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Reported speech as cultural gloss and directive: socializing norms of speaking and acting in Japanese caregiver–child triadic interaction

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Abstract: This paper examines reported speech in Japanese caregiver–child triadic interaction. Based on 132 hours of audiovisual recordings of eight two-year-olds in and around the home and neighborhood, it draws upon language socialization and conversation analytic methods in examining how caregivers use third-party reported speech (e.g., She/he says X) in socializing children how to interpret others’ communicative behavior as social action (i.e., intentional and goal-oriented behavior such as request or refusal). It considers reported speech as social action within social action; in this case, a directive that embeds a prior verbal and/or nonverbal communicative behavior of another. The analysis shows how caregivers use the quoted (embedded) utterance as a cultural gloss to position quoted speakers as various kinds of social actors (e.g., polite, gendered, indirect, epistemic authority). It also shows how they use reported speech with other verbal and nonverbal strategies such as pointing, gaze, and touch in guiding children how to respond. The findings suggest that reported speech together with embodied resources plays an important role in encouraging children’s moral, social, and language development in Japanese.

Keywords: conversation analysis, directives, Japanese, language socialization, reported speech, social action

1 Introduction

Research over the last few decades has examined the use of reported speech in various settings and languages (e.g., Clark and Gerrig 1990; Holt and Clift 2007; Tannen 1986). According to Bakhtin (1981), reported speech represents a double voicing, or “sounding of a second voice” (Morson and Emerson 1990: 149). Tannen (1986) proposes that reported speech is actually constructed dialog, as prior speech

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is not conveyed in the exact same way it was originally produced, and what is reported is not always based on speech. Similarly, Clark and Gerrig (1990) characterize reported speech as a selective depiction in which speakers choose certain features of prior talk to replay within the current speech event. As pointed out by many scholars, an important function of reported speech is to perform a social action (i.e., intentional and goal-directed behavior such as a request or refusal) (e.g., Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Duranti 1984; Sacks et al. 1974) in the immediate interaction through the representation of another’s (prior) words (e.g., Goodwin 1990; Hill and Irvine 1993). At the same time, reported speech has been examined in relation to the current speaker’s stance, or position taken up with respect to those words (e.g., Goodwin 2007). Reported speech has also been examined in relation to gesture, gaze, and other embodied resources (e.g., Goodwin 2007). While reported speech has been widely examined in adult interaction, it has been much less studied in caregiver–child interaction, particularly in languages other than English (e.g., de León 1998; Moore 2014; Rabain-Jamin 1998). This is especially relevant when considering reported speech in relation to embodied resources.

The present analysis examines third-person reported speech (e.g., He/she says X) in Japanese caregiver–child triadic interaction as a strategy in encouraging children how to interpret others’ verbal and embodied communicative behavior as social action. It considers reported speech as social action within social action; in this case, a directive (e.g., Cekaite 2010; Goodwin 1990; Takada 2013) – communicative behavior “designed to get someone else to do something” (Goodwin 1990: 67) that is constructed through talk and embodied resources (e.g., Cekaite 2010; Field 2001) – that embeds a prior verbal and/or embodied behavior of another. It examines ways in which the embedded utterance is a cultural gloss (see Section 2) (e.g., Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Scollon and Scollon 1981; cf. Jefferson 1985) that conveys to children norms and values on ways to speak and act. While viewing children’s interactions with others as situated, contingent, and multimodal (e.g., Filipi 2009; Lerner et al. 2011; Wootton 1997), the present analysis details the importance of reported speech as a strategy for promoting children’s moral, social, and language development.

2 Language socialization, cultural gloss, and reported speech

This study is situated within language socialization (e.g., Duranti et al. 2012; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986) – a dynamic theory for investigating the process of acculturation into linguistic and cultural norms. A central tenet of language
socialization is that as children (and other relative novices) are socialized to use language they are socialized through the use of language (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986). That is, as adults (and others, such as siblings) interact with children they convey to them the use of language as an index (e.g., Silverstein 1976) of sociocultural meanings. According to Silverstein, two types of indexes are (i) referential indexes that contribute to the propositional content of an utterance (e.g., deictic words such as here, I, tomorrow), and (ii) nonreferential indexes that do not contribute to the propositional content but evoke social, cultural, and/or affective meaning. In relation to nonreferential indexes, Ochs (1996) argues that language (including words, grammatical markers, particles, code switching, register, and the like) can index one or more of the following sociocultural meanings:

- social acts (or social actions, as in Section 1)
- social activities (i.e., a sequence of social acts such as a request-compliance or larger unit such as a sermon or mealtime)
- stances, in particular affective stance (i.e., emotional orientation and degrees of emotional intensity) and epistemic stance (i.e., knowledge or belief toward a focus of concern including degrees of certainty of knowledge)
- social identities, such as group membership (e.g., gender, nationality), social positions (e.g., rank, status), and interactional roles of speaker and hearer

As caregivers interact with children they convey to them – primarily in implicit ways – the use of language as an index of sociocultural meaning. Similar to Cicourel (1970), language socialization is concerned with knowledge of cultural norms and how members acquire the ability to identify contexts in which such norms apply and to respond in appropriate ways. Such norms centrally include ways of speaking and acting. At the same time, language socialization does not view children as passive recipients, but as active agents (e.g., Schieffelin and Ochs 1986), who take up, or do not take up, acts of socialization (e.g., Cromdal 2006; Danby 1996), and socialize others including caregivers, siblings, and peers (e.g., Rabain-Jamin et al. 2003; Rogoff 1981).

In interacting with children, caregivers deploy a range of verbal and non-verbal socialization strategies (Duranti et al. 2012). Two verbal strategies that are especially relevant here are cultural gloss and reported speech, which have been discussed in previous socialization research in various societies and communities. First, in relation to cultural gloss, in their study of an Athabaskan (Alaskan) community, Scollon and Scollon (1981) describe glossing after the fact, in which a caregiver paraphrases, translates, or explains a young child’s
utterance in a pragmatically appropriate way. According to Scollon (1982: 91),
glossing is a way in which a caregiver provides “interpretations [of a young
child’s utterance] based on her own sense of the situation.” Moreover, Scollon
points out that glossing socializes Athabaskan children to a preference for
indirectness, which in Athabaskan society involves communicating without
imposing one’s “own wishes or views on others” (Scollon 1982: 72).

In discussing these findings, Ochs and Schieffelin (1995) point out that
caregivers in many societies gloss children’s verbal and nonverbal
behaviors: “The use of cultural glosses is far more widespread than might be assumed, in
that adults may impose a cultural gloss on children’s gestures and utterances
without recognizing that they are doing so” (Ochs and Schieffelin 1995: 178;
emphasis mine). In this way, caregivers in many societies draw upon multiple
modalities in interpreting children’s communicative behavior. Importantly, cul-
tural glossing may not represent the actual intentions of the quoted speaker
(child) but rather caregivers’ interpretations of what is socioculturally appropri-
ate in immediate contexts, and their expectations of how the child should speak
and act (Ochs and Schieffelin 1995; Scollon 1982).

A second socialization strategy that has been discussed is reported speech
(e.g., Clancy 1986; de León 1998; Ely et al. 1995; Moore 2014; Rabain-Jamin
show how parents report the speech of children, themselves, or third parties. For
instance, in one example, a father reported the speech of an addressed male
child at the dinner table (Father: “You had your chance to have soup and you
said you didn’t want any more”). This kind of reported speech seemed to be
used to encourage the child to produce a response to the father as a means of
holding the child accountable for his previous words in relation to an immediate
course of action and activity.

Research in other societies and communities, such as Tzotzil Mayan, Wolof,
and Japan, suggests that caregivers use reported speech in mediating in interac-
tion between children and interlocutors. For instance, de León (1998) shows
how Tzotzil Mayan caregivers use reported speech to animate the intentional
communicative behaviors of infants based on their bodily actions, minimal voca-
lizations, gestures, and gaze, and to convey these intentions to third parties
(de León 1998). De León (1998: 138) argues that this use of reported speech
positions infants as virtual speakers through which they eventually emerge as
speakers in their own right. Also, Rabain-Jamin (1998) shows how Senegalese
caregivers use reported speech to animate young children’s bodily behavior and
minimal verbalizations. For instance, when a two-year-old female child made a
refusal gesture toward her older sister who had touched the child’s doll, the
mother used reported speech to animate the child’s refusal (NE NA nga bāyyī!
“SHE [the child] SAID that you should leave it!” (Rabain-Jamin 1998: 63). In this way, Senegalese caregivers use reported speech to speak for a child who has performed a social action in an embodied way. As such the above studies suggest that caregivers in some communities use reported speech in triadic interaction to gloss children’s embodied behavior as social action addressed to others.

In addition to positioning children as speakers, Wolof, Tzotzil Mayan, and Japanese caregivers use reported speech in triadic interaction to position children as addressees. For instance, Rabain-Jamin (1998: 59) shows that when a less than two-year-old male Wolof child took out a whip and shook it near his two-year-old cousin (Bakari), the mother used reported speech to attribute a strong request to the cousin (Bakari NE NA bul dóor! ‘Bakari SAID, “Don’t hit!”’). Such use of reported speech seems to be a way that Wolof caregivers speak through another child in telling the addressed child what to do or not do. In Japanese, Clancy (1986) shows how mothers use reported speech to repeat the words of other adults addressed to two-year-old children, such as when the child is not paying attention and does not respond. In one example, when the researcher made a request to the child (shooboojidoosha misete ‘Show me your fire engine’) and the child did not respond to it, the mother used reported speech to repeat the request to the child (shooboojidoosha da tte ‘She said, “Fire engine.”’). Clancy (1986) proposes that reported speech socializes children to the importance of attentive listening and response, which is also socialized (although in different ways) in elementary school classrooms (see Cook 1999).

Clancy also points out that Japanese caregivers use reported speech in another way, namely to attribute wants, feelings, and needs of other people (even when they have not spoken) (e.g., [to child eating a tangerine]: oneesantachi mo tabetai tte ‘The girls also say, “We want to eat”’) and of inanimate objects (such as toys, food, or everyday objects), as a form of empathy training (cf. Hayashi et al. 2009). In another study of Japanese caregiver–child triadic interaction, involving two-year-old twins, Nakashima et al. (2004) show how a mother used reported speech to facilitate communication between the children as a hashiwatashi ‘bridge’ or ‘mediator’ between them, such as by expanding the utterance of one child to the other child (Child-1 [looking at picture of a toy penguin called Pingu]: asobitai ‘[I] want to play [with it]’ → Child-2: nani asobitai no? ‘What does [he] want to play?’ → Mother [to Child-2]: Pinguu de asobitain da tte ‘[He] says [he] wants to play with Pingu’ → Child-2: Pinguu? ‘Pingu?’). These studies suggest that Japanese caregivers use reported speech in triadic interaction in various ways, such as to repeat a prior utterance of an adult, or to expand a child’s utterance in clarifying what the child had said. Japanese caregivers use reported speech to mediate in children’s interaction with others and encourage further interaction and activity between children and others.
Studies thus far have mainly examined cultural gloss and reported speech separately. This study brings these two strategies together by examining reported speech as a cultural gloss of another’s verbal and/or embodied actions. It further builds upon prior research on directives and directive sequences (Goodwin and Cekaite 2013) by showing how Japanese caregivers use reported speech together with other verbal and embodied strategies such as pointing, gaze, and touch across an interaction in guiding children how to interpret and respond to a quoted speaker’s communicative behavior as social action.

3 Study and setting

The analysis draws upon linguistic and ethnographic research involving eight middle-class families with a two-year-old focal child (four girls and four boys) living in nuclear households. The families were residing in the Kansai (or Western) region of Japan, in the urban areas of Kobe, Kyoto, and Osaka. The fathers worked full-time outside the home, and the mothers provided full-time childcare. Seven of the eight focal children – four boys (Shinichi, Masaru, Takahiro, and Noriyuki) and three girls (Keiko, Hiromi, and Yoko) (pseudonyms) – were observed over six months, from the ages of one year and ten or eleven months (1;10 or 1;11) until the ages of two years and five or six months (2;5 or 2;6). Each child was audiovisually recorded for 18 hours (total of 126 hours), for six hours a week (two hours each day over three days) every two months. Three of these children (Shinichi, Hiromi, and Yoko) had an older sibling. An eighth focal child (Chie: 2;0–2;1), who is included only in the qualitative analysis (see Excerpt [3]), was audiovisually recorded for six hours over two months as part of a preliminary study (during the summer). All the focal children were observed as they interacted with family members, peers, and others in and around the household, which provided a broad sample of the settings in which these children interacted in their daily lives. The families were recruited through personal and academic contacts in Japan, and provided verbal and written consent for their data to be used for academic purposes.

4 Reported speech as social action within social action

This section considers reported speech as social action within social action. In particular, it shows how Japanese caregivers use third-person reported speech as
a directive (matrix social action) – or action “designed to get someone else to do something” (Goodwin 1990: 67) – and as a cultural gloss to embed another social action in positioning the quoted speaker as a particular kind of social actor (embedded social action).

In general, reported speech is a frequent practice in Japanese caregiver interaction with young children, though its frequency varies among families. As shown in Table 1, among 623 tokens of reported speech among the seven families in the main study, the number of tokens per focal child ranged from a high of 155 (Shinichi) (average of about 9 tokens per hour) to a low of 12 (Yoko) (average of less than one token per hour).

Table 1: Caregiver tokens of reported speech in data: per focal child and total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Sibling age, sex</th>
<th>Tokens of reported speech (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shinichi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4 years, M</td>
<td>155 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaru</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>150 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiko</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>146 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiromi</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>9 years, F</td>
<td>72 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takahiro</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>56 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noriyuki</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>32 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5 years, M</td>
<td>12 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>623 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among these tokens, Japanese caregivers primarily use reported speech in the following three ways: (i) attribute feelings, needs, or wants to inanimate and animate entities who ostensibly cannot speak (e.g., flower, stone, toy, worm); (ii) repeat a version of prior talk in the more distant past of themselves, the addressed child, or a third party who is not co-present; and (iii) repeat a version of an ongoing or immediately prior verbal and/or nonverbal communicative behavior of a focal child or another (e.g., child or animal) who is co-present. While the primary focus of the analysis is on type (iii) (beginning in Section 4.1), it may be worthwhile to briefly consider one of the other types in order to point out a similarity among them in relation to social action within social action. In one scene, when a mother and child (Takahiro) were walking down the stairs of their apartment building and the child was looking back (toward the researcher operating the camera), the mother told him to ‘please walk straight’ (massugu aruite kudasai:i) or else he might ‘fall down’ (docchinto korobu yo:::). Following this, she reported the speech of the child’s doctor (type [ii]) (sensei ga yukkuri naga::ku aruite kudasai ne: tte ‘The doctor
said [to you] “Please walk slowly [and take] long steps”; koketara abunai kara ne:: tte “[He] said, “Since if [you] fall it’s dangerous”). In this way, Japanese caregivers use reported speech with children to embed an utterance (a social action) and to direct a child’s next action (a social action).

Japanese caregivers use reported speech with two-year-old children to position them as speakers (speaking for a focal child) and addressees (speaking for a third party). Among the 623 tokens of reported speech in Table 1, 67 tokens (10.8%) are cases in which a caregiver positions a focal child as a speaker (see Excerpt [1]), whereas 556 tokens (89.2%) are cases in which a caregiver positions a focal child as an addressee (see Excerpts [2]–[4]).

It should be noted that in these data reported speech has two main parts in the following order (opposite of English): (i) quoted portion (or here, embedded social action and cultural gloss) (i.e., representation in words of speech, embodied behavior, and the like); and (ii) reporting frame (or here, matrix social action and directive) (i.e., quotative particle tte and/or verb of speaking). The English glosses will be presented in the original Japanese word order. Moreover, while Japanese has both indirect and direct reported speech (e.g., Coulmas 1985), in the data presented certain features within the quoted portion, such as formulaic expressions, vowel elongation, reduplication, and pragmatic particles, are indicative of direct reported speech, which is more common than indirect reported speech in interaction with young children.

4.1 Positioning two-year-olds as speakers (and older siblings as addressees)

Excerpt (1) illustrates how a caregiver (father) uses reported speech to speak for a focal child (Yoko: 1;10) to her older brother (OB: 5;7), and thus position her as a speaker. Here, Yoko and her father are playing on the floor in the living room, and the older brother is sitting on the sofa while holding a box of pokki ‘chocolate covered pretzel sticks’ and eating one. (Transcription conventions appear in the appendix.)

(1) Positioning focal child as speaker (Kobe, family living room: Sunday, 11:41 a.m.).
1 Yoko: ((stands up from floor and then puts out hand))
2 Dad: un?
   “Hm?”
When Yoko stands up while reaching out her hand (line 1) and then turns and walks toward her older brother on the sofa (line 3), the father initially displays an uncertainty of Yoko’s intended action (lines 2 and 4). Immediately following this, however, he uses reported speech to speak for Yoko, which also functions as a directive to the older brother (indicated through the father’s gaze and verbal attention-getter na ‘Hey’ in line 5) to give Yoko one of his pokki (line 5: ‘Hey, “May I have (one),” (she) is saying (to you)’). In using reported speech in this way, the father also positions Yoko as a particular kind of social actor. In the quoted portion, he uses the formulaic word choodai ‘May I have (one)’, an expression that indexes the social action of requesting an object and at the same time displays politeness toward the addressee, which refers to affective stances and practices to “avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain communicative concord” (Leech 2007: 173). In this way, the father positions Yoko as one who uses language to speak kindly, well mannered, and appropriately to her older brother when making a request for something she appears to desire.

The father’s use of reported speech also positions the siblings in a relationship tied to expected actions, roles, and activities. As in many other societies (e.g., Rabain-Jamin et al. 2003), Japanese children are expected to cooperate and share toys, snacks, and the like with other children, particularly with younger siblings (Takahashi 2001). Moreover, the action of complying with a request for something (or even offering it before it is requested) indexes being older and other-oriented, and no longer self-centered and wagamama ‘selfish’. In these ways, Japanese caregivers use reported speech in triadic interaction to position two-year-olds as speakers and older siblings as addressees through which they convey a range of sociocultural meanings in encouraging the addressee’s next action.
4.2 Positioning two-year-olds as addressees

As discussed above, Japanese caregivers more often use reported speech in interaction involving focal two-year-old children to position them as addressees of others’ talk and/or embodied communicative behavior. In particular, caregivers often use reported speech in sequences in which there is some kind of interactional trouble (cf. Schegloff et al. 1977), such as the child not appropriately responding to a prior directive of the caregiver (see Excerpt [2]), or following a third party’s initiating utterance (Excerpt [3]) or non-response to a child’s initiating action (see Excerpt [4]).

Excerpt (2) illustrates how a caregiver (again, a father) uses reported speech to quote the speech of an animal to a focal child (Keiko, female: 1;11), and this also provides a window into the use of reported speech in gender socialization. Here, a father and child are standing by a pond with food in their hands to feed some turtles. A turtle has just brought its head to the surface of the water.

(2) Positioning focal child as addressee. (Kyoto, park with pond: Sunday, 11:31 a.m.).

1 Dad: *n kamesan matten de.*
   ‘Mm, Mr./Ms. turtle is waiting (for the food).’

2 Keiko: ((gazing toward turtle, food in hand))

3 Dad: *hora.*
   ‘Look.’

4 Keiko: ((continues gazing toward turtle: 0.2))

5→ Dad: *kamesan kure::: yuute.*
   ‘Mr. turtle, “Give (me):::”, (he) says.’

6 (1.0)

7→ Dad: *kure kure::: tte.*
   ‘“Give me, give me:::”, (he) says.’

8 Keiko: ((hesitates but then throws food to the turtle after father’s explicit urging and modeling what to do))

When the father tells Keiko that the turtle is waiting for food (line 1) – as an indirect directive to urge Keiko to throw some food in her hand to the turtle – Keiko does not respond. In dealing with this interactional trouble, the father uses reported speech to speak for the turtle (line 5: ‘Mr. turtle “Give [me]:::”, (he) says’; line 7: ‘“Give [me], give [me]:::”, (he) says’). In comparison to Excerpt (1) above, here in the quoted portion the father uses a pragmatically strong request (a command form *kure* of the verb *kureru* ‘to give’), which is accompanied by vowel elongation (lines 5 and 7) and repetition and reduplication of the
quoted portion (line 7) that increases its pragmatic force. In Japanese, there are a number of linguistic features that stereotypically evoke male and female voices, such as some pragmatic particles, pronouns, and grammatical forms (e.g., Nakamura 2004). Although this strong imperative form (kure) is associated with a male voice, imperatives within indirect reported speech are often a grammatical convention (in adult–adult interaction) rather than an indication that the original speech was uttered using an imperative (e.g., Coulmas 1985). However, as mentioned earlier (Section 4), in the present analysis the quoted portions are all direct reported speech (due to vowel elongation, reduplication, pragmatic particles, and the like). Thus, here the father’s choice of the imperative form in the quoted portion suggests a construction of a male voice for the animal, rather than the conventional use of an imperative form. Notably, in these data, mothers do not use imperative forms in reported speech when addressing girls, as they may be heard as sounding too rough and blunt, or, according to a Japanese informant (graduate student), even kowai ‘scary’. At the same park two days earlier, this time when Keiko and her mother were feeding some turtles, her mother used a polite request form kudasai ‘please’ in reporting the speech of a turtle (Mother: manma kudasai tte yutten de ‘[Mr./Ms. turtle] is saying “Please [give me] food’’). In these ways Japanese caregivers may use reported speech to position quoted speakers as gendered social actors in relation to the caregiver’s gender (as in excerpt [2]), and in the process sensitize children to gender identity.

4.2.1 Guiding children to interpret another’s talk

As mentioned above, Japanese caregivers use third-person reported speech with children as a directive – within directive sequences – in encouraging them to interpret another’s verbal and nonverbal communicative behavior as social action. In such contexts, reported speech is an indirect directive in that it does not explicitly convey to the child how to respond (e.g., Clancy 1986). For this reason, caregivers often deploy various verbal and nonverbal strategies and resources in relation to reported speech.

Excerpt (3) illustrates how a mother uses reported speech with other verbal and embodied strategies in encouraging a focal child to interpret a boy’s utterance as a request. Here, a female child (Chie: 2;1) and her mother (C-Mom) are in the children’s book section of a library in which there are several small tables and chairs with different colored seats. Prior to the extract shown, when Chie and her mother were seated at a table looking at several books they had taken off the shelves, an unfamiliar boy (2;10) had come up to their table.
and sat down. Here, as Chie has just stood up from her chair in order to change the color of the chair she will sit on (which aggravates her mother a bit, as also displayed in line 7), the boy accidentally knocks one of their books onto the floor (line 1).

(3) (Osaka, neighborhood library: Saturday, 1:34 p.m.)
1 Boy: ((arm knocks book from table onto floor))
2 a: ((turns and looks toward book on floor))
   ‘Ah.’
3 (0.7)
4 Chie: ya, acchi. ((to her mother))
   ‘No, (I want the chair) over there.’
5 (0.2)
6 Boy: nanka [ochi(ta)]
   ‘Something fell.’
7 C-Mom: [ ili: ]
   ‘It’s fine: (=Sit on the other chair)’
8 ((turns and gazes at book on floor))
9→ ochita tte ochita tte< Chie. ((points at book))
10 >”(It) fell,” (he) says, “(It) fell”, (he) says, Chie’<
11→ C-Mom: [(turning, gazes toward book)]
12 Chie: [[(one hand on Chie’s back, and points at book)]
13 C-Mom: [°ochita yo:: tte.< ] ((points at book))
14 °(It) fell, I tell you::”, (he) says.”
15 Chie: ((stands up from chair))
16 C-Mom: [°totte totte.° ]
17 ‘Pick it up, pick it up.’
18 Chie: [((moves toward book, picks up book))]
19 ((places book on table))

When the boy verbally responds to the book falling on the floor (lines 2, 3, and 6: ‘Ah (0.7) Something fell’), Chie’s mother ceases her negotiation with Chie over the chair – perhaps as a way to get out of this negotiation as it seemed to have annoyed her – and repeats a version of the boy’s utterance to Chie as reported speech (line 9: “(It) fell,” (he) says, “(It) fell”, (he) says, Chie’<). Here, although the addressee of the original utterance is not clear (it could be Chie, her mother, or no one in particular), reported speech is again deployed in relation to interactional trouble, in this case the focal child not attending to and responding to a third party’s utterance. While this utterance is on the surface a description of a state of affairs (i.e., “The book fell”), by repeating a version of it as reported
speech the mother positions Chie as the addressee and encourages her to interpret it as a request to pick up the book – in traditional pragmatic research, an *indirect speech act* (Searle 1975). In positioning Chie as the addressee of this utterance, the mother socializes her to display personal *responsibility* for the book, as she had taken it off the shelf so it is for the time being *her book*. Also, as the quoted speaker is an older child (and male), this may socialize her to do things for elders as part of hierarchical social relations that will also be socialized later in different ways in school (Park 2014).

In guiding Chie to pick up the book, the mother uses a range of verbal and embodied strategies. These combined strategies resonate with Cekaite’s (2010) analysis of directive sequences in caregiver–caregiver interaction in Swedish, particularly *shepherding*, or “meaningful bodily actions [...] aimed at controlling and scaffolding the child’s body movement as a goal-directed action that is indispensable to accomplishment of the directive” (Cekaite 2010: 2). Here, while reporting the boy’s speech and reduplicating it, the mother points toward the book on the floor to focus Chie’s attention (line 9). Also, as was observed above (see Excerpt [2]), here the mother uses more than one token of reported speech, and transforms the quoted portion in the process (if ever so slightly). In particular, as Chie turns and gazes toward the book on the floor (line 10), her mother points toward it while again reporting the speech of the boy (line 11: “(It) fell, I tell you::”, (he) says’). This reported speech varies from the first reported speech in this sequence through the addition of the pragmatic particle *yo* ‘I tell you’ within the quoted portion. According to Chin (1987), the particle *yo* marks “information that the speaker but not the listener is aware of” (Chin 1987: 94; translation mine). In this way, using *yo* performs the social action of informing (in addition to other social actions performed by the utterance it is attached to). Here, by placing the particle *yo* on the quoted portion (rather than on the reporting frame, as in the possible utterance: *ochita tte yutteru yo* “‘It fell,” [he] says, I tell you’), the mother positions the boy (rather than herself) as a particular kind of social actor, namely as an *epistemic authority*, i.e., authority in the management of rights and responsibilities for knowledge and information (e.g., Heritage and Raymond 2005). Similar to Clancy’s (1986) observations that Japanese mothers frequently de-emphasize their role as authority figures in directing two-year-old children what to do (such as by using indirectness, or referring to the reactions of others, e.g., “Others will laugh at you”), here by using the particle *yo* in the quoted portion she assigns the role of authority for the (indirect) request to the third party who initiated it.

Following these uses of reported speech, the mother continues to use a range of verbal and embodied strategies until the focal child carries out the expected response (i.e., picks up the book and places it back on the table). In
particular, after Chie turns around and gazes toward the book on the floor (line 12), her mother puts her hand on Chie’s back and points toward the book while issuing an explicit directive on what to do in a quiet voice (line 14: “Pick it up, pick it up”) (Figure 1). This combination of directive and embodied strategies gives Chie a final “push” to carry out the expected next actions and ties the boy’s utterance to its underlying meaning as a request, regardless of whether the boy intended it to be heard in that way.

4.2.2 Guiding children to interpret another’s non-forthcoming response

Japanese caregivers also use reported speech in encouraging children how to interpret another’s non-forthcoming response as social action. This will be illustrated in Excerpt (4) in which a caregiver uses reported speech in a
different sequential position than has been considered so far, namely following a focal child’s initiating action to a third party. In relation to this, in his discussion of conditional relevance, Schegloff (1968: 1083) notes, “given the first [pair part] the second [pair part] is expectable [...] upon its nonoccurrence it can be seen to be officially absent.” As we will see, reported speech is used in response to a non-forthcoming response (officially absent) from a third party.

In (4), a female focal child (Keiko: 2;2) – same child as in Excerpt (2) – and her mother (K-Mom) are at an indoor play area inside a department store, and are currently at a jungle gym slide. Keiko is about to climb up the ladder where there is a girl (Girl: 2;2) in front of her who is also about to climb up the ladder.

(4) (Kyoto, children’s play area inside a department store: Thursday, 11:44 a.m.)

1 Keiko: ((climbing jungle gym ladder behind another girl))
2 K-Mom: na, juunban na.
   ‘Okay, take turns, okay.’
3 yukkuri.
   ‘Slowly.’
4 Keiko: [otete tsunagoo. ((reaches for Girl’s hand)]
   ‘Let’s hold hands.’
5 K-Mom: [n
   ‘Mm.’
6 [otete tsunagoo n(h)o? h h
   ‘It’s that (you) will hold (her) hand? h h’
7 Girl: [(going up ladder, grips onto handle rail)]
8 K-Mom: otete tsunaidagete.
   ‘Hold (her) hand for (her).’
9 Girl: ((grips onto handle rail of the ladder))
10 Keiko: [((reaches for girl’s hand, but girl withdraws it)])
11→ K-Mom: [ otete- otete iya da tte. ] ((shaking head))
   ‘(Holding) hands- hands is no good’, (she) says.’
12 Keiko: ((withdraws hand, looks toward Mom, 0.5))
   ‘Mm.’
14 ((points to Girl))
15→ otete- [ima nobottehara] kara, abunai yo tte.
   ‘Hands- ‘Now (she) is climbing so, “It’s dangerous, I tell you”, (she) says.’
16 [((points to Girl))]
When Keiko invites the girl to hold hands while reaching for her hand (line 4: 'Let’s hold hands'), Keiko’s mother initially encourages Keiko to do so (line 8). However, in response to a following silence and the girl’s visible embodied actions (lines 9 and 10) (i.e., gripping onto the slide handle rail), Keiko’s mother uses reported speech to attribute a refusal to the girl (line 11: ‘“[Holding] hands- hands is no good”, (she) says.’). In the quoted portion, she uses the word iya ‘no good’, which is acquired early by Japanese children as a verbal resource for refusing or rejecting another’s proposed action and expressing dislike of something (Clancy 1985). In this way, the mother uses iya to index the social action of refusal, and position the girl as a particular kind of speaker, namely as one who displays a child-like unmitigated and abrupt stance toward Keiko’s invitation.

Although this direct refusal belies a preference in Japanese socialization for positioning children as polite and cooperative social actors (see Excerpt [1]), the mother deals with this in a theoretically interesting way. In particular, she follows this reported speech with an utterance formed as two clauses (line 15). In the first clause, while pointing toward the girl (line 16) the mother describes the girl’s ongoing action (‘Now [she] is climbing so…’), using the honorific marker -haru (Kyoto dialect, see Koyama 2001) on the verb ‘climb’ (action of the girl) as an index of respect toward the girl. In the following clause, she reports the girl’s speech again (line 15: ‘…”It’s dangerous, I tell you,” [she] says’). Here, while the content of the quoted portion is different from that in the first reported speech, it is sequentially tied to it by providing a reason for the prior (child-like unmitigated and abrupt) refusal. In this quoted portion the mother uses the word abunai ‘dangerous’, which is an assessment word that Japanese caregivers often use in directing children to avoid or cease actions that could cause harm to themselves and/or others (Clancy 1986). In using abunai, the mother indexes the social action of warning Keiko of the danger of holding hands while climbing the ladder, and at the same time indexes a caregiver voice. Also, similar to Excerpt (3) above, the mother uses the pragmatic particle yo ‘I tell you’ within the quoted portion, which positions the girl (rather than the mother) as an epistemic authority that Keiko’s proposed action (holding hands) is abunai.

What is especially interesting here is that in changing the content of the quoted portion from outright rejection to warning (an indirect directive), the mother also transforms the girl from a social actor who displays an abrupt stance to one who displays a more polite and caregiver-like stance in showing concern toward the situation and addressee (Figure 2).
5 Conclusions

This paper has examined third-party reported speech in Japanese caregiver–child triadic interaction as a strategy in socializing children to cultural norms of speaking and behavior. It has shown how caregivers use reported speech as social action within social action; that is, as a directive (matrix social action) that embeds a prior or ongoing communicative behavior of another (embedded social action). In particular, it has shown how caregivers use reported speech as a cultural gloss to transform others’ verbal and nonverbal communicative behavior into socioculturally appropriate speech and in the process position the quoted speaker as a particular kind of social actor (e.g., polite, gendered, epistemic authority, one who speaks indirectly). It has also shown how caregivers use reported speech in directive sequences together with other verbal and nonverbal strategies such as touch, gaze, and pointing in guiding children how to respond to another’s communicative behavior. In this regard, an important function of reported speech in Japanese caregiver–child triadic interaction is to

Figure 2: As Keiko tries to reach for Girl’s hand a second time (line 10) and the girl does not offer it to her, Keiko’s mother attributes a refusal to the girl (line 11).
encourage children’s moral, social, and language development in interaction with others including peers, siblings, and animals.

The analysis has offered two central motivations for Japanese caregivers’ use of third-party reported speech in triadic interaction involving two-year-olds. First, reported speech functions as an indirect directive for a next action. This may be linked to a preference for deemphasizing the caregiver’s authoritative stance toward children, which positions the caregiver as a mediator rather than as a top-down or forceful authority. Second, reported speech allows caregivers to index a range of sociocultural meanings within the quoted utterance to children, some which may be more difficult to index through the caregiver’s own voice (such as a strong imperative linked to a male voice). In this way, reported speech is an important strategy for socializing children to sociocultural meanings of language related to identity, stance, and social action.

These findings also suggest that children are not passive recipients of language socialization, but are actively taking up what is evoked through reported speech. Of course, children can also be expected at times to resist, ignore, or refuse such acts of socialization. They also illuminate the importance of examining the multimodality of reported speech and other practices and socialization strategies in interaction. Finally, the findings suggest that socialization is a process of learning to view the social world in relation to social actions constructed with others through multiple modalities, including how to “see” and “hear” communicative behavior that may be subtle, indirect, or not even spoken. Thus, part of becoming a competent social actor entails learning to interpret what others might be communicating with their words and embodied behaviors as a form of social action for constituting stances, activities, and identities.

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Appendix

The following transcription conventions are used:

[Wo]rd Brackets indicate overlapping talk and/or embodied behavior.
Wo::rd Colon marks phonological lengthening (each colon is approx. 0.1 sec.).
Wo- Hyphen indicates sound cutoff.
((bows)) Nonverbal actions and comments are shown in double parentheses.
References


**Bionote**

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