

Problems in Explaining Use of *desu/masu* Forms: Evidence from a Small Community Classroom

Rika YAMASHITA
rikayam111@gmail.com

Keywords: style-shifting, politeness, pragmatics, Japanese, honorifics, code-switching, register,
desu/masu

Abstract

Desu/masu forms in Japanese are considered part of the ‘formal’ or ‘polite’ style in Japanese, often referred to as honorifics. However, studies have shown that *desu/masu* forms are not always used as addressee honorifics (Cook 1996, 1997, 2012), and that they index the ‘disciplined mode of self’ or the ‘public self’ of the speaker. By analyzing *desu/masu* use of pupils in a small community classroom which contrasts with normative uses in previous studies, this paper addresses the problems in applying such notions and aims to contribute towards a better explanation of ‘unconventional’ *desu/masu*.

1. *Desu/masu* forms: issues

1.1 Aim of the study

Desu/masu forms in Japanese are considered part of the ‘formal’ or ‘polite’ style, often referred to as honorifics. However, *desu/masu* is not always used as honorifics. It can appear in informal conversations with family and friends, without the honorific sense. Previous studies have addressed this ambiguous use of *desu/masu* use and non-use. One of the major explanation was that *desu/masu* indexes the disciplined mode of self, or the ‘public self’, while the non-use of it indexes the innate self (Cook 1996, 1997, 2012). Although this view is a leap forward from treating all *desu/masu* as honorifics, challenges remain in applying to all instances of *desu/masu* use. This paper analyzes *desu/masu* use of pupils in a small classroom setting. Pupils use *desu/masu* as a classroom register in this particular setting. Some are in line with previous studies, while others are slightly divergent. In this paper, I attempt to move the discussion of *desu/masu* beyond politeness or ‘public self’, which could also advance the analysis of *desu/masu* use and its non-use outside this particular context.

1.2 *Desu/masu* forms

Desu and *masu* are often considered part of *keitai* (honorific style) or *teineitai* (polite style) in Japanese. *Desu* is a copula, while *masu* is a form added to verbs. *Deshita* and *mashita* are their respective past forms. All these forms appear at sentence-final position. Examples of these forms and their negative forms are shown below.

- (a) *Muhanmado wa gakusei* [*desu/deshita / dewa arimasei / dewa arimasei deshita*]
 Muhammad [is/was/is not/was not] a student.
- (b) *Muhanmado wa gakkō ni* [*iki-masu/iki-mashita/iki-masen/iki-masen deshita*]
 Muhammad [will go/went/will not go/did not go] to school.

On the other hand, when sentences end without *desu* or *masu* forms, they are called *jotai* ('ordinary' style). The verb form used in this style is often called the 'plain' form. Examples are shown below.

- (a') *Muhanmado wa gakusei* [*da/ 0 /datta/dewanai/janai/dewanakatta/janakatta*]
 Muhammad [is/is/was/is not/is not/was not/was not] a student.
- (b') *Muhanmado wa gakkō ni* [*iku/itta/ikanai/ikanakatta*]
 Muhammad [will go/went/will not go/did not go] to school.

1.3 *Desu/masu* as a register

Previous studies refer to *desu/masu* as 'style', 'register', 'speech level', 'honorifics' and so on (see Miyatake 2009 for a review of all these different terms). This paper will regard *desu/masu* as a register, and refer to it as '*desu/masu*' or '*desu/masu* forms' (DM for shorthand). Here, I take after Agha's definition of a register –“a linguistic repertoire that is associated, culture internally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices” (Agha 1999: 216). In my data of pupils in a small community classroom, pupils were using *desu/masu* as a classroom register, as it is expected in mainstream Japanese schools. They engage in classroom activities, both in classroom content as well as classroom discipline, which are collaboratively accomplished through interaction among teachers and other pupils.

There are several reasons for choosing register instead of all other terms. One is that I intend to approach *desu/masu* forms as something other than honorifics or politeness strategy. *Desu/masu* forms are not the only means to indicate politeness or formality; honorific verbs and other non-*desu/masu* ending forms are in the *keitai* or *teineitai* category. Although *desu/masu* forms as above are only a part of the *keitai* or *teneitai*, they are often referred to as addressee honorifics. *Desu/masu* is sometimes not addressee honorifics at all, but a preferred register in particular domains and situations, such as some literary styles. Such association is explained culturally as connected with honorifics and 'formality' that the Japanese speakers need to adhere to (Ide and Yoshida 1999).

The second reason is that it is problematic to treat *desu/masu* forms as a full-fledged honorific code, as a mismatch in the politeness level within an utterance or a sentence can often occur in everyday interactions. Following examples show the mismatch between the *desu/masu* and the lexical items used in the rest of the sentence regarding politeness.

- (c) *temee no sei desu.* (It is your ((derogatory)) fault + DM)
- (d) *maji yabai desu.* (I'm in flipping trouble + DM)

In (c), *temee* is a derogatory second person pronoun. It is difficult to say if *temee* can collocate with

desu/masu, if one considers *desu/masu* as a polite form. Scholars in politeness would consider that this sentence is at a lower end of the politeness continuum, or a sarcastic offensive use of *desu/masu*. Sentence (d) is heard far more commonly in everyday discourse, and can yield some examples on the Internet. *Maji yabai* is a very colloquial expression which means “very cool (as in ‘trendy’)” or “in a very troublesome situation”. This highly informal and slang-like expression does not match the formality level expected from *desu/masu*. Even in such cases, linguists would automatically assign these as a sentence in *keitai* or *teineitai*, because of the *desu/masu* form at the end of the sentence. Therefore, *keitai* or *teineitai* is defined almost only by the existence of *desu/masu* forms, rather than the politeness level or formality level of the sentence as a whole.

Thirdly, the reason why I would not like to use the term ‘style’ is the confusion it may cause in cross-linguistic discussions. Sociolinguistics today do not treat ‘style’ as an attention-based linguistic continuum as Labov defined. Rather, it is treated more as individual choice of linguistic features which contribute strongly to speakers’ self-identification to particular groups or symbols (Rickford and Eckert 2001, Coupland 2007).

In this paper, *desu/masu* forms will include *desu/masu* and their conjugated forms, *kudasai* (‘please’), *gomennasai* (a politer form of apology). This is because each form has equivalent plain forms, *chodai* and *gomen*, which are used far more frequently in informal situations and relations. However, not all of these appear in my data.

1.4 When do speakers switch between *desu/masu* and plain forms?

Ideologically, it is believed that a speaker would commit to either using *desu/masu* or the plain form throughout, in a particular speech setting. This is because Japanese speakers are explicitly taught to keep to the *teineitai* or *jotai*, without mixing the two in the norms of the written Japanese. Keeping one’s speech in *keitai* or *teineitai* is also expected, where the situation is highly formal, or speaking to someone of a higher social status. Speakers’ failure to do so could invite social sanctions. However, one of the problems that many have tried to explain is the seemingly varied choice of honorifics and *desu/masu* at intimate or not as highly formal situations.

One of the simplest explanations of *desu/masu* use is that speaking in *desu/masu* indicates speech towards an outsider, where as non-*desu/masu* use indicates speech towards an insider or to oneself (Ikuta and Ide 1983, Shibatani 1990). Ikuta and Ide (1983: 80) categorized situations, what they call politeness levels, where one would use polite forms throughout, plain forms throughout, and mix the two. In the third category, they listed everyday conversations, small talks, chats, interviews and debates, lectures (monologue ones such as university lectures), narratives, and reports. They also give descriptions of three factors that determine the choice in politeness levels:

- (1) Social context, where the basic politeness level is determined.
- (2) The speakers’ ‘psychological attitude’ (*shinteki taido*), which includes speakers’ emotional involvement in the addressee or the topic discussed
- (3) The management of discourse (*danwa no tenkai*), where the speaker controls the argument and logic for better clarity.

‘Psychological attitude’ in their terms includes many things, such as ‘familiarity, agreement, support,

and empathy towards the addressee' (1983: 81). They seem to say that a downward shift in politeness level 'could make the addressee feel relaxed in, or more focused on the conversation' (ibid). On the other hand, an upward shift in politeness level involves distancing the psychological distance – which expresses 'formal feelings and the attitude not to disturb the hearer's private space' (ibid). According to them, such attitude 'avoids troublesome utterance and continue with the conversation without offending the hearer' (ibid).

Some scholars attempted to explain *desu/masu* choice from the politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), in communication between adults (e.g. Okamoto 1999, Usami 2001, Mimaki 2002). Others took various qualitative approaches to explain generic pragmatic rule that determines speakers' *desu/masu* use. Switches between *desu/masu* and non-*desu/masu* can also be observed within a public conversation between two adults (Ikuta 1983), in hierarchical and professional relationships such as professor-student academic consultations (Cook 2012), and in hierarchical but intimate relationships such as caregiver-child interactions (Cook 1996, 1997). They explained that *desu/masu* can be used to indicate interpersonal psychological distance (Ikuta 1983), and intrapersonal psychological distance (Cook 1997), the switching between the public self and the innate self (Cook 1996, 1997).

Out of these, the most useful explanation is that *desu/masu* indexes 'the disciplined mode of self for public presentation', while the plain form indexes 'spontaneous innate mode' (Cook 1996, 1997, 2012). Cook's dichotomy can explain politeness-related uses of *desu/masu* as well as those not related to it. Moreover, the two modes could also explain the use of *desu/masu* by parents and teachers, as well as children and pupils. Cook also discussed language socialization, the ways in which children become socialized into using Japanese. She described the *happyoo* (speech presentation) activity in an elementary school classroom, both teachers and pupils used *desu/masu* (Cook 1996). The *happyoo* as an activity was accomplished by teachers' using *desu/masu* as they take the role as a teacher, and pupils' used *desu/masu* as the presenter, both indexing the disciplined mode of self for public presentation. Cook also studied children's *desu/masu* use at home, which indexed the children's fulfillment of responsibilities as a family member (Cook 1997).

1.5 Codeswitching and style choice in classroom settings

Discourse in classroom context where two languages or registers have been studied worldwide in its right. Classroom interaction involves a specific exchange structure different from daily conversations, where speakers accomplish their respective roles as teachers or students (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). Teachers and students have specific types of speech which controls and manages the classroom activities through discourse, in explicit ways (such as direct instructions) and by meta-communication (Stubbs 1983).

Because the classroom is an institution, some believe that classes are conducted thoroughly in the formal register. In reality, both teachers and pupils do use plain forms or colloquial registers, along with the formal register assigned to the class. This applies to many classrooms cross-culturally; in *desu/masu* and its non-use in Japan (Cook 1996, Moro 1997, Okamoto 1997), between the standard and the local varieties (Blom and Gumperz 1972, Moro 1997) and between the target language and the local language (Lin 1990). All of these studies show the tendency that the general instruction towards the whole class are

conducted in the classroom register (often the formal register), whereas individual instructions or the follow-up discussions were led in the other language (often the other register). Rhetorical questions and certain interactions in classroom for both teachers and pupils, the marking of beginning and endings of classes and school day may often be carried out in the ‘formal’ or ‘academic’ register. Use of the informal register is frequent between teachers and pupils, at other times, even within the class time. These studies tend to focus on teachers’ shifting to one register or another is an ongoing act of controlling the classroom situation where instructions and those who follow instructions are created and tend to focus on pupils who follow the rules as full participants according to the classroom norm.

Findings on *desu/masu* use in classroom do not contradict with studies mentioned in 1.4. Okamoto (1997: 49-50) lists four types of provisions under specifying situations in classroom *desu/masu* use. Two of them are “interpersonal relations” (such as speaker’s desire to maintain a distance from the addressee, or to show that the speaker has a command in the language, but in Okamoto’s classroom, it is about insider/outsider), and “situation” (the speaker’s definition of the situation as formal), which she took from Kumatoriya (1994). Then she adds two other for classroom discourse; “addressee (whether the addressee is the whole class or individuals)” and “self (the speaker speaks from their role as a teacher/pupil or as an individual outside the role)”. Okamoto also provides four points as a general conclusion on classroom *desu/masu* use that teachers and pupils use *desu/masu* forms to successfully do class activities, in a ritualistic meta communicative utterances, teachers use *desu/masu* to control or restrict pupils’ utterances, and encourages speaking by plain forms. Also, teachers and pupils unofficially negotiate linguistic acts that may interfere with classroom activities, such as pupils’ demands to the teachers or refusal of teachers’ instructions. Meanwhile, teachers could control classroom activities by using *desu/masu* as an authority (1997: 49)

2. Data

2.1 Setting

The sound-recorded data, of approximately 36 hours in total across 25 days, was collected to analyze codeswitching involving Japanese, English, and Urdu (Yamashita 2016), during the daily evening program for children provided in a mosque in a Tokyo suburb, where English and the Qur’an were taught. In pupils’ utterances, 119 tokens of *desu/masu* forms were found. This very low frequency may be related to some informality of the class, the closeness of the social relations, and the age of the children. It is difficult to specify the addressee of each utterance in children’s classroom discourse. Previous studies have shown that pupils’ *desu/masu* utterances are within the public realm of classroom discourse (Cook 1996, 1997; Okamoto 1997), and not addressee honorifics. We can see that some were towards teachers, when the pupils specifically call out for the teachers. However, some were towards other pupils, uttered in contexts where the teacher was absent, and many other cannot be identified as one or the other.

Instead of rigidly arranged individual desks and chairs at Japanese day schools, pupils set up the long foldable desk just before class starts, on the mosque carpet. The space used mainly for prayers and other community activities (such as meals) is used as a temporary classroom. Unlike day school, pupils can consume snacks and drinks, and can bring in comic books, toys, mobile phones, and game devices. This atmosphere makes the mosque classroom somewhere between their day school, which is much more

institutional, and the home setting. It is where the school culture of the Japanese day school and the culture of the community meet.

As a local religious community in a non-Muslim majority society, the teachers, pupils, parents, and other members of the community often gather at the mosque to attend lectures, pray, organize events, religious lectures, and classes, or just socialize. The majority of the community was South Asians, mostly Pakistanis. However, Japanese Muslims and Muslims of other nationalities (such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Sudan, etc.) also participated in the mosque activities, as well as took part in organizing the community. Many services were available in English, Urdu, and Japanese.

2.2 Participants

The participants were four Pakistani pupils and two South Asian teachers (a Rohingya and a South Indian). The pupils had lived and schooled in Japan for 8 years or longer, and three pupils—Jamila, Khareem, and Laila—were siblings. Jamila was the eldest, who was 12-13 at the time of recording. Khareem was 11-12, Laila was 9-10. Imran, who was part of the second set of the recording, was 12. All of them were brought up in households where both parents are Pakistanis. All pupils used Japanese the most frequently, and considered themselves better speaker in Japanese than in Urdu or English.

All the pupils were L1 Urdu speakers, but neither the author nor other L1 speakers of Japanese noticed differences in the children's Japanese style-shifting from that of the L1 Japanese speakers. The pupils' parents used Urdu at home, but some, especially fathers, occasionally used Japanese as well. The parents, especially the fathers, have some knowledge in Japanese polite style. Although they may shift between the polite and the plain styles, they may not use them the same way as L1 speakers of Japanese. The parents may use *desu/masu* to both adults and children. They may also mix *desu/masu* and plain forms, at different occasions from how the L1 speakers would mix them. The mothers do not speak a lot of Japanese. With this background, it is highly likely that the pupils learned *desu/masu* use through socialization through school, playgroups, and adults' interactions at the mosque. Unlike previous studies on elementary school pupils who showed less social obligation to use *desu/masu* forms consistently (Cook 1996, Okazaki et al. 2015), the pupils consistently used *desu/masu* in interaction with the researcher, indicating that they had already acquired the social norm to speak to unfamiliar adults in *desu/masu* style.

The teachers used English, Japanese, and Urdu for instruction. Mrs. Bilquis, the English teacher, did not use any *desu/masu*, and tended to use English for main classroom instructions, Urdu and Japanese for some individual and behavioral warnings. Mr. Ali, the Qur'an teacher, did not use English during class, and used Urdu and Japanese in both *desu/masu* forms and non-*desu/masu* forms. Mr. Ali's use of *desu/masu* did not resemble that of previous studies of *desu/masu* use of L1 speaker teachers. This is due to the nature of the classroom activity as well as the different pragmatic norm he had as an L2 Japanese speaker. Most of the instructions he gave were "Read the Qur'an" or "Hurry", and therefore did not have the "question-answer-evaluation" format that were observed in most classroom discourse settings (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Stubbs 1983, Okamoto 1997).

3. *Desu/masu* as pupils in the classroom

In this section, I will provide examples of *desu/masu* use in class. As a means to play the pupils' role and fulfill their responsibilities as pupils to learn and behave properly, the pupils use *desu/masu*. Section 3.1 shows how pupils announce their actions to continue with the class under teachers' instruction and control. Then, section 3.2 discusses pupils' use of *desu/masu* for apologies and promises to be a good pupil, when their non-normative behavior becomes an issue. Contrastively, section 3.3 discusses pupils' *desu/masu* use for utterances where pupils' are not fulfilling their responsibilities nor behaving well.

3.1 *Desu/masu* as a school register

This section discusses *desu/masu* use in the 'official' discourse in class—the utterances that manage classroom activity. The following two examples show how pupils like using *desu/masu* to announce their activity status, their finished actions, and upcoming actions. These announcements seem to prompt the teachers to give them new instruction or permission. In (1), Jamila announces that she finished the required class task. This announcement of her finished action prompts the teacher to acknowledge her current progress as a pupil, and therefore proceed to give the next task, or to allow her to take a break. The display of the disciplined self (Cook 1997) may fit well in this example, as Jamila is fulfilling the responsibility as a pupil, which is to finish her task.

(1) I've finished [AC466]

01 Jamila; *sensei owarimashita* (DM)

01 Jamila; *Teacher, I've finished* (DM)

In addition to finished actions, pupils need to communicate to the teacher of their next action, again requiring acknowledgement or permission. In (2), Imran announces that he would go to the bathroom. Pupils are conventionally allowed to go to the bathroom, with permission. This utterance legitimizes Imran to stand up and go out of the classroom. He accomplishes his responsibility as pupils to stay under teacher's surveillance, and to ask permission when he needs to withdraw himself from the classroom temporarily.

(2) I'll go to the washroom [AA598-599]

01 Imran; *sensei:*

02 (3.0)

03 Imran; washroom *ittekimasu* (DM)

01 Imran; *Teacher*

02 (3.0)

03 Imran; *I'll go to the washroom.* (DM)

Like in mainstream Japanese schools, pupils may use *desu/masu* forms to discuss academic content publicly, as in (3) below. The teacher asks Jamila to read what she wrote as an answer (lines 01-02). Mrs.

Bilquis tells Jamila that her answer was wrong (lines 03-04), and comments on the mistake, and urges her to give the correct answer. Imran interrupts this interaction at line 08 in *desu/masu*, to show that he knows the correct answer while Jamila doesn't.

(3) That is wrong [BB462-471]

01 Mrs. Bilquis; Jamila, read the answer.

02 Jamila; *nmnn* "Mrs. Wilson did took her cat with her ####."

03 Mrs. Bilquis; hn.

04 Mrs. Wilson took, did took, no. It's wrong.

05 You don't have to use did.

06 took

07 "Mrs. Wilson took the cat, with her?"

08 Imran; *chigaimasu (DM), chigaimasu (DM), B desu (DM)*

09 Mrs. Bilquis; no

10 Imran; *kaitearimasu (DM)*

01 Mrs. Bilquis; Jamila, read the answer.

02 Jamila; *nmnn* "Mrs. Wilson did took her cat with her ####."

03 Mrs. Bilquis; hn.

04 Mrs. Wilson took, did took, no. It's wrong.

05 You don't have to use did.

06 took

07 "Mrs. Wilson took the cat, with her?"

08 Imran; *(That) is wrong (DM), (that) is wrong (DM), it's B (DM)*

09 Mrs. Bilquis; no

10 Imran; *It's written (DM)*

The *desu/masu* register does not just cover the public announcement of pupils' actions or their opinions in the academic discussion. It can also be used for requests to the teachers on non-academic classroom matters.

In example (4), Imran asks the teacher to reprimand Jamila, by a rhetorical question "Is Jamila a teacher?" (lines 04 and 06). Imran implies that Jamila is not a teacher but a pupil, and therefore she should concentrate in class and do some work (line 08). Imran asks this question to the teacher so that the teacher would tell her to do the classroom task.

In my data, pupils sometimes indirectly ask the teachers to chastise or punish other pupils who do not seem to be following the classroom expectations as pupils. Whether this counts as an 'official' classroom discourse or not is debatable. In Okamoto's definition, this would be outside the 'official' as it deals with the possible interference of class, and thus plain forms would be used by teachers and pupils. But interpreting the *desu/masu* use here suggests an alternative view. The pupils' utterances and behavior here may not be 'official', but pupils seem to accomplish a kind of responsibility through them. Previous

studies did not discuss classroom norms in detail, but such “responsibilities” that pupils accomplish through utterances may need to be defined ethnographically in each social context even in a linguistic analysis like this. Meanwhile, Imran’s use of *desu/masu* here could also be related to the authority and legitimacy given to pupils as they use *desu/masu*.

(4) Is Jamila a teacher? [BD2 698-705]

01 Mr. Ali; *o ima oboeta?*

02 Khareem; *un un*

03 Mr. Ali; *ato wa, kore ne, tatoeba kore ne, chotto mite*

04 Imran; *sensei jamira tte sensei nandesukaa? (DM)*

05 Mr. Ali; nn?

06 Imran; *jamira tte sensei nandesuka? (DM)*

07 Mr. Ali; *jamira, jami*

08 Imran; *sokoni suwatteru shii, neteru shii, nanka okashii shii,*

01 Mr. Ali; *uh have you learned?*

02 Khareem; *uh-huh*

03 Mr. Ali; *the rest, is this, for example this, look for a moment*

04 Imran; *teacher, is Jamila a teacher? (DM)*

05 Mr. Ali; nn?

06 Imran; *Is Jamila a teacher? (DM)*

07 Mr. Ali; *Jamila, Jami-*

08 Imran; *(she’s) sitting there, sleeping, and somehow strange*

The uses from (1) to (4) are all related to activities that the pupils engage in class. These were used to accomplish classroom tasks, and could be said that they are within the uses of *desu/masu* as a school register.

3.2 *Desu/masu* as a promise to be ‘good’ pupils

The following examples differ from those in 3.1 in the sense that they include apologies for the failure to fulfill one’s responsibilities as pupils. Pupils use *desu/masu* in their defensive or apologetic response to reprimands by teachers or other pupils for their misbehavior.

Mrs. Bilquis is scolding pupils in both examples (5) and (6), and pupils respond to her scolding by apologizing. While Mrs. Bilquis threatens to call pupils’ parents (as pupils fear their parents’ scoldings more than teachers’) Jamila simply says “I’m sorry” in *desu/masu*. Conventional explanation of *desu/masu* may assert that pupils show respect to the teachers and know that they should use *gomennasai* instead of *gomen* in such cases. However, there is more to explore when we examine the uses in its context. In example (6), Imran says “*ima modorimasu* (I will get back to my seat now)” in *desu/masu*. This is similar to the announcement of pupils’ actions, as seen in example (2). While (2) was an example

of asking for permission, Imran is announcing this here to show that he promises to fulfill his role as a pupil. In fact, example (5) can also be interpreted as a promise rather than a genuine apology, as it is very likely that Jamila is trying to dissuade Mrs. Bilquis from calling her parents, which may be possible by repenting her actions and becoming a good pupil from then onwards. These examples fit well with Cook's view. In Cook's data, children made promises to the adults, while indexing the responsibilities the children have as members of the family (1996: 182). The *desu/masu* forms here index the responsibilities the pupils have as the participants of the classroom.

(5) I'm sorry [B420-421]

01 Mrs. Bilquis; *ab'ii main abbuu ko fon kartii tum log ye karoNge to*

02 Jamila; *suimasen* (DM)

01 Mrs. Bilquis; *Now I am going to phone [your parents] if you are [going to continue] doing that.*

02 Jamila; *I'm sorry* (DM)

(6) I will return to my seat now [AC2-5]

01 Mrs. Bilquis; Khareem!

02 Khareem; *kore boku no seki*

03 Mrs. Bilquis; Imran!

04 Imran; *a gomennasai* (DM)

05 *ima modorimasu* (DM)

01 Mrs. Bilquis; Khareem!

02 Khareem; *This is my seat*

03 Mrs. Bilquis; Imran!

04 Imran; *oh I'm sorry* (DM)

05 *I will get back (to my seat) now* (DM)

Example (7) below is different from the previous two in that (1) it is not the teacher who is reprimanding but another pupil, and (2) it does not involve words of apology. However, again it is about the pupil promising to be good. Laila tells the teacher that Jamila is doing something unrelated to classroom task. Jamila gives a cry of surprise, and immediately says she "understood". What is "understood" by her is very likely the norms that Jamila needs to abide by and responsibilities she has as a pupil in the classroom. By implying that she now understands the importance of following class rules and fulfilling the responsibilities as a pupil, she promises in *desu/masu*.

(7) I understood very well [B670-671]

01 Laila; *sensei; jami wa eigo no yatsu wo yomou to shitete, sakki kara nooto wo yondetandaa*

02 Jamila; *hiet, yoku wakarimashita*

01 Laila; *Teacher, (I now) see that as Jamila was trying to read English stuff, she was reading the notebook.*

02 Jamila; *ugh, I understood very well.*

3.3 *Desu/masu* allowing pupils to be ‘bad’ pupils

Section 3.2 showed instances where pupils responded in *desu/masu* for actions normative to the classroom activity, to fulfill their responsibilities as pupils. In such sense, pupils could be showing their disciplined self, or the presentable self. However, pupils also used *desu/masu* for actions which seem contrary to the fulfillment of pupils’ responsibilities.

In example (8), Laila is expected to answer the task at hand—a question in the English textbook. Here, she rejects answering by saying “*wakarimassen*”, but with a stress in “*sen*”. Also, this “*wakarimassen*” is uttered slowly and very articulately, sounding “*wa-ka-ri-ma-sen*”. Despite the polite and formal nature of the form, this articulation could be taken as an overemphasis, and as a result, may risk being interpreted as rude, as pupils are expected to try to answer at least.

(8) I don’t know [B480-482]

01 Mrs. Bilquis; Okay Laila answer the first question. “What did Talha liked to do?”

02 Laila; *wakarimassen (DM)*

03 Mrs. Bilquis; “Read the passage and find the answer.”

01 Mrs. Bilquis; Okay Laila answer the first question. “What did Talha liked to do?”

02 Laila; *I don’t know (DM).*

03 Mrs. Bilquis; “Read the passage and find the answer.”

In (9), three pupils explicitly show their reluctance to study—two in *desu/masu* form and another in the plain form. Mrs. Bilquis is trying to start the class, telling the pupils to sit down and be ready for the class, but Khareem was away. Khareem finally came, and Mrs. Bilquis asks Jamila and Khareem to come to her and collect a sheet. Jamila says she wants to sleep indirectly indicating her reluctance to study. Mrs. Bilquis disapproves her attitude (line 04). Khareem and Laila also join in expressing their reluctance to study (lines 05 and 06), which Mrs. Bilquis also disapproves (line 07).

(9) We want to sleep [BE 85-91]

01 Mrs. Bilquis; *aa* Jamila, Khareem

02 Jamila; *sensei watashi mou netai desu (DM)*

03 <sound of the door>

04 Mrs. Bilquis; *uun, dame*

05 Khareem; *ore mo netai*

06 Laila; *watashi mo tsukareta desu (DM)*

07 Mrs. Bilquis; *dame*

- 01 Mrs. Bilquis; *Come*, Jamila, Khareem
02 Jamila; *Teacher, I want to sleep now.* (DM)
03 <sound of the door>
04 Mrs. Bilquis; *Uh-uh, no.*
05 Khareem; *I want to sleep too.*
06 Laila; *I am tired too.* (DM)
07 Mrs. Bilquis; *No.*

Here, we see that three pupils are expressing their reluctance to study, which would be against the norms and responsibilities of pupils in the class. Pupils are conforming to the social role as pupils to some extent, by at least giving a response to the teacher rather than ignoring her. Why do pupils do this? This looks like what Japanese may call ‘*amae*’—when the dependent (child, pupils, etc.) expects indulgence from their caregiver. ‘*Amae*’ is the indulgent dependence displayed by the children to evoke ‘motherly affection’ from the addressee (Doi 1979). Pupils express their reluctance to study not necessarily to defy and challenge the teachers’ authority. Rather, they do this to ask for some mercy and have the class shortened, or the tasks alleviated. This strategy has previously been successful in this classroom, as the teachers may compromise by announcing that they would shorten the class time, or show some sympathy. This interaction shows that pupils are allowed to express their feelings even if that could be against what the class expects them, contrary to the classroom norms in Okamoto (1997). The fact that pupils used *desu/masu* forms their roles as classroom pupils, although they may not be fulfilling their responsibilities as pupils (to concentrate and engage in class), does not match well with the explanation by ‘disciplined self’ either. Instead, pupils are allowing themselves to become deviant pupils, by using the authority or legitimacy that *desu/masu* use indexes.

4. Discussion

This study of a small, close-knit classroom context revealed following empirical problems.

On ‘disciplined mode of self’ or ‘public self’

As the data in this paper dealt with classroom discourse, the notion of ‘public self’ or ‘disciplined self’ (Cook 1996, 1997) could be applied to all examples in this paper. Pupils’ *desu/masu* use was related to classroom activities and interactions where they need to report their own actions to collaboratively continue learning in class under teacher’s instruction and control.

The notion of ‘disciplined mode of self’ or ‘public self’ seems too vague in analyzing current data. Does the ‘disciplined mode of self’ refer to the self which is in accordance with the prevalent social norm in the particular context? In previous studies, this notion of ‘public self’ or ‘disciplined self’ was mainly discussed using data where pupils or children were behaving as the teachers or the parents expect them to be. However, pupils acted counter-normatively using *desu/masu* (section 3.3). In such cases, *desu/masu* did not straightforwardly index the self that they are expected to present or fulfill their responsibilities as pupils. It is not the display of ‘public self’ but the achievement through making the information public that is the key to the interaction. It is also too much to say ‘disciplined’, where pupils act against social

norms.

Also, some examples were against Cook's argument that plain forms are 'innate mode of self', in contrast to the 'disciplined' or 'public' self displayed by *desu/masu*. Although I did not show the data in this paper, pupils actually used plain forms for the same linguistic acts mentioned in sections 3.1 and 3.3. Explaining the use of *desu/masu* as a display of 'disciplined mode of self' cannot hold, if the same occurs in plain forms.

Stating that pupils use *desu/masu* is a school register, which they sometimes use and do not use, would be less misleading and fairer as an explanation.

Are all *desu/masu* uses indexical?

Pupils used *desu/masu* forms as registers that could accomplish particular acts related to class, or teacher-pupil relationship, to fulfill their responsibilities in the classroom. The problem is that we still cannot explain all *desu/masu* choices. Even in this paper, there was an interaction where some were using *desu/masu*, but one wasn't (e.g. example (9)). Cook considers that all *desu/masu* should be categorized into the display of 'presentable self' in the end (1997). However, the variable use of *desu/masu* in my data suggests that *desu/masu* use does not always nor necessarily involve a strong sense of indexicality. It is possible that in particular settings, the indexicality is bleached out more than in other settings, although I would not say it would be entirely absent.

On discourse and dynamics of the classroom context

To some extent, pupils were allowed to be reluctant to study, which is something outside the norms of more formal schools in previous studies. The pupils must have already established a relationship based on interdependent indulgence with the teachers, as well as their relationship as classroom teachers and pupils. The fact that they used *desu/masu* while being deviant indicates that children are sensitive to the control and authority that *desu/masu* provide. The pupils were not mainly trying to be deviant or conflictual with the teacher, but instead, they were seeking allowance by acting childishly – the principle of interdependent indulgence, or *amae*. In this sense, the classroom rules visible through interactional patterns were different from those of Okamoto (1997), where the class seemed more institutional, and where pupils were not allowed to speak out their own feelings as freely (c.f. examples (4) and (9) of this paper). While Okamoto (1997) concluded that pupils' feelings would be expressed in plain forms and not in the public discourse of the class, the pupils in this paper did otherwise. Although it is tempting to call this the difference between mainstream schools in general and smaller classrooms, it is not the physical or institutional context, but the ways the teacher and pupils interact that create such differences. Although this is outside the scope of this paper, Mr. Ali and Mrs. Bilquis had different strategies, and pupils also had different ways of interacting with them. To be more precise, the ways pupils showed solidarity and intimacy with the teacher, and the ways they challenged the teacher, were different between the two teachers. For instance, pupils would challenge Mr. Ali's authority by mocking him, but at times, shared jokes with him and made fun of other pupils with him. Meanwhile, gossiping about other adults in the mosque, school matters, and things like *amae* appeared more when they were with Mrs. Bilquis.

Another difference from the expected norms in the mainstream schools is that pupils were often

engaged in competition among themselves. Since three were siblings and the whole class met every day, their relationship was very close. The teachers would see their parents more often than their mainstream school teachers, and thus their behavior would be told to their parents much sooner. Pupils were often competitive, not as enemies, but to avoid being the target of penalization by the teachers and their parents or to establish themselves as the smartest pupil out of the class. Competition in becoming a better pupil through using *desu/masu*, or by telling the teachers to scold other pupils, often occurred, as we have seen in the data. These may not have been so prevalent in mainstream schools that other scholars had studied.

The teachers were often required to manage communication both as a community adult and community teacher. This is the difficulty that the teachers may face. Mrs. Bilquis, who had experience in teaching in her home country, has been wondering why the pupils could not keep concentration and stay quiet like at the mainstream schools. Other South Asian teachers also confided to me that they found it difficult to control the class without Japanese. This is partly because of the language barrier, but I suspect that their interactional styles in teaching class in their home countries, were also the key, as such interactional styles could have been unfamiliar to the pupils who were educated in Japan.

Implications for *desu/masu* studies in general

This paper is a small step forward to discover how adults and children use *desu/masu* forms in ways that have not previously discussed, especially in interactions where addressee honorifics is not required. From my observations of everyday conversations between adults, I believe that some of the *desu/masu* use as a register in this paper can be seen in adults' informal conversations. For example, announcing and reporting of one's actions could also appear in adults' conversation between friends or family. Phrases such as "*chotto toire ittekimasu (DM)*", similar to the example in 3.1, could appear as an alternative to the same speech in the plain form "*chotto toire ittekuru*", without psychological distancing, focusing on display of one's 'public self', or politeness strategy to the addressee. I think such examples are not often discussed, because most interactional data that previous studies have used were in a setting where two or three adults talk freely in a set room for a while. *Desu/masu* use in sections 3.2 and 3.3 show certain similarities in the ways they take the epistemological stance and cooperative (and uncooperative) stance vis-à-vis the other pupils, as they compete in attaining the teachers' attention, and the status and the identity of a 'good pupil'.

Lastly, I would like to note that sentence-final intonation should be taken into consideration in analyzing conversation, since it plays a great role in spoken Japanese. Close analysis of sentence-final intonation can be a cue in discovering how *desu/masu* form works without politeness, as in "*wakarimasen*" (example (5)) and others. More attention to intonation should be incorporated in further research on Japanese style-shifting, as well as studies in politeness.

Transcription conventions

<i>nihongo</i>	Speech in Japanese
<i>urduu</i>	Speech in Urdu
English	Speech in English
(DM)	<i>desu/masu</i>

<laughs>	Notes and paralinguistic features such as voice quality and laughter
:	Prolonged syllable
# #	Unintelligible mora/syllable
[B 111-113]	Data key and lines
[word]	Overlaps
Urdu (Hindi-Urdu) vowels: <i>a, i, u, e, o, au, ai, aa, ii, uu,</i>	nasal vowels: N added to each vowel
Urdu (Hindi-Urdu) consonants: <i>p, b, t, d, T, D, R, k, g, c, j</i> (and their aspirated equivalents with apostrophe ' added),	
<i>G, m, n, S, h, r, y, q, x, v, l</i>	

References

- Agha, Asif (1999) Register. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9 (1/2): 216-219.
- Blom, Jan-Petter, and John Gumperz (1972) Social meaning in linguistic structure: code-switching in Norway. In Gumperz, John J. & Hymes, Dell D. *Directions in Sociolinguistics*. 407-434. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York.
- Brown, Penelope, and Steven Levinson (1987) *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (Vol. 4). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook, Haruko Minegishi (1996) Japanese Language Socialization: Indexing the Modes of Self. *Discourse Processes* 22: 171-197.
- Cook, Haruko Minegishi (1997) The Role of the Japanese *masu* form in caregiver-child conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 28: 695-718.
- Cook, Haruko Minegishi (2012) Style shifting in Japanese academic conversations. In: Tsuyoshi Ono and Kimberly Jones (eds.) *Style-shifting in Japanese*, 171-202. Amsterdam/Philadelphia; John Benjamins.
- Coupland, Nikolas (2007) *Style: Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doi, Takeo (1973) *The anatomy of dependence*. Kodansha International Ltd. Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco.
- Ide, Sachiko, and Yoshida Megumi (1999) Sociolinguistics: Honorifics and gender differences. In: *The Handbook of Japanese Linguistics*, Natsuko Tsujimura (ed.) 444-480. Malden: Blackwell.
- Ikuta, Shoko (1983) Speech level shift and conversational strategy in Japanese discourse. *Language Science*, 5: 37-53.
- Ikuta, Shoko and Sachiko Ide (1983) Shakaigengogaku ni okeru danwa kenkyu. *Gengo* 12 (12): 77-84.
- Kumatoriya, Tetsuo (1994) Metamesseeji to bogowasha hibogowasha no danwa kodo. Nihon kenkyu Kyoto kaigi haifu shiryō.
- Lin, Angel Y (1990) *Teaching in Two Tongues: Language Alternation in Foreign Language Classrooms*. (Research Report No. 3). Hong Kong: City Polytechnic Hong Kong.
- Miyatake, Kaori (2009) Nihongo kaiwa no supiiichi reberu wo atsukau kenkyu no gaikan. *Kopasu ni motozuku gengogaku kyoiku kenkyu houkoku* No.1: 305-322.
- Moro, Yuji (1997) Hatsuwa no kata. In: Yuji Moro (ed) *Taiwa to chi*. 47-75. Shinyosha.
- Mimaki, Yoko (2002) Politeness between Native speakers of Japanese as seen through speech level control. *The Japanese Journal of Language in Society* 5 (1): 56-74.

- Okamoto, Noriko (1997) Kyoshitsu danwa ni okeru buntai shifuto no shihyouteki kinou: Teneitai to futsuutai no tsukaiwake. *Nihongogaku* 16 (3): 39-51.
- Okamoto, Shigeko (1999) Situated politeness. Manipulating honorific and non-honorific expressions in Japanese conversations. *Pragmatics* 9 (1): 51-74.
- Okazaki, Wataru, Mizuki Yoshimura, and Ryota Nagata (2015) The Differential Use of Speech Style in Elementary School Students: From the Perspective of Indexicality. *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University: Part. II, Arts and science education*. 64: 157-165.
- Rickford, John, and Penelope Eckert (2001) *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sinclair, John McHardy, and Malcolm Coulthard (1975) *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Shibatani, Masayoshi (1990) *The Languages of Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stubbs, Michael (1983) *Discourse Analysis*. Basil Blackwell.
- Usami, Mayumi (2001) How honorific use functions in “Discourse Politeness” in Japanese conversation: Some implications for a universal theory of politeness. *Gogaku kenkyujo ronshu* 6: 1-29.
- Yamashita, Rika (2016) *Zainichi pakisutanjin jidou no tagengo shiyou*. Tokyo: Hitsuji Shobo.

ですます形式の選択の説明に関する問題

—少人数コミュニティ教室のデータより—

山下里香

rikayam111@gmail.com

キーワード: スタイルシフト ポライトネス 語用論 日本語 コードスイッチング
レジスター 敬語 ですます体

要旨

ですます形式(ですます体)は、日本語における「かしこまった」または「丁寧な」スタイルの一部であり、敬語として扱われている。一方で、ですます形式は常に待遇敬語として使われているわけではなく、話者の「制御された自分」または「公的な自分」を指標しているといわれている(Cook 1996, 1997, 2012)。本稿では、少人数のコミュニティ教室の談話データを用い、先行研究では挙げられてこなかったような、児童による非典型的なですます形式の使用の分析を通して、こうした概念の問題点を指摘する。最終的には、これらの問題点の指摘により、教室内の児童に限らず、成人を含めた様々な私的場面の談話における、非典型的なですます形式の選択のメカニズムの解明に寄与することを目指す。

(やました・りか 関東学院大学)