COMPLETION REPORT

Focusing on the topic of "common and differential neural mechanisms underlying processing Japanese and Chinese honorific expressions: A neuro-linguistic investigation", I have completed a comprehensive review comparing the neural correlates underlying Japanese and Chinese respectful processing and conducted two event-related potential (ERPs) studies on the real time processing of Chinese respectful expression, following the study on Japanese honorific processing by Momo, Sakai, Sakai (2008).

Japanese and Chinese differed in the marking system for the honorific expressions, with the former equipped with morphosyntactic markers (-naru; -suru) and the latter equipped with lexical markers (nin; ni). The review work demonstrated that the misapplication of Japanese honorific markers recruited the neural responses to the morpho-syntactic errors, either in neuroimaging or electrophysiological studies, suggesting that dealing with honorific violation in Japanese engages the "syntactic repair" mechanisms; However, in the two ERP experiments in Chinese, I employed a novel "violation paradigm" in which I manipulated the status-congruency between the second-person pronoun in the directly-quoted utterance and the social status of the conversants in the scenario. Different from the Japanese honorific violation, an increased N400 followed by a late negativity was observed on status-inconsistent pronoun which violated the honorific constraint, suggesting a "semantic-pragmatic inference" mechanism in dealing with the disrespectful utterance (works submitted to journal). **In face of disrespectful utterance in which the honorific constraint is violated, Japanese communicators may recover the "unintentional" use of an incorrect honorific expression while Chinese communicators may infer the most likely pragmatic implication underlying the "intentional" use of the honorific pronoun.**

This finding is reconciled with Inui and Osterhout (2005) who demonstrated an N400 on a small group of Japanese participants. Indeed, I demonstrated that the neural responses to the honorific violation were modulated by individuals' tolerance to the status inconsistence, gender and interpersonal reactive ability. The negativities were only observed in those who reported stronger inappropriateness in the status-inconsistence, in males and in those who had higher fantasizing ability to image oneself to be a protagonist in the conversation scenario (work presented on Experimental and Empirical Approaches to Politeness and Impoliteness, Illinois, August, 2012). **The individual's social cognitive ability in communication matters in face of a misapplication of honorific error.**

Cross-linguistic comparisons based on different experiments suggested that differential marking systems play critical roles in the processing of honorific expressions and led to the engagement of different neural mechanisms in processing Japanese and Chinese. Moreover, this study sets up a paradigm for future studies in studying Japanese honorific expression and its relation with social cognitive abilities and calls for the cross-cultural investigation of human honorific system on the neuro-cognitive level.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

August, 2012, Jiang Xiaoming, Zhu Mengyan, Zhou Xiaolin. When fantasy intervenes: Processing linguistic and extra-linguistic agreement during utterance comprehension. Oral presentation at 3rd Experimental and Empirical Approaches to Politeness and Impoliteness. Urbana, Illinois.

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)