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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Ayumi, Suga</td>
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<td>Citation</td>
<td>Ayumi Suga: 欧米言語文化研究（奈良女子大学文学部欧米言語文化学会） Vol.2, pp.1-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Date</td>
<td>2014-12-30</td>
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<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10935/3923">http://hdl.handle.net/10935/3923</a></td>
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Announcing Names and Reporting Talk in Japanese Storytelling

Ayumi Suga

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the activity of naming people and discusses how announcing names in stories contributes to storytelling in Japanese conversation. When a speaker refers to a person unknown to the recipients, the person can be referred to by a description (cf. Sacks and Schegloff 1979), e.g., tomodachi (a friend of mine), kowai ko (a girl I was afraid of). If the names of referents are mentioned, this can be done with a quotative marker, e.g., Konomi tte yuu ko (a girl named Konomi). When the same referent is subsequently referred to, this can be done with anaphoric expressions such as demonstrative NPs and pronouns (including zero pronouns), e.g., sono ko (the girl). However, there are cases when having described someone, the speaker later says that person’s name and uses the name to refer to the person. I will call this action “Name Announcement.”

A Name Announcement is defined as the action of saying the name of a person who was initially introduced into a conversation as a non-recognitional referent. The basic formulation of a Name Announcement is “Name + Quotative Marker tte + verb of saying iu + Final Particle no (and its variations, e.g., nda, nen)”. For example, Konomi tte iu no means that ‘the name of the person is Konomi,’ or ‘the person is named [called] Konomi’:

1 This is a revised version of a paper delivered at the 4th International Conference on Conversation Analysis held at UCLA on June 25-29, 2014. I am very grateful to Barbara Fox for a conversation about my data in 2008 and for her valuable comments and suggestions. I also would like to acknowledge fruitful discussion with Makoto Hayashi, Shuya Kushida, Ikuyo Morimoto, Tetsuri Toe, and other members of Kansai Conversation Analysis Research Group. The responsibility for any remaining inadequacies is, of course, my own.
(1) Konomi tte yuu no[nda/nen]
Name QT say FP
‘(Her name) is Konomi / (She) is named Konomi’

The purpose of this study is to discuss how Name Announcements contribute to storytelling in conversation and to show that the selection of referring expressions is interactionally motivated.

The analysis is based on ordinary conversational data collected from videotaped face-to-face conversations by Japanese university students (9 conversations by 2 or 3 participants each, 6 hours 40 minutes in total), and a corpus of telephone conversations between families and friends, CallHome Japanese, recorded by the Linguistic Data Consortium (63 conversations, 31 hours in total).

2. Previous Studies

Schegloff (1996) proposes the notion of marked reference. To define this notion, he classifies referring expressions in English into four types in terms of occasions or positions of reference and recipient design (Sacks and Schegloff 1979). The occasions of reference are distinguished between “locally initial” reference occasions and “locally subsequent” ones. They are respectively defined as “the first time in a spate of talk that some person is referred to” and “subsequent occasions in that spate of talk in which that person is referred to” (Schegloff 1996:450).

In terms of recipient design, a recognitional reference form is the linguistic form for a referent that is assumed to be recognizable to the recipients. A non-recognitional reference form is used for a referent which is assumed not to be recognizable to the recipients.

Schegloff then observes that in English the unmarked reference form for recognitional reference in locally initial reference occasions is Name and the unmarked forms in locally subsequent occasions are anaphoric expressions.

Fox (1987) has pointed out that there are cases where locally subsequent
reference occasions for recognitional reference are filled with a name. Schegloff (1996) also shows instances where locally initial occasions for recognitional reference are filled with a pronoun and he argues that such cases of marked reference forms do more than just refer to a person with a referential function. In this paper I will argue that Name Announcements in Japanese, which occur in locally subsequent occasions for non-recognitional reference, do more than just subsequently refer to the referent; rather, Name Announcements play an interactional role in articulating the climax of a story.

3. Name Announcements in the Climax of a Story

3.1. Giving the Background of the Story

This section will discuss an example of Name Announcement in storytelling. The data is extracted from a video-recorded conversation by three undergraduate students in a student room at their university. They graduated from different high schools about a year ago, and are now close friends. One of the participants, Akane, recalls her high school days and she is talking about how she got along with an exchange student from Australia.

In excerpt (2), Akane is giving the background of the story: Akane’s high school has a sister school partnership with a school in Australia and one of the exchange students came to her class. Her host sister, who was responsible for taking care of her, was too busy for her club activity and so Akane and some of her classmates were spending time with the exchange student. Akane then goes on to tell the climax of the story. She says that suddenly the exchange student started complaining that her host-sister wasn’t able to spend time with her.

Two people unknown to the recipients are introduced into the story as main characters: one is the student from Australia in line 7 and the other is

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2 Stivers (2007) points out cases of marked reference where locally initial reference occasions for recognitional reference are filled with descriptions.
the host sister of the exchange student in line 8:

(2) [dem3]

01 Akane: de sono oosutoraria no: tokoro kara:
and the Australia LK place from
‘And, from a school in Australia,’

02 Akane: shimai koo teekee shiteru kara:
sister school partnership do because
‘(our school) has a sister school partnership (with them), so,’

03 Chiho: un
‘yeah’

04 Akane: nan nin ka kite:
several Q come
‘several students came.’

((2 lines omitted))

07→ Akane: [de sono] uchira no kurasu ni kite:, and FIL our PL LK class PT came
‘And (the Australian student) came to our class.’

08→ Akane: de sono: ( ) no hosuto shisutaa(.)
and that LK host sister
‘And that ( ) host sister’

09 Chiho: un
‘yeah’

10 Akane: kazoku ga:,
family SP
‘family’

11 Chiho: un
‘yeah’

12 Akane: suisoogakubu de anna aite shita age rare hen kara:, brass band club PT so-much get-along-with could not because
‘belonged to the brass band club and (she) couldn’t get along with (her) so much, so,’
13 Chiho: un
  ‘yeah’

14 Akane: uchira ga issho shabettotte(n) yan ka:.
  we PL SP together were-talking FP FP
  ‘we were talking with (the Australian student), you know.’

15 hiho: un
  ‘yeah’

The exchange student is introduced into the story in Akane’s utterance in line 7, uchira no kurasu ni kite: (came to our class). Since the referent was mentioned previously in the conversation and becomes a topic here, it is referred to with zero anaphora in this excerpt. The host sister of the exchange student is referred to using a category term, hosuto shisutaa (host sister), in line 8. Later in line 14, Akane and her classmates are referred to as a group of people by the deictic expression uchira (we).

3.2. Telling the Climax of the Story with a Name Announcement

The storytelling climax occurs in the following excerpt, which is a continuation of excerpt (2):

(3) [dem3]
01 Akane: hondara na: sono ko ga ikinari na:,
  then PT the girl SP suddenly PT
  ‘Then the girl (= the exchange student) suddenly’

02 Chiho: un
  ‘yeah’

03 Akane: nanka koo >minna de< shabettottara na:,
  FIL like-this everybody PT was-talking PT
  ‘well, when we were talking together (with other students),’

04 Chiho: un
  ‘yeah’
05  Akane: >nanka< (1.0((scratching nose))) nande: uchi no:(0.4)
      ‘well, “why my-” ’
06→ Akane: ↓ Konomi tte yuu nen
      ‘(Her name) is Konomi.’
07→ Akane: ↑ <Why Konomi: : > ↓ toka itte [na:],
      ‘Why Konomi?’ she said.’
08  Izumi: [huhuhu]
09  Chiho: [un]
      ‘yeah’
10  Akane: nande Konomi wa watashi o (0.2)aite shite kure hen nen ya roo
      ‘Why can’t Konomi spend time with me?’
11  toka (h) i(h)[tte:
      ‘she said.’
12  Izumi: [>nhuhu<hu:[huhu]]
13  Chino: [un]
      ‘yeah’
14  Akane: [nde] poroporoporoporo naku
      and  ONOMATOPOEIA sob
15  ne(h) ya(h)n ka:[haha]
      ‘and she was sobbing.’
16  Chiho: [hahaha]
17  Izumi: [maji de]
      ‘Really.’
In line 1, Akane refers to the exchange student with *sono ko* (the girl) anaphorically. Though she has started telling the climax, Akane does not finish the sentence of the projected utterance here. Instead, in line 3, Akane provides further background information. This activity can be regarded as “parenthesis” in Goodwin’s (1984) terms. It is a section of background information embedded (disjunctively) within the climax. In line 5, Akane starts reporting an utterance of the exchange student. However, after saying *Nande uchi no-* (Why my-), she cuts off and creates a new turn-constructional unit for a Name Announcement, *Konomi tte iu nen*, explaining that the host sister’s name is Konomi. In line 7, Akane is reporting what the exchange student said in English.

We can observe from the data that Name Announcements occur just before or during reporting talk in which the same proper names are referred to. Notice that the announced names are neither the storyteller’s nor those of the speakers of the reported utterances. The announced names are the ones that are used in the reported speech. 3 Let us more closely examine the climax of the storytelling:

(4=(3))

05 Akane: >nanka< (1.0((scratching nose))) *nande*: *uchi no* (0.4) FIL why my LK

‘well, “why my-” ’

3 From other data in my collection, it can be observed that the forms of announced names include First/Last name and are often accompanied by honorific suffixes or titles.
In line 5, Akane stops saying the projected utterance in the middle of producing the NP, *uchi no* (my). She could report the exchange student’s utterance by referring to the host sister with a description. For example, if she had completed her utterance, she might have said, *Nande uchino hosuto shisutaa wa watashi no koto aite shite kure hen nen ya roo* (Why can’t my host sister take care of me?) without announcing any name. However, she repairs the trajectory of the utterance and announces the name of the host sister, reporting what the exchange student said using direct reported speech.

This Name Announcement in line 6 can be regarded as a side activity; the main activity of telling a story is resumed in line 7. Thus by formulating a new turn-constructional unit for announcing names, the progressivity of the storytelling is suspended. Why then does the speaker announce the name at the cost of the progressivity? What is achieved by the name announcement?

To answer these questions, I will examine the data in terms of the notion of “granularity” (Schegloff 2000) and the interactional role of reported speech (Holt 2000) in the next section.

4. Name Announcements and Reported Speech

4.1. Granularity

Schegloff (2000) proposes the notion of “granularity” to capture the differences in the practices for reporting talks, which embody different levels of detail. He illustrates three levels of granularity with excerpt (5). In this excerpt Curt is talking about a main protagonist (referred to with *he* in line 1) and his car (a classic, original 1932 Oldsmobile referred to with *th’car* in
line 1):

(5) [Schegloff (2000: 716)]

01  Curt: En he wz tellin us, we were kin’v admiring th’ car=
02 = en ’e siz yah, I gotta get rid’v it though.
03 (0.5)
04  Curt: I said why dihyou have tih get rid’v it. ’n ’e sid
05 well I’m afraid my wife will get it. <er my ex wife.
06 (1.0)

Schegloff describes the differences in “granularity” observed in lines 1 and 2 in (5) as in (6):

(6) [Schegloff (2000: 717)]

• “We were kind of admiring the car” groups together a bunch of speaking
 as a single unit of activity—as a single reportable occurrence;
• “he was telling us” groups together a set of actual productions—whether
 a string of sentences, or the particulars of a single utterance—as a single
 unit;
• “’e siz yah, I gotta get rid’v it though” presents a single turn at talk in
 its contextual particularity, while glossing or disattending details of its
 production.

He then suggests that there may be a case that en ’e siz in line 2, in contrast
 to the previous aborted en he wz tellin us, marks a step into the core plot of
 the story and its approaching the climax.

Excerpt (3) can now be examined using this notion of “granularity.” In
 line 3, the event of talking is first reported with a low level of granularity.
 The adverb koo (like this) does not express how or what the people were
 talking about in detail. In addition, by selecting the referring expression minna
(everybody), the speaker refers to the people in the event not as individuals but as a group of people. In contrast, in line 5, the speaker tries to report the event with a finer level of granularity by describing what the exchange student said in Japanese. Then after the Name Announcement, in line 7, she is reporting the event with an even finer level of granularity. Here the speaker is enacting what the Australian exchange student said in English i.e., she uses a first name to refer to the host sister and pronounces the name with an English accent, lengthening the final vowel like Konomi:: to express the sense of the exchange student. Akane does not fully complete the sentence, presumably because of her English ability; instead, she re-utters the Japanese translated version of the utterance in line 10. And in line 14, she uses onomatopoeia for sobbing, poropoporoporoporo, to convey how the reported utterance was delivered.

From the observations so far, we can say that Name Announcements are motivated through the following steps:

1. In the climax of stories, the event is told with a finer level of granularity.
2. In order to recount events with a finer level of granularity, reported speech is used.
3. In the reported speech, names are mentioned.
4. Since the recipients do not understand whose names they are, the speaker needs to first announce their names, before the reported speech.

4.2. The Role of Reported Speech in the Storytelling Climax

Holt (2000) suggests that by using direct reported speech, the storyteller conveys not only what was said but also how the utterance was delivered. Thus the storyteller implicitly expresses his/her emotional attitude toward the speaker of the reported utterance so that the recipients can make their own assessments. Therefore the use of direct reported speech makes it possible to elicit the relevant responses from the recipients.

When we observe the data in (3) from the viewpoint of recipients’ reactions,
the recipients’ laughter and responses are elicited after the direct reported speech, as we can see in lines 8 and 9, and also in lines 12 and 13. Moreover, in lines 17-18 and 19, the recipients show their own assessments: Izumi says *Maji de, Kawaii na* (Really. How sweet she is!), and Chiho says *Kawaisoo* (I feel sorry for her).

5. ‘Names’ in Japanese

It is worth considering why the names of people are mentioned even though the referents are not assumed to be recognizable to the recipients. We can say that names are announced to indicate personal relationships between the speaker of the names and the referents.

Japanese has a variety of linguistic resources available to indicate the social relationships between speakers and referents. In Japanese, first/last name with/without honorific suffixes/titles all have different indexical meanings. For instance, first names without a suffix e.g., *Konomi* in (3), are used among young people, close friends, or used by a parent to call their child. First names with suffixes, like *-chan*, are used among small kids or used by an adult person to call a small child.

With regard to this point, another example of storytelling is presented in excerpt (7). In this excerpt, two undergraduate female students are talking. Megu is explaining that she was bullied by a girl when she was in elementary school. She initially refers to the bully with a description, *kowai ko* (a girl I was afraid of), which occurs prior to this excerpt. Risa says that she was also bullied when she was in elementary school. After Risa has talked about her experience, Megu starts her story in (7):

(7) [val8]  
01→ Megu: atashi mo ne, sono [ne], ijimekko ga [ne] =  
I also PT the PT bully SP PT  
‘In my experience, the bully’
Risa:

Megu: = **Yoko-chan** tte iu [nda kedo ne]?
NAME QT say FP PT FP
‘is named Yoko-chan.’

Risa: [ehahahahaha]>name ga deta<[zo].
Name SP appeared FP
‘You said the name!’

Megu: [(so)]

yeah
name ga deta!
Name SP appeared
‘Yeah, I said the name!’

Megu: nanka ne: **Yoko-chan** to[ka ne:]
FIL PT NAME QT PT
‘Um Yoko-chan’

Risa:

[u(h)n]
‘yeah’

Megu: >nanka ne< (0.2) teshita ga koo nan nin ka ite ne,
FIL PT subordinates SP like-this several Q exist PT
‘um had a number of subordinates,’

Risa: ¥ un ¥ (( smiley face))
‘yeah’

Megu: nanka >sono< teshita no ko’ga’koo atashi no tokoro ni[kite]ne
FIL the subordinates LK girl SP like-this my LK place PT came PT
‘um, one of the subordinates came to me,’

Risa:

[un]
‘yeah’

Megu: nanka ne: ’**Yoko-chan** no koto doo omou >toka atashi ga(h)<
FIL PT NAME LK about what think QT I SP
‘well, (she said) “What do you think about Yoko-chan?” (and) I’
In line 1, the referent is referred to with a description, *sono ijimekko* (the bully). The bully’s name is then announced in line 3, *Yoko-chan tte iu nda kedo ne?* (is named Yoko-chan). In lines 6 and 8, Megu gives the additional information that the bully had a number of subordinates. She then goes on to tell the climax of the story in line 10, and in line 12, she reports what was said by one of the subordinates, *Yoko-chan no koto doo omou* (What do you think about Yoko-chan?). The name of the bully, *Yoko-chan*, is used in this reported speech.

As observed earlier, the forms of announced names are the ones that are used in reported speech. In the case of the story in (7), when the name was announced in line 3, the recipient laughs and shows her understanding that the bully the storyteller was afraid of was actually called *Yoko-chan*. The honorific suffix implies that the little girl is affectionately called *Yoko-chan* (rather than, e.g., *Yoko*) by the girls around her, including Megu. Thus a Name Announcement not only tells what the person’s name is, but also indexes personal/social relationships among the people in the story. That helps to realize the climax of the storytelling.

6. Summary

In this paper, it has been argued that Name Announcements helps

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4 In this excerpt, the Name Announcement occurs before the climax of the story. The reaction of the recipient Risa “You said the name!” and her laughter in line 4 show that she did not expect the name to be announced at this point. One possible reason why the teller announces the name early is that she is going to refer to the person (the bully) repeatedly as a protagonist in the story.
the speaker to realize the climax of the story through direct reported speech with a finer level of granularity, and in consequence, elicit relevant responses and reactions from the recipients. We have discussed that this is partly because announced names in Japanese become resources to indicate personal or social relationships between callers of names and the relevant referents.

This study deals with marked phenomena of person reference in conversation. It has been shown that subsequent references by name to a person unknown to the recipient do more than just refer to the referents. In that sense, this study suggests that the notion of marked reference can be extended and applied to cases for non-recognitional reference.

The phenomena discussed in this study show that referring expressions in interactional tasks help the speaker to articulate the climax of a story in conversation and therefore help to guide the recipients' understanding of that story.

References


**Appendix**

1. **Transcript symbols**

[ ] The point where overlapping talk starts

] The point where overlapping talk ends

(0.0) length of silence in tenths of a second

(.) micro-pause

Underlining relatively high pitch
CAPS relatively high volume
:: lengthened syllable
- glottal stop self-editing marker
= “latched” utterances
?../., rising/falling/continuing intonation respectively
↑/↓ upward/downward shifts in pitch respectively
! animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation
( ) unintelligible stretch
(word) transcriber’s unsure hearings
(( )) transcriber’s descriptions
hh audible outbreath
.hh audible inbreath
(hh) laughter within a word
> < increase in tempo, as in a rush-throught
< > decrease in tempo
« » a passage of talk quieter than the surrounding talk
¥ ¥ a passage of talk with smily voice

2. Abbreviations used in the interlinear gloss
CP various forms of copula verb be
DP dative particle
FIL filler
FP final particle
INT intensifier
LK nominal linking particle
N nominalizer
O object particle
PL plural marker
Q question particle
QT quotative particle