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Topic Shifting Devices Used by Supporting Participants in Native/Native and Native/Non-native Japanese Conversations[1]

Yoko Kato Nakai

1. Introduction

In this paper, I analyze differences in the devices used by native and non-native supporting participants in topic openings and closings in Japanese face-to-face conversations. My analysis builds on previous research on conversational units and topic-shifting devices in Japanese conversations (Hayashi 1960; Minami 1972, 1983, 1993; Ichikawa 1978; Sugito and Sawaki 1979; Noda 1981, 1990; Ikuta 1983; Sugito 1983, 1987; Jorden with Noda 1987; Sakuma 1987, 1990, 1992; Szatrowski 1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1991, 1993, 1997, 1998; Imaishi 1992; Sakuma and Suzuki 1993; Suzuki 1994, 1995; Karatsu 1995; Emmett 1996, 1998; Okada 1996; Sasaki 1996, 1998; Kato 1999), analyses of topic-shifting devices in English conversations (Garfinkel and Sacks 1970; Reichman 1978; Derber 1979; Goodwin 1981; Long 1981; Levinson 1983; Chafe 1987; Goodwin and Goodwin 1992; Sacks 1992; Geluykens 1993), and contrastive analyses of topic-shifting strategies in English and Japanese conversation (Maynard 1989; Yamada 1992; Watanabe 1993). I demonstrate that the non-native supporting participants in my data used fewer devices such as discourse developing connectives (e.g., *demo* 'but', *ja* 'so [in that case]', etc.) and the extended predicate (Jorden with Noda 1987) to indicate the relation of their utterances to the context in topic openings than Japanese native supporting participants did. Non-native supporting participants also tended to use more *aizuchi* 'backchannel utterances' in topic closings than did native supporting participants, who combined *aizuchi* with a variety of other devices such as fragments, assessments, summary utterances, direct style, final particles, prolonged vowels, overlap, repetition, and co-construction.

My data consist of eight 15-minute dyadic, face-to-face Japanese conversations videotaped in the United States, three between native Japanese

speakers (NS) and five between native Japanese speakers and non-native Japanese speakers whose native language was English (NNS). The Japanese background of the non-native speakers varied; some had been to Japan, some had studied in high school, and they had used a variety of Japanese textbooks. However, they were all relatively comparable to third-year students, that is, they were studying in a university class where all the students had studied Japanese for at least 500 hours. The tendencies I will discuss did not vary dramatically among the participants. I also conducted follow-up interviews with all of the participants in the conversations, in order to get a sense of their first-hand impressions of the conversations.

I will begin by reviewing Szatrowski's (1993) distinction between information-presenting participants and supporting participants. Next, I will discuss differences in the devices used by native and non-native supporting participants in topic openings and closings in Japanese conversations. Finally, I will conclude by suggesting some applications of the results of my research to teaching Japanese as a second language.

2. Previous Research

My research builds on research on conversational units by Minami (1972, 1983) and Szatrowski (1991, 1993, 1998). Minami (1972) proposed a hypothetical unit of *gengo hyoogen* 'language expression' which he called a *danwa* 'discourse unit'. Based on the analyses of Ichikawa (1978) and Sakuma (1987), Szatrowski (1991, 1993, 1998) proposed a conversational unit which she called a *wadan* 'stage' as a subcategory of Minami's (1972, 1983) *danwa* and analyzed the linguistic elements used at the beginning and end of *danwa* and *wadan* units.

Following Szatrowski (1991, 1993, 1997), I distinguish between information-presenting participants and supporting participants. An information-presenting participant is a participant who uses utterance functions which relate to information presentation, i.e., *chuumoku yookyuu* 'attention requests', *danwa hyooji* 'discourse markers', *joohoo teikyoo* 'information presentation', *ishi hyooji* 'intention displays', *dooi yookyuu* 'agreement requests', *tandoku kooi yookyuu* 'independent activity requests', *kyoodoo kooi yookyuu* 'shared activity requests', *iinaoshi yookyuu* 'repeat requests', *iinaoshi* 'repeats', *kankei zukuri/girei* 'relation-building/etiquette expressions', *dooi no chuumoku hyooji* 'agreement attention displays', and *jiko chuumoku hyooji* 'self-directed attention displays'. A supporting participant is a participant who supports the information-presenting participant using *joohoo yookyuu* 'information requests', *iinaoshi yookyuu* 'confirma-

tion requests', *iinaoshi* 'repeats', *kankei zukuri/girei* 'relation-building/etiquette expressions', and *chuumoku hyooji* 'attention displays', including *keizoku no chuumoku hyooji* 'continuer attention displays', *shoonin no chuumoku hyooji* 'recognition attention displays', *kakunin no chuumoku hyooji* 'confirmation attention displays', *kyoomi no chuumoku hyooji* 'interest attention displays', *kyookan no chuumoku hyooji* 'empathy attention displays', *kanjoo no chuumoku hyooji* 'emotion attention displays', *kansoo no chuumoku hyooji* 'impression attention displays', *hitei no chuumoku hyooji* 'negating attention displays', and *shuuryoo no chuumoku hyooji* 'concluding attention displays' (Szatrowski 1993; translations by Szatrowski).[2]

3. Analysis

I conducted a topic division survey in which I asked five Japanese native speakers who had not participated in the conversations to identify topic divisions and give topic division titles for each of the eight conversations used in this study (a total of 40 informants). I determined topic divisions in this study using Suzuki's (1995) criteria for topic divisions by survey. Like Suzuki, I took into account the number of informants who indicated each content division, and I determined similar topic divisions based on similarities in the topic titles given by the informants. Although Suzuki mainly analyzed content divisions which were agreed upon by four or five informants, I included content divisions agreed upon by three informants as well. Following Suzuki, in cases when three or more informants indicated topic divisions at repeated, adjacent, or near-adjacent utterances and gave them similar topic titles, I treated the earliest topic division as the topic division in my analysis. After determining topic divisions, I analyzed the total of 149 topics (62 in the three NS–NS conversations and 87 in the five NS–NNS conversations), including 141 topic openings (59 in the three NS–NS conversations and 82 in the five NS–NNS conversations) and 149 topic closings (62 in the three NS–NS conversations and 87 in the five NS–NNS conversations) in my data.[3]

I found 28 linguistic devices in the topic openings and closings in my data.[4] I have listed some of the previous research related to my analysis of these devices in Table 1.[5]

Table 1. Previous Research Related to Linguistic Devices Used in Topic Openings and Closings

1. vocative utterances	Szatrowski 1991, 1993	15. direct style	Ikuta 1983
2. discourse-developing connectives	Reichman 1978 Maynard 1989 Szatrowski 1991,1993,1998 Yamada 1992 Sakuma & Suzuki 1993 Suzuki 1994,1995 Karatsu 1995	16. declarative statements	Geluykens 1993
3. metalinguistic utterances	Geluykens 1993	17. questions	Long 1981 Geluykens 1993 Suzuki 1994,1995 Sasaki 1996,1998
4. interactional markers	Yamada 1992 Suzuki 1994,1995 Emmett 1996 Szatrowski 1998	18. greetings	Levinson 1983 Szatrowski 1991,1993
5. self-directed utterances		19. clause particles	Jorden with Noda 1987
6. yes-no responses	Suzuki 1994,1995	20. final particles	
7. topic particle *wa*	Suzuki 1994,1995 Szatrowski 1998	21. prolonged vowels	Yamada 1992
8. particle omission		22. inversion	Geluykens 1993
9. deictics	Suzuki 1994,1995 Szatrowski 1998	23. *aizuchi*	Maynard 1989 Chafe 1987 Szatrowski 1991,1993,1998 Imaishi 1992 Suzuki 1994,1995
10. fragments		24. overlap	
11. *te*-form		25. repetition	
12. assessments	Maynard 1989 Goodwin & Goodwin 1992	26. self-correction	Goodwin 1981
13. summary utterances	Garfinkel & Sacks 1970 Maynard 1989	27. co-construction	
14. extended predicate		28. null connection	

In Table 2 I list the 28 linguistic devices, numbering them in order of use in an utterance in terms of four levels of expression, for the most part following Hayashi's (1960) analysis of *jutsubu no yon-dankai* 'four levels of predicates' and Minami's (1993) analysis of *bun no koozoojoo no kaisoo* 'the stratification of Japanese syntactic structure'. I distinguished between devices used in sentence-initial position (1–5), non-predicate components (6–10), predicate elements (11–15), sentence-final position (16–22), and interactional devices (23–28).[6]

Table 2. Order and Structure of Devices Used in Topic Openings and Closings

sentence-initial position	non-predicate components	predicate elements
1. vocative utterances	6. yes-no responses	11. *te*-form
2. connectives	7. topic particle *wa*	12. assessments
3. metalinguistic	8. particle omission	13. summary utterances
4. interactional markers	9. deictics	14. extended predicate
5. self-directed utterances	10. fragments	15. direct style

sentence-final position	interactional devices
16. declaratives	23. *aizuchi*
17. questions	24. overlap
18. greetings	25. repetition
19. clause particles	26. self-correction
20. final particles	27. co-construction
21. prolonged vowels	28. null connection
22. inversion	

I counted the number of devices used by supporting participants in the topic openings and topic closings in the conversations in my data. Then, I calculated the percentage of usage of each device within topic openings and within topic closings and arranged them according to the two groups of participants, i.e., NS(→NS) and NNS, as shown in Table 3.[7]

3.1. *Devices Used by Native and Non-native Supporting Participants in Topic Openings*

I give the percentages of devices used in topic openings by native supporting participants in Table 4 and by non-native supporting participants in Table 5.

Table 3. Number (N) and Percentage (%) of Each Device Used in Topic Openings and Closings

	topic openings				topic closings			
	NS(→NS)		NNS		NS(→NS)		NNS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. vocative utterances	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.4	0	0.0
2. discourse-developing connectives	6	2.7	1	0.7	3	1.2	0	0.0
3. metalinguistic utterances	1	0.5	0	0.0	2	0.8	0	0.0
4. interactional markers	15	6.8	35	25.9	16	6.5	6	4.8
5. self-directed utterances	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
6. yes-no responses	0	0.0	2	1.5	7	2.9	3	2.4
7. topic particle *wa*	12	5.5	7	5.2	2	0.8	2	1.6
8. particle omission	5	2.3	0	0.0	3	1.2	0	0.0
9. deictics	17	7.7	4	3.0	5	2.0	2	1.6
10. fragments	11	5.0	9	6.7	7	2.9	7	5.6
11. *te*-form	2	0.9	0	0.0	1	0.4	0	0.0
12. assessments	1	0.5	0	0.0	7	2.9	2	1.6
13. summary utterances	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	3.3	1	0.8
14. extended predicate	14	6.4	0	0.0	4	1.6	0	0.0
15. direct style	16	7.3	8	5.9	20	8.2	13	10.4
16. declarative statements	2	0.9	3	2.2	8	3.3	3	2.4
17. questions	34	15.5	23	17.0	7	2.9	9	7.2
18. greetings	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.8
19. clause particles	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20. final particles	20	9.1	17	12.6	13	5.3	2	1.6
21. prolonged vowels	13	5.9	2	1.5	43	17.6	20	16.0
22. inversion	5	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.8
23. *aizuchi*	21	9.5	8	5.9	54	22.0	40	32.0
24. overlap	18	8.2	4	3.0	24	9.8	8	6.4
25. repetition	2	0.9	5	3.7	3	1.2	4	3.2
26. self-correction	4	1.8	7	5.2	2	0.8	1	0.8
27. co-construction	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.6	0	0.0
28. null connection or association	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.4	0	0.0
TOTALS	220	100	135	100	245	100	125	100

Table 4. Devices Used by Native Supporting Participants in Topic Openings

sentence-initial position	non-predicate components	predicate elements
		11. *te*-form 0.9%
2. connectives 2.7%	7. topic particle *wa* 5.5%	12. assessments 0.5%
3. metalinguistic 0.5%	8. particle omission 2.3%	
4. interactional 6.8%	9. deictics 7.7%	14. extended predicate 6.4%
	10. fragments 5.0%	15. direct style 7.3%

sentence-final position	interactional devices
16. declaratives 0.9%	23. *aizuchi* 9.5%
17. **questions** 15.5%	24. overlap 8.2%
	25. repetition 0.9%
19. clause particles 0.5%	26. self-correction 1.8%
20. final particles 9.1%	
21. prolonged vowels 5.9%	
22. inversion 2.3%	

Table 5. Devices Used by Non-native Supporting Participants in Topic Openings

sentence-initial position	non-predicate components	predicate elements
	6. yes-no responses 1.5% +	
2. connectives 0.7% –	7. topic particle *wa* 5.2%	
	8. particle omission 0.0% –	
4. **INTERACTIONAL** 25.9% +	9. deictics 3.0% –	14. extended pred. 0.0% –
	10. fragments 6.7% +	15. direct style 5.9% –

sentence-final position	interactional devices
16. declaratives 2.2% +	23. *aizuchi* 5.9% –
17. **questions** 17.0% +	24. overlap 3.0% –
	25. repetition 3.7% +
	26. self-correction 5.2% +
20. FINAL PRTCLS 12.6% +	
21. prolonged vowels 1.5% –	
22. inversion 0.0% –	

Non-native supporting participants opened topics with discourse-developing connectives, deictics, the extended predicate, direct style, prolonged vowels, inversion, *aizuchi*, and overlap less than native participants. I will discuss only discourse-developing connectives, and the extended predicate in this paper.[8]

In (1), Yae (Y) is a native supporting participant, and Ayako (A) is a native information-presenting participant. Yae, the supporting participant, opens the topic in 429Y using the interactional markers *a-* 'oh', *ano:* 'uhm', and *e:tto:* 'uhm', the discourse-developing connective *ja:* 'then (in that case)', the topic particle *wa*, the extended predicate *n desu*, the final (question) particle *ka*, and a question.[9] In this topic opening, Yae uses *ano:* to indicate that she is formulating her utterance carefully and *e:tto:* to search for the right word (Emmett 1996, 1998).

(1) Yae = native supporting participant (female NS, early 30s)
Ayako = native information-presenting participant (female NS, late 20s)
Topic 14: ESL class (429–457)

→ 429Y: あっ、じゃあ、ＥＳＬのクラスは、あれですか？あのー、えーっとー、ＥＳＬの授業を実際聴講されたりとかしてるんですか？

A-, ja:, ESL no kurasu wa, are desu ka? ano:, e:tto:, ESL no jugyoo o jissai chookoo-saretari to ka shite ru n desu ka?

interactional markers •
discourse-developing connective •
topic particle *wa* •
extended predicate •
final particle •
question •

'Oh, then (in that case), as for ESL classes, what is that? uhm, uhm, is it that (you) are doing things like actually auditing ESL classes?'

430A: 実際に教える // ってことがあるんですって。

Jissai ni oshieru // tte koto ga aru n desu tte.

'(I) hear that it's that (one) has a chance to actually teach.'

Although native supporting participants used discourse-developing connectives to connect the new topic with a previous topic or assumption, only one non-native supporting participant used a discourse-developing connective, and he misused it when trying to connect something talked about in the previous topic with the next topic. Native and non-native supporting participants used questions at a similar rate in topic openings.

However, while native supporting participants used the extended predicate in their questions approximately 32% of the time, the non-native supporting participants in my data did not use the extended predicate in their topic-developing questions at all.[10] This lack of use of the extended predicate gave an overall impression of lack of contextual connection in the non-native speakers' conversations.

In (2), Ben (B) is a non-native supporting participant, and Keiji (K) is a native information-presenting participant. After Ben and Keiji talk about Keiji's day off on the weekend from 219B through 224K, Ben opens the topic "Keiji's work hours" with his question in 225B: *Dakara:, ano:, mainichi nan-ji kara nan-ji made shigoto o shite imasu ka?* 'So (because of that), uhm, from what time to what time do you work everyday?' Ben probably used the discourse-developing connective *dakara* in 225B because it can be translated as 'so' in English in some contexts. However, *ja* 'so, then (in that case)' would have been more appropriate than *dakara* 'so (because of that)' to change the topic from Keiji's day off to Keiji's working hours. According to Karatsu (1995: 128), the discourse-developing connective *dakara* functions to "add an explanation to what the speaker has said previously" or "repeat what the speaker has said previously." Had Ben phrased his question with the extended predicate, saying for example *Jaa, ano:, mainichi nan-ji kara nan-ji made shigoto o shite iru n desu ka?* 'So then (in that case), uhm, from what time to what time is it that you work every day?', he would have established a more smooth connection between his question and the previous topics about Keiji's work.

(2) Ben = non-native supporting participant (male NNS, early 20s)
Keiji = native information-presenting participant (male NS, late 20s)
Topic 9: Vacation in Japan (190–224)

(. . .)

219B: あのー、(3.0) あーん、だから、週末が休みですか？
Ano:, (3.0) *a:n, dakara, shuumatsu ga yasumi desu ka?*
'Uhm, (3.0) uhm, so (because of that), do you have time off on the weekends?'

220K: ん？
N?
'Huh?'

221B: 週末、が、
Shuumatsu, ga,
'Weekends,'

222K: 週末休みです。
Shuumatsu yasumi desu.
'Weekends are vacation.'

223B: 休み。
Yasumi.
'Vacation.'

224K: ええ。
Ee.
'Yes.'

Topic 10: Keiji's working hours (225–256)

→ 225B: だからー、あのー、毎日何時から何時まで仕事をしていますか？
Dakara:, ano:, mainichi nan-ji kara nan-ji made shigoto o shite imasu ka?
discourse-developing connective •
interactional marker •
final particle •
question •
non-extended predicate •
'So (because of that), uhm, from what time to what time do you work everyday?

PEDAGOGICAL SUGGESTION

225B: じゃあ、あのー、毎日何時から何時まで仕事をしているんですか？
Jaa, ano:, mainichi nan-ji kara nan-ji made shigoto o shite iru n desu ka?
'So then (in that case), uhm, from what time to what time is it that you work everyday?'

In (3), Danny (D) is a non-native supporting participant, and Hayato (H) is a native information-presenting participant. Danny asks Hayato whether he skis often in 236D: *A:n, a, yoku sukii-shimasu ne?* 'Uhm, uhm, you ski often, right?' In the follow-up interview, Danny told me that he used the final particle *ne* 'right' because Hayato had talked a little about his experience skiing in America in the previous topic. In a discussion

of the extended predicate, Jorden with Noda (1987: 242) stress the importance of shared information and its implications in Japanese. They claim that "when used appropriately, the extended predicate can create a feeling of closeness, empathy, understanding, and warmth." Danny would have been less imposing if he had phrased his utterance as a question with the extended predicate, saying for example *Ano:, yoku sukii-suru n desu ka?* 'Uhm, is it that you ski often?' This would have established a smoother connection between his question and what Hayato had mentioned previously.

(3) Danny = non-native supporting participant (male NNS, mid-20s)
Hayato = Native information-presenting participant (male NS, late 20s)
Topic 9: You ski, right? (236–310)

→ 236D: あーん、あ、よくスキーしますね？
A:n, a, yoku sukii-shimasu ne? — non-extended predicate • interactional markers • final particle *ne* • question •
'Uhm, uhm, you ski often, right?'

237H: はい、スキーします。
Hai, sukii-shimasu.
'Yes, (I) ski often.'

PEDAGOGICAL SUGGESTION

236D: あのー、よくスキーするんですか？
Ano: ,yoku sukii-suru n desu ka?
'Uhm, is it that you ski often?'

3.2. *Devices Used by Native and Non-native Supporting Participants in Topic Closings*

I give the percentages of devices used in topic closings by native supporting participants in Table 6 and by non-native supporting participants in Table 7.

Table 6. Devices Used by Native Supporting Participants in Topic Closings

sentence-initial position		non-predicate components		predicate elements	
1. vocative utterances	0.4%	6. yes-no responses	2.9%	11. *te*-form	0.4%
2. connectives	1.2%	7. topic particle *wa*	0.8%	12. assessments	2.9%
3. metalinguistic	0.8%	8. particle omission	1.2%	13. summary utterances	3.3%
4. interactional	6.5%	9. deictics	2.0%	14. extended predicate	1.6%
		10. fragments	2.9%	15. direct style	8.2%

sentence-final position		interactional devices	
16. declaratives	3.3%	23. ***aizuchi***	22.0%
17. questions	2.9%	24. overlap	9.8%
		25. repetition	1.2%
		26. self-correction	0.8%
20. final particles	5.3%	27. co-construction	1.6%
21. **prolonged vowels**	17.6%	28. null connection	0.4%

Table 7. Devices Used by Non-native Supporting Participants in Topic Closings

sentence-initial position		non-predicate components		predicate elements	
		6. yes-no responses	2.4%		
2. connectives	0.0% –	7. topic particle *wa*	1.6%	12. assessments	1.6% –
		8. particle omission	0.0% –	13. summary	0.8% –
4. interactional	4.8% –	9. deictics	1.6%	14. extended pred.	0.0% –
		10. fragments	5.6% +	15. DIRECT STYLE	10.4% +

sentence-final position		interactional devices	
16. declaratives	2.4%	23. ***AIZUCHI***	32.0% +
17. questions	7.2% +	24. overlap	6.4% –
18. greetings	0.8%	25. repetition	3.2% +
		26. self-correction	0.8%
20. final particles	1.6% –	27. co-construction	0.0% –
21. **prolonged vwls.**	16.0% –		
22. inversion	0.8%		

Non-native supporting participants tended to use a higher proportion of *aizuchi* 'backchannel utterances' in topic closings than native supporting participants.[11] This tendency relates to the fact that native supporting participants tended to use *aizuchi* in combination with other devices in topic closings such as fragments, assessments, direct style, final particles, prolonged vowels, overlap, repetition, and co-constructions, while non-native supporting participants tended to use only *aizuchi*.[12] This high proportion of *aizuchi* used by non-native supporting participants may also be due to a negative transfer of the use of backchannel utterances to close topics in English. According to Chafe (1987), English listeners give backchannel utterances at the end of the narrator's conversational paragraphs.

(4) is a typical example of a topic closing in my Japanese native/native conversations. In (4), Fujio (F) is a native supporting participant and Sayo (S) is a native information-presenting participant. Prior to the segment in (4), Sayo and Fujio were talking about code-switching between standard Japanese and the Kansai dialect. In particular, Fujio's use of co-construction, overlap, direct style, and prolonged *aizuchi* in (4) contrasts dramatically with Danny's use of prolonged *aizuchi* and laughter in (5) to close the topic in my native/non-native data.

(4) Fujio = native supporting participant (male NS, late 20s)
Sayo = Native information-presenting participant (female NS, late 20s)
Topic 7: Osaka people's writing in standard Japanese (422–441)

431S: そー、だから、私も書く時は、もう、全然、
So:, dakara, watashi mo kaku toki wa, moo, zenzen,
'Yeah, so, I too, when writing (letters), quite completely,'

→ 432F: もう、普通に。
Moo, futsuu ni. fragment • co-construction •
'Quite normally.'

433S: 普通にもう、// 話してるような。
Futsuu ni moo, // hanashite ru yoo na.
'Normally, quite, like speaking.'

→ 434F: 話してるのと読むのも同じ。
Hanashite ru no to yomu no mo onaji. fragment • direct style • overlap • co-construction •
'Speaking and writing are the same.'

435S: うーん。
U:n.
'Yeah.'

→436F: あー。
A:. prolonged *aizuchi* •
'Oh.'

437S: うーん。
U:n.
'Yeah.'

→438F: へー。
He:. prolonged *aizuchi* •
'I see.'

439S: 不思議ですねー。
Fushigi desu ne:. assessment •
final particle *ne:* •
'It's amazing, isn't it.' prolonged vowel •

→440F: そうですね。
Soo desu ne *aizuchi* •
'It's so, isn't it.'

441S: うーん。
U:n.
'Uh huh.'

Topic 8: Dialects in Kyushu and Shikoku (442-467)

442S: でもー、あれですよね、あのー、すごくー、と、九州とか、だ、
Demo:, are desu yo ne, ano:, sugoku:, to, Kyuushuu to ka, da,
'But, it's that, isn't it, uhm, extremely, To-, Kyuusyuu or something,'

443F: はい。
Hai.
'Yes.'

444S: とかー、四国とかでも結構、ひょ、ほ、方言あるんでしょ？
to ka:, Shikoku to ka de mo kekkoo, hyo, ho, hoogen aru n desyo?
'or, in Shikoku, it's that there are du-, di-, dialects, aren't there?'

In (5), Hayato (H) is a native information-presenting participant, and

Danny (D) is a non-native supporting participant. After Hayato mentions in 303H and 305H that he likes Calgary more than Colorado, although he does not know why, Danny simply gives *aizuchi* in 306D: *A:, hai* 'Oh, yes'; 309D: *U:n, hun* 'Uh huh, humph', (English *aizuchi*); and 310D: *U:n* 'Uh huh'. Subsequently, Hayato changes the topic to Danny's hobbies in 311H: *Nani ka shumi wa?* 'How about (your) hobbies of some kind?'.

(5) Hayato = native information-presenting participant (male NS, mid-20s)
Danny = non-native supporting participant (male NNS, late 20s)
Topic 9: Are you planning to go to Colorado, Calgary? (287–310)

303H: でもー、コロラドより、僕は、あー、カルガリーの方が好きなんです。
Demo:, Kororado yori, boku wa, a:, Karugarii no hoo ga suki na n desu.
'But, it's that I like uhm Calgary better than Colorado.'

→ 304D: あそうですか。
A soo desu ka. *aizuchi* •
'Oh, is that so.'

305H: なぜか分からないですけどね。
Naze ka wakaranai desu kedo ne.
'(I) don't know why but, you know.'

→ 306D: あー、はい。{笑い}
A:, hai. {laughter} *aizuchi* • laughter •
'Oh, yes.'

→ 307D: ハハハハ、ウ、フン、{drink juice}ハハハハ、ア。
Ha ha ha ha, u, hun, {drink juice}*ha ha ha ha, a.* laughter •
{laughter} {drink juice} {laughter}

308: (2.0)

→ 309D: うーん、ふん。
U:n, hun. prolonged *aizuchi* •
'Uh huh, humph.'

→ 310D: うーん。
U:n. prolonged *aizuchi* •
'Uh huh.'

Topic 10: Danny's hobbies (jet skiing, skiing, football, tennis, movies) (311–351)

311H: 何か趣味は？
Nani ka shumi wa?
'How about (your) hobbies of some kind?'

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306D: へー、カルガリーの方が好きなんですかー。
He:, Karugarii no hoo ga suki na n desu ka:.
'Really, is it that (you) like Calgary more?'

OR スキーはアメリカよりカナダの方がいいんですねー。
Sukii wa Amerika yori Kanada no hoo ga ii n desu ne:.
'As for skiing, it's that Canada is better than America, isn't it.'

OR へーおもしろいなー。
He: omoshiroi na:.
'Really, (that's) interesting.'

In the follow-up viewing session, Hayato told me that Danny's superficial laugh in 307D made him think that Danny did not understand him. Danny, on the other hand, told me that he had understood Hayato and laughed in 307D because he thought that it was interesting that Canada (including Calgary) was more popular internationally than America for skiing. Danny could have responded in a way that would have made Hayato think that Danny had understood the conversation by combining his *aizuchi* and laughter with repetition and the extended predicate, for example by saying *He:, Karugarii no hoo ga suki na n desu ka:* 'Really, is it that (you) like Calgary more?', or by adding a comment about skiing in America and Canada, such as *Sukii wa Amerika yori Kanada no hoo ga ii n desu ne:* 'As for skiing, it's that Canada is better than America, isn't it'.

Ikuta (1983: 43) pointed out that Japanese speakers use direct style in assessments to express their empathy toward their interlocutor, i.e., to show strong agreement, to give positive evaluation of a preceding statement, and to show admiration of their partner.[13] While native supporting participants used assessments in direct style to close the topic 85% of the time (in six of seven cases), there were only two cases when non-native supporting participants used assessments to close the topic in my data and both were in direct style. Similarly, Danny would have sounded more friendly if he had used direct-style assessment of Hayato's topic

about Calgary, by saying for example *He: omoshiroi na:* 'Really, (that's) interesting'.

4. Conclusion

I will conclude with applications of the results of my research to teaching Japanese as a second language. As is seen in my data, non-native supporting participants had difficulties in showing involvement in the topics because they had not learned how to use topic-shifting devices. As a result, they tended to open and close topics suddenly, may have created impressions of not understanding or disinterest in the topics, and disappointed their native interlocutors. In order to avoid such situations, I will discuss some suggestions for improving non-native supporting participants' skills in using topic-shifting devices in order to show their positive involvement in topics.

In topic openings, native speakers tended to use interactional markers to formulate questions carefully and to search for the right word (Emmett 1996, 1998). In order to help students gain time to construct their questions, Japanese teachers need to develop ways to give their students practice using interactional markers such as *ano(:)* 'um', *etto(:)* 'um', and *soo desu ne:* 'It is so, isn't it', as well as metalinguistic utterances such as *Nan datta ka na:* 'I wonder what it was'.

In order to help non-native supporting participants make connections in the flow of the conversation in topic openings, Japanese instructors need to teach students how to use discourse-developing connectives to connect new topics with previous topics or assumptions. In particular, Japanese instructors need to give students practice in contexts where it is appropriate for students to use the Japanese discourse-developing connectives *demo* 'but', *de* 'and', and *ja* 'so (in that case)'. According to Sakuma and Suzuki (1993), these connectives were used most frequently for *hanashi o kaeru kinoo* 'the function of changing the topic' in their data from female university students' conversations.

Japanese instructors also need to teach students how to use the extended predicate when asking questions about shared knowledge or previously mentioned topics. Failure to use the extended predicate in contexts which involve shared information may make non-native speakers appear uninterested in the topic and "distant, harsh, aloof, or unconcerned" (Noda 1981: 87), although they do not mean to give this impression. This study supports Noda's (1981: 86) claim that teachers need to help their students understand "the subject matter of the conversation" and monitor "the

availability of sharable information" in order to learn to use the extended predicate effectively.

In topic closings, non-native supporting participants tended to promote topic closings faster than native participants through excessive use of *aizuchi.* In an analysis of three conversations between a salesperson and her cus-tomers, Sugito and Sawaki (1979) demonstrated that participants do not develop conversations actively with *aizuchi* and repetition. Maynard (1989) also pointed out that *aizuchi*, repetition, and laughter are often followed by a lapse and do not contribute to topic advancement.[14] In order to help students increase their involvement in their interlocutors' topics as support-ing participants in topic closings, Japanese instructors need to teach students how to combine *aizuchi* with other closing devices, such as fragments, assessments, direct style, final particles, prolonged vowels, overlap, repe-tition, and co-construction. This will help them be able to signal topic closure gradually and avoid the abrupt closure caused by using only *ai- zuchi.* According to C. Goodwin and M. Goodwin (1992: 171), assessments promote heightened involvement in the topic, signal the climax or peak of the topic, and foreshadow topic closure. Japanese instructors need to teach students how to use assessments ending with *ne*, *ne:*, or the final particle combination *yo ne* to indicate their desire to share and obtain their native interlocutors' agreement and create involvement in the con-versation. In addition, Japanese teachers need to create contexts for their students to use assessments in direct style. This will enable them to ex- press their empathy toward the topic (Ikuta 1983) and realize more highly involved topic closure.

Above, I analyzed the usage of 28 linguistic devices in topic openings and closings in eight Japanese conversations between native speakers and between native speakers and non-native speakers. I also discussed some applications of the results of my research to teaching Japanese as a second language. Although my findings are reflected in some aspects of Japanese learners' tendencies, because the data is small, I have to say that these tendencies are limited to learners who studied Japanese mainly in the United States. For example, some students who have studied in Japan overuse rather than underuse the extended predicate. Nevertheless, although the applicability of my pedagogical suggestions may be limited, I would like to emphasize the importance of teaching the usage of topic-shifting devices in classrooms. Teachers should let the students talk with each other and practice opening, developing, and closing topics. I would like to study such teaching methods more in the future.

APPENDIX
Transcription Conventions

I transcribed the conversations used in this study in Japanese using the transcription notation developed by Szatrowski (1993, Data Volume 2–3), which are shown below.

// Indicates that the portion of the utterance after the // is overlapped by the following numbered utterance.

(0.4) Numbers in parentheses indicate the length of pause in tenths of seconds. (I measured the length of pauses using a stopwatch and indicated the pauses which were more than 1 second.)

? Indicates rising intonation, but not necessarily an interrogative utterance.

。 Indicates a sentence ending with falling intonation.

、 Indicates a very short pause, or in cases where the sentence continues, a nominal phrase, adverb, subordinate clause, etc.

{} Indicates nonlinguistic behavior, e.g., laughter.

() Indicates utterances which are difficult to hear.

In the romanization of these transcriptions, I indicate vowel lengthening (ー) with a colon (:) and a word-final moraic obstruent with a hyphen (as in *a-* for あっ).

NOTES

1. This research is a part of my M.A. thesis, "Topic Shifting Devices Used in Japanese Native/Native and Native/Non-native Conversations" (Kato 1999), submitted to University of Minnesota. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Polly E. Szatrowski, my advisor, Dr. Amy L. Sheldon, Dr. Terry Kawashima, and the graduate students and faculty in the Japanese program at the University of Minnesota for their thorough and enthusiastic guidance, inspiration, and encouragement on this paper. I am also grateful to the people who allowed me to videotape their conversations and the informants who participated in the survey for this paper.
2. See Szatrowski 1993 for the definitions of each term.
3. I considered the last topic in each conversation only as a topic closing and did not consider it as a topic opening, so the total numbers of topic openings and closings differ.
4. See Kato 1999 for the definitions and examples of each device.
5. The research listed is related to the linguistic devices in Table 1, but each

researcher does not necessarily refer to the devices by the term which I use in this paper.

6. I define an interactional device as a linguistic device often lacking referential content which can be used almost anywhere in an utterance and whose use is based on the interaction between the participants. Neither Hayashi (1960) nor Minami (1993) included interactional devices in their analyses. I define null connection or association as an utterance which I observed when participants were unable to continue the topic by relating to their own experience (e.g., *Shiriai de wa inai ka naa* 'I don't have any acquaintances [who do that]'). I considered null connection or association to be an interactional device because its definition is related to the meaning or context of the interlocutor's previous utterance. In Tables 4–7, I indicate devices used more than 25% of the time with **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS**, devices used more than 15% with **bold letters**, and devices used more than 10% with CAPITAL LETTERS. In Tables 5 and 7, I indicate devices which non-native speakers used more than 1% higher than native speakers with a '+' sign and devices which they used more than 1% lower than native speakers with a '–' sign.
7. For example, native supporting participants used a total of 220 devices in topic openings. Because 15 of these 220 devices were interactional markers, the percentage of the use of interactional markers was 15/220 or 6.8%. "NS(→NS)" means a native participant who conversed with a native participant, and "NNS" means a non-native participant who conversed with a native participant. I did not analyze the native participants who conversed with non-native participants in this paper.
8. Following Sakuma (1992:15), I define discourse-developing connectives as connectives which "function to develop, complete, unify, and convey the context of the text or discourse" (translation mine). Following Jorden with Noda (1987:178), I define the extended predicate as the direct style predicate + nominal *n* + *desu* 'it's that . . .', which "relates what precedes *n* to something in the real world which is known or assumed to be known by the person addressed, as well as being known by the speaker" and "often serves as an explanation." For more discussion about the usage of the other devices, see Kato 1999.
9. Emmett (1996, 1998) refers to *ano(:)* and *e:to* 'um' as interactional markers because they are not merely used to fill silence but are used in relation to the conversational interaction. Following Emmett (1996:221), I define interactional markers as forms "closely related to the conversational interaction." This includes "hesitation markers," which are used to fill a pause in the middle of the speaker's own utterance to avoid silence (Yamada 1992:69).
10. Native supporting participants used a total of 34 questions and 14 extended predicates in topic openings, as shown in Table 3. Because 11 of these 34 questions were used with the extended predicate, the percentage of the use of questions with the extended predicate was 11/34 or 32%.
11. Following Sugito (1987:88), I define *aizuchi* as "utterances which are primarily responses" (e.g., *Haa* 'Yes (polite)', *A:* 'Oh', *Un* 'Uh huh', *A: soo*

desu ka 'Oh, is that so', *Sayoo de gozaimasu ka* 'Is that so (polite)', and *Ee soo desu nee* 'Yes, that is so, isn't it') and "utterances which consist only of repetitions and exclamations (e.g., *Ee!* 'What?', *Maa* 'Well', and *Hoo* 'whoo!') and laughter," which "do not contain linguistic forms which express referential content (i.e., nouns, verbs, etc., which are not mere repetitions)" and which "do not act on the hearer such as judgements, requests and questions" (translation by Szatrowski).

12. I define fragments as "utterances that end in noninflected words with or without following particles" (Jorden with Noda 1987:20). Following Goodwin and Goodwin (1992:155), I define assessments as the speaker's visible evaluation of an event by displaying his or her "experience of the event, including his or her affective involvement in the referent being assessed," and assessment of subject matter.

    Following Jorden with Noda (1987), I define direct style as a sentence ending with (1) a verbal in the *ta*-form or *ru*-form (e.g., *Itta* '[I] went'), (2) an adjectival ending in *-i* or *-katta*, or (3) a nominal + copula ending with *da* or *datta* and possibly followed by a clause particle (e.g., *Kore da* '(It) is this'; *Kore da kedo* '(It's) this but'). Unlike Jorden with Noda, I considered (4) a verbal ending in the *te*-form, an adjective ending in the *-kute* form, or a nominal + copula predicate ending in the *de* (gerund) form to be in direct style. In addition, unlike Jorden with Noda, I included in direct style (5) a nominal by itself (e.g., *Kore* 'This'), (6) a nominal followed by one or more final particles (e.g., *Kore ne?* 'This, right?'), (7) a nominal followed by a phrase particle (*wa*, *ga*, *mo*, *o*, *ni*, *e*; e.g., *Kore wa?* 'As for this?', *Nihon ni* 'To Japan'), and (8) a *na*-nominal + *ni* (e.g., *Kirei ni* 'Neatly', *Kooritsu no ii yoo ni* 'For good efficiency')

    Following Jorden with Noda (1987: 33), I define final particles as "a group of words which occur only at the end of sentences" and which "qualify the meaning of what has preceded."

    I define prolonged vowels as (1) prolonged utterance-final vowels (e.g., *Itta kedo:* '[I] went but') and (2) *aizuchi* with a prolonged initial or final vowel (e.g., *U:n* 'Uh huh', or *He:::* 'Really?')

    I define overlap as utterances and laughter which overlap the interlocutor's utterances.

    Following Tannen (1989), I define repetition as (1) allo-repetition, i.e., repetition of the other participant's immediately prior utterance, (2) self-repetition of the participant's own immediately prior utterance or current on-going utterance, (3) paraphrasing of the other participant's or the participant's own immediately prior or current on-going utterance, or (4) repetition used to ask the meaning of words.

    I define co-construction as utterances which complete the other participant's immediately prior incomplete utterance.

13. I use the term direct style (citation dictionary forms) (Jorden with Noda 1987:222) here, instead of Ikuta's (1983) term [–distant] (the non-use of *des-/-mas-*).

14. According to Horiguchi (1997), speakers can develop topics by means of

the listerners' supporting utterances, such as *hanpuku yookyuu* 'repeat requests', *setsumei yookyuu* 'explanation requests', *kakunin yookyuu* 'confirmation requests', *sakidori* 'co-construction', and *ootoo* 'responses' (translation mine) in Japanese conversations. In her data, advanced learners of Japanese used less *hanpuku yookyuu* 'repeat requests', *setsumei yookyuu* 'explanation requests', and *kakunin yookyuu* 'confirmation requests' than Japanese native speakers. Thus, she points out the importance of teaching these supporting utterances to Japanese learners.

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