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Cross-Cultural Pragmatics

Ein neuer sprach- und kulturvergleichender Ansatz

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Zusammenfassung

In diesem Beitrag wird ein neuer sprach- und kulturvergleichender Ansatz vorgestellt. Die Forschungsmethodik dieses Ansatzes ist pragmalinguistisch, corpus-basiert und bottom-up ausgerichtet. Nach einer Vorstellung der forschungsmethodischen Grundlagen dieses neuen Ansatzes wird über drei Case Studies berichtet, die sich auf folgende drei diskrete, aber unmittelbar zusammenhängende Ebenen erstrecken: Ausdruck, Sprechakt und Diskurs.

Schlagwörter: Cross-Cultural Pragmatics; Forschungsmethodik; Case Studies; English-Chinese; German-Japanese

Abstract

In this paper, I describe an innovative contrastive pragmatic approach. The research methodology of this approach is pragmalinguistic, corpus-based and bottom-up. Following a description of the research-methodological basis of this approach, the paper reports on three case studies, which relate to the following three discrete, but interconnected levels: expression, speech act, and discourse.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Pragmatics; Research Methodology; Case Studies; English-Chinese; German-Japanese



1 Introduction

This contribution is based on a plenary lecture presented at the conference ‚Methodische Zugänge zur Interaktionsforschung DAFZ‘ as well as a book recently published by Cambridge University Press: *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics* (House & Kadar 2021).

Let me first of all answer the question: What is ‘Cross-Cultural Pragmatics’: Cross-cultural pragmatics is the study of the use of language by human beings in different languages and cultures. Consider the following utterance:

Example 1:

Can you open the window? (English)

Bang wo dakai chuanghu. (Chinese)

帮我打开窗户。

Help me open the window.

Here we can see that English prefers the modal verb *can*, while in Chinese the comparable request tends to be formulated as an imperative expression mitigated by the expression ‘help me’. This is already a striking pragmalinguistic difference.

Up until the 1970s, the concept ‚cross-cultural‘ was used very rarely in linguistics and applied linguistics. This changed in 1989 with the publication by an international research consortium known as the ‘Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project’ (CCSARP): ‘Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies’ (Blum-Kulka et al 1989), which turned out to be a landmark in cross-cultural pragmatics. Despite being criticized for its supposedly contextless data, the CCSARP method is still today used worldwide with many different languages and language varieties. The methodology presented in House and Kadar (2021) offers a genuinely new comprehensive methodology. This methodology can be outlined in the following overview:

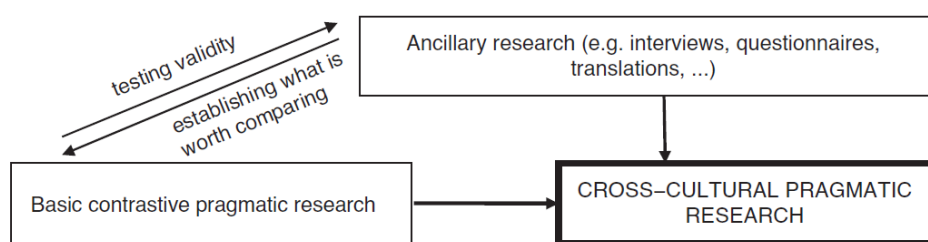


Figure 1: Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Research Methodology

As we can see in Figure 1, Contrastive pragmatic research covers a **basic methodological approach** by means of which the cross-cultural pragmatician is guided to conduct data-based comparative linguistic analyses. However, cross-cultural pragmatics not only relies on contrastive pragmatic research: it also uses **ancillary methods** supporting the linguistic analysis through interviews, surveys, translation and other relevant tasks. The suggested approach rests on a number of methodological assumptions which will be explained in further detail in the next section.

1.1 Basic assumptions underlying the research methodology suggested for Cross-Cultural Pragmatics

The following six components make up the cross-cultural research methodology:

1. *Corpora*: Cross-cultural pragmatic research needs to be based on corpora, i.e. searchable collections of machine-readable texts of various size.
2. The research methods used are both qualitative and quantitative.
3. *More than one language*: Cross-cultural pragmatics may pursue an interest in intra-cultural and intralinguistic variation of languages, including social and regional dialects, style levels, variation according to gender and age, and so on. However, cross-cultural research ideally includes various languages.
4. *Emic and etic perspectives*: Considering that the researcher's view of cross-cultural pragmatic data is very often etic because various languages tend to be involved in the analysis, it is important to balance emic and etic views by resorting to experts who are cultural insiders of the languages involved in the research.
5. *Linguistically based terminology*: Cross-cultural pragmatics operates with a linguistically based terminology, reflecting an endeavour to shy away from using essentially psychological and cultural concepts such as 'ideology', 'values' or 'identity'. A typical example of a cross-cultural pragmatic term is 'LINGUACULTURE', a term indicating how culture is manifest through particular patterns of language use, and emphasizing the inherently close relationship between language and culture.
6. *Comparability*: An important issue in cross-cultural pragmatic research is how we conduct the comparison itself: the issue of comparability emerges with both the corpora selected and the phenomena to be considered in the research.

1.2 What is 'culture'?

An important concept in cross-cultural pragmatic research is 'culture' – a concept that has been the concern of many different disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, literature, and cultural studies. The definitions offered in these fields vary according to the particular frame of reference invoked. In 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn had already collected as many as 156 (!) definitions of culture. We define 'culture' as a group's dominant and learned set of habits, conventions, norms and traditions. In general, one can distinguish two fundamental concepts of culture: the humanistic concept and the anthropological concept of culture.

- The humanistic concept centres on the 'cultural heritage' of a community as a model of refinement. Culture here refers to the exclusive collection of a community's masterpieces in literature, fine arts, music and so on.
- The anthropological concept of culture refers to the overall way of life of a community, i.e., all those traditional, explicitly and implicitly conventionalized designs for living that act as potential guides for the behaviour of members of a particular culture.

Another way of classifying the complex notion of 'culture' refers to four different levels of 'culture', as displayed in the following figure:

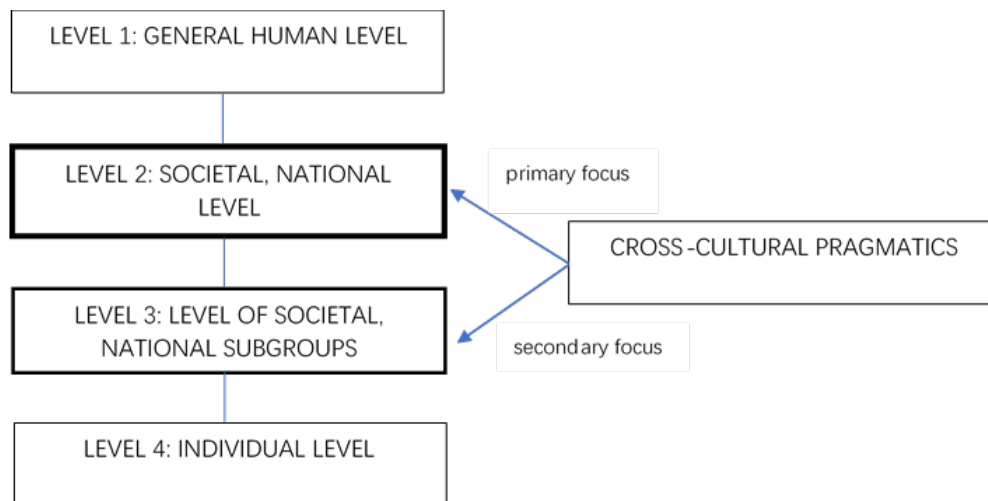


Figure 2: Levels of Culture (adapted from House 2005)

1.3 Research strands influencing Cross-cultural Pragmatics

An area with strong influence on cross-cultural pragmatics is research into the role of psycholinguistic factors in situated language use. An early representative of this body of inquiries is Hoppe-Graff et al. (1985), who proposed a binary distinction between what they called ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’ situations in the realisation of speech acts. According to Hoppe-Graff et al. (1985: 90), a situation qualifies as ‘standard’ for a language user if “the speaker assumes with a fair amount of certainty that the partner is able and willing to perform act A”, while in a ‘non-standard situation’, the speaker needs to engage in an active search for, and use of, information from the environmental context. Various experiments conducted by Hoppe-Graff et al. showed that, in standard situations, participants tend to use different ways to realise speech acts than they would use in non-standard situations. In the methodology to be described below, standard situations are indicated in a corpus by Ritual Frame Indicating Expressions (RFIE) (see below for details).

1.3.1 The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989)

The general goal of the CCSARP investigation was to establish patterns of REQUEST and APOLOGY realisations under different social constraints, across a number of languages and cultures, including both native and non-native varieties. The goals of the projects were:

1. To investigate similarities and differences in the realisation patterns of the speech acts REQUEST and APOLOGY across languages and language varieties, relative to the same social constraints (cross-cultural variation).
2. To investigate the effect of certain social variables (Power and Social Distance) on the realisation patterns of given speech acts within speech communities (sociopragmatic variation).
3. To investigate the similarities and differences in the realisation patterns of given speech acts between native and non-native speakers of a given language, relative to the same social constraints (interlanguage variation). The study was designed to allow for a reliable comparability both along the situational (sociopragmatic), cultural, and native/non-native axes.

In the CCSARP research, respondents from seven different LINGUACULTURES were asked to fill in realisations of the speech acts REQUEST or APOLOGY in the blank lines provided. In the following examples of test items, (a) is constructed to elicit a REQUEST and (b) to elicit an APOLOGY:

Example 2:

(a) At the university. Ann missed a lecture yesterday and would like to borrow Judith's notes.

Ann: _____

Judith: Sure, but let me have them back before the next week.

(b) A college teacher's office. A student has borrowed a book from her teacher, which she promised to return today. When meeting her teacher, however, she realises that she forgot to bring it along.

Teacher: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you last week.

Miriam: _____

Teacher: Okay, but please remember it next week.

(Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 14)

In the 1990s and the 2000s, the CCSARP research methodology was criticized, most famously by Gino Eelen (2001), who attacked it for its preference of elicited and essentially de-contextualized data, when it was clear to many at that time that it is 'naturalistic', fully contextualised data which can be the only reliable and valid data source for cross-cultural research. Further, CCSARP was attacked for its (supposed) universalist stance. Despite this criticism, there were and still are today many publications worldwide with different language pairs which essentially replicate the CCSARP methodology. The original CCSARP methodology from the 1980s was, however, never changed or further developed, leaving the field of Cross-Cultural Pragmatics in a theoretical and methodological void.

This is why an entirely new Cross-Cultural Approach is necessary today. One of the publications that explicitly propagate the new approach is the journal *Contrastive Pragmatics* (published since 2020 by Brill), another one is the volume *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics* mentioned above.

2 Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Research Methodological Procedures

One necessary ingredient of cross-cultural pragmatics is its focus on **conventionalisation** and the related **replicability** as pillars of any contrastive analysis. The following figure gives an overview of the suggested methodological procedure, here with reference to Ritual Frame Indicating Expressions (RFIEs):

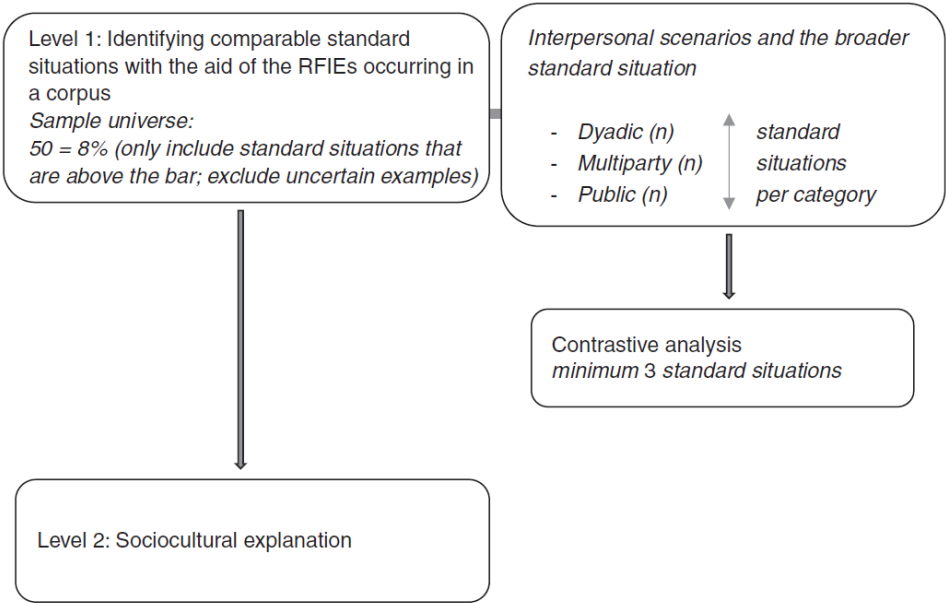


Figure 3: Cross-cultural pragmatic research procedure

The following two figures illustrate categories of cross-cultural pragmatic importance highlighting the concepts of conventionalisation and replicability: the system of *gambits* originally developed by Edmondson and House (1981; and see Edmondson et al. 2022) as well as the categories of *discourse preferences* German-English (House 2006). These two systems are explicitly based on conventionalisation and replicability.

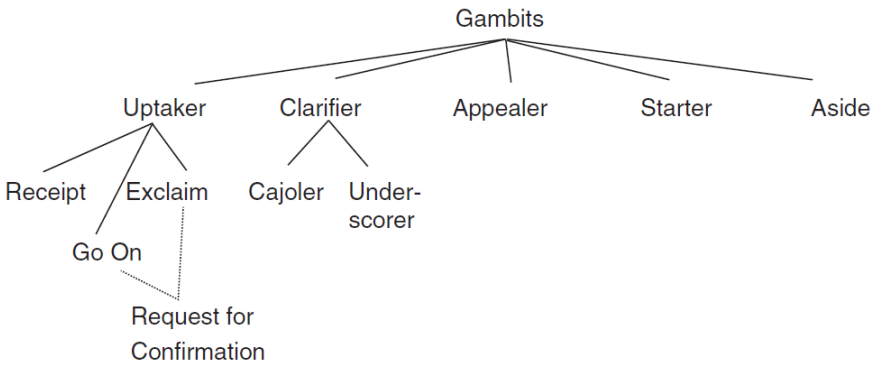


Figure 4: The replicable system of conventionalised Gambits (adapted from House & Kadar 2021)

German		English
Directness	↔	Indirectness
Orientation towards self	↔	Orientation towards other
Orientation towards content	↔	Orientation towards addressees
Explicitness	↔	Implicitness
Ad hoc formulation	↔	Routines

Figure 5: Conventionalised discourse preferences in two LINGUACULTURES (adapted from House 2006)

As a departure point for analysis, cross-cultural pragmatics follow a strictly bottom-up procedure, in the spirit of Karl Popper (1934), (see here the methodology chapter in Edmondson & House 2011). The basic idea is that the cross-cultural pragmatician ‘innocently’ approaches the data – i.e., never setting out to confirm, but rather to disconfirm, her hypothesis – and if a hypothesis turns out to be disconfirmed, an alternative hypothesis needs to be pursued, as can be seen in the following figure:

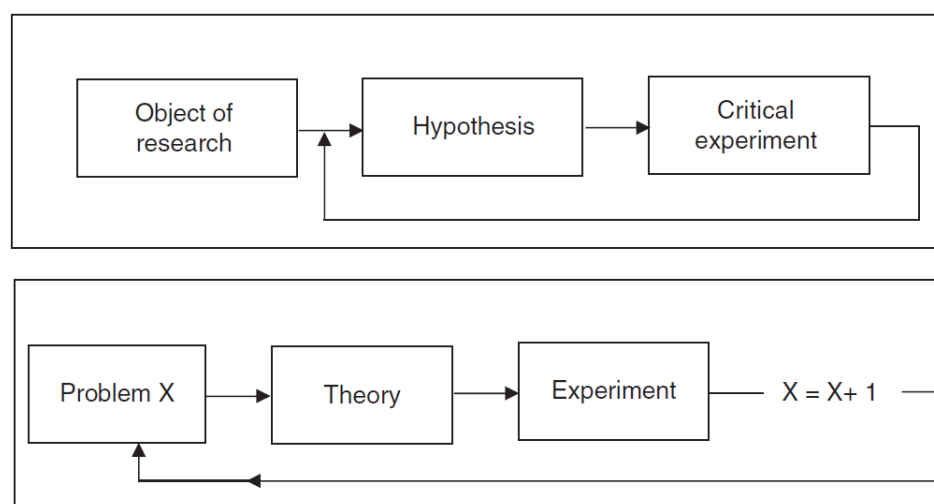


Figure 6: Popper's Research Methodology (adapted from Edmondson & House 2011: 30)

3 Three Levels of Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Comparison: Expression – Speech Act – Discourse – each illustrated by a case study

3.1 Level 1: Expression

Expressions fall under the category of Ritual Frame Indicating Expressions (RFIE). ‘Ritual frame’ refers to a cluster of standard situations in which rights and obligations – which are the essence of ritual – prevail, and one is expected to follow these rights and obligations to maintain one’s (sacred) face. ‘Ritual frame’ describes awareness of the particular standard situation in which participants find themselves. Indicating standard situations within a ritual frame facilitates the reproduction of social structures in a particular *LINGUACULTURE* (Goffman 1974). By ‘*LINGUACULTURE*’ we mean culture manifested through patterns of language use, as indicated above.

In cross-cultural pragmatic studies of RFIEs we deploy a micro (bottom-up) data-driven and corpus-based investigation, the goal being a) to pin down the cluster of standard situations a particular RFIE indicates (establishing a map of a ritual frame), and b) to deploy a contrastive inquiry in order to capture linguacultural differences between RFIE pairs.

A theory of RFIEs also helps us to connect various seemingly unrelated pragmatic phenomena such as honorifics and Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) (e.g., *THANKS*). An IFID can be defined as a formulaic, routinised expression, which makes a speech act explicit.

In the following I will present a summary of a case study of expressions taken from Chinese and English corpora (see Kadar & House 2020).

The research methodology used is illustrated in the following figure.

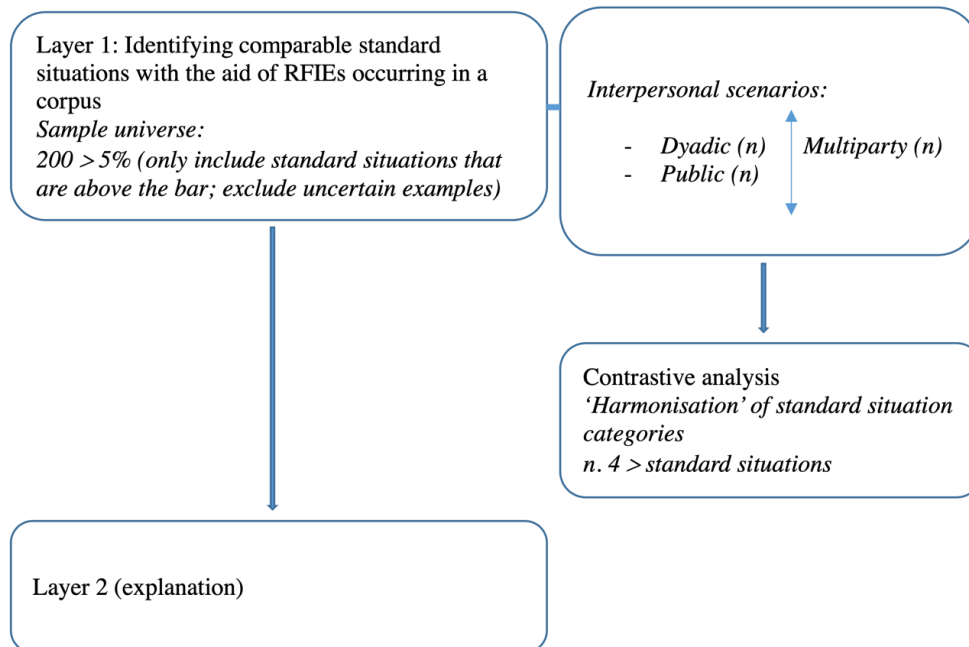


Figure 7: Methodological Procedure of a Case Study involving RFIEs in two LINGUACULTURES

3.1.1 Data: Two corpora

The data used in this study included Mandarin Chinese and English corpora of comparable size.

The Chinese corpus consisted of 1,000 occurrences of the Chinese RFIE *qing* ('please') and *duibuqi* ('sorry'). We compiled this corpus on the basis of the Modern Chinese General Balanced Corpus, a collection of approximately 100 million characters, which includes dialogues, political articles, legal documents, news reports, and various literary works. The texts in the corpus cover the period from 1919 (the establishment of the Republic of China) to the beginning of the 21st century. In the course of data collection for the present project, we collected 200 occurrences of the RFIEs.

The English corpus held the same quantity of 1,000 uses of the English RFIE *please* and *sorry* from the British National Corpus (BNC). The BNC is a 100-million-word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a cross-section of British English from the latter part of the 20th century, both spoken and written. The BNC includes, for example, extracts from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals, and spoken language collected in different contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins.

3.1.2 Analysis and Results

The corpus search revealed the following Standard Situations indicated by the RFIEs *dubuqi* and *sorry*.

Chinese RFIE (‘dubuqi’ 对不起)	English RFIE (‘sorry’)
family and ceremonial	n/a
institutional (power-salience)	institutional (power-salience)
administrative (power is not salient)	administrative (power is not salient)
political language use	political language use
n/a	classroom

Table 1: Standard situations indicated by the Chinese RFIE *dubuqi* and the English RFIE *sorry*

The distribution of English ‘sorry’ is as follows:

Overall number	Dyadic	Multiparty	Public
200	78 (39%)	91 (45.5%)	31 (15.5%)

Table 2: Distribution of the RFIE *sorry* in the interpersonal scenarios in the English corpus

And the overall distribution of ‘sorry’ in the English corpus can be described as in the following Table 3:

Interpersonal scenario	Dyadic (78)	Multiparty (91)	Public (31)
Standard situation			
Administrative (power is not salient)	49	28	n/a
Classroom	n/a	26	n/a
Institutional (power-salience)	29	37	n/a
Political language use	n/a	n/a	31

Table 3: Overall Distribution of the RFIE *sorry* in the English corpus

An immediate point to note is that there are *very few* public uses in the English corpus.

While the interpersonal scenario ‘Classroom’ clearly belongs to ‘Institutional’. However, since the use of ‘sorry’ is so prevalent in this context, we decided to categorise it as a separate standard situation.

Here are some examples of the RFIE ‘sorry’ in the English corpus

Example 3:

The following examples illustrate the use of ‘sorry’ in the context of a classroom:

How many tens in one hundred. Oh sorry, ten.

We will start to think about Nick. No sorry you’ve got notes about Nick.

‘Sorry’ is used here to introduce self-correction.

Example 4:

The following examples illustrate the use of ‘sorry’ in administrative contexts:

Lorna, sorry. I thought you have some more questions.

Oh, yes, sorry, I thought mine was a copy.

‘Sorry’ is here used as indicator of self-correction.

The following Table 4 shows the incidence of ‘sorry’ used in the context of a NON-APOLOGY:

Interpersonal scenario	Dyadic (78)	Multiparty (91)	Public (31)
Standard situation			
Administrative	29 10 attention-getting 13 repairs	37 15 attention-getting 19 repairs	n/a
Classroom	n/a	26 9 attention-getting 12 repairs	n/a
Institutional	49 attention-getting 22 repairs	28 17 attention-getting 9 repairs	n/a
Political language use	n/a	n/a	31 17 attention-getting 14 repairs

Table 4: Distribution of RFIE sorry indicating NON-APOLOGIES, i.e., repairs, attention getting

As we have seen, the RFIE ‘sorry’ is often used as a giveaway expression, frequently indicating other phenomena than APOLOGIES. This is already an interesting result.

Let us now look at what happens in the Chinese corpus. The following Table 6 shows the overall distribution of ‘duibuqi’ indicating Standard Situations and interpersonal scenarios.

Overall number	Dyadic	Multiparty	Public
200	48 (24%)	71 (35.5%)	81 (40.5%)

Table 5: Overall number of the RFIE ‘duibuqi’ indicating interpersonal scenarios

Interpersonal scenario	Dyadic (48)	Multiparty (71)	Public (81)
Standard situation			
Family & Ceremonial	17	34	n/a
Administrative (power is not salient)	31	n/a	n/a
Institutionalised (power-salience)	n/a	37	49
Political language use	n/a	n/a	32

Table 6: Overall distribution of the RFIE ‘*duibuqi*’ indicating standard situations and interpersonal scenarios

Table 7 shows how often ‘*duibuqi*’ is used in a NON-APOLOGY context (in brackets):

Interpersonal scenario	Dyadic (48)	Multiparty (71)	Public (81)
Standard situation			
Family & Ceremonial	17 (3)	34 (2)	n/a
Administrative (power is not salient)	31 (6)	n/a	n/a
Institutionalised (power-salience)	n/a	37 (3)	49
Political language use	n/a	n/a	32

Table 7: Distribution of the RFIE ‘*duibuqi*’ in a NON-APOLOGY use in brackets and underlined

An immediate point to note here (apart from the standard situations) is the following: there are very many public uses. This clearly indicates that ‘*duibuqi*’ is used as a momentous and weighty apology expression, and only infrequently as a NON-APOLOGY.

Here are two examples illustrating how the RFIE ‘*duibuqi*’ is used in the standard situation Family & Ceremonial:

Example 5:

他向前走了一步，摸了一把脸上的雨水和泪水，等呜咽声从喉咙里咽下去以后，才继续说：

这些年来，我给大家办的事太少了，许多乡亲们直到现在还少吃没穿的，我对不起乡亲们！

He made a step forward, wiped off the tears from his face, and after a crying guttural sound he said:

“In these years, I’ve done too little for everyone, so many of my fellow villagers are still in poverty, I have to apologise for failing my fellow villagers.”

Example 6:

不起，请开壶龙井！

Sorry, please open this jar of Longjing tea!

As opposed to the English RFIE ‘sorry’, the Chinese RFIE ‘*duibuqi*’ – which is the standard translation equivalent of ‘sorry’ – is a ‘politeness-heavy’ expression due to its honorific origin. In most of the cases in our Chinese corpus, ‘*duibuqi*’ indicates a proper and serious apology. This is very different from the RFIE ‘sorry’ in English, which, as we have seen above, is often used as a ‘POLITENESS-LIGHT’ expression.

3.2 Level 2: Speech Acts

Cross-cultural pragmatic studies on speech acts can benefit from using the following replicable and finite interactional speech act typology. This typology is a classification of speech acts that can be useful in analysing and interpreting human linguistic behaviour. The case study described in this section is also based on several of the speech acts listed in this typology.

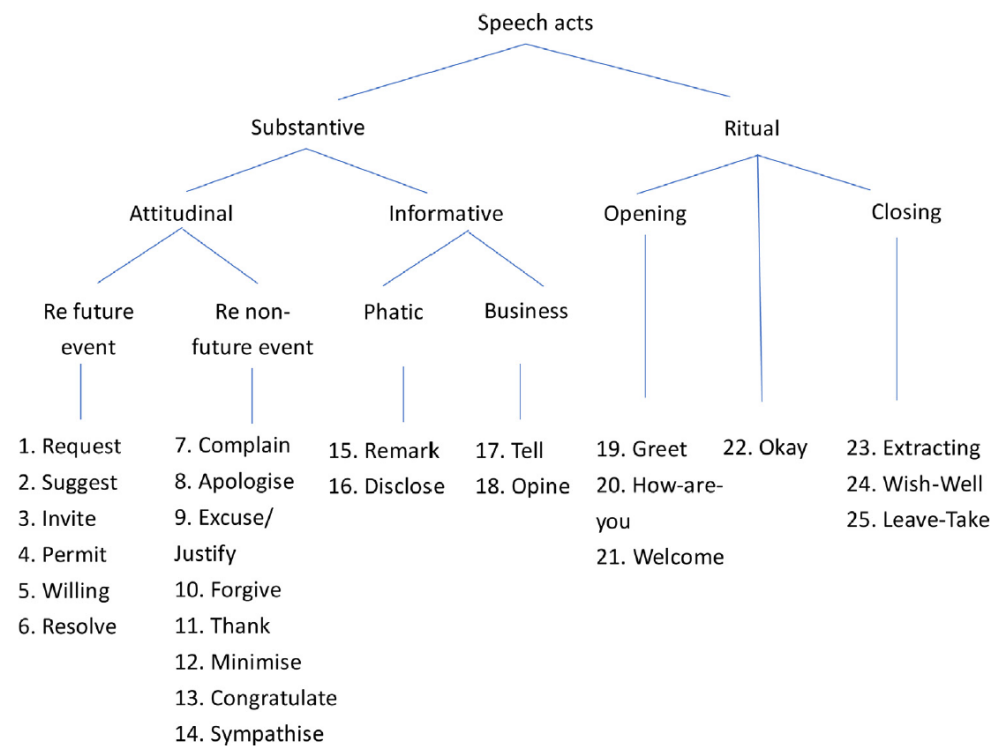


Figure 8: An interactional speech act typology (adapted from Edmondson & House (1981: 98, and Edmondson et al. 2023)

In the following I present a summary of a historical cross-cultural pragmatic case study in which Chinese and English realisations of certain speech acts are compared. The study involved a diplomatic interaction between Chinese and American diplomats from the 19th century. It is an example of strictly language-anchored research – obviously in a historical case study there is no way one can look into participants’ minds. The study involved exchanges of diplomatic notes – ‘Démarche’ (*zhaozhui* 照會 in historical Chinese). In diplomatic notes, aggression tends to be veiled through the operation of a conventionalised ritual frame, and it often occurs under a veneer of civil diplomatic language. Watts (1999) has referred to this phenomenon as resembling an ‘Iron fist in a velvet glove’. With respect to diplomatic notes, it seems important to examine what exactly goes on in terms of language

use, and in particular with respect to the use of speech acts and how their use reflects the dynamics of intercultural communication at the time. In diplomacy, interactions often take place in the form of genres with strictly conventionalized ritual features (Kadar 2017) including the use of expressions of deference such as ceremonial forms of address and the operation of complex participation and ratification in Goffman's (1967, 1974) sense: while a diplomat may exchange seemingly 'personal' remarks with the recipient, ultimately he must act as a representative of a country rather than as an individual. The operation of a ritual frame in diplomatic interactions manifests itself in participants' rights and obligations.

3.2.1 Methodology and data

The following two research questions were formulated:

1. How is aggression realised in the ritual genre of diplomatic notes?
2. What do realisation patterns of the speech acts used in these notes reveal about intercultural diplomatic communication in the given context?

We follow the logic of Karl Popper's empirical research methodology: although our initial assumption was that in diplomatic notes aggression will essentially be realised through REQUESTS, we decided to explore our corpus without any pre-categorization other than basing our work on the above displayed interactional typology of speech acts, and here we worked in particular with the speech act TELL (see Figure 8). The speech act TELL is defined as follows:

The Tell we might call the most "neutral" informative illocution. ... The assumption behind Tell is that the content of the illocution – the "fact" communicated – is of interest and relevance to the hearer's concerns and interests, and Tells are therefore made as a response ... to the hearer's explicit or implicit desire to know the fact. (Edmondson and House 1981: 177-178)

The reason why we used the category TELL rather than Searle's 'Representatives (Assertives)' is that we pursue interest in the interactional features of TELL, i.e., we do not assume that TELL is always informative.

The Corpus consists of 25 diplomatic notes exchanged between the US representative Cushing and his counterpart, the Chinese representative Ching, between the 27th of February and the 24th of May 1844. Originally Cushing's diplomatic notes were translated into Classical Chinese, and a sinologist in Cushing's team translated the Chinese diplomatic notes into English (see House et al. 2022: 5).

Diplomatic notes	Number of English words/Chinese characters
Cushing's diplomatic notes	6,700
Ching's diplomatic notes	7,315

Table 8: Corpus of diplomatic notes

3.2.2 Analysis and Results

In the following I will first present an analysis of Cushing's diplomatic notes through the lens of speech acts, concretely I will investigate how the speech act *TELL* is employed as an instrument of aggression. Secondly, I will present the analysis of the Chinese data.

In looking at the exchange of the diplomatic notes in the corpus, it became clear that the Chinese diplomat Ching tries to prevent the American ship to enter Chinese territory, which the American diplomat Cushing not only ignores, but counters with intentions to enter nonetheless – albeit couching this intention in the pseudo-politeness of the diplomatic genre. Consider the following example of Cushing's strategy:

Example 7:

SIR: I have the honour to inform your excellency that the United States frigate Brandywine, bearing the broad pennant of Commodore Parker, proceeds this day to Whampoa [a port in Shanghai] on a visit, for a few days, of courtesy and civility to the capital of the Province. (Cushing & Ching Corpus, cited from House et al. 2022: 7)

In this example, Cushing realises a diplomatic *TELL* presenting the other with a *fait accompli*, which is here a form of threatening aggression as it signals that the other's previous prohibition to come is effectively ignored. Here we see a relatively 'restrained' *TELL* in the Cushing corpus. The following example is a more openly aggressive realisation of the speech act *TELL*, in which the threat is cleverly packaged as informing the other about a hypothetical situation in a manner-of-fact way:

Example 8:

The rules of politeness and ceremony observed by Sir Henry Pottinger were doubtless just and proper in the particular circumstances of the case. But, to render them fully applicable to the United States, it would be necessary for my Government, in the first instance, to subject the people of China to all the calamities of war, and especially to take possession of some island on the coast of China, as a place of residence for its Minister. (Cushing & Ching Corpus, cited from House et al. 2022: 8)

Over and above the *TELLs*, we find other speech acts intertwined with *TELL*, e.g., *COMPLAINS*.

COMPLAINS are frequently employed in diplomatic notes because they point to the rationale triggering the note (preventing entry on the part of the Chinese diplomat and insisting on entering on the part of the American diplomat). Such a use of a *COMPLAIN*, combined with a *TELL*, is illustrated by the following example, where the *COMPLAIN* is marked:

Example 9:

When I addressed your excellency on the 13th, thanking you for copies of the treaty of Nanking and that of Portugal, I was not aware of the fact, which I have since discovered to my regret, that your excellency did not deem it convenient to communicate to me the whole of the treaty of Nanking (Cushing & Ching Corpus, cited from House et al. 2022: 9)

The following is a summary of the American diplomat Cushing's use of *TELLs* and other Speech Acts intertwined with *TELL*:

Type of aggression-relevant speech acts	Distribution of aggression-relevant speech acts (in words)	Proportion (overall size of Cushing corpus: 6,700 words)
TELL	3,165	47.23%
COMPLAINS (intertwined with TELL)	587	8.76%
REQUESTs (intertwined with TELL)	470	7.01%
Suggests (intertwined with TELL)	186	2.77%
Excuse/Justify and Sympathise (intertwined with TELL)	121	1.80%
Total	4,529	67.59%

Table 9: The use of the speech act Tell and other Speech acts intertwined with Tell in the American corpus

Let us now look more closely at the Chinese Diplomatic notes: All TELLS in Ching's Diplomatic Notes in the Chinese corpus appear to be devoid of aggression. The following example illustrates this point:

Example 10:

「現在大皇帝福壽安康，遐邇同慶，理合復知貴公使，以答慕義之忱。」

“At the present time, the great Emperor is in the enjoyment of happy old age and quiet health, and is at peace with all, both far and near; of which it is proper, in reply, to inform the honorable Plenipotentiary, in order to answer his sincere desire of what is just and proper.”

(cf. House et al. 2022: 16)

An additional pragmatic function of such ‘innocent’ TELLS in the Chinese corpus is the following: the Chinese diplomat Ching realises the speech act TELL essentially to appease the aggressor, as shown in the following example:

Example 11:

「又本兼護部堂於二月十四日具奏貴公使仍請進京，並願由內河行走一案，本月十九日，接奉軍機大臣字寄大皇帝諭旨，頒給調任兩廣總督耆欽差大臣關防，與貴公使酌商定議。」

“Again: I, the acting Governor General, upon the 2nd moon, and the 4th day, (April 1, 1844,) memorialized the Emperor, that the honorable Plenipotentiary still requests to go to Peking, and is willing to go by the inner rivers. This, too, is on record. Upon the 19th of the present month (May 6) I received a communication from the Privy Council, stating that the August Emperor's will has been promulgated, to deliver over the seal of Imperial High Commissioner to Tsiyeng, Governor General of the two Kwang, in order that with the honorable Plenipotentiary he may negotiate and settle deliberations.”

(cf. House et al. 2022: 16)

The following is a summary of the results of the analysis of Ching's use of speech acts associated here with fending off aggression:

Type of speech acts fending off aggression	Distribution of speech act occurrences fending off aggression (in characters)	Proportion (overall size of Ching corpus: 7,315 words)
COMPLAINS	2,251	30.77%
REQUESTS	1,927	26.34%
Total	4,178	57.11%

Table 10: Distribution of Ching's use of Speech Acts in the Chinese corpus

As Table 10 shows, the Chinese speech acts relating to the fending off of aggression are REQUESTS and COMPLAINS, but not TELLS.

The case study described above provided an analysis of interactional speech acts with a focus on linguistic realisations. Such an analysis can reveal what happens in a case where it is tempting to refer to aggression in a broad sense using emotive overgeneralizations. Another advantage of an analysis like the one presented in this study is that the speech act system employed is replicable.

We may now venture beyond speech acts looking at intercultural interaction through another level: Discourse.

3.3 Level 3: Discourse

In the following, I summarise a cross-cultural pragmatic case study in the field of Language and Politics involving German and Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGIES (cf. House & Kadar 2021b).

3.3.1 Methodology and Data

In this case study the following two research questions were formulated:

1. Which APOLOGY COMPONENTS are present in the German and Japanese Corpora?
2. What are the differences between the German and the Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGIES?

Two Corpora were used, each consisting of 15 most representative, official apologies made by German and Japanese representatives of the state. All of these 2x 15 apologies are online publicly available. They are the most well-known and most commented on WAR CRIME APOLOGIES. The study is longitudinal, i.e. diachronic across time after WWII.

3.3.2 Analysis of the individual corpora

The following five traditional APOLOGY COMPONENTS or strategies developed by the above described Cross-Cultural Speech Act realization Project were used in the analysis:

- IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices), i.e. routinised formulaic expression making a speech act explicit
- Taking on Responsibility
- Explanation or Account
- Offer of Repair

- Promise of Forbearance

I will first present the analysis of how these components feature in the Japanese APOLOGIES, and then move on to the analysis of the German data.

The following Table 11 shows the analysis of the components of the Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGIES:

		IFID	Accepting responsibility	Explanation or account	Offer of repair	Promise of forbearance	META	UPGRADER
1957	Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke to Burma	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
1965	Minister of Foreign Affairs Shiina Etsusaburo to Australia	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
1972	Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka to the People's Republic of China (communique)	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x	✓
1982	Chief Cabinet Secretary Kiichi Miyazawa to the Republic of Korea (communique)	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
1984	Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone to China	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
1989	Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru to the nations of Asia (Japanese Diet)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓
1990	Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu to Korea	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
1992	Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Kato to Korea (Comfort Women)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓
1998	Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi to China (communique)	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
2001	Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda to the nations of Asia	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2001	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Korea (Comfort Women)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓
2003	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Asian Nations	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2005	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Asian Nations	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓
2010	Prime Minister Naoto Kan to Korea (Comfort Women)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓
2015	Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida to South Korea	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓

Table 11: APOLOGY COMPONENTS in the Japanese corpus

As Table 11 illustrates, IFIDs feature in all but one of the Japanese APOLOGIES, and the strategy of ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY is a 'Superstrategy' in that it is present in all APOLOGIES in our Japanese corpus. The following extract illustrates the operation of this strategy:

Example 12:

May 25, 1990: Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, in a meeting with President Roh Tae Woo said:

「私は、大統領閣下をお迎えしたこの機会に、過去の一時期、朝鮮半島の方々が我が国の行為により耐え難い苦しみと悲しみを体験されたことについて謙虚に反省し、率直にお詫びの気持ちを申し述べたいと存じます。」

“I would like to take the opportunity here to humbly reflect upon how the people of the Korean Peninsula went through unbearable pain and sorrow as a result of our country's actions during a certain period in the past and to express that we are sorry.”

The issue of Japanese ‘war responsibility’ has been the subject of much debate (see e.g., Field 1995 for an overview). However, on the basis of pragmatic evidence, we can confirm that the strategy of ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY is indeed always present in Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGY realisations. It is generally ‘Japan’ as an entity and not the ‘Japanese people’ that are discursively positioned as a party ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY for war crimes (in contrast to the German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES, see below).

The component ‘Explanation or Account’ is the only strategy which is completely absent from the Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGY corpus. This absence may be explained by the severity of the moral transgressions involved: acts of explaining war crimes could be interpreted as speech acts of EXCUSE/JUSTIFY – which would be unacceptable.

The component ‘Offer of Repair’ occurs only twice in our corpus, and only in communiques which were issued jointly by Japan and the country to which the apology is offered. The component ‘Promise of Forbearance’, however, occurs frequently in the Japanese corpus, although it only emerged in the late 1980s. Here is an example:

Example 13:

April 22, 2005 Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said:

「我が国は、かつて植民地支配と侵略によって、多くの国々、とりわけアジア諸国の人々に〓して多大の損害と苦痛を与えました。こうした歴史の事実を謙虚に受けとめ、痛切なる反省と心からのお詫びの気持ちを常に心に刻みつつ、我が国は第二次世界大〓後一貫して、〓〓大国になっても軍事大国にはならず、いかなる問題も、武力に依らず平和的に解決するとの立場を堅持しています。」

“Japan squarely faces these facts of history in a spirit of humility. And with feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology always engraved in mind, Japan has resolutely maintained, consistently since the end of World War II, never turning into a military power but an economic power, its principle of resolving all matters by peaceful means, without recourse to use of force.”

In our Japanese corpus, one can observe a strategy which does not feature in the above list of established APOLOGY COMPONENTS, namely metacommentary (META) on the continuity of WAR APOLOGY realisations. This strategy became important at the beginning of the 21st century. The following example illustrates the operation of this situated APOLOGY strategy:

Example 14:

September 8, 2001: Minister for Foreign Affairs Makiko Tanaka said in a speech:

「日本は、先の大〓において多くの国の人々に〓して多大な損害と苦痛を与えたことを決して忘れてはおりません。多くの人々が貴重な命を失ったり、傷を負われました。また、元〓争捕虜を含む多くの人々の間に癒しがたい傷跡を残しています。こうした歴史の事実を謙虚に受け止め、1995年の村山内閣総理大臣談話の痛切な反省の意及び心からのお詫びの気持ちをここに再確認いたします。」

“We have never forgotten that Japan caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries during the last war. Many lost their precious lives and many were wounded. The war has left an incurable scar on many people, including former prisoners of war. Facing these facts of history in a spirit of humility, I reaffirm today our feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology expressed in Prime Minister Murayama's statement of 1995.”

Many Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGIES also use a specific Upgrader: Honorifics. As Ide (1989) already argued, it is imperative in the Japanese LINGUACULTURE to use honorifics in certain ritual contexts and ceremonial events, and public WAR CRIME APOLOGIES seem to be such an event. The use of honorifics has the effect of boosting the force of the APOLOGY.

I will now move on to the analysis of the components featuring in the German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES, as displayed in the following Table 12:

		IFID	Accepting responsibility	Explanation or account	Offer of repair	Promise of forbearance	Guilt/Shame	Upgrader
1952	Theodor Heuss	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
1964	Ludwig Erhard	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
1964	Ludwig Erhard	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
1970	Willy Brandt	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1970	Willy Brandt	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
1985	Richard von Weizsäcker	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
1988	Phillip Jenninger	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
1994	Roman Herzog	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2000	Johannes Rau	x	✓	x		x	✓	✓
2000	Johannes Rau	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2008	Angela Merkel	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2014	Joachim Gauck	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2014	Joachim Gauck	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2019	Frank Walter Steinmeier	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
2019	Frank Walter Steinmeier	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓

Table 12: APOLOGY COMPONENTS in the German corpus

As Table 12 shows, in the German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES, IFIDs are initially not present, later they appear to be more frequent: for instance, in the following example:

Example 15:

September 1, 2019, Bundespräsident Frank Walter Steinmeier:

Die Vergangenheit vergeht nicht. Und unsere Vergangenheit vergeht nicht. Das wissen wir. Als deutscher Bundespräsident will ich Ihnen versichern: Wir werden nicht vergessen. Wir wollen und werden uns erinnern. Wir nehmen die Verantwortung an. Ich verneige mich vor den Opfern des Überfalls auf Wielun. Ich verneige mich vor den polnischen Opfern der deutschen Gewaltherrschaft. Und ich bitte um Vergebung.

Interestingly, representatives of the German state deploy one particular IFID token – ‘Bitte um Vergebung’ – and no other standard APOLOGY IFIDs is ever used. As Vollmer & Olshtain (1989:207) have argued, this IFID is a pragmatically loaded expression, and so its use accords with the weight of the war crimes committed. It is also remarkable that this IFID only emerged some 50 years after the end of WWII. This ‘delay’ might be due to the enormity of the German war crimes. It is worth referring here to Bergman and Kasper’s (1991) claim that IFIDs are never the preferred choice whenever an apology follows a particularly severe offence.

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY is also a supercomponent in the German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES: it is present in all apologies. For example, in his 1994 speech, Roman Herzog states: „Den Holocaust an den Unschuldigen vieler Völker haben Deutsche begangen“.

A notable feature of this strategy in the German corpus is that the apologizer delivers the apology on behalf of the entire German people, and not Germany itself and in this respect the German WAR CRIME APOLOGY realisations clearly differ from their Japanese counterparts.

A salient finding of the analysis of the German corpus is that German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES are ‘minimalist’ in that three of the main conventionalized APOLOGY components: ‘Explanation or Account’, ‘Offer of Repair’ and ‘Promise of Forbearance’ are completely absent from the German corpus. One explanation that offers itself for the ‘minimalist nature’ of the German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES is again the enormity of the offence perpetrated by Germans during WWII.

An additional APOLOGY COMPONENT of fundamental importance in the German APOLOGIES, namely ‘Expression of Guilt and Shame’ was also discovered in the analysis. This component is a central feature of the earliest German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES, as can be seen in the very first APOLOGY realization in our corpus performed by the first German President after WWII, Theodor Heuss in 1952:

Example 16:

September 30, November 1952, Theodor Heuss

Und dies ist unsere Scham, daß sich solches im Raum der Volksgeschichte vollzog, aus der Lessing, Kant, Goethe und Schiller in das Weltbewusstsein traten. Diese Scham nimmt uns niemand ab.

The importance of the self-reflective ‘Expression of Guilt and Shame’ in the German WAR APOLOGIES fits into a broader linguacultural discourse preference in the German LINGUA-CULTURE (cf. House 1996; 2006): German interactional behaviour tends to be generally more self-oriented than other-oriented, when we contrast it with preferences in other LINGUACULTURES. In the context of WAR CRIME APOLOGY realisations, this self-oriented character implies that the explicit APOLOGY is backgrounded, and the war crime perpetrator’s own feelings of guilt and shame are foregrounded.

Following the analysis of the individual corpora, let us now engage in a contrastive analysis of the two corpora:

3.3.3 Contrastive Analysis of German and Japanese War Crime Apologies

Here we first asked the following question: Does the presence of many different APOLOGY COMPONENTS make the apology more effective, the answer being: No! In Germany, Willy Brandt's 1970 WAR CRIME APOLOGY – which immediately became viral – was the most minimalist one ever performed: Der Kniefall – a simple gesture of humility and penance, and a very moving and convincing one.



Figure 9: Der Kniefall (Internet, publicly available)

Here is a brief summary of the results of the CONTRASTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS of German and Japanese WAR CRIME ANALYSIS:

1. Distribution: Japanese APOLOGIES are 'richer' in components, German APOLOGIES are 'minimal'.
2. Japanese APOLOGIES feature many IFIDs, German APOLOGIES do not.
3. Japanese APOLOGIES changed more over time, presumably due to the controversy over them, with many claims that the Japanese apologized too little, and their APOLOGIES were generally too ineffective.
4. German APOLOGIES are largely inward-looking: 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' is a typical descriptor, and the German APOLOGIES are full of explicit expressions of 'Guilt and Shame', which is only implicitly present in the Japanese WAR CRIME APOLOGIES.
5. The absence of an explicit strategy 'Expression of Guilt and Shame' in the Japanese APOLOGIES clearly refutes essentialist culture-contrastive claims that Japan is a 'Shame-culture'.

The major difference between Japanese and German WAR CRIME APOLOGIES can be displayed along the following two lines:

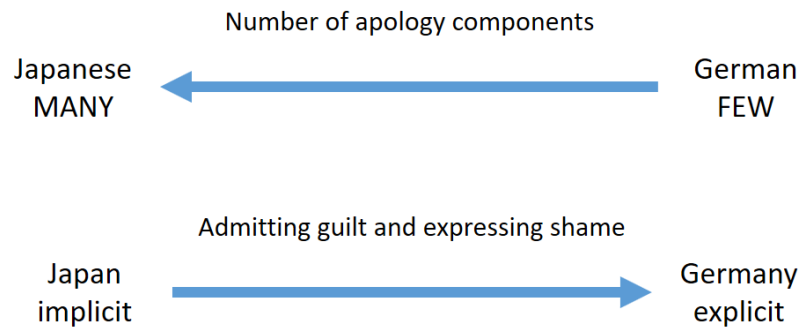


Figure 10: Contrastive differences between Japanese and German war apologies (House & Kadar 2021b: 119)

This cross-cultural pragmatic case study has focused on the speech act APOLOGY embedded in discourse. I hope to have shown that an empirical, corpus-based and language-anchored cross-cultural piece of research can be more insightful and revealing than facile, emotively loaded and essentialist debates around the very difficult subject of WAR CRIME APOLOGIES.

4 Conclusion

In this paper I have described an innovative cross-cultural pragmatic research methodology. I have illustrated this methodology with different case studies that involved a limited number of languages such as English, German, Chinese and Japanese. The comparative studies in these case studies – each involving one of the three levels of the methodology: expressions, speech acts and discourse – have revealed that it can be both interesting and rewarding to engage in rigorously bottom-up empirical cross-cultural pragmatic analyses of linguistic phenomena in typologically distant LINGUACULTURES. Such strictly language-anchored analyses might be more useful than essentialist studies suggesting an East-West Divide, and claiming that speakers of languages belonging to ‘the East’ tend to be more ‘polite’ etc. It is of little use to study ‘exotic’ data on their own and come up with grand claims about their nature. Such claims are particularly irritating when they imply that these ‘exotic’ LINGUACULTURES are so insuperably different from ‘Western’ LINGUACULTURES that only ‘natives’ can ever understand them. Such a view shuts the door on any serious contrastive pragmatic research. I hope to have shown that the results of the case studies presented in this paper provided a more realistic and differentiated picture.

Future research will hopefully enrich our current knowledge by also bringing lesser studied LINGUACULTURES into the scope of cross-cultural pragmatic research.

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