

松 山 大 学 論 集  
第 27 卷 第 3 号 抜 刷  
2 0 1 5 年 8 月 発 行

Multiplex Employment of Resources  
in Management of Speakers' Epistemic Authority  
and Subordination in Assessment Sequences  
in Japanese Interaction

Yoko Nogami

# Multiplex Employment of Resources in Management of Speakers' Epistemic Authority and Subordination in Assessment Sequences in Japanese Interaction

Yoko Nogami

In almost every form of social organisation, there are fundamental associations between identities<sup>1)</sup> of conversational participants and their actions in interaction (Heritage & Raymond, 2005 ; Raymond & Heritage, 2006). It is also true when conversational participants manage their rights to knowledge – i. e., epistemic rights.

[T]he conduct of participants reflexively constitutes a link between identities of the speakers (conceived in various terms) relative to one another, and the local distribution of rights and responsibilities regarding what each party can accountably know, how they know it, whether they have rights to articulate it, and in what terms. In this respect, there can be direct links between the identities of participants and the rights and responsibilities associated with those identities that are directly implicated in practices of speaking. (Raymond & Heritage, 2006, p. 681)

---

1) Identity refers to 'reflective self-images constructed, experienced, and communicated by the individuals within a culture and in a particular interaction situation' (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 217). Identities are thought to be fluid, multifaceted, and socially constructed.

Reflecting their identities based on self-other relations, every member who is involved in *talk-in-interaction* (i. e., conversation) employs methods for managing his or her rights to knowledge. This is called *the epistemic of social relations* (Raymond & Heritage, 2006).

This study examines assessment sequences in mundane Japanese conversation by incorporating the sociological methodology of conversation analysis (CA). It will show a systematic predicament between speakers' affiliative action that is sought by each of the other and their negotiation regarding their associated responsibilities related to knowledge and information. This property has not been investigated in Japanese interaction since the development of CA in Japanese conversation in the late 1970s, even though a significant number of functional grammarians have studied epistemics, focussing on Japanese lexical and/or grammatical items (Itani, 1996 ; Iwasaki, 1993 ; Kamio, 1994, 1997 ; Mushin, 2001 ; among others). Therefore, this study will pioneer investigating how people index their relative epistemic authority and subordination in assessment sequences in Japanese interactions. In this article, we will explore four excerpts containing assessment sequences that involve speakers' multiplex resources to index their relative epistemic rights and to manage and negotiate their epistemic rights with co-participants in talk-in-interaction.

## Background

### Assessment Sequence

In everyday conversation, speakers regularly make assessments in some fashion, evaluating persons and events that are being described. In other words, assessments are products of participation in social action (Pomerantz, 1984). Considerations of *face*<sup>2)</sup> are largely involved in accomplishing social actions. Interactants generally try to maximise the likelihood of affiliative, socially harmonious actions and to

minimise the consequences of disaffiliative, socially divisive actions (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Heritage, 1984; Levinson, 1983; Pomerantz, 1984). In assessment sequences in talk-in-interaction, management of face becomes a crucial factor, which can be observed in *preference organisation*. The term preference organisation is related to a socially determined structural pattern of interactional practice called *adjacency pair*. An adjacency pair is an example of a turn-taking system, which comprises two utterances by two speakers. The second-pair part of an adjacency pair is systematically affected by the design of the first-pair part; therefore, a speaker's turn is regarded as a joint production of another speaker's turn (Levinson, 1983). One type of second-pair part is *preferred* and the other is *dispreferred*. The first type is structurally expected, simple, and immediate, but the latter is structurally unexpected, more complex, and delayed. In producing assessment sequences, agreement is generally the preferred social action; however, interactions are not always that simple. When people make an evaluative assessment of the state of affairs being discussed, the *terms of agreement* becomes an important issue. Such terms include who goes first and who goes second, and who is agreeing with whom (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Thus, how conversational participants manage their relative rights to produce assessments, and how such management is indexed within the conversation, involves participants' concerns for face and reflection of identity. For example, in their study on a phone call between two friends, Raymond and Heritage (2006) illustrated how an interactant conveyed a specific identity as a 'grandparent' in courses of action.

---

2) The notion of *face* is derived from Goffman (1976) and refers to the public self-image of a person. 'Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face' (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 61).

## Research Methodology

### Conversation Analysis

This study relies on conversation analysis (CA) as a methodology. CA is a research tradition investigating natural conversation as a specific style of social action, which is derived from Garfinkel's (1967) *ethnomethodology* that 'focuses on the study of common-sense reasoning and practical theorizing in everyday activities' (Ten Have, 1999, p. 6).

For humans, talking in interaction appears to be a distinctive form of this primary constituent of social life, and ordinary conversation is very likely the basic form of organization for talk-in-interaction. Conversational interaction maybe thought of as a form of social organization through which the work of most, if not all, the major institutions of societies - the economy, the polity, the family, socialization, etc. - gets done. (Schegloff, 1996, p. 54)

In recent years, researchers have paid more attention to the study of grammar as a resource for its coherence with interactional activities because of the contribution made by Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson (1996). Studies of interaction and grammar demonstrate links between the organisation of grammar and the organisation of social interaction.<sup>3)</sup> The present study situates itself within this growing body of interdisciplinary research : grammar and interaction.

---

3) For example, how grammar influences the management of repair in conversation (Fox, Hayashi, & Jasperson, 1996 ; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), mechanisms of turn-taking (Lerner & Takagi, 1999 ; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974 ; Tanaka, 1999), lexical phenomena such as *actually* (Clift, 2001), reported speech (Clift, 2006), and joint utterance construction (Hayashi, 2002).

## The Data

The data used for the current study are based on audio recordings of naturally occurring conversations in Japanese.<sup>4)</sup> Participants are native speakers of Japanese. The data are comprised of three sets of multi-party face-to-face interactions recorded at a hamburger shop, a Chinese restaurant, and a café. Each recording lasts approximately from 1 hr to 1 hr 20 min. Participants in each conversation are friends and acquaintances who were meeting for the first time but with mutual friends present. All the recordings took place in 2007 in Hiroshima City, Japan. All participants are in their mid- to late 20s and grew up in Hiroshima, thus speaking with a Hiroshima dialect, except one participant (O)<sup>5)</sup> from Osaka, who spoke with a Kansai dialect. All participants consented to being audio recorded for academic research ; however, they were not told how the data would be analysed.

CA's sequential analysis requires a detailed inspection of tape recordings and transcription. The collected conversations were transcribed based on Jeffersonian convention (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, pp. 731-734). The notational conventions used in the transcriptions appear in Appendix 1.

## Findings and Discussion

We now will examine four excerpts<sup>6)</sup> that characterise complexity of assessment sequences and the terms of agreement. Speakers often claim their epistemic authority that is grounded in a variety of motives. Consequently, their epistemic battle in the assessment sequence becomes competitive when each of them makes his or her own epistemic claims.

---

4) Since there is no visual documentation for these data, several important aspects of face-to-face social interaction including eye gaze, gestures, posture shifts, and other body movements in coordination with their talk are missing from the analysis. This is one shortcoming of the present study.

5) Participant O appears in the interaction at a hamburger shop.

In the study of assessment sequences, assessments that are initiated first in the sequence are called first-positioned assessments, and assessments that are designed to be as responses to the first-positioned assessment are called second-positioned assessments.

### Excerpt 1

Prior to this segment of transcription, Y asked B whether H (Y's boyfriend) speaks much when B and H talk. H usually does not talk a lot when many people are involved in a conversation, of which he and many of his friends are aware. S joins this conversation again after coming back from the restroom and asks what they have been talking about (Line 5), and Y explains the situation at Lines 7 and 9. The topic is about H's reserved characteristics, which can be understood as an assessment that the interactants have already agreed upon. S acknowledges such already-settled agreement at Line 8: °*Hai hai*.°, 'Yes, yes', deprecating a minimal agreement token. In the following turn, S delivers an *ah*-prefacing disagreement over the prior discussion by citing a condition in which H can be talkative. The change of state token *ah* (*oh* in English) escalates disagreement by embodying a declaration of epistemic independence (Heritage, 1984). With an *ah*-prefacing opinion, a speaker conveys that his or her assessment is independent from the 'here

---

6) The excerpts will be presented in three lines. The first line will be the original Japanese written in Roman letters. The second line presents free word-by-word translation and grammatical descriptions. A list of abbreviations of grammatical terms used in the translation appears in Appendix 2. The third line presents an English gloss translation. Unexpressed elements in the Japanese original appear in double parentheses in the English translation. Translating speech that unfolds moment-by-moment from one language to another involves substantial difficulties, especially when syntactic formation and cultural values differ between Japanese and English. The current study involves several grammatical forms in Japanese, and when translating them into English, there must be consistency with symbolising these forms in order to build systematic presumptions of the epistemics in Japanese. This may have resulted in a lack of naturalness in the translation.

and now' of the in-progress event and the previous speaker's assessments (Heritage, 1984). Responding to S's *ah*-prefacing opinion, Y merely agrees with S's assessment first, and then at Line 13, she states *Shittoru*, 'I know', overtly indicating her epistemic independence and authority. S and Y here hold an epistemic battle regarding H's characteristics. S's epistemic claim stems from S having been a good friend of H for 3 years as members of the same sports club at university. With regard to Y, she claims her epistemic authority that is based on her relationship with H as his girlfriend. Both S and Y assert their evaluations as individuals who believe that they know more about H than the other.

Excerpt 1 : [Chinese Restaurant 00:43:58]<sup>7)</sup>

1 H: *Ore wa kudaran koto shika syaberan yo*  
I TOP rubbish matter only speak.NEG FP  
I only talk rubbish.

2 Y: @@@

3 B: @@@

4 Y: *Kihon- un kihontekini . hh*  
Basic yeah basically  
Basically, yeah, basically.

((He comes back from the restroom and joins in the conversation again.))

5 S: *E ? nani ga desu ka ?*  
E ? what OBJ COP QM  
E ? What is ?

---

7) This involves four participants, comprising three males (H, S, and B) and one female (Y).

- 6 H: [(*Iya nanka*)  
no well  
Well,
- 7 Y: *Iya syaberan ken ne,*  
well speak.NEG so FP  
Well, he doesn't talk, you know.
- 8 S: °*Hai hai.*°  
yes yes  
Yes yes.
- 9 Y: *Itsumo syaberan non (. ) te kikiyotte kara :*  
Always speak.NEG QM QUOT be.asking QUOT FP  
I was asking if he usually doesn't talk.
- 10 S: *Ah : shumi no >hanashi ni nattara< sugoi ssu yo =*  
Oh hobby GEN story P become.PAST if then great COP FP  
Oh, he does when it's about his hobbies.
- 11 Y: = *Un.*  
yeah  
Yeah.
- 12 (2, 2)
- 13 Y: *Shittoru.*  
know  
I know.
- 14 H: @@

- 15 Y: @@@@
- 16 (2.8)
- 17 S: *Kihontekini jibun kara mono o kimenai*  
basically oneself from things OBJ decide.NEG  
Basically he doesn't decide things by himself.
- 18 B: @@@@
- 19 (1.5)
- 20 Y: *Kimen ne.*  
decide.NEG FP  
(He) doesn't decide, does he.
- 21 (1.0)
- 22 Y: *Kimeru toki mo aru kedo ne.*  
decide time too exist CONJ FP  
But there're some occasions he decides by himself, you know.
- 23 S: *Are jyanai ssu ka?*  
That COP.NEG COP QM  
Isn't that it?
- 24 *meshi- meshi iku basyo toka zettai kimenai desyo :*  
meal meal go place for-instance never decide.NEG COP  
He never decides where you go out for a meal?

25 Y: *SAKKI SA: £ kimesaseyotta kee sa: £ =*  
 earlier FP be.letting.decide.PAST because FP  
 He let you decide that earlier.

26 S: = *Ne:*  
 FP  
 Didn't he.

27 Y: *A, kimen non da na: tte omotte:*  
 oh decide.NEG VP COP FP QUOT be.thinking.and  
 Oh, he didn't decide, I thought.

Their epistemic competitiveness is again observed further down. At Line 17, S makes another new first-positioned assessment about the characteristics of H: *Kihontekini jibun kara mono o kimenai*, 'Basically he doesn't decide things by himself', which S produces in an unmarked manner. Responding to this, Y makes a second-positioned assessment that is upgraded by employing modified repeats (Stivers, 2005). Modified repeats are assertions produced by a second speaker, who repeats fully or partially what the previous speaker has said. By reasserting the claim that the previous speaker made, the second speaker indicates he or she has primary rights to assess the state of affairs (Stivers, 2005). In Y's turn (Line 20), Y reiterates the key term of the prior speaker's assessment: *kimen*, '(He) doesn't decide'. This assertion indicates that Y's opinion is a formerly settled-upon opinion that she holds independently, regardless of her co-participant's assessment. In the next turn in which she makes another assessment asserting that H sometimes decides things by himself (Line 22), we can understand her position as the previously settled-upon opinion representing her firstness. This is further reinforced when Y says she thought H let S decide where they should have a meal together (Line 25). Using the past tense in her utterance to refer back to an event which happened in the

past also indicates that her claim is previously determined.

To sum up, S presents his epistemic primal access to the referent from the first position. The first speaker making an evaluation generally embodies relative epistemic primacy because of his or her positioning of 'going first'. S's tactic of going first and conveying *ah*-prefacing disagreement represents his autonomous access to the referent. Y also tactically claims her epistemic authority from the second position by upgrading her assessment using different resources. As well as S claims his epistemic independence, Y also asserts her epistemic primacy overriding S's, which can be observed in her deployment of multiplex resources in interaction. They were competing with each other over their claims of epistemic independence and authority.

## Excerpt 2

Meanwhile, there is no guarantee that speakers will allege their epistemic rights as they are socially warranted, or that recipients will align with the previous speaker with an expected relative epistemic claim. When a speaker asserts an epistemic right that is potentially problematic, it becomes a source of conflict or struggle. This excerpt involves one party (N) asserting primary rights to assess the characteristics of the co-participant (Y), when it is socially apparent that no one has epistemic authority to assess the personality of the co-participant but herself (Y). In Excerpt 2, Y and N have been talking about the association between blood type and personality traits.

Excerpt 2 [Cafe 1:14:30]<sup>8)</sup>

1 Y: *O no hito tte hontoni oozappa jya nai ?*

---

8) I recorded the conversation in which two women (N and Y) took part in a café.

O GEN people QUOT really careless COP.NEG  
Aren't O people really careless ?

- 2 N: *Sokka* :  
uh-huh  
Uh-huh.
- 3 Y: *Un*  
yeah  
Yeah.
- 4 N: *Komakai* : ? *Choko*\* ((\*Choko is Y's nickname.))  
Exact Choko  
Are you exact ? Choko.
- 5 Y: [*Un*  
yeah  
Yeah.
- 6 N: [*Choko warito komaka* [*kattari suru yo ne* :  
Choko fairly exact.and COP FP FP  
You, Choko are quite exact, aren't you.
- 7 Y: [*Komakai*  
exact  
((I'm)) exact.
- 8 (1.0)
- 9 Y: *A to B ga mazattoru kee*,  
A and B SUB mix because  
I am a mixture of Type A and Type B, so,



- 19            *nanka iwareru mon nanka*  
 well say.PASS N well  
 Sometimes people say,
- 20            “*B ga MAZAtte kite nai ?*”  
 B NOM mix and come.QM  
 “You’re becoming more like a B type”
- 21            *mitaina koto [iwareru koto ga aru tokidoki.*  
 like thing say.PASS VN NOM exist sometimes
- 22 Y :                            [*USO*  
                                       lie  
                                       Is it right ?
- 23 N :    *E ? tto omotte. >hajimete B toka iwareru n dakedo mitaina<*  
 What QUOT think.and first B like say.PASS N CONJ like  
 I thought ‘what?’ That’s the first time I’ve been told I have B type  
 blood. like,

This sequence involves several assessments. The first assessment sequence comprises a downgraded first-positioned assessment and an upgraded second-positioned assessment. At Line 6, N makes an assessment about Y’s characteristics (*Choko warito komaka [kattari suru yo ne :*, ‘You, Choko are quite exact, aren’t you’), which is downgraded by the final particle *ne*. In the next turn, Y repeats the key term of the previous assessment (*Komakai* ‘((I’m))exact’) in order to agree with N through a confirmation indexing her epistemic supremacy on the matter (Stivers, 2005), as Y has epistemic authority over other people to assess her own personality.

Next, from Lines 9 to 11, Y makes another self-assessment, which is carried out by unmarked simple declaratives due to her direct access to assess her own personal traits. In the next turn, N awkwardly makes an overt upgraded assessment by confirming (= *honma yo ne* :, 'That's true you know'), even though she clearly has less right to assess Y's personality. Moreover, considering Y's action was a self-deprecating form of action, disagreement with the previous speaker's self-deprecating assessment is a generally preferred form of action (Pomerantz, 1984). At Line 13, a remarkable 3.0-second pause reflects the awkwardness of N's epistemic upgrading. N's turn-final is furnished by the final particle *yone*, which invites the next speaker and marks a possible transition relevance place ([TRP<sup>9</sup>] Tanaka, 2000).

According to the preferred organisation, N selected Y to agree with N. Therefore, the 3.0-second pause is understood as Y's turn, which can be interpreted as a dispreferred response to N's awkwardly upgraded epistemic assessment (Levinson, 1983). Furthermore, there is another piece of evidence of abnormality of N's upgraded assessment, regardless of inferior epistemic rights. N initiates (Line 13) a self-deprecating assessment about herself (*Watashi mo saikin tekitoo nan yo ne : meccha*, 'Recently, I've been really careless, you know'). This is downgraded by the employment of the final particle *yone*, inviting supportive action from the co-participant in the next turn. Y's second-positioned assessment (Line 15) is downgraded, straightforwardly reflecting her inferior epistemic right toward the matter under discussion.

As was seen above, speakers occasionally upgrade their epistemic rights even when they clearly do not have access to do so. When that happened, N compensated for her bizarrely upgraded epistemic second-positioned assessment by

---

9) A transition relevance place (TRP) is a point where the turn may go to another speaker, or the present speaker may continue with another turn.

delivering a self-deprecating downgraded assessment, which in turn provided the co-participant access to assess the matter at hand.

### Excerpt 3

The third case presents interactants' negotiation of epistemic primacy and subordination in an assessment sequence by deploying several resources. Here, participants are talking about a turn of fate that O often contemplates, which happens when people travel by airplane. All participants commonly have experiences of travelling long distances on a plane.

In Lines 1 to 3, O formulates his first-positioned assessments about travelling by airplane, and how there might be an element of fate regarding the person sitting in the next seat. This assessment is epistemically downgraded by the use of evidentials (*ki ga shimasu*, 'I feel like') and a combination of the final particle *yone*. In O's assessment, turn-final-located final particle *yone* marks a TRP-eliciting supportive action from the next speaker. Y produces a supportive action for O's assessment by saying *CHOTTO ne* :, 'A little bit you know', which is epistemically upgraded by the final particle *ne*. Because all participants are experienced air travellers, they acknowledge themselves as those who like to travel abroad more than other people in general. Therefore, all participants are aware of the fact that they have putatively equal and direct access to evaluate the matter under discussion.

In Lines 7 to 8, Y initiates a new first-positioned assessment about how people may think that people go in completely different directions in their lives right after leaving their seats on an airplane. At a possible turn construction unit (TCU)<sup>10</sup> in

---

10) Turn construction unit (TUC) refers to the linguistic component (e.g., a sentence, clause, phrase, or word) from which a next turn may be constructed. It is the simplest system for the organisation of turn-taking for conversation.

Y's turn, O comes in to make a second-positioned assessment. His utterance (*Soo desu ne.*, 'That's right, isn't it') upgrades his epistemic rights by the features of *that's right* and final particle *ne*, which indicate that his assessment stems from his independent access to the matter under discussion (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). In the next turn (Line 11), Y completes her first-positioned assessment by using multiple resources to downgrade her first-positioned assessments (such as the evidentials *Tte kanji ga suru*, 'Feels like it', and the final particle *yone*). The use of evidentials for downgrading is carried out based on O's previous assessment agreeing with Y. Additionally, in the same turn, the particle *yone* at Y's turn-final position marks the completion of her turn and the selection of the next speaker by inviting affiliative action in the next turn. Evidentials are often used to downgrade first-positioned assessments, and the final particle *yone* is often employed to upgrade second-positioned assessment (Nogami, 2007). Thus, Y acknowledges the co-participant's epistemic rights to the state of affairs. Responding to it, M affiliatively agrees with Y's assessment by making a confirmation through the deployment of the final particle *ne*, which upgrades her epistemic primacy from second position (Line 12). In her next TCU, M adds *Ikkini ne.*, 'Straight away, isn't it', meaning such situation happens straight away when people leave their seats. This assessment can be regarded as another indication of her epistemic authority to the topic under discussion.

Excerpt 3 : [Hamburger 00:52:07]<sup>11)</sup>

- 1 O: *Nanka hikooki de : tonari ni natta hito toka tte*  
well airplane LOC next.to COP.PAST people for.instance P  
Well, I feel like it's kind of fate, the person you end up sitting next

---

11) Participants in the conversation at a hamburger shop are five postgraduate students. T, O, and H are male, and M and Y are female.

to on a plane, don't you think, because it's a long journey, well.

2 *nanka chotto en ga aru yoo na ki ga shimasu yo ne :*  
well a little fate NOM exist like FP feel FP FP FP

3 *nagaikoto noru kara [nanka*  
long.time get.on because like

4 Y: *[CHOTTO ne : =*  
a little FP  
A little bit you know.

5 O: *= ne : ?*  
FP  
Don't you think ?

6 T: *Kedo : [are*  
but that  
But that,

7 Y: *[Demo : A- (.) Kekkyoku nanka (.)*  
but that after all like  
But that's- after all, well,

8 *seki o tatta syunkan ni betsu,*  
seat ACC leave.PAST moment P separate  
the moment you leave your seat, it changes,

9 O: *Soo desu ne.*  
right COP FP  
That's right, isn't it

- 10 M: *U: n*  
yeah  
Yeah.
- 11 Y: [*Tte kanji ga suru yo ne?*  
QUOT feel FP FP  
Feels like it, doesn't it?
- 12 M: [*NE. Ikkini ne.*  
FP straight away FP  
Doesn't it. Straight away, isn't it.
- 13 Y: *U: n.*  
yeah  
Yeah.
- 14 O: <*Boku demo : tegami nankai mo moratta koto arimasu yo.*  
I but letters many times P receive VN exist FP  
But lots of times I've got letters,
- 15 Y: [*Ah, soo na:n?*  
oh right FP  
Oh, is that right?
- 16 O: [*Tonari ni notta obachan kara*  
next.to get.on.PAST middle-aged-lady from  
from a lady I sat next to.
- 17 Y: *Ah SOo nan jya :*  
oh right FP FP  
Oh, is that right?

## Excerpt 4

In the last excerpt below, participants are talking about their own regional vernaculars. O speaks a Kansai dialect, and the others speak a Hiroshima dialect.

T initiates his first-positioned negative assessment on the sound of a Kansai dialect at Line 18. His epistemic claim is downgraded by employing the final particle *yone*, which marks the TRP – soliciting speakers’ change and invites affiliative action in the next turn (Tanaka, 2000). Responding to T’s assessment, O, who has epistemic authority on a Kansai dialect, delivers an *ah*-prefacing agreement. *Ah*-prefacing indicates the following assessment is carried out based on the speaker’s independent access to the referent because of its change-of-state semantics (Heritage, 1984). In the next turn, Y reconfirms O’s second assessment (↑*Ah soo nan jya* :, ‘Oh, is that right’.), and then O reiterates his second-positioned assessment in a slightly modified way, which is downgraded by the final particle *yone* by inviting supportive action in the next turn.

Right after this assessment sequence, Y initiates another first-positioned assessment about the Hiroshima vernacular (which T, Y, and M have primary access to assess) in a self-deprecating manner, which is downgraded by the final particle *jyan*. Sequentially, when a first speaker makes a self-deprecating assessment, a preferred next action is a disagreement with the prior action (Pomerantz, 1984). A disagreement-preferred sequence is delivered by disaffiliating overtly with the prior critical assessment (Pomerantz, 1984). O’s sequence proffers a disagreeing assessment by delivering a contrastive second assessment (*E, demo nanka boku zenzen*, ‘Well, it’s not like that at all’) (Pomerantz, 1984). At Lines 24 and 25, O asserts that a Hiroshima dialect sounds better than a Kansai dialect, praising the referent and invalidating the previous speaker’s self-deprecation, *BOKU WA : Hiroshima no hito no hoo ga nanka >syu< tto shiteru kanji ga suru n su yo*, ‘I feel like people from Hiroshima sound sort of

smarter' (Pomerantz, 1984). At the same time, O proffers a downgraded new first-positioned assessment, which is indexed by the evidentials *kanji ga suru*, 'feel like', since O has inferior epistemic rights to assess the referent. The recipient T makes his second-positioned assessment by deploying the sentence final copula *Daro : ?*, 'Don't you think?', which manifests his epistemic primacy toward a Hiroshima dialect and the sheer firstness of his claim.

Excerpt 4 : [Hamburger 00:01:21]

- 1 O : *Honde na konaida na nanka (.) hahaoya ni :*  
And FP the other day FP like mother by  
Well, the other day I was told to watch my language by my mother, lately
  
- 2 *kotoba zukai naoshinasai tte iwarete saikin*  
language usage fix.imperative QUOT say.PASS.and lately.
  
- 3 T : *Fu : : n. [Honde honde ?*  
hmm and and  
Ok, and, and ?
  
- 4 Y : *[. h@@@@@ honde ?*  
and  
And ?
  
- 5 T : *Honde ? =*  
And  
And ?
  
- 6 M : *= SHINCHAI tte iwareta [n jya*  
do. imperative COP say.PASS.PAST N COP  
So, you were told to watch your language.

- 7 O: [SHINCHAI *tte*  
Do. imperative COP  
I was told to watch my language.
- 8 *iwareta n su yo* =  
say.PASS.PAST N COP FP
- 9 T: = SHINCHAI *tte* [*iwarete?* *hmm*  
do.imperative COP say.PASS.PAST *hmm*  
So, you were told to watch your language, ok.
- 10 O: [Nde “E?  
And what  
And, I said “What?
- 11 *jibun kansai jin ya* [*no ni okashii yan*” *tte*  
yourself Kansai people COP N P strange COP QUOT  
It’s funny, even though you yourself are from Kansai”.
- 12 H: [Sugoi ( )  
great  
Great ( )
- 13 Y: [@@@@@
- 14 H: (Sugoi)  
great  
Great.
- 15 Y: Un  
yeah  
Yeah.

- 16 M: .hh
- 17 (.)
- 18 T: *KANsai tte kotoba zukai warui yo ne?*  
Kansai QUOT language usage bad FP FP  
Kansai (people) have a rough tone, don't they?
- 19 O: *Ahh warui hisan.*  
Oh bad disastrous  
Oh, It's bad. Disastrous.
- 20 Y: ↑ *Ah soo nan jya :*  
Oh, right COP FP  
Oh, is that right?
- 21 O: *E : kitanai desu yo ne ?*  
Yeah nasty COP FP FP  
Yeah, it is nasty, isn't it?
- 22 Y: *Hiroshima mo warui tte iu (.) jyan.*  
Hiroshima also bad QUOT say FP  
People say it's also bad in Hiroshima, you know.
- 23 O: *E, demo nanka boku zenzen.*  
Well but like I not at all  
Well, it's not like that at all.
- 24 *BOKU WA : Hiroshima no hito no hoo ga*  
I TOP Hiroshima GEN people GEN than NOM  
I feel like people from Hiroshima sound sort of smarter.

25            *nanka >syu< tto shiteru kanji ga suru n su yo =*  
 like smart QUOT COP feel NOM COP N COP FP

26 M:        = [*Syu*  
               *smart*  
               *Smart ?*

27 T:        = [*@Daro : ?*  
               COP  
               Don't you think ?

## Conclusion

We have examined the linguistic methods that speakers employ to index their relative rights within assessment sequences in Japanese, and how they manage and negotiate their knowledge and information with interactants in talk-in-interaction. In particular, we examined four excerpts to reveal how complex assessment sequences can be and how intricately interactants manage and negotiate their respective epistemic authority and subordination. Generally, first-positioned assessments are downgraded and second-positioned assessments are upgraded. These tendencies imply speakers' recurrent social dilemma with regard to aligning their epistemic and/or moral rights with those of recipients. I have also identified a variety of grammatical practices that are deployed in managing the speakers' epistemic claims. Interactants often showed their epistemic independence and superiority that derived from different identities. As we saw in Excerpt 1, one claimed his epistemics based on being a friend of the referent, and the other asserted her epistemics based on being the referent's girlfriend. On such occasions, the sequence revealed their competitiveness over their epistemic access and supremacy. Meanwhile, there is no guarantee that a speaker and recipients indicate their epistemic claims as they

generally should. When interactants express their epistemic rights inappropriately, sequential organisation reflects such problematic aspects; however, interactants compensate for their inappropriate epistemic claims through their sequential management in talk-in-interaction (e. g., Excerpt 2). Furthermore, the third and fourth excerpts showed how conversational participants deal with their epistemic stances relative to those of co-participants. In Excerpt 3, the participants had relatively equal epistemic access to the state of affairs. In such a case, first-positioned assessments were downgraded so as to acknowledge other participants' epistemic rights, and second-positioned assessments were upgraded to assert the speaker's epistemic rights. In Excerpt 4, one of the participants clearly had epistemic authority and independence to assess the referent, and co-participants managed their related degrees of epistemic rights in the assessment sequence.

Overall, grounds for speakers' epistemic claims can involve either a speaker's role as an interactant (e. g., as a storyteller or recipient of the telling) or his or her social role (e. g., friend and boy/girlfriend). The excerpts showed participants sometimes embodied identities, such as 'girlfriend/boyfriend' and 'good friend', claiming the territory of knowledge when asserting their epistemic authority. Moreover, another salient issue in an agreement sequence relates to the matter of speakers' alignment with co-participants. A mutual agreement is socially preferred within assessment sequences to promote social solidarity among interactants, respecting each other's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987); however, conversational participants' management of the terms of agreement (i. e., 'who agrees with whom') can also be a crucial matter in social interaction. Speakers must respect co-participants' territories of knowledge and their relevant epistemic rights to access to the matters under discussion (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Stivers, 2005); therefore, agreement sequences can be as complex as we have seen in the excerpts.

Lastly, the data incorporated in this study are only limited to mundane informal conversations among young people; the findings and analytical discussions drawn here thus may be limited. However, the sociological methodology of CA aims to reveal recurrent structural features in social interaction, and the CA analytic work is independent from linguistic varieties, settings, and other social factors, such as gender and age (Drew, 1990). Thus, with the data of the limited social settings, the main findings and discussion should apply as generic idiosyncrasies of social organisation in Japanese and contribute to the newly emerging field of CA, grammar, and interaction.

#### References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clift, R. (2001). Meaning in interaction: The case of 'actually'. *Language*, 77, 245-291.
- Clift, R. (2006). Indexing stance: Reported speech as an interactional evidential. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 10 (5), 569-595.
- Drew, P. (1990). Conversation analysis: Who needs it? *Text*, 10 (1), 27-35.
- Fox, B. A., Hayashi, M., & Jasperson, R. (1996). Resources and repair: A cross-linguistic study of syntax and repair. In E. Ochs, E. A. Shergloff, & S. A. Thompson (Eds.), *Interaction and Grammar* (pp. 185-237). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: essays on face to face behaviour*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Hayashi, M. (2002). *Joint utterance construction in Japanese conversation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Heritage, J. (1984). A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In J. M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 299-345). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heritage, J., & Raymond, G. (2005). The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. *Social psychology Quarterly*, 68 (1), 15-38.
- Itani, R. (1996). *Semantics and pragmatics of hedges in English and Japanese*. Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo.
- Iwasaki, S. (1993). *Subjectivity in grammar and discourse: Theoretical considerations and a case study of Japanese spoken discourse*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- Kamio, A. (1994). The theory of territory of information : The case of Japanese. *Journal of pragmatics*, 21, 67-100.
- Kamio, A. (1997). Evidentiality and some discourse characteristics in Japanese. In A. Kamio (Ed.), *Directions in Functional Linguistics* (pp. 145-171). Philadelphia : John Benjamins.
- Lerner, G. H., & Takagi, T. (1999). On the place of linguistic resources in the organization of talk-in-interaction : A co-investigation of English and Japanese grammatical practices. *Journal of pragmatics*, 31, 49-75.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Mushin, I. (2001). Japanese reportive evidentiality and the pragmatics of retelling. *Journal of pragmatics*, 33 (9), 1361-1390.
- Nogami, Y. (2007). *Management and negotiation of speakers' epistemic authority and subordination in assessment sequences in Japanese interaction*. Unpublished MRes dissertation, University of Essex. U. K.
- Ochs, E., Schegloff, E. A., & Thompson, S. A. (Eds.). (1996). *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Pomerantz, A. (1984). Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments : Some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J. M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action : Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 57-101). Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Raymond, G., & Heritage, J. (2006). The epistemics of social relations : Owning grandchildren. *Language in Society*, 35 (5), 677-705.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematic of the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50 (4), 696-735.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1996). Turn organization : one intersection of grammar and interaction. In E. Ochs, E. A. Schegloff, & S. A. Thompson (Eds.), *Interaction and Grammar* (pp. 52-133). Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sack, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language*, 53 (2), 361-82.
- Stivers, T. (2005). Modified repeats : One method for asserting primary rights from second position. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 38 (2), 131-158.
- Tanaka, H. (1999). *Turn-taking in Japanese conversation : A study in grammar and interaction*. Amsterdam : John Benjamins Publishing.
- Tanaka, H. (2000). The particle *ne* as a turn-management device in Japanese conversation. *Journal of pragmatics*, 32, 1135-1176.
- Ten Have, P. (1999). *Doing conversation analysis : A practical guide*. London : Sage.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2005). Identity negotiation theory : Crossing cultural boundaries. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 211-234). Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE.

**Appendix 1: Transcription Conventions**

[	the point at which the overlapping talk starts
]	the point at which overlapping talk ends
=	“latched” utterances, with no interval between them
(0.0)	numbers in parentheses indicate the length of silence in seconds and tenths of seconds
(.)	a dot in parentheses indicates micro-pause
<u>word</u>	underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis via high pitch or loudness
WORD	capital letters indicates high volume
:::	colons indicate lengthened sound
-	a dash indicates a sudden cut-off of the current sound
?	a question mark indicates a rising intonation
.	a full stop indicates falling intonation
,	a comma indicates a continuing intonation
↑↓	the up or down arrows mark a rise or fall in pitch
°word°	portions which are delivered in a quieter voice than surrounding talk
<	a hurried start in speaking
><	talk delivered at a quicker pace
<>	talk delivered at a slowed pace
. hhh	audible inbreath
£ word £	smiling voice
# word #	creaky voice
@	laughter
( )	empty parentheses indicate words unclear and so untranscribable
(word)	parenthesised words are dubious hearing or speaker identifications
(( ))	transcribers descriptions

**Appendix 2: List of Abbreviations of Grammatical Items**

ACC	accusative particle
CONJ	conjunctive particle
COP	copula
FP	final particle
GEN	genitive particle
N	nominaliser
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative particle
P	particle
PASS	passive
PAST	past tense
QM	question maker
QUOT	quotative particle
TOP	topic particle
VP	verb nominaliser