

## Analyzing Job Training Sessions as ‘Unequal Encounters’

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### Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to examine work place conversations with power as a focal point of analysis. The data for the study is a collection of natural conversations appearing in a television documentary. In particular, the scenes in which an experienced announcer is training a newly hired announcer on how to conduct a television report were analyzed. The research question that guided this study is how power is exercised in the discourse between individuals of differing status. That is, the discourse of an ‘unequal encounter.’ The linguistic features of interruptions, corrections, and evaluations described by Fairclough (1989) in the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis were observed in the present data. In addition, the role of final particles was examined as a tool to show power in the Japanese discourse.

Keywords: discourse analysis, language and power, language in the work place, final particles, critical discourse analysis

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to re-examine the conversation between the trainer and the trainee with power as a focal point of analysis.<sup>1</sup> The linguistic features to exercise power in interaction were extensively examined in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This study thereby uses the CDA as an analytical tool.

The critical analysis of language has developed since early twentieth century (see Sapir 1929, for example) and developed mainly in the field of literary and social theory. The critical approach of language was adopted in linguistics extensively and has developed as Critical Discourse Analysis since the 1980s (see Fairclough 1989, 1992; and van Dijk, 1993; among others).

CDA contributes to the understanding of power relations and ideological processes in discourse (Fairclough, 1989, p. 109). Fairclough claims that CDA is composed of three stages: description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship

between interaction and social context. In early years, the analysts of CDA placed their position in the political and philosophical issues as a center of their study (Fairclough 1989, 1992; van Dijk 1993; and Wodak 1997; among others), particularly in the stages of interpretation and explanation of the text as Fairclough points out. In recent years, however, CDA started to be used as a tool to analyze the discourse not necessarily as ideologically motivated activity. In such studies, the analysts take a relatively neutral position regarding the political and philosophical issues in and around the interaction (Ivanic, 1999; Sato, 2001; for example). The field of CDA has started to develop with variation regarding the positioning of the analysts. In the present study, I would not place my positioning of the issue at the center of the study. Rather, I would utilize CDA as a tool to analyze the power relations expressed in language.

### **Unequal Encounter**

The present study investigates the discourse of 'educating.' The educating scene analyzed in the present study is a job training session at a Japanese work place. The job training session is the place where a trainer gives guidance to a trainee about special knowledge and skills related to the job. This is the place where participants with different status meet and interact. Fairclough (1989) calls it an 'unequal encounter' (p. 44). In an unequal encounter, the social position of the participants is not equal and consequently an exercise of power is observed. The trainer and the trainee don't share equal status because the trainer possesses more knowledge and expertise of the specific task whereas the trainee receives these from the trainer. The trainer is experienced, and that experience is acknowledged by the institution. That is why the person was assigned to be a trainer. There is the institution behind the trainer. In this setting, the trainer is in power for the interaction. Discourse at work situations is the place where the hierarchically different participants interact through language.

The data for the present study is a collection of natural conversations appearing in a television documentary. In this program, a television crew is conducting interviews in Tokyo. The scenes where an experienced announcer is giving training to a newly hired announcer on how to conduct a television report were analyzed in particular. The research question that guided the present study is how power is exercised in the discourse of an 'unequal encounter.' The role of final particles in the discourse of educating is discussed as tools of exercising power in the discourse of unequal relationships.

### **Theoretical Background**

The framework used for the analysis is the 'power in discourse' that Fairclough (1989) proposes

(p. 43-47). In his work, Fairclough uses the discourse in which a doctor is training medical students (pp. 44-45) and shows how the doctor exercises his power over his students through language. In this setting, a doctor is giving training to a group of medical students on how to handle a premature baby. Fairclough describes the linguistic features which the doctor uses to control the discourse with one student of the group (pp. 45-47). The following contains some of his observations.

- 1 . The doctor interrupts the student frequently.
- 2 . The doctor expresses what is going to go on in the interaction.
- 3 . The student is told when to start talking and examining.
- 4 . The student's contributions in the discourse are evaluated.
- 5 . The student is 'put on the spot' in the series of questions of turns.
- 6 . The doctor is using negative questions which make the student look silly.

In the job training session of the present study, the trainer is considered to be in power whether power is exercised directly or indirectly. The trainer determines what discourse type is expected in the interaction. The manner of the trainer in this interaction is pleasant, her directives are mild, and her interruptions and her corrections are done for the benefit of the trainee to become a skilled and professional announcer. The control by the powerful participant, in this case the trainer, over non-powerful participant, that is the trainee, is not in conflict. However, the trainer is still considered to be exercising her power by controlling and constraining the way the trainee should contribute. According to Fairclough (1989, p. 46), there are three types of constraints: contents, relations and subjects. In terms of contents, the trainee has to do a TV report while operating in a professional relationship to the viewers and in the subordinate relationship to the trainer. The trainee occupies the subject positions of a trainee as well as an announcer of a TV station. The subject position also concerns the setting in which the trainer and the trainee are talking to each other in front of a camera and their interaction is broadcast. The trainer mainly talks to the trainee although she knows her speech is viewed. The trainee is mainly addressing the viewers because he is conducting a report, but the trainee also talks to an interviewee and has interactions with the trainer because she gives directions and makes corrections whenever necessary.

## **Methods and Analysis**

Data used for the analysis is a two-hour television program broadcast in Japan. In the program,

several announcers of a Tokyo-based television station visit new cake shops in the city and report on the specialties and uniqueness of each shop. After the program was video recorded and audio recorded, conversations were transcribed. In one particular scene, an established announcer of the TV station trains a newly hired announcer. The young announcer makes his first appearance and first report on television. The trainer goes to the site with the trainee and waits in a van watching the performance on a monitor. The trainer has a microphone which is connected to earphones that the trainee is wearing. The trainer makes comments and gives instructions, whenever necessary, through the earphones. The trainee makes a report in front of the camera following the guidance of the trainer who is watching his performance in the crew van. The entire interaction including the trainee's report and the trainer's reactions were taped. After the report, the trainer met the trainee in the van and evaluated the performance. All their interactions were televised.

## Results and Discussion

The transcribed interactions were analyzed in terms of those linguistic features which exercise power as claimed by Fairclough (1989).

### Interruptions

The first feature with which the trainer exercises her power is interrupting the trainee's speech. Example (1) shows the scene where the trainee starts his report by describing the shop and, when he tries to continue, the trainer interrupts and tells him to move on to the report of the cakes.

#### Example (1)

- 1 Trainee: *futsuu no kissaten wa kokomade*  
[normal coffee shops are not  
2 *kotte inaito omoundesu ga...*  
this decorative, I think, but...]  
3 *soshite*  
[Then...]  
→ 4 Trainer: *hai, keeki no hanashi ni ikimashoo-ka*  
[Well. Let's move on to the cake story. ]  
5 *keekiya-san desukara ne*  
[Because (this is a) cake shop, you know. ]

- 6 Trainee: *hai. soshite*  
[Yes. And]

In line 4, the trainer interrupts the trainee's speech. Then again in line 3 of example (2), the trainer cuts in when the trainee tries to continue the general description of the cakes which the shop carries.

**Example (2)**

- 1 Trainee: *kyoo no watashi no omeate kokoni*  
[Today's my purpose, a lot of cake,  
2 *takkusan no keeki ga narande imasu..*  
are displayed here. ]  
→ 3 Trainer: *temijikani. motto shurui ga takusan arukoto shookai shite.*  
[Concisely. Introduce the fact that there is more variety. ]  
4 Trainee: (he starts to describe one kind of cake)

The trainer directs the manner and the content of the trainee's description. The trainer tells the trainee to describe concisely, then tells him to focus on the variety of cakes. Following the trainer's directions, the trainee starts describing each cake, although his description is still general and vague by saying, '*kooitta keekiga takusan narande imasu,*' meaning 'These kinds of cakes are put out in the store.' Example (3) shows the scene in which the trainer is constraining the content and manner of the trainee's speech.

**Example (3)**

- 1 Trainer: *moo ichido kawata-san ni*  
[To Mr. Kawata, once more]  
2 Trainee: *hai*  
[Yes]  
→ 3 Trainer: *ano keeki eno omoi*  
[(About) his thoughts]  
4 Trainee: *hai*  
[Yes]  
→ 5 Trainer: *yappari hontooni dooshite sonnani*  
[Again, really why that much to

- 6            *keeki ni*  
              the cake]
- 7    Trainee: *hai*  
              [Yes]
- 8    Trainer: *uchikonde irassharunoka sonohenno*  
              [(He is) dedicated to and things
- 9            *polishii*  
              (His) policy
- 10           *mitainamono o kiitahooga iin janai?*  
              around that and things. Isn't it better to ask?]
- 11           *korekarano yume o saigo ni ukagatte oshimaini shitara?*  
              [Why don't you ask his future dream at last and end (the interview) ?]
- 12    Trainee: *wakarimashita.*  
              [I understand. ]

In lines 1 through 10, the trainer tells the trainee to ask the work ethics of the interviewee. Then in line 11, she tells the trainee to ask the dream of the interviewee and then end the interview. Here, the trainer not only constrains the content of the trainee's speech, but also the manner of his contribution, that is, the control of what to do when. In addition, in example (4), line 3, the trainer urges the trainee to describe the taste.

#### Example (4)

- 1    Trainee: *soredewa chotto tabetemimasu*  
              [I will have a quick bite. ]
- 2            *shiawasedesu.*  
              [(I'm) happy. ]
- 3    Trainer: *donna aji?*  
              [What kind of taste is it?]
- 4    Trainee: *ikken desunee purin no yoono ajiwaiiga arimasu.*  
              [At the first look, it has the taste like a pudding. ]

When the trainee tries the cake, he describes his feelings of being happy. However, the trainer asks the trainee to describe the taste of the cake with more specific expressions. This is also control of the manner of the trainee's contribution to this interaction.

## Corrections

As part of 'constraining contents,' the trainer is correcting specific expressions of the trainee's speech. In example (5), line 4, she corrects the grammatical forms of the trainee's sentences.

### Example (5)

- 1 Trainee: *soredewa keeki no tsukurarete iru chika*  
[Then, I am going to the basement where cake is  
2 *no hoo ni chotto itte mitai to omoimasu.*  
being made, I think. ]  
3 *kitsui kaidan ni natte masu.*  
[(This is) the steep stairway. ]  
→ 4 Trainer: *'keeki no tsukurarete iru' janakute 'keeki o*  
[It is not ' (the place where) the cake is being  
→ 5 *tsukutte iru' de ii noyo-ne*  
made,' but ' (the place where they) are making the cake' is good, you know. ]  
6 Trainee: *hai.*  
[Yes. ]

In example (6) also, the trainer is correcting the trainee's report.

### Example (6)

- 1 Trainee: *piza ga narande imasu.*  
[Pizzas are displayed. ]  
→ 2 Trainer: *hontoo ni piza? sore piza?*  
[Is that really a pizza? Is that a pizza?]  
→ 3 *piza ni mienaikedo.*  
[It doesn't look like a pizza. ]  
→ 4 *namae chigaun janai?*  
[Isn't the name wrong?]  
5 Trainee: *sumimasen. kochira wa nande shooka.*  
[Excuse me. I wonder what this is. ]  
6 Store clerk: *pai desu.*  
[This is a pie. ]

The trainer describes the cakes in the shop and mentions that a pizza is also displayed. Instantly, the trainer cuts in and asks whether that is really a pizza. The trainer shows her doubt of the trainee's report about it. Responding to the trainee's comments, the trainee asks the name of the item to the store clerk. It turns out that the item is a pie and not a pizza. The trainer follows it up and tells the trainee not to mix up the names. The trainee responds to the trainer's comment and makes a correction of the name. Example (7) also shows a scene where the trainer corrects the trainee's report. This time, it is the trainee's poor positioning.

### Example (7)

- 1 Trainer: *ano, kamera, kamera cyuuu.*  
           [Well, camera, camera, caution. ]
- 2           *intabyuu shiteiru aite no kao ga mienai.*  
           [We can't see the face of the person (you are) interviewing. ]
- 3           *dokoni tatten no?*  
           [Where (are you) standing?]
- 4 Trainee: *hai.* (interview continues)  
           [Yes. ]

The trainee starts talking to a shop clerk and asks her the difference between the cakes near him and the ones in the other corner of the shop. The trainee is so busy interviewing that he forgets about the camera position. He stands in front of the interviewee. The trainer cuts in and tells the trainee to think about his position. The trainee acknowledges the trainer's comments and moves to the side, and continues his questions. Probably because the trainee panicked when thinking about his stance while questioning the interviewee, he asks a silly question. After the store clerk explains that the difference between two cakes is that one is un-baked and the other is baked, the trainee asks what the difference is in making the two. The answer is obvious, that is, the former was not baked and the latter was baked. Being posed a silly question, the store clerk cannot answer. The trainee notices it and says, 'I will ask the cake chef later' and ends the interview. Thereby, the trainee's manner and content are corrected and directed to what the trainer desires.

### Evaluation

The trainer evaluates the trainee. The beginning of example (8) shows such an exchange. The trainee mentions the cookies in the shop. He describes the fact that there are a lot of cookies.



The trainer cuts in and tells the trainee to speed up. The trainer is giving an indirect evaluation about the trainee's manner being interesting or boring during the report. The speed of the trainee's report is the concern.

**Example (8)**

- 1 Trainee: *kukkiirui deshoo ka.*  
[I wonder they are cookies. ]
- 2 *takusan no kukkii ga narande imasu.*  
[A lot of cookies are here. ]
- 3 Trainer: *motto motto tenpo appu*  
[Speed up much more. ]
- 4 *shinaito omoshirokunai*  
[It won't be interesting if you did not speed up much more!]
- 5 *motto akaruku.*  
[More cheerfully!]

Example (9) shows a scene of direct evaluation.

**Example (9)**

- 1 Trainer: *iyaa soonee*  
[Well...]
- 2 Trainee: *kotoba arimasen*  
[I have no words (to say). ]
- 3 Trainer: *40 ten*  
[40%]
- 4 Trainee: *hai*  
[Yes. ]

The trainee comes back to the van where the trainer is waiting. They sit together in front of the camera and the trainer starts evaluating. She starts out with a hesitation by saying, 'iyaa soonee,' meaning 'well...' This signifies the trainee's poor performance and it is hard for the trainer to describe. After the frequent interruptions during the report followed by this hesitation, the trainee realizes that his performance was not very good. The trainee responds to the trainer's hesitation noise by saying, 'kotoba arimasen,' meaning 'I don't have a word to say.' The trainer

finally gives a mark of 40%. The trainee agrees with the evaluation. The trainer starts commenting by asking questions. She poses a sequence of questions. She asks what the interviewee most wanted to say, and what the trainee most wanted to ask. Here, the trainee is 'put on the spot' with the sequence of questions in front of the viewers.

#### Example (10)

- 1 Trainer: *Oobon Byuutan tte naani?*  
[What is 'oobon byuutan'?]
- 2 *dooiu koto nano kono namae wa?*  
[What does this name mean?]
- 3 Trainee: *wasurete... okikisuruno o wasure mashita*  
[I forgot, forgot to ask. ]
- 4 Trainer: *soo yo-ne.*  
[That's right. ]
- 5 Trainee: *hai wakarimashita.*  
[Yes. I understand. ]

The trainee starts responding to the questions, but the trainer interrupts and further asks a question to clarify the meaning of the complicated name of the shop, *Oobon Byuutan*. The trainee admits that he forgot to ask about it. Finally the trainer settles with the expression, *sooyone*, meaning 'That's right, isn't it.' Then, the trainee agrees. These scenes show how the trainer is in control of the interaction.

#### Final Particles as Tools of Power

The interaction of the present study has been analyzed with the features that Fairclough (1989) used in the analysis of discourse in British English. Since the data of the present study is a Japanese discourse, I find it necessary to include an analysis of features that are crucial in Japanese discourse, although they might not be so in English. Some key features in Japanese discourse are final particles. They are related to power in discourse. Maynard (1993) points out that 'the choice of *yo* and *ne* can reveal the speaker's assumption on the level of the addressee's knowledge and consequently it can imply crucial social meaning' (p. 195). She also claims that the accessibility to and/or possession of information is directly linked to the relative right to interactional and social power. Therefore, displaying information, to which the speaker has more accessibility, toward one's social superior often results in a face-threatening act. Given this

special factor, one chooses *ne* instead of the normally predicted particle, *yo* (p. 196). She provides a specific situation to illustrate her point. The social subordinate will choose *ne* even when he or she assumes to have more availability of the relevant information as shown in the following.

**Example (11)**

*Buchoo, ja kaigi wa sanji to yuu koto desu /a. ne/*

*/b. \*yo/*

[Manager, so the meeting is at three, isn't it?]<sup>2</sup>

According to Maynard (1993), even when one addresses one's boss to remind him or her of the time of the meeting, which means that the speaker assumes that the boss doesn't know or is likely to have forgotten about the meeting, a case of *ne* is the preferred choice (p. 196). 'After all, the information provider gains instant power in human interaction and a social subordinate is expected to avoid disrupting the hierarchy of dominance by his or her higher accessibility to and/or stronger possession of the relevant information' (p. 196).

Although the occurrence of final particles was not frequent in the data and the results are not conclusive, the present study includes the analysis of final particles as a tool to exercise power. The analysis here will focus on *yo* and *ne* due to the high frequency of these two particles in Japanese discourse.

An often observed tendency for the particle *yo* is to focus on information that is new to the addressee, whereas the particle *ne* focuses on information which is shared by both the speaker and the addressee. In addition, the addressee is offering agreement for what was said or the speaker is looking for agreement for what was said to the addressee. As Maynard (1993) illustrated, when *yo* is used rather than *ne*, the accessibility of the information is focused and emphasized, thereby the speaker's expertise and power are reinforced in the discourse.

In the present data, the trainer is the one who used final particles. The trainee did not use any particles in his speech. The trainer did not use the particle *yo* by itself, although it was used in combination with *ne*. In addition, most of her sentences ended without particles, although the use of *yo* is grammatically and semantically possible. Example (8) shows the trainer's speech in which she urges the trainee to speed up the report to make it interesting. She says, '*molto molto tempo appu shinaito omoshiroku nai*' (lines 3 and 4). Here, she could have added *yo*. In the end of example (7) also, the trainer points out the poor positioning of the trainee and says, '*intabyuu shiteiru aitenno kao ga mienai*' (line 7). Here also the use of *yo* is possible, but did not happen.

However, example (5) shows the trainer's speech in which she uses *yo*, but with another particle *ne*. She corrects the speech of the trainee and gives an alternative expression, *keeki o tsukutteiru de iino yone*, meaning 'The expression, *keeki o tsukutteiru*, is better, right?' Here, the power of this information-focused *yo* seems to be weakened by the interaction-focused particle *ne*. Thereby, her knowledge and expertise as a trainer is enforced but mitigated. Maynard (1993) points out that *ne* is a device to avoid or to remedy [this] potential failure in interpersonal emotional involvement. It defocuses information and instead calls attention to interpersonal feelings to assure some level of emotional engagement (p. 215). At the same time, since the use of *ne* looks for an agreement and a common basis of knowledge, it sounds imposing on one hand, but it also sounds a little sarcastic because it marks the assumption that the trainee should have known the information. Another place where the trainer softens her information-focused ending is in example (8). She points out to the trainee a question he forgot to ask. Following up on the trainee's admitting fault, the trainer says, '*sooyone*.' Here her speech sounds more softened by the use of *ne*.

The trainer's speech therefore is characterized by sentence endings without particles. This might be due to the fact that the directions had to be given quickly, so the ending was omitted. Even in cases where the trainer had more accessibility to information, she used it with the combination of the more interaction-focused particle, *ne* (see example (10), line 4). The fact that the training session was televised might have had some effect. Here, the trainer's speech is constrained by her subject position. That is, the viewers are more powerful than the trainer.

## Conclusion

As a conclusion, I would like to state that the discourse features that exercise power, which Fairclough described, were also observed in the present data. However, the analysis of the discourse should include features crucial to each language. The linguistic tools for exercising power in each language need to be further examined and evaluated. Final particles in Japanese seem to play a part of such a role, although this observation is not conclusive based on the analysis of the present data. Further examination is necessary. More investigation of this kind, on power in language, is needed to determine how power is exercised directly or indirectly to maintain and reinforce the socially unequal relations of the participants.

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- 1 The data of the present study was analyzed with gendered language as a focal point in my previous study (see Takenoya, 1999).
- 2 For morpheme by morpheme gloss, see original study by Maynard (1993, p. 196). It is omitted here since the information is not directly related to my point.

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### 要 旨

本研究は、職場の会話を権力関係（パワー）に焦点をあて、パワーが談話にどのようにあらわれているかを分析した。テレビで放映されたドキュメンタリー番組をデータとして取り上げ、特に、教育系の先輩アナウンサーが新人アナウンサーにテレビ・レポートの仕方を指導するシーンに注目した。分析の結果、Fairclough (1989) がクリティカル・ディスコース分析の枠組の中で指摘しているように、パワーがある話者のない話者の発言に対する「さえぎり」、「訂正」、「評価」という行為において、そのパワーが行使されている様子が示された。また、日本語談話にあらわれる終助詞の「よ」と「ね」のパワーを表す道具としての役割に注目し、その特徴を吟味した。

キーワード：談話分析、言語と権力、職場の言語、終助詞、クリティカル談話分析

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