

Formality or Rapport: Speech Style Shifts in Japanese Television and Radio

Lidia Tanaka

La Trobe University, Victoria

Abstract

Speech style in many languages not only reveals the degree of formality of an interaction but also encodes the social relationships between the speakers. In Japanese, choice of speech style is obligatory and is maintained throughout an interaction. However, occasional style shifts can be observed even though every factor remains unchanged. These shifts have been attributed to psychological reasons (Ikuta, 1983; Makino, 1983), to awareness of 'thou' (Maynard, 1991) and to the construction of role identity (Cook, 2006). However, it is not known why these shifts occur in some interactions and not in others. Similarly, little attempt has been made to differentiate formal and informal settings even though it is quite clear that some style shifts are triggered by very different reasons.

This paper argues that shifts in formal interactions should be considered as different from those in informal ones, not only because they are intrinsically more face threatening but because they are more directly related to social factors. Through a functional analysis of style shifts from polite to informal style in television and radio discourse two types of shifts were identified. Shifts triggered by psychological reasons function as interactional tools and occur only when social conditions of the participants are met. In contrast, those triggered by the syntactic and discourse structure are used to enrich the narrative and are more commonly used. These results suggest that these two types of speech style shifts have to be considered as two different phenomena.

Keywords: *Japanese, television and radio, speech style shift, formal interactions*

Introduction

What is known as speech style or the use of particular syntactic forms, lexical and pronominal items indicates not only the degree of formality but also the type of relationship between interlocutors and their social distance (Brown and Gilman; 1972). This social distance is determined by the age and status difference between interlocutors. In their seminal work study of personal pronouns, Brown and Gilman (1972) describe how the choice of personal pronouns among speakers of many languages such as German, French or Spanish can index status or power differences and degree of formality. Therefore, the correct choice of speech style is of utmost importance in any social interaction, as failing to do so could incur social consequences. Naturally, this aspect is not exclusive to languages that have the T/V pronominal system.

In Japanese two speech styles the polite, formal or *masu*, form and the plain, informal or *da* form index not only the degree of formality but also the social and psychological distance between interlocutors. The more powerful speaker uses the plain form towards inferior or younger speakers while these latter groups must use the polite form in return. Polite forms are also used when the relationship between speakers has not yet been established, such as among strangers or when speakers are equal but want to maintain a distant relationship. Conversely, the use of the plain form among family members and very close friends indicates not only an informal relationship but also solidarity. When speakers feel close enough, a change from the polite to the informal style occurs.

Despite the fact that every factor in a conversation remains unchanged, speech-style shifts have been observed in formal and informal spoken interactions as well as in written Japanese (Cook, 2002, 2006; Ikuta, 1983; Makino, 1983, 2002; Maynard, 1991, 2001). These shifts have been explored by

some scholars using a variety of approaches who argue that shifts are consciously and strategically used for different purposes (Hasegawa, 2006; Ikuta, 1983; Makino, 1983; Maynard, 1991, 2001).

However, three major problems have not yet been addressed: the distinction between spoken and written discourse, the distinction between formal and informal settings and the reason why shifts occur in some interactions and not in others. It seems that, so far, no serious attempts have been made to differentiate formal and informal situations, and written and spoken language. This poses a problem because written data should be treated separately, as social factors do not affect the outcome in the same way that they do in spoken interaction. Similarly, formal and informal data should be considered separately, because shifts from polite to plain and those from plain to polite are, with the exception of quotations, fundamentally different. In informal interactions Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) do not carry the same weight as in formal or public settings. Formal situations are intrinsically more difficult for speakers, because of the difficulty in managing not only styles but also the use of Japanese honorifics. Committing an FTA in a public interaction, in particular in a broadcast event, might bring heavier sanctions than in a private conversation. Likewise, little is known why these shifts occur in some interactions and not in others. The literature suggests that shifts are used strategically therefore we can infer that shifts in formal interactions would be chosen for very different purposes to those in an informal one. This leads to the following research questions. Why do speech style shifts occur in some formal interactions and not in others? What are the factors that determine speech style shift in formal interactions? Are they only triggered by psychological factors? Are occasional speech shift styles governed by social factors at all? How do we consider the social factors when shifts occur?

Understanding speech style shifts will contribute to the debate between politeness theories that see the choice of appropriate styles as either volitional (Brown and Levinson, 1978) or the result of speakers using *discernment* (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988). It will also contribute to the teaching of the language itself, as it is emphasized that polite and plain forms must be kept separate. Students, Japanese and foreign, are warned against mixing styles regardless of the way in which language is really used, despite the fact that shift styles are commonly used.

This study looks at style shifts from polite to plain in formal television and radio discourse through a functional approach. The speech style shifts from polite to informal seem to be triggered by two different motives. One type of shift is clearly narrative and discourse based, while the second is triggered by psychological factors. Therefore, the occurrence of the first type is not bound by social factors while the latter is directly related to them. This is an indication that not all speech style shifts should be treated as the same phenomenon but as two distinct strategies.

Background, Politeness theories

Choice of speech style is intertwined with politeness. Researchers looking at politeness have tried to explain how people of different languages use linguistic strategies to maintain a harmonious relationship. Brown and Levinson (1978) are the pioneers who based their universal theory of politeness on the concept of face. They explained that speakers can minimize FTAs by using positive or negative politeness strategies based on the social distance and relative power of the interlocutors. Since this theory was published many scholars have critiqued it (Eelen, 2001; Watts, Ide and Ehlich, 2005) however, the focus in this study will be only on studies related to Japanese politeness.

Brown and Levinson have been criticized by some scholars (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988) who have argued that their theory does not account for some Asian societies where the use of particular linguistic forms that index social distance is not an option but are obligatory. Ide argued that Japanese speakers had to follow socio-cultural rules or what she referred to as *discernment*. Thus, the use of honorifics or formal speech style is not a choice based on maintaining face, but that of etiquette or *discernment*. Matsumoto (1988) also argued that Japanese must choose a style even for a simple greeting based on who the listener is and what kind of relationship exists between them. Therefore, shifting styles is a strategic move.

Other scholars argue for Brown and Levinson's theory as being a more encompassing approach. They write that the concepts of negative and politeness aspects of face are consistent with Asian languages (Fukada and Asato, 2004, Pizziconi, 2003) and the theory can better explain discourse behaviour in Japanese (Usami, 2002).

The next section of this paper explains the details of formal and informal styles in Japanese and is designed for readers unfamiliar with the language.

Formal and informal speech styles: Japanese society and hierarchy

Speech style in Japanese is manifested grammatically and semantically. Polite and plain styles have different verbal, nominal and adjectival endings and these are distinctly used to signal status and the nature of interpersonal relationships. The polite form, known also as the *desu/masu* style, is used in formal situations among people who do not know each other well and it indexes social distance and formality. It also is used towards one's senior in age or status or *meue*. The plain form, or *da* style, on the other hand, expresses familiarity, intimacy and solidarity and is used among family members, friends and towards people of lower status or *meshita* in informal settings.

The same conceptual statements can be expressed in various ways, as in the examples below. The segments indicated in bold show where polite and plain styles are encoded. They are arranged by degree of formality.

- i) sutekina baggu **de gozaimasu** ne. dochira de **okaininarimashita** ka.
- ii) sutekina baggu **desu** ne. dochira de **kaimashita** ka.
- iii) sutekina baggu **da** ne. doko de **katta** no?
- iv) sutekina baggu **jan**. doko de **katta**?

'It is a nice bag, isn't it? Where did you buy it?'

The most formal expression is represented in i) where the copula appears in the *gozaimasu* ending (an honorific form) and the second sentence ends in the *masu* form of the honorific verb to buy. A slightly less formal example is ii) where the copula and verb endings are in the *masu* forms. Informal or short forms are expressed in iii) and iv) with abrupt endings, and in iii) those are accompanied by sentence final particles (SFP). By looking at the syntactic forms, one can immediately predict the status of the listener and the situation. Thus, we can infer that in i) the listener is older or more important than the speaker or the relationship is extremely formal while in ii) the relationship is formal and the interlocutors could be of the same status and age. In iii) and iv) the interlocutors are close friends or family members and it is an informal situation. As with other languages, the length of the utterance is an indication of the degree of politeness.

As noted in the introduction, speech style in Japanese is defined by the degree of formality and differences of age and status between interlocutors. An additional factor that influences the choice of speech style is known as the *uchi/soto* concept or in-group or out-group membership. This awareness of membership inclusion or exclusion is crucial not only in the choice of speech style but also of honorifics and other syntactic constructions.

Speech style shifts

Shifts of speech style are chosen in strategic ways. In the following excerpt from data of this study from a television interview, the guest is a professional nature photographer who describes his experiences in the forest when trying to take shots of a flying squirrel. In lines 2 and 3 of excerpt 1, the guest uses not only the plain form (in bold and underlined) but also the rough first personal pronoun *ore* and a very colloquial form of the verb *kurenai*. Other endings are in the formal or *desu* form (underlined).

Excerpt 1) (ningen mappu)

- 1 G: *chigau momonga ga/ (eh) ushiro ni ita rashiin desu.*
- 2 *(hai) ... de.. <nande **ore** no hoo ni kamera mukete*
- 3→ ***kunnain da** >. tte iu yoo na (**uhn**) ano= kanji de/ (**eh**)*
- 4 *atashi notoko/ tondan desu. (**sure sure o.**) eh. ggiriggiri.*

5 (hai) *supaatto to tondeetan desu.*

'G: a different flying squirrel (**uh-huh**) seemed to be behind me. (**yes**)...and it was as if it was saying something like <Why don't you aim your camera at me> (**uh-huh**) and flew towards me/ (**very close**) really close. (**yes**) Just flew.

By shifting to the plain style, the guest is able to provide a livelier narrative that includes a "quotation" from the animal he encountered.

Literature Review

Speech style shift was already formally recorded in Japan when language standardization was being implemented by the Meiji government in the 19th century. A number of grammarians and educators wrote about this phenomenon and criticised the mixing of styles (for a detailed account see Maynard, 1991). Early studies on speech style shift published in English by Makino (1983, 2002) and Ikuta (1983), observed that style switch occurs frequently in spoken Japanese. Makino (1983) used the Principle of Speaker-Orientation to explain these shifts. He defines speaker and listener-orientation as two different mechanisms in conversation. Speaker orientation is the 'motivation to express some highly subjective and pre-suppositional information' (Makino, 1983: 143) and listener orientation is when the information is directed towards the recipient of the talk. Makino's later work (2002) concentrates on shifts from polite to informal, and offers an insightful analysis of the psychological motivations for such shifts. He argues that shifts occur when a speaker wants to express ideas that are inwardly directed and when talking about non-controllable matters. While his works are invaluable for understanding the different mechanisms that influence shifts, he does not include any social or interpersonal factors in the analysis, even though style is primarily a device that indexes interpersonal information.

Meanwhile, Ikuta (1983) explains these shifts by using the notion of distance. She terms the polite form as [+Distant] and the informal as [-Distant]. She explains that the speaker shifts to the [-Distant] to show empathy when the topic is positive and thus demonstrate attitudinal closeness to the listener. Similarly, she argues that these shifts are used to signal discourse cohesion of subordinate clauses or illustrations. She maintains that these shifts do not violate the social rules and that they are strategically used, and skilful speakers learn when to shift styles in order to show closeness and appropriate distance. However, her assertion that when topics are very personal or sensitive the [-Distance] should be avoided as it violates personal space seems to be a contradiction, as empathy should involve a closer interpersonal distance. Another problem with this research is that the [+Distance] concept does not explain many other shifts such as interjections or soliloquy.

Maynard (1991, 2001) has written on this topic from the viewpoint of discourse modality. Using spoken data as well as written fiction, she argues that the plain style is used when the speaker (i) suddenly recalls or explains something, (ii) vividly expresses events, (iii) talks to him/ herself, (iv) jointly creates utterances, (v) presents background information and (vi) expresses an intimate relationship with the listener. On the other hand, the polite style is used when the speaker (a) expresses a thought which directly addresses the listener and (b) communicates essential information. Maynard (2001) also comments that shifts from polite to plain levels reflect an emotional aspect and are explained as an awareness of 'thou'. As with many studies on speech level shifts, the use of both formal and informal interactions, spoken and written data without any distinction seems to be problematic, as the social and psychological factors in those settings are very different in nature.

Two studies that use the theories of universal politeness and discernment politeness with divergent arguments are Cook (2006) and Megumi (2002). Cook (2006) writes that because speakers have a choice in each and every turn, they are by no means passively following the social rules of discernment. According to Cook, social identities are created in moment-by-moment interaction. She also shows that there is a pattern within a turn, where the polite form is used first, the shift to plain form is employed to expand the speaker's presentation and reverts to the plain form before a turn relevant place (TRP). An opposing view is that of Megumi (2002), who demonstrates that social factors play an important part in the overall choice of polite and plain forms. In a discussion between a junior student and two seniors, she shows how the older interlocutors consistently use plain forms whereas the former uses polite speech. In this way, she demonstrates that age, status and discernment are basic in an interaction.

Two other works that have looked at plain to polite shifts are Janes (2000), and Yoshida and Sakurai (2005). Janes (2000) analysed shifts in informal conversation using TV dramas and included the use of sentence final particles. She found that shifts motivated by the 'awareness of thou' or caused by 'attitudinal distance' are characterized by naked plain forms (without sentence final particles or SFPs). The use of particles with the plain forms was motivated by negative politeness, thus, providing listeners more choices of how to respond. Janes' new approach is extremely interesting as it provides a new perspective into the understanding of this area, in particular with the use of multiple theories to explain this phenomenon. However, the paucity of data in Janes' study and the lack of distinction between formal and informal interactions in the studies by Cook and Megumi is a drawback. In particular, because so many social and psychological factors seem to affect choice of speech style, a larger data set or more uniform type of data are desirable.

Yoshida and Sakurai (2005) based their research on casual conversations, and show that Japanese speakers shift styles to index their role identity. They argue that speakers are very creative in using polite forms when talking to friends or family members to mark their socio-cultural identity. This study is worthy of note because it shows that in informal situations, factors such as status or age difference are irrelevant in style shifting. Their observations are very important for the understanding of this phenomenon and emphasize the need to differentiate between formal and informal interactions.

The data

Sixteen television interviews and four radio phone-in programs broadcast in Japan during the period of 2001-2007 were used in this study. The television interviews were broadcast at different times of the day and ranged from news programs to celebrity interviews. The four radio phone-in programs are from *Terefon Jinsei Soodan*, broadcast daily by a private radio station. While the television programs feature guests known for their expertise or their achievements, the callers in the radio program are anonymous, and ask for advice. The interviews are dyadic in nature. The radio programs are initially dyadic, however, later in the program a counsellor joins in.

Speech style shifts in the data

As expected, polite style was used throughout most of the programs. Any shift of style was examined in the analysis; including choice of words, use of discourse markers and minimal responses. There were two major types of shifts classified according to their function:

Stylistic (used for quotations, examples, clarification/summaries)

Interactional

- Rapport (used to create rapport, to save face or to soften criticism)
- Mixed (interjections, repetitions, soliloquy)

Stylistic shifts and interactional shifts were easy to identify because the former is mainly narrative oriented while the latter seems to be more psychologically triggered. Mixed shifts, however are multi-functional, and are more difficult to classify them. It was necessary to test whether (i) polite forms could be used without changing the effect on the discourse and on the interaction, and even more importantly, (ii) whether the shifts were actively directed at the listener or not.

Stylistic shifts

Stylistic shifts occurred mostly turn-internally and were discourse motivated. They were used to provide a more vivid account, such as providing quotations or to give examples or illustrations. In excerpt 1), presented previously, we have an example where the guest shifts to the plain form for a quotation. Note that the effect on the narrative would have been completely different, had the guest used the polite form in the quotative phrase. A male identity is indexed through the choice of the plain form and the various other rough items, whereas a polite form would convey the image of a female animal.

When enumerating or giving examples, Japanese speakers can use speech style shifts to indicate subordinate phrases. In excerpt 2), the guest is the president of an organization that provides training and jobs for disabled people. Here, she explains why she had started that organization. A small extract of a very long turn shows three similar utterances with the abrupt verbal ending in lines 2 and 3.

As in excerpt 1), the endings of these subordinate phrases would have sounded rather unnatural and cumbersome had the speaker chosen polite forms. They are used to give the various reasons why disabled people want to work. The use of plain forms in this type of construction is commonly observed in written Japanese (Makino, 1980; Maynard, 1991). Observe that the main phrase (line 4) ends in the formal *masu* form.

Excerpt 2) Stylistic shifts(yuuyuu)

- 1 **G:** *jitsu wa/ yume mo kiboo mo dekiru koto mo ...*
- 2 → *shakai ni taishite watashi wa konna koto shitai.*
- 3 → *hatarakitai. kane mo kasegitai. moo ironna omoi o*
- 4 *motte haru tte iu (e.e. e.) yoku wakarimashitan de, (continues)*

'G: as a matter of fact/ people have dreams and aspirations and...things that they want to do for society. They want to work. They want to earn money. (**yes. yes. yes**). and because I really understood that (continues)

Interactional shifts, Rapport

Interactional rapport-type shifts are very different in nature from the stylistic shifts in that they seem to be psychologically motivated. They appeared mostly turn-finally, sometimes accompanied by sentence final particles, although some occurred in turn-initial positions. As observed in other studies (Ikuta, 1983; Maynard, 1991, 2001), plain forms appear when interlocutors want to show a relaxed and intimate attitude as in the excerpt 3. The interview was nearing the end, the topic had been about the guest's trips and photographs had been shown. At this point, both host and guest had already established a rapport and seemed to be enjoying the interview. Here, they are talking about a cruise the guest had taken and how she had learned ballroom dancing while on board. First the host shifts to plain form and then the guest follows suit (line 5). In line 6, the host continues using the plain form. However, the host reverts to the polite honorific form *ohikinatta* when she asks a question, thus, following the protocol of the interview situation.

Excerpt 3) (Tetsuko)

- 1 G...*atashi warutsu odorimashita no. tara kakkoku no hito ga MMinNa kite*
- 2 *ne/ te tataitan desu.*
- 3 T: *demo sank san sanshuukan/ sanshuukan no aida ni dansu tte sonnani*
- 4 *jozu ni odorechau no/*
- 5 G: *kantan yo.*
- 6 T: *ah. hontou? sugoi no.(@) sorekara nanka piano mo ohiki ni nattan*
- 7 *desu tte ne/*

'G: When I danced a waltz, people from different countries came and applauded us.

T: But, three- three weeks. In three weeks can you become such a good dancer?

G: Easy.

T: Oh, really? Great! That's amazing! And also, I've heard that you played the piano.'

Excerpt 4 is from a rather unusual interview due to the age differences between the host and the guest. The guest was a 100 year-old prominent feminist and the host is a lawyer in her late 30s. The guest used plain forms as in the example below and these shifts sounded impressionistically natural because the age difference and the guest's high profile put her status clearly above the host's. In excerpt 4, the guest talks about her husband while their photograph is shown. Unlike excerpt 3 where the shift is initiated by the older host with the guest following suit, the shift in 4 is initiated by the guest but the host keeps using the polite form. It is only much later in the program, when the host feels enough rapport between them, to shift to the plain form.

Excerpt 4) (Fukushima-Kato)

1 G: [soo nan desu yo.] atama wa ii shi, moo toodai o

2 yuutoo to sotsugyoo shite, [hansamu de]

3 **[(hansamu desu ne/)]** moosu toko nai no.

4 H: soo desu ne/ oyashisoo desu mono ne/

'G: [yes, really.] Intelligent, and graduated from Tokyo University, and [handsome and] **[(he is really handsome, isn't he?)]** there is nothing to complain, you know.

H: Yes. And he also looks very kind.

Mixed shifts

Interactional mixed-type shifts occurred at various points in the discourse and were used to show interest and involvement in the interaction. These shifts were multi-functional in that they showed the desire to keep a shorter psychological distance and at the same time they functioned as questions, minimal responses, soliloquy. In excerpt 5, the interview features a woman who had a remarkable life story of transformation from being a gang member to becoming a lawyer. Here, she talks about her daily routine and the host's turn in line 4 is a quasi interjection of astonishment and admiration. Exclamations of this sort cannot be in the polite form unless they are in the interrogative form with rising or flat intonation. It is impossible to know at whom this turn was directed; however, the guest interprets this turn as a sign of the host's interest, as can be seen in line 5.

Excerpt 5) (doyoo intabyuu)

1 G: *hai...kocchi ni kuru no wa kujihan- sugi ga (uhn)*

2 *moo tsuujoo nan desu kedomo/ motomoto/ watashi*

3 *wa yoji goro kara moo benkyoo shitemasu node*

4 H: **asa yoji!**

5 G: hai.

6 H: HAA. soshite/

7 G: nnn. neru no wa daitai juuniji sugi gurai desu ne/

8 H: eh!! jaa- suimin jikan yoji-

9 G: hai. san yojikan—desu.

10 H: WAAA! Daijoo-bu-==?

'G: yes... when I come here it is usually past nine thirty (**uh-huh**), but, I've actually already been studying from four am.

H: Four in the morning!'

It is interesting that in line 10, the host's involvement and preoccupation with the guest's wellbeing is displayed by the use of the plain form after learning that she only has 4 hours of sleep a day.

Mixed-type shifts also occur in one interview when the interviewer encounters a rather unusual situation; he is challenged by the guest in a funny and playful way in excerpt 6. The guest asks why people like Mozart's music, and the host cannot find an answer even though he is pressed for and answer through a number of turns. A number of shifts occur in both the host's and the guest's turns which are multi-functional. In line 2, the host uses the plain form in the same way as the guest's utterance in lines 3 and 4, and this is probably a soliloquy. Line 5, however, is a request for the guest to answer the question as he explains there is little time. The fact that he uses the plain form in the informal imperative form seems to function as a face-saving device. Notice that there is laughter in both the guest's and the host's turn which may function as 'face' maintaining strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987:40). In line 6, the guest initially uses plain forms but shifts back to the polite in her answer in subsequent lines.

Excerpt 6) (**Stage door**)

- 1 G: *kangaetemite kudasai.*
 - 2 H: *nan darou na/*
 - 3 G: *koko de kotae dashichau tte iya da na (@@@) dasanai de*
 - 4 *kangaesasetoko ka ne (@@@)*
 - 5 H: *kotae dashite. ie ie kotae dashite. jikan ga naikara @@@@*
 - 6 G: *honto/@@@ dashichau to tsumannain dakedo (uhn.) ma= to iu no wa*
 - 7 *ne/ aru toki atakushi ga {continues}*
- 'G: please think
- H: I wonder what it is.
- G: I don't want to give you the answer (@@) Maybe I won't answer and just leave you to think about it? (@@)
- H: Give the answer. No. No. Give the answer, 'cause there's no time. (@@)
- G: Really? @@@ It's boring if I answer but (uh-huh) well, the fact is you know, that once I {continues}

Differences in radio and television

Television interviews and radio programs showed distinct characteristics. Table 1 shows the speech style shifts found in television. Stylistic shifts occur in all programs while mixed-type shifts occur in some. Interactional rapport-type shifts, on the other hand, are directly related to the age of the interlocutors as seen in table 1. These are initiated by the older speaker and sometimes reciprocated by the listener. For example, in the last program titled *Tetsuko no Heya* (Bando) the host and guest are friends and consequently they seem to use more shifts than observed anywhere else except in the interview with Fukushima-Kato and Miyake-Ohira, where there is a marked age difference.

Table 1 Speech style shifts in television

Program	Stylistic shifts		Interactional: Rapport		Interactional: Mixed		Age	
	Host	Guest	Host	Guest	Host	Guest	Host	Guest
ETV	0	4	1	1	0	2	30's	50s
Ningen mappu	6	25	2	1	0	1	20s	50s
Ningen yuuyuu	2	2	1	0	0	0	50s	50s
Stage door I	0	22	1	2	6	4	60s	40s
Stage door II	0	1	0	0	0	0	60s	40s
Miyake-Yutaka	1	1	5	1	0	0	50s	30s
Miyake-Oohira	8	34	11	1	7	0	50s	30s
News 23	3	7	1	1	0	1	60s	70s
ETV	0	3	0	0	0	1	40s	60s
Fukushima-Kato	1	27	4	1	2	6	30s	100
Sawayaka	1	10	3	4	0	5	40s	60s
Yuuyuu	0	16	3	1	1	0	50s	50s
Tetsuko no Heya *Hotta	0	7	2	0	0	0	60s	60s
Tetsuko no Heya *Miyao	0	3	6	3	8	4	60s	60s
Tetsuko no Heya *Bando	5	2	1	0	12	9	60s	30s

The radio programs on the other hand, showed clear differences in the types of shifts and who used them. While shifts in the television interviews did not occur for more than two turns, in radio programs the presenters and counsellors used plain forms more often. Table 2 shows the relationship between the age differences and the types of shifts used by hosts, counsellors and callers. Note that one of the counsellors used plain form throughout the program (Program XII).

Table 2 Style shifts in radio discourse

Program	Stylistic shifts			Interactional: Rapport			Interactional: Mixed			Age		
	Hos t	C o	Gues t	Hos t	C o	Gues t	Hos t	C o	Gues t	Hos t	Co s	Gues t
<i>Jinsei soodan VIII</i>	2	3	1	4	14	0	1	0	0	70	60 s	32
<i>Jinsei soodan VII</i>	0	1	0	6	6	0	3	0	0	70	50 s	56
<i>Jinsei soodan XII</i>	0	*	0	14	*	0	1	*	1	74	54	34
<i>Jinsei soodan XIII</i>	0	1	1	7	7	0	2	0	0	64	?	42

Co-counsellor, * The speech style was informal throughout

The hosts in these radio programs invariably shift to the plain form when talking to their callers with a pattern where the host starts with polite form and shifts to plain form once information about the callers' ages is revealed. However they shift back to polite forms before handing over to the counsellor. In excerpt 7 the caller is answering questions related to her situation. When the host asks her age in line 1, he uses the polite form. However, once he notes that she is younger than him, he shifts to the plain form in line 3.

Excerpt 7) (Jinsei. 28/09/05)

1 H: *kore, okusan ima oikutsu desuka?*

2 C: *sanjyuu roku sai desu.*

3 H: *a. mada. ja, okusan mo hataraiteru?*

4 C: *ima=, paato ni deterun desukedo,*

'H: Uhm, how old are you?

C: I am thirty six.

H: Oh. Still (thirty six). So, you're working too?

C: Now, I have a part-time job.

What is most interesting is that counsellors use plain forms to provide advice while callers, on the other hand, use polite forms throughout. The shifts to plain forms by the host and the counsellor could indicate not only age and status differences, but also a strategy to make callers feel more relaxed and facilitate the conversation. It has been reported that even in solicited advice-seeking situations (Jefferson and Lee, 1981; Heritage and Sefi, 1992), advice giving can be an FTA and therefore counsellors must be tactful and must make those seeking their advice feel relaxed and at home. In our data host and counsellor face and additional challenge; callers' problems are very complex and hosts have to obtain as much information as possible within a limited amount of time.

Discussion

This study has revealed significant differences in the characteristics of style shifts in formal discourse through a functional analytical perspective. Style shifts were classified according to their function: stylistic and interactional (rapport and mixed). While stylistic shifts were present in the speech of most of the speakers, the other was more restricted. Interactional rapport-type shifts occurred **only** when the interlocutors' i) age and status difference was obvious, ii) when they knew each other, iii) when they

had established a rapport or iv) when the topic was light. This finding suggests that these speech style shifts have to be looked at as two different kinds of phenomena.

The fact that stylistic shifts occur commonly in the data regardless of social factors suggests that they should be considered as a discourse strategy to enliven and develop a narrative. Stylistic shifts are those cases in which the polite form would be rather cumbersome (example 2) or not accurate enough (example 1). In those cases, shifting to plain forms proves to be more efficient than having to use considerably longer phrases and explanations. Plain forms are generally used to list examples or to quote and it can be argued that they are a very efficient and effective way to convey information. Consequently, stylistic shifts are used by most of the interlocutors in the data, in particular by the television interview guests.

Interactional shifts (rapport-type in particular), on the other hand, seem to be bound by social factors such as age and in-group/out-group membership as well as topic. Interactional shifts as seen in examples 3-7 are a result of, or intended to create, rapport between interlocutors. In all of them, the shift to the plain form is initiated by the older or higher status speaker and not always reciprocated. These shifts function in a similar way to discourse markers or other cooperative strategies (for example, tag questions) because: a) their use does not change the content of the utterance, b) they do not add any new information to the propositional content and c) they have an emotive function.

There was a clear difference between the radio and television programs. While most of the shifts in the TV interviews are stylistic, interactional shifts are more common in the radio programs. Moreover, interactional shifts in the TV interviews were observed in the speech of older speakers regardless of their role. In contrast, interactional shifts in the radio programs were exclusively used by the host and the counsellor. Reasons for this difference may be attributed to several causes.

Firstly, this variation can be caused by the very nature of visual and audio broadcast. A face-to-face interaction and a telephone exchange entail different kinds of communicative strategies, as there are fewer cues in the latter. Another important reason might be that television interviews and radio call-in programs are produced for different purposes. The interview is designed so that some aspect of the guest's life, work or way of thinking can be shared with the public. The radio program, on the other hand, is designed to provide advice to people with problems.

However, what appears to be crucially important is the difference in the interlocutors' status. The guests' status in television interviews is relatively higher than that of the interviewers. Usami (2002) writes that more powerful speakers have less inhibitions about using informal forms as seen in this study. Guests are invited to be interviewed because of their professional or personal contribution to society or because they have gained some sort of social prominence. In contrast, the callers' status is lower than that of the hosts and counsellors in the radio programs, who are usually professionals such as lawyers, psychologists or medical doctors. Callers are ordinary citizens and most importantly they are anonymous. It is therefore interesting that the callers' speech did not show any interactional shifts and only a few instances of stylistic and interactional (mixed) shifts. It seems, therefore, that social factors are extremely important in the use of interactional (rapport type) shifts.

Another possible reason for the consistent shift to plain forms by the counsellor and the hosts in the radio programs is that they were used as a strategy to create an informal atmosphere so that the caller could feel relaxed. It is known that advice giving is a potential FTA (Heritage and Sefi, 1998), and therefore, hosts may have used plain forms as a conscious attempt to diffuse a possibly stressful encounter. Similarly, it has been reported that in advice-seeking settings many of the callers do not bring up just a single 'problem' and that in order for the host and counsellor to understand the whole situation, much probing is needed (Hutchby, 1995). One of the ways to elicit information is to make the caller feel relaxed and to show a closer psychological distance; and this can be achieved in Japanese through the use of plain forms.

A question arises, then, whether the participants' use of speech styles is governed by social norms exclusively or whether they choose them as the interaction develops. This dilemma brings us to the current debate on Japanese politeness based on the universal politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1978) and the concept of discernment proposed by Ide (1989) and others. The results of the present study suggest that both theories are applicable. Discernment seems to be the framework that limits the use of plain forms. In the television interviews, interactional shifts are very short and interlocutors always revert to the polite form. This is an indication of their awareness of the difference in sta-

tus, of the setting and of the formality. Similarly, although hosts and counsellors in the radio programs shift to plain forms more often and use them for a number of turns, they always use the polite form at the beginning and end of the program and also when they talk to each other. Callers do not shift to plain forms even though the hosts and counsellors regularly do so. In these radio programs, the status differences between the interlocutors are very clear. The hosts and counsellors as professionals and renowned people have a higher status, whereas the callers are ordinary people with a correspondingly lower status. Discernment is the rule when participants in a public or institutional interaction know that they should use the polite forms because of the formality of the situation and participants in both types of programs show that they are aware of the setting.

At the same time, we can suggest that volition is a very important aspect of the discourse. In the television interviews, a number of interlocutors who are much older or almost similar in age do not shift at all. It can be argued that those who did not want to index psychological closeness with the listener did not use any shifts. The fact that many participants used no interactional (*rapport*) or mixed shifts at all indicates that they did not feel the need to show familiarity towards the listener. Because interactional shifts do not function in a similar way to stylistic shifts it can be argued that they are a direct reflection of the speaker's psychological attitude. Those who used interactional shifts felt that either they had the right to use plain forms because of their higher status or felt relaxed and intimate enough to do so.

It seems then, that these two theories are not disparate as has been argued (Cook, 2006) but complementary. People, regardless of culture, know what constitutes expected behaviour and, therefore, participants know during an interview that it is a formal setting and that the interviewer has to ask questions and the interviewee has to answer them. At the same time, I agree with Matsumoto that every utterance in Japanese carries a pragmatic message, and that therefore the choice of style or style shift is up to the individual (Matsumoto, 1988,) as is clear from my data. Some of the participants chose to shift styles to demonstrate a particular stance while others did not.

This study also raises a number of interesting questions for future research. A consideration of a larger number of similar programs can indicate how general the findings are. Observing other institutional data can reveal more about style shifts in formal Japanese. What occurs in situations where there are more than three interlocutors and when the factors are more complex? Similarly, a look at informal discourse using the same parameters would also be interesting.

The results of this study, I believe, will contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon of style shifts. While there are many questions still waiting to be answered by future research, the data in this study enables us to argue that a functional view of speech style shifts provides a new perspective.

Conclusion

This study has shown that speech style shifts are not a single phenomenon but should be considered as different linguistic strategies depending on their function. Shifts from polite to informal in formal television and radio discourse have shown that those used for narrative purposes occur for cognitive reasons and are not bound by social factors. Interactional shifts, on the other hand, are used to show a collaborative stance, are psychologically motivated, and socio-cultural factors seem to be directly related to their use. Interactional (*rapport*-type) shifts, in particular, are present in the speech of older or higher status speakers regardless of their role. These results show the importance of adding a functional perspective in analysis speech style shifts and the inclusion of all factors affecting an interaction.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the understanding of language as a dynamic system, in which speakers use strategies that on the surface seem to be of similar nature but are functionally quite different. These strategies are chosen thoughtfully in order to maximize their communicative goals.

References

- Brown, P. & Gilman, A. (1972). The pronouns of power and solidarity. In P. P. Giglioli (Ed.), *Language and Social Context*. Middlesex: Penguin.

- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook, M. H. (2006). Japanese politeness as an interactional achievement: academic consultation sessions in Japanese universities. *Multilingua*, 25, 269–292.
- Cook, M. H. (2002). The social meaning of the Japanese plain form. In N. Akatsuka & S. Strauss (Eds.), *Japanese Korean Linguistics*, Vol.10 (pp.150–163). Stanford: CSLI.
- Eelen, G. (2001). *A Critique of Politeness Theories*. Manchester: Saint Jerome Publications.
- Hasegawa, Y. (2006). Embedded soliloquy and affective stances in Japanese. In S. Suzuki (Ed.), *Emotive Communication in Japanese* (pp. 209–230). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Heritage, J. & Sefi, S. (1998). Dilemmas of advice: aspects of the delivery and reception of advice in interactions between health visitors and first-time mothers. In P. Drew & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Talk at Work* (pp. 459–418). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hutchby, I. (1995). Aspects of recipient design in expert advice-giving on call-in radio. *Discourse Processes*, 19, 219–238.
- Ide, S. (1989). Formal forms and discernment: two neglected aspects of universals of linguistic politeness. *Multilingua*, 8, 223–248.
- Ikuta, S. (1983). Speech level shift and conversational strategy. *Language Sciences*, 5 (1), 37–53.
- Janes, A. (2000). The interaction of style-shift and particle use in Japanese dialogue. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32, 1823– 1853.
- Jefferson, G. & Lee, J. R. E. (1981). The rejection of advice: managing the problematic convergence of a 'troubles-telling' and a 'service encounter'. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 5, 399–422.
- Makino, S. (2002). When does communication turn mentally inward?: a case of Japanese formal-to-informal switching. In N. Akatsuka & S. Strauss (Eds.), *Japanese Korean Linguistics*. Vol.10 (pp.121–135). Stanford: CSLI.
- Makino, S. (1983). Speaker/listener-orientation and formality marking in Japanese. *Gengo Kenkyuu*, 84, 126–145.
- Matsumoto, Y. (1988). Re-examination of the universality of face: politeness phenomena in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12, 403–426.
- Maynard, S. (2001). Falling in love with style: expressive functions of stylistic shifts in a Japanese television drama series. *Functions of Language*, 8 (1), 1– 39.
- Maynard, S. (1991). Pragmatics of discourse modality: a case of *da* and *desu/masu* forms in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 15, 551– 582.
- Megumi, M. (2002). The switching between *desu/masu* form and plain form: from the perspective of turn construction. In N. M. Akatsuka & S. Strauss (Eds.), *Japanese Korean Linguistics*, Vol. 10 (pp.206-234). Stanford: CSLI.
- Usami, M. (2002). *Discourse Politeness in Japanese Conversation*. Tokyo: Hituji Syobo.
- Watts, R., Ide, S. & Ehlich, K. (2005). *Politeness in Language Studies: Studies in Its History, Theory and Practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Yoshida, M. & Sakurai, C. (2005). Japanese honorifics as a marker of socio-cultural identity: a view from a non-Western perspective. In R. T. Lakoff & S. Ide (Eds.), *Broadening the Horizon of Linguistic Politeness* (pp.197–215). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.