論　文

日本人と英語圏の人の間のミーティングにて談話と態度の違い

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Discordant discourse styles in the decision-making meetings of Japanese English speakers and native English speakers

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ABSTRACT：世界中のビジネスミーティングは一見して同じ様に思われる。しかし、談話を分析するとそれぞれの文化によって根本的な違いが見えて来る（Aritz & Walker, 2014）。国際的なビジネスミーティングに参加する人々がこういった違いの存在を認識していなければミーティングの目的と人間関係に損傷がでる可能性がある。この論文は、ミーティングで日本人と英語圏の人の談話と態度の違いを分析する。その結果、話すタイミングと談話の管理と意見が不一致の場合の解決方法に関して、基本の違いがあるとわかる。

Business meetings are superficially alike all over the world. Yet under the surface they show fundamental discursive differences that align with the specific cultures in which they occur (Aritz and Walker, 2014). A lack of awareness of these differences within the context of an intercultural meeting can potentially impact group rapport and meeting effectiveness. This paper compares the discursive behaviour of groups of Japanese English speakers and groups of native English speakers participating in decision-making meetings and concludes that there are notable and discordant differences across the two groups in terms how discourse is framed, how speaking turns are achieved and how conflict is resolved.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Discordant meeting styles

The rationale for group-decision-making in business meetings is the assumption that by exploiting the range of knowledge, experience and expertise of the many, the decisions made are, on balance, better for the company (Saaty, 2012). However, such human resources can only be exploited if they are able to participate fully in the decision-making discourse. Research into Asian and Western intercultural meetings suggests that this is not always the case and that, regardless of proficiency with English, cross-culturally different behaviour and expectations of behaviour can result in ineffective or imbalanced meeting participation (Tanaka, 2006; Tanaka, 2008; Du-Babcock & Tanaka, 2016). In a study of an English language meeting between the carmakers, Renault and Nissan, held to decide an advertising strategy, Tanaka (2008) reported how limited participation by the Japanese Nissan team was misinterpreted by French participants as acquiescence to their point of view. In an earlier report, also by Tanaka (2006), relational damage is observed as the result of conflicting and misinterpreted meeting behaviours of Japanese and American participants in a management meeting at a Chemical company.

1.2. Japanese and Anglo-western intercultural decision-making

These studies suggest there is inherent discord between the conventional meeting behaviours of Anglo-western and Japanese business people. Yet, as Japanese business globalizes, intercultural

collaboration will surely increase resulting in more meeting interactions between Japanese and western professionals (Staples, 2011). Three contexts are most significant: meetings between foreign employees of Japanese companies and their Japanese colleagues working in Japan (Neeley, 2012; Mikitani, 2016), meetings between Japanese employees of foreign affiliates based in Japan and their global colleagues and superiors (Edman, 2016), and meetings between Japanese employees posted overseas to foreign joint ventures and their partners and subordinates (Farrell, 2008). In all cases, the need to maximize participation by people regardless of cultural background is important. Therefore there is a need to understand what factors might be preventing this.

1.3. Discursive Leadership

The concept of Discursive Leadership (Fairhurst, 2007) suggests that leadership in talk is a socially constructed phenomenon, rather than residing in any single individual (Robinson, 2001). Robinson argues that leadership emerges from meeting discourse when '… ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized as capable of progressing talks or problems …' (2001, p. 93). Aritz and Walker (2014) took the concept further and identified three different styles of Discursive Leadership. Based on their cross-cultural conversation data, they claim that there is a Directive style, wherein participants assertively seek to align others with their own point of view, a Cooperative style, where the onus is on involving others in the decision-making process, and a Collaborative style of leadership, where participants jointly frame and negotiate decision-making (2014). They found a preference for Cooperative Leadership among Asian participants and for Collaborative Leadership among Anglo-Americans (2014).

1.4. Differences between Japanese and western business meetings

In Japanese corporate cultures, decision-making rarely occurs in formal group settings such as meetings (Yoshino, 1975; Yamada, 1992). Instead, formal meetings are seen as places where decisions are ratified rather than negotiated, with consensus-building carried out beforehand in informal one-to-one or small group encounters known in Japanese as *nemawashi* (JETRO, 1999; Sagi, 2015). On the other hand, in Anglo-western business contexts, decisions are more often made, or at least discussed, in formal meeting settings (Fisher and Ury, 1981). The differences between Japanese and English speakers also extend to conventional social behaviour within the group decision-making process itself. A good example is different pragmatic approaches to disagreement (e.g. JETRO, 1999; Sagi, 2015). Therefore, given the significance that group decision-making has in global business and the above-mentioned cross-cultural differences, this study set out to investigate the quality and significance of discursive differences between Japanese speakers of English, hereafter JSEs, and native speakers of English, hereafter NSEs. The investigation can be seen as an important first step in enhancing the efficacy of intercultural meetings between the two groups.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Two representative populations of each group were asked to perform two decision-making scenarios for the study. The data was therefore elicited data. In one scenario, participants were tasked with selecting a candidate to be laid off from a company undergoing a restructuring process. In the second, participants were tasked with planning a retirement party for a senior colleague. Both tasks involved building consensus in order to resolve a realistic business problem. Following Du-Babcock and Tanaka's approach (2013; 2016), mixed quantitative and qualitative analyses and a twin focus on turn-taking and consensus-building moves were employed. This was chosen because significance in conversational data often lies in a combination of quality and quantity (Dörnyei, 2007).

2.1. Sample populations and data collection

The Japanese participants, hereafter type A participants, were recruited from an English communication training course at the Tokyo head office of a manufacturing company. Twenty-six volunteers were recruited ranging in English proficiency from Pre-intermediate to Intermediate, the equivalent of B1 to B2 in the Common European Framework. The recruits were overwhelmingly male, the majority being in their thirties. All were low to middle-level managers. From this population, eight meeting groups were made consisting of from three to five people and eight sets of conversation data collected. The Anglo-western participants, hereafter type B participants, consisted of colleagues of the researcher from a corporate communication training company also based in Tokyo. The total population was four, all male, native speakers of English, consisting of two British, one Canadian and one American. Two groups of three were made from this population and two sets of conversation data was collected.

Data was collected by audio recording group meeting performances and transcribing the recordings following conventions adapted from Jefferson (table 1). The researcher observed all meetings and took field notes recording non-verbal behaviours such as eye contact, facial expressions and gestures, where significant. The ten sets of conversation data that were collected amounted to a total of 163 minutes 18 seconds of discourse. All meetings were performed in English in order to be accessible for analysis, to comply with the research context of the English training program, and to be representative of the real-world primacy of English as the language of global business discourse (Jenkins, 2009).

Table 1. Transcription conventions (After Jefferson, 2004)

.	Just noticeable pause
..	Noticeable pause
…	Extended pause
[T- sounds good]	Overlaps
you agree with-	Sharp cut off
( )	Unclear sounds
((laughs))	Non-verbal behaviour or commentary

2.2. Analytical approach

The collected data was analysed in terms of the ways that speaking turns were allocated, the ways that the discourse was framed and the ways that conflict, inherent in group decision-making, was resolved. These three categories were further separated into whether behaviours observed might be considered stylistic features, and therefore aspects of a Discursive Leadership style, or sociopragmatic features, and therefore aspects of rapport management. These multiple analytical concerns produced a framework into which conversation data was coded qualitatively (table 2).

Table 2. Analytical framework

	DISCURSIVE LEADERSHIP	RAPPORT MANAGEMENT
Turn-taking		
Discourse framing		
Conflict resolution		

Turn-taking data was also analysed quantitatively. A speaking turn was deemed to have been allocated when a new speaker produced speech of greater significance than a brief request for clarification. Turn-allocations were categorized according to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's distinction of self-allocation and other-allocation (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). Self-allocations were further divided into those from an open floor and those that required interrupting another speaker, labelled here a 'turn-grab'. In addition, a further distinction was made between the turn-allocations managed by the chair and those initiated by other participants. This was in order to shed light on how participants perceived the rights and responsibilities of the chair as distinct from other participants. In total, six categories of turn-allocations were created (table 3).

Table 3. Turn allocation categories

		Chair/Non-chair controlled
Ch<at>	Chair allocated turn	Chair controlled turn allocations
Ch<sa>	Chair self-allocated turn	
Ch<gt>	Chair ‘grabbed’ turn (interruption)	
P<at>	A participant allocated turn	Non-chair controlled turn allocations
P<sa>	A participant self-allocated turn	
P<gt>	A participant ‘grabbed’ a turn (interruption)	

3. RESULTS

3.1. Contrasts in turn allocations

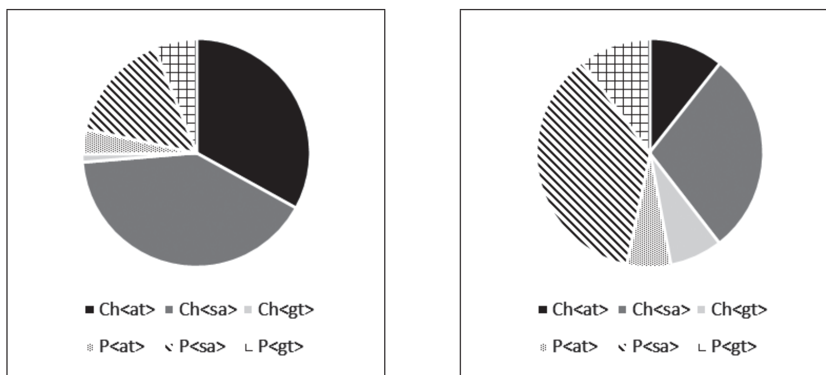
The analysis of turn allocations revealed significant differences in the roles of the chairpersons across type A and type B meetings. In the Japanese type A meetings, on average 74.8% of turn-allocations were made by the chair. This figure was only 47.3% for the type B Anglo-western meetings (table 4). Type A meeting #3 showed this tendency in the extreme, 100% of turn-allocations being either chair-allocated or self-allocated by the chair. In the type A meetings, the chair’s dominant role in allocating turns appeared to be consensual. Japanese chairs did not impose an order of turns on the other participants. Instead, this responsibility seemed to have been ceded to them. Self-allocation percentages reveal this arrangement well. 56.1% of turns were self-allocated from an ‘open floor’ in the Japanese type A meetings (Ch<sa> + P<sa>), but were heavily dominated by the chairs, (table 4). In other words, in type A meetings, when the floor was open, it was usually being left open *intentionally*. The other participants were waiting for the chair to speak. In the type B meetings, similar data reveals a 29:36.6 ratio, which given that there were only three participants in each group, works out as roughly an even share of self-allocations, not dependent on role.

Interestingly, the responsibility for allocating turns in type A meetings did not seem to mean that chairs exerted the right to assign or deny speaking turns. There was not much evidence of type A chairs controlling turns. The number of interruptions by type A chairs was extremely low, at only 1.2% of all turn-allocations (table 4). In effect, turns were distributed in a very egalitarian way, often around the table in strict order. This accords with the findings of Aritz and Walker of a preference for Cooperative Leadership in East Asian meetings (2014). In contrast to this egalitarian pattern, turn-grabs were more common in type B meetings at 17.9% of the total and performed regardless of role (table 4).This suggests that participation was being determined based on individual initiative rather egalitarianism. Neither did there appear to be a role for the chair as a conductor of turn-taking. This finding also mirrors Aritz and Walker’s Collaborative Leadership style preference for Anglo-westerners.

Table 4. Types of turn-allocations

Turn allocations % of total	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	Means	
	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)
Ch<at>	28.6	21.9	50	43.5	8.9	27.8	26.8	35.3	30.3	12.5	33	10.7
Ch<sa>	35.7	21.9	50	47.8	32.1	36.1	37.9	47.1	48.5	25.9	40.6	29
Ch<gt>	2.4	6.2	0	0	1.8	0	1.2	0	0	12.5	1.2	7.6
P<at>	0	12.5	0	2.2	7.1	5.6	6.1	2	0	5.4	3.5	6.3
P<sa>	14.3	28.1	0	4.3	39.3	16.7	25.6	13.7	21.2	33.9	15.5	36.6
P<gt>	19	9.4	0	2.2	10.7	13.9	2.4	2	0	9.8	6.1	10.3

Figure 1: Responsibility for turn-allocation

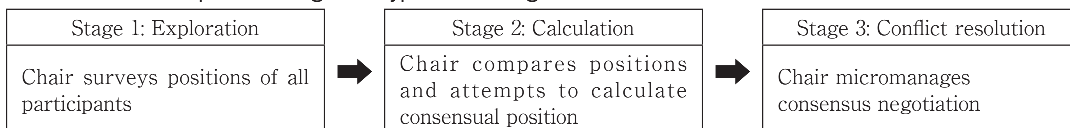


Solid shaded sections represent chair control over turn-allocation

3.2. Type A discourse framing and consensus-building

As well as contrasts in turn allocations, discourse framing and consensus-building were also constructed in different ways across the two groups. In type A meetings, discourse framing was the exclusive preserve of the chairperson. For most of the type A meetings, this followed a three stage process: 1) an exploration stage, 2) a calculation stage and 3) a conflict resolution stage (table 5).

Table 5. Three sequential stages of type A meetings



Stage 1: Exploration	Stage 2: Calculation	Stage 3: Conflict resolution
Chair surveys positions of all participants	Chair compares positions and attempts to calculate consensual position	Chair micromanages consensus negotiation

In all eight type A meetings the chair's first move was to survey the positions of the participants in order. Each participant took a turn to set out their position independently. No reference was made to the opinions of other participants at this stage. Often, type A chairs made a note of each speaker's positions

and their reasons. This was followed by a Calculation stage in which the type A chairs attempted to calculate a consensus position based on their initial survey. This calculation was performed by the chairs alone and without intervention from other participants and can be seen in example 1. From Meeting #2. The chairperson, K, describes the results of the opinion survey in which candidate Rebecca had been the first choice of one participant and the second choice of two others. K presents these statistics to the group as a calculated solution to their decision-making.

Example 1. MTG #2 (Lay-offs)

15:17　K:　Er . Rebecca, regarding Rebecca .. Mr G and Mr N choose the second candidate to lay off and Ms S choose as a first candidate .. so .. so . so er .. do you agree . er . we lay off Rebecca? ... ((laughs)) er . er . er . as a result of this discussion?

When this calculation process was unsuccessful and did not produce a statistically obvious solution, type A meetings reached an impasse with chairs often unsure of how to proceed (Example 2).

Example 2. MTG# 6 (Retirement Party)

04:06　T:　... ... each, each person opinion is different ((laughter)) ...

Yet, even when type A chairs appeared unsure of their next steps, help with discourse framing was extremely rare from the other participants. More often than not, type A meetings experienced a period of silence while the chairs considered how to proceed.

Sometimes, in type A meetings, calculation resulted in an obvious consensus solution. Participants holding minority positions usually changed their minds once it became clear they were in the minority. When disagreements did emerge, however, participants resorted to negotiation. During the negotiation of consensus, chairs continued to manage turn allocations but in a more directed fashion to focus on the participants holding conflicting views. Interruptions were still rare however, and there were noticeable pauses between turns. In rapport management terms, the significance of pausing between turns, the absence of direct disagreements and the frequency of hedges at these moments indicated that disagreements were being very carefully managed by all participants. For example, in Meeting #7, a very impractical proposal - Beppu, a two-hour flight from the meeting in Tokyo - was offered as a party location. Instead of being summarily dismissed, however, it was carefully considered. Only after a drawn out discussion involving hedged, indirect but only implied criticisms, such as silences, laughter and a range of ambiguous facial expressions, was it withdrawn by its original proposer, G (example 3).

Example 3. MTG #7 (Retirement Party)

22:54 G: er, Beppu ((laughter)) ... because er, in order to hold the party in Beppu bay er we have to take a day off because the party will be held on Friday .. er I'm just wondering that it is isn't possible ((laughter)) all of [N- moreover] participants

Challenging opinions was a cautious procedure throughout the type A meeting data as shown in Meeting #6 by M's careful criticism of a hotel suggestion (example 4).

Example 4. MTG# 6 (Retirement Party)

03:16 T: What, what do you th,.. what do you think?

03:25 M: Ah, yeah um . hotel is good idea but er .. er . a little bit er, a little bit eh .. high price ...

In type A meetings, conflict was always mediated by the chair, but rarely did this involve proposing compromise positions. Instead, there was a reliance on a tacit desire for conformity. Chairs often drew implicit attention to the holders of minority positions as in Meeting #8, where the chair T signaled through eye contact and a laugh that participant K should reconsider (example 5).

Example 5. MTG # 8 (Retirement Party)

23:16 T: So.. what should we do? ((laughs)) ... Mmm ... Any comments? ...

23:52 K: Mr O's idea .. sounds .. good [T- sounds good] .. I change my .. opinion [T- you agree with-] I agree with Mr O

24:28 T: Thank you

Or in meeting 6, where the pressure was applied more overtly (example 6).

Example 6. MTG# 6 (Retirement Party)

05:05 I: .. then I I .. we, we should go to Italian restaurant .. what .. what ... Mm ... how about Italian restaurant Mr H?

05:33 H: Oh.. I agree

3.3. Type B discourse framing and consensus-building

The stages of the type B meetings were less clearly defined than type A meetings. Instead of an exploratory opinion survey followed by the chair attempting to calculate consensus as in type A meetings, in type B meetings, all participants immediately engaged in a non-sequential and cyclical exploration and conflict negotiation process (table 6). Views were expressed, in no obvious egalitarian order, and where

conflict arose, negotiation of consensus immediately followed. Apart from initial discourse framing, speaking turns were not dependent on the chair but rather based on individual initiative. Nor was conflict resolution dependent on chairs, with participants in conflict directly addressing each other. Even the right to frame the meeting discourse was not exclusively the preserve of the chair. Other participants could and did challenge the chair on the direction of the discourse. During conflict resolution, negotiation based on argument was a common strategy with the chairs' role being mostly one of summarizing positions and proposing compromise positions. Silences between turns were extremely rare and interruptions were common.

Table 6. Two non-sequential stages of type B meetings

Stage 1: Exploration		Stage 2: Conflict resolution
Turn-taking dependent on initiative - not egalitarian nor controlled by the chair, conflicts negotiated as they arise	⬌	Conflicts resolved through argument and alliance building, compromise proposed by the chair

A key difference between type A and type B, was the right of the chair to frame discourse. This right was sacrosanct in type A meetings, with participants refusing to intervene even at the cost of the meeting stalling. In type B meetings, participants were less restrained as shown in Meeting #10 where participant B's very first move is to successfully challenge the order of discussion items proposed by the chair, J (example 7).

Example 7. MTG #10 (Retirement Party)

02:20 J: So, erm item one then, the place.. thoughts?

02:23 B: Yeah should maybe we decide the if, if we do it outside of the office should we maybe choose a time and date first? Because in case the places aren't.. [J- ok] available you know I mean if we choose a place and then if it's not available on the day we want [J- sure, ok, time and date] maybe it's easier than ... ... head office which is place faster I dunno-

02:45 J: Er.. ok time and day then erm day first, he leaves, his last day is August the 29th .

Disagreement in type B meetings was more direct than in type A meetings. Hedges were less extreme without the careful pauses between disagreement moves. A typical example of type B disagreement comes from Meeting #5 in which J's disagreement move is hedged with short hesitations and minimal linguistic strategies such as a hypothetical 'would' and the softener 'I think' (example 8).

Example 8. MTG #5 (Lay-offs)

05:30 J: Um, I wouldn't fire Peter, um . I think, this situation we delete space have, we're in trouble, we're in a period of recovery, trying to save the company, it's not a time to take unnecessary risks I think

In the same meeting, J makes a number of more direct 'Why' challenges, albeit hedged with minor hesitations (example 9). Such short and overt challenges typically did not occur in type A meetings, yet were ubiquitous in the type B data.

Example 9. MTG #5 (Lay-offs)

08:21 J: He's not, well I don't know whether we can trust him or not. Wh, why, why do we automatically assume because he knows something, [D- um] that could damage us, why do we assume that um... why does that reflect badly on his personality? It may be that er if we leave him alone, that this information will be, will not cause us any trouble.

Occasionally, bald on-record disagreements occurred in the type B meetings such as in Meeting #5 where J directly contradicts R's assessment (example 10).

Example 10. MTG #5 (Lay-offs)

15:21 R: I'm sure, I'm sure that in a moment like this we need to think about what's best for the company. Because if there's no company in three month's time, .. clearly, um , it's irrelevant. [D- Um], So I think that [J- oh, ok] at this point um the-

15:35 J: -It's not, it's not irrelevant.. is it? It's not irrelevant to our . personal situations.

Similar to type A groups, peer pressure was also a conflict resolution strategy in type B meetings, but usually emerged as alliance-building. Participants expressed or sought allegiance by making references to others or expressing agreement with the views of others. This can be seen in example 11, example 12 and example 13 below.

Example 11. MTG #5 (Lay-offs)

10:42 D: Looks like he's highly productive. I would say keep him.

10:47 J: yeah, me too

Example 12. MTG #10 (Retirement Party)

05:35 J: Yeah er, I feel the same way and R is big guy as you know [B-yeah?] these rooms're pretty small and er .. [D- for six of us] it'd be kind of like having a meeting ((laughs)) don't you think? We wouldn't be able to move.

Example 13. MTG #5 (Lay-offs)

13:56 R: I agree with you J there may not be an issue, but if there is [J- mm] an issue [J- ok] that's something that will need to involve (inaudible)

3.4. A comparison of type A and type B

What emerges from the analyses is two types of discourse that, although with some similarities, differ significantly in terms of turn-taking, discourse framing and conflict resolution (table 6).

Table 6. Comparative analysis of decision-making discourses

Type A Decision-making Meetings (Japanese)		
	DISCURSIVE LEADERSHIP	RAPPORT MANAGEMENT
Turn-taking	Turns allocated by chair in an egalitarian order	Significant pauses between turns, interruptions few
Discourse framing	Discourse framed and directed by chair	Discourse framing seen as institutional right of chair
Conflict resolution	Conflict mediated by chair, tacit pressure to conform to majority view	Disagreements significantly hedged, strategic alliance-building moves absent
Type A Decision-making Meetings (Anglo-western)		
	DISCURSIVE LEADERSHIP	RAPPORT MANAGEMENT
Turn-taking	Turns allocated by individual initiative	Overlapping and interrupting common
Discourse framing	Discourse framed by chair but not exclusive right	Discourse framing seen as common responsibility
Conflict resolution	Conflict mediated by chair, compromise proposed, argument and alliance building strategies	Disagreements usually hedged but direct disagreement possible

In type A meetings the chair holds the exclusive right to allocate turns and to frame discourse. These rights are very rarely impeded on by other participants. In type B meetings, although framing discourse is performed by the chair, it is not seen as an exclusive right and can be challenged. Turn allocation is much more dependent on the individual initiative of the participants. In type A meetings, the stages of the meeting are distinct with a clear exploration stage followed by an attempt to calculate a consensus. Negotiation of consensus is rarely the first option. In type B meetings, opinions are shared and conflict resolved in a more integrated sequence which is less dependent on orchestration from the chair. Conflict is always negotiated, the chair's role being one of summarizing status and proposing compromise. For type A participants, disagreement inherent in decision-making is very carefully managed as evidenced by

significant pauses, verbal and non-verbal hedges and indirect language. Type B participants also hedge disagreement but less so. Direct disagreement occurs infrequently in type B meetings, but in this data, did not occur in eight type A meetings.

4. CONCLUSION

This cross-cultural analysis of decision-making meeting behaviours found significant differences between Japanese speakers of English and native speakers of English which were analysed using the notion of Discursive Leadership. The behaviours of type A groups conform closely to the Cooperative Leadership style defined by Aritz and Walker and the behaviours of type B to their concept of Collaborative Leadership (2014). This finding supports their observation that there is a cultural preference among East Asians for Cooperative Leadership and among Anglo-westerners for Collaborative Leadership. The key question for managers is what might happen when people with such distinct approaches to group decision-making attempt to collaborate in real-world business projects. It is clear from this study that many of the differences would be discordant. A type B participant who attempts to frame the discourse might annoy a type A chairperson who sees it as the exclusive right of their position. Likewise, a reluctance to engage in argument, unmediated by the chair, as the primary means of conflict resolution might upset a type B participant in a meeting with type A colleagues. In other words, such pragmatic differences have the potential to affect rapport as well as the efficacy of intercultural business meetings.

In addition to rapport, the discord between Cooperative Leadership and Collaborative Leadership would lead to dominance of the decision-making process on the part of one group and insufficient participation on the part of the other. There are a small number of studies of authentic intercultural decision-making that show this (Tanaka, 2006; Tanaka, 2008), and a much larger popular literature that reflects participant dissatisfaction with Japanese-Anglo-western meeting outcomes (e.g. Knowles & Maio, 1990). If the efficacy of group decision-making lies in the efficient exploitation of all human resources, such discord is likely to result in inefficient and ineffective business decision-making. Awareness-raising training based on studies like this one are clearly needed for Japanese and western professionals whose work requires intercultural communication in meeting situations. Such awareness is a prerequisite for effective and tolerant intercultural communication.

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