

Consciousness in Business Communication :

The Effects of Self-consciousness and Other-consciousness on International Business Communication

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Introduction

“On-line communication, which we think probably is the ultimate democratic information exchange system, gets rid of obstacles. Having no clue of his or her appearance or voice, you cannot judge the person whom you ‘talk to.’ You can become a person you want to be. A bashful person can become courageous ; a child can express his’ or her views to an adult ; the adult listens to them ; an accountant can talk

to an executive director on the same level.¹

This statement, appearing in a book on computer networking, ironically and paradoxically tells us how much we human beings are affected by “what he is who talks to me” and “what he is whom we talk to” when communicating with each other. We are apt to classify people with whom we communicate into class names such as company presidents, professors, reformists, conservatives, “our group” or “their group”, etc. We, then, respond categorically based on our own standard of the person’s social status and direct relationship to us. When you are introduced as a company president in your thick-carpet-floor office to your counterpart, he or she will hear all that you speak as “the president’s words,” never as the words from a kindergarten nurse. The class names really affect the type of meaning of the messages sent and received. The meaning of a message varies according to who is talking to me and whom I am talking to. This assumption or person judgment is based on the consciousness in our minds. It is not too much to say that it is the consciousness that gives the meaning of a symbol communicated. Based on this assumption, I have hypothesized that:

H 1 : The negotiator’s “self-consciousness” and “other-consciousness” of the counterpart would affect their business communication before and during the use of language.

H 2 : Reactive adjustment theory would play an important role if the

1 Tracy Laquey and Jeanne C. Ryer, *The Internet Companion*, trans. Setsu Suzuki (Tokyo: Toppan Publishing Co., 1993), p. 45.

2 An essay on business communication management I have introduced. It ↗

purpose of business communication is to make the negotiation successful.

I will discuss the reasons why I have come to hold these hypotheses and how the person's consciousness of oneself and others affects business communication across nations and cultures in this paper.

Identity and Personal Relationships in Business

Business, whatever its type may be, is itself human relations. The basic requirement for business activity is the existence of yourself and other-self. As Hayakawa stated, "Any organized business activity whatsoever is an elaborate act of cooperation, in which every individual worker contributes his share. . . . And what is important for our purposes here is that all this coordination is of necessity achieved by language or else it is not achieved at all."³ We cannot neglect the importance of human relations and the role language plays in a business. In other words, business communication is "the vehicle through which management performs its basic functions. Managers direct through communication, coordinate through communication, and staff, plan, and control through communication."⁴

claims that a human can adjust and tune oneself to his or her counterpart and surroundings for better communication results. It was first introduced in "Business Reports Across Nations and Cultures," *The Japan Business English Association Annual Studies* No. 52 (October 1993): pp. 112-119.

3 S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), pp. 13-14.

4 Raymond V. Lesikar, John D. Pettit, Jr., Marie E. Flatley, *Basic Communication*, 6th ed. (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1989), p. 4.

However, what I want to emphasize here is that any communication between two people within or outside a business organization could be influenced by the relationship which exists between them. And, this relationship is affected by a number of important factors such as job title differences, social class differences and even cultural differences. We sometimes take the meaning of the same words used differently, and even change the styles of discourse, depending on who says them and whom we talk to. Also, we often adjust our behavior and the way of expressing our ideas by reacting to our surroundings. One should adjust and tune himself or herself to his or her counterpart or surroundings for better communication results. As human beings we can adjust our own behavior if we believe that not only we ourselves but also our counterpart would feel more comfortable. I have named this communication management "Reactive Adjustment." I believe that all human beings, regardless of the differences of nationality, culture, etc., have this reactive adjustment function. It should not be classified as the Japanese people's peculiar character alone, as the following statement claims: "The Japanese find it easier to deal with one another as unequals than as equals. They must know whether the person addressed is superior or inferior to them in status. The up-or-down vectors of all relationships are crucial. They always exchange business cards on meeting, in order to tune their language to one another's relative status. All this makes for close-woven judgments and the most delicate calculations when the Japanese meet socially..."⁵

5 Lance Morrow, "All the Hazards and Threats of Success," *Time*, 1 August 1983, pp. 24-25.

I will introduce some real cases in which foreign people use this reactive adjustment techniques in their business communication for better results later in this paper. Why, then, do people in general have this type of self reactive adjustment function? The answer is closely related to language. Kyoichi Marukusu, a prominent scholar of International Politics and the Study of Asia, says in his very thought provoking book; *A Viewpoint of Contemporary International Society*, that "A human being is not a species who can live isolated from others. . . . The development of language, a means of communication, gives a significant meaning to a species called a human being. That is to say a language naturally develops on condition that there exist others. It can be reasonably said that the fact a language highly advances means a human being is not an isolated being in the first place."⁶

If a human being is originally one whose relations with others are closely woven between them, it is quite natural that one wishes to keep his or her human relations well no matter where he or she comes from either West or East. The word "communication" is derived from the Latin word "communicatio," which is said to mean "being with others, sharing with each other, and becoming happy with others." It is this communication which means "being with others" that makes a human being a unique species called homo sapiens.

Self-Consciousness and Other-Consciousness in Business Situations

It may be hardly possible to think of any business activities which

6 Kyoichi Marukusu, *Gendai Kokusai Shakai No Shiza* [A Viewpoint of Contemporary International Society] (Tokyo: Maruzen Co., 1991), p. 44.

do not claim the existence of other beings and a language working as an intermediary as we have so far observed. Business is nothing but human relations and, therefore, we can say that "successful business communication is about 10 percent business and 90 percent human relations."⁷

"Business Communication" is defined as "communication aiming at achieving a certain practical effect or obtaining the desired results in a business situation," and "when the sender of message has succeeded in having the receiver of message take an action the former intended through communication, the aim can be said accomplished."⁸ That one achieves a certain practical effect presupposes the existence of self and other. And, if it is self not other that wishes to achieve this practical effect, the question of how the self is conscious of himself or herself and also his or her counterpart will become important. Though I will later discuss in detail Nakamura's theory of "situation" and its stage development (which offers theoretical base to the above definition of business communication), I wish to say that the fact that situation develops or changes into a new phase is nothing but a result of the self's hard effort of paying the closest attention to the response of his or her counterpart and responding to the reactions newly expressed by the counterpart in order to achieve a certain practical effect. We can say that this process of communication is the dynamic activity of self-consciousness and other-consciousness.

7 Howard Wilson, "Put Yourself in the Other Man's Shoes," *Business English* Vol. 31 No. 3 (March 1975), p. 36.

8 Takao Norisada, "Critical Examination on Traditional Business English Studies and Advocacy of International Contractual Communication," *Shogaku Ronkyu* Vol. 41 No. 1, Kwansai Gakuin University, (June 1993): p. 47.

We can classify our consciousness into the three standards: (1)'consciousness' which we can directly perceive; (2)'preconsciousness' which we can not perceive directly, but can obtain access to it if we would try; and (3)'unconsciousness' which we cannot have access to it even if we would try hard.⁹ The self can be divided into (1)'private self' which others cannot sense and (2)'public self' which can be the subject of perception of others. Therefore, we can classify the self-consciousness into private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness. The former can be construed as the self's tendency of focusing his or her attention to the private self which others cannot observe from outside of the self. The latter is the self's tendency of perceiving his or her own public self which others can observe.¹⁰ Similarly we can classify other-consciousness into (1) our direct perception of or interest in others and (2) our imaginative perception of or interest in others.¹¹ According to Professor Tsuji, the author of *Self-Consciousness and Other-Consciousness*, the leading American scholars of this subject have distinguished "self-consciousness" which is a characteristic of self-consciousness or the tendency of the self's paying attention to his or her own self from "self-awareness" which is a state of self-consciousness evoked situationally (Fenigstein, A., Scheier, M. F., & Bus, A. H., 1975).¹²

The concept of self-consciousness and other-consciousness has been dealt with in the field of psychology, particularly psychopathology or

9 Heijiro Tsuji, *Jiko-ishiki To Tasha-ishiki* [Self-consciousness and Other-consciousness] (Kyoto: Kitaohji Shobo Co., 1993), p. 26.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-65.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 49-152.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 51.

neuropsychiatry which is known for its mental therapy for neurotics. The history of the study of self-consciousness is old and its concept is so well known with such terms as "id," "ego," and "superego" by Sigmund Freud that no further explanation may be necessary.

However, the idea of "other-consciousness" has been scarcely studied so far. The study on other-consciousness has just recently been started by Prof. Heijiro Tsuji of Kyoto University. He has said that the reason why this "other-consciousness" has been neglected for a long time is that it has been absorbed into public self-consciousness which is a state of mind in which one cares how he or she is looked on by others. Tsuji noted in the book I have referred to before that "we live with others in our society. Our attention, perception, and interest are naturally directed to others. We pay attention to others' appearances or looks at every movement. We care much about what the expression or the attitude of others means to us and imagine the thoughts and feelings others may hold in their minds. If we would name these attentions, interests or perceptions "other-consciousness," this other-consciousness will become an indispensable concept to understand self presentations while perceiving others, affectionate actions toward others, personal uneasiness which one feels when he or she faces others, etc." He also notes the difference between "public self-consciousness" and "other-consciousness" as follows: "While other-consciousness is the self's attention to or interest in others, and the object is nothing but 'others', public self-consciousness is the consciousness of and about the self which is observed by others. No matter how

13 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

much it may be the consciousness observed by 'others' and reflected upon 'others,' the object of the consciousness is always 'self' itself. Therefore, as far as they are defined in this way, other-consciousness and public self-consciousness are entirely different entities.¹⁴

When we talk about self-consciousness and other-consciousness, we cannot overlook the matter of labeling others and ourselves because we have a tendency to live up to our labels, whether those labels have been applied by others or are those we have chosen for ourselves. Here is a statement about this subject illustrating how labeling works and affects our communication: "Often there is comfort in responding to a label. . . . If you label yourself as 'no good in math' or 'a lousy public speaker' or 'the quiet type,' you may continue to prove that this is so. Responding to such labels gives us direction, even if the direction is backwards; responding to such labels helps us decide what to do and what not to do, even if the choices are not the wisest."¹⁵

These labels can be also called categories or classifications we give to ourselves and others, which influence our attitude when communicating with others a great deal. Since "there is comfort in responding to a label," we are apt to classify a person whom we talk to into a certain type, forming an image of him or her based on pre-information given to us before business negotiations start. However, we have to be careful in making this type of classification because "No category is neutral. Not only does a classification reflect a purpose, but often an attitude is associated with the classification, too."¹⁶ Our attitudes

14 *Ibid.*, p. 151.

15 John C. Condon, *Semantics and Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1975). p. 64.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

toward our counterpart might vary depending on whether you were told he or she was such and such a person before the communication with him or her starts. Our attitude might be different with each different classification. There is a risky possibility that we will not talk to the counterpart as he or she really is, but talk to our own responses to the pre-information we have received beforehand.

The Scope of Business from the Consciousness Viewpoint

I have been wondering at which point the phenomenon of business communication would start and also what and how far in the world the term "business" covers and means. I have studied the subject and come to the conclusion through trial and error that we could solve these questions with the concept of self-and other-consciousness. A language could not exist and function at all should there be no other beings in this world, as we have observed. And if it were so, there should be no interaction of people in our daily lives. This is also true in a business world. No language means no business. And no business requires no interaction. "The goal of interaction is the merger of self and other, a complete ability to anticipate, predict, and behave in accordance with the joint needs of self and other," said David K. Berlo in his *The Process of Communication*, a bible of communication study. He further said, "We can define interaction as the ideal of communication, the goal of human communication."¹⁷

The thoughts and emotions of all human beings are all the same

17 David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 131.

regardless of any other differences. Our counterpart in business communication, no matter where he or she comes from, understands consideration for others, cries when he or she is sad, and laughs when she or he is happy, just as we do. And if they do, they can practice what we call "put yourself into the other's being" even across cultures and national boundaries. When we are cold, we think of others and presume they also feel cold. If we are hungry, we know others must be also hungry.¹⁸ I believe people would all agree to this statement: "Probably the most basic human tendencies are present, in at least latent form, in all peoples. No human beings are completely foreign to each other. Differences between cultures are matters of degree and of relative frequency,¹⁹ not differences of kind."

Because of this inherited human nature transcending cultural differences, "Honda in Ohio, Nissan in Tennessee, Toyota in Kentucky, Sharp in Tennessee—Japanese firms are now operating their own plants on American soil, with American workers and mostly American suppliers, and, so far, are doing a credible job."²⁰ I quite agree with the American author who said, "It is incorrect to say that Japanese ways will not work in our culture. Almost anything will work in our culture for a certain segment of our population if properly understood, installed, and rewarded."²¹

Let us look at definitions of the term "business." The lexical meaning

18 Naoki Kameda, "Empathy in International Business Communication," *The ABCA Bulletin* Vol. 40 No. 4 (December 1977): p. 27.

19 Dean C. Barnlund, *Public and Private Self in Japan and the United States* (Tokyo: The Simul Press, Inc., 1975), p. 65.

20 Ken Matejka and Dick Dunsing, "Japanese/American Management Myths," *Business Horizons* Vol. 34 (November 1991), p. 56.

21 *Ibid.*

of business is really wide in scope, as is its Latin original, "negotium;" 'neg' means 'not' and 'otium' means 'leisure.' Almost anything which is not leisure can be called "business." Before going further into our discussion of the subject, I would like to introduce some legal definitions of business. The first five come from the U. S. and the next five are from the U.K.

- (1) "Business" is largely the barter, sales, or exchange of things of value, usually property. *Wills v. National Mineral Co.*, 55 p. 2nd 449, 453, 176 Okl. 193.
- (2) Any activity which occupies the time, labor and attention of men for purpose of earning a livelihood is a "business." *City and County of Denver v. Gunshurst*, 210 p. 2nd 616, 618, 120 Colo. 465.
- (3) The word "business" has a very broad meaning, and may be used in many different connotations. It means anything that engages time, attention, or labor. *Smith v. Duracraft Products Co.*, 62 N.E. 2nd 731, 734, 75 Ohio App. 556.
- (4) "Business" is defined as that which busies or that which occupies the time, attention, or labor of one as his principal concern, whether for a longer or shorter time. *Rosenblum v. Anglim*, D.C. Cal., 43 F. Supp. 889, 893.
- (5) "Business" is defined as that which occupies the time, attention and labor of men for the purpose of livelihood or profit. The word "business" has a wide application. *Wallace v. U.S.*, D.C.N.Y., 50 F. Supp. 178, 180.

(*Words and Phrases Volume 5A*, s. v. "Business.")

- (1) Business is a wider term than, and not synonymous with, trade ; it means practically anything which is an occupation as distinguished from a pleasure. Profit or the intention to make profit is not an essential part of the legal definition of a trade or business. (38 Halsbury's Laws (3rd Ed.) 10, 11).
- (2) "Business" includes the undertaking of a canteen, club, school, hospital or institution, whether carried on for profit or not, and any undertaking or activity carried on by a public or local authority (Food and Drugs Act 195, s. 135(I)).
- (3) "The word 'business'...means almost anything which is an occupation, as distinguished from a pleasure—anything which is an occupation or duty which requires attention is a business." *Rolls v. Miller* (1884), 26 Ch. D. 71. C. A., *per Lindley*, L. J., at p. 88.
- (4) "My present view is...that a solicitor's practice, at any rate in London, is a pursuit upon lines sufficiently commercial to bring it within the term 'business' as distinguished from an occupation such as that of a schoolmaster which is not organised and conducted upon commercial lines." *Re Wilkinson*, [1922] 1 K.B. 584, *per Roche*, J., at p. 587.
- (5) "I turn to the meaning of the word 'business' and it seems to me that it is plain, on the meanings found attributed to the word in the dictionaries as in the authorities, that "business" is capable of including the practice of a profession. The Oxford English Dictionary gives, among others, this meaning: 'Habitual occupation ; profession ; trade.' That plainly includes the profession of a

doctor." *Re Williams' Will Trusts, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China v. Williams*, [1953] 1 All E. R. 536, *per* Danckwerts, J., at pp. 537, 538 (also reported in [1953] Ch. 138, at p. 141).

22
(*Words and Phrases, Legally Defined*)

As we have observed so far in the legal definitions of business, the term "business" has indeed a broad meaning. The communication between a professor and his or her secretary is business communication even though it has nothing to do with making a commercial profit. Take for instance, a professor who all of a sudden remembers he needs some materials for the following day's meeting. He must have those typed out by his secretary. The time is 4:55 p.m. The secretary politely turns down the request. The professor negotiates the matter earnestly and has finally succeeded in having the secretary accept the work. He has "achieved a practical effect or obtained the desired result at a business situation." In other words, the professor as the sender of a message has succeeded in having the receiver of his message take an action he has intended through communication. The aim of his communication is accomplished. This process perfectly fits in the definition of business communication introduced before in this paper.

One other example may suffice to explain what business in business communication is. This example of communication between a Japanese and Americans clearly shows us the importance of self- and other-

22 John B. Saunders, ed. (London: Butterworths & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1974), p. 199.

consciousness in business communication. A Japanese personnel manager working for a relatively large English conversation school in Osaka once told me an interesting story of his experience. One of his important tasks is to ask a native speaker to substitute for a regular instructor during his or her abrupt absence. While he was pressed for time, he asked an American lady to take over this particular work, expecting that she would do the work much better than him with her "real English." But, his wish did not come true. Why? Those who receive such a request are usually preoccupied with some plans of their own or may just wish to take a rest on that day. Although they know well that they are paid extra for such an irregular job, they usually would not like to accept it. Therefore, when the American lady, whom they did not know, phoned and asked, all those asked by her coldly turned down such a request. However, when the Japanese manager asked the same thing to the same persons, the response was different; they either hesitated to refuse the request or simply accepted it. He said he had succeeded in these tough negotiations because of his position but not because of his English.²³ This anecdote that all the respondents gave totally different answers to the same subject depending on whom they talked to is, I believe, a good example how the self- and other-consciousness affects communication.

From the legal definitions of business we have learned that 'time,' 'labor,' and 'attention' are the three factors in common for the definition of business. If business means anything that engages time, attention, or labor, I wonder if the seemingly inactive action of speculators

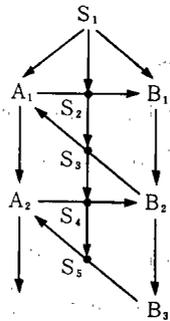
23 Interview with Fujio Okamoto, Manager, Native Instructors' Personnel Section, ECC Foreign Language Institute, Osaka, 27 December 1993.

in shares or foreign exchange could perfectly constitute a business. When they struggle for the maximum profit or the minimum loss just sitting deep in the sofa and being sunk in deep thought, they may be doing a very big business though their static posture does not express an image of doing any productive business. They spend 'time,' 'labor,' and 'attention' wondering to themselves if they should go forward or retreat. This state of their minds is nothing but a business; their "self as the subject" and "self as the object" are communicating with each other through their inner speech in their minds. I think this inter-mind communication between the self as the subject and the self as the object by inner speech could be also called business communication. Inner speech is "a type of 'speech' discussed by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, who distinguished between external speech and inner speech. External speech is spoken or written speech, and is expressed in words and sentences. Inner speech is speech for oneself. It takes place inside one's own mind and often takes place in 'pure word meaning' rather than in words or sentences, according to Vygotsky."²⁴

Business Situation between Two Selves and Its Development Process

The following figure is from Mikito Nakamura's well-known theory of "Situation" and its development ($S_1 \rightarrow S_2 \rightarrow S_3 \dots$). He said that "we al-

24 *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (2nd ed.) s.v. "inner speech."



ways stand on a certain 'situation' and respond to the stimuli therefrom. This response sometimes takes a form of speech and some other times is expressed in nonverbal form. When such a stimulus is uttered in verbal form (utterance), the utterance stimulates the listener (or even the speaker himself or herself) and leads him or her to take a certain response. This response may be verbal again or nonverbal one. ... At any rate, the Situation, which lies between A and B and wrap the A and the B, changes every second and further develops ($S_1 \rightarrow S_2 \rightarrow S_3 \dots$) by verbal actions of both A and B. A_1 and B_1 confront each other, receiving various influences such as education, experience, personal history, etc. from each one's past time- and space-wise Situation. The Situation S_1 is expanded between A_1 and B_1 . A_1 and B_1 standing on each one's situation receive a stimulus respectively from this Situation S_1 common to both of them. Suppose that an utterance is now started from A_1 to B_1 . Although A_1 speaks to B_1 , and not to S_1 , in this case, a change of $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ is brought about by A_1 's utterance. The utterance $A_1 \rightarrow B_1$ gives a stimulus to B_1 through S_2 and brings about a change of $B_1 \rightarrow B_2$. If B_2 responds to A_1 , B_2 is now a speaker giving an utterance to A_1 ($B_2 \rightarrow A_1$). This B_2 's utterance changes S_2 to S_3 , stimulates A_1 through S_3 , and brings about the change of $A_1 \rightarrow A_2$. If communication would continue, the utterance of $A_2 \rightarrow B_2$ will further bring about $S_3 \rightarrow S_4$ resulting in $B_2 \rightarrow B_3$. Thus the communication between A and B will change the Situations one after another.

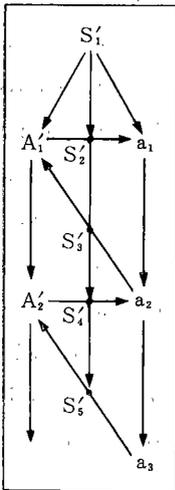
25

This is the development of contexts or coherence."

25 Mikito Nakamura, *Business Communication* (Tokyo: Dobunkan Publishing Co., 1978), p. 17.

Dean C. Barnlund, a world famous communication scholar, says that "Every communication, interpersonal or intercultural, is a transaction between these private worlds. . . . When it involves an integration of facts or ideas, it is usually called an 'agreement'; when it involves sharing a mood or feeling, it is referred to as 'empathy' or 'rapport.' But 'understanding' is a broad enough term to cover both possibilities; in either case it identifies the achievement of a common meaning."²⁶ This statement also supports Nakamura's theory of the Situation and its development. "The achievement of a common meaning," I think, is equal to "the stop of the situation's development" in the case of the Nakamura's theory.

However, if and when we carefully look into the stage when the utterance of A_1 to B_1 takes place, or S_1 develops to S_2 , from the consciousness viewpoint, I think we can say the following: the utterance



is the result of agreement and understanding between the subject self and the object self. Let me explain as follows:

The left figure is a modified version of Nakamura's. It shows the state of mind of A_1 in Nakamura's figure. " s_1 " is the situation incorporated into A_1 . " A_1 " is the subject self (I) and " a_1 " is the object self (me). The utterance $A_1 \rightarrow B_1$ would be started only after the small " s " develops in between A_1 and a_1 and both agree with and understand each other at a certain point; that is,

where the small "s" stops to develop further. Naturally the same thing can be applied to the inner states of mind of B_1 , A_2 , B_2 and A_3 which are their self-consciousness. This inner communication between (I) and (me) is carried out by inner speech as I explained before. This inner speech is purely transparent and noise-less, free from any misunderstanding, because the same person works as message sender and receiver as well. We can also say that that Reactive Adjustment functions as explained before are again the result of inner communication between A'_1 and a'_1 and the situation development of small s'_1 to s'_2 . General Semantics²⁷ people say that meaning are in people, or words do not mean but people mean. There is no possibility of bypassing²⁸ here at all as long as the same person is communicating in inner speech.

After (I) and (me) in A_1 agree and understand, then the A_1 selects a means of communication that will best carry his messages, which can be also called a channel. A_1 converts meanings into symbols and sends these symbols to B_1 . There are three channels to send them: (1) Verbal, (2) Nonverbal and (3) Silent communications. A_1 can select either one or two combined (verbal plus nonverbal or nonverbal plus silence) of these channels. Verbal communication means spoken words, written

27 General Semantics is "an educational movement concerned with relations between symbols, esp. language, and reality and with improving the adjustment of people to each other and to the environment," *Webster's New World Dictionary*, s.v. "general semantics."

28 "Bypassing is the name for the miscommunication pattern which occurs when the *sender* (speaker, writer, and so on) and the *receiver* (listener, reader, and so forth) *miss each other with their meanings*." William V. Haney, *Communication and Interpersonal Relations* (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1979), p. 285.

words and nonverbal communication means all communication that occurs without words such as gestures, movements, facial expressions, and so on. I want to emphasize here that the selection or decision of which channel(s) A_1 uses is again the result of the agreement between (I) and (me) in A_1 's self-consciousness.

Nakamura highly evaluates the power of silence saying "It is not right to think the development of Situation stops if either A or B has become silent... I, rather, wish to think that silence is zero sign 'parole'^{29, 30}" Although "it is often very difficult in practice to draw a precise distinction between informative and communicative behavior,"³¹ I still believe the A's silence is intentional and communicative, and if it were intentional and communicative all the time, the volume of message the silence would express could be much larger than verbal or nonverbal communication depending on cases and situations. It sometimes stimulates the other-consciousness of B a great deal. You may understand the matter well if you think of the speechless cold war between husband and wife or a manager and his subordinate. The silence each side resorts to, after its careful consideration, may serve as powerful strategy.

People may object saying that there should be unintentional silence, too. However, I think there is no such "unintentional silence." Ignoring

29 The term "parole" was used by the linguist Saussure to mean the actual use of language by people in speech or writing. Saussure called the system of a language "langue", that is the arrangement of sounds and words which speakers of a language have a shared knowledge of or, as he said, "agree to use." Langue is the "ideal" form of a language. *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (2nd ed.) s.v. "langue."

30 Nakamura, *Business Communication*, p. 18.

31 Peter Hartly, *Interpersonal Communication* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.12.

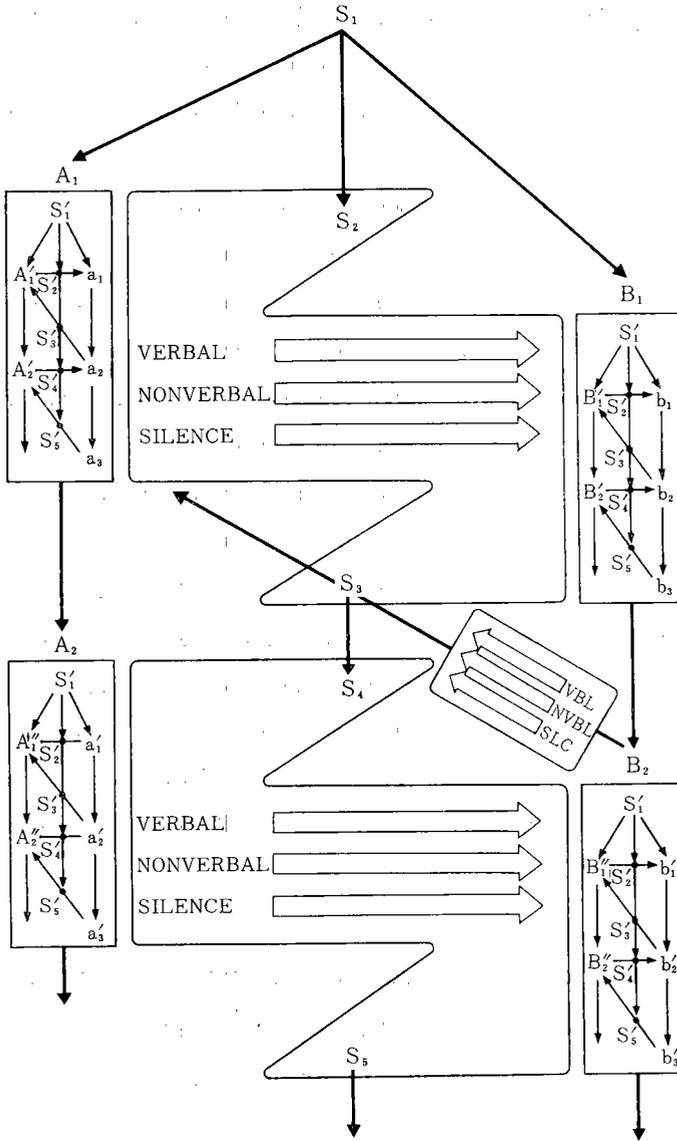
silence, for instance, is a means to stop the development of Situation or to force the Situation to cease from its further development. This, too, is an intentional action to "to stop the situation's further development."

The meaning of messages sent by A to B through the channels as above is regulated by the A's self-and other-consciousness of "who I am," and "whom I am talking to." B in turn gives his or her own meaning to the messages he or she has received from A. And this message (symbol or symbols) decoding is much influenced by the B's self- and other-consciousness, too. This is the reason why we are apt to give different meanings to the same words or messages on the same subject, depending on who has said what.

I have further modified Nakamura's figure of the Situation development and illustrated how the communication between A and B is actually carried out and the situation develops in the following page. The boxes on four corners, namely A_1, B_1, A_2 and B_2 , represent each one's inner state of mind. You may also call this box the mind's filter, which incorporates the product of all one's experience and thoughts into it.

Classification of International Business Communication and Cases of Self- and Other-Consciousness in Business Communication

I have classified International Business Communication as follows based on the definition of Business Communication by Norisada, who



said, "We can say the purpose of business communication is accomplished when the message sender has had the receiver take the former's intended action. The case may present two possible situations. One is that only one side has the purpose and communicates to accomplish it. The sender is active and the receiver is passive in this situation. Let us name this one-way communication 'Instructive Communication.' The other one is that each side has its own purpose and communicates to accomplish it collaborating with each other. However, since their interests confront each other to some extent in this situation, both sides try to find out a point of agreement through their communication. Let us name it 'Negotiatory Communication.' In this case the two-way communication, in which each side becomes the sender and

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

| | INSIDE COMPANY | OUTSIDE COMPANY |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| INSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ORDER PLACEMENT • BUSINESS REPORT • TRAINING (LOCAL) • TRAINING (H.Q.) • MANUAL • INSTRUCTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRESENTATIONS • PRESS RELEASE • AD & PUBLICITY • DEMONSTRATIONS • TRAINING (LOCAL) • ORDER PLACEMENT |
| NEGOTIATORY COMMUNICATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MANAGEMENT • BUSINESS REPORT • VARIOUS MEETINGS ON PRODUCT, LOGISTICS, FINANE, ETC. • BRANCH MANAGERS OR SUBSIDIARY PRESIDENTS CONFERENCES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEGOTIATIONS INQUIRY, OFFER, ETC. • CONTRACT • COMPLAINT & CONFLICT SETTLEMENT • DEALERS MEETINGS • DELIVERY & PAYMENT |

the receiver, is practiced.”³²

I have applied Norisada's definition of business communication into International Business Communication and classified it into the diagram on page 51 with four boxes in it, all of which extend their boundary to international and cross-cultural territories.

I am going to introduce the following four model cases of business communication in which the self- and other-consciousness of the senders and the receivers of messages affects their communication in the real world of business :

- (1) The H. Q. of a Japanese electronics company and its locally established company in Singapore.
- (2) A Japanese lecturer speaking to an audience of foreign nationalities.
- (3) A young operation chief of a Japanese steamship company and captains of foreign nationality.
- (4) A Japanese manager of the overseas department of a leading Japanese audio manufacturer and the president of its exclusive distributor in an Asian country.

These four cases represent business communication of four boxes in the International Business Communication diagram on the previous page. I am going to analyze each case and elucidate the self- and other-consciousness effects on business communication. The first two cases may serve as the answers to my first hypothesis and the last two

32 Norisada, "Critical Examination on Traditional Business English Studies and Advocacy of International Contractual Communication," p. 47.

to my second hypothesis.

The president of a Japanese electronics company's Singaporean local company, who is a Japanese, complained to a newspaper reporter during an interview. One of his troubles is that all order forms from the Japan H. Q. are written in Japanese, which he has to have translated into English. He said, "If the H. Q. regards us as an independent company on an equal footing, its staff would have written all the documents to us in English. Because the H. Q.'s consciousness hasn't changed a bit, it treats us just as one of its affiliated companies."³³ This fact shows the low esteem or the low degree of the other-consciousness of the H. Q. against its local company. It also suggests that the conflict between the "dutiful self," which the local president feels the H. Q. wants him to be, and the "ideal other," which he wants the H. Q. to be, is hampering smooth communication. The term "ideal other" is the same as "imaginative or desired other-consciousness."

The next case is from *The Japanese Managers*³⁴ written by Tetsuo Amako, a professor of Yokohama State University who is known for his energetic lecturing trips overseas on Japanese management. When he lectured at a workshop seminar in Lisbon, he received an unexpectedly poor response from the attendees of his lecture. Actually his colleague had received an enthusiastic response at a similar seminar

33 "Japaness Multinational Companies in Asia," *Asahi Shimbun*, 9 June 1990, p. 11.

34 Tetsuo Amako, *The Japanese Managers* (Tokyo: Sogensha Co., 1992), pp. 102-103.

meeting on the same theme in Paris shortly before he spoke in Lisbon. Amako raised the reasons why his lecture was poorly received. While the participants at the Paris meeting were French personnel managers, all interested in the Japanese management system, the Lisbon participants were the managements of furniture manufacturers from 14 countries who have no connecting points with Japan. Speaking to people who have no particular interest in Japanese management, you cannot win their confidence in your seminar talk, he said. "A black-haired Japanese wearing glasses speaking in Japanese English insolently about the supremacy of Japanese multi-national companies," as he himself said, was the second reason. All these factors, he said, must have caused a rejection reaction in the minds of the participants.

These self reflective statements of Amako exactly reflect public self-consciousness and other-consciousness and represent an example of failure in the consideration for such consciousness. The public self-consciousness is expressed in his statement of "a black-haired Japanese wearing glasses speaking in Japanese English insolently," and the low degree of other-consciousness is expressed in his self reflection that he regarded the participants identical to those in Paris only because, he thought, they were the same Caucasians.

The third case is from a conversation with a young man working for a Japanese steamship company. I remember his talk because his comment on language learning was unique. He said that English proficiency is much involved with not a mere skill but the degree how close you are with those to whom you speak. He told me he

finds it difficult to communicate in his English to foreign captains or crews at his first meeting with those people. However, he has less difficulty and can give orders or instructions concerning the company's ship schedules smoothly to those whom he has met before. Also, he said, "Because a captain is much higher in hierarchy than a section chief like me, almost all the captains show a somewhat defiant attitude to my orders, which makes our communication rough. But, as time passes the captains come to understand that it is me, not the division manager whose job ranking is the same as that of the captain, that actually operates the ship schedule worldwide. When they realize this, many captains change their attitudes and become polite to me, although I am lower in hierarchy and younger in age. This change in their attitudes toward me make our communication in English very smooth."³⁵ This story also relates the issue of public self-consciousness and other-consciousness. I believe the last explanation about the change in the attitudes of foreign captains toward a young Japanese man illustrates a good example of the Reactive Adjustment.

The last example comes from a story told to me by a company president whose company is a sole and exclusive distributor of a leading Japanese audio manufacturer in one of the ASEAN countries. Whenever he meets and speaks with the manufacturer's overseas department manager, who is known as a somewhat temperamental person, this president, who is an overseas Chinese, is careful about his speaking English to that Japanese manager, particularly the selec-

35 Interview with Hirokazu Tobari, Chief, Tanker Section, Yuyo Steamship Co., Ltd., Business Department No. 1, Tokyo, 28 July 1992.

tion of English words. He pays attention to the manager's responses and whenever he sees even a slight change in the manager's attitude or facial expressions, he said, he immediately changes his own attitude and the way of speaking.³⁶ He knows the purpose of business communication. I believe this is again a good example of changes in the public self-consciousness and high level of other-consciousness on the side of the sender of a message. It also illustrates well the function of the Reactive Adjustment theory.

³⁷ Dogen, a premier Zen Buddhist of the medieval times of Japan, once instructed his disciples that "An ancient saying tells us to think about something three times before saying it. This means, of course, that whenever we are about to say or do something, we should think it over three times before expressing it in speech or action. Most Confucians of old understood this to mean to withhold speech or action until a matter had been considered three times and found worthy each time."³⁸ It is interesting to note that the overseas Chinese company president practices this Confucianism of old in his communicative behavior in today's modern world.

I have analyzed case three as one in which the self- and other-

36 Interview held during my visit in Jakarta on 2 August 1992, but the interviewee must be kept anonymous because of the delicacy of the matter reported.

37 "Dogen (1200-1253). Also known as Dogen Kigen or Kigen Dogen. Founder in 1227 of the SOTO SECT of ZEN Buddhism and of the monastery EIHEIJI in Echizen Province (now part of Fukui Prefecture). He wrote SHOBO GENZO (1231-53, Treasury of the True Dharma Eye), a classic of Buddhist literature..." *JAPAN AN Illustrated Encyclopedia*, Kodansha Ltd., s.v. "Dogen."

38 Reiho Matsunaga, *A Primer of Soto Zen* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1975), p. 68.

consciousness changes the extent of how well the words are communicated to others, and case four as another in which the self- and other-consciousness changes the words themselves. A clear distinction lies, however, between these two cases. That is the time spent for the changes in the speakers' state of mind. The captains' case shows a gradual change in the long run, and the company president's case an immediate change or a quick response. I call these reactive changes in the attitudes of the speakers "reactive adjustment," and am interested in the fact that this reactive adjustment is practiced by foreign peoples, too. Professor Buss, a well known scholar for his study of self-consciousness, states "When one's public self-consciousness is elevated, he or she starts being anxious about other's thought on him or her, that is, how he or she is thought by others, and therefore, he or she is liable to display a sympathetic action in which he or she tries to have his or her judgment and action agreeable to others³⁹." This statement of Buss also supports my objection to Lance Morrow's analysis of the Japanese peoples' communicative behavior as something unique and peculiar to Japanese alone (see p. 32 of this paper).

International Business Communication and Consciousness Problems

I would now like to refer to the general case of international business communication such as correspondence, business meetings, contracts, etc. and consciousness problems.

39 Heijiro Tsuji, *Jiko-ishiki To Tasha-ishiki*, p. 97.

We may be able to classify business correspondence such as letter and fax writing into the second column of other-consciousness, that is, our imaginative perception of other. What I mean is that we communicate with others who are not present in front of us. When one writes his or her message, being conscious of the addressee, he or she is apt to be conscious of not the addressee as a human being but merely an inhuman company stuffed with office equipment or an imaginative person whose image he or she has selfishly formed. This type of attitude should be avoided. One must know clearly, before writing, who will actually read his or her letter. For this purpose one should be armed with a plentiful support which may well elevate his or her other-consciousness. By physical support I mean such things as photos or video tapes of the addressees, their offices and factories or warehouses, the vicinity's sceneries; photo albums and letter files; sufficient information on the addressee from one's colleagues or seniors, etc. In business letter/fax writing it is very important to know of whom we write to. We say that a style changes, or we should change the style of our business writing, depending on who the reader of our letter and fax is. It is natural that a style changes according to the length or the depth of the writer's association with the reader.

When a business person meets his or her counterpart for the first time, he or she usually starts the conversation with a warm-up which is a talk about weather, business in general, etc. This reminds us of the dogs and cats sniffing each other on their first encounters. Not only dogs and cats, but also human beings feel uneasy unless they know what and who their counterparts are. I have had the same

experience in the same place, but when a friend of mine, a Belgian businessman, visited Athens, he was totally aghast with the torture of wining and dining entertainment for the first two full days. This, I know, comes out of the kindness of Greek people who want a visitor to feel relaxed, and also their wish to know the true color of the visitor as early as possible. We can analyze this Greek style of approach as an action from the host's desire to elevate his other-consciousness on the visitor while the host opens his public-self consciousness to the visitor, both for making their contact close.

Business persons should attend a business negotiation with full intentional knowledge of the identification of themselves and also their company's stand in that particular business situation. A novice business person often fails in negotiations because he or she doesn't know where he or she stands from the viewpoint of the counterpart. It is true that "In real business negotiations it is seldom that both parties stand on an equal footing... It is almost a kind of fantastic story that the bargaining powers of both parties are equal to each other because of the 'buyer's market' or 'seller's market', the competition with rival companies, the managerial restrictions, etc."⁴⁰ One of the keys to successful negotiation across national and cultural boundaries is (1) to know the right positions of who I am and who the counterpart is, the differences in the value assessment, the way of thinking and the behavioral pattern underlying each culture, and (2) to understand each one's unique and original view toward a business contract based on such cultural differences.

40 Noboru Kashiwagi, "The Japanese Business Transactions and Laws of Contract," *NBL* No. 500 (July 1992), p. 23.

Conclusion

Business communication or international business communication at large is influenced by the self- and other-consciousness of the person engaging in a business activity or a business negotiation. This self- and other-consciousness affects business communication in various forms. I have classified the forms into the following six items as "factors affecting business communication."

1. Identity

This is the true color of oneself or one's consciousness, his or her company, being a member of this group or that group, his or her social status, etc. Also his or her company's position and relations to others in a particular business field falls into this category.

2. Image

Impressions from the personal appearance, voice, or the layout of business letters form an image of the message sender and affect the meaning of expressed ideas. Here is a good lesson. "The physical appearance of your message creates a crucial first impression: readers see before they read. And as soon as they see, they form judgments—good or bad—of the writer and his message."⁴¹

3. Preconception

To feel secure because of the length and the depth of the send-

41 Francis W. Weeks and Daphne A. Jameson, *Principles of Business Communication* (Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing Co., 1979), p. 45.

er's (receiver's) association with the receiver (sender) of messages or to feel uneasy because each is unknown to each other. This preconception, too, forms an image of whom one is to talk to or listen to. However, this preconceived image of the person may be quite different from an actual figure.

4. Style of speech

The skill of language use, the way one speaks and the style, too, all affect business communication because these matters, in a sense, represent the communicators themselves.

5. Situation

Power relations (strong or weak, a buyer or a seller in a buyer's or seller's market, the principal or the agent, etc.) between the two surely affect their business communication. Each one's position and also the atmosphere of a situation influence business negotiation and communication.

6. Personality

The personality or character, warm or cold, sympathetic or haughty, of the sender and the receiver of the exchanged message affects the communication and sometimes even changes the meanings of messages exchanged.

As I have observed in this paper, we can conclude that a language is not a panacea for business communication. The degree of the person's self- and other-consciousness could be a more important norm for the expression and the perception of information processed than the degree of correctness of a language used. The self- and other-

consciousness influences the expression of a sender's ideas, the selection of a channel(s) to convey the ideas to a receiver, and the perception of the ideas by the receiver. Business communication is thus much involved with the consciousness question of the senders and the receivers of messages exchanged across human beings, nations and cultures worldwide.