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Exploring the organization of Japanese interaction in various contexts

CA research on Japanese has increased significantly in recent years. Placing a focus primarily on everyday casual conversation, analysts have elucidated how the structure of the Japanese language, including word order, particles, and connective expressions, is implicated, generally, in the management of turns at talk (Hayashi 2003a; Tanaka 1999, 2000) and, more narrowly, in the organization of specific types of social actions such as word searches (Hayashi 2003b), dispreferred actions (Tanaka 2005), and the expression of agreement and disagreement (Mori 1999). By applying CA to a non-western language such as Japanese, this emergent research speaks to the potential of using the conversation analytic framework to understand the organization of interaction in a wide variety of languages and societies. This panel attempts to further expand the application of CA to Japanese by examining the organization of a variety of social activities as they are constructed not only in casual conversation but also in institutional settings. Since an institutional context raises the possibility that the participants attend directly to aspects of the institution itself, for example, the identities of doctor and patient in a hospital and the activity of distributing information in a news broadcast, the inclusion of such settings should extend our understanding of the different ways in which Japanese participants organize their talk. Accordingly, the first session of the panel features three presentations which describe different aspects of interaction in a gynecological clinic. **Aug Nishizaka** focuses on the sequential development of interaction and referential practices as a doctor and pregnant woman look together at an ultrasound monitor in a prenatal examination. **Michie Kawashima** investigates how doctors formulate results of fertility tests and how such formulations lead sequentially into different kinds of proposed treatments, and **Tomoyo Takagi** looks at counseling sessions about menopausal symptoms and concentrates on the discursive construction of a patient's personality and disposition. The three presentations in the second session of the panel explore an even more diversified set of actions and settings. **Dom Berducci** examines a training activity in a scientific laboratory involving a biochemist and a technician and probes the relationship among talk, non-verbal action, and the projection of grammatical elements. **Scott Saft** compares the role of response tokens in terms of the sequencing of talk across two settings, university faculty meetings and roundtable discussion TV programs. The analysis shows that response tokens help create social organizations which allow the participants to engage in different social actions, including arguing, decision-making, and the establishment of facts about other participants. Finally, **Emi Morita** focuses her contribution on casual conversation, describing the incremental development of storytelling in Japanese. More specifically, her study shows how participants use the grammatical structure of Japanese as a resource to coordinate the beginnings of stories. As part of their presentations, some of the contributors will draw comparisons across settings, but the implications of the panel do not necessarily stop with similarities and differences. By including descriptions of a range of social actions from both institutional settings and casual conversation in a non-western language, the panel will promote an expanded understanding of the structures at work in Japanese interaction and, at a wider level, deepen our knowledge of the ways in which human beings are capable of organizing their social world.