Power and Solidarity in Japanese and English
Political Speeches and Stand-Up Comedy

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This paper will explore the use of power and solidarity in Japanese and English. The tendency of each language to use the specific strategies of power and solidarity will be proven by studying their use in formal and informal forms of speech. Specifically, the paper will examine speeches in press conferences and interviews given by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and United States President George W. Bush concerning the war in Iraq and the December 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami disaster. Informal speech will be analyzed in the form of stand-up comedy. The stand-up comedy routines of Ayanokoji Kimimaro and Ellen DeGeneres will be compared and contrasted with regards to power and solidarity. By using diatric forms of speech the paper will show the pervasive use of these communication strategies in Japanese and English. The paper comes to the somewhat counterintuitive conclusion that while Japanese culture is predominantly group oriented, the language relies heavily on power strategies in its communication, and that the United States, despite its emphasis on the individual, regularly employs solidarity strategies.