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**Verbal resources for affective stance display  
in Japanese conversational interactions**

**Verbální prostředky vyjadřování afektivního postoje  
v japonských konverzačních interakcích**

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This thesis was instigated by my deep fascination with the question of how people use language in their everyday conversational interactions in order to express and make interpretable various emotions, feelings, moods, and attitudes, or – to put it differently – how people use language to construct affective stance displays. As part of my endeavour to contribute to the growing body of research that tries to answer this question, I devoted this thesis to the exploration of verbal resources for affective stance display which are routinely deployed by Japanese speakers in their informal conversational interactions.

Many have pointed out the ubiquitous nature of affective stance displays in social interaction. Jakobson (1960:354), for example, argues that the speaker's expression of their attitude towards what they are speaking about "flavors to some extent all [...] utterances". Goffman (1981:120) asserts that "it is impossible to utter a sentence without coloring the utterance with some kind of perceivable affect, even (in special cases) if only with the emotionally distinctive aura of affectlessness". Ochs (1986:256) likewise maintains that "[i]n most arenas of daily communication, speakers convey not only information concerning some state or event but their feelings about some state or event as well, and languages will have varying structures for encoding this level of information". Similarly, Tannen (1985:131) contends that "one cannot speak without showing one's attitude toward the message and the speech activity", while Jaffe (2009b:3) states that "speech cannot be affectively neutral; we can indeed convey a stance of affective neutrality, but it will of necessity be read in relation to other possible emotional orientations we could have displayed" and, as such, potentially oriented to by the co-participants as interactionally relevant. In brief, as Du Bois and Kärkkäinen (2012:434) point out, "emotion is in principle present in interaction, at least as a potentiality via its projectable consequences on many levels".

In different languages and cultures, the use of particular resources and bundles of resources for constructing affective stance displays is arguably routinized and conventionalized to various degrees. Were there no recurrent correlations between certain culturally shared ideas of affective stances and the means deployed to build their displays in the course of specific actions and activities in social interaction, how would we be able to interpret the affective stance displays produced by others or how would we know how to believably fake specific affective stances while actually feeling something different? Language supplies us with a great array of resources that may be mobilized and utilized for affective stance display. According to Ochs and Schieffelin (1989:22), for example, "[a]ffect permeates the entire linguistic system" and "[a]lmost any aspect of the linguistic system that is variable is a candidate for expressing affect". In conversational interactions, however, affective stance displays are not realized and made

interpretable by means of isolated linguistic resources, but by, as Sorjonen and Peräkylä (2012:9) emphasize, “the cooccurrence of resources from different modalities and levels of modality” that “are interpreted and oriented to by the recipients of the displays at specifiable places in interaction”.

For a long time, there was a marked tendency for studies of affective-stance-display-related phenomena in language and discourse to either discuss a broad range of linguistic (and occasionally also certain other semiotic) forms from a largely theoretical perspective or to concentrate on a rather limited number of linguistic forms mainly using made-up example sentences and non-spontaneous written language data from sources such as novels or newspaper articles. By contrast, especially over the past two decades or so, we have witnessed a great surge in scholarly interest in the topic and its exploration from an interactional perspective. These studies yield invaluable insights into the workings of specific linguistic forms and formats and the ways in which particular actions and activities are accomplished. However, they are (quite understandably) generally very narrowly focused on the context of specific actions, activities, and sequential positions and so their findings about individual resources are frequently not generalizable and are scattered across a number of publications. In this thesis, I aspired to both show the impressive plurality of verbal resources that Japanese language speakers commonly deploy for affective stance display purposes in their everyday informal conversational interactions and demonstrate how they may be used to construct affective stance displays in cooccurrence with other resources in specific interactional contexts by using close analyses of excerpts from naturally occurring conversational interactions.

The objectives that I pursued in this thesis, therefore, involved (1) finding out about the diversity of linguistic forms and formats that are systematically and methodically deployed as verbal resources for affective stance display in Japanese informal conversational interactions; (2) creating an inventory of the major types of such resources; (3) describing and exemplifying them using especially the findings from my long-term research on spontaneous conversational interactions of Japanese young adults; and (4) demonstrating some of the ways in which they are used in ordinary informal conversational interactions, using excerpts from face-to-face conversational interactions, telephone calls, and occasionally also technically mediated interactions on social media between Japanese young people in close personal relationships. The Japanese language has long been regarded as a language that is endowed with many lexicogrammatical resources that index social-relational meanings. The present study shows not only how some of these linguistic forms that have long been recognized as serving ‘non-referential’ purposes may be employed alongside other verbal resources in the course of conversational

interactions as resources for affective stance display but also demonstrates that there are many other linguistic forms and formats that are regularly used for affective-stance-display-related purposes.

This thesis represents a strictly data-driven endeavour. It is based primarily on my study of recordings of spontaneous face-to-face and telephone conversations mainly between Japanese young adults in close personal relationships. Methodologically, it draws on conversation analysis and interactional linguistics. The types of verbal resources that the thesis deals with were chosen because of their high frequency of use in the studied data. In particular, the thesis discusses some of the affective-stance-display-related uses of lexical categories, verbal morphology, demonstratives, zero-marking, topic-marking particles, person reference, connective expressions, non-predicate-final constituent order, direct speech constructions, question forms, syntactically incomplete utterance constructions, and various utterance-final elements. Affective-stance-display-related meanings and functions may constitute the core meanings and functions of the given linguistic form or format, or they may be of a more peripheral significance for them. The thesis shows that affective stance displays are often achieved by using resources that have more affectively neutral alternatives (which were not chosen by the speaker), and/or are referentially superfluous in the given context (and yet were produced), and/or are unexpected and create markedness on any level of language and social interaction in the given environment with respect to the surrounding turns and the entirety of the situational context.

It also demonstrates that affective stance displays may be constructed quite explicitly as well as in a fairly subtle way through resources that evoke affective-stance-display-related interpretations rather than mark affective stances overtly. Verbal resources may play various roles in affective stance display processes and their affective-stance-display-related uses may be conventionalized or fixed to different degrees. Some are used to express or index affective stances. Some serve the purpose of affective contextualization, making a unit of talk come across as affectively coloured or affectively charged. Some modify the intensity of affective stances displayed by means of other resources. Some co-construct affective stance displays by helping to specify the kind or category of otherwise produced displays. Certain resources have intrinsic affective-stance-display-related meanings. Some linguistic forms and formats have developed specific affective-stance-display-related uses and functions owing to their repeated deployment in particular types of interactional contexts for the purpose of accomplishing particular types of tasks, while other resources may have more generic uses.

The thesis also helps us more fully appreciate the fact that everyday informal conversational interactions are replete with different kinds of affective stance displays. Affective stance displays can form primary actions (when we, for example, produce a turn that consists solely of a phrase used to express our gratitude), secondary actions (when we, for example, colour our refusal with a display of an affective stance such as contempt), as well as the defining components of a number of actions (such as apologizing or complimenting) and activities (such as arguing or storytelling). In any case, affective stance displays are deeply consequential for the development of the ongoing social interaction and may be oriented to by the co-participants either directly or indirectly through the design of their turns. At the same time, they are also crucial for the maintenance and further advancement of the attendant social relations. In the context of conversational interactions, affective-stance-taking represents an ever-present, organized, coordinated, situated activity that involves all levels of language and communication. Closely monitoring each other's talk for affective stance displays, participants in interaction produce, negotiate, and incrementally modify and modulate their affective stance displays and manage affiliation. Knowing how to use linguistic forms and formats to perform and interpret affective stance displays in social interaction is one of the things that characterises speakers as members of a speech community.

Throughout this thesis, I emphasize the importance of a positionally-sensitive approach to language and the importance of differentiating between language ideology and actual language use. Through the analyses of numerous excerpts, I tried to shed some light on the process of affective stance display construction, showing how various resources are mobilized by the participants in interaction to jointly build affective stance displays. The excerpts clearly demonstrate that affective stance displays in conversational interactions are accomplished via the interplay of co-occurring resources from different modalities in their contexts of occurrence. Furthermore, certain resources also habitually cooccur to jointly construct affective stance displays, thereby forming sets, bundles, or complexes of resources that may be viewed as practices characterized by different degrees of fixity. Members register and keep track of the affective-stance-display-related uses of particular linguistic forms and formats in particular types of contexts and commit to memory the particular forms and formats together with the situated affective-stance-display-related implications that they bear. The context of actions and activities within which individual verbal forms and formats are deployed is, therefore, crucial for their interpretation as resources for affective stance display because it considerably constrains the potential implications that the individual resources carry. In other words, there are potential context-dependent, affective-stance-display-related meanings and functions

conventionally associated with individual forms and formats, which are then actualized and particularized in the specific contexts of their occurrence in systematic ways, which are, however, many and have not yet been fully elucidated.

The major contribution of this thesis is undoubtedly to the study of the Japanese language and social interaction. It advances our understanding of the ways in which Japanese people use language to communicate and provides new insights into the workings of various linguistic forms and formats, some of which have often been studied and described without paying close attention to the actions and activities in which they occur. By considering the possible situated uses of the verbal forms and formats that it concerns itself with, this thesis broadens our understanding of how they may be employed in interaction with a view to accomplishing certain goals. Even though ordinary conversational interactions are the primary mode of interpersonal communication and investigating linguistic forms and formats as they occur in actual social interactions is the only way to find out about their full potential, research into everyday conversational interactions in Japanese and interactional studies of the Japanese language are still quite rare compared to other approaches to the language.

The approach developed in this thesis and the results it may yield if adopted in larger research projects have potential applications in multiple fields, including foreign language teaching and learning, studies of cross-cultural communication, artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction, translation studies, politics, advertisement design, etc. The thesis itself can be particularly useful to students and teachers of Japanese as a foreign language. It offers more realistic descriptions of the Japanese language as it is used in everyday social interactions and illustrates how informal conversational interactions in Japanese may be organized. The excerpts can be read as examples of conversational Japanese, whose structures are quite different from those that are normally taught in Japanese language textbooks and classrooms. The ability to produce, interpret, and respond to affective stance displays in specific contexts in social interactions represents a vital part of the pragmatic competence of speakers of any language and is of fundamental significance for successful interpersonal communication and the development of social relations. Since it is seldom addressed in foreign language textbooks and classrooms, students may often be able to “produce grammatically flawless speech that nonetheless fails to achieve its communicative aims” (Fraser 2010:15). The social-relational behaviour of such students (in part because of their high grammatical and lexical competence) may then be judged by their co-participants as odd, unnatural, unfriendly, distancing, confusing, inappropriate, impolite, and even rude or offensive. Mastering methods and means for affective stance display is not an easy task even for advanced students of a

language. However, without being aware of at least the basics regarding the mechanisms for affective stance display in a given language, smooth interpersonal communication is hardly possible.

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