On the place of linguistic resources in the organization of talk-in-interaction: A co-investigation of English and Japanese grammatical practices

Gene H. Lerner\textsuperscript{a,}*\textsuperscript{,} Tomoyo Takagi\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a} Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA
\textsuperscript{b} Department of Linguistics, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA

Received 1 August 1995; revised version 9 March 1998

Abstract

This report presents a method for examining grammar as a participants’ resource for conduct in interaction. By situating the analysis of grammar in the interactional context of turn-construction and action sequence organization we are able to establish a technical basis for comparing elements of grammatical organization across languages and cultures. By focusing on the co-construction of single turn-constructional units, we are able to describe participants’ treatment of sentences-in-progress in terms of a sequentially informed syntax. Through the co-investigation of languages with dissimilar grammatical practices we are able to isolate and describe the use of language-specific structures as constitutive elements of turn-construction.

“In dealing analytically with conversation, you must at least be cautious in the use of what you’ve been taught about grammar.” (Sacks, 1992, Vol. 1: 334)

1. Introduction

The United States and Japan are recognizably quite distinct cultures. In part, this is produced by and reflected in the differences between the English and Japanese

\footnote{We would like to thank Junko Mori and Makoto Hayashi for contributing to our understanding of Japanese language use and Manny Schegloff, Sandy Thompson and Pamela Downing for their comments. Thanks also go to Ryoko Suzuki, Akira Suzuki, Junko Mori and Makoto Hayashi for making available to us some of the Japanese conversations used in our analysis. This paper was first delivered at the Symposium on Conversation, Linguistic Society of America, Summer Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 1995.}

* Corresponding author
languages, as well as differences in interactional practices, and differences in other aspects of social organization. Many of these differences are produced and reproduced in talk-in-interaction. That is, talk-in-interaction is the ‘point of production’ for cultural difference and the recognizability of that difference. However, it is important to remember that much linguistic and other cultural difference is not produced for the most part as difference, but as separate features situated in their own cultural milieu. This makes comparison difficult. It is also important to remember that to speak of the United States and Japan as distinct cultures is to gloss (sometimes usefully) a wide range of social practices and products invariably situated in the local particulars of their realization. This too makes comparison difficult.

Though grammatical practice is always a constitutive element of recognizable social-cultural organization, it is in the first place, for participants engaged in talk, an aspect of talk-in-interaction, of action in interaction. Its primary relevance for participants is as an interactional resource situated in an emerging, sequentially positioned turn at talk.

In examining language use it seems safe to assume that the language spoken has a continuing relevance for turn-construction, since the choices and possibilities for a speaker are always found within the linguistic resources available. However, it is another matter to demonstrate just how these linguistic resources are consequential for the organization of talk-in-interaction. This is one place where a comparison, or co-investigation, of distinct languages can be advantageous. Of course, comparison raises the issue of the comparability of actions. Yet this concern does not seem to us to pose a distinctively different problem than other sorts of differences of circumstances, identities, ways of speaking, etc. Action is always accomplished against the backdrop of (and methodic appropriation of) one or another instantiation of context. As Sacks et al. (1974) have shown, some aspects of the organization of talk-in-interaction (e.g. turn-taking) can be context-free, while nevertheless relying on the situated particulars of each occurrence, thus remaining context-sensitive at each deployment.

The immediate aim of this investigation is to isolate some of the interactional consequences of grammatical practices employed in turn-construction in English language and Japanese language talk-in-interaction. A perspicuous site for examining turn-construction is produced when one participant completes a syntactic unit begun by another participant. In this report we investigate the operation of two devices used in both English and Japanese talk-in-interaction to accomplish this: the anticipatory completion of a compound turn-constructional unit and the terminal item completion of a turn-constructional unit (henceforth TCU). Next, we examine how one participant can join and assist in the explanation that a co-participant produces for and addresses to a third participant. Here, we show that both English and Japanese co-participant completions can be deployed in the course of a single type of activity (explaining) to accomplish the same type of action (assisting in the explanation).

---

1 These resources need not be restricted to the lexicon and grammatical practices of a single language. See Szymanski (1996) for a discussion of bilingual practices in which the resources of two languages (Spanish and English) are concurrently available.
Finally, having provided this analytic or technical basis for comparison of turn-constructional practices in the service of a specific activity (assisting in an explanation) across languages, we conclude by describing one way in which the grammatical practices of English and Japanese provide resources to their respective speakers to realize anticipatory completion in distinctive ways.

This report should be seen as an exercise in co-investigation. The aim here is not so much to report on a particular practice or organization of practices found in English and/or Japanese language materials. We undertake the steps in this analysis to investigate what a comparison might consist of when investigating grammatical practices in interaction that are situated in recognizably distinct cultural and linguistic contexts.

2. A methodological comparison

Ono and Yoshida (1996) have reported that TCU completion by a co-participant in Japanese differs from completion in English on two counts. First, they find that completion differs structurally because of the 'special syntactic features of Japanese' as compared to English. For example, they mention that "Japanese is known to be a strict verb-final language" (Ono and Yoshida, 1996: 117): thus, they propose that recipients in Japanese conversation can contribute the final verb of a clause begun by another speaker, while they assert this is not possible in English because it is not a verb-final language. Second, they state that completion by a co-participant seems to be infrequent in Japanese as compared to English conversation. They suggest a pragmatic or cultural basis for this finding: "In general, to Japanese speakers, it seems impolite to finish another speaker's sentence or to provide additional information unexpressed by the first speaker" (Ono and Yoshida, 1996: 120).

We do not question these observations. However, we approach the phenomenon of completion in a different manner on both counts. First, we will describe the structure of utterances that are completed by another participant in interactional terms, i.e. in terms of emergent turn-construction. This will allow us to describe the features of utterance production (across language structures) to which participants are oriented in the midst of interaction. It is these elements of a 'participants' syntax' that are the relevant sequentially situated resources that enhance the possibility of co-participant completion. It is within the analytic context of turn-construction practices that language specific features can be isolated, and their social and interactional consequences can be assessed. On the second count, we will not turn to characterizations of cultural norms (however accurate) that guide action as an account for frequency differences between cultural groupings. Rather, we identify and describe one action environment (assisted explaining) that provides a social-interactional occasion for co-participant completion. This activity is not described on the basis of linguistic or cultural differences, but in terms of the organization of action.

---

2 The use of frequency counts is a tricky matter as Schegloff (1993) has pointed out. For example, number of occurrences per transcript is of dubious value, since 'transcript' is not a relevant domain for comparing utterance completion frequency.
In this way we attempt to characterize both a turn-constructional practice and an activity in common analytic terms relevant to the organization of talk-in-interaction, postponing the introduction of distinctive linguistic and cultural features until the analyses of the practices themselves require such introduction. It is, then, within the context of a particular type of activity and a particular form of turn-construction that we undertake to explicate the relevance of linguistic form for the organization of talk-in-interaction.

3. Co-participant completion

Several distinct environments for co-participant completion of a speaker's TCU can be distinguished (Lerner, 1996a). Yet, much of the work in this area (e.g. Antaki et al., 1995; Coates, 1994; Falk, 1980; Ferrara, 1992; Ono and Yoshida, 1996) fails to distinguish among the several distinct social-sequential environments in which a co-participant contributes an utterance that is tied syntactically to the current speaker's utterance, thus considering together rather distinct types of action. Co-participants can add continuations to another's turn when there is a halt in the progressivity of the turn's talk (as in a word search), or after a TCU has arrived at a possible completion (by furnishing a next increment to that unit), as well as contribute a completion for an emerging unit prior to a possible completion. Here, for example, they can furnish the final component of a compound TCU, or they can produce the 'terminal item' of a TCU at its pre-possible completion point. In this report, we will examine these last two forms of co-participant completion. Examining co-participant completion furnishes one way to investigate the elements of grammar as features of interaction, i.e. as grammatical practices. And co-investigating English and Japanese talk-in-interaction provides one way to isolate the consequentiality of different grammatical practices by holding constant, in a sense, the social-sequential environment of those practices, yet where 'holding constant' requires analytic proof in each case.

3.1. Compound turn-constructional units

The spates of talk that constitute the discrete units that both make up a linguistic system and provide participants with a basis for recognizing unit completion have been described in various ways. One advantage of describing these units in sequential terms is that it is possible to capture aspects of the structure of talk that are not language-dependent, but (inter)action-dependent.

The compound turn-constructional unit (Lerner, 1991) furnishes one example of this type of description. A compound TCU realizes the features required of a TCU in

---

3 Sacks (1992) provides the initial description of this practice which he first called 'joint productions' and later referred to as 'collaborative completions'.

4 Most research in this area also ignores the import of the 'directionality' of address associated with a second speaker’s contribution. The interactional import of this matter will be taken up in the section on 'assisted explaining'.
a special way. A compound TCU projects in its course, and prior to the onset of a final component, that a two-part unit is underway. This type of TCU is composed of the following features. Roughly, it is designed in a manner that shows the current component of the TCU to be a preliminary component and it foreshows both a place where a final component could begin and a form that such a final component can take. This can then provide an opportunity (but not a mandate) for a co-participant to contribute the anticipated final component. This can be seen in the following excerpt:

(1) [HIC: I] [IF + THEN]
    1 David: so if one person said he couldn’t invest
    2 (.)
    3 Kerry: then I’d have to wait

At line 1 in this excerpt, an utterance-in-progress can be seen as a preliminary component (IF X) and foreshows a possible place and form for a final component (THEN Y). In this instance, a co-participant then produces an utterance in the form of the projected final component at a place it could be due, thereby furnishing an anticipatory completion for the TCU as a whole.

There is a range of interactionally relevant resources, including syntactic, intonational, semantic and pragmatic resources, that enhance the possibility of co-participant completion in conversation. However, the above characterization of compound TCUs does not specify language-specific syntactic, intonational, semantic, or pragmatic resources, but describes a method for participants (and professional analysts) to determine at any point in the production of an utterance, one utterance at a time, whether the TCU-so-far constitutes a compound TCU. This type of characterization is not limited to compound TCUs. This is how TCUs generally can be characterized, not in terms of specific units of realization, but in terms of a general method for analyzing each instantiation, using all the resources of language, intonation, sequential environment and any other resources that are locally possibly consequential in establishing the TCU’s situated circumstances such as setting, relevant identities, and other elements of context. For compound TCUs, their compoundness may be found in the syntactic structure of the TCU itself or it may be found elsewhere and applied to the TCU’s syntactic structure or both.

Corresponding aspects of Japanese talk-in-interaction also furnish features of compound TCUs and these, too, occasion anticipatory completion. For example, in excerpt 2 at line 8, the phrase hoide, kaerukoro ni nattara, ‘by the time I go home’, establishes a compound form for the TCU.5

---

5 See Appendix for a list of abbreviations used in the word by word gloss. These linguistic categories are only included in the gloss as a courtesy to those readers who are familiar with linguistic glossing practices. This usage is not part of the analysis.
(2) [BIIRU]

1 A: kuro biiru toka amai yan. 
   black beer TOP sweet FP

2 B: a, soo desu ka, atashi [nonda koto nai]. 
   oh so BE:POL Q I drank NR NEG

3 C: [kuro biiru ne], are ne, nomi 
   black beer FP that FP drink 
   sugiru. 
   too.much

4 (0.7) anoo atashi nanka nomenai tachi nanoni::, kuro biiru 
   well I TOP drink:NEG type though black beer

5 tte nomi yasui kara, [kuikuikuikui] tte nondete, 
   QT drink easy because {sound of drinking} QT drink:CONT

6 A: [a, ma:, u::n, soo ( )] 
   um well ah so

7 B: a, soo [nande]su ka. 
   Oh so BE:POL Q

8 → C: [.h hoide], (.h)KAeru koro ni nattara, [.h HIE:::] 
   and leave when become:COND ONM

9 → A: [ashiga] torareru. 
   reel

10 C: soo. 
   right

11 A: suGOi tsuyoi mitai yo, kore ni kurabete. 
   very strong seem FP this to compare:CONT 
   ((Pointing to a draft beer on the table))

1 A: I think black beer tastes light.
2 B: Oh, does it? I [haven't tried it yet.
3 C: [It's easy to end up with drinking too much 
   of black beer. Well, I don't drink a lot, but black beer is easy to drink,
   so I [just keep drinking.
4 A: [Well, ah yeah, that's so.
5 B: Oh, Is that so?
8 → C: and by the time I go home, [whoa:::
9 → A: [You find yourself drunk and reeling.
10 C: Right.
11 A: I heard it's much stronger than this. ((Pointing to a draft beer on the table.))

In this excerpt, the compound form is produced in the course of an extended turn by projecting the consequence of the action (continuing to drink) as the TCU's final component. At the completion of the preliminary component, speaker A produces a continuation of C's utterance (at line 9) in a manner designed to co-opt the completion. The composition of C's turn-in-progress foreshows the consequence of the
event as the next action. The form this will take, as a next increment to the current TCU, is foreshown by the prospective link -tara in mātara, 'become', that brings the current (preliminary) component to completion. The non-final ending form, tara, marks not only the boundary of a component but also its preliminariness. At this place, A furnishes an anticipatory completion. As it turns out, C formulates the consequence of 'keep drinking' in a somewhat different fashion than A. C produces an interjection (HIE:::) that expresses surprise in a slightly humorous way. In this way C enacts what A simultaneously describes as the resulting situation. C then confirms A's interposed completion in line 10.

It is worth noting one feature that distinguishes the realization of the compound TCU and its anticipatory completion in excerpt 1 from that in excerpt 2. Excerpt 1 marks the preliminary nature of the component syntactically at its beginning (IF), while excerpt 2 does so at the component's completion (-tara).⁶ The importance of this difference for turn-construction and anticipatory completion will be taken up in a later section.

3.2. Sources of syntactic structuring

Before examining additional types of English and Japanese compound TCUs and their anticipatory completion, we would like to look more closely at how these units are constituted. Lerner (1991) states that "[a]ny aspect of the organization of talk in interaction that includes a projectable compound turn-unit format therein provides the resources for completion by another participant" (1991: 450). Though compound TCUs are always realized through some syntactic form which becomes available to participants as a compound syntactic form, the compoundness of that form may not always or only or substantially be found in that syntactic form itself. That is, the structuring of some small spate of talk as a compound TCU may not always have its source in the formal syntax of that small spate of talk itself.

In both English and Japanese grammatical practices, there are syntactic structures that do not ordinarily constitute compound TCUs themselves – for example, the [Subject + Predicate] form in English and the [Subject (ga) + Predicate] and [Topic (wa) + Comment] forms in Japanese. However, these syntactic forms can be cast as compound TCUs by the structure of the action carried by the TCU or by the position of the TCU in an emerging course of action or by prosodic design of the TCU – or, more likely, by some combination of these ever-present elements of turn-construction.

In (3) an English compound TCU is realized as a [Subject + Predicate] format by a practice for composing complaints in a two-part form, [disparaging reference + complainable action], while in (4) an [advice prefix + advice] format provides a compound TCU.

(3) [JS]
1 → Joe: ... en all 'a these go:ddam people

⁶ Also, in (1) there is a pronoun shift to maintain the reference across speakers, while this is not needed in (2). Note that although there are pronominal subjects (‘I’ and ‘you’) in the English translation, in the Japanese original no explicit reference is made to C by either speaker C or A.
on the freeway [were stoppin-

Edith: [were rubbernecking

(4) [Sewing] ((Father and daughter are sewing a pillow))

1 → Daughter: Oh here dad (0.2) a good way to get those corners out
2  (0.2)
3 Dad: is to stick yer finger inside.
4 Daughter: Well, that’s one way.

In the following instance the position of speaker B’s utterance (at line 9) in a course of action makes a [Subject + Predicate] available as a compound TCU.

(5) [Jingles]

1 A: Oh misses had to go ta the hospita[al
2 B: [.hh he:::ah didja hear about this?
3 C: what
4 B: .h [misses Roberts-
5 A: [you heard about uht?
6  (0.2)
7  ((laughter))
8 D: (why)
9→B: Misses Roberts
10 A: >had t’ go the ho:<<[ spita[l
11 B: [had t’ go to the hospital=jingles had to take
12 her cause her ulcer started bl(h)eeding.

Here the very local contingencies of this particular juncture in this particular conversation – the shared knowledge of news, its misfired delivery, and the resulting overlap and appreciation – furnish A with the resources for issuing the final component of the TCU at line 10. Thus the basis for establishing the compoundness of a TCU, i.e. establishing it for participants, can be either systematic or it can hinge on a quite local configuration of interactional contingencies.

The intonational contour of a TCU can also enhance the possibility of completion. So, for example, when the preliminary component of a syntactically-furnished compound TCU is produced under its own intonation contour, a more distinct opportunity is provided to co-participants for interposing a completion. However, a distinct two-part intonational contour is not required to occasion completion. On the other hand, TCUs that are not compound syntactic units can be composed as compound TCUs through intonational practices. The important point here is that the characterization of compound TCUs does not specify the resources of utterance composition and positioning that constitute a spate of talk as a compound unit, but rather provides a context-free method for using whatever resources are at hand to produce and recognize such a unit.

In the following Japanese instance a [Topic (wa) + Comment] unit at line 6 is available as a compound TCU.
Here T’s utterance at line 6 is cast as a compound unit by its position in a turn which is formed up as a contrast between Japanese and American mores. (This is embedded in a larger topic that contrasts Japanese and American cultures – and thus furnishes a fair number of opportunities for anticipatory completion.)

In the following Japanese instance another [Topic (wa) + Comment] construction is cast as a locus for anticipatory completion by its position in a description of countervailing events that, taken together, project a result of unchanged circumstances. In other words, the description is composed as [cause + effect]. In the talk that precedes excerpt 7, M has been telling a story about a group of high school students who approached her and a friend at a well-known Tokyo intersection (the Shibuya intersection) during a holiday week. One story recipient then asks her why she thinks they were approached among all the people at the intersection. M replies that she does not know why. However, she then goes on to say that the intersection was nevertheless crowded, though not with the usual Tokyo
residents who had left the city for the holiday period, but with vacationers from the countryside.

(7) [SHIBUYA]
1 M: gooruden W1ku towa ie sa:, Golden Week TOP ay FP
2 H: [un]. Uhuh
3 M: [ya]ppari sa, dakara, tokyoo no hito wa minna as.expected FP so Tokyo GEN people TOP all
dokka ni ryuushutsu shiteru keredomo=, somewhere go.out doing although
5 H: = [un]. Uhuh
6 M: = [kekkyoku] inaka no hito wa kiteru wake yo. after.all country GEN people TOP coming reason FP
7 H: [so so so so]. yeah.right
8 → M: [dakara<]. .h shibuya no koosaten wa itsumo no yoo ni so Shibuya GEN intersection TOP as.usual
9 [konde ita no ] was.crowded FP
10 → H: [konde nda yo ne]. is.crowded FP FP
11 A: un. Uhuh

1 M: though it was the ‘Golden Week’,
2 H: [Uhuh ].
3 M: [you know], people living in Tokyo are out of town,
5 H: =[Uhuh ].
6 M: =[but still] people from country come to Tokyo, you know.
7 H: [Yeah, right ].
8 → M: [So], the Shibuya intersection was as usual
9 [crowded ]
10 → H: [crowded ].
11 A: I see

In the talk prior to H’s anticipatory completion at line 10, M contrasts the typical movements of people from Tokyo and those from the country during the holiday week: ‘people living in Tokyo are out of town, but people from country come to Tokyo’. This sets up the consequence that the intersection remained crowded. This consequence becomes recognizable as the next component of M’s turn when she begins her next TCU with dakara, ‘so’, followed by shibuya no koosaten, ‘the
Shibuya intersection’, at line 8. Upon the production of wa, it becomes clear that the consequence (for the Shibuya intersection) could be produced next. The adverbial phrase *itsumono yoo ni*, ‘as usual’, strengthens this projection as well as further specifies the form M’s utterance will take after the completion of the adverbial phrase, i.e. the upcoming Comment will take the form of a predicate. And this is how H completes M’s utterance at line 10.

Among linguists the ‘topic marker’ wa has long been associated with contrast in [Topic-Comment] constructions (Kuno, 1973; Shibatani, 1990). The above excerpt shows how the sequential position of wa can implement its contrastive use, and thus produce a two-part structure that furnishes the sequential opportunity for anticipatory completion. We will now examine the distinctive grammatical resources provided by English and Japanese for producing several other types of compound TCUs.

3.3. Attributed speech

The practices of attributing speech in conversation furnish another environment for anticipatory completion, although English and Japanese furnish somewhat different resources for its realizations. In English conversation (in contrast to written text) the author attribution (e.g. ‘she said’) ordinarily precedes and thereby projects the attributed or quoted speech. As such, this recognizable two-part format can constitute a compound TCU and provide the resources for anticipatory completion as in the following excerpt.

(8) |GTS| [AUTHOR ATTRIBUTION + QUOTE]
1 Ken: insteada my grandmother offering him
2 a drink, of beer she’ll say
3 Louise: wanna glassa milk?

In the case of attributed speech, the preliminary component [author attribution] does not itself project the syntactic form of the attributed speech, but only that what follows will be attributed speech. As we noted earlier, the two-part format of compound TCUs is not always fully specifiable in purely syntactic terms. In excerpt 8 the attributed speech format is embedded in a contrast (as a further specification of a contrastive offer), thus specifying the final component as not only attributed speech, but as a contrastive offer that will take the form of attributed speech.

There is evidence that Japanese grammatical practice can furnish a similar format, but with a reverse ordering of the components. So, in Japanese, a compound TCU can take the form [quote + author attribution] when it can be discerned that an utterance-in-progress is an attributable remark. This can be seen in the following instance where a variant of the attribution verb *omou* ‘think’ is used. Speaker K has just told the other participants about someone who had misconstrued some Chinese characters on a menu at a Chinese restaurant. The excerpt begins with R’s utterance proposing what this person might have been thinking. K, and another recipient M complete the author attribution part overlapping R’s continued talk.
(9) [RAAMEN] [ATTRIBUTED THOUGHT + AUTHOR ATTRIBUTION]

1 R: ajiga koku tsuiteru mita ni, [omo]motta no kamo ne:::. taste strong seasoned like thought NR perhaps FP

2 → K: [soo soo. ]>o[motta no<. omotta yeah thought FP thought rashikute seem

3 M: [(omotta no) kamo ne:::. thought NR perhaps FP

1 R: (The dish) is more strongly seasoned

1a than usual [or something like that, she [thought perhaps.

2 → K: [Yeah. She seems to have [thought.

3 M: [she thought perhaps.

In the discussion immediately preceding this excerpt, the participants have discussed the Chinese character (which means ‘additional’) that could be easily mistaken for the character in question (so in miso). The utterance ajiga koku tsuiteru ‘(the dish) is more strongly (i.e. additionally) seasoned’ is then hearable as an attributed interpretation of the word for miso with the character for so mistaken for the other character. Note that K, the participant who introduced the story, produces the acknowledgment tokens soo soo at the point the attributed part is completed. This is produced in overlap with R’s continuing utterance which is a type of evidential marker mita ni, ‘like’. Mitai ni mitigates the certainty of the attributed part and is often used in place of a quotation marker preceding an attributing verb. Thus the phrase mitai ni strongly foreshows an attributing predicate as the next component. It is therefore possible for K, as she produces the acknowledgment tokens, to recognize that the preliminary component of the attributed thought accompanied by the evidential/quotative marker is approaching its completion and the final component of the attributing predicate will now be due. Voicing the attributed thought (the preliminary component) with a discrete intonational contour further enhances the projectability of the TCU as a two-part TCU. The fact that both M and K complete R’s utterance nearly simultaneously and complete it by issuing the same predicate (though each is realized in a slightly different fashion) suggests that the place and the form of the final component have been strongly projected. Here we have the conjunction of several types of grammatical and prosodic features

7 Pre-positioned agreement or acknowledgment tokens such as this (as well as post-positioned tokens) can also be found with English anticipatory completion, but we do not have space to examine these features in this paper.

8 Japanese grammatical practice can show a speaker’s basis for knowing what they assert. In this instance, the participants each compose their final component in a fashion that displays their differential knowledge, i.e. speakers R and M indicate their contributions are based on a logical deduction of what they have been told (kamo), while speaker K’s contribution indicates her knowledge is based on a source, though not her own senses (rashikute). Nonetheless, the availability of a place and a form (of a predicate attributing thoughts) is exploited by both ‘types’ of recipients.
(compound form, prospective linkage, and intonation contour) which together
enhance the opportunity for anticipatory completion by foreshowing a place and
form for a next component in the course of what can be thereby treated as a pre-
liminary component.

3.4. Lexical resources

Any aspect of talk-in-interaction that can cast a spate of talk as a compound TCU-
in-progress furnishes participants with resources for anticipatory completion of the
spate of talk in those terms. As we have shown, the preliminary component and pro-
jected final component need not themselves be composed in syntactic terms, since
otherwise unsegmented TCUs can be cast into a two-part form by other aspects of
talk-in-interaction such as the prosody and action format of a TCU. Even word pron-
unciation practices can occasion anticipatory completion in both English and Japan-
ese – when a TCU is cast in those terms. Though spelling a word or enumerating a
phone number might not be thought to establish 'syntactic' relations among letters or
numbers, the syllable system for pronouncing words in English, and the grouping
convention for phone number digits can establish the compoundness of a TCU and
can thereby provide the opportunity and warrant for anticipatory completion as can
be seen in excerpt 10 at line 5 and in excerpt 11 at line 1.

(10) [CDHQ: II]
   1 Mrs. R:  His name is Joe.
   2 Josh:  Mm hm?
   3 Mrs. R:  Vandiver.
   4 Josh:  Vandiver?
   5 → Mrs. R:  V-a-n,  [d-
   6 Josh:  [d-i-v-e-r.
   7 Mrs. R:  d-i-v-e-r. Uh huh.

(11) [SF: 1]
   1 → Mark:  Okay it's area code two one three
   2 JoAnn:  Yah. Four three one.
   3 Mark:  Right.

Word pronunciation can also provide an opportunity and warrant for anticipatory
completion in Japanese. For example, when the pronunciation of a word becomes a
topic of talk as, for example, an element in an explanation, and its demonstration is
projected as a segmented delivery, then that single word or, more precisely, its first
part can furnish the features and warrant for anticipatory completion. In excerpt 12,
the pronunciation of the word nippon becomes topicalized in explaining how the
mora pronunciation system operates. Speaker A is explaining to C how the mora sys-
tem in Japanese is different from the English syllable system.
(12) [MORA]

1 A: >dakara<, soui no o siraburu de kakuto, (. ) enu, 
such NR OBJ syllable with write:COND ‘n’
tatoeba, enu ai pi pi ou enu tte kaitara::: (1.0) 
for.example ‘n’ ‘i’ ‘p’ ‘p’ ‘o’ ‘n’ QT write:COND
3 h- bunsetsu no wake kata ga hutatsu desho. 
syllable GEN divide way SBJ two BE:POL
4 B: un. 
right
5 A: enu ai Pl.: (0.7) [pi] ou ENU [tte iu], 
‘n’ ‘i’ ‘p’ ‘p’ ‘o’ ‘n’ QT say
6 B: [un un]. 
right right
7 A: ni- ni bun- [ni]: siraburuzu ninaru desho. 
two- two syll- two syllables become BE:POL
8 ?: [u:n] 
uhuh
9 B: un.
right
10 A: two syllables. [da]kedo (.h), 
two syllables but
11 B: [hai]. 
yeah
12 A: mora: WA, (0.4) nihongo WA, soo janakute, 
mora TOP Japanese TOP so BE:NEG:CONT
13 → niPON ja(h)na(h)kuTE:(h), 
BE:NEG:CONT
14 C: [u:::n]. 
o::h
15 → B: [>so so so so<]. 
yeah.right
16 A: nip [pon].
17 → B: [pon]. (. )>so so so so<.

1 A: So, when you put such a word into syllables, say,
you write ‘n-i-p-o-n’, 
and it can be divided into two syllables.
4 B: Right.
5 A: you know, ‘nip-pon’.
6 B: Right.
7 A: Two syllables.
8 ?: Uhuh.
9 B: Right.
10 A: Two syllables. [But]
11 B: [Yeah].
Japanese words don’t count like that.
Not ‘nip-pon’ but
[C: O:: h ].
[Right, right, right].
‘nip[pon]’.
[pon], yeah, right.

After stating that a word with a double consonant (nippon) does not count as two units in the Japanese mora system as it does in the syllable system, A demonstrates the syllable pronunciation (in a slightly exaggerated fashion). B, who has already shown that she knows what a mora is (and has been assisting A in the explanation), produces a string of agreement tokens at line 15 in anticipation of the imminent contrasting mora demonstration. For what can be seen as acknowledgeable has not occurred yet at this point, and it is evident by the continuing form of the negation at the end of A’s previous utterance (nakute) that his turn projects continuation. What is to come next is foreshown in the contrast between pronunciation of the word by syllable versus pronunciation by mora. This contrast, along with the timing of A’s demonstration of pronouncing ‘nippon’ by mora – specifically the first of the double consonant ‘pp’ being held without being voiced for a moment – allows B to produce the final part of the word at the same moment as A does – exactly two beats after the onset of the word (at line 17). This excerpt illustrates that a single word can become a unit of interaction – a compound unit of interaction – segmenting the ongoing TCU in the course of its final word.

In this case the TCU as a whole is a compound TCU of the form [Not X, But Y]. However, the contrast also foreshows (to someone who has knowledge of the mora system) that the final word will be voiced as a demonstration of pronunciation using that system. Though ‘nippon’ counts as four morae, the crucial difference between the prior and contrasting syllable demonstration and the upcoming mora demonstration is the timing of the third beat. Thus the very local relevance of pronunciation here constitutes ‘nippon’ as a two part unit with each part consisting of two beats.

In this section, we have seen one important distinction between English and Japanese compound TCU construction, and this bears on the relative reliance for producing and spotting compound units on grammatical grounds as compared to other resources that are concurrently involved in their realization. This concerns the linguistic resources available to bring a preliminary component to completion. One class of English preliminary components is constituted at TCU-beginning by TCU-initial markers such as ‘if’ and ‘when’. Though speakers of Japanese can recognize a preliminary component-in-progress, Japanese grammatical practice ordinarily does not include explicit component-initial indication as in English grammatical practice. In Japanese, grammatical indication usually occurs at component completion (i.e. at the completion of the preliminary component). In Japanese, what seems to be marked explicitly is preliminary component completion, not its onset.

As Ono and Yoshida (1996) point out, there seem to be very few cases where ‘if X-then Y’ type compound TCUs are used as a resource for producing anticipatory completion. Our analysis suggests that this is so because in Japanese such syntactic
elements as indicate what it takes for the current turn to be completed come at the end of the preliminary component – thus turn shape may be indicated ‘just in time’. Of course, other aspects of the talk and its circumstances can foreshow the preliminarity of a turn component, but this is not always the case. In short, an utterance-in-progress may not be constituted as a preliminary component until a component-ending connective particle is produced, and thus a recipient may only find out then that the just-ending component has turned out to have been the preliminary component of a yet-to-be completed compound TCU.

3.5. Terminal item completion

Schegloff (1996) has identified pre-possible completion as a locus of ‘strategic organizational import’ and Jefferson (1983) has shown it to be a systematic locus for the onset of overlapping speech. Speakers have methods for showing that an imminent syntactic possible completion is a ‘designed possible completion’. Schegloff describes the ‘pitch peak’ as one device speakers use to mark a TCU’s pre-possible completion. The pre-possible completion point of a TCU also provides a site for ‘terminal item’ co-participant completion (Lerner, 1996a).

Terminal item completion can be designed as a choral co-production of the terminal item as in excerpt 13, or as a co-optation of the terminal item as in excerpt 14.

(13) [SARI 2]

1  A: You have too many white friends. You don’t know how
2     to be with your [people. ((A does 2 handed double quote gesture at your))
3  → B:     [people ((nods twice with your))]

(14) [CDHQ: Hurricane 1:5]

1  Tiny: Chief Jerruso and Vic are on their way to Haynes Boulevard now,
2     and they say you better have yer transportation=
3  → Charlie: =ready.=
4  Tiny: =alerted hh

In each of these excerpts a co-participant interposes the impending final item of a possibly complete TCU at the pre-possible completion point.

In the following Japanese instance of terminal item completion, speakers A and B are explaining the Japanese linguistic concept of mora to C. This excerpt begins just after speaker A has given a simple definition of mora as a beat, while making reference to the syllable system for contrast. The terminal item completion occurs at line 10.

(15) [MORA]

1  A: hiragana hitotsu tte kangaetemo ii k- kana: =
     hiragana one QT think.of;COND good FP
2  B: =soo so. hiragana hitotsu ga hitotsu no.(.) oto no nagasa
     right hiragana one SBJ one GEN sound GEN length
tte iu no kana.
QT say FP FP

A: Soo desu nee=
so BE:POL FP

B: =un.
mm

A: ko:
this.way

C: "n: [::
mhm

A: [dakarra<,(. ano:::, nippon dattara, chicchai TSU: mo,
so uh:: ‘Japan’ BE:COND small ‘tsu’ too

hito[tsu no ] mora ni [narun ‘desu yo ne’].
one GEN mora become BE:POL FP FP

B: [hitotsu].
[so so so so so so].
one yeah.right

C: Aa:: [::::],
o:::h

B: [so so so] so so so.
yeah.right

1 A: You can think of it as one hiragana. I guess.=
2–3 B: =Right. One hiragana corresponds with one beat length.
4 A: That’s right=
5 B: =mm
6 A: so,
7 C: m: [hm]
8 A: [so], take uh:: ‘nippon’ for example. The small ‘tsu’
in the word counts also as o[n e ] mora, [you know].
9 B: [One], [yeah, right]

10 → B:

11 C: O::[:::: h.

B: [Yeah], right.

(As background for understanding this instance, note that in the Japanese writing system the word ‘nippon’ is spelled in four characters representing the sounds ‘ni’, ‘po’, ‘n’ and the silent consonant between ‘ni’ and ‘po’, for which the character representing the sound ‘tsu’ is conventionally used, though it is written smaller than the other characters. In a syllable system, the first of the double consonants would be assigned to the preceding syllable ‘ni’, resulting in a two-syllable word. It is a crucial distinction between a syllable system and a mora system, for the explanation, that the first of the double consonants accounts for one beat in the latter system.)

When A produces chicchai tsu, ‘a little tsu’, at line 8, B can recognize that A’s TCU is approaching a possible completion. In addition, the TCU’s pre-possible completion position is marked with heightened pitch on the tsu and the post position marker
mo. It is at this point that a terminal item completion is produced, thus co-producing the crucial element of the example for their mutual recipient.

We now turn to one action environment (among others) in which these practices are systematically employed in both English and Japanese talk-in-interaction. Here again the task is to develop independent analyses of this action environment on English and Japanese materials as a basis for asserting their comparability.

4. Assisted explaining

In the first part of this report we described some of the practices of talk-in-interaction that can cast a TCU as a compound unit. We showed that these practices can be found in talk-in-interaction conducted in English and Japanese, and we showed that these practices can appropriate the syntactic forms of each language to provide opportunities for anticipatory completion. Similarly, we showed that both English and Japanese turn-construction can provide the opportunity for terminal item completion. To further establish the comparability of aspects of English and Japanese talk-in-interaction, we now turn to an examination of one common action environment for anticipatory completion: explaining sequences. In particular, we examine how anticipatory completion is used to assist in explaining. This provides an additional step in specifying analytically the interactional environment of the language-specific grammatical practices we seek to isolate and describe.

Lerner (1993) has described methods that participants use to establish and sustain the conjoined participation of two participants in conversation. There are specific practices designed for assisting in the telling of a story in conversation (Lerner, 1992), as well as practices that can be used to accomplish other types of activities in a conjoined fashion.

Explaining sequences — that is, the orderly courses of action in talk-in-interaction that comprise explaining — make relevant at least two distinct types of participation. Explaining, as a sequence of actions, further organizes opportunities to participate provided by turn-taking organization, and as it organizes participation it thereby organizes participants, making relevant the activity-specific identities of 'explainer' and 'explainee'. However, in multi-party conversation more than one ‘knowing’ participant may join in the explanation. This type of conjoined participation provides a systematic basis for anticipatory completion. That is, anticipatory completion of an element of the explanation by a knowing co-participant, addressed to the recipient(s) of the explanation, is one method for establishing and sustaining conjoined participation. Anticipatory completion accomplishes this by syntactically tying the action

---

9 Here, the topic marker mo indicates that what has just proceeded it will be the topic for the next part of the utterance, i.e. what the upcoming predicate of the clause will be about. Also, mo indicates that the referent of the topic shares the same attributes as something already mentioned or implied, and so it means something like 'also' or 'too'.

10 The explication of 'directionality' of talk and its relationship to action type and sequence organization are beyond the scope of this report. However, it should be noted that there are four possibilities when one considers the combined directional possibilities of both the TCU-in-progress and the anticipa-
of one participant to that of another. By addressing an anticipatory (or terminal item) completion to the addressed recipient of the TCU-in-progress a participant can co-participate in producing an action ordinarily produced by a single participant. Here, as Sacks (1992, Vol. 1, Fall Lecture 3, 1965) suggests, syntax is being mobilized in the service of social organization.

4.1. Assisted explaining using English

In the following excerpt from a family conversation, a compound TCU provides an opportunity and anticipatory completion provides a method to demonstrate one’s position in the explaining sequence (i.e., not an explainee, but a co-explainer) and to assist the original explainer. In this excerpt, Dad is presenting the preliminary draft of a written contract to set up a family investment club. He is the document’s author, and he is presenting it to other family members for the first time. Kerry and David are grown children (with Kerry being the eldest). In this excerpt at line 5 David asks Dad to state which of the two ways of making decisions that are mentioned in the draft document is the one being proposed, not realizing that both methods are being proposed for different sorts of decisions. Dad begins explaining this to David. In the course of the explanation, Dad begins a compound TCU of the form [ANYTIME X, THEN Y].

(16) [HIC]

1 David: it says here that ah (.) decisions decisions shall be
2 made by the partners whose capital total a majority
3 and that’s saying you have a unanimous decision
4 Mom: that’s what it usually is
5 David: so which one is it?
6 Dad: its its its
7 :
8 Dad: let’s say we want to send Kerry on a trip ta ta check
9 out ah ah general motors
10 (0.6)
11 a majority of votes could do that.
12 (0.4)
13 we take care of all of our business, .h but anytime
14 we go contrary ta any of the ru:les ³here³=
15 → Kerry: =ih takes unanimous vote

...
The anticipatory completion of Dad’s utterance, ‘We take care of all of our business, but any time we go contrary to any of the rules here’, provides a way for Kerry to align himself with Dad and collaborate in the explanation. Here, anticipatory completion of a compound TCU provides a way to demonstrate (at the level of syntax) that they are a ‘team’ by providing a method for jointly constructing an action.

4.2. Assisted explaining using Japanese

Prior to excerpt 17, speaker A, who is a student of linguistics, has been discussing the Japanese sound system with B, a teacher of Japanese. There seems to be some difference of opinion as to how the system works. In the course of this discussion, a third party, C, asks ‘what’s a mora?’ and A begins to explain.

(17) [MORA]
1 B: un, soo deshou ne, [nde-]
yeah so BE:POL FP and
2 → C: [nani], mora tte.
what mora QT
3 A: mora tte ma, haku tte iun desu [ka],
mora QT sort.of beat QT say BE:POL Q
4 B: [un].
mmh
5 A: sono:, .hhhh niHON::go: wa >nanka< siraba- a:::
uh Japanese TOP sort.of syllab-
sirat()buri() to: iu: tan’i ja naku[te] (>sono<) [mora] tte [iu]
syllable QT say unit BE NEG:CONT uh mora QT say
7 → B: [nakute], [(haku)], [ha]ku
NEG:CONT beat beat
8 kankaku.
length
9 A: mora tte iu no WA:::, ma[: itte mitara],
mora QT say NR TOP sort.of so.to.speak
10 B: [kore (o)],
this OBJ
11 ichi, ni, san, shi. ((Beating time))
one two three four
12 C: a:::
oh
1 B: Yeah, it may be true. [And ] ...
2 → C: [What’s] a mora?
3 A: A mora is something like a beat, I [guess.
4 B: [Mhm.
5 A: Uh, Japanese doesn’t count by uh, syllab-, uh,
6 syllable bu[t by mora] ...
7 → B: [But by beat]
8  A: Beat length.
9  B: A mora is, [so to speak.]
10 B: [This is],
11 C: one, two, three, four. ((Beating time))
12 C: Oh, I see.

After C's question ('what's a mora?') at line 2, A provides a definition of mora. A formulaic expression *tte iun desu ka*, 'something like', at line 3 follows the definition, showing some uncertainty about the definition, thus presenting it as having been a 'try'. Speaker B produces a minimal acknowledgment token *un* at line 4. Since it is C and not B who is the recipient of A's explanation, B's *un* here cannot be heard as an assertion of recipient understanding. Rather it is a confirmatory acknowledgment. A then extends his answer to C's question at line 5 with a further explanation. Here, he contrasts the syllable system to the Japanese system. In the course of this, B interposes an anticipatory completion at line 7, thus aiding in the explanation. (A more detailed treatment of the compound structure of A's turn and the placement of B's anticipatory completion is taken up in the next section.)

5. Isolating the place of a grammatical resource in anticipatory completion used to assist an explanation

Thus far, we have shown that co-participant completion is a device available to both speakers of English and Japanese, we have described the social-syntactic practices that provide the resources for such co-participant completion, and we have shown that anticipatory completion can be deployed to assist in an explanation in both languages by native speakers. In this section, we focus on one instance of assisting an explanation in Japanese. We describe how one form of compound TCU is constituted in the course of this explanation, thus providing the sequential possibility of anticipatory completion, and then discuss the place of one language-specific grammatical practice within this environment as a way of isolating and accounting for distinct realizations of the same phenomenon in English and Japanese talk-in-interaction.

Here we continue the discussion of the explaining sequence in excerpt 17, and show how one element of Japanese syntax is consequential for the way anticipatory completion is accomplished in this case. As we mentioned above, speaker A elaborates his definition of mora. He does this by formulating a contrast between the syllable system and the mora system. The English form of this contrast format would be [not X + but Y]. However, this format does not precisely fit Japanese grammatical practice, and the difference in this grammatical practice, in constituting a compound TCU, provides a resource for realizing anticipatory completion in a somewhat different manner than in English talk-in-interaction.

In Japanese, a predicate negation is ordinarily placed at the end of the clause. Two forms of the predicate negation become relevant in this context. *Nai* is a form that
shows the TCU to be coming to possible completion, while naku- strongly projects te- and in doing so projects a next component to the TCU. This is so, since te- is a prospective linking element. Thus the sequential format is as follows: [X-not→but + Y]. (We use ‘→’ to indicate that this form of ‘not’ projects a prospective link.) Unlike English grammatical practice, both the negation and the conjunction are part of the first clause, i.e. they are both part of, and in their course constitutive of, a preliminary component.

This can be contrasted to English. In the following excerpt Josh’s first turn is possibly complete at line 1. The TCU is syntactically complete and the utterance ends with downward (terminal) intonation. However, at line 2 Burg produces a next increment to the TCU as Josh himself also begins to do at line 3.

(18) [CDHQ:II:156]
1 → Josh: Between you and me, the-the- the coast is clear.
2 Burg: Uh huh, [but yer gonna play it safe.
3 Josh: [uh but-
4 Josh: but we wanna play it cozy, ...

On the other hand, a speaker can compose an utterance that projects a contrastive clause. This can be seen in the contrastive list produced by Penny and completed by Pat in excerpt 19.

(19) [Frankel:House:II:5]
1 Penny: I know that’s a cliche, I kno:w probly evrybody
2 said that[t. but-
3 Pat: [but it’s true:. En (yet [ I nev]er::)
4 Penny: [Yeah.]

In (18) Burg begins at a possible completion of Josh’s turn and produces an utterance that ‘recompletes’ Josh’s TCU, while in (19) Pat begins at preliminary component completion (after the second item of a three part list) and furnishes a completion for the TCU. In both cases the second speaker starts with the contrastive coordinator that begins the contrasting clause.

Returning to excerpt 17. B begins speaking in the course of A’s production of nakute, ‘-not→but’, and begins her utterance with the same component-final (but TCU-continuing) negation combined with a conjunctive particle (‘X-Not→But’). It is clear to B, who knows that Japanese does not have a syllable system, that the X-part being produced by A is about to be negated, since the topic has been specified as nihon::go:: wa, ‘Japanese-TOP’, at the beginning of the formulation. In other words, A’s utterance is so formulated that it becomes projectable that a contrast is in progress as soon as the word ‘syllable’ is produced. Three features of the utterance’s structure are foreshown here: (1) the continuing form of negation naku-, (2) a continuing conjunctive particle -te (rather than a final particle), and (3) a contrasting final component about ‘mora’. In this case, the two component-final elements do not themselves compound the TCU-in-progress, since the contrast has already been
established. Rather, nakute is projectable as an aspect of Japanese grammatical practice which ordinarily requires elements of the predicate of a non-final clause to be conjugated in the continuing form. We are not suggesting that the non-finalness (or finalness) of a clause is always projectable. As we showed earlier, recipients may sometimes have to wait until the clause-final elements have begun before it is possible for them (or professional analysts) to determine whether the imminent possible component completion is a TCU possible completion or the completion of a preliminary component.\textsuperscript{12}

In this case, B does not wait until the completion of the preliminary component to begin, nor does she begin with the beginning of the final component. Rather, B begins at just the point the negation element becomes recognizable as a marker of utterance continuation – at the utterance’s structure recognition point (cf. Jefferson, 1973, 1983). That B initiates anticipatory completion by reference to structure projection is evidenced by the fact that B produces a Y-part which is lexically different than A’s final component, yet realizes the same contrastive form as A’s own final component.\textsuperscript{13}

The following schematic representation may aid in understanding the difference in the temporal emergence of these compound TCU formats.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{English} \quad [not X, but \quad Y]
  \item \textbf{Japanese} \quad [ \quad X→not→but, Y]
\end{itemize}

In English, the ‘but’ is the component-initial item of the final component, while in Japanese the linking item can be the component-terminal item of the preliminary component. This difference in grammatical resources does not change the sort of work completion can do or the sort of compound units completion can occur within, but it does allow Japanese anticipatory completion to be realized in a distinct fashion. Here, then, we have isolated a (small) cultural difference within an social-interactional practice – one that is sustained by a difference in the linguistic resources available for conducting talk-in-interaction.

Distinct grammatical practices for English and Japanese seem to furnish distinct orientations to this position in the emerging TCU. In Japanese, it can be warrantably used as a place to begin the final component by producing just the elements that demonstrate an orientation to the utterance as continuing, while in English pre-possible completion startup can be treated as early (as in 20) or it can be used to accomplish actions specifically designed for the pre-beginning of the second component (as in 21).

\textsuperscript{12} This also suggests that practices for adding and recognizing an increment to a TCU may take distinct sequential forms in the two languages.

\textsuperscript{13} This is a quite different phenomenon than that described by Tannen (1989) as ‘shadowing’. Though humans do seem to be capable of split-second word-by-word repetition of what they hear, this is seldom what people are \textit{doing} when they say the same or nearly the same thing as another speaker. Rather, it is the result of the recognition of what another is about to say or beginning to say, using the projectability of action and grammatical structure as resources.
In (20) at line 3, Dad first begins at a pre-possible completion point of a preliminary component, and then cuts off his utterance and restarts it at a place the final component could be due (cf. Schegloff, 1987).

(20) [HIC]
1 Sparky: an when it do:es: ah involve the basic
2 agree[ment t] cont [ract it s b y: u h m]
3 → Dad: [we’re s-] [we’re still letting us set aside]
4 the agreement contract ( )

In (21), an action specifically designed for the pre-beginning of the anticipatory completion is produced at the beginning of line 6.

(21) [CS:3]
1 Fran: BUT WHUT UH YUH GONNA DO, YUH JUST GONNA
2 SPREAD THAT STUFF ON THE DRI:VEWAY?=
3 Mike: = >'s gonna load [up with it]<
4 Steve: [I'm not gonna spread it
5 on the dri: [veway, I'm gonna dump it
6 → Fran: [Aih! you gonna dump it

Here Fran issues an exclamation before producing the final component of Steve's contrastive compound TCU. In English, pre-possible completion of the preliminary component could conceivably provide a place for completing the TCU as a whole - though we have not seen instances of this. However, this would be a syntactically and thereby a social-sequentially distinct form of completion from the Japanese instance described in excerpt 17, in which a speaker begins with turn-constructional elements that specifically indicate continuation.

6. Concluding remarks: The place of grammatical practice

The social-interactional context of turn-construction provides one site for assessing the relevance of specific grammatical practices for conducting talk-in-interaction. Some time ago, Sacks et al. (1974) stated: "It is expectable, then, that some aspects of the syntax of a sentence will be best understood by reference to the jobs that need to be done in a turn-in-a-series, turns being a fundamental place for the occurrence of sentences" (1974: 723). One aim of a subsequent report (Lerner, 1991) was to craft a description of a socio-grammatical structure or unit, the compound TCU, that registered the features relevant to participant use in terms that could accommodate and appropriate whatever the local or current 'fashion' in syntactic structure (if we may put it that way). The current report might be seen, in part, as a test of the robustness of this form of socio-grammatical description.

Since turn-taking for conversation does not seem to be limited to a single language or culture, one should not be surprised that a socio-grammatically described unit holds for the disparate syntactic structures of both English and Japanese. Our
investigation of co-participant completion lends empirical support to this assertion. We have shown that quite distinct language resources within and across languages can constitute socially construed units of turn-construction. Anticipatory completion of compound TCU structures found across languages furnishes evidence of participants’ orientation to disparate syntactic structures of utterance production for similar features of turn-construction.

There are grammatical practices (among other facets of talk-in-interaction) in both English and Japanese that can constitute compound TCUs. Many of these grammatical practices are distinguishable by reference to language (i.e. between English and Japanese), yet they are oriented to by participants in conversation, at least in part, for the ways in which they constitute compound TCUs. These features furnish the sequential opportunity for the anticipatory completion of the final component at just the place it could be due in both English and Japanese conversation. However, we have described one form of Japanese grammatical practice (consisting of the use of clause-final negation and a conjunction particle), that may be unavailable to English speakers. This feature seems to provide speakers of Japanese with a distinct method for initiating anticipatory completion, by co-producing the terminal prospective linking items (at the point of their recognition) and then continuing on to the final component.

The phenomena we have been examining in this report hinge on there being grammatical units with enough structure for the participants to permit structural projection which allows anticipatory completion. To describe the practices of turn-construction, as we and others (e.g. Ford et al., 1996) have done, rather than limiting ourselves to the resulting linguistic products, does not, as it might seem to do, abolish unit structure from our accounts of turn-taking, but rather places that structure inside the practices of turn-construction and in the hands of the interactants themselves as elements of a participants’ syntax.

Appendix: Abbreviations

BE  Copulative verb
COND Conditional
CONT Continuing (non-final) form
FP  Final Particle
GEN Genitive
NEG Negative
NR Nominalizer
OBJ Object Marker
ONM Onomatopoeic
POL Polite
Q Question Particle
QT Quotative Particle
SBJ Subject Marker
TOP Topic Marker
References


Gene Lerner is Associate Professor of Sociology and Linguistics at the University of California at Santa Barbara. His research examines the place of grammatical practices in the organization of talk-in-interaction.

Tomoyo Takagi is a doctoral student in Linguistics at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Her research interests lie in the areas of grammar and interaction, and language socialization. She is just beginning her dissertation research into grammatical practices among Japanese children and how these constitute the local organization of culture in the process of socialization.