## Towards Dialogue Authenticity of Examinations via Discourse Markers

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#### **Abstract**

This paper examines how the use of discourse markers (DMs) has evolved in conversational problems in university entrance examinations over the past forty years. The result of the analysis reveals that although considerable progress has been made, there is much room left for improvement. This report concludes that considering the potential washback effect, it is essential to raise the quality of problems in examinations in order for young Japanese to acquire English competency and that appropriate inclusion of DMs in dialogues can enhance the proximity of the discourse toward authentic conversation. The author lastly provides an example of how to insert DMs into a typically rigid existing examination problem in order to generate an air of actual conversation.

#### Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Background and literature review
- 2.1 Historical aspects of English language education in Japan
- 2.2 The Course of Study
- 2.3 Washback effect
- 2.4 Authentic versus edited dialogues
- 2.5 Discourse Markers
- 2.5.1 What constitute discourse markers
- 2.5.2 Basic characteristics of discourse markers
- 2.5.3 Functions of discourse markers in spontaneous talk
- 2.5.4 Functions of discourse markers to be analyzed
- 2.5.4.1 Oh
- 2.5.4.2 Well
- 2.5.4.3 You know and I mean
- 2.5.4.4 Sort of and kind of and like
- 2.5.4.5 *Actually*
- 2.5.4.6 Incidentally and by the way
- 2.5.4.7 Anyway and as I was saying
- 3. Method
- 4. Results and Discussion
- 4.1 The number of dialogues in examinations in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012
- 4.2 The number and kind of DMs in dialogues in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012
- 4.3 Discussion on selected discourse markers
- 4.3.1 Oh
- 4.3.2 kind of / sort of and like
- 4.3.3 Discussions on other discourse markers
- 4.4 Suggestions on dialogues
- 5. Summary and Conclusion

#### 1. Introduction

It has been the wish of many students of English language worldwide to learn colloquial, communicative English (Timmis, 2002) and the Japanese are no exception. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan (MEXT) has long recognized the unsatisfactory state of English language education especially in terms of improving students' communicative abilities. MEXT has hence been launching various projects and action plans including "An Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities" announced in 2003 and "The English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization" in 2014. In addition to these, when the Course of Study is revised approximately every ten years, MEXT introduces new English subjects for the purpose of boosting students' communicative skills. Examples of new subjects at the high school level are "Oral Communication" in 1989 and "English Communication" in 2009.

In spite of all these efforts by MEXT and above all by students themselves, dramatic improvements in students' communicative skills have yet to be seen. The most commonly cited culprit responsible for poor communicative English skills of the Japanese is said to be in entrance examinations. The competition to get into prestigious universities is so severe that high school students as well as teachers have no choice but to concentrate on the kind of English that appears in entrance examinations (Sturman, 1989; Brown, 1993, 1995; Vanderford, 1997; Shimamura, 2009). Therefore, it is essential that the use of English in entrance examinations, especially dialogue questions, bear more resemblance to communicative, colloquial

English, in order to equip students with "the ability to fluently communicate with English speaking person" as advocated by MEXT in its English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization.

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether or not Japanese university entrance examinations have shown any progress in conversational problems by analyzing the use of Discourse Markers (DMs). Since DMs are known as, among other things, features of unprepared, spontaneous talk (Erman, 1987; Watts, 1989; Channell, 1994; Carter and McCarth, 1997; McCarthy, 1998; Fox Tree, 1999; Fox Tree and Schrock, 2002), examining the use of DMs will hopefully reveal, even partially, the degree of progress in conversational problems. Because of their potential washback effect, the quality of problems in entrance examinations should be one very important aspect of changes in English education in Japan. In the end, the author would like to demonstrate how adequate addition of DMs will bring dialogues in closer proximity to natural spoken English.

## 2. Background and literature review

## 2.1 Historical aspects of English language education in Japan

Japan had been secluded from the rest of the world for more than 200 years and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the country fully realized the economic and technological superiority of the Western world. There was obviously a strong desire to catch up, and understanding English was imperative to Japan's progress (Weiner, 1994). During this time, it was even proposed that Japanese be abandoned and English adopted as the national language (Miller, 1982). Therefore, it is not surprising that English was regar-

ded as the tool to gain, not to give, information. In much the same way as they had used Chinese as a source for knowledge, it was mostly the ability to read English and then to translate it into Japanese that was required for this purpose.

Until Japan became economically successful in the 1970's, English was regarded as the way to transfer information one way. Japan then recognized the need for interactive communication for spoken as well as written language. This period, 1970s, coincided with the emergence of communicative teaching in Western countries (Shohamy, 1990; Clapham, 2000), but the Japanese educational system resisted these outside influences. Thus, though Japan had ample opportunities to reform its English language education, these chances were never taken. Both English classes at school and English in entrance examinations have long been based on grammar translation method.

#### 2.2 The Course of Study

In Japan, MEXT promulgates the Course of Study or curriculum guidelines approximately every ten years. It provides the goals, guidelines, and general principles for teaching each subject. Its purpose is to ensure that students are provided with the same quality of education throughout Japan.

When the Course of Study in 1979 and 1989 are compared, several differences can be observed as well as numerous similarities (Law, 1995). One of the most significant improvements from 1979 to 1989 is the introduction of aural/oral communication, with one disappointing aspect: none of these courses are compulsory. It was widely

observed, therefore, that many high schools did not actually follow these guidelines for fear of losing precious class hours to solve questions for entrance examinations.

The Course of Study in 1998 placed more emphasis on aural/oral communication and some qualitative improvements were made as well. In this 1998 Course of Study, *gengo katsudo* or language activity, is described as "to respond" or "to transmit information" instead of the more physical action of "to speak". This change shows a better understanding by MEXT of what actually constitutes communicative ability, which is not merely a jumble of separate skills but the integration of each skill along with the development of paralinguistic and sociocultural competence, paragmalinguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence (Hymes, 1972; Widdowson, 1978; Canale and Swain 1980; Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell 1995).

The 2009 Course of Study focuses on developing academic proficiency, such as expressing oneself in presentations, debate, and discussions (Underwood, 2012). In reality, however, because of the intense pressure caused by competitive entrance examinations, these reforms can potentially end up having only a cosmetic effect without a concrete proposal for reforming examinations.

#### 2.3 Washback effect

Washback effect is the term used when describing the effect testing has on teaching and learning (Hughes, 2003; Brindley, 2001; Chapelle & Brindley, 2002) and it can be either positive or negative. A high stakes test such as university entrance examination in particu-

lar can dominate the whole process of learning and teaching. In the case of foreign language education, both students and teachers tend only to focus on what is likely to be tested, irrespective of its effectiveness on the development of language ability (Leonard, 1998). Consequently, washback effect can be beneficial when the contents of the examinations reflect the aim of a particular form of education, but it can be harmful when there is a wide discrepancy between the two.

It is widely believed that Japanese university entrance examinations have had a negative washback effect on English language education (Brown, 1993, 1995; Brown & Yamashita, 1995; Ryan, 1995; Leonard, 1998; Sturman, 1989; Vanderford, 1997). Researchers have shown that despite the students' wish to develop their communicative ability, most English exams lack communicative content. Tanabe (2003) also reports on the poor quality of spoken English among Japanese students, despite the long hours spent on English education.

The influence of the washback effect is reflected in three different Japanese expressions meaning English: eigo, juken eigo, and eikaiwa. Eigo is a general term meaning English. When someone specifies English you learn at school for examinations, it is often referred to as juken eigo, whereas English for actual communication is called eikaiwa. This trend demonstrates there is a conventional division in the minds of many Japanese that there are two different languages within English (Hones & Law, 1989).

#### 2.4 Authentic versus edited dialogues

There have been lengthy debates on the pros and cons of authen-

tic materials over the past several decades. Although some researchers once advocated the motivating effect of authentic materials (Bacon and Finnemann, 1990; Kuo, 1993; Little et al., 1994), the majority now agree on the use of adapted materials as most appropriate. Authentic dialogues with no editing have so many overlaps, unfinished sentences, ellipses, spoken grammars, and so on that they simply confuse students and can be a hindrance to learning especially for beginners (Widdowson, 1984, 1990, 1994, 2000; Morrow, 1977; Robinson, 1980; Hutchinson & Waters, 1984; Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984; Day and Bamford, 1998). One way to create suitable materials for learning is to start with the authentic dialogue and eliminate inappropriate usages. Another is to fill in missing features of natural discourse in concocted dialogues (McCarthy & Carter, 1994). As Widdowson(1998) advocates, "The appropriate language for learning is language that can be appropriated for learning" (p.715) and this principle also holds true when composing dialogues for entrance examinations.

#### 2.5 Discourse Markers

#### 2.5.1 What constitute discourse markers

Although most researchers fundamentally agree that Discourse Markers (hereafter DMs) signal a sequential discourse relationship, there is no consensus on what expressions are discourse markers and what are not.

Levinson (1983) is one of the first to shed light on DMs, though he did not use the actual term DMs but instead referred to them as phrases that "indicate the relationship between an utterance and the

prior discourse" (pp.87-88). Some of the examples Levinson researched are *but*, therefore, in conclusion, to the contrary, still, however, anyway, well, besides, actually, all in all, so, and after all. Schourup (1985) who employs the term "discourse particles" is mainly interested in *like*, well and y'know.

Schiffrin's (1987) work on "discourse markers" has laid the foundation for later research. Her analysis includes *and*, *because*, *but*, *I mean*, *now*, *oh*, *or*, *so*, *then*, *well*, and *y'know* as they occur in unstructured interviews. She sees the functions of DMs as indicating or displaying the relationship between sentences.

Blackmore (1987) uses yet another terminology "discourse connectives" and discusses phrases such as *and, after all, you see, but, moreover, furthermore,* and *so.* She works within the relevance theory framework and proposes that these terms "impose constraints on relevance in virtue of the inferential connections they express" (p. 141).

Taking all these studies into account, Fraser (1990) basically agrees with other researchers in that "a discourse marker signals the speaker's view of how the message following relates to the preceding" (p.391) but excludes some of the expressions that his predecessors consider to be DMs. For example, he refuses to include interjections (ah, oh, etc.), vocatives (Mr. President, darling etc.) and other expressions such as because, y'know and I mean, as they have functions other than signaling a sequential relationship. He later (1999) modifies some of his arguments, and includes conjunctions such as because, since, and although. All these endless efforts by different researchers confirm the potential difficulty of defining DMs.

#### 2.5.2 Basic characteristics of DMs

As addressed in the earlier section, there has been no single agreement among researchers as to what constitutes DMs. There are, however, some basic elements that are most commonly attributed to DMs and these would include connectivity, optionality, nontruth conditionality, weak-clause association, initiality, orality, and multi-categoriality (Schourup, 1999). In other words, DMs are optional items which relate utterances but do not affect the truth conditions of the core meaning of a sentence and not usually inside the syntactic structure. DM positions are often, though not always, at the beginning of a sentence.

The following examples from Fraser (1990) illustrate how caution is required when identifying DMs (pp.388-389). In these very similar two sentences, the identical word can either function as DM (*italicized*) or as something else (not italicized).

- (1) (i) A: John left. Now, Mary was really frightened.
- (1) (ii) A: John left. Now, Mary was really frightened.
- (2) (i) A: I want another candy. B: Well, there are six left.
- (2) (ii) A: I want another candy. B: There are...well... six left.

*Now* in (1-i) functions as a focusing device, while in (1-ii) it serves as a time adverbial. Similarly, well in (2-i) functions as a discourse marker signaling some forthcoming dissonance, while in (2-ii), it is a pause marker, a very different signaling device.

The aim of this presentation is not charging bravely into the world of never-ending discussion as to the qualification of DMs but examining the transition of Japanese university entrance examinations in terms of DMs, and making constructive suggestions in composing dialogues in the test. Therefore, in this article, the selection of DMs will be narrowed down to the frequently used DMs that have gained approval by most researchers.

#### 2.5.3 Functions of discourse markers in spontaneous talk

Although DMs can be found in both written and oral interactions, some DMs are more likely to be found in spoken discourse (Carter, 1987; Stenstorm, 1990; Schourup, 1999) where they serve to function to mark interpersonal and social relationships. By tactfully using DMs, speakers are conveying their reactions to what others have said and signaling their stances, attitudes and feelings to the listeners. DMs, therefore, have higher tendency to appear in spontaneous talk. Appropriate use of DMs in written dialogues, therefore, could help them assume the natural air of spoken dialogues.

## 2.5.4 Functions of discourse markers to be analyzed

As was discussed earlier, criteria of DMs are somewhat vague with different suggestions from individual researchers. Among the numerous DMs, eleven are selected based on Fox Tree (1999), as she concentrates on DMs "found frequently in spontaneous speech but not in prepared speech or written text" (p.390). Some of the DMs from Fox Tree are excluded from the analysis because of their potential ambiguities.

#### 2.5.4.1 Oh

According to Schiffrin (1987), "oh occurs as speakers shift their orientation to information" (p.74). Jucker & Smith (1998) categorize oh as a reception marker, which gives feedback to speakers to show how listeners are integrating information. The status of oh as a reception marker is later endorsed by Fuller (2003). Ajimer (1987) enumerates seventeen functions for oh, and finds "oh occurred more than any other initiator with accompanying elements" (2002, p.100) with 42% of the use of oh occurring as in one of the following collocational patterns:

Expletives with oh Oh God, Oh gad, Oh gosh, Oh golly, Oh goodness, Oh Christ, Oh Crikey, Oh crumbs, Oh bloody, Oh hell, Oh heavens, Oh dear, Oh God almighty

(These mostly function as a follow-up or back channel.)

Positive covert intensificational adjectives and adverbs with oh Oh super, Oh good, Oh great, Oh fine, Oh lovely, Oh fantastic, Oh absolutely

(Affective connotation)

Agreement Oh yes, Oh I know

Disagreement Oh no

Acceptance Oh I see, Oh of course, Oh well

#### Endorsement Oh that's a point, Oh that's right

#### 2.5.4.2 Well

Well is perhaps the most researched DMs. Schourup (2001) identifies more than a dozen studies that have attempted to determine well's core function, with no consensus yet reached. Well can initiate turns (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974), preface answers that are insufficient (Lakeoff, 1973) and anticipate disagreements (Pomerantz, 1984).

Both Schiffrin (1987) and Fuller (2003) conclude that *well* is a reception or response marker and it appears when an utterance is at odds with a previous one. Schiffrin (1987) further discusses the use of *well* in response to a question. When respondents are unable to answer a question coherently, *well* can act as a signal for diversion. According to the data collected by Schiffrin, answers to WH-questions are more often preceded by *well* because deliberation is needed in order to deliver a considered response. In the case of a yes-no answer, respondents will tend to preface their answers with *well* when not answering yes or no. Overall, Schiffrin concludes, "*well* is used when respondents do not match questioners' assumptions as to what constitutes the ideational content of an answer" (pp. 107–108).

The following dialogue from Schourup (2001) is intriguing, as in it *well* is used as a "quasi-linguistic vocal gesture used to portray the speaker's mental state" (p.1058).

A: There's something I need to ask you. (long pause)

#### B: Well?

(This will be followed by the promised question.)

Reading this dialogue, the author pictures an image of a person shrugging shoulders and cupping hands, as if to say "Come on. I'm all ears." The function of *well* here is almost equivalent to the physical gesture, making the dialogue lively.

#### 2.5.4.3 You know and I mean

Because of their apparent similarities, the functions of *you know* and *I mean* have often been compared with each other. Some of the earlier researchers argue that they are interchangeable but later disproved by Fox Tree and Schrock (2002). General agreement is that their functions are semantic: *you know* "marks interactive transitions in shared knowledge" and thus invites inferences on the part of addressees, whereas *I mean* "marks speaker orientation toward the meanings of own talk" and forewarns upcoming adjustments (Schiffrin, 1987, p.309). Consequently, there is the danger that *you know* forces addressees to make more inferences on the speaker's meanings than they want, while *I mean* might make the addresser appear self-focused and self-centered (Schiffrin, 1987; Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002). As is the case with any other DMs, moderate use of these DMs is desirable.

#### 2.5.4.4 Sort of and kind of and like

Sort of and kind of and like are not seemingly DMs but they can functions as DMs when not inside the syntactic structure or when the

deletion of it from the sentence does not affect the syntactic structure of a sentence as in the following examples. Americans are prone to use *kind of* much more than the British (Crystal and Davy, 1975) and *sort of* and *kind of* are interchangeable.

- (1) (i) I was *sort of* (*kind of*) okay at first but began to shiver later.
  - (ii) I have no idea what sort of (kind of) a man he is.
- (2) (i) ...may be you can *like* delete this part because this would get us in trouble.
  - (ii) I like skiing but I'm not fond of snowboarding.

In these examples, eliminating *sort of (kind of)* and *like* from (i) is not detrimental to the core meaning of the sentences, except that sentences without those DMs lose the downtoning effect (Crystal and Davy, 1975). These DMs are regarded as "softeners" by many researchers and those DMs "make spoken interaction easier, more pleasant and more efficient" (Aijmer, 1994, p.127).

#### 2.5.4.5 Actually

As a DM, *actually* does not literally appeal to the actuality of an assertion but instead it allows the speaker to change the perspective to something that has just occurred in the speaker's mind (Aijmer, 2002) as in the following example:

A: I've heard Ann is getting married.

B: Well, actually, she is my favorite actress.

#### 2.5.4.6 Incidentally and by the way

These DMs, in the description of Hirschberg and Litman (1993), "indicate the beginning of a digression" (p.501).

#### 2.5.4.7 Anyway and as I was saying

These DMs indicate a return from a digression or signal that the topic is coming towards its end (Hirshberg & Litman, 1993; Carter, Hughes & McCarth, 2000). Note that sentence final *anyway* means "in any case" and is normally used adverbially (Carter & McCarthy, 1997).

#### 3. Method

Zenkoku Daigaku Nyushimondai Seikai (hereafter DNS) is the most sold book that list examination problems of major universities throughout Japan. Depending on public demand, the publisher, Obunsha, decides on which university to list and there are some, not many, changes of universities every year. Because some universities have different English problems for different faculties, the number of English problems is inevitably larger than the number of universities listed. On average, out of five different questions for one faculty, one is dialogue-based question if a university decides to include a dialogue question at all.

In this report, the number of the appearances of the eleven DMs used dominantly in spoken dialogues, has been manually counted in the dialogues of private university entrance examinations in DNS: *oh, well, you know, I mean, sort of (kind of), like, actually, incidentally, by the way, anyway, as I was saying.* 

For the purpose of analyzing the historical transition of Japanese university entrance examinations, problems in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012 from DNS are studied.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

# 4.1 The number of dialogues in examinations in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012

Sheer comparison of the number of questions set around dialogues discloses the transition toward communicative English of Japanese university entrance examinations. Remarkable increase is observed in the rate of dialogues in examination questions with the percentage increasing around six fold between 1982 and 2012. The fact that only one in ten examinations included dialogues in 1982 reveals the nature of English education in Japan at that time. English lessons were conducted by the grammar translation method for reading and writing, not for communicating interactively (see section 2.1).

A quick glance through the 1982 edition of DNS is enough to see that questions then were centered around reading long passages,

Table 1: The number of universities, examinations and dialogues listed in DNS in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012

	1982	1992	2002	2012
No. of univ.	144	100	117	70
No. of examination	192	162	164	119
No. of dialogues	19	43	103	70
% of dialogues	10%	26.5%	62.8%	58.8%

translating English into Japanese and vice versa. High school students those days would spend the entire English lesson reading a passage and translating it word by word into Japanese. Little or no instruction in English conversation was given at school. Data in 2002, in contrast, show that 62.8% of the questions contain some sort of dialogues. This is a significant leap from those of 1982, which is merely 10%. This remarkable increase in the number of dialogues reflects the universities' efforts to respond to the public's need for communicative English.

There is a slight decline in the percentage of dialogues from 2002 to 2012, from 62.8% to 58.8%. Further observation is required to see whether this trend will continue or it is only a temporary phenomenon due to a different selection of universities by Obunsha. Another possible reason could be the increasing inclusion of a listening test in the entrance examination. Casual conversation in English is one of the popular materials for listening test and this may satisfy a university's need to test candidates' understanding of communicative English. It is not easy to predict in which direction this trend will move because drastic revision of university entrance examination is expected in 2020, including total abolition of National Center Test for University Admissions.

## 4.2 The number and kind of DMs in dialogues in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012

Table 2 shows that in 1982 examinations, dialogues contain only 0.01% of DMs. In 1992, it rises to 1.2% with a 120% increase. With such small data, the percentage of increase does not often reflect the

Towards Dialogue Authenticity of Examinations via Discourse Markers

Table 2: Occurrence of 11 selected DMs in each year.

	1982	1992	2002	2012
Total no. of words in dialogues	3,020	7,099	20,748	16,561
Total no. of DMs	21	86	193	131
% of DMs	0.01%	1.2%	0.93%	0.78%

true nature of the event. Yet the conscious effort can be observed by the test compilers to make dialogues look more natural.

Table 3: Frequency of occurrence of 11 DMs

	1982	1992	2002	2012	Total
Oh	8	36	76	45	165
Well	11	38	89	66	204
Anyway	1	2	4	6	13
You know	0	3	14	4	21
I mean	0	0	3	1	4
Kind of/Sort of	0	1	0	1	2
Like	0	0	1	0	1
Actually	0	2	3	7	12
As I was saying	0	0	1	0	1
Incidentally	0	1	0	0	1
By the way	1	3	2	1	7
Total	21	86	193	131	431

What can be construed from this Table 3 is that *oh* and *well* are two popular DMs throughout. In regard to other DMs, there have not been major increases in the number of their use, despite the sharp

increase in the number of total words in dialogues, perhaps except *actually*, which shows a slight increase in use.

#### 4.3 Discussion on selected DMs

#### 4.3.1 Oh

Oh collocates with other words more often than any other DM. In Aijmer's data (2002), 42% of oh collocates with one of the words listed in section 2.5.4.1. In the dialogues of 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012 combined, the rate for those collocations is 26%.

Oh, no (12 instances)

Oh, yes (7 instances)

Oh, I see (6 instances)

Oh, well (6 instances)

Oh, of course (5 instances)

Oh, goodness (5 instances)

Oh, dear (1 instance)

Oh no is the most frequent collocation, whereas in Aijmer's study (2002), oh yes occurs about three times as often as oh no, and his claim is more or less consistent with the results of online corpora. In the British National Corpus, there are 1951 instances of oh no and 3147 instances of oh yes in the spoken data as of January in 2015. Similarly, on the same day, 277 oh no and 354 oh yes are identified in the spoken data from Corpus of Contemporary American English. This uniquely higher frequency of oh no in the Japanese examinations can be the result of abundant use of oh no in daily life in Japan.

When both *oh no* and *oh yes* are searched using *Japanese katakana character* in YAHOO! JAPAN, *oh no* yields 185,000 search results compared with 28,200 of *oh yes*. It means *oh no* is more popular or used in Japanese society. There is even a Japanese joke involving *oh no*: "*Ono wo otoshite oh no*!" meaning "someone dropped an ax or ono (which sounds like *oh no*) and said *oh no*!" It is probable that *oh no* lingers in the subconscious mind of many Japanese, and that test writers cannot help using the expression more often than they realize. Employing *oh* in collocations is a good tactic, when caution is exercised not to overuse *oh no*.

#### 4.3.2 kind of / sort of and like

Kind of and sort of as DMs only appear twice in total and only one example is found for like as a DM illustrated in section 2.5.4.4. Even though DM like is the sixth most frequent DM in spoken data from the Australian and New Zealand ICE corpora, blind introduction of like in the examination can be very confusing to examinees. The following sentence is the extract from British National Corpus and the one discussed in section 2.5.4.4:

- (1) ...history of the war in the picture, and it had *like* all these photos of ....
- (2) (i) ...may be you can *like* delete this part because this would get us in trouble.

There is a great chance that some students confuse DM *like* with verb like. Therefore, scarce use of this softener is "kind of" understand-

able. One thing English teachers can do is to explain to students in the classroom how DM *like* is used as a hedge in conversation. One successful example of the introduction DM *like* is observed in 2002 examination: "What! You mean *like* green tea?" This short simple sentence effectively introduces DM *like*, without confusing examinees. Muller's (2005) research shows that non-native speakers use DM *like* only a fraction of the time of native speakers of English. Learners should be exposed different expressions, including *like*, in order to acquire high level of language competency.

Some effective usage of *kind of* and *sort of* are found in examinations. The following (1) is the extract from 1992 dialogue that includes DM *kind of*:

(1) A: Will you drop in for a cup of coffee?B: I'd like to, but I don't think I'd better. It's kind of late.

Compare this with this dialogue from 2002:

(2a) A: Here, have some of these chocolates. They are delicious.B: No, thanks. I'm trying to stick to the diet I'm on.

They are two similar interactions of offering and declining but the rebuttal in (1) sound softener and more polite, with the DM *kind of* functioning as lubricant for human relations. There are other thoughtful expressions in this sentence. First of all, instead of saying "No, thanks", it skillfully employs a form of acceptance, "I'd like to" followed by "but" which turns overt acceptance into covert

declining, thus saving the face of speaker A. "I don't think" is another good expression with more softening tone than the straight "I'd better not." Lastly, the DM "kind of" is used as a hedge, making the meaning of the word somewhat ambiguous or avoiding fully committing to the utterance. Thus, the whole utterance of (1)B is less-threatening. In contrast, B's replay in (2a) sounds rather straightforward with no softeners. When examinees are advanced students, it can be rewritten as follows in the examination:

(2b) A: Here, have some of these chocolates. They're delicious.B: Oh, I'd love to, but better not. I'm kind of watching what I eat, you know.

"No thanks" is a typical phrase for declining an offer and is taught at Japanese schools extensively. However, this expression could give a wrong impression. Starting with a positive remark of "I'd love to" followed by "but", is a safe way to decline an offer. By intentionally transforming the precise word "diet" into "watch what I eat", and further hedging it by using "kind of", the tension will be reduced even further. Lastly, by adding "you know", speaker B invites understanding on the part of the listener.

There are many other ways to rewrite dialogues and the variation just presented is merely one example. Additionally, there may be a time when a speaker truly wants to sound abrupt with no hedges. In many cases, however, it is preferable to sound non-threatening for the sake of establishing a relationship with others, and one way to do it is through a tactful use of DMs. It is the job of English teachers

and test makers to introduce different expressions to students and examinees. Learners will not acquire various attributes unless being exposed to them (Krashen, 1982, 1988) and because of the washback effect, dialogue in examinations could serve as the starting point to introduce "real English".

#### 4.3.3 Discussions on other discourse markers

Well is the most popular DM all the time and there is no further need to increase the frequency of its use. Most usage of well, though, is old-fashioned and monotonous, prefacing answers and so on. Creative usage of well, similar to the one discussed in the section 2.5.4.2 would be very interesting in the future examination.

The rest of DMs, you know, I mean, anyway, actually, as I was saying, incidentally, by the way are the frequently used DMs by native speakers but do not appear in the test very often. More use of these in the future could be beneficial for learners.

Low frequency of by the way is unexpected as it is one of the first expressions to be taught at junior high school, whereas phrases such as, as I was saying, incidentally are not found in high school textbooks. Anyway, actually, as I was saying, incidentally, by the way are categorized as transactional DMs, which help addressees make a coherent connection between two consecutive sentences. Because of their logical nature, they are mostly used in formal situations and may not be suitable for most of the casual interactions in test dialogues.

You know and I mean, on the other hand, are in the category of interactional DMs. These DMs have little propositional content, but

play important roles when people are trying to establish relationships with others (Trudgill, 1983). Although overuse or misuse of DMs can lead to adverse effect (Watts, 1989), appropriate use of interactional DMs can take away sharp edges from interactions and help addressers to avoid having to commit themselves to their utterances (Carter, 1998; Carter & McCarthy, 1997). Appropriate use of these DMs could be beneficial when the test makers want to invite more interactional atmosphere into dialogues.

#### 4.4 Suggestions on dialogues

It is a welcoming trend that test questions after 1992 have shown steady progress toward including spoken elements of English in terms of the number of dialogues and the frequency of DMs. Still, the author believes that it is still insufficient and many dialogues can get rid of their rigidity by making minor alterations without losing their understandability. The following is one example by the author of how to insert some DMs and follow-ups into an actual examination dialogue in DNS.

## Original dialogue

(Jim, an American, is talking to Manabu about America.)

Manabu: Jim, you're from America, aren't you?

Jim: Yes, Manabu. I'm from Dallas, Texas.

Manabu: What's the population of Texas?

Jim: It's very large. In fact, it's the second largest state, after Alaska.

Manabu: What's the population of the U.S. now?

Jim: It's about 270 million.

Manabu: I know the capital of the U.S. is Washington, D.C. What does D.C. stand for?

Jim: The District of Colombia, which was named after Christopher Columbus.

Manabu: I hear Americans move a lot. Is that right?

Jim: Right. Most Americans change home many times.

Manabu: What states are most popular?

Jim: The Sunbelt states of California, Florida, and Texas.

Manabu: Why do you call them 'Sunbelt states'?

Jim: Because they are usually sunny.

The following is one possible way of rewriting this dialogue without unduly increasing the lexico-grammatical load. There are some DMs and follow-ups embedded. Follow-ups may increase a human touch to the dialogue, by showing the listener's interest and recognition to the speakers' utterance. All additions are underlined and DMs are italicized.

## Revised dialogue

(Jim, an American, is talking to Manabu about America.)

Manabu: Jim, you're from America, aren't you?

Jim: Yes, Manabu. I'm from Dallas, Texas.

Manabu: Oh, are you? What's the population of Texas?

Jim: Well, you know, it's very large. In fact, it's the second

Towards Dialogue Authenticity of Examinations via Discourse Markers

largest state, after Alaska.

Manabu: <u>Well, then</u>, what's the population of the U.S. now? Iim: It's about 270 million.

Manabu: *Oh*, that is a lot, isn't it? *By the way*, I know the capital of the U.S. is Washington, D.C. <u>but</u> what does D.C. stand for?

Jim: The District of Colombia. It was <u>actually</u> named after Christopher Columbus.

Manabu: Was it? Interesting. *Incidentally*, I hear Americans move a lot. Is that right?

Jim: Right. Most Americans change homes many times.

Manabu: *Then*, what states are most popular?

Jim: <u>Like</u> the Sunbelt states of California, Florida, and Texas.

Manabu: <u>I see but</u> why do you call them 'Sunbelt states'? Jim: Because they are usually sunny, you know.

Ideally, adding a few more follow-ups and not changing the topic one after another would bring this dialogue closer to a conversation, away from an interrogation style with a sequence of questions and answers. However, even a few makeshift DMs and follow-ups can make some differences. In Manabu's second utterance, adding reception the marker "Oh" and "are you" shows that Manabu has received the information and is interested. In answering the question, Jim cannot come up with the precise number. Adding "Well" implies insufficient answers (Lakeoff, 1973) and "you know" invites inferences on the part of addressees. In this particular case, Jim

would like Manabu to understand that Jim does not know the exact population but knows that it is large. Manabu could say "Well then" to change the topic (then is not discussed in this paper but it is also DM) into something Jim may know to save face. In answering the question on Washington D.C., Jim could add actually to change the perspective from the city itself to a historical person to show the significance of the name. When answering the question about the most popular states, responses could be preceded by like, meaning for example, as this is a casual interaction between seemingly young boys.

The author would like to reiterate that there are many ways to refurbish a dialogue and this is only one suggestion. In this attempt, in order to show different possibilities, more DMs than needed may have been included.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

This study has shown that dialogues in Japanese university entrance examinations have made steady progress in both quantity and quality over the past forty years in terms of authenticity created by the use of DMs. There is, however, still much room left for improvement. This paper has demonstrated that by adding appropriate DMs and follow-ups, dialogues will look substantially different with more natural tones.

Murphy writes in his 2001 paper that "it is the ignorance and fear of change and blame that keep university staff from openly talking about the exams, educating themselves, and risking changes" (p.3). In this short essay, no verification has been made how true this

remark still is in 2015. In regard to the use of DMs, however, dialogues in university entrance examinations have shown some, though not enough, improvement.

The author is a rare case among teachers of English, who has taught full time at junior high school, high school, cram school and college, as well as private English conversation school. The long experience of listening to the true wishes of learners of English and their parents at different stages has made me convinced that much as they like to be fluent in English, their first priority is to enter their first choice university. Considering the potential washback effect, therefore, test makers should continue their utmost effort to create better questions so that learners can learn "juken eigo" and "eikaiwa" at the same time. It is the responsibility of every educator to motivate students. Creating better questions for entrance examinations is one way to do it.

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## 専任教員研究業績一覧

(平成 26 年 1 月 1 日~平成 26 年 12 月 31 日)

氏名・職名	著書、論文、翻訳 研究報告等題名	発表年月	掲載誌名または 発表場所	備考
尾野 治彦 (英文·教授)	「日本語の体験的把握に表れる〈視覚性〉〈感覚・感情性〉〈共感性〉――対応する 英語表現との対比の観点から ――」	2014年 3月	『北海道武蔵女子短 期大学紀要』第 46 号	論文
	「「体験的把握」に表れる「体験表現」の諸相 ― 「分析的把握」との対比の観点から ― 」	2014年6月14日	北海道教育大学函館 校(平成 26 年度函館 英語英文学会)	招待発表
	「日本語の知覚体験による 事態把握における表現の特 徴について ― 言語表現と 映画ポスターの関連にもふ れて ― 」	2014年10月25日	北海道武蔵女子短期 大学(日本英文学会 北海道支部第59回 大会)	招聘発表
佐々木勝志 (英文·教授)	English Teaching for the MICE Industry in Japan	2014年8月15日	AILA World Congress 2014 (17th World Congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics) ポスターセッション	(共同発表)
中澤千磨夫 (教養·教授)	「痙攣するデジャ・ヴュービデオで読む小津安二郎 一・⑩小津安二郎作品地名・人名稿(補遺):付講演ふたつ」	2014年 3月15日	『北海道武蔵女子短 期大学紀要』46	事典・講演記 録 153 枚 pp.1~72
	「四十勇信自伝」	2014年6月20日	『ブレーメン館』12	翻刻・注釈・ 略年譜 159 枚 pp.176~211
	「世界一になった小津安二郎」	2014年 1月31日	SAPPORO ART LABO 講演会(ト・ オン・カフェ(札幌 市中央区))	講演

氏名・職名	著書、論文、翻訳 研究報告等題名	発表年月	掲載誌名または 発表場所	備考
中澤千磨夫 (教養·教授)	「堀田善衛 1945年 — 深川、上海、そして日本へ —」	2014年 5月24日	ブレーメン館研究会 (北海道情報大学札 幌サテライト (札幌 市中央区))	研究発表
	「小津安二郎『秋刀魚の味』 について」	2014年 11月3日	湘南庭園文化祭 2014+第3回茅ヶ崎 映画祭(茅ヶ崎館(神 奈川県茅ヶ崎市))	講演+小川稔 (茅ヶ崎市美 術館館長)・ 森浩章 (茅ヶ 崎館館主)と の鼎談
	<b>以下参考</b> 「管理委員会のこと」	2014年3月14日	『キネマむさし』 11 (北海道武蔵女子 短期大学 2012 年度 中澤千磨夫専門ゼミ ナール)	短評 6 枚 pp.49~50
	「佐藤忠勇と井坂栄一― 小津映画の三重一斑 — 」	2014年 3月	「小津安二郎生誕一 一〇年記念事業 in 松阪 記念誌」(小津 安二郎生誕一一〇年 記念事業実行委員会 [事務局担当]松阪市 教育委員会文化課)	短評 5 枚 pp.51~52
	「アンケート小津監督に寄 せて」	2014年 3月	『小津安二郎生誕一 一〇年記念事業 in 松阪 記念誌』(小津 安二郎生誕一一〇年 記念事業実行委員会 [事務局担当]松阪市 教育委員会文化課)	アンケート1 枚 p.67
	第20回児童文学ファンタ ジー大賞第3次選考会	2014年7月12日	特定非営利活動法人 絵本・児童文学研究 センター (北海道小 樽市)	選考委員
	斎藤博美「戦争の影 ひそかに大切に描く」(連載「小津安二郎がいた時代」)	2014年8月17日	『朝日新聞』首都圏版	記事中で小津 安二郎の戦争 体験について コメント 記 事4枚+写真 1葉 p.32

氏名·職名	著書、論文、翻訳 研究報告等題名	発表年月	掲載誌名または 発表場所	備考
中澤千磨夫 (教養・教授)	第20回児童文学ファンタ ジー大賞最終選考会	2014年 9月7日	ホテルノルド(北海 道小樽市)	選考委員
	第1回小樽こどもの誇コン クール〜目指そう! 最優 秀賞「工藤直子(のはらう た大賞)」! (小樽市教育委 員会・特定非営利活動法人 絵本・児童文学研究セン ター主催) 選考会	2014年 10月16日	特定非営利活動法人 絵本・児童文学研究 センター (北海道小 樽市)	選考委員
	「イザベラ・バード (近藤純 夫訳)『イザベラ・バードの ハワイ紀行』」(ほっかいど う人と文学・私の一冊)	2014年 10月29日	『北海道文学館報』 99(北海道立文学館)	書評 4 枚+写 真 1 葉 p.3
	「第 20 回児童文学ファンタ ジー大賞選後評」	2014年 11月16日	『DAWN』22 (特定 非営利法人 絵本・ 児童文学研究セン ター)	選評 4 枚+写 真 1 葉 p.9
	「ベスト 10 東京暮色」(熱 烈ファンが選ぶ BEST 10 小津安二郎)	2014年 12月23日	『東京グラフィティ』 124 (2015 年 1 月号)	短評1枚+写 真2葉 p.45
松田 寿一 (英文·教授)	Survival が伝えること ― 「犠牲になる動物たち」と Alden Nowlan の詩	2014.3.15	『カナダ文学研究』第 21号 (大阪教育図 書)	論文
	「カナダ詩人ロバート・クロ ウチの詩」	2014.7.25	『オーロラ』19号	訳詩と解説
	TISH の詩学と Al Purdy — 北の *ブラック・マウン テン" とカナダ詩 —	2014.10.5	第53回日本アメリカ文学会全国大会(北海学園大学)―シンポジアムII「英語系カナダ文学とアメリカ」	シンポジウム 司会・研究発 表
河村 芳行 (教養•教授)	「分類・目録の基礎知識~本にも住所がある、資料の検索方法と組織法の関連について~」	平成 26 年 2月6日	平成25年度第2回 学校図書館担当者会 議(石狩市民図書館 視聴覚ホール)	講演
	「世帯レベルの利用行動を 踏まえた視点に立った図書 館経営〜札幌市住民調査を もとに〜」	平成 26 年 11 月 11 日	平成 26 年度後志管 内図書館協議会研修 会(余市町図書館)	講演

氏名・職名	著書、論文、翻訳 研究報告等題名	発表年月	掲載誌名または 発表場所	備考
吉地 望 (経済·教授)	行政系ポイントサービスの 現状と課題について一 ICカード「SAPICA」を利 用した「札幌地域ポイント」 モデル事業の取組を中心に	平成 26 年 4 月 (2014 年 4 月)	旭川大学地域研究所 年報、第 35 号、1-26 頁	
桂 玲子 (教養・准教授)	「2020 年東京オリンピック・パラリンピック」開催についての意識調査 — 本学学生の課題を探り、講義のあり方を検討する —	2014年 3月	『北海道武蔵女子短期大学紀要』第 46 号	
沢辺 裕子 (英文・准教授)	The Multiplex Melding of Media: The Mingled Hits and Misses of the Harry Potter Films	2014年 3月	『北海道武蔵女子短 期大学紀要』第 46 号	研究論文
	『イギリス文化事典』	2014年 11月	イギリス文化事典編 集委員会 丸善出版	分担執筆·分 担翻訳
板谷 初子 (英文·准教授)	2015年受験用旺文社全国 大学入試問題正解英語(国 立大学編)(私立大学編)(追 加掲載編)解答、解説執筆	2014年 5月	2015 年受験用旺文 社全国大学入試問題 正解英語(国立大学 編)(私立大学編)(追 加掲載編)	
官尾 昌子 (教養・准教授)	「教養としてのヒューマン・マナー〜これからの女子教育に求められるマナー教育のあり方への一考察〜」	2014年 3月	『北海道武蔵女子短 期大学紀要』第 46 号	論文
	「採用ノウハウセミナー」	2014年 9月9日	北海道中小企業家同 友会主催 地域中小 企業の人材確保・定 着支援事業(セン チュリーロイヤルホ テル・札幌市中央区)	パネラー
	「社会人としてのマナー研修①」	2014年 11月12日	北海道中小企業家同友会主催 内定者フォローアップ研修(札幌エルプラザ・札幌市北区)	講演

氏名・職名	著書、論文、翻訳 研究報告等題名	発表年月	掲載誌名または 発表場所	備考
官尾 昌子 (教養・准教授)	「社会人としてのマナー研 修②」	2014年 12月5日	北海道中小企業家同 友会主催 内定者 フォローアップ研修 (札幌エルプラザ・札 幌市北区)	講演
Robert McGuire (英文•准教授)	Measuring the Effective- ness of Commercial Lan- guage Learning Websites	2014年6月	JALT CALL 2014 (名古屋)	
	Measuring the Effective- ness of Commercial Lan- guage Learning Websites	2014年 11月	CALL-Plus Work- shop 2014(北海道)	
髙橋 秀幸 (教養・准教授)	北海道武蔵女子短期大学の 就業力育成報告	2014年 6月	日本ビジネス実務学 会第 33 回全国大会	事例報告
	高校生の短期インターン シップからの学び	2014年 9月	日本インターンシッ プ学会第 15 回大会	学会発表
鈴木 健太 (教養・准教授)	「仏教の律文献における看 護指針について」	平成 26 年 1 月	北海道大学第14回 応用倫理研究会	研究発表
	「『八千頌般若経』における 四種菩薩再考」	平成 26 年 3 月	『武蔵野大学通信教育部人間学論集』第3号、pp.13-25	論文
	「ハリバドラの「菩薩」「摩 訶薩」「独覚」解釈について」	平成 26 年 3 月	『奥田聖應先生頌寿 記念インド学仏教学 論集』、pp.806-815	論文
	「小品系般若経について」	平成 26 年 8 月	日本印度学仏教学会 第 65 回学術大会(武 蔵野大学)	学会発表
本宮 洋幸 (教養・准教授)	「平安朝文学史を紡ぐⅡ」 (朝日新聞と JTB の文化 活動 2013 年秋講座)	(2013年 10月~) 2014年 1月~ 3月まで	朝日カルチャーセン ター札幌教室	④源氏物語 (第二部·第三部) ⑤更級日記· 堤中納言物語 ⑥百人一首
	『落窪物語』を読む」朝日 新聞とJTBの文化活動 2014年講座	2014年 4~12月 (2015年3 月まで)	朝日カルチャーセン ター札幌教室	
	「袖君から玉鬘へ ―― さす らう女君と人生儀礼」	2014年 7月	『京都教育大学国文 学会誌』第 41 号	論文

氏名•職名	著書、論文、翻訳 研究報告等題名	発表年月	掲載誌名または 発表場所	備考
本宮 洋幸 (教養・准教授)	「高木信・木村朗子・安藤徹編『日本文学からの批評理論 亡霊・想起・記憶』」	2014年 12月	『日本文学』第 63 巻 第 12 号	書評
木村 修一 (教養・専任講師)	図書館ボランティア活動に おける学生ボランティアの 学びの構造とその意義 ― 短期大学図書館のボラン ティア活動を事例に ―		西日本図書館学会 平成26年度秋季研 究発表会	学会発表
木下なつき (教養・専任講師)	「黒人生命保険会社の歴史 — 組織・企業形態を軸に (アメリカ、1890 年代~)」	2014年 1月25日	生命保険文化センター	研究報告
	「企業・組織形態から見る黒 人生命保険会社の歴史と戦 略」	2014年 6月8日	アメリカ学会 第 48 回年次大会	学会報告
	「ヒスパニック移民がオバ マケアに与える影響」	2014年 7月	『生命保険経営』	翻訳記事
	「『アフリカ系アメリカ人と いう困難』をめぐって — 人種は無視すべきなの か?」	2014年7月27日	紀伊国屋書店札幌本店	講演 コメン テーター
	2014年度アメリカ学会年 次大会 経済・経済史分科 会報告概要		『アメリカ学会会報』 No.186	