Interactional Relevance of Linguistic Categories: Epistemic Modals *daroo* and *deshoo* in Japanese Conversation

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Abstract

The present study investigates the locally situated interactional functions of so-called epistemic modals, *daroo* and *deshoo*, in Japanese conversation. Although the two forms are generally considered plain and polite variants of the same epistemic modal, both forms frequently appear in the present casual conversational data. A detailed sequential analysis demonstrates that *daroo* and *deshoo* are used to perform various social actions rather than simply expressing the speaker's conjecture. *Deshoo* has a rather fixed function of soliciting alignment or confirmation from the interlocutor. On the other hand, *daroo* works as part of larger constructions for various actions, including (i) displaying spontaneity, (ii) expressing neutral or uninvolved stance, (iii) displaying alignment, (iv) qualifying one's assertion, and (v) challenging the interlocutor's assertion. The findings suggest that linguistic categories such as 'epistemic modals' are epiphenomena of social interaction (Ford et al., 2013), which are not themselves interactionally relevant to the conversational participants.

Keywords

Epistemic modality; Alignment; Stance; Intersubjectivity; Japanese conversation; Interactional Linguistics

1. Introduction

For the past few decades, discourse-functional and CA-inspired linguistic studies have made many empirical discoveries about what people do with language in real contexts of use. At the same time, it is still a norm for empirically oriented analysts to adopt a priori linguistic units and categories in their investigations. Notions such as sentence, subject, and pre/postposition often serve as initial points of inquiry as well as guiding principles during

analysis. Our robust intuition concerning traditional linguistic notions likely derives from "the strictly imposed norms of literacy and education" (Hopper, 2004:153). However, as corpus-based research has shown, our intuitions about grammar and words often do not represent the actual patterns of use (e.g., Sinclair, 1991; Biber et al., 1994). Some discourse-based studies have directly addressed the issue of potential discrepancies between traditional linguistic category notions and actual patterns and practices in interaction, for example, Thompson (2002) on 'complement-taking predicates' in English, Ono et al. (2000) on 'subject marker' in Japanese, and Thompson and Tao (2010) on 'adjectives' in Chinese conversations. Ford et al. (2013) provide a sequential, action-based account of conversational turns, for example, 'it is cool,' without drawing on any traditional linguistic unit-types or categories such as noun phrase and copular clause. Their point is that abstract formal linguistic notions do not reveal much about the actions and practices the conversational participants themselves orient to and accomplish together in a particular sequential environment. One purpose of the present study is to add to the above-mentioned line of research with a case study on so-called epistemic modals, *daroo* and *deshoo*, in Japanese conversation.[1]

The two forms, *daroo* and *deshoo*, are generally described as plain and polite variants of the same epistemic modal expressing conjecture (Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Maynard, 1990; Miyake, 1995; Nakakita, 2010). This characterization would predict a situation-based split between the plain *daroo* in informal conversations and the polite *deshoo* in formal conversations. However, in the present data, both forms frequently appear within the same informal conversations. A detailed sequential analysis of the use of these forms illustrates that (a) neither *daroo* nor *deshoo* is a simple marker of conjecture, and (b) each has unique patterns of use with respect to sequential positions, social actions, and formal and functional links with the preceding and proceeding elements. I argue that categorizing *daroo* and *deshoo* together as 'epistemic modals' or 'markers of conjecture' does little to deepen our understanding of how conversational participants use these forms in real-time interactions. Rather than simply expressing one's conjectures, conversational participants use *daroo* and *deshoo* to seek and negotiate alignment with one another (see Du Bois and Kärkkäinen, 2012). In this sense, these forms are more appropriately categorized as interactional resources for negotiating and achieving intersubjective stance.

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[1] In this study, both *daroo/deshoo* and shorter daro/*desho* are included. For convenience and readability, I represent both types as daroo/*deshoo* in Sections 1-3. In Section 4 where specific examples are discussed, the distinction is explicitly presented.

2. Previous studies on *daroo* and *deshoo*

In Japanese, several expressions are associated with epistemic modality, including *kamoshirenai*, *hazu-da*, and *daroo* (Kaufmann and Tamura, 2017). These expressions are said to qualify a statement as a conjecture with varying degrees of certainty. Among the three expressions, *kamoshirenai* indicates the weakest degree of certainty (e.g., *taihen kamoshirenai* 'it may be laborious'). *Hazu-da* indicates a stronger degree of certainty (e.g., *taihen-na hazu-da* 'it must be laborious') based on logical inference. *Daroo* also indicates a stronger degree of conviction (e.g., *taihen daroo* 'I would think it is laborious'), but it is based on the uncertain ground (Iwasaki, 2013:297–298). *Deshoo* is considered a polite counterpart of *daroo* (e.g., *taihen deshoo* 'I suppose it is laborious' (polite)).

Many discourse-based studies have recognized the interactional function of *daroo*/*deshoo* as a request for confirmation, in addition to the function of expressing one's conjecture (Teramura, 1984; Moriyama, 1989; Tabei, 1990; Tanomura, 1990; Kinsui, 1992; Szatrowski, 1994; Miyake, 1995; Iori, 2009; Nakakita, 2000; among others). In particular, Tabei (1990) and Iori (2009) state that *daroo* and *deshoo* are not primarily used as an epistemic marker of conjecture in everyday spoken discourse. Tabei (1990) analyzes dialogues in TV soap opera scripts and reports that *daroo*/*deshoo* are used for interpersonal functions such as requesting confirmation and imposing on an idea overwhelmingly more often than they are used for conjectural meaning. Iori (2009) examines conversational data and shows that the conjectural use of *deshoo* appears much less frequently in real conversations than the confirmation-request use.

One recurrent methodological issue observed in the previous studies is that they treat *deshoo* and *daroo* as formal-informal versions of the same form. A resulting paradox is that the 'formal' *deshoo* is frequently used in informal conversations between close friends and family members, while its use is considered inappropriate to one's social superior in a formal context (Maynard, 1990; Nakakita, 2000). Although the two forms are undoubtedly related at some level, the fact that both forms are regularly used in informal conversations raises the possibility that *daroo* and *deshoo* are used for different discourse functions. Rather than beginning with the assumption of plain-polite distinction, it is more fruitful to start with the empirical analysis of actual uses of *daroo* and *deshoo* in various contexts. The present study takes this inductive approach and aims to identify their discourse functions within the context of face-to-face informal conversations.

The analysis of conversational data presented here partly confirms the findings of previous discourse studies such as Tabei (1990) and Iori (2009). *Daroo*'s various concrete functions more or less relate to one another under the abstract notion of epistemic modality; on the other hand, *deshoo*'s usage patterns point to a more independent interactional function of requesting confirmation or soliciting alignment from the interlocutor. This does not mean that the use of *daroo* does not have any interactional import. In fact, as illustrated in Section 4, the use of *daroo* is associated with a wider range of interpersonal functions than that of *deshoo*, from displaying an alignment to challenging a position.

3. Data and methods

The data come from BTSJ-Japanese Natural Conversation Corpus with Transcripts and Recordings (Usami, 2018). Within the larger BTSJ corpus, 51 dyadic conversations with audio recordings were used for this study (the total of 13 hours). These conversations were all face-to-face, and they were recorded by one of the participants in each conversation in 2004 or 2007. All participants were native speakers of Japanese, and they were university students in their late teens to early twenties at the time of the recordings. The participants described their conversation partners as their close friends. Some conversations included non-Tokyo dialect speakers, but at least one of the speakers in each conversation was a speaker of Tokyo dialect. In the current analysis, only the uses of *daroo* and *deshoo* by Tokyo-dialect speakers were examined.

As suggested earlier, both *daroo* and *deshoo* frequently appeared in the present conversational data. 280 tokens of *daroo* and 356 tokens of *deshoo* were identified, excluding those appearing within quotations (those followed by quotatives *to*, *tte*, *toka*, and *mitaina*) and as part of a formulaic expression (A *daroo ga* B *daroo ga* 'whether A or B'). In the 51 conversations examined, *deshoo* was pronounced *desho* much more commonly. Thus, I use the form *desho* in the following section unless I am referring to a specific token with a prolongation of the final vowel sound (*deshoo*). For *daroo*, the distinction between *daroo* and *daro* was found to be associated with specific formal patterns and functions (see 4.2).

To provide an empirically grounded analysis, I adopt the framework of Interactional Linguistics (Ochs et al., 1996; Selting and Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 2018), which views "linguistic patterns as *practices* fitted to particular sequential environments" (Fox et al., 2013:729). In investigating sequentially situated interactional functions of linguistic

forms, Interactional Linguistics adopts research methodology of Conversation Analysis (CA).[2] This study aims to identify interactional functions carried out by the ways *daroo* and *deshoo* are used in conversations.

4. Interactional functions of *desho* and *daro(o)*

When *desho* and *daro(o)* are analyzed from sequential and interactional perspectives, there is a striking difference in their formal and functional characteristics. As illustrated in 4.1 and 4.2., *desho* is more fixed than *daro(o)* in terms of both form and function. Despite their differences, both items are used to carry out and manage locally situated interpersonal actions instead of simply expressing one's conjecture.

4.1 Functions of *desho*

The use of *desho* is similar to that of English tag questions such as 'right?' and 'isn't it?' (see Heritage, 2012); it is used (i) to request confirmation from the interlocutor or (ii) to solicit alignment from the interlocutor.[3] There are various types of sequences in which *desho* appears, including information-seeking, assessment, clarification, and storytelling sequences. Interpretation of *desho* as requesting confirmation or as soliciting alignment depends on whether the information is perceived as belonging to the speaker's or recipient's domain of knowledge or territory of information. For example, in Excerpt (1), the assertion presented with *desho* in line 4, *F26 (name) NHK minai* 'You don't watch NHK (Japan national public broadcast),' clearly concerns the recipient's situation, and thus *desho* is heard as a request for confirmation.

In (1), M27[4] asks a 'why' question in line 1 to proffer a topic to be discussed jointly (see Section 4.2 for the functions of *daroo ne*). However, in the next turn, F26 does not take up M27's topic-proffer and begins to say 'But, …' in line 3. M27 then utters a follow-up question to his initial topic-proffering question with *desho* in line 4. This move seems to be M27's attempt to get his interlocutor to take up his initial question, as evident from his repeating the initial question in line 6 after F26 complies with his request for confirmation that she does not watch NHK in line 5.

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[2] Interactional Linguistics is also influenced by discourse-functional linguistics, anthropological linguistics (Fox et al., 2013; Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 2001), and contextualization theory (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 2018).

[3] English tag questions and Japanese *desho* also differ in various aspects. I address these in a separate paper (Kaneyasu, in preparation).

[4] In all excerpts, 'M' refers to a male speaker and 'F' refers to a female speaker. ID numbers following 'M' or 'F' identify individual speakers.

(1) Requesting confirmation [217]⁵

1   M27   *demo NHK tte sa:* (.) *nande anna   tsumannai n daroo ne:?*
                  but (name) TOP PP   why that.much boring   SE MOD   PP
                  But I wonder why NHK is so boring, you know?

2   (0.5)

3   F26   *demo* (0.5) [*son-*]
                  but   tha-
                  But (0.5) tha-

4 → M27   [*F26*]   *NHK mi   nai **desho**?*
                                (name) (name) watch NEG MOD
                                You don't watch NHK, right?

5   F26   *un.*
                  Yeah. (= Yeah, you are right that I don't.)

6   M27   *nande are nande are anna   tsumannai n daroo ne?*
                  why   that why   that that.much boring   SE MOD   PP
                  I wonder why it's, why it's so boring, you know?

In (2), the assertion presented with *desho* in line 3, '(You) thought "oh no" at first' concerns the recipient's (mental) experience, and thus *desho* is also heard as a request for confirmation. In the prior context to the segment shown in (2), M11 makes a sarcastic remark about F107's weight, which F107 takes as a joke and plays along. After a few joking exchanges, M11 defends himself by saying that he is not a type of person who makes sarcastic remarks, to which F107 responds that she has gotten used to M11 giving sarcastic remarks. Her response here does not align with M11's self-defense. This prompts M11 to initiate a clarification sequence, first with a polar question 'Have (you) gotten used to (it)?' in line 1, to which F107 gives an affirming response 'yes' in line 2. In line 3, M11 asks the second clarification question '(You) thought "oh no" at first (when you met me)' with *desho*. F107 checks her understanding of what M11 meant, saying 'Hmm? Like "what kind of person is this"?' in line 4, and M11 confirms her understanding, saying 'Right right' in line 5. Then, in line 6, F107 provides her aligning response 'Yeah' to M11's second clarification question (one with *desho*? in line 3).

(2) Requesting confirmation [249]

1   M11   *nareta?*
                  get.used.to:PST

⁵ The number in the square brackets identifies a particular conversation within the BTSJ corpus.

Have (you) gotten used to (it)?

2   F107   *un.*
             Yeah.

3 → M11   *saisho   are? tte omotta **desho**?*
             beginning what QT think:PST MOD
             (You) thought "oh no" at first, right?

4   F107 *e: nani kono hito: toka? (hh)*
             INJ what this   person like
             Hmm? Like "what kind of person is this"? (hh)

5   M11   *(hhhh) .hh soo soo.=*
                     so so
             (hhhh) .hh Right right.

6   F107 *=un.*
              Yeah.

In the previous two excerpts, the speakers use *desho* to request confirmation regarding their assertions about the recipients' experience. On the other hand, in (3), an assertion to which *desho* is attached concerns external situation accessible to both parties. In this context, *desho* is heard as seeking alignment with the speaker's assertion.

In (3), M13 and M37 have been talking about a broadcasted professional volleyball game with a DJ, which they agreed was an unsuccessful attempt by the Japan Volleyball Association to promote professional volleyball to the TV audience. In the segment shown, in line 1, M13 makes an assessment that 'that (DJ performance) was heavily criticized as we might expect' with *desho*, to which M37 provides an aligning response in line 2 with *u:n* 'yeah' and *daroo ne* (see 4.2 for the functions of *daroo ne*).

(3) Soliciting alignment [254]

1 → M13   *demo are (0.3) yappari   kekkoo hihan   mo dekakatta n **desho**?*
             but   that   as.expected quite   criticism also big:PST   SE MOD
             But that (DJ performance) (0.3) was heavily criticized as we might expect, right?

2   M37   *u:n daroo ne:,*
             INJ MOD   PP
             Yeah I guess.

3   M13   *nanka (0.2) terebi kyoku ni.*
             like   TV   station DAT
             Like (0.2) to the TV station.

4   M37   *a:: soona n da.*
           INJ SO:ATT SE COP
           Oh, I see.

Although (1) and (2) are examples of the confirmation-requesting *desho*, the action of requesting confirmation in these and some other cases seems to have a secondary purpose of seeking alignment from the interlocutor with respect to the speaker's action or assertion. Since the proposition for which confirmation is requested concerns the recipients' own experience or domain of knowledge, they are entitled to talk about it in their own terms (see Heritage and Raymond, 2005). However, after the confirmation-requesting *desho*, a minimal confirmation response is preferred. By providing a simple confirmation, the interlocutors forgo making their rights relevant in the ongoing sequence and imply their alignment with the speakers' action and perspective. For example, in (1), the confirmation that the interlocutor does not watch a given broadcasting channel also implies her alignment with the speaker's stance that this broadcasting channel is boring, which he already made clear in his prior topic-proffering question. In (2), the confirmation that the interlocutor thought 'oh no' (only) when she first encountered him (and her laughter) also implies her alignment with the speaker's perspective that his teasing remarks should not be taken as serious or harmful once people get to know him (not shown in the segment).

While it is more common for *desho* to appear as part of initiating action, which makes relevant a responsive action of confirming and aligning, there are cases in which *desho* appears as (part of) a response to an initiating action. By responding with *desho*, the speaker displays an agreement with the interlocutor, but at the same time, it frames the turn as an initiating action, to which an aligning response becomes relevant. This is commonly observed when the assertion concerns the speaker's own experience or situation, as in (4), or an external object, situation, or third party, which (the speaker judges) belongs to the speaker's domain of knowledge, as in (5). The way in which *desho* is used in the second position provides strong evidence for its alignment seeking function.

In (4), M10 and M34 are talking about M10's job-hunting activities. In the preceding context to the excerpt shown, M10 explains that he does not have much motivation to look for a job because he still does not know if he can graduate from university in the current academic year (which ends in March in Japan). In line 1, M34 provides an evaluation '(Waiting until) March 31st (to look for jobs) would be too late.' In response, in line 3, all M10 produces is *desho*. This response does two things: (i) it displays the speaker's agreement with the prior speaker's evaluation; (ii) it frames the current turn as an initiating action to which alignment from the

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interlocutor is relevant. By framing the turn as an initiating action, the speaker in the second position reclaims his status as being the author of the assertion made by the interlocutor (see Goffman, 1974, 1981) and redirects the ongoing action from one that he aligns to one that he seeks alignment.

(4) Soliciting alignment (framing the responsive turn as an initiating action) [242]

```
1      M34    demo 3-gatsu 31-nichi  toka it  tara moo (0.2) teokure da  yo.
              but  march  thirty.first such say if  already    too.late COP PP
              But March 31st would already be (0.2) too late.

2             (0.3)

3  →   M10    desho?
              MOD
              Right?

4      M34    un.
              Yeah.
```

To frame their responsive turn as an initiating action, speakers use a self-standing *desho* as in (4) or a repeat of the interlocutor's assertion with *desho* as in (5). The ongoing topic of the conversation in (5) is M27's sports team activity at university. In the preceding context, F26 asks M27 about his team's upcoming practice schedule. M27 tells F26 that he feels sorry for the other team, which his team is scheduled to practice together (because his team is not as good as the other team). In line 1, M27 qualifies his earlier statement about feeling sorry for the other team that it would be fine for his team. Following this turn, F26 makes an evaluation that the other team would not like it in line 3. Then in line 4, M27 responds to F26's assessment with the exact repetition of her assertion followed by *desho*, thereby reclaiming his authorship of the given assessment (more on this example in 4.2).

(5) Soliciting alignment (framing the responsive turn as an initiating action) [216]

```
1      M27    ma: uchira teki        ni  wa ii   n daroo kedo:,
              well we    perspective DAT TOP good SE MOD  though
              Well, it would be fine for us,

2             (0.6)

3      F26    mukoo        ga  ya    daroo ne.=
              the.other.side NOM dislike MOD  PP
              They (the other team) wouldn't like it, you know.
```

4 → M27   =*mukoo*   *ga ya*   **desho**, *tabun.*
            the.other.side NOM dislike MOD   probably
            They wouldn't like it, right? Probably.

5   F26   *n n: n:.*
             INJ
             Mm hmm.

In this section, we saw that *desho* is used by conversational participants to request confirmation or solicit alignment. These interactional functions of *desho* cannot be accounted for by the notion of epistemic modality. In the following section, discourse functions of *daro(o)* are examined. Unlike *desho*, various uses of *daro(o)* can be associated with conjectural meaning. However, such categorization fails to illustrate *daro(o)*'s diverse formal and collocational patterns and how these patterns are closely tied to the locally emerging and managed interactional practices.

4.2 Discourse functions of *daro(o)*

Compared with the rather unified alignment-seeking and confirmation-requesting functions of *desho*, the interactional use of *daroo* is more divergent. The following six types represent most commonly found constructions, based on form, collocation, and prosodic characteristics, in the present data. In Type 1, a question word *nan* 'what' is followed by a short *daro*. The entire phrase is produced rapidly. In Type 2, a question sentence (e.g., *doo na-n* 'how is it') is followed by *daroo* and sometimes also by a pragmatic-particle *na(a)*. In Type 3, [*soo* 'so'] + *daroo*, [a repetition of (a part) of the prior speaker's turn] + *daroo*, or self-standing *daroo*, is followed by the pragmatic-particle *ne(e)*. In Type 4, a statement or question sentence is followed by *daroo* and the pragmatic-particle *ne*. In Type 5, a statement or question sentence is followed by *daroo* and the utterance-final conjunctive particle *kedo* 'though.' In Type 6, a statement is followed by a short stressed (indicated with the exclamation mark) *daro*!

Type 1: *nan daro*
Type 2: [question] *daroo* (*na*)
Type 3: [*soo*/repetition/ø] *daroo ne*
Type 4: [statement/question] *daroo ne*
Type 5: [statement/question] *daroo kedo*
Type 6: [statement] *daro*!

Types 1-3 and 5 have a one-to-one correspondence with discourse functions. Types 4 and 6 are each used for more than one discourse function. Although the six types represent a wide range of interactional functions, on the semantic level, they can be linked loosely by the conjectural meaning of *daro(o)*. This conjectural meaning manifests more concretely in interaction as: (i) spontaneity of verbalizing while thinking (Type 1-2), (ii) neutral or uninvolved stance of the speaker (Type 3-4), (iii) openness of the speaker's position (Type 4-5), or (iv) heightened emotion (Type 6). Thus, in actual conversation, *daroo* is not used simply to express the speaker's conjecture, but as part of larger constructions for various locally-situated actions. Below, each construction type and its associated actions are illustrated with examples.

Type 1 *nan daro* 'what would (it) be?' is a form of self-addressed question and it displays the trouble the speaker has in putting their thoughts together. Interactionally, *nan daro* works as a discourse marker, which brackets units of talk to connect an utterance at local and global levels and helps with discourse coherence (Schiffrin, 1987, 2001). As a discourse marker, *nan daro* brackets and marks the subsequent utterance as being planned and produced simultaneously, that is, a 'think-aloud.'

In the conversation leading up to (6), F103 and F30 have been talking about their knowledge of historical figures and world history, about which they might be asked on their upcoming employment tests. Prior to the segment, F30 mentions that she recently had a chance to look at a world history textbook. In line 1, F103 begins to state something about a world history textbook (in general), saying 'But, that (=textbook), like,' but she has trouble putting her thoughts into words. She produces the discourse maker *nan daro* to display her trouble and signals to the interlocutor that she is trying to think aloud. This action implies the speaker's expectation of sympathetic listening by the interlocutor. After the production of *nan daro*, F103 continues her turn, 'like, here, when this is happening, this, like, you know.' F30 displays her alignment with F103 in line 4 'Right right right,' and also gives her interpretation of what F103 might have meant in lines 6-7 'Because (textbooks) don't cover (two events) at the same time.'

(6) Type 1: *nan daro* [230]

```
1      F103   demo  are   nanka sa::,
                but   that  like    PP
                But that, like, you know,

2   →          hh nan daro (0.9) koo (0.4) koko  de
                   what MOD        this.way   here  LOC
                hh what would (it) be (0.9) like (0.4) here
```

3   *kore ga okotteru toki-ni kore:* [*toka sa::,*
     this NOM happening when this like PP
      When this is happening, this, like, you know,

4 F30   [*soo soo soo.*
               Right right right.

5 F103 *suggoi wakari* [*nikui   n da yo.*
     very hard.to.understand SE COP PP
     (It)'s so hard to understand.

6 F30   [*nanka sa:,*
        like PP
        Like, you know,

7   *dooji?* (0.5) *ni* [*yan nai kara::,*
     same.time DAT do NEG because
     The same time? (0.5) Because (textbooks) don't cover (two events)
     (simultaneously),

8 F103   [*un.*
         Yeah.

Type 2 [question] *daroo* (*na*) is similar to Type 1 *nan daro* in that it is a form of a self-addressed question. Type 2 is different from Type 1 in that the utterance [question] *daroo* (*na*) itself is a think-aloud, whereas the discourse marker *nan daro* marks the subsequent utterance as a think-aloud. Type 2 may appear at the beginning of a response to a question, as in (7).

In this excerpt, F187, who is making a questionnaire survey concerning foreign decorative patterns for her thesis project, asks her friend F188 what question the friend would ask about the decorative patterns. After a 1.3 second silence, in line 8, F188 utters 'hmm, what would (my question) be?' Since F188 is asked a question about her opinion, her self-addressed question embodies her alignment with the interlocutor's action and her willingness to give the question genuine thought. F188 subsequently says that she would ask a question about the survey participants' favorite patterns, like a popularity vote (lines 9-10).

(7) Type 2: [question] *daroo* (*na*) [333]

1 F187 *ne ja kiku kedo donna shitsumon(h) shi(h) tai(h),*
     INJ then ask though what.kind question do want
     Well then can I ask you what kind of question(h) you would(h) ask(h),

2   (0.4)

3   *sooshoku moyoo ni-tsuite, (hh)*
                decorative pattern about
                about decorative patterns, (hh)

4   [*(name) chan dat tara,*=
                (nick name) COP if
                if you were (doing the survey),

5   F188   [*uchi ga:?*
                 I   NOM
                Me?

6   F187 =*un.*
                Yeah.

7   (1.3)

8 → F188 *e:: **nan daroo na:**,*
                INJ what MOD   PP
                Hmm, what would (my question) be,

9   (0.3) *yappa okiniiri no yatsu toka janai?*
                    after.all favorite GEN thing such.as COP:NEG
                (0.3) in the end like (the participants') favorite ones (patterns), isn't it?

10   (.) *nani ga ichiban suki tte ninkitoohyoo shi tai yone.*=
                  what NOM most   like QT popularity.vote do want PP
                (.) I want to ask (the participants) to vote for their most favorite (patterns), you know.

11   =[*iroiro*
                different.kinds

12   F187 [*un shi tai yone.*
                yes do want PP
                Yeah (I) want to do (that).

Type 3 [*soo*/repetition/ø] *daroo ne* '(it) would be [so/repetition/ø]' is used to display an alignment with the interlocutor's prior remark. Sometimes it is preceded by an agreement token *un* 'yeah' (e.g., Excerpts (8) and (10)). The use of *daroo* in this aligning expression indexes the neutral or uninvolved stance of the speaker. The interlocutor's proposition to which the speaker displays alignment concerns general, future, or hypothetical situations. By using [*soo*/repetition/ø] *daroo ne*, the speaker expresses alignment with the interlocutor's point of view while remaining indifferent about the state of affairs of which the speaker lacks personal experience or knowledge. The following three excerpts represent three forms of Type 3: *soo*

daroo ne in (8), repetition + *daroo ne* in (9), and *daroo ne* in (10). In all three cases, what the speakers show alignment to concerns the interlocutors' personal experience or knowledge.

In the preceding context to the segment shown in (8), M08 called F104 a 'natural dork' (*tennen boke*), but F104 denied that she was, saying *chigau yo:* 'that's wrong.' In lines 1-2, M08 makes a generalized claim about how drunken persons would never admit they are drunk, to which F104 shows an alignment in line 5. Then, in lines 7 and 10, M08 makes the same generalization about natural dorks, to which F104 responds with *soo daroo ne* 'I guess it would be so.' By using *daroo ne*, F104 shows an alignment with M08, but at the same time, she avoids being the target referent of M08's claim about natural dorks. In fact, in the following context (not shown), F104 says that she does not know how natural dorks would think (because she is not one).

(8) Type 3: [*soo*/repetition/ø] *daroo ne* [236]

1   M08   *ore ne* (.) *yoku itteru   n da kedo* (0.2) *yopparai   ni ne*
               I   PP   often say:ASP SE COP though   drunken.perspn DAT PP
               I (.) say this often, but (0.2) to drunken persons

2   (.) *omae yotte n daro tte it   tara zettai minna   yotte nai tte yuu no,*
                 you   drunk SE COP QT say if   surely everyone drunk NEG QT say PP
               (.) if one tells them 'you are drunk,' they all say that they aren't,

3   F104 [*un.*
               Mm-hmm.

4   M08   [*hisshikoite.*
               desperately.

5   F104 *un.*
               Mm-hmm.
6   (0.5)

7   M08   *tennen   no ko   mo zettai mitome nai n da yone.*
               natural.dork GEN person also surely admit   NEG SE COP PP
               Persons who are natural dorks also would also not admit it.

8   F104 *un.*
               Mm-hmm.

9   (0.4)

10   M08   *tennen   daro toka it   temo zettai   chigau tte yuu no.*
               natural.dork MOD like say even definitely wrong QT say PP
               One tells them 'you are a natural dork,' without exception, they say it's wrong.

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11 → F104 *un **soo daroo ne***.
          INJ SO   MOD   PP
          Yeah (I guess it) would be so.

In (9), M13 and F109 are talking about living alone away from one's parents. M13 has been living by himself, but F109 lives with her parents. In line 7, M13 says that the most challenging thing about living on one's own is making meals. In line 8, F109 displays her alignment with *taihen daroo ne* '(I guess it) would be challenging.' Her use of *daroo ne* indicates that she does not have the experience herself, but she knows enough to imagine how it would be challenging.

(9) Type 3: [*soo*/repetition/ø] *daroo ne* [257]

1   M13   *ikinari   ne:?* (0.5) *a::*
             suddenly PP   INJ
             Suddenly you know (0.5) u:m

2   F109 *un.*
             Mm-hmm.

3   M13   *hitori gurashi no (xxx) henka   o* ((sniff))
             alone living   GEN   change ACC
             Changes (that happen) from living by yourself ((sniff))

4   (0.7)

5   M13   *sentaku mo senaakan shokki-ariai mo senaakan tte yuu no mo soona n da kedo:,*
             laundry also do.must   dish-wash   also do.must   QT say GEN also so   SE COP though
             Of course you have to do your laundry, you have to wash your dishes, but

6   F109 *un un.*
             Mm-hmm.

7   M13   *shokuji tsukun no   ichiban taihen.*
             meal   make NML most   tough
             making your meals is the most challenging.

8 →   F109 ***taihen daroo ne::.***
             tough   MOD   PP
             (I guess it) would be challenging.

In (10), M30 tells F29 in line 3 that not many new students will probably join the research group (called *zemi*, which runs under the guidance of a professor) to which he belongs. F29's aligning expression *daroo ne* in line 4 also expresses her indifferent stance as an outsider as she belongs to a different research group.

(10) Type 3: [*soo*/repetition/ø] *daroo ne* [228]

1   M30   *ma: demo uchi no,*
               well but   we GEN
               Well, but our,

2   F29   *kawaiso:,*
               pitiful
               Poor man ((referring to the previous context))

3   M30   *u:n ik-ko   shita wa demo tabun   sonnani   haitte ko   nai na.*
               INJ one-CLS below TOP but   probably that.much enter come NEG PP
               Yeah, people one grade below us, not many of them probably will join (my
               research group).

4 → F29   *u:n **daroo ne**.*
               INJ MOD PP
               Yeah (I guess that) would be.

     Type 4, [statement/question] *daroo ne*, has two interactional functions, depending on their sequential positioning. As an initiating action, it proffers a topic to be discussed jointly. We saw an example of this use earlier in (1) (shown here as (11)).

(11) Type 4: [statement/question] *daroo ne* [217]

1 → M27   *demo NHK   tte sa:* (.) *nande anna   tsumannai   n **daroo ne:**?*
               but (name) TOP PP   why   that.much boring   SE MOD PP
               But I wonder why NHK is so boring, you know?

2   (0.5)

3   F26   *demo* (0.5) [*son-*]
               but   tha-
               But (0.5) tha-

4   M27   [*F26*]   *NHK   mi   nai desho?*
                       (name) (name) watch NEG MOD
                       You don't watch NHK, right?
5   F26   *un.*
               Yeah. (= Yeah, you are right that I don't.)

6 → M27   *nande are   nande are anna   tsumannai n **daroo ne**?*
               why   that why   that that.much boring   SE MOD   PP
               I wonder why it's, why it's so boring, you know?

     As a responsive action, [statement/question] *daroo ne* displays an alignment with the interlocutor's remark in the prior turn. This is similar to Type 3 aligning expression, but unlike

Type 3, which refers back to the proposition made by the interlocutor, in Type 4, the speaker gives a new proposition that sums up or interprets the interlocutor's prior remark. In (12), two friends are talking about an English proficiency test called TOEIC. In line 1, F181 makes an inferential statement that if one takes the test many times, their scores will increase. In response, in line 2, F182 gives her own interpretation that it is because test takers get used to the test with *daroo ne.*

(12) Type 4: [statement/question] *daroo ne* [329]

1   F181   *TOEIC tte nanka ukemakut   tara agaru   rashii yo.*
                     (name) QT like   take.many.times if   increase MOD PP
                     It seems that the score will increase if one takes (the test) many times.

2 → F182   *a* [*nareru*   *n **daroo*] *ne.***
                     INJ get.used.to SE MOD   PP
                     Oh (people) get used to (taking the test) (I) would guess, right?

3   F181   [*uwasa de wa*].
                      rumor   COP TOP
                      According to what people say.

4   F182   *un.*
                     Yeah.

The next example (13), which was presented earlier as (5), represents a case in which the issue of who aligns with whom is brought to the center stage and overtly negotiated. As with the previous example, F26 shows her aligned stance in line 3 by summarizing what M27 said in the prior turn. However, since M27 is more knowledgeable about his team's situation, instead of simply acknowledging her aligned stance, M27 reclaims the same proposition just made by F26 and solicits her alignment with *desho* in line 4 (see 4.1 for the function of *desho*).

(13) Type 4: [statement/question] *daroo ne* [216]

1   M27   *ma: uchira teki   ni wa ii   n daroo kedo:,*
                     well we   perspective DAT TOP good SE MOD   though
                     Well, it would be fine for us,

2   (0.6)

3 → F26   *mukoo   ga ya   **daroo ne**.=*
                     the.other.side NOM dislike MOD   PP
                     They (the other two teams) wouldn't like it, you know.

4 → M27 =*mukoo   ga   ya   **desho**, tabun.*
    the.other.side   NOM dislike MOD   probably
    They wouldn't like it, right? Probably.

5   F26   *n n: n:.*
    INJ
    Mm hmm.

In Type 5, [statement/question] *daroo kedo*, a statement or question is followed by *daroo* and the utterance-final conjunctive particle *kedo* 'though.' It is used to qualify the speaker's assertion, and sometimes it works to express partial agreement with the interlocutor's view. Excerpt (14) is an example of qualifying the speaker's assertion. (14) includes the segment presented in Excerpts (5) and (13) as well as its preceding context. Excerpt (15) is an example of partial agreement with the interlocutor's view.

In (14), M27's [statement] *daroo kedo* (*uchira teki ni wa ii n daroo kedo* 'it would be fine for us') in line 12 qualifies his earlier statement that he feels sorry that his team and the other team are scheduled to practice together (lines 1-2).

(14) Type 5: [statement/question] *daroo kedo* [216]

1   M27   *daibu nanka ne: ima no ya- tookyoo no (name) to   ne: oosaka no (name)*
    quite like   PP now GEN Tokyo GEN   and PP Osaka GEN
    It's quite, like, (team name) in Tokyo and (team name) in Osaka

2   *isshoni sun no wa nanka oosaka ni   mooshiwakenai* [*ki-ga-suru.*
    together do   NML TOP like   Osaka DAT sorry   feel
    I feel sorry for (practicing) together.

3   F26   [*tashikani ne.*
    indeed   PP
    You have a point.

((8 lines omitted.))

12 → M27 *ma: uchira teki   ni wa ii   n **daroo kedo:**,*
    well we   perspective DAT TOP good SE MOD   though
    Well, it would be fine for us,

13   (0.6)

14   F26   *mukoo   ga   ya   daroo ne.=*
    the.other.side   NOM dislike MOD   PP
    They (the other team) wouldn't like it, you know.

15   M27   =*mukoo   ga   ya   desho, tabun.*

18

the.other.side   NOM dislike MOD   probably
They wouldn't like it, right? Probably.

16   F26   *n n: n:.*
                INJ
                Mm-hmm.

In (15), F105 and M09 disagree about whether or not going to a school while studying abroad would be a good opportunity to build one's community. In line 4, M09 states that (going to a school) does not help to build a community, with the alignment seeking *deshoo* (see 4.1). F105 disagrees with his view by saying *natteru atashi wa* 'they have for me' (line 7) and *naru yo* 'it does become (a community)' (line 13). In the following turn, M09 again shows his disagreement with *iya* 'no' and backs up his claim by pointing out that the foreign students at their school (in Japan) stick together (lines 14-16), to which F105 simply responds *u:::n* 'mmm.' In line 18, M09 qualifies his earlier assertion and in effect offers a partial agreement with F105 that it would probably not be like that in foreign countries, with *daroo kedo*.

(15) Type 5: [statement/question] *daroo kedo* [240]

1   F105   *demo yappa   nanka sa sooyuu,*
                but   after.all like   PP that.kind
                But, after all, like you know, that kind of,

2   (0.6)

3   F105   *komyunitii o   sa: tsukuru kikkake n:: (0.5) mazu gakkoo:,=*
                community ACC PP make   occasion INJ   first   school
                as an opportunity to make a community, first (you go to) school

4   M09   =*komyunitii nan   nai deshoo?*
                 community become NEG MOD
                 (Schools) wouldn't become a community, would they?

5   (0.4)

6   M09   *kono* [*gakkoo,*
                This school,

7   F105   [*eh?   natteru   atashi wa.*
                         what become:ASP I   TOP
                         What? (They) have for me.

((5 lines omitted.))

13   F105   *(hh) na:*[*ru   yo.*

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```
                    become PP
                    (hh) It does (become a community).
```

14   M09   [*ya: demo gaijin   no   hito   toka:,*
                    no but   foreigner GEN people such.as
                    Well, but the foreigners (at our school)

15   (0.2)

16   M09   *yappa gaijin   de katamatteru   shi.*
            after.all foreigner COP gather.together:ASP because
            after all they (foreigners) are sticking together.

17   F105 *u:::n.*
            Mmm.

18 → M09   *un ma demo* (0.3) *gaikoku   wa sonnna koto nai   n* **daroo kedo** *ne.*
            INJ well but   foreign.country TOP that thing not.exist SE MOD though PP
            Yeah, well but (I guess) it wouldn't be like that in foreign countries.

Type 6: [statement] *daro*! is characterized by the *utterance*-final short stressed *daro*. This use of *daro* shows heightened emotion of the speaker, and in casual conversations, it is used to perform two quite different actions. The first action, as exemplified in (16), is to challenge a position claimed by the interlocutor. The second action, as shown in (17), is to display an alignment with the interlocutor's position.[6]

In (16), two male friends are talking about a first-year female student who they both think cute. In line 1, M08 tells M32 if M32 does not make his move toward her quickly, she will be taken by her classmate or an older student. M32 first seems to agree with his friend's assessment, as he says *a:: naruhodo ne* 'oh::, I see' in line 6. After a 1.7 second pause, M32 changes his mind, and in line 8, challenges his friend's assessment, saying *senpai wa nai daro!* 'older students wouldn't (target her)!'

(16) Type 6: [statement] *daro*! [234]

1   M08   *soshite:* (0.5) *hayameni te:-ut   toka   ne: to,*
            and   early   make.a.move in.advance NEG otherwise
            And (0.5) if you don't make a move quickly,

2   M32   *u:n.*
            Mm-hmm.

3   M08   *1-nen   see   ni torareru ka,*

_____

first-year   student   by take:PSS or
(she will) be taken by a first-year student or,

4   M32   [*a::.*
               Oh::.

5   M08   [*moshikuwa betsu   no   senpai ni nerawarete torareru ka.*=
               or   another GEN senior   by target:PSS   take:PSS or
               or (she will) be targeted and taken by an older student.

6   M32   =*a:: naruhodo ne.*
               INJ indeed   PP
               Oh:: I see.

7   (1.7)

8 →   M32   *kedo* (0.4) *senpai wa   nai   daro!*
               but   senior TOP not.exist MOD
               But (0.4) older students wouldn't!

9   *uchira* (.) *nerau yatsu   anmari inai   daro.*
               we   target person much   not.exist MOD
               We (.) there won't be many (of us) who would target (her).

In (17), two female friends are talking about one of their classmates who overslept on the day of his job interview. Prior to the segment shown, both speakers have been criticizing his recent behavior, such as not coming to classes. Lines 1-4 are the continuation of their criticism. F29 tells F102 that not only did he oversleep and miss his job interview, but he also lied to the interviewer (not shown) to ask for another interview. F102's assessment *arienai daro!* '(that) would be absurd!' in line 4 is a display of her aligned stance with F29's criticism.

(17) [statement] *daro*! [226]

1   F29   *sono ba   o   yarisugoshi:,*
               that situation ACC get.through
               (He) got through that situation, and

2   (0.8)

3   F29   *atsukamashikumo: moo ichi-do yatte(h) itadakenai-deshoo-ka(h) tte(h),*=
               boldly   more once   do   would.you.please   QT
               (he) boldly asked(h) 'would(h) (you) do(h) (the interview) one more time,'=

4 →   F102   =*arienai   daro!*
                impossible MOD
                =(That) would be absurd!

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To summarize this section, a wide range of formal and prosodic patterns as well as interactional functions are identified for *daro(o)*. Although it is possible to group all the identified usages of *daro(o)* together as a marker of conjecture, doing so would not give us much insight into the social actions conversational participants are doing through locally emerging interactions. The analysis of *daro(o)* provides support for the view that linguistic categories are "epiphenomena of social interaction" (Ford et al., 2013:50).

4.3 Infrequent and marked uses of *daroo* and *deshoo*

This section considers infrequent and marked uses of *daroo* and *deshoo*. They include nine tokens of *daro* and two tokens of *deshoo* (1.7% of all the tokens). Consideration of these cases gives us a glimpse into factors other than moment-to-moment talk-in-interaction and the relationship between participants that affect people's language use. Analysis of *daro* and *deshoo* examples suggests that speaker gender and (imagined) social context are among those factors that may be related to one's use of *daroo* or *deshoo*.

First, nine tokens of *daro?* with a rising intonation (represented by the question mark), all appearing in male speech, are used to seek for alignment or confirmation just like *desho* (see 4.1).[7] For example, in (18), M29 checks his understanding and requests for confirmation from his interlocutor regarding the location of a restaurant in line 3, *ano atari daro?* '(it)'s around that area, right?'

(18) Alignment/confirmation seeking [statement] *daro*? in male speech [224]

1	M29	*are wa nanka* (0.2) *shi-* (0.6) *(name) toka* [*(name) toka,*
		that TOP like such.as such.as
		That (restaurant) is like (0.2) shi- (0.6) such as (name) or (name),

| 2 | F28 | [*soo soo soo soo.* |
| | | Right right right right. |

3 →	M29	*ano atari* ***daro?***
		that neighborhood MOD
		(it)'s around there, right?

| 4 | F28 | *un.* |
| | | Yeah. |

---

[7] I must note here that although this use of *daro* is exclusive to male speakers, overall, in the current data, female speakers use *daro(o)* much more frequently and male speakers use *desho* much more frequently. These tendencies question the received view associating the 'plain' *daroo* with male language and the 'polite' *deshoo* with female language based on the ideology that women (should) speak more gently and politely (e.g., Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Maynard, 1990, 1997; Nakakita, 2000).

Secondly, two tokens of *deshoo* (*ne)* (with a prolonged final vowel sound in both cases and the pragmatic particle *ne* in one case) appear within a particular kind of "side sequence" (Jefferson, 1972) in which the speaker takes on an 'on-stage' social role (Cook, 2008). In both cases, the speaker shifts from the plain speech style to the polite speech style and playfully takes on an (imagined) expert role, a commentator on a panel discussion show in one and a researcher on the other.

In (19), M11 suddenly switches from the plain speech style to the polite speech style in line 5 (*masu* in line 5 and *desu* in line 6) to make a side remark about his use of an offensive word earlier in the conversation. The use of polite speech foregrounds his 'on-stage' role as he comments on the content of the recording to his (imagined) audience, that is, researchers who will later listen to and work with this recording. In line 6, he seeks an alignment from the imagined audience that the offensive word will not be played, meaning that it will be censored and edited out. Then, in the three lines omitted, he predicts that the word will be replaced with a beep sound or with proper English pronunciation. His use of *deshoo ne* in line 11 sounds like those of expert prediction used by weather reporters, commentators on a panel discussion, and the like. That M11's side remarks are not addressed to his interlocutor (M25) is demonstrated by M25 in that he does not take up any of M11's side comments other than responding with laughter in line 7. Immediately following the segment shown, M11 switches back to the plain speech style and resumes the on-going talk that was put on hold temporarily.

(19) Topic-proffering [statement] *deshoo ne* in a side sequence [246]

```
1       M11     maa ichi-nen  to   kawarazu:: (0.6) jugyoo toru kedo:.
                well freshman with change:NEG      class   take though
                Well just like when I was a freshman (0.6) (I) will take classes.

2       M35     un.
                Yeah.

3               (0.5)

4       M11     sugoi    yone:,
                amazing PP
                (It)'s amazing, you know,

5               ima: boku chotto maa (0.4) eego  de fakku toka itte masu kedo:,
                now I    little   well       English in fuck  like say  POL  though
                Now I'm, well, a bit (0.4) (I) said, like, fakku (fuck) in English,
```

6   *tabun   nagasarenai <u>desu</u> yone*.
           probably play:PSS:NEG POL PP
           (The word) probably won't be played (=censored and edited out), you know.

7   M35 *(hhhh)*
           (hhhh)

((3 lines omitted.))

11 → M11   *maa doonika   natteru   n __deshoo ne__:.*
           well somehow become:ASP SE MOD   PP
           Well it will turn out somehow, you know?

The two infrequent and marked cases of *daro* and *deshoo* illustrate the dynamic nature of these linguistic forms, with which speakers can embody varied identities (such as masculinity) and social roles (such as 'on-stage' expert role), sometimes playfully as was the case with *deshoo*. It is important to note that the infrequency and markedness of these uses are not intuitively obvious to native speakers. The literature on Japanese communication, based on constructed examples and scripts, describe *daro(o)* as male language (e.g., Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Maynard, 1990), and many JFL (Japanese as a Foreign Language) textbooks, even those that are characterized as 'communicative,' introduce *deshoo* as a marker of prediction (see Iori, 2009). It is only through a comparison with more frequent uses in real contexts that we can see how these uses are infrequent or marked in ordinary conversations.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper, I investigated the interactional relevance of the linguistic category 'epistemic modals' or 'markers of conjecture' by examining the interactional functions of *daroo* and *deshoo* in Japanese conversations. While a variety of functions are identified, they collectively demonstrate that, rather than expressing one's conjectures, conversational participants use *daroo* or *deshoo* to seek, display, and negotiate intersubjective alignment and stance with their interlocutors. The dynamic ways in which the two forms are used in conversations cannot be captured by the notion of epistemic modality. Questions remain as to how *daroo* and *deshoo* are used in other contexts, including formal conversations such as interviews and different registers/genres such as speech and essays, and how the patterns of use in one context may resemble or differ from another. As suggested through the case of *deshoo (ne)* in 4.3, it is possible that the two forms, and some other related forms, are used to perform different functions in different contexts. One of those seemingly related forms is *ssho* (e.g., *dareka iru ssho* 'someone will be here *ssho*.'), which was not included in the present study. Another

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limitation of the present study is that it did not consider demographic factors such as age and sex of the speakers. These factors may also affect the use of linguistic forms.

Acknowledgements

Appendix A. Glossing abbreviations

ACC   accusative
ASP   aspect
ATT   attributive form
CLS   classifier
COP   copula
DAT   dative
GEN   genitive
INJ   interjection
LOC   locative
MOD   modal expression
NEG   negative
NML   nominalizer
NOM   nominative
PP   pragmatic particle
PSS   passive suffix
PST   past tense
QT   quotative marker
SE   sentence extender
SFX   suffix
TOP   topic marker

Appendix B. Transcription symbols

,   continuing intonation
.   falling intonation
?   rising intonation

[ ]	overlapping speech
::	lengthened syllable
(.)	micro-pause less than 2/10 of a second
(0.0)	length of silence in tenths of a second
-	truncated speech
=	'latched' utterances
.hh	audible inbreath
(hh)	laughter
(xx)	uncertain hearings
(())	transcriber's descriptions

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