The covertisation of norms in contact situations: The influence of the nonnative speaker on native speaker behaviour

Lisa Fairbrother

1. Introduction

The concept of the contact situation is founded on the premise that different kinds of problems will occur in interactions where participants from different language and/or cultural backgrounds meet, than in native-only interactions, otherwise known as internal situations (Neustupný 1985a). Marriott (1991) has proved that participants, and in particular native speakers, often behave differently in contact situations than they would in internal situations. This different behaviour can occur on a linguistic level, including native speakers’ use of foreigner talk (Ferguson 1975, Skoutarides 1986); or it can occur on a sociolinguistic level, for example when in English speaking situations Australian businessmen add the suffix “-san” to the names of their Japanese interlocutors (Marriott 1991); or on a sociocultural level, for example when Australian businessmen attempt to adopt the Japanese custom of gift-giving with Japanese business associates in a non-Japanese environment (Marriott 1993).

Marriott has argued that participants in English based contact situations may apply norms other than those normally expected in an English language internal situation. She has shown that although English base norms may be applied on the linguistic level, other norms, such as the norms of the nonnative speaker, may control participants’ sociolinguistic and sociocultural behaviour. However, as of yet, there has been little research conducted on the functions of such norm selection and the mechanism that controls such a process.

In his analysis of norms applied in contact situations, Neustupný (1985b) provides valuable insights into the processes involved in the application of those norms. His classification of norms into covert and overt, aware and unaware provides us with clues as to how and when certain norms might be applied. He has shown that in contact situations native speakers’ norms may be overtised when the speaker’s metalinguistic attention is drawn to a deviation, when the speaker is not familiar with the interlocutor, when the number of serious deviations is not high, or when the deviation causes a serious substantive problem. However, as of yet, there is no definitive theory to account for the circumstances under which deviations will be overlooked, i.e. when such norms will be covertised. In this study, I will argue that it is essential to examine the process of the covertisation of norms in order to understand how and why native speakers apply different norms in contact and internal situations.

I will also argue that it is the presence of the nonnative speaker in the contact situation that influences the covertisation of base norms under certain circumstances. Since Long’s research (1983) into foreigner talk, the influence of the nonnative speaker, or foreign factors, on the behaviour of the native speaker has been acknowledged. In his study of Japanese native speaker reactions to nonnative speakers of various ethnic origin, Ostheider (1999) has shown that not only the language behaviour of the nonnative speaker, but also their outward appearance can affect the behaviour of native speakers. However, these studies only look at the results of behaviour and do not address the processes involved. As Faerch and Kasper (1983) have pointed out, it is often necessary to look at the internal processes involved in order to further understand why certain behaviour will be produced. In this study I claim that by looking at the processes involved in the application of norms in contact situations, and in particular the covertisation of base norms, we will be able to see how and why native speakers apply different types of norms in contact and internal situations, and how the presence of the nonnative speaker may influence that process.
2. Data
The data used in this study is based upon video recordings, made in 2000, of 18 Japanese native speaker – non-native speaker dyads. Each nonnative speaker was asked to speak with two different Japanese native speakers in Japanese. The participants had never met each other before and were requested to chat informally. The researcher did not set any conversation topics but suggested that they start by introducing themselves. The conversations within each dyad lasted approximately 10 to 20 minutes but only the first 10 minutes of each conversation was analysed as data. All recordings were transcribed (for transcription symbols see appendix) and the Japanese text romanised (Neustupný 1991).

The nonnative speakers were divided into three groups: Caucasian English native speakers, Han Chinese native speakers and Brazilian Portuguese native speakers of Japanese descent. Each group included participants of different Japanese speaking proficiency; beginner, intermediate and advanced as set by the researcher. Most of the Japanese native speakers had had little previous contact with nonnative speakers. All participants, both native and nonnative speakers, were university students. Details of the participants can be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Native speaker profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sex</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>school year</th>
<th>major</th>
<th>prior experience with nonnative speakers</th>
<th>overseas trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JF1</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>undergrad. 2nd</td>
<td>literature</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF2</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>undergrad. 3rd</td>
<td>law</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF3</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>undergrad. 3rd</td>
<td>law</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF4</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>undergrad. 3rd</td>
<td>economics</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM1</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>undergrad. 2nd</td>
<td>law</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM2</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>masters 2nd</td>
<td>science</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM3</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>masters 2nd</td>
<td>literature</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM4</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>undergrad. 3rd</td>
<td>law</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Nonnative speaker profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sex</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>ethnicity</th>
<th>school year</th>
<th>major</th>
<th>time in Japan</th>
<th>Japanese study</th>
<th>Japanese level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>white European</td>
<td>short exchange</td>
<td>science</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>white European</td>
<td>research student</td>
<td>Japanese culture</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>white European</td>
<td>master 1st</td>
<td>economics</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>master 2nd</td>
<td>geography</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>9.5 years</td>
<td>beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>master 1st</td>
<td>city planning</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>master 2nd</td>
<td>law</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>high advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Han Chinese</td>
<td>short exchange</td>
<td>literature</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Han Chinese</td>
<td>research student</td>
<td>design</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Han Chinese</td>
<td>research student</td>
<td>linguistics</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>low advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the seminal work by Faerch and Kasper (1987) the value of introspective techniques in the analysis of language usage has been widely accepted. The introspective technique used in this study is the follow-up interview (hereafter FUI) developed by Neustupný (1994a), which requires participants to report on language use and other specific features of their interactions as they relive them by watching the video recordings. Each FUI lasted approximately 60 minutes.

In order to pinpoint participants’ norms, data obtained from the video recordings and FUIs was analysed using the language management theory (Jernudd & Neustupný 1987, Neustupný 1994b). According to this theory, norms of behaviour exist and we interact with others in accordance with those norms. In contact situations, deviations to those norms may occur and those deviations may be noted or overlooked. A wide range of deviations may be noted, such as grammatical errors, pronunciation mistakes,
The covertisation of norms in contact situations (Fairbrother)

Differences in body movement and chosen topics of conversation. Deviations do not necessarily have to be linguistic in nature; deviations relating to sociolinguistic and sociocultural features of the interaction may also be noted. Noted deviations may or may not be evaluated and adjustments may or may not be devised and implemented in response to those deviations. After identifying Japanese native speakers' norms it was then possible to further classify them depending upon whether they were Japanese base norms or not.

3. The covertisation of norms

In this study, the term “covertisation of norms” will be used to describe circumstances when Japanese native speakers apply norms different from those that they would be expected to apply in a native-only internal situation. In contrast, the term “covertisation of norms” will be used to describe Japanese native speakers' application of Japanese base norms in contact situations. As will be shown below, native speakers do not merely overtise or covertise Japanese base norms. The results of this study suggest that in addition to the covertisation of base norms, other norms and/or expectations may be applied.

3.1. The covertisation of Japanese base norms

First it is important to look at cases in this study where deviations occurred in the interaction but were not noted by Japanese speakers. In other words, I will introduce examples where Japanese base norms were not applied, i.e., those norms remained covert.

Example 1

During the interaction occurring between JM3 and B2, B2 used considerably large arm movements, at one point stretching both her arms into the air above her head.

In a Japanese internal situation we can assume that participants would note such cases of nonverbal communication as deviations from Japanese base norms. However according to his FUI, JM3 did not even notice B2's gestures, indicating that his Japanese base norms remained covert. JM3 reported that he was focusing so hard on trying to listen to what B2 was saying to him that he was not able to notice other aspects of the interaction, such as her physical gestures. In his words “yo(yu) ga nakatta [I didn't have chance (to notice)].

This example implies that because B2 was an intermediate level speaker of Japanese, it took JM3 a considerable amount of effort just to comprehend her speech on a macro level, thus leaving him incapable of noting less prominent deviations, such as her arm movements. This case contrasts with Neustupny's (1985b) explanation of overt norms, whereby deviations may become overt when the nonnative speaker's language proficiency is so advanced that in general very few deviations occur. In such cases, the general lack of deviations highlights the deviations that actually do occur. Conversely, by looking at the situation from the point of view of covert norms, we can say that nonnative speakers with lower language proficiency will produce more frequent deviations (not only grammatical errors but also deviations relating to pronunciation, speed, vocabulary, prosody, style and nonverbal behaviour) and hence it may be impossible for the native speaker to process all those deviations at the same time. Therefore in some cases deviations may not be noted and Japanese base norms will remain covert. It appears that to JM3, understanding B2's message was given priority over processing her nonverbal behaviour. Therefore the general foreignness that he noted with regard to her linguistic performance left him unable to note other deviations concerning her physical movements. Rather than being a particular trait of (in this case) Brazilian female nonnative speakers, such linguistic deviations, or linguistic foreignness, is likely to occur in the speech of any intermediate level nonnative speaker. We can therefore refer to these general deviations as the collective foreignness of the nonnative speaker. It appears that this collective foreignness can influence the covertisation of native speakers' base norms regarding other deviations.

In the same interaction, B2 makes a grammatical error that is not noted by JM3.

Example 2

B2: ma-, kita toki wa zenzen wakarana, nanimo wakaranaku kattan, nanka jotai de
JM3:
B2: well, when I came I completely didn't understa-. I was in a situation where I didn't understand anything
In his FUI, JM3 claimed that he did not notice B2's grammatical mistake regarding the past negative form of the verb "wakaru" [to understand]. B2 said "wakaranakattan" but she should either have said "wakaranakattan" or "wakaranakute". He reported that, as it was obvious that B2 was trying to say that she had not understood any Japanese when she came to Japan, he did not pay attention to her minor grammatical errors. Indeed it is probable that JM3's focus on the meaning of B2's statement resulted in him not being able to process deviations regarding linguistic accuracy. As I demonstrated in example 1, native speakers may not be able to note some deviations if the nonnative speaker's language contains a great number of deviations. As Neustupný (1985b) has shown, some deviations may only be noted when a substantive problem occurs or when something brings the native speaker's attention to the deviation on a metalinguistic level.

Nevertheless it must be noted that even if native norms may be covert regarding individual micro level deviations, we cannot presuppose that such deviations will go unnoticed on the macro level. Indeed, although he was unable to note B2's individual grammatical mistakes, on a more general scale JM3 did report that he was aware that B2's language use was "nantonaku gaikokujin ga shabetteiru nihongo" [somehow like the Japanese that foreigners speak]. Therefore, although JM3 could not pinpoint all of B2's individual deviations he did note her deviations on the macro level. Due to B2's general language ability, JM3's base Japanese norms were covertised on the micro level in some cases, but they were overtised on the macro level.

3.2. Application of norms other than Japanese base norms

In addition to the covertisation of norms shown in the examples above, there are cases where Japanese native speakers appear to apply norms other than Japanese base norms. In other words, they judge and react to events differently from the way we would expect them to do if they were in a native-speaker-only internal situation. As the application of such norms seems to be specific to contact situations, I refer to these norms as contact norms (Fairbrother 2001). Furthermore, as will be shown in the examples below, it appears that native speakers may have different varieties of contact norms depending on the type of foreigner that they are interacting with, and that they can be aware or unaware (Neustupný 1985b) of their application of such norms.

3.2.1. Collective contact norms

Based on FUI reports and analysis using the language management model, it was possible to identify some cases where Japanese native speakers applied contact norms. I have argued (Fairbrother 2000) that we can identify the presence of contact norms in cases where positive evaluations without deviations occur, and also in some cases where deviations are overlooked. In the following example the native speaker makes a positive evaluation even though no deviation appears to have occurred.

Example 3

At the very beginning of their interaction B3 bows to JF4.

In her FUI, JF4 positively evaluated B3's bow as "nihonjinpo atamasage" [a very Japanese way of bowing his head]. As it is highly unlikely that JF4 would positively evaluate the same kind of nonverbal communication if performed by another Japanese native speaker, we can assume that she did not perceive B3's behaviour in accordance with Japanese base norms. We must therefore conclude that she was evaluating B3 according to a different standard altogether. JF4's report suggests that she was expecting something different from a nonnative speaker, i.e. she was expecting him not to bow in a very Japanese way. Thus, when B3 did bow in a Japanese manner, this behaviour was evaluated positively because it deviated not from her Japanese base norms, but from her expectations of nonnative behaviour. In short, what on the surface appears to be a positive evaluation without a deviation may in fact be an evaluation of a deviation noted against contact norms. That such a deviation was evaluated positively implies that JF4 looked favourably upon B3's adaptation towards Japanese base norms.

In the next example, JF3 and C2 are talking about their hometowns.
Example 4

In this example, JM3 wants to explain to C2 that her hometown is far from the sea but to make sure that C2 understands her explanation she first checks whether C2 knows where her hometown, Nagano, is. In other words, JM3 implements a pre-adjustment to check C2’s geographical knowledge of Japan. By checking whether C2 understands the name of the place, JM3 is effectively trying to avoid any potential deviations regarding C2’s comprehension of “Nagano” from occurring. Indeed, as can be seen from the discourse example above, C2 did not understand the place name “Nagano”, which resulted in a number of adjustment strategies being implemented until she did understand.

However, as it is highly unlikely that the same kind of pre-adjustment would occur in an internal situation, we must contend that JM3 was not applying a Japanese base norm when she devised her pre-adjustment plan. Instead she had an expectation that, as a foreigner, C2 probably would not know where Nagano was, thus she applied a contact norm concerning nonnative speakers’ knowledge of Japanese geography.

It is important to consider why such contact norms exist within the repertoires of JF4 and JF3. There are a number of possibilities but we can assume that these contact norms were norms applied towards nonnative speakers in general and not towards any specific group. These norms can thus be described as collective contact norms. The formation of such norms could have been based upon personal experiences with other nonnative speakers, who had not been able to bow in the same way as native speakers, or who had not known about Japanese geography. On the other hand, they could also have been merely formed from stereotyped images in the media or anecdotes from other native speakers that have been idiomatized (Muraoka 2000). Regardless of how such norms are formed, however, it is clear that they would only be applied in contact situations. It therefore evident that the presence of the nonnative speaker has a considerable influence on the behaviour of the native speaker.

3.2.2. Group specific contact situation norms

As was shown in the examples above, Japanese native speakers can often be aware of their application of contact norms in intercultural interactions. There was one case in the data, however, which suggests that native speakers may also apply contact situations norms completely subconsciously.
Example 5

A2: nihon no minzoku geino to dento engeki * o benkyo shite imasu. tatoe ba, kyogen o yatte
JM2: donna † un, hai
A2: imasu. Jibun de yatte imasu eigo de un, nihongo de un ha-
JM2: a ! eigo de, e † eigo de yaru no †, demo sore wa,
A2: enmoku hai só
JM2: ano kyōgen no nan to iu {draws a square in the air} arimasu yo ne * kō iu kyōgen to iu
A2: hai honyaku shite
JM2: suto-ri ga arimasu ne sore o ja, eigo ni naoshite
A2: I'm studying folk performing arts and traditional drama for example, I'm doing Kyogen. I do it by
JM2: What kind?
A2: myself in English um, from the Japanese, um yeah
JM2: ah! in English, oh! You do it in English? But * that's, they
A2: the script yeah
JM2: have that Kyogen, what do you call it {draws a square in the air} this kind of there's the
A2: yeah translate it
JM2: kyogen story, right? So you change that into English

At first glance it seems that JM2 may have produced the word "suto-ri" [story] in an attempt to make himself better understood to A2, however, according to his FUI, JM2 was completely unaware that he had used the word at all. If his report is to be believed we must then conclude that he produced the word "suto-ri" subconsciously. In addition, we can assume that JM2 would be unlikely to use the English loanword (story) when asking another native Japanese speaker about traditional Japanese theatre, so it can be concluded that he was not applying a Japanese base norm. This implies that JM2 had a norm controlling his language production in contact situations and that that norm governed the use of English based words when communicating with an English native speaker.

In other words, JM2 subconsciously applied a contact norm that enabled him to produce the English derivative of "suto-ri".

This example suggests that JM2 did not apply a contact norm towards nonnative speakers in general, but that he applied the norm specifically to a nonnative speaker who was also a native speaker of English. This kind of norm can therefore be referred to as a group specific contact norm. This point is further substantiated by the fact that JM2 did not apply a similar type of contact norm in his interaction with the Chinese native speaker, C2. In example 5, the native language of the nonnative speaker appears to have influenced JM2's subconscious application of contact norms so we must conclude that different groups of nonnative speakers may affect the behaviour of native speakers in different ways.

3.3 The shift from overt to covert norms

Although some norms may be covertised from the beginning of the interaction and remain so until its conclusion, this is not always the case. In this study there was a case where a norm that had been overt at the beginning of the interaction became covert after the subsequent repetition of the same deviation. In the following excerpt JM2 first notes a deviation concerning A2's use of a first person referent.

Example 6

(00mins 36secs)
A2: demo, ano-, watashī no umareta toki ni yūmei na haiyū ga terebi de kanojo no nanae wa A2
JM2: a
A2: But, um, at the time when I was born there was a famous actress on TV and her name was A2
JM2: ah
36 seconds from the start of their interaction, JM2 noted a deviation concerning A2's use of the first person pronoun "watakushi" [I]. In an informal interaction between two university students, females would be more likely to use the term "watakushi" to refer to themselves whereas the term "watakushi" would be more commonly used by older Japanese males when giving speeches. JM2 noted this deviation and evaluated it negatively.

Example 7

(08mins 45secs)

A2: sō, dō iu fu ni ano, sono yamabushi * no kyōgen wa Kyōto no kyōgen ni narimashita ka. Dō iu do iu fu ni u, un

JM2:

A2: dōshite, dōshite, itsu, dō iu fu ni to, to iu shitsunon ga motte imasu. watakushi wa omotte imasu, kōjinteki ni

JM2:

A2: Yeah, um, in what ways, the Yamabushi * kyōgen become Kyoto kyōgen. I have questions about in what

JM2: um, uhm


JM2:

However, this deviation was repeated both at 4 minutes 37 seconds and 8 minutes 45 seconds into the interaction. On both of these subsequent occasions JM2 reported that he had not noted the deviations at all. One of those subsequent deviations is demonstrated in the following excerpt where A2 is explaining her field of research.

JM2 claimed that he did not notice A2's use of the word "watakushi" here as he was concentrating on the content of A2's dialogue. However it is important to question why he did note A2's deviation at the beginning of the interaction but not later. It is possible that at the onset of the interaction A2 may have appeared particularly foreign to JM2. This foreignness may have included not only her pronunciation, intonation, language use and non-verbal communication but also her physical appearance. It is possible that while they were still introducing themselves and before their conversation reached a deeper level, he was more sensitive to the differences between himself and A2. However, by the time the deviation in example 6 occurred, the two participants had already discussed a number of topics related to their research fields, including genetics, biology and kyogen. The discussion of such topics, even in an internal situation, requires a considerable amount of concentration on the content of the subject matter so we can assume that JM2 by this time was focusing more on the content of A2's message rather than the form of the language that she used. We can therefore assume that JM2 overlooked A2's first person pronoun deviation because his priority lay in focusing on the content of her message. In addition, JM2 may have become accustomed to A2's repetition of "watakushi", and subconsciously stopped noting it because it was a deviation that did not affect the meaning of her message. I have argued (Fairbrother 2001) that getting used to a certain type of deviation may result in a lack of noting of any subsequent deviations of the same type and that explanation also appears to be applicable to JM2's noting of the deviation concerning "watakushi".

Examples 6 and 7 demonstrate that although Japanese native speakers may be sensitive to certain deviations at the beginning of the interaction, because of the foreignness of their interactants, subsequent deviations of a similar type may be overlooked as the interaction progresses and they develop a sense of rapport. Native speakers' base norms may be overt at the beginning of the interaction but may become covertised as the interaction develops. It must be concluded, therefore, that even though some norms may be covert or overt at some stage of the interaction, they will not necessarily remain so when other subsequent deviations occur.

4. Conclusions

In this paper I have tried to show how the presence of the nonnative speaker can have an affect on the native speaker's application of norms. By looking at the processes involved in the noting of deviations, the following conclusions can be made:

1) Japanese base norms may remain covert and deviations may not be noted when the total number of deviations committed by the nonnative speaker is
high.

2) Even though Japanese base norms may remain covert on a micro level, more general macro-level deviations may be noted.

3) Japanese base norms may remain covert, but in their place contact norms may be applied consciously or subconsciously.

4) Contact norms may be formed as a reaction towards all nonnative speakers in general (collective contact norms), or towards one specific group of nonnative speakers (group specific contact norms).

5) Japanese base norms that become overt towards a certain deviation will not necessarily remain overt. They may become covert when the same deviation is repeated.

Although it has been shown that the presence of a non-native speaker can affect the native speaker’s application of norms in some situations, it must be noted that not all covertisation of norms is a direct result of nonnative influence. As is also the case in internal situations, sudden interruptions, nervousness at meeting someone for the first time, concentrating on one’s own thoughts or deep involvement in the conversation can all lead to deviations being left unnoticed. Nevertheless cases where the influence of the non-native speaker is evident must not be overlooked as they can provide hints for the improvement of interactional skills of both native and nonnative speakers. As this study only focuses on a small number of interactions with a limited range of participants the results cannot be regarded as exhaustive or absolute. Further research will still be needed to investigate whether native speakers apply norms in a similar manner in other kinds of contact situations. It will also be necessary to further examine under what circumstances general and group specific contact norms are applied and to what extent the specific background of the non-native speaker influences their application.

References


(2001) Gengo kanri moderu karaintaakushonen kanri moderu he [Towards a model of interaction management]. In Muraoka, H. (Ed.) Soshoku haren no gengo kanri kenchyu vol. I: [Research into contact situations and language management] Chiba University Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities project report


Ostheider, T. (1999) Taigaikokujin gengo kodo to gengogai joken no sogokanken [The correlation between extra-linguistic conditions and language behaviour towards foreigners]. Nihongak cabo 18, 89-104 Osaka University, Faculty of Letters, Japanese Research Department


Appendix: Transcription symbols
The covertisation of norms in contact situations (Fairbrother)

† rising intonation e.g. eigo †
* half second silence
- long vowel e.g. o - -
{ } nonverbal communication e.g. {A2 taps the table with her hand}
! surprise, exclamation
*italics* English translation of Japanese discourse