

A GENERAL PRINCIPLE IN CASUAL SPEECH PROCESSES IN JAPANESE

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1.0. Introduction.

Grice proposed the Cooperative Principle in 1975 as a general condition which promotes efficient communication. One of the maxims of this Principle seems to be operative as a constraint in casual speech processes in Japanese. The Principle consists of four categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The last maxim, Manner, is the condition which explains exceptions in casual speech processes in Japanese. The supermaxim of Manner is to "Be perspicuous", and under this are four other maxims: (a) Avoid obscurity of expression, (b) Avoid ambiguity, (c) Be brief, and (d) Be orderly. Among those maxims, (b) is a simple condition that rules out almost all ill-forms in casual speech processes.

There are two types of contracted form in Japanese: one is the contracted form which occurs according to a phonetic environment and the rate of speech, and the other is the one which could appear as an informal written form, regardless of the rate of speech. Hasegawa (1979) calls the former "fast speech" (FS), and the latter "casual speech" (CS). Hasegawa made a formal distinction between FS and CS: the rules of FS processes are conditioned by purely phonological factors, while the rules of CS processes are sensitive to sociological notions. Hasegawa claims that all CS phenomena should be described in the lexicon, since CS processes are lexically governed, regardless of components of grammar (lexical, morphological, syntactic or phonological). She argues that exceptions, which most CS processes possess, follow from the lexical information given to each item (1979:135). She does not discuss the general principle, which could eliminate exceptions in casual speech phenomena.

In this paper, I will demonstrate that Grice's Maxim, "Avoid ambiguity" is the operative constraint in CS processes in Japanese. This maxim prevents some lexical items from undergoing CS processes, and thus keeps CS perspicuous. First, I will briefly explain the formal distinction between fast speech and casual

speech, as made by Hasegawa. Then, I will demonstrate that Grice's Maxim is operative to account for exceptions of CS processes, examining four CS phenomena.

1.1. Distinction between Fast Speech and Casual Speech

Hasegawa states that contracted forms in FS occur because of the rate of speech. For example, Hasegawa explains that high vowels /i/ and /u/ are devoiced when they occur between voiceless consonants or before a pause under the rule of High Vowel Devoicing (HVD). The rule is shown in (1) and the examples of HVD in (2) (Hasegawa's (1) and (2) on page 127, respectively).

(1) High Vowel Devoicing

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syll} \\ +\text{high} \end{array} \right\} [-\text{voice}] / [-\text{voice}] \text{ --- } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [-\text{voice}] \\ +\text{pause} \end{array} \right\}$$

(2) \bar{V} stands for a devoiced vowel and \bar{V} for a long vowel.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. kisetu 'season' | b. kisetu ga 'season SM' |
| c. sukosi 'a little' | d. sukosi dake 'only a little' |
| e. yakusoku 'promise' | f. yakusoku da 'promise copula' |
| g. t̄is̄ikikaikyū 'intelligentsia' | |
| h. t̄okyō e iku hito
to go person
'the person who goes to Tokyo' | i. t̄okyō e iku basu
bus
'the bus which goes to Tokyo' |

Hasegawa's examples show that HVD is purely conditioned by phonological environment. It occurs regardless of morphological or syntactic environment, or sociological factors. Thus, the phonological variations of the contracted form in FS are often predictable according to universal rules in phonology.

On the other hand, there are a number of contracted forms in Japanese whose processes cannot be adequately explained by purely phonological processes. This type of contracted form is often conditioned by sociological factors, such as the speaker's occupation, class, and sex, and formality. Hasegawa calls this type of contracted form "casual speech". Note that this use of the term "casual speech" is different from its use by Lass in *Phonology* (1984), in which he uses it to refer to variations of one's speech. "Casual Speech" in this paper refers to a

contracted form, which can appear in writing as a style of speech and which is considered to be lexical variation, rather than phonological. These contracted forms often appear in novels as one's utterances and in personal letters to family members and friends.

For example, English gonna of going to and oughta of ought to are examples of casual speech, under the definition in this paper. These contracted forms are used in conversation and can also appear as written forms. Casual speech in Japanese is far more abundant and complicated than English. For example, čaw, the contracted form of V-te šimaw 'finish doing (something)', can be used only in an informal situation between close people. Vowel Fusions such as kēru, the contracted form of kaeru 'return', occur only in vulgar speech. This contracted form is observed in the speech of gangsters, uneducated men, and often young men who are trying to sound like them.

Minami (1973) states that the choice of a style in one's speech is dependent on the relationship between participants in a conversation, the speaker's background, topic, circumstances and many other social factors. Use of contracted forms in Japanese is certainly restricted to informal situations. Some forms are used only by certain classes, and others among intimate friends.

The following Japanese examples in (3) of casual speech are commonly used by anyone in informal speech, regardless of social class, age or sex. This is an informal style of speech, in which the form which can be the construction de wa (consisting de, either the gerundive form of the copula or a locative, followed by the topic marker wa) is contracted to ja. The ill-formed (3d & e), in which the string is not syntactic, illustrate that this contracted form is not a result of purely phonological processes.

- (3) dew → dž (de + wa → dža)
- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| a. soredewa | → | soredža | 'then' |
| b. (Noun/Adj.) de | wa nai | → (N/Z) džai nai | |
| | copula | Top.not | '(it) is not (N)' |
| c. tokyo de wa | → | tokyo džai | 'in Tokyo' |
| | at Top | | |
| d. soredede watasi | → | *soredžatasi | 'so I...' |
| | therefore I | | |
| e.node | wakare-ta | → | *...nodžakareta |
| | because separated | | 'separated because...' |

Examples in (4) also illustrate that the contracted syllabic form η of no is not merely a result of purely phonological processes. Nasal syllabicization occurs because of both syntactic and phonological factors. Moreover, it appears only in informal speech, like all other contracted forms in casual speech. I will elaborate the discussion on this casual speech process in section 2.2.

- (4) no \rightarrow η
- a. watasi no da \rightarrow watasi η da. 'it's mine'
 I Gen. copu
- b. watasi no dariya \rightarrow *watasi η dariya 'my dahlia'
 I Gen. dahlia
- c. watasi no uči \rightarrow watasi η či 'my house'
 I Gen. house
- d. watasi no učikake \rightarrow *watasi η čikake 'my wedding robe'

The CS processes are not predictable according to phonological rules alone, since they are fixed written forms, which differ according to the speaker's social class, sex and syntactic configurations.

In the next section, I will present more data which support Hasegawa's lexical approach. Then, I will demonstrate that Grice's maxim is operative to block processing certain CS processes, modifying Hasegawa's analyses of four CS phenomena.

2. CS rules conditioned by lexical information.

2.0. Subject Honorification.

Hasegawa explains that there is a number of exceptions among a CS process. For example, certain lexical items do not undergo the syntactic process of Subject Honorification, because SH is lexically governed. (5) are the examples of SH, taken from Hasegawa.

(5) Subject Honorification: It changes the verb into the infinitive form, and inserts ni-nar 'copula-become-Honorific verb ending' after the verb.
 (Hasegawa, 1979:131)

- | | | | | |
|---------|--------|---------------|-----|---------------|
| a. kak- | 'write | o-kaki-ni-nar | | |
| b. iw- | 'say' | *o-iwi-ni-nar | but | osšar- |
| c. ik- | 'go' | *o-iki-ni-nar | but | o-ide-ni-nar |
| d. mi- | 'see' | *o-mi-ni-nar | but | go-ran-ni-nar |

In (5), (b)-(d) do not undergo SH. That is, the syntactic process does not account for the suppletion. Now, Hasegawa claims that "...sociological conditions are allowed only in the lexicon, not in any other components of a grammar. Hence, [a lexical] approach to CS phenomena is desirable. In such a model, all the CS phenomena should be described in the lexicon" (1979:132). Examples (b), (c) and (d) do not follow the syntactic rule of SH, because they have special lexical variants for the subject honorific form.

It is clear that Hasegawa sees SH as a case of syntactic CS. However, I do not consider it a CS process, since SH does not involve any phonological processes; further, it is hard to see how an honorific process can be construed as "casual" in nature. SH is a case of purely syntactic processes, which also require lexical information in the lexicon. The lexical information can be stated as a condition such that SH does not apply when independent lexical items already exist to refer to the same meanings, as shown in (5b, c, and d).

Now, I will demonstrate that Grice's maxim, "avoid ambiguity" is an operative principle to block certain CS processes in Japanese. The first example that supports the general principle is observed in exceptions to the rules yielding contracted forms via Vowel Fusion.

2.1 Vowel Fusion

Hasegawa discusses a casual speech process, called Vowel Fusion, which occurs only in men's vulgar speech. In such speech, only ai, oi and ae can be fused into a long vowel ē. Hasegawa formalizes the rule as in (6) (Hasegawa's (8), p.129).

(6) Vowel Fusion (VF)

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ai \\ oi \\ ae \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \bar{e} / C_1 \underline{\quad}$$

(7) are examples of the VF (see next page).

Hasegawa states: "VF can be found only in the speech of a certain social group, such as gangsters, the scum of the streets among the Tokyo dialect speaker, and of the speakers of certain regional dialects". This type of speech is also often found in speech among male friends in informal situations.

(7)

- | | | | | |
|-------|----------|---|---------|---------------|
| A. a. | Verb-tai | → | V -tē | 'want to V' |
| b. | nai | → | nē | 'not, no' |
| c. | itai | → | itē | 'painful' |
| d. | kurai | → | kurē | 'dark' |
| | | | | |
| B. a. | sugoi | → | sugē | 'great' |
| b. | omosiroi | → | omosirē | 'interesting' |
| c. | mugoi | → | mugē | 'cruel' |
| | | | | |
| C. a. | atarimae | → | atarimē | 'of course' |
| b. | kaeru | → | kēru | 'to return' |
| c. | omae | → | omē | 'you' |

The VF is allowed only with certain lexical items. The constraint seems to be Grice's maxim, "avoid obscurity". That is, the VF seems to be applicable only when the contracted form of a certain lexical item does not have a homonym.

(8) are the examples of lexical items which cannot be allowed to undergo the VF. In parentheses, the normal interpretation of the contracted form of each item is given (see next page). The homonyms or almost homonyms in the parentheses in (8) indicate that the general conversational principle rules out the application of the VF to certain lexical items.

It is also important to note that this principle does not seem to be the only constraint to eliminate the bad forms. There seem to be other factors such as the position of stress. For example, the VF of ae in (8Cb), haeru 'to excel in brilliancy', is ill-formed, while the VF of ai of another word, hairu 'to enter', is well-formed, as indicated in the parenthesis. This phenomenon indicates that there seem to be secondary rules to determine which lexical item takes precedence in undergoing the VF processes, when there are more than two items which contain the diphthongs ai, oi, or ae. One of the rules may be a stress position. In the case of (8Cb), hairu 'to enter' undergoes the VF process, rather than haeru. It may be due to the stress position, i.e., the primary stress in hairu is on the first syllable, while that in haeru is on the second syllable. Another possibility of the secondary constraints for (8Cb) is that hairu 'to enter' undergoes the CS process because it is much more frequently used in daily conversation, while haeru 'to excel in brilliancy' is more restricted in terms of its contexts of use. These analyses are no more than suggestive, and further analyses are required.

(8)

- A. a. maikai → *mēkai 'every time' (mēkai 'clear')
 b. gaisa → *gēša 'foreign cars' (gēša 'a geisha')
 c. saikō → *sēkō 'best, highest' (sēkō 'success, Seiko watch; sēko 'a girl's name')
 d. ore ga iku → *ore gēku 'I go' (a nonsense phrase)
- B. a. kuroi → *kurē 'black' (kurē '(VF form of kurai) dark')
 b. kīroi → *kīrē 'yellow' (kīrē 'clean beautiful')
 c. sitsukoi → *sitsukē 'persistent' (situke 'discipline')
 d. osiroi → *osirē 'facial powder' (osiroi is a female term)
 e. ore mo iku → *ore mēku 'I also go' (a nonsense phrase)
- C. a. kimaē → *kimē 'generosity' (kime 'texture')
 b. haeru → *hēru 'to excel in brilliancy' (hēru '(VF form of hairu) 'to enter')
 c. taeru → *tēru 'to endure' (nonsense)
 d. ore ga erai → *ore gērai 'I am great' (nonsense)

The second example of CS processes as fixed lexical items is Nasal Syllabicization, discussed in the following section.

2.2. Nasal Syllabicization (NS).

Hasegawa explains that "when no, either as a nominalizer or as a possessive marker, occurs before a copula, o in no is dropped and n is syllabicized.... Similarly, the connective form of the copula, ni, becomes n̄, being followed by nar 'become' " (p.128). (9) is the tentative formalization of NS rule, given by Hasegawa.

(9) Nasal Syllabicization. (Hasegawa's (7), p128)

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{no} \\ \text{ni} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \text{n̄} / \text{---} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{copula} \\ \text{n} \\ \text{d} \\ \text{[nar]} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{Cond.:} \\ \text{ni} = \text{copula}$$

Hasegawa realizes that there are several exceptions to

(9). For example, the possessive no followed by certain lexical items can be syllabified, as in (10), and the nominalizer no followed by a question particle ka can also be syllabified, as in (11). The NS mon of mono 'thing, object' can appear in certain idiomatic expressions, as in (12). All examples are taken from Hasegawa (Examples (i) in fn.5, p.135).

- (10) boku no tokoro → boku ŋ tokoro 'my house'
(H's (ia))
- (11) yatta no ka → yatta ŋ ka '(you) did
(it)?' (H's (ib))
- (12)a. sonna mono → sonna mon 'such a
thing'
- b. siru mono ka → siru mon ka 'how can (I)
know?!'
- c. yatta mono da → yatta mon da 'used to do
(it)'

In my analysis, (10) - (12) are not exceptions. They follow (13), a revised formalization of Hasegawa's NS rule: it shows that there is no ambiguity between the syllabic ŋ of no and that of ni, since they occur in different linguistic environments.

(13) Revised formalization of the NS rule.

A. $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{no} \\ \text{[possessive/} \\ \text{complimentizer]} \\ \text{mono} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \eta / \text{---} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{copula} \\ \text{N[u} \underline{\text{ci}} \\ \text{'house/home'} \\ \text{ka(question} \\ \text{marker)}^1 \end{array} \right\}$

B. ni → ŋ / ___ nar

Examples in (14) (see next page) demonstrate that (13) are applicable.

As can be seen in (j-n) of (14A), the syllabic ŋ of possessive marker or complimentizer, no, occurs before copula and the question marker ka. It also occurs with the noun uci. The NS of ni occurs only before the inchoative verb nar 'become', as observed in (14B). The difference of the syntactic environments where no and ni can be syllabified also indicates that the general conversational principle, "avoid ambiguity", is operative in this CS processes.

(14)A.

before copula

- a. boku no da → boku n da. 'it's
I poss. copl. mine'
- b. so suru mono da. → so suru mon da. '(It's)
so do way copl. natural to do that way'
- c. iku no da → iku n da 'It's
go comp. copl. that (I'm) going.'

before the noun uči "house/home"

- d. boku no uči → boku n či. 'my
I (male) poss. house'
- e. watasi no uči → ore n či 'my
I (male/female) house'
- f. ore no uči → ore n či 'my
I (vulgar) house'
- g. anata no uči → anata n či 'your
you house'
- h. kare no uči → kare n či 'his
he house'
- i. Michiko no uči → Michiko n či
'Michiko's house'

before nouns other than uči 'house'. (See e.g. (4) also.)

- j. boku no nori → *boku n nori
poss. seaweed 'my seaweed'
- k. watasi no haha → *watasi n haha
I poss. mother 'my mother'
- l. kodomo no kaban → *kodomo n kaban
child poss. bag 'children's bag'
- m. ano mura no tera → *ano mura n tera
that village poss. temple 'the temples in
that village'
- n. watasi no usagi → *watasi n usagi/sagi
I poss. rabbit

before the question marker ka.

- o. boku no ka → boku n ka
poss. Q '(Is it) mine?'
- p. so suru mono ka → so suru mon ka 'Should (I)
so do do that way?
- q. iku no ka. → iku n ka. 'Is it that
comp. (you're) going?'

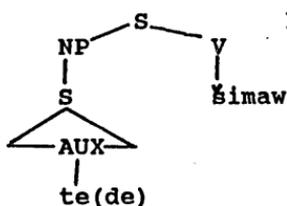
- B. ni → ŋ
- a. isa ni nat-ta yo. → isa ŋ nat-ta yo.
 doctor become-past emph. '(He) became a doctor'
- b. iya ni nar-u ne → iya ŋ nar-u ne.
 disgusted become-pres. '(It's) disgusting, isn't it?'
- c. isa ni da. → *iša ŋ da. '(It's) to doctors'.
 c'. isa no da. → iša ŋ da. '(It's) doctors'.'
- d. isa ni ka → *iša ŋ ka. '(is it) to doctors?'
 d'. isa no ka → iša ŋ ka. '(Is it) doctors?'

2.3. V-te(de) ŝimaw → V-čaw (ŷaw)

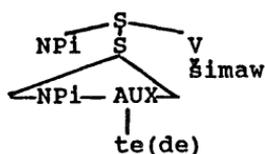
The third example of CS processes as fixed lexical items, discussed in Hasegawa, is the contracted form čaw/ŷaw of V-te ŝimaw/v-de ŝimaw. This sequential change is not at all due to rate of speech. (15) is a rule proposed by Hasegawa ((13a), p.130).

- (15) (Verb)-te (de) ŝimaw → čimaw (ŷimaw) → čaw (ŷaw)
 Gerun. finish

(16)a



b.



Hasegawa argues that past transformational analyses of the Japanese aspectual verb ŝimaw, which takes either a sentential subject, as in (16a), or a sentential complement, as in (16b), are not adequate. According to her, in order to derive the contracted form, Verb-Raising applies to (16a), and Equi NP Deletion, S-Pruning, and VR apply in this order to (16b). Whichever deep structure is chosen, the insertion of a contracted form by lexical insertion is impossible at the level of deep structure. Moreover these contracted forms occur only in the construction such as (16b). Thus, she again emphasizes her claim that the contracted forms are lexically specified so as to take a verb phrase complement (p.134).

Hasegawa refers to the verb ŝimaw 'finish' as a perfect aspectual verb. However, in my analysis, ŝimaw in structures like (16a) and ŝimaw in structures

like (16b) are semantically different, so that they occur in syntactically different environments. šimaw in (16a) syntactically functions as a main verb of a coordinate structure. It semantically indicates "to put (things) away". On the other hand, šimaw in the contracted form is an auxiliary verb, which denotes completion of action indicated by the main verb; it often connotes the speaker's regret or disappointment about the incident denoted by the main verb. Examples in (17) and (18) illustrate this difference between šimaw as an independent verb in (b) and šimaw as an auxiliary verb in (a).

(17) Mou tabe-te šimat-ta.
 already eat-Ger. -past

(a) "(I) already ate it all (I wish I still had some left)."

(b) "(I) already ate it and put it (=the dish) away."

→ { (a') mou tabe-čat-ta.
 (b') *mou tabe-čat-ta.

(18) Soko e it-te šimai-masi-ta.
 storage to go-Ger. -polite-past.

(a) "(He) (already) left for the storage room (unfortunately)."

(b) "(He/I) went to the storage and put it away."

→ { (a') Soko e it-čai-masi-ta.
 (b') *Soko e it-čai-masi-ta.

When one utters the contracted form such as (a'), it always refers to the meaning of (a). It can never be produced in the sense of (b). Examples in (17) and (18) again have shown that the constraint in the CS processes applied only when there exists an ambiguous phenomenon.

2.4. V-Infin. kko nai.

The last example in this paper² for the constraint to avoid ambiguity is a contracted form V-Infin. kko nai, discussed by Hasegawa. Hasegawa points out that this contractable construction also has to be conditioned by lexical information. (19) (see next page) are Hasegawa's examples and her gloss (Hasegawa's (12a-c), p.130).

- (19)a. mi-ru_s] koto wa (nai)→mi kko (nai)
 see-pres. NOM. not
 'It is not the case that ...see...'
- b. Yom-u_s] koto wa (nai)→yomi kko (nai)
 read-pres. NOM. not
 'It is not the case that ...read...'
- c. mi-ta_s] koto wa (nai)→[*mi-ta kko (nai)
 see-past NOM. not [*mi kko (nai)
 '...have not seen...'

Although I agree with her lexical approach, Hasegawa's analysis of this contracted form does not seem to explicate adequately the phenomenon. There are two points which make her analysis invalid.

First of all, Hasegawa confuses two different idiomatic phrases. Second, her interpretations of the original phrase and of the contracted form are not correct. She explains that the contracted form, (21), V-Infin.kko (nai) is derived from (20) V-pres. koto wa (nai).

- | | |
|--|--|
| (20)a. V-pres. koto wa (nai). | "There are (no) times when..." |
| b. V-pres. koto wa nai. | "There is no need (for one) to V..." |
| (21) V-Infin. kko (nai). | |
| (22) V-pres. wake ga nai.
→V-Infin. kko nai | "There is no reason/way (for one) to V..." |
| (23) V-pres. wake ga ar. | "there are reasons (for one) to V..." |

In fact, however, the contracted form, (21), is derived from the original form, (22), V-pres. wake ga nai, which means "there is no reason/way to...". (20) V-pres. koto wa (nai) means "there are (no) times when...". In other words, her gloss, "it's not the case that...", observed in (19), does not refer to any of the two forms, ((20a) and (21)) that she cites.

Because of this crucial misunderstanding, her analysis does not make sense. In my analysis, there are two different interpretations of the original form of this particular idiomatic phrase which Hasegawa refers to, V-pres. koto wa nai in (20): one of the interpretations is "there is no need (for someone) to V...", in which the negative morpheme nai is obligatory, and the other is "there are times when..."

- (26)a. sonna koto s-uru] wake ga nai.
 such thing do-pres. 'There is no way (for
 him) to do such things.'
 → sonna koto s-i kko nai.
- b. sonna koto s-urujwake ga ar-u.
 "There are reasons (for
 him) to do such things."
 → *sonna koto s-i kko ar-u.
- c. sonna koto s-ita] wake ga nai.
 do-past
 "There should be no way (for him) to have
 done such things."
 → ?? sonna koto s-i kko nai.

3. Concluding remarks

I have discussed four examples of casual speech processes in Japanese, showing that a general principle, proposed by Grice, is the key that rules out some cases of exceptions. In other words, the seeming exceptions are not actually exceptions, but they simply follow the general conversational principle, "Be perspicuous". This restricts one form to refer to one meaning. This seems to be the crucial rule to the casual speech processes in Japanese, although there may be secondary constraints, such as stress position and frequency of use. These phonological or conversational constraints in casual speech processes in Japanese await further investigations.

NOTES:

I would like to thank John Lawler and Peter Hook for valuable comments and suggestions. I would also like to thank Karin Carey for preparing this paper for publication.

1. There are many cases in which the NS occurs before other sentence particles, such as ne, yo and sa. These are more dialectal.

- (i) a. sore watasi no yo. → sore watasi n yo.
 that I poss. emph. 'It's mine.'
- b. so suru mono sa. → so suru mon sa.
 that way do emph. "that's the way
 you should do.'

