A Critique of Natural Discourse in Intermediate Level Textbooks for Learners of Japanese as a Second or Other Language

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Abstract

The number of learners of Japanese as a second or other language has increased rapidly worldwide over the past several decades. The objectives of their study have largely changed from pursuing purely academic research interests to acquiring the communicative skills needed for business or leisure purposes. There are five language competency skills needed to master foreign languages: reading, writing, listening, speaking and intercultural competence. Students, particularly those studying outside Japan, depend more on textbooks for learning how to speak than their peers in Japan; and speaking is studied formally through analysis of model discourses in selected textbooks. In particular, if the learner's first language is very different from Japanese, which in fact almost all other languages are, the complexity of the spoken language, including gender difference and respect forms, presents most learners with certain challenges that require adequate explanation to be comprehended.

Likewise, the larger the cultural gap between learner and target language, the greater are the challenges for acquiring intercultural competence, which is closely interrelated with the production of 'natural speech'. It is, therefore, crucial for learners from other cultures who have little opportunity to speak in Japanese to learn from a textbook of good quality which provides appropriate explanation of the social and cultural context of the model dialogues they employ as exemplars.

The present study aims to analyse and evaluate the appropriateness of model dialogues contained in intermediate level textbooks for learners of Japanese as a second or other language. The findings suggest that none of the selected textbooks included satisfactory

explanation about the model discourses, so there seems to be much room for improvement in this regard. It is anticipated that the results of this study will contribute to the design concept of foreign language textbooks in future.

Part I: Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

For almost all foreign language learners, the aim of learning another language is to acquire knowledge about the target language, to be able to communicate with people, to read literature, and to understand the culture of the target language. One of the basic aims of foreign language teaching and learning is to increase empathy for other cultures, because language lies at the root of culture and society. There is no question that the successful integration of culture with language teaching and learning can contribute to humanistic awareness, which needs sociolinguistic knowledge of the target culture. Hence, language ability and cultural sensitivity play a major role in developing the communication skills of learners.

Japanese is spoken by some 127 million people, most of whom live in Japan, and around another three million people study Japanese as a second or other language (JSOL).[1] Those who want to continue Japanese language study after completing a basic course can expect that in intermediate level study they will be trained to be capable of broadly comprehending sentences and discourses of a fairly high level (Noda 1986: 60). It is assumed they will be able to choose an appropriate phrase from a variety of options according to the setting. In other words, they are required to exercise their ability to create expressions in accordance with various circumstances, such as the age, gender,

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[1] The Japan Foundation website, http://www.jpf.go.jp/j/japanese/survey/result/dl/2006-1.pdf (Accessed on 10 August, 2008).

social rank, occupation of the other party, topic, place (school, office etc.), situation (class, meeting, etc.), setting (public or private), and so forth.

For JSOL learners, recognising the cultural differences between Japanese and their own cultures is important. Maynard states that one must pay attention to the way cultural relativity is likely to influence the ways language is used for communication. Language usage is revealed in socially defined interactions, and linguistic relativity must be interpreted not only in cognitive but also in social terms (Maynard 1997: 3). In particular, the Japanese language is famous for its complex honorific expressions,[2] and for its circumlocution in communication, because Japanese people think that an indirect way of speech creates an impression of greater politeness towards the interlocutor. The concept of honorifics stems from politeness, and they are employed in order to establish or maintain an appropriate distance between the speaker and the interlocutor (Mizutani 2008: 19). JSOL learners who come from other cultural backgrounds tend to find it difficult to comprehend some aspects of Japanese culture. It is also often perceived that what is taken as a matter of course in one culture is not taken similarly in another culture. Clarifying and understanding the differences between learners' own cultures and the culture of the target language form an important part of the language learning process for foreign learners.

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[2] Research about images of the Japanese language was conducted in 1997 and 1998 by the National Language Research Institute (Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenky•jo) with around 1,000 people in each of 28 countries/regions. According to this, Japanese was perceived as a very difficult language in general. Eighty per cent of Europeans, 73 per cent of Australians, and 67 per cent of Americans marked it as difficult. So did 36 per cent of Chinese, 32 per cent of Koreans, and 30 per cent of Taiwanese. The percentages for East Asians are much lower than the rest (Mizutani et al. 2005: 485-486).

Unlike beginners, who have a very superficial knowledge of Japanese, intermediate level learners are in need of not only a variety of expressions but also of the skill to command the right expression on the right occasion. For example, when one wants the salt at the dinner table, the selection of appropriate expressions is in accordance with competency in the language and understanding of the setting. The following phrases translated from Japanese may convey different contexts to readers, such as: "Salt!" or "Please would you pass me the salt". When asking for salt, an explanation of why it is needed is most unlikely. By contrast, when asking permission to borrow a friend's car, the phrasing of the request might be as follows: "Can I borrow your car?" or "Would you mind lending me your car, please?" Furthermore, the reason for borrowing the car would probably be added before making the request. Beginners try to utter requests based on their own linguistic competence and cultural standards, but the more advanced the learners' level is, the more they should be able to apply the cultural rules of the target language in order to minimise their "foreigness".

Sugito points out the difficulty of applying a foreign language in real life. He demonstrates this as follows: a JSOL learner who had finished the beginners course was asked his name at a restaurant when making a reservation in this way, "*o-namae o ukagatte mo yoroshii desu ka* (May I ask your name?)", and he responded with, "*Hai, ii desu* (Yes, you may)". As with the English equivalent, this reply is grammatically correct, but it is an inappropriate answer from a sociolinguistic point of view (Sugito 2007: 19). Japanese expressions such as that by the receptionist in the above case are often used in the service industry nowadays. If a learner studies outside Japan and the main source of his/her study is a teacher and written materials, the learner's speech act may be understandable, but it may miss the point.

Textbooks typically model various expressions in order that learners may learn not to seem impolite in Japanese society. However, JSOL learners might fail to employ an appropriate expression unless they understand the relevant sociolinguistic and sociocultural rules. The question is how deeply textbooks depict and explain the cultural background of the expressions produced. It has become apparent that the model discourses presented in recent textbooks are for the most part very natural compared with those of the past. The latter were created in order to practise and memorise grammatically correct sentence patterns, which were often unnatural and unusable in real life. These drawbacks seem to be no longer problematic in textbooks published from the 1980s onwards. However, no matter how natural and practical the model discourses presented are, explanations about the fundamental principles of the culture of the target language are equally important for learners. For them, textbooks are materials for supporting self-study. Good textbooks reflect topics and settings containing the cultural atmosphere of the target language in the model discourses, with sentence patterns being presented as an explanation (Yamauchi 2005: 160-161).

This research sets out to examine whether intermediate JSOL textbooks currently available clearly explain the cultural background of various expressions in their model discourses. When generating speech, speakers (learners) have to pay attention to social rules which are sometimes only tacitly alluded to in textbooks. They must be taught these by teachers and/or teaching materials. This is a key to success in becoming a good learner and speaker. In particular, JSOL learners who study outside Japan greatly depend on textbooks which explain social norms, since it is rarely possible to set up a contact situation in a class which is overseas. This study is based on the premise that it is only model dialogues with appropriate explanations and teacher's instructions that help

learners to acquire intercultural communicative competency. If informative explanations of model discourses are omitted, many educational benefits are lost.

1. 2. Hypothesis

This thesis will analyse the contents of Japanese language intermediate level textbooks designed to teach conversational skills to learners of Japanese as a second or other language (JSOL). Textbooks contain model discourses constructed especially for the purpose of language teaching and learning, and normally the expressions used are devised using a native speaker's intuition for natural speech.

A model discourse in a textbook, which is perceived as natural, implies that it should be a likely story owing to plausible flow of the context, and which complies with the social norms. It is these social norms that influence the speech level in the contact setting. Thus, when JSOL learners study spoken Japanese, they are required not only to acquire sentence patterns and items of vocabulary, but also to comprehend when to use them from the sociolinguistic viewpoint. In particular, it is necessary for those who study Japanese outside Japan to be taught them explicitly. This is because the cultural background of almost all JSOL learners is different from that of the Japanese. Moreover, if the social norms are not appropriately explained and understood, JSOL learners may be able to speak Japanese to convey their intention but this might not mean they are competent speakers of Japanese.

This thesis hypothesises that important features of the sociolinguistic background to the Japanese discourses in the selected textbooks are explained to learners only superficially and cursorily so that valuable pedagogical opportunities are missed.

1. 3. Aims

The aim of this thesis is to test this hypothesis by examining the extent to which selected Japanese textbooks for adult learners explicitly explain techniques and concepts necessary for the development of natural Japanese discourse. This includes examination of: (1) whether sociolinguistic competency as a vital part of Japanese language education is adequately addressed in the texts of discourses and accompanying explanations, and (2) whether explanations of the principles underlying utterances used in model discourses are included.

Studying a foreign language means not only understanding the new vocabulary, grammar, and phrases of the target language but also comprehending its cultural context. Adult JSOL learners are typically communicatively competent in their own language(s), which have normally been acquired within a given cultural background since childhood. However, they may not necessarily make full use of the structural knowledge of Japanese no matter how good the command of their first language is, because the norms of their culture are likely to be different from those of the target language. In the absence of overt instruction in the sociolinguistic context of the new target language, the JSOL learners may unconsciously yet inappropriately apply the norms of their background sociolinguistic culture. For instance, Japanese native speakers in general are concerned about the feelings of the interlocutor and they feel reassured when the other party gives frequent back-channelling and/or nodding, since these are signs of agreement or acknowledgement of the conversation.[3] This may differ from other cultures which might place greater emphasis on expressing the speaker's point of argument. To know and to

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[3] Back-channelling is an interlocutor's utterance of a short word(s) in response to the speaker's utterances, such as "oh" or "right" in the case of English.

understand the other's linguistic cultural context are arguably indispensable objectives of studying the target language.

Textbooks play a key role in most formal (class-room based) language teaching and learning environments. For learning Japanese as a second or foreign language, textbooks are available at the beginners level which cover the minimum skills and basic knowledge of the Japanese language, but not as many intermediate level textbooks have been published. Learners at the beginners level, therefore, have more opportunities to choose a textbook appropriate to their needs with broader options than for those at the intermediate level.[4] In other words, the need for an appropriate textbook in order to meet the requirements of intermediate level learners is more important, since the level of their study has become more complex and difficult and their purposes more diverse. Regardless of whether the learner is a beginner or at intermediate level in most cases textbooks would be presecribed by teachers or institutions.

Until the middle of the 1980s, memorising sentence patterns was the mainstream of speaking practice. This method focused very much on grammatically correct sentence patterns, but the product was usually not natural conversation. Then another approach

[4] Table 1: The Numbers and Ratio of Textbooks of Different Levels on the Market in 1983 and in 1992

Level	1983	1992
Beginners	75 (55%)	110 (53%)
Intermediate	44 (31%)	66 (32%)
Advanced	19 (14%)	34 (15%)
Total	138 textbooks	210 textbooks

Source: *Ky•kasho kaidai (Bibliography of Textbooks)* published by the Japan Foundation in 1983 and *Nihongo ky•kasho (Japanese Language Textbooks)* published by Nihongo ky•iku gakkai in 1992. (Several books contain more than one level, which are counted into each level. For instance, if a textbook contains intermediate level and advanced level material, the book is counted into two levels respectively.)

appeared which emphasised natural and smooth communication, taking sociolinguistic elements into consideration together with conventional learning of grammar or vocabulary. As a result, exemplary dialogues became very important in textbooks.

In any given model dialogue in an intermediate Japanese language textbook, we can assume that the individual utterances are almost invariably correct Japanese expressions in terms of grammar and vocabulary. Authors of textbooks select the words and phrases, and they determine how plausibly each utterance is exemplified in a model conversation according to the setting within the given textbook. The issue in the present study is the inclusion of an explanatory description about such utterances. These are premised upon the Japanese sociocultural background, which native speakers understand intuitively (so-called "native speaker intuition"), but which foreign learners may not. The explanation of appropriateness of a given phrase or word in a given context is crucial for learners in order to recognise it and apply it to other similar settings. For example, when asking permission in Japanese, it is considered better to explain the reason first, then to ask permission, rather than the other way around. This is because the former pattern is customarily regarded as more polite and appropriate when asking permission of others, especially in the case of requests to one's seniors. Hence, this study will examine, analyse, and evaluate the textual explanations about the speakers' utterances in Japanese language textbooks.

The criterion for analysis in the present study is the degree of clarification of the social environment of the dialogues. For instance, the utterances of a student who asks a teacher's advice need to be polite, for which he/she has to use certain polite forms of speech in Japanese. Also, their speech must be hesitant, because of a more widely

perceived distance in the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor. In addition to this, the sequence of utterances as well as the particular characteristics of Japanese dialogues, such as unfinished sentences and back-channelling, are also points to be considered, since they make an utterance sound more natural and instinctive. As a consequence, the dialogues selected for this study and their explanations in the selected textbooks will be examined as to how clearly the authors describe and explain the rationale of the context in any given discourse.

1. 4. Methodology

The research was conducted in the following manner. First, a range of textbooks for adult learners at intermediate level was surveyed in conjunction with consideration of the definition of 'intermediate'. Then, among the various language functions presented in the selected intermediate level textbooks, key functions which learners are expected to acquire were identified and chosen for this research as case studies. These are 'to request', 'to complain', and 'to apologise', since they are included in almost all the textbooks in various settings, and demand a challenging degree of sociolinguistic competency beyond beginners level in order to be conducted appropriately in Japanese. By means of a preliminary survey of available textbooks, these three functions were deemed to exemplify the range of approaches adopted by textbook authors with regard to contextural explication. Obviously, there are other functions, such as 'to order/instruct', 'to praise' and 'to allow'; however, these typically seem to present fewer sociolinguistic pitfalls, or they are less commonly encountered than the aforementioned functions. While they are not unimportant, the scope of this research was limited to the three key functions identified above.

1.5. Definition of textbooks for teaching Japanese as a second or other language

There are various kinds of teaching materials in use, such as textbooks, supplementary workbooks and drills, flash cards, realia, audio and visual tools, and so forth. Of these, textbooks tend to be the central classroom material that determines and structures instructional scope and sequence, and generates the goals and objectives of language acquisition at all levels. Textbooks typically control the content and context of instruction and the pedagogical role of the teacher. Rivers affirms that textbooks determine the major part of classroom teaching, because decisions have already been made about what students will learn, how they will learn it, and what sections of the work will receive the most emphasis (Rivers 1968: 368).

Nihongo ky•iku jiten (*Dictionary of Japanese Language Education*) describes textbooks as the predominant tool along with the teachers to bring about learning, as well as to teach a class effectively. It also defines a textbook as printed material that gathers together pedagogical and educational contents which are designed and edited based on curricula. The teaching items and syllabi are arranged in a specific order. The textbook represents the goals of learning so that it can be a guide for learners to prepare for coming lessons and to review previous lessons. Furthermore, since a learner is usually able to gain a sense of achievement when a textbook has been completed, it plays a key role in pedagogical instruction and learning activities (Mizutani et al. 2005: 895, 899).

Kawarazaki offers his own definition of textbooks from the viewpoint of class activity. He classifies textbooks, especially for beginners of Japanese language study, into the following two types: either sentence pattern-focused, or speech pattern-focused

presenting day-to-day situations, albeit limited, that the student will be likely to encounter. He defines the textbook as a teaching material which presents educational values and content in a sequence of language expressions. In a textbook, these are arranged according to the quantity of material and a particular sequence in order to attain the desired outcome. The purpose of the textbook is to construct a relationship between learners, teachers and the target language (Kawarazaki 1986: 13-4, 1992: 7).

Quackenbush claims that teaching materials are indispensible for effective second or other language teaching. They explicitly explain the structure and characteristics of teaching items of a target language (Quackenbush 1992: 23). Authors of textbooks have to determine the contents in anticipation of learners' needs and levels. Therefore, arguably, no matter how good a textbook is, there will inevitably be a gap between the real demands of learners and the contents of the textbook (Okuda 1992: 45-6). Okazaki is concerned about the diversity of learners' characteristics. His point of discussion is that firstly a part of the text of teaching materials should take local factors and views (not only Japanese) into consideration. Secondly, they should comply with the local educational system, and suit local styles and activities (Okazaki 1992: 41). Okuda argues that the textbook, in principle, should be focused on a specific group of learners. It should be a feature of a textbook that it combines universality (e.g. orthography and grammatical structures) with specificity (e.g. dialogues in a specific setting).

1.6. Definition of intermediate level

The Japanese language teaching and learning environment has been changing since the 1980s with the learners' characteristics and objectives becoming more diverse and the

number of learners reaching almost three million worldwide.[5] One problem for the present research is that it seems that no clear standards have yet been established in the JSOL pedagogy to define 'levels' of proficiency. Learners are widely graded on the basis of their proficiency in four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The grades are typically called from the basic level upwards, "beginners", "intermediate", and "advanced".

However, the definition of each level is ambiguous, since no universal or generally recognised specification for determining each level has been explicitly prescribed. This is so, despite the fact that placement tests are frequently conducted by teachers before starting a course in order to group the students who share the same level of proficiency– unless they are going to begin with the "*a, i, u, e, o*" of the Japanese language.[6] From the viewpoint of teachers who are in charge of intermediate and/or advanced level students, there may be a difference in the competency of students whose learning experiences may vary considerably (Kitazawa 1998: 28); even so, criteria to classify students' ability depend greatly on individual teachers or institutions. While there are no standardised criteria for what is meant by "beginners", "intermediate" or "advanced", authors of various textbooks have devised their own definitions, which will be outlined below with reference to "intermediate" level Japanese.

Nihongo Ky•iku Jiten (*Dictionary of Japanese Language Education*) categorises JSOL learners' level into the commonly used categories of: "beginners", "intermediate", and "advanced". Each level is further subdivided into two: "beginners" subdivisions are

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[5] The figures were collected by the Japan Foundation in 2006, and cited in an article "Japanese Language", *The Japan Times* September 3, 2007, p. 8.

[6] This is equivalent to starting with the "A,B,C" of English.

"introductory" and "beginners"; those of "intermediate" are "first half" and "second (or latter) half"; and those of "advanced" are "advanced" and "super (or specific)". The criteria of the division depend on the level of the learners' language competency along with the target goals of the individual level. The length of accumulated hours of formal study is also a benchmark for determining a learner's level. According to this dictionary, the intermediate level is defined as that which learners will have reached by the end of a given course which covers a fairly high level of grammatical structures and phrases, 1,000 *kanji* and 6,000 items of vocabulary. In addition, they will have acquired capabilities in comprehension and the ability to generate a body of coherent sentences to compose a discourse to fit the specific criteria (Mizutani et al. 2005: 757).

The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), which is the most comprehensive and large scale Japanese language examination for non-native speakers, currently divides its test into four levels. These are: Level 1, advanced; Level 2, intermediate; Level 3, second half of beginners'; and Level 4, first half of beginners'.[7] A successful applicant at Level 1 is expected to have a very good command of the Japanese language; for Level 2 the learner is capable of communicating about general matters with a relatively high level knowledge of grammar and vocabulary; for Level 3 the learner is able to use a basic level

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[7] The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) examines the level of applicants' reading (vocabulary, grammar, structure) and listening skills. It has been administered by the Japan Foundation since 1984. In 2007, 520,000 people took the test in 51 countries/territories.

Table 2: Guideline of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test by Level

Level of JLPT	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Number of *Kanji*	2, 000 *kanji*	1, 000 *kanji*	300 *kanji*	100 *kanji*
Items of Vocabulary	10,000 words	6,000 words	1,500 words	800 words
Hours of Study	900 hrs	600 hrs	300 hrs	150 hrs

of grammar including vocabulary for daily conversation; and for Level 4 the learner is

expected to be capable of generating simple and basic sentences.[8]

Several different Japanese language textbooks variously delineate learners who start

lessons at an intermediate level as follows:

- "Intermediate level learners face a shortage of vocabulary, and they need a good command of top-down and bottom-up reading skills which should be taught in class";[9]

- "A 1,500-word text should be read in ten minutes in rapid reading";[10]

- "Learners do not have confidence in speaking and grammar even though they have completed beginners level";[11]

- "Although learners must have completed 150 to 300 hours of study, they still rely on *furigana* (phonetic script for *kanji* to indicate the pronunciation)";[12]

- "It is assumed that learners have a fairly good mastery of a basic vocabulary of about 2,500 words and a total of 466 *kanji* characters".[13]

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[8] Website of the Japan Foundation. http://www.jlpt.jp/j/about/content.html (accessed on 13 September, 2008). From 2010, the classification of current JLPT will be revised from four levels to five levels. The new levels will be called N1 the most difficult, to N5 the least difficult. Website of the Japan Foundation. http://www.jlpt.jp/j/about/content.html (accessed on 17 June, 2009).

[9] *Ch•, j•ky• Nihongo dokkai ky•zai, Asahi shinbun de Nihon o yomu* (1990) (pp. i-ii). The top down approach is one of the reading methods; grasping an entire picture of the article at first, then going down to a sentence level, and a word level. The bottom up approach is the other reading method; understanding a word level meaning, then going up to a sentence level, and an entire picture level.

[10] *Ch•ky• kara manabu Nihongo* (1991) (pp. iii-iv). This textbook was designed for practising rapid reading.

[11] *Gendai Nihongo k•su ch•ky• 1* (1988) (p.ii).

[12] *S•g• Nihongo ch•ky• Intermediate Japanese* (1987) (p.7).

[13] *Intermediate Japanese, Ch•ky• Nihongo, vol. 1* (1974) (p.3).

Two other textbooks conform to the definition of the intermediate level (Level 2) of the JLPT, which suggests that the students will be capable of passing Level 2 of the JLPT when they have completed the intermediate lessons.[14]

A different definition of intermediate level from that in the textbooks can also be found in academic studies in this field: for instance, Kitaj•'s definition is 600 hours of study, 600–1,000 *kanji*, and 6,000 words of vocabulary.[15] She indicates that learners at the intermediate level, who have finished the beginners level with 300 hours of study, and who have mastered 300 to 400 *kanji* and 2,000 words, need to obtain skills in using sentence ending expressions which reveal a speaker's intention together with the complex and mixed feelings of the speaker.[16] In addition to this, complex sentences, too, are to be studied (Kitaj• 1988: 238-241).[17] There is another view proposed by Nishiguchi, whereby intermediate learners are those who can understand a text by referring to a dictionary; and in a conversation, they can respond to a question passively — however, it is too challenging for them to generate an interrogative sentence actively. Their use of

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[14] These are *Nihon o shiru* (1992) (pp.iii-iv) and *Ch•, j•ky• Nihongo ky•kasho, Nihon e no sh•tai* (2002) (p.ii).

[15] Kitaj•'s definition of advanced level is to use 1,800 to 2,000 *kanji* and 20,000 items of vocabulary, and being able to employ idiomatic phrases.

[16] For example, "-*ni suginai* (only/merely)", "-*noda* (an ending remark containing a speaker's assertive intention)", "*to no koto da* ([I heard…by someone/thing] that)", "-*koto ni natte iru* (been decided to/ has come about that…)".

[17] For example, "-*ni kanshite wa* (regarding)", "-*to shite wa* (as for)", "-*ni iwase reba* (if asked someone to say)", "*V shita tokoro* (upon V)".

basic phatic and formulaic expressions, such as courteous greetings and expressions of gratitude, is satisfactory (Nishiguchi 1990: 71-72).[18]

In the case of the United States, Kamada refers to the proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) concerning the definition of level-wise function, content/context, and accuracy of grammar and pronunciation (Kamada 1990: 47-49). The Council prescribes four levels: superior (further divided into two-sublevels), advanced (two sub-levels), intermediate (three sub-levels), and novice (three sub-levels). In total, therefore, there are four levels which include ten sub-levels. According to the ACTFL, learners at the intermediate level are expected to generate sentences creatively, combining various elements that they have been taught in novice classes, and to be able to form interrogative sentences and to communicate in short conversations. They can execute certain communicative functions, such as 'to request something from someone', albeit perhaps in a basic form. Some idiomatic expressions and conversational skills which are indispensable for daily living should be mastered, yet communication regarding abstract concepts is too difficult to manage at this level.

Overall, therefore, there is consensus only that the "intermediate" level lies between "beginners" and "advanced", and that the end of the beginners level and the beginning of

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[18] The following case of multiple sentences is to be understood by intermediate learners according to the definition of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL): (*Gogatsu itsuka no asa j•ji han no shinkansen de eki ni tsukimasu. Tokyo wa hajimete desu kara, yoku wakarimasen. Sumimasen ga, mukae ni kite kudasai. H•mu de matte imasu.* I will arrive at the station by *shinkansen* at 10:30 a.m. on 5th of May. Since this is my first trip to Tokyo, I do not really know it. Sorry, but please come to pick me up. I will wait [for you] on the platform.•

the advanced level demarcate the boundaries of the intermediate level. Nonetheless, these are not clearly delineated. In general, when a new student registers for an intermediate level course in any language institution, he/she is required to have already spent around 150 to 400 hours in lessons, and have gained knowledge of 1,500 to 2,500 words. After completing an intermediate course, a learner should be capable of dealing with 1,000 *kanji* characters and 6,000 words. This will take approximately 600 hours of study, according to the specifications of Level 2 of the JLPT.[19] As a consequence, in the present research the intermediate level is implied when either a textbook is entitled 'intermediate' or stipulates that it was designed for students who have completed approximately 300 hours of Japanese study.

1.7. Selection of textbooks

The textbooks to be analysed for this research were chosen based on popularity and availability "which is likely to be a major factor determining textbook choice on the part of teachers" (Kawase 2001: 48-49).[20] The following nine intermediate level textbooks were selected for analysis. These are:

- Association for Japanese-Language Teaching (AJALT). (1990). *Japanese for Busy People III*. Tokyo: K•dansha International.

- Inter-university Center for Japanese Language Studies. (1991). *Formal Expressions for Japanese Interaction.* Tokyo: The Japan Times.

- The Japan Foundation. (1990). *Nihongo ch•ky• 1 (Intermediate Level Japanese Language 1)*. Tokyo: Bonjinsha.

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[19] Level 2 is the second most difficult rank in the JLPT, after Level 1.

[20] The publishers of textbooks for JSOL learners are very limited. Information about well-accepted textbooks was provided by these publishers, as well as by the Japan Foundation Library.

- Kaigai Gijutsusha Kensh• Ky•kai (Japan). (2000). *Shin Nihongo no ch•ky•* (*New Japanese Language, Intermediate Level*) Tokyo: Sur•• Nettow•ku.

- Kaneko, H. (2006). *Nihongo keigo tor•ningu* (*Training in Japanese Honorific Language*). Tokyo: Asuku.

- Nagoya Daigaku. S•g• Gengo Sent•. Nihongo Gakka. (1988). *Gendai Nihongo k•su ch•ky• Vol 3* (*Modern Japanese Language Intermediate Course, Vol. 3*). Nagoya: Nagoya University Press.

- Nagoya Daigaku. S•g• Gengo Sent•. Nihongo Gakka. (1990). *Gendai Nihongo k•su ch•ky• Vol 4* (*Modern Japanese Language Intermediate Course, Vol. 4*). Nagoya: Nagoya University Press.

- Tsukuba Rang•ji Gur•pu. (1994). *Situational Functional Japanese*, *Vol. 2*. Tokyo: Bonjinsha.

- Tsukuba Rang•ji Gur•pu. (1994). *Situational Functional Japanese*, *Vol. 3*. Tokyo: Bonjinsha.

The level of difficulty of some of these textbooks seems to be closer to beginners level, whereas others are nearer to advanced level. This is because several are two- or three-volume works. Furthermore, there is as yet no agreed definition of the term 'intermediate'. However, the analysis of this research will not be greatly affected by these factors as the focus of the research is not the level itself but the degree of detail and adequacy of the explanation of the social environment of the utterances presented in the textbook.

1.8. Rationale for selection of the textbooks to be analysed

The characteristics of textbooks aimed primarily at spoken language and those primarily for reading purposes differ considerably, especially in terms of their design concept. The former typically present purpose-built dialogues created for the textbook by the authors. These might be transcribed conversations of native speakers, or native speakers and learners, yet it can be said that they have been devised by the authors. Textbooks for

reading contain texts from a variety of sources, and may be categorised into three different kinds: (1) authentic articles from newspapers or books, (2) essays or stories written only for the purpose of the textbook, and (3) articles or literary works edited by the textbook authors as appropriate to the learners' level. The editors of *Ch•ky• Nihongo* (*Intermediate Japanese*) surmise that, in general, around thirty per cent of all texts for reading at the intermediate level comprise 'original' texts which correspond to the above category (2), and seventy per cent are texts using authentic articles from newspapers or magazines, as well as any works having been modified by the textbook authors, which correspond to the above categories (1) and (3).[21]

From studying several intermediate level textbooks for reading, it has become apparent that the approach to the teaching and learning of reading Japanese differs according to the individual characteristics of the texts used. For example, when reading newspaper articles, skimming skills are expected to be employed by readers in order to grasp the essential facts quickly and efficiently. When answering questions about a text, scanning skills are most effective for finding the appropriate sentences or words in order to complete the answers.

By contrast, essays and stories generally seem to be designed to encourage an intensive reading with careful attention to grammatical structures of the sentences and the meaning and pronunciation of newly introduced vocabulary. Furthermore, the themes of the texts

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[21] *Ch•ky• Nihongo* describes the ratio of 'original' texts in the prologue entitled "*Kono tekisuto de jugy• o suru sensei gata e* (*To the teachers who will use this textbook in class*)". This section is unpaginated. *Ch•ky• Nihongo* is published by Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku (The University of Tokyo Foreign Studies) in 1994.

vary greatly depending on the textbook, from literary texts related to Japan such as history, society, and traditional arts, to those with no specific relationship to Japan such as scientific essays concerning, for instance, the function of a human hand or the optometry of monkeys.[22] As with the diversified nature of the contents of the textbooks, the supporting peripheral functions of the main texts, too, differ distinctively from one another. Most of the textbooks provide one or several appended supports such as *furigana*, English translation of sentences and words, vocabulary lists, grammatical explanations, or questions pertaining to the text.

In general, there is little commonality among the textbooks for reading at the intermediate level. For instance, the contents cover diverse topics as mentioned above. Newspaper articles and literary works presented in the textbooks are either authentic or modified to be appropriate for the intermediate level, yet the criteria of the term "intermediate" are not clearly defined. Hence, each individual textbook seems to apply its own standard regarding the level of difficulty. Therefore, the appropriate teaching approach (including supporting functions and supplementary materials relating to the main text) differs considerably between textbooks. It can be said therefore that there is no common standard for the textbooks for reading at this level, despite their common usage of the term "intermediate level". Hence, textbooks for reading are excluded from the present study, and textbooks for the spoken language are the objective in this research.

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[22] The function of a human hand (*te no kin•*) is presented in *Ch•ky• Nihongo* on pp. 65-68. The optometry of monkeys (*saru no shiryoku kensa*) is presented in *Nihongo ch•ky• J301* on p.150.

1.9. Discourses selected to be analysed

For the purpose of the present study, 140 discourses presented in nine textbooks aimed at teaching the spoken language were reviewed. These discourses are classified by function, such as 'to request' and so forth. These key functions which are used in everyday life are covered in almost all textbooks. The most extensive discourse contains 32 "turns", while the shortest offers only two turns.[23] Primarily, the conversations present a combination of native utterances by speaker(s) and non-native speaker(s), so that learners can learn from typical examples in prescribed settings.

The need to introduce explicit and clear examples in textbooks is understandable. However, because the Japanese language is more tightly linked to a high context culture, compared to, say, English and French, which share a comparatively low context culture, the unspoken context is sometimes more relevant than the dialogues themselves.[24] Also, from a sociolinguistic viewpoint, the importance of interpersonal relations such as the hierarchy of the speaker and interlocutor, politeness to others, and the level of politeness as a norm of the society or preventing loss of one's own and another's face, must all be taken into consideration when speaking Japanese. These are the aspects that Japanese language learners tend to find most difficult to understand, and consequently they need time and instruction in order to acquire them. Without the understanding and acquisition

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[23] A turn means one unit of a speaker's utterance(s). When another person starts speaking after the present speaker, it is regarded as another turn because the speaker is different. The smallest unit of a turn is composed of one word, including an interjection such as "*eh*" or "*uh*".

[24] Low context culture means that the utterance does not imply anything other than as it is spoken. In a high context culture, on the other hand, even though the utterance is spoken, it also includes other unspoken implications (Mizutani et al. 2005: 327).

of these sociolinguistic behavioural patterns, no matter how grammatically correct their utterances are, their foreignness will still stand out.

In textbooks of Japanese for JSOL learners at an intermediate level, the explanations of social norms should be delineated as the *reasons* behind the utterances in the dialogues. The dialogues in various settings presented in the textbooks should be natural so that nothing is inappropriate in the given context. Nevertheless, if a learner faces a new setting in real life, such as an interlocutor being of a high social status, i.e., not a colleague, as presented in a textbook, there may be cases where a given textbook example is not appropriate to this new setting. In such a case other appropriate utterances to suit the new setting should be provided along with an explanation of the setting in which they are best used. Since it is impracticable to introduce all possible types of dialogues for every setting in the textbooks, it is most essential for learners that the rationale of the dialogues be explained in order for them to apply it in other settings. In other words, it is not adequate for the textbooks to present only appropriate dialogues for a certain given condition. Ideally, the social situations and limitations of those utterances should also be explicitly spelled out, so the learner knows when it is appropriate and when it is not appropriate to employ these model phrases.

Textbook model dialogues can be analysed from the sociolinguistic perspective, which is relevant because a conversation is an interaction of people in a contact setting. As the textbooks are designed for intermediate level learners, students will be expected (both in classroom and in 'real life' interactions with native speakers) to perform more natural conversations than when they were at the beginners level. For learners to be able to articulate naturally on any occasion, they need to be provided with clarification of the

appropriateness of the utterances they are using. The present research will examine the textbooks to discover whether or not they provide learners with adequate and suitable explanations for a certain setting from a sociolinguistic perspective. The reason why explanation of the sociolinguistic context is so important for JSOL learners is outlined in the following section.

Part II: Review of Literature

Chapter 2: JSOL learners and their challenges

2.1. JSOL learners

The Japanese language is the national language of Japan.[25] The number of Japanese language speakers is almost the same as the present Japanese population: 127 million as mentioned previously, so that this number makes the Japanese language the ninth most spoken language in the world.[26] The distribution of Japanese language speakers and Japanese culture developed virtually coterminous with the area of the Japanese archipelago, unlike other major languages such as Chinese, Spanish, and English, which are used not only in the territories where these languages originated, but are widely spoken in other regions and countries of the world as well.

The beginning of Japanese language education for foreigners is generally regarded as being in the middle of the sixteenth century when Catholic missionaries from the Iberian Peninsula started to learn Japanese. In the nineteenth century, thanks to vigorous work by the German doctor and naturalist Philipp Franz von Siebold, European universities took

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[25] The Ainu language has been spoken by the indigenous people, who mainly live in Hokkaido. Their population is estimated to be around 25,000 in the early 21st century, of whom only 15 people are estimated to speak the Aini language. http://www.search.eb.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/eb/article-9005192 (Accessed on 1 March, 2009).

[26] The order of most spoken first languages is; Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, English, Arabic, Portuguese, Bengali, Russian, Japanese, German, http://www.lexiophiles.com/most-spoken-languages (Accessed on 10 August, 2008).

the first steps in researching Japan and the Japanese language.[27] Around the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868), studies relating to Japan were mainly led by non-Japanese, while the Japanese were busy learning and acquiring Western languages and cultures. After the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, as Japanese military power expanded outside its own shores, Japanese language education too expanded, to areas such as Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, South East Asia, and to some Pacific Islands, using teaching materials that had been developed in Japan. Some of them, such as *Nihongo hy•gen bunten* (*Dictionary of Japanese Expressions*) published in 1944, continued to be used in the post-war Japanese language educational environment (Mizutani et al. 2005: 531).

Apart from those in East and Southeast Asia who learned Japanese during the Second World War owing to Japan's colonial occupation, Japanese language learners in the West were mostly at higher educational institutions where they studied Japanese language, literature, culture, or history academically. Needless to say, the number of learners was very small. Reischauer recalls that in the 1930s there were only a small number of universities in the United States (Columbia, Harvard, and the University of California at Berkeley) where study of East Asia was possible. "The field of East Asian studies had become a little more accepted, but it continued to be regarded as a peripheral and exotic adjunct to the universality of the title 'university'" (Reischauer 1986:38, 70).[28] This situation lasted until the 1970s.

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[27] Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) was born in Würzburg, Bayern, in the Holy Roman Empire. He came to Nagasaki as a doctor, and lived there during the national seclusion period, 1823-28 and 1859-62. He studied the history, language, geography, botany of Japan.

[28] Edwin O. Reischauer (1910-90) was a distinguished scholar of Japanese and Chinese history and an American ambassador to Japan (1961-66) assigned by the Kennedy Administration.

Sometime towards the end of the 1970s, owing to the exponential growth of the Japanese economy, a wider diversity in learners' characteristics became more evident. Besides academic figures who focused on their scholarly disciplines, new learners of the Japanese language emerged, such as those who were in the trade, medical, and engineering fields, were of Japanese descent in South America, or were pupils at primary and secondary schools in the Asia Pacific region.

According to the Japan Foundation, the number of Japanese language learners was quite small in the early stages, and the increase was moderate. In 1979, the number of learners overseas was about 124,000. Just over a decade later in 1990, the number had reached almost one million. By the end of 2007, it rose as high as three million, representing a threefold increase in two decades.[29] This rapid increase in the number and diversity of learners had never before been experienced in the educational domain of Japanese as a second or other language.

2.2. Historic development of teaching Japanese

The Grammar-Translation method played a central role in foreign language education for many centuries in Europe. Latin was a language that was translated into other European languages long after it was no longer spoken, yet it was common in academia as a tool with which to study literature.[30] This is because it has been preserved almost exclusively in text form as literature, poetry, polemic texts, and European religious culture. The learning method was to understand the grammar and then to translate the text into other

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[29] The figures were reported by the Japan Foundation in 2006, which was cited in an article in *The Japan Times* on 3rd September, 2007.

[30] The Vatican City is the only exception, and Latin is still spoken there now.

languages. This method contributed to recognition of the differences in grammar between Latin and the learners' native language.

In Japan also, owing to the geographical distance between Japan and Europe and Japan's isolationism, the Grammar-Translation method of translating written materials word by word was virtually the only way for Japanese to learn foreign languages. This method was used by such well-known Japanese figures as Sugita Genpaku (1733-1817) who translated a Dutch science book (Sugimoto 1985: 99, Sugimoto et al. 1997: 220-224).[31] Izawa Sh•ji (1851-1917) also applied this method in order to teach the Japanese language as a second language in the 1890s in Taipei.[32] These were regarded as the first Japanese language classes that were opened and led by native Japanese people using the Grammar-Translation method (Mizutani et al. 2005: 531).

Using this approach, reading and writing skills were well learned through acquiring grammatical rules, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions. On the other hand, listening and speaking skills could be almost completely disregarded. In spite of obtaining the meaning of words and competency in grammatical rules through a high reading and writing capability, this approach did not necessarily benefit listening and speaking skills, especially natural and fluent speaking ability.

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[31] Sugita Genpaku was one of the first Japanese to translate a science book from Dutch *Ontleedkundige Tafelen* (Anatomy Tables) published in 1734 in Japanese.

[32] Izawa Sh•ji (1851-1917) was the Head of the School Affairs section, of the Office of the Governor General in Taiwan (Taiwan S•tokufu, Gakumu-buch•) from 1885-1887. He wrote *Nihongo ky•ju sho (Documents of teaching the Japanese language).*

It takes years of study to reach a high level of listening and speaking competency through the traditional Grammar-Translation method, so during the Second World War the Audio-Lingual approach was developed in the United States in response to an urgent need to gain an understanding of the language of the enemy. This was a very successful method based on structural linguistics which was used to train in quite a short period of time American military personal who previously knew nothing about Japanese. Several prominent scholars of Japanese language and literature, including Donald Keene and Edward Seidensticker, are renowned graduates of the school in Colorado that first developed this approach.

Keene writes in his memoirs that in the days when he was studying Japanese, he had heard there were only fifty Americans who had a good command of Japanese in the United States in the early 1940s (Keene 1972: 24-26). They did not, however, include Japanese-Americans in this number. In Seidensticker's autobiography, he states that conversational skills were central to their study of Japanese, so for example, they had to endeavour to remember the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs. After fourteen months concentrating on learning Japanese, they could read newspapers in Japanese.[33] The success of this method used by the military school made the Audio-Lingual approach so popular that it gained currency worldwide throughout foreign language learning and teaching domains. Seidensticker, however, expressed doubt about this teaching method, which was originally devised by observing the way infants acquire speech, while students at the military language school were adult intellectuals with higher education (Seidensticker 2004: 36).

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[33] According to Seidensticker's autobiography *Nagare yuku hibi* (*The Flow of Days*, [Original English title: Tokyo Central: A Memoir]), Keene completed the school in one year (p.36).

In the early 1970s, acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the Audio-Lingual approach resulted in a new syllabus being developed which emphasised the communicative function. This is the Communicative approach which stresses the acquisition of communicative skills, such as how to ask permission, etc. (Mizutani et al. 2005: 730). The Communicative approach does not follow sentence patterns systematically in the way the Audio-Lingual approach does. Rather, what is taught is based on the needs of learners. Contact settings, roles and topics are therefore considered in order to meet the learners' requirements, which are closely bound up with sociocultural features (Hymes 1972: 277). The context for the discourse, which is an aggregation of sentences, is deemed both relevant and essential; needless to say, sentences in the dialogues must be cohesive and coherent.

The Communicative approach includes writing practice, which was not a focus of the Audio-Lingual approach. In this approach, writing is designed in such a way as to teach the communication of accurate messages through words. For this, writing training covers everyday practical needs, such as how to fill in an application form, etc. Reading practice is also undertaken. However, the emphasis is not on learning vocabulary or sentence structure per se, which was highlighted by the Grammar-Translation method, but on how to get information from newspapers, restaurant menus, and other written material commonly found in everyday life.

In order to redress the shortcomings of the Audio-Lingual approach, the Communicative approach aims at conveying the intentions of speakers mainly through speech. Hence, it is essential to create an appropriate context in a discourse so as to express the ideas of the speaker. In other words, in the Communicative approach, the focus is not on vocabulary

and sentences that are to be memorised by learners, but on the explicitness of the meaning in an utterance at the time of communication. This theory, which is fundamental to the Communicative approach, is called 'contextualisation'. This is composed of five elements: the content of the utterance, the social status of the speaker, the relationship between the listener and speaker, the intention of the utterance, and the place of utterance (Takamizawa 1989: 97).

This denotes that even though the same words and sentence structures may be used, when the situation is different at the time of utterance, its intrinsic content changes according to the situation. An example is the sentence "*kono heya wa atsui ne / atsui desu ne* (this room is hot)", which may imply one or some of the following: *"h•t• o tomete yo* (turn off the heater)", or "*mado o akete yo* (open the window)", or "*eakon o irete yo* (switch on the air conditioner)". While high school students are chatting about what to eat for lunch, they would not use the polite form of "-*masu/-desu* (to do, to be)", for instance, "*sandoitchi o tabemasu ka* (shall we eat our sandwiches?)". Instead, they may say, "*sandoitchi o tabey• yo* (let's eat our sandwiches)". The former does not suit the situation of the speakers (high school students), and it even stands out as sounding 'foreign'. Learners of Japanese have to be instructed to think what, where, when, how, and to whom they are speaking to ensure they use speech appropriate to the situation (Takamizawa 1989: 96-97). A learner is expected to interact properly so as not to deviate from the context in which the utterance occurs. In language program design, careful and most effective consideration of the context is significant because effective teaching and learning occurs where the cultural context is included (Richard and Rogers 2001: 248).

2.3. Recent trends in Japanese language education

Neustpuný claims that the Communicative approach has yet to be perfected in the case of Japanese language education. It is inadequate because it focuses merely on 'language education'. He contends that it should be interactional education. The traditional approaches of language education were 'linguistic' procedures through the Grammar-Translation method and the Audio-Lingual approach (Neustpuný 1995: 6-11). In *The Relevance of Japanese Language Teaching*, he states that the interactive function is the basic function of language teaching which gives it its *raison d'être* (Neustpuný 1992: 6).

In Japanese language education, without doubt, the final goal of teachers of a class is to assist learners in acquiring the skill of generating correct sentences within a certain period. Ability in communication has been taking the place of solely language (linguistic) acquisition in the recent environment. Neustupný cites sociolinguist Dell Hymes stating that without acquiring sociocultural ability, we are like parrots who can pronounce perfect sentences, but cannot use them at the correct time, disregard whom they are addressing, and in general, apply sentences out of context (Neustupný 1987:6).

His point of argument is that communication must be a tool of sociocultural and socioeconomic interactions. We have progressed from traditional language education in obtaining linguistic ability to education emphasising communicative ability (linguistic plus socio-linguistic ability), and have then advanced to interactive ability (linguistic, sociolinguistic, plus sociocultural ability.) He calls this 'Japan literacy,' which, he believes, has to be taught to JSOL learners (Neustupný 1995: 6, 10-11). For instance, students learn the personal pronoun of the second person *anata* (you) in class, but they hardly hear this word in daily conversation. If they recognise *anata* or other such words,

it must be in an unusual situation, such as in a quarrel. Also, *anata* must not be used to one's seniors or elders. If so used, it would be regarded as an insult to them. Knowledge of this sort is not purely grammatical linguistic ability but is directly related to sociocultural ability which learners must acquire along with linguistic ability.

The contact situation is regarded as being equivalent to a cross-cultural situation in this research. A typical textbook dialogue case is, for example, where a non-Japanese speaker is in contact with a Japanese native speaker. It aims to teach learners the speech acts in a given situation, but rarely goes beyond that. However, since learners will possibly have contact with Japanese in different social, cultural, and economic situations in future, they must be taught and acknowledge those various situations in order to be able to deal with them appropriately as they arise. This implies that teaching and learning another language needs to include the sociocultural dimension, the scope of which is wider than ordinary communicative ability, because it includes even non-verbal communication and network skills. These skills have not usually been called 'language' and are sometimes called 'paralanguage', but they are necessary when communicating with others, in particular, those who belong to different cultures.

For instance, in traditional Japanese language teaching which focused on acquiring correct grammar and expressions, a learner may be taught to ask a teacher "*m• ichido itte kudasai* (please say [it] again)" when the student does not understand what the teacher is saying in class. This expression is faultless in terms of Japanese grammar. However, Neustupný even calls into question whether or not this sentence is really 'the Japanese

language' (Neustupný 1982: 42-52, Neustupný 1995: 11-14. 218).[34] This is because it sounds too direct and does not contain an appropriately apologetic feeling as when asking something particularly of a superior (teacher) in Japanese. Neustupný's assertion of the need for 'Japan literacy', which combines skill in linguistics and sociocultural abilities, is embodied in the practices of Hosokawa. He affirms that at the beginners level learning practice should be linguistic-focused. However, the more advanced the level is, the more it should move to being content-focused. This has become the recent mainstream of Japanese language education (Hosokawa 2002: 172-4).

Another example, although this seems to be an extreme case, is that *sumo* wrestlers who are from foreign countries, such as Mongolia, Russia, and Argentina, are noticeably as fluent as Japanese native speakers. Many come to Japan usually before the age of twenty years without receiving formal Japanese language lessons in their homeland. While living in a *sumo* stable together with senior wrestlers and other peer trainees all day long, they learn not only how to practice *sumo* wrestling but also the customs and manners of the *sumo* world, which is a very traditional and hierarchical society. For foreign-born *sumo* wrestlers, this way of learning Japanese means that they are totally immersed in Japanese all day. If they fail to absorb and assimilate the language *and* culture, in practice they will fail in the *sumo* world. This makes them conspicuous and exceptional among Japanese language learners (Miyazaki 2006: 62, 68).

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[34] A student asks a teacher "*M• ichido itte kudasai* (Please say [it] again)" in class, it is not an appropriate expression. "*Sumimasen (ga), m• ichido itte kudasai masen ka*" or "*Sumimasen (ga), m• ichido onegai shimasu*" and add a reason why he/she asks it, such as "*yoku wakaranakatta no de*" (I did not understand it).

2.4. Challenges to JSOL learners

Languages are classified into language families based on their origins. English, French, German, and Spanish belong to the Indo-European family, but Japanese has not been clearly defined as belonging to any particular family. It has been demonstrated, however, that Japanese is related to East Asian languages such as Korean, Mongolian, and Tungus in Siberia (Okimori 1989:7). Grammatically Korean is much closer to Japanese than French is to English. However, no decisive theory has yet been established. It is clear that there are few commonalities between English, for example, and Japanese in terms of semantics, syntax, morphology, and orthography because the language families of the two are very distant. This distance clearly results in linguistic challenges for JSOL learners from most other language families.

The greater variety of words in Japanese compared to other languages is another challenge for JSOL learners. Nakano compared Japanese with several European languages with regard to the percentage of the 1,000 most frequently used words in written materials and found 85 per cent for French compared with 60 per cent for Japanese. In the case of 2,000 frequently used words, it was 90 per cent for French and 70 per cent for Japanese. This indicates that even though 2,000 Japanese words are acquired by JSOL learners, they still have to look up a dictionary to grasp the meaning of roughly 30 per cent of the text, whereas in the case of French, the equivalent proportion is only 10 per cent. In the case of Japanese, if it were the 5,000 most frequently used words, it would still raise the proportion to only 82 per cent (Nakano 1974: 28-30).[35] This is one

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[35] Level 2 (L2) of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) might be said to be almost the equivalent of "intermediate level". According to the JLPT, the applicants of L2 are encouraged to acquire around 6,000 words.

of various challenges which JSOL learners will face when learning Japanese. Further details of the challenges are as follows.

2.4.1. Challenges of script

Unlike alphabetic languages, the script employed to write Japanese is so complex that this alone presents enormous challenges to JSOL learners. The Japanese writing system involves four different types of orthography: *kanji* borrowed from Chinese*, hiragana* and *katakana*, and then Arabic numerals. The first, *kanji,* comprises ideograms, and the latter two are phonograms derived and developed from *kanji.* Morohashi's dictionary, *Dai kanwa jiten (Lexicon of Kanji Characters)* contains 49,964 items of *kanji*;[36] however, a total of 1,945 *kanji* were authorized for common usage by the Japanese Government in 1981. Of these, 1,006 *kanji* are taught at elementary school over six years. Another 983 *kanji* are permitted for use in personal names. As for *hiragana* and *katakana,* they comprise forty-six characters, including five vowels, for each of the two sets of *kana.* While *kanji* provide meaning to parts of speech and comprise nouns and the stem of verbs and adjectives, *kana* are syllabic and represent phonetic sounds only. *Katakana* is used for some onomatopoeic expressions, and almost all loanwords from other languages except Chinese. It is also used in a variety of other ways as well as such as to replace unknown or non-standard *kanji*, to indicate mispronunciation or unusual pronunciation, to show a word is unusual in some way, e.g. that it is a colloquial or slang words, etc. *Hiragana* is used for the remainder of the written language, such as particles and the inflecting part of verbs and adjectives. When learning Japanese scripts, most beginners

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[36] *Dai kanwa jiten (Lexicon of Kanji Character)* registered the largest numer of *kanji* characters in the world. The first version containing 13 volumes was published in 1960.

start from *kana*, and steadily start to practise some of the most simple and common *kanji* characters.

The Japanese language remains very much influenced by Chinese, especially in the writing system as mentioned above. Each *kanji* has a meaning so that it is easy to create new words. As a result, however, there are many homonyms, such as the five meanings of *kank•* using different *kanji*: ∈• (sightseeing), •• (to practise), •• (to publish), •• (to expose), and •∈ (to venture). In addition to this, almost all *kanji* have more than one reading, which makes reading complicated. Perhaps to overcome this difficulty, rote memorization is a traditional but sure method of Japanese learning.

It is quite common for one *kanji* character to have more than one reading in the Japanese language, unlike a *kanji* in Chinese which usually has only one monosyllabic pronunciation.[37] Owing to the different periods of infiltration and different source regions in China, one *kanji* may be pronounced with more than one Chinese-based sound called the *on*-reading; the different (new) sound was added to the previous sound for each *kanji*. All *on*-readings were adapted to the pre-existing phonetic system. Furthermore, the indigenous Japanese pronunciation called the *kun*-reading often already existed for many words. The reading is sometimes only determined by context. In the case of the *kanji* ∈,

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[37] This is because *kanji* were brought into Japan from China in three different waves. The oldest transfusion of *kanji* seemingly came through the Korean Peninsula. This was called *go-on* named after the southern area of the Chang River where it was presumably sourced. Then, *kan-on* (pronunciation derived from that of the Han dynasty, 3C B.C. to A.D. 3C) was brought back by Japanese diplomatic missions to China during the Sui dynasty. This was followed by *t•-on* (pronunciation of the Tang dynasty, A.D. 7C to 10C) (Mizutani et al. 2005:259).

(meaning, to go or to carry out), for example, six different pronunciations are possible: *i,*
yu, or *okona* in *kun*-readings, whereas in the case of *on*-readings, ∈ has three different
sounds: *"gy•"* (∈ •   for *gy•-kan*, space between lines), *"k•"* (∈ •   for *k•-d•*,
behaviour), and *"an"* (∈ •   for *an-don*, traditional lantern). Although the *kanji* is written
the same way in each example, the fact that it is possible to pronounce one *kanji*
character in several different ways makes reading *kanji* in Japanese very difficult even for
native speakers, let alone JSOL learners.

2.4.2. Challenges of vocabulary

In addition to the challenges for both native and second or other learners of Japanese by
the basic dualistic vocabulary of indigenous and imported Chinese vocabulary, there are
further intricacies.

There are four different types of Japanese words which are categorised by origin.
Japanese origin words (*wago*) arose domestically, Chinese origin words (*kango*) came
from ancient China and Korea, loanwords (*gairaigo*) are derived from foreign countries
other than China, and mixed words (*konshugo*) are created by using two or three different
origins of words, such as *nama b•ru* (draught beer, *wago+gairaigo*) and *denshi renji*
(microwave oven, *kango+gairaigo*).

In ancient literature such as *The Tale of Genji*, 94 per cent of words were of Japanese
origin,[38] and as many as 79 per cent of words in *Nippo Jisho* (*Vocabvlario da Lingoa de*
Iapam) edited by the Portuguese missionaries in 1603 were of Japanese origin *wago,* and
the remaining 21 per cent were words of Chinese origin. The vocabulary of this

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[38] *The Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari)* was written by Murasaki Shikibu in the 11th century.

dictionary was collected by observing the way people spoke and wrote (Miyajima et al. 1982: 170). Almost four centuries after *Nippo Jisho* was published, an analysis of three Japanese language dictionaries reveals the tendency for an increased use of words of Chinese origin words and loanwords. From *Genkai* published in 1891 to *Kadokawa Kokugo Jiten* in 1969, there is a difference of 78 years.[39] In the century-old *Genkai*, the 56 per cent of words of Japanese origin words still outnumbered the 35 per cent of words of Chinese origin, and loanwords comprised 9 per cent.

The difference between *Genkai* and *Kadokawa Kokugo Jiten* is the remarkable increase in words of Chinese origin proportionately in the latter, and by contrast a considerable decrease in words of Japanese origin. The number of entries affects the origin of words in Japanese dictionaries; i.e. the larger the number of words in a dictionary, the more words there are of Chinese origin compared with those of Japanese origin. This implies that, in general, words of Japanese origin are more frequently used, such as *suru* (do) and *naru* (become), while those of Chinese origin appear less frequently than *wago*, but they are applied at key points of sentences because they express the meaning of the words (see Table 3) (Miyajima et al. 1982: 60, 71). This is because the usage of words according to origin is customarily different in Japanese. It is likely that more words of Chinese origin will be acquired as the level of JSOL learners progesses.

Table 3: Ratio by Origin of Words in Dictionaries

The name of dictionary and the year of publication	*Nippo Jisho* in 1603	*Genkai* in 1891	*Kadokawa Kokugo Jiten* in 1969
Japanese origin words	79%	56 %	37%
Chinese origin words	21%	35%	53%
Loanwords	•	9%	10%

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[39] *Genkai* is the first legitimate Japanese language dictionary edited by F. • tsuki.

Number of collected words in dictionary	100% 32,800	100% 39,103	100% 60,218

(Adapted from Miyajima et al. 1982: 60, 170 and Kindaichi et al. 1988: 1153.)

Of loanwords in *Genkai,* the number of Dutch words exceeded English ones, while in recent mazagines, English comprised 80 per cent of the total, followed by French 6 per cent. In particular, over 90 per cent of words pertaining to sport, such as tennis and boxing are loanwords (Miyajima et al. 1982: 60, 70-72). Loanwords from English increased especially after the Second World War, but their pronunciation is very much Japanised, so that English native speakers often do not recognise them when they first hear them.

The National Institute of Japanese Language has also carried out similar research.[40] They used four different resources in order to count each word (*kotonari-go s•* and *nobe-go s•*):[41] junior high school textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and TV. Their findings are as follows.

Table 4: Ratio of Usage by the Origin of Words (*Kotonari-go s•* and *Nobe-go s•*)

Media	Textbooks *Kotonari-go s•*	Textbooks *Nobe-go s•*	TV(speech) *Kotonari-go s•*	TV(speech) Nobe-go s•
Japanese origin words	29 %	52%	41%	70%
Chinese origin words	66%	46%	32%	18%
Loanwords/Mixed words	5%	2%	27%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

N.B. Newspapers and magazines sit between textbooks and TV.
(Adapted from a paper by the National Institute of Japanese Language.)

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[40] http://www.kokken.go.jp/event/forum/30/haifu_30 (Accessed on 15th August, 2008). The title of the paper is "*Nihongo no naka no gairaigo to gaikokugo* (Loanwords and Foreign words in the Japanese Language)" presented at the 30th Forum of *Kotoba* (Language) by the National Institute of Japanese Language held on 24th February, 2007.

[41] *Kotonari-go s•* means that a word is counted only when it appears for the first time, while *nobe-go s•* means that a word is counted whenever it appears.

It could be surmised that words of Japanese origin are proportionally more numerous in *nobe-go s•* because it mainly comprises basic vocabulary which is used very frequently as mentioned previously. By contrast, loanwords and mixed words show a great increase in *kotonari-go s•*. This indicates that they are not repeatedly used within a text and conversation, but used in a certain context. In particular, they are about five times to six times more frequently used in speech than in texts in *kotonari-go* and *nobe-go* respectively. This is because loanwords and mixed words contain a sense of modernity and they are easily to be used in speech, while as for textbooks, because of their nature the more formal words and expressions are likely to be chosen and it takes time for them to be published.

Although the ratio of usage of loanwords and mixed words in conversation is still smaller than that of Japanese and Chinese origin words, it is apparent that individual loanwords and mixed words are used more often than before. Owing to the fact that they work as the stem part of sentences, it may be deduced that studying loanwords and mixed words, too, is as essential as studying words of Japanese and Chinese origin. For JSOL learners, memorising different vocabulary (signifiers) for one item (signified) is one challenge, and another is learning when to apply these appropriately.

2.4.3. Challenge of loanwords

About four hundred years after the first Europeans from Portugal came to Japan in 1543, an English influence became predominant in various fields, especially after the Second World War (Ogawa and Ito 1982: 287). Not only nouns but also other parts of speech, such as verbs and adjectives, were imported and adopted into the Japanese language. However, for JSOL learners including those who understand English, these words are

often difficult to comprehend and utilise, even though nowadays most of these words originate from English. This is because, primarily, pronunciation was considerably altered in order to suit Japanese phonetics, such as vowels being inserted after each consonant.

Japanese people, particularly the younger generation, tend to create new words by borrowing English words and adding Japanese words, especially the verb *suru* (do) after the loanword. The usage of these has been initiated by the young, very often in informal settings. For example, the word 'drive' is pronounced *doraibu*. And when it is used as a verb, the Japanese verb *suru* ('do' in English) is added. So, 'to drive' is translated into *doraibu + suru*. Also, by adding *suru* after English verbs or *na* after English adjectives, an English word becomes a new Japanese word, such as *charenji suru* (to challenge), *kurikku suru* (to click) and *k• ru na* [*hito*] (a cool [guy]). A recent extreme example of a newly coined word is *guguru*, which means to conduct an online search for something using Google. This is an example of a foreign word being turned into the stem of a regular Japanese verb, such as *panikuru* (to panic) or *saboru* (to bunk, cut [from class or work] from *sabotage* in French), etc. This trend seems to have increased recently.

As long as the meaning remains the same as that of the original word, it is not very hard for learners to guess the meaning of that Japanese word, especially if they are familiar with the original language, and provided that they can recognise the difference between the syllables of Japanese and the original word. But some English words were changed or misinterpreted as regards their meanings. The verb, 'claim'(*kur•mu*) has been incorrectly adopted into Japanese as 'complain' in Japanese, and the term 'imbalance' in economics

as 'unbalance' (*anbaransu*).[42] Moreover, English words, such as 'infrastructure', 'deflation', and 'restructuring' have been shortened when used in Japanese, to *infura*, *defure*, and *risutora*. Thus, JSOL learners cannot necessarily understand shortened and vocalised words unless they are explained in context. Another difficult thing for learners is that there are cases where two loanwords are combined at first and then generate an elliptical form. For instance, two English words 'digital' and 'camera' are conjoined to create a new Japanese word, *dejikame* (digital camera). Likewise, *pasokon* (personal computer) and *rimokon* (a remote control unit for electrical devices) have the same structure. Even prepositions have been used to create a new word, such as *ara f•* which is a combination of 'around' and 'forty [years old]'. These words are used when asked an age, such as "[*ano hito wa*] *ara f• yo* ([that person is] around forty)". As noted earlier, in other cases words of two different origins are combined, such as a Japanese word and a loanword to create a mixed word; i.e. *itameshi* which means 'Italian food/meal', '*meshi*' being an informal word for food/meal in Japanese.[43]

JSOL learners normally have to learn all of the above sorts of items of vocabulary as though they were originally Japanese, since their usage is often remote from languages the learners might be familiar with. There have been many new words generated in the past few decades. Loanwords are perceived positively by the Japanese people as modern and innovative, and are readily accepted because people like something new and different from conventional words. Loanwords written in *katakana* are especially widely used on

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[42] There was a different trend when abbreviating long foreign words, such as toilet training pants of infants becoming *torepan* for sportswear of adults (Ishiwata 1991: 290-292).

[43] Another example: loanwords from French as well as English have much more influence in the fashion industry, such as, "*shikku na dezain*" which includes 'chic' from French and 'design' from English.

billboards, in advertisements, for names of shops, merchandise, and title of movies and TV programmes in order to work them as key words (Ishino 1977: 206). However, since the pronunciation is completely converted to Japanese syllables, which little resemble the original words, it may not be easy for JSOL learners to imagine the original words only by hearing them, let alone the mixed words mentioned above.

These new items of vocabulary are seldom found in traditional dictionaries. The origin of contemporary loanwords is mostly English, which is the most common language of JSOL learners. However, learners of Japanese, even native speakers of English who study Japanese, face difficulties in getting used to this challenging aspect of the modern Japanese language.

2.4.4. Challenge of dialects

Dialect (*h•gen)* is regarded as speech used only in a limited region or local area. During the Edo period (1603-1867), owing to the prohibition of free traffic by common people, dialects developed locally, so even every hamlet had its own distinguishable dialect. This made it difficult for people to communicate when talking even to people from nearby villages, much less to people from distant places. In the Meiji period (1868-1912), a movement for promoting standard language (or eradicating dialects) was started.[44] Dialects were labelled as bad and uneducated language. In the early Meiji period, y*amanote-kotoba* (a dialect spoken in the western hilly residential area of Tokyo) was promoted as the standard language (*hy•jungo*) of Japanese (Shibata 1976: 11), because there were many distinctive dialects spoken nationwide. More recently, mass

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[44] The movement was called *h•gen bokumetsu und•* (movement for abolishing dialects) (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 930).

communication through radio and television has worked to penetrate the standard language throughout the nation's speech. Eventually, this brought about a double-standard in language. At school or in formal settings, standard language was and is mostly used, but at home, in the community, and in informal settings, dialect was and is dominant.

In 1951, the National Institute for Japanese Language acknowledged that Japan had local dialects as well as the common language (*ky•ts•go*) which was based on *yamanote-kotoba* (Mizutani et al. 2005: 497-498).[45] In the mid 1980s, dialects were reinstated and lifted from an obscure position to mainstream as people recognised them as rich and colourful ways of expressing the emotions or feelings of everyday life.[46] This means that dialects should not be diminished by education, and the wide penetration of mass-communication served to spread the standard language the length and breadth of Japan. The rich variation in regional dialects present 'real life' difficulties for JSOL learners, since model dialogues presented in textbooks are almost exclusively in the standard Japanese.

The differences in pronunciation affect recognition of the meanings of words, because JSOL learners might mistakenly imagine a different word from what which a speaker of a

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[45] The difference between the standard language (*hy•jungo*) and the common language (*ky•ts•go*) exists, but it is very minimal, such as *hanashita* (spoken) in *hy•jungo* while *hanashichatta* in *ky•ts•go.*

[46] In 1986, a local doctor of Kesen city of Iwate prefecture published a textbook of the Kesen language (*Kesen-go*) to teach how to speak *Kesen-go*. Iwate was one of the least developed regions in Japan. This textbook became an instant best-seller, because it was unique and interesting. This made people re-think the value of the colourful and lively dialects they use everyday.

local dialect intends. This is potentially a cause of confusion and misunderstanding.[47] What is important for learners is that, firstly, they need to acknowledge the existence of dialects among people in and from regions with whom they interact. Secondly, they have to recognise the differences between standard language and dialects. The dialects are usually used in casual settings, and possibly they are spoken faster than in formal settings. Hence, comprehension of dialects by learners is often problematic. However, if a learner's place of living is a dialect-speaking environment, there could be an opportunity for a learner to assimilate a local dialect.

Owing to mass communication and the policy on language of the then government about a century ago, the Japanese language was standardised. Nevertheless, dialects are still being used in daily life. In the Japanese language teaching domain, dealing seriously with dialects started only after the 1990s. There was only one textbook focusing on dialect on the market, and others presented standard language and dialects in parallel (Takagi and Maruyama 2007: 69).[48] Dialects are not usually taught in class, particularly outside Japan as teachers are not expected to teach dialects unless there is a demand from learners. Moreover, perhaps, almost all teachers cannot teach dialects properly if they were not trained or born in a specific region where a requested dialect is spoken. Hence, the aim of teaching and learning dialects is, for JSOL learners, firstly to become capable of understanding dialects, and next to use them appropriately. Textbooks of dialects should be developed locally from the intermediate level, in spite of the fact that teaching dialect

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[47] For example, the pronunciation of *senpai* (a senior) and *shinpai* (worry) are very close to each other, or almost identical, in northeastern Honshu.

[48] *K•te oboeru kansai (Osaka) ben ny•mon* (*Beginning Course of Memorising the Kansai (Osaka) dialect by Listening*) 1998, Aruku.

is needed by the beginners if their environment requires it (Takagi and Maruyama 2007: 72). In general, teaching and learning dialects is a specific issue for a person who is and will be in a region where a local dialect is frequently used, because the words to be learned and the cultural background vary locally (Oki 2007: 31-32). At least, recognising the correct meanings of words and phrases through context should be taught to JSOL learners according to the respective local dialect.

2.4.5. Challenge of gender-associated language

It has been recognised that the Japanese language has an extensive number of gender-associated and gender-specific words and expressions, called 'men's and women's language'. There appears to have been no distinctive gender difference before the eleventh century, and the origin of the gender difference in language is thought to lie in the euphemistic court-lady language (*ny•b• kotoba*) of the Muromachi period (1338-1573). Refinement and elegance were features of this language, and some words are still used today, such as *ohiya* (chilled water for drinking), *onaka* (abdomen) and *himojii* (hungry) (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 557-558, 561).

There are three prominent features of gender-associated language. These are (1) different words and usage of sentence ending particles according to the speaker's gender, (2) different words and usage of the first personal pronouns according to gender, and (3) beautified language (*bikago*) and polite language (*teineigo*) used by women more often than men (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 557-570). The following are examples of sentence ending particles. Some of them are used exclusively by one gender, in other words, they are absent in the speech of the other gender. These are w*a, no, none, noyo, kashira, kashirane* for women; and *zo, ze, na* for men. The sentence ending phrase, *s•nanoyo* ([it

is] so) is an unmistakably feminine expression (Kunihiro, 1977). A few sentence ending particles have recently been neutrally employed by both genders, such as *kana, da, ne, yo, yone*. According to Suzuki, the sentence ending particle *da* is indicative of a shift in masculine words to use by women, too. She observes that the younger generation uses *da* in the speech of both sexes, while among the older generation it is used mostly only by men. This includes variations of *da*, like *da+ne, da+yo, da+yone* (Suzuki 2007: 53).[49] Obviously, the use of words varies according to individuals, geography, and generations.

Particles used only by women work to give a soft impression to their speech by weakening the impression of assertion, insistence, and contention, whilst those particles used only by men function to strengthen those connotations. If a feminine sentence ending particle is used by a male native Japanese speaker, he might be thought to be homosexual. If this were the case with a male JSOL learner, his teacher's professional skill as a language teacher might be questioned. Suzuki claims that feminine particles, such as *dawa, dawayo, dawane* have become obsolete words nowadays, while at the same time, the gender gap has been reduced recently, and the use of neutral particles has increased (Suzuki 2007: 50-51). Nonetheless, sentence ending particles still play a significant role in differentiating masculine and feminine speech.

At the present time, the first personal pronoun, *watakushi* (I), is commonly used by both genders on formal occasions. The more the setting becomes casual and informal, the larger the range of first person pronouns that are used. The order of formal to casual of

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[49] The word, *da*, a copula of the adverb of *desu* is on the border of the genders, as well as the generations of the old and the young. For example, casual expressions of *iin'da* ([it's] good/alright) and *s• nanda* ([it is] so) are more frequently used by the young generation of both male and female than the older generation.

the first personal pronouns is, *watakushi, watashi, boku, or*e for men, and, *watakushi, atakushi, watashi, atashi* for women. There is also a generation gap in the usage of the first person pronouns as there is for other words (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 558). It is noteworthy that, like sentence ending particles, some first person pronouns are seldom used by the other gender. JSOL learners, therefore, must be careful in an informal setting. Even if the conversational partner of a learner is of the opposite gender, the learner has to use the relevant first person pronoun for expressing him/herself in gender-appropriate terms. In other words, the learner must not be influenced by the partner's choice of a first person pronoun, but must adhere to the one(s) most appropriate for his/her own gender.

In general, women are regarded as employing beautified language and polite language more frequently than men on any occasion. This is because women are *expected* to use beautified and polite language. Women may do in fact tend to choose a more polite expression than men. For example, Ide reports that when asking about 'when to go (*itsu iku ka*)', a difference was observed in utterances by males and females in terms of their choice of polite language. Men replied using "*itsu ikundesu ka*", whereas women utilised "*itsu irassharu no*" (cited by Kindaichi et al. 1988: 558).[50]

Another distinction of women's language is that they are more likely to add prefixes, such as *o* or *go* before certain nouns, which make words and expressions softer and more polite, such as *o-mizu* (water), *o-hana* (flower), *go-h•koku* (report), and *go-renraku* (contact) (Toyama 1977: 156). These prefixes are, however, not normally applied to loanwords, except in specific circumstances.[51] Recently, usage of beautified and polite

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[50] S. Ide's research based on actual conversation is undated.

[51] The word *b•ru* (beer) is a loanword from Dutch, but it is sometimes called *o-b•ru* by bar hostesses.

language by women has shown a tendency to decline. In particular, these words are not so much used by young women. According to a study of conversations between housewives and husbands in movie scenarios, 56 per cent of older housewives' lines comprised polite words, in contrast to only 10 per cent for young housewives (Kindaichi et al.1988: 558).

In conversation, women tend to add moderate and reserved phrases before starting a request, for example, *chotto* (little, momentarily), *dekireba* (if possible), *moshi yokattara* (if [you] do not mind) in order to avoid giving an intrusive, assertive or aggressive impression (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 558). These expressions may be used by men, too; but, women use them more regularly. Even though use of beautified and polite language by females is on the decrease, a difference by gender still exists. For intermediate level JSOL learners, it is not functionally necessary to acquire all the subtle gender-related features of the Japanese language. However, what is relevant for them is to understand what native speakers say to them.

With regard to the dialogues presented in the sample textbooks, it is essential for JSOL learners to recognise the distinctions between male and female speech, as uttered in a given dialogue. Research on gender differences in expressions in textbooks was conducted by Watanabe in 2006. This discovered that the mother in dialogues speaks more politely than the father in seven beginners' textbooks which were published between 1998 and 2001 (cited by Suzuki 2007: 49). Watanabe's research also reveals that there are stereotypical descriptions in JSOL textbooks. Likewise, by comparing actual conversation with three textbooks published between 1992 and 1996, Kawasaki and McDougall found that use of feminine sentence ending particles by female characters in

textbooks is close to the speech patterns of the older generation. In other words, stereotypical female speech is reflected in the textbooks. Currently, even though all age groups of women tend to employ neutral forms in real spoken data, this was not observed in the textbooks. The characteristic of stereotypical male speech found in the textbooks is an absence of use of feminine sentence ending particles by men in spite of the fact that they are often used by males, too, in natural (authentic) conversations (Kawasaki and McDougall 2003: 12-13).

Another investigation by Thomson and Iida demonstrates that model dialogues of women in textbooks take a more polite form than that of men, and the differences in usage by gender are typically shown in the ending remarks of the sentences. These authors indicate, however, that although the correlation of gender and speech is clearly presented in textbook dialogues and reference books, this has rarely been adequately explained in them to JSOL learners, if at all (Thomson and Iida 2007: 124).

In addition to the above research findings, which infer that dialogues in JSOL textbooks largely tend to differ from real conversation, Suzuki also points out that the Tokyo-centric language (or standard language) predominates in the dialogues in JSOL textbooks, particularly those involving women. She argues that in textbooks for beginners, the dialogues are primarily composed in the polite form, such as the *desu/masu* form. Therefore, differences according to gender in dialogues do not significantly appear. Once the level advances, however, it becomes apparent that more complex and longer dialogues are increased in textbooks, but they do not reflect the reality of conversational gender differentiated speech patterns (Suzuki 2007: 48). This implies that the nature of

textbooks is that they are inclined to present stereotypical characters, using obsolete words and phrases, which are rarely used in real life.

2.4.6. Challenge of honorific speech

Four ranks in the feudal society were officially distinguished: *samurai* (warrior), farmer, artisan, and merchant in order of rank with the consequence that *keigo* (honorific words and expressions) were strengthened.[52] In addition to previously occurring *sonkeigo* (respect words), *teineigo* (polite words) and *kenj•go* (humble words) were elaborated. Various personal pronouns were created in order to make a distinction between speaker and interlocutor. These include such pronouns as *omae, konata, onore, anata, omaesan, omae, om•, tem•* all meaning "you," which also verbally distinguished gender differences. These are recognised in the traditional dialogue of the *kabuki* theatre and some of them are still used even today (Okimori 1989: 35). This honorific speech system persists in many respects in the Japanese language, and presents special challenges to JSOL learners.

In 1868, after 260 years of seclusion, Japan's ports re-opened to the world. In the Japanese language world, an innovative movement for synchronisation of the spoken and written language arose. Such sentence ending as *masu/desu* (to do/to be) were typical examples of the new style of written language brought about by this movement, together

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[52] The feudal society here indicates the period between 16th and 19th centuries. Apart from the four official classes, there were two untouchable groups: the Imperial family above and outcastes below. Notably, the forms of speech in the Imperial Court became so specific to it, that when Emperor Hirohito made his first ever radio broadcast to the nation announcing Japan's defeat in August 1945, many of the common populace were unable to understand him.

with rapid penetration of the mass media of newspapers, magazines, and books (Okimori 1989: 37).

The honorific words and expressions are another characteristic feature of the Japanese language together with male/female gender specific words and expressions. Until recently, they were developed and were associated with the nature of Japan's hierarchical society. The young generation of today does not pay as much attention to them as their predecessors, who had to use them correctly with regard to manner and timing. Nevertheless, the honorific aspect of the language still permeates everyday life in Japanese society.

2.4.7. Challenge of politeness

Language and society are closely connected to each other. Japanese society is hierarchical, like many other societies; however, it has devised more elaborate and sophisticated conversational rules based on human relationships than many other languages. In Japanese society, great importance is placed on the rules of conversation by exploiting the use of honorific words and expressions which are particularly difficult for those who are not raised in Japanese society.

These rules primarily pay attention to the social rank of the interlocutor and the object of conversation, because the appropriate use of these signifies the speaker's notion of respect for the interlocutor and/or the object of discussion. The degree of the honorific words and expressions revealed in dialogues is determined by the relationship of the people concerned, not absolutely but relatively. Therefore, the expressions in dialogues

relate to the position and role of the speaker and the interlocutor socially, culturally, and psychologically.

The frequently used words when describing the relationship of the two parties, "*meue*" means a person whose social rank or position is higher, or a person who was born earlier than oneself. The word "*meshita*" is the antonym of "*meue*". The word "*senpai*" means a person who entered and graduated from the same school (alumnus) or entered the same company earlier than oneself. The word "*k•hai*" is the antonym of "*senpai*".

If a speaker does not follow the rules, he/she is regarded as an immature, untrained or unsocialised person. Thus, the conversational rules of politeness in the Japanese language are taken seriously. All of them are set against the background of Japanese human relationships. For non-native speakers, the situation might be slightly different from that of Japanese people. Liddicoat describes the view of the Japanese people to the Japanese language learners who try to speak Japanese as follows:

> Quite often native speakers can be tolerant of problems of grammar or vocabulary, but cultural mismatch often creates significant problems for communication and for social relationships, largely because people are much less aware of their cultural rules for interaction than they are of other aspects of language (Liddicoat 2008: 278).

His research on the pedagogical practice of Japanese language learners underpins the importance of understanding the target cultural context.

Politeness in conversation includes the participants' attitude and vigilant attention. A Japanese speaker is careful of saving the other person's "face" and hardly dares to be in discord. Even to the point of leaving the decision-making responsibility in the hands of the interlocutor, the speaker puts him/herself in a lower position. This intention of the speaker is to maintain a good relationship, and to avoid conflict. This has been termed the Theory of Politeness (Satake and Nishio 2005: 77-79, 116, Kabaya et al. 1998: 15, 122-123).

The level of honorific words and expressions and politeness are closely bound together, and are adapted according to the nature of the relationship between the speaker and an interlocutor. For this reason, an appropriate dialogue, arising from the intent to lubricate the conversation, is generated taking into account through a combination of social rank, the degree of intimacy, and the contact setting (Kabaya et al. 1998: 15). The wider the difference in rank that exists between a speaker and an interlocutor, the more polite honorific words and expressions are used in relation to the subordinate's language. The dialogue is deemed natural and appropriate when the Theory of Politeness is applied in conversation by selecting appropriate honorific words and expressions.

The characteristics of the Japanese language are that words and expressions vary depending on who speaks to whom and about what, and this involves honorific words and expressions (Satake and Nishio 2005: 17). It is important, therefore, to know who is speaking to whom about what, how, and for what purpose. Society's influence on dialogue is significant, and takes great account of human relationships. In the case of Japanese, honorific forms implicitly indicate social and cultural standing or roles such as employer versus employee, teacher versus student, and parent versus child. The extent

and degree of the usage of honorific words and expressions is relatively defined based on the relationship of the speaker to the interlocutor and the object of the conversation. (Satake and Nishio 2005: 54; Kabaya et al. 1998: 6). For example, when an employee goes home and takes on the role of a parent, then the situation changes and so, too, does the speaker's use of politeness.

Honorific words and expressions are formulated according to different settings and human relationships. For a speaker to be able to convey his/her intention, he/she has to employ the appropriate honorific words and expressions in order to generate socially acceptable discourse (Kabaya et al. 1998: 39, 44). It is apparent that this strategy is exercised particularly when the relationship between a speaker and an interlocutor is that of a senior and a junior; it is also applied when the speaker establishes a distance from the interlocutor in order to pay him/her respect. It acknowledges that there is a psychological distance between them. By using honorific words and expressions, the position of the interlocutor is raised, and thereafter the psychological distance is adjusted so as to maintain an appropriate distance and not get impudently near. This being so, honorific words and expressions are not usually used to family members at home (Satake and Nishio 2005: 56-57).

The usage of honorific words and expressions is determined by various social interrelationships and settings. Many items of vocabulary, especially verbs, are modified in extraordinarily elaborate and subtle layers, graded from humble through neutral to honorific, depending on the degree of politeness required of the grammatical subject (e.g., *mairu*, *iku*, *irassharu*, *o-ide ni naru*: 'to go'—and each of these may have - *masu* as a suffix showing politeness to the interlocutor. However, a further subtlety is added, since

an utterance expressing the speaker's intention is composed of action (by whom), the right of decision-making (who has), and benefit (who receives). The latter two especially are the most vital elements for inducing politeness in Japanese conversation. Therefore, it is necessary for a speaker to be in command of the knowledge of appropriate words and expressions for every setting. The interlocutor, too, has to be competent in indirect and meandering expressions (Kabaya et al. 1998: 29).

Kabaya demonstrates the aspect of politeness by presenting polarised examples. The most polite sentence pattern is when the right of decision-making is given to the interlocutor,[53] while the least polite is when the speaker retains the right of decision-making.[54] In addition to these, he states that giving the benefit to an interlocutor is less honorific, especially if the interlocutor is senior to, or higher ranking than the speaker (Kabaya et al. 1998: 122-123, 135).[55]

The most honorific utterance is one in which the action is taken by the speaker, the decision is deferred to the interlocutor, while the benefit is received by the speaker. This

[53] The right of decision in the phrase …*shite mo ii desu ka (may I V)* goes to the interlocutor.

[54] The right of decision in the phrase …*shite mo ii desu (you may V)* goes to the speaker.

[55] To avoid this, there is an alternative expression which suggests the benefit belongs not to an interlocutor but a speaker. For example, instead of using …*shite agemash• ka* (shall I V) in which benefit goes to an interlocutor, a declarative expression …*shimasu* (I will V*)* is appropriate. Because the latter's benefit belongs to a speaker. The following dialogue, "*Sensei, nimotsu o motte agemash• ka* (Professor, shall I carry your luggage?)" is awkward, it even sounds impolite and rude when a student says this to a professor. The appropriate expression in this case is "*Sensei, nimotsu o o-mochi shimasu* (Professor, I will carry your luggage)". It is not necessary to ask the professor for permission in this kind of setting (Kabaya et al. 1998: 146-149, 212).

is the case of 'asking permission,' such as when opening the window in hot weather: "*Mado o akete mo ii desu ka* (May I open the window?)". By contrast, the least honorific utterance is when the action is taken by the interlocutor, the decision is taken by the speaker, and the benefit is received by the interlocutor. This is the case of 'giving permission,' such as "*Mado o akete mo ii desu* (You may open the window)". Interestingly, by switching the beneficiary from the interlocutor to the speaker, the impression of the utterance improves, to become more polite. For instance, the 'advising/suggesting' form of …*shita h• ga ii desu* (you had better V) sounds more straightforward and less polite than the 'requesting' form of …*ni shite itadakemasu ka /itadakemasen ka* (could/couldn't you please V). The difference between these two forms is that the beneficiary of the former is the interlocutor, while the beneficiary of the latter is the speaker.

Another example of making an utterance polite is to change the 'ordering/instructing' form to the 'requesting' form without any change in the intention of the speaker. For example, "*Seki ni tsukinasai* (Sit down)" can be changed to "*Seki ni tsuite itadakemasen ka* ([lit.] Could I please get you to sit down?)" (Kabaya et al. 1998: 143). The 'ordering/ instructing' form holds the speaker's right of decision-making, but the 'requesting' form does not, being deferred to the interlocutor in the case of the latter. For speakers, it is vital to choose the most appropriate words and expressions by recognising the purpose of the conversation and the social status of the interlocutor in relation to that of the speaker.

It has become clear that polite expressions accommodate the right of decision-making to be taken by the interlocutor, with the benefit going to the speaker. The reason for this is that showing the speaker's appreciation with gratitude to the interlocutor by receiving a

favour from him/her involves some kind of feeling of indebtedness on the part of the speaker, and as a result, this allows a feeling of superiority to the interlocutor owing to the fact that he/she has made a decision favourable to the speaker. Kabaya claims that almost all utterances to seniors in Japanese fall into either the '(as if) asking' form[56] or the '(as if) asking permission form',[57] because both forms incorporate the interlocutor's right of decision-making as well as the speaker's benefit (Kabaya et al. 1998: 124, 130-131). This is the principle of politeness, which articulates the ownership of the function in conversation.

On the other hand, there are expressions that are inappropriate if used to seniors. These phrases include asking the will, hope, and desire of the seniors, such as *V tai desu ka* (do you like to V), *hoshii desu ka* (do you want), *V tsumori desu ka* (are you going to V). A junior's forthright question to seniors about their desire is considered as insolent, because these questioning expressions about desire or wish, in particular, are regarded as inherently containing a nuance of superiority. In preference to a direct question, other ways of inquiring should be employed, for instance, a speaker offering to do something

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[56] The '(as if) asking' form means that the real intention of the utterance is to order the doing of something to someone. Replacing the 'ordering' form with the '(as if) asking' form, the impression of the utterance becomes more polite. For example, station staff announce, "*Sumimasen ga, hakusen no uchigawa ni sagatte itadakemasu ka* (excuse me, but would you please stand back behind the white line)" rather than "*Hakusen no uchigawa ni sagatte kudasai* (please stand back behind the white line)" (Kabaya et al. 1998: 126-128).

[57] The '(as if) asking permission' form means that the real intention of the utterance is to confirm something with someone. Replacing the 'confirming' form with the '(as if) asking permission' form, the impression of the utterance becomes more polite. For example, …*itashimasu ga, yoroshii desh• ka* (I'm going to V, and is it alright?) rather than …*shimasu* (I'm going to V) (Kabaya et al. 1998: 156).

for the senior, rather than questioning the senior if they want (intend) to do something.[58]

Instead of a phrase, such as "*K•h• o o-nomi ni naritai desu ka* (Do you want to drink coffee?)", expressions such as "*K•h• o o-ire shimash•* (Shall I prepare coffee for you?)" or "[*K•h• o*] *ikaga desu ka* (How about [some] coffee?)" are considered more polite (Kabaya et al. 1998: 212-213).

Table 5 illustrates the framework of various intentions embodied in dialogues. By defining who takes the action, who makes the decision, and who obtains the benefit, the level of politeness is ascertained. The expressions in bold type are more polite than those in the row immediately above, without changing the intention of the speaker. This is all very difficult and complicated for most JSOL learners.

Table 5: Framework of Dialogues of Plain and Polite Expressions

Intention of speaker	Action	Deci-sion	Benefit	Expression
1. Advise, Suggest	I	I	I	*V ta h• ga ii desu yo ([you] had better V)*
(As if requesting)	**(I)**	**(I)**	**(S)**	***V te itadakemasu ka, V nasatta h• ga yoroshii to omoimasu ga (could [you] V, [I] think it would be better if [you] V)***
2. Invite	IS/I	I	IS/I/S	*V masen ka, V mash• yo (why don't [you] V, let's V)*
(As if requesting)	**(I)**	**(I)**	**(S)**	***Vte itadakemasen ka (couldn't [you] V)***
3. Request	I	I	S	*V te morae masu ka, kure masen ka (could [you] please V)*
(More polite form)	**(I)**	**(I)**	**(S)**	***V te itadakemasu ka, V te itadakemasu desh• ka (can [you] V, could [you] V)[59]***
4.Order, Instruct	I	S	I	*V te kudasai, V nasai (please V, V)*
(As if requesting)	**(I)**	**(I)**	**(S)**	***V te itadakemasu ka (would [you] V)***
5.Give permission	I	S	S/I/0	*V te mo ii desu ([you] may V)*
(Different form)	**(I)**	**(I)**	**(S)**	***•, • d•zo, onegai shimasu (yes, yes please, please do so)[60]***
6. Propose	S	I	I	*V te agemash• ka (shall [I] V)*

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[58] For example, the phrase "*Gogo, tenisu o suru tsumori desu ka* (do you intend to play tennis this afternoon?)" can be revised to "*Gogo, tenisu o nasaimasu ka* (will you play tennis this afternoon?)".

[59] In this case, the level of politeness is determined by the rank of the interlocutor.

[60] For example, when someone asks permission, "*Mado o akete mo ii desu* ka (May I open the window?)", the appropriate reply to this interrogative sentence would be "*• d•zo, onegai shimasu* (Yes, yes please, I appreciate it)" instead of responding straight, "*Mado o aketemo ii desu* (You may)".

(Different form)	(S)	(S)	(I)	*V masu, V mash• ([I] V, [I] am going to V)*[61]
7.Ask permission	S	I	S	*V te mo ii desu ka (may [I] V)*
(More polite form)	(S)	(I)	(I)	*V te mo yorosh• desu ka, V te mo yorosh• desh• ka, (Man [I] V, couldn't [I] V)*[62]
8. Confirm	S	I	S/I/0	*V te mo ii desu ne ([I] can V, can't [I])*
(Different form)	(S)	(I)	(S/I/0)	*V itashimasu ga, yoroshii desu ne, itashimasu ga, yoroshii desh• ka ([I am going to] V, it is alright, isn't it?; [I am going to] V, isn't it alright?)*[63]
9. Declare	S/IS	S	S/I/0	*shimasu, sasete moraimasu ([I'll] V, (I'll be obliged to V)*
(As if asking permission)	(S)	(I)	(S/I/0)	*yoroshii desh• ka (if [I am going to V, isn't it alright?)*

S for speaker, I for interlocutor, 0 for neither of them.
(Source: Adapted from Kabaya et al. 1998: 121)

2.4.8. Challenges of naturalness

Natural conversation denotes a steady and desirable flow of dialogue befitting a given contact setting. In the case of Japanese, the speaker is expected to choose a linguistically distinct style and a tone of speech appropriate in a given sociocultural context (Maynard 1997: 49). In order to maintain the dialogue as natural, the utterances have to match the conversational rules of Japanese society. Hence, a touch of naturalness is brought into conversation not only by utilising polite words and expressions, but also through certain other techniques of utterance. Typical examples include unfinished sentences, hesitancy,

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[61] It is important to avoid giving the expression of bestowing favours on the interlocutor.

[62] In this case, the level of politeness depends on the status of the interlocutor. The following is an example of a flight attendant's expressions. He/she differentiates his/her expression according to the native language of passengers. When collecting an embarkation card, she says, "*Have you filled out the form yet (M•, kaki-oemashita ka)*" to American passengers, which implies asking permission to collect the embarkation card, whereas to Japanese passengers, she says, "*Yoroshii desu ka (Is it all right?)*" (Hinds 1986: 22). The intentions are the same, but the approaches are different by changing the expression to comply with the cultural background of the passengers. For the Japanese passengers, "*M•, kaki-oemashita ka*" is too direct since it may sound censorious if they have not, so that the more polite expression "*Yoroshii desu ka*" is appropriate in this setting.

[63] These expressions are more polite than "*Shite mo iidesu ne (I can V, can't I)*".

and a circumlocutory way of speaking, especially when asking a favour or asking permission. In addition to these, anticipatory completion and back-channelling are also distinctive features of Japanese conversation. With a good command of these tactics, the utterance is perceived as more natural and less "foreign". In other words, naturalness is not obtained only by employing the appropriate level of honorific words and expressions; the criterion of naturalness is also closely associated with the social environment.

Discourse is a group of sentences which are linked closely to each other, and sentences constructing a discourse must be consistent and coherent when expressing one's thought about the object of discussion. Intermediate level discourse contains and reflects sociocultural knowledge which is significant for the learners to acquire, along with selecting the pertinent vocabulary with appropriate timing. The content has to be comprehensible and suitable for each individual situation. Learners have to be taught to consider "what" (declarative knowledge) and "how" (procedural knowledge) in order to speak properly.[64] These can be acquired when certain tasks of discourse are presented in class: for example, asking someone something, or declining an invitation without hurting the other's feelings. These are differences between the beginners and the intermediate level learners (Mizutani et al. 2005: 745).

The sequence in a dialogue is another element that makes a conversation sound natural and spontaneous. When starting a conversation, a speaker might arrange the order of dialogue, either consciously or unconsciously, as to what utterance should come first, so as to break the ice, and what comes next, so as to accomplish the aim of the speaker.

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[64] Declarative knowledge: knowledge of appropriate utterances and behaviours in a certain situation. Procedural knowledge: knowledge of the procedures employed in executing conversations.

When making a request or asking permission, for instance, it is better in Japanese not to open the matter abruptly, such as "*Sh•gakukin no suisenj• o kaite kuremasen ka* (Could you write a recommendation letter for my scholarship?)". Primarily, a speaker should understand how to broach the subject by considering the sociocultural conventions. When a student wants a professor to write a recommendation letter of scholarship, the order of the student's utterances should be:

      (1) Phatic greeting and gaining attention,

      (2) Opening the conversation,

      (3) Explaining the reason,

      (4) Asking,

      (5) Showing appreciation regardless of the result,

      (6) Phatic greeting and making closing remarks.[65]

It is not necessary to follow this order strictly; however, if 'asking' for a recommendation letter comes prior to 'explaining' the reason for the letter, the Japanese professor might be offended and even upset. The matter to be concerned about here is to give the

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[65] A typical conversation would be,

(1) Greeting and gaining attention, "*Shitsurei shimasu* (Excuse me)",

(2) Opening the conversation, "*Sensei, chotto onegai shitai koto ga aru no desu ga, ima yoroshii desh•ka* (Professor, is it alright now as I'd like to ask your favour?)",

(3) Explaining the reason, "*An•, jitsu wa sh•gakukin o uketai no desu ga, sono tame ni, ky•ju no suisenj• ga hitsuy• ni narimashite…* (Well, as a matter of fact, I'd like to receive a scholarship. So, I need a recommendation letter from you)",

(4) Asking, "*O-isogashii tokoro m•shiwake gozaimasen ga, kaite itadakemasu desh• ka* (Sorry for asking you at a busy time, but could you please write it for me?)",

(5) Showing appreciation regardless of the result, "*Arigat• gozaimasu. Yoroshiku onegai itashimasu* (I really appreciate your favour, thank you very much)",

(6) Greeting and making closing remarks, "*Shitsurei shimasu* (Excuse me)" (Kabaya et al. 1998: 42).

professor some time to prepare a reply, and not to surprise him/her by requesting point-blank.

By contrast, when someone requests something of a friend or colleague, the utterance could start immediately from an opening or explanation of the reason, omitting courteous greetings. The approach thus changes by adjusting the level of politeness in accordance with the distance of rank in the social hierarchy. However, the procedural order remains unchanged. This requires a circumstantial explanation proceeding to a request. A sudden request in the latter case tends to be regarded as blunt and unsophisticated. The requester needs to recognise his/her situation, which is often lower than that of the person being asked, at least in conformity to the norms of Japanese sociocultural behaviour.

The fundamental point is that the relationship between people determines the appropriate procedure on any occasion. A conversation will be perceived as natural as long as the speaker complies with social etiquette, including the order of the utterances in line with the distance of the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor. This, again, is frequently an additional challenge for JSOL learners, unless instruction is explicit.

There are two major elements in Japanese to making utterances sound natural in dialogues. Firstly, appropriate words and expressions have to be employed in conversation in recognition of the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor. Particularly when the interlocutor is a senior in terms of social rank or age, the range of choice in words and expression is narrowed. At the same time, the right of the decision-making being deferred to the interlocutor, along with the benefit given to the speaker, make the utterance more polite. The order of utterance should also be a concern as one of

the conventions of social behaviour, especially when asking a favour of the interlocutor. Secondly, utterance becomes more native-like if the following are observed. These include ellipsis, unfinished ending, hesitancy, sounding indirect, anticipatory completion, and back-channelling. These are notable characteristics of 'natural' Japanese conversation.

2.4.9. Challenges of paralinguistic features

Interactive response, one of the communicative skills including back-channelling (*aizuchi*) and anticipatory completion (*sakidori*), is recognised in accordance with various intentions of the listener and speaker during conversation. [66] In particular, back-channelling plays an important role in Japanese conversation. There are eighty-five back-channelling expressions reported in Japanese so far, and on average the Japanese give back-channelling seventeen times a minute (N. Mizutani cited by Horiguchi 1990: 22).

An experiment on interactive responses in conversation was conducted by Horiguchi with non-Japanese university students. They were requested to converse with peer students about any familiar topic for ten to twenty minutes. The aim of her research was to find out how often interactive utterances appeared in their conversations, such as back-channelling and anticipatory completion, since these are frequently produced in conversations among the Japanese people. In this experiment, frequently used back-

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[66] Back-channelling (*aizuchi*) is used to give interactions that make a conversation go smoothly such as *naruhodo* (I see). Anticipatory completion (*sakidori*) is used to anticipate the utterance of an interlocutor and deliver what is anticipated prior to the interlocutor's utterance.

channelling were *hai* (yes), *un* (yeah), and *s• desu ne* (well, that's so).[67] The result was that the frequency with which even advanced level JSOL learners uttered back-channelling was only one-fifth of that of Japanese. Horiguchi reports that the Japanese produce back-channelling every three to five clauses, while JSOL learners do it every six clauses at the most. On the other hand, the number of anticipatory completions in the experiment was fifty-five, which seems to be almost the same as that of native speakers. As for beginners learning the Japanese language, however, twenty per cent of subjects did not make any interactive responses, and even if they did, only four types of back-channelling were used. In other words, as learners progress to higher levels of Japanese competency, their interactive responses become more similar to the Japanese, but especially in the case of back-channelling, their number of responses is still comparatively limited. It is important for JSOL learners to know that Japanese people are prone to judge the spoken language competency of learners by their frequency of back-channelling (Horiguchi 1990: 23-30).

By contrast, a study regarding the frequency of usage of back-channelling at the Australian National University in 1999 revealed conflicting results (Mukai 1999: 215). The aim of this study was to compare qualitatively and quantitatively with native Japanese speakers the back-channelling of advanced level learners who had been in Japan for more than one year. There are two functions of back-channelling: simple acknowledgement and the listener's attitudes, such as sympathy, towards the speaker. The result was that regarding frequency, learners were found to produce back-channelling as often as native speakers, but the back-channelling usage by learners was significantly

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[67] Most frequently used back-channelling responses are, *hai* (yes) 24%, *un* (yeah) 18%, *s• desu ne* (well, that's so) 11%, *•n* (hum) 8%, and • (eh) 4% (Horiguchi 1990:23).

different in the qualitative aspects. Learners do not express their attitude toward what the speaker says as much as native speakers do when producing back-channelling.

Although the findings of the two experimental studies are somewhat contradictory in terms of back-channelling, it is imperative for learners to raise their awareness of the importance of interactive responses, especially back-channelling. Learners cannot ignore this when communicating in Japanese, because appropriate use of interactive response is a key to be regarded as good listener as well as a good speaker by the Japanese.

There are various types of challenges lying in wait for JSOL learners. As previously explained, from the linguistic viewpoint, the Japanese language is far different from almost all other languages in the world except some speakers such as Korean or Mongolian who seem to acquire Japanese comparatively quicker than speakers of languages such as English owing to similarities in the grammatical structures of thsir langauges. These challenges, in turn, become the distinguishing features of the Japanese language. There is no shortcut to victory in acquiring any language, and most probably, making steady efforts is the only way. Owing to the dissimilarity in the characteristics of Japanese from other languages, JSOL learners will have to strive harder, and it will obviously take a longer time for them to attain their goal than for learners of other languages. For JSOL learners, not only the teacher's attitude but also the quality of supporting materials, such as textbooks, are the major elements in maintaining their motivation to learn a difficult language such as Japanese, which contains many challenges for learners.

Chapter 3: Textbooks for teaching Japanese as a second or other language

3.1. Overview

In the field of JSOL, changes in the Japanese economic and social environment have drastically changed student demographics. The academic discipline of JSOL was not fully-fledged until the end of the 1970s, and since the 1980s, the number of teachers who majored in JSOL teaching has increased in Japan (Kawarazaki et al. 1992:3-4). Foreign language classes comprise students, teachers, teaching methods, and teaching and learning materials. Kawase states that teaching and learning materials including textbooks present contents to be learned, and serve to connect teachers with learners. In order to attain the desired outcome of a course efficiently, three elements are considered important. These are students, teachers, and appropriate textbooks. Authors of textbooks should consider the principles of Japanese language education, along with teaching methods, learners' levels, and the learning environment of the potential learners present. When creating a textbook, linguistic elements (pronunciation, script, vocabulary, and grammar) and material related to language competency skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are devised and incorporated into it, as well as appropriate sociocultural components. Comprehensive and multipurpose textbooks cannot be realised without these elements. (Kawase 2007: 23-25)

The chronology of the development of teaching methods is that, as mentioned in Chapter 2, there was a long history of Grammar-Translation method, whereby learning Japanese was largely tantamount to looking up a word in a dictionary and memorising new vocabulary. The intrinsic essence of communication was pushed to the periphery of study by such an approach. However, as the characteristics of Japanese language learners

diversified, their demands expanded and communication took centre stage. In recent years, via the Communicative approach, a sociolinguistic and sociocultural component has been emphasised in the field of the Japanese language teaching and learning domain. Authenticity is prioritised in this new environment, which explicitly focuses on the fluency and naturalness of speech (Kawaguchi 1993: 23).

When creating textbooks, authors select the words and phrases, and they can also determine how plausibly each utterance is described in a model conversation within the textbooks according to the setting. At issue here is the inclusion of explanatory descriptions about such utterances. These are premised upon the Japanese sociocultural background, which native speakers understand instinctively but which foreign learners may not. The explanation of appropriateness in a given context is crucial for learners in order to recognise it and apply it to other similar settings. Hence, examining the textual explanations about the speaker's utterances is important in Japanese language textbooks.

The important point for Japanese language learners, even through the Communicative approach, is to understand the environment around them and to use appropriate words and sentences which depend on the so-called '5W1H' (what, who, whom, when, where, and how). The contact situation that Neustupný demonstrates relies heavily on the cultural background. Hence, learners have not only to acquire vocabulary and sentences, but they also have to understand the cultural and other environmental backgrounds. The speech acts for buying a train ticket at a station or picking up a taxi to a museum may not be too difficult to master in a foreign language, but understanding and comprehending how to communicate in a given situation appropriately may need a different strategy and tactics (Tarone & Yule 1989 in Wakui 2002:147-9). The ability to communicate

embraces cultural understanding, for language and culture co-exist and cannot be separated. To be successful, language education must contain cultural information (Wakui 2002: 150).

In the case of learners, if the language family of their mother tongue is far from that of Japanese, it is fair to assume that their cultural background is also very different. The Japanese language has been influenced by other languages in terms of orthography, syntax, and vocabulary as noted in Chapter 2. However, no matter how strongly influential they have been in the past and even nowadays, the cultural background of Japan is different and divergent from them. Consequently, it is imperative to acknowledge the similarities and differences in the culture of the target language (Nuibe 2002: 29), and to ensure that textbooks adequately contextualise the cultural environments of example dialogues.

3.2. Creation of textbooks

According to *Ky•kasho o tsukur•* (Let's make a textbook) by the Japan Foundation, when envisaging a new textbook, the purposes of teaching and learning, the curriculum, and the environment of teachers and learners are the factors to be considered. For example,

- Where is the learning site: domestic or overseas?
- What is the level of the learners: novice, intermediate or advanced?
- Who is the teacher: a native speaker of the Japanese language or non-native?
- What is the goal of the class?
- What is the time period over which it will be taught?

Topics in the textbook should range from the familiar to the less familiar for learners, such as from home to school, town, city, country and Japan. The importance of the students having a sense of completion when they reach the final chapter should not be ignored. This implies that the goal of the textbook should be selected to make it attainable for the learner (The Japan Foundation 2002: x – xii).

In 1992, the Japan Foundation conducted research on the needs and circumstances of the teaching and learning materials in overseas secondary schools.[68] It did not include the *kanji*-using region (China, Korea, etc.), because, according to the Japan Foundation, their needs were not the same as those of other regions. Their research found that materials based on the Communicative approach and which also had the possibility of progressing from beginners to intermediate level were very rare. Sixty per cent of institutions used materials published in their own countries. When these institutions selected the materials, they made much of the teaching method, grammar, and topics of the contents, such as Japanese society, tradition and customs. In other words, they taught not only the Japanese language but also cultural aspects (Tsuboyama and Mukai 1994: 125, 131).

Ono examines the nature and order of information introduced in beginners level Japanese textbooks. He categorises textbooks into two types: one is structure-focused, for which the workload to produce a textbook is not heavy,[69] but it may not be practical to use;[70] the

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[68] Research was carried out in the following countries: Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Brazil, UK, France, Germany, Russia, Poland, and Czech-Slovakia. The ages of the learners were between 12 and 19 years old.

[69] The number of structures for beginners is limited, and many textbooks based on the basis of structure-focused concept have already been published.

[70] Ono is concerned about the flow and naturalness of dialogues in structure-focused textbooks.

other is situation-focused, which is practical, but demands a large workload to create. He concludes that there are few salient differences among textbooks in terms of characteristics of dialogues or order of the materials. However, there are variations in the relationship between the model person who presents information and their conversational partner.[71] He argues that textbooks should take into account the many different human relationships, unlike grammar structures for which the order of the degree of difficulty has already been established (Ono 1997: 72, 80-81).

A description of Kusumoto's laborious experience of creating the Japanese textbook *Xingainian Riyu 1 (• ∈ • • •   New Concept Japanese 1)* in China illustrates what the authors avoided and what they incorporated in the textbook compared with previously published texts. [72] Primarily, they noticed a need to strengthen their teaching of conversational skills. Vocabulary and expressions in order to match present Japanese society were chosen, and some grammatical items were also newly selected. They attempted to present natural and practical Japanese, which learners could make use of as soon as they had learned it. They omitted unnatural phrases like, "*Watashi wa Tanaka desu* (I'm Tanaka)"[73] or "*Kesa nani o tabemashita ka* (What did you have for breakfast

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[71] For example, these are combinations of a teacher and students, a boss and subordinate, parents and children, doctor and patient, and so on.

[72] It took four years to publish *Xingainian Riyu I*.

[73] When introducing oneself, usually the first personal pronoun *watashi* (I) is omitted. In this case, it should be, "*Tanaka desu* ([lit.] Tanaka is)" (plain form); "*Tanaka to m• shimasu*" (humble form); "*Tanaka de gozaimasu*" (polite form).

this morning?)".[74] Examples in the textbook are not presented in single uncontextualised sentences but in dialogue style so that learners can comprehend the situation easily.

Another notion that Kusumoto et al. had was that they did not separate language from cultural teaching and learning. The Japanese sense of values was also introduced. For example, in general, Japanese have a tendency to circumvent direct expression, and put great emphasis on the concepts of *uchi* (inside) versus *soto* (outside), and politeness and humility. Kusumoto and his team came to the conclusion that a good textbook for learners must be useful and easy to learn from; which means it controls quantity and demands quality, and employs a systematic introduction of new items. A key to success in making a good textbook depends on whether the learners are able to apply what they have learned from a class (textbook) to a real conversation. He has a negative view of the modular type of conversation-based textbook, as he stresses that a textbook needs to link lessons to each other from easy to difficult in order to foster a communicative ability.[75] In his opinion, the modular type textbook does not have room to achieve this (Kusumoto 2003: 145-147, 150-151).

By contrast, Okazaki and Quackenbush express a positive view regarding the modular type of teaching and learning materials. Their point is that, compared to the period when there was only minor variation in learners' characteristics until the end of the 1970s, from

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[74] This kind of question is rarely be posed in daily conversation unless at a language class, kindergarten, elementary school, or a medical interview at hospital. If people dare to ask a close friend, it would be "*Kesa nani (o) tabeta (rising tone) / tabeta no?*".

[75] A modular type textbook is one of the editing styles. It is designed to accord with each teaching and learning activity so that users can select a particular topic and the necessary requisite volume of material for the lesson (Mizutani et al. 2005: 910).

the 1980s onwards, the diversification of learners' needs prompted change in the teaching and learning materials to become more multidimensional, because learners' objectives, native tongues, and future directions diversified. There are two purposes for learning Japanese that they highlighted: one is a specific purpose and the other is general purpose. For the latter, modular type materials are adequate because they are less concerned about differences in learners' language ability, learning style, and cultural background.

The modular type materials allow the syllabus to be flexible, mobile, and self-completing. This contrasts with the structural syllabus. Okazaki and Quackenbush follow Yalden's concept of using modules, which asserts that grammar should not be limited by the order of presentation; a module can be the foundation for a flexible curriculum; and a module can assist with a learning style.[76] What Okazaki and Quackenbush endeavoured to do was to be independent from the grammar-focused syllabus. They argue that ultimately it makes a textbook more comprehensive and more flexible to suit learners' differences in competency, language, and ways of life (Okazaki and Quackenbush 1989: 49-50, 54-6, 59).

The quite opposite views of the above two pedagogies are noteworthy. One supports a traditional style textbook which starts with an explanation of easy grammatical structures, while the other favours a modular type which enables learners to start at any module. The root of this contrast stems from different views of the characteristics of learners. The former's learners may share similar features such as having very similar goals; by contrast, the latter's may not, owing to a wide variety of learners' characteristics, such as

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[76] Yalden, J. (1987). *Principles of course design for language teaching.* London: Cambridge University Press.

refugees, South Americans of Japanese descent, housewives coming from overseas, and so forth.

3.3. Recent trends in Japanese language education

3.3.1. Insufficient contextualisation

Any model discourse presented in a textbook must be natural—not only individual sentences but also the flow of the dialogue. The context, therefore, should be plausible and realistic. The focus of Kawaguchi's argument is the unnaturalness of dialogues used in Japanese language textbooks. He selects examples from *Nihongo de manabu Nihongo, shoky•* (*Japanese learned by Japanese, Beginners level*) in which conversations in the textbook seem unlikely to occur in real life.[77] Although the purpose of one chapter, for example, is to introduce the "*te*-form" as one of the new grammatical structures for learners, he criticises the unrealistic speech and behaviour in the dialogues, claiming that this cannot be overlooked, even from a technical viewpoint of structural and grammatical education.

He cites research conducted by Takagi on "The kind of conversation that can be used in a textbook".[78] According to this, conversation has four indispensable conditions: (1) it is undertaken by more than one person, (2) there is a certain motivation/intention, (3) it

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[77] *Nihongo de manabu Nihongo, shoky• (Japanese learned by Japanese, Beginners level)* published by Taish•kan in 1995. Examples that Kawaguchi, a professor of Waseda University, criticises are presented in pages 134-135 of *Nihongo de manabu Nihongo, shoky•* and *Bulletin of Japanese language research,* Waseda University, vol. 5, p. 12.

[78] Takagi, M., 'Kaiwa to iu taig• komyunik•shon no shikumi (Communicative treatment scheme called communication)' in *Taig• komyunik•shon kenky• (Research of Treatment Communication),* vol.1. Waseda Daigaku Taig• Komyunik•shon Kenky• Kai, (to be published), p. 8.

takes place at a certain location, and (4) there is an interaction. He criticises dialogues presented in *Nihongo de manabu Nihongo, shoky•* for not fulfilling these conditions of conversation, so consequently their dialogues are not natural.

At the same time, Kawaguchi acknowledges that the dialogues contain structure, grammar and vocabulary as items to be newly introduced in each lesson. He questions whether including these is sufficient for achieving recognition. When creating dialogues, it is precision that is most important. This implies that the conversational situation must be carefully planned; people who speak must have a purpose(s) to be congruent. In the case of *Nihongo de manabu Nihongo, shoky•*, it fails in this point as the dialogues do not flow smoothly and the characters in them display incongruent speech.[79]

The purpose of Japanese language education for JSOL learners is to teach and learn correct expressions. Hence, the notion of contextualisation must be considered so as to form links between education of grammar and instruction of expressions. The words "who", "to whom", and "why" are three imperative elements for contextualisation, so that examples of dialogues shown in textbooks have to conform to the condition of contextualised conversation (Kawaguchi 2005: 4, 7-8).

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[79] For example, in a certain dialogue, when a teacher comes into a classroom, in spite of the fact that he knew that the next class would start very soon, the dialogue presents conversations with students about rainy weather and a traffic accident seen from the classroom window. Kawaguchi concludes that this discourse is incongruent and presented to introduce the "*te*-form" without careful consideration of the context.

3.3.2. Negotiation of meaning/correction

Another concern about dialogues introduced in textbooks is revealed by Miyazaki. He expresses strong concerns about 'controlled' dialogues presented in textbooks, in which he likewise sees similar concerns over learners, 'teacher talk'[80] and 'foreigner talk'.[81]

Miyazaki analyses the scenarios of 'negotiation of meaning' from ninety-eight Japanese language textbooks of various levels to see whether the dialogues of 'negotiation of meaning' were appropriately presented or not.[82] He observes that adjustment trajectories are seen when an irrelevant utterance (error, mistake, ambiguity) is given.[83] The variation of adjustment trajectories is determined by who takes what part in the conversation; namely, who marks the inappropriate utterance, and who executes an adjustment. This scheme comprises four elements: speaker, listener, notice of inappropriateness, and utterance for correction.

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[80] Teacher talk: a teacher's way of talking to Japanese language learners. It limits usage of vocabulary and grammar according to the level of the learner (Mizutani 2005: 345).

[81] Foreigner talk: a native speaker's simplified way of talking to Japanese language learners in order to help them to understand Japanese. However, this does not contribute to learners' acquisition of the language (Mizutani 2005: 503).

[82] 'Negotiation of meaning' is an action taken by a non-native speaker (or native speakers) who does not understand the meaning of the other party's utterance during conversation. For example, when a Japanese native speaker notices an inappropriate speech-act that a non-native speaker utters, the former asks the latter to repeat it, or corrects it spontaneously.

[83] 'Adjustment trajectory' is the series of patterns of adjustment practised by either a speaker or an interlocutor when an inappropriate expression(s) is uttered. This does not necessarily mean there are two persons taking different roles, because there is the case when one person makes an error and corrects it him/herself.

Miyazaki explains that there are four types of 'adjustment trajectories', which are:

(1) The other (interlocutor) notices, the self (speaker) corrects,

(2) The self notices, the other corrects,

(3) The self notices, the self corrects,

(4) The other notices, the other corrects.

Miyazaki contends that dialogue examples are not well balanced in terms of content in many Japanese language textbooks. He points out that in model discourses of negotiating the meaning, even if there are several options for correcting the dialogues, one particular type of explicit adjustment is intensively employed across the textbooks. He states that textbooks have to introduce not only grammar, structure, and vocabulary, but also some other 'negotiating' patterns which are indispensable, particularly ways of resolving errors in discourse. Otherwise, learners cannot acquire the ability to amend them.[84] His conclusion is that dialogues in contact situations, especially negotiating scenarios, need to be improved because there is no reason why other patterns of adjustment should not be introduced into the textbooks (Miyazaki 2005: 17, 21-22).[85]

His findings from the textbooks are that the majority of 'adjustment trajectory' scenes falls into type (1) in thirty-seven textbooks, followed by type (2) in eleven textbooks, and the rest to a much lesser degree.[86] He states that there are too many sentences

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[84] Sei's research on 'Difficulties for advanced business learners in business communication', too, argues that there is a lack of textbooks and class activities for learners to make them notice and solve issues/trouble for themselves in *Nihongo ky•iku* (*Journal of Japanese Language Teaching*) vol. 87. November, 1995.

[85] Miyazaki claims that it is mostly not necessary to practise explicit adjustment in real conversation. There are other ways of adjustment, but he also acknowledges that further research is necessary in this regard (Miyazaki 2005: 17).

[86] Type (3) is presented in 7 textbooks, and type (4) in only one textbook.

representing the native speaker's part, so that dialogues in the textbooks, in general, do not reflect the zest for resolving linguistic issues that learners have in real life. As teacher talk and foreigner talk are often recognised in authentic conversations, it is questionable as to why case (3) is presented in only a few textbooks.

Almost all of the discourses in the case of conflict in an interaction scene, such as 'negotiating of meaning', with given examples, proceed to resolve these issues. The means of negotiation are limited and they only present grammatical items, by which non-verbal communication and sociocultural explanations are not given attention. For instance, strategies for recasting (rephrasing questions) are not introduced systematically, but rather arbitrarily.

Neustupný's observation in *Nihongo ky•iku* in 1981 still seems valid. He argues that in order to improve competence in conversation, it is necessary to review guidance for learners towards the use of various correction rules (Neustupný 1981: 105). Although there are many rules concerning correction in order to rectify errors, it is necessary to assess the rules as to what has to be taught in order for learners to understand and acquire conversations more naturally and spontaneously. Also another point of concern is that since limitations of textbooks have been observed, these should have been recognised and corrected by the authors to provide learners with more realistic settings and possible situations.

3.3.3. Generation of alternatives to model dialogues

Textbooks show much interest in teaching how to generate dialogues, but there is no perspective on how to evade certain conversations. For example, when a learner should

execute a dialogue in such a way as to preclude honorific expressions but does not know or is not confident as to what an appropriate expression is, a substitute method of expression should be taught. (Miyazaki 2005: 2). Evasion of practising honorific expressions is one such example, but the message can still be conveyed. For example, when a student wants to borrow a book, he/she may say to a professor, "*Eigo no hon o kashite itadakemasen desh• ka* (Could you please lend me an English book?)". An acceptable alternative expression by employing the unfinished sentence avoids the complications of polite speech: "*Eigo no hon o yomitai no desu ga...* (I would like to read an English book)". Needless to say, use of the latter, the structure and expressions of which are easier than the former, is not encouraged. But the important point is that textbooks, and perhaps also teachers, should provide JSOL learners with alternative means of expression for certain speech acts if learners cannot generate them appropriately.

3.3.4. Deviation from authentic speech

There are cases where one has the time and ability to accept a request or invitation but does not want to accept it. These are rarely seen in Japanese textbooks, but can be observed in actual conversation data. In this case, specific strategies are evident. There are various circumstances which learners will definitely encounter in real life. It is especially important for them to know appropriate expressions and vocabulary for polite form refusals, because inoffensive refusal is socially and culturally more difficult than acceptance of requests or invitations. Textbooks are deemed to be one of the reliable sources of information for learners, yet they incorporate only a limited field, and this needs to be redressed (Laohaburanaki 1995: 25, 27, 37-38).

Textbooks do not always seem to reflect authentic speech. Laohaburanakit compares and examines expressions of refusing requests including declining invitations in ten Japanese textbooks with actual telephone conversation data from the following four viewpoints. These are: the structure of refusals based on the combination of "impossibility" and "reason"; the relationship between the participants in the conversation; the possibility of the refuser accepting the request or invitation with respect to timing and convenience; the degree of necessity of the situation, considering the possible effects of refusal. Laohaburanakit found that of twenty-five examples of refusal in the textbooks, only three were 'refusal' of a request, while twenty-two were 'declining' of invitations. The results show that textbooks are inadequate at presenting situations of refusal and the relationship between the participants, compared with actual native speakers' conversations.

It was found that structure-focused textbooks tend not to cover refusals, and communication-focused textbooks rarely have enough explanation of refusals as discourse. In other words, there is no guidance or explanation of the importance of maintaining a good relationship with others. The length of dialogues in the textbooks is too short. Furthermore, there is none of the dissimulation given to the requester/inviter from the refuser, such as are made in real life situations.[87] On the other hand, from this data gathered from real telephone conversations, it was found that the relationship between the participants influences the structure of the refusal, while the degree of

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[87] For example, when responding to a requester about a request by the interlocutor, the speaker does not reject directly, but utters ambiguous expressions, such as "*s•ka, komatta n•* (is that so, [we're] in trouble)", "*dame ka n•* ([soliloquy] I can't make it, can I?)", "*kangaete miru yo* (I'll think about it)", or "*d• shiy• n•* (well, what shall I/we do)". Upon hearing these expressions, the requester (Japanese native speaker) can perceive that his/her request would not be likely to be accepted by the other party. It must be very difficult for JSOL learners to recognise the real implication of the speaker (refuser) without explanation.

necessity of the situation influences the manner of the refusal (Laohaburanaki 1995: 31, 34-35, 38). In consequence, there is a discrepancy between the model discourses presented in the textbooks (which are simplified and less complex) and authentic speech uttered by the Japanese native speakers.

3.3.5. Summary

What we understand from this is that even though the quality of dialogues presented in textbooks has improved over the years—particularly since the days of the Audio-Lingual approach, there is still much room for improvement. This is because there are considerable gaps between authentic conversations and the model dialogues which are controlled by authors in terms of settings and variation of scenarios. For this reason, when creating a textbook, what needs to be considered is not only just generating phrases in model discourses, but also evading (or modifying) them so that JSOL learners may make use of them in practice, since limited and implausible discourses will not help JSOL learners.

3.4. Ideal textbook

Textbooks play a central role in the pedagogical domain, as noted before. Through a long history of teaching and learning of the Japanese language, textbooks have evolved in order to meet learners' needs, which differ according to time and place. Learners' needs and their reasons for learning also change over time. Thus, even though a textbook may have once been well accepted, it will not necessarily be well accepted by subsequent generations of learners. Unlike the days when there were very few Japanese language learners and they had similar study goals, it is unrealistic to aim to create a single textbook that would meet the needs of all JSOL learners today. In particular, the more

advanced the learner's level is, the more difficult it is to design textbooks, owing to the recent rapid diversification of learners' characters and goals. The creation of an all-purpose type of textbook is unrealistic beyond beginners level.

An ideal textbook should respond to the target learners' needs. In the case of spoken language textbooks, many kinds of examples are presented, from which learners are able to easily comprehend the various situations and functions. The model dialogues must be natural, the settings must be realistic, and possible alternatives should be provided in order to avoid presenting one-sided settings to the learners. It is also essential for the intermediate level learners to understand the importance of the sociolinguistic aspects which can often be seen and heard in real conversations, such as unspoken (paralinguistic) behaviour. This allows their conversation to become more natural. Long dialogues are not necessary if the objective of the lesson is general conversation, because actual conversations between Japanese native speakers are relatively short (Kawano 2008: 212).

Real life presents a myriad of possible conversation scenarios, and it is obvious that textbooks cannot cover all of them. But how do native speakers choose appropriate phrases according to the setting? In the case of Japanese, the following are prime factors determining their selection of appropriate phrases; the social distance between the speaker and the interlocutor (determined by gender, age, and professional factors), the standpoint of the speaker (apologiser, etc.), and the situation (formal or casual). A wise solution for textbooks is to present some typical examples of a discourse with accompanying tables illustrating other alternative phraseology. For instance, if the interlocutor in the model discourse is a male senior, other phrases used by female junior

parties, etc. could be presented in a formulaic table. Detailed explanatory notes about settings and functions (to apologise, etc.) from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics are also indispensable.

A difficult and long-standing issue facing traditional type textbooks is the frequency of updating of the contents, because speech changes over time. Once a textbook is published, revision takes much time and effort. However, obsolete and outdated contents are not appropriate as teaching materials. To minimise this issue, modular type textbooks are most suitable for the intermediate level spoken language.[88] When considering the changes in learners' needs over time, modular type textbooks have more advantages than conventional textbooks owing to ease of responding to learners' needs quickly. Their shortcomings of such an approach are the limitations on presenting an overview of the entire contents of the textbook, and maintaining a consistent design. Nonetheless, the crucial thing is to meet learners' requirements as soon as, and as much as possible. For this reason, the modular a way of creating textbooks is the most flexible.

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[88] The modular type is probably not the most suitable for the lower intermediate level where learners still have to master basic structures, grammar, vocabulary, and idioms; however, from the middle stages of the intermediate level onwards, a modular approach may be preferable.

Part III: Analysis

Chapter 4: Analysis of discourses

In this chapter, three kinds of model discourses presented in the selected textbooks will be analysed. These are discourses illustrating: 'how to request', 'how to complain' and 'how to apologise', since such sociallinguistic situations frequently arise in daily life. The order of analysis is as follows: discourses of 'requesting' are first, followed by those of 'complaining', then 'apologising'. This is because the contexts of some discourses of complaining contain the speaker's feeling of making a request, so, discourses of 'requesting' precede those of 'complaining'. Also, the utterance of apology often follows a complaint by someone. So, discourses of 'apologising' are analysed after those of 'complaining'. The points to be analysed are: (1) structures, such as the relevance of the approach, the contents and strategies of utterances; (2) expressions, such as the appropriateness of words and phrases for the intermediate level Japanese and the given setting; and (3) explanations, such as a detailed explanatory note taking the sociolinguistic and sociocultural background into consideration.

4.1. Analysis of discourses illustrating how to request

A request is an action by a person who asks the other party politely to do something for him/her. A request needs two parties—one to make the request and one to grant it (Izaki 2000:133). In order for the requester to have his/her wish granted by the other party, the means of approach should be considered carefully. Also, expressions of request have to include the requester's feeling of indebtedness towards the other party (Himeno 1991: 74, Hashimoto 1992: 97-97). In Japanese, the important point when making a request is to create the appropriate level of politeness in accordance with the social status of the other

party, and the significance of the content of the request (Kabaya et al. 1998: 136-137).[89]

If a substantial degree of difficulty is expected for the other party when a request is made, more polite forms should be employed, such as using negative and interrogative forms or conditional clauses.[90] This is because the decision whether or not to grant the request is the prerogative of the other party (Iori et al. 2001: 492). With regard to the approach to the other party, the level of politeness varies according to what and to whom the request is made. Table 6 shows the common different stages of the approach of the requester in casual (Level 1) to formal (Level 4) speech.

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[89] For example,

  1. Ask a junior for a pen: *V-te moraeru/moraenai* (can I V?).

  2. Ask a stranger for a pen: *V-te moraemasu/masen ka* (may I V?).

  3. Ask a professor for a reference book: *V-te itadakemasu/masen ka* (would/wouldn't you please V?).

  4. Ask a professor for a recommendation letter: *V-te itadakemasu/masen desh• ka.* (would you mind V?).

    (Adapted from Kabaya et al. 1998: 137).

[90] For example,

  1. Negative and Interrogative expressions

    …V-te kudasaimasen ka, …V-te itadakemasen ka (e.g. Could you please V).

  2. Negative, conjectural and interrogative expressions

    …V-te kudasaimasen desh• ka, …V-te itadakemasen desh• ka, (e.g. Could you perhaps…).

  3. Conditional clause (unfinished sentence)

    …V-te kudasaru to arigatai no desu ga, …V-te itadakeru to arigatai no desu ga,

    (e.g. I would appreciate it if…).

In a very casual situation of asking a junior for a pen, a requester may say *kariru yo* (male), *kariru ne* (female) (I'm borrowing it), while requesting a recommendation letter in another setting, the same requester would not immediately start asking the other party to write a letter, but would use one of the formulaic (phatic) expressions, such as *sumimasen* (excuse me) so as to attract the attention of the other party, after which they might ask the other party's availability before making the request.

Table 6: Procedural Elements of Approach

Speech Level 1	Broach subject •	Request				
Level 2	Broach subject •	Confirm the other party's reaction•	Request			
Level 3	Broach subject •	Check the other party's availability •	Confirm the other party's reaction•	Explain •	Request	
Level 4	Broach subject •	Check the other party's availability •	Confirm the other party's reaction•	Apologise •	Explain •	Request

(Adapted from Kabaya et al. 1998:140-142)

As already established, each stage of the process is determined by the setting, which is controlled by the content of the request, the other party's social rank, and the distance or familiarity between the requester and the other party. Clearly, if the level of content is casual, the approach is short. It is essential for JSOL learners to at least recognise the structure and components of request in order to avoid causing offence.

In a comparative study conducted in 1992, Hashimoto found a large difference between Japanese and English speakers concerning their approach to making a request. Although both groups commonly employ explanations about the reason for the request, Japanese speakers prefer using an expression to enquire about the other party's availability (to co-operate or help), while English speakers are more concerned about the feelings of the other party (Hashimoto 1992: 96-98).[91] Another of her findings is that there is a

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[91] Fifty nine per cent of the English speakers in this research asked about the other party's feelings. This was the most frequent expression they used, followed by an explanation and the reason for the request. By contrast, only five per cent of the Japanese speakers asked about the other party's feelings. The most frequently used expression by Japanese was to explain the reason for the request (47 per cent), followed by an expression asking about the other party's availability (43 per cent). The latter was used by only seven per cent of the English speakers. (Hashimoto 1992:96).

difference between, on the one hand, Japanese and Koreans and, on the other hand, English, German, and Portuguese regarding the approach to a request. The former group mostly adapts the procedure according to the social rank of the other party rather than according to the familiarity of their relationship, while the latter group changes their approach according to the degree of familiarity but not much according to social rank (Hashimoto 1992: 96-98).[92] These opposite results are a reflection of cultural differences. This demonstrates the conventional belief that people from East Asia are concerned about hierarchy and Westerners are concerned about distance or familiarity. Therefore, if JSOL learners come from places where the cultural background is not similar to Japanese culture, it would be worthwhile for them to pay careful attention to where the emphasis should be placed when making a request.

A study of expressions of request among international students was conducted by Kumai in Japan. It found that they were inclined to bring up a request abruptly and use the completed sentence …*desu* (V), while the Japanese used the unfinished sentence …*no/n da ke(re)do* ([I'm] V-ing),[93] where the missing phrase of the latter would be something like "*yoroshii desh• ka* (would that be all right?)". When making a request, a completed sentence, for example, "*jisho o karitai desu* (I want to borrow a dictionary)" can convey the intentions of the speaker, but it might fail to convey the feeling of 'sorry for bothering you' to the other party. The point here is that an unfinished sentence serves to convey the

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[92] In this research, subjects were asked to answer questions, one of which was what to ask someone to whom the subjects had to sell tickets for a play. Across the nine languages, the most common response was to state the fact or the reason, such as "I'm performing in a play" or "I have to sell a ticket" (Hashimoto 1992: 96).

[93] For example, "*pen o karitai desu* (I would like to borrow a pen)" versus "*pen o karitain da kedo...* (I would like to borrow a pen…, [do you mind?])".

speaker's feelings more than the blunt complete sentence setting out only the speaker's intentions (Kumai 1992:74). Thus, if elements of the request procedure in the speaker's culture differ from the unwritten conversational rules of the target language, the request might not be successful, or at the very least it may take more time to persuade the other party unless the learner is instructed otherwise.

Experimental research about differences in the procedure of approach between Japanese and French subjects was conducted by Izaki which corroborated Kumai's results. It was found that all the Japanese subjects uttered a precautionary expression to check the other party's availability, using a phrase such as "*chotto onegai ga arun da kedo* (I'd like to ask you a favour)". This kind of utterance helps the speaker to judge the other party's reaction, as it explicitly warns him/her that a request is coming. French subjects, on the other hand, did not utilise this type of expression. Instead, they mostly applied an implicit utterance related to the topic of the request. The Japanese subjects who received such an implicit utterance from their French counterparts could not grasp the intention of the French interlocutors (Izaki 2000: 137-142).[94] Izaki also emphasised that an unfinished sentence of the type …*V-n da kedo…* (e.g. *ikun da kedo…*, I'm going…[but]) was used by all the Japanese subjects. The word "*n*" attached after a verb functions to express the

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[94] In this research, four groups were organised as follows: (1) both a requester and an interlocutor were Japanese, (2) a requester was Japanese and an interlocutor was French, (3) a requester was French and interlocutor was Japanese, and (4) both a requester and an interlocutor were French. Except (4), Japanese was spoken in this experiment. The French subjects' task for a role-play was to borrow a car. They tended to announce, "I want to travel", "I do not have a car", "You have a car", etc., which insinuated something related to travel and/or a car, but these were not clear enough for the Japanese counterparts. Hence, they mostly failed to understand the true intention of the French subjects. Japanese people use of hints for complaints but not for requests.

speaker's wish and request tacitly. In the case of the French subjects, some people utilised unfinished sentences, but they missed the word "*n*" when they spoke in Japanese.[95] Therefore, their phrases seemed to state the situation, but not to communicate the speaker's tacit request (Izaki 2000: 143). This suggests that if the approach is different from what is customary in the speaker's own culture, it may take time to understand the other party, or the attempt may end in failure. Even if the approach in the target language when making requests is not recognised easily, it cannot be ignored by learners as knowledge of it will facilitate them in becoming natural speakers and prevent misunderstandings.

The use of Japanese verbs of giving/receiving (*juju d•shi*) reveals who the beneficiary is through the utterance itself. When making a request, this is the principal rule. Even when expressing respect, specifying the beneficiary should not be ignored (Himeno 1991: 74, 79-80). There are two key verbs of giving/receiving in Japanese, *kureru* and *morau*; and each has a polite form, respectively *kudasaru* (a respect form of *kureru* "give") and *itadaku* (a humble form of *morau* "receive").[96] Even though both *V-te kudasaimasen ka* (would you please V) and *V-te itadakemasen ka* (could you please V) have very similar functions, their nuances are slightly different. The former *kureru* works to heighten the interlocutor's position, while the latter *morau* works to lower the position of the speaker

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[95] For example, "*kuruma ga nai kara*…(since [I] don't have a car…)" is an unfinished sentence, but it only states the fact. If *V-n* were added, it would be, "*kuruma ga nain da kedo*…(don't have a car…, [so, can I ask you…])", and the speaker's unspoken wish would have been conveyed to the Japanese counterparts.

[96] When these verbs are affixed to an auxiliary verb together with a sentence ending particle, such as *masu/masen ka*, they create request forms. These are: …*V-te kuremasen ka*, …*V-te kudasaimasen ka*, …*V-te moraemasen ka*, and …*V-te itadakemasen ka*, etc.

and the phrase involves the speaker's gratitude for receiving the benefit of the interlocutor's action. Therefore, the latter is more polite than the former.

If, for instance, a teacher asks a student to open the window, "*mado o akete kudasai*" is appropriate, but not "*mado o akete itadakemasen ka*", because the teacher should not use a humble form to the student to lower his/her own position. In other words, the respect form, for example, *kudasai/kudasaimasen ka* can maintain the speaker's social status vis-à-vis the other party (Minami 1977: 36-37, 40; • ishi 1978: 177-178). These are subtle differences which originate in the different nature of the verbs *kureru* and *morau*. As a consequence, *V-te itadakemasen ka*, a humble form of the verb *morau*, is regarded as more polite for making a request than *V-te kudasaimasen ka*. When a student asks a teacher to write a recommendation letter for a scholarship, however, *V-te itadakemasen ka* is more appropriate than *V-te kudasaimasen ka*, because the expression is more polite and puts the speaker in a lower status. The important point is that the speaker has to understand the relationship between the other party and him/herself, and to use the appropriate expressions based on that relationship.

In summary, as mentioned above, when a request is made in Japanese, appropriate phrases and procedures are determined by the content of the request and the social rank of the other party, rather than the level of familiarity with the other party. In addition, it is necessary to broach a request with one or more preliminary phatic expressions to warn the other party that a request is imminent, and then the background information should be provided before making the request proper. It is important that JSOL learners appreciate all these points as well as learn the vocabulary and grammar structures associated with requests.

This section analyses requests as presented in the selected textbooks. That is, the structure, expressions, and explanations of the model discourses are examined for how and what is presented, and whether it is appropriately and adequately explained in the textbooks. There are seven model discourses concerning requests in the five intermediate level textbooks. These are:

- *Nihongo keigo tor•ningu* (hereafter *Keigo*), in Lesson 5 "*Onegi suru* (*To make a request*)", pp. 50-55 …….…………………………….…………......Excerpt 1 (p. 93)

- *Formal Expressions for Japanese Interaction* (*Formal Expressions*), in Unit 10 "*Irai suru* (*To request*)", pp. 112-125 ...…….……….…………..Excerpt 2 (p. 93)

- *Shin Nihongo no ch•ky•* (*Shin Nihongo*), in Lesson 3 "*Tanomu* (*To ask*)", pp. 39-52 …………………………..….………………Excerpt 3 (p. 94) and Excerpt 7 (104)

- *Gendai Nihongo k•su ch•ky• I* (*Gendai I*), in Lesson 1 "*Tanomu* (*To ask*)", pp. 1-28 …………..……………….…………….……………..……Excerpt 4 (p. 96)

- *Situational Functional Japanese Vol.3* (*Situational 3*), in Lesson 23 "*Tanomi to kotowari* (*Request and Refusal*)", pp. 181-204

  ………………………………………….….Excerpt 5 (p. 97) and Excerpt 6 (p. 98)

The following are features of the seven model discourses studied here. With regard to the characters, there are fourteen people in the discourses. All but one are males and the gender of this is unidentifiable due to polite and neutral language, and the textbook does not specify the gender.[97] The requesters are four JSOL learners and three Japanese, while the other parties are three JSOL learners and four Japanese. The reasons for the requests are: matters related to language learning in four discourses and technical help in three

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[97] The textbook is *Keigo.*

discourses. The settings of the discourses are: five conversations conducted at universities and a language class, and one each in a work place and a dormitory. In all cases the relationship between the requesters and the other party is close, or at least they are acquaintances. Four of the requests are made to a senior party, two to a junior party, and in one scenario both the requester and the other party are the same rank.

There are two different types of request scenarios in the selected textbooks:

(1) Non-mandatory request

When the interlocutor does not have an obligation to assent to the request: e.g. helping with Japanese reading.

(2) Mandatory request

When the speaker makes a request knowing the interlocutor is obliged to comply, e.g. asking a janitor to change a light bulb.

4.1.1. Non-mandatory requests

There are six discourses of non-mandatory request where the speaker seeks to obtain consent from the other party. Of these, four scenarios relate to language learning, and two relate to technical support. In the former cases, the requester asks a favour of an acquaintance or a senior party; while in the latter cases, the requester makes a request to someone of junior rank. As expected, the distance between the requester and the other party in terms of social hierarchy affects the requester's speech. This is clearly recognisable in their dialogue judging from the words being used by the requester. In the following excerpts in which the requester makes a non-mandatory request to the other party, the results of the requests are not always accepted. One is refused, while in the other, phrases of negotiation are employed until the other party consents.

Excerpt 1

Alex: *An•, ima yoroshii desh• ka* (Excuse me. Do you have time?).

Yamada: *Hai, nan desu ka* (Yes, what can I do for you?).

Alex: *Jitsu wa kin•, omoshiros• na kiji o mitsuketan desu* (Well, I found an
            interesting article yesterday).

Yamada: *S• desu ka* (Oh, is that right?).

Alex: *Sore de, yoroshikattara, yomu no o tetsudatte itadakereba to
            omoimashite…* (So, I was wondering if you could help me read it, if you
            don't mind…).

Yamada: *•, ii desu yo. O-tetsudai shimash•* (Alright, no problem. I'll help you).

Yamada is a volunteer in a Japanese class, whom Alex asks for help in reading a Japanese article.[98] Alex starts by asking Yamada's availability, and after getting a positive response, he explains the reason for his request. Alex's phrases are very formal; he uses an unfinished sentence to convey his hesitant feeling.

Excerpt 2

Kimura: *D• desu ka. Sukoshi wa yonde mimashita ka* (How are you getting on? Have
          you tried to read it a little?).

Smith: *•, an•, jitsu wa sono koto de ky• o-ukagai shitan desu ga* (Yes, well, I really
          came here about it, today).

Kimura: *Hai, nan desh•* (Oh, what can I do for you?).

                                        :

Smith: *•, ma, tada….chanto yomete iru no ka d• ka shinpai ni natte kimashite…*

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[98] Yamada's gender is unidentifiable as the speech is formal.

(Ah, um, I'm a bit concerned about whether I really understand my reading or not).

Kimura: •, *hitori de wa fuan desu ka* (Ah, you're feeling anxious when reading alone, are you?).

Smith: •, *s• nan desu. Sore de dekimashitara, donata ka bungo ni tsuyoi kata o go-sh•kai itadakenai ka to omoimashite...*(Yes, that's right. So, if possible, would you mind introducing someone to me who is good at reading literary Classical Japanese language?).

Kimura: •, *s•*…(Ahh).

Smith: …*iroiro shitsumon dekitara iin desu kedo*… (… if I could ask lots of questions, I'd be grateful…).

:

Smith: …*donata ka irasshaimasen desh• ka* (…, is there anyone who could help me?).

Smith is a student and his conversations with Professor Kimura are very formal and polite. He raises the subject, and then upon confirming Kimura's readiness, he explains his concern, which leads him to ask for an introduction to someone who could help him.

The following two model discourses, Excerpt 3 and Excerpt 4 from two different textbooks, employ the structure *V-te itadakenai desh• ka* (could you please V) which is commonly used when making a request to a senior.

Excerpt 3

Kobayashi: *Kim-san, ima o-isogashii desh• ka* (Mr. Kim, are you busy right now?).

Kim: *Iie, nan desh• ka* (No. What can I do for you?).

Kobayashi: *An•, jitsu wa kondo Kankoku ni tenkin suru koto ni nattan desu* (Well, the

　　　　　thing is, I'm to be transferred to Korea).

:

Kobayashi: •. *Sore de chotto onegai ga arun desu ga* (Yes, and, I'd like to ask you a

　　　　　favour).

Kim:　　　*Hai…* (Yes).

Kobayashi: …*zutto tsukattenai mono desu kara, m• sukkari wasurete shimatte...*

　　　　　Sore de, Kim-san no tsug• no ii toki de iin desu ga…(I haven't used it

　　　　　[Korean], so I've forgotten it. So, some time when it's convenient for

　　　　　you…).

Kim:　　　• (Yes).

Kobayshi:　*Chotto Kankokugo o oshiete itadakenai desh• ka* (Could you please teach

　　　　　me a bit of Korean?).

Kim:　　　…*Uun, chotto jishin ga nai desu ne* (…Um, I'm not very confident [about

　　　　　that]).

Kobayashi: *Ie, tada issho ni Kankokugo de oshaberi suru dake de iin desu yo* (No,

　　　　　no. Just chatting in Korean would do).

Kim:　　　•, *s• desu ka*. *Sore nara watashi ni mo dekis• desu* (Is that right? In that case,

　　　　　I'll be able to do it).

Kobayashi, an employee, and Kim, a trainee, work for the same company. Kobayashi asks Kim to help with his Korean conversation. The textbook does not explain the relationship between the two, but judging from their dialogues, we can assume they are acquaintances. But they do not seem to be close enough to call each other friends because they both use polite forms of speech. At first, Kobayashi asks Kim's availability to

converse with him, and upon getting an affirmative reply, Kobayashi reveals the situation, and then makes his request.

There are three important points in Excerpt 3. These are: (1) setting the condition *tsug• no ii toki de iin desu ga* (some time when it's convenient for you) before making the request, (2) the use of the humble polite form *V-te itadakenai desh• ka* (could you please V), and (3) Kobayashi's further explanation of his request after Kim's initial refusal. This is the kind of circumlocutory discourse that reflects real conversations.[99] Kobayashi pursues his request further in order to persuade Kim, by explaining that the request should not be a heavy burden for him. Kobayashi's phrase *V dake de* (only V) appears to lessen Kim's concerns. Also, both Kobayashi and Kim use the word *chotto* (a little bit) which serves to lighten the degree of obligation implied in the request.

In the following discourse, Excerpt 4, the requester also makes a second attempt as the other party does not respond positively when the initial request is made.

Excerpt 4

Reed: *An•, Kinoshita-san, chotto ii desh• ka* (Mr. Kinoshita, do you have some
            time?).

Kinoshita: *Un, nani* (Yeah, what can I do for you?).

Reed: *Kore ni furigana o tsukete itadakenai desh• ka* (could you add *furigana*
            to this?).

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[99] A comparative study of refusal between Japanese and English speakers finds that two thirds of 62 pairs of the same language subjects pursued the request again if they got refused the first time (Nishimura 2007: 107).

Kinoshita: *Ii yo* (No problem).

Reed: *Konsh• ch• ni yomanakereba naranain desu kedo, kanji ga •sugite…*(I have

to read this by the end of the week, but there are too many *kanji*…).

Kinoshita: *S•. Dore. •, konna ni aru no. Ima sugu* (Is that so. Let me see. Wow, so

many. Do you need it right now?).

Reed: *Iie, ashita demo iin desu* (Oh, no, tomorrow will do).

Kinoshita: *Ja, azukatte oite ii ka na. Ashita made ni yattoku kara* (Okay, can I keep

this? I'll finish it by tomorrow).

Reed: *Sumimasen. O-isogashii tokoro o* (Thank you so much, when you're

busy).

The textbook does not give the gender of the characters, but only states their relationship;

i.e. Kinoshita is of senior rank to Reed. Judging from some of Kinoshita expressions,

such as the sentence ending particle *na*, we can assume that Kinoshita is male.

The next two discourses, Excerpt 5 and Excerpt 6, differ from the previous ones, for the

requesters do not employ *V-te itadakenai desh• ka*. This is because the male requester is

senior to the other parties, so does not need to use this polite and humble form. Such

phrases would not be appropriate for him unless the topic of his request were

exceptionally serious and crucial.

Excerpt 5

Suzuki: *Anil-san, iru* (Is Mr. Anil [Sharma] here?).

Sharma: *Hai* (Yes).

Suzuki: *A, yokatta. Ima chotto ii ka na* (Thank goodness. Do you have a minute?).

Sharma: *Hai, nan desh• ka* (Yes, what is it?).

Suzuki: *Jitsu wa, ima uchi no kenky• shitsu de* (Actually, at my lab at present…).

Sharma: • (Yes).

Suzuki: *Sent• no h• kara sofuto tanomareterun da kedo* (We've been asked by the Centre to develop some software).

Sharma: • (Yes).

Suzuki: *Anil-san, B•shikku wakaru yo ne* (Mr. Anil [Sharma], you know Basic, don't you?).

Sharama: • …(Yes…).

Suzuki: *Ja, sumanai kedo, chotto tetsudatte moraenai ka na* (Sorry, but could you help us, please?).

Sharma: *An•, sore, isogimasu ka* (Um, is it urgent?).

Suzuki: *Un* (Yep).

Sharma: *Jitsu wa konsh• ch• ni kakanakucha naranai rep•to ga arun desu* (Actually, I have a report that I mush finish by the end of this week).

Suzuki: *S• ka, Ja, chotto muri da na* (Oh. So, it'd be impossible).

After being declined by Sharma in Excerpt 5, Suzuki tries to convince Yamashita to support him in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6

Suzuki: *O, Yamashita* (Oh, Yamashita).

Yamashita: *A, d•mo* (Oh, hello).

Suzuki: *Rep•to owatta* (Have you finished your report yet?).

Yamashita: *•, ima dashite kita tokoro nan desu kedo* (Yes, I've just handed it in).

Suzuki: *A, ch•do yokatta* (Ah, that's good timing [for me]).

:

Suzuki: …*Waruin da kedo, chotto tetsudatte kurenai ka na* (…Sorry to trouble you, but could you lend me a hand?).

:

Yamashita: *Kin•, rep•to de tetsuya dattan desu yo* (I had to stay up all last night to write my report).

Suzuki: *Soko o nantoka tanomu yo* (*Please* do me this favour).

Yamashita: *Chotto*…(Sorry, but…).

Suzuki: *Iya, ore hitori ja maniais• mo nakkute sa. Na* (Uh, I don't think I can do it by myself, you know. Please).

Yamashita: *Maitta na* (I give in).

Suzuki: *Warui na. Ban meshi ogoru kara sa* (Thanks! [lit. sorry]. I'll treat you to dinner).

Yamashita: *Hai. Yarimasu* (OK, I'll help you [lit. do it]).

Suzuki asks Yamashita to help him with some software programming. Yamashita at first refuses, giving his reasons; however, Suzuki's desperate phrase *soko o nantoka tanomu yo* is effective because Suzuki, who is senior to Yamashita, is begging him for help in spite of his seniority. Suzuki could have used stronger and more authoritative expressions if he had wanted. However, the right of decision would then move to the speaker, turning the request into an order. Furthermore, Suzuki's next utterance, "*Iya, ore hitori ja maniais• mo nakkute sa. Na*" explains the difficulty he will be in if Yamashita does not

help. The sentence ending particle *na* following after the end of the explanatory phrase contains Suzuki's wish to get the consent of the other party.[100]

Structure

Five out of the six discourses discussed here share a common structure, namely the requester broaching the conversation, giving an explanation, and then making the request. One discourse (Excerpt 4) has the opposite, which is that the speaker's request comes before the explanation. This might be acceptable in Excerpt 4, because the request is not urgent and crucial. In the case of Excerpt 4, the request is immediately uttered by Reed right after Kinoshita's agreement to engage in conversation, and then follows with an explanation about the need for the request. The latter part of the explanation *kanji ga • sugite….* is left unsaid, which shows Reed's hesitancy. Hearing Kinoshita's expression of surprise, Reed negotiates by saying *iie, ashita demo iin desu*. The order of the utterances is that the request is made before the explanation. This does not seem to be quite appropriate, even if the content of the request is light and not very serious. Yet, it might be better still to have given the explanation of the request beforehand to prepare the other party for the request. Izaki's research (2000) confirms the validity of this approach (pp. 88-89).

Four of the model requests are not accepted immediately by the other party. Of these, three are accepted at the second attempt, but one is finally refused in Excerpt 5. These are useful scenarios for JSOL learners as they reflect real life situations rather than just smooth acceptances, because the structure and expressions of those dialogues contain first and second attempts at requests, and utilising negotiations.

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[100] In the case of female language, it would be *ne.*

Expressions

All the discourses covered so far use verbs of giving/receiving. Four out of the six discourses employ a variation of the verb *itadaku*, as their conversational counterparts are all senior parties. Two discourses employ a variation of *morau* (receive) and *kureru* (give) respectively. This is because the other parties are of junior rank to the speaker. It is obvious that verbs of giving/receiving should be utilised when a request is made unless the setting is very casual. A typical example of this is observed in Excerpts 5 and 6.

In Excerpt 5, the requester, Suzuki, uses *morau* (receive), which is one of the verbs of giving/receiving, when making the request, which clarifies that he is the beneficiary. His other expression *ka na* also indicates his hope. His tactic is more effective than using a more direct expression such as *tetsudatte (kure) yo*, because as the senior party Suzuki's use of *tetsudatte moraenai kana* conveys a casual and condescending feeling, such that the junior party who is the interlocutor might feel difficulty in refusing the request without good reason.[101]

Suzuki's dialogue with Sharma, *ja, sumanai kedo, chotto tetsudatte moraenai ka na* may be interpreted as follows: (1) Suzuki at first says *ja sumanai kedo* by way of apology, then (2) adds *ka na* in order to leave the decision to Sharma. Therefore, while the verb *morau* itself alone does not contain the meaning of lowering the speaker's position, this utterance as a whole indicates that Suzuki lowers himself. Owing to Sharma's own circumstances, however, Suzuki's request is refused in the end. One minor criticism of this dialogue is Sharma's last sentence when he explains the reason for refusing the

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[101] The sentence ending particle *ka na* expresses a speaker's wish (Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenky•jo 1984: 126). The use of *ka na* is limited almost entirely to senior males.

request. Given that Suzuki is senior to Sharma, his refusal would have been more polite, employing perhaps an unfinished sentence and hesitancy, such as *chotto rep•to ga arunode…*use of which would not change the main context.

A notable difference in Suzuki's language in Excerpts 5 and 6 is that the requester uses *V-te moraenai ka na* to the interlocutor in Excerpt 5 and *V-te kurenai ka na* to another interlocutor in Excerpt 6. Both expressions are requests. The only difference is that the former has a slightly more polite implication in terms of a request than the other. This is because *morau* diminishes the speaker's status or position (Minami 1977: 36-37).

The requester utilises the more decisive verb *kureru* in Excerpt 6, because this phrase does not lower his position, although it still shows respect to the other party. The difference in the requester's approach to the two requests is also revealed by the way he addresses the other party. When addressing Sharma, Suzuki adds an honorific title *-san* after Sharma's name (*Anil-san*), while in the case of Yamashita, Suzuki just calls him by name only. This may be because Sharma is a foreigner and it could be also that Sharma is mid-way in seniority between Suzuki and Yamashita, so Suzuki treats him more politely than Yamashita. In short, the different perception of the other parties by the requester differentiates the speech level.

There are many other expressions used in requests in real conversations, so it would be helpful for learners to have at least some other key expressions as a reference in the textbooks. Another widely presented form is the contracted form *…n* (*desu, desu kedo,* etc.) for instance in Excerpts 1, 3 and 4, which expresses a hesitative yet relatively strong pressure.

One frequently utilised word is *chotto*, such as *chotto onegai ga…* or *chotto ii desh• ka*, when asking for the other party's compliance. These expressions are chosen according to the level of the request. For JSOL learners, it is important to acquire not only the various patterns of structures and expressions, but also to comprehend what, when, and to whom these phrases should be employed, because they are key components of the socially appropriate conversational interaction.

The very formal form *o/go N (noun) itadakenai ka to omoimashite…*(I was wondering if you could V) is employed in Excerpt 2. This particular formal unfinished sentence is comprised of a humble form of the verb (*itadake-*), a negative (*nai*), an interrogative (*ka*), and the assumptive elements (*to omoimashite*). Also, before broaching the main topic of the request, the requester shows restraint in expressing his wish using the phrase *dekimashitara* (if possible). He also uses *irassharu*, an honorific respect form of *iru* (exist). His last phrase is composed of a respect form of the main verb• plus negative• conjectural• and interrogative elements• these dialogues are applicable if the other party is superior and the nature of the situation demands effort on the part of the requester in order to achieve their goal. However, although the model expressions are complex, the textbook provides learners with no analysis of their composition and use.

In Excerpt 6, while maintaining the higher position of Suzuki, the requester also puts Yamashita into a disadvantageous position. After Suzuki's softly begging yet forceful expression *soko o nantoka tanomu yo*, Yamashita finds it hard to refuse his senior's request since he does not have a strong reason to turn it down. Finally, Suzuki employs the bargaining tactics of an offer of a meal. Suzuki's procedure of request is to confirm the availability of the other party, then to explain the situation, and then to make the

request. Even though Yamashita is reluctant to accept the request, Suzuki is successful because Yamashita does not have a reasonable excuse to decline the request.

4.1.2. Mandatory requests

There is one discourse where the requester, a resident of a dormitory, asks a favour of the other party, a janitor, who is obliged to respond, on account of his job. The utterance, therefore, is different from the other model discourses examined previously where the interlocutor did have a right to refuse the request. The following is a conversation where the requester wants the broken light bulb changed.

Excerpt 7

Lee: *An•, …. Rii desu. Chotto onegai ga arun desu ga* (Excuse me. I'm Lee. I'd like to ask you a favour).

Tamura: *Hai, nan desh• ka* (Yes, what can I do for you?).

Lee: *Tenj• no keik• t• ga ippon kirechattan desu. Torikaete hoshiin desu ga* (One of the fluorescent strip lights in the ceiling has burnt out. I'd like you to change it, please?).

Tamura: *Ima desu ka. Suimasen, ima, chotto te ga hanasenain desu ga, sanjippun gurai ato de mo kamaimasen ka* (Right now? Sorry, but I'm busy right now. Do you mind if I do it in about half an hour?).

Lee: *Hai, kamaimasen. Ja, yoroshiku onegai shimasu* (No, no problem. Thank you).

Lee does not use verbs of giving/receiving but an adjective *hoshii* (want) because he does not think that asking a janitor to change a light bulb requires a polite request. Because of

the different nature of this scenario from the others previously analysed, as soon as the requester explains the situation to the other party, he makes his request without checking the response or availability of the other party. JSOL learners should learn that if the content of the request is based on the requester's own wish, the utterance should use verbs of giving/receiving, whereas if it is based on the other party's obligation, the verbs of giving/receiving can be replaced by other neutral forms, even though the action is still categorised as a request.

Structures

The structures employed here are very straightforward. After explaining that Lee has a request to make, he explains the situation and makes his request all in one go. There are two reasons for this: one is the power relationship between the dormitory resident and the janitor; and the other is the topic of the request. Because the janitor is fully occupied at that precise moment, the request is not complied with immediately, but it is accepted nevertheless. This scenario is also one which would be likely to happen in real life.

Expressions

The form *V-te hoshiin desu ga* (I want you to…) may be used when making a request, but this differs from any other request forms examined previously. The usage of the stem word *hoshii* implies that the speaker does not have respectful or humble feeling for the other party, since it does not belong to the giving/receiving verb group. This is because he thinks that changing the light is the janitor's responsibility. However, the unfinished sentence gives a hesitant feeling, so it prevents the requester's utterance from seeming too demanding. Another noteworthy point about the requester's speech is that he does not even say *d•zo* (please), which makes requests polite. These two characteristics

distinguish this model discourse from the others. Furthermore, the janitor uses the casual word *suimasen* instead of its more formal form *sumimasen*. This is because he is not really apologising to the requester but just responding to him. As such, the word *suimasen* is not appropriate when apologising with sincerity.

For JSOL learners, it is important to recognise that there are two types of request: one is a genuine request based on a genuine desire of the requester, and the other is a kind of reminder to the other party who has a responsibility for actioning the request. Hence, the expressions employed differ accordingly.

Explanations

Among the five selected textbooks, the most detailed explanation is presented in *Situational 3*. It describes on what occasions, to whom, and by whom the expressions in the model discourses are appropriate. *Gendai I* provides an explanation of the polite and non-polite form,[102] but it is dislocated from Lesson 1, and the explanation is insufficient. Also, it contains the drill for …*V-te itadakenai desh• ka*, but no explanation is given of its usage, limitations, etc. The other three textbooks, *Keigo*, *Formal Expressions*, and *Shin Nihongo*, do not contain substantial explanations. Although all of them have practice drills, the quality is not particularly good because they are mostly mimicry-type drills.

Keigo does provide tables of expressions according to the level of the other party. These are easily understood by learners, so this is equivalent to an explanation.[103] However, the lack of explanation of individual expressions is this textbook's shortcoming, so the

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[102] It is presented in *Gendai I* on p. 126.

[103] Two tables are presented in *Keigo* on p. 51.

teacher's explanation of each expression must be provided so that the tables can be used effectively. According to *Formal Expressions*, one of the objectives of Unit 10 "*Irai suru* (to request)" is to be able to make a request to the other party using appropriate expressions. But it does not include any explanation of the structures introduced in that unit. Furthermore, it presents an expression *go/o-N* (noun) *itadakenai ka to omoimashite* (I'm wondering whether you'd mind…) as one of key sentences of the unit. Even if an explanation had been provided, the expression is hard to understand, and with no explanation it is most challenging for JSOL learners. *Shin Nihongo*'s model discourse (Excerpt 7), including in particular an expression that does not use verbs of giving/receiving when making a request, but the adjective *hoshii* should be evaluated for highly because of the thoroughness of the authors. However, there is no explanation about when and to whom this expression can be used. Since it has limited usage, an explanation is essential.

The result of the analysis reveals that almost all of the selected textbooks fail to present adequate explanations of the model dialogues. Requests involving verbs of giving/receiving especially demand a detailed explanation of the situations and personal relationships for which they can be used. Also, as with the other functions analysed here, the level of utterances varies primarily according to the other party's social position. Therefore, the textbook's lack of written explanation means that teachers must strive to describe for themselves the elaborate system of request forms. For JSOL learners studying on their own and with time-pressured (or less competent) teachers, those vital elements may not be sufficiently absorbed. The simple request forms are not difficult to acquire for learners. However, the more advanced the level is, the more complex and socially determined are the forms presented. Hence, adequate explanation is a lifeline for

learners. If the textbook does not have sufficient explanations, it will not function optimally as a useful educational tool for the learners.

4.2. Analysis of discourses illustrating how to complain

A complaint is a phrase or expression by which a person blames another who has damaged something or placed him/her in a harmful situation. A complainant expects to recover or improve the present (or past) situation that has been affected. The expression of complaint depends on the distance and relationship between the two parties. If a problem-causer is a senior or an acquaintance, the expression of the complainant is unlikely to take the form of a complaint, but rather of a request because of careful consideration from the sociocultural viewpoint in the case of the Japanese language.

Hence, one of the most difficult ways to express a speaker's thoughts among the various functions in the Japanese language is through a complaint. Making a complaint properly and fulfilling the speaker's wish are not an easy task even for Japanese native speakers, much less for JSOL learners, because of the risk of coming into conflict with the other's sentiments, avoidance of hurting the feelings of others, or avoidance of giving an aggressive impression. It is regarded as more polite to use a request form or using an explanatory expression, such as …*no desu ga* (because, since, as), instead of making a complaint straight to the interlocutor (Ogawa and Maeda 2003: 62). In this section, the selected textbooks are analysed with regard to the function of making a complaint. The points to be examined are, primarily, the structure of discourses, expressions, and explanations of model dialogues, as in the previous section 4.1.

There are seven model discourses about complaints in four of the selected textbooks. These textbooks are:

- *Situational Functional Japanese Vol.3*, in Lesson 21 "*Kuj• (Complaint)*", pp. 131-152 ....Excerpt 8 (p.111), Excerpt 14 (p. 120)

- *Shin Nihongo no ch•kyu*, in Lesson 13 "*Kuj• o iu, ayamaru (To complain, To apologise)*", pp. 172-196 …..…….….…….Excerpt 9 (p. 111), Excerpt 13 (p. 119)

- *Gendai Nihongo k•su ch•ky• II (Gendai II)*, in Lesson 12 "*Monku o iu (To make a complaint)*", pp. 61-88 …………….…Excerpt 10 (p. 112) and Excerpt 12 (p. 114)

- *Nihongo ch•ky• I (Nihongo ch•ky• I)* in Lesson 12 "*Kuj• no m•shi ire (To make a complaint)*", pp. 104-113 …………………………………....Excerpt 11 (p. 113)

The following are features of the seven model discourses. With regard to characters who make a complaint in the model discourses, three are JSOL learners and four are Japanese people. Those who receive complaints are two JSOL learners and six Japanese. This is because one of the seven model discourses is a tripartite conversation. The reasons for the complaints are: in four discourses the cause is excessive noise from a neighbour, and one each of carelessness, misunderstanding, and lack of information. The settings of the discourses are: five conversations are performed in or around the residence of speakers, one at school, and the other in a *ryokan* (traditional Japanese-style inn). There are fifteen characters in total in the seven discourses. The genders of the seven characters are indicated in either that individual lesson or in a list of characters presented at the beginning of the textbook, i.e., four are male and three are female, but the genders of the other eight characters are not specified. Judging from the dialogues of these eight characters, four out of the eight can be identified as two male and two female. This is deduced because there are several gender-specific markers uttered in their dialogues. In

total, therefore, six male and five female characters are presented in the seven model discourses. While the genders of the other four remain unclear, as their speech is neutral or formal. Knowing genders is relevant for JSOL learners because they might learn lines of model speeches by rote. However, sometimes utterances are awkward if the gender of the JSOL learner is not the same as that of the character in model conversations. This would be a failure of teaching materials.

There are two kinds of discourse of complaints which appear in the textbooks.

(1) Request-type complaints

   The speaker is discontented with the status quo, so that they make a complaint to the interlocutor in the form of a request.

(2) Advice-type complaints

   The speaker is certain and they have the stronger voice in the relationship, so that they complain in the form of giving advice to the problem-causer.

4.2.1. Request-type complaints

There are five discourses of this type in the materials studied. Of these, four discourses present noise from a neighbour as the cause of annoyance, and the other is one where information about a special lecture is not given to the speaker (complainant). The latter is rather exceptional insofar as all the characters in the model discourse are peers, unlike the other examples, in which the speakers are not particularly familiar with their interlocutors. These situational differences affect the forms of the dialogues. The following are excerpts from the dialogues.

Excerpt 8

Yamashita: *Sumimasen, tonari no mono desu kedo* (Excuse me, I am your neighbour).

Neighbour: *Hai, nani ka* (Yes, is there something the matter?).

Yamashita: *An•, sumimasen ga, m• sukoshi shizukani shite moraemasen ka* (Well, sorry

to ask, but could you please be a little bit quieter?).

Neighbour: *A, d•mo sumimasen* (Oh, I'm sorry).

:

Neighbour: *Ima, tomodachi ga atsumatte, chotto p•tii o yatterumon desu kara* (We're

having a party with friends).

Yamashita: *An•, m• 11ji o sugiterun desu kedo* (It's already past 11 o'clock).

Neighbour: *A*, s•*ka. Ki ga tsukanakute* (Oh, right. I did not notice it).

Yamashita: *Rep•to kaiterumon desu kara. Onegai shimasu* (I'm writing a report, so

please see to it).

Neighbour: *Hai* (Yes).

The neighbour seems to be understanding when Yamashita makes the complaint, although the party has been going on until late with loud noise. Yamashita's phrase *shizuka ni shite moraemasen ka* sounds a rather blunt and straight expression. In the neighbour's explanation of the reason for the noise and that for the complaint by Yamashita, both characters use *V-te iru+mon desu kara* which is a contracted form of *V-teru+mono desu kara*. This casual form would be acceptable when the other party is not higher than the speaker socially.

Excerpt 9

Annan: *Gomen kudasai* (Excuse me).

Neighbour: *Hai, donata sama desu ka* (Yes, who is it?).

Annan: *Tonari no Annan desu. An•,…karaoke no oto ga chotto •kiin desu ga, m•*

sukoshi, chiisaku shite moraenai desh• ka (It's Annan, your neighbour.

Um,…could you please turn down the *karaoke* a little bit more?).

Neighbour: *A, sumimasen. Ki ga tsukanakute, sugu chiisaku shimasu* (Oh, I'm sorry. I

did not realise. I'll do so immediately).

Annan: *Onegai shimasu* (Thank you for your understanding).

Comparing Excerpts 8 and 9, there is a difference of approach by the complainant, although both situations are very similar. In Excerpt 9, Annan, the complainant, employs more careful approaches by using a formal phatic phrase of greeting *gomen kudasai* when broaching and making himself known to the neighbour. In this scenario, too, the neighbour immediately acts on the request.

Excerpt 10

Lewin: *Sumimasen* (Excuse me).

Takahashi: *H•i, an• nani ka* (Yes, right, what is it?).

Lewin: *An•, m•shiwake arimasen ga, an• sutereo desu ka, oto ga…* (Well, sorry to

ask, but is it your stereo? The noise is…).

Takahashi: *Ah, kikoemasu ka* (Oh, can you hear it?).

Lewin: *•, sumimasen. Jitsu wa, ima shiken ch• nan desu. Sore de…*(Yes, sorry, but

I'm in the midst of exams now, so…).

Takahashi: *A, s• desu ka. Sumimasen, ki ga tsukimasen de* (Oh, is that right? Sorry, did

not realise it).

Lewin: *Ato mikka de owarimasu kara* (It will be finished in three days).

Takahashi: *Hai, wakarimashita. Ki o tsukemasu* (Yes, understand. I'll be more careful).

This is less formal than the discourse in Excerpt 9**,** but not as casual as the one in Excerpt 8. Lewin does not give his name, yet the neighbour recognizes who he is. Despite the fact that the phrases he uses are relatively casual, Lewin's utterances would not harm their relationship, because his speech is very hesitant by using the filler word *an•*, the apologetic phrase • *sumimasen*, and unfinished sentences.

Excerpt 11

Lee: *Sono, enkai to iu no wa, yoru osoku made tsuzukun desu ka* (Will that party continue till late)?

Receptionist: *S• desu ne, m• sugu owaru to wa omoun desu ga* (Well, I think they'll finish soon).

Lee: *S• desu ka. An•, sore de onegai ga arun desu ga* (Is that so? Well, I'd like to ask you a favour).

Receptionist: *Hai* (Yes [what is it?]).

Lee: *Moshi dekitara, heya o dokoka ni kaete itadaku wake ni wa ikimasen ka* (If possible, could you give me a different room?).

Receptionist: *Heya o desu ka* (Is the room [you'd like to change])?

Lee: • (Yes).

Receptionist: *S• desu ne…* (Let me see).

Lee's approach and expressions are weak when asking (complaining to) the receptionist to change the room because his circuitous phrasing gives the impression that he is begging rather than complaining.

Excerpt 12

Chung: *H•. Ano Yokohama daigaku no* (Wow, is he [a professor] of Yokohama University?)

Kobayashi: *Un, Indoneshia de totte kita suraido o misete kuretan da yo* (Yep, he showed us slides taken in Indonesia).

Silva: *Muk• no daigaku no o-hanashi nanka mo shite kudasatta no yo* ([He] talked about universities over there).

Chung: *Hont•. D•shite oshiete kurenakattan da yo* (Really? Why didn't you tell me?).

This is a typical conversation among university students, which is very casual and open. Hence, the expression of complaint *d•shite oshiete kurenakattan da yo* has only limited usage. This phrase should only be used by a young male to close friends.

Structure

The discourses are structured in one of two types:

(1) Complaint-first type: the complaint is made before the explanation, or there is a complaint only and no explanation is given. This structure is applied in three model discourses.

(2) Explanation-first type: an explanation is given before the complaint. There are two model discourses in this type.

It seems to be logical to make the complaint first rather than to explain about the circumstance if the complainant is under difficult conditions which are in urgent need of improvement.

In the three model discourses about the complaint-first type of structure, two discourses concern a dispute over noise, in which the speaker's ultimate goal is to get the other party immediately to turn down the volume. Excerpt 12 (Complaint-first type) where the speaker complains without giving a reason, is different from the other models in terms of the environment. The reason for this speaker's frustration is that he was not given information by his peers beforehand, so all the characters share the same background to the situation. Hence, the speaker who complains does not need to explain why he was annoyed. Meanwhile, in the case of Excerpt 11 (Explanation-first type), the story is very lengthy, as it contains 26 turns in the model scenario.[104] The speaker gives four different reasons for the unacceptability of his room to the hotel receptionist before asking to have the room changed. The request is eventually declined, due to full occupancy.

Another facet of the four discourses of complaint, where the problem has not yet been resolved, is that three attempts (Excerpts 8, 9, 10) out of four were successful. The structure of them is a complaint-first type. The structure of the unsuccessful attempt (Excerpt 11) is in reverse order: explanation first, and then complaint next. Although these scenarios were written by different authors in different periods over ten years, it is worthwhile for JSOL learners to recognise what strategy is perceived as effective by those who are native speakers authors.

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[104] A turn is a point of the utterance changing from one person to another. The number of turns of other model discourses is around ten on average.

Expressions

There are four completed sentences (not unfinished sentences) applied in the model discourses. These are:

- *V-te moraemasen ka* (could you please V?)

- *V-te moraenai desh• ka* (couldn't you please V?)

- *V-te itadaku wake ni wa ikimasen ka* (isn't it possible for you to V?)

- *V-te kurenakattan da yo* (why didn't you V?)[105]

The first three phrases contain the interrogative particle *ka* at the end of all sentences to request the other party to reduce the volume. Alternatively, it could be possible to use a rising tone after verbs of giving/receiving and leave the sentence unfinished. This makes the sentences casual and less intentional.[106] The expression of Excerpt 12 is different from the others in terms of the setting. The speaker, Chung, must be male because "*da yo*" is used at the end of the sentence, and the event that he is concerned about has already finished. He knows that there is no use complaining as he is unable to influence the outcome, as is clear from his use of the past tense verb ending *katta* (did). The speaker reproaches his peers for not having informed him beforehand, so that his speech does not contain a feeling of demanding that others to do something immediately, but conveys his discontent to his peers. Obviously, the interrogative particle *ka* is not used in this sentence, but another particle *yo* is used to blame the others. *Yo* must be pronounced

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[105] The order of the structures here is in increasing politeness except "*V-te kurenakattan da yo*".

[106] Verbs of giving/receiving used in the model dialogues are *morau* (receive) and *itadaku* (a polite form of *morau*). For example, *V-te moraemasen•*, *V-te moraenai•*, *V-te itadakemasen•*.

with a descending tone in this setting so as to suit the context. Also, the intention of the complaint is clearly different from the other dialogues, as mentioned earlier.

The speakers of the two expressions, *V-te moraemasen ka* presented in Excerpt 8 and *V-te moraenai desh• ka* in Excerpt 9**,** present similar attributes. Their commonality is that they feel superior to the other party. The verb *morau* ([lit.] receive) in these two expressions implies an action that someone who is socially lower than or equal to the speaker does for them (Bunkach• 1971: 61).[107] In other words, *V-te morau* contains a feeling of superiority on the part of the speaker so that the dialogue indicates the speaker's wish to the interlocutor**,** who is expected to comply with the request. Both dialogues have filler words, such as *an• sumimasen ga* (well, excuse me) to minimise the impact before uttering the *V-te morau* form. If the speaker wants to maintain a good relationship with the other (neighbours being the model cases), a combination of adding *ka* after *V-te morau* in order to make an interrogative sentence, such as *moraemasen ka* and *moraenai desh• ka*, and using filler words is a tactical choice. That is because the interrogative form yields the right of decision to the interlocutor. If *ka* were not added, the utterance would contain the imperative nuance, and if the filler words were not spoken, the impression given by the speaker would be blunt, even to the point of impoliteness.

As for the expression of the *V-te itadaku wake ni wa ikimasen ka* form presented in Excerpt 11, the verb *itadaku*, which is a humble form of *morau*, is applied. This works to make the speaker's position lower than that of the other party, here, a hotel receptionist (Bunkach• 1971: 45, 60). Furthermore, polite and circumlocutory expressions are also

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used. The speaker complains about noise from another room and wants to change rooms, yet this complaint results in failure in the discourse scenario. In particular, he uses *moshi dekitara* (if possible) which weakens the impression of his request. In addition to this, the receptionist's reply *heya o desu ka* is inappropriate to respond to the hotel guest as it contains a feeling of unwillingness, because Lee's request is clearly to change rooms.

The wisdom of presenting such a humble and complex expression for the intermediate level JSOL learners as a model conversation of complaint is questionable. What is more, it is hard to understand why the humble and very circumlocutory form, *V-te itadaku wake ni wa ikimasen ka*, is presented in the given context in which the speaker, a hotel guest, is annoyed with the noise and explains the situation four times. Such is the expression that it is doubtful about its appropriateness as a model discourse in the textbook, let alone as to be exercised by JSOL intermediate level learners. It would have been a better scenario if the guest complained and made the receptionist contact the problem-causer(s) to stop the party.

Other than Excerpt 12, the cause of troubles in these discourses is still ongoing, such as noise from a neighbour. All speakers, therefore, show a moderate or even respectful attitude when complaining to the person who is making a noise. This is because the final decision whether or not to reduce the volume does not belong to the complainant but to the other party. Consequently, the language of the speakers is soft, even hesitant. Typical expressions which the speakers use in their dialogues are: filler words like *an•* (well)*, m• sukoshi* (a little bit more), *sumimasen ga* (excuse me, but)*, m•shiwake arimasen ga* (I'm sorry, but)*,* and *moshi dekitara* (if possible). These expressions work to break down the defensive attitude of the other party, and are therefore useful tools for JSOL learners

because the situation has not yet been improved, and they need to persuade the opposition. Having the other party do as the complainer wants is his/her purpose. Several other typical characteristics of the Japanese language are observed in the model dialogues, such as unfinished sentences and hesitant sounds.

4.2.2. Advice-type complaints

There are two dialogues of 'advice-type complaints'. The causes of trouble are carelessness and misunderstanding respectively. The complainants, who are a janitor and a landlady, and the problem-causers, are all Japanese.

Excerpt 13

A fire almost broke out in the dormitory because Sasaki, a resident, forgot to unplug the iron. A janitor warned him to be more careful.

Janitor: *Sasaki-san no heya kara kemuri ga dete, taihen dattan desu yo* (We had a serious problem, as smoke was rising from your room).

Sasaki: *E* (What?!).

Janitor: *Airon o tsukeppanashi ni shiteta desh• ...* (You left the iron plugged in, didn't you?...).

Sasaki: *E, hont• desu ka. D• mo sumimasen deshita* (Really? I am indeed sorry).

Janitor: *Hont• ni ki o tsukete kudasai yo…* (Please be really careful…).

Sasaki: *Hai, korekara wa ki o tsuke masu. Hont• ni m• shiwake arimasen deshita* (Yes, I'll be very careful from now on. Very sorry about this).

Excerpt 14

Suzuki's misunderstanding causes a problem. The landlady notices the problem-causer must be Suzuki, so she cautions him about the rubbish collection day. She, however, kindly took back in his rubbish from the collection area, which had been left out on the wrong day.

Landlady: *A, Suzuki-san. Kesa gomi dashita desh•* (Oh, Mr. Suzuki. You put your rubbish out this morning, didn't you?).

Suzuki: *•, hachi-ji mae ni chanto itsumo no tokoro ni dashitoki mashita kedo* (Yes, I left it before eight o'clock at the collection place as usual).

Landlady: *… are, moenai gomi datta desh•* (…that was non-combustible, wasn't it).

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Landlady: *…moenai gomi wa mokuy• desh•* (…Thursday is the day for non-combustibles [don't you remember?]).

Suzuki: *S• dattan desu ka* (Is that so?).

:

Landlady: *Ja, ima made, zutto machigaete ita no. Sh• ganai wa ne* (So, you've been getting it wrong until now, have you. You're hopeless).

Suzuki: *H•, d•mo sumimasen* (Yes, I am sorry).

Landlady: *Ky• no wa watashi ga azukattoita kedo. K• y• koto wa, chanto shite kurenai to komaru no yo* (I took care of yours, today. But if you don't do such things properly, we'll have a problem, understand?).

Suzuki: *Hai, d•mo go-meiwaku kakete sumimasen deshita* (Yes, I'm really sorry for bothering you).

Structure

In Excerpt 13, Sasaki causes the trouble through a careless mistake, but does not realise it until the janitor points it out. The dialogue starts with the janitor's (complainant's) explanation. Excerpt 14 starts with the complainant seeking confirmation whether it was the other party (Suzuki) who caused the trouble. After confirming her suspicions, the complainant (the landlady) instructs Suzuki as to what he should have done. In both cases, it was not necessary to ask the problem-causers to do anything at the time of complaining, because the annoyances were past events, unlike the case of noise from a neighbour in the previous section 4.2.1. However, it is necessary to ensure that those who caused the trouble do not repeat it. As such, the complaint speaks as though giving advice. Even though both model discourses are edited under the titles of "*Kuj• o iu, ayamaru* (*to complain, to apologise*)" and "*Kuj•* (*complaint*)" respectively, their dialogues have similar scenarios, in that while complaining to the problem-causers, the speaker properly gives them corrective instruction. This approach differs from the previous cases of noise from a neighbour. Thus, the structure of 'advice-type complaints' is composed of the confirmation of the other party being the possible problem-causer followed by an explanation of the problem, with the expectation that the problem-solver will correct their behaviour.

Expressions

The following expressions are presented in the model discourses; forms of …*dattan desu yo* (it was…) in Excerpt 13 including its variations, and …*desh•* (did you V…, didn't you?) in Excerpt 14. The speech of the former sounds neutral as the sentence ending particle *yo* is used, which is applied by both genders recently, to soften the force of the words. Hence, this discourse does not indicate the gender of the speaker.

The very colloquial expressions "*dashitokimashita*" and "*azukattoita*" appear in Excerpt 14. These are two contracted verbs, "*V-te+ oku* ([lit.] place, put, set)", then it is changed to "*toki*". So the original forms are respectively "*dashite oki mashita*" and "*azukatte oita*". These expressions are casual and very often employed in daily conversation, but rarely used in written contexts.

The nuance of …*desh•* (did you V…) in Excerpt 14 is that of sounding out the other party who seems likely to be the problem-causer, and then to admonish the other party to ensure that he/she understands what he/she should (not) have done. Hence, the utterance should have a falling intonation (•) like an affirmative sentence. If, on the other hand, the speaker does not have full confidence that the other party was the person who caused the problem, the intonation should rise (•) like an interrogative sentence. Therefore, the accusatory implication of the expression …*desh•* in speech is clarified by the speaker's ending tone. So the implications of this exchange differ in speech, but must be left to the reader's imagination in writing.

Explanation

Explanations about model discourses focused on 'request-type complaints' are not fully presented in the textbooks examined. *Shin Nihongo* describes the aim of Lesson 13 "*Kuj• o iu, ayamaru* (*to complain, to apologise*)" as "to be able to complain while considering the feelings of others". There is a drill using the *V-te moraenai desh• ka* form. However, no explanation is given as to what and to whom it would be appropriate (or inappropriate) to apply this form. If this were used between friends when demanding the return of a pen, for example, the friend would be suspicious because the expression is not appropriate to a close friend and/or in respect of a pen. This is because it makes the

requester seem too distant socially. However, JSOL learners would not know this if they learn only by using this textbook.

In *Situational 3* (Excerpt 14), the explanation is detailed in terms of what and to whom to utter. It introduces polite and indirect ways of speech. Moreover, it adds the further explanation that "[A]n unfinished sentence like the above (*an• m•shiwake arimasen ga, terebi no oto ga...* (well, sorry to bother you, but the TV volume) /*sumimasen ga, terebi no oto ga ...* (excuse me, but the TV volume)), is often used in Japan, but to seniors you should also complain by first indicating your situation, and gradually raising your complaint" (p.148). It presents other model discourses as alternative information about what and to whom other expressions are appropriate, such as when speaking to a senior, a close friend, and a person whom you do not know well. In addition, this textbook contains a flow-chart of the discourse.[108] This helps learners to understand what approach would be appropriate when making a complaint.

Gendai II (Excerpts 10 and 12) presents several key expressions useful for polite complaints, such as *m•shiwake arimasen ga, an•, sutereo desu ga, oto ga...*(sorry to bother you, but, well, it's about the stereo, the noise is…). There are other examples and drills as practice of complaints to several different social ranks of persons, such as a senior and a person with whom the speaker is unfamiliar. These examples employ unfinished sentences like the model discourse. However, there is no explanation why the given examples of different expressions are appropriate in the individual settings.

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[108] The flow-chart illustrates the sequence of the dialogues, such as confirming facts• correcting a misunderstanding• apology (in *Situational 3* on p.133).

Regrettably, *Nihongo ch•ky• I* (Excerpt 11) does not have any explanation about the model discourse, but it does have word drills.

There are four textbooks in which model discourses of complaint 'Request-type complaints' were examined. All of them provide Audio-Lingual style drills; however, only one of the four textbooks, *Situational 3*, has any explanation at all of the discourse presented in the textbook, which is fairly detailed. With regard to explanations of the model discourses focused on 'Advice-type complaints, *Shin Nihongo* has a drill related to the discourse about leaving on a hot iron. However, there is no explanation given in the lesson. *Situational 3* provides an explanation of the usage of the phrase *sh•ganai*, which appears in one of the speaker's dialogues. It explains that "this usually indicates that there is no choice, but in this conversation, *sh•ganai* has the sense of 'you are hopeless', blaming Yamashita for his error (p.136).[109] No explanation other than this is provided. The key sentence of complaint in this dialogue is, however, "*k• y• koto wa, chanto shite kurenai to komaru no yo* (if you don't do such things properly, we'll have a problem, understand?)". Yet, there is no explanation about this expression in the textbook, either.

The reasons why two of the studied textbooks do not present detailed explanations about their discourses might be that the speakers in both discourses are a janitor and a landlady, so it does not seem that JSOL learners will have many chances to use them as their own dialogues. Nevertheless, insofar as they might be on the receiving end of complaints in future, an explanation would be useful. In this regard, to understand the feelings of

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[109] In *Situational 3* (p.136), it is described as "*Blaming Yamashita*", however, the character who is blamed by the landlady is Suzuki, not Yamashita, in the main text on p.133. This must be an editorial error. Yamashita is the person who complains about noise to the neighbour as presented on p. 132.

speakers who might utter such expressions, it must be helpful for JSOL learners to be taught these expressions and their nuance.

There is a noteworthy explanation in *Situational 3*, which introduces implicit complaints using *an• m• shiwake arimasen ga,…*(excuse me, but…) and explicit complaints using *an•, waruin da kedo...*(sorry, but…), as well as providing an explanation of the unfinished sentences which are often used when complaining. This is the only clear explanation of this type among the selected textbooks. In conclusion, the lack of appropriate explanation in the most of selected textbooks will hinder JSOL learners acquiring suitable expressions for complaints and prevent them from being able to select the appropriate phrases for use depending on their relationship with the other party and the seriousness of the situation.

4.3. Analysis of discourses illustrating how to apologise

An apology is remedial work to repair social interactions undertaken by a person whose conduct does not conform to the norms of society. The action of apologising for one's mistake or trouble caused to others is observed in every culture and society. Kumagai illustrates three characteristics of apologies in Japanese. These are: firstly, the apologiser is in breach of the norms of society; secondly, it is an action of adjusting the relationship between the apologiser and the other interlocutor; and thirdly, there are fixed forms of apologetic speech in the case of the Japanese language, these include *sumimasen* (excuse me) and *gomen nasai* (I am sorry) (Kumagai 1993: 4-5).

Understanding the manner of apologies in the target language society is vital for language learners. This is because it might be different from that of the learner's society, depending on the degree of similarity between the culture of the target language and the

learner's own. According to Kumadoridani, it is important that making an apology does not only involve uttering apologetic words, but also expressing an attitude of determination not to repeat the error (Kumatoridani 1993: 30). If the relationship between the apologiser and the interlocutor has been distorted by the apologiser's mistake, the speech and manner of the apology play an important part in repairing the relationship, as does the speaker in expressing his/her regret for the misbehaviour.

This section analyses the function of apology as presented in the selected textbooks. The analytical method is the same as for other discourses examined already. There are nine model discourses concerning apologies in the seven intermediate level textbooks. These are:

- *Shin Nihongo no ch•kyu*, in Lesson 13, "*Kuj• o iu, ayamaru* (*To complain, To apologise*)", pp. 172-196 …………. Excerpt 13A (p. 144) and Excerpt 17 (p. 132)

- *Situational Functional Japanese Vol.3*, in Lesson 21 "*Kuj• (Complaint)*", pp. 131-152 ……………………………………...…..Excerpt 14A (p. 144)

- *Nihongo keigo tor•ningu*, in Lesson 8 "*O-wabi suru (To apologise)*", pp. 68-79 ……………………………………………………………Excerpt 15 (p. 128)

- *Situational Functional Japanese Vol.2* (*Situational 2*), in Lesson 13 "*Kissaten de (At a coffee shop)*", pp. 132-152……………………….…Excerpt 16 (p. 129)

- *Japanese forBusy People Vol. III* (*Busy People*), in Lesson 14 "*Late for a Date*", pp. 136-143 ……………………………..……………..………Excerpt 18 (p. 134)

- *Formal Expressions for Japanese Interaction,* in Unit 3 "*Denwa de kesseki ya chikoku no renraku o suru (Telephoning in the case of lateness or absence)*):

The following are features of the nine model discourses of apology. Regarding the characters who make an apology in the model discourses, five are male JSOL learners and three are Japanese males, and there is one learner whose gender is unidentifiable. The persons who receive the apologies are comprised of two JSOL learners, of whom one is female but the other's gender is unidentifiable; and four each of Japanese males and females. However, the gender of the other two Japanese remains unclear. Three tripartite conversations are presented in the model discourses, so in total there are twenty-one characters in the nine model discourses. Male characters outnumber females in these settings. Indeed, it is interesting to note that no female characters make an apology in the model discourses analysed here. Six JSOL learners apologise, which is twice as many as the Japanese characters.

The reasons for the apologies are: late arrival in five discourses, and one each of carelessness, misunderstanding, failure to inform a superior, and excessive noise. Three out of the five apologies for lateness are made to superiors, who are a business client, a boss, and a teacher. The other two are business colleagues and *k•hai*. The settings of the discourses are: three conversations performed in or around residential areas, and two each at schools, in work places, and in the central city. In all dialogues, the relationship between the apologiser and the interlocutor is close, or at least they are acquaintances. In

other words, there is no model discourse presenting a setting in which an apology is made to a complete stranger.

There are three different types of apology scenarios that appear in the selected textbooks.

(1) The apologiser has already realised his/her transgression, e.g. late arrival, and apologises of his/her own accord,

(2) The apologiser does not realise his/her transgression until someone points it out, e.g. misunderstanding,

(3) The apologiser is already aware of his/her transgression but does not apologise until another points it out.

4.3.1. Active apology

There are five discourses of apology where the apologisers are aware of their error before making their apology. In these five scenarios, the offence committed is lateness. However, the degree of apologetic speech in terms of the level of politeness varies according to the level of seriousness of the offence and the distance of the relationship between the apologiser and the interlocutor.

Excerpt 15 is the case of a highly formal setting, so that the register is very formal and polite. By contrast, Excerpt 16 is a casual dialogue between *senpai* and *k•hai* at a coffee shop.

Excerpt 15

Alex: *Sakujitsu wa m•shiwake arimasen deshita* (I am very sorry for yesterday).

Kato: *Ie. M•, okake kudasai* (Never mind. Um, please sit down).

Alex: *…11-ji o 1 ji to kiki machigaete shimattan desu. Chanto kakunin subeki datta no desu ga… M• shiwake arimasen deshita* (…I misheard 11 o'clock for 1 o'clock. I should have confirmed… I am very sorry).

Kato: *S• deshita ka* (Is that so).[110]

Alex: *Go-meiwaku o okake shite, hont• ni m• shiwake arimasen deshita. Kongo nido to kono y• na koto ga nai y• ni ki o tsukemasu no de, d• ka o-yurushi kudasai* (I am terribly sorry to have troubled you. Since I will be very careful not to repeat this kind of problem from now on, please forgive me).

Kato: *M• , amari o-ki ni nasaranai de kudasai* (Well, don't worry too much).

Alex repeatedly makes apologetic expressions, *m• shiwake arimasen deshita,* three times to his business client, because the situation is very serious. Also, he uses *sakujitsu* ('yesterday' in *kango* (Chinese origin word)) instead of *kin•* ('yesterday' in *wago* (Japanese origin word)), because by using *kango*, his utterance creates a more formal and polite impression than by using *wago* (Iori et al. 2001: 487). All utterances of Alex and Kato are very formal, so the model dialogues are usable by both genders.

Excerpt 16

Suzuki is Tanaka's *senpai* who is twenty minutes late. His speech, including an explanation of the reason for his delay, is very casual because his conversational partner, Tanaka, is his *k• hai*.

Suzuki: *Y• . Gomen, gomen. Osoku nacchatte* (Hi! sorry, sorry for being late).

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[110] This is not an interrogative sentence. A falling intonation should be applied because Kato accepts Alex's explanation about why the trouble happened. If it were a rising intonation, it would reveal Kato's sarcastic doubt about Alex's explanation.

Tanaka: *A, kon'nichi wa* (Ah, good afternoon).

Suzuki: *Sensei-tachi to hirumeshi kutteta mon da kara* ('Cause I was having lunch with the teachers).

Tanaka: *Sumimasen, o-isogashii no ni* (Thank you for giving up your time).

Suzuki: *Ie ie. Kamawanain desu yo* (No, no. It's all right, I don't mind).

In the same chapter of this textbook,[111] there is a column entitled 'Tanaka's diary' in which she writes, "Suzuki is a person who 'always' comes late, and he came twenty minutes late". Yet, when Tanaka meets him, she also apologises with *sumimasen* (excuse me). In this context, Tanaka's implication is "thank you", because Tanaka does not think of complaining to Suzuki about his delay of twenty minutes. Instead, she even responds apologetically *o-isogashii no ni* (you must be busy [but you came here]) to express her appreciation of his effort to meet her. The important point is that even though a person comes late, if he/she is of a senior rank, the other party is likely to refrain from complaining or showing disapproval. Rather, it is more important for the junior party to express appreciation to the senior party for his/her efforts to meet, despite the delay.

The strategy of apology presented in Excerpt 16 supports a comparative study carried out in Japan and in the USA by Ikeda (1993). This concludes that all the university student subjects in both countries answered that they would make a clear apology to a senior party (here, a professor) if they were late to class. However, a large difference is revealed when the problem is caused by the senior party's misunderstanding. In this case, where the professor was mistakenly waiting for the student, 61 per cent of the American students employed a strategy of explanation and justification of the professor's

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[111] *Situational 2* (p. 131)

misunderstanding or fault, whereas only 2 per cent of the Japanese students did so. In other words, Japanese tend to avoid explaining and/or justifying themselves to a senior party even when the trouble is caused by the senior party. This may not appear rational on the surface, but Japanese are concerned about avoiding making the other party lose 'face', particularly if the other party is of senior rank, as they want to maintain a good relationship (Ikeda 1993: 14-16).[112]

Understanding both Tanaka's speech in Excerpt 16 and the behaviour demonstrated by Japanese students in Ikeda's research might not be easy for JSOL learners. Nevertheless, as a language learner, the important point is that even if Japanese are put in a compromising situation, they will not readily refer to it in the conversation, particularly if the other party is of senior rank. JSOL learners should be aware that in order to maintain a good relationship, it is not necessary to draw the attention of someone of senior rank to his/her error or fault unless the matter is very serious. In other words, it would be foolhardy for learners to indicate their senior party's error. Instead of taking the risk of damaging the relationship, there is another way to draw their attention to the error by raising a question related to the matter.

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[112] Ikeda's interpretation of the major difference between the students in Japan and the USA is that the Japanese are more concerned about the senior party's face than their own. Therefore, in order to prioritise the relationship with the senior, the strategies of making an apology together with admitting responsibility effectively are preferable strategies for the Japanese, rather than explaining clearly the cause of the trouble which implies the senior's fault. Americans are, on the other hand, concerned not only about the senior party's face but also their own. Hence, they add explanation and justification so as not to look bad. The numbers of the subjects who participated in this research were 50 university and graduate students in Japan and 25 in USA (Ikeda 1993: 14-16, 19-20).

Regardless of the level of seriousness, all apologisers in the model discourses start with apologetic words because they know the cause of the trouble is their own fault. The only difference among them is whether verbose explanations (or excuses) follow or not. If the trouble is very serious, a promise not to repeat the error is also added.

In the following Excerpts 17, 18, and 19, also, the apologisers make an apology to senior parties or collegues for their lateness.

Excerpt 17

Lee: *D•mo okurete shimatte, m•shiwake arimasen* (Very sorry for being late).

Ito: *A, Lee-san, d• shita no? Minna matteru yo* (Oh, Mr. Lee. What's happened? Everybody is waiting [for us]).

Lee: *Sumimasen. Chotto wasuremono ni ki ga tsuite tori ni modotta mono desu kara* (I'm sorry. [I noticed] I'd forgotten something, so I went back to get it).

Ito: *S• ka. Demo denwa gurai suru mon da yo.* (Is that so. But, you should at least have rung us).

Lee: *Hai, toch• de denwa shiy• to omottan desu ga, nakanaka denwa ga mitsukaranakute…*(Yes, I thought I'd phone you on the way, but I could not find a payphone…).

Ito: *S•, wakatta. Ja, minna matteru kara, sugu ik•. Shiry•, sorotteru ne* (I see. Well, let's go in now, they're waiting. You've prepared all the materials, haven't you)?

Excerpt 17 employs a different context from the others. This is because Lee, a trainee, explains to Ito, his boss, why he was delayed by giving specific reasons in detail.

However, it sounds as if he is speaking at length to justify himself,[113] so the boss urges him to go to the meeting by interjecting rather brusquely, *s•, wakatta* (Is that so? I see), as they are already late.[114] The above dialogue illustrates such lengthy excuses.

In such circumstances, the perceived value of justification may vary according to the individual cultural background. In the case of the Japanese language, excessive justification has an adverse effect. Consequently, it would be counterproductive and result in what might be least expected by the apologiser. The unwritten social rule, "in any event, apologise before justifying oneself even when it is not entirely your fault", is effective for Japanese people (Nakamichi and Doi 1993: 71).[115]

Lee had to inform Ito of the reason for his delay. However, the third utterance about difficulty of finding a payphone sounds excessive to a Japanese listener. Probably, he should have said, *hai, wakarimashita* (Yes, I understand). This would have sufficed in

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[113] The trainee's two dialogues have eight lexical units (*bunsetsu*) each. Kawano reports that on average in Japanese, three out of four casual conversations comprise less than four lexical units. This research in detail revealed the following; 3.8 lexical units in daily conversation; while 16.5 lexical units in radio news, and 21 lexical units in news comment on average. For example, the sentence *kesa • asagao ga • niwa ni • saita* (this morning, morning glories have come into flower) comprises four lexical units (Kawano 2008: 212-222). Judging from this, the trainee's eight lexical units seems exceptionally long.

[114] The boss's words should not be literally interpreted that he really accepts the trainee's explanation. Since the situation is that they have to attend a meeting, the boss is intending just to stop the trainee's excuses and proceed with the meeting. *S•, wakatta* does not always mean "I understand (or agree)". Sometimes, it involves the meaning that "I acknowledge what you say (but I am not fully convinced, or I disagree)".

[115] For example, a vehicular accident in the rush hour.

this context.[116] Ito does not sound fully convinced by Lee's explanation because his following utterance is *s•, wakatta*, which literally means "I see" or "I understand". However, his dialogue ends the conversation abruptly, for we can assume that he would not wish to listen to Lee's excuses. This is evident because his next utterance changes the topic to the meeting that they have to attend.

In short, in the case of apology, the length of speech and content are important. This should be noted by JSOL learners in order to avoid giving a negative impression by justifying one's own actions too much. Also, it is important for them to be aware that Japanese people are not likely to use this strategy much either (Mizutani and Mizutani 1984: 49). Both characters in this dialogue are male, according to the list of characters in the textbook. Lee's speech, however, can be used by both genders, as it is of a relatively formal and polite nature.

The following is a discourse in which the apologiser, Johnson, uses the present tense, when he apologises to his collegues for his delay.

Excerpt 18

Johnson: *D•mo osoku natte m•shiwake arimasen. Dekakey• to shita toki, denwa ga*

             kakatte kite…. Sore ni, kuru toch•, demo ni atte, takush• ga nakanaka

             susumanakute komarimashita (I'm terribly late. I do apologise. When I was

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[116] There are drills in *Shin Nihongo* (p.180) after the main text presenting the example, *…denwa gurai surumonda yo* (…at least [you] should have rung), and the reply to it is, *hai, korekara ki o tsukemasu* (yes, I'll be careful from now). As shown in the drill, this should be the immediate reply to advice [given by a senior]. This is appropriate in the given context, too.

about to go out, there was a phone call. Then, on the way we ran into a

protest march and the taxi couldn't move at all. I was stuck).

Chang: *Ittai d• shitan dar• tte shinpai shite itan desu yo* (We were wondering what

on earth had happened to you, and were worried).

Johnson: *Go-shinpai kakete m• shiwake arimasen* (I'm sorry for worrying you).

Nakamura: *S•, isogimash•* (Right, let's hurry).

As for gender, Johnson and Chang are male and Nakamura is female, according to the

description in the textbook. Johnson's dialogues are polite and Chang's is neutral, so

theirs are usable by both genders, while Nakamura's is feminine-like speech.[117]

In the following discourse in Excerpt 19, Smith who is a student uses the past tense when

he apologises to his teacher for being late for class.

Excerpt 19

Smith: *A, sensei, ky• wa chikoku shite shimaimashite, m• shiwake arimasen deshita.*

Jitsu wa jiko de densha ga okurete shimattan desu (Mr, Sakagami, I'm sorry

for being late for class. The fact is that the train was delayed because of an

accident).

Sakagami: *A, jiko dattan desu ka. Konde taihen datta desh•* (Oh, there was an accident. It

must have been awful in the crowded train).

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[117] Her dialogue is *s•, isogimash•* (right, let's hurry), particularly *isogimash•* is a female expression,

because it uses the more polite *–masu* ending. Its male equivalent is *s•, isog•*.

Structure

The model discourses of apologies examined are structured as follows. Firstly, the apologiser broaches the apology with an apologetic word, and then explains the reasons for the delay. If the social *faux pas* is serious, apologetic phrases are commonly uttered not only once but twice or more. In addition, in the case of a crucial situation, such as in a business environment, the apologiser promises not to repeat the same error to the business client. By contrast, if the apologiser is of a higher social position than the offended party, the apology is short, simple and straightforward. An explanation and/or an excuse are still expected, but it should not be too long. In general, apologies in this type of model discourse begin with an apology, and are then followed by an explanation of the reason (or excuse). Making a promise to not repeat the offense in the future is observed, when the social context demands it.

It is apparent that textbooks commonly apply the above strategic order of utterances, which should be recognised by JSOL learners as a sociolinguistic rule along with people of the target language. However, this rule is probably not going to be adopted by JSOL learners unless it is explained explicitly in the textbook.

Expressions

There are conventional phrases of apology in the Japanese language, such as *gomen nasai* (I'm sorry), *sumimasen* (excuse me), and *m• shiwake arimasen* (I am indeed sorry) (Kumagai 1993: 7). [118] These phrases are chosen by the speaker according to the seriousness of the trouble and the relationship between the apologiser and the offended party. A survey conducted by Nakada (1989) reveals that *m• shiwake arimasen* ranks

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[118] The phrases are arranged in order from casual to formal.

third in terms of frequency of use in conversation, after *sumimasen* and *gomen nasai*; however, *m•shiwake arimasen* is most regularly used in the model discourses presented here.[119]

The following is the list of frequently used apologetic expressions (phatic phrases) and the literal meanings of them. They are arranged in order of increasing politeness.

(1) *Gomen nasai* is a polite imperative form; meaning "forgive me", "spare me", or "your pardon", hence it is equivalent to "I'm sorry".

(2) *Sumimasen* derives from *sumu* (to finish), and *sumimasen* is the negative form of it, which means "I have unfinished business with you" implying either "I am indebted to you. Sorry" or "thank you".

(3) *M•shiwake nai/arimasen/gozaimasen* means "I have no excuse". Hence, "it is inexcusable of me. Sorry".[120]

(4) *O-yurushi kudasai/yurushite kudasai* literally means "please forgive me", "please allow me", or "please permit me", so these explain "sorry".

The fourth expression should be used together with other apologetic expressions, for example, *m•shiwake arimasen + o-yurushi kudasai*, because it alone does not contain a feeling of apology but asking for forgiveness.

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[119] Nakada reports that in the 400 samples, *sumimasen* is used 157 times, followed by 100 *gomen nasai*, 45 *m•shiwake arimasen*, 39 *warui*, and so forth (Nakada 1989: 195). In the seven textbooks of the present analysis, *m•shiwake arimasen* appears 7 times, followed by *sumimasen* 4 times, and *gomen gomen* once.

[120] *M•shiwake nai* is the least, and *m•shiwake gozaimasen* is the most polite form among these.

Excerpt 16 uses a casual apologetic phrase *gomen gomen* (sorry sorry). *Gomen* is an abbreviated form of *gomen nasai* (I'm sorry), which gives an impression of friendly familiarity. This being a very casual expression, usage of it is limited to speech from a senior to a junior party or to someone of the same generation, and also their relationship should be close. In other words, this should not be used by a junior to a superior (Tsukuba Rang•ji Gur•pu 1994: 148). Although *gomen* has recently started to be used by young women to others of the same generation, this expression is still mostly used by men.

As shown in Excerpt 16, repeating *gomen* emphasises the senior's apologetic feeling to the junior. The repetitious way of apologising is also applied to other model discourses, either by repeating exactly the same phrases or using slightly different ones.[121] Unlike *m•shiwake arimasen* (*deshita*) and *sumimasen* (*deshita*) which are presented in various excerpts, the expression *gomen nasai* does not have a past tense because grammatically it is an imperative form.[122] None of the textbooks employs *gomen nasai* in their model discourse, but as we have seen, its abbreviated form *gomen* is used in Excerpt 16. This is because *gomen nasai* is less sincere than other apologetic expressions, so it would not be suitable in a business environment. The authors of the textbooks in general, therefore, might have avoided using *gomen nasai* in the model discourses. *Gomen*, a casual form of *gomen nasai*, is short and easy to pronounce, but JSOL learners should be careful when and to whom it is used. Moreover, unless JSOL learners are minors, it would be better to

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[121] For example, Excerpt 15 and Excerpt 18 include apologisers making apologies repeatedly.

[122] It is possible to make a past tense of *gomen nasai* technically, as *gomen nasai deshita*. However, this would not fit any occasion. The only possibility would be when a mother scolds her small child gently, by adding the reminding phrase *desh•*, like '*gomen nasai' deshita desh••* (you should have apologised, don't you remember?).

employ other apologetic words, such as *sumimasen* or *m•shiwake arimasen*, so as to make their apologies, especially to their superiors, seem appropriately sincere and mature.

Another study of the usage of various adverbs in novels set in business entities shows that some adverbs are frequently used to strengthen apologetic expressions, such as *d•mo* (very), *makoto ni* (sincerely), and *hont• ni* (really) (Kai 1993: 81).[123] In the model discourses analysed here, however, both *d•mo* and *hont• ni* are used, but *makoto ni* is not.[124] This is probably because *makoto ni* sounds very formal and it can be replaced with *hont• ni* (Iori et al. 2001: 487).

Almost all the apologetic utterances analysed here are composed of complete sentences, which reveals a great contrast with the sentences of 'request-type complaints', as many of the latter are unfinished sentences. This is because an apologiser has to be explicit about his/her intention to apologise. If the apologiser stops his/her words in the middle of the sentence, it is perceived that he/she is reluctant to apologise.

Another noteworthy point is that the discourse of apology in Excerpt 15 contains promises, which are regarded as one of the means of apology, but they are only used together with another apologetic phrase, such as *sumimasen* (excuse me). If a promise, such as *kongo ki o tsukemasu* (I'll be [more] careful from now), is uttered alone without an apologetic phrase, it does not imply an apology (H• 2005: 81). Regarding the

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[123] Kai analysed ten novels about business enterprises written by different authors published between 1981 and 1992. This study reveals that *d•mo* is used 21 times out of 52 total usage of various adverbs (40 per cent), followed by *makoto ni* 17 times (33 per cent), and *hont• ni* 6 times (12 per cent).

[124] In the present analysis, *d•mo* and *hont• ni* are used 5 times and 3 times respectively out of 8 uses of adverbs in the seven textbooks. No adverbs other than these two are used.

promises not to repeat the same error, there are four expressions woven into the dialogues of the selected textbooks. Each of the *faux pas* has a different reason, and one of those reasons is lateness, such as in Excerpt 15, in which all expressions including the promise appear very formal. These social conventions work more appropriately if an apologetic phrase is spoken together with a promise. However, this might not be always obvious for JSOL learners unless it is explained overtly.

Concerning the tense of the apologetic phrase, out of four of the five apologies for 'lateness' studied here two each apply *m• shiwake arimasen* (present tense) and *m• shiwake arimasen deshita* (past tense). The difference between the present tense and the past tense in terms of usage is that if some time has passed since the trouble happened, the past tense is used; whereas if it has just happened or just been discovered, the present tense is used. For example, in Excerpt 18, when a speaker shows up at the meeting place twenty minutes late and his colleagues are about to leave for their destination in order not to be late for the event, the apologiser uses *m• shiwake arimasen* (present tense).

On the other hand, in Excerpt 19, when a speaker apologises to his teacher after class for being late, he uses *m• shiwake arimasen deshita* (past tense), which is also the case in the business environment of Excerpt 15, as mentioned above, in which trouble happened the previous day. However, determining the tense used depends on circumstantial judgement, and there is no set rule. In the situation of the concert in Excerpt 18, the characters will probably still be on time for the start of the concert, while in the case of being late for class in Excerpt 19, the class had already started when the student arrived, so he makes an apology to the teacher after class by using the past tense.

In Excerpt 18, the apologiser, Johnson, employs the present tense to make the apology to his colleagues about the twenty-minute delay. In another twenty-minute-late example in Excerpt 16, Suzuki also employs the present tense *gomen* (sorry) to his juniors. Although there are only two model discourses describing the specific time of delay as twenty minutes in each discourse, it is appropriate to use the present tense when a speaker apologises for around twenty-minutes of lateness, as long as the social rank of the others is the same level or lower than that of the speaker. Besides the above cases, there are other examples where at first the present tense is used, and the past tense follows. They are analysed in Excerpts 14A and 20 later in this chapter.

Unfinished sentences are employed in some key sentences. In Excerpt 15, the apologiser expresses his regret at not having acted appropriately by using …*kakunin subeki datta no desu ga*…(I should have checked…) before saying the second apology, *m•shiwake arimasen deshita*. The model discourse is not lengthy, only eight turns, and the expressions are very polite. Usage of such phrases should be taken into consideration by JSOL learners when apologising to a superior or person they do not know well, and more importantly, if the situation is serious. However, no explanation about this is presented in the textbook.

Regarding the apologiser, Johnson's second utterance in Excerpt 18, *dekakey• to shita toki, denwa ga kakatte kite…*, in the textbook *Busy People* gives an explanation that 'Johnson is giving reasons for being late, so he leaves the sentence unfinished, rather than ending it with *okuremashita*' (*Busy People* (p. 138)). It is appropriate for the apologiser to give a reason to the other parties in the model discourse; however, the explanation does not fully explain why the sentence is left unfinished. This is a halfway measure. An

unfinished sentence is often employed when a speaker explains the reason, leaving out something which is commonly understood, unlike the case of a finished sentence where he/she wants to express a feeling of apology. So, the apology should be in full sentences, but the reason can be in unfinished sentences. This practice is analysed in the previous Section 4.2. What is understood from Excerpt 18 is that 'Johnson was late', so if the phrase *okuremashita* (I was late) is added at the end of the sentence, the sentence is completed. However, it might sound excessively wordy or repetitious like a declaration of fact.[125] In this particular setting, leaving the sentence unfinished without mentioning the fact makes the dialogue more natural as it shows his feeling of regret.

In Excerpt 19, the apologiser uses formal language,…*shite shimaimashite* instead of skipping *shimaimashite* or *mashite*,[126] in order to emphasise his apology. However, his next utterance employs the abridged-form, *shimattan desu*, not using the more formal form *shimatta no desu*.[127] This may be because he thinks the apology is more important than the explanation, and with the apology already given, he uses a less formal form for the explanation.

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[125] Ito (2002) argues that in inter-language pragmatics (*ch•kan gengo goy•-ron*), in the Japanese language if a speaker completes a sentence (not left unfinished) when declining something, for example, people feel that the speaker is bold and impudent. By contrast, in the same situation in American society, it is considered to be desirable to complete the sentence even using a direct expression (*Nihongo ky•iku*, vol.115. p.61). This may also be applied to apologetic sentences.

[126] As a plain form, the sentence is able to convey the message even without the phrase *shimaimashite*.

[127] In this case, a more formal-form *shimaimashita no desu* is also possible, but since Smith is young male student, *shimatta no desu* sounds natural and suitable for him.

From an examination of the selected textbooks, it appears that when the speaker makes an apology to someone who is (or was) offended or inconvenienced by the speaker's actions, the response from the offended party is always very favourable to the apologiser. In real life, however, it does not necessarily go as smoothly as in the model discourses. Nakamichi and Doi criticise authors of textbooks in which the content is too simplified and no serious situations are presented. Ultimately, this could result in JSOL learners being misunderstood and unprepared for serious situations (Nakamichi and Doi 1993: 68).

There are, in fact, no examples of the apologiser having difficulties in getting through a tough situation presented in the model discourses. Perhaps Excerpt 15 is the only textbook presenting a rather tougher situation than the others owing to the fact that the offence was caused in a business environment. Even in Excerpt 15, however, the other party is a business client who seems to be an unusually understanding person.

4.3.2. Apology when previously unaware

This is the case in which an apology is made only after someone has indicated the error to the problem-causer because he/she has not realised it until then; for instance, in the case of carelessness or misunderstanding.

The following are extracts from the two model discourses mentioned already on p. 119 with regard to discourses of complaints.

Excerpt 13A[128]

Tamura: *…m• chotto de kaji ni naru tokoro deshita yo* (…it was about to catch fire).

Sasaki: *E, hont• desu ka. D• mo sumimasen deshita* (Really? I'm so sorry).

:

Sasaki: *Hai, kore kara wa ki o tsukemasu. Hont• ni m• shiwake arimasen deshita* (Yes,

I'll be very careful from now. I'm terribly sorry about it).

When Sasaki, the tenant, apologises, he uses two different apologetic expressions. He must have realised how serious the situation was, so he used a more formal expression in the second utterance.

Excerpt 14A

Landlady: *Ja, ima made, zutto machigaete ita no. Shoganai wa ne* (So, you've been

getting it wrongly until now. You're hopeless, aren't you).

Suzuki: *H•, d• mo sumimasen* (Yes, I'm sorry).

:

Suzuki: *Hai, d• mo go-meiwaku kakete sumimasen deshita* (Yes, I'm so sorry for

bothering you).

:

Landlady: *Ja, kondo kara mokuy• ni dasu y• ni shite ne* (So, put the rubbish out on

Thursday from now on, okay?).

Suzuki: *Hai, kore kara ki o tsukemasu* (Yes, I'll be careful from now).

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[128] Excerpt 13A and Excerpt 14A (which is presented later) are parts of Excerpt 13 and Excerpt 14.

Suzuki's apology is formal, so both genders can use them, while the landlady uses the sentence ending particles, *no*, *wa ne*, and ne, so her phrases can be used only by women.

Structure

In both discourses, the conversation is broached with an explanation by a complainant, who is (was) upset by the problem-causer. The causer then realises what he/she has done, and apologises with an additional phrase at the end of the discourse, promising to be more careful. Therefore, the structure of this type of discourse is composed of two key sentences, an apology and a promise.

Expressions

Expressions similar to those mentioned in Section 4.3.1., such as *d•mo sumimasen* (I'm sorry in the present tense), *d•mo sumimasen deshita* (past tense) are employed in Excerpts 13A and 14A, along with another apologetic sentence, *d•mo go-meiwaku kakete sumimasen deshita* (I am so sorry for bothering you). This is used when the speaker is informed of the problem by the complainant: a landlady (Excerpt 14A). The expression *go-meiwaku kakete* (I bothered you) implies the problem-causer's sincere appreciation to her for having voluntarily dealt with the problem.

Both excerpts include a promise by the problem-causer saying, *kore kara* (*wa*) *ki o tsukemasu* (I'll be [more] careful from now onwards). In particular, in the case of Excerpt 13A, the phrase, *hont• ni m•shiwake arimasen deshita* (I am indeed sorry), shows deeply apologetic feeling. By adding *hont• ni* (really or indeed), the sorrowful feeling is emphasised. It would be possible to substitute *sumimasen* (*deshita*) and *m•shiwake*

arimasen (*deshita*).[129] However, there is a slight difference between these: *m•shiwake arimasen* is more formal and has a stronger feeling of regret and apology than *sumimasen*. Therefore, *m•shiwake arimasen* is employed in the case of the small fire, and likewise in Excerpt 15.

An ideal textbook should present not only the basic flow and expressions of discourse which are easy to practise, but also include model scenarios which are of practical use in difficult situations as well. In addition to this, it would be helpful to describe appropriate attitudes, including posture, according to the setting.[130] This should be taught to JSOL learners, but none of the selected textbooks gives instruction regarding those topics. According to one source which emphasises the importance of accompanying non-verbal communication, *m•shiwake arimasen* and *sumimasen* are often repeated several times with much bowing and facial expressions of regret (Tsukuba Rang•ji Gur•pu 1997: 151). It is instructive for JSOL learners to have it explained that showing feelings of regret should be expressed not only verbally but also in attitude.

4.3.3. Passive apology

This is the most difficult and delicate apology if the problem-causer wants to continue a good relationship with the other party. This is because it is the other person who points out the problem, knowing that the problem-causer is aware of the transgression but has not yet apologised, which should have been done earlier.

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[129] *Deshita* is the past tense.

[130] When apologising, saying *sumimasen* (excuse me), an apologiser is expected to bow low with the upper body.

The following are extracts from the model discourses. Excerpt 20 is a tripartite conversation of Perez, a professor, and a teaching assistant.

Excerpt 20

Assistant: *Peresu-san, sensei ni Imai no suisenj•, kaite itadaitan desh•* (Mr. Perez, you asked the professor to write a recommendation letter for the Imai scholarship, didn't you?).

Perez: *Hai* (Yes).

Assistant: *S• iu koto wa h• koku ni konakucha* (You should have come to tell us about it).

Perez: *A, sumimasen, ki ga tsukanakute* (Oh, I'm sorry, I did not realise it).

Professor: *Sore de d• natta* (So, what's the result?).

Perez: *Hai, ukarimashita* (Yes, I got it).

Professor: *A, m• kimatta no* (Oh, you already heard the result?).

Perez: *Hai, go-h• koku shinakute m• shiwake arimasen* (Yes. Very sorry for not informing you).

Professor: *M•, ukattan'nara, ii kedo. Zutto shinpai shite itan desu yo* (Well, it's all right if you got it. It's just that we've been worried about you).

Perez: *A, sumimasen. Go-shinpai o-kake shite, m• shiwake arimasen deshita* (Oh, I'm sorry for making you worry so much).

Both *m• shiwake arimasen* and *m• shiwake arimasen* are used in Perez's part. The first apology uses the present tense because the other party, a professor, has not yet accepted the apology. Once the professor has accepted the apology, the past tense is used by Perez because the matter has been resolved. By being accepted, the error/mistake casued by the

aologiser is regarded as complete and a matter in the past. So this marks the conclusion of the apologetic discourse.

If, in Perez's country, it is the social custom not to report such a thing to the superior, it may be the reason that Perez did not report his behaviour to the professor. But this is not acceptable in the case of Japan, because the professor had bothered to write a recommendation letter for Perez, who, therefore, had an obligation to report to the professor anything related to the recommendation letter as social etiquette.

There are no clues to the gender of the characters. Perez's speech is formal, while that of the professor and assistant are neutral. So, all dialogues can be used by both genders. However, the professor's plain language, in particular, should be used only to a junior. If it were applied to a senior party who is not a family member, it would sound too plain and therefore rude.

Excerpt 21 also describes that the problem-causer, Lewin, did not realise his noise had bothered a neighbour.

Excerpt 21

Matsumoto: *Kin• wa osoku made daibu nigiyaka deshita ne* (You had a very lively party until late last night, didn't you).

Lewin: *A, sumimasen. Urusakatta desu ka* (Oh, sorry. Was it noisy?).

Matsumoto: *Iya, betsu ni. S• iu wake ja nain desu kedo* (No, not really. That's not what I mean, though…).

Lewin: *Shiken ga owatte…, tomodachi to ippai yatteta mon desu kara* (The exams

              are over, so I had a drink with friends).

Matsumoto: • , s• *dattan desu ka. D• ri de* (Ah, is that so? No wonder).

Lewin: *D• mo sumimasen deshita* (I'm so sorry about it).

Matsumoto: *Kono ap• to, kabe ga usuin desu yo ne* (The walls of this apartment are

             very thin, you know).

Lewin: • . *D• mo*…(Yes. Sorry…).

                                      :

Lewin: *Kore kara ch• i shimasu* (I'll be aware of it).

Matsumoto and Lewin's genders are not identifiable owing to their neutral-tone dialogues. Matsumoto uses the sentence ending particle *ne*, which is seeking agreement from Lewin about the noise and the thinness of the walls. In this context, the word *ne* functions like a tag question in English. Therefore, *ne* cannot be used here to determine the gender.

Structure

In both Excerpts 20 and 21, social breaches are broached not by the problem-causer but by the offended party. The problem-causer apologises twice after receiving the complaint; the first apologetic words apply to the present tense, and the second apology changes to the past tense.

In addition, if the situation is serious, as it is in Excerpt 20 (Perez's case), the more formal word *m• shiwake arimasen* (*deshita*) is employed, whereas in Excerpt 21 (Lewin's case), *sumimasen* (*deshita*) can be adequate. Again, the degree of seriousness depends on a combination of the relationship between the apologiser and the offended party as well as the significance of the problem. Since Perez did not inform the professor about his

award of a scholarship in spite of having asked the professor to provide a recommendation letter for another scholarship, his situation is worse than Lewin's, who has only troubled his neighbour by making too much noise. In Excerpt 21, Lewin apologises and promises to be more careful in future because the same kind of incident could happen, while in Excerpt 20, a promise not to repeat the mistake would not be appropriate because such situations do not arise very often.[131] It can be said from here that only the seriousness alone of the problem does not determine whether a phrase of promise is uttered or not, but a combination of it and the situation.

Expressions

Concerning the different usage of the present and past tense, Tsukuba Rang•ji Gur•pu (Tsukuba Language Group) explains, "[W]hen apologising for what has already been done, use a past-tense form" (Tsukuba Rang•ji Gur•pu 1994: 148). However, this does not adequately explain the above two model discourses. Rather, when the trouble just happened or was pointed out• in this case, the present tense should be used, but when the past tense is once uttered after the present tense, there seems to be no room for the apologiser to give any explanation or excuse but just apologise, and he/she likes to end the conversation. There is no model discourse that continues substantial conversation once the past tense is uttered, but, in the case of the present tense, there might be some room for the apologiser to continue the conversation about the topic of trouble. Obviously,

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[131] Perez's situation is that he passed the scholarship examination, but the scholarship was different from the one that professor had written a recommendation letter for. To ask for a recommendation letter for a scholarship does not happen very often, so Perez would not need to pledge not to repeat this negligence again. Instead, he says, *go-shinpai o-kake shite m•shiwake arimasen deshita* (I'm so sorry for having worried you) because the professor and teaching assistant had worried about the result of his examination.

these are the typical examples written for the model discourses of the language textbooks, so they do not necessarily reflect real conversations.

In Excerpt 20, because of the seriousness of the situation, the highly polite form *V-te m•shiwake arimasen* (*deshita*) is used in Perez's case of discourtesy for not reporting important information to his superior. He uses the present tense and the past tense as mentioned above. Although the level of seriousness seems similar to that in the business case of Excerpt 15, Perez does not apply much heavier expressions, such as *d•ka o-yurushi kudasai* (please forgive me). In the business setting, since the interlocutor is a client, the apologiser must maintain a good relationship with his/her client.

In the case of noise disturbance in Excerpt 21, Lewin promises *kore kara ch•i shimasu* (I'll be more careful from now on) to Matsumoto with the typical apologetic words, *d•mo sumimasen* and *d•mo sumimasen deshita*. Noise is a regular cause of trouble in Japan; so, his pledge will help to reassure the other party.

The very important point is featured in Excerpt 21, which is that connotative phrases are used in the interlocutor's lines. For example, it is observed in Lewin's reply to Matsumoto's first comment about the party the night before, *kin• wa osoku made daibu nigiyaka deshita ne*. Lewin apologises to him with *sumimasen* instead of directly responding, such as *hai, tanoshikatta desu* (yes, we had a good time) or the like. This is because Matsumoto raises the topic of the party, but rather highlights its noise, using *daibu nigiyaka* (very noisy and lively). Hence, apologetic expressions should be considered not only for what is directly uttered but also for *hidden* hints. For this reason, Lewis apologises because he now realises his action had annoyed his neighbour.

Another example of a circuitous hint given by the interlocutor is *kabe ga usuin desu yo ne*. Merely by using this phrase, it implies that he could hear noise from Lewin's room and that he had been inconsiderate of his neighbours. As a matter of fact, Matsumoto does not employ any direct expressions of complaint. However, his indirect phrases suffice to convey his thoughts to the problem-causer. JSOL learners might encounter similar situations to Lewin's. It means that Japanese native speakers may say something indirectly, particularly in a case of something being inconvenient, such as a complaint. If a learner takes a thing at its face value without noticing the hidden message in the context, his/her relationship with the interlocutor would not be improved. JSOL learners, therefore, should be made aware of the need to pick up on these *hidden* hints and respond accordingly. There are probably more cases of *hidden* hints in Japanese because of the Japanese cultural custom of wanting to avoid direct conflict with and loss of face of the other party. In this regard, Excerpt 21 is a good model discourse for JSOL learners to comprehend the sociocultural background through dialogues.

Explanation

Among the seven selected textbooks, three present sufficient contextual explanations about the dialogues, while the other four contain either insufficient or no explanations. The three textbooks which lay emphasis on explanations are *Situational* 3 (Excerpt 14A), *Situational 2* (Excerpt 16), and *Gendai II* (Excerpts 20 and 21). In particular, the texts in *Situational 3* are well explained and balanced, in terms of difficulty of model dialogues, explicitness of the objective in the lesson (how to apologise), variations of expressions,[132] and limitation of usage due to social hierarchy issues. The texts include an arrow at the end of some sentences to indicate a rising or falling tone which emphasises that bowing

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[132] For example, several usages of speech by formal versus casual, male versus female (or neutral).

and facial expression also play an important role when apologising. The only inappropriate matter in *Situational 3* is the comment, "[W]hen you hadn't realised that you annoyed someone, apologize with *ki ga tsukanakute sumimasen* (sorry for not realising) or *kore kara ki o tsukemasu* (I'll be careful from now)" (p.152). The meanings of the two are different, so they are not compatible. Hence, the explanation should be *sumimasen* (sorry) AND *kore kara ki o tsukemasu*. If only the former is used, it could be acceptable as an apology; however, if the latter is used alone, since it does not contain a feeling of regret, it cannot function as an apology.

Likewise, *Situational 2* (Excerpt 16) distinguishes four apologetic expressions [133] according to their use in either formal or casual settings, and it describes the limitations of *gomen* (*nasai*) (excuse me) as being inappropriate in serious situations. Also, it illustrates the way to make excuses with some examples. In general, this textbook series focuses more on giving explanations than practising drills.

The model discourse of *Gendai II* (Excerpts 20 and 21) is very natural, since typical characteristics of the Japanese language, such as back-channelling, are included. Although an unfinished sentence is employed in the model discourse of Lesson 13 and there is a column entitled "Leaving elements unsaid",[134] the explanation of the unfinished sentence shown in the model dialogue is not given. *Gendai II* provides fewer grammatical expressions compared with other textbooks. One concern is that because of the naturalness of their dialogues, it might be better to add thorough explanations especially

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[133] These are *gomen* (*nasai*) (excuse me), *sumimasen* (sorry), *m•shiwake arimasen* (I'm sorry), and *m•shiwake gozaimasen* (I'm indeed sorry).

[134] The examples are *d•zo* (please) and …*kedo* (how about …) when making offers (p. 93).

from the sociolinguistic and sociocultural viewpoint in order for JSOL learners who may not be able to grasp the real (indirect or hidden) meaning of such phrases solely by reading the words, as mentioned above. This is particularly important because it affects the appropriate knowledge needed to make apologies for them.

There is no doubt that *Keigo* (Excerpt 15) is an effective textbook for JSOL learners if their target is business language. However, since the necessary written explanations are insufficient, teachers are expected to teach them accordingly. But, if teachers are not familiar with a business environment, the JSOL learners will be missing out. Thus, the given expressions concerning when and to whom to use them have to be fully described in the textbook. *Shin Nihongo* (Excerpts 13A and 17) has many drills and role play practices, but its explanations are also very limited. Although dialogues are natural, without adequate explanation, it would be difficult for JSOL learners to apply these apologetic expressions appropriately. *Formal Expressions* (Excerpt 19) depends totally on the teacher's skill, because neither explanations nor drills are provided, even though several alternative examples are provided. *Busy People* (Excerpt 18) provides explanations of key expressions from a grammatical viewpoint, but it does not explain the appropriateness of the characters' utterances in terms of when and to whom they can be used. Also, it presents two other expressions as similar to the model expression *go-shinpai kakete m•shiwake arimasen* (p. 135). But, these three are not really inter-changeable expressions.[135]

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[135] *O-tes• kakete* and *go-mend• kakete* could be interchangeable, but not *go-shinpai kakete*. This is because the first two phrases mean someone was inconvenienced by the apologiser, while the last phrase means someone was worried about the apologiser. Thus, the explanation of *Busy People* is not appropriate.

Although only seven intermediate level textbooks are examined in the present analysis, there is no case of an apology to a stranger. Furthermore, when apologising, the interlocutor's relative age should be also taken into the account. Some textbooks contain illustrations of the characters so we can tell their age, but not all of them provide such visual clues. This is an important concept for the JSOL learners because the speech level of an apology is influenced by the age gap between the two parties.[136] Likewise, only a few textbooks describe the gender and social position or title of the characters. As we have seen, the social rank of both parties also affects the level of speech. In other words, the wider the hierarchical distance between the apologiser and the other party, the longer and the more complex the apology needs to be (except perhaps from small children).

Another concern which is revealed in this study is gender difference. Since the Japanese language is characterised by the existence of gender-specific speech, if a textbook gives examples of one gender's speech, it should also exemplify the other's speech in order to avoid learners' misunderstanding. In conclusion, the textbooks studied here do not provide sufficient explanations, in general, about the dialogues' socio-linguistic context, such as differences in speech by social rank, age and gender.

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[136] For example, if you step on someone's feet, *m•shiwake arimasen* (I'm sorry) is appropriate to older people, while the more casual expression *sumimasen* (excuse me) is acceptable to those of the same generation as the speaker and younger people.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Overview

JSOL textbooks present in varying degrees grammatical explanations along with drills accompanying model discourses that are intended to instruct a learner on what speech is most appropriate to use in a given scenario. Owing to the complicated and elaborate nature of linguistic politeness in Japanese, it is rarely possible to provide a 'one size fits all' type of dialogue, since in real life speech the relationship between the participants results in different speech acts for the same semantic purpose, depending on who the speaker is, to whom they are speaking, where the conversation takes place, and what the topic is. There are customary language rules which native speakers normally acquire either spontaneously or through overt instruction, but which JSOL learners have to be taught.

This chapter will discuss how the intermediate level textbooks examined in this study failed in various ways to exemplify the importance of this diversity to JSOL learners by means of the model discourses. Further, there is very little explanation of either the linguistic options or their sociocultural contexts. Arguably, therefore, without adequate examples and explanations, JSOL learners from cultural backgrounds that have different linguistic conventions (the overwhelming majority) are unlikely to be able to discern the nuances of the dialogues presented, let alone generate for themselves 'natural' dialogue with appropriate levels of politeness for any given actual situation.

5.2. Findings

Out of the total twenty-three discourses which were examined in the nine selected textbooks, there were seven scenarios of request, seven scenarios of complaint, and nine

scenarios of apology. The focus of this research was to ascertain whether or not appropriate explanations about the model discourses were provided, and a detailed analysis was conducted on this point. It was discovered that more than half of the selected textbooks offer insufficient or no explanation at all of the model discourses presented concerning linguistic and sociolinguistic matters. Moreover, in many example dialogues there was a mismatch between speech acts and social relations in terms of politeness. Such model conversations may mislead JSOL learners if they attempt to use them directly in other settings. However, there are a few good examples of explanations presented in the selected textbooks, which will also be analysed here.

5.2.1. Insufficient examples of discourses which include alternative social relationships

As set out in Section 5.2.1., Japanese social relationships dictate the structure, vocabulary, approaches and even body language appropriate to a given conversation. Thus, a model dialogue of any function will have only limited usage, depending on the social relationships between the players. It is, therefore, vital that the limits of specific examples be explained to students, and alternative phrases, structure, vocabulary, approaches, and grammar be provided, so that they can deal with a range of settings.

Seventeen out of the twenty-three discourses (74 per cent) are marked by a total lack of, or insufficient explanation about individual model dialogues. Most of the examples presented are natural and employ a rather polite form, so they can be applied to a wide range of settings. However, about three-quarters of the discourses examined do not contain any or an adequate explanation.

To accustom learners to hearing or generating indirect speech in order to be polite, various filler words, unfinished sentences, and circumlocutory approaches are applied in the textbooks. Nonetheless, even though there are model dialogues using these approaches, explanations of their meaning and usage are very rare as mentioned above. If explanations of the model discourses are not accurately described, it is left to the teachers' discretion whether to instruct learners in these as a supplement to the textbooks. This means the explanation hinges on the teachers' knowledge, skill and native speaker intuition, while the lack of explanation hinders self-study for learners.

For example, the casual complaint presented in Excerpt 12 can be accepted only if the other party is of the same social rank as the speaker. Obviously, the textbook describes the conversation partners as friends, but can this model discourse be used for others, such as neighbours? The answer is "no", because it is too blunt unless the other party is young and the social rank of the two parties is the same. Similarly, Excerpt 10 presents the setting of a complaint about noise coming from a neighbour. The complainant hints at the problem indirectly by using only unfinished sentences with the filler word *an•* and the broaching phrase *sumimsen*, and by sounding hesitant.[137] These impart the feeling of annoyance on the part of the speaker towards the problem-causer. The individual sentences are not long and no formulaic expressions of complaint are used; yet it functions "naturally" in Japanese to convey the complaint. The model discourse is well considered: the structures and expressions are easy to use and the relationship between

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[137] Unfinished sentences give a signal that a speaker wants the other party to say something about a topic of conversation (Mizutani & Mizutani 1989: 100-101). This means that they are often employed in the sentences of request or complaint, in which a speaker offers an opportunity to the interlocutor to complete a sentence by leaving a sentence unfinished.

the two characters in the dialogue is not harmed. It is regrettable, however, that an explanation of the setting is not provided. In other words, the key phrases might be difficult for JSOL learners to create without appropriate instruction..

The model discourse presented in Excerpt 11 should have focused on the main objective of Lesson 12 together with taking the learner's level into account. This is because the scenario is too long to identify the most relevant expression(s). Moreover, the expressions are limited in their usage, and are only suitable for use to a senior or the like, although a hotel receptionist is the other party in the given setting, which seems inappropriate in dealing with the hotel guest. Worse still, there is no explanation about the discourse at all, and no alternative expressions presented which could be used in different settings.

Detailed explanations including appropriate phrases for different social relationships are missing from or are inadequate in the textbooks, as mentioned already. For those JSOL learners who are relying solely on the textbook for their self-study, this is a serious shortcoming as the discourses presented in the textbooks could not be applied to other settings unless a teacher supplements other expressions with explanations. The rare exceptions include the tables in *Keigo* illustrating expressions using verbs of giving and receiving, and the relationship between the requester and the interlocutor.[138] Also there is an explanatory article in *Situational 3*, in which comparisons between formal and casual speech and so forth appear.[139] These are adequate and effective for JSOL learners to envisage the total picture of appropriate expressions through the relationship between the requester and the interlocutor.

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[138] The explanatory table is presented in *Keigo* on p. 51.

[139] The explanatory article is presented in *Situational 3* on pp. 199-201.

5.2.2. Mismatch between speech acts within dialogues and the social norms

Six out of the twenty-three dialogues (26 per cent) contained mismatches between the speech acts described in the dialogue and social norms. The number of mismatches is not small, even though almost all the authors of the textbooks examined seem to be native Japanese speakers and would have understood the social norms. Yet, some inappropriate examples were obvious.

When starting a conversation, speakers consciously (or unconsciously) choose the most appropriate words and expressions as well as strategy, taking account of social norms and individual settings every time. The psychological effect should also be considered in creating a scenario for textbooks. A comparison of two discourses, Excerpt 17 and Excerpt 18, which resemble each other in setting and structure (apology and two excuses for lateness) illustrates this point.

In the scenario of Excerpt 17, there are two reasons (excuses) for delayed arrival uttered by the problem-causer. The first reason is spontaneously spoken, while the second one is a response to cautionary words given by the interlocutor. This kind of apology in which the reasons are presented a few at a time creates a bad impression on the other party. And, what is worse, it may cause the interlocutor to think that the second reason (excuse) would not have been revealed if he/she had not asked the problem-causer. If there is more than one reason, it is regarded as much more socially acceptable to offer them at the same time. The conversational flow of Excerpt 17 is not suitable as a model discourse in this regard.

By contrast, the flow of Excerpt 18 is appropriate, and it meets the norms of society. Regrettably, the textbook of Excerpt 18 only provides the grammatical use of several phrases, but gives no explanation about the discourse from the viewpoint of sociocultural background, and neither does that of Excerpt 17. To have learners understand the cultural background through the context is fundamental, so the authors of textbooks should emphasise the relevant sociocultural issues behind the model discourses, such as in the case of lengthy excuses and too much self-justification, because they will sometimes have a counterproductive effect. This point needs to be highlighted to JSOL learners, particularly those from regions where cultural backgrounds differ from that of Japan, and where such strategies are preferred. The textbooks analysed here did not provide adequate explanations of the issue.

Grammatically correct sentences convey the message, but this does not mean that they are always accepted by the other party. The important point is whether or not the utterance agrees with the conventional norms. One model discourse presented in Excerpt 8 has different characteristics from the other discourses created to illustrate how to complain. This is because the scenario appears to be a complaint to the other party in a straightforward way; it uses a completed sentence "*m• sukoshi shizuka ni shite moraemasen ka* (Can't you please be a little bit quieter?)". Even though the expression takes a negative and interrogative tone to express the speaker's complaint politely, the intention is not to 'request', but it is rather close to an order or instruction owing to the use of the completed sentence. If, like the other discourses of making a complaint, such as Excerpts 9 and 10, it were to employ an unfinished sentence, the strength of the demand would be lessened. This is because they contain a hesitant feeling on the part of the complainant or requester.

Furthermore, in Excerpt 8, the neighbour who is conscientious realises and acknowledges the problem (noise), and so complies with the speaker's request. However, this seems to be a very delicate proposition. If JSOL learners use the *V-te moraemasen ka* form without mentioning the reason for the complaint first (as shown in the model discourse), although its message will be conveyed to the other party, the speaker has to understand that the relationship between the two parties might deteriorate. There are two reasons. One is that this phrase contains a strong instructive nuance as mentioned earlier, and the other is that the speaker requests (complains) first, then explains the reason for it. When making a request in a reserved way, it is better to explain the situation first and then wait for the other party's response (Mizutani and Mizutani 1984: 26-27). Thus, this dialogue could have been more polite and applicable to making a complaint in practice for JSOL learners. This oversight limits the usage and the value of such a scenario in the textbook.

5.2.3. The limitations of 'real life' actual usage

In sixteen out of the twenty-three discourses (70 per cent) that were examined, there were limitations in the 'real life' usage of expressions, but these were either not explained properly or there was no explanation provided.

In the model discourses of making a request, the attitude of virtually all of the requesters is modest and humble, and they overtly use unfinished sentences. This differs from the discourses of apology, a characteristic of which is to use completed sentences. In a request, the pattern of the *V-te* form as an unfinished sentence is useful to convey the requester's feeling of hesitancy, which is shown, for example, in Excerpts 1 and 2. There is another measure to express a feeling of request in Excerpts 5 and 6, which is to place the particle *ka na* at the end of the sentence instead of leaving the sentence unfinished.

This implies the speaker's hesitancy and obsequious attitude regardless of whether or not the other party accepts his/her request (Iori et al. 2001: 263). At the same time, the requester utters *warui*(*n da*) *kedo* casually to the other party in order to lessen any sense of onerousness that the interlocutor may have in Excerpt 6. This phrase works as a token of the speaker's feeling of condescension (Sugito 2001: 25). This means that it can only be used from a senior rank to a junior rank or amongst equals. The phrase *warui*(*n da*) *kedo* was explained as casual speech, but *ka na* was not, and the latter is not usually used by female speakers a point that also went unexplained. Because of the implied condescension and a gender-specific word *ka na*, it most certainly has limited usage which should be explained to JSOL learners to avoid causing offence and inappropriate usage.

The reason for these expressions being used in the model discourses of requests is because the final decision is dependent on the other party's judgement. Thus, the requester is expected to adopt a relatively humble attitude and expressions even when the speaker is a senior. Although there are many examples presented in the textbooks, there is no clear explanation about why these dialogues are appropriate in the given context. As for unfinished sentences, the most important point for learners is that they need to create them for themselves, and also for learners to sense the intention of the other party when they hear them. In particular, producing unfinished sentences might be more difficult for learners than complete sentences, because while the latter is of course taught from the beginners level, the former may not be. And until learners have a firm grasp of both complete sentence structure and sociocultural context, it may be difficult for them to predict intended sentence endings without any explanation.

Politeness is one of the core elements of the Japanese language and culture, so that verbs of giving and receiving are generally employed as they have the effect of making a sentence more polite when making a request. However, it is not necessary to employ them all the time. One model discourse (in Excerpt 7) does not employ them, but expresses the requester's wish by applying the adjective *hoshii* in the model discourse presented. This is potentially problematic, because the word *hoshii* has limited usage, for this should not be used to seniors – at least unless the speaker is an infant. This should have been explained in the textbook but it was not.

In general, in spite of the fact that the textbooks use verbs of giving and receiving to make utterances polite in order to comply with Japanese social norms, explanations are insufficient. Fragmentary information alone is not acceptable for learners to comprehend the concept of verbs of giving and receiving in making a request. According to Horiguchi's research, JSOL learners tend not to use verbs of giving and receiving in sentences in which the social situation expects it (Horiguchi 1984: 100-101).[140] It is apparent that the JSOL requester's intention can be sensed by the other (Japanese) party as long as the context contains the key message. However, skill in generating a socially appropriate sentence should be acquired by intermediate level learners. To achieve this, the textbook has to provide the necessary information according to the level of the learner.

In the meantime, when a learner receives a complaint, he/she is expected to recognise the relevant indirect expressions which may be spoken by the Japanese people, since they are

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[140] An example is that instead of using verbs of giving and receiving (*shite kudasaimashita*), a learner used the polite form of a regular verb (*shimashita*); "*chichi no o-tomodachi ga chichi to watashi o sh•tai shimashita* (my father's friend invited my father and me)".

a customary practice unless the situation is very serious. A typical example is shown in Excerpt 10. The scenario is very natural, polite and hesitant because the complainant implicitly complains without using any direct expressions. However, there is no explanation about the structure and expressions which are closely related to this cultural background. As a consequence, leaving the essential part of the sociolinguistic context unexplained is problematic for many JSOL learners.

The conventional formulaic phrases of apology, such as *m•shiwake arimasen* (present tense)*/m•shiwake arimasen deshita* (past tense) and *sumimasen* (present tense)*/ sumimasen deshita* (past tense) are widely applied in the model discourses. Eight out of the nine dialogues of apology employ either one of these two or both. The other dialogue uses *gomen*, which is a very casual male expression. From these, it is evident that, at the very least, it is possible for JSOL learners to make do with these expressions when apologising in Japanese. It is also apparent that the *appropriateness* of the various forms should be taught according to the social rank of the other party and the degree of seriousness of the problem. This is explained in the *Situational Series*, which specify suitable expressions to accompany the setting, either casual or formal, and by gender.[141] This makes it easier for learners to comprehend the combination of expressions and the setting. However, few of the other textbooks provide such contextualisation and these expressions are not clearly explained in the other textbooks. As such, learners relying on these textbooks might tend to utter inappropriate expressions.

When it comes to apologising, the important point is that the apologetic phrases must be uttered *explicitly*, unlike in the case of complaining as mentioned above. However, one

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[141] The explanations are presented in *Situational 2* (pp. 148-149) and *Situational 3* (pp. 151-152).

unique exception is illustrated in Excerpt 21. The scenario presents three apologetic expressions out of six turns of the apologiser: firstly the apologiser uses *sumimasen* (present tense) secondly *d•mo sumimasen deshita* (past tense)*,* and lastly *d•mo…*(an unfinished sentence), which omits an apologetic phrase, such as *sumimasen*, after the adverb *d•mo*. The interpretation of this discourse is that in the first two, the apologetic phrases are clearly stated, but the third (last) expression is only *d•mo*, which does not mean anything literally. If *sumimasen* (*deshita*) were added after *d•mo*, it would become a complete apologetic sentence. The reason for omitting a phrase of apology must be to avoid repetition and to reinforce the apologiser's feeling which contains implicitly a gesture of hoping for the termination of the conversation.

The adverb *d•mo* can be used in multiple ways, but it does not contain an honorific feeling (Sakamoto 2001: 18). Knowing when to employ the frequently used adverb *d•mo* is essential for learners. For example, if *d•mo* were the first apologetic word uttered by the problem-causer in the above scenario, the interlocutor would not be able to put aside his/her anger because *d•mo* alone upon first utterance does not imply an apology. As such, an explanation of the use of *d•mo* should have been included in the textbook in order to prevent erroneously omitting a 'real' apologetic phrase after *d•mo* from the first utterance. Additionally, if the flow of the discourse is prescribed, it would also help learners to comprehend the speaker's strategies of conversation.

In short, speakers are expected to select and apply appropriate expressions which vary according to the setting. There are quite a few cases when Japanese speakers express the matter indirectly rather than directly when they want to convey the key message. This is particularly true if the topic of conversation is presumed to cause the other party to react

unfavourably, such as in a case of complaint. Nevertheless, it is usually possible for Japanese people to sense the speaker's key idea. This probably results from the speaker and the other party sharing a common sociolinguistic background in the Japanese language. Indirect speech is usually regarded as more polite and sophisticated than direct speech in Japanese conversation. When JSOL learners become the interlocutor, they are also expected to sense the implicit meaning of a speaker who does not state the matter directly. It is therefore particularly necessary for those who come from a low context cultural background, such as that of English speaking countries, to have Japanese indirect expressions explained to them.

5.2.4. Insufficient provision of alternative outcomes

Twenty-one out of the twenty-three discourses (91 per cent) were categorised as having insufficient provision of model discourses and explanations that provided an inadequate number of alternative outcomes. Two out of the twenty-three are presented in the discourses of requests in Excerpts 5 and 6 which comprise dialogues of refusal and acceptance when the interlocutors were given a request. This is the only example exemplifying an alternative in the model discourses. In general, the stories in the discourses do not contain such serious settings that they might demand strategies for negotiation and re-negotiation in order to achieve the desired result, unlike in real life.

As discussed, in the business domain, use of the Japanese language is more rigorously prescribed and more complex than in other domains. Firstly, the speaker should employ polite forms to a person who does not belong to their 'inner circle', such as an employee of another company. The discourse in Excerpt 15 represents the fairly formal apology by utilising direct apologetic words three times in four lines, and a kind of expression

begging for forgiveness after promising not to repeat the transgression. Excerpt 15 contains very formal speech and uses honorific expressions, therefore, it is probably not easy for learners to understand, much less to acquire. In spite of such possible comprehension difficulties, there are only a few such examples and conversational practices but no explanations nor alternative dialogues. This no doubt makes it hard for learners to understand the model discourses, even though they contain only eight turns. Since a business environment is different from others, such as at school or at home, it would have been advisable for the author to provide a detailed explanation and possible alternatives.

5.2.5. Insufficient explanation of paralinguistic aspects

When people are speaking (or listening), it is not only words that are involved but also non-verbal communication, such as intonation, tone of voice, attitude, posture, gestures, facial expressions, and so forth. These paralinguistic elements work to convey the emotion of the speaker (and the interlocutor). This plays an important role in communicating with others appropriately. These paralinguistic aspects of speech have to be taken into account especially if the other party is a senior. These should be indicated to JSOL learners as they might not realise the importance of them, but they are not described or explained in any textbooks other than the case of back-channelling.[142]

One of the characteristics of the Japanese language is back-channelling, as noted (see Chapter 1). Several of the model discourses display this, but only *Gendai I* has an

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[142] There are two types of back-channelling in a broad sense. One is nodding and the other is a verbal response (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 681).

explanatory article on this topic.[143] Also, Excerpt 2 is noteworthy in respect to back-channelling, because the back-channelling part is distinguished in parentheses from other lines. Since back-channelling is more frequently employed in Japanese native speakers' conversations than in some other languages, clarification of this aspect is well advised. This is because it may be easily overlooked by learners during their actual conversation practice, especially if the other party's voice is low or the words uttered are too short to be picked up by the JSOL learners. Even so, use of these is important for Japanese people as a sign of attentiveness and listening to the other party. A point of concern for learners is the timing of the insertion of the back-channelling. It is inserted either during, or immediately after, the other party's speech, so in the former case, in particular, clarifying in the text when it should be inserted is instructive for learners.

By including back-channelling, the dialogues presented in Excerpt 2 are very natural and sound mature. But, owing to their being so natural, some expressions must be explained and also pronounced with appropriate intonation by teachers (or in supplementary audio materials, if available), such as ***nan desu ka, k•,*** *chanto yomete iru no ka*, because no explanation is provided.[144] Otherwise, the meaning of this phrase is easily misunderstood, or it cannot be understood at all. The dialogue is obviously fluent, but when considering the level of the target learners and the difficulty of intonation of *nan desu ka, k•* , it might be better to reconsider whether these kinds of expressions need to be presented in this model discourse.

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[143] *Gendai I* has an explanatory article of back-channelling (*aizuchi*) on pp. 211-213.

[144] The intonation of "***nan desu ka***" must be carefully pronounced, because if the accent is put on *nan*, the meaning of the phrase is "what is it?", while if it is pronounced flat, the meaning becomes "how can I put it?". The latter is the correct meaning in the given context.

Characteristics of the Japanese language include gender-differentiated speech, regional dialects, and loanwords (see Chapter 2). It is understandable that dialects would not be included in the model discourses since they are too localised to be of general use, but gender-differentiated speech has been prevalent for centuries in Japanese, even if the gender gap among the younger generation is becoming narrower than that of their predecessors. In the chosen textbooks, gender-related scenarios are minimal. An exception is *Situational Series* (Excerpts 14 and 16) which applies male/female marks to the key dialogues in order to differentiate the gender-wise expressions alternatively. Nevertheless, almost all discourses employ either formal expressions or male speech. Moreover, the number of male characters is more than double that of the combined total number of female and unidentified characters in the selected textbooks for the present study, which does not reflect the actual circumstances of society in Japan.

In addition to these, the speaker's age is not considered at all. All characters in all of the textbooks examined seem to be adults, but very old people who might speak differently from the younger people were excluded. The youngest in the textbooks seems to be a university student. Therefore, the textbooks do not illustrate the very casual conversations of high school students, or the more old-fashioned language used by the elderly. Loanwords have increased in recent years, but these are rarely woven into the model discourses. These aspects observed in present-day society are scarcely touched upon in the textbooks, and this does little to help learners to comprehend the entirety of Japanese society through language learning—and vice versa.

5.3. Summary

It is clear that textbooks examined in this study do not provide sufficient explanations about the vast majority of their model discourses. In particular, they do not provide alternative conversational outcomes, alternative phrases for different social relationships, and explanations about the dialogue's limitations in 'real life' actual usage. On average, seventy-eight per cent of the textbooks analysed in this case study were identified as textbooks with insufficient or no explanation. By contrast, mismatches between speech acts within dialogues and the social relationships portrayed in the dialogues were not encountered often in the examined items, with only six dialogues out of twenty-three falling into this group.

Consequently, almost all textbooks fail to support JSOL learners in presenting detailed explanations, especially from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics. Instead, Audio-Lingual type drills are largely presented, which require changing some words or phrases of the key sentences somewhat mechanically. This exercise is a useful tool for learners in order to be able to speak Japanese fluently, but this alone does not provide enough support.

It is understood that traditional textbooks cannot cover paralinguistic factors including intonation, prominence, speed, hesitant tone, attitude, facial expression, posture and so forth. However, supplementary tools, such as accompanying CDs, DVDs and websites could adequately provide this kind of information nowadays.

Among the nine intermediate textbooks analysed in this research, only *Situational Series* consistently presents fairly detailed explanations, while *Gendai Series* provides some explanations, but there is no consistency. In general, the model discourses read naturally,

but without any explanation; it can be misleading for learners who might use the model discourses in an inappropriate setting, because they rely on the textbooks. Hence, there is much room for improvement in the supplementary information presented in the textbooks.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

The present research examined and analysed twenty-three sample dialogues in nine intermediate textbooks for JSOL learners that were available for purchase in 2008. It confirmed that explanations in them, particularly from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics, were insufficient in almost all cases. Various kinds of drills and cloze tests are presented in most textbooks; however, these do not necessarily provide guidance for JSOL learners in how to employ an appropriate phrase in a given setting. Hence, students are unlikely to be able to acquire the quintessence of the Japanese language, which is closely related to Japanese culture and society.

This uniformity in terms of the design concept of textbooks applies extensively to the range and variety of personae, scenarios, grammatical structures, and phatic expressions. This is despite the fact that JSOL learners will encounter a much greater variety of expression in real life. Moreover, among those that are introduced, the textbooks normally provide little or no explanation of their application to different circumstances. Ideally a textbook would provide a wide range of models, which would be clearly explained. Furthermore, the length of the discourse should be considered; it is not necessary for it to be so lengthy that it loses the point it is illustrating. The average number of turns was 13, but in certain cases these were as many as 30, in which case the focus was lost.

As Liddicoat points out, even if a learner's pronunciation, grammar and expressions are not really perfect, the other party as a native speaker might understand and accept them (p. 53). But if the learner does not abide by social norms owing to unawareness (because of not being taught), people might feel offended and become uncomfortable. Some of the

discourses do not provide examples of best practice, i.e., to avoid causing offence. It is inadvisable for textbooks to present dialogues that students might hear (for passive recognition) but would cause offence if the student actively imitated them. Here, again, what is required is a clear explanation of the social interaction and appropriate speech for different interlocutors. This should be amended, at the very least an appropriate explanation should be added; otherwise it will lead astray JSOL learners or teachers who are unfamiliar with the social norms of the Japanese.

Another common facet of the textbooks examined in this study is that the discourses are somewhat unrepresentative in terms of the model characters' gender, age, and regional representation. For example, male characters are dominant and only three females play the main characters in the discourses analysed. The range of ages is from university students to middle-aged office workers, so the language of elderly people and juveniles is not represented. Loanwords, which have increased in the last few decades, are few and restricted to those such as *sutereo* (stereo), *ap•to* (apartment), and *suraido* (slide). These are all nouns and no verb-form loanwords are incorporated in the dialogues. In addition, regional dialects are not included at all as all dialogues are spoken (written) in Tokyo-centric standard language. This makes it difficult for learners to comprehend the full range of present day spoken Japanese in practice, especially learners who are outside Japan and who study Japanese mainly from teachers and textbooks. It also means that while intermediate learners who travel beyond the Kant• region will have little difficulty making themselves understood, they may experience shock at how little they understand of the speech they hear around them.

It was also found that features of the Japanese language such as unfinished sentences, indirect speech and back-channelling, etc., are skilfully woven into many dialogues, making them fairly natural and smooth. However, these aspects of Japanese discourse are mostly unexplained; it would be much more instructive if the reasons for their appropriate usage were explained explicitly and specifically. This is because they are very inconspicuous which is why the model dialogues sound so natural, and without being given explicit explanations, JSOL learners cannot necessarily recognise the importance of these characteristics. Nevertheless, a few textbooks do explain and incorporate them in the dialogues. The learners could understand the concepts and apply them accurately in any setting insofar as their textbooks describe them appropriately and/or a teacher teaches them. Yet, other accompanying appropriate paralinguistics features, such as posture, attitudes, gestures, etc. are not touched on in the textbooks examined. These elements are also vital to the acquisition of appropriate conversational skills. Although impossible to be taught through dialogue text alone, they could nonetheless be taught through pictures and explanatory notes. What is more, the phonetic features of conversation, such as intonation, prominence, accent, and speed are almost impossible to explain properly except by using CDs or DVDs.

Politeness is a salient character of the Japanese language and stems from the influence of social and cultural history. Because of the characteristics of foreign language textbooks, almost all their design concepts, in general, resemble one another, and their point of concern seems to be politeness to others. As the Japanese language arguably requires more careful attention to the relationship with an interlocutor than most other languages, it is understandable that this is the essence that textbooks have to emphasise in order that learners may recognise and imitate it. The majority of the model discourses employ polite

forms, presumably because it is thought better to play safe rather than use casual forms in any setting. Casual scenarios are for passive recognition but notes of explanation should be added that explain that learners must not imitate them but stick to politer levels. Most of the model discourses adequately elaborate polite expressions. The amount of polite speech employed in the chosen model dialogues is overwhelmingly large compared with that of casual speech; the latter is given in only four out of twenty-three models. Although it is not easy to comprehend the entire structure of verbs of giving and receiving in a short period, a learner will be able to show politeness to the other party by utilising these verbs to the best of their abilities.

The level of politeness depends on various elements between the speaker and the other party which must be provided to the learners not just by presenting the model dialogues, but through the hidden sociolinguistic rules. These are mutually but tacitly understood by native speakers. Some textbooks do, for ease of understanding, provide examples of explication of what phrase is suitable for which setting, but such examples are rare. In other words, many of the analysed textbooks neglect to present the intrinsic principles of speech, which correlate with the relationship with the other party.

Ideally, learners should be provided with not only natural model dialogues, but also clear explanations for the reasons the given structures and expressions are appropriate in the model discourses presented. This is because for learners at intermediate level, a mechanical mnemonic method alone no longer suffices and a strategic learning method backed up by explanations enhances their progress. The lack of appropriate explanatory notes, which are examined in this study, is a significant drawback. Thus, there is much

room for improvement in terms of the design concept of Japanese intermediate level textbooks for the spoken language.

What this research has revealed is that the ideal textbook for intermediate JSOL learners will include the following: good support of new concepts by presenting not only examples but also explanations, relevant and interesting topics which present a true and rounded picture of Japan for those who are studying abroad. In addition, well paced contents (a mixture of the new and familiar), and a teachers' manual providing both native speakers and non-native speakers teachers with hints for further detailed explanations from sociolinguistic and sociocultural viewpoints are desirable. If a textbook were to be designed to include these features, it would be much easier for learners as well as teachers to comprehend the complexity of the Japanese language and culture.

Appendixes

Glossary

K•hai: A person who entered and graduated from the same school (alumnus) or entered the same company later than oneself. However, it may happen that one's *kohai* becomes *meue* if the social rank of *kohai* is higher than oneself.

Meshita: A person whose social rank or position is lower, or a person who was born later than oneself. However, if a person who is older but the social rank is lower than oneself, he/she becomes one's *meshita.*

Meue: A person whose social rank or position is higher, or a person who was born earlier than oneself. However, if a person who is younger but the social rank is higher than oneself, he/she becomes one's *meue.*

Senpai: A person who entered and graduated from the same school (alumnus) or entered the same company earlier than oneself. However, it may happen that one's *senpai* becomes *meshita* if the social rank of *senpai* is lower than oneself.

Verbs of giving and receiving (*Juju d•shi*): Verbs *such as yaru, ageru, sashiageru* (to give) and *kureru, kudasaru, morau, itadaku* (to receive) are employed when expressing a respectful feeling to the others or being humble about oneself.

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