

# UC Berkeley

## L2 Journal

### Title

Teaching Japanese Pragmatic Competence Using Film Clips

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2wc6962j>

### Journal

L2 Journal, 3(2)

### Author

Kambara, Wakae

### Publication Date

2011

### DOI

10.5070/L23210001

### Copyright Information

Copyright 2011 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

---

# Teaching Japanese Pragmatic Competence Using Film Clips

WAKAE KAMBARA

*University of California, Berkeley*  
*E-mail: wkambara@berkeley.edu*

---

Taking three common pragmatic errors by intermediate students of Japanese as a starting point, namely, overuse of the 1st person pronoun *watashi*, and incorrect use of hearsay markers and sentence final particles, this paper develops a strategy for employing film clips in classroom and homework exercises to model NS language use and to deepen student understanding of the meanings of these linguistic forms in Japanese, thereby improving their communicative competence. I also show how the verbal forms work in tandem with cinematic devices to create meaning.

---

## INTRODUCTION

In its 2007 report regarding foreign language curricula, the Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages recommends that the goal of the language instruction be “to produce educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence,” and that courses should systematically teach “differences in meaning, mentality, and worldview as expressed in American English and in the target language.” This approach advocates that students acquire lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic competence beyond that which we have currently envisioned.

In this context it is meaningful to consider that students in my third-year Japanese course at the University of California, Berkeley are able to communicate in Japanese amongst themselves and with me as the instructor in order to convey and solicit information and to express their needs and feelings. Their utterances are usually grammatical, and yet they often sound artificial to native speakers of Japanese. Such unnaturalness is typically due to the lack of understanding of profound differences in the organization and coordination of verbal exchanges between English and Japanese.

This paper considers this phenomenon and proposes classroom activities that enable students to become aware of such differences. It begins with an examination of several unnatural sentences collected from my students’ utterances and identifies the causes of these inconsistencies and deviations. This is followed by an exploration of the use of film clips that demonstrate what and how native speakers of Japanese customarily convey the same ideas when they interact. The use of these film clips also provides students with opportunities to interpret third parties’ conversations and to infer their intentions.

## Typical unnatural utterances

During the semester, students enrolled in first through third-year UC Berkeley Japanese courses write several skits. After the instructor has made any necessary corrections, the skits are performed in class. This activity is popular because it provides students with opportunities to demonstrate their creativity and personality.

Three types of anomaly have been observed in these skits. In the following, anomalies are underlined, and omissions are in square brackets:

1. The overuse of *watashi* 'I', which is normally implicit in Japanese. This is particularly evident in self-introductions.
  - a. *Watashi wa UC baakuree no ichi-nensei desu.*  
'I am a freshman at UC Berkeley.'
  - b. *Sutoresu ga tamaru to, watashi wa heya o sooji shimasu.*  
'Whenever stress builds up, I clean my room.'
2. The absence of report/hearsay/conjecture expressions, which makes the utterance sound decisive and overconfident to native speakers' sensitive ears.
  - c. *EPA no hoo kokusho ni yoreba, haiburiddo kaa o kau yori furui kuruma o katte tsukau hoo ga (CO<sup>2</sup>) gasu no hooshutsu wa sakugen-sareru [rashii] yo.*  
'According to the EPA report, CO<sup>2</sup> emissions would be reduced if you buy and drive a used car, rather than a hybrid car.'
  - d. *Manga wa, moto wa to ieba, Amerika kara komikkusu to shite tsutaerareta mono da [soo da] yo.*  
'Manga was originally imported from America as comics.'
3. The absence of interactional expressions. Interactional expressions are sentence final expressions that make sentences communicative.
  - e. A: *Ima kankyoo-mondai o kangae bajimenakattara hidoi koto ni naru [yo].*  
'If we don't start thinking about environmental issues, we'll suffer disastrous consequences.'
  - B: *Un, wakatta. Ima kara risaikuru suru [yo].*  
'OK. From now on, I'll recycle.'

## The causes of unnaturalness

Native speakers of Japanese consider the use of the first person pronoun *watashi* ‘I’ unnecessary in self-introduction because it is clear from the context who the subject is.<sup>1</sup> In fact, in Japanese, the first person pronoun is frequently omitted because, unless otherwise specified, utterances are made from the speaker’s point of view (Morita, 2002). For example, in the sentence, *Sofu ga shinde kanashii* ‘[My] grandfather died, and [I am] sad’, it is understood that the person who is sad is the speaker even though *watashi* is not expressed. If one says *Watashi wa sofu no shi o kanashimu* ‘I regret [my] grandfather’s death’, in which the ‘I’ is explicit, the utterance sounds like an objective statement. A frequent use of the first person pronoun is not only unnecessary, it also makes the utterance excessively self-focused.

Hearsay expressions are concerned with the conceptual “territory” to which a given piece of information belongs (Kamio, 1994, 1995). Japanese people are sensitive to this concept, which might be less significant for English speakers. For example, when one reads an article in the *New York Times* and reports it to another, one might say, “Ford and Toyota are going to jointly develop a gas-electric hybrid system.” To convey the same information, Japanese requires a hearsay expression (capitalized): *Nihonkeizai shinbun ni yoru to, Toyota to Foodo wa jisedai haiburiddo sisutemu o kyoodoo kaibatsu suru SOO DA* ‘According to *Nihonkeizai shinbun*, Ford and Toyota will jointly develop the next generation hybrid system’. Or, as another example, a woman hears the weather forecast and learns that it will rain in the afternoon. She says to her child, “Take your umbrella with you. It’s going to rain this afternoon.” In Japanese, one must document that the utterance is based on hearsay information, *Gogo ame ga furu SOO DA kara kasa o motte iki-nasai* ‘I heard that it will rain in the afternoon, so take your umbrella with you’, or *Tenki-yoboo ni yoru to, gogo ame ga furu RASHII kara, kasa o motte iki-nasai* ‘The weather forecast says that it will rain in the afternoon, so take your umbrella with you’. If the source of information is mentioned, it is marked with *ni yoru to* ‘according to’, and a referring hearsay expression is obligatory. Omitting such an expression as *soo da* and *rashii* makes the hearer wonder why the speaker is so confident about a topic that falls outside of his or her expertise.

In verbal communication, sentence-final expressions are often obligatory. Omitting them makes utterances less interactive and, in some cases, the utterance might sound like a monologue. In short, Japanese sentence-final particles contribute to the coordination of dialogues (Katagiri, 2007). According to Izuhara (2003), the sentence-final particle *yo* has three functions: (1) to appeal to the listener’s recognition and to persuade him/her to take action, (2) to try to correct the listener’s recognition, and (3) to urge the listener to accept the speaker’s recognition. Native speakers would add *yo* to A’s utterance in (3e) above (Izuhara’s usage type 1). B in (3e) can also add *yo*, thereby informing A that he is no longer one of those who are not concerned about environmental problems (Izuhara’s type 3).

---

<sup>1</sup> Unlike Italian or Russian, where the personal pronoun can be superfluous, the Japanese verb does not mark the person or the number of the subject. In a Japanese sentence without *watashi*, only context determines the subject.

## USING FILM CLIPS TO MODEL LANGUAGE

Anomalies discussed above are purely pragmatic, not grammatical; therefore, they cannot be taught independently of context. How can one create a context that enables the teaching of pragmatic features of the Japanese language in the classroom? They could be taught by means of lengthy, possibly boring, explanations involving theoretical terms. However, such an attempt is likely to fail, with the students remaining unable to use the Japanese language appropriately. In this paper, the use of film clips as a solution is advocated; several techniques are suggested for doing so.

Although conversations in films are usually scripted, they can be sufficiently natural to convince native speakers that they are “normal.” Film has the added advantage of providing verbal interchanges within rich visual contexts, e.g. gesture and facial expression. Students can watch selected clips, observe samples of the linguistic expression in question used in realistic contexts, analyze the usage, and even act out the scene. Teaching the subject via such an activity is far superior to explaining the characteristics in abstract terms.

The Berkeley Language Center’s Library of Foreign Language Film Clips (LFLFC)<sup>2</sup> was designed (i) to facilitate instructors’ searches for clips of particular interest, and (ii) to make those clips available to students in the classroom and or as homework assignments. The LFLFC has 190 Japanese films, of which 38 have been cut and tagged into 1,391 clips. The following is an explanation of how to use LFLFC to find clips for teaching proper usage of *watashi*, hearsay expressions, and sentence-final particles, followed by pedagogical exercises to reinforce understanding.

### Watashi

In order to find examples that show the infrequency of *watashi*, search the clip database with the tag “introduction.” The result is a list of several dozen clips, from which “Self introductions”<sup>3</sup> from *Shigatsu monogatari (April Story)* (Shunji, 1998) is selected. This clip consists of a semiformal self-introduction by a student to her classmates.

Teaching of *watashi* in a self-introduction: Students are assigned homework to prepare a self-introduction script modeling the *April Story* clip. In class, several students introduce themselves and perform their own scripts. Some are likely to overuse *watashi*, due to L1 interference. The film clip is then shown in class, and students are asked to point out differences between the authentic Japanese self-introduction and those of the students’ overusing *watashi*. If they fail to recognize the difference, they are alerted to the word, *watashi*.

The next activity requires identification of when *watashi* can be used appropriately. After noting the absence of *watashi* in self-introductions, students compare two clips, “Fired”<sup>4</sup> and “Accusation”<sup>5</sup> from *Hakase no Aishita Suushiki (The Professor and His Beloved Equation)* (Koizumi, 2006). In the former, Kyoko is accused by her supervisor of overstepping the

<sup>2</sup> For more on the LFLFC, please see Mark Kaiser’s paper in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> 13:12 to 16:21 of the film

<sup>4</sup> 79:35 to 82:55 of the film

<sup>5</sup> 86:09 to 89:44 of the film

boundaries of her job as a professional housekeeper. In the latter, her employer, a rich elderly widow, accuses her of the same thing. Students first identify the characters in the scenes and note which ones use *watashi* or its variations such as *watakushi*, *boku* and *ore*.<sup>6</sup> They then discuss whether the use of the first person pronoun or its absence makes any difference in each scene.

Kyoko uses *watashi* three times in “Fired”:

- (1) Kyoko: *Ruuru o mushibita no wa **WATASHI** no misu desu.*  
‘I was wrong to have broken the rules.’
- (2) ***WATASHI** wa onesama ni meiwaku o kaketa oboe wa arimasen.*  
‘I have not caused any trouble for his sister-in-law.’
- (3) *Kyoo, **WATASHI** ga ikanakattara, Hakase wa tottemo ...*  
‘If I don’t show up today, Professor will be ...’

Kyoko acknowledges her mistake in ignoring the association’s rules in (1). She insists on her innocence in (2), and argues her usefulness in (3).

She uses *watashi* once in “Accusation.” In this scene, Kyoko responds to the widow, who suspects that Kyoko is using her son as a tool to establish what the widow considers to be an inappropriate relationship with her brother-in-law.

- (4) Widow: *Desu kara, **WATAKUSHI** wa anata gojishin no okangae o otazune shite irun desu.*  
‘I am asking what your intentions are.’
- (5) Kyoko: ***WATASHI** wa ... musuko ga tanoshii kibun de ite kureru koto igai nozomi nado arimasen.*  
‘I ... don’t have any desire other than my son’s happiness.’

Based on Kyoko’s utterances, students learn when *watashi* is actually used in Japanese discourse: in taking responsibility, defending oneself, asserting oneself, and declaring one’s opinion.

The two accusers, her boss and the widow, use the language in quite different ways. Her supervisor speaks rather frankly using plain forms, while the widow uses honorific forms extensively, e.g. *watakushi*. She uses *watakushi* also when she fires Kyoko:

- (6) Widow: ***WATAKUSHI**-domo<sup>7</sup> to wa en ga kireta hazu desu.*  
‘I believe you should have nothing further to do with us.’

The accusation in “Fired” is business like. The widow in this film is portrayed as a rich, eccentric elderly woman who is distancing herself from other people. She shows emotional

<sup>6</sup> *Watashi* is a first person pronoun used by males (formal) and females (casual-formal). *Watakushi* is a super-formal form used by both genders. *Boku* (casual) and *ore* (vulgar) are used solely by males.

<sup>7</sup> *-domo* is a suffix which makes nouns regarding people plural.

detachment from Kyoko by using *watakushi* as well as *anata* ‘you’,<sup>8</sup> which make the accusation personal and severe.

After watching the two clips, “Fired” and “Accusation”, students compare the two scenes: which scene is more businesslike, which accuser sounds more upset, how does Kyoko respond to the accusations, or how she distances herself from them, etc. Students then closely observe when *watashi* is used: whether it is used in response to a specific question, what the speaker’s intention is, and when it is used in the sentence. Through such discussions and observations, students will realize not only that the use of *watashi* is limited to various types of self-promotion, but also that its usage contributes to a change in tone in the scene. Finally, students can act out the scene, playing the roles of the supervisor, housekeeper, and widow in order to feel how the use of *watashi* or its variants, combined with other verbal elements, impacts the tone of the scene.

### Hearsay expressions

The movie *Okuribito (Departures)* (Takita, 2008) is selected to demonstrate the usage of hearsay expressions and sentence-final particles. The hearsay expressions such as *mitai*, *-tte*, and *soo* appear in the clip titled “Refusing a father.”<sup>9</sup> In it, a telegram arrives, informing the protagonist Daigo of the death of his father. Mika, the protagonist’s wife, reads the telegram and tries unsuccessfully to reach Daigo by cell phone and leaves a message with the office receptionist, who later reports to Daigo using *mitai*, as in (7). Then he calls Mika. Mika tells him how she has obtained the information, as in (8), and reports the contents, as in (9) and (13-15).

(7) Receptionist to Daigo:

*Otoosan nakunatta MITAI.*

‘Apparently your father has died.’

(8) Mika:

*Sorede, Yorohama gyokoo ni kaketara oshiete-kureta no.*

‘So I called the Yorohama fishing port and learned what happened.’

(9)

*Otoosan no ibin no naka ni uchi no juusho ga attan da-TTE.*

‘I was told that our address was found in his belongings.’

(10) Daigo

*Demo, imasara chichioya-tte iwarete mo.*

‘But it’s too late to hear about my father. I don’t care.’

(11)

*Sanjuu-nen ijoo mo atte nain daze.*

‘I haven’t seen him in more than 30 years.’

(12)

*Sore ni, issbo ni nigeta aite ni mendoo mite moraya iinda yo.*

‘His girlfriend can tend to him.’

(13) Mika

*Zutto obitori datta SOO yo.*

<sup>8</sup> The use of the second person pronoun *anata* is also rare in daily conversation.

<sup>9</sup> 110:05 to 113:54 of the film

‘They said he had been single.’

(14) *Ashita no asa, kasoo suru kara-**TTE**.*  
‘I was informed they’re cremating him tomorrow.’

(15) *Otoosan no goitai wa soko no shuukaijoo ni aru **MITAI**.*  
‘They say his body’s at the Fisherman’s Cooperative there.’

Mika’s repeated use of hearsay may sound overdone for speakers of English because the information source appears reliable. However, it is the norm in Japanese to use hearsay markers when reporting recently obtained information, as shown in this film clip. It must be explained to the learners that the omission of such markers might make Daigo wonder how Mika knows—“Has she been to *Yorobama*?”

After watching this clip, students each converse with a partner and report to another partner what they have learned from the conversation, using report/hearsay/conjecture expressions. For example, a student asks the partner about his/her plans for the weekend or what s/he did last weekend. Then, with new partners, they report and comment on what they have learned from each other. They must use report/hearsay/conjecture expressions each time they report someone else’s utterance.

### Sentence-final expressions

The third problem commonly found in students’ skits is omission of sentence-final particles, which are obligatory in many situations. In order to use them appropriately, students first need to learn their functions and then their usages. The clip entitled “Death and eating”<sup>10</sup> from *Okuribito* (Takita, 2008) is useful for this purpose.

Students watch several clips selected for home viewing in order to understand the story up to this point. The summary is as follows:

Daigo, the protagonist, loses his job as a cellist when his orchestra is abruptly disbanded. After moving back to his small hometown, Daigo responds to a classified ad, assuming that the employer is a travel agency. It turns out to be a funeral service provider. Daigo accepts the position as an assistant mortician without telling his wife he is going to be engaged in a job that carries considerable stigma in Japanese society, performing the ceremony of cleaning and dressing the deceased body before it is placed in a coffin. When Daigo’s wife discovers what his job is, she becomes distraught. She despises the work, issues him an ultimatum, and leaves him. He decides to quit the job.

In “Death and Eating,” Daigo visits his employer, Sasaki, to inform him that he is resigning. But before Daigo can say a word, he is invited to eat dinner with Sasaki. In this scene Daigo and Sasaki converse at length for the first time.

Being short and unstressed, sentence-final particles are difficult for students to recognize in film clips. Therefore, several steps are prepared to help students to become aware of their presence or absence and to infer their functions. After understanding the general setting of

<sup>10</sup> 77:13 to 80:49 of the film



the scene—i.e., who the characters are, whose room they are in, and who is offering food—students identify the topics of the conversation. There are three topics: food, Sasaki's late wife, and the fact that living creatures eat the dead in order to survive. Students then watch the clip again and discuss who speaks more—Sasaki or Daigo. This exercise is designed to raise students' awareness of the amount of interaction.

Students are asked to recognize moments when Daigo does not talk. He is quiet when Sasaki talks about his late wife and the fact that living beings eat deceased objects—whether animal, fish, or plant—in order to continue to live and to survive. Students observe the scenes when Daigo does not talk and speculate moment by moment about how the atmosphere might evolve. Is the silent moment awkward, or are both characters comfortable being silent?

After observing the situation in each scene, a written script (which leaves the particles redacted) is distributed. Students read it and divide it according to the topics mentioned above. They mark Daigo's utterances and responses. After confirming that Daigo does not utter a word and rarely responds when Sasaki talks about his late wife and the fact that the living consume the dead in order to continue living, they discuss whether it is ever appropriate to listen silently to someone without responding or commenting.

Students watch the clip again at home and fill in the blanks in the script with particles or expressions as shown in capitals below. They write "X" when they do not hear anything at the end of the sentence and "?" when the intonation is rising. Students notice that Sasaki rarely uses sentence-final expressions when he talks about his late wife.

(16) Sasaki: *Kami-san, mada modotte-nai-N DAROO ?.*  
'Your wife's still away. (Literally, Your wife has not returned, has she?)'

(17) Daigo: *Ha, hai.*  
'No.'

(18) Sasaki: *Kutte-ke YO.*  
'Eat.'

(19) *Ore no hoo ga umai ZO. Tabun.*  
'I'm probably a better cook than you.'

(Daigo nods and sits down at the table.)

(20) Sasaki: *Saa, yaroo KA.*  
'Dig in.'

(21) Daigo: *Nan desu KA. Kore wa.*  
'What's this?'

(22) Sasaki: *Fugu no shirako.*  
'Puffer roe.'

(Daigo nods.)

- (23) *Abutte, shio de kuu to umai-NA DA.*  
‘It’s tasty when grilled with salt.’

(Daigo nods. Daigo glances over at a photograph of a middle-aged woman.)

- (24) Sasaki: *Nyooboo da. 9-nen mae ni NA, shinarechimatta X.*  
‘It’s my wife. She died on me nine years ago.’

(Daigo nods.)

- (25) *Fuufu-tte no wa izure shini wakarerun da ga, sakidatareru to tsurai X.*  
‘Eventually a married couple must be separated by death, but it is hard being left behind.’

- (26) *Kirei ni shite, okuridashita X.*  
‘I made her beautiful and sent her off.’

- (27) *Ore no daiichigoo da X.*  
‘She was the first one I have sent off.’

- (28) *Sore irai, kono shigoto shiteiru X.*  
‘Then I started this business.’

In the next class, students compare the conversation between Sasaki and Daigo on each topic. Daigo speaks only when Sasaki uses a sentence-final expression. Daigo is quiet when Sasaki talks about his late wife and the fact that the living eat the dead, as in (24-28). Students watch this part of the clip again and compare their utterances. Daigo shows considerable interest in Sasaki’s story of his late wife. Nevertheless, he does not respond orally and nods only once on this topic when Sasaki uses the sentence-final particle *na* in the middle of his utterance. Daigo nods slightly more when Sasaki uses sentence-final expressions talking about the fact that the living eat the dead. Students come to realize what these sentence-final expressions accomplish: *they solicit a response from the hearer*.

By the end of the scene the sentence final particles occur more frequently, and Daigo’s responses transition from nods of agreement to short sentences as seen in the following transcript.

- (29) *Kore datte sa, ... Kore datte go-itai da YO.*  
‘Even this... is a corpse.’

- (30) *Iki-mono ga iki-mono kutte ikite-ru, DAROO?*  
‘The living eats the dead [objects to continue living].’

(Daigo nods.)

- (31) *Koitsura, betsu dake do* X.  
‘They are different, but...’
- (32) *Aa! Shinu ki ni nare-na-~~ky~~a, kuu shika nai* X.  
‘Unless you want to die, you have to eat.’
- (33) *Kuu nara, umai hoo ga ii* X.  
‘And if you eat, eat well.’
- (After a few seconds, Daigo nods as if he makes up his mind and eats.)
- (34) *Umai* DAROO?  
‘Good, huh?’
- (35) Daigo: *Umai-su* NE.  
‘Yes, it is.’
- (36) Sasaki: *Umai-N* DA YO NA. *Komatta koto ni*.  
‘So good ... I hate myself.’

This rapprochement between Daigo and his boss happens at multiple levels in this scene, not just at the verbal level. The scene begins with Daigo entering the room and Sasaki already seated, with camera frame on each character separately. Next the camera shows the two men together in the scene, but across the room from each other. Daigo is invited to sit with Sasaki, and the camera shifts to a full view of one character with a shoulder frame of the other character. Finally, we are shown shots of the two in the same frame facing each other (see Image 1). As the verbal moves from a more monologic to dialogic exchange, the camera captures the two becoming closer physically. Moreover, the setting also echoes themes raised in the conversation. Sasaki’s room is lush in vegetation – plants seem to cover every possible surface. But when Sasaki talks about his dead wife, the camera focuses on Daigo, and behind him there is a large window where we see snow falling. From the first scene of the film snow and cold are associated with death. The two eat snow-white puffer fish, itself associated with death. And the scene ends with a white out to a car driving through a blizzard to a funeral service. The interplay between language and cinematic devices (setting, color palette, juxtaposition of scenes, framing) create the scene’s meaning: Daigo and Sasaki form a bond, and Daigo learns from Sasaki to see death as an integral part of life.



Image 1: Sequence of shots of Sasaki and Daigo in the clip “Death and eating”

*Okuribito* involves a number of subplots suitable for teaching-learning other functions of sentence-final expressions, one of which involves the relationship between Daigo and Mika. Their first conversation in the film takes place in the clip “Revealing a debt,”<sup>11</sup> when Daigo tells Mika that he has lost his job and, due to the purchase of a concert cello, he is seriously in debt. Mika is annoyed. However, the audience can infer that this does not cause a crisis in their marriage when she says:

- (37) Mika: *Gohan tsukuru NE.*  
‘I’ll make dinner.’

Mika uses *ne* at the end of her utterance. There are two functions of *ne*. It can be used in an utterance when speaker and hearer share the same experience or body of knowledge. It indicates that the speaker seeks the hearer’s agreement with the expressed point of view. In this case, *ne* is mandatory. The second usage is to bring the hearer into the speaker’s domain of perception or knowledge without trying to change the hearer’s point of view (Izuhara, 2003). Mika uses *ne* with the first function, which suggests that she is the one who usually prepares meals. She also seeks his agreement to eat the dinner that she will prepare.

By contrast, later in the film, when she discovers the truth about Daigo’s job performing the ceremony of cleaning and dressing deceased bodies, she becomes agitated and leaves him. Mika’s lines in the clip “Confrontation over his job”<sup>12</sup> run as follows:

- (38) Mika *Sonna mondai janai DESHO?*  
‘Don’t change the subject.’
- (39) *Shigoto no naiyoo moo shirabeta X.*  
‘I’ve checked what the company does.’
- (40) *Nande itte kurenakatta NO?*  
‘Why didn’t you tell me?’
- (41) *Atarimae DESHOO?*  
‘Naturally! [I would have been opposed to your taking this kind of job if you had told me.]’
- (42) *Konna shigoto shiteru nante hazukashii to omowanai NO?*  
‘Aren’t you ashamed of having a job like this?’
- (43) *Futsuu no shigoto o shite hoshii dake X.*  
‘I just want you to get a normal job.’
- (44) *Rikutsu wa iikara X.*  
‘Don’t give me that!’
- (45) *Ima sugu yamete X.*

<sup>11</sup> 11:25 to 14:03 of the film

<sup>12</sup> 69:42 to 73:41 of the film

'I want you to quit your job immediately.'

- (46) *O-negai* X.  
Please.
- (47) *Atashi ima made nani mo iwanakatta* YONE.  
'I haven't said anything so far, have I?'
- (48) *Dai-chan ga chero yametai-tte itta toki mo inaka ni modoritai-tte ittatokimo waratte tsuite kita* LANAI.  
'I just smiled and followed you when you wanted to quit the cello and move back up here.'
- (49) *Sorya kanashikatta*-NDA YO. *Honto wa*.  
'The truth was, I was unhappy.'
- (50) *Demo... anata ga suki da kara...*  
'But because I love you ...'
- (51) *Dakara ...kondo dake wa onegai... atashi no in koto kiite* X.  
'So just this once ... listen to me.'
- (52) *Issho no shigoto ni dekiru* NO?  
'Will this be your career for life?'
- (53) *Jikka ni kaeru* X.  
'I'm going home.'
- (54) *Shigoto yametara mukae ni kite* X.  
'Come see me when you quit your job.'
- (55) *Sawaranaide* X.  
'Don't touch me.'
- (56) *Kegarawashii* X.  
'You're filthy.'

Students watch this clip and identify all of the sentence-final expressions using the same worksheet format as was used in the "Death and eating" clip. Then they check to determine whether or not such expressions are distributed equally throughout the clip. They find that Mika uses sentence-final expressions often in (38-42) and (47-49), but rarely in (43-46) and (50-56). Students read the script, paying particular attention to the sentence-final expressions, and discuss how Mika's attitude shifts. Mika first interacts with Daigo expressing her anger and she attempts to persuade him to abandon his job. Then, she declares her decision to leave him and at the end of the clip she returns to her parents' home. Tracing the use of the sentence-final expressions reveals how Mika's attitude toward Daigo changes as the scene develops.

Students note each sentence-final expression that Mika uses in this clip. First they notice her using two variants of *daroo*: *desbo* in (38) and *desboo* in (41), with rising intonation, when she seeks agreement from Daigo. *Daroo* implies that a given piece of information belongs to both the speaker's and the hearer's territories (Kamio, 1994, 1995). Utterance (38) is in response to Daigo's attempt to change the topic by saying *Tsukue no naka katte ni mita-NDA* 'You looked in my desk without my permission'. Mika recognizes his intent and prevents the topic diversion from his job. Utterance (41) is also a response to Daigo when he says, *Iu to hantai suru DAROO* 'If I told you [what my job really is], you'd have told me not to do it'. *Janai* in (48) is also considered a variant of *daroo* by Kamio. In (48) Mika refers to her past acceptance of Daigo's decisions without argument, which both of them should remember.

Mika also uses the sentence final particle *no* in utterances (40), (42), and (52). Students may also notice questions with rising intonation. According to Masuoka and Takubo (1992), *no* is indeed a question marker used in informal conversation. It is often used by females, as Mika does here. It is also used by males when talking to a female or a child in a gentle tone.

*Yone* is used in (47). Izuhara (2003) states that *yone* has two usages : the speaker requests that what he/she says be accepted or confirmed by the hearer. Here, *yone* is used for soliciting confirmation.

Mika uses *nda yo* in (49). (*Nda* is a variation of *noda*.) One of its functions is to convey the speaker's wish to be understood (Noda 1997). Here, *yo* is used to signal that Mika wants to change Daigo's opinion, one of the functions of *yo*, according to Izuhara (2003). With *noda yo*, Mika attempts to change Daigo's perception of past events.

After examining Daigo's utterances as closely as those of Mika, students play their roles, adding appropriate sentence-final expressions to their utterances or dropping existing ones, considering how such modifications change the mood of the scene. As a final exercise with this film clip, students perform their own version of Mika and Daigo's exchanges, again paying attention to sentence-final expressions.

Understanding sentence-final expressions is essential for an understanding of the subtle shifting of the relationship between Mika and Daigo, one of the main aspects of the film's plots. Mika's love for Daigo eventually requires her to accept him as a mortician. The carefully constructed utterances with sentence-final expressions throughout the scenes make her transformation believable. Through Mika's transformation, viewers are invited to examine their own attitudes towards death and perhaps undergo a similar acceptance of it as a part of life. The sentence-final particles, used by the writers of the script and brought to life in the actors' speeches, become an essential part of understanding each character in the film as well as the relationship among them.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has explored a new and refreshing approach to teaching several aspects of Japanese pragmatics, namely, the meaning and usage of the first person pronoun *watashi*, hearsay expressions, and sentence-final expressions. I have shown how film clips can be employed in classroom and homework exercises to model Japanese usage of these linguistic features of the language. I have also explored how these linguistic features, in tandem with cinematic devices, contribute to the creation of meaning in a scene. By understanding their meaning and usage, students are able to develop their communicative competence in Japanese.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was supported in part by a grant from the Berkeley Language Center at the University of California, Berkeley. I am indebted to Mark Kaiser, Richard Kern, Claire Kramsch, Sirpa Tuomainen of the BLC and Yoko Hasegawa of the UC Berkeley Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures for their invaluable comments and suggestions.

## REFERENCES

- Izuhara, E. (2003). Shuujoshi 'yo', 'yone', 'ne' saikoo. *The Journal of Aichi Gakuin University* 51: 1-15.
- Kamio, A. (1994). The theory of territory of information: The case of Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics* 21: 67-100.
- Kamio, A. (1995). Territory of information in English and Japanese and psychological utterances. *Journal of Pragmatics* 24: 235-264.
- Katagiri, Y. (2007). Dialogue functions of Japanese sentence-final particles 'Yo' and 'Ne'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39: 1313-1323.
- Koizumi, T. (Director). (2006). *The Professor and his Beloved Equation (Hakase no aishita sunshiki)*. DVD: Asmik Ace Entertainment, 2006.
- Masuoka, T. & Takubo, Y. (1992). 益岡隆志・田窪行則 (1992) 『基礎日本語文法——改訂 版』くろしお出版, 東京
- The Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. 2007. "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World". Accessed August 10. <http://www.mla.org/flreport>
- Morita, Y. (2002). 森田良行 (2002) 『日本語文法の発想』ひつじ書房, 東京
- Noda, H. (1997). 野田春美 (1997) 『「の(だ)」の機能』くろしお出版東京
- Shunji, I. (Director). (1998). *April Story (Shigatu monogatari)*. DVD: Dawoori Entertainment, 1998.
- Takita, Y. (Director). (2008). *Departures (Okuribito)*. DVD: E1 Entertainment, 2009.