fortelle noen at den er sendt. Det vil jo kunden skjønne når han får den.

6.2.5 Details

(40) De er ekstremt detaljorientert. Jeg blir sprø av det!

(41) De tar alle detaljer like alvorlig.

(42) Fordi japanere er så gode på detaljer, kan man legge ut logistikken til japanerne. Markedsføringen derimot, bør man ikke overlate til japanerne. Vi hadde et offisielt slagord som vi ønsket å bruke over hele verden "Expand

your car” (en takboks gjør en liten bil stor). Japanerne skjønte ikke slagordet og ville hjelpe oss med å finne et som de mente ville selge mer i Japan. De fant ”Wind making” som de trodde betydde ”trend setter”.

(43) Det å spørre om detaljer kan være et spill. Det er viktig å ikke miste fatning men være bestemt.

(44) Min kultur er brutalt tydelig. Jeg ser det store bildet. Japanere ser alle detaljene. Noen ganger må jeg si at ”nok er nok”. Det er vanskelig å få tolken til ikke å pakke det inn.

6.2.6 Improvisation

(45) Når man har fått ting på plass, er det motstand mot å endre noe. De er så lojale til beslutninger at de marsjerer i vei uten å tenke om det er lurt.

(46) Japanere liker veldig dårlig å bli overrasket. Hvis overrasket, vil gjerne reaksjonen være å snakke mye om uvesentligheter.

(47) Japanere krisemaksimerer.

(48) Nordmenn er flinke til å improvisere.

(49) Nordmenn er mer fleksible og kutter noen svinger

6.2.7 Emotions

(50) Får en del emosjonelle adjektiv. Det er vi nordmenn som ikke bruker de ordene, men vi skjønner når det er alvor uten å si det så sterkt [...] Når en først er blitt sint, mister en fullstendig grepet og den eldre sjefen kastet papirene etter meg og kalte meg de verste ting.

(51) Vi har fått kjeft som at ”vi er upålitelige, ikke har kontroll, ikke holder det vi lover, de føler at vi lurar de, Lerøy tar ikke Japan alvorlig”. Japanere er følelsesmeneske; stolthet, face, face er emosjonelt, de taper ansikt overfor sin kunde. De kan ikke ta det ut på kunder eller på de andre i firmaet. Av og til føler vi at vi er ventilen deres. De forteller ofte om hvor forferdelig dette er for dem. Ofte er det helt usaklig.

(52) Stereotypen er jo at japanere er veldig kald/steinansikt, men betyr ikke at de ikke kan være emosjonelle, og det handler om er at ”du har skuffet meg” og hvis du går tilbake til konfutsianismen så er relasjonen far og sønn og da er det skuffe og ikke skuffe som gjelder, men hvis man tar den kommunikasjonen rett hjem til Norge så blir det ikke forstått, for hvis man skal klage i Norge så må man jo komme med tekniske bevis; hva var det som gikk galt? Har du brukt det på en gal måte? Ofte negativ bevisbyrde, men i Japan holder det å si ”jeg er skuffa”.

6.2.8 (In)dependence

(53) I Norge kan en ha møte med en ingeniør som favner vidt og kan svare på mange ulike aspekt ved det som skal lages, til og med ta enkelte avgjørelser uten å spørre sin sjef.

(54) I store firma kan det være 20 personer med der hver person har ansvar for sin del av kulepennen.

(55) Japanere alene er ikke beslutningsdyktige

(56) jeg var mer *pushy* enn vanlig og europasjefen sa ”du forhandler ikke alene med meg”. Han la fram det han hadde forhandlet med sin gruppe allerede og problemet var at vi hadde pushet mer enn det.

6.2.9 ‘Asking twice’

(57) Japanere har et mer omtrentlig språk. ... Tar tid å skjønne ”hva mener han nå?”. En må mase.

(58) Må gjenta og gjenta. Forteller – gjentas – be om bekreftelse. Med store aktører kan det bli stille. Det er mange spørsmål og få svar. Det blir helt feil hvis vi blir japanere her og ikke tørr å spørre. Vi sier: ”Vi må vite kor vi er i prosessen, ellers kan ikke vi gi informasjon til dere”.

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Direct and indirect
communicative styles

