

PATTERNS OF INTERPERSONAL CRITICISM IN JAPAN AND UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT. To investigate patterns of interpersonal criticism in Japan and United States, preliminary interviews were conducted. Three major variables: sources of dissatisfaction; the status of communicative partners; and modes of giving criticism were identified. These variables were incorporated into an Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire and then administered to 149 Japanese and 168 American college students of both sexes, after establishing cross-cultural equivalence. The results demonstrated a significant difference between the two cultures, but no significant difference between the sexes. Both cultures favored expressing dissatisfaction in a direct way, but Japanese more frequently employed passive forms of criticism and Americans active forms. While Japanese consistently adapted critical messages to the status of their communicative partners, Americans consistently adapted their critical messages to the character of the provocation.

Every culture expresses its purposes and conducts its affairs through the medium of communication (Barnlund, 1975). Cultures are distinctive to the extent that they create and cultivate unique forms of human interaction. Socialization of the newborn infant consists of instruction in the "communicative style" favored among a particular community of persons. Yet in learning to interact with others, the child acquires more than merely vocabulary and grammar; he/she acquires the values and assumptions that are implicit in these patterns of interaction and that regulate meanings within a particular social system. It is in this sense that "culture is communication" (Hall, 1959).

The systematic investigation of the communicative style of any culture poses certain methodological difficulties. For one thing, communication is so pervasive a form of human behavior that the occasions for interaction within any society are incalculable. In addition, the rhetorical motives that prompt people to interact are diverse, elusive, and undergo constant alteration as conversation proceeds. Finally, we have only the most rudimentary idea of the strategies people employ in accomplishing these

rhetorical purposes. To investigate communicative style in any depth seems to require focusing upon a more limited segment of social behavior.

This problem, however, is not unique to the study of communicative acts; it is inherent in the investigation of any form of social action. It is always necessary to deal with segments of behavior whether it is the bonding of mother and child, voting behavior in elections, or the resolution of marital difficulties. One is forced to select some behavioral event that appears to have a certain degree of autonomy not irreparably damaged by being torn from its natural context, and that holds some promise of throwing light on the larger life of which it is a part.

There are many "segments" of communicative behavior that might fit such criteria: greetings, requests, apologies, criticism, compliments. These, and others, constitute the somewhat independent rhetorical moves that make up larger conversations. Although people occasionally execute a singular communicative task, such as making a request, most extended conversations encompass a sequence of patterned exchanges. Further, each of these segments has a certain integrity: each has a discernible beginning, involves a series of reciprocal acts, and has a discernible ending. Just as careful examination of a shard may expose the structure of an extinct society, so the close scrutiny of a fragment of behavior may illuminate the social dynamic of a contemporary one. In the effort to know the part we may come to a richer understanding of the whole.

Here we seek to probe the structure and dynamic of two cultures through systematic exploration of the form and content of criticism among Japanese and Americans. Criticism is defined here as the expression of dissatisfaction concerning the personal qualities or behavior of another person that is offered in face-to-face dyadic encounters.

Relatively little research has been done on the nature of interpersonal criticism from a multi-cultural or even a single cultural perspective. None of the studies noted here focuses on criticism as defined above, but each originates from a unique academic perspective and throws some light on relevant variables. Deutsch (1961), in his investigation of praise and criticism, found the impact of such messages to be significantly affected by institutional and role contexts. Different meanings were assigned to the same evaluative statements when the person was seen as occupying superordinate or subordinate positions, or if their acts were interpreted in the varying contexts of family, school, military or work. The study, though highly suggestive, is limited in focusing exclusively upon the management of criticism within the American culture.

In her classic book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Benedict (1946) offers acute observations about the management of criticism within the Japanese culture. She notes the profound influence of order and hierarchy in preventing the flow of criticism across status lines. With their emphasis upon the sanction of shame, the Japanese tend to be vulnerable

to others' slurs, rejections, and accusations, and criticism of one's acts or one's competence automatically becomes criticism of one's self. Consequently, the Japanese remain circumspect about their remarks in relations with other people. Each critical message has its consequences, and one should not act without considering them.

A comparative study of communicative styles of Japanese and Americans, undertaken by Barnlund (1975) included an analysis of preferred forms of defensive behavior under conditions of low and high levels of interpersonal threat. The results of this study suggested that the Japanese tend to prefer more passive forms of defense when confronted by critical remarks while Americans preferred to rely on more active and aggressive defenses.

These studies, useful as they are, fall short of answering a number of questions concerning the nature of interpersonal criticism in Japan and United States. To what extent do Japanese and Americans prefer different ways of managing the expression of criticism interpersonally? Do such differences, if any, vary according to the nature of the provocation, the specific type of dissatisfaction? Do such differences, if any, vary according to the status relations of the two persons? Finally, are there sex differences in the patterns of criticism in the two cultures?

METHOD

Defining the Variables

Any study of communicative style must first identify the situational variables operating within the cultures under study. To isolate relevant situational factors influencing criticism in Japan and the United States, a series of interviews was conducted with members of the two cultures. These interviews, largely unstructured, permitted examination of spontaneous and subjective reports of actual incidents of interpersonal criticism. These reports, in turn, would permit construction of an instrument that would make more systematic investigation of patterns of criticism feasible.

Interviews were held with 21 Japanese and American students attending San Francisco State University. Interpersonal criticism was defined at the outset as the "expression of dissatisfaction concerning the personal qualities or behavior of another person that is offered in face-to-face dyadic encounters." Interviewees were informed that the nature of their dissatisfaction might be trivial or serious, that their communicative partner might include anyone, relative, friend or stranger. Specifically they were asked: "Please recall the last time you wanted to criticize someone. What did you actually say to the person? If you didn't say anything, what did you do instead?" Responses were tape recorded and transcribed to permit analysis of these spontaneous reports.

The major aim of this analysis was to identify the specific form and content of critical behaviors. Fifty-three distinct ways of managing critical encounters were identified, ranging from "silence" to "constructive suggestion" to "sarcastic remarks." After eliminating rarely reported forms of criticism, and combining similar responses, the remaining modes of criticism, 11 in all, were ordered along a linear scale from "passive-withdrawing" to "active-aggressing" behaviors.

In addition, three variables were found to influence modes of criticism: (1) the setting in which the dissatisfaction arose; (2) the specific nature of provocation or dissatisfaction; and (3) the relationship of the communicative partners. Each of these became the focus of further analysis.

Least critical of the variables appeared to be the setting in which criticism occurred. Many of the incidents appeared to be interchangeable; that is, could be imagined as occurring with equal likelihood in other settings. Often the interpersonal roles rather than the physical location appeared to determine the form of response. Although settings cannot be disregarded in studies of human interaction, the nature of the provocation and the character of the relationship appeared to be more promising variables to investigate.

The character of the reported dissatisfactions were analyzed in two ways: first, they were treated topically; second, they were evaluated psychologically. Classifying each episode with regard to its topical focus proved unproductive, partly because existing taxonomies, for example, Jourard's Self Disclosure Scale (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958), forced many acts into multiple categories or failed to accommodate all the items. The second alternative, based on the perceived nature of the injury or wrong, proved more productive. (The resulting scale was referred to as the "Dissatisfaction Scale" in English, the "*Higaikan* Scale" in Japanese.) Each of the reported incidents was found to be classifiable under one of the following three types of dissatisfaction. Type A—Injury: I have been wronged without apparent justification; Type B—Disappointment: You have failed to live up to my expectations; and Type C—Disagreement: Your behavior challenges beliefs and standards that I value.

A wide variety of persons were mentioned as communicative partners and as targets of interpersonal criticism: parents, relatives, friends, acquaintances and strangers. These were of both sexes and of nearly all ages. But the manner of giving criticism appeared to vary according to the age, sex, status and closeness of the identified target persons.

The initial interviews with Japanese and Americans, thus, were of considerable value in identifying relevant factors affecting interpersonal criticism in both cultures. Three variables, the psychological nature of the triggering dissatisfaction, the character of the relationship with the person to be criticized, and the particular form in which criticism was expressed appeared to hold promise in accounting for similarities and differences in cultural styles.

Constructing the Interpersonal Criticism Scale

Construction of a questionnaire exploring patterns of interpersonal criticism would make it possible to obtain larger samples of behavior in both countries and would then permit statistical analysis of dominant response patterns. Such an instrument could be used to measure preferred forms of behavior under varying conditions of dissatisfaction and with a representative set of communicative partners. Any variations in critical messages could then be linked to the prior conditions that provoked the critical message, to differences in relations with target persons, and to differences between the two sexes and two cultures.

The situations employed in the questionnaire were based on the actual incidents reported in the interviews. The episodes were prepared so as to be representative of both cultures, of sufficient variety to compare types of dissatisfaction, and to accommodate a wide range of partners. Since three major sources of dissatisfaction had been identified—personal injury, failure to fulfill expectations, and disagreement—four episodes of each type were constructed. For example: Type A incidents included a missed concert and accidental spilling of coffee; Type B incidents included failure to make a reservation and driving dangerously; and Type C incidents included conflicts over sex roles and selection of clothing.

These 12 situations were then phrased so that they might realistically involve different target persons. Those included were the ones mentioned most frequently in the unstructured interviews. They were: Father, Mother, Close Male Friend, Close Female Friend, Male Acquaintance, Female Acquaintance, Male Stranger and Female Stranger. The qualifier, "of the same age," was added for all target persons except Father and Mother. To reduce the length of the questionnaire these 96 situations, involving 12 instigating conditions and 8 possible target persons, were divided into 2 forms: Form A included all 12 situations with Father and Mother, and Male and Female Acquaintances, as communicative partners; Form B included the same situations with Close Male and Female Friends, and Male and Female Strangers.

Over 50 different critical behaviors were reported in the initial interviews. After consolidating these according to type, it was found they could be ordered along a linear scale from passive-withdrawing (showing dissatisfaction through silence or nonverbally) to active-aggressing (showing dissatisfaction through sarcastic or angry remarks). A Q-sort was undertaken to test if the 11 responses comprising "The Response Scale" were appropriately ordered for each culture independently and for both cultures combined. The original ranking was strongly confirmed: Japanese sorters approved it with one exception; American sorters approved it with two exceptions. All items placed at extreme ends of the scale were consistently confirmed by all raters.

The equivalence of any instrument to be used in research in different cultural contexts is a matter of critical concern (Brislin, 1973). Several steps were taken to insure that the Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire would have equivalent meaning in both cultures. First, English and Japanese versions of the questionnaire were prepared by the investigators. These two versions were then critically evaluated by two bilingual graduate students in communication and further adjustments made in both forms. The Japanese version of the original forms was then independently translated back into English by a professional translator who had no knowledge of the nature of the research. The original English version and the back-translated version were then compared. The few discrepancies in vocabulary or phrasing were then reviewed by another bilingual specialist, and further suggestions made. A final meeting was held with the back-translator to achieve consensus on the final phrasing.

Thus original interviews led to the identification of critical variables influencing the character of criticism. These variables—the nature of dissatisfaction, the personal relationship of the communicants, and the forms of critical behaviors sanctioned in the two cultures—were used to construct an Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire that could be used to compare dominant patterns of criticism in these two cultural contexts.

PROCEDURE

Sampling

Form A and B of the Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire, each including the same twelve critical situations but with two different sets of target persons specified, were administered to native-born undergraduates, 18-24 years-of-age, enrolled in humanities classes in Japan and United States. The sample included 149 Japanese college students (62 males and 87 females) in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Kyoto and 168 American college students (59 males and 109 females) in Los Angeles, Reno and San Francisco.

The same procedure was followed in administering the questionnaire in both countries: The instructor of the class introduced the investigator and a brief explanation of the survey was given, emphasizing the importance of accuracy in answering the questions and stressing the anonymous nature of the answers. Form A and Form B were distributed to alternate students so that half of each class answered each of the forms. (Respondents without parents were given Form B since it did not include parents as target persons.) Sufficient time was provided to read the instructions and to complete the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Reliability

Cross-cultural research presents the investigator of human behavior with unique challenges. There is not only the problem of constructing instruments of sufficient consistency to be used in a single cultural context, but of establishing their cross-cultural equivalency as well. The within-culture reliability of the Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire was ascertained by determining the consistency of answers on alternate items of both forms for each language version. The Japanese version of the questionnaire yielded a Pearson r of 0.92 for Form A and 0.94 for Form B; the equivalent values for the English version was 0.96 for Form A and 0.95 for form B. These correlations indicate that the questionnaire provides a reliable instrument for use in both cultures.

Assessment of the cross-cultural reliability of any instrument is more difficult to determine, but is just as essential (Brislin, 1973). Unless one can demonstrate consistent measurements between cultures, comparisons may be suspect. To demonstrate the cross-cultural reliability, bilinguals completed both forms of both versions of the instrument. Ten bilinguals (five males, five females) equally divided among those whose native language was Japanese and those whose native language was English completed the instrument on two occasions. At the first administration of the questionnaire, half the bilinguals completed Form A in Japanese and Form B in English, the other half completed Form A in English and Form B in Japanese. Following a one month interval the procedure was reversed, thus permitting comparisons of both forms and both language versions with respondents acquainted with both languages and both cultures. The resulting correlation coefficients were 0.75 for Form A and 0.82 for Form B. These coefficients, remarkably high considering the complexities of test construction for research in contrasting cultures, indicate that the two versions yield consistent responses when administered to members of either culture or linguistic community.

Japanese and American Patterns of Criticism

The responses of Japanese and Americans were analyzed statistically to identify any similarities or differences in their overall manner of giving criticism under varying conditions of provocation with various communicative partners. A one-way analysis of variance revealed a highly significant difference in preferred forms of criticism in the two cultures.

A more definitive picture of commonalities and differences is apparent from a histogram analysis. Both Japanese and Americans preferred to "express dissatisfaction in a direct way." Yet after recognizing this

TABLE 1

Comparison of Patterns of Criticism: Japanese & American

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups (Explained)	52100.29	1	52100.29	26.360	0.001
Within Groups (Residual)	622600.97	315	1976.51		
Total	674701.26	316	2135.13		

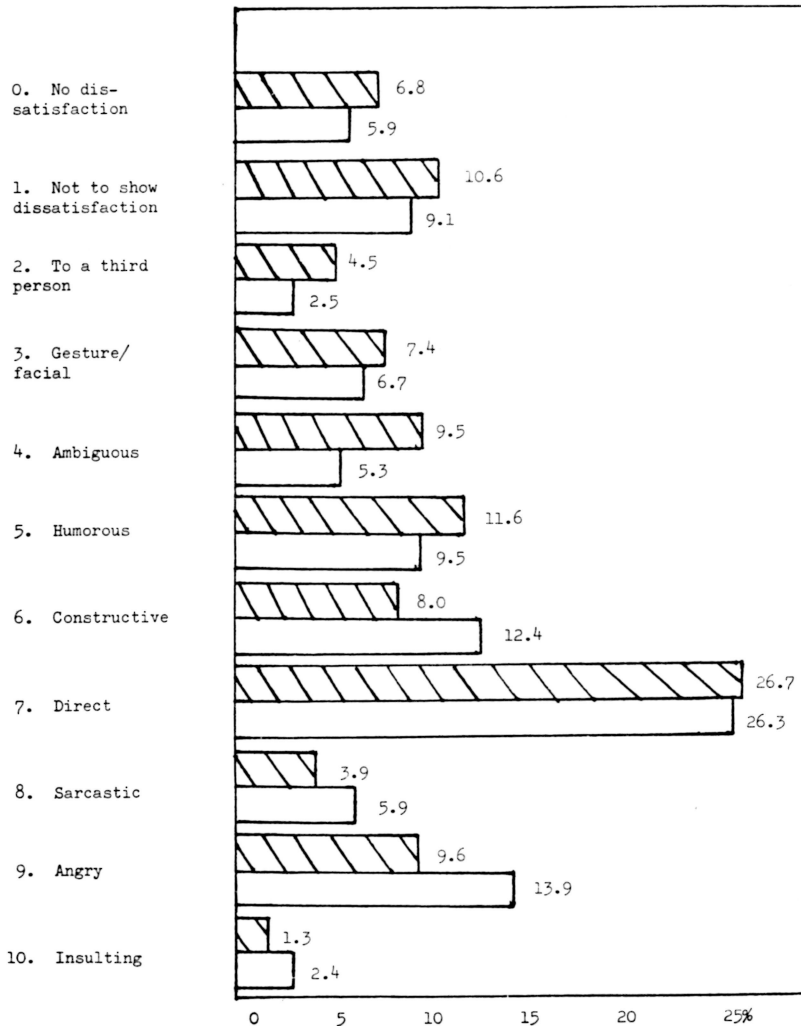


FIGURE 1. Profiles of Criticism in Japan and America.

commonality, a further pattern was discernible. Japanese scored consistently higher on all forms of passive criticism; Americans scored consistently higher on all forms of active criticism. Thus, Japanese more frequently reported they would "attempt not to show dissatisfaction," "would express dissatisfaction to a third person," and would express dissatisfaction "nonverbally," "ambiguously," and "humorously." Americans, in contrast, more often reported they would express their dissatisfaction "through constructive suggestions," "sarcastic remarks," "angrily," and "in an insulting way." The three most preferred responses among Japanese were to criticize "in a direct way," "humorously," or "attempt not to show dissatisfaction." The three most preferred responses among Americans were to criticize "in a direct way," "angrily," or "through constructive suggestions."

Male and Female Patterns

A similar analysis of variance was used to examine the responses of males and females in both cultures to evaluate the role of sex as a determinant of communicative style. No reliable difference was found in male or female patterns of criticism in Japan or the United States ($F = 0.179$, $P = 0.999$). Although a somewhat greater difference was found between Japanese males and females in their manner of expressing dissatisfaction ($F = 1.319$, $P = 0.251$), it was not sufficiently large to prove reliable. The cultural variable, in short, appears to exert a stronger influence than the sex variable in determining the manner of giving criticism.

Types of Dissatisfaction

If the cultures differ in their management of interpersonal criticism, do such differences arise out of the character of the provocation or out of the nature of the role relationship? Conceivably, cultures might promote differing interpretations of various types of psychological distress or, alternatively, sanction different modes of expression with variously statused persons. The Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire was designed to permit the collection of data to answer these questions.

Within-culture comparisons were made first to determine if either culture attributed differing interpretations to situations involving "injury," "disappointment," or "disagreement." The Japanese patterns of giving criticism indicated no reliable differences between reactions to "injury" and "disappointment" ($F = 0.126$, $P = 0.679$), but a significant difference in the management of "disappointment" and "disagreement" ($F = 44.42$, $P = 0.000$). That is, Japanese did not vary their form of critical response when they felt wronged or when expectations were not met; they did alter

TABLE 2

Japan: Injury vs. Disappointment vs. Disagreement

Type of Dissatisfaction	No. of Cases	F_H (Hotelling's t-squared)*	df	P
Injury	149	0.126	1/148	0.679
Disappointment	149	44.415	1/148	0.000

*Hotelling's t-square statistic, which is related to the F test, was employed since data obtained from the same individuals may not be independent.

their pattern of giving criticism when they encountered disagreement over beliefs and values. Although criticizing in a direct way was preferred by Japanese, the most popular second choice was to respond "ambiguously" to disagreement, "humorously" to disappointment, and "angrily" to personal injury. In short, as one moves from situations involving personal harm to disagreement, the Japanese shift from angry reactions to increasingly passive alternatives, particularly preferring ambiguous responses. But, with the exception of instances of disagreement, there is less significance attached to the character of the provocation.

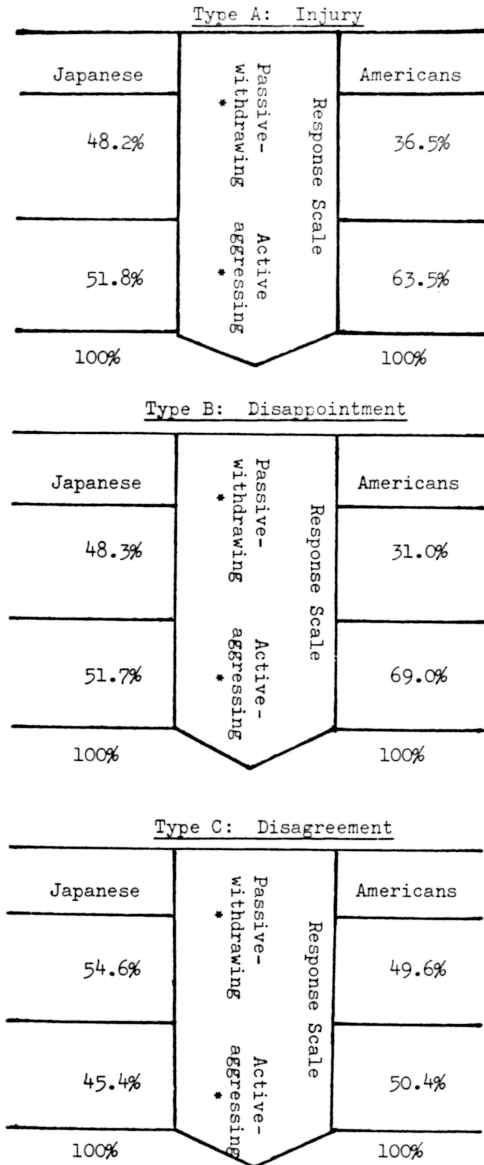
Among American respondents a contrasting pattern is found: Americans showed significant changes in their manner of criticizing with all three types of dissatisfaction. They chose different ways of responding to situations involving "injury" and "disappointment" ($F = 20.28$, $P = 0.000$)

TABLE 3

America: Injury vs. Disappointment vs. Disagreement

Type of Dissatisfaction	No. of Cases	F_H (Hotelling's t-squared)*	df	P
Injury	168	20.282	1/167	0.000
Disappointment	168	187.733	1/167	0.000

*Hotelling's t-square statistic, which is related to the F test, was employed since data obtained from the same individuals may not be independent.



*Passive-withdrawing responses include: "no dissatisfaction," "not show dissatisfaction," "to a third person," "nonverbal expression," "ambiguously," and "humorously"; active-aggressing responses include: "through constructive suggestions," "in a direct way," "with sarcastic remarks," "angrily" and "in an insulting way."

FIGURE 2. Proportion of Active-Passive Responses to Three Types of Provocation.

and to situations involving "disappointment" and "disagreement" ($F = 187.28$, $P = 0.000$). Americans appear to attach different meanings to situations involving personal harm, disappointment and disagreement. Active-aggressing forms of criticism, dominant responses to the first two sources of dissatisfaction, fell off sharply in favor of more passive forms of criticism in cases of disagreement.

Between-culture analyses were also carried out with respect to types of provocation to criticize. With regard to personal injury, a significant cultural difference was found ($F = 21.21$, $P = 0.001$). Although both cultures preferred to express dissatisfaction "directly" as their first choice of response and "angrily" as their second, Japanese consistently scored higher on the passive side of the scale and Americans on the active side. Japanese and Americans also differed significantly in their manner of coping with situations involving failure to meet expectations ($F = 52.92$, $P = 0.001$). Again the Japanese showed a higher preference for passive reactions and Americans for more active ones. In both instances, however, the Japanese displayed a wider variety of critical response while Americans were more constrained in their choices and more aggressively critical.

However, Japanese and American respondents did not differ significantly in their management of episodes involving "disagreement" ($F = 0.016$, $P = 0.999$). Here the configuration of preferred ways of handling dissatisfaction also departs noticeably from the previous patterns: in situations involving disagreement with communicative partners, American choices were as widely dispersed as Japanese, and were almost equally balanced between passive-withdrawing and active-aggressing forms of criticism.

Relations with Communicative Partners

Another variable that might be expected to influence the character of interpersonal criticism is the nature of the relationship between communicants. Every communicative effort would appear to require originators of any message to give some thought to their relation to the recipient (Mead, 1934). Do cultures differentiate among personal relationships of various kinds and, if they do, what effect does this have upon communicative strategies such as interpersonal criticism? To what extent, and in what ways, do Japanese and Americans adapt the manner of their criticism to differences in their communicative partners? Here again the Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire yields data which permit an exploration of these issues.

The impact of differences in relations with persons who were targets of criticism was first examined within each cultural sample; later, differences between the two cultures were considered. Among Japanese, the forms of criticism that were preferred changed significantly with each change in

TABLE 4

Criticism Directed to Parents vs. Close Friends vs. Acquaintances vs. Strangers: Japanese

Target Person	No. of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value*	df	2-Tail Prob.
Parents	74	143.72	28.23	4.27	147	0.000
Close Friends	75	125.15	24.75			
Acquaintances	74	113.91	24.14	3.08	147	0.002
Strangers	75	101.83	23.67			
Close Friends	75	125.15	24.75	2.81	147	0.006
Acquaintances	74	113.91	24.14			

Target Person	No. of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	F_H (Hotelling's (t-squared)**	df	P
Parents	74	143.72	28.23	67.807	1/73	0.000
Acquaintances	74	113.91	24.14			
Close Friends	75	125.15	24.75	55.938	1/73	0.000
Strangers	75	101.83	23.67			

*The between-form comparison—parents and close friends or acquaintances and strangers—were analyzed by simple *t*-test since the scores are from different forms, hence different respondents.

**Hotelling's *t*-square, which is an ideal statistical test to use when scores may be dependent, was computed for within-form comparisons: parents and acquaintances or close friends and strangers.

target person: parents, close friends, acquaintances and strangers were each communicatively differentiated. The closer the personal relationship, as with parents or close friends, the more active the forms of criticism employed; the more distant the relationship, as with acquaintances and strangers, the more passive the favored forms of criticism. The data suggest that Japanese are highly sensitive to differences in the status of their communicative partners and reflect this in their giving of criticism.

The data from the American sample, however, reveal a different configuration. Differences in the relationship with parents, close friends and acquaintances were not linked reliably to modes of giving criticism. In short, these three types of personal relationships were not communicatively differentiated, did not produce changes in the style of giving criticism. Strangers, however, were differentiated as shown by significant changes in preferred forms of giving criticism. With strangers there was

TABLE 5

**Criticism Directed to Parents vs. Close Friends vs. Acquaintances vs. Strangers:
Americans**

Target Person	No. of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value*	df	2-Tail Prob.
Parents	84	140.24	27.27	0.38	166	0.703
Close Friends	84	138.73	23.94			
Acquaintances	84	136.75	28.48	4.09	166	0.000
Strangers	84	120.05	24.36			
Close Friends	84	138.73	23.94	0.49	166	0.627
Acquaintances	84	136.75	28.48			

Target Person	No. of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	F_H (Hotelling's (t-squared)**)	df	P
Parents	84	140.24	27.27	1.334	1/83	0.250
Acquaintances	84	136.75	28.48			
Close Friends	84	138.73	23.94	37.606	1/83	0.000
Strangers	84	120.05	24.36			

*The between-form comparison—parents and close friends or acquaintances and strangers—were analyzed by simple *t*-test since the scores are from different forms, hence different respondents.

**Hotelling's *t*-square, which is an ideal statistical test to use when scores may be dependent, was computed for within-form comparisons: parents and acquaintances or close friends and strangers.

greater suppression of dissatisfaction, more reliance on nonverbal expression, and remarks directed to a third party; there was less reliance upon sarcasm and constructive suggestions.

When the two cultures are compared with respect to sensitivity to target persons, there is evidence that Japanese and Americans are most alike in their manner of criticizing parents ($F = 0.619$, $P = 0.999$). On the other hand, the preferred forms of criticism employed with close friends ($F = 12.349$, $P = 0.001$), acquaintances ($F = 29.158$, $P = 0.001$), and strangers ($F = 22.770$, $P = 0.001$) show consistent differences between the cultures.

It would appear, then, that the Japanese are more sensitive or more responsive to differences in the status of their communicative partners, and take such differences into account in selecting their manner of expressing dissatisfaction interpersonally. Americans seem to be more sensitive to differences in the nature of the provocation that gives rise to

their criticism, but are less concerned with differences in the status of their communicative partners.

DISCUSSION

This investigation sought to explore one aspect of the communicative styles of Japanese and Americans: their manner of giving criticism interpersonally. Exploratory interviews suggested that three variables might influence preferred forms of criticism employed in the two cultures: the psychological character of the dissatisfaction that provokes criticism; the depth of the relationship with the person who is the target of criticism; the variety of ways in which dissatisfaction may be expressed that are sanctioned in each culture.

The Interpersonal Criticism Questionnaire permitted the testing of all three variables with college students of both sexes in Japan and the United States. Twelve episodes incorporating three types of psychological provocation were used to examine the profiles of criticism of Japanese and Americans with parents, close friends, acquaintances, and strangers of both sexes. The findings demonstrate a significant difference in patterns of interpersonal criticism between the two nations, but not between the sexes.

In both cultures there is a preference for expressing dissatisfaction "in a direct way"; both Japanese and Americans devote 26% of their choices to this mode of criticism. Yet there is also evidence of difference: Japanese score consistently higher on all passive-withdrawing forms of criticism while Americans score consistently higher on all active-aggressing forms. The Japanese are more unlikely to feel dissatisfied, more likely to remain silent, to direct their remarks to a third person, to employ nonverbal signs of disapproval, are more likely to use ambiguity and humor to express their feelings. Americans, on the other hand, prefer to deal with critical situations more constructively, more sarcastically, more angrily, and more insultingly. The findings suggest qualified support for the image of the Japanese as somewhat more restrained in their expression of criticism and Americans as somewhat more assertive in manner.

The extent of cultural agreement on "expressing criticism in a direct way" prompted a follow-up survey in which members of both cultures (26 Japanese, 30 Americans) were asked to describe precisely *how* they would criticize "in a direct way" in three situations. These three situations were taken from the IPC Questionnaire: one involving "injury"; one involving "disappointment"; and one involving "disagreement." This follow-up survey, though not as extensive nor systematic, sheds further light on this apparent cross-cultural consistency. The Japanese respondents, when criticizing directly, often expressed their complaints in a playful and half-joking manner, while Americans in expressing criticism did so in a more

abrasive and trenchant manner. In short, even within the most popular form of criticism in both cultures the Japanese skew their interpretations of it toward their second most chosen form, "to criticize humorously," and Americans toward their second most chosen form, "to criticize angrily." Thus, the same cultural bias can be observed within the single category of "direct criticism" as can be observed across all categories of critical behavior; the Japanese tend to favor more passive modes of criticism and the Americans tend to favor more active modes.

The discovery that Japanese rely more on passive forms of criticism, and Americans on active forms, should be interpreted with caution. The identification of such profiles is of general value in characterizing the communicative styles of the two cultures. But even more valuable would be a clarification of the factors that regulate choices among these culturally sanctioned forms of behavior. Contextual variables obviously intervene to regulate the specific form of criticism prompted by specific situations and specific associates.

To understand someone from another culture requires more than mere awareness of their manner of acting; it requires some capacity to comprehend their acts from within the assumptive world of that culture, to grasp the inner dynamics that make such actions desirable or inevitable. The concept of empathy implies as much: to empathize, within or between cultures, is to interpret the acts of another not from one's own frame of reference, but from the frame of reference of the other. Intercultural encounters pose greater challenges to human understanding simply because it is less likely that communicants share such frames of reference and because such cultural assumptions are so deeply buried and so inaccessible.

Most members of most cultures are content simply to know how to interact appropriately with members of their own cultures. If it is a rare person who is aware of the extent to which their social behavior is patterned, it is even more rare to find anyone capable of explaining the unconscious premises from which their behavior derives. The value of systematic research into communicative styles, then, lies not merely in documenting the particulars of any cultural style, but in its potential for exposing the unconscious criteria that influence choices among various possible forms of social behavior.

The findings reported here reveal there is not only consistency in the manner of offering criticism within Japan and the United States, but that each culture regulates such behavior by different out-of-awareness contextual criteria: in the one the form of criticism is influenced more by the nature of the provocation, and in the other more by the nature of the relationship with one's communicative partner. Thus Americans and Japanese appear to focus attention on different features of social settings, one attending more to *how* they have been wronged, the other to *who* has

wronged them. In encounters between the two cultures it appears, therefore, that each not only possesses a somewhat different hierarchy of ways of expressing dissatisfaction, but each perceives different features of social settings as relevant in mediating the particular form of criticism they employ. Thus it is appropriate to note that systematic inquiry cannot only document the repertoire of preferred behaviors, but can expose the unconscious premises from which behavioral decisions arise.

The assumption that culture is carried in the style of communication of a given community of persons seems to hold promise. That promise appears to be two-fold: (1) That through a description of modes of interacting one can identify specifically what it is that differentiates members of various cultures; (2) That through analysis of the patterns of perception that give social encounters their meaning, deeper cultural premises may be discovered. This study suggests, as well, that even segments of social intercourse, such as ways of giving criticism, may illuminate larger cultural dynamics; that in studying a part one may gain some access to the whole.

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

MODES DE CRITIQUE INTERPERSONNELLE

AU JAPON ET AUX ETATS-UNIS

Des entrevues préliminaires ont été conduites afin d'enquêter certains modes de critique interpersonnelle au Japon et aux Etats-Unis. Trois variables principales ont été identifiées: source de mécontentement, statut des interlocuteurs et modes de proferer la

cirtique. Ces variables ont été incorporées dans le Questionnaire de Critique Interpersonnelle administré à 149 étudiants universitaires japonais et 168 américains, des deux sexes, après avoir établi une équivalence entre les deux cultures. Les résultats ont démontré une différence significative entre cultures, mais not entre sexes. Les deux cultures ont favorisé l'expression directe due mécontentement mais les Japonais eurent recours plus fréquemment à des formes passive de critique. Tandis que les Japonais ont adapté avec consistance leurs critiques au statut de leur interlocuteur, les Américains ont avec consistance adapté leurs critiques au caractère de la provocation.

Normas de critica interpersonal en el Japon y en los Estados Unidos

Con el propósito de investigar las normas de critica interpersonal en el Japon y en los Estados Unidos, se llevaron a cabo entrevistas preliminares. Se logró identificar tres variables principales: el origen del descontento, la posición social de las parejas comunicativas y las maneras de presentar la critica. Estas variables fueron incorporadas en un Cuestionario de Critica Interpersonal que fue luego contestado por 149 estudiantes universitarios japoneses y por 168 estudiantes universitarios estadounidenses de ambos sexos, después de establecer una equivalencia cultural entre los dos grupos. Los resultados demostraron una diferencia significativa entre las dos culturas pero no establecieron una diferencia significativa entre los sexos. Ambas culturas son partidarias de expresar descontento de una manera directa, pero los japoneses emplearon con mayor frecuencia formas pasivas de critica, en contraposición a las formas activas de los estadounidenses. En tanto que los japoneses adaptaron consistentemente los mensajes criticos al estado social de sus parejas comunicativas, los estadounidenses consistentemente adaptaron los mensajes criticos a la naturaleza de la provocación.