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The Acquisition of Communicative Style in Japanese

Language socialization involves not only children's mastery of the structures and lexical items of their language but also norms of how to communicate—what Patricia M. Clancy calls communicative style. The hallmark of Japanese communicative style is indirection, which may be accomplished with a variety of subtle methods.

Note: Clancy follows the convention in studies of language acquisition and socialization where ages are given as "years; months," so a child at the age of "1;11" is one year, eleven months old.

READING QUESTIONS

- What are *indirect imperatives*? How do they fit with Clancy's argument about the socialization of communicative style?
- How is empathy taught to Japanese children?
- What is the role of teasing? How is it connected to conformity?
- What is the role of direct refusal? In what circumstances is it appropriate and in what circumstances is it avoided?

One of the most striking meeting places of language and culture can be found in **communicative style**. The notion of communicative style has been defined by Barnlund (1975) to include the topics people discuss, their favorite forms of interaction, the depth of involvement sought, the extent to which they rely upon the same channels for conveying information, and the extent to which they are tuned to the same level of meaning, such as factual versus emotional content. Obviously, communicative style is one aspect of "**communicative competence**," relating, in particular, to the "rules for use" that govern speakers' production

and interpretation of language appropriately in context (Hymes 1972). Communicative style, which I will define loosely here as the way language is used and understood in a particular culture, both reflects and reinforces fundamental cultural beliefs about the way people are and the nature of interpersonal communication. As Scollon (1982) has argued, children's acquisition of culture-specific patterns of communication is an extremely important part of their socialization, since such patterns serve as one of the primary sources of information on cultural values concerning social relationships and interaction. Thus acquisition

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of communicative style plays a part in the development of children's social cognition, thereby helping to shape their world view (Whorf 1956; see Chapter 5) or "reality set" (Scollon & Scollon 1981).

Japanese Communicative Style

It is widely recognized that the communicative style of the Japanese is intuitive and indirect, especially compared with that of Americans. As Azuma et al. (1980) have said, verbal expression among the Japanese is "context dependent, indirect, rich in connotation and evasive in denotation." The basis of this style is a set of cultural values that emphasize _omoiyari_ 'empathy' over explicit verbal communication. A striking example of these values can be found in the Japanese attitude toward speech itself. As Ito (1980) points out, verbosity has traditionally been looked down upon in Japan, especially for men; this is revealed in traditional sayings such as _Iwanu ga hana_ 'Silence is better than speech'. The Japanese have little faith in verbal expression or in those who rely upon it. As Nitobe has written, "To give in so many articulate words one's innermost thoughts and feelings is taken as an unmistakable sign that they are neither profound nor very sincere" (cited in Barnlund 1975:133). The Japanese apparently do talk less than Americans: Barnlund found that a large sample of Japanese and American students characterized the Japanese as "silent" much more frequently than Americans, who were seen as "talkative." Doi (1973) notes that upon arriving in the United States, he found that the incessant talk of Americans, even during meals, made them sound "hypermanic." My own experience after a few months of assimilating Japanese norms was that, indeed, I seemed to be talking endlessly and compulsively, perhaps stimulated to even greater volubility to compensate for the comparative silence of my conversational partners.

When verbal communication does enter in, it will often be inexplicit and indirect. As Doi (1974) has pointed out, the structure of the Japanese language fosters **ambiguity** in various ways. For example, in Japanese it is grammatically acceptable to omit overt reference to any element in a sentence that the speaker assumes to be "understood"; frequent use of nominal ellipsis in Japanese discourse results in a much higher rate of potential ambiguity than in English (Clancy 1980). Since Japanese is a **left-branching verb-final** language, with **negation** appearing as a verb suffix, speakers may negate a sentence at the last moment, depending upon the addressee's expression (Doi 1974). They may also **nominalize** and negate entire sentences upon their completion to make assertions less direct: when this is done with negative **predicates**, multiple embedded negations are created. Loveday (1982:4) cites the following example from Gibney, which reflects Westerners' perception of this usage:

"It isn't that we can't do it this way," one Japanese will say.

"Of course," replies his companion, "we couldn't deny that it would be impossible to say that it couldn't be done."

"But unless we can say that it can't be done," his friend adds, "it would be impossible not to admit that we couldn't avoid doing it."

The average American is likely to find Japanese multiple negation mind boggling to process syntactically, and maddeningly roundabout as a way of expressing opinions. The structure of the Japanese language and speakers' exploitation of all its potential for ambiguity and **indirection** probably play an important part in Americans' perception of the Japanese as "reserved," "cautious," and "evasive" (Barnlund 1975).

The Japanese rely upon indirection in many common social situations especially when they are trying to be polite. Japanese who have had contact with Americans quickly become aware of their comparatively greater use of indirection, as a result of many misunderstandings. For example, Japanese visitors to the United States often point out that in Japan an offer of food should ideally be refused three times before accepting. Of course, the host must realize that the guest is actually hungry and merely exhibiting appropriate _enryo_ 'reserve'. From the reports of my own acquaintances, it appears that most Japanese who come to America can expect to suffer a period of hunger before learning that offers of food will be made only once (cf. also Doi 1973), and may raise a few eyebrows by their unseemly boldness in accepting offers quickly upon returning to Japan.

The Japanese reliance upon indirection is consistent with their attitude toward verbal conflict. As Barnlund points out, in Japan conversation is "a way of creating and reinforcing the emotional ties that

bind people together" with the aim of social harmony. Therefore, overt expression of conflicting opinions is taboo. Even conference participants, for example, in contrast to their argumentative American counterparts, tend to express their views tentatively, in anticipation of possible retraction or qualification depending upon how they are received; they try to feel out the positions of their colleagues, seeking a common ground for establishing unanimity (Barnlund 1975; Doi 1974).

However, the value placed upon unanimity does not prevent individuals from harboring their own thoughts and feelings. Doi (1974) discusses this phenomenon in terms of *honne to tatemae*, roughly "real feeling versus (socially) accepted principle." This distinction, which was also pointed out to me by Japanese friends, is not, ideally, regarded as involving hypocrisy, although the potential for this interpretation exists and is sometimes made even by Japanese. Americans tend to feel that acting and speaking in accordance with one's *honne* is a matter of personal integrity, but, according to Doi (1974), in Japan the discrepancy between *honne* and *tatemae* is generally seen, in good conscience, as merely reflecting the way society works. Individuals may hold their own view, but, in the interests of group harmony, should not express it if it conflicts with the opinions of others.

One outcome of this system is that in Japan it can be extremely difficult to find out what is on someone's mind. Americans discover to their frustration that yes may well mean no, but cannot figure out when. Reluctant to disagree with another's opinion or refuse a request, the Japanese feel pressured to give their consent, even when they actually disagree or are unable or unwilling to comply. Ueda (1974) discusses "sixteen ways to avoid saying 'no' in Japan," which include silence; ambiguity; expressions of apology, regret, and doubt; and even lying and equivocation. Ueda's subjects reported using direct no at home, but very rarely in public; in fact, lying was the most frequent means of declining requests reported by the subjects. According to Ueda, the reasons underlying avoidance of no include empathy with the addressee, whose feelings would be hurt, and concern about the potential negative results, such as retaliation by a person in a position of power relative to the speaker. In interpreting the response to a direct question or request, therefore, one must be ready to guess what the speaker probably means, even in spite of what may actually be said.

Clearly, the Japanese style of communication can work only in a rather homogeneous society in which people actually can anticipate each other's needs, wants, and reactions. Japanese society is, in fact, extremely homogeneous, and more group-oriented than American society, which has much greater ethnic diversity and places a much higher value on individualism. Of course, all socialization by definition entails teaching children to conform to the expectations of the social groups in which they are being raised. But in Japan, where interpersonal communication relies so heavily upon intuition and empathy, conformity to group norms can be seen as an essential aspect of communicative style. For the system to work, people must be interpretable, which means that their thoughts and feelings must fall within the range of others' ability to imagine and understand, even without any explicit verbal expression.

One striking aspect of language use in Japan that is related to conformity is the existence of a great number of fixed **verbal formulas** that are used extensively in daily interactions. These expressions cover a much broader range of situations than English verbal formulas, including, for example, *Itadakimasu* 'I will receive it', which must be said before starting to eat, and *Ojama shimasu* 'I will get in the way', said upon entering someone's house. As Loveday (1982) points out, in Japan formulas are used very frequently, and apparently without fear of sounding unoriginal and therefore insincere. In contrast, Americans tend to prefer individualized expressions. Loveday reports that when asked what they would say upon receiving a birthday present, Americans gave a variety of answers, including "It was very thoughtful of you to remember my birthday"; when asked what they would say to someone who had saved them from drowning, they responded, "What can I say . . .", "I don't know how to thank you," etc. The Japanese used the same formula of thanks in both cases. It is as if the Americans are relying upon the words themselves to communicate their feelings to the listener, and therefore find the verbal formulas inadequate. In Japan, there seems to be an extensive codification of contexts in which particular feelings are expected; speakers need only indicate, by means of the right formula, that they are experiencing the appropriate reaction, without expressing any more personal, individualized response. An important goal of socialization in Japan is to promote the unanimity in

feeling that will support the norms of verbal agreement and empathy.

As this summary shows, the characteristics of Japanese communicative style reveal a very different view of verbal interaction from that shared by Americans. Reddy (1979) proposes that English-speakers' view of communication rests upon the **"conduit metaphor"**: speakers "put their ideas into words," which they "exchange" with the listener, whose task is merely to extract the ideas from the words again. The main responsibility for successful communication rests with speakers, who must know how to "get their ideas across." This view of communication is explicitly espoused in much of popular American psychology; for example, one goal of assertiveness training is to teach people to express their thoughts and feelings explicitly in words, rather than relying upon indirect or non-verbal messages. In contrast, in Japan the ideal interaction is not one in which the speakers express their wishes and needs adequately and listeners understand and comply, but rather one in which each party understands and anticipates the needs of the other, even before anything is said. Communication can take place without, or even in spite of, actual verbalization. The main responsibility lies with the listener, who must know what the speaker means regardless of the words that are used. In this view of communication, mind-reading is seen as both possible and desirable, rather than a misguided expectation of those who have not learned to express themselves adequately.

The Japanese view of communication arises from, and contributes to, *amae*, a concept that Doi (1973) regards as basic to both individual and social psychology in Japan. To *amae* is to depend upon and presume upon another's benevolence (Doi 1974). The prototype of a relationship based upon *amae* is that between mother and child, which serves as a model for many other social relationships in Japan, such as the paternalism of employers towards employees. According to Doi (1974), all interpersonal communication in Japanese society has the emotional undertone of *amae*. In fact, an analysis of Japanese communicative style suggests that it is a style that *amaes*, with the speaker presuming upon the listener's willingness to cooperate, empathize, and intuit what he or she has in mind. Thus Japanese communicative style places speaker and hearer in the prototypical social relationship, namely, one that is based on *amae*; the values reflected and reinforced by this mode of communication constitute an integral part of Japanese culture.

Acquisition

How do Japanese children learn this intuitive, indirect style of communication? Study of early mother–child interaction has revealed patterns emphasizing nonverbal communication at an extremely early stage. In their investigation of thirty Japanese and thirty American infants 3–4 months old interacting with their mothers, Caudill & Weinstein (1974) found that Japanese mothers talked to their children significantly less often than American mothers, and that Japanese children had significantly lower rates of "positive vocalization" than the American children. On the other hand, the Japanese mothers were together in the same room with their children, even while they were sleeping, significantly more often than American mothers, and responded quickly to soothe and care for their children's needs upon any negative vocalization. This finding is consistent with Vogel (1963), who reports that in his study of middle-class mothers in a Tokyo suburb, one of the first things the mothers did after birth was to find out under what circumstances their children cried and to satisfy them so that they never cried for more than a few seconds. The Japanese mother's goal is to empathize with her child's needs; one result of this goal is that the motivation for vocalization is reduced. Caudill & Weinstein (1974:8) conclude that "It is as if the majority of the American pairs had reached an 'agreement' to be talkative, while the majority of the Japanese pairs had reached an 'agreement' to be silent." By as early as 4 months of age, American and Japanese children are already being socialized into different patterns of communication.

Looking at a much later stage of development, Matsumori (1981) has also found interesting differences between the communicative styles of Japanese and American mothers. In her study, Matsumori analyzed the **directives** used by ten Japanese and ten American mothers interacting with their children, aged 3–6 years, and their responses to a set of hypothetical situations calling for directives. The American mothers tended to express their own feelings and opinions when reacting to socially disapproved behaviors, e.g., "I don't like the way you're speaking." They used polite expressions, such as "Could/would you"

when requesting personal favors, and wanted their children to address them with polite formulas such as "please" and "thank you." In contrast, the Japanese mothers tended to appeal to social norms in correcting misbehavior, e.g., *Otona no hito ni soo iu hanashikata shicha dame yo* 'Speaking that way to a grown-up won't do'. They used directives reflecting the intimacy of the mother–child relationship when requesting personal favors, rather than forms which could also be used to strangers, and insisted that their children use polite forms in addressing others, but not when speaking to their mothers. Matsumori concluded that these differences reflect differences between Japanese and American social structure and the nature of the mother–child relationship in each culture. Like the research of Caudill & Weinstein, Matsumori's work provides evidence that mothers' communicative style is an important factor in the socialization of children to culture-specific values.

In this [chapter], I will focus on a stage of development intermediate between those considered by Caudill & Weinstein and Matsumori: approximately 2 years of age. At this stage a good deal of mother–child communication is taking place through, or is at least accompanied by, language, but the acquisition of grammar is still not very advanced. The study of mothers' speech to young children has been popular for many years, and many suggestions have been made about the potential effects of "motherese" on semantic and syntactic development, but as yet little is known about aspects of mothers' speech to children of this age that could foster acquisition of culture-specific communicative styles. I will focus on those features of Japanese mothers' speech that might be shaping the development of communicative style, such as their use of indirection in giving directives and in saying no to their children, and their reliance on verbal strategies that foster empathy and conformity. Japanese children's exposure to this kind of verbal interaction is probably one of the earliest and most important means by which they are socialized to Japanese culture.

The data for this [chapter] consist of tape-recorded interactions between five mother–child pairs, which were collected as part of a study of early grammatical development in Japanese (see Clancy 1986). Three children from that study will be discussed here: two boys, Yoshinobu (hereafter Y), who was recorded twelve times, usually at one- or two-week intervals, from the age of 1;11 to 2;4 years, and Masahiko (MK), who was recorded twice, at 2;4 and 2;5 years of age; and one girl, Maho (M), who was recorded four times between the ages of 2;1 and 2;3 years. M and MK were only children at the time of the recordings; Y had a 5-year-old sister who was attending kindergarten. All three were children of college-educated, middle-class parents living in a suburb of Tokyo. The fathers held white-collar positions; the mothers were not employed outside the home. The linguistic development of the three children was consistent with the literature on Japanese acquisition for their age group.

The recording sessions were each one hour long. The children were recorded in interaction with their mothers, and Y occasionally also with his sister; in some of the early sessions with Y and M, a young Japanese woman who was assisting me also participated. During the recording sessions, I interacted only minimally, devoting myself to taking contextual notes. The mothers were asked to interact with the children as they did when alone. A variety of activities were recorded, including playing with dolls and toys, reading storybooks, drawing, eating, and make-believe role-playing routines. Largely because of the presence of outsiders interacting with the mother–child pairs, there were many occasions when the mothers tried to shape the children's use and interpretation of language, and so these recordings were in certain ways ideal for the analysis of incipient communicative style. It is interesting that each of the mothers in this study seemed to seize upon these visits as occasions for socializing their children into appropriate patterns of polite interaction with people outside the family circle.

Listening and Responding

One of the most basic features of communicative style is when to speak and when not to speak. The data for this study cannot be used for an analysis of the normal frequency of verbal interaction, since the goal of the recording sessions was to collect speech samples for grammatical analysis, and an effort was made to keep the children engaged in conversation as much as possible. However, the transcripts do provide clear evidence for at least one context in which the mothers consistently trained their children to speak, namely, when they are spoken to. I have suggested that Japanese communicative style places the main burden for successful communication upon the

listener; obviously, the first rule for good listeners must be to notice and pay attention to speech that is addressed to them. And in Japan, as elsewhere, a basic rule of politeness is to respond to questions, comments, and requests.

Studies of young American children have shown that they often ignore the speech of others (Wetstone & Foster 1982) and fail to respond even at an age when they presumably have no difficulty understanding what is being said (Dore 1978). In my data as well, the three children would sometimes become engrossed in their own actions and either would fail to notice attempts to engage them in conversation or would choose not to reply. Their mothers did not allow this to continue; they consistently focused the unresponding child's attention upon the person who was trying to interact and repeated the utterance that had been addressed to the child, as in the following example (M 2;1):

[Child is pretending to eat imaginary food from a toy dish]
    Adult: *Mahochan wa nanika tabeten no? Koko nani ga haitten no?*
       'Are you eating something? What is in there?'
    Child: [No response]
  Mother: *Nani ga haitteru no ka naa. Oneesan nani ga haitten no tte kiiteru yo.*
       'I wonder what could be in there. Older sister is asking, "What is in there?"'
    Child: *Purin.*
       'Pudding.'

Such repetitions were a frequent part of the mother–child interactions in my sample, occurring in every transcript of each child.

Sometimes mothers' repetitions may be necessary for the child's comprehension, especially when the child is first interacting with an unfamiliar person, and there were a few cases in which mothers simplified the speech in their repetition for the child. However, most repetitions did not paraphrase or simplify the original utterance; they were intended to elicit a response from the child by adding the mother's authority to the request for an answer or a favor. The great consistency with which the three mothers repeated unanswered questions shows that they felt it was very important for their children to learn to reply

when spoken to. In the following example, the mother explicitly refers to the rule she is trying to teach (M 2;1):

Adult [looking at a character in a storybook]:
    Kore wa dare desu ka?
    'Who is this?'
    Child: [No response]
  Mother: *Nani! Dame ja nai, kotaenai de. Dare desu ka to yuu n deshoo. Doo yuu no? Hai to. Hisakochan to doobutsuen.*
       'What! Isn't that bad, not answering. She says, "Who is it?" What do you say? Say, "Yes. It's Hisako and the zoo."'

Requests were repeated by the mothers with even greater insistence. In fact, mothers often reacted with great concern if a child failed to comply with a request immediately. In the following example, the mother attempts to communicate a sense of urgency, even alarm, at the discovery that a guest's wish is going unfulfilled (Y 2;3):

      PC: *Yotchan no shooboojidoosha misete.*
       'Show me your fire engine.'
    Child: [No response]
  Mother: *Shooboojidoosha da tte.*
       'She said, "Fire engine."'
      PC: *Shooboojidoosha.*
       'Fire engine.'
  Mother: *Sa, hayaku. Patricia-san misete tte yutteru yo. Isoganakucha. Isoganakucha. A! A!*
       'Well, quickly. Patricia is saying, "Show me it." You must hurry. You must hurry. Oh! Oh!'

On another occasion, when I had made a similar request, Y's mother exclaimed, *Hora! Taihen da! Motte konakucha!* 'Listen! This is terrible! You must bring it' (Y 2;3). In such cases the mothers were most probably exaggerating the degree of concern they felt in order to make an impression on their children. However, it is interesting to compare this feigned alarm with the very real concern (*ki o tsukau*) and solicitousness that the Japanese show their guests. Behind the mothers' alarmed reactions, we can sense the Japanese feeling that, ideally, a guest's needs should be met even before a direct request becomes necessary.

Repeating the speech addressed to their children was one strategy that these mothers used in socializing their children to the rules for interacting with others. All direct questions and requests must be answered; in fact, it is in light of this general rule that an addressee's silence becomes meaningful to the speaker who has asked a question or made a request. Since both questions and requests reveal that the speaker is in need, either of information or of some desired object or action, Japanese mothers' insistence that their children pay attention and respond to such utterances may be viewed as one early instance of "empathy training."

Directives

Given the Japanese emphasis upon consideration for others, it is not surprising to find that indirection is one of the hallmarks of Japanese communicative style. As Brown & Levinson (1978) have pointed out, certain speech acts are intrinsically "face threatening" to the addressee; directives, which seek to impose the will of the speaker upon the listener, constitute a prime example. Obviously, trying to get the listener to do something could easily lead to a violation of the right to "freedom from imposition" (Brown & Levinson 1978) and hence to violation of the Japanese ideal of empathy. One solution to this problem, in Japan as elsewhere, is to resort to indirection as a less coercive means of conveying imperative intent. In this section, I will examine the directives used by the Japanese mothers in my sample to their 2-year-old children to discover whether, and to what extent, very young children are exposed to indirect imperatives.

Directives of various types were extremely common in the speech of all three mothers; the average frequency across mothers and samples was 113 directives per one-hour sample. Directives frequently occurred in a series of highly repetitive utterances, with the same content being expressed several times, often in different grammatical form, either within or across speech turns. This kind of self-repetition and paraphrase seems to be one feature of an interactive style that is concerned with mutual comprehension. Newport, Gleitman & Gleitman (1977) and Cross (1977) have described a similar pattern for English-speaking mothers. They report that paraphrases were especially common in sequences of directives, where they served to ensure comprehension or, as Gleason (1977) has discussed, to guide and direct the child's behavior.

[Directive] strategies [may be] divided into positive directives, which aim at getting the child to perform some action, and negative ones, which are intended to prevent or stop undesirable behavior. . . . Japanese mothers use a very wide range of directives, which vary greatly in their strength of imperative force and their degree of explicitness about what the child is to do. Accordingly, the different strategies also vary in what Azuma et al. (1980) have referred to as "psychological space," the amount of room a directive leaves for noncompliance. . . . The most common directives were also the most direct and forceful, namely, those using imperative verb forms such as *-nasai* or the milder *-te*. Individual lexical items, such as *hayaku* 'quickly', also served as very direct imperatives. Statements of obligation, for example, *Moo sukoshi ushiro ikanakya dame* 'You must go back a little more' (lit. "Not going back a little more is no good"—M 2;1), and statements of prohibition, for example, *Sonna nagetara dame* (lit. "If you throw that kind of thing, it's no good"—MK 2;4), were also quite explicit and coercive in tone. However, they may be regarded as less direct than imperatives, since on the surface they merely inform the child that certain behaviors are *dame* 'no good' or *ikenai* 'won't do'. Somewhat milder in tone were sentences without surface subjects of the form "(You) will/won't do *x*" or "(One) does/doesn't do *x*," which may be regarded as instructions (cf. Matsumori 1981) or generalizations about social norms intended to convey such instructions. Taken together, these directive strategies, which allow very little "psychological space," constitute 58.3 percent, on the average, of all the utterances with imperative intent each mother addressed to her children.

The next three strategies . . . allow the child more freedom of response. In statements of permission/preference, mothers simply categorized a particular course of action as *ii* 'good/all right'. Suggestions took the form of "**cohortatives**" with verbs inflected in *-oo* 'let's' (although the child was usually expected to perform the action alone), **conditionals** in *-eba* and *-tara* 'if', and questions. . . . Although as explicit about the desired action as more forceful imperatives, these suggestions leave it up to the child whether to comply with the directive or not. The children in this sample often responded to suggestions in question form by performing or refusing to perform the action, revealing

that they were able to interpret them as directives. . . . Suggestions, including "positive" questions, accounted for an average of 15 percent of the directive input to children.

The remaining 27 percent of directives used by these mothers were indirect in that they did not specify clearly what the child was supposed to do and/or were not addressed directly by the mother to the child, but rather were attributed to a third party. Thus Japanese children are already hearing indirect imperatives as early as 2 years of age.

Many of these indirect imperatives had the surface form of questions. There were several examples of indirect requests in question form, such as *Sooseeji arimasu ka?* 'Is there any sausage?' (Y 2;2). These "situated conventional directives," which explicitly mention the desired object, if not the action to be performed (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1977), were readily understood by the children. Y and M had even begun to use such questions themselves in the context of eating.

The most frequent type of indirect question used by these mothers was the rhetorical question with negative directive intent. . . . These questions expressed a variety of negative attitudes, ranging from amused skepticism, *Isu ni nokkeru no? bubu o* 'You put the car on a chair?' (Y 1;11), to frustration, *Ohanashi outa mo nashi?* 'Is there no speech, no song at all?' (M 2;1), and annoyed disapproval, *Mada sore taberu no?* 'Are you still eating that?' (M 2;1). In rhetorical questions, it is the disapproved action that is mentioned explicitly, and it is up to the child to figure out what to do. Given the context and the mother's obvious negative attitude and tone of voice, this was probably not too difficult for the children, although comprehension did not, of course, ensure compliance.

The least direct imperatives used by these mothers were hints, which require inference to figure out the intended directive (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1977). Some hints were very similar to rhetorical questions in that the mother simply referred to something that the child had just done, leaving her disapproval to be conveyed by her tone of voice and the context, as in *Mata puu shiteru* 'You're farting again' (M 2;1). Sometimes hints alternated with questions; for example, when Y (2;1) was taking toys that did not belong to him, his mother used both the hint *Kore Yotchan no yo* 'This is yours' and the corresponding question *Yotchan no dore?* 'Which one is yours?' at different points. In the following example (M 2;1), M's mother interweaves questions and

declarative hints in trying to get the child to give my assistant a turn in their game, but never tells her what to do directly.

Mother: *Maho yaru no?*
    'Will you do it?'
Child: *Un.*
    'Yes.'
Mother: *Maho bakkari ja nai no. Mahochan furefure to itte ageru, oneesan ni. Gambatte.*
    'Not only you. Will you say to older sister, "Go go, try hard"?'
Child: *Iya. Iya da.*
    'No. No.'
Mother: *Oneesan iya na no? Dooshite? Dare ga suru no?*
    'You don't want her to do it? Why? Who will do it?'
Child: *Maho suru.*
    'I will do it.'
Mother: *Kondo . . . Maho bakkari da ne. Mahochan bakkari.*
    'This time . . . only Maho, isn't it. Only Maho.'
Child: *Maho bakkari yo.*
    'Only Maho.'

The most frequent type of hint consisted of a reason why the child should perform an action or a warning of the potential negative consequences of a particular behavior. When used alone, these directives are inexplicit in that they merely state a basis or rationale for the desired behavior, while not actually telling the child what to do or refrain from doing. The most frequently cited reasons had to do with the wishes, needs, and feelings of others and will be discussed below with respect to empathy. Positive reasons for performing actions were often based on **"felicity conditions"** for the request, such as the presence of the necessary objects or the knowledge or ability to perform an action, as in *Shitteru anata* 'You know it (= So sing the song)' (M 2;1). These were sometimes extremely indirect; for example, once Y told his mother that there was nowhere for him to write on a piece of paper that still had some room, and she replied, *Omeme aru n ja nai* 'You have eyes, don't you' (Y 2;4). Mothers also gave hints intended to suggest that the children stop what they were doing and take an alternative course of action; for example, when Y was looking for a

book in one place, his mother said, *Sotchi ehon nai deshoo* 'There's probably no book there' (Y 2;1). The most common rationales with negative directive intent were warnings, either of potential damage to objects, such as breaking, falling, spilling, and colliding, or of possible harm to the child, such as getting hurt, becoming sick, and getting cavities.

From the standpoint of socialization to Japanese patterns of dependency, it is interesting to note that among the more frequent rationales that the mothers used to encourage their children to do something were offers to help the child, to perform the action too, or even just to watch the child perform the action alone. Occasionally a mother referred to the child's social responsibilities. For example, when Y asked his mother to help him put away his toys, she responded, *Mama mo ireru no? Mama irenakute, Yotchan mo ireru. Yotchan ga asonda deshoo?* 'Mama put them in too? You'll put them in, not me. You played with them, didn't you?' (Y 1;11).

These mothers' frequent appeals to various rationales for their directives imply a view of even very young children as rational beings, who will be more willing to cooperate if they understand the basis for an imperative. This view is consistent with the findings of Vogel (1963), who reports that among the urban middle-class Japanese mothers he studied, the basic strategy of child rearing was to establish a close relationship with their children and try to "get them to understand" (*wakaraseru*). The use of rationales indicates to the child, and to the mother herself, that she is not merely trying to impose her will, but rather has a sound basis other than her own wishes for giving the directive.

How does the Japanese child learn to interpret this wide range of directive strategies? As Ervin-Tripp points out, it is extremely difficult to investigate children's comprehension of directives, since failure to comply does not necessarily indicate lack of understanding. Moreover, compliance does not necessarily indicate comprehension of the directive per se, since children could be relying upon context, tone of voice, and their comprehension of mothers' affect, rather than degree of directness, in deciphering imperatives. In the present transcripts, there were many cases of compliance with indirect strategies such as questions, statements of desire, and reasons/warnings that indicated that in one way or another the child had understood the directive.

If a child failed to comply with an indirect request, the mother might try to help by "translating" it into a more direct expression. In one interesting case, my assistant wished to end a game in which M (2;1) kept serving her food, and the following interaction took place:

Adult: *Moo ii desu.*
　　'It's already good.' (= I've had enough.)
Child: [Continues serving]
Mother: *Moo ii tte oneesan.*
　　'Older sister said, "It's already good."'
Child: [Continues serving]
Adult: *Hai. Moo onaka ippai desu.*
　　'All right. My stomach is already full.'
Child [serving]: *Mii.*
　　'Milk.'
Adult: *Doomo gochisoosama deshita. A, kondo kore wa mii desu ka?*
　　'Thank you for the fine meal. Oh, now is this milk?'
Child: *Suupu na no. Suupu. Suupu.*
　　'It's soup. Soup. Soup.'
Adult: *Hai, hai, hai.*
　　'All right, all right, all right.'
Child: *Jaa, jaa, jaa.*
　　'Here, here, here.'
Mother: *Moo oneesan iya tte, moo ii tte mii wa.*
　　'Older sister said, "No!"; she said, "It's already good, as for milk."'

At this point, the child discontinued the game. In this sequence, the mother begins by repeating the phrase *Moo ii* (lit. "It's already good") without the polite *desu* form of the **copula** for the child. When the child ignored this, and continued serving despite the more explicit *Moo onaka ippai desu* 'My stomach is full' and the polite *Gochisoosama deshita* 'It was a fine meal', her mother intervenes again. In her last utterance, the mother quotes my assistant as having said *Iya*, which is a very strong "No" meaning approximately "I don't want." She juxtaposes this with the less direct expression *Moo ii* 'It's already good', my assistant's first utterance, thus clarifying for the child that *Moo ii* should have been interpreted as *Iya*. Obviously, such cases could teach the Japanese child how to interpret the indirect, polite speech of others as expressing the same strong feelings and wishes as more direct utterances.

From the present transcripts it appears that, as the above example suggests, the primary means by which these children could be learning how to interpret

indirection is through the pairing of indirect with direct utterances having the same communicative intent. All of the imperative strategies discussed above did, at least occasionally, occur alone. Rationales/warnings, such as *Ochiru yo* 'It will fall' appeared as the only expression of a directive 11.8 percent of the time, and this was the highest frequency among the indirect imperatives. Obviously, most instances of indirect imperatives occurred in a speech turn or sequence of turns in which the same content was also expressed more directly. . . .

The mothers frequently followed an indirect request with a more explicit imperative, especially if they strongly disapproved of the child's current behavior. Indirect strategies such as rhetorical questions usually occurred alone only when a lengthy preceding context had established a particular directive as given. For example, during one session Y (2;3) repeatedly tried to take the toys of a younger playmate, and his mother used many direct imperatives telling him to stop, suggested alternatives, and reminded him that the toys did not belong to him. When later in the session Y again tried to take a toy, his mother simply exclaimed, *Dooshite hito no mono soo yatte toru no?* 'Why do you take other people's things like that?' Such cases could serve as a kind of bridge between the comprehension of direct and indirect strategies, helping the child to understand indirect imperatives even when they occur alone. One can imagine that, as a child gets older, the mother may increasingly assume that such indirect questions can function alone as directives.

The progression from less to more explicit directives was not the only one. Mothers also frequently began with an extremely direct and explicit imperative, and then added questions, reasons, and warnings that could convey the same message, as in the following example: *A, yamenasai. Oneechan sekkaku tsukutta no. Oneechan ni okorareru yo.* 'Oh stop. After all your sister's trouble making it. She'll get mad at you' (Y 2;0). Once when Y (1;11) was eating tangerines without offering any to his guests, his mother first gave direct imperatives, then added a rhetorical question: *Ja, oneechan mo tabete tte iwanakya. Un? Oneechan mo doozo tabete tte. Yotchan dake pakupaku tabeten no?* 'Well, you must say, "Older sister, eat too." Right? Say, "Older sister, please eat." Is only Yotchan munching away?'

Sometimes direct and indirect imperatives were mixed in a single speech turn, as in the following case: *Mama supagechi ga ii naa. Tsukutte kudasai. Sakki yatte ta*

n ja nai. Hayaku tsukutte kudasai. Mama onaka suite imasu yo 'As for mama, spaghetti is good. Please make some. You did it before, didn't you. Please make some quickly. Mama's hungry' (Y 1;11). In this example, the conventional formula *X ga ii* 'X is good' is followed by an explicit imperative, then a rationale implying that the child should be willing and able to comply, then another imperative, and then a "problem statement" (Ervin-Tripp 1977). Sometimes two indirect forms were coupled. In the following example from Y (2;2), a conventionalized question requesting food, *X ga aru?* 'Is there any x?', is preceded by the somewhat more obvious desire statement *Mama sooseeji hoshii desu. Sooseeji arimasu ka?* 'I want sausage. Is there any sausage?' In a similar example, M's mother followed a question with a desire statement: *Osakana o yaite kureru? Mama osakana yaite hoshii naa* 'Will you bake a fish for me? I'd sure like to have a fish baked' (M 2;1). Such cases were quite typical and probably play an important part in teaching the child that various formulations of a directive are functionally equivalent.

It seemed clear from the variety of different combinations used that the mothers were not deliberately sequencing direct and indirect imperatives in any set order. There were probably some occasions when, having uttered an indirect form, mothers felt a need to clarify with something more direct to ensure comprehension and compliance. In general, however, self-repetition and paraphrase seemed to be the mothers' habitual mode of speaking to their 2-year-olds. They did not wait for feedback before starting to paraphrase, and used paraphrases even when the child seemed to understand and be complying with the initial formulation. The mothers may also have wanted to show that they intended to persist in their directives until the child complied.

Whatever the motivations for this style, one result was that the children were frequently exposed to both indirect and direct versions of the same imperative in immediate succession. Ervin-Tripp (1977) has proposed that with indirect imperatives, especially questions and hints that do not mention the desired goal state or object at all, comprehension must rest either on active inference or on repeated conjunction with more explicit forms. . . .

Although the children in the present study were very young, they were probably already able to understand a significant portion of the indirect imperatives addressed to them. Perhaps the best evidence for this is

that they were themselves beginning to use certain of the indirect strategies in their mothers' speech when giving directives of their own. Across the three children's samples, 78 percent of all imperatives were extremely direct: verbs in the *-te* inflection, nouns referring to desired objects, and lexical items such as *choodai* 'please give'. Indirect strategies used by the children included statements of desire, such as *Mame tabetai* 'I want to eat beans' (Y 2;2), and problem statements, such as *Mama dekinai yo* 'Mama, I can't do it' (Y 2;3, when he was trying to play with origami), or *Tapa nai no, tapa* 'There's no trumpet' (M 2;1, when she wanted to play with her toy trumpet). The children also occasionally used requests in question form, such as the conventionalized *X ga aru?* 'Is there any *x*?' for food; for example, *An no?* 'Is there any?' (Y 2;3, when he wanted candy). Of the three children, only Maho regularly used question requests of the form 'Will you do *x*?', such as *Matte kureru?* 'Will you wait for me?' (M 2;2), and made polite suggestions and offers in question form, for example, *Tabenai?* 'Won't you eat?' (M 2;2). Y occasionally used two different rationales as directives: the availability of a desired object, as in *Mama, mada aru yo* 'Mama, there's still some left' (Y 2;3, when he wanted to continue blowing bubbles), and the right of possession, as in *Yotchan no yo* 'It's mine' (Y 2;1), which he said when he wanted a toy, whether it was his or not. Except for these two reasons, which are closely linked to performance of an action in the child's experience, directives calling for inference, such as rhetorical questions and other types of hints, did not occur in the children's speech. Directive strategies that were grammatically complex, such as statements of obligation or suggestions in the conditional, also were not used by the children at this stage, although they seemed to be able to understand them. Although it is not clear what role social factors played in the children's use of imperatives, it is interesting that certain forms that can be used only by social superiors to inferiors, such as the *-nasai* imperative suffix, did not occur; the children used only the polite request form *-te*.

Interestingly, there was no evidence of indirection in the children's speech in contexts other than giving directives. For example, there were no indirect refusals, although the children were also exposed to many of these. From the transcripts, it was evident that whereas a simple "No!" was usually sufficient to silence a mother's unwelcome requests, getting her to comply with the child's requests was a more difficult

matter. Thus the children were motivated to attempt a variety of directive strategies to get what they wanted, and indirection in directive contexts was already making its appearance in the first few months of the third year.

Empathy Training

In giving directives, Japanese mothers strongly emphasized sensitivity to the needs, wishes, and feelings of others. In fact, such appeals for empathy, both implicit and explicit, constituted 45 percent of all the rationales given by mothers for their directives. . . . These included statements of desire, need, and problems, which were very common when the mothers were trying to show their children how to treat guests. In these transcripts, both Y and M often played a game in which their mothers took the role of guest—along with the real guests, my assistant and I—and the child played the part of the host/ess. In these routines, when expressing requests for themselves, mothers frequently used statements of desire, such as the following (Y 1;11):

Mother: *Mama shimbun yomitai naa.*
    'Gee, I want to read the newspaper.'
Child: *Nainai.*
    'All gone.'

It was often clear from the children's responses that they understood these statements as imperatives, as both the example above and the following example (M 2;2) show.

Mother: *Mama budoo ga ii wa. Kyuuri demo ii wa.*
    'As for mama, grapes are good. Even cucumber is good.'
Child [giving imaginary food]: *Hai.*
    'All right.'

Mothers also informed their children of the needs/problems of others, as in *Motto hakkiri ohanashi shinai to oneesan wakaranai yo* 'If you don't speak more clearly, older sister won't understand' (M 2;2) or *Oneechan onaka suichatta* 'Older sister is hungry' (M 2;1). Thus Japanese children learn at an early age that the speaker's wish is their command and that they must try to fulfill the wishes expressed by others.

kudasai tte. Gomennasai tte. Kikochan ga itai tte 'Kikochan is amazed. Kikochan says, "Please stop". Say. "I'm sorry." Kikochan says "Ouch!"'. Thus Japanese mothers use attributions of speech to correct their children's behavior, at the same time distancing themselves from the actual imperative. This strategy serves to deemphasize the mother's role as an authority figure, while teaching children to be aware of the effects of their behavior on others.

Consistent with these findings, Azuma et al. (1980) and Conroy et al. (1980) report that "appeals to feeling" function as a control strategy among Japanese mothers, who often invoke the feelings of others as the rationale for a child's good behavior. In a study of fifty-eight Japanese and sixty-seven American mother–child pairs, each mother was given a set of hypothetical situations, such as being in the supermarket with a disruptive child, and was asked to respond as she would if the child were actually present. In analyzing the results, the authors report, the category "appeals to feelings" had to be created because of its frequency among the Japanese mothers, who used this strategy in 22 percent of their responses, as compared with only 7 percent among American mothers. In these responses, the mother would, for example, ask the child to consider how she felt as mother of such a child, or how the child would feel if someone else did the same thing to him or her. As in my sample, this study found that Japanese mothers appealed to the feelings of third parties and even of inanimate objects. Although these appeals to feelings often do function as control strategies, they can also be viewed as providing children with explicit training in empathy, lessons in how to guess what others are thinking and feeling even when they have not spoken. It is consistent with the very different communicative styles in Japan and America that Japanese mothers used this strategy so much more frequently than American mothers.

Conformity Training

Although empathy may seem an entirely desirable ideal, it is, in a way, a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the ability to be sensitive to others has many benefits, including the social harmony that the Japanese value. On the other hand, being so attuned to the feelings of others makes the individual extremely vulnerable to public opinion, creating pressure to conform.

And in Japanese social structure, with its emphasis on mutual dependency, this pressure is intense. Thus empathy and conformity may be seen as two sides of the same coin, each contributing to the characteristic Japanese communicative style. Indirection, even silence, can be readily understood by those trained in empathy, as long as people generally conform to expected feelings, attitudes, and behavior.

In the present samples, there was considerable evidence for "conformity training." Mothers were actively engaged in teaching their children Japanese norms for speech and behavior, both through subtle pressure and explicit instruction. The latter was especially striking with respect to polite formulas and context-appropriate turn-taking. A large number of maternal directives were aimed at teaching children what to say in particular situations. The mothers told their children to use polite expressions, such as *Doozo* 'Please/go ahead/help yourself', *Arigatoo* 'Thank you', *Hai* 'Yes', *Choodai* 'Please give', *Gomennasai* 'I'm sorry'; greetings such as *Ohayoo gozaimasu* 'Good morning', *Konnichiwa* 'Hello/good day', *Oyasumi* 'Goodnight', *Baibai* 'Goodbye', *Sayoonara* 'Goodbye', *Itte mairimasu* 'I go and will come back' (said when leaving the house), *Irasshai* 'Welcome', *Mata ne* 'Come again'; and formulas for use at the table, including *Itadakimasu* 'I will receive it' (said before eating) and *Gochisoosama* (*deshita*) 'It was a fine meal'.

The mothers seemed to take every opportunity to teach these formulas to their children. They modeled them when appropriate occasions arose; for example, when my assistant picked up something for Y, his mother said, *Hora, ochichatta yo. Arigatoo wa? Oneechan ni arigatoo tte yuu deshoo* 'Look, it fell. What about "Thank you"? You should say "Thank you" to older sister' (Y 1;11). Mothers attributed polite formulas to characters in story books, and, if another adult used a formula, they would repeat it for the child's benefit. More adult forms were taught to replace childish expressions, as in the following case (Y 2;0):

Child: *Baibai tte itta no.*
     'He said "Byebye."'

Mother: *Itta no ne. Papa nante itta? Itte mairimasu tte itta deshoo. Itte mairimasu.*
     'He said it, didn't he. What did Papa say? He said, "I go and will come back," didn't he. "I go and will come back."'...

The mothers in this sample also tried to get their children to empathize with certain emotions that they expressed to encourage or discourage particular behaviors. A frequent theme with Y's mother was the fear of fire, which she sought to instill in her son: *Yotchan achichi itazura shinai no ne. Kowai, kowai ne, kaji ne* 'Yotchan doesn't play with fire, does he. Fires are scary, scary, aren't they' (Y 1;11). In Japanese, subjects are usually omitted from these expressions of feeling (as elsewhere). Thus there is no distinction, for example, between 'I'm afraid of fires' and 'Fires are scary' in Japanese unless an explicit experiencer is mentioned as subject. The same is true of another common expression, *X ga kawaisoo* 'X is pitiful' or 'I feel sorry for x'. The mothers often expressed this emotion when they wanted their children to give better treatment, usually to a toy, as in the following case: *Kawaisoo, darumasan naguttara* (lit. "The daruma is pitiful if you hit him" or "I feel sorry for the daruma if you hit him"—M 2;2). Mothers also tried to encourage kind behavior toward pets and babies by pointing out that they were *kawaii* 'cute/lovable'. In the following case, Y (2;0) had refused to lend his toys to a younger child, saying *Dame!* 'No!', and his mother replied, *Dame tte yuu no? Hirochan ni mo doozo tte kashite agenakya. Takusan aru kara, hitotsu doozo tte kashite agenakya. Akachan kawaii deshoo?* 'Do you say "No!"? You must lend one to Hirochan, saying, "Help yourself." The baby is cute/lovable, isn't he?' Through such expressions of emotion, the mothers in this sample revealed their own feelings to their children, apparently hoping to make them feel the same emotion themselves, and to act in accordance with it.

Given the Japanese emphasis on indirection and avoidance of imposing on others, it is important to be able to anticipate the needs of others, so that they will not be forced to make a direct request. One might well wonder how Japanese children learn to "read the minds" of other people in this way. Judging from the present transcripts, the answer seems rather simple: Their mothers tell them directly what other people are thinking and feeling in various situations. A common behavior for all three mothers in the sample was to attribute speech to people who had not actually spoken, thereby indicating to the child what might be on their minds. The speech attributed to others ranged from direct requests, such as *Oneechan omocha misete tte* 'Older sister says, "Show me your toys"' (Y 2;0), to statements of desire, need, and emotional reactions. For example, when Y and M played host/ess, their mothers

would attribute requests for food to other people as part of the game. They also did this if the children were eating alone, without offering anything to others. Once, when Y (1;11) was eating a tangerine, his mother suddenly said, *Oneesantachi mo tabetai tte* 'The girls also say, "We want to eat"', although we had not said anything. Mothers also frequently attributed feelings of pain to others, especially if the child was responsible but had failed to notice or apologize for causing the pain. For example, when M's toy dishes fell on my assistant, her mother immediately said, *Neechan itai-itai tte* 'Older sister says, "Ouch ouch"' (M 2;1), before anything had been said. Attributing speech to others is one way Japanese mothers teach their children to be sensitive to others.

Empathy is especially important in order to avoid inconveniencing, annoying, or imposing upon others. As the example above suggests, the mothers were quick to point out cases in which a child had caused someone trouble. Again, this was often done by attributing thoughts or speech to someone who might appear to be silently content. When a child imposed upon someone with a direct request, even if the person seemed to comply willingly the mother might indicate that such behavior is not appreciated. For example, when Y (1;11) asked my assistant to peel a tangerine for him, and she was doing this very amiably, his mother said, *Oneechan jibun no muite taberu tte ne* 'Older sister says she'll peel and eat her own'. Such examples may represent the Japanese child's first encounter with the idea that there is sometimes a difference between what people's behavior seems to indicate and what they are really thinking.

Mothers also often attributed speech to others as an indirect way of correcting inappropriate behavior. In such cases, they would typically attribute various negative reactions to people who had not spoken. For example, when M (2;1) was misbehaving, her mother said: *Oneechan akirechau kara tte itteru yo. Mahochan ni wa akirechau* 'Older sister is saying, "I'm surprised. I'm surprised at Maho"'. Negative reactions and feelings were even attributed to inanimate objects. When Y (1;11) repeatedly dropped apples on the floor, his mother said. *Sonna koto suru n dattara ringosan itai itteru wa yo* 'If you do that kind of thing, Mr. Apple says "Ouch!"'. And when MK (2;4) was getting very loud, pretending that he was firing guns, his mother attributed a request that he stop to his stuffed animal, Kikochan: *Kikochan bikkuri shiteru yo. Kikochan yamete*

The mothers in this sample also provided their children with a considerable amount of instruction in somewhat less stereotyped verbal behavior, such as saying *Asobimashoo* 'Let's play' to friends. In role-playing routines, the children were taught how to speak on the telephone to their grandmothers and how to interact with guests in their homes. For example, in the host/ess game, Y and M were taught to ask what a guest wanted to eat; to offer food, saying *Doozo* 'Help yourself'; to ask if the food was good, whether it was too hot or cold, and whether the guest wanted more to eat. They were also taught the role of the polite diner; for example, M's mother insisted that she say *Oishii* 'It's delicious' after the first few bites. Clearly, a basic goal of mother–child communication in these samples was to prepare the children for a variety of social interactions. The Japanese codification of contexts and appropriate formulas starts being taught and acquired very early.

In training their children to conform to social expectations, an important strategy used by Japanese mothers is appealing to the imagined reactions of *hito* 'other people', who are watching and evaluating the child's behavior. In the present transcripts it was clear that through their training in empathy, the mothers were teaching their children not only to be sensitive to the needs and desires of others, but also to fear their criticism and disapproval. Benedict (1946) has discussed how Japanese children are inculcated with a fear of ridicule or ostracism. Ito (1980) points out that in Japan mothers often tell a misbehaving child, *Hito ni warawareru* 'You will be laughed at by other people'. This approach locates the source of disapproval and constraint outside the mother, in society at large. As Vogel has noted, the fear of ridicule serves to ally mother and child against the outside world; the mother's role is seen as helping the child to avoid the negative sanctions of others.' . . .

Another strategy Japanese mothers sometimes use to induce their children to conform to expectations is teasing. Benedict (1946) has proposed that maternal teasing, which the child at first takes seriously, contributes to a later fear of ridicule, since children eventually come to realize that they are being laughed at. Japanese mothers often tease children about childish or disapproved behaviors. For example, Y's mother frequently teased him about his eating, comparing his plump body to Winnie-the-Pooh. Once, when he asked for more to eat, she said, *Motto? Koo, oheso, onaka ni kiite*

goran. "Daijoobu?" tte 'More? Ask your belly button, your stomach, "Are you all right?" ' (Y 1;11). Y did not seem to recognize his mother's teasing as such, since it was done lightheartedly, and at this age he would readily point to pictures of storybook characters who were fat or who were eating a lot and say, *Yotchan mitai* 'Just like me'.

Teasing is also used to enforce certain attitudes and reactions in Japanese children, such as dependence upon their mothers. Benedict reports that Japanese mothers may threaten to give their children away to visitors; in citing a similar example, Vogel proposes that Japanese mothers keep their children dependent by provoking their anxiety about the outside world while at the same time rewarding intimacy. A striking example of this also occurred in my data. Y (1;11) and his mother were engaged in fantasy play with his toy cars, and his mother suggested that he go shopping in one of the cars. The following exchange then took place:

Mother: *Mama ikanakute ii no.*
'I don't have to go.'
Child: [Whines]
Mother: *Yotchan hitori de ittoide. Hora, buubuu ni notte, ittoide.*
'You go alone. Look, ride in the car and go.'
Child: *Iya* [whining].
'No.'
Mother: *Buubuu notte ittoide.*
'Ride in the car and go.'
Child: *Eeen, mama mo, mama mo.*
'Waah, mama too, mama too.'
Mother: *Mamo mo? Mama ii no. Mama ii no.*
'Me too? I'm all right (without going). I'm all right.'
Child: *Iya da! Iya da!* [starting to cry] *Iya da! Een, mama!*
'No! No! [starting to cry] No! Waah, mama!'
Mother: *Are, okashii naa. Okashii naa.*
'What, that's strange. That's strange.'

Although they were only playing, this fantasy based on the *amae* or dependence between mother and child seems to have a kind of primal quality for them. The mother may be teasing, but the emotions being invoked are very real and powerful. Although she calls

the child's ultimate tears "strange," she must surely have anticipated some such response. Thus teasing can be used to reinforce the kinds of emotions and reactions expected of children in Japanese society.

When faced with the disapproval of other people, the misbehaving child is expected to feel *hazukashii* 'ashamed'. In such cases, the mother will usually simply say, *Hazukashii.* Typically, no subject is used; thus *Hazukashii* 'shameful' conveys both the mother's own feeling and the strong implication that the child should feel the same way. For example, at 2;2 years, M wet her pants when she was about to leave the house with her parents and guests. As her mother was trying to wash her, she ran away; her mother pointed out that everyone was watching, and repeatedly said, *Hazukashii.*

Kasahara (1974) suggests that this aspect of Japanese child rearing may contribute to a fear of eye-to-eye confrontation that is common among young adults in Japan, but virtually unknown in the West. In this neurosis, people experience a phobia about being stared at by others, and in severe cases fear that they cannot control their own eyes and prevent their stares from inflicting undue pain upon others. The strong emphasis on *Hito ga miteru* 'People are watching' from early childhood, Kasahara suggests, may foster the development of personalities that incessantly watch, and dread being watched by, those outside their family circle.

In this light, it is interesting to note that very young children in Japan may at first strongly resist internalizing their mothers' *Hazukashii* and the disapproval of watching eyes. For example, in the case just mentioned, M responded to her mother's *Hazukashii* with a resounding *Hazukashii chigau!* 'I'm not ashamed!' In fact, Japanese adults do not really expect very young children to measure up to adult norms of self-restraint and discipline. To the American observer, Japanese child rearing seems extremely permissive. Vogel (1963:244) notes that Japanese children are rarely punished, and are allowed to "run, climb, yell, stay up late, eat large amounts of sweets, keep their mother occupied away from company, hit bigger children, and climb up on parents' laps and backs almost with no limit." I can testify that an American's blood will boil to see a child as old as 4 years scream and pummel his mother in the kind of temper tantrum that Benedict describes, while other family members stand patiently by.

From the standpoint of the extreme social constraints on Japanese adults, this early permissiveness may seem mysterious. Benedict claims that the "arc of life" in Japan is a U-curve, with the greatest freedom and indulgence enjoyed by babies and the elderly, and the low point of greatest restriction falling during the prime of life, especially just before marriage. Vogel insists that although Japanese mothers do become stricter as their children grow, they do not suddenly apply a strictness that did not exist before. Rather, he claims, early training appears lenient because it is carried out largely by establishing a close relationship in which few sanctions except a vague feeling of approval or disapproval are required to get the child to behave. This view is supported by the present data. In their comments and attitudes toward their children's unrestricted or selfish behaviors, the mothers in this sample were already sowing the seeds for the social constraints to be imposed later by the watching eyes of *hito* 'other people'. . . . Early training in empathy and conformity thus leads Japanese children to understand the feelings and expectations of others, and also to experience the expected feelings themselves. This helps set the stage for the successful functioning of the Japanese indirect, intuitive mode of communication.

Saying No

One result of Japanese conformity training is the wish to avoid conflict, which leads, in turn, to an avoidance of saying no directly. Since any overt conflict between speaker and hearer could jeopardize the harmony of an interaction if expressed directly, the Japanese rely upon various indirect strategies for saying no, the most extreme of which is simply saying yes. Americans tend to regard such behavior as irresponsible or dishonest, but it can be traced to the Japanese ideal of concern for others that makes it so difficult for them to risk angering or hurting the feelings of the addressee by a direct no. Since the values involved are so basic to Japanese culture, it is interesting to examine the present data to discover how these Japanese mothers said no to their children . . .

The typical form of prohibition in Japanese is, in fact, indirect. The negative inflection *-naide* 'don't' was quite rare; by far the most common expression of prohibition was V-*cha dame* 'Doing *x* is no good'. This expression is very forceful in tone, and is probably not felt to be indirect by those who use it. Yet these and

certain other conventional prohibitions are indirect in their literal readings; they give the reasons for not performing an action, rather than actually saying not to perform it, e.g., *Abunai* 'It's dangerous' (= "Watch out/Stop") or *Ii* 'It's good/all right', which means approximately "It's good as is (without your doing *x*)"; therefore, "Stop doing/don't do *x*." Thus conventionalized Japanese forms of prohibition show a replacement of imperatives with rationales (It's good, bad, dangerous to do *x*) that may once have been motivated by the wish to avoid a more direct "don't."

Whereas prohibitions reflect a conflict concerning the addressee's behavior, contradictions express a clash of opinions between speaker and hearer. The mothers in this sample were generally very direct in contradicting their children. Typically a mother used the expressions *X ja nai* 'It is not *x*,' *Chigau* (lit. "It differs"), and occasionally *uso* 'lie' (more similar in tone to English "not true"), and/or presented her own opinion as a corrected version of the child's statement. For example, when Y (2;0) called a picture of an airplane *shinkansen* 'bullet train', his mother responded, *Shinkansen ja nai, kore hikooki deshoo* 'It's not a bullet train, this is an airplane, isn't it'.

Again, if we consider the function of contradictions in the mothers' speech, it becomes clear why such direct clashes of opinion were not avoided. The great majority of maternal contradictions were intended to correct a word used or pronounced incorrectly by the child, as in the example above. Thus the mothers were not contradicting the children to assert their own views on matters of opinion, but rather to help them learn vocabulary. Occasionally contradictions were also used to correct socially inappropriate speech, as when Y (2;0) offered my assistant something to eat saying *Motte tte* 'Take it', and his mother immediately said, *Motte ja nai deshoo. Doozo* 'Not "Take it. Help yourself"'. Thus, as with prohibitions, the contradictions in these mothers' speech were intended for the children's own good, and therefore can be regarded as desirable behavior for the good mother.

Refusals, however, show a very different pattern, with obvious avoidance of the direct no. The mothers very frequently complied with their children's wishes, but, as in other cultures, there was an obvious relationship between the "demand value" of a request (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1977) and compliance. The mothers were more likely to obey commands to look at the child or at a picture than to get up and do or get something for the child. When mothers did refuse requests, they rarely did so directly . . .

[Some] strategies . . . are delaying or avoidance tactics. The mother might ignore the request, promise to comply later, distract the child by changing the topic or offering food, make a countersuggestion, or recycle the request by asking questions about it. For example, when Y (2;4) demanded that his mother draw a truck with a siren on it, she said, *Sonna no an no?* 'Does it have that kind of thing?' If the child was adamant, recycling strategies served only to buy a little time, but often a child seemed to lose interest in the demand if the mother could delay compliance even very briefly. The most common countersuggestion offered by these mothers was that the child should be the one to perform the desired action; for example, Y's mother responded to a request that she draw for him by saying *Yotchan jibun de kaku n deshoo* 'You'll draw it yourself, won't you' (Y 2;4). Occasionally, a mother might try to get a child to drop a request by complaining, e.g., *Mata dakko? Omoi no ni naa. Omoi no ni naa* 'Sit on my lap again? But you're heavy. You're heavy' (Y 2;1), or by teasing or criticizing the child for making the request. The mother might also simply tell the child not to make the request; for example, when Y (1;11) complained that he had no toy cars, his mother said, *Sonna koto iwanai de. Bubu nakute mo ii tte?* 'Don't say that kind of thing. Will you say "It's all right if there are no cars?"'

As with directives, the mothers frequently refused requests by giving reasons why they could not or would not comply. And again, the reasons often had to do with the "felicity conditions" for the request. For example, the mothers might point out that the desired action was unnecessary or impossible. When Y (2;0) wanted candy, his mother said, *Asa omochi takusan tabeta ja nai* 'Didn't you eat a lot of *mochi* this morning?' Mothers also called for empathy, citing the feelings, rights, and needs of others when refusing requests. When Y (2;3) asked his mother to give him his friend's toy truck, she replied, *Sore wa Daichan no deshoo* 'That's Daichan's, isn't it', and when he wanted to play with his toy ambulance, she pointed out that my tape recorder was on (Y 2;3).

Of the three children, Y was by far the most demanding, at least during the present recordings. He made the most requests, and was the most persistent in repeating them despite his mother's various avoidance tactics. Clearly Y taxed his mother's imagination and patience, and she sometimes responded as the

Japanese may do under pressure—by lying. Sometimes a "white lie" served as an excuse for getting Y to perform an action himself, as in the following example (Y 2;3):

Child: *Mama, Yotchan no hikooki.*
'Mama, my airplane' [repeated three times].
Mother: *Yotchan no hikooki mama shiranai yo. Sagashite kite.*
'I don't know about your airplane. Go look for it.'

In other cases, she was simply trying to get Y to abandon his request by pretending that it was impossible to fulfill. In a striking example when Y was 1;11 years old, he insisted on playing with his toy ambulance, which he was unable to wind himself. His mother engaged in an elaborate subterfuge lasting several pages of transcript, pretending that she couldn't wind up the toy, that it was broken, asking Y to try himself, and giving it to my assistant to show that she couldn't make it work either.

Why do Japanese mothers bother to give reasons for refusing requests when, at the age of 2 years, the children do not seem to understand or to care what the reasons might be? In addition to their more general wish to avoid a direct refusal, an important factor is probably the mothers' wish to maintain their status as rational adults in going against their children's wishes. Simply refusing requests with *Iya* 'No/I don't want to', as the children usually did, would bring a mother down to the same level as her 2-year-old, making her sound selfish and childish. It would also reduce the exchange to a battle of wills, bringing the mother into direct conflict with her child. In contrast, giving reasons for her refusal puts the mother in a superior position and helps mitigate the conflict. To the extent that the child understands the mother's reasons, the basis for making the demand will be undermined; the child can neither hope for compliance by persisting nor blame the mother for refusing. In any event, reasons can at least serve as yet another delaying tactic, eventually leading the child to abandon the request without forcing the mother to give a direct refusal.

There were, of course, a certain number of direct refusals, which were typically made with the words *Ii* 'It's good/all right (as is)', *Iranai* 'I don't need it', and, very rarely, *Dame* 'It's no good/won't work'. The strongest and most personal expression of refusal in Japanese, *Iya* 'I don't want to', was never used by these mothers as a single-word exclamation. When *Iya* did occur, it was used as a predicate more similar in tone to "unpleasant" or "dislike" than to "No!" For example, when MK (2:4) repeatedly pretended to be firing guns, his mother said, *Mata teppo. Nani de Maachan? Teppo wa moo mama iya da ne. Itai ne* 'Guns again. Why, Maachan? Mama is tired of guns (lit. "Mama already doesn't like guns") It hurts'. Mothers also sometimes attributed a refusal with *iya* to some third party. For example, in her attempts to get Y to stop eating, his mother sometimes attributed refusals of food to his stomach. At 1;11 years, when Y had been eating tangerines and asked for his mother's too, she said, *Futatsu tabeta deshoo moo. Koko ippai da tte itteru mon, onaka ga. Hora, Iya ne, iya ne* 'You've already eaten two. Your stomach is saying, "I'm full" ' here. Listen. "No, no" '. Thus the directness of refusals, like the force of imperatives, could be mitigated by attributing them to others.

The children in this sample typically obeyed their mothers quite readily, and when they refused their mothers usually did not try to force compliance. But although the three mothers readily accepted an emphatic *Iya!* 'I don't want to!' or *Dame!* 'It's no good!' from their children, either without comment or with a mild *Dooshite iya na no?* 'Why don't you want to?', they were quick to express their disapproval if the children spoke this way to me or to my assistant. In the following examples, the children experienced what may have been among their earliest lessons in avoiding a direct refusal. When Y loudly refused to sing a song for his mother and me, yelling *Dame!* 'No!', his mother attributed a negative response to me: *O, kowai, Yotchan, oneechan kowai tte. Yotchan kowai naa. Yotchan dame nante yuu kara, kowai, kowai* ' "Oh, I'm afraid of Yotchan," older sister says, "I'm afraid. Oh, I'm afraid of Yotchan because he says 'No!' I'm afraid. I'm afraid" '. And when Maho (2;2) refused to cooperate in answering my assistant's questions, saying *Dame!* 'No!', her mother immediately corrected her, and told her, *Dame nante yuu hito dare mo inai* 'There is no one who says things like "No"'. . . . Thus the present data suggest that negative sanctions against saying no directly are first experienced with respect to people outside the child's family. This is consistent with Ueda's (1974) finding that Japanese adults reported using direct refusals more frequently within their family circle than with outsiders.

Apparently this pattern is already being taught to children as young as 2 years of age. . . .

Summary and Conclusions

It has long been recognized that language is an important part of culture, and this is especially true of communicative style. The particular communicative style of a culture arises from shared beliefs about people, what they are like, and how they should relate to one another, and is an important means of perpetuating those beliefs. In Japan, the individual is seen primarily as a member of a social group, with a responsibility to uphold the interests of that group. Thus arises the need for empathy and conformity, which help to preserve group harmony and group values. The importance of empathy and conformity in Japanese culture gives rise, in turn, to certain characteristics of Japanese communicative style, such as the use of indirection both in giving and refusing directives.

The present study has shown that these aspects of Japanese communicative style can be found in mothers' speech from an extremely early stage in their children's development. As Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) point out, the content of early mother–child verbal interactions plays an important role in the process of socialization. In the present transcripts, it was obvious that an important goal of the mothers in talking to their 2-year-olds was to instill cultural values. For example, by telling their children what other people were thinking and feeling, the mothers encouraged their children to empathize with others; by warning them that certain behaviors were strange, frightening, or shameful in the eyes of others, they indicated the importance of conformity. Another important means by which these mothers imparted cultural values was through "lessons" in communicative style, which were given by example, e.g., using indirection in making and refusing requests, and by direct instruction in how to use and interpret language appropriately in context.

Since studies of linguistic socialization are still so few, it is difficult to evaluate the present findings from a cross-cultural perspective. For example, it is not clear to what extent the communicative strategies discussed here, such as indirection, are used by mothers in other cultures; Matsumori (1981) found that there were few statistically significant differences in the frequency of directive types between the Japanese and American mothers in her study. Much further research is necessary on the particular features of communicative style in different languages and how they relate to cultural values (the same feature might serve different functions in different cultures). One thing, however, is already clear: the study of early mother–child interactions can yield a wealth of information about communicative style and the role it plays in transmitting cultural values to children.

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Critical Thinking and Application

- How is the same behavior (such as avoiding conflict by saying *yes* when the meaning is *no*) evaluated differently by people from different societies, such as Japanese and North American? Are there any absolute, universal values with regard to communication?

- Observe children between the ages of one and four interacting with adults. Which of the strategies of socialization that Clancy reports do you observe, and which seem absent? Are the ones you *do* observe approximately as common as in the Japanese settings that Clancy provides? Do you