

Toward the Pedagogy of Style: Choosing between Abrupt and Formal Verb Forms in Japanese

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This study analyzes Japanese verb morphology, *da* and *desu/masu* endings, in three genres of modern Japanese, i.e., conversation, prose, and dialogue in fiction. Advancing a step beyond the view that the choice between *da* and *desu/masu* endings depends on “styles”—such as formal versus informal, written versus spoken—I argue that motivations for the mixture of *da* and *desu/masu* endings in a single paragraph or a single speaking turn can be pragmatically explained. I conclude that the *da* style is selected (1) when the speaker expresses abrupt remembrance or a sudden emotional surge, (2) when the speaker takes a perspective internal to the narrative setting and immediately responds within that framework, (3) when the speaker presents background information semantically subordinate within the discourse structure, and (4) when the speaker finds the addressee close and the speaker uses a style similar to self-address. The cognitive and social source for the verb morphology in Japanese is sought in the philosophy of Watsuji and Mori which advocates the “betweenness” of self and other and, above all, the importance of “thou.”

Based on the findings of this study, I conclude that a simplistic approach to maintaining the principle of stylistic consistency is satisfactory only for elementary level students. For intermediate and advanced students, discussing the discourse manipulation of the stylistic mixture is both useful and intellectually stimulating. Above all, the importance of the synergy of linguistic research and its pedagogical application is emphasized.

INTRODUCTION

As a teacher of advanced Japanese language courses, I have witnessed students' confusion on the choice of verb forms in Japanese. The aspect I focus on here is the choice between abrupt (or informal) *da* and formal *desu/masu* verb forms. Let us examine a sample writing of a third-year student in which this stylistic mixture occurs.

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In order to facilitate the discussion, the text is given in English translation and whether the main verb is in abrupt or formal style is marked in parentheses.

1. a. Ishihara states that Americans sometimes hold prejudicial views toward Japanese. (formal)
- b. I think so, too. (formal)
- c. As a good example, one can cite the case where Japanese-Americans were imprisoned in camps during the Second World War. (formal)
- d. That, I think, is of course prejudice. (abrupt)
- e. But since many Americans know little about Japanese society, they tend to have prejudicial feelings toward Japanese—as when a Japanese company buys and takes over an American company. (formal)

In this writing, the student uses the verb *omou* “to think” three times, twice in formal style *omoumasu* in 1b and 1e, and once in abrupt style *omou* in 1d. Faced with this inconsistency, the most often expected pedagogical solution is to direct the students to follow the principle of stylistic consistency, i.e., whichever style one chooses one must use consistently throughout the entire text.

While this has been customary in Japanese language education for Japanese as well as for speakers of other languages, in reality stylistic mixture occurs more often than one expects. In fact, there are examples in Japanese textbooks which use mixed styles (see for example, Japanese Language Promotion Center 1980: 293).

Indeed, as will be discussed in this paper, an observation of authentic text and interaction in Japanese reveals that a stylistic mixture exists in Japanese conversation, as well as in fictional and expository writings in Japanese. Thus the question is raised: What is the meaning/function of the stylistic mixture of *da* and *desu/masu* verb forms in Japanese? (In other words, the first task of an instructor is to understand the Japanese language itself.) And consequently, a pedagogical issue must be addressed: How should the instructor lead students to acquire the means to make stylistic choices? In what follows I will explore these issues.

Traditionally, linguists have characterized the abrupt and formal verb forms as merely representing different “styles,” for example, spoken versus written or informal versus formal. I find it important to take a step beyond this convenient assumption and ask what motivates a speaker to choose between these two types of verb-final forms in Japanese text and interaction, and consequently discuss how a more accurate characterization can be incorporated into Japanese language pedagogy.

First, let us consider data set 2 taken from contemporary Japanese fiction.¹

¹ For glossing data the following abbreviations are used:

BE=various forms of copulative verb *be*, IO=indirect object marker, IP=interactional particles, LK=linker, linking nominals, NEG=negative morpheme, NOM=nominatizer, O=direct object marker, PASS=passive morpheme, Q=question marker, QT=quotative marker, S=subject marker, T=theme marker.

For the main verbal ending in each utterance, either formal or abrupt style is assigned and is indicated at the end of each utterance.

2. a. *Hitori dete-kita.* (abrupt)
 one person appeared
 A person is coming out. (abrupt)
- b. *Ano ko desu yo.* (formal)
 that child BE IP
 That is the very girl. (formal)
 (Natsuki 1981: 159)

Notice that *dete-kita* in 2a is in *da* form while *desu* in 2b is in *desu* form. Both utterances are made by one individual and constitute a single conversational turn in the fiction. Obviously 2a and 2b both represent a spoken style, as evidenced by their appearance in direct quotation, and both are presumably on the same level of formality. It is difficult to imagine, at least in this situation, that the level of formality would change in the middle of the speaker's turn. Thus, one cannot persuasively argue that the speech producer (in this case the author) finds it necessary to mix *da* and *desu* forms on the two possible grounds, i.e., spoken versus written or informal versus formal styles. This means that one must seek the motivation for the style mixture elsewhere.

I have selected three different sources for the data relevant to this study: (1) transcribed casual conversation among friends, (2) modern Japanese prose, and (3) dialogues appearing in modern fictional works. The rationale behind this selection is that at least one genre from both spoken and written discourse is necessary to investigate the phenomenon if I am interested in claiming that the "stylistic" difference—between spoken versus written style—does not alone motivate the selection between *da* and *desu/masu* forms. Consequently, casual conversation and prose are chosen. Additionally, dialogues in fictional works offer a unique data source since they represent a case of a spoken style (at least the author's intention being so) within a written text. The casual conversational data consists of five-minute segments of twenty conversations performed by twenty adult native speaker pairs videotaped in Tokyo, Japan, in 1985.² For the prose data, I scanned twenty volumes of prose anthology and I concentrated on eighteen pieces of prose in which the *da* and *desu/masu* stylistic mixture appeared.³ For fictional works, twenty volumes of modern Japanese fiction were scanned and examples were extracted from dialogues which contained the mixture of *da* and *desu/masu* verb forms within a single turn.⁴

It should be pointed out that when examining abrupt verb endings, I chose only those without sentence-final particles and the like. This is because I am primarily interested in contrasts between (1) verb endings accompanied by some stylistic and/or interactional signals (one case of which is the *desu/masu* ending) and (2) abrupt verb endings with no further interactional devices attached. I suspect that abrupt endings

² See Maynard (1989) for discussion on the collection method and preparation of the conversational data used here.

³ For prose data, I scanned Volumes 1 through 20 of *Nihon no meizuihitsu*, published by Sakuhinsha. Those items from which our data are extracted are listed in the Bibliography.

⁴ For fictional writing data, I scanned twenty contemporary Japanese mystery novels. Those items from which our data are extracted are listed in the Bibliography.

which are accompanied by particles as well as other interactionally and discourse-organizationally motivated markers share modal characteristics similar to—or, at least which may be analyzed from a perspective similar to—*desu/masu* endings. Concentrating on the naked abrupt forms (i.e., *da* endings with no additional markers attached) allows us to limit the scope of our investigation, thus making it easier to concentrate on the pragmatic differences between the *da* and *desu/masu* verb morphology.

Background

Historically the issue of choice among *da* and *desu/masu* styles came into focus in the third decade of the Meiji period (from 1887 to 1896) at the time of *genbun itchi undō* (the unification movement of the written and spoken language). Some writers deliberately chose one style over the other at certain times in their careers. For example, Yamada Bimyō adopted the *da* style in 1888 but changed to *desu/masu* style in 1889 and eventually came to be known as the author representing *desu* style writing. The *dearu* style, which I categorize as a type of *da* style in this paper, was refined by Ozaki Kōyō in 1897 and eventually became the common style in modern written Japanese.⁵ In contemporary Japanese, *da*, *dearu* and *desu/masu* styles are used, sometimes mixed in a single text segment.

Among Japanese grammarians who have commented on the phenomenon of the style mixture, the following represents a generally accepted position. Most traditional prescriptivists recommend against mixing styles inadvertently. For example, Haga (1962: 62), citing *danwatai* “spoken style” and *bunshōtai* “written style”—similar to our abrupt and formal styles, respectively—suggests that mixture of these styles without reason should be avoided. Haga (1962) calls this rule *bunmatsu ikkan no gensoku*, “principle of consistency in sentence-final forms.” Haga, however, points out several situations in which language users may purposefully mix *da*, *dearu* and *desu/masu* endings. First, in a discourse where *da* endings dominate with occurrences of sporadic *desu/masu* endings, the latter expresses the following: (1) formality, (2) humor and an insertion of personal comment, as well as sarcasm, and (3) vocative and directly addressing the listener. In a discourse segment where the *desu/masu* style dominates but where sporadic *da* endings appear, the latter expresses an interpersonal familiarity and closeness to the listener. In addition, Haga notes that sometimes the *da* and *desu/masu* mixture results from sociolinguistically uncertain circumstances, especially when the speaker fails to clearly identify the addressee’s relative social status. Since the *desu/masu* style, in part, marks politeness, the participants’ relative social status becomes a decisive factor for the style selection.

Kindaichi (1982) comments that the *da* style is used for self-addressed utterances or where a brief pause in discourse exists, while the *desu* style is used when the speaker

⁵ This paper does not discuss the distinction between two predicate forms of Japanese copula, *da* “BE” and *dearu* “BE.” See Maynard (1985) for the functional differences between *da* and *dearu* in written Japanese. In this paper I categorize *dearu* as *da* form and *dearimasu* as *desu/masu* form.

directly addresses the listener or where a major pause in discourse exists.⁶ Kindaichi points out the writing style of Fukuda Kōson as a representative writer who effectively mixes abrupt and formal styles. It is unclear, however, what Kindaichi means by a “brief pause” and a “major pause” in discourse. I will explore this observation in more detail later.

Mio (1942: 192–97) in his study of spoken Japanese points out that the *da* style is generally used in the following three situations, although he acknowledges (1942: 197) other factors involved, such as local and individual differences, including family practice and the social status of the speaker.

1. When speaking in monologue,
2. When speaking to persons who hold relatively lower social status, and
3. When conversing among familiar and close friends.

While studies briefly reviewed above offer helpful hints in understanding the choice of verb endings in Japanese, they fall short of answering the question posed at the outset of this paper in reference to data set 2, i.e., the speaker’s motivation for the style mixture. I find it both important and interesting to ask what underlies the seemingly unrelated lists of reasons for the style mixture suggested by various scholars. An answer to this question will provide the *raison d’être* for the *da* and *desu/masu* morphological manipulation and thereby provide us with a more cohesive view of the stylistic choice. In the following I explore these and other possibilities to explain the reasons for the stylistic choice in Japanese in terms of sociolinguistic, ontological, and discourse-organizational motivations.

The *Da* and *Desu/Masu* Mixture in Casual Conversation

In casual conversation among friends of equal or similar status, the normal speech style is abrupt. Formal styles do occur but only when a specific need arises, for example, when directly quoting someone who spoke in the formal style.⁷ The choice of style, at least in part, is without doubt sociolinguistically and interactionally motivated. For example, as Hori (1985) states, speakers use *desu/masu* style to maintain personal distance. In this case the *desu/masu* style functions to maintain the invisible bubble of space surrounding every individual. In casual conversation among friends, individuals tend to be encouraged to invade each other’s personal space and therefore they avoid using *desu/masu* endings.⁸

Conversational utterances, however, rarely end with abrupt forms without final particles or the like attached. When do speakers use naked abrupt endings? In our data there are two possible sources for this choice. First, a speaker expresses surprise,

⁶ In the original Japanese:

Da-tai no tokoro wa hitorigototekina tokoro, naishi wa, bunshō ga chiisaku kirete-iru tokoro, desu-tai no tokoro wa, hanashikake-chō no tokoro, naishi wa bunshō ga ōkiku kirete-iru tokorode, awasete zentai toshite henka no myō o misete-iru. (Kindaichi 1982: 50)

⁷ See Maynard (1989, chapter 3) in this regard.

⁸ Refer to Neustupný (1983) for the sociolinguistic issue of politeness avoidance among Japanese speakers.

abrupt remembrance, or a sudden emotional surge, as shown in data set 3. Second, the speaker is in the narrative setting right there and then, i.e., the speaker takes a point of view internal to the world under discussion, as is the case in data set 4.⁹

3. a. *Dōshiyō, Kimi-chan tachi nani hanashita n da.* (abrupt)
 what should do Kimi and others what discussed NOM BE
 What should we do, what did Kimi and the others talk about? (abrupt)
- b. *Aa wakatta.* (abrupt)
 Ah understood
 Oh, I remember now. (abrupt)
- c. *Kyōshoku no hanashi da.* (abrupt)
 teaching LK talk BE
 It's about teaching. (abrupt)
4. a. *Uchi no chichioya sō da yo.* (abrupt with IP)
 home LK father so BE IP
 My dad is like that, you know. (abrupt with IP)
- b. *Soide norikomū to nē,*
 then get on when IP
 When he gets on (the train),
- c. *kutsu o nuide nē,*
 shoes O take off IP
 he takes off his shoes,
- d. *bīru o katte nomi-hajimeru.* (abrupt)
 beer O buy begins to drink
 he buys beer and begins to drink. (abrupt)
- e. *Shinbunshi shiku no.* (abrupt with IP)
 newspaper spread IP
 He spreads out the newspaper. (abrupt with IP)

In data set 3, the speaker wonders about her friends' conversation topic but suddenly recalls it and reports that it was about teaching. In utterances 3b and 3c, the speaker does not design the utterance in a sociolinguistically and interactionally sensitive manner, for example, by adding interpersonal particles. Notice that although 3a ends with an abrupt form, the verbal *hanashita* appears with the so-called extended predicate (i.e., the *no da* construction) and therefore it is not in the naked abrupt form. 3b and 3c are in naked abrupt style simply because the speaker uttered them at the instant the thought entered into consciousness. In data set 4, the speaker speaks 4d in naked abrupt form. As evidenced by the imperfective tense of the verb *nomi-hajimeru*, the speaker assumes a point of view internal to the conversational narrative setting where the incident takes place. It is as if she were there to directly witness her father drinking beer. She thereby describes the action dramatically and vividly. In short, the choice of the naked *da* style in predominantly non-naked *da* style achieves (1) immediacy and directness in expression and (2) a narrative-internal perspective. Notice that when

⁹ See Maynard (1985) for the concept of "internal to scene" and "external to scene" in narrative discourse.

interactional particles mark the utterances, by virtue of the fact that the speaker selects appropriate interactional particles, these utterances reflect a point of view external to the narrative setting. Speakers directly address the listener by taking the point of view of deliberately talking to the audience.

One also finds the naked abrupt endings in echo responses and questions as shown in data sets 5 and 6.

5. a. *Tsuisuto no Kame-chan tte shitte-ru?* (abrupt)
Twist LK Kame QT do you know
Do you know Kame of the group Twist? (abrupt)
- b. *Shitte-ru.* (abrupt)
know
Yes, I do. (abrupt)
6. a. *Ashita wa jikken repōto ga*
tomorrow T experiment report S
Tomorrow an experiment report
- b. *Aru.* (abrupt)
there is
there is. (abrupt)
- c. *Un, aru.* (abrupt)
yes there is
Yeah, there is. (abrupt)

In these paired abrupt expressions where two participants exchange identical phrases, the rhythmicity of the language seems, in part, to motivate them. Notice that in 6, speaker of 6b completes the utterance that the speaker of 6a initiates by inserting an abrupt form of the verb *aru*, to which the speaker of 6a responds. Here two speakers jointly create the utterance. In this situation neither speaker consciously addresses the other; rather, they both address the information being jointly formed. In our data, naked abrupt forms appear in all three cases of jointly created utterances.

What is common in the observation made regarding conversational data—i.e., *da* endings appear (1) for abrupt remembrance or sudden emotional surge, (2) for expressing narrative-internal point of view, and (3) for echo questions and for jointly created utterances—is that all three expressions are the kind not deliberately addressed to the listener. Rather, these *da*-ending utterances are made without going through the designing process that interactionally accommodates the listener.

The *Da* and *Desu/Masu* Mixture in Dialogues of Fiction

In our second type of data taken from dialogue portions of modern fiction, the abrupt endings appear in similar situations. For example, let us examine data set 2 again. At the point when 2 appears in the novel, the author creates the following narrative setting.

Two police officers—Tadokoro and Ōno—are on duty secretly observing female high school students suspected of prostitution coming out of a local bar. Of particular interest to these men hiding behind the billboard across from the bar is

Kimie, the daughter of the couple who interact with the protagonists of the mystery novel. Tadokoro notices a girl coming out of the bar; he pokes his partner and utters 2.

Tadokoro utters 2a as he immediately describes the incident of a girl coming out of a bar. 2b, on the other hand, has a distinct explanatory tone in that it provides information as to who the girl is. The style chosen for 2b results from the speaker's effort to design the utterance appropriate to and appealing to the partner in that context. In the novel, Tadokoro consistently and primarily speaks in *desu/masu* form. Therefore, utterance 2b maintains the expected and sociolinguistically most appropriate style. Notice that the mixture of *da* and *desu/masu* verb endings observed in 2 results from factors beyond the merely sociolinguistic. The style mixture is a manipulation device for the speaker (i.e., author) to signal different sentence types within a single speaking turn.

If we manipulate 2 in such a way as to alter the *da* and *desu/masu* choice as given in 7, we observe a different effect.

7. a. *Hitori dete-kimashita.* (formal)
one person appeared
- b. *Ano ko da.* (abrupt)
that girl BE

Although the (logical) semantic content is identical in both 2 and 7, the effect is different. One may consider the following likely narrative setting for 7.¹⁰

Tadokoro describes to Ōno that a girl is coming out of the bar; he calmly describes the situation in the style that he uses most often, i.e., 7a. Then all of a sudden he realizes that the girl he has just described is the one that he and Ōno were looking for. At this point Tadokoro exclaims 7b.

Obviously the effect discussed here does not depend only on the *da* and *desu/masu* manipulation. The underlying *ga* and *wa* markings and the verb tense, for example, play major roles in creating the said effect. Nonetheless, it is true that *da* and *desu/masu* verb morphology enhances, together with other strategies, the different utterance effect pointed out above.

The manipulation discussed above, however, is not the only motivational source for the *da* and *desu/masu* verb morphology in the dialogues of fiction. Let us observe another example taken from fiction, data set 8.

¹⁰ I informally asked six native speakers to guess a likely narrative setting in which conversations 2 and 7 might take place. All informants responded in writing and expressed similar differences between the two types of discourse. In fact one informant came very close to the situation I present here although she was told merely that the conversation was taken from a mystery novel with no hint of the narrative situation. In summary, she stated that the situation appropriate for 2 is such that the speaker announces that one person unexpectedly shows up (*Hitori dete-kita*), and then the speaker points out that the person who just showed up is the child they are concerned about (*Ano ko desu yo*). The situation appropriate for 7 is such that the child is expected to appear and the speaker reports the fact (*Hitori dete-kimashita*) and unexpectedly finds out that that child is someone the speaker was looking for (*Ano ko da*).

8. a. *Kore to itta gen'in ni-naru yōna deki goto ga atta wake dewa-nai to*
 this QT say cause become such as incident S there was case BE-NEG QT
omoimasu ne. (formal)
 think IP
 I don't think there was a specific reason for the incident. (formal)
- b. *Moshi omotedatta kenka demo shiteireba, kitto Harue no kuchi kara*
 if apparent fight such as do-if certainly Harue LK mouth from
kinjo ni hiromatte-iru hazu desu kara. (formal)
 neighbor IO spread should BE since
 If they actually had a fight, that is sure to be known by the neighbors,
 since Harue is certain to have spread the word. (formal)
- c. *Tabun, Harue ni-shitemireba, jibun to dōnenpai no onna ga hitoride*
 perhaps Harue for self as same age LK woman S alone
shareta uchi ni sunde, akanuketa minari de tsūkin shite-iru. (abrupt)
 stylish house in live fashionable clothes BE commute
 Perhaps for Harue (it was upsetting to see that) a woman about the same
 age as herself lives in a stylish house and goes to work wearing fashionable
 clothes. (abrupt)
- d. *Tokitama gaisha de okurarete kaette-kuru.* (abrupt)
 sometimes foreign car by drive-PASS return
 And sometimes the woman is driven back home in a foreign car. (abrupt)
- e. *Sōyū hadena kurashi ga netamashikatta to yū koto ja-nai n deshō*
 such showy life-style O was jealous QT say fact BE-NEG NOM BE
ka. (formal)
 Isn't it that Harue was jealous of such a showy life style? (formal)
 (Natsuki 1981: 75)

In this segment, Yazu, a secretary in the public prosecutor's office, reports to Akiko, a district public prosecutor, how Harue, a neighbor of a crime suspect, commented about the suspect. The discussion concerns why Harue maintains an unfriendly attitude toward the suspect. Utterances 8c and 8d—which, unlike 8a, 8b, and 8e, take *da* endings—describe the kind of life style the suspect leads. It is as if 8c and 8d form a two-item list that describes the suspect's life-style. Notice that *sōyū*, “such,” in 8e represents a case of sentence anaphora whose anaphoric scope includes both 8c and 8d. In this discourse segment then, utterances 8c and 8d provide subordinate information that modifies *sōyū hadena kurashi*, “such a showy life-style.” Because of this, it is not necessary to design these utterances to conform to the expected speech style, i.e., the *desu/masu* style. This phenomenon corresponds to the sentence-internal situation in which subordinate clauses normally do not carry interpersonal features while the main clauses do.¹¹

¹¹ Here I should point out a similar observation made by Noda (1989). Noda discusses two types of sentences—sentences with genuine modality (*shinsei modariti o motsu bun*) and sentences without (*shinsei modariti o motanai bun*)—and comments that sentences without genuine modality which express a low level of independence (*dokuritsusei no hikui bun*) are not likely to take formality markings.

This interpretation clarifies the somewhat vague statement made by Kindaichi (1982), quoted earlier. In fact in the discourse segment discussed by Kindaichi, sentences with abrupt endings simply describe the author's own observations on advising in personal affairs. As suggested by Kindaichi himself, these utterances are almost self-addressed, providing information that supports the argumentation, which in turn constitutes its major points. In this sense, when Kindaichi says abrupt endings signal "brief pauses" and formal endings signal "major pauses," the briefness of the pause reflects the close connection between the subordinate and the main information. Subordinate information must be integrated into the main line of argument addressed directly to the reader. Points between two main pieces of information mark "major pauses," because they are more autonomous than discourse subordinate information marked by the *da* style.

As we have just observed, the verb morphology in Japanese is functional for distinguishing the different statuses and the types of information within a large discourse unit. In understanding this operation, the concept of "foregrounding" is helpful. According to Hopper (1979: 213), "foreground" refers to "the language of the actual story line" or "the parts of the narrative which relate events belonging to the skeletal structure of the discourse" in contrast with "the language of supportive material which does not itself narrate the main events," i.e., "background." Although I adopt Hopper's characterization of foreground in the narrative discourse, in conversational discourse, the information may be "foregrounded" in an additional manner. For example, in conversation, a speaker "foregrounds" information that directly satisfies the significant speech act, for instance, answering the question in a question-answer adjacency pair. When answering a question, the answer is interactionally foregrounded. Thus foregrounding involves at least three elements: (1) deviation in form, (2) information describing the skeletal structure of the narrative, and (3) information interactionally relevant.

I conclude here that in dialogues taken from fiction one may use the abrupt style (within predominantly formal style) when the content of the utterance constitutes background information, while one may use formal style to mark foregrounded information. This distinction between foregrounded and backgrounded information in sentences and in discourse is useful not only for understanding the verb morphology in fictional dialogues but also in prose as well, as will be explained next.

The *Da* and *Desu/Masu* Mixture in Prose

In our data of twenty volumes of prose anthology containing 709 entries, 30 were written in predominantly *desu/masu* style, and all others were in *da* style. Out of 30 *desu/masu* style prose entries, 18 contained the mixed style in which the *da* form appeared. The discussion to follow is based on these examples.

In general, as expected from what I discussed already, we find phenomena similar to those already observed in other genres of discourse. Abrupt endings within prose containing predominantly formal endings mark subordinate information. For example, observe 9.

9. a. *Hontōno jihi to wa, koko ni hontōni mono o ataeru ni tekītōna*
 true compassion QT T here at really thing O give for appropriate
jijō o motsu hito ga aru. (abrupt)
 condition O possess person S there is
 As for true compassion, let's assume that there is a person who deserves to receive things because of his or her misfortune. (abrupt)
- b. *Sono toki, sono hito ni tekītōna hodo no mono o ataeru.* (abrupt)
 that time that person IO appropriate degree LK thing O give
 At that moment, one gives something appropriate to that person. (abrupt)
- c. *Sore ga hontō no jihi dearimasu.* (formal)
 that S real compassion BE
 That is true compassion. (formal)
- d. *Koko ni hitori no namakemono ga atte, sore ga kuchi-o-jōzuni-shite*
 here at one person LK lazy person S there is that S convincingly
sugatte-kita to suru. (abrupt)
 beg for mercy QT do
 Let's assume another situation where there is a lazy person here, and he or she asks for compassion with convincing excuses. (abrupt)
- e. *Sono kuchi jōzu ni jōzerare mono o yatta to suru.* (abrupt)
 that glibness by deceive-PASS thing O gave QT do
 Let's assume that one is deceived by the glibness of the explanation and gives something. (abrupt)
- f. *Sore wa jihi ni nite hi naru mono dearimasu.* (formal)
 that T compassion to resemble wrong become thing BE
 That may have the appearance of compassion but it is not. (formal)
- g. *Odate-ni-notta ukatsumono no orokana shogyō desu.* (formal)
 deceived by false praise fool LK foolish deed BE
 It is the deed of a fool who is easily deceived by false praise. (abrupt)
- h. *Sonna toki, mono o yaru kawarini, sono namakemono no ojōzumono no*
 such time thing O give instead that lazy person LK cunning person LK
hō ni hirate no hitotsu mo mimatte yaru. (abrupt)
 cheek IO slap LK one even give
 At that moment, instead of giving something, one may slap this lazy, phony person on his or her cheek. (abrupt)
- i. *Imashime ni nari happunzai ni naru kamoshiremasen.*
 discipline as become source of inspiration as become may (formal)
 This may serve as discipline and may become a source of inspiration.
 (formal)
- j. *Sono hō ga hontōno jihi desu.* (formal)
 that direction S real compassion BE
 That, more than anything else, is true compassion. (formal)

(Okamoto, 1983: 142)

We can find how the choice of *da* and *desu/masu* style functions as a surface-signalling device for the discourse organization here. Note that the topic of segment 9 surrounds

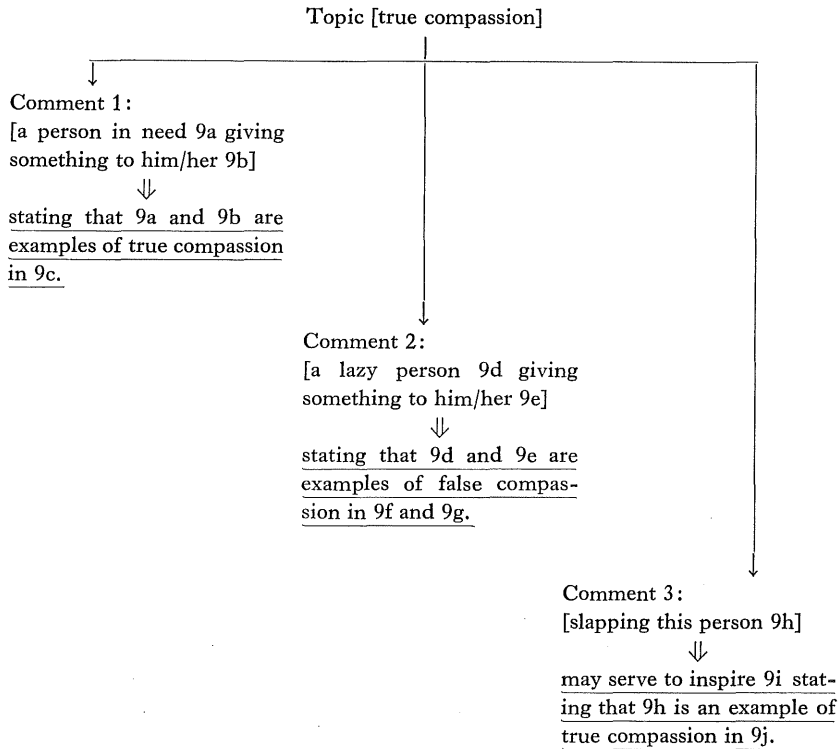


Fig. 1 Discourse Structure of Data 9

Note: Underlined utterances appear in *desu/masu* form in text; single arrows semantically connect the topic with comment; double arrows indicate information flow from support to argument.

the issue of true compassion, which is signalled by the initial noun phrase marked by *wa* in 9a. The discourse semantic structure of 9 may be schematized as in Fig. 1.

There are three items of comment semantically linked to the topic; comments 1 and 2 represent true and false compassion each accompanied by an example, and comment 3 describes the recommended response to a case of false compassion, which in turn becomes an example of true compassion. In all underlined utterances marked by *desu/masu* style in the text, the author offers his own comment. In offering his comment, the author is more aware of the reader and takes the stance of author speaking to reader. In all other sentences marked by *da* endings, the author provides background information that leads to his comment, examples that must be incorporated into his line of argument. We find further evidence to support this view in those surface anaphoric devices *sore* in 9c, *sore* in 9f, and *sono hō* in 9j all refer to the situations described immediately prior to them, which are enclosed by square brackets in Fig. 1. This clearly shows that the *da* and *desu/masu* mixture corresponds to the author's discourse organization, specifically distinguishing between backgrounded versus foregrounded information.

Ontological Basis for the Verb Morphology

Observations made so far all point to the distinction between two types of utterances: (1) foregrounded utterances directly addressing the listener with full awareness of the listener and (2) backgrounded utterances that provide subordinate information and that do not directly address the listener, but are rather almost self-addressed. The awareness of the addressee plays an important role in the production and comprehension of not only the verb morphology but also of the Japanese language in general. In Japanese communication, an awareness of others—or more generally the contextualization of the self in the scene of communication—forces one to choose different linguistic devices more demanding than in many of the Western communities.¹²

In this regard it is useful to inquire into how the Japanese mind constructs the speaker-listener relationship. It is often said that the Japanese concept of “self,” and consequently the essence of the relationship between the self and the other, differs from that typical of the Western view. Of particular interest to our present concern are the thoughts supporting this view represented by two modern Japanese philosophers, Watsuji and Mori.

In his work, Watsuji (1937) develops the concept that the social human relationship is that of *aidagara*, “betweenness.” The term *aida*, “betweenness,” literally means a spacial distance that separates two items. The concept of space which makes the notion of betweenness operative was developed earlier in his work *Fūdo* (1935). In *Fūdo* Watsuji proposes that a person is realized as he or she closely interacts with *fūdo*, “climates,” and this process of interaction and integration serves as the basis for human ontology. A person for Watsuji is also a betweenness in the social network found in social space, as reflected in the Japanese word for person, i.e., *ningen* (literally meaning *nin*, “person,” and *gen*, “between”). Watsuji emphasizes that “self” cannot be defined without sufficiently considering the social relationship between the self and others, which in fact are definable only in their “betweenness.”

Mori (1979) goes a step further in characterizing the nature of Japanese ontology and develops a concept which he calls “binary combination” or “binary rapport” (1979: 66). According to Mori “binary combination” refers to the following manner of combination: two persons construct an intimate relationship in the process of life experience, and that relationship itself serves as the ontological basis for each person. In his words:

Essentially, among “Japanese,” what opposes “thou” is not the “self,” but rather, *what opposes “thou” is also a “thou” from the point of view of your “thou.”* . . . The child is not the “self” which has its ontological root in its “self,” but rather, the child *experiences* self as “thou” from the perspective of parents, who in turn are “thou” from the child’s point of view. (Mori, 1979: 63–64. My translation, original emphasis.)

The significance of the philosophical thoughts presented here lies in the importance of “thou” for the realization of “self” among Japanese. The speaker/author’s mo-

¹² See Maynard (1989) for the concept of “self-contextualization.”

tivation for the *da* and *desu/masu* verb morphology is in fact founded in the Japanese speaker's sensitivity toward "thou." It is only when the awareness of the other momentarily lapses that naked abrupt utterances are made. Likewise all other abrupt forms offer subordinate information not directly addressed to "thou" and consequently do not require the designing of utterances for the purpose of interpersonal appeal.

One may understand the relation between the self and the other and how this relationship influences the choice of verb morphology in the following framework. The more the speaker is aware of "thou" as a separate and potentially opposing entity, the more elaborate the markers for discourse modality become, one of which is the *desu/masu* ending. Thus we can identify the contextual circumstances where the level of "thou" awareness varies from lower to higher as follows:

1. Low Awareness Situation—the *da* style is more likely
 - a. when the speaker exclaims or suddenly recalls something,
 - b. when the speaker vividly expresses events scene-internally as if the speaker is right there,
 - c. when the speaker expresses internal thought self-reflexively, including almost self-addressed utterances and monologues,
 - d. when the speaker jointly creates utterances whose ownership is shared,
 - e. when the speaker presents information semantically subordinate in nature or backgrounded information, and
 - f. when the speaker is in an intimate relationship with "thou" where the speaker does not consider "thou" as opposed to self; expresses social familiarity and closeness.
2. High Awareness Situation—the *desu/masu* style is more likely:
 - a. when the speaker expresses thought which directly addresses the partner perceived as "thou" with expressions appropriate in terms of sociolinguistics variables—marker for social relationship; expresses formality, and
 - b. when the speaker communicates main information directly addressed to the listener, especially when the *desu/masu* ending appears in the *da* style discourse.

In short one chooses the *da* and *desu/masu* style as a result of the filtering process during which one recognizes the differing levels of the "thou" awareness as well as the distance between "thou" and "thy thou." The mixed style reflects the speaker's choice as to how the utterance is located in the low and high points within the scale mentioned above.

It should also be mentioned that there may be cases when the low and high awareness situation is yet to be defined among speech participants, specifically in cases 1f and 2a above. Under such circumstances the social situation is yet undefined by the participants, and one may choose a mixed style until the participants decide on the most appropriate verb-final forms, as stated by Haga as referred to earlier.

Toward the Pedagogy of Style

As mentioned at the outset of this paper, pedagogically the issues of abrupt and formal endings of the verb have been assumed to be resolved by appealing to the principle of stylistic consistency. We have seen, however, that the shift between *da* and *desu/masu* forms signals more than mere "stylistic" change. While the simplistic approach of insisting on stylistic consistency is appropriate for elementary level courses, directing students' attention to the style mixture as examined in this paper is beneficial in intermediate and advanced level courses for at least the following reasons.

First, students learn the different manipulations involved in sentence-final forms. By using authentic text where the stylistic mixture occurs (for example, our data set 9), instructors in advanced level courses may introduce into the pedagogy of verb-final forms the concept of discourse and its management. An understanding of the unit larger than the sentence and an appreciation of the discourse organization have always been pushed aside by language instructors. By paying closer attention to the discourse organizational principles such as topic structure and the effect of foregrounding/backgrounding manipulated by the stylistic mixture, students are given opportunities to appreciate the concept of discourse structure in a coherent context.

Second, an inquiry into the psychosocial motivations for the style manipulation based on the degree of awareness of "thou" will give students an insight into how the Japanese view self and other and the relationship between the two. I fear that too many language classes, and I include many advanced courses as well, are devoid of intellectually stimulating resources. Merely learning an increasing number of characters or adding to the students' repertoire of tactful ways of saying "no" to Japanese can hardly challenge the intellectual curiosity of many students. In other words, language instructors, especially at the college level, should not be satisfied with the mere training of skills. Whenever possible, they should provide opportunities for studying language as an object of analysis. Doing so encourages students to see language as a system reflecting the language speaker's cognitive processes as well as his or her social and cultural orientations.

In order to achieve these goals, instructors may choose various sources including supplementary readings and audio/video tapes and their transcripts which contain the relevant style mixture, and discussion may be encouraged among students as to the possible reasons for it. Depending on the level and interests of the students, further discussion may develop. For example the genre that the style mixture appears in a textbook (Japanese Language Promotion Center, 1980: 293) is the *zadankai* "discussion meeting" format. In fact the stylistic mixture in this speech genre is frequent; one can easily find *da* forms appearing among predominantly *desu/masu* forms. Thus, starting from the mere morphological issue of verb endings, one can proceed naturally to the issues of discourse and the discourse genres.

Another pedagogical strategy involves the application of the stylistic mixture of the main verb endings to the issue of verb morphology in subordinate clauses. Students learn that in subordinate clauses—for example, in cases of sentential modification (relative clauses)—normally the verbs take informal endings. The reason can be found

in the fact that subordinate clauses are not directly addressed to others and therefore fall under what I would call “low awareness” situations, even when the dominant style chosen remains formal. This rationale can unite verb morphology in a more coherent manner, providing an opportunity for students to review Japanese verb morphology in the social and cognitive context.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have explored the functions of style mixture in modern Japanese both in terms of interaction and discourse organization. Based on the findings, I have made pedagogical suggestions as to how to incorporate the information made available by this study. What has emerged in this process is the important relationship between these two activities. It is often the case that theoretical analysis of language—whether in formal linguistics or discourse analysis, pragmatics or sociolinguistics—and language pedagogy (or applied linguistics) are divided into two different activities. This artificial division, however, often diminishes the importance of integrating both. Language pedagogy cannot exist by itself. Pedagogical solutions must be based on an understanding of the subject of pedagogy. Thus pedagogy devoid of serious linguistic study is only mildly convincing to students even when it is accepted. Awareness of this fact is crucial, especially in college-level language education where students themselves are mature and have developed the habit of critical examination of the material presented. In other words, we must remind ourselves that we are as much students of the Japanese language as we are teachers. And it is in the synergy of theoretical exploration of language and its pedagogical application that we find a pathway toward the meaningful pedagogy of style.

In actually applying what has been proposed here, each instructor must remain versatile and flexible in his or her pedagogical approach. Teaching requires a day-to-day adjustment to the students' progress and capacity in terms of what materials they can absorb efficiently and, for instance, what particular examples are most suitable to help them understand relevant points. As difficult as it may be to find an opportune time to discuss style in our hectic and often chaotic language classrooms, I hope the suggestions made in this paper will be of some assistance to Japanese language instructors and students alike.

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