

Techniques for Expressing Upgraded Agreement in Japanese Conversation

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1. Introduction

In her seminal work, Pomerantz (1984) demonstrated that in English conversation there are different types of agreement displayed by a recipient of a prior assessment made by the speaker (i.e., upgrade, same evaluation, and downgrade relative to a prior assessment). Of these types, Pomerantz discussed two types of techniques by which a recipient expresses upgraded or strong agreement. One type of technique (i.e., lexical upgrade) is that the speaker replaces an evaluative term in the prior assessment with a stronger evaluative term. The next two excerpts borrowed from Pomerantz (1984) illustrate this.

(1)

01 J: T's- tsuh beautiful day out isn't it?

02 → L: Yeh it's just gorgeous ...

(2)

01 A: Isn't he cute?

02 → B: O::h he::s a::DORable

(Pomerantz, 1984: 65)

In excerpts (1) and (2), the evaluative terms, “beautiful” and “cute,” are replaced with stronger ones, “gorgeous” and “adorable,” respectively.

The other technique (i.e., syntactic upgrade) is that the speaker adds

an intensifier that qualifies the same evaluative descriptor as in the prior assessment. The following excerpts are cases in point:

(3)

01 M: You must admit it was fun the night we

02 we-nt down

03 → J : It was great fun...

(4)

01 B: She seems like a nice little lady

02 → A: Awfully nice

03 little person.

(Pomerantz, 1984: 66)

In excerpts (3) and (4), the speaker places an intensifier, “great” and “awfully,” before the same assessment terms in the initial statement, “fun” and “nice,” as in the initial assessment, respectively. In doing so, they express upgraded agreement.

Following Pomerantz, this study aims to investigate techniques that Japanese speakers use to express strong agreement with a prior speaker’s assessment in lexical and syntactic terms. It demonstrates that similar to English speakers, Japanese speakers use the two techniques discussed by Pomerantz. However, the following analysis reveals that Japanese speakers extend beyond the use of the two techniques to express strong agreement. For the first technique, the lexical upgrade is not limited to an assessment term or a particular part-of-speech (i.e., adjectives). It is even done on multiple components of a prior speaker’s turn. For the second technique, an intensifier can be added before and after an assessment term and it is even placed without it.

2. Data

This study adopts the methodology of Conversation Analysis. The data used in this study comprise 12 videos that capture naturally occurring everyday Japanese conversations among friends. All participants are native speakers of the Tokyo dialect. The participants' ages range from the early 20's to the early 30's. The total length of the conversations is approximately 10 hours. The data are transcribed according to the conventions of Conversation Analysis (see Appendix A). Each transcript for the talk comprises three lines. The original Japanese utterance is provided in the first line, followed by word-by-word glosses of the Japanese utterance in the second line (see Appendix B) and a colloquial English translation in the third line. The names of participants in the data are anonymized.

3. Lexical upgrade

Replacing the assessment term in the prior assessment made by the speaker with a stronger one, or lexical upgrade, as in Pomerantz (1984), can also be found in Japanese. The following excerpts illustrate this point:

(5) TU2-42

((Y said that a middle-aged man offered his seat to her on the train.))

01 T: *e nande? chotto hazukashii yo nee?*

eh why a.bit embarrassing FP FP

'Eh why? ((That's)) a bit embarrassing, isn't it?

02 →Y: *un chotto shokku datta.*

yes a.bit shocking BE-Past

'Yes, ((it)) was a bit shocking.'

(6) TU2-39

((T describes some merits for living alone.))

01 T: *koo mongen toka nai no ga ii kamoshirenai.*
 this curfew and.the.like not N SUB good may
 'Well it may be good that there is no curfew and the like.'

02 →Y: *nn. sore wa sugoi urayamashii.*
 yeah that TOP very envious
 'Yeah. That's very envious.'

In excerpt (5), T initially describes how she perceives what Y experienced when she was offered a seat from a middle-aged man on the train (line 01). Y agrees with T's view (line 02). In this case, an assessment adjective *hazukashii* "embarrassing" in the first assessment is replaced by a stronger, or more negative, assessment adjective *shokku* "shocking" in the second. In excerpt (6), T lists up one of the merits of living on her own and says that she feels good since there is no curfew. Y then shows that she shares the same view with T but expresses it in a different way. In doing so, in addition to an intensifier *sugoi* "very," she incorporates into her agreement turn a more emotional adjective *urayamashii* "envious," which displays her envy at T's current living condition, relative to a more emotionally neutral adjective *ii* "good" in the prior statement. Although such replacements of assessment adjectives observed in Japanese conversation as in the above examples seem to be a common technique for the lexical upgrade in second assessments in English conversation, the use of this technique is surprisingly rare in my Japanese data.

However, there are alternate ways in which Japanese speakers can upgrade the prior assessment by lexical choice. That is, in Japanese conversation, the lexical upgrade is not limited to an assessment term or a particular part-of-speech (i.e., adjectives), but open to other of parts-of-

speech. The next two examples illustrate this point:

(7) TU1-41

((K and F are talking about a book written by one of the professors at their university.))

01 K: *ore nanka are wa imaichi de, shikamo Jsensee jugyoo*
I somewhat that TOP not-satisfactory and moreover professor.J class

02 **wakarinikukattari*° *cho- chotto dake(h)h*
incomprehensible a.lit- a.little only
'For me, that ((book)) is not somewhat satisfactory. Moreover, Professor J's class is only a little incomprehensible.'

03 →F: >e< *KANARI.*
eh considerably
'Eh ((it)) CONSIDERABLY ((is)).'

(8) O-S-1

((O is looking at pictures that S took during her recent trip in Malta. S then describes these pictures.))

01 S: *taimu[surippusita yooroppa mita] tte yutta desho?*
timeslipped Europe like QT said TAG
'((I)) said that ((Malta)) is like Europe traveled back in time, didn't I?'

02→O: [un un un un un un]

03→ *honto da. ehon mitai.*
really BE picture.book like

Excerpt (7) demonstrates that the lexical upgrade has been done by replacing an adverbial phrase *chotto dake* “only a little” in the first assessment with another adverb *kanari* “considerably” in the second. In lines 01 and 02, K shifts his focus of talk from a book to its author, one of the professors that both F and K know well and criticizes the professor’s class in a hesitant way.

This can be observed as K produces an assessment adjective *wakarinikui* “incomprehensible” with a lower amplitude and then adds a post-predicate adverbial phrase *chotto dake* “only a little.” In line 03, F puts a turn-initial *e* “eh,” which indicates “a noticing of departure” from K’s hesitant stance of the assessable object (Hayashi, 2009). Therefore, F displays her assertive stance which completely agrees with K’s evaluation by upgrading the prior weak adverbial phrase *chotto dake* “only a little” to a stronger adverb *kanari* “considerably” with a greater amplitude. In excerpt (8) the lexical upgrade has been done by replacing a noun *taimusurippushita yooroppa* “Europe traveled back in time” with *ehon* ‘a picture book’. In this example, in line 01, S reminds O of her earlier evaluative description of Malta. This earlier description, *taimusurippushita yooroppa mitai* “((Malta)) is like Europe traveled back in time,” which is established as a metaphorical formulation indicating the suffix *mitai*, is bracketed by the subsequent quotative particle *tte* “that,” followed by a confirmation question *yutta desho* “((I)) said, didn’t I?” Rather than hearing the prior turn simply as a confirmation question, O in line 03 treats the emergent structure of S’s turn as something with which she can agree.¹ In fact, as soon as O hears S’s emerging evaluative and metaphorical description, she overlaps it by successive acknowledgement tokens, which indicate that O displays her affiliation with S (Aoki, 2008). O then upgrades S’s description not only by producing an intensifier *hontoda* “((It)) really ((is))” and but also by making another metaphorical formulation *ehon mitai* “((It’s)) like a picture book.” This upgraded metaphorical description intensifies the assessable object, Malta, which is not merely something that exists in the speaker’s imagination but is also seen in picture books. By replacing one metaphorical description with another, O upgrades S’s prior evaluative description and thereby displays strong agreement with S.

Further, the lexical upgrade is occasionally done on multiple components in the second assessment relative to the first assessment, as illustrated in excerpt (9).

(9) MU1-37

((T, N, and H are comparing the two Japanese professional baseball leagues. Their talk is now focusing on one of them.))

01 T: *nanka mitame toka ga urusai desu yo ne?*
 somewhat appearance and.the.like SUB fussy BE FP FP
 ‘((The Ce(ntral) League)) is fussy somewhat about their appearance and the like, isn’t it?’

02 → N: *soo soo. nanka suteetasu ni kodawatteru jan nanka.*
 so so somewhat status with preoccupied TAG somewhat
 ‘Right right. ((The league)) is somewhat preoccupied with ((their)) status, isn’t it? (It) somewhat (is).’

03 T: *tashikani.*
 certainly
 ‘(((It)) certainly ((is)).’

Excerpt (9) shows that N upgrades multiple components of T’s prior assessment. While a noun, *mitame* ‘appearance,’ is replaced by a more general term, *suteetasu* ‘status,’ an assessment adjective *urusai* ‘fussy,’ which invokes a rather static interpretation, is supplanted by a verb (progressive form) *kodawatteiru* ‘preoccupied,’ which invokes a more dynamic interpretation. Through these replacements, N skillfully selects appropriate lexical items and correctly displays his agreement with T’s initial assessment. N’s skillfulness can also be observed in his turn design. Firstly, instead of directly producing his upgraded assessment, N produces an agreement marker *soo* ‘That’s right’ twice in a row. These successive tokens indicate N’s agreement with T’s view. Such a turn-preface projects

that N's subsequent statement (i.e., the next turn constructional unit) is framed within the same affiliative orientation. In addition, N uses a similar syntactic design as in T's prior assessment. Similar to T, N begins his subsequent statement with *nanka* "somewhat." He then replaces words in the same order with minimum adjustments (e.g., the subject particle *ga* is replaced by another particle *ni*) as T has produced.² T then agrees with N's upgraded statement (line 3).

As excerpts (7)-(9) have shown, the scope of the lexical upgrade is not limited to assessment adjectives but covers a wider range of parts-of speech in the case of Japanese conversation. Moreover, the replacement of lexical items is sometimes across different parts-of-speech, as in excerpt (9) (i.e., the assessment adjective *urusai* "fussy" is replaced by the verb *kodawatteru* "preoccupied"). Prior studies have not examined the range of parts-of-speech which can be modified to upgrade the prior assessment, partly because the lexical upgrade is recurrently done on assessment adjectives in English conversation, which is the focus of the previous studies. Thus, this study has shown that as far as Japanese conversation is concerned, speakers of second assessments utilize a range of parts-of-speech as resources to upgrade first assessments. It is also important to underscore here that in Japanese conversation, the lexical upgrade is not a common strategy for displaying upgraded agreement with the prior assessment. In fact, surprisingly out of the total 476 cases of agreement in the second assessment position, only 13 cases (>3%) involve the lexical upgrade in this study's data. Unlike interactions in English, the lexical upgrade might not be a major technique to show upgraded agreement with the initial assessment in Japanese conversations.

4. Syntactic upgrade

The upgrading of a first assessment, or upgraded agreement, can be implemented by syntactic additions or modifications. As Pomerantz (1984) showed, in English conversations, the recipient of a first assessment displays their agreement as upgraded by adding an intensifier that modifies the initial assessment term as in the first. Such a pattern can also be found in this study's data, as in the following excerpts.

(10) MU2-20

((M, H, and B are talking about a popular Japanese singer.))

01 B: *mienai yo ne?*=

look-NEG FP FP

'((She)) doesn't look ((like half French and half Japanese)).'

02 →H: =n:: *zenzen mienai.*

yeah absolutely look-NEG

'Yea::h. Absolutely ((she does)) not look ((like half French and half Japanese)).'

(11) TU1-40

((K and Y are talking about one of the Chinese students at their university.))

01 K: *nanka koo, atsuku kataru.*

somewhat this enthusiastically talk

'Somewhat, you know, ((he)) talks enthusiastically.'

02 →Y: *SOO. chooatsui desu [yo ne : : : : : : : : : :] : :*

so super-enthusiastic BE FP FP

'RIGHT. ((He)) is super-enthusiastic, isn't he?'

03 K: *[ano hito doko no hito? kantonjin?]*

that person where GEN person Cantonese

'That person, where is that person from? ((Is he)) Cantonese?'

In excerpt (10), in line 01, B assesses a popular Japanese singer, who is half French and half Japanese, with a negative descriptor *mienai* ‘((She)) doesn't

look (like half French and half Japanese),” which implies that she only looks Japanese. In line 02, H displays agreement with B’s assessment. H’s agreement is upgraded by placing an intensifier, *zenzen* “absolutely,” before the prior negative descriptor in the initial assessment. Excerpt (11) shows that a certain prefix, which is attached to an assessment term also serves as an intensifier. In line 01, K evaluates one of the Chinese colleagues in terms of how that Chinese colleague talks to K or other colleagues. Y’s agreement in line 2 is done in an interesting way. Rather than simply repeating the same assessment phrase *atsuku kataru* “((He)) talks enthusiastically,” she picks up the core of the assessment descriptor, *atsuku* “enthusiastically,” which is an adverbial form of an adjective *atsui* “enthusiastic.” She then modifies this into a “full” adjective *atsui* “enthusiastic” as a qualified assessment term. By this modification, Y slightly shifts the assessable object. The second assessment assesses the Chinese colleague’s personality, which includes the prior assessment of how he talks.³ Importantly, she further attaches the prefix *choo* “super-,” which functions as an intensifier, to this newly qualified assessment term. By doing so, she displays her upgraded agreement with K.

On some occasions, the speaker of a second assessment uses a different evaluative descriptor than the speaker of a first assessment, without any noticeable or recognizable lexical upgrade. On such occasions, the speaker of the second assessment makes visible their assessment as upgraded relative to the prior, by placing an intensifier before the different evaluative descriptor. By doing so, they seem to pre-empt the implication that they may not perfectly align with the prior speaker’s view. The next excerpt is illustrative:

(12) MUI-25

((T, N, and H are discussing one of the professional baseball players.))

01 N : *demo:: kyojin no kyara janai ne?*
 but Giants GEN type BE-NEG FP
 'Bu::t ((he)) is not a type of ((player belonging to)) Giants, isn't he?'

02 H: *un*
 'Yeah.'

03 →T : *zenzen chigaimasu ne?*
 absolutely is.different FP
 '((He)) is absolutely different, isn't he?'

In excerpt (12), T, N, and H are talking about a Japanese professional baseball player, who belongs to Yomiuri Giants, one of the Japanese professional baseball teams. Prefacing his turn with a connective *demo* “but” in line 01, N shifts the focus of talk to a negative aspect of that baseball player and states that he is not a type of player qualified as a member of Yomiuri Giants. In line 02, H produces an acknowledgement token *nn* “yeah” in combination with a deep nod, and displays his agreement with N. In line 03, T then provides another second assessment, which can be recognized as upgraded agreement. T replaces the prior evaluative phrase, a nominal predicative phrase *kyojin no kyara janai* “is not a type of ((player belonging to)) Giants,” with a verbal predicate *chigaimasu* “is different.” This replacement itself would not be recognized as upgraded agreement for N and H. The intensifier, *zenzen* “absolutely,” thus contributes to the recognizability of T’s upgraded agreement with N’s prior assessment.

So far, the intensifier upgrading the prior assessment is placed before the assessment term as in excerpts (10)–(12). However, such an intensifier, although less frequently, can also be placed after the assessment term in Japanese conversation. The following excerpt includes one such instance.

(13) TU2-84

(Y and M are discussing a certain seat arrangement on the train.)

01 M: *yoningake wa kimazui kara nee,*
 seat.of.four.people TOP awkward because FP
 ‘Because the seats of four people is awkward, you know,’

02 → Y: *ki[mazui. =hontoni.]*
 awkward really
 ‘(It is) awkward. (It) really) is.

03 M: [*hairitakunai.*]
 not.want.to.enter
 ‘(I) don’t want to go and take a seat there.’

In line 01, M articulates how she feels about sitting on a type of seat on the train which accommodates four people in which they must sit face-to-face. It should be noted that this part is constructed as a preliminary part of a compound turn constructional unit by indicating a connective *kara* “because” (e.g., Hayashi, 2003; Lerner, 1987, 1991; Lerner & Takagi, 1999; Tanaka, 1999 among others). A compound turn constructional unit (a compound TCU) can be defined as “(a)ny unit, which in the course of its construction signals a [preliminary component + final component] turn format (i.e., a compound turn format)” (Lerner 1987, p. 14). In the case of Japanese, multi-clausal sentential units such as [X-*kara* + Y] (“[Because X + Y]”) as in (13) and [X-*tara* + Y] (“[If/When X + Y]”) are typical instances of compound TCUs (Hayashi, 2003). Hayashi (2003) claims that like in English, in Japanese, the preliminary component (e.g., X-*kara* “Because X”) initiated by the current speaker can create an opportunity for their co-participant to produce a final component of such a unit. What is happening in line 2 is that rather than providing a final component fitted to the preliminary component (i.e., *kara*-clause) initiated by M, Y treats the preliminary component as something with which she can agree. In other

words, rather than responding to the structural feature of a turn-in-progress (i.e., a compound TCU in progress), Y responds to the prior by itself as an assessment, which makes her response relevant.⁴ Of particular importance here is it that Y's agreement is retrospectively upgraded by an adverbial increment *hontoni* "really." In contrast to the instances in excerpts (10)-(12), this instance shows that the intensifier can be positioned after the assessment term.

On other occasions, by placing an intensifier turn-initially without any evaluative descriptor that it modifies, the speaker of a second assessment can show their upgraded agreement with the prior speaker. Consider the following example:

(14) TU1-14

((K is criticizing one of the linguistic theories.))

01 K: *nanka kore itta mon gachi no toko aru.=nanka ninchi tte.=*
 somewhat this said man win GEN case is somewhat cognitive.linguistics TOP
 'Somewhat as for this, it is the case that the man who speaks up wins. Somewhat as
 for cognitive linguistics.'

02 →Y :=**KANARI** [*h h h h h h h*]
 considerably
 '((It) CONSIDERABLY ((is)).'

03 K: [*kanari ne hh*]hh
 considerably FP
 '((It considerably) is, isn't it?'

In excerpt (14), in line 01, K critically evaluates one of the linguistic theories using a sort of aphorism, *itta mon gachi* "the man who speaks up wins." In line 02, Y agrees with this critical evaluation. Y's agreement is expressed without delivery of any evaluative descriptor, instead only deploying a stand-alone intensifier, *kanari* "considerably." Despite the

absence of an evaluative descriptor, Y successfully conveys her agreement with K. In line 03, K displays his understanding of Y's agreement in line 03. The visibility of Y's agreement seems to be warranted by the temporal contiguity between K's assessment and the intensifier that Y produced as a second assessment. Here Y uses the intensifier by latching on to K's prior turn. This intensifier retroactively modifies K's prior statement. In this way, Y displays her upgraded agreement.

Considering Y's display of agreement from another perspective, she could have expressed her agreement by repeating the evaluative descriptor with the intensifier that she produced in line 02, as in excerpts (10) and (11). However, she did not take this option. Y's contingent deployment of the stand-alone intensifier seems to emerge from its structural dependence on the first assessment. Y's agreeing turn can be understood only by reference to the prior turn, specifically to the prior assessment noun phrase *itta mon gachi no toko* "a thing that the guy ((who)) said ((something)) wins." It seems that the intensifier is parasitic to the prior turn and thereby allows itself to make a backward linking with the prior assessment noun phrase. One outcome of this is that Y can display perfect attunement with K by totally relying on the structure of the prior turn. Another outcome seems that by not repeating the prior assessment's noun phrase, Y can avoid competition with K in terms of claims of epistemic primacy, that is, claims of knowledge about what K has just said (Heritage, 2013; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers et al., 2011). Therefore, by deploying the stand-alone intensifier parasitically located after the prior assessment, Y designs her turn to be heard not only as perfect attunement with K but also as not competitive with the prior speaker's stance in terms of epistemic primacy.

The next excerpt includes another case where the intensifier is

parasitically deployed immediately after the initial assessment without reiterating the assessment term.

(15) MU1-19

((T, N, and H are talking about one of the professional baseball players.))

01 H: *sutamen de tsukau kyara janai yo na?*
 starting lineup in use type BE-NEG FP FP
 '(That player) is not a type (of player that can be) used in the starting lineup.'

02→T: *nn zenzen [da yo.]*
 yeah absolutely BE FP
 'Yeah. ((He is)) absolutely ((not)).'

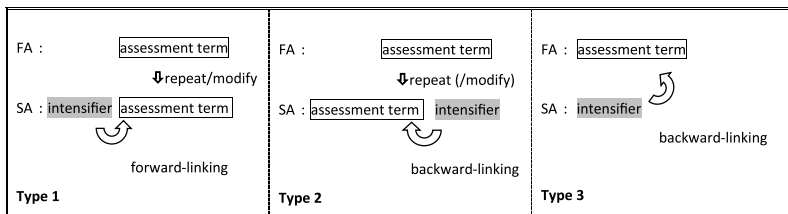
03 H: [hhhhh]

In line 01, H conveys a negative description of a professional baseball player, which is established as a first assessment. In line 02, T's agreement is formulated by an acknowledgement token *nn* "yeah" and an intensifier *zenzen* "absolutely" as the core element, followed by a "minimum" predicate, copula *da*, plus a final particle *yo*. As in excerpt (14), this agreement is done without repeating the prior evaluative description. In line 03, H produces laugh tokens before T's response actually becomes completed.

Let us look closely at T's agreeing turn in line 02. The intensifier *zenzen* "absolutely" that T produced, as in excerpt (14), can be made intelligible as upgraded agreement only by reference to the prior utterance. This intelligibility of T's turn as upgrading the prior can thus be warranted by the contiguity between the prior turn and T's turns. It should be noted that there is a slight difference between excerpts (14) and (15). While in excerpt (14), the intensifier stands alone within a turn, in excerpt (15), the intensifier follows and is followed by some additional elements. This differentiation can be partly explained by the lexical ambiguity of the intensifier, *zenzen*

“absolutely” in excerpt (15). If this intensifier stands alone, just like *kanari* “considerably” in excerpt (14), it would either be interpreted as an agreement or a disagreement. The ambiguity of the interpretations could not be resolved. The turn-initial acknowledgement token *nn* “yeah,” which is placed before the intensifier, contributes to the resolution of the ambiguity between agreement and disagreement. In other words, by beginning his turn with the turn-initial acknowledgement token, T carefully designs it to be interpreted as a display of agreement with H. As for the element following the intensifier, copula *da* serves to allow the preceding intensifier (i.e., *zenzen* “absolutely”) to behave like a [noun plus copula], or an assessment term (i.e., *zenzen da*). Similar to the preceding acknowledgement token, it also allows T’s action to be unambiguously interpreted as a display of agreement. The use of the final particle *yo* is often considered as the speaker’s “epistemic stance of authority on the part of the speaker that is not open to negotiation on the part of the hearer” (Morita, 2002, p. 227). T not only displays his perfect attunement with H’s view but also intensifies H’s view by claiming epistemic primacy.

In sum, the use of an intensifier to upgrade the prior assessment discussed so far can be schematized in the following diagram:



*FA = First Assessments, SA= Second Assessments

Type 1 shows that as in English conversation, the intensifier is placed before the assessment term (as in excerpts (10)-(12)). It modifies the assessment term that follows to display upgraded agreement. The present database uncovers that, unlike English examples discussed in Pomerantz (1984), the prior speaker's assessment term is not necessarily recycled or repeated in the second assessment when it is modified by the intensifier (as in excerpts (11) and (12)). Type 2 confirms that in Japanese conversation, the second assessment speaker can also place the intensifier after the assessment term and retroactively display their upgraded agreement (as in excerpt (13)). In Type 3, the use of the stand-alone intensifier is structurally parasitic to the prior turn (as in excerpts (14) and (15)). Hence, by reference to the prior assessment, the stand-alone intensifier can be recognized as an interactionally relevant unit. Further, by its deployment contiguous to the prior turn, it can be made intelligible as a second assessment implemented to display upgraded agreement. The outcome of the structural dependence on the prior turn that arises out of such a situated usage of the intensifier is that the speaker of a second assessment may display their perfect attunement with the initial assessment.

Our detailed examination of positionings of the intensifier, which seems to present one's claim as upgraded agreement, shows rather heterogeneous realizations as in the above three types, in contrast to those that can be observed in English, in which speakers seem to predominantly use Type 1. These heterogeneous realizations can be ascribed to the structural relaxation of the Japanese language: frequent use of ellipsis and word order variability of the language (Fox et al., 1996; Fujii & Ono, 2000; Ono & Suzuki, 1992; Tanaka, 2005).

5. Conclusion

This study investigated how Japanese interactants express upgraded agreement by lexico-syntactic means. It specifically examined how they utilize the two techniques, that is, lexical upgrade and syntactic upgrade, discussed by Pomerantz (1984). For the lexical upgrade, Japanese speakers replace an evaluative term used by a prior speaker with a stronger one, just as done by English speakers. However, lexical replacements are not limited to evaluative terms but are implemented to adverbs, metaphorical expressions, and even multiple words at a time. For the syntactic upgrade, Japanese speakers add an intensifier before the assessment adjective produced by a prior speaker, as English speakers do, whereas they add it after the assessment term or they produce a stand-alone intensifier immediately after a prior speaker's turn to show that their agreement can be recognized as upgraded. Of particular importance here is the fact that in the current database, both techniques do not constitute major strategies to scale up the strength of agreement in second assessments in Japanese conversation. This study limited its focus to the two upgrading techniques employed by Japanese interactants. There appear to be other upgrading techniques that Japanese speakers are more inclined to employ (Hayano, 2011; Mori, 1999; Sugiura, 2011). Such techniques that seem to be unique to Japanese talk-in-interaction should be investigated in future studies.

Notes

1. By displaying her agreement with S, O actually indirectly answers S's confirmation question simultaneously.
2. A careful reader might argue that there seem to be "big" syntactic changes: the subject particle *ga* and a copula + final particles *yo* and *ne* used in the first are not retained in the second but replaced by something else. What I meant here by what I "loosely" term "syntactic design" is that N puts replaced words in the same order without any additional elements or without reformulating it in a completely different way from what T said. It should also be noted that the length of N's subsequent statement is similar to that of T's initial assessment turn.
3. This reference shift may also involve the upgrading of the prior assessment in addition to the intensifier which upgrades an assessment term that follows.
4. Hayashi (2003) noted that in Japanese conversation a preliminary component of a compound TCU can be recognizable only after the production of a certain connective at a clause-final position, which indicates that a turn-in-progress is constructed as a compound TCU. Hayashi, therefore, demonstrated that because of this, in contrast to English, the final component is regularly delivered in delay. Some noticeable pause can be observed between the production of the preliminary component and the initiation of the final component. In excerpt (13), however, Y's response occurs immediately after M's preliminary component of her compound TCU. This is warranted by Y's orientation to M's evaluative comment of the seat arrangement in the preliminary component, but not to the conclusion that M might draw from the preliminary component.

Appendix A: Transcription symbols

[the point where overlapping talk starts
]	the point where overlapping talk ends
=	latching
(0.5)	silence in tenths of a second
.	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
,	continuing intonation
:	prolongation
-	cut-off
WORD	louder than the surrounding talk
°word°	quieter than the surrounding talk
><	quicker than the surrounding talk
h	exhalation
(h)	laughter within a word
(())	transcriber's descriptions of events

Appendix B: Abbreviations used in the interlinear gloss

BE: various types of the “be” verb	CONJ: conjunctive
FP: final particle	GEN: genitive
NEG: negation	QP: question particle
QT: quotative particle	SUB: subject particle
TAG: tag question	TOP: topic marker

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Synopsis

Techniques for Expressing Upgraded Agreement in Japanese Conversation

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In her seminal work, Pomerantz (1984) demonstrated that in English conversation there are different types of agreement displayed by a recipient of a prior assessment made by the speaker (i.e., upgrade, same evaluation, and downgrade relative to a prior assessment). Of these types, Pomerantz discussed two types of techniques by which a recipient expresses upgraded or strong agreement. One type of technique (i.e., lexical upgrade) is that the speaker replaces an evaluative term in the prior assessment with a stronger evaluative term. The other technique (i.e., syntactic upgrade) is that the speaker adds an intensifier that qualifies the same evaluative descriptor as in the prior assessment.

Following Pomerantz, this study aims to investigate techniques that Japanese speakers use to express strong agreement with a prior speaker's assessment in lexical and syntactic terms. It demonstrates that similar to English speakers, Japanese speakers use the two techniques discussed by Pomerantz. However, the analysis reveals that Japanese speakers extend beyond the use of the two techniques to express strong agreement. For the lexical upgrade, it is not limited to an assessment term or a particular part-of-speech (i.e., adjectives). It is even done on multiple components of a prior speaker's turn. For the syntactic upgrade, an intensifier can be added before and after an assessment term and it is even placed without it. The data are in Japanese with English translation.