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Author(s)	Takada, Akira; Endo, Tomoko
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Object transfer in request-accept sequence in Japanese caregiver-child interactions

Akira Takada

Kyoto University

Tomoko Endo

JSPS research fellow / Tsukuba University

Abstract

Requesting an object or information is a basic and ubiquitous activity in human interactions, but the sequential organization of this activity varies considerably across speech communities. In line with Language Socialization approach, this paper inquires into (1) how children formulate their acceptance of object requests made by caregivers, (2) the role of requested object in request-accept sequences, and (3) the distinctive features of object requests in Japanese caregiver-child interactions (CCIs). Based on video data of Japanese caregiver-child (aged 0–5 years) interactions, we conducted an interaction analysis of conversations involving object transfer. The results revealed that the features of request-acceptance sequence are shaped by (1) the trigger of object request, (2) the features of the requested object, (3) timing, location, and manners to transfer the requested object. By engaging in object request sequences, caregivers not only made reciprocal communication more effective but also set and modified the frame of their activity. The study also revealed that object request sequence is the place of negotiation for both children and caregivers with respect to (re)constructing the appropriate morality of Japanese culture.

Keywords

directive, interaction, Japanese, Language Socialization, young children

1. Introduction

1.1. Requesting an object in interactions

Requesting an object or information by using language or gestures is a basic and ubiquitous activity in human interactions (Curl and Drew, 2008). Even infants use gestures to draw

attention to an object, or to comment on an aspect of the world (e.g., indicating what they have seen before) (Cartmill et al., 2012; Liszkowski et al., 2012). Moreover, requesting is not confined to human actors. Researchers have demonstrated that great apes other than humans also make several types of requests (Cartmill and Byrne, 2010; Cartmill et al., 2012; Takada, 2014). However, we must acknowledge the huge discrepancy between human and non-human great apes. According to Cartmill et al. (2012), the use of gestures by apes is primarily limited to requests for others to interact or leave, and lacks most of the representational elements that characterize human gestures.

The distinctive style of human communication gradually develops during the course of child development. A number of researchers have reported that human caregivers often try to involve infants with turn-taking patterns of interactions using various kinds of semiotic resources (C. Goodwin, 2000), even when infants do not show clear evidence that they understand the meaning of the utterances. Bruner (1983) found that requests by both caregivers and children are deeply embedded in their daily context and play an important role in facilitating the smooth flow of interactions with young children, who are not yet able to use language fluently.

Like other social activities, requesting an object or information is a socially constructed activity, and types of request vary considerably across speech communities. Thus, we must identify the cultural features of requests based on ethnographically grounded research before claiming that certain aspects of these phenomena are universal. Like all language/cultures, the Japanese language/culture includes well-developed strategies to successfully convey requests. Following John Searle's classification of speech acts, Takada (2013) proposed "request" as one of the subclasses of a "directive," which is broadly defined as "an utterance to get the hearer to do something" (Searle 1975: 355-356; M. Goodwin, 2006a: 107), in Japanese interaction. It is known that a wide range of grammatical forms in Japanese¹, including those that indicate requests, are used to moderate the directness–indirectness of directives (Clancy, 1986; Burdelski, 2006; Takada, 2013). The directness of

¹ According to Takada's (2013) scale of directness, which is a modified version of Clancy's (1986) model, such grammatical forms ranges from (1) "commands," such as utterances in which the verb takes the form of the imperative *-nasai*, to (2) "requests," such as utterances that take the form of the compound verb *V-te-kureru* (V+TE+give); (3) "suggestions," such as utterances that take the conditional form *V-tara* (V+COND); (4) "prompts," such as utterances that take the form of the compound verb *V-te-goran* (V+TE+try); and (5) "invitations," such as utterances that take the form of volition. Of these, in Takada (2013), requests were observed most frequently (35% of the entire directive cases), followed by suggestions and prompts.

directives is also affected by differences in footing (Goffman, 1981). In our dataset, caregivers sometimes used “reported speech” (i.e. quoting or reporting the speech of others or attributing speech to others) when conveying indirect directives, including requests (Takada, 2013). According to Clancy (1986: 222), directives are intrinsically “face threatening” (Brown and Levinson, 1987) to the addressee and thus easily lead to a violation of the Japanese ideal of empathy. The tendency of Japanese individuals to resort to indirectness as a less coercive means of conveying a directive is thus not surprising.

When we carefully observe the actual caregiver-child interactions (CCIs) among Japanese individuals, it is clear that directive sequences are seldom completed in a single adjacency pair. When a child does not comply with a caregiver’s directive, the caregiver often issues a modified directive, while monitoring the child’s behavior (Takada, 2013). Effective use of modified directives by Japanese caregivers not only facilitates reciprocal communication (Bruner, 1983) but also sets and modulates the frame of their activity to make children do what caregivers want them to do. At the same time, children can display a range of different perspectives (e.g., constructing the caregiver as someone who is esteemed or as someone with whom open confrontations are necessary) in their responses to a directive (M. Goodwin et al., 2012).

Of the variety of directive sequences, this paper focuses on caregivers’ object requests, which result in object transfer by children as responses of immediate or delayed compliance with them. Object transfer is one of the salient phenomena observed in CCIs, and it is particularly important to consider developmental transitions in the communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) of children. In the next section, we will review the literature relevant to object transfer in CCIs.

1.2. Development of taking and giving behaviors

Several behavioral categories are relevant to object transfer between participants in an interaction. In this paper, we adopt the terms “giving” and “taking” to describe the behavioral aspects of object transfer. As practical concepts to facilitate our discussion, these terms are defined as follows: When object transfer occurs from person A to person B, A and B’s behaviors are described as “giving” and “taking”, respectively. It should be noted that previous studies (e.g., Adamson, 1995) sometimes applied different terms, such as “offering” and “showing”, to indicate some of behaviors defined as giving here. However, offering and showing are conceptually distinguished from giving in that they do not necessarily require an actual object transfer, whereas giving requires a successful object transfer.

Children begin to take and give objects before they become fluent in the production of verbal utterances. Infants reportedly begin to take objects before they are 6 months old, and begin to give when they are approximately 12–13 months old (Adamson, 1995). Thus, taking and giving activities involve more than just a role reversal, and they have an asymmetrical relationship in the course of child development. Research regarding child development has suggested that children experience critical changes in communicative competence at around 9 to 12 months of age, just before infants begin to give. These changes include starting to pay attention to others' actions, recognizing pointing and other gestures made by others, and producing these gestures themselves. Tomasello and colleagues referred to such changes as the "9-month revolution" (Tomasello, 1999). The present study focuses primarily on object transfer by children who have already experienced this developmental transition.

1.3. Objects as semiotic resources embedded in the environment

By linking the actors and the environment, an object acts as a type of semiotic resource that plays an important role in carrying out an embodied action-in-interaction embedded in an environment. By focusing on the transformations in the configuration of the object and the relevant actors, we can provide a new perspective for analyzing the spatiotemporal organization of object request sequences in at least (but not only) the following four respects.

First, this approach allows researchers to analyze how children's participation in organized ongoing activities allows them to understand the meaning that caregivers have attached to an object. For instance, Lerner et al. (2011) examined the sequential structure of others' observable conduct (e.g., serving a meal), which furnishes very young children with the interactional resources for participation in social life. In this study, they persuasively showed that even 1-year-old children reacted to the meaning attached to an object (e.g., washcloth, lid on a food container) making use of prior actions, gaze, various kinds of gestures, and non-verbal vocalizations appropriate to the unfolding structure of practical tasks.

Second, this approach clarifies how the object contributes to establishing the meaning of the embodied practices that children enact in response to requests. Children often achieve this by using an object as a tool for knowing or referring to other things. For instance, when a child is asked to eat a meal, the child can enact a particular manner to eat by using silverware at a table. Additionally, the child can pick up a dish to request more food.

Third, this approach exhibits that children's bodies operating the object contain a

number of quite different kinds of resources that play different roles in the organization of the human–environment relationship (C. Goodwin, 2010). When a caregiver interacts with a child who is holding or using an object, the body of the child is related to the object in a particular way. The caregiver then reads a particular feature (in terms of its appearance, function, affective stance, etc.) of the child’s body. The feature is available for the caregiver as resources for interactions. Moreover, the child’s body is embedded in the environment via that feature while she or he is engaged in a joint activity with the caregiver.

Finally, this approach underscores the view that the use of language, like that of objects, is grounded in the public structure of the environment. Contemporary studies of embodied cognition and environmental perception (Hutchins, 2005; C. Goodwin, 2010; Ingold, 2001, 2011) have revealed how language use is a public process embedded in the environment. In this respect, Hutchins (2005) provided a number of examples of thinking strategies that involve the interaction of mental and material structures and explored the possibility that some physical objects work as “material anchors” in the formation of such a conceptual blend.

Our perspective is thus particularly important in that it bridges the function of objects and that of language. Request activities are deeply embedded in the everyday context. Language Socialization approach from which our approach is derived provides a powerful tool for analyzing the organization of actions in the everyday context. Researchers using this framework focus on how each community’s habitus of communicative codes, practices, and strategies is related to its sociocultural logic (Ochs et al, 2005: 548). In accordance with this framework, Ochs et al. (2005) proposed a model of child-directed communication (CDC) as a theoretical tool for illuminating how members of social groups verbally and nonverbally interact with children.

1.4. Research questions

Based on the aforementioned considerations, this study examines the following three research questions.

(1) How do children formulate their acceptance of object requests made by caregivers? It is not easy for young children to appropriately accept an object request. Thus, we examine how young children articulate the multimodal reactions that are involved in object transfer and how caregivers attune to those reactions.

(2) What role does the requested object play in request–accept sequences? Children’s reactions to object requests may vary depending on the features of the object. Accordingly,

this study analyzes what the use of a particular object means in an interactional context and examines the interactional consequences of the use of such an object.

(3) What are the distinctive features of object transfer in Japanese CCIs? Our dataset suggests how the elements of Japanese morality are introduced in mundane CCIs (Takada, 2013). In this study, we identify the characteristic features of object transfer that convey the culturally shared morality of Japanese.

2. Data and Methodology

The data used in this study were collected as part of a longitudinal research project, “Cultural Formation of Responsibility in Caregiver–Child Interaction,” in the Kansai area, around Kyoto city. Beginning in 2007, the research team visited 18 middle-class families with children aged 0–5 years. Some mothers who participated in this study were pregnant during the period of data collection. All families used the Kansai dialect for daily communication. A researcher and a videographer visited each family at home for approximately 2 hours per month to videotape interactions between child(ren) and caregiver(s) in natural settings. In total, approximately 400 hours of video were recorded, and basic verbal and non-verbal behaviors were transcribed to yield the dataset.

We conducted an interaction analysis of video-recorded data involving caregivers’ object requests to their children. Interaction analysis is an empirical method for determining why an action is selected at a specific place and time by deconstructing the micro-sequential context of the interaction (Nishizaka, 1997; Schegloff, 2007). We also used concepts derived from Conversation Analysis (Schegloff, 2007) and Language Socialization approach (Duranti et al., 2012) as theoretical frameworks to explore the management of micro-interactions.

3. Decomposing object-request sequences

We extracted object-request sequences from the dataset and identified the following three issues as focal points of the analysis: (1) the trigger of the object request; (2) the features of the requested object; and (3) the timing, location, and manner of the transfer of the requested object. Whereas the first and second points address the first (how children formulate their acceptance of object requests) and the second (the role of the requested object) research questions, respectively, the third issue addresses both research questions. The third research question (What are the distinctive features of object transfer in Japanese CCIs?) will be discussed in section 4. The following examples are transcribed from our

dataset. Each line includes the original Japanese utterance, word glosses, and the English translation.²

3.1 Triggers of object requests

Preceding events have a crucial impact on the success of subsequent paired actions. Thus, whether an object request is successfully accepted is strongly influenced by the way in which the request sequence is initiated. When a request is made by a caregiver to solve a problem encountered by a child, acceptance of the request is often accomplished smoothly because the child understands why the transfer is needed. In the example presented below, Ay put the *origami* (folding paper) sheets in a box after playing with them. However, she found herself in trouble: she could not close the box properly. She then asked F for help.

(1) [origami] (KJ_H101010_1)

Ay(4:3), F(father)

01 ((Ay closes a box))

02 Ay: *a, a: a:*, ((closes the box))

IJ IJ IJ

² In the excerpt, utterances are transcribed according to a modified version of the conventions developed in Conversation Analysis research (for details, see Schegloff, 2007). Information important to the utterance, such as participant's nonverbal behavior, omitted element in utterance or number of omitted lines, is indicated in double parentheses: (()). Equal signs (=) ordinarily appear in pairs, one at the end of a line and the other at the start of the next line. If the lines connected by two equal signs were uttered by different speakers, the second line followed the first with no discernible silence between them, or was "latched" to it. Pause length is marked in parentheses, in tenths of a second (e.g., (0.6)). Overlap of utterances is marked by square brackets: []. Two degree signs (° °) enclose remarks that were markedly softer in tone than the utterances surrounding them. An up arrow (↑) indicates an increase in voice pitch. Talk between "more-than" and "less-than" symbols has been compressed (> <) or slowed down (< >). Audible laughter is indicated by the letter "h", and additional "h"s indicate sustained laughter. Stressed words are underlined, and single parentheses indicate that an utterance was unintelligible or was made by an unidentifiable source. A dash (-) shows a sharp cut-off. Interlinear gloss abbreviations are indicated as follows: ACC, accusative; ASP, aspect; BEN, benefactive; CAU, causative; COND, conditional; COP, copula; DAT, dative; DIM, diminutive; HON, honorific marker; IJ, interjection; IMP, imperative form; INV, invitational form; LK, linker; LOC, locative; NEG, negative; NOM, nominative; PN, personal name; POL, polite form; PP, pragmatic particle; PST, past; Q, question marker; QT, quotative particle; SSW, sound-symbolic word; TE, conjunctive (-te form); TOP, topic particle; VOL, volitional.

- Oh, oh: oh:
- 03 *ie:::* ((looks at F))
 IJ
 O:::h
- 04 *taihenna koto ni nacchaimashita.*
 troublesome thing DAT become-ASP-POL-PST
 ((I))'ve got into a trouble. ((lit. Something problematic has happened.))
- 05 F: *doo shita n?*
 how do.PST FP
 What happened?
- 06 Ay: *origami wo huta wo shimerarenaku natte.*
 folding.paper ACC rid ACC close.can-NEG become-TE
 ((I)) can't close the box for folding papers.
- 07 F: *kashite mi*
 lend-TE see
 Let me borrow it. ((lit .try lending))
- 08 ((Ay walks to F while holding the box))
- 09 ((Ay gives the box to F))

[Insert Figure 1 and 2 approximately here]

In line 3, Ay looks at F while she utters an interjection *ie:::* "O:::h". The gaze indicates that F was the target of the interjection. The next utterance directed at F, *taihenna koto ni nacchaimashita*, literally means, "something problematic had happened" (l. 4). The phrase *taihenna koto*, "something problematic", is designed to attract the attention of the hearer. Ay expects F, her father and caregiver, to solve the problem for her. The predicate *nacchaimashita* consists of a verb *naru*, which means "become", and an auxiliary verb *-chau* (shortened form of *-te shimau*), which indicates the completive aspect and the past tense of a polite marker, *mashita*. The marker of the completive aspect, *-chau* (or *-te shimau*), often connotes that the final situation is undesirable for the speaker. Here, the *-chau* form, in combination with her formulation of the situation as *taihenna koto* "something problematic", indicates Ay's evaluation of the situation. That is, her characterization of the situation as problematic, and her report that it had already occurred as an undesirable event led to her communication of the urgent need for a solution. At this point, Ay had already started to formulate the participation framework in which her father F played the role of problem solver. Moreover, it should be noted that the sentence-final form of this utterance was the polite form, *mashita* (a politeness marker in the past tense). The use of the polite form is

interesting, because Ay usually used a more casual form when talking to F, as seen in the utterance in line 6. The switch to the polite form at this point reflects her emphasis on the pro-moral or normative nature of her activity; namely, packing the *origami* sheets, as she reported on the problem about the progress of the activity to F. Such practices are often observed when children of her age engage in an activity in a kindergarten classroom, and report on the activity (e.g., trouble with or achievement of an activity) to the teacher supervising the activity. Indeed, *origami* sheets are often used in Japanese kindergartens. In these situations, the activity is embedded in a social or educational context, and thus engagement in the activities carries a pro-moral meaning. Additionally, placing the messy *origami* sheets into the box *per se* has a pro-moral or normative connotation. By making effective use of these elements, Ay achieves joint attention with F by the beginning of line 5. Asked what has happened (l. 5), Ay answers that she cannot close the box (l. 6). F then prompts Ay to give him the box, saying *kashite mi* “let me borrow it” (lit. “try lending”) in line 7, while stretching his left arm toward Ay (Figure 1). Ay immediately stands up and walks to F while stretching her left arm toward F. She then gives the box to F (Figure 2), and the trouble source is moved from Ay's side to F's side.

In this example, Ay was the first to notice and report trouble with the box. F's response was understood as offering help. It was natural for Ay to expect that F would solve the problem if she gave the box to F. This resulted in the smooth transfer of the object, and led the prompting by the caregiver: F said *kashite mi*, “Let me borrow it”, which literally means “Try lending (it)”.³ The main verb, *kasu*, “lend”, implies that the object belongs primarily to the child and that the caregiver has only temporary custody of it. The form *-te miru* adds the meaning that the situation is occurring on a short-term trial basis.

In contrast, when children are unaware of problems, they may not accept a request as smoothly. Indeed, children often react to unwanted requests with complaints and resistance (Takada, 2013). Sometimes the second pair part (SPP) to the request takes a totally different form from what the first pair part (FPP) projected, demonstrating that children are not as severely constrained by cultural conventions as are adults. These cases are often seen as reflecting the creativity of identifying the relevance between adjacent actions. In the example below, M, who was 7 months pregnant, lay on a couch. In front of the couch, her 26-month-old son, Ke, held a keychain.

³ *Mi* is a casual, shortened form of *miru* “see”, in the imperative form. The serial verb construction, *V-te miru*, originally meant, “do something and see (what happens)”; it has been grammaticalized as an auxiliary that means, “do something on a trial basis” .

(2) [keychain] (US_Ke110305_1)

Ke(2:2), M(mother:7months pregnant)

01 M: *ja: mo: kashite.* ((Ke walks to M))
then already lend-TE
Then let ((me)) have ((the keychain)).

02 Ke: *hu:hu:[hu:hu:* ((Ke starts blowing on the keychain))
SSW
hu:hu:[hu:hu:

03 M: *[nani ga(h) hu:(h) shiten(h) no yo(h).*
what NOM SSW do-ASP PP PP
[What(h) are(h) (you) blowing(h) at(h).

04 Ke: *dekita.=*
can-PST
((I)) did it.=

05 M: *=a, dekita.*
IJ can-PST
=Oh, ((you)) did it.

06 M: *arigato.* ((M takes the keychain from Ke's hand))
thank.you
Thanks.

07 Ke: *hu: tte dekita.*
SSW QT can-PST
((I)) did *huu.*

08 M: *hu: tte dekita.*
SSW QT can-PST
((You)) did *huu.*

[Insert Movie 1 approximately here]

M sees the keychain held by Ke and asks him to give it to her (l. 1). Ke then starts blowing on it (l. 2). According to the caregiver, Ke and M recently shared a birthday party. Ke seems to be re-enacting blowing out the candles on his birthday cake by blowing on the keychain. At first glance, Ke's action (blowing) in line 2 appears to be disjunctive with the prior turn, which constitutes the FPP of the request sequence. However, it is still in an appropriate position in response to the mother's request, as Ke was actively demonstrating why he did not immediately give the keychain to M, pre-empting the overt rejection. As M requested that Ke give her the keychain, the preferred response would be for Ke to hand the object to M. Instead, by blowing on the keychain, Ke initiated a new sequence, which may change the frame of interaction from a questionable deed (i.e., holding a keychain) to a more acceptable

activity (i.e., blowing out the imagined candles on his birthday cake).

At first, the meaning of Ke's action is unclear to M. Using a voice slightly infused with laughter, M immediately requested an explanation for Ke's response (l. 3). The sound quality of M's voice and her body posture (i.e., M is still lying down on the couch) indicate that M does not seriously blame Ke for not giving her the keychain. Immediately after M's utterance, Ke proclaims his accomplishment, *dekita*, “((I)) did it”. Note that Ke's action is consistent with his prior action (i.e., blowing) in that he treated the prior action as something that should be done first. It also creates a context in which praise or acknowledgement from M is relevant in the next turn.⁴ Then, prefacing her response with a change-of-state token, *a* “oh”, M acknowledges Ke's action by repeating *dekita*, “((you)) did it” (l. 5). Furthermore, she expresses her appreciation of Ke's blowing, adding *arigato*, “thank you” (l. 6). Ke then underscores his accomplishment by saying *huu tte dekita*, “((I)) did *huu*” (l. 7), which specifies what he did. M then almost completely repeats the utterance in the next turn by saying *huu tte dekita*, “((You)) did *huu*”(l. 8).⁵ In this way, the focus of their activity shifted from the request for the keychain to blowing out the imagined candles, from there to proclaiming an accomplishment, and finally to appreciating this accomplishment. Accordingly, the role of Ke's body changed from the holder of the object, to the blower of the imagined candles, to the achiever, to the object of appreciation.

It should be noted that the original SPP, i.e., to transfer the requested object, was achieved in the background. When Ke says *dekita*, “((I)) did it” (l. 4) and M recognizes and appreciates this (ll. 5 and 6), M takes the keychain from Ke. Thus, M's utterance in line 6, “thank you”, can also be interpreted as appreciation for receiving the requested object. It thus demarcates the successful accomplishment of object transfer as a focused joint activity. In either case (appreciation of Ke's blowing or appreciation of receiving the requested object), M's utterance in line 6 treated Ke's action (either blowing on the keychain or giving it to M) as sequentially appropriate.

In this multi-activity the object transfer was facilitated by the gap in attention between M and Ke. That is, when Ke blew on the keychain, both Ke and M paid attention to

⁴ *Dekita* is the past tense form of *dekiru* “be able to do (something)”. As such, *dekita* contains the meaning of capability, but the focus of the utterances using *dekita* in this example is more on the aspect of accomplishment. Therefore we translated the utterances as “((I))/(you) did it”, rather than “((I))/(you) was/were able to do it”.

⁵ It should be remarked that, in Japanese conversation, subject of sentence is often not manifested when it is obvious from the context. In the above example, this feature allows the mother to express acknowledgement and appreciation by completely repeating the prior utterances by the child.

this action, which evoked an interactional landscape of a virtual and theatrical play situation (i.e., the birthday party). Then, after the focus of their activity shifted to the proclaimed accomplishment and appreciation thereof, Ke's primary focus of attention shifted from the keychain, whereas M remained focused on this object. This example demonstrates the multiple roles that an object can play in interactions. For M, the keychain was an important item that should be kept away from a child, and she therefore requested the object. For Ke, the keychain also worked as an index that invoked a memory shared with M; he used it to avoid a situation in which he could be blamed and created a theatrical situation which M and Ke can enjoy together.

3.2 Features of objects

Several features of the requested object in an object-request sequence are crucial to acceptance of the request. First, the requested object needs to be within reach of the giver. That is, the giver has to actually have access to the requested object to give it to the taker. Moreover, children are often so sensitive about ownership or possession of an item that they may refuse to relinquish it. Caregivers are often concerned about such features of objects when they issue an object request. In example (3) below, a 32-month-old girl, S(Shiho), was playing house in front of her 8-month-old younger brother, Ko(Kosuke). Their father, F, was sitting behind Ko, who grabbed a toy pan to his right. Their mother, M, had been out of the frame, but came close to the rest of the family as S yelled at Ko.

(3) [flyer] (TM_K080227_1)

Ko(0:8), S(2:8), M(mother), F(father)

01 S: *dame::*

IJ

((You)) should not! ((gets the pan back))

02 M: *hhhh*

03 *chotto jaa sawarasete agete Shiho.*

a.little then touch.CAU give-TE PN

let ((him)) touch ((it)) for a while, Shiho.

04 S: *iya:da da:me: (oto-)* ((pushes Ko back))

IJ-COP IJ younger.bro

((I)) don't want, (little.bro-) should [not!]

((four lines are omitted))

09 M: *jaa shiho jaa kosuke no sukina omocha kashite agete:?* ((takes a toy box))

then PN-DIM then PN NOM like-COP toy lend-TE give BEN-TE

Then Shiho, then let Kosuke borrow his favorite toy.

- 10 *nanka kashite agete?* ((puts the toy box in front of S))
something lend-TE BEN-TE
Let ((him)) borrow something?
- 11 *shiho. hai.* ((holds the toy box in front of S))
PN IJ
Shiho. Here you go.
- 12 F: *[hai.* ((takes the toy box from M))
IJ
Here you go.
- 13 S: *[hai.* ((takes away the toy pan from Ko and puts it aside))
IJ
Yes.
- 14 M: *nanka kashite agete?*
something lend-TE BEN-TE
Let ((him)) borrow something?
- 15 S: *hai.*
IJ
Yes.
- 16 (1.0) ((F puts the toy box in the middle of Ko and S))
- 17 F: *hai.*
IJ
Here you go.
- 18 S: ((takes something out of the toy box))
- 19 *kookoku ya. kookoku kookoku kooko:ku. kooko:ku. kooko:ku.* ((Ko starts crawling towards a toy bowl))
flyer PP flyer flyer flyer flyer flyer
((It's)) a flyer. Flyer flyer flyer. Flyer. Flyer.
- 20 *jakajaka:: tte shite mi otouto.*
SSW QT do-TE see younger.brother
play with this ((lit. do JAKAJAKA)), little brother.

[Insert Movie 2 approximately here]

At the beginning of this sequence, S loudly says *dame*, “((You)) should not!”, which implies that Ko’s behavior violates a social norm (l. 1), and Ko returns the toy pan. Next, M asks S to allow Ko to touch the pan (l. 3), saying, “Then let him touch it for a while, Shiho”. S does not comply with this request, saying, *iya:da [da:me: (oto-)*, “((I)) don’t want, (little.bro-) should not!”. This response begins with *iya*, which placed greater focus on the desire of the agent;

that is, she did not want to do what she was told. She then uttered *oto-*, which can be heard as a part of a kin term, *otouto*, (younger brother). This implies that she, S, should be able to give instructions to her younger brother. Then, S pushes Ko back. The use of these utterances and bodily movements indicates that S objects to Ko touching her toy (i.e., the toy pan) and puts him in his place.

Then, M changes the content of her request. She says, “Then Shiho, then let Kosuke borrow his favorite toy.” (l. 9), and then says, “let him borrow something” twice (ll. 10 and 14). These utterances altered the relationships between the relevant actors and the objects in at least the following three ways. First, they acknowledged S’s ownership of the object by using the verb “borrow”. Although the requested “favorite toy” was to be transferred to Ko, M acknowledged that it belonged primarily to S, whom she treated as a generous older sister who was aware of her younger brother’s favorite toy.

Note that M used *V-te ageru* form, in her requests in lines 9, 10, and 14. *V-te ageru* is one of the grammatical devices that form the benefactive voice, derived from a verb *ageru* “give” (Shibatani 1996; Yamada 2004). That is, the action has a beneficiary, a person who benefits from the action. In this example, the agent performing the action was the older child, S, and the beneficiary was the younger child, Ko. As shown in this example, when an older sibling tries to exclude his or her younger sibling, caregivers often make a request using the *V-te ageru* benefactive form, which induces a change in the participation framework (Endo 2013). In the above example, it would have been possible, or even easier, for the parents to hand the toy directly to Ko without asking S anything. However, by asking S for help in facilitating compliance with their request, the parents showed S the appropriate way that she, the older sister, should behave towards her younger sibling. In this way, a conflict regarding object transfer between children provided their caregivers with a good opportunity to promote language socialization.

Second, M’s modification of her request was issued in relation to a focal object other than the toy pan. The positioning of the object is of crucial importance here. While verbalizing her request in lines 9 to 10, M picked up a toy box, moved it towards S, and held it in front of S as if inviting her to take it. S immediately agreed with this offer, at least verbally, saying *hai* (“yes”) (l. 13). At the same time, however, S took the toy pan from Ko and put it aside. M then reiterated the request (l. 14). Again, S verbally agreed with this (l. 15).

On the other hand, F, who was sitting in front of S, took the toy box from M and placed it between Ko and S. The toy box then became the focus of their interaction. This replacement of the toy box made the requested object, namely Ko’s favorite toy, available to

both S and Ko, and thereby established the condition for S to accept the request behaviorally (i.e., by letting Ko borrow a toy).

Third, M's modification of her request allowed S to initiate an alternative pro-moral activity. After F puts the toy box next to S, S starts looking for a toy in the box, and she finds a toy flyer. She removes it from the box, shows it to Ko, and then enthusiastically and rhythmically says, *kookoku ya. kookoku kookoku kooko:ku. kooko:ku. kooko:ku* "It's an flyer. flyer, flyer, flyer. flyer. flyer." (l. 19). She thereby renewed the interactional landscape that provided the contextual point of departure for the following actions. At this point, her attention shifts to the toy flyer, inviting Ko to play with it (*jakajaka:: tte shitemi*, "do JAKAJAKA", uses a sound-symbolic word *jakajaka*, which signifies a loud noise) in line 20. It is plausible that S already knew that Ko liked these sounds. In this case, the modified request made it possible for S, who initially did not accept her younger brother's participation, to demonstrate willingness to play with her younger brother (i.e., to follow the parents' request by introducing the new toy, the toy flyer). On the other hand, Ko's attention was not attracted by the toy flyer. Instead, he started crawling towards a toy bowl, which was on the floor in a direction opposite of that of the toy pan and the toy box (l. 19). Thus, irrespective of S's invitation to play with the toy flyer, Ko shifted his attention from the toy pan.

In this section, we discussed the features of an object that facilitate the acceptance of an object request and makes object transfer possible. We showed that object characterization by the caregiver, and the positioning of that object are particularly important to the child's willingness to comply with the caregiver's request to transfer the object with relative ease.

3.3 Timing, location, and manner of transfer

Object transfer requires that both the giver and the taker engage in a collaborative adjustment of their physical behaviors. When an object is transferred from very young children, the caregivers are usually required to make the adjustments that enable successful object transfer. In this section, we argue that three factors affect the ability to achieve successful object transfer: the timing, location, and manner of transfer. In the next example, a 15-month-old girl, Sr, was sitting in a highchair to which a small tray was connected. A cup containing candies was placed on the tray. The mother was sitting on a chair to the left of Sr, looking at Sr. Sr picked up a candy and stretched out her right arm, holding the candy near M, while looking at M.

(4) [candy] (SB_110419_1)

Sr(1:3), M(mother)

01 ((Sr shows a candy to M))

02 M: *oishii?*

tasty

Is ((it)) tasty?

03 ((M places her right hand under Sr's hand))

04 ((Sr puts the candy to her mouth))

05 M: *YA(h), yana(h) kanji(h).*

IJ bad feeling

OH(h) ((you are)) being(h) mean(h).

06 *kurehen no?* ((M places her right hand next to Sr))

give.NEG PP

((You're)) not going to give ((it to me))?

07 Sr: *hun* ((nods))

IJ

huh

08 M: *kurehen no?*

give-NEG PP

((You're)) not going to give ((it to me))?

09 *kureru to omoikiya.* ((M withdraws her hand, drawing her body back))

give QT think-PAST-PP

((I)) thought ((you)) would give it to me.

10 (1.3)

11 Sr: *uum, uum*

IJ IJ

((Non-linguistic sounds))

12 M:

[un

IJ

yeah

13 *choofdai.* ((M places her right hand next to Sr))

give

Gi[ve ((it to me)).

14 Sr: *[aa*

IJ

((Non-linguistic sounds))

15 ((Sr puts the candy on M's right palm))

16 M: *hai.*

IJ

Yes.

17 M: Q:::
IJ
WOW:::

[Insert Movie 3 approximately here]

Seeing Sr with a candy in her mouth, M says, “Is ((it)) tasty?” while nodding her head slightly (l. 2). Sr keeps showing the candy in her hand to M, who then places her hand under Sr’s hand (l. 3), expecting Sr to put the candy in her (M’s) hand. Sr touches M’s palm slightly but does not release the candy. Sr then quickly returns her hand to her mouth and eats the candy herself (l. 4). Thus, Sr’s action turned out to be showing the candy or making a play offer, rather than giving the candy to M. M says, “Oh(h) ((you are)) being(h) mean(h)”, while laughing and drawing her body back (l. 5).

By showing the candy, Sr established joint attention with M. However, the goal of the action was not shared with M. When Sr put the candy in her mouth, M expressed surprise by loudly expressing, “Oh”. The subsequent laughter indicates that M did not really disapprove of Sr’s action, instead regarding it as funny.

M then says “((You’re)) not going to give ((it to me))?” while smiling and stretching her right hand toward Sr (l. 6). M thus playfully complains about Sr’s not giving her the candy and simultaneously behaviorally asks Sr to give her the candy. Sr immediately says “huh” while nodding (l. 7), which suggests that she regards M’s previous utterance as a question and confirms her intention not to give the candy to M. Next, Sr starts wiggling her body. Seeing this, M reiterates the same phrase she used to ask Sr whether she would give her the candy (l. 8). M then says, “((I)) thought ((you)) would give it to me”, while drawing back her body (l. 9). With these utterances, M again playfully complains to Sr about Sr not giving her the candy, but this time she does not behaviorally request the candy. Rather, M’s body posture conveys that she is withdrawing from the playful interaction.

After a silence for 1.3 seconds (l. 10), Sr produces non-linguistic sounds, “uum, u[um]”, as if requesting further action from M, and then stretches her right hand toward the cup (l. 11). This indicates that Sr wishes to continue the playful interaction. Overlapping with Sr’s utterance, M says *un*, “yes” (l. 12), which serves as an acceptance of Sr’s request to continue to play. M then clearly requests a candy by saying, *choodai*, “Give ((it to me))”, while stretching her hand toward Sr (l. 13). Sr immediately puts the candy in M’s palm while nodding (l. 15). That is, this time M’s request is accepted by Sr, and M simultaneously acknowledges this by saying “Yes” and nodding (l. 16), almost synchronized with Sr’s prior

gesture. M then expresses appreciation for the act of giving by saying “Wow::” in a complimentary tone (l. 17).

In the above example, the young child, Sr, and her mother engaged in a playful exchange through embodied interactions. This was made possible by the mother adjusting her actions during the course of the interactions and promoting the embodied “choreography” of her child’s actions (Tulbert & M. Goodwin, 2011). The act of “giving” by Sr in line 15 was accomplished when the mother requested the candy at an appropriate time (immediately after agreeing to continue playing) and location (quickly putting her hand under the hand in which Sr was holding the candy). Their mutual efforts were gradually better coordinated with each other, establishing an interactional environment facilitative of repetitive playful exchanges. After the above excerpt, Sr was able to repeat the playful exchange of a candy with her mother several times.

In addition to timing and location, the manner of transfer is crucial to the success of an object transfer. In some cases, merely transferring the requested object does not achieve the goal of a CCI. The manner of transfer also matters. In Example (5), M is sitting on the floor while holding her 8-month-old baby (Kt). Her 43-month-old daughter, A, is rolling around on the floor.

(5) [ball] (FM_A080612_1)

Kt(0:8), A(3:7), M(mother)

01 M: *(nee)chan, ano booru:: (.) totte.*
big.sister-DIM that ball take-TE
(Big sis)ter, take that ball.

02 M: *kouchan to isshoni korokoro shiyou.*
PN-DIM with together SSW do-INV
Let ((us)) roll ((it)) together with Kt.

((two lines are omitted))

05 M: *hai, totte.*
IJ take-TE
come on, take it.

06 M: *un, un, hai, koro-* ((A throws the ball to M/Kt))
IJ IJ come.on SSW
yeah, yeah, come on, ro-

07 M: *AAAN. korokoro shite agete.*
IJ SSW do-TE CAU-TE
Uh-oh. Let it roll ((for Kt)).

08 M: *hai korokoro::* ((M rolls the ball to A, A receives it.))

IJ SSW
Now let it roll.

09 M: *kouchan kuru yo booru*. ((A rolls the ball to M/Kt))
PN-DIM come PP ball
Kouchan, the ball is coming.

10 M: *˚kita kita.˚*
come-PST come-PST
((It's)) coming, ((it's)) coming.

11 M: *hai, tchugi, koutchan, Ei!* ((M rolls the ball using Kt's hand))
IJ next PN-DIM IJ
hey, next, Kouchan(('s turn)), Hey!

[Insert Movie 4 approximately here]

At the beginning, M points at a ball and says, “Big (sis)ter, take that ball” (l. 2), whereupon M invites A to participate in the next activity, saying “Let ((us)) roll ((it)) together with Kt”, specifying the suggested partner in the activity (her younger brother, *kouchan*) and the manner of transfer (*korokoro*) in line 2. *Korokoro* refers to rolling a light object such as a ball or an acorn. However, A does not respond appropriately to this invitation and instead throws the ball too forcefully for Kt. Although M manages to catch the ball, she complains about this, saying *AAAN. Korokoro shite agete*, “Uh–oh. Let it roll ((for Kt))”, using the *-te ageru* form (l. 7). The utterance identifies Kt as the beneficiary of A’s act of rolling. M then prompts her to roll it (l. 8), saying “Now let it roll”, again specifying the manner of transfer by using the word *korokoro*.

Note that the Japanese language is known for its rich variety of sound-symbolic words (SSWs). With their high referential specificity, Japanese SSWs often collocate with verbs, denoting the manner of action (Akita, 2012). SSWs are said to have the effect of making the utterance or passage joyful because their highly specific meaning renders a description vivid. They are also used in child-directed speech when a child has a limited vocabulary (Suzuki, 2013). In lines 2, 6, 7 and 8 in the above example, M uses a sound-symbolic word, *korokoro*, not only to specify the manner of transfer but also to make the transfer seem as if it will be fun.

A then rolls the ball to M and Kt in line 9. Seeing this, M says to Kt that the ball is coming (l. 9). She then whispers to Kt “((It's)) coming, ((it's)) coming”, using infant-directed speech (l. 10). Then, in line 11, M says to Kt, “hey, next, Kouchan(('s turn))”, which is a directive to roll the ball to A. While holding Kt’s hands, she continues speaking and acting for Kt in the

following exchanges, finally achieving mutual understanding among the participants, including Kt (Takada, 2013). In this way, M established an empathic participation framework characterized by a nesting structure in which M played with A (older sister), who played with Kt (younger brother). Notably, the nesting structure operated both verbally (i.e., via the production format of the utterances) and spatially (i.e., via the configuration of body positions).

In the above example, which is similar to example (4), M promoted the embodied choreography of Kt's actions by manipulating the location of his body (nesting position and sitting posture) and adjusting the timing of his utterance (issuing reported speech in accordance with the movement of the ball). M thereby established the interactional environment in which A could understand the appropriate manner for transferring the ball to her younger sibling. Moreover, through rolling the ball gently, A contributed to building a playful atmosphere that included her infant sibling.

4. Socialization into Japanese culture through object transfer

The analysis in the preceding section indicated that distinctive cultural practices, including individual parenting styles, are progressively nurtured in CCIs. In this section, we further examine how the sequence of object requests constructs the culturally shared morality of Japan.

Object requests are often made to resolve troubles that occur in the course of CCIs. The definition of "trouble" is influenced not only by the function of the object but also by the cultural norms regarding the object. In CCIs, young children focus primarily on function, whereas caregivers often introduce the element of culture. Later, by setting a trouble in the frame of activity ordinarily governed by cultural norms, children may elicit help from caregivers to solve the task at hand (see ex. (1), in which the child demonstrates that she could not pack the folding papers in a culturally appropriate manner). Such shift occurs not only through a general maturation process but also via the development of various communicative competencies, that is, the knowledge a speaker requires to function as a member of a given social group (Hymes, 1972). In this respect, the analysis of object-request sequences disentangles the relationships among the various codes of communicative conduct that are used to foster communicative competence. The use of more codes of communicative conduct increases the complexity of the organization of the interactive field. For instance, in example (5), while exchanging the ball with the child, the caregiver effectively made use of various kinds of semiotic resources, such as rich SSWs in

Japanese, her and the infant's body postures that display their affective stances, reported speech that convey the infant's voice, and nesting position that spatially structures the relationship among the participants. Such practices sometimes result in the adoption of a culturally distinctive form of mutual understanding (see ex. (5); also see Takada, 2013).

Trouble resolution is just a type of strategy among various others that facilitate cooperative engagement in everyday activities. In order to elicit cooperative action from children, caregivers often choose a particular object, which facilitates joint attention, and manipulate the location of the object to serve it as the target of an object request. Caregivers who establish such situations often attempt to shape the activity into a culturally appropriate form (see ex. (3), in which the caregiver guides the older sister to play peacefully with her younger brother, and ex. (5), in which the caregiver requests that the child gently roll the ball), using culturally distinctive devices. For instance, the grammatical form of Japanese *V-te ageru* codifies the presence of a beneficiary. When used in a request to an older child, it often rests on the assumption that his/her younger sibling is the beneficiary and thereby effectively conveys culturally appropriate norms, such as "the older sister should be nice to her younger brother." This is also reflected in the Japanese lexicalization which identifies both the gender and the relative age of siblings (see ex. (3) and ex. (5) for the actual use of these linguistic forms.).

On the other hand, children's responses to the object request also reflect culturally formed morality. Children sometimes engage in alternative pro-moral activity (e.g., virtual birthday party in ex. (2), and sound play in ex. (3)) based on memories so as to avoid actions that do not accord with their desire or preference. Or children may prefer issuing a variety of modified responses and may thereby activate various cultural contexts. Consequently, object transfer in CCIs is often associated with repetitive play (see ex. (4), in which the child repeatedly engaged in a playful exchange of a candy with her mother, and ex. (5), in which the child and the caregiver repetitively rolled a ball). It is known that many cultures have developed diverse forms of repetitive play for or among children (e.g., Goodwin, 2006a; Moore, 2012).

As Ingold (2001) suggests, an ecological account of skilled practice that considers the practitioner's bodily movement as a "movement of attention" is needed to fully understand the dynamics of object-request sequences. Object transfer provides insights into how the body of a child is related to the environment. In other words, through manipulating an object, the child chooses how s/he dwells in the world (Ingold, 2011). When an object is transferred from a child to the caregiver, the focus of joint attention often shifts from the side of the child to that of the caregiver. At the same time, by reacting to the context shaped by

the prior utterance, the child renews the interactional landscape that provides the contextual point of departure for the action(s) that follow it (Heritage, 1984: 18) (see ex. (2), in which the child's action of blowing evoked the context of birthday party, and ex. (3), in which the child initiated a new pro-moral activity (i.e., playing with her younger brother) when she picked up the toy flyer). Moreover, object exchange facilitates the adoption of the perspective of another who is present or, sometimes, of others who are absent (e.g., an unseen baby; see Takada (2013: 429–430)). In these practices, children are not only socialized into the given community's habitus, but also contribute to build the community's habitat (Ochs et al., 2005) (see ex. (4), in which the child's vocal sounds and gestures contributed to the establishment of an interactional environment that facilitated a repetitive playful exchange, and ex. (5), in which the child and her mother jointly created a playful atmosphere in which her infant sibling was involved).

5. Concluding remarks

Following the tradition of recent studies of family relationships (M. Goodwin, 2006b), this paper examined the process and practices that constitute Japanese family and culture. Object requests are effective ways for caregivers to facilitate the embodied choreography of children's attention in the structure of an everyday activity (Tulbert & M. Goodwin, 2011). Our analysis indicated that object-request sequences allow caregivers and children to collaboratively create important life events even before children have become fully acquainted with verbal exchanges. We clarified the following points regarding the research questions outlined at the beginning of this paper.

First, we examined how young children articulate the reactions that are involved in object transfer. When a child encounters a problem and the caregiver makes an object request to solve it, the child is apt to see the caregiver as offering help. Consequently, the request often elicits compliance. In contrast, when the child is unaware of a problem, he or she may not accept the request but instead may respond in a way that evades possible blame. To avoid complaints and resistance in response to such a request, the caregiver should issue the request at an appropriate time and location.

The features of the object in question also play an important role in the achievement of successful object transfer. Indeed, it is important that the requested object is sufficiently accessible to the giver, in our case, the children. It should be remembered that the characterization of an object by the caregiver is sometimes more important than are the immanent features of the object. Successful object transfer is facilitated by the caregiver's

acknowledgement that the child owns the object and by his or her provision of an alternative focal object.

The present study also identified the features of object transfer that convey culturally shared morality. In CCIs, young children are apt to focus primarily on function, whereas caregivers often introduce the element of culture. Later, children begin to make use of cultural norms to elicit help from caregivers and solve the problem at hand. Such practices sometimes result in the adoption of a culturally distinctive form of mutual understanding. In brief, transferring an object while promoting cooperative activity is tantamount to adjusting the participation framework, choosing what to say and how to say it, displaying an affective stance, and thereby organizing interactions with reference to the culturally appropriate norms.

To conclude, this paper clarified that both children and caregivers actively choose their strategy in accordance with the unfolding horizon of their interaction. Object-request sequences are venues for their moment-to-moment intersubjective negotiations in which they (re)construct the activity.

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Figure 1 F stretches his arm to Ay, saying *kashite mi* “Let me borrow it” (Example (1): line 7).



Figure 2 Ay gives the box to F (Example (1): line 9).