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## On the Acquisition of Japanese gender-related language behavior through peer-group interaction\*

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子供が、言語を習得する際には、大人と子供の会話的相互作用と、子供同士の会話的相互作用が考えられる。大人が、子供に対し、性別に応じた言語行動のパターンを提示し、また、それが、子供同士の相互作用で強化されていくことで、子供はその文化の性別による言語行動を習得していくと考えられる。

本稿では、3~4歳までの、日本人の男児・女児の会話における言語行動の特徴について、実際の発話資料をもとに、同性同士、異性同士の協調的会話 (collaborative talk) において、会話管理 (conversational management) のしかた及び会話のストラテジーの分析を行なった。

データの結果からは、会話管理に関して、男児は競合的な関係を、女児は平等な関係を維持しているのが見られた。また、使用していた会話ストラテジーに関して、同性同士の会話では、男児は Direct Directive (直接的命令) の Imperative (命令) や Prohibition (禁止)、Statement Directive (陳述命令) を、女児は Indirect Directive (間接的命令) の Proposal (提案) と相手の意向を確認する質問を多用する傾向にあった。

仲田 (1997) で、大人と子供の会話的相互作用において、父親は、子供に対して、直接的命令を母親に比べて多用し、一方、母親は、父親に比べて間接的命令を多用しているのが見られた。この結果と、今回の結果をあわせて考えると、男児の直接的命令の多用は、父親による同じ会話ストラテジーの多用と、そして、女児の間接的命

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\*日本語における言語行動の性差習得について一子供同士の会話的相互作用を通して一(仲田陽子)

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の多用は、母親による同じ会話ストラテジーの多用と一致していることがわかる。しかしながら、異性同士の会話では、男児が、女児が同性同士の会話で多用していた相手の意向を確認する質問を多用する傾向にあった。

今回の調査では、3~4歳の女児・男児は共に、異性同士で過ごすことよりも、同性同士で一緒に過ごすことが多く見られた。このことから、子供は、同性同士で過ごすことにより、それぞれの性別に応じた会話ストラテジーを学ぶ機会が増え、また、それぞれの性別に応じた言語使用のスタイルを再生し、強化されていくものと考えられる。その一方で、子供は、ただ自らの性に応じた会話ストラテジーのみを用いるだけでなく、状況および相手の性別に応じた使い分けも習得していくものと考えられる。

## 1 Introduction

When children acquire language behavior according to gender, there are two forms of interaction<sup>1)</sup> through which it is conceivable that they are socialized: one is adult-child interaction; the other is interaction between children. Adults present appropriate gender-related language behavior and the gender-related language behavior is further intensified by interaction among peers and siblings. That is because children often spend time and play with same-sex companions. So it can be expected that children are socialized through interaction with peers. Same-sex play can increase the opportunity to learn about, reproduce and intensify gender-appropriate styles of language use. Children learn to use language in ways that fit a culture's norms of appropriate feminine and masculine behavior. This article will show young Japanese children's actual gender-related language behavior by analyzing such interaction between children.

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<sup>1)</sup> According to Vygotsky, children's acquisition of language is through social interaction.

## 2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify what gender differences are observed in Japanese children's conversational interaction, and the conversational management and conversational strategies which boys and girls use.

Many studies on language and gender have been conducted in sociology, anthropology, pedagogy and psychology as well as linguistics since the pioneering work of Robin Lakoff (1975). As a result, many characteristics of language behavior according to gender have been identified. In recent years attention has been paid to language acquisition according to gender by many researchers in the West.<sup>2)</sup> However, research into acquisition of Japanese gender-related language behavior has not yet been conducted in the field of conversation analysis. Many studies on language acquisition have laid emphasis on syntactic aspects.

Real speech is very fluid. The reason is that language behavior is contextually dependent. I believe that by studying language acquisition according to gender we can identify the acquisition and cultural transmission of gender through language. Also, such study will eventually contribute to clarifying the behavioral system which determines language choice, as well as to identifying the process of children's language acquisition according to gender.

## 3 Method

Conversational interaction is the basis of language acquisition, so conversation provides very precious data for the study of language acquisition. The data for this study are transcripts of naturally occurring tape-recorded conversations. Data were collected through participant observation. I attempted to minimize my own interaction with the children while I was observing in order to disturb the activities as little as possible. Therefore the situation

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<sup>2)</sup> Engle (1980), Grief (1980), Goodwin (1980), Gleason (1987), Sachs (1987), Sheldon (1993) etc.

in which data are collected is almost natural. The conversations to be examined here are from three- to four-year-old children at a nursery school setting in Osaka Prefecture. I collected data during free time of the nursery school in the morning.

The data are transcribed according to the system developed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974).<sup>3)</sup> I added and modified transcription to incorporate features of Japanese language behavior. Punctuation symbols refer to intonation changes rather than grammatical structure. The transcription conventions used in this data are as follows.

#### Transcription Conventions

.: falling intonation

?: rising intonation, question

,: phrase-final intonation (more to come)

We used to go there

Where was it? : underlined speech indicates overlapping

↑: interrupting speech

Oh: loud

hhh: laugh

G: girl

B: boy

W: the present writer

::: prolonged syllables

G → B: G speaks to B

A [B]: A is *Kansai* dialect. B is a standard dialect

C ⟨D⟩: C is baby talk. D is adults' talk.

Contextual notes were also made. The notes include information about non-verbal behavior, setting and scene.

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<sup>3)</sup> Since then, many linguists such as Tannen (1984) have developed transcription conventions for naturally-occurring conversation.

The recording amounts to about eleven hours in total. However, some of this could not be transcribed because of noise. As a result, the complete script is 98 pages long.

## 4 Data Analysis

Generally, children often spend time and play with same-sex companions, and the same tendency was observed in this data. Conversation among children can be generally divided by context into two kinds: collaborative talk and conflict talk. However, here I limit the discussion to collaborative talk for lack of space. Collaborative talk in four same-sex conversations and two cross-sex conversations are shown as follows. In each piece of data, the transcription is romanized. An English translation follows the transcription.

### Collaborative Talk

#### Same-sex conversation

##### Conversation among Girls

**Data 1** A girl is playing with a toy house. Another girl is participating in making it.

- 1 G1 : Ouchi dekita, takkai [takai], ouchi.
- 2 W : Aa, takai ouchi. Yonkaidate no ouchi? Hora, ichi, ni, san, shi.  
(G2 has been gazing at G1's toy house)
- 3 G1→G2 : ○○-chan (G1's name) no ouchi ni kiteiyo.
- 4 G2 : Yatta::
- 5 G2→W : Atashitachinona. Anona, oto::san, kaisha yakara, kitemo, iikedo.
- 6 W : E, kokoni?
- 7 G1 : ○○○ (G1's name) no ouchimo, kaisha yade. Kyou, ohiruni kaettekurunen.
- 8 G2 : Atashimo

- 9 W : Kyou, doyoubi dakara?  
10 G2 : Oni::chan mo ohiruni kaettekurunende.  
11 G1 : One::chan, ohiruni kaettekurunen.  
12 G2 : Onnaji.  
13 G1 : Onaji.  
14 G2 : Onajiyana.  
15 G1 : Hun.
- 

- 1 G1 : The house is ready; it's a high house.  
2 W : Oh, that's a high house, a four-story building, isn't it? Look, one,  
two, three, four.  
(G2 has been gazing at G1's toy house)  
3 G1→G2 : It is O. K. for you to come in, into ○○-chan's (G1's name)  
house.  
4 G2 : Yahoo::.  
5 G2→W : It is all right for you to come to my house because Daddy has  
gone to the company.  
6 W : Huh, here?  
7 G1 : My daddy has gone to the company, too. He will come back at  
lunchtime.  
8 G2 : Mine too.  
9 W : Is that because today is Saturday?  
10 G2 : My (older) brother will come back at lunchtime, too.  
11 G1 : My (older) sister will come back at lunchtime.  
12 G2 : It is the same.  
13 G1 : It is the same.  
14 G2 : It is the same, isn't it?  
15 G1 : Ya.

In Data 1, the girls think of each other's position. It can be observed that these two girls, G1 and G2, maintain an equal relationship with each other. For example, at line 8, G2 says 'the same' in response to G1's speech (line 7).

At line 11, G1 also says 'the same' in response to G2's speech (line 10). Girls share their turns in the conversation equally.

Let us consider another conversation among girls.

**Data 2** When two girls (G2 and G3) are playing with clay, another girl (G1) asks to join them.

- 1 G1: Nee, nee, maite. [mazete]
- 2 G2: Iiyo.
- 3 G3: Iiyo.
- 4 G2: Hanbunko shiyou.
- 5 G1: Kokoni aru yanka, ○○-chan. (G1 smiles. She points to another piece of clay)
- 6 G2: hhhh.
- 7 G3: Asokonimo aruyo. hhhhh.

- 
- 1 G1: You'll say yes, won't you?
  - 2 G2: All right.
  - 3 G3: All right.
  - 4 G2: Let's cut my clay in half.
  - 5 G1: There's some here; look! (G1 smiles. She points to another piece of clay)
  - 6 G2: hhhh.
  - 7 G3: There is some clay over there, too. hhhhh.

At line 1 in Data 2, G1 asks G2 and G3 if she can join them. G1's participation is permitted without dissent by G2 and G3. At line 4 G2 proposes to cut her clay in half for G1 because G1 does not have any.

In both 1 and 2 above, the girls seem to be trying to maintain solidarity and equality with one another. For example, in the lines between 7 and 15 in Data 1, the girls say that their circumstances are equal. In line 4 in Data 2, G2 thinks that G1 does not have any clay to play with, so she tries to share



her clay. So it appears that girls maintain an egalitarian relationship. The data of this pilot study often show that girls tend to be egalitarian in the way indicated here.

Now let us consider two conversations among boys.

### Conversation among Boys

**Data 3** Four boys are playing with toy blocks. They are making bulldozers.

- 1 B1: Honnara, tsukurude.
- 2 B1: Konkuri::to botan<sup>4)</sup>. Konkuri::to botan yade.
- 3 B1: Kokoni na, nendo iretarana, konkuri::to botan yade. Konkuri::to botan yade.
- 4 B2: Konkuri::to botan.
- 5 B3: Bu::n. U::n.
- 6 B2: Nani kabuserunya?
- 7 B1: Haittara akande, kore. (B1 gives B2 a block)
- 8 B3: Bu::n.
- 9 B1: Haittara akande.
- 10 B3: U::n.
- 11 B1: Kokona, konkuri::to botan oitokunen.
- 12 B1: Gattai. (B1 orders the other boys to put together the blocks which they've made)
- 13 B4: Konkuri::to
- 14 B1: Shoberuka:: Konkuri::to.
- 15 B1: Gattai yade. Gattai ya.
- 16 B2: Gattai.
- 17 B1: Ano, ookinowo yattsukero. (B1 tries to knock over a car which B3

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<sup>4)</sup> Konkuri::to botan (concrete button) is a word which a boy coined. It indicates a switch used to operate a toy bulldozer.

and B4 have made.)

18 B2: Oo:: Doka::n. Doka::n.

19 B1: ○○○ (B3's name), kore.

20 B3: Kore torarehen [torenai].

21 B4: Aaaaaa:: (The blocks which they made collapse because B3 moves one of them)

22 B1: ○○○-chan (B2's name), akan, akan, korewa.

1 B1: Now, Let's make.

2 B1: A concrete button<sup>4)</sup>. This is a concrete button.

3 B1: If you put the clay here, it'll be a concrete button. It'll be a concrete button.

4 B2: A concrete button.

5 B3: (makes onomatopoeic 'truck noises')

6 B2: What do I cover it with?

7 B1: Don't let it come into the blocks. Here you are. (B1 gives B2 blocks)

8 B3: (more 'truck noises')

9 B1: Don't come in here.

10 B3: (more 'truck noises')

11 B1: Here, I'm putting in a concrete button.

12 B1: Stick them together. (B1 orders the other boys to put together the blocks which they've made)

13 B4: Concrete.

14 B1: A bulldozer. Concrete.

15 B1: Together, right? Together.

16 B2: Together.

17 B1: Down with that big car. (B1 tries to knock over a car which B3 and B4 have made.)

18 B2: Ya, Ba::ng. Ba::ng.

19 B1: Oi! ○○○ (B3's name).

20 B3: I can't get this block away from the others.

21 B4: Ahh:: (The blocks which they made collapse because B3 moves one of them)

22 B1: ○○○-chan (B2's name). Don't. Don't do that.

In Data 3, there is a ranking among the boys. There is a leader in the boys' group, B1. At lines 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 15 and 17 B1 gives orders to the other boys. He initiates most of the conversational moves. The other boys do not participate much in the conversation. At line 6, B2 asks B1 for instructions. At lines 4 and 16, B2 repeats what B1 said. In the conversation among the girls (Data 1), everyone participates equally in the conversation and shares the floor. By contrast, in the conversation among the boys (Data 2), one boy monopolizes the conversation even during collaborative talk. Furthermore the development of the boys' conversation proceeds quickly. This is also apparent in the next Data 4.

**Data 4** Three boys are boasting about their travel experiences.

1 B1: Oka:san to, ○○○ (B1's name) to densha ni notten. Densha. Densha.

2 W: Densha nottano?

3 B2: Ashita na, ○○-chan toko na, ○○-chan to Hikari-gou norunen.

4 B3: ○○-chan toko na, Shinkansen norunen.

5 B2: ○○-chan ga, Hikari-gou ikunen [Hikari-gou ni notteiku].

6 B1: Hondena [Sorekara], ○ ○ -kun na, anona, irona na, densha norunen. Densha. Oto:san to, one:chan to, oto:san tona,

7 B2: ○○-kun na, ○○-kun na, † Shinkansen, notten.

8 B1: ○○-chan Dizuni::rando ni ittende.  
(omission)

9 B2: Kaiyukan nimo ittende.

1 B1: I have been on a train with Mammy. A train. A train.

2 W: You took a train?

- 3 B2: Tomorrow our family will take the Hikari Express.  
 4 B3: My family will take the Shinkansen.  
 5 B2: I will go to on the Hikari Express.  
 6 B1: Well, I'll go on all sorts of trains. Trains.  
     With Daddy and Sis, with Daddy  
 7 B2: ○○○, ○○○ (B2's name)      ↑ I have been on the Shinkansen.  
 8 B1: I have been to the Tokyo Disneyland!  
     (omission)  
 9 B2: I have been to the Kaiyukan (an aquarium), too.

In Data 4, at lines between 1 and 7 boys boast about the vehicles which they have taken. From line 8, the topic changes and they boast about the places where they have been. In contrast to the girls' talk, the boys argue with one another and try to show how they are superior to the other boys. Their boasting escalates. In terms of conversational management, there are scrambles among the boys to get turns. For example, at line 6 when B1 is talking about whom he is with ("With Daddy and Sis"), B2 overlaps B1's talk but can not continue talk. Just after B1 says "with Daddy" at line 6, B2 interrupts and succeeds in getting his turn at line 7 ("I have been on the Shinkansen"). Then just after B2 finishes his talk, B1 begins to talk at line 8. Thus the development of the conversation proceeds rapidly because of the scrambling for turns. Although participants in this talk amount to three, B3 can not easily get his turn except at line 3. This presents a contrast to the case of the girls, where everyone participates in the talk equally. On the other hand, it often appears in this data that boys scramble for turns and compete for dominance.

Now let us consider two cross-sex conversations.

### Cross-sex conversation

**Data 5** Two girls and a boy are making toy guns with toy blocks.

- 1 G1 : ○○-chan, teppou tsukurou.
- 2 G2→W : Teppo.
- 3 W : Ah, hontoda. Mou hitotsu kuttsuketara, teppou rashiku naruyo.
- 4 G2 : Mata, oreta.
- 5 G1 : Mata, orechatta.
- 6 B : Mitemi. (B shows his own toy gun to G1)
- 7 G1 : ○○-chan (B's name), tsukuttayo. Tsukuttayo. ○○-chan, ooki teppou tsukuruno?
- 8 B : O::ki teppou.
- 9 W : Ah, konndoha, orenaine.
- 10 B : Wa::, wa::, wa::.
- 11 G2→G1 : Tsukurarehen, are?
- 12 G1→G2 : Atode tsukuttageru [tsukutteageru].
- 13 B : Ban, ban, ban.
- 14 G1 : Asobou, asobou, teppou zukuri. (Chanting)  
○○-chan (B's name), o::ki teppou yade.
- 15 G2 : Koreha, chicchai [chisai] tetto [teppou]. Teppou, a::, mata, oreta.
- 16 G1→G2 : Tsukuttarou.

- 1 G1 : ○○-chan, Let's make a gun.
- 2 G2→W : A gun.
- 3 W : Right! If you add one more block, it looks like a gun.
- 4 G2 : This gun broke again.
- 5 G1 : It broke again.
- 6 B : Look. (B shows his own toy gun to G1)
- 7 G1 : ○○-chan (B's name), I made it. I made it. ○○-chan (B's name),  
Do I make a big gun?
- 8 B : A big gun.

- 9 W : Oh, now this gun won't break, will it?  
 10 B : Wow, wow, wow.  
 11 G2 : I can't make a gun. Oh?  
 12 G1→G2 : Afterwards I'll make a gun for you.  
 13 B : Bang. Bang. Bang.  
 14 G1 : Let's play. Let's play at making a gun. (Chanting)  
     ○○-chan (B's name), this is a big gun.  
 15 G2 : This is a small one. Oh, it broke again.  
 16 G1→G2 : I'll make one for you.

In Data 5, G1 tries to keep a collaborative relationship with peers. G1 always makes a proposal for play. For example, at lines 1 and 14, G1 makes a proposal to B. At line 7, G1 confirms B's intention by using a question whose function is to check a partner's wishes.

Let us consider another example between a boy and a girl.

**Data 6** A boy is riding on a toy train. He is advancing towards a girl.

- 1 B1 : Tooshite kure:: Tooru kara.  
 2 G1 : Chotto, kashite, sore. Iya? (G1 gazes at his toy train)  
 3 B1 : Iiyo.  
 4 G1 : E? Kachite (Kashite).  
 5 B1 : Akkoni [Asokoni] kuruma aruyo. Kashite. (B1 asks G1 to lend him  
     a toy which she has.)  
 6 G1 : Hai, ageru. (G1 gives B1 the toy.)  
 7 B1 : Asokomade ittara, kashiteya.  
 8 G1 : Hai.

- 
- 1 B1 : Let me pass through here. 'Cause I will pass through.  
 2 G1 : Can you lend it to me for a moment? Is it O. K.?  
     (G1 gazes at his toy train)  
 3 B1 : All right.

4 G1: What? Lend it to me.

5 B1: There is another car over there, isn't there? Lend it to me. B1 asks G1 to lend him a toy which she has.)

6 G1: Here you are. (G1 gives B1 the toy.)

7 B1: When you get there in this car, give it back.

8 G1: All right.

In Data 6, at line 2, G1 asks B1 to lend her a toy car by using a question to check her partner's wishes. She uses indirect linguistic forms and adds with "chotto" ("for a moment"). Thus in this data girls often confirm partners' wishes. By contrast, boys often use direct linguistic forms in conversation with other boys. However, in cross-sex conversation, boys often also use indirect linguistic forms when they talk to girls as the following Tables 2 and 3 show. After her first request ("Can you lend it to me for a moment?"), G1 confirms B1's wishes again. Such questions confirming partners' wishes do not force the partners to do so, so they widen the latitude of choice. As a result, such requests are easy for boys to accept. Negotiation for toys goes smoothly. When boys try to borrow toys from other boys, in most cases they use direct directives. As a result, conversation often develops into conflictual language.

In this data, as mentioned above, boys tend to use more direct directives than girls. Let us now consider the quantitative and functional aspects of the directives which boys and girls use in the conversations in this data. The directives which boys and girls used in this data were coded according to twelve types of directives. Coding by function was done and modified as in Table 1 according to Japanese language behavior discovered in this data, with reference to Ervin-Tripp (1976: 29)<sup>5)</sup> and Sachs (1987: 182).<sup>6)</sup>

I also conducted a Chi-square test for these results. I indicate the results

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<sup>5)</sup> Ervin-Tripp (1976) divides directives into six categories as follows. (1) Need statements 'I need a match' (2) Imperatives 'Gimme a match.' (3) Imbedded imperatives 'Could you gimme a match?' (4) Permission directives 'May I have a match?' (5) Question directives 'Gotta match?' (6) Hints 'The matches are all gone'

Table 1 Categories for directives<sup>7)</sup>

Categories	Examples
Direct Directive	
Imperative	Give me a match. A match.
Prohibition	Don't do that.
Declarative Directive	You have to push it.
Attentional Device	Look at this.
Need Statement <sup>8)</sup>	I need a match.
Statement Directive*	I will put these blocks together.
Indirect Directive	
Permission Directive	May I have a match?
Question Directive*	
a) asking for information	
b) getting leadership in a conversation	
c) checking a partner's wishes	
Information Question	What is this?
Proposal*	Let's make it.
Polite Directive*	Please give me a match.
Negative Question*	Don't you want to play?

(Categories with asterisk marks (\*) are supplemented.)

<sup>6)</sup> Sachs (1987) calls such directives 'Obligés'. She divides them into 10 categories as follows. (1) Imperative "Bring her to the hospital" (2) Prohibition "Don't touch it" (3) Declarative Directive "You have to push it" (4) Pretend Directive "Pretend you had a bad cut" (5) Question Directive "Will you be the patient?" (6) Tag Question "That's your bed, right?" (7) Joint Directive "Now we'll cover him up." (8) State Question "Are you sick?" (9) Information Question "What does she need now?" (10) Attentional Device "Lookit [sic]"

<sup>7)</sup> I added four categories.

Statement Directive does not give a partner a choice of answer 'no'.

Question Directive gives a partner a choice.

Proposal gives a partner a certain amount of choice.

Negative Question does not give a partner much choice of answer 'no'.

<sup>8)</sup> Ervin-Tripp (1976) says, Need Statements are among the earliest directives used by children.



Table 2 Number of directives used by boys and girls

Categories	Same-sex interaction		Cross-sex interaction	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Direct Directive				
Imperative	44	11	4	
Prohibition	17		1	2
Declarative Directive	2			
Attentional Device	4		8	6
Need Statement		5	2	2
Statement Directive	10		2	
	77	16	17	10
Indirect Directive				
Permission Directive				2
Question Directive a)	5	1	3	1
b)	2			
c)	1	5	8	
Information Question	9	3	11	
Proposal	3	12	4	4
Polite Directive	3	2		
Negative Question	3		1	
	26	23	27	7
Total	103	39	44	17

in detail at notes 8 and 9.

The results of directives used by boys and girls are shown in the Tables 2 and 3. In these Tables the total number of directives used by girls is much smaller than by boys. The reason is that girls often spent time with a female nursery school teacher during the tape-recording. On the other hand, it is characteristic of this data that boys spent less time with the nursery school teacher. This article deals with peer-group interaction, so that conversations in which girls talk with the teacher are excluded. As a result, girls'

Table 3 Percentage of directives in various categories, for boys and girls (%)

Categories	Same-sex interaction		Cross-sex interaction	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Direct Directive				
Imperative	42.7	28.2	9.0	
Prohibition	16.5		2.3	11.8
Declarative Directive	1.9			
Attentional Device	3.9		18.2	35.2
Need Statement		12.8	4.6	11.8
Statement Directive	9.7		4.6	
	74.7	41.0	38.7	58.8
Indirect Directive				
Permission Directive				11.8
Question Directive a)	4.9	2.6	6.8	5.9
b)	1.9			
c)	1.0	12.8	18.2	
Information Question	8.8	7.7	25.0	
Proposal	2.9	30.8	9.0	23.5
Polite Directive	2.9	5.1		
Negative Question	2.9		2.3	
	25.3	59.0	61.3	41.2

speech is less well represented in the data.

When we see these results as a whole in same-sex conversation, it is clear from the Tables 2 and 3 that boys use more direct directives such as imperatives, prohibitions and statement directives than girls ( $p < 0.001$ ).<sup>9)</sup> Boys

<sup>9)</sup> The value of a Chi-square test in terms of direct directives which boys use in same-sex conversation is very highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). For imperatives which boys use it is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). For prohibitions which boys use it is highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). For statement directives which boys use it is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

use question directives to get leadership in a conversation and negative questions, which girls do not use at all, to reduce their partner's possibility of refusal. On the other hand, girls use more indirect directives, such as proposals and questions confirming partners' wishes ( $p < 0.001$ ).<sup>10)</sup> However, while there are clear differences in speech between boys and girls in same-sex conversation, there are not many clear differences in cross-sex conversation. In such conversation, boys use questions to check partners' wishes, which they do not do much in same-sex conversation, and girls use them more than boys in same-sex conversation. It was observed that boys used such strategies in girl-oriented activities such as playing house. In same-sex conversation, while girls tend to engage in static play, boys' playing tends to be dynamic. Girls often sit and play quietly. Most of their play consists of playing house, whereas boys often play with toy blocks and toy cars. Boys are always restless. They often run around after the other boys.

## 5 Discussion and Summary

In this paper I have analyzed the conversational management and strategies which Japanese three- to four-year-old children use in same-sex and cross-sex conversations. The major findings of this analysis are summarized below.

In terms of conversational management, in same-sex conversation, the girls tend to maintain egalitarian relations with peers. They share the floors equally. By contrast, the boys' relationships are competitive. They compete with peers for turns. In terms of conversational strategies with directives, as Tables 2 and 3 show, girls tend to use more proposals and questions whose function is to confirm partners' wishes. On the contrary, boys tend to use more imperatives, prohibitions and statement directives as direct directive

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<sup>10)</sup> The value of a Chi-square test in terms of indirect directives which girls use in same-sex conversation is highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In terms of proposals which girls use it is very highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In terms of questions confirming partners' wishes which girls use, the Chi-square value is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

than girls. Nakata (1997) indicates that fathers tend to use more direct directives than mothers and mothers tend to use more indirect directives. It appears from these findings that the fact that boys use more direct directives may be consistent with the fact that fathers use them more, and that girls use more indirect directives may be consistent with the fact that mothers use them more. Therefore it can be said that children's gender-related language behavior reflects that of adults. Children acquire language behavior from adults, and reproduce and intensify gender-appropriate styles of language use in peer talk and peer play. In this pilot study, it was observed that girls and boys frequently engaged in different activities. This evokes different forms of social organization, and is one factor which probably causes differences between girls' and boys' behavior.

It should also be noticed that in cross-sex conversation, boys also use many questions whose function is to check partners' wishes, though girls use these more than boys in same-sex conversation. One of the reasons for boys' using such strategies is that they converge, that is, make their speech similar to the style of the girls who are their addressees,<sup>11)</sup> in order to maintain collaborative relationships. Another reason is that they change their conversational strategies according to situation. For instance, when boys engage in static girl-oriented play, they use more indirect directives.

From the above, it appears that three- and four-year-old children acquire not only conversational strategies appropriate to their own gender but also situational strategies and strategies appropriate to the gender of conversational partners.

Gender-related language behavior is situationally dependent. In addition, there are individual variations. In future research, more data should be added, to increase generalization validity. Children increase conversational

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<sup>11)</sup> According to Giles, Taylor and Bourhis's (1973) (Speech Accomodation Theory), speakers converge (i.e. make their speech similar to the style of their addressee) or diverge (i.e. make their speech different from the style of their addressee). In some situations speech maintenance occurs (i.e. speakers make no changes). Speech accomodation is motivated by the attitudes speakers hold towards their audience.

strategies as they grew older,<sup>12)</sup> so longitudinal studies must also be conducted. It is also important to consider the question of cultural differences between Japan and other countries and psychological aspects such as gender identity. We have to deal with these aspects in order to explicate real gender-related language behavior. This is because these factors can be considered to influence the choice of language behavior.

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<sup>12)</sup> Garvey (1975) found that imperatives are used by young children and that indirect forms appear as the children get older.

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