TEINEIGO AND STYLE-MIXING: FORMALITY VARIATION IN THE INTERVIEW REGISTER AND APPLICATION OF CONVERSATION ANALYSIS THEORY

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Abstract

Research in style-shifting between formal and familiar predicate forms that mark the addressee honorific in Japanese (-desu, -masu /-da, -ru) has revealed a great deal of variation along the social dimensions of gender, status and interactional role, as well as contextually-bound persona construction. The consensus is that this shift is flexible and variable, and that usage of linguistic politeness (teineigo) is not consistently reliant on predetermined norms inherent in status relationships. While studies on the social deixis of teineigo have proven that women use more formal forms in general, few studies have isolated the age differential as a determinant of addressee formality-shifting within the same or across gender groups. It is also unclear whether sociolinguistic factors such as gender and age have a significant effect on linguistic style change at pivotal points throughout the flow of the conversation, and not just overall for a given speech event. This study looks at the style-shifting practices of forty Japanese native speakers in a semi-formal interview setting. Quantitative analysis is performed in order to see whether it is males or females on one hand, or younger or older interviewees on the other, who perform more style-shifting overall, and further, at certain conversational junctures. For the second part of the analysis, coding was performed to delineate conversational segments, thus establishing the temporal sequential structure in which token analysis was then carried out to find how a speaker’s style preference evolves over the course of conversation. The results yielded by the empirical analysis of token distribution show that gendered language differences do not prove to be as prominent as generational differences in the patterns of variation. Further, it is found that variation by both gender and age are greatly dependent on conversational register, namely the interview setting, which requires all speakers to conform to certain style patterns. The results of the conversation analysis suggest the possibility that social categories may be secondary to contextual roles in the production and maintenance of style in conversation, and redirect the study of addressee formality in a direction with a deeper focus on conversational register.

Introduction

The average speaker of Japanese has at his disposal several tens or even hundreds of stylistic nuances to draw from when putting forth the same referential concept. These nuances are chosen according to several emotive and social factors affecting a speaker’s choice in any given speech act. Existing quantitative studies utilizing self-reported data have illustrated this
flexibility. Table 1, for instance, shows several versions of the phrase ‘I know,’ all with a uniform underlying semantic meaning:

Table 1  Twenty-two stylistic versions of ‘I know’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>日本語</th>
<th>普通話</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>存じております</td>
<td>知っていますけど</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>存じ上げております</td>
<td>知ってますよ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>存じてます</td>
<td>知っている</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>存じています</td>
<td>知ってる</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>知っております</td>
<td>知ってるよ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>分かります</td>
<td>知っているわ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>存じ上げてます</td>
<td>知っているよ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>知っております</td>
<td>知ってるわ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>知ってます</td>
<td>知っているわ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>知ってますよ</td>
<td>知ってるよ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>知ってますよ</td>
<td>知っているわよ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reproduced from a questionnaire study of politeness (Ogino 1986).

The various expressions in the table above share a semantic basis but differ in exterior form, and quite often in discursive and pragmatic application. Their difference is stylistic rather than semantic, and therefore reflects attitudinal, social, and interpersonal factors behind the choice of expression. In particular, all these expressions vary in level of formality. In a questionnaire by Ogino (1986), respondents rated each of the above stylistic versions according to formality. Zonjiteorimasu rated as highly formal and shitteiru wa yo rated as highly informal. The latter study, like many others of its kind (e.g., Ogino, Misono & Fukushima 1985; Hori 1986; Ogino 1986; Fritzsche 1998) concludes that native Japanese speakers have certain idealizations and intuitions about how to use stylistic markers of formality.
While there is an abundance of research measuring speakers’ perceived use of formality expressions, more data is needed on actual language practices. As Wetzel puts it, “there is a dire need for research that measures the disparity between behavior and attitude (2004:14).” In recent years, this need has been met with an increasing number of empirical studies of on-the-ground speaker behavior. In an endeavor to address the need for empirical conversationally-based data revealing patterns in style use and mixture, this thesis will present a quantitative study of the distribution of several styles in the category of *keigo* called addressee honorifics \(^1\) (or *teineigo*) among several sociodemographic subgroups.

To contribute to the empirical research on style manipulation of *teineigo*, I will analyze the morphological variations of several *teineigo* forms. In sociolinguistic literature, the addressee honorific suffixes *-desu/-masu* and their familiar equivalent *-da/-ru* are treated as stylistically different when speakers manipulate them in the process of adaptation to social circumstances and their own psychological states. Most discourse analysis studies of *teineigo* focus on the *desu-da* dichotomy, positing that the speaker always has to make a choice between the two in any given utterance (Ide 1982; Ikuta 1983; Okamoto 1998; Cook 1999). The current study broadens the formality continuum to include the more-than-formal form (e.g., *-teorimasu*) as well as the semi-formal form (*-nai/ndesu*), and analyzes their distribution in discourse in the same study. I take these four styles as mutually exclusive in order to deduce whether speakers do in fact show different degrees of partiality for some styles over others at different conversational junctures.

The literature on Japanese formal language also pays much attention to style differences according to gender, or more specifically, stylistic manipulation of classic

\(^1\) Addressee honorifics are verbal markers employed when the speaker wants to show deference or formality towards the addressee; this is contrasted with referent honorifics, which are used when speakers show deference or formality for the subject or object of the sentence uttered (Harada 1976; Levinson 1983).
categories of gendered language. Sociolinguistic studies often focus on the manipulation of onna no kotoba, or ‘women’s language’ by women in various circumstances in order to construct or deconstruct feminine personae. Analyses of formality and style, thus, frequently aim to uncover the ways in which gendered divisions manifest in interaction. These categories are maintained even when variation is checked according to other social and interactional variables, such as age, class, or occupation, as well as the situational context in which the speakers interact.

I seek to test whether the differences in language use between men and women that are thought to be salient and ubiquitous in Japanese society are indeed reflected in an interview setting. Moreover, I would like to determine whether gendered language differences in teineigo use are more, less, or equally as salient as differences observable according to other demographic characteristics, such as age. The question in this study is: how does the difference in teineigo use between men and women compare with the difference between younger and older speakers?

Furthermore, I am interested not only in deconstructing the gendered language assumption, but also in contributing to the growing literature on the importance of context, or situational register, on formality level and style choice. Thus, this study also asks: Can the conversational register prove to have supremacy over any type of static sociodemographic speaker attribute and demand its own pattern of style distribution?

These questions and the ensuing empirical analysis are intended to suggest the possibility that social categories may be secondary to contextual patterns in the production and maintenance of style in conversation. I hypothesize and indeed find that gendered language differences do not prove to be as prominent as generational differences in the patterns of
variation. Further, I find that indeed variation by both gender and age are greatly dependent on conversational structure, which requires all speakers to conform to certain style patterns.

To address these questions, I analyzed forty interviews that were accessed from the online Hypermedia Corpus of Spoken Japanese, which provided only the raw transcribed interviews. I performed multi-level coding and discourse analysis, producing thousands of speech tokens, which I then analyzed according to their placement in conversation and the attribute of the speaker. I carefully divided the speaker population into subgroups according to gender and age group and I coded systematically for the speech tokens, namely, several versions of the addressee honorific suffix desu/masu. I also coded the interviews for conversational segments, thus establishing the temporal sequential structure in which conversational analysis was then carried out to find how style mixing evolves over the course of conversational flow.
Literature Review

Sociolinguistic studies of *keigo* are increasingly rejecting the traditional hegemonic assumptions about the ubiquitous use of certain language forms by certain speakers, which assume cultural essential norms of gendered and status-based language practices. These emerging studies use the increasingly refined methods of discourse analysis and rely on interactional and quantitative evidence, resulting in a more empirically-supported and behavioristic set of theories that address how people manage their style and formality in daily interaction. Like other studies on *keigo*, the current one takes the honorific system and its conversation-level manifestation as a type of style, i.e. they are variations on how a speaker can put forth the same semantic meaning depending on the social context and other non-linguistic factors. To follow is a review of the definition and application of the concept of style to one subcategory of *keigo*: namely, the addressee honorific *desu/masu* and its related clause-final forms (collectively known as *teineigo*). This review also explores the ways in which this definition is positioned in the larger sociolinguistic debate on style and linguistic variation.

*Style and Honorifics*

Generally, a given style is defined according to any of several criteria spanning the areas of speech formality or politeness, narrative flow, type of discourse (verbal, written,

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2 The literature on politeness focuses more on pragmatic aspects of positive and negative face in terms of Gricean maxims (see Brown & Levinson 1987). Thus the term ‘politeness’ often elicits these debates, which are different in focus from the sociolinguistic inquiry into the conversational manipulation of markers of deference and formality. Therefore, to avoid confusion, only the term ‘formality’ will be used in the current study.
visual), and type of speech act, as well as the increasing focus on the intermixture of \textit{gairaigo} and native forms of expression. This study focuses on a particular style category falling under the category of speech formality or honorification (\textit{keigo}): the addressee honorific \textit{desu/masu}.

Under the social deixis\textsuperscript{3} approach to style (more specifically, honorifics as a form of style), some consider \textit{desu/masu} to index a show of deference by the speaker towards the addressee in accordance with the speaker’s relatively lower or higher position vis-à-vis the addressee, whether that hierarchical differentiation is due to age, status, class, occupation, familial relationship, etc. (Wetzel 1988; Ochs 1990, 1992; Okamoto 1998). Further, these operate under the assumption that variation is not only attributable to demographic categories (i.e. social deixis), but numerous types of contextualized subvariations according to speaker, context, and mindset, and that they fulfill not only social but interactional and context-bound roles (i.e. the indexing of persona). Ochs (1990), for instance, looks at the indexing capacity of affect markers, such as \textit{ze} or \textit{zo}, to signal expressive intensity. Cook noticed that the use of the \textit{masu} form among elementary school children served to index the “mode of self for public presentation (1998:67),” namely expressing two modes of self – disciplined and spontaneous. Yoshida and Sakurai (2005), upon observing natural conversation within a family whose members tend to use mostly the informal forms with each other, finds that they use both \textit{desu/masu} and \textit{da} to index their ‘role-oriented identity’ within the family circle. These studies demonstrate that style is a function of not only situational formality, but also of psychological and situational role-construction.

When speakers noticeably change their formality level or verbal politeness from one utterance to the next, this is termed style-shifting (Ervin-Tripp 2001; Geyer 2008; Jones &

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{3}Deixis is defined as the contextual linking of linguistic marker with the speaker’s intended meaning. Social deixis refers to a speaker’s awareness of social factors in his choice of verbal formality marker (Levinson 1983; Brown & Levinson 1987; Wetzel 1988).
\end{footnote}
The interactionist utterance-level approach to the analysis of style-shifting has shown that honorifics act as a deixis for numerous attitudinal/interpersonal stances of the participants (Coupland 1980; Schiffrin 1994; Gumperz 2003; Geyer 2008). It is clear, as the interactional view argues, that the change of style is not only a dynamic and temporal phenomenon, but is dependent to a great extent on processes internal to the speaker, and that speakers manage their social persona in the process of interaction (Maynard 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1997, 2007, 2008; Ochs 1992; Geyer 2008). From the perspective of analyses focusing on internal motivators, style-shifting is done predominantly on a micro-, or sentential level. However, style mixing at the larger conversational level also occurs, and the explanation of variation in these large-scale style changes illustrates how speakers manage formality markers over time.

**Anthropological, Sociolinguistic and Discourse Analytic Approaches to the Study of Honorifics**

With regards to languages that have addressee honorific systems such as Japanese, Levinson writes: “in general, in such languages, it is almost impossible to say anything at all which is not sociolinguistically marked as appropriate for certain kinds of addressees only (1983:90).” Given this implication into formality that a speaker faces, sociolinguistic studies illustrate how speakers manage these obligatory forms. Japanese sociolinguistic studies of *keigo* have gradually moved away from normative and prescriptive accounts towards empirical and ethnographic accounts of so-called deviant uses of all types of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviors (Shibamoto 1987; Smith 1992; Wetzel 1994; Smith & Okamoto 2004).
Sociolinguistic research on *keigo* has revealed how speakers use honorific language to express, create or enforce status relations (Cook 2005, 2008); wield social power or create solidarity (Lakoff 1975; Kondo 1990); express dignity and elegance (Ide 2005), and to widen or minimize psychological or social distance (Ikuta 1983, 2008; Shibatani 1990; Okamoto 1995, 1997; Cook 1996). Of particular interest for linguistic anthropologists in terms of formality and style has been the concept of gendered language, i.e. *onna no kotoba* (or *jouseigo*) and *otoko no kotoba* (or *danseigo*) (Ide 1979, 1997; Ide et al. 1986; Ide & McGloin 1991; Inoue 2002; Smith 2004; Wetzel 2004; Yukawa & Saito 2004). The discussion on gendered speech norms has largely been framed within the critique of *nihonjinron* normative assertions of essential cultural features, the latter positing that women are more conservative and employ higher levels of honorific forms as well as femininity-marking and beautification forms typical of *onna no kotoba*. In contrast to this traditional view, however, the preferred current philosophy of the study of gendered language is summarized by Okamoto and Smith with the motto “real language, real people (2004:13),” as empirical research into natural occurrences of speech and its critical interpretation are now more common.

Not least of the contributions brought to sociolinguistics with this latter orientation towards natural speech is the increasing use of empirical, data-based ethnographic methods. Real conversational samples from local speech communities are collected, on whose basis tangible statistical conclusions could be made about the reality of certain language features within that speech community (Labov 1970, 1972; Hymes 1974; Duranti 1985). In Japanese studies, Janet Shibamoto Smith was among the first to do large-scale quantitative analyses of casual speech in order to reveal features that relate to either the speaker’s identity as a woman or to “specific role-situational constraints to be socially ‘feminine’ (Shibamoto 1985:2).” This
type of work combines large amounts of empirical support with an aim to shatter mainstream
notions about connections between linguistic form and a static social role, and it does so with
a focus on gendered language.

While gender is the most popular target variable (Ide et al. 1986; Smith 1992; Okamoto 1995), studies are being published on the issue of language manipulation by other
social subgroups, namely along the age, class and socioeconomic status (Peng 1977, 1979;
Takasaki 1993; Endo 1997; SturtzSreetharan 2006), and regional (Sunaoshi 2004; Okamoto
2008) dimensions. SturtzSreetharan (2006), for instance, analyzes the use of clause-final
particles by all-male groups, concluding that younger men and older men use more familiar
forms than middle-aged men, the latter belonging predominantly to the ‘salaryman’
socioeconomic stratum. Focusing on another gender subgroup, Matsumoto (2004, 2008) looks
specifically at middle-aged stay-at-home mothers, and how they express alternative femininity
while constructing complex personae in intimate conversations with their friends. Okamoto
has also produced valuable work that elucidates linguistic affect with gendered language
among young women (Okamoto & Sato 1992).

Such studies shed light on the multiple variables that can interact in a speech event, not
the least important of which is the generational dimension. Studies usually incorporate an
analysis according to age or status differences while focusing primarily on gendered language.
Philips (2001) compares the speech of younger and older women, finding that younger women
and regional trends in the performance of women’s language in the context of urbanization to
identify the process of language socialization in the formative years. While Okamoto (1995,
1997), in studying sentence-final affect markers also finds differences among women of
different ages, concluding that older women use more referent honorifics and beautification forms (e.g. o-cha). In these studies, generational and status differences are brought back to a discussion on gendered language, and the propensity for some women to employ strongly masculine or feminine forms. Thus, the discussion of age in style differences is framed in the gender binary, and the way younger women use keigo is likened to masculine speech, while the way older women use keigo is likened to the ‘hyper-feminine’ (Okamoto 1995; Matsugu 2008).

There are a few emerging studies, however, that are challenging the ubiquitous manifestation of gendered language differences, and placing more emphasis on other contextual and social variables as well as the influence of situational register on speaker style management. For instance, Uchida (1993), Tanaka (2004, 2008, 2009) and Okada (2006) find, in observing numerous politeness strategies, that age and status do take precedence over gender differences in the interview context based on television talk show interviews. While studying conversational settings with inherent hierarchical structures – such as interviewer/interviewee relations– it is difficult to distinguish whether a given formal marker is used because the speaker is female or because the speaker is younger or less senior than the listener. However, by taking a combined quantitative/qualitative method approach, these studies are able to pinpoint precise dynamics between speakers to deduce the socio-psychological roots of verbal indicators. This study joins this new trend in showing that gendered language norms are not as primary as other social variables could be, and that both gender-based and other-social-variable-based variation is secondary to the contextual constraints demanded by the conversational register.
**Variationist and Interactionist Sociolinguistics**

The paradigm in discourse analysis under which the assumptions and inquiry of the current study operate is known as the variationist sociolinguistic approach, whose scope and quantitative methods were founded by William Labov in the 1960s. The studies of Labov and those who followed isolate for variables that act as surface manifestations indexing underlying socioeconomic and regional linguistic variation (Halliday 1978; Sankoff 1978). The method “relied on quantitative analysis to validate interpretations of data [in order to] highlight the sociocultural meaning of linguistic variation and the nature of the relationships among the linguistic aspects in probabilistic terms (Dubois & Sankoff 2003:282).” As a subfield, ethnography of speaking (Gumperz 1962; Hymes 1964, 1966; Gumperz & Hymes 1964) takes language as just one of several rule-governed ritual behaviors, and, “in these terms, the unit of analysis is no longer a language form, but a piece of human behavior, a speech event characterized by the occurrence of a certain way of speaking (Argente 1992:327).” Similarly, the variationist approach is social action-oriented, such that the linguistic marker is treated as a means (one of many possible) for social or interpersonal relations to unravel themselves towards specific ends.

However, even in variationist sociolinguistics there have been debates on the meanings underlying variables, as the interpretation of language variation has in the most recent “Third Wave” of variationist studies (Eckert 2005) come to see variation as persona-construction and stylistic indexing of socially-embedded categories. These stress that “variables index demographic categories not directly but indirectly, through their association with qualities and stances that enter into the construction of categories (Eckert 2008:455)” and “styles associated
with types in the social landscape bear an important relation to [class]⁴, but not a direct one (ibid:456).” Thus, Eckert continues, a woman using a linguistic form statistically shown to be led by women isn’t necessarily “making gender claims (ibid)”; rather, she is manipulating a social persona intending to identify with a more “feminine” stereotype in a particular context.

Thus, variationist accounts have shown that such external factors as age, gender, class, regional or occupational affiliation, etc. do play a significant role in the extent to which certain groups implement certain styles, although not for the same unidirectional reasons provided by the traditional view. They reveal social-level divides and the deictic nature of keigo not in the ways style indexes a fixed social category per se, but in the ways style indexes “enregistered voices, or the location of register in a continual process of production and reproduction (Eckert 2008:456, quoting Agha 2003).” Cook states that this is because “crosslinguistically an honorific form and social status are not directly indexed by a linguistic form; rather, the relationship is mediated in a complex fashion by various co-occurring linguistic and nonlinguistic contextual factors, including folk beliefs about usage (1999:88).” Thus, it is not unlikely that social categories are indexed by linguistic markers, only perhaps not in a direct manner as was previously thought (cf. Harada 1976; Brown & Levinson 1987) and it is more likely that they are indexed in the ways speakers manage their persona-construction while keeping in mind situational customs and register propriety.

The current study takes this indirect relation between dependent and independent variable as a given, and does not suggest that any pattern observed with respect to the predominance of a certain style by a certain subgroup is indicative of that subgroup’s innate propensity for that style. Rather, the purpose of the study is to open up the possibility of

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⁴ Class as one of several variables.
deconstructing and reassessing established global social attributes (such as gender) that have often come to be taken as a given in studies of Japanese style variation by refocusing on generational and age-related patterns, where the latter have been empirically understudied in comparison with the gender dimension. The variationist quantitative approach is productive as long as we understand that the observed correlations are not direct indexes of the two variables linked.

Further, in the ‘real people, real talk’ tradition of Smith, Okamoto, Ide and others that breaks with hegemonic ideas about normative associations between linguistic form and social position, this study seeks to shatter the static descriptions of the relationship between language and ‘social category’ (Okamoto & Smith 2004) in two ways: 1) by testing whether or not normative gendered language practices are paramount for speakers in interview conversations, and 2) by looking ‘inside the conversation’ to uncover ways in which register and context frame the manipulation of style choices by speakers.
**Conversation Analysis**

Conversation analysis (CA), a subfield of discourse analysis grounded in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), was established by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s and its central focus is the phenomenon of ‘talk-in-interaction’ (Goodwin & Heritage 1990; Zimmerman & Boden 1991; Heritage 2008). At its core, CA holds that interaction has an order independent of the psychological and social factors brought upon it by the speakers, and that this order is sequential, consistent, and contextual (Goodwin & Heritage 1990; Goodwin & Duranti 1992). The locus of the formation of social order is, according to ethnomethodology, not only in the aggregate level of social life but in local singular occasions (Goffman 1967, 1983). The sequential construction of conversation requisites a knowledge on the part of the speaker of what should follow based on what just occurred (Clarke 1975; Clarke & Argyle 1982). Accordingly, speakers proceed in observance of the constraints present as a result of not only the context, but of the talk that preceded and the talk that subsequently needs to occur.

In the current study, tenet elements of CA as they relate to the conversational register are introduced in order to further provide evidence for variation patterns in style-mixing: namely, to find patterns overall as well as in the course of (a particular kind of) conversation. The temporality and directionality involved in real-time interaction (Mori 1999), coupled with the sequential nature of the organization of units in conversation are particularly attractive for the purposes of our inquiry in that they will reveal not only a pattern of linguistic agency on the part of the speakers, but variation among those speakers in the ways that agency is implemented (Eckert 1999).
The principal use of CA as applied to the study of Japanese has been in the micro-level studies of the interactional type discussed above. However, it is worth exploring whether there is a larger quantifiable trend in the ways style is managed inside the conversational structure, rather than at the utterance-level, and whether this trend can be used to explain or take apart socio-cultural attributes, such as gender, in the study of linguistic variation.

**Context and Register**

In the current study, I am particularly interested in variation that arises according to those aspects pertaining to contextual register. Register is defined as “a particular configuration of situational characteristics and purposes (Biber & Conrad 2003:175),” and studies show that “there are systematic and important linguistic differences across registers, referred to as the patterns of register variation (ibid:176).” Interviews have been acknowledged to possess a particular structure and situational delineation that has implications for the formality gamut speakers can engage in (Tanaka 2004, 2008, 2009), and thus make it a particular kind of register. They are thought to represent a type of institutional interaction, where the participants fulfill certain roles, fall into a tacitly accepted dynamic of turn-taking, and engage in goal-oriented communication (Drew & Heritage 1992; Heritage 1995). The interviews analyzed in the current study follow such a goal-oriented question and answer pattern.

In the structurally-grounded spirit of conversation analysis, I follow whether style patterns are conversation-structure-driven, and whether style levels are associated with specific contextually-bound roles. Other studies also question mutually exclusive social dichotomies, and the possibility of speech register being more determinant of certain verbal choices than other speaker-related factors. For instance, Freed and Greenwood (1996) show
that it was the type of talk and not the speaker’s gender which affected speaker use of affect markers and interjections. Tanaka’s study (2004) explores both conversation analytic and variationist methods to reveal that variation does indeed occur according to status, gender, age, and other socially-determined external factors, but also acknowledges that the dynamics shown by these variables are shaped in great part by the formal interview register in which speakers interact. Such studies show an increasing concern for identifying the types of variation – social, linguistic, situational – and how these types of variation affect and interact with each other in any given communicative act (Finegan & Biber 1994, 2001). This is also the concern of this study.

Variationist studies that focus on global speaker attributes alone, such as gender, would not be able to identify situations where contextually-bound roles (such as an interviewee/interviewer relationship) cause status-based evaluations of one’s own and the other’s position to become irrelevant, and cause speakers to make fulfillment of one’s own (and acknowledgment of the other’s) role a priority. Contextually-bound roles are ubiquitous in daily interaction, such as those emerging in doctor-patient and teacher-student relations. These roles are translate into conversationally manifested personae that recur in the repeated interactions of the people filling these roles in order to create and reproduce social order.

The current study aims to combine the variationist approach with CA theory to a study of teineigo style mixing. In so doing, I aim to find a) whether conversational structure brings its own constraint to discourse in the way of range and distribution of style found appropriate by any speaker in the interview register and b) whether flexibility can exist in the way speakers manage their style within that constrained framework.
I now present a detailed overview of the methods used in subcategorizing the speaker population, identifying and implementing coding criteria, and deriving the statistics that reveal style mixing patterns overall and in conversational flow.

Methodology

The Data

The interviews analyzed in this study were obtained from the Hypermedia Corpus of Spoken Japanese, a project assembled in 1995-96 by Ryuuichi Uemura of Fukuoka Institute of Technology and later made available freely online, including the transcriptions and the audio versions. The site provides the aggregate data and interview transcriptions, which I then synched with the audio interviews to ensure accuracy. I inferred all population subcategorizations and statistics pertaining to the coded teineigo tokens on the basis of the contents of these interviews.

Speaker Demographics

The primary demographic categorizations are age and gender, and I created subdivisions for three age subgroups in order to portray a finer picture. I established categories for male and female as well as three subcategories by age group: 10s-20s, 30s-40s, and 50s-60s. Originally, the study aimed at taking occupation into account as a possible independent variable.

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5 The details pertaining to number and age of speakers, as well as the interview transcripts themselves were all obtained from the project website, http://www.env.kitakyu-u.ac.jp/corpus/index.html, and from Dr Uemura’s reports (1995, 1996).
6 The category 10s-20s refers to people of college age; hence, 10s refers to no less than 18, and there are only three speakers who are 18 or 19 years old.
However, it became clear that the four occupations represented in the data set, subdivisible into student and non-student, were in perfect overlap with the four main age groups, subdivisible into <30 and >30. I therefore dropped the analysis by occupation.

Table 2 summarizes the grouping of the forty subjects into the demographic subdivisions delineated according to age group and gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10s-20s</td>
<td>30s-40s</td>
<td>50s-60s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-student</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group subtotals I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group subtotals II</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender subtotals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Numbers determined from the aggregate data and content of interviews in Hypermedia Corpus of Spoken Japanese

A division by age group and not by exact age was employed due to the lack of more detailed information in the source data. Consequently, I assigned each speaker to an age group with the help of only the aggregate data and by scrutinizing self-reported information by each speaker in the course of the interview.

It is understood that all who fall in the group of 10s-20s are college students (24), and all who are older, namely educators (8), housewives (6), or other (2), are non-students (16). Thus, any discussion regarding age group differences can simultaneously be interpreted on a student/non-student dimension. However, any conclusions made about occupation and
teineigo use would be purely incidental and secondary, as these variables are not controlled for. Finally, it needs to be mentioned that the number of members in the sample population in this data set is already larger than those used in most other studies of a similar kind.

**Interviewee Backgrounds**

While all subjects in the study are native Japanese speakers, and while we know that 2 men and 13 women are from Tokyo, and 10 men and 15 women are from outside Tokyo, their individual residence or point of origin in Japan is not deducible from the information provided, nor from the interview accounts of the subjects. The interview, however, is carried out in Standard Japanese, and the location of the interview site is at the International Christian University in Tokyo. The geographical origins, and hence dialect background of each speaker cannot be taken into account in the analysis, but the consistent use of Standard Japanese by all speakers is a reliable constant.
The Interviewers

Interviewee speech is the only target of analysis of the current study. As such, interviewer questions and response are ignored in the coding process. It is fortunate that the two interviewers conducting the interviews with 40 interviewees (20 each) are both women, and both belong to the same sociodemographic group: they are middle-aged Japanese language teachers. Because the current study is not a micro-level analysis of style-shifting, interviewer-interviewee turn dynamics are not a factor in the measurement of overall style use and style-mixing trends among the participants. While coding interviewee speech I noted that the interviewer speech was of a uniformly high level of formality that was more or less consistent throughout. More notably, interviewer speech is extremely high in referent honorifics, which is characteristic of their contextual role, viz. they are in the position of asking all the questions. See Appendix 1 for extracts of interviewer speech from several interviews with male and female speakers of various ages.

Coding Method and Coding Criteria

I established the coding criteria according to definitions of several teineigo variations defined in the vast literature on style in Japanese. As many studies focusing on teineigo and formality do, this study will also look specifically at clause-final predicate forms (see Ogino, Misono & Fukushima 1985; Cook 1999; Ikuta 2008, among others).

7 In this analysis, I do not account for the dyadic dimension inherent in any conversation, and thus could not take into account, for instance, the style pattern variations between male-male and male-female dyads, and further take into account the additional dimension of age differentiation therein. The interactional-contextual personae and dynamics established between interviewer and interviewee (as discussed by Eckert, Silverstein, Ide, Maynard and others) are recognized, but they can only be fully explored with qualitative methods. Some studies concerned with variation as well as the semiotics of contextual meaning combine a quantitative approach with a subsequent qualitative analysis, and this would be a good next step for this study.
I uploaded the transcribed interviews into the data analysis software program NVivo, which I then used to perform multi-level coding and produce numerical matrices cross-analyzing coded tokens, (e.g. -teimasu, -teorimasu). Nodes were manually defined for verbal content (i.e. type of manifested formality), and were assigned a ‘formality level’ attribute – hyper-polite, formal, semi-formal, or familiar – whose respective traits will now be described.

**Formal (desu/masu) and Familiar (da)**

The suffixing morphemes desu/masu are the tense-carrying verbals of the main clause: -desu as a copula, and -masu as a verb ending. These are considered formal or deferential on a pragmatic level; however, as previously discussed, the use of desu/masu forms in spoken language is also thought to index quite more complex mechanisms inherent in the construction of situational meaning (Silverstein 1976; Hanks 1992; Cook 1999). While acknowledging these situational fluctuations in meaning, Geyer (2008) argues that the meanings of ‘deference, formality and the presentation of public self’ are the core properties of the desu/masu forms, while the lack of these features constitutes the core properties of plain or familiar forms. Cook (1996) sees the encoded meaning of masu as being distance rather than formality, proposing that “the encoded meaning of the plain form is a lack of distance or proximity between interlocutors as well as between the self and his/her social role (1996:10).” Whether indexing deference or distance, desu/masu are taken to possess the core property of formality, and are interpreted as social deixis markers for the purposes of the current study. On the other hand, when main clauses end in the nonpast version of a verb (-ru) the statement is said to be in a familiar or informal tone.
Hyper-polite (Suppletive)

Hyper-polite is used here to refer to the category of more-than-formal forms that encompasses both main-clause- and subordinate-clause-final humble forms. These include expressions traditionally classified by Harada (1976) as ‘suppletive,’\(^8\) and include conjugations involving *orimasu*, *itashimasu*, *gozaimasu*, *moushimasu*. Harada’s label – suppletive – will be used throughout this study to refer to any suffix ending in this way.

Researchers agree that there is a distinguishable difference in degree of politeness, formality, or ‘softening’ between the strict formal *desu/masu* and the suppletive version of the verb, or a suppletive suffixation (Ogino et al. 1986; Minami 1997; Cook 2008). Given this acknowledged importance of suppletive forms, I have included this formality level as part of our analysis of the suppletive as a form that is contrastive to the *desu/masu* formal suffix. I also take the clausal positioning of the hyper-polite into account, as a subordinate clause positioning signals even higher levels of formality (Jorden & Noda 1987; Makino 2002).

**Main vs. Subordinate clause**

The study focuses solely on clause-final predicates (of both main and subordinate clauses) as an indicator of the speaker’s intended level of formality, as do many other studies that measure formality-level choice (Cook 1996, 1998, 1999, 2005, 2008; Ikuta 2008). This is because clause-internal uses are both syntactically and pragmatically different. To illustrate the difference, the following sentence shows the location of intra-clausal verbals, subordinate clause-final verbals, and main clause-final verbals:

Example 1  *Speaker 1, female, 50s-60s*

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8 Harada’s classification encompasses suppletive verbals in both referent and addressee honorifics (Harada 1976:506). Only addressee forms are used in this study.
わたしたち日本人はちょっと、そういうことをやってらっしゃる方は少ないんじゃないかなと思って、わたくしがまた向こう行ったとき、皆さんがほんと、あのー、両手を広げて迎え入れてくれたものですから、わたくしも日本へ帰ったら絶対やらなきゃいけないと思って、それで日本帰ってきてからずっと始めております。

The study is done on a grammatical dimension of clause-type in order to test whether a speaker takes an additional step in the direction of higher levels of formality by implementing either a suppletive (more-than-formal) or a formal suffix in a subordinate clause. When this happens, it implies a higher level of formality than regular main-clause-finalizing formal desu/masu, and possibly somewhat higher levels of formality than the main-clause-finalizing suppletive forms, e.g. -teorimasu, -teitashimasu. Subordinate clause polite conjugations occur any time a verbal suffix or copula marks the end of an intra-sentential clause by not using the typical intra-sentential conjugation -(t)te, rather a more elaborate form -temashite and even more elaborate suppletive form -teorimashite or -teitashimashite. Additional typical subordinate clause hyper-polite formations include -te(formal)/-te(suppletive) + -kara, -node, -shi, -tara, -kashira. This works both when the base verb is in the infinitive or gerunditive conjugation: kiteorimasu kara, kiteorimashite kara, as of course these have different semantic values.

Example 2 illustrates the difference between standard and suppletive clausal transitions. The item underlined represents a non-suppletive, non-formal standard clausal transition; the items double underlined represent a suppletive clausal transition:
Example 2  Speaker 2, female, 50s-60s
6月30日までもうクラブ一筋でまいりましたので（1：はといえば）水泳クラブに（1：ああーああ）所属しております、けれども6月30日の大会で一応引退いたしまして（1：ハハハ）の/切り替えで（1：ええ）お勉強というあのー（1：ええ）感じで、まだーあの一本腰ではございません。

Familiar forms are not counted in the same way as are formal forms in subordinate clause-final positions for two reasons: 1. the familiar subordinate clause suffixation, i.e. the standard (-te), does not have a formality coloring and does not qualify as a locus of overt honorification (see discussion on overt/covert honorification to follow). Secondly, the fragmented nature of speech itself makes it difficult to ascertain, (for instance, in cases where sentences are left trailing, or where speakers make clausal transitions in non-conventional ways) where a standard (familiar) clausal transition could have taken place but didn’t. On the other hand, formal or suppletive clausal transitions stand out immediately, and their implementation in place of the formality-free standard form makes conspicuous the speaker’s intention to be more polite. Only instances where the speaker takes the extra step of formalizing their language, and thus deviating from the formality-less norm, are of interest here.
**Semi-formal (nonpast+(n)desu)**

The predicate-ending nonpast+ndesu is a newly-recognized *teineigo* form, and is considered semi-formal because it avoids the full formality of the *masu* verbal conjugation while bringing a formality-marked closure to an utterance. While primarily studied in the negative form *nai desu* (Hudson 2008; Fukushima & Uehara 2001; Uehara & Fukushima 2008), this form also appears as a secondary suffixation to a nonpast verb, even though that verb already possesses a conjugational locus, namely the *masu* form (i.e. *omooundesu* in place of the expected *omoimasu*). Hudson states that historically, Japanese speech has moved away from referent-centered exalted language to more addressee-oriented ‘social type’ of *keigo*: “The speaker’s deference toward the addressee has come to control *keigo* usage more prominently than does the relative status of an intra-sentential referent vis-à-vis the speaker…The semi-polite style then may be viewed as ‘doubly simplified’ *keigo* since it is simpler not only in its conceptual framework, but also in its formation (Hudson 2008:136).” She suggests that the semi-formal style should be placed between *desu* and *da* on the politeness continuum. Uehara and Fukushima make the further point that *masen* and *naidesu* are not synonymous, the latter representing a distinct sub-level of polite speech (2008:183). Given the increasing attention the semi-formal suffixation is receiving in the literature on style-shifting, this category has been included in the current study to encompass both affirmative and negative forms.
**Conjugational Variation**

There is variability in conjugations of the same form, with same-category conjugations of different forms carrying different honorific weight. Table 3 outlines the conjugational variations coded for in this study.

Table 3  *Conjugational variations on four styles of teineigo as identified in the corpus interviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suppletive</th>
<th>Formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-de gozaimasu</td>
<td>Shufu de gozaimasu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-itashimasu (from suru)</td>
<td>Shitsurei itashimasu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-orimasu (from iru)</td>
<td>Omotte orimasu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-itadakimasu (from morau)</td>
<td>Tsutaete itadakimasu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-moushimasu (from iu)</td>
<td>Tanaka to moushimasu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Semi-formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-da</td>
<td>Seitou da.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-darou</td>
<td>Dou darou.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-(r)u</td>
<td>Hanasu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-(y)ou</td>
<td>Ikou.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are not exhaustive lists of all possible conjugational variations in the language, only those appearing in the interviews.

The *desu/masu* that appear in the formulaic response *sou desu* (other versions: *sou nan desu, sou desu ka, sou desu ne*) are not coded for. Other studies (Cook 2008) treat the *desu* in
sou desu as a countable formal desu response, and count it as an instance of style shifting or adherence. In this thesis, sou desu and all its forms are taken as a set-phrase, much like arigatou gozaimasu, because it has a covert honorific meaning. Neustupný (1986) refers to an honorific form as being overt when the speaker makes a special conscious effort to frame his utterance in a certain way for the benefit of the hearer, and covert when the opposite is true. He cites o- in ocha, where ocha is now most commonly used by default, and thus is covert and devoid of speaker-driven honorification. In addition to its covert formality, sou desu is not subject to style shifting analysis because inclusion of this set phrase as part of the total count of coded formal markers only served to statistically mask the true degree of formality determined on the basis of non-set-phrase style changes. Other set phrases covert in formality – arigatou gozaimasu, ohayou gozaimasu – are also not coded for, as their use does not occur at a juncture where the speaker finds himself in a position to make a style choice. However, places where the set-phrase greeting offers a suppletive alternative are coded for, both in their standard (formal) and in their suppletive versions (e.g. yoroshiku onegai shimasu, yoroshiku onegai itashimasu).
The laboratory-style nature of the interviews, coupled with the uniformly-applied OPI interview standard makes this source of data particularly appropriate for the type of quantitative analysis applied in the current study.

The structure of the conversations is not identical but quite similar. They each have introductory and ending greetings and one or two role-play sections, while the free talk segments consist of questions by the interviewer on the occupation, research, family life, hobbies, and opinions on current events of the respective interviewees. The current study excludes the role-play sections from analysis, as these require the speakers to approach the discussion under the premise that they are in fictitious contexts, and thus the speaking styles used in these sections do not reflect the adaptability of the speaker to the dynamics of the actual register.

The conversations follow an asymmetrical contingency pattern, whereby one person directs the conversation and the other responds accordingly but does not initiate new

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9 The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) was developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and is used as a standard in language proficiency testing. (See http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1).
directions of talk (Jones & Gerard 1967; Clarke & Argyle 1982). Interviewers use topic change strategies such as *chotto hanashi ga kawarimasu kedomo*, or topic-change-signaling interjections such as *jaa* and *sore de wa* to indicate the transition from one conversational segment to the next. Thus, the interviewer dictates the flow of conversation and provides clear distinctions between the conversational segments.

The current study presents a rudimentary delineation of conversational segments that comply with generally-accepted conversational categories.\(^\text{10}\) This is done to quantitatively apply CA to the study of honorific patterns by creating a view ‘inside the conversation,’ rather than only a statistic of overall trends. This reveals style mixing phenomena that would otherwise remain hidden, and offers a different perspective on what variation means. Namely, we see that variation could mean contextual-structural variation, or variation within the conversation, whereby speakers have different ways of constructing the same conversational pattern, and these ways do show trends according to basic sociodemographic subdivisions. A follow-up to this study could benefit from a refinement of the conversational structure model in order to reveal differentiation among yet smaller conversational segments, such as adjacency pairs and conversational sub-themes; according to Makino (1990), turn structure also has its ways of organizing styles, and it is thus also worth exploring conversation turn-internally.

\(^\text{10}\) Recurring conversational categories such as openings and closings have been described by Schegloff 1968, Schegloff & Sacks 1973, Clarke & Argyle 1982, Heritage 1995, and others, and their criteria are employed here.
Statistical Method

Once coding was completed, matrices crossing the dependent and independent variables (counting for number of teineigo tokens) were migrated to spreadsheets, where percentages measuring relative formality were deduced. The degree of style use in a segment or by a speaker is calculated as a percentage of total style references (tokens) coded for, rather than as a percentage of word count for that speaker. The total number of coded references is a reliable base statistical population against which to compare the number of tokens of each style, and in the end provides a good idea as to how the four styles are dispersed in relation to each other in any given segment. This method is best for the purpose of the current study, which aims to show how speakers choose among four styles, rather than to show how much of any given style dominates a speaker’s total speech output.

Discussion of Results

Results of the study will be analyzed in two sections. The first is concerned with outlining general teineigo style-choice trends among age and gender subgroups. The second section will apply conversation analysis to look at teineigo distributions in conversational flow.

General Summary of Results by Age Group and Gender

This portion of the analysis serves to explore whether it is predominantly among gender or in fact age subgroups where most variation in use of a particular style can be observed. The difference between percentages of a certain style between males and females,
younger and older, etc. were deduced in order to understand whether in the interview setting gendered language differences or in fact age/status-related differences are more salient.

Table 4 shows the number of coded references by age subgroup. We see that formal style has the most tokens, followed by hyper-polite and semi-formal for all subjects. We also see that this is not the case necessarily for each age/gender subgroup. These numbers help us gauge the dispersion of coded references across the style gamut, and in relation of each style to the total tokens for a subgroup.

Table 4  Number of coded references for four styles by age and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total coded references</th>
<th>Hyper-polite</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Semi-Formal</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Subjects, N=40</td>
<td>3839</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10s-20s male, N=9</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s-40s male, N=3</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10s-20s female, N=14</td>
<td>1153</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s-40s female, N=10</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50s-60s (total=female), N=4</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 1 and 2 below are a percentage representation of the numbers in Table 5; they show that the age variable consistently dominates over the gender variable in the distribution of any kind of teineigo form in all styles.
Figure 1  Distribution of four styles of teineigo by gender

![Bar chart showing distribution of teineigo styles by gender.

Figure 2  Distribution of four styles of teineigo by age group

![Bar chart showing distribution of teineigo styles by age group.]
We can see from these two figures that, while not much difference exists between men and women in the use of any style, differences can be observed by age group, particularly in the use of hyper-polite and semi-formal forms. There is clear positive correlation between style formality and age, where the subject belonging to increasingly older age groups opt increasingly more for the use of the hyper-polite style, and increasingly less for the semi-formal and familiar styles. The 50s-60s age group consists only of females, as there was no equivalent age group for males available in the aggregate data. Nevertheless, we could imagine that the addition of older male subjects to this population would not significantly alter the distribution of styles. The 50s-60s female group gives a good initial insight into how the trend would potentially continue with the addition of increasingly older subgroups.

There are other important observations to be made. First, the style most often used (i.e. has the highest percentage of total teineigo count) by all speakers is the formal, and it is also the style that shows the most uniformity across demographic subgroups, with an average of between 46% and 54%. Had the analysis focused only on the desu-da dichotomy, the relative stability of these forms regardless of speaker attribute would have gone unnoticed, as would have the greater variation exhibited by the hyper-polite and semi-formal forms. The formal style shows uniformity in the comparisons by age and by gender, suggesting that the average difference in use of the formal style is the same between, for instance, a younger and an older person of any gender as between a 20-year-old woman and a 20-year-old man. Age does not show to have a greater impact on how much desu/masu is used than gender, but the relative uniformity of the formal style throughout suggests that it is established as a ‘baseline’ style for the interview.\footnote{The concept of ‘baseline’ as applied to teineigo was introduced by Maynard (2008), and is defined as the style that dominates a discourse, within which a style shift becomes immediately evident.}
Second, the semi-formal category (nonpast+ndesu) is the second-most used method of suffixation (when comparing male and female groups), but still significantly less used than the formal. This suggests that it is, in fact, separate and mutually exclusive from desu/masu, and that speakers don’t treat it as interchangeable with the formal desu, even though the suffix is identical.

However, a considerable difference exists between age and gender subgroups when it comes to the hyper-polite, suggesting that age plays a greater role in the likelihood of an increased use of hyper-polite forms than gender does. Figures 1 and 2 above show that this difference is due to the increase in usage of hyper-polite forms on the part of the older subjects of either gender; at 42% for the 50s-60s group, this is almost four times larger than the 10s-20s group. Thus, in an interview setting, a woman is not necessarily more likely to use hyper-polite forms, as the ‘women’s language’ hypothesis may predict, but an older subject, either male or female, is.

A similarly large difference exists among age and gender subgroups when observing semi-formal forms, and this is due to an increased usage of these forms by younger speakers. With 28% for 10s-20s and 11% for 50s-60s, the preference is more than double for younger speakers. Thus, the two styles – hyper-polite and semi-formal – are (for this population in the interview register) the locus of linguistic variation among age subgroups. There are no styles, however, where gender overtakes age as the variable most correlated with an increased usage of that particular style.
Conversation Analysis of Style Trends

Trends for All Speakers

The following graph illustrates the distribution of hyper-polite, formal, semi-formal, and familiar forms in relation to each other within each conversational segment for all speakers; segments are ordered sequentially so as to simulate conversational flow.

Figure 3  Distribution of teineigo across conversational segments for all subjects (style calculated as % of total coded teineigo per segment)
Table 5  Number of coded references per conversational segment (all subjects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>HP</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SF</th>
<th>Fam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory greetings</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial free talk</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-role play free talk</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-role play free talk</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending greetings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect of conversation structure on style-mixing is evident from Figure 3, which shows that, for a goal-oriented interview register, speakers primarily use hyper-polite forms while engaging in self-introductory and closing exchanges (see Table 5 and compare across). Further, while the formal suffix is also heavily used in these two prototypical transitional segments, speakers never use the semi-formal versions, although these versions end in the formal desu suffix. In short, a speaker is likely to introduce himself using -to moushimasu 54% of the time, -to iimasu or (name)-desu 46% of the time, and -to iundesu nearly 0% of the time, while during the closing greetings, they would use a phrase such as -tondemo gozaimasen 53% of the time, -tondemo arimasen 41% of the time, and -tondemo nai(n)desu 6% of the time. This reveals much about the positive association of hyper-polite forms with conversational boundaries such as the initiation and closing, as well as the lack of interchangeability between the formal and semi-formal forms.

Trends by Sociodemographic Subgroup

We have seen that, for all speakers on average there is a dynamic trend in the way these four types of verbal suffixes manifest throughout conversation. By additionally looking at the conversational distribution of styles for several demographic subgroups, we can see that the
way in which speakers of different genders and age groups distribute their *teineigo* across a conversation can also vary to a great extent, and observe how each subgroup compares to the population average. The following sets of figures show the distribution of four styles throughout conversation, first for gender metagroups followed by age subgroups and age metagroups.
Figures 4-6  Distribution of styles across conversational segments by gender metagroups\textsuperscript{12}

**Figure 4**  Females 10s-40s

![Graph showing distribution of styles across conversational segments for females 10s-40s](image)

**Figure 5**  Males 10s-40s

![Graph showing distribution of styles across conversational segments for males 10s-40s](image)

**Figure 6**  Females 10s-60s

![Graph showing distribution of styles across conversational segments for females 10s-60s](image)

\textsuperscript{12} See Figure 3 for legend for all future figures.
Figures 7-9  Distribution of styles across conversational segments for three age subgroups of women

Figures 10-11  Distribution of styles across conversational segments for two age subgroups of men
Figures 12-13  *Distribution of styles across conversational segments for 2 age metagroups*

**Figure 12  10s-20s Total**

**Figure 13  30s-40s Total**

From these sets of figures we can make several observations. Firstly, men consistently show more fluctuation throughout conversation, in every style, regardless of age group (see Figures 5, 10, 11). Secondly, younger age groups of both genders show a lesser propensity for the U-shape pattern of HP style use (see Figures 7, 10, 12). Finally, the ‘baseline’ style, (i.e. the style
used most consistently and at the highest percentages), is the formal style for every subgroup (with the exception of the 50s-60s female group).

Thus, the conversational structure defined in this goal-oriented interview genre required the desu/masu form as the baseline style and the HP form as the U-shape hyper-formal ‘frame’ of the conversation. Upon analysis of subgroup behavior, we see that some subgroups deviate from this conversational type, thus indicating that sociodemographic (among many possible other) factors can show variation in terms of their distribution patterns throughout the interview, thereby demonstrating the flexibility of manipulation of these four categories of style within a register. This deviation is either shown through a tendency towards greater fluctuation patterns in the case of male speakers, and through a break with the U-shape template as well as lesser degrees of formal styles, in the case of younger speakers.

Conclusions

We have seen marked differences among age and gender groups not only in terms of the amount of a certain style used overall, but also in terms of the amount of mixture among the four styles throughout conversation. A positive correlation exists between age and formality equally for men and women in terms of overall style percentages, where no such correlation exists between the gender subgroups as would be expected according to the ‘women’s language’ hypothesis, the latter assuming women use more formal structures. This may suggest that there is a higher propensity for a generational gap to manifest itself in the task-oriented interview genre than is a gender gap, and thus brings to light the primacy of the type of conversational genre in the linguistic priorities manifested by speakers. Like the studies of
Uchida (1993), Tanaka (2004, 2009) and Okada (2006) previously discussed, this study also finds that there are greater degrees of variation among interlocutors of different ages than there are between men and women when it comes to formality styles.

Results by style are particularly surprising, especially when one notices that there is no overall variation in the ways any age or gender subgroup uses the desu/masu and da forms. This suggests that in the interview genre, these styles are not susceptible to sociodemographic or interactional variation, rather perhaps indexing the desire of a speaker of any age, gender, or social status to maintain the ‘baseline’ style, or the expected level of formality typically thought proper for that register, thus leaving the hyper-polite and the semi-formal styles open for observation as the true yardsticks of variation. This lends validity to the claim that conversational register is key when speakers judge what is appropriate. On the formality continuum, there is not only a limitation on the appropriate range within which to maneuver during an interview (exemplified by the complete absence of familiar and semi-formal forms at the beginnings and ends of conversation), but also on which level to settle as the comfort level at each segment of the conversation.

Also evident are the ways in which style is managed on average by all speakers throughout conversation, revealing that different styles are bound to dominate certain conversational junctures. The hyper-polite form is the most conspicuous, and its ‘U-shape’ pattern in conversational flow suggests that speakers are on average more formality-conscious in the beginning and closing segments of the interview, and that the semi-formal and familiar styles are nearly taboo during these sections. This is true regardless of sociodemographic affiliation, thus further suggesting that there are underlying forces relating to contextual register, the framework of which all idiosyncratic speaker differences must fit into.
Thus, when looking at things from a CA perspective, it seems it is more a question of which style is most flexible or most steady during conversation, rather than whether older or younger, or males or females use style in a certain manner over the course of conversation. This is precisely the goal of CA theory: to find order that is reproduced by various participants in similar contexts. That being said, as we have seen in this and other studies mentioned, we can no longer make sweeping statements about ‘women’s language’, the universal formality of desu/masu, or variation unconstrained by speech register, and that style is in fact highly determined by conversational structure and the formality-consciousness of the speaker in context. We have also seen that in registers that exert such strict limitations on style fluctuations as the interview setting, age and status play a greater role than gender, thus perhaps suggesting that more research needs to be undertaken with this set of variables in mind.

In sum, this study shows that a speaker has agency only insofar as the register allows for a certain range and a certain pattern of formality. That is to say, indeosyncratic and sociodemographic differences manifest themselves within the frame of the propriety allowed by the task at hand, which is adhered to by most speakers, showing similar flow patterns (e.g. the U-shape HP, the high baseline levels of desu/masu, upside-down U-shape of semi-formal and familiar). Further, only certain forms are susceptible to fluctuation, and the desu/masu form establishes itself as a baseline style for all speakers, while the remaining forms show great variation according to social attributes and conversational placement. By pointing out the variation in the ways speakers of different ages or genders maneuver through the uniform conversational pattern, (and in so doing, also revealing that there isn’t one particular subgroup that is uniquely prone to higher formality-awareness or uniformity), we have shown that,
although conversational-structures are constraining, they are not rigid, and that sociodemographic (and possibly other) factors still play a significant role in how a speaker performs.


### Appendix 1  Excerpts from interviewer speech

**Interviewer:** Murano  
**Interviewee:** TA (10s-20s, student, male)

| Initial questions | 1: ああー、そうですか。えーと、今留学っていう、お話でしたけれども、あの、どういう所に、（2：ふふ）留学してらしたんですか？ | 1: はい。（2：はい）ああそうだ、何を勉強なさいましたか？ |
| Role play request | 1: あはは、そう、なるほどね。（2：はい）じゃあねこの辺ちょっとロールプレイ（2：はい）というのをやって頂きたいと（2：はい）思うんですが、あの、アルバイト、の面接、（2：はい）というロールプレイなんですね。∥（2：ふふ、はい）∥じゃ、あの、たくしが、面接、（2：はい）をするんです。（2：はい）はい。よくいらっしゃいました。（2：あ、どうも）どうも。∥えっとアルバイトにおき、を、したいということ、ですね。（2：はい）えっと、たくし共の方では、（2：はい）あのこういうような条件なんですけども、（2：はい）どうでしょうか。 |

**Interviewer:** Murano  
**Interviewee:** YY (50s-60s, housewife, female)

| Initial questions | 1: 矢部さんで（2：はい）いらっしゃいますか。あの矢部さんは、（2：はい）あの一、うん、と、失礼ですが（2：ええ）主婦でいらっしゃいますか？ | 1: あの矢部さん、あの毎日どうなさって、いらっしゃいますか？ |
| Role play request | 1: うん、はい。あの、ロールプレイをやっていただきたいと思うんですけれども、（2：はい）あの一、／お友達を誘って映画を見に行きたい、（2：はい）と思います。（2：はい）お友達にお電話していただきたい。∥（2：はい）そのお友達とまたお留守ですので、（2：はい）留守番電話にメッセージを、残してくださいという、ロールプレイなんです。 |

**Interviewer:** Murano  
**Interviewee:** TS (30s-40s, student, former-housewife, female)

| Initial questions | 1: 学生さんでいらっしゃいますか。 | 1: ああー、そうですか。あ、どうして、お、聞いていいですか、（2：はい）どうしてまた、あの、お、お仕事辞めて学生さんに、なろうと？ |
| Role play request | 1: ああ、そうですか、—はい。ええと、ちょっとあの一、じっと、この辺でロールプレイ、をして頂きたいんですけれども、（2：はい）あの、ま勉強していきまして、（2：はい）で隣の、あのアパートにお住まいですか、マンション、（2：あ、いや）ですか。（2：普通のうち、なんですか）ご自宅、あ、じゃご自宅、でするけれど、お隣のうちから無理あの、（2：はい）うるさいあの、まあ、ピアノを練習している音がする、うるさくないんですけれど、（2：はい）きれない音なんですけれど、（2：はい）でも、あの今勉強している時なので、少し集中したい、それで、あのちょっとお隣にあの、ふふ、あの、静かにしてもらうようにというように、∥（2：はい）あの、言って頂きたいんですけども。ふふ。（2：ふふ、難しい）はい、あたくし、お隣の、（2：はい）人です。で、あのピアノを弾いている人は、あのあたくしの自慢の娘、です。