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Hesitations (Discourse Markers) in Japanese

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The issue of hesitation phenomena in Japanese is pointed out as being complicated because of the variations in accordance with age, sex, and other sociolinguistic factors. We are all familiar with expressions such as *anoo*, *yappari*, or *soo desu ne*. Yet, other than these typical ones, what constitutes hesitations (=discourse markers) in general? How do social factors (variables) affect the people's use of discourse markers? This paper attempts to clarify these questions.

First, the state of affairs regarding the treatment of hesitation phenomena is roughly outlined. Second, certain characteristics of Japanese discourse markers are pointed out. Then, the data taken from interviews with kindergartners are analyzed on the assumption that the use of markers is related to overall language acquisition. Third, discussion is made in accordance with variables (mentioned above), based on the data taken from formal and informal spoken discourses. Finally, an attempt is made to elucidate the inner nature of the Japanese way of communication.

INTRODUCTION

According to Goldman-Eisler's experiment (1968) cited in *Onseigaku dai jiten* (A Great Dictionary of Phonetics) (1976: 47), hesitations in English account for as much as 50 percent of total speech time in interviews and 35–60 percent of unprepared prompt speeches (my translation). In Japanese, as far as I know, nosuch experiment has ever been done. But, the frequent occurrence of hesitation observed in various speech activities leads us to assume that hesitations take up a considerable amount of the total speech time in Japanese as well. Howell and Yamaguchi (1979: 128), in their study to compare hesitation

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phenomena in English and Japanese, point out, "The whole question of hesitation phenomena in Japanese is much more complicated than in English." Complication stems from "some variations in accordance with age and sex." And they speculate that there are other sociolinguistic considerations involved in the phenomena. Nevertheless, their study based on controlled experiments is confined to cognitive language processing and has not incorporated the sociolinguistic aspects of the phenomena parallel to other researches in those days.

Indeed, an observant foreign learner of Japanese might be impressed with not only the frequency but also the diversity of discourse markers in Japanese such as *anoo*, *ee to*, and a lexicalized clause *soo desu nee*, to mention just a few. In addition to the variations in age and sex, situational varieties are found in my data. Also, to whom the speaker addresses is seen to affect the use of discourse markers. All these strongly suggest that sociolinguistic and interpersonal perspectives are essential to describe how people generally use hesitations in Japanese society.

The phenomena have long been referred to as "fillers," "filled pauses," or "hesitations" in English. Similarly, in Japanese, *iiyodomi* "hesitations" (the noun form of the verb *iiyodomu*, "stumble") has been the cover term used to refer to the phenomena in general. These terms by themselves reflect a somewhat negative view associated with the phenomena. Admittedly, discourse markers are commonly used as "hesitant signs" or "fillers." But to label them all as such is misleading in that these terms necessarily ignore other functions as well as potential core uses of these discourse markers. In spite of their distributional significance, studies on the phenomena were confined to how the difficulty of language production triggers disfluency reflected by hesitations or pauses. In a way, the long neglect or indifference to the issue is quite understandable. Discourse markers, as primarily spoken phenomena and propositionally vacuous, were to be ignored as long as the focus of interest was on "sentences."

However, with the advancement of discourse analysis, more researchers have taken the phenomena seriously and attempted to investigate their individual functions. New terms have been introduced by these scholars to refer to the phenomena; "discourse particles" by Schourup (1985) and "Discourse Markers" by Schiffrin (1987). Likewise, in Japanese, more scholars have paid attention to various characteristics and functions of markers; for example, Maynard (1992), Moriyama (1989) and Takubo (1992). But the scope of these researchers is much wider, including other linguistic items such as final particles, discourse connectives, and other linguistic items. The approaches they take also differ—Maynard from the point of view of discourse modality and Moriyama and Takubo from that of the discourse management system. In this paper, I will concentrate on what traditionally are called hesitations or fillers but exclude discourse connectives. As for the term, I choose a neutral term "discourse markers," following Schiffrin (1987). The aim of the study is

to clarify what constitute discourse markers in general and how social variables affect the use of markers. And then what motivates speakers to use them is to be examined from a sociolinguistic perspective which, I believe, is more appropriate to account for the phenomena in Japanese than in terms of language-processing difficulty.

Schiffrin suggests four conditions to allow an expression to be used as a D.M. (1987: 328). All of them were found to be applicable to identify their Japanese counterparts. They are:

- it has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence.
- it has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance.
- it has to have a range of prosodic contours, e.g., tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction.
- it has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse and on different planes of discourse.

The data collected for this study are as follows:

1. Recorded interviews with 34 kindergartners (2.5 hours).
2. Recorded casual conversations (five male pairs and five female pairs; 10 minutes each).
3. Two recorded meetings (15 minutes and 10 minutes each).
4. Recorded family conversation (15 minutes)..
5. Six recorded lectures (three male speakers and three female speakers; 10 minutes each).

Maynard categorizes fillers into two groups based on the motivation for their use. They are "(1) language-production-based fillers and (2) socially motivated fillers" (1989: 30). Then she continues, "Many fillers, however, cannot be clearly defined in terms of the two types identified here" (p. 31). Another thing is that even meta-communicational utterances which are essentially production-based are often used with particles and copulas as in *ee to nee*, "well," or *uun to desu nee*, "well," which reflect interpersonal or social orientation. Therefore, to be consistent, no distinction is made between the two. Also, to avoid the confusion in the statistics, added particles or copulas are all disregarded. Markers used solely as backchannels are disregarded, too.

Discourse Markers in Japanese

This section describes certain characteristics of Japanese discourse markers. Discourse markers, as a functional class, resist being neatly categorized by one or two grammatical classifications. In fact, discourse markers, even within the limited scope of this study cut across various grammatical classes, for example, interjections (e.g., *uun* and *ee*), exclamations (e.g., *eeh* and *ah*), and deictic demonstratives (e.g., *ano(o)*, *kono(o)*, and *sono(o)*). Some model adverbs because of their insignificant semantic content are often utilized as markers (e.g.,

yappari/yahari "after all" and *ma(a)* "well"). And lexicalized clauses exemplified as *soo desu nee* "let me see" and *are desu yo* "it's that."

1

Deictics, probably due to their speaker-oriented nature, have a high potentiality to be used as markers. In English, the time deictics ("now" and "then") and the location deictics ("here" and "there") serve as markers. Japanese has three-way distinction on the proximal-distal dimension, roughly distinguished as follows:

ko-series: inside the speaker's territory.
so-series: outside the speaker's territory but inside the hearer's territory.
a-series: outside the territories of both speaker and hearer.

Many expressions, but not all, derived from the three series serve as markers. More specifically, the following direction-oriented expressions (on the left) are found not to serve as markers. But the other place-oriented expressions (on the right) all serve as markers. This distinction is strictly observed by the speaker.

Direction-oriented		Place-oriented		
achira/atchi	*asoko*	*ano*	*are*	*aa*
kochira/kotchi	*koko*	*kono*	*kore*	*koo*
sochira/sotchi	*soko*	*sono*	*sore*	*soo*

(modified version of Kinsui's diagram 1990: 23).

Since the set *ano(o)*, *kono(o)*, *sono(o)* compared to the other sets occur conspicuously, *ano*, *kono*, and *sono* are to be independently categorized. The other two sets are categorized together as *a*-series, *ko*-series, and *so*-series in the statistics which will be introduced later.

When *kono*, *ano*, and *sono* are used as markers, their vowels are usually prolonged as in *konoo*, *anoo*, and *sonoo* which are articulately distinguishable from their demonstrative uses. However, if this is not the case, and used with a noun to follow, the distinction between a demonstrative and a marker is not always clear. In theory, the distinction between the two is according to the phonological difference as in:

Ano hon no koto de . . . (a demonstrative use)
that book LK fact as for
=As for that book . . .
Ano hon no koto de . . . (a marker use)
well book LK fact as for
=Well, as for (the/a) book . . .

However, in practice, the phonological distinction is not always clear since people tend to speak fast and not articulately. After coming across several

problematic cases, in which the context does not provide any clue, I have come to speculate that the distinction might be a matter of degree and there might be an in-between area where a demonstrative use and a marker use are amalgamated. For that matter, even the speaker him/herself is most unlikely to be aware of whether he/she means it as a marker or a demonstrative.

As mentioned, *kono*, *sono*, and *ano* are as a set more frequently used when compared to the other *ko-*, *so-*, *a*-sets. Among the three, *ano* occurs most frequently and *kono* least frequently. For an utterance initial marker, *ano* is exclusively used. But other than that, I do not know under what conditions the speaker chooses one demonstrative rather than the other two as a marker. One speculation is that a marker is a display of the speaker's locus in relation to the following information. *Sono* implies a relative detachment while *kono* reflects more involvement regarding the upcoming information on the part of the speaker. *Ano* does not really designate the speaker's locus at all and thus is the most neutral or unmarked of all.

2

Other linguistic items follow discourse markers, such as final particles (*na*, *ne*, *yo*, and *sa*) and a copula (*da*/*desu*) but not in a random order. Demonstratives and modal adverbs are added by a final particle alone as in *ano sa* or *yappari ne* or the combination of a copula and a final particle exemplified as *are da na* or *maa desu ne*. But in the case of interjections, the combination is not applied directly but always first a phrasal particle *to* is added. For example, *uun to ne* or *ee to desu yo*. Exactly speaking, two interjections *ne*(*e*) and *na*(*a*), both "look" or "you see," originated from final particles *ne* and *na*, resist being followed by any linguistic item. So do markers of exclamatory type such as *ara* and *eh* probably because of their strictly spontaneous nature. A final particle *ne* markedly occurs together when young children use markers. To a lesser extent yet still quite commonly, grown-ups also use a particle and the combination in casual conversation. It is rather strange that a copula can follow those non-referential items and in the case of *desu* can make politer versions of the markers.

3

As is known, Japanese is a syllable-timed language and has three syllable structures: V., C.V., and C.V.N. (C=consonant, V=vowel, N=nasal stop.) The way speakers make use of the word final sound to fill pauses reflects these syllable structures. All five vowels and nasal stop are found to be used as fillers. Although, the two lecture-speakers (the oldest speaker in the respective male/female group) used the device quite frequently, their frequency is not included in the statistics following Schiffrin's criteria. The device is used as in:

'*Amerikaa ni nagaku sunderu hito nooo hanashi'dewaaa . . .*'

America in long living person LK talk according to
=According to a person living in America for a long time . . .

Somewhat similar to this device, another vowel lengthening is detected in my transcription. That is to accentuate and prolong the end of phrases typically found among young girls. In my data, two women use the device (the oldest is 32). An example from the data is:

. . .	*kuruma*	*o*	*katte*	*moratta*	*n*	*da*
	car	ACC	buying	receiving	NOM	COP
kedoọọ	*sono*	*kuruma*	*o*	*uchatteęę* . . .		
but	that	car	ACC	selling having done and		

. . . I got (someone) to buy a car but (someone) has sold that car and . . .

This phenomenon has long been criticized by the older generation because the speakers sound childish and affected. Nevertheless, a certain population of young girls often accentuates the end of phrases to the extent that this device is recognized as a characteristic of their way of speaking. The device sounds like it aims at a stylistic effect rather than filling pauses. This device is also inseparable from the word where it occurs, and thus, is not counted in the statistics.

4

It is interesting to know how foreign people observe the way Japanese speak. Another somewhat problematic item in terms of its linguistic identification happens to be the one featured by White in his dissertation as "the ingressive air" (1981: 114). Initially, I was not sure whether to categorize this as a marker or a special way of breathing because the device seems quite similar to a sigh, except that the air flow is in the opposite direction. However, the device is obviously meant to be heard when compared to a sigh which is essentially a personal matter, so I include it as a marker. White maintains that "the use of hissing or a sharp intake of air as a device to self-select" is "one of several techniques to be prominent in trun-taking and turn allocation" (p. 112). Then, he quotes Miller (1967) as pointing out that the use of ingressives among the Japanese is a national characteristic. In my data, two men, both around 50, contribute to the frequency of this device (see Table 5), one fairly frequently, the other just sometimes. Both instances are taken at meetings and none in casual conversation. Recently, I have noticed that many TV/radio broadcasters, commentators, and politicians often use the device. The device, without specification of words, can convey a certain attitude on the part of the speaker. That is the speaker is impressed or struck seriously with the current situation or the information he or she is going to carry or has just brought about. The seriousness of the user certainly gets across to the audience. This seems to be a convenient device for those speech professionals enabling them to show their stance even without any commitment of substantial words. However, to call this a national characteristic needs some qualification. First of all, as found in

my data, the occurrence is usually limited to formal occasions. Also, children and young people do not resort to the device. For women, it is not a common device.

5

In her study on hesitations in Japanese, Shiozawa, recording children aged 3 to 5 playing at a nursery school, obtains three kinds of markers *uun*, *uunto*, and *too* (1979: 158–59). Finding it difficult for young children to have any considerable length of conversation, I interviewed 34 children: 18 older-class (aged 5) and 16 younger-class (aged 4) children (Table 1). Assuming their short memory span, I set up questions like, "What did you eat for dinner yesterday?" or "What TV program did you watch yesterday?" As pointed out by Shiozawa, an unfilled pause or silence is the predominant reaction they produced when facing cognitively "difficult" questions..

Table 1 The Use of Markers by Kindergartners

5 year olds (n=18)		4year olds (n=16)	
Used in any way	Not used at all	Used in any way	Not used at all
10	8	8	8

The markers they could produce were limited in kind and rather primitive—in terms of ease of articulation—such as *uun* and nazalized *nnnu*, and their variations *uun to nee* or *nnnu to ne*. But others, *ee to ne* or *ano nee* and *nan dakke* ("what was that?") are also found. In terms of the statistics above, one year's age difference may not be conspicuous. But among non-users, three in the older and one in the younger class were quite responsive, and they did not really have to resort to hesitant signs or fillers. The fluent speakers answer questions immediately or replied quickly as "I have forgotten" or "I don't remember."

Markers are not included as a formal grammatical item to measure language acquisition. But my impression is that the use of markers reflects the overall communicative skills. The most remarkable characteristic of children's use of markers is the addition of a phrasal particle *to* and a final particle *ne(e)*. *Ano* and *ee* are not used solely but always as *ee to ne* or *ano ne*. Also, rather unexpectedly, the incessant use of *ano ne* by the interviewer is found to be significant. Most probably grown-ups, when speaking to young children, will find themselves in a similar situation. Here, *ano ne* is meant to achieve interpersonal relationship with them and also to make sure to catch their attention before producing any substantial information.

Shiozawa presents a table showing the distributional frequencies of several kinds of hesitation markers used by four age groups (p. 162). According to the table, the elementary and junior high school pupils groups do not use *sono*, *ko*-series or *ma(a)*. Since I have not examined children of these age groups, I can

not provide any statistics to support or refute hers. Nevertheless, it is simply not conceivable that children would use *ma(a)* or *sono*. If any, they would sound quite strange or presumptuous. These instances strongly indicate that even after language acquisition, it takes more time to acquire a set of standard markers as the functional repertoire.

Discussion

In the statistics in Tables 2 through 5, the distinction is not made between *ano/anoo*, *kono/konoo*, *sono/sonoo*, *ne/nee*, *eh/eeh*, *un/uun*, *ah/aah*, and *ma/maa*. An exclamation *maah* is distinguished from a modal adverb *ma(a)*. *Yappari* has another three versions—relatively more formal *yahari* and more casual *yappashi* and *yappa*. Neither *yappashi* nor *yahari* is detected in the data, but *yappa* appears five times in casual conversation by two relatively young male pairs and one young female pair. However, this variation is represented by *yappari* alone in the statistics. *Moo*, when meaning "already" or "another," is not counted as a marker. *Un* and *iya(a)* usually designate a casual "yes" and "no" respectively but otherwise are regarded as makers. The three demonstratives *kono*, *sono*, and *ano* are separately categorized from the respective series. The *a*-series, for example, includes all related expressions such as *are* ("that"), *aa yuu nee* ("that kind"), *anna nee* ("like that"), and *are desu yo* ("it is that"). All *ko*-expressions and all *so*-expressions are categorized in the same way. Likewise, the *do*-series includes expressions such as *doo dakke*, *doo yuu no ka*, both meaning "well" or "How shall I say?" or a politer version, *doo ii masu ka*. The *nani*-series includes expressions like *nani* ("well" or "what?"), *nan dakke* ("well" or "what is that?"), *nan te ittara ii ka* ("well" or "what should I say?"), and *nan te yuu ka* ("well" or "what shall I say?").

In the data (Tables 2 through 5) markers which contribute nearly or over 10 percent of the individual totals are regarded as major markers and are distinguished from minors by the dotted line. Minor markers are those which occur considerably less than 10 percent of each total. Other minor varieties may be detected if more people are examined. Yet, I feel standard markers for both formal and informal discourses are fairly well identified in Tables 2 through 5. The ten pairs of participants of casual conversations are close friends.

Table 2 Markers in Casual Conversations (10 minutes each)

Male Total 361 Average 72.2						*Female* Total 274 Average 54.8					
Dominant Markers *ano(o)* 64 (17.7%) *ma(a)* 57 (15.8%)						Dominant Markers *nanka* 52 (19.0%) *ano(o)* 49 (17.9%) *moo* 40 (14.6%)					
yappari	29	*aa*	18	*kono*	11	*aa*	26	*iya(a)*	10	*ee*	7
sono(o)	29	*moo*	14	*nani*-series	9	*sono*	17	*a(a)h*	10	*nn(n)*	6
a(a)h	28	*u(u)n*	14	*ee*	8	*a*-series	14	*yappari*	7	*ko*-series	5

nanka	22	*a*-series	13	& others	14	*ne(e)*	12	*nani*-series	7	& others	12
iya(a)	19	*ne(e)*	12								
1		60s vs 60s Total 98						40s vs 40s Total 92			
		ano(o)	22					*ano(o)*	29		
		yappari	12					*moo*	15		
		ma(a)	11					*aa*	12		
		ne(e)	11								
iya(a)	8	*nani*-series	3	*uun*	2	*a(a)h*	8	*yappari*	3	*hee*	1
a(a)h	8	*a*-series	3	*aa*	2	*nanka*	5	*sono*	3	*araa*	1
moo	6	*u(u)n*	2	*ko*-series	1	*ee*	5	*nn(n)*	3	*ma(a)*	1
sono(o)	5	*nanka*	2			*a*-series	3	*nani*-series	2	*maah*	1
2		50s vs 50s Total 51						30s vs 30s Total 73			
		ano(o)	11					*ano(o)*	16		
		ma(a)	11					*moo*	14		
		yappari	6					*sono(o)*	11		
		u(u)n	5								
aa	4	*nani*-series	2	*nanka*	1	*ne(e)*	6	*a(a)h*	2	*aa*	1
sono(o)	3	*oh*	2	*a*-series	1	*ko*-series	5	*u(u)n*	2	*kono(o)*	1
ee	3	*a(a)h*	1	*ko*-series	1	*nanka*	5	*ma(a)*	1	*hora*	1
						a-series	4	*yappari*	1	*so*-series	1
						nn(n)	2				
3		40s vs 40s Total 86						20s vs 20s Total 46			
		sono(o)	19					*nanka*	22		
		ma(a)	17					*aa*	5		
		ano(o)	16					*iya(a)*	5		
		kono(o)	10					*moo*	4		
yappari	6	*a(a)h*	4	*nani*-series	1	*yappari*	3	*ne(e)*	2	*ee*	2
moo	5	*a*-series	1	*e(e)h*	1	*ano(o)*	3				
aa	5	*ko*-series	1								
4		30s vs 30s Total 63						20s vs 20s Total 37			
		nanka	12					*nanka*	10		
		a(a)h	11					*aa*	6		
		iya(a)	7					*a*-series	6		
		ano(o)	6					*moo*	4		
u(u)n	5	*ee*	2	*e(e)h*	1	*iya(a)*	3	*nani*-series	2	*u(u)n*	1
ma(a)	4	*do*-series	2	*ne(e)*	1	*ne(e)*	3	*ano(o)*	1	*nn(n)*	1
nani-series	3	*a*-series	1	*nn(n)*	1						
yappari	2	*ko*-series	1	*aa*	1						
hora	2	*kono(o)*	1								
5		20s vs 20s Total 63						20s vs 20s Total 26			
		ma(a)	14					*nanka*	10		
		ano(o)	9					*moo*	3		
		a-series	7					*nani*-series	3		
		aa	6					*sono(o)*	3		
nanka	5	*moo*	3	*ee*	1	*aa*	2	*a*-series	1	*u(u)n*	1
iyaa	4	*nani*-series	3	*e(e)h*	1	*iyaa*	2	*ne(e)*	1		
a(a)h	4	*sono(o)*	2	*hora*	1						
yappari	3										

Table 3 Markers in Family Conversation (15 minutes among 3 members)

			Total 18				
			a-series	7			
			ano(o)	5			
			uun	2			
nanka	1	*do*-series	1	*aa*	1	*ma(a)*	1

1

In casual conversation, the total occurrence of markers in the male and the female groups are 361 and 274 each (Table 2). The total frequency of the male group considerably exceeds the female counterpart. The average frequency among the five male paris is 72.2 whereas it is 54.8 among the five female pairs. The most frequently appeared marker among the males is *ano(o)* (64) which is the second among the females (49). Less than *ano(o)*, yet still promiently used among the men, is *maa* (57) followed by *sono(o)* (29) and *yappari* (29). Among the females *sono(o)* is the fifth marker but the occurrence of *ma(a)* totals just two (once each by the first and the second pair) and thus is only insignificantly used. Also, *yappari*, which totals 29 among the men, occurs only 7 times among the females.

If we assume a marker which takes up more than 15 percent of the overall total occurrences is predominant in each group, *ano(o)* and *ma(a)* are dominant markers among the men (17.7 percent and 15.8 percent each), whereas *nanka*, *ano(o)* and *moo* for the women (19.0 percent, 17.9 percent, and 14.6 percent). The predominance of the respective two or three markers is not similarly reflected in the five pairs of each group. Among the men, the predominance of the two markers is well reflected in the second and fifth pairs. In the first pair *yappari* (12) occurs more frequently than *ma(a)* (11). And in the third pair, *sono* (19) exceeds both *ma(a)* (17) and *ano(o)* (16). Yet, in both pairs (1 and 3) *ano* and *ma(a)* are still among the majors. In the fourth pair, *nanka* (12), *a(a)h* (11) and *iya(a)* (7) are more significantly used than both *ano* (6) and *ma(a)* (4). But even in this case, *ano* is among the major markers and 4 occurrences of *ma(a)* is quite substantial. From all these, it can be said, regardless of age differences and personal preferences, certain consistency is observed in the men's use of markers.

I have often observed young people using *yappa* (=casual, shortened form of *yappari*) and 5 instances, though not reflected in the statistics, are evidenced in the data. But in terms of frequency, the main contributors of *yappari* are found to be two relatively older male pairs (1 and 2). *Yappari*, less frequently, is detected among the females (1, 2, and 3) as well as relatively young male pairs (3, 4, and 5). But, in comparison, these instances cannot be said as substantial. Maynard characterizes *yahari/yappari* as "often serving as a device for switching personal responsibility to that of the society's (assumed) consensus." Furthermore, she continues as "the strategy to use society's (assumed) consen-

sus as a mediation of an individual's cognitive mode reflects what is widely discussed about the Japnese way of communicative strategies" (1992: 134). I have often felt a sense of resignation implied when people use *yappari*. As far as the data are concerned, *yappari* is a preferred marker among the relatively old men. The men's preference for *ano(o)* and *ma(a)* is found to be shared by all five pairs, whereas the situation regarding the dominant markers is entirely different among the five female pairs. *Nanka* seems to be women's favorite marker and was used five times or more by all five pairs. Yet, the distributional frequencies among the relatively old pairs (1 and 2) and the relatively young pairs (3, 4, and 5) is 10 vs. 42. The combined frequency of *nanka* by the three young pairs is conspicuous when compared to their rather insignificant contribution to the overall total frequency of markers, 109 against 274. This means the three pairs contribute only 39.8 percent of the overall total frequency. The occurrence of *nanka* solely accounts for 38.5 percent of the entire frequency markers among the three pairs. The frequencies of markers in the three pairs are all less than the average, but in the case of the fifth pair, the total frequency is even below half of the average —26 against 54.8. So their conversation goes on with *nanka* like:

M: *Demo nanka koko no botan yana n da yo na*
but like here LK button dislike NOM COP FP FP
But I don't like the button here.

T: *Ee, doo shite?*
well how doing
Well, how come?

M: *Nanka nee, nanka nee.. ii n da kedo sa*
like FP like FP O.K. NOM COP but FP
Like, like . . . it is all right but . . .

Men use *nanka* as well (1, 2, 4, and 5). As a matter of fact the frequency of *nanka* in the 4th pair ranks the top and thus is noteworthy. In the fifth pair *nanka* is not a major marker but appears relatively frequently, so preference for *nanka* is recognized among the relatively young males (4 and 5), which is not shared with the relatively older pairs. Another characteristic found among the three young pairs is a somewhat curious lack of the use of *ano(o)*, which is generally the ubiquitous marker in all situations. It is not that they do not use *ano(o)* at all. Except for the fifth pair, the expression is used once in the fourth pair and three times in the third pair but not significantly in terms of frequency.

Moo is another major marker among the women. Among the men, it is used 14 times by three pairs (1, 3, and 5), but all as minors. So it can be said that *moo* is another favorite marker for women. But, in comparison to *nanka*, *moo* is contributed more equally by the five pairs in that they all use *moo* as majors. In other words, the occurrence of *moo* is consistent regardless of age differences of the five female pairs. *Moo* is often used in a highly emotional way exempli-

fied as *moo iya* ("I just hate it.") or *moo sugoino* ("just terrific").

2

Table 2 does not show a correlation between the age and the frequency of markers in a particularly obvious way. In fact, the frequency of markers in the second oldest male pair is the lowest among the group. But, otherwise, a loose correlation between the age and the frequency of markers is observed—namely, the older pairs tend to use more markers. Presumably, the use of makers is associated with the tact of the speaker. Maynard points out the usefulness of markers as in "uttering mere sounds makes it possible to create the impression that verbal communication is carried on without cessation, thereby avoiding potential embarrassment" (1989: 30). By the same token, in claiming the turn or changing the topic, prefacing the utterance with a marker will considerably soften the sense of abruptness or imposition as this provides the recipient with a monitor space. And as a result saves the "face" of the addressee. Thus, markers contribute to "politeness" which is to be distinguished from the formal politeness realized by honorifics. Japanese formal politeness is recognized as what Brown and Levinson (1978) call "negative politeness" which is "mainly used as a means to articulate social distance" rather than enhancing "solidarity relationship" (Nagura 1992: 61-62). Yet, the horizontal orientation or the preference for the "positive politeness" is commonly observed in friendly casual conversation "which is evidenced in many uses of particles and fillers. These devices help to create a causal, friendly discourse with a pleasant emotion to one's partner" (Maynard 1989: 31). The relatively older generations probably are more concerned with the interpersonal relationship even within close friends and this may enhance their use of markers.

From a different viewpoint, Endo (1990) points out an increase in hesitations as a characteristic of the way the elderly talk (pp. 79-80 my translation). (But she does not define the elderly in terms of an exact age group.) If this is the case, at a certain point, the use of markers generally perceived as tact is more likely to be taken as a sign of language-processing difficulty. Then, the use of discourse markers certainly characterizes the individual's mode of speech, which undergoes various stages on a life long basis.

In the family conversation (Table 3), the total occurrence of markers in 15 minutes is only 18. The interactants do not feel it particularly important to pay attention to the interpersonal relationship they have already firmly established among each other.

Table 4 Markers in Lectures (10 minutes each)

	Male Total 387 Average 129				*Female* Total 215 Average 71.7			
	ma(a)	133	*sono(o)*	25	*ano(o)*	66	*sono(o)*	32
	ano(o)	113	& others	19	*ma(a)*	55	& others	25
	ee	97			*ee*	37		
1		30s Total 153				20s Total 68		
	ee	59	*ma(a)*	31	*ma(a)*	21	*ee*	17
	ano(o)	45	*sono(o)*	15	*ano(o)*	20		
	kono	1	*nani*-series	1	*ko*-series	3	*uun*	1
	ko-series	1			*kono*	2	*moo*	1
					sono(o)	2	*a(a)h*	1
2		40s Total 103				40s Total 57		
	ma(a)	72	*ano(o)*	23	*ano(o)*	21	*ma(a)*	8
					sono(o)	21	*ee*	6
	sono(o)	5	*aa*	1	*kono*	1		
	ko-series	1	*ee*	1				
3		50s Total 131				60s Total 90		
	ano(o)	50	*ma(a)*	28	*ma(a)*	26	*ee*	14
	ee	37			*ano(o)*	25	*sono(o)*	9
					aa	15		
	sono	8	*ko*-series	2	*nani*-series	1		
	uun	2	*do*-series	2				
	nani-series	2						

Table 5 Markers Used at Meetings

(15 minutes by 2 females and 3 males)

1 Total 218			*ano(o)*	104		
			ee	37		
			ma(a)	29		
			sono(o)	21		
	ingressive	17	*nani*-series	3	*kono(o)*	1
	ko-series	4	*a*-series	1	*uun*	1

(10 minutes by 2 females and 4 males)

2 Total 98			*ano(o)*	34		
			ma(a)	32		
			sono(o)	12		
			ee	10		
	ingressive	5	*do*-series	1	*hora*	1
	kono	1	*nanka*	1	*uun*	1

3

In lectures (Table 4), the three speakers in both groups use markers with much greater frequency than the respective average in casual conversation. In fact, the first male speaker whose frequency totaling as many as 153 is identified as one participant of the fourth male pair in casual conversation, whose contribution was not found as significant in the data. Obviously, the formality of the occasion is reflected in the frequency of markers. Here, the age factor does not seem to affect the frequency of markers. The total frequency of the three male speakers is 387 whereas the counterpart of the three female speakers is 215. So the men's frequency of markers is even more marked in formal speech. Yet, other than that, the constituents of major markers they used are almost identical *ano(o)*, *ma(a)*, *ee* and *sono(o)*. In casual conversation, *ma(a)* is not a preferred marker among the women. However, in formal speech, all the women make use of *ma(a)* as their male counterparts. In fact, *ma(a)* is the most frequently used marker in the first and the third female speakers. The frequency of *ma(a)* by the second male speaker is a marked case. The occurrence of *ma(a)* accounts for 69.9 percent of his total frequency. Certain preferences are observed, but the partial use of one particular marker is not found in the other speakers. Unlike casual conversation, the markers used in formal speech are all standardized and much less varied. In casual conversation *ee* nor *sono* is not a significant marker. However, in the lectures, *ee* and *sono* take up considerable proportions of the respective overall total. The rather formally loaded nature of these utterances are discerned. It is remembered that *ee*, an information searcher, was one of a limited number of markers small children could use. But, they used *ee to ne* not *ee*. *Ano* is ubiquitous in formal speech as well and was used by all the speakers as a major marker.

4

Table 5 lists the markers obtained at two meetings, additional formal occasions. In these two cases, one more formal marker is found, the ingressive air dealt with earlier. At the two meetings, the ingressive air occurs 17 times and 5 times and is solely contributed by one interactant each. So, *ano(o)*, *ma(a)*, *ee*, *sono(o)*, and possibly the ingressive air are most likely to occur as markers in formal speech. The appearance of the ingressive air solely depends on whether there is a user or the speaker is a user of the device. In casual conversation, a variety of markers appear as majors or minors; for instance, emotionally loaded *nanka*, *yappari*, or *moo*. Or intimate attention catchers *hora* ("look") and *ne(e)*. Except for three instances—*moo* (Table 3, the first female) and *hora* and *nanka* (Table 4, the second meeting) once each—they all disappear in formal speech. Clearly, the speakers in formal speech are inhibited from using these casual markers freely. Mizutani and Mizutani point to the informal nature of *yappari* and mention that "in formal speech, the word *kekkyoku* is used to mean 'after all' because it sounds less emotional" (1977: 91). Although I do not agree that *yappari* can always be replaced by *kekkyoku*, nevertheless

yappari is not evidenced in formal speech. Similarly, *nanka* is likely to be replaced by more polite expressions like *nan to iimashoo ka* or *nan to mooshimasu ka* ("what should I say?") and thus is categorized in the *nani*-series. Also, *moo* may be taken over by more formal adverbs, such as *taihen* ("very") or *hijooni* ("greatly"), for instance. Indeed, the speaker does not use markers as arbitrarily as he or she might appear.

5

In my data, *ano*, *maa* or *ma*, *ano* often appear in pairs. Also, when interviewed, interviewees on TV or radio start speaking with *ano*, *ma* or *ma*, *ano*. So seemingly, these two markers are interchangeable and therefore are similar. In fact, they function quite differently.

Ano is a neutral attention seeker and can occur almost anywhere in discourse without qualification, as long as it is not a monologue. When speaking to a stranger for directions, for instance, *ano* functions just as "excuse me," while the use of *ma*(*a*) always requires a certain presupposition between the speaker and the hearer. The presupposition is not necessarily overtly expressed. It can be the implied or covert topic of discourse or the state of affairs by itself or even the state of the consciousness of the speaker, but it is supposed to be acknowledged by the addressee. From this point, *ano*(*o*) is essentially forward-looking while *ma*(*a*) is backward-looking and thus inherently contributes to the cohesion of discourse. Then, it is no wonder *maa* is a major marker for all the lecture speakers (Table 4). Obviously, *maa* as a cohesive marker is used strategically as cohesion is a prerequisite for a successful lecture. Because of its anaphoric function, *ma*(*a*) is often used as a reply meaning "that may be so," referring to the previous discourse whereas *ano*(*o*) alone cannot serve as a reply. Mizutani and Mizutani (1977: 123) claim that "*ma*(*a*) is used to express agreement with some reservation."

But, the use of *ma*(*a*) is not confined to replies. Rather, *ma*(*a*) signals the ensuing speaker's opinion or comment, which is made based on the overt or covert state of affairs. On the part of the addressee, this sounds as qualified. Since the presupposition is only assumed to be shared but is in fact directed by the speaker, *ma*(*a*) sounds more assertive or imposing when compared to the neutral marker *ano*(*o*).

6

To sum up, in casual conversation, the frequencies of markers are considerably less than in formal speech. Between the two groups, men tend to use more markers than women in both formal and informal discourses. A loose correlation is observed between the age and the frequency of markers in casual conversation, namely the relatively older pairs use more markers. However, this is not necessarily the case in formal speech. The ubiquitous marker *anoo* is frequently used by all the male and relatively older female pairs but only insignificantly by the relatively young female pairs in casual conversation. *Maa*, a

favorite marker among the male group, is not preferred as a marker among the women. *Yappari* is preferred by the relatively old male pairs but not particularly by the other male pairs nor the female pairs. *Nanka* is a favorite marker for all the female pairs and the relatively young male pairs. In particular, the heavy use of *nanka* is marked among the young female pairs. Also, preference for *moo* is noticeable among the females.

In formal speech, the male speakers' frequencies greatly exceed those of the female speakers. But otherwise neither the age nor the sex factor seems to be relevant to the selection of markers. Or rather, the formality of the occasion constrains all the speakers to use a standard set– *ano*, *maa*, *ee* and *sono* and possibly the ingressive air. Thus, in spite of the higher total frequencies, the variety of markers used is quite limited in formal speech. Except for a few instances, emotionally or intimacy-loaded kinds such as *yappari*, *nanka*, *moo*, *hora*, and *nee* are excluded in formal discourse. In contrast, a few markers which are minors or insignificant in casual conversation emerge for formal use, such as *ee*, *sono*, and the ingressive air. Also *maa* as a cohesive marker is highly utilized in formal discourse.

CONCLUSION

In their cross cultural research, Brown and Levinson (1978) contend that hesitations function as strategies to lessen face risk in situations of conveying dispreferred content such as negation or disagreement. However, in the case of Japanese, discourse markers appear ubiquitously, not necessarily confined to prefacing face threatening acts. Other motivations, on the part of the speaker, are speculated to be involved. Otherwise, high frequencies of markers evidenced in relaxed casual conversation cannot be explained.

Maynard defines "modality" in a broader sense and characterizes Japanese as a modality-centered language as opposed to proposition-centered. She argues, "Japanese has a strong tendency to express this attitudal stance, i.e., one's personal voice by adding and/or avoiding a variety of linguistic devices" (1992: 4). Thus, in Japanese communication, the emphasis is on "emotional exchanging" rather than "information exchanging." And, as a natural result, the encoded emotion may override the propositional content of the message. Maynard (1989: 31) introduces the idea of the social packaging defined as "best understood as an expression of contextual transformation on the part of the speaker in order to maximize the effect of personal appeal." And she points out, "together with final particles, fillers, among other devices, offer an important source for achieving the effect of 'social packaging' one's speech." The usage of final particles may be restricted in formal speech but as was evidenced, discourse markers, equipped with both formal and informal varieties are used throughout and make it possible to carry on the same mode of communication.

Still, a fundamental question remains—why is this so? Why does the speaker feel it necessary to personalize his/her speech by means of fillers and

particles? Japanese people recognized themselves as members of a homogeneous society, where sameness rather than individualism tends to pervade. The idea of sameness is essentially relativistic and is always defined in terms of the group criteria or the community criteria and thus a so-called strong sense of group orientation is fostered. Reischauer (1977: 138) maintains, "in a society in which people see themselves primarily as members of groups, specific intragroup and also intergroup relationships may reasonably take precedence over universal principles." Thus, being accepted in the group or the community becomes of primary importance. Interactions center around how to achieve interpersonal relationship with others. This motivates, then, members to solicit others' agreement or emotional involvement by means of particles and discourse markers.

Among discourse markers, attention catchers, confirmation seekers, and the curious use of the ingressive air—all unusable in monologue and thus are strictly interpersonally oriented—specifically reflect this motivation. So do strategically as well as emotionally loaded uses of modal adverbs. Since the sharing of emotion is aimed at, interaction with these linguistic devices, may seem to be egalitarian-oriented. Indeed, as is commonly seen in friendly casual conversation, these devices contribute greatly to enhance the interpersonal relationship between the interactants which is essentially solidarity-oriented. Yet, perhaps much less frequently, power and authority can resort to these interactional devices as well to disguise or envelope the real nature of the hierarchical relation.

Also stylistically being direct or straightforward is not favored in Japanese communication. The speaker is more likely to try not to sound assertive. Therefore, discourse markers and final particles are conventionally used as hedges or lubricants to modify the force of a speech act. Furthermore, discourse markers are used for encoding the implications or meta-messages of propositionally incomplete or ambiguous utterances. Here, they can be seen more negatively as devices of backgrounding the personal commitment on the part of the speaker. Since the language is structured in such a way, interactants encode various implications in discouse markers almost automatically. This may explain why there are so many discouse markers conventionalized—even loaded with different degrees of formality. For the most part, they cannot be translated other than "well." The point to keep in mind is implications or suggestions encoded in discouse markers and, for that matter, in final particles cannot be expected to be understood in cross-cultural communication. Rather, it is to be feared, as pointed out by Maynard (1992: 27), that these nonreferential linguistic items may trigger communication problems if the speaker assumes that these devices can achieve the same effect universally.

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NOTES

ACC: accusative
COP: copula
FP: final particle
LK: linker
NOM: nominalizer