



## Discourse Structure Analysis of Making Request in Japanese Conversation

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### ABSTRACT

Making requests (*irai*) is a genre of spoken interaction that is taught from the basic level of learning Japanese as a foreign language. A request is one of the speech acts that may raise face-threatening potentials. Understanding the stages of request appropriate to Japanese culture is thus essential for Japanese learners to achieve successful conversation. Therefore, conversation pedagogy by using a discourse approach is essential. This study investigates a potential structure gap in Japanese making-requests conversations realized in actual settings and textbook conversational models. By employing genre theory and interpersonal discourse of "Negotiation" as a qualitative discourse analytic method from the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective, this paper describes the gaps and some factors that potentially influence the structure of Japanese making-request conversation. Data were obtained from conversational texts in the Japanese language corpus named Japanese Natural Conversation Corpus and Japanese textbooks for elementary and middle adult learners. Regarding the structure, the results show no difference between conversations in textbooks and authentic ones at the stage level, but both differ at the phase level. There is no introduction to the problem, additional explanation, and confirmation phases in textbook conversational models. In addition, the absence of the phases, the differences in pre-condition content between textbook and authentic conversations, also the length of the reasoning phase, are assumed to be influenced by relational status between participants (tenor) as well as the imposition degree of the requested object.

### KEYWORDS

Conversation structure; Discourse analysis; Japanese conversation learning; Making requests; Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the primary conversation genres in Japanese-speaking learning is making requests (*irai*). A request is a type of social action in which the interactional goal of the first speaker (requester) is to get the interlocutor (requestee) to perform an action (i.e., transferring something of value such as

an object, service, or information) that is for the benefit of the first speaker or a third party" (Taleghani-Nikazm & Huth, 2010). Making a request is also defined as asking someone to do something on our behalf. In request speech, the requestee has the right to accept or reject our request, and that is what distinguishes request (*irai*) from order (*meirei*) (Nitta, 1991). This type of

spoken interaction is taught starting from the elementary level considering the importance of students having the ability to make requests properly according to the culture of Japanese speakers.

Requesting can be a challenging process for several reasons. First, making requests is one of the directive speech acts that have the potential to threaten face (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Therefore, the choice of expressions or linguistic forms used during making request interactions must consider the status of the interlocutor, the social distance between the speaker and the interlocutor, and the degree of imposition of the requested object (Brown & Levinson, 1978). These three factors, particularly in Japanese requests, should be considered when making a request speech (Indraswari, Meisa, Rachmawati, & Ariyani, 2021).

Second, making a request is a social activity that has a specific social purpose (Nitta, 1991), so making a request can be categorized as one genre in spoken interaction. Genre is defined as a staged-goal-oriented social process (Martin & Rose, 2007, 2008). As a genre, making a request has a structure that can distinguish it from other conversational genres, such as apologizing, asking for permission, or invitation. Furthermore, the structure which realized in stages is not always the same with other languages because the genre is culture-specific. Moreover, Japanese culture is very sensitive to relational status. Hence, interpersonal relational status that is based on either power relation or degree of intimacy can affect the structure or exchange pattern of interaction (Martin, 1992).

Therefore, to raise the learners' awareness of the Japanese making request genre, as well as to improve their discourse competence, they need to be given input related to the discourse structure of making requests. It becomes significant for Japanese language learners to understand how to make appropriate requests by following stages appropriately according to Japanese culture

Making request interaction can't be separated from social context (cultural context and situational context). These contexts influence the selection of linguistic forms people use when making a request. The manifestation of the cultural context in Japanese making requests can be seen from the stages implemented during interaction to achieve its social purpose. These stages have been conventionalized by the culture of Japanese speakers. Situational context can be seen from the register: the field of experience, the tenor of social

relations, and the mode of communication (Martin & Rose, 2008). Field of request is an activity of asking someone to do something for the benefit of the requester, taking into account the status and social relations between participants and the degree of imposition (the light weight of the request object). The tenor of making a request is about the relational distance between participants, which showed differences in power or superior-inferior relationships (*jooge kankei*) such as superior-subordinate, teacher-student, senior-junior, expert-not expert; and the degree of closeness (closeness, familiarity) between participants. Honorific and various types of language (formal or informal) indicate that the tenor influences linguistic choices in request speech (Indraswari, Meisa, Rachmawati, & Ariyani, 2021). As for the mode of communication, requests can be made in person or through a media/device, such as telephone calls. This social context will influence the linguistic choices used in the interaction (Eggs, 1994; Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2008). In other words, since Japanese request-making is sensitive to social context, the stages, and linguistic choices are likely influenced by its social context.

Generally, Japanese making request consists of three stages, namely pre-condition (*senkoo-bu*), request (*irai-bu*), and closing (*shuuketsu-bu*) (Xu, 2006) and it was adapted by Nguyen (2017) into two stages, namely 'chat section' (*danwa-bu*) and 'request section' (*irai-bu*). In Japanese language learning, the learners' understanding of the structure of the conversation is essential (Ri, 2002). However, teaching conversational structures, especially making requests, has not been done much (Miyatani, Kurono, Kobayashi, Doi, & Fukunaga, 2001). Request speech, as one of the spoken genres taught from the basic to the advanced levels still emphasizes the mastery of politeness through the accuracy of speech act level choices associated with politeness. Both learners and teachers are still more concerned about the accuracy of implementing speech levels that match the social status of the interlocutor. In other words, the attention to conversation structure tends to be ignored (Fox, 2014). Therefore, teaching conversation using a discourse approach is significant in order to raise the learner's competency in conversation as a form of spoken discourse (Jones & Ono, 2005; Horiguchi, 2005)

On the other hand, Japanese conversation learning still relies on conversational models in grammar, speaking, and listening textbooks, following the function of the textbook as a provider

of conversational models to introduce new functions and structures (Bernsten, 2002). Nevertheless, many of these dialogues are less authentic because most are based on the intuition of native speakers and the rules of written language rather than the results of research on the use of spoken language (Gillmore, 2007; Jones & Ono, 2005). In addition, not many textbooks provide detailed explanations about the structure of Japanese making requests. The authors' preliminary observations on 10 Japanese textbooks show that only one conversation textbook includes the structure of the making request interaction.

There are some previous studies on the discourse structure of making a request conversation. Some studies discuss sequences of making requests in specific contexts, such as call services (Li & Ma, 2016) and business emails Park, Jeon, & Shim, 2021). Other studies analyzed the request structure of the Japanese native group and Japanese learners' group (Nguyen, 2017; Yu, 2012; Xu, 2006, 2007; Ri, 2002). Specific studies on stages of making requests are about the pre-sequences stage (Fox, 2014; Nguyen, 2017; Onuma, 2011); the request stage (Nguyen, 2017; 2014), and the closing stage (Yu, 2012). Although all studies described the stages, they didn't describe the phases that structured each stage. In addition, since the exchange role between participants during the interaction was not explored, the meaning of negotiation in each stage remains unrevealed. Also, the studies didn't include the significance of the register (field, tenor, and mode) in the formation of stages and interaction patterns. The study of making requests of/in textbooks conversational models by applying a discourse approach is limited. Some of those studies were conducted by Miyatani, Kurono, Kobayashi, Doi, and Fukunaga (2001), Bernsten (2002), (Usó-Juan, 2007), Ding (2012), Tsujioka (2021).

The analysis of making request structure in this study can be similar to Miyatani, Kurono, Kobayashi, Doi, and Fukunaga (2001) which compares the discourse structure of making request conversations in some Japanese textbooks (including Business Japanese). However, the previous studies didn't compare the textbook conversational models to authentic conversation, so the structure gap between them is still unclear. Being aware of gaps can benefit teachers to prepare materials better, for example by modifying conversation models, so that the conversational models have the same structure as authentic

conversations. This study attempts to explore the discourse structure of making request conversations in textbooks and authentic conversations. The structure will be identified by analysing the interaction pattern (*yaritori*) so that the stages and phases will be found. By comparing the stages of textbook and authentic making requests, the structure gap between the textbooks and authentic conversation can be confirmed. This study answers two questions: 1) what are the structure gaps between authentic making request conversation and the textbook conversational models; 2) What are the factors that affect the structure of making requests conversation?

Most of the conversation structure studies had implemented Conversation Analysis (CA) framework. However, this study will analyze the structure using a Systemic Functional Linguistics approach by applying genre and register framework, as well as Negotiation (Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2007). These frameworks allow us to take a closer look at patterns of making request interactions in context, revealing the structure of request-making in textbooks and authentic conversations. The former aids in revealing the cultural and situational contexts (field, tenor, mode) in which the interactions take place (Martin & Rose, 2008), and the latter, as an interpersonal discourse instrument, deals with spoken dialogic text (Rose & Martin, 2007) such as those used in making request interaction. As mentioned above, tenor (participants' relational status) can affect the structure, so these frameworks can effectively investigate some cultural factors that affect the conversation structure.

## METHODS

This research is a qualitative study employing the genre and register framework (Martin & Rose, 2008) and the interpersonal discourse of Negotiation (Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2007). Genres and registers are used to distinguish the stages in a conversation between the requester and the requestee as well as to investigate the situational context responsible for the structure of making a request. In analyzing spoken text, the stages present in the structure of the text are identified, taking into account the social objectives of the text, and the interactions in the text will also form stages to achieve social goals (Thornbury & Slade, 2006). The register is the context of the

situation that is included in a text. The register includes *fields* (experiences about something), *tenor* (social and status relations between participants), and *mode* (modalities used by the text to convey its social goals).

The data of this study is the written texts of Japanese request-making conversations. There are two types of data, conversation texts which are obtained from Japanese textbooks, and authentic conversation texts which are obtained from the Japanese language corpus, as shown in Table 1. The total of 11 textbook conversation models is taken from 10 Japanese textbooks used in grammar, speaking, and listening classes which covered the basic, pre-intermediate, and

intermediate levels. Meanwhile, the sixth (6) of authentic conversation data was taken from the Natural Japanese Conversation Corpus downloaded with permission from the NINJAL website. The making request conversations involve participants with equal status (friend/colleague) and unequal status (teacher, *senpai*/senior, superior). The making request fields include borrowing books from friends and teachers, applying for annual leave, asking for help, and asking friends and seniors to be research respondents. The modes used in the conversation are face-to-face and telephone conversation.

Table 1: Japanese Textbook as Data Source.

No	Title	Year	Level
1	Minna no Nihongo: Shokyuu I (second edition)	2019	Basic
2	Minna no Nihongo: Shokyuu II (second edition)	2019	Basic
3	Marugoto A1: Japanese Language and Culture	2013	Basic
4	Marugoto A2/1: Japanese Language and Culture	2013	Basic
5	Marugoto A2/2: Japanese Language and Culture	2013	Basic
6	Marugoto A2/B1: Japanese Language and Culture	2015	Pre-intermediate
7	Marugoto B1: Japanese Language and Culture	2017	Pre-intermediate
8	Kaiwa ni Chosen! Chukyu Zenki kara no Nihongo Rorupurei	2005	Pre-intermediate
9	Nameraka Nihongo Kaiwa: Successful Communication in Japanese	1997	Intermediate
10	Dekiru Nihongo: Chuukyuu	2013	Intermediate

This study used the NEGOTIATION instrument to identify the interaction structure between participants in the conversation. This analysis investigates conversation stages and phases through the exchange of speech roles between requester and requestee, namely between the roles of providing information (K1), requesting information (K2), providing comments (K1f /K2f), submitting tracking (tr), responding to tracking (rtr), clarification (cl), responding to clarification (rcl), challenge (ch), requesting action/action (A2), and fulfilling action (A1). The core of the conversation of making request genre is to have someone perform an act of request (A2), and the interlocutor accepts or refuses the request (A1). To fulfill these social goals, participants will exchange each other's roles.

Conversation (exchange) data from textbooks was classified according to: a) their use at each learning level: basic, pre-intermediate, and intermediate level, and b) the status relation of the participants (equal-unequal). Furthermore, all data from textbooks and corpus was analyzed using the NEGOTIATION instrument to determine the conversation structure which consists of stages and

phases. The structure found in the textbook was then compared with that of authentic conversation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented firstly in terms of our findings on the discourse structure of the authentic making request and followed by the findings on the structure of textbook conversational models. The structure is presented in the form of stages and phases of making request conversations. The stages and phases of each group conversation will be described, and then the two will be compared.

The analysis result shows that the making request conversation has three stages: 1) introduction (*senkoo-bu*), 2) request (*irai-bu*), 3and ) closing (*shuuketsu-bu*), which appear as a sequence. There is no difference in stage level between authentic conversation and textbook models.

The first stage consists of three phases: the pre-condition, the introduction of problems, and the pre-request statement (*mae-okoi*). At this stage, generally, the requester opens the conversation with the pre-condition phase by asking and

confirming each other's situations. Both participants tried to share information regarding themselves or some situation around them. The negotiation in the pre-condition phase is a means for re-navigating the situation so that the requester can decide whether or not the request can be continued. The pre-condition phase is continued with the introduction of problems phase which is also the requester's positioning action before submitting the request. As a closing phase of the introduction stage, it can be a statement of pre-request in the form of a formulaic expression.

The second stage is the 'request'. This stage is characterized by using a statement of request which can be preceded and/or followed by a more detailed explanation about the reason of the request. Finally, this stage ends with a response (answer) to the request (compliance or refusal).

The third stage is 'closing', which begins with the confirmation of the acceptance of the request followed by an agreement between participants or a detailed explanation of the implementation of the request. This stage closes with a greeting as a relationship maintenance action.

## Stages of Authentic Making Request

### 1. Introduction (*Senkoo-bu*)

This stage aims to create a condition that makes it possible to make a request. This stage is essential as a pre-condition before stating the request. The requester tries to introduce the requested topic by maintaining a good relationship with the interlocutor through conversations related to their condition. This stage consists of three phases: pre-condition (asking and confirming about participants' condition), introduction of problems, and statement of pre-request (*mae-oki*). Exchange 1 in Table 2 shows the first phase by participants A and B as close friends. Requester A wanted to borrow a storybook from B. The requester opened the conversation by asking B about the book he was reading and how B evaluated the book. Negotiation patterns show activities of asking each other by providing information, follow-up, and tracking.

Table 2: Exchange 1.

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stages	Phase
A	<i>Are?! Nani o yonden no?</i> Eh? What are you reading?	K2	Introduction	pre-condition
B	<i>E- 'Moshi Dora' o shitte ru?</i> 'eh, do you know 'Moshi Dora'?	K1		
A	<i>A</i> Oh	K2f		
B	<i>Chotto mae ryuukoo tte ta yatsu</i> Novels that were popular	K1		
A	<i>Shitte ru sore!</i> I know it!	K1		
B	<i>Maji de?</i> Really?	K2f		
A	<i>Demo, are, moo kattan da?</i> But... uh, you've bought it, huh?	K2		
B	<i>Soo soo, kacchatta to</i> Yes, finally	K1		
A	<i>Doo omoshiroi?</i> Is it interesting?	K2		
B	<i>Meccha omoshiroi yo</i> It's really interesting, you know.	K1		
A	<i>Doko made yonderu no?</i> How far have you read?	K2		

In a conversation that involves participants with unequal status, i.e., teacher-student, the pre-condition begins with a greeting and asks for the requestee's free time before stating the request. After the requestee expresses his willingness, the requester explains the situation or problem behind

his request. Exchange 2 in Table 3 shows that the participants do not tell each other about the situation around them or their current situation. The requester immediately gives a short explanation about the background of the request.

The structure of the pre-condition phase is the series of  $K2^{\wedge}K1^{\wedge}(tr)^{\wedge}(trr)^{\wedge}K2f^{\wedge}K1^{\wedge}K2f$  for equal status and  $Gr^{\wedge}rGr^{\wedge}K2^{\wedge}K1^{\wedge}K1^{\wedge}K2f$  for unequal

status. Tracking (tr) and response to tracking (trr) was an optional move.

Table 3: Exchange 2.

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase
A	<i>Shitsuree shimasu.</i> Excuse me	Gr	Intro duction	pre- condition
	<i>Konnichiwa, sensei.</i> Good afternoon, Sensei.	Gr		
B	<i>Doomo konnichiwa.</i> Good afternoon.	rGr		
A	<i>Ima yoroshii deshoo ka?</i> Now (sensei) there's time?	K2		
B	<i>Hai.</i> Yes.	K1		
A	<i>Sorede, toshokan ni ittan desu keredomo,</i> I went to the library	K1		introduction of problem
	<i>Toshokan ni ittara sono hon wa sensei no kenkyuushitsu ni aru to iu fuu ni natta.</i> But when I got there, it turned out that the book was in sensei's lab room.	=K1		
B	<i>Hai</i> Yes.	K2f		

Table 4: Exchange 3.

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase	
A	<i>Jitsu wa chotto tanomitai koto ga atte denwa shitan dakedo</i> Actually I have a favour	K1	Intro duction	pre- condition	
B	<i>Hai</i> Yes	K2f			
A	<i>Asatte sa, gozenchuu tte nani ka aru?</i> The day after tomorrow, is there any agenda?	K2			
B	<i>Nai desu kedo.</i> <i>Nothing anyway.</i>	K1			
B	<i>Ashita baito desu ka</i> Do you have part-time tomorrow?	K2			
A	<i>Baito ka...</i> Part-time ...	K1f			
B	<i>Iya, baito no o kawatte hoshii toka</i> No, I mean, do you want me to replace your part-time schedule?	cl			
A	<i>Aa, aa. Uun</i> Ah, ah. No.	rcl			
A	<i>Gozenchuu ni ne</i> So, in the morning, you know	K1			
B	<i>un</i> Hh	K2f			
A	<i>Sugoku hen na onegai ga atte</i> I have an unusual request	K1			pre- request
B	<i>Haa</i> Sorry?	K2f			
A	<i>Ano, watashi no shozoku shiteru zemi de</i> <i>Mm..in the seminar lab where I studied</i>	K1			reasoning

The introduction stage can be ended with a pre-request statement, where the requester expresses his/her request by using formulaic language, such as '*Chotto onegai ga aru n desu ga / Onegai ga aru no / Onegai ga atte...*'. Table 4 contains Exchange 3, which is a request conversation by telephone. Requester A asks B to be an informant for his colleague's research. After doing the pre-condition, the requester continues with the pre-request statement by saying *Sugoku hen na onegai ga atte* 'I have an unusual request', which is also a signal that the object of the request has a high imposition (serious). Exchange 3 also confirmed that the introduction of the problem phase is absent in the introduction stage. It also means that it is optional to make a request interaction.

The presence of the pre-request phase in exchange 3 is aligned with Nguyen (2014) study, which demonstrated that pre-request appears when the request object is rather serious or inconvenient for the requestee, such as borrowing money. On the other hand, borrowing book requests (exchanges 1 and 2), which have less imposition than asking someone to be an informant of research, shows the absence of the pre-request statements.

Based on the analysis results, the introduction stage is a series of three phases: pre-condition^(introduction to problem)^(pre-request). Pre-conditioning is an obligatory phase, while introduction to problems and pre-request statements are optional. The content of the pre-condition stage was influenced by the relationship status between participants, while the appearance of the pre-request statement was assumed to be influenced by the degree of imposition. In addition, the introduction of problems is assumed as a part of the pre-condition or a reasoning phase in the second stage. If it is absent in the introduction stage, it is assumed that the phase is on the second stage's reasoning phase.

## 2. Request (*Irai-bu*)

This stage consists of four phases: reasoning, statement of request, additional explanation, and answer (compliance or refusal) of the request. The reasoning phase contains the reason for the request or elaboration of the request object. This phase can appear before or after the statement of request. In a condition when the reasoning phase appears before the statement of request, any explanation

after the request statement functions as a piece of additional information about the request, which is given when the requestee asks for it. All of the authentic conversation data shows the series of reasoning^statement of request^additional explanation before the answer of request phase.

In exchange 4 as shown in Table 5, the requester A realized the reasoning phase by explaining the background and reasons before stating the request statement. The requester said that his colleague conducting Linguistic research needs some respondents to produce conversation data. Then, A asks B to be a respondent by providing information (K1) about the research while the requestee (B) actively responds with a follow-up (K2f) move. This phase is then followed by a statement of request '*..., kyooriyoku shite kurenai kana to omotte*' 'I wonder if you can cooperate (in this research)', which is a specific action requested by the requester.

If the requestee asks for additional information regarding the request, the requester will open/add another explanation phase after the statement of request. In contrast to the reasoning phase, the exchange structure of the additional explanation phase opens by requestee with the requestee asking the question. In this phase, the requestee is more active in taking the role by asking (K2) or tracking (tr) since the requestee will take the additional information/explanation given into consideration before providing an answer. Even though the additional explanation could be an optional phase in other authentic data, however, as this phase appears regularly in our data, it can be said that additional explanation is an obligatory phase.

In the context of making requests involving the unequal status of participants, a statement of request generally uses an imperative form with honorific levels, such as '*~ itadakemasen ka?*'; '*~ itadakitain desu ga...*', while equal status context uses a more casual imperative form, such as '*~ kurenai kana to omotte*'.

The structure of the request stage is reasoning^statement of request^additional explanation^response to request (compliance or refusal). The exchange pattern of this stage is a series of K1^K2f^K1(K2f)^A2^K2^K1^K2f^(tr)^(rtr)^A1. A2 moves refer to the statement of request, while A1 is the request fulfillment.

Table 5: Exchange 4.

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase	
A	<i>A, ano ne, chotto onegai ga atte, denwa shitan desu kedo,</i> A, emm..i called because I wanted to ask for some help	K1	Intro duction	pre- request	
B	<i>Un</i> Yeah	K2f			
A	<i>B san wa, itsu machi kaeru?</i> B san, when do you go home to ~ town?	K2	Request	reasoning	
B	<i>Etto ne, asatte kana. Un</i> Emm..maybe the day after tomorrow.	K1			
A	<i>Nanka ne, watashi...</i> Emm, I..	K1			
B	<i>E, nande?</i> E, what's the matter?	K2			
A	<i>Ano ne, nanka, watashi no insei,</i> Emm, my college friend,	K1			
B	<i>Un, un</i> Yeah, yeah	K2f			
A	<i>daigakuin no tomodachi no hito ga ne</i> friends of the master's program	K1			
B	<i>Un</i> Yeah	K2f			
A	<i>Ima, gengo choosa ni kan suru, nanka, jikken mitai na no o yatte te</i> Currently working on some kind of research related to Linguistics	K1			
B	<i>Un</i> Yea...	K2f			
A	<i>De, sono gengo choosa ni kyooryoku shite kureru hito o, boshuu shite</i> <i>iru wake desu yo.</i> Then he was trying to recruit people who would cooperate in his research.	K1			
B	<i>Un</i> Yeah	K2f			
A	<i>Un, de, sore ga yuujiin no hito no soodan tte iu naiyoo nan da</i> Yeah, then, that's what my friend consulted me	=K1			
B	<i>Un</i> I see.	K2f			
A	<b><i>Sore ni moshi yokattara, kyooryoku shite kurenai kana to omotte..</i></b> So, if you don't mind, do you think you'll help?	A2			statement of request
B	<i>Nan de suru no?</i> Help in what way?	K2			additional explanati on
A	<i>nn, nanka tada tan ni watashi to ne, syabereba iin dake dakedo</i> Emm.. just chat with me.	K1			
B	<i>Un</i> I see.	K2f			
A	<i>Un</i> Yeah	K1f	response to request		
B	<b><i>A, ii yo, ja.</i></b> Ah, okay then.	A1			



### 3. Closing (*Shuuketsu-bu*)

The closing stage consists of three phases: confirmation, agreement, and closing/greeting phases. The confirmation phase could be an action of asking for clarification (cf) by the requester as his/her spontaneous response to compliance of request. It is expressed explicitly using formulaic vocabulary, such as, *'Ii? / 'Ii desu ka? 'Can you?'*, *'Hontoo ni? / 'hontoo desu ka? 'Really?'*; as an expression of appreciation to the requestee. This phase is continued then with the arrangement phase, where participants seek agreement on implementing the requested action. Finally, this stage ended with a greeting phase like *Arigato gozaimasu* 'thank you', *Sumimasen* 'sorry', *Yoroshiku onegai shimasu* 'look forward your cooperation', and *Baibai; Jaa ne; Shitsurei shimasu* 'see u; goodbye'.

Exchange 5 in Table 6 shows those three phases in the closing stage. Requester A asked for confirmation to express his happiness because requestee B accepted his request. The confirmation phase is then followed by the arrangement phase, a negotiation regarding how the participants will execute the requested object. So the negotiation pattern is exchanging information (K1) and follow-up (K1f/K2f) responses. Again, no tracking (tr) move was found because the requestee tends to only ask for confirmation about the implementation of the requested object. The closing stage ended with a sequence of greeting and responding to the greeting: *Arigato gozaimasu; Yoroshiku; Ja, onegaishimasu; Jaa ne*. Requestee can add *Wakatta* in the arrangement or closing phase to express his/her full understanding about the detailed request.

Table 6: Exchange 5.

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase	
B	<i>A, ii yo, ja.</i> Ah, okay then.	A1	Request	response to request	
A	<i>A, ii?</i> <b>Are you sure?</b>	cf	Closing	confirmation	
B	<i>Un.</i> Yeah	rcf			
A	<i>Kuwashii koto wa mata nochihodo.</i> The details come later	K1			
B	<i>Un, wakatta.</i> Okay.	K2f			
A	<i>Un, nanka ne, sharei mo ne,</i> Yeah, mm.. as a gift, <i>500 en toshoo-ken ka nanka, nanka ga deru rashii.</i> It seems that there will be a book voucher of 500 yen.	K1 =K1			arrangement
B	<i>Sonna itadakeru n da?</i> Get a reward too?	cf			
A	<i>Un, soo nano,</i> Yeah, it said so.	rcf			
B	<i>A, arigatoo.</i> Ah, thanks.	K1			
A	<i>Un. Yeah.</i> <i>Ja, kochira koso, yoroshiku to ka itte,</i> I am the one who thanks you for your help	K2f K1			
B	<i>Un. Yeah</i>	K2f			
A	<i>Hai, ja, onegai shimasu.</i> Okay, look forward to your cooperation	K1			
B	<i>Un. Okay.</i>	K2f			
A	<i>Haai.</i> Yeah	K1f		greeting-closing	
B	<b>Wakatta.</b> <b>I understand</b>	K2f			
B	<i>Jaa ne.</i> Bye.	Gr			
A	<i>Jaa ne.</i> Bye.	rGr			

All the authentic data demonstrated those three phases in the closing stage then it can be said that those phases are obligatory. The interaction pattern at this stage is the series of cf<sup>rcf</sup>K1<sup>K2f</sup>(cf)<sup>(rcf)</sup>K1f<sup>gr</sup>rgr.

## Stages of Making Request Model in Textbook

### 1. Introduction (*Senkoo-bu*)

The textbook, making request conversation model involves participants with both equal and unequal status. The introduction stage consists of pre-condition and pre-request statement phases. The pre-condition starts by asking about the interlocutor's free time. In the 11 model conversations observed, only one conversation was

similar to authentic conversations. Meanwhile, the introduction of problems phase is not found in the introduction stage. After asking for the interlocutor's free time, the requester explains the situation or his activity and gets through the pre-statement phase.

In the basic level textbook, the requester goes to the pre-request phase immediately after pre-condition, then the introduction stage becomes shorter than authentic conversation. Table 7 shows that Exchange 6 is a basic model of making request conversations. It involves a staff member and his superior as the participants. There is no phase of introduction to the problem. A short explanation of the problem comes after the statement of request in the second stage.

Table 7: Exchange 6 (Basic).

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase
Miller	<i>Kachoo, ima o-isogashii desu ka.</i> Sir, is it busy now?	K2	Introduction	pre-condition
Nakamura	<i>ie.</i> No.	K1		
Nakamura	<i>Doozo.</i> Please	A1		
Miller	<i>Chotto onegai ga aru n desu ga</i> I have a favor.	K1		pre-request
Nakamura	<i>Nan desu ka?</i> What's that?	K2		
Miller	<i>Ano, raigetsu shichi gatsu kara tooka kan yasumi o torasete itadakemassen ka?</i> starting from the 7 <sup>th</sup> of next month, am I allowed 10 days off?	A2	Request	statement of request
	<i>Jitsu wa Amerika no tomodachi ga kekkon suru n desu.</i> Actually, my friend in America is getting married.	K1		reasoning
Nakamura	<i>Soo desu ka.</i> I see.	K2f		

Table 8: Exchange 7 (Pre-intermediate).

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase
A	<i>Suzuki san, ima isogashii?</i> Suzuki san, are you busy now?	K2	Introduction	pre-condition
B	<i>Iya, betsu ni.</i> No, not really.	K1		
A	<i>Ima chotto ii?</i> May I ask for a minute?	K2		
	<i>Jitsu wa ne, kondo no chikaku no jinja de o-matsuri ga arun dakedo</i> Actually, there will be a festival at the temple nearby.	K1		
B	<i>Itsu?</i> When?	K2		
A	<i>Kondo no nichiyooobi.</i> Next week	K1		pre-request
	<i>Sorede, chotto onegai ga aru no.</i> So, I want to ask something for help	=K1		

Exchanges 7 and 8 in Table 8 and Table 9 show the difference from exchange 6. Both exchanges demonstrated some short introduction of the situation before pre-request. However, the intermediate level (exchange 8) has a more extended introduction than the pre-intermediate (exchange 7).

In exchanges 7 and 8, the pre-condition phase contains an explanation about the requester

activity, which is slightly similar to the authentic conversation. However, this explanation seems optional in the textbook model since other pre-intermediate and intermediate-level conversation shows no explanation in the introduction stage. The explanation about the motivation or reasons for the request tends to come as reasoning in the second stage.

Table 9: Exchange 8 (Intermediate).

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase
A	<i>Sensei, ima chotto yoroshii deshou ka.</i> Sensei, have you a minute?	K2	Introduction	pre-condition
B	<i>Ii desu yo.</i> Okay	K1		
	<i>Nan desu ka?</i> Any matter?	K2		
A	<i>Jitsu wa, nihongo no benkyoo no tame ni saikin uta o kiite irun desu.</i> Actually I've been listening to Japanese songs to learn Japanese.	K1		
B	<i>Nihon no uta desu ka?</i> Japanese song?	tr		
	<i>Sore wa ii desu ne.</i> That's nice.	K2f		
	<i>Donna uta desu ka?</i> What kind of song?	K2		
A	<i>Poppusu nan desu ga...</i> Like Pops...	K1		
	<i>kore nan desu.</i> like this song.	=K1		
B	<i>Aa, kore.</i> Oh, this song.	K2f		
A	<i>Sorede, onegai ga arun desu ga...</i> Then I have a favour...	K1	pre-request	

Based on the analysis, the introduction stage consists of a pre-condition, the introduction of the situation, and the pre-request phases, in which the introduction of the situation is optional. The stage structure is precondition^(introduction of situation)^pre-request. The interaction pattern of the introduction stage in the basic level is K2^K1^A1^K1, while the pre-intermediate and intermediate pattern is K2^K1^K2^K1^(tr)^(trr)^K2f^K1.

Regarding the status relation of participants, exchange 7 is a making request interaction between close friends, while exchange 8 involves teacher-student relations. The analysis shows differences in exchange patterns. In exchange 7, the requester immediately provides information about the situation behind the request, although the requestee has not yet asked to take a turn (lines 3-4). On the other hand, exchange 8 shows that the requester takes a turn to speak after the requestee

allows speaking. The question (K2) *Nan desu ka?* 'any matter?' means the requestee allows the requester to answer by providing information (K1). Other data using *Doozo* 'please (say)' as a permission signal from the requestee.

Those differences are assumed to be influenced by the type of interpersonal relation between participants. Since a teacher-student relationship is a power relation status, the student will take the turn after he receives permission from the teacher. The offer from the teacher to the student can be realized by the question *Nan desu ka?* or imperative *Doozo*. In other words, the relationship status type will affect the exchange structure at the introduction stage.

## 2. Request (*Irai-bu*)

Similar to the authentic conversation, the four phases (reasoning, statement of request, additional

explanation, response to the request) of the second stage are also seen in the textbook conversation models. The reasoning phase at the basic level is only found before or after the statement of request, while some of the pre-intermediate and

intermediate reasoning are shown before the statement of request and followed by an additional explanation.

The basic conversation model in Exchange 9 (Table 10) shows the reasoning phase coming after the statement of request.

Table 10: Exchange 9 (Basic).

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase
Miller	<i>Chotto onegai ga aru n desu ga...</i> I have a favour...	K1	Intro duction	pre-request
Nakamura	<i>Nan desu ka?</i> What's that?	K2		
Miller	<i>Ano, raigetsu shichi gatsu kara tooka kan yasumo o torasete itadakemassen ka?</i> starting from the 7 <sup>th</sup> of next month, am I allowed 10 days off?	A2	Request	statement of request
		<i>Jitsu wa Amerika no tomodachi ga kekkon suru n desu.</i> Actually my friend in America is getting married.		K1
Nakamura	<i>Soo desu ka.</i> I see.	K2f		

Table 11: Exchange 10 (Intermediate).

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase	
A	<i>Chotto onegai ga arun desu ga...</i> I have a little favour...	K1	Intro- duction	pre-request	
B	<i>Nani?</i> What's that?	K2			
A	<i>Jitsu wa, arubaito no yoobi no koto nan desu kedo...</i> Actually, it's about part-time workdays	K1	Request	reasoning: explanation of the condition	
B	<i>Un</i> Yeah	K2f			
A	<i>Ima made getsuyoobi kara kinyoobi made arubaito ni haitte imashita ga,</i> During this time I worked from Monday to Friday.	K1			
	<i>Raigetsu kara mokuyoobi wa yasumasete itadakitain desu ga.</i> But starting next month, can I ask for a day off every Thursday?	A2		statement of request-1	
B	<i>E, mokuyoobi?</i> Eh, thursday?	tr		additional explanation: problem	
	<i>Nande?</i> Why?	K2			
A	<i>Ee</i> Yes, it is.	rtr			
	<i>Ano.. jitsu wa maishuu kinyoobi tesuto ga arimashite,</i> Mm..actually every Friday there is a test	K1			
	<i>mokuyoobi wa ie de benkyo shitain desu.</i> On Thursday I want to study at home.	=K1			
B	<i>demo, getsuyoobi kara kinyoobi made shite kureru tte iu kara, saiyoou shitan dayo.</i> But I used to recruit you to come to work on Monday-Friday, you know.	ch			
	<i>Hontoo ni komaru naa.</i> It can cause trouble...	ch			
A	<i>Soko o nan toka onegai itashimasu.</i> Please...	A2			the second statement of request
B	<i>Shooganai naa.</i> I have no choice	A1			response to request
	<i>Benkyoo ga daiji da kara ne</i> Because the study is also important, right?	K1			

Exchange 10 in Table 11 as an intermediate conversation confirmed that the reasoning phase appears before the statement of request and is followed by additional explanation. The additional explanation phase seems longer than the reasoning.

In exchange 10, the reasoning is realized as two phases. The first phase is an explanation of the condition and given before the statement of request. The second is an explanation of the problem and comes after the statement of request. Other data shows that the additional explanation in the second phase is used by the requester to convince the requestee when they show signs of rejecting the request.

It is also seen in Exchange 7 that the requester negotiates by providing the second statement of request as a response to the rejection signal given by the requestee. In other words, using an additional explanation and a second statement of request is a strategy to make the request accepted.

However, in general, the exchange pattern of the request stage in the conversation model is also

the same as authentic conversation. The difference in the stretch of reasoning exchange is seen in the three levels of the textbook; that is, the higher the level, the more complex and more extended the reasoning will be.

### 3. Closing (*Shuuketsu-bu*)

The closing stage of textbook conversation models is structured by arrangement and greeting for the closing phase. There is no confirmation phase at any level of textbook conversations. Moreover, the arrangement phase is only found in pre-intermediate and intermediate conversations, with arrangement at the intermediate level being more complex than pre-intermediate.

Exchange 11 as shown in Table 12 is a pre-intermediate model involving the superior and inferior status of the relationship (A as a supervisor and B as an employee). After B gives compliance, the requester (supervisor) initiates arrangement negotiation as he is a party with power and knowledge about the rule.

Tabel 12: Exchange 11 (Pre-intermediate)

Speaker	Exchange	Role	Stage	Phase
A	<i>Soko o nantoka onegai itashimasu.</i> I'm really asking for your help.	A2	Request	statement of request
B	Shooganai naa. I have no choice.	A1		acceptance
	<i>Benkyoo ga daiji da kara ne.</i> Because the study is also important, right?	K1		
	<i>Demo, kore ijoo baitoo no hi o herasanai de ne.</i> But don't reduce working hours anymore beyond this, right?	A2		
A	<i>Hai.</i> I understand.	A1	Closing	arrangement
	<i>Mokuyooobi dake de iin desu.</i> Thursday is enough.	K1		
	<i>Hontoo ni sumimasen.</i> I really apologize.	=K1		
B	<i>Wakatta yo.</i> it's okay.	K2f		
	<i>Ja, raigetsu kara ne.</i> Okay, starting next month, right?	cf		
A	<i>Hai.</i> Yes.	rcf		
	<i>Arigatoo gozaimasu.</i> Thank you.	gr		greeting

The analysis results have demonstrated that the textbook-making request model and authentic conversation both have three stages of making requests, namely introduction, request, and closing. This result supports (Xu, 2006) studies.

The gap between authentic and textbook model conversation lies in phase level and the content of those phases (see Table 13).

Table 13: Structure Gap Between Authentic and Textbook Conversation Model of Making Request.

Stages	Phases	Authentic VS Textbook	Authentic		Textbook	
			Unequal status	Equal status	Unequal status	Equal status
Introduction ( <i>senkoo-bu</i> )	pre-condition	Differ in content	Asking time availability	Casual chat; sharing each other condition	Asking time availability	
	introduction of problem		✓/-	✓/-	-	✓ Pre-int
	pre-request statement		✓/-	✓/-	✓	✓
Request ( <i>irai-bu</i> )	reasoning-1	Differ in content	Explanation of problem		Explanation of condition	
	statement of request		✓	✓	✓	✓
	reasoning-2		-	-	Explanation of problem	
	additional explanation		Additional explanation (request limitation)		-	-
	response to request (compliance or refusal)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Closing ( <i>shuuketsu-bu</i> )	confirmation		✓ / -	✓	-	-
	arrangement		✓	✓	✓ / -	✓ / -
	closing; greetings		✓	✓	✓	✓

In the introduction stage, Table 13 shows that in the pre-condition phase, the authentic and textbook model conversations have different content. Pre-conditioning is an important consideration in making requests (Fox, 2014), then this must be anticipated in the learning process of making requests. Without sufficient pre-conditioning, the requester looks insensitive to the interlocutor's condition and selfishness. Such an attitude is against the character of Japanese society that promotes harmony in collectivity (Lebra, 1976). Moreover, making requests should not only contain request objects but also casual chat in the pre-condition phase (Miyatani, Kurono, Kobayashi, Doi, & Fukunaga 2001; Nguyen, 2014).

The result of authentic data analysis confirmed all of those statements, especially in making requests between the equal status of participants. The pre-condition of authentic data shows exchanging information about each other's conditions or asking something related to the object request and introducing the problem. In

contrast, the textbook conversation shows an introduction to the situation as a reasoning of the request. However, pre-condition content between authentic and textbook conversational models involved equal status of participants shows similarity in the content. Both of them include the activity of asking time availability of the requestee.

Requests to higher persons make the pre-condition not contain casual exchange/conversation. It is different from making a request that involves equal-status participants. Those analyzes also confirmed that the type of interpersonal relationship is assumed to be a significant factor that influences the discourse structure of making requests.

In addition, authentic data shows that the statement of the request phase is optional depending on the degree of imposition of the request object. If the request is considered heavy then the pre-request appears. This also confirms Nguyen (2017) who stated the same thing.

The phase gap between authentic conversation and the textbook conversation model is seen in the

request stage. There is no additional explanation phase in textbook conversational models. Moreover, the reasoning phase is placed after the statement of request. Meanwhile, reasoning as the statement of problems appears only in pre-intermediate and intermediate conversation models. However, the reasoning phase of textbook models looks too short and does not provide enough information to the requestee. This difference also needs to be considered in the practice of making requests learning.

Reasoning is an obligatory phase because it is one of the considerations for the requestee before deciding on the answer to the request. The authentic conversation shows that the reasoning phase was realized before the statement of the request. It is information about the background and the problems faced by the requester so that it could be a motivation for the request. More details regarding the requested object are presented after the statement of request as an additional explanation phase. Data shows that the requester always asks for additional explanations after the statement of the request so that the requester provides additional explanations. An additional explanation could be in the form of request limitation as the requester's strategy to reduce the degree of imposition of the requested object so that the request does not look too heavy.

The other gap between textbooks and authentic conversation is seen in the closing stage. The confirmation phase does not appear in all levels of textbook conversation, while it is found in most of the authentic data. This result aligns with Nguyen's (2014) that confirmation is an important phase and always appears in Japanese making requests. However, the analysis shows that the confirmation phase is optional in authentic conversation. The confirmation phase only appears in conversations involving equal status relationships, and when the requested object is a private thing (the requestee is not obliged to fulfil the request). Therefore, the request burden will be high on the requestee. When the requestee fulfils the request, the requester will express his appreciation by asking for confirmation using formulaic expressions, such as *Maji de?* or *Hontoo desuka?* 'really?'.  
Meanwhile, the appearance of confirmation is affected by the type of interpersonal relationship between participants. Conversations involving participants with equal status seem more casual and relaxed, so the participants tend to show confirmation as a form of appreciation, especially

when the requester feels excited when his request is accepted (Yu, 2012). On the other hand, analysis shows that making requests involving unequal status of participants will seem formal. Therefore, instead of asking for confirmation, requesters tend to express gratitude or apology immediately.

Therefore, the interpersonal relationship between participants (tenor) and the imposition degree of the requested object together play a role in determining the structure of the request. Thus, it is assumed that the discourse structure of the making-request conversation is influenced by situational context. Nevertheless, it needs further studies to be able to confirm such assumptions.

The analysis results indicate that the status of interpersonal relationships and degree of imposition, which is culturally assessed, affect the structure of making request conversations. This assumption supports Miyatani, Kurono, Kobayashi, Doi, and Fukunaga's (2001) study, which suggests that the type of requested objects (private and non-private) will affect the making-request structure. The author assumed that the confirmation phase might be absent at the closing stage if the requested object is something that is part of the requestee's work or responsibility. Ding (2012) stated that the degree of imposition could be as high as -1, 0, and 1. It is worth 0 (no request burden to the requestee) if the object requested is something that is a social responsibility for the requestee to fulfil it. For example, it is natural for teachers to fulfil student requests for letters of recommendation because it is the teacher's responsibility. In such a context, the confirmation phase tends not to appear. Thus, Nguyen (2014) statement about the vital role of the confirmation phase in making requests needs to be reviewed by involving more data with varying types of relationship status and degrees of imposition.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to answer two questions: 1) what are the structure gaps between authentic making request conversation and the textbook conversational models; 2) What are the factors that affect the structure of making requests conversation. Research shows that the two types of making request text have no difference in stages since both of them have three stages: introduction (*senkoo-bu*), request (*irai-bu*), and closing (*shuuketsu-bu*). Each stage of authentic making requests has a sequence of phases. The introduction stage is a

series of pre-condition^introduction to problem^(pre-request). The request stage consists of the reasoning phase^statement of request^additional explanation^and response to a request. The closing stage comprises (confirmation phases)^arrangements^ greetings as closing parts.

The gaps between them lie in phase level and the content of some phases. The textbook conversational models show the absence of an additional explanation phase in the request stage and a confirmation phase in the closing stage. Not only the absence of some phases, but the placement of phase also differs between them. The reasoning phase as the main problem statement of making request in textbook models was placed after the request statement. It was different with authentic making requests which were stated before the request of statement phase.

Moreover, the pre-request phase which should be optional becomes an obligatory phase at any textbook level. The confirmation phase that was supposed to appear in conversations involving equal status did not appear in the textbook either. Instead, the arrangement phase of the closing stage only appears in the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.

The content gap is seen in the pre-conditioning phase. Authentic conversation shows content differences based on the type of relation status between participants. Asking for time availability is mostly applied in unequal interaction, while casual chat or sharing condition is applied when the participants have an equal status. However, the textbook model always employed asking time availability content both in equal and unequal interaction. Therefore, this difference must be anticipated considering the pre-condition's important role in making request conversations.

There are two factors that are assumed to play an important role in the configuration of the making request structure, namely the type of interpersonal relation status (equal or unequal) and the imposition degree of the requested object. While Nguyen (2017) stated the importance of the confirmation phase, it still needs further consideration about the relational status between participants. This research has confirmed that the relational status between participants (tenor), as one component of situational context, determines the appearance of the phase and its content as well.

The description of the discourse structure of making request conversations above is expected to contribute to Japanese conversation (*Kaiwa*) learning. Discourse knowledge of stages and

phases helps learners to conduct requests appropriately according to the culture of Japanese speakers. Moreover, considering the significant role of the tenor, it is urgent to raise the learners' awareness about the role of the tenor in every genre of conversation.

However, due to the absence of some obligatory phases in the textbook conversation models, authentic conversation is needed as additional teaching material. In addition, the lack of a conversation model involving participants with equal status in textbooks further reinforces the need for authentic conversational material. Moreover, further work on linguistic choices in each stage or phase should be taken to investigate the interpersonal meaning of making requests which results will enrich this study.

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