

Not to conflict: Strategies for disagreeing and nonverbal signs of disalignment in online and offline meetings

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Abstract

本研究ノートは、対面およびオンライン形式の会議における話者意見への不同意の際のポライトネスの表出を、スタンステイキング理論から観察したものである。対象とするデータは、日本のある大学で毎年発行される学生による創作雑誌の編集者会議を録画・録音したもので、不同意や反対意見表明前後の会話を分析する。会議は対面形式で行われてきたが、新型コロナウイルスの蔓延により、オンライン形式へと変更されたこともあり、ふたつの形式による会議をデータとし、形式による差も議論の対象とする。また、スタンス分析時は言語使用のみではなく、非言語行動も分析対象とし、会議の形式によって会話にどのような差が生まれるのか、また不同意や相反する意見の表明時にどのような言語・非言語行動をとって衝突を回避しようとするのかを観察する。結果として、会話形式は、視線の違いや、ターン保持やポーズの時間に差を生み出す可能性があることが示された。一方、不同意時の衝突回避方策として、譲歩や直接的言及を避けるなどの言語的方策が用いられ、会話をポライトに進行しようとする参加者の意図が観察された。また、形式問わず、不同意の表明の際に、話者が後ろに少しのけぞったり、頭を触ったりするような行動が観察され、非言語行動が話者のスタンス表明に関連している可能性が示された。しかしデータが限られていることから、今後のさらなる研究が必要である。

Keywords: politeness, stancetaking, multi-modal data, verbal and nonverbal behaviors, online and offline discourse

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim¹

This paper tries to claim that, when a speaker shows disagreement and/or an opposite opinion in online and offline meetings, speakers adjust their

positioning with regard to others' positioning to show politeness. It also tries to show some nonverbal behaviors, such as leaning back and scratching the head, can possibly be signals of disalignment. With the framework of stancetaking theory (e.g., Du Bois, 2007), I examine interactions in online and offline meetings among some Japanese university students and their teacher, who is a native English speaker. They are the editors of a magazine and talk about it in the meetings. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, they held meetings in a small conference room at the university in person, but after the spread of the virus, they started to talk online.

The speakers sometimes disagree with the prior speaker and/or give some opposite opinions to the interlocutor(s). This paper focuses on such utterances and analyze them from the views of the stancetaking theory and politeness (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Haugh, 2007; Grainger, 2011). As a result, the data show that, in such confrontational situations, both speakers and interlocutors try to behave politely by conceding and/or showing their understanding of the interlocutors' position; in other words, the speakers adjust their positioning not to conflict.

In addition to that, this paper is also interested in nonverbal behaviors in these situations, and, in some cases, certain nonverbal behaviors could function as a preparatory stage of disagreement. This possible signal of disalignment can be found in both online and offline meetings, and they possibly help us analyze multi-modal interactional data more deeply. However, since the data are limited, this point needs to be investigated further in the future research.

1.2 Background

Based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1987), showing an opposite idea or thought can threaten interlocutor(s)' and possibly the speaker's own face. The notion of 'face' is originally introduced by Goffman (1967), and he argues that every person fundamentally wants to sustain their public self-image. This self-image is called face, and when people talk to each other, they utilize linguistic strategies not to threaten their face. That is, when people try to disagree with or give an opposite idea or thought to the

interlocutors, they use some linguistic strategies to mitigate the impact of this Face Threatening Act, or an FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

However, Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness focuses too much on the speakers' utterances; some scholars criticize their theory, indicating that we need to look at wider discourse, namely both speakers' and hearers' utterances, to investigate politeness (e.g., Eelen, 2001; Grainger, 2011; Watts, 2003). Considering previous discussion of politeness, this paper examines both speakers' and hearers' utterances to investigate politeness in interactions.

As for managing confrontational situations, Saito (2011) investigates how superior workers manage the interactions when the speakers have opposite opinions and/or thoughts on directive speech acts at a workplace. This shows that the superior uses some linguistic strategy to perform directives to handle the confrontational situations effectively. However, this research uses a role-playing interaction as its data; it doesn't look at natural speech data. Also, it focuses too much on speakers' utterances. Taking this limitation into account, I explore natural speech data, especially when speakers confront each other to some extent, from the view of interactional politeness (Grainger, 2011).

As a method of analysis, I adopt the theory of stancetaking introduced by Du Bois (2007). He states that stancetaking is a dialogic and intersubjective act and it consists of three actions: evaluation, position, and alignment. He also suggests that any kind of meaningful interaction can be analyzed from the view of stancetaking. Therefore, people must take stances in interactions, because at least two subjects engage in a certain interaction. It means that analyzing interactions from the view of stancetaking can help us find out both speakers' and hearers' intention of politeness. In addition, along with the discussion of the relationships between stancetaking and nonverbal behaviors (e.g., Goodwin, 2006; Haddington, 2006), this paper also investigates nonverbal behaviors as well as verbal behaviors when analyzing stancetaking.

As shown above, I explore how people show disagreement and/or an opposite opinion in interactions from the views of politeness and stancetaking, but one more thing to consider when analyzing the data is the mode of communication. Recently, the ways of communication have been changed

because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the spread of the new virus, people avoid face-to-face interactions, and, instead, they start to use online real-time communication tools, such as 'Zoom' and 'Teams.' Thanks to these applications, people appear to be able to communicate with others as they did before the pandemic. However, it should be examined whether such applications influence and/or change our ways of talking. This becomes another target of my research.

1.3 Research questions

Given the background and current situations, I set two research questions. First, are our ways of talking different in offline face-to-face and online interactions, and if that is the case, how? Second, what kind of verbal and nonverbal strategies do people use in offline and online meetings when they want to disagree with the prior speaker? As for the first research question, since the modes of interactions can affect our ways of communication (Holmes, 2013), we need to look at the influences of the modes of communication, offline or online, on our ways of talking. If they have some impact on our interactions, we may have to dig into more about it in the future studies. The second question is for figuring out how speakers deal with confrontational situations with verbal and nonverbal strategies to maintain their harmonious interactions.

2. Methodology

To obtain some kind of answers to the research questions, I collect multi-modal data and analyze both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. I video- and audio-record the offline meetings among some university students and their teacher. They are the editors of a magazine published annually by the English department of that university. The students can freely contribute any works written in English, such as poems, original stories, and so forth, to this magazine. The editors of this magazine hold the meetings about it in a small conference room at the university. They sit around the table; they can see each other during the meeting. In addition to the offline face-to-face meetings, I record online meetings. After the spread of the virus, the editors started to

use an online application, 'Zoom,' to hold meetings. These meetings are also the data of my study.

The editors are not always the same, because most of the editors are university students, and they are volunteers. Of course, some of them graduate every year. So, some participants of online and offline meetings are different. However, the teacher and some students participate in both types of meetings. The teacher is responsible for the magazine, so he continues to attend both offline and online meetings. He is a native English speaker who can also speak Japanese, and he usually conducts the meetings. In addition to him, one student takes part in both offline and online meetings. He is a graduate student who has been engaged in this magazine since he was an undergraduate student.

Most of the participants in offline meetings are native Japanese speakers, and one student is a native Portuguese speaker who can also speak Japanese and English fluently. In online meetings, every participant, except for the teacher, is a native Japanese speaker. Some students have experienced studying abroad; they can speak English fluently. In both types of the meetings, the participants are talking in English most of the time. Japanese are sometimes used whenever needed.

The offline meetings are held once a month on average during a lunch break, and each meeting lasts less than an hour. The online meetings, on the other hand, are conducted twice a month on average usually on Saturday, and each meeting lasts about an hour. Since being recorded is an unnatural setting, and it may influence the ways of their speech (Ahearn, 2017), I cut out first five minutes of each meeting to gather as natural speech data as possible. Some might think five minutes are not enough for the participants to get used to being recorded, but I record every meeting, and it leads them to be accustomed to being recorded in five minutes. I analyze the interactions in such meetings with the framework of stancetaking (Du Bois, 2007; Englebreton, 2007; Jaffe, 2009) and politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Grainger, 2011; Watts, 2003).

3. Data analysis

In this section, I illustrate examples of the strategies people use not to conflict. In a meeting where Excerpt 1 comes, the speakers talk about what each editor can do for the magazine. The teacher (Mark; anonymous name) lets the students decide what kind of job they do, such as promoting the magazine, responding to questions, and managing the manuscripts. Before the meeting starts, Mark distributes a handout on which some jobs are written; the students can choose what they want to do from these options.

In Excerpt 1, a male student (Koki) disaligns himself with Mark's position. Before the excerpt, Koki volunteers to distribute the magazine to some places, such as a library and PR center of the university, for promoting it. Before analyzing Excerpt 1, it is important to note that this university has two campuses, and it takes more than an hour to move from one campus to the other. (See Appendix for transcription conventions.)

Excerpt 1:

- 01 Mark: ... and then. ah also I'm not sure where to distribute it on *Otsuka* campus ((anonymous name of one campus))?
- 02 Koki: ai yeah, an: <<leaning back and touching his head by his right hand> (2.5) it is distributed in the corner of e:e: library entrance>
- 03 Mark: right.
- 04 Koki: then an (0.5) <<@actually> <<looking at Mark> we have to go to the *Otsuka* campus>>
- 05 Mark: right.
- 06 Koki: yeah. <<facing down> *Kaneko* san ((a former editor)) told me that. (1.0) So>
- 07 Mark: but am (3.0) there are (2.0) copies of *SMOG* ((the name of the magazine)) (1.0) at *Otsuka already*. So you don't have to carry the copies.
- 08 Koki: okey.

In Line 01, Mark intends to make Koki go to the other campus to distribute it. However, Koki is a student of a campus where the meetings are held, and

he shows his hesitation to go to the other campus just for distributing it in Lines 02, 04, and 06.

In Line 02, even though Koki just says the magazine can be put in a library, his nonverbal behaviors, leaning back and touching his head, may show his disalignment with Mark as shown in Figure 1 and 2:



Figure 1: Line 01



Figure 2: Line 02, Koki's leaning back and touching his head

Then, in Line 04, laughing bitterly and looking at Mark, Koki confirms his visiting the other campus, as if he challenges Mark's intention, but in Line 05, Mark does not change his intention to ask Koki to go to the other campus as shown in Figure 3:

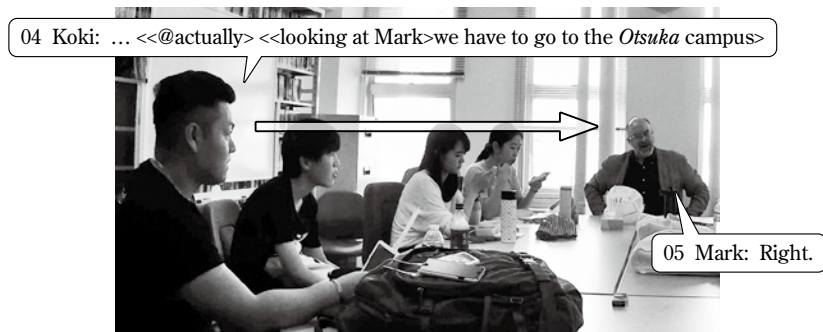


Figure 3: Lines 04 and 05

In addition to Line 04, looking away from Mark, Koki still seems to show his hesitation to go to the other campus, as if he tries to convince himself to do that job by saying that *Kaneko san*, who was also a member in a previous year, told them to do in Line 06 as shown in Figure 4:



Figure 4: Line 06

Even though Koki does not tell directly that he does not want to go, his nonverbal behaviors indicate his disagreement with Mark. Here, we can see Koki's intention of being polite; Koki thinks that he should not disagree straightforwardly, because Mark is his teacher, namely he is superior to Koki in this situation. This leads us to interpret Koki's positioning. He positions himself far from Mark, and he expresses his disalignment not with verbal

expressions but with nonverbal behaviors.

This analysis is also supported by Mark's response in Line 07. Mark mentions that distributing the magazine in the different campus is not so large burden, because copies are already there, and Koki does not have to carry them. His words indicate that he thinks that Koki hesitates to go there. Then, he shows his understanding of Koki's hesitation and makes a concession. Although it may not be the most preferred structure as Levinson (1983) illustrates, Koki's 'off-record' strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987) can convey his intention to Mark, and they can avoid a conflict.

Although Koki may not mean that his hesitation is due to the heavy luggage he has to carry, Mark's understanding of Koki's avoidance seems to happen because of Koki's nonverbal behaviors. During the meeting, Koki does not tell explicitly that he does not want to go to the different campus. This suggests that Mark does not have a chance to catch Koki's hesitation from Koki's words; he may interpret Koki's want from what he does nonverbally.

The next excerpt comes from an online meeting, and it also illustrates the concession strategy for disagreeing with the prior speaker and its possible connection to nonverbal expressions. In this meeting, the speakers talk about how to promote the magazine. They usually go to some classes and give some information about it to the students. In this promotion, they not only explain what kind of magazine it is but also try to encourage them to write something for it. In Line 01 in Excerpt 2, a male speaker (Tomo) suggests that they make a script of what they talk in the promotion in the classes. However, in the following lines, Koki, the same participant in Excerpt 1, disagrees with Tomo's idea and suggests that, instead of making an exact script, they make some brief outline and slides to show on a screen and talk about the magazine by looking at them.

Excerpt 2:

01 Tomo: ...<<looking up> what I want to talk about is a: (0.5) I'm going to (1.0) make > a: list about the ten minutes (0.5) a: kinda worksheet like a first two minutes the paper is going to talk about the first two minutes going to talk about this and last minutes we are going

talk about this and the middle maybe seven minutes we are going to talk about kinda (0.5) writings in the our a visiting days of a class so I'm going to send it first so then probably we can send our on our *Line* ((the social media application)) about (1.5) a which word are you want to use or (0.5) maybe I think we should divide our part of who is going to make, it's introduction, who is going to make middle and who is going to make conclusion. a what do you think everyone.

(7.0) ((in this pause, Koki, the next speaker is looking up, as if he thinks of something.))

02 Koki: am, yeah I think <<leaning back a little and scratching his head>> <<leaning forward> so you mean like> we're going to make you know the exact script right?

03 Tomo: ye [ah]

04 Koki: [sc] ript for the, yeah, am, I think (0.5) it also would be, good to: you know make an [outline]

05 Tomo: <<nodding> [un]>

06 Koki: for the class presentation. then yeah we're no' going to make the exact, script right?

07 Tomo: un

08 Koki: so like you know, for example we make some kind of a slides or yeah it also would be better that we have kind of like a word script on yeah on <<smiling> on our laptop, cuz the students don't see anything? while we're speaking?

09 Tomo: <<smiling> yeah>

10 Koki: <<still smiling> so I think it's one thing> so, you know, that, ye yea I also think the: script is also good cuz, a: we can sharpen the words and expressions that we are going to make and we are going to tell them. but I also think the the you know slides and kind of like ambiguous image or, more, am a fluffy outline? than the script i' makes a:m our words more kind of like a creative?

11 Tomo: <<nodding> un>

12 Koki: and yeah XX kind of like straightforward word for them so I think

that's the good point not to make script and then a:m X kind of <<looking up> like a:, I don't know> the: basic ideas, and we dare to, stay them like, the just a fluffy ideas? so yeah that's an idea ff from my yeah.

13 Tomo: hun

In Line 02, Koki leans back a little and scratches his head as shown in Figure 5 (he is in the upper left.), and then he asks Tomo if they make an exact script for the promotion as shown in Figure 6, where he leans forward a little:



Figure 5: Line 02; Koki's leaning back and scratching his head



Figure 6: Line 02; Koki's leaning forward and asking

From these verbal expressions and nonverbal behaviors, we cannot interpret whether Koki disagrees with Tomo's idea, but in the following lines, while he admits some good aspects of Tomo's idea, he gives an alternative idea. It means that he disaligns himself with Tomo. In Line 04, Koki suggests they just make an outline, and in Line 06, he indicates they do not have to make a perfect script. In addition, in the first part of Line 08, he suggests that they make slides to show, which indicates that they do not need a script. Moreover, he continues to show why he disagrees with the idea that they make a script with some reasons in the last part of Line 10 and in Line 12.

These words clearly show that Koki disagrees with Tomo, but his intention of being polite can also be seen here. After Tomo requires the others' opinion, there is seven-second pause. Here, Koki thinks about something and gives a clarification request in Line 02. Koki not only clarifies whether Tomo's position is the same as what Koki understands, but he also intends to cushion the impact of his following disagreement. This indicates his hesitation in giving an opposite idea; he tries to behave politely.

In addition, Koki shows his understanding of Tomo's suggestion and a possible way to use a script in the last part of Line 08, and he admits some advantages of making a script in the first part of Line 10. These strategies also indicate his hesitation in fully disagreeing with the prior idea; we can also observe his intention of being polite here. This indirect disagreement is similar to what Koki does in Excerpt 1, and these strategies appear to aim at politeness. As for nonverbal expressions, Koki uses the same expressions, leaning back and scratching or touching his head. This may be a signal of following disalignment, but these nonverbal behaviors come from the same person; it may be just his personal habit or characteristic.

However, by looking at Excerpt 3, we can see that the politeness strategy and possible sign of nonverbal disagreement may not be just Koki's habit. It also comes from an online meeting, and in this meeting, the participants talk about making a short video that introduces the magazine and uploading it on some social media platforms, such as 'Twitter' and 'Instagram.' In Excerpt 3, Tomo asks Mark to give some talk, record them, and upload it on the social media in Line 01, but Mark does not want to do that. Mark uses a linguistic

strategy not to conflict when disaligning, and he also uses some nonverbal expressions which are similar to what Koki does in Excerpts 1 and 2.

Excerpt 3:

01 Tomo: ... also we would like to get ah: (3.0) professor talking about the: (1.0) everyone in the student want to have a: confident about using in English for, a video. because I think it's really important to students X messages not only the students but also the professor teaching, a: teaching or telling lecturing the students about English life.

(3.0)

02 Mark: <<leaning back a little and scratching his head>> h: I don't know, does anybody wanna listen to me? I don't, <<@>but>

[@@@ XX] listen myself=

03 Tomo: [@@@@]

04 Koki: [<<looking up and smiling>>]

05 Mark: =but am but whatever you think I mean I'm happy to do that, am I can do some short ones but am, I think (1.0) well what if I find like some inspiring quotes and then, you know all of you could kinda pick one or something and like you know, ah:, I don't know, let's see <<looking through something>(18.0)> ...

((after 18-second pause, Mark shares his screen on which a quote from some literature is written, and he illustrates how to use an inspiring quotes and encourage students to participate in the magazine. He still continues to speak in Line 06))

06 Mark: so somebody does a like just a super short little video just like that, am, then people say oh? okey am, maybe maybe I can do that maybe I shouldn't worry too much. I'm just start or someX but I think something like that would be would be good, I mean I don't mind looking through, some quotes and giving you X quates but am, and I'll do a video too? but a:m, a I think, you know having students do is really nice. <<nodding>yeah>

In line 02, Mark leans back a little and scratches his head as shown in Figure 7 (Mark is in the middle). Then, he asks a question (“does anybody wanna listen to me?”) and answers by himself (“I don’t,”) in Line 02, which straightforwardly shows his disagreement with Tomo’s request in Line 01. However, he laughs after he says, “I don’t,” as shown in Figure 8, and it indicates his intention of cushioning the impact of his disalignment.



Figure 7: Line 02; Mark’s leaning back and scratching his head



Figure 8: Line 02; Mark’s laughing

Aside from that, in Lines 05 and 06, Mark uses a strategy of conceding as Koki does in Excerpts 1 and 2. In Line 05, he says, “I’m happy to do that, am I can do some short ones but...,” to indicate that he would make a video, but

he implies that he disagrees by saying ‘but’ in his utterance. After this, he, at least superficially, moves on to a different topic, but finally he states again that he will make a video in Line 06. At the same time, he suggests the idea that students should make a video to post on the social media; he explicitly disagrees with Tomo’s request. Although he disaligns himself with the prior speaker, he indicates that he would make a video, which can show his intention of conceding and thus politeness.

As for his nonverbal behaviors, his leaning back and scratching his head may hint that his following utterances may lead to an opposite opinion as in Excerpts 1 and 2. In Excerpts 2 and 3, I cannot see whether the interlocutors perceive it as a sign of disagreement, because there seems to be no data that show the speakers’ disagreement influence the interlocutors’ following turns. It means these analyses may not be valid, but it is worth stating that some nonverbal behaviors can be a signal of stancetaking, because the different speakers did the same thing before disagreeing and/or giving an opposite opinion in the data introduced above.

4. Discussion

As the excerpts above show, conceding and using implicit expressions can be the strategies not to conflict with others. In Excerpt 1, Koki does not show his disalignment straightforwardly, but it conveys his intention to the interlocutor, Mark. Excerpts 2 and 3 illustrate that showing the speakers’ understanding and admitting the idea(s) that are mentioned in the prior turn can cushion the impact of displaying their opposite idea(s) or thought(s). The speakers in my data do not merely disagree, but they mitigate the possible shock of disalignment before and/or after they disalign.

These strategies may be induced by the social settings. In the meetings, the participants share some goal of interactions; they try to publish the magazine annually without any problems and they may strive to make it a better and well-known magazine. This lets the speakers disagree more easily than mundane interactions, because they may feel that their disagreement can lead the magazine to be a better one. Of course, even though they share some kind of goals, the possible danger of the speakers’ face still exists, and

it leads them to avoid threatening others by using some linguistic strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

As for hearers' view of politeness (e.g., Watts, 2003) and interactional politeness (Grainger, 2011), it is difficult to observe them in the data above. Excerpt 1 can possibly show that the speakers achieve interactional politeness, because each of the speakers aligns themselves at the compromised plan, but we cannot observe whether interactional politeness is achieved in the other two excerpts, since one speaker tends to hold longer turns than in Excerpt 1. This means that we also have some difficulty in investigating hearer's view of politeness in Excerpts 2 and 3, because we cannot observe hearers' reactions to the speakers' using some strategies.

As discussed above, it is difficult to explore interactional politeness in the excerpts above, but this difficulty may bring us the possibility that two kinds of data are different; that is, in offline face-to-face meetings, people 'interact' or take turns more often than in online meetings. In online meetings, the speakers tend to hold their turn(s) longer than in offline meetings as we can see in the data. In addition, there are less overlaps in the online meetings. It is true that the number of participants may have some influence on this disparity of turns. That is why we need more data to validate the possible tendency to interact more in an offline conversation.

Besides, the length of silence or pause and the directions of gaze are different in online and offline meetings. When we look at the data from the view of linguistic politeness strategies, it is hard to find out the differences; however, pauses tend to be longer, and the participants' looking up (an example is shown in Figure 9) can be observed more in online meetings.



Figure 9: Koki's looking up

These might be because speakers cannot guess who speaks next. In face-to-face conversations, speakers can feel who wants to speak by watching others, and also, they can talk with others in undertones while someone is talking. By contrast, in online meeting, it seems that only one speaker can speak simultaneously. Of course, it is possible for all speakers to speak up at the same time, but they cannot listen to each other. This brings the participants some kind of difficulty in finding out who is about to talk and taking turns in an 'appropriate' time. Hence, participants seem to wait until they make sure who speaks next or whether it is appropriate to take a turn then, and it leads to a longer pause.

Furthermore, "who looks where" is unclear in online conversations, and looking up may be a sign that they do not intend to speak right away. All speakers are shown in the same screen as the figures I introduce throughout this paper show, and we cannot see where each speaker looks. That might be another reason for longer pauses, because no one can observe the others' gaze, but more importantly here, looking up, as Koki does in Figure 9, can tell others that they are thinking of something and do not want to speak right now. Although the participants' looking up happens to be observed many times in my data, participants in online interactions may utilize whatever functions as a sign of declining to take a turn.

Finally, the data above imply that leaning back and scratching or touching their head can be the preliminary stage of disalignment. These nonverbal

behaviors, at least in my data, function as the initial stage of disagreement. In particular, people can distance themselves from the speaker by leaning back, and it may seem to be a sign of disalignment, because this kind of physical movement is a characteristic of stancetaking (Englebretson, 2007) and some nonverbal behaviors are the signals of stancetaking (Goodwin, 2006). It is possible that people use these nonverbal behaviors, consciously or unconsciously, for preparation for the following FTA(s) (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Levinson, 1983). By using these behaviors, people can have some time to think of how to deliver their message in the following turns. Of course, it is hard to claim that these nonverbal behaviors directly show disalignment only by looking at the data shown above, but there is a possibility that we could interpret such nonverbal behaviors as a sign or a preparatory stage of disalignment, and it may help us better understand stancetaking activities. However, as mentioned above, limited data cannot exclude the possibility that these nonverbal behaviors are just personal habits. Therefore, it requires further investigation with broader data set.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the interactions where people try to disagree in a meeting and do not want to conflict, and showed that they use some linguistic strategies to avoid friction. One of these strategies was disagreeing implicitly, although it does not succeed unless the interlocutor interprets the intention. The other strategy shown in the data was concession; the speakers admit and/or show understanding the prior idea or thought to some extent, and then they display their disaligning.

As for the differences between the offline and online meetings, turn-holding time, the length of pause, and gaze could be different. However, these differences were not able to be fully discussed with the data I showed above.

One more interesting finding was that some nonverbal behaviors, leaning back and touching their head, could be the signals of disalignment. These behaviors might be just for thinking of how to respond to the prior speaker and they do not directly show disagreement. However, as scholars (e.g.,

Goodwin, 2006; Englebretson, 2007) show, nonverbal behaviors are also a part of stancetaking; it means that they may be a target of evaluation (Du Bois, 2007) and thus, they compose stancetaking activities. The nonverbal behaviors found in my data could possibly be a signal of a certain stance.

Unfortunately, I was not able to discuss the relationships among nonverbal behaviors, stancetaking, and politeness further, as well as the possible causes of the differences between offline and online interactions. They are worth discussing more deeply with more various data in the future studies, and they will help us better understand the nature of human communications.

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Notes

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Appendix: Transcription conventions

- . : falling intonation
- ? : rising intonation
- , : Short pause (less than 0.4 second)
- (1.0) : Pause (e.g., (1.5) for 1.5-second and (2.0) for 2.0-second pause)
- [] : Overlap
- (()) : extra information
- @ : laughter
- <<action>> : non-verbal behavior; doing something
- <<action>~~> : doing something while saying ~~
- = : latching
- X : Unclear sound and/or incomprehensible sound, each X approximately stands for a syllable
- ... : Short omission