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Formulaicity and contexts: a multimodal analysis of the Japanese utterance-final *tteyuu*

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Abstract: This study investigates the use of the utterance-final *tteyuu* [ʔteju:], a combination of the quotative particle *tte* and the verb *yuu* ('say'). Although its lexicalized status and utterance-final occurrence are commonly observed, we still know little about its real-time functions. The analysis of 120 examples in varied contexts shows its general usage to clarify something expressed in the prior talk, which is a type of repair practice. More importantly, the analysis reveals how the participants' understanding of the ongoing speech activity and multimodal cues affect its use and interpretation. Furthermore, some specialized usages appear to motivate activity-bound pragmatic inferencing, leading to emergence of a new construction. The findings demonstrate that even those expressions that are *fixed* in one context are in flux; their functions and structures are always subject to negotiation and change through frequent use in new contexts. The study contributes to the understanding of a dynamic interplay between linguistic formulaicity and contextual factors.

Keywords: activity-bound pragmatic inferencing; Japanese quotative constructions; speech activities

1 Introduction

Our everyday language use is much more fixed than we may think. An utterance or expression can be considered fixed if someone who is otherwise proficient in the grammar and the vocabulary of the language still fails to “know (i) how to say it, or (ii) what it means, or (iii) whether it is a conventional thing to say” (Fillmore et al. 1988: 504). Per this definition, not only idioms (e.g., *saba o yomu* ‘miscount on purpose’ (lit. read mackerel) and collocational phrases (e.g., *mata mata* ‘come on; you’re kidding me’ (lit. again again) but also phenomena such as the utterance-final use of *tteyuu* are formulaic. According to Suzuki (2007), by the end of the 19th century, the

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combination of the quotative particle *tte* followed by the verb *yuu* ('say') was used to introduce a name of a category noun ([name *tte yuu* N] 'N called {name}'), to link a modifying phrase or clause to a modified head noun ([phrase/clause *tte yuu* N] 'N that {phrase/clause}'), and to introduce a topic ([N *tte yuu no wa* V] 'Speaking of N, V'). In all these constructions, *yuu* had already lost its semantic content as a verb, and the collocation *tte+yuu* seems to have had acquired its lexicalized status. Knowing these uses of *tteyuu*, however, does not transfer to knowing its use utterance finally. Only through direct experience in specific contexts can one learn to interpret and use formulaic expressions including the utterance-final *tteyuu*.

The notion of context is multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of dimensions, including physical surroundings, behavioral environment, linguistic and paralinguistic features, and social and cultural knowledge (Duranti and Goodwin 1992; Ochs 1979). During interaction, context invokes background assumptions and provides the interpretive framework for understanding the focal event or action. Put differently, it enables and assists the necessary inferential processes to make sense of what is said or done. What a recipient of an utterance takes as relevant context is guided by multiple factors: (i) what they bring along from the past experience and associated assumptions, (ii) their understanding of the ongoing activity in which they are engaged (Duranti and Goodwin 1992), and (iii) multimodal cues given by the speaker at the moment of the utterance (i.e., contextualization cues; Gumperz 1982). Notwithstanding the importance of all three factors, since the first factor is difficult to examine with the present data, the current study focuses on the second and third ones: participants' understanding of the ongoing speech activity and multimodal contextualization cues.

The result of my analysis demonstrates that these contextual factors play a central role in the use and interpretation of the utterance-final *tteyuu*. Speech activities¹ (or speech events, Hymes 1974) in socio-culturally defined settings have been investigated in genre/register studies (e.g., sports announcer talk in Ferguson 1983), but they have not been scrutinized from the perspectives of the participants. What a genre/register study labels "informal conversation," when analyzed from an insider's viewpoint, may involve other speech activities such as storytelling (Sacks

1 The idea of speech activities is not equivalent to that of "interactive frames" (Tannen and Wallat 1987), which represent "what people think they are doing when they talk to each other (i.e., are they joking, lecturing, or arguing?)" (Tannen 1993: 6) at a particular moment in interaction. Speech activities refer to larger activities with certain norms and expectations regarding the use of speech (Hymes 1974: 52). The idea of speech activities is closer to what Tannen and Wallat (1987) refer to as "knowledge schemas" or "structures of expectation." For example, a joking frame may be embedded in a speech activity of informal conversation, although the two can sometimes overlap (e.g., shouting "Fire!" constitutes both an alerting frame and a speech activity of alerting people in the immediate vicinity).

1986), ‘broadcast’ talk (Hoymann 2016), and topic-based discussion (this paper). Conversely, more specialized speech activities such as sports announcer talk likely contain practices and features of conversational interaction when analyzed from an emic perspective. The other factor, multimodal cues, pertains to verbal and nonverbal signals, such as intonation contour, shifts in pitch, tempo, or loudness, pragmatic particles, gestures, and eye gaze, that work to prompt inferential processes in making sense of what is said or done (Gumperz 1982; see also Auer 1996; Levinson 2003). Conversation analytic research has shown how interlocutors attend to one another’s multimodal conduct as interactional resources in building and negotiating turn-design (e.g., Goodwin 1979), alignment (e.g., Schegloff 1998), and (dis)affiliation (e.g., Steensig and Larsen 2008). These areas of research elucidate the multimodality of conversational interaction. The current research shows how multimodal cues also work to facilitate a reinterpretation of a conventionalized expression, along with activity-bound pragmatic inferencing.

In what follows, after a review of utterance-final quotative expressions (Section 2) and the presentation of the data (Section 3), Section 4 presents the analysis of the utterance-final *tteyuu*, followed by concluding remarks (Section 5). The analysis underscores the inextricable link between linguistic expressions and contexts of use and the importance of multimodality in the evolution of constructions.

2 Utterance-final quotative expressions

Tteyuu is not the only quotative expression found utterance finally. Other quotative particles and phrases that appear at this position include *tte* (Hayashi 1997; Okamoto 1996; Okamoto and Ono 2008; Suzuki 2007), *to* (Hayashi 1997; Okamoto 1996), and *ndatte* (Suzuki 2007). Like *tteyuu*, these forms co-occur with syntactically independent utterances and show the characteristics of formulaicity (see the definition in Section 1) at least within informal conversations.

But the utterance-final expression whose function is closest to that of *tteyuu* is *mitaina*.² Though *mitaina* does not include a quotative particle *tte* or *to*, it follows quote-like utterances at the utterance-final position. Suzuki (1995) speculates that the utterance-final *mitaina* developed from postposing of the noun-modifying *mitai na* in colloquial speech. As the postposed *mitai na* was used more and more frequently, it described not just nouns but also longer phrases and utterances in the prior discourse. In this way, the utterance-final *mitaina* came to signal that the utterance it marks is an elaboration on what was expressed in the preceding discourse. The focus

2 *Mitai na* is the prenominal or attributive form of the evidential auxiliary *mitai da* (‘seem/look like’).

of the current study is not historical, but a similar developmental path is feasible for the utterance-final *tteyuu* (see Koda 2013).³

The noun-modifying *mitaina* and *tteyuu* differ in the relationship they indicate between the modifier and the modified. With *mitaina*, the modifier is taken to be an example, analogy, or close-enough description of the modified (Suzuki 1995). On the other hand, *tteyuu* signals that the modifier is the precise description of the modified (see Matsumoto 1997). The semantic difference is reflected in the distinct uses of *tteyuu* at the utterance final position, as will be shown in this paper.

Utterance finally, *mitaina* and *tteyuu* follow various phrasal and clausal forms, retroactively modify something expressed in the preceding discourse, and they both tend to appear towards the end of conversational storytelling (Koda 2013). Yokomori (2019) further reports that in conversational storytelling, the utterance-final *tteyuu* is involved in the interactional function of making the point of the story clearer, usually after the story's climax has been delivered, and it helps the teller move to close the storytelling sequence. In Yokomori's examples, the *tteyuu*-ending utterances present either a paraphrasing of the story's upshot or an enactment of a hypothetical thought of the teller. The enactment of a hypothetical speech or thought is also observed with the utterance-final *mitaina*, but while *mitaina* invites further elaboration from the story recipient (Yamamoto 2014), *tteyuu* does not.⁴

The conversational research on the utterance-final quotative expressions offers much insight into the versatility of the quotative items in meeting a variety of local contingencies. The conversational participants use language (and other semiotic resources) in a recipient-designed manner as they respond to each other's display of (non-) understanding, (dis)alignment, and (dis)affiliative stance. Although there is no denying that face-to-face informal conversation is still the primordial site of human communication and language use, people also consume and produce a large amount of language in other environments, notably conventional and social media along with an ever-

3 Some studies analyze *tteyuu*-final (also spelled *toiu*) utterances as missing a head noun with general meaning such as *hanasi* ('story') and *wake* ('reason') (e.g., suspended clause by Ohori 1996; see also Evans 2007 for the concept of insubordination). The present study does not follow this view because of the following reasons. First, since what is 'modified' by the *tteyuu*-final 'modifier' clause is found in the preceding discourse, there is no need to assume a missing modified head noun. Second, there are examples of *tteyuu* followed by *hanasi* or *wake* at the utterance-final position in my data and they seem to have different interactional functions from that of *tteyuu*-final utterances. This observation does not support the view of ellipsis. The utterance-final *tteyuu* appears to be a case of dependency shift (see D'Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014; Mithun 2008), although a detailed investigation is needed.

4 For example, the *mitaina*-ending utterance (*itu kuru-n da yo mitaina*. 'When would the letter come *mitaina*.') is followed by the recipient's elaboration (*oi: mitaina*. 'Hey *mitaina*.') (Yamamoto 2014). Contrarily, the *tteyuu*-ending utterance (*amai daro, sore wa tteyuu*. 'That's too sweet *tteyuu*.') is only responded to with a receipt token (*hee:::* 'Wow.') (Yokomori 2019).

growing number of hybrid situations. To the extent that language is context dependent (see Section 1), widening our analytical scope to non-conversational language uses may help us gain a fuller picture of language users' knowledge and skills.

In this regard, recent Japanese studies have shown that some constructions develop only in certain environments (e.g., *wa*-initiated responsive construction in question-answer sequence in formal exchanges between two people of different social status, Nakayama and Horiuchi 2020; non-predicative copula construction in public speech, Iwasaki 2020) while others are adapted to varied situations with partially overlapping communicative needs and purposes (e.g., stand-alone noun-modifying construction, Matsumoto 2015; *no-wa* cleft construction, Kaneyasu 2019). The present study adds to this line of research with an analysis of the utterance-final *tteyuu* in different speaking situations, including conversations, discussions, storytelling contests, and talk radio shows.

3 The data

The data come from the following sources. Corpora (a)–(d) came with transcripts, but I re-transcribed relevant segments using the Jefferson transcription system (Jefferson 2004). In total, 120 instances of the utterance-final *tteyuu* were found. The next section presents the result of analyzing these examples in their sequential environments.

- (a) CallHome corpus [Callhome] (Canavan and Zipperlen 1996)
 - Phone conversation between friends and family; 71 audio-recordings; 11 h.
- (b) Sakura corpus [Sakura] (Miyata et al. 2009)
 - Face-to-face conversation among college classmates; topic-based discussion; 14 video-recordings; 6 h.
- (c) BTSJ corpus [BTSJ] (Usami 2018)
 - Face-to-face conversation between friends; some with given topics; 51 audio-recordings; 13 h.
- (d) My funny story corpus [Contest] (Sadanobu 2019)
 - Solicited funny stories submitted for a contest; 264 video-recordings; 9 h.
- (e) Talk-radio show “*Towazugatari no Kanda Hakuzan*” [Radio] (Tonami 2020)
 - Free monologue by a professional storyteller; 3 audio-recordings; 1.5 h.

4 Usages of the utterance-final *tteyuu*

The utterance-final *tteyuu* in my data has three usages. The first and most general usage is to clarify something expressed in the prior talk, a type of repair practice (clarifying *tteyuu*) (4.1). The second usage is to recast the prior unit of talk to focus on, highlight, or explicate a particular aspect of the prior talk that is relevant to the main communicative

Table 1: Distribution of the *tteyuu* tokens by usage and genre.

	Clarifying <i>tteyuu</i>	Recasting <i>tteyuu</i>	Key action <i>tteyuu</i>	Total
Conversation [Corpora (a) (b) (c)]	23 (92%) ((a) (b) (c))	1 (4%) (in (b))	1 (4%) (in ((b))	25 (100%)
Storytelling [Corpus (d)]	3 (21.4%)	9 (64.3%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (100%)
Talk radio [Corpus (e)]	34 (42.0%)	21 (25.9%)	26 (32.1%)	81 (100%)

purpose of the ongoing speech activity (recasting *tteyuu*) (4.2). The third function is to deliver a key action for the ongoing speech activity (key action delivering *tteyuu*) (4.3). Table 1 shows the distribution of the 120 *tteyuu* tokens by usage and genre. The following sections describe each of these usages in more detail with examples.

4.1 General usage: clarifying something expressed in the prior talk

The most general usage of *tteyuu*-ending utterances is to clarify something expressed in the prior talk. In informal conversation, where the course of actions is created dynamically and organized sequentially on a moment-by-moment basis, the clarification function is utilized to respond to various interactional contingencies. In some cases, what is being clarified (the target) is identifiable in the preceding discourse, but in others, it is difficult to pinpoint the target element since it concerns a larger segment of talk or what is implied by the interlocutor's response to the speaker's earlier utterance. In storytelling, the clarifying *tteyuu* appears in side sequences in which the teller clarifies something said earlier for the recipients. In talk radio, the personality uses it to add subsidiary information, sometimes to humorous effect.

The clarifying *tteyuu*-ending utterance provides further details or more exact information about what has been expressed in the prior talk, hence it is pragmatically dependent on the preceding discourse. It is important to note that the clarifying *tteyuu* does not replace the previously expressed idea, but it expresses the same idea more clearly or precisely for various purposes.

Excerpt 1 comes from the beginning of an audio-recorded face-to-face conversation between two friends. In line 1, Speaker A suggests that they now talk about what they were talking about earlier, but B does not seem to remember the topic of their earlier conversation.⁵

⁵ The abbreviations used in the interlinear glosses in the transcripts are as follows: ASP = aspect; CAU = causative; CND = conditional; CP = copula; FP = final particle; LK = linking particle; N = nominalizer; NEG = negative; OP = object particle; POL = polite; PST = past tense; PT = particle; Q = question particle; QT = quotative particle; RC = response cry; SP = subject particle; TAG = tag question; TE = *te*-form connective; TP = topic particle; VOL = volitional.

(1) Clarifying *tteyuu* [Earlier talk] (BTSJ.256_0:04-0:10)

- 1 A: *sakki no hanasi modoru?*
 earlier LK talk return
Shall we go back to our earlier topic?
- 2 B: *sakki no hanasi, sakki nani hanasiteta n da kke?*
 earlier LK talk earlier what talk:ASP:PST N CP Q
The earlier topic, what were we talking about earlier again?
- 3 A: → *nanka (.) (school name) ga imeezi to*
 like SP image with
- 4 A: → *tigatta kara [yokatta tteyuu.*
 different:PST since good:PST TTEYUU
[Lines 3-4] Like (.) you were glad because the school was different from what you had imagined tteyuu.
- 5 B: [aa soo (school name) to imeeji
 oh so with image
- 6 B: *tigau to ne omotta ne:,*
 differ QT FP think:PST FP
[Lines 5-6] Oh, right. I did think the school was different from what I had imagined.

In line 2, B asks a clarification question to which A responds with the clarifying *tteyuu*-ending utterance in lines 3–4. We can identify the target of the clarifying utterance in the preceding lines: ‘the earlier talk’ (*sakki no hanashi*) in lines 1 and 2.

Similarly, in Excerpt 2, the storyteller answers the story recipient’s clarification question in the middle of the story in a side sequence.

(2) Clarifying *tteyuu* [USJ ride] (Contest.2011046_0:07-1:13)

- 1 A: *ano:: bakku (.) tuu za huutyaa tteyuu,*
 um back to the future called
- 2 A: *a hai hai hai.*
Oh yea yea yea.

- 3 A: *kuruma no atarakusyon ni:*,
car LK attraction PT
- 4 B: *n::n.*
Mhmm.
- 5 A: *kazoku san-nin de noru koto ni narimasite,*
family three-people PT ride N PT become:POL:PST:TE
**[Lines 1, 3, 5]U: m three of us were going to ride a car attraction
called “Back to the future” as a family,**
(13 lines omitted))
- 19 B: *donna n desita kke?*
what.kind N CP:POL:PST Q
What was that (attraction) like again?
- 20 A: → *ano: nanka nan te yuu n desu ka kuruma wa ugokanai,*
um like what QT say N CP:POL Q car TP move:NEG
U: m like how do I put it, the car doesn’t move,
- 21 B: *un un.*
Mhm mmhm.
(14 lines omitted))
- 36 A: → *ano sono ba ni ite eezoo o taikansuru tteyuu.*
um that place PT stay:TE picture OP experience TTEYUU
**Um it stays where it is and (you) experience through pictures
tteyuu.**
- 37 B: *un un.*
Mhm mmhm.

Though the clarification the teller provides is much longer than one in Excerpt 1, we can still locate the target of the clarifying utterance in lines 1 and 3: ‘the attraction called Back to the Future.’

In the next example, the target of the clarification is not easily identifiable. In Excerpt 3, two friends are about 6 min into their phone conversation. Just prior to the segment shown, they finished talking about one topic and both fell silent. A then told B that they did not have much to talk about. B responded to A that it was not that they did not have things to talk about (*sonna koto wa nai yo*) and that she was about to say something but hesitated (*nanka ioo to omotta kedo chotto*). B’s remark was followed

by joint laughter. It sounds like they are both conscious of being recorded and avoiding talking about certain topics. In line 1, A then says, ‘It should be fine after 15 min,’ which seems to suggest when B can say what she hesitated to do so earlier.

(3) Clarifying *tteyuu* [Fifteen minutes] (Callhome.2207_6:19-6:31)

1 A: .hh [zyuugo hun °tattara] ii° mitai da [kedo nante.
fifteen minute take:CND good seem CP but QT
.hh It should be °fine after° fifteen minutes, or something.

2 B: [hmmmm.] [nn?
Hmmmm. Huh?

3 A: zyuugo [hun,
Fifteen minutes,

4 B: [n-
Mm-

5 A: zyuugo hunkan rokuonsuru ndatte.
fifteen minute record QT
They are recording it for fifteen minutes.

6 B: a honto:?
Oh really?

7 A: u:n.
Mhmm.

8 B: sono ato wa ii no?
that after TP good FP
It's fine after that?

9 A: un.
Yep.

10 B: huhhHEHEHEHE

11 A: → sono ato wa zyuugo hunkan tada *tteyuu*.
that after TP fifteen minute free TTEYUU
We can talk for free for fifteen minutes after that *tteyuu*.

12 B: *a soo.*

Oh I see.

After A informs B that their conversation is only being recorded for the initial 15 min (lines 1, 3, and 5), B asks a confirmation question in line 8 ('It's fine after that?'). When A confirms that their talk is no longer recorded after 15 min in line 9 ('Yep.'). B bursts into laughter in line 10, which can be heard as implying that she is thinking about what she hesitated to mention earlier. It is in the next line A offers additional details with *tteyuu* to clarify her simple answer in line 9 that they can talk for free for fifteen more minutes after the recording stops (line 11). Though A is not directly asked for any clarification here, her offering of this information at this sequential position seems to be motivated by what B's laughter in line 10 implied, given what they talked about earlier (that there was something B wanted to say but did not because of the recording).

The fourth example comes from a talk-radio monologue. On this radio show, the personality, Kanda Hakuzan, who is a professional *kodan* storyteller,⁶ talks candidly and humorously about events in his life. There is another person on the show whose role seems to consist entirely of laughing at whatever the personality says.⁷ Since this person does not utter a single word of his own and the personality never responds to the person's laughter, I excluded the background laughter from the transcript for clarity. Prior to the segment shown in Excerpt 4, the personality recalled his high school English teacher, who often got sidetracked during class to talk about his girlfriends. He then impersonated the teacher talking about meeting a woman at the airport during one of the classes.

(4) Clarifying *tteyuu* [English class] (Radio.20200828_18:06-18:17)

1 *.hh ore ano zyugyoo suki datta n da yone.*
 I that class like CP:PST N CP FP
.hh I liked that class.

2 *sorezyaa (.) eego modoroo ka tte yutta toki no,*
 then English return FP QT say:PST when LK
When the teacher said now let's go back to English,

3 → *↑anna doodemoui doodemoui dassen da kedo=*
 that meaningless meaningless digression CP but
↑Such a meaningless meaningless digression, =

⁶ *Kodan* is a traditional oral storytelling art.

⁷ The intended effect of this background laughter seems similar to that of laugh tracks in comedy shows and sitcoms.

4 → =eego no zyugyoo yori wa masi tteyuu.
 English LK class than PT better TTEYUU
 =but it was still better than the English class tteyuu.

After saying that he liked the English class in line 1, the personality adds subsidiary information in lines 3–4 to clarify what he meant by liking the class.

The four examples presented in this section illustrate the general usage of *tteyuu*-ending utterances to clarify something expressed in the prior talk. For conversational participants, it is a useful interactional device to retroactively modify the prior utterance(s) without disrupting the progressivity of the interaction. For storytellers, it allows them to signal the pragmatic dependence of the *tteyuu*-utterance on the previously expressed idea and anchor the clarification side sequence to the main storytelling sequence. And for the talk radio personality, it provides the flexibility to add subsidiary information to something already mentioned anytime.

4.2 Activity-sensitive usage (I): recasting the prior talk

The second usage of *tteyuu*-ending utterances is to recast something expressed in the prior talk. It shares with the first clarifying usage the pragmatic dependency on the preceding discourse. However, unlike the first usage, the recasting usage only appears within specialized speech activities and does more than retroactively modify the prior talk. Examples in this section demonstrate the activity-sensitive nature of the recasting *tteyuu*.

4.2.1 Recasting the other's utterance to focus on its relevance to the discussion activity

The first example comes from a video-recorded group conversation among four university students. At the onset, the group is given a discussion topic, written on a small card, to start their conversation. The topic for this group is: 'Are you a dog person or a cat person?' (*inuha ka nekoha ka*). Though the participants are told that they need not stick to the given topic, at least some of them seem to regard the topic-based discussion as the main purpose of their interaction. As it will be shown, the physical existence of the topic card and the participants' attention to it serve as important contextualization cues reminding them of the topic-based discussion as at least one of the speech activities in which they are jointly engaged (the other being conversational interaction).

Just before A's utterance in line 1 in Excerpt 5, B told everyone that they could stick to the given discussion topic, but A informed B that they did not have to do so as long as they kept talking. B accepted A's informing. However, after a short pause, in line 1, A tells C that dogs would be cute if they did not have nails, which can be heard as going back to the activity of the topic-based discussion.

(5) Recasting *tteyuu* [Nails] (Sakura.04_5:44-5:56)

1 A: *inu tte tume ga nakereba kawaii yo.*
 dog TP nail SP exist:NEG:CND cute FP

Fig. #1

Dogs would be cute if they didn't have nails.



Figure 1

2 B: *neko mo tume aru ssoyo?*
 cat also nail exist TAG

Fig. #2

Cats also have nails, don't they?



Figure 2

3 A: *e: ya da: hhh dakara tume ga ya na n zyan.=*
 RC dislike CP so nail SP dislike CP N TAG

Ew, no. hhh I said I don't like nails.=

4 B: ((nods))

5 C: → *=zya nani ga suki na no tteyuu.*
 then what SP like CP FP TTEYUU

Fig. #3

=Then what do you like? tteyuu.



Figure 3

6 A: ((looks down))

7 (1.1)

8 A: *ee:::?*
Whaaat?


As A finishes her utterance in line 1, she shifts her gaze from C to the topic card on the table (Figure 1). Everyone follows her gaze so that when B tells A that cats also have nails in line 2, everyone is looking at the card (Figure 2). After A addresses B's comment in line 3 and B nods to accept her response (line 4), C comes in with a question ending in *tteyuu* in line 5, 'Then, what do you like? *tteyuu*,' directed to A (Figure 3). A looks down for 1.1 s and says 'Whaaat?' in line 8 to show she has trouble answering C's question. The *tteyuu*-ending question works to recast A's utterances from statements about her personal preference to ones about her take on the discussion topic (whether she is a dog person or a cat person). In particular, the question focuses on the fact that A does not take either side, hence can be heard as a complaint that A's utterances do not contribute to moving forward the discussion activity.

4.2.2 Recasting the story climax to highlight the humorous aspect

Within the dataset of solicited funny stories (Sadanobu 2019), *tteyuu*-ending utterances recurrently occur at the sequential position where the teller, having just delivered the story's climax, receives an inadequate response from the recipient(s). The tendency is also observed in conversational storytelling in Yokomori's (2019) study. Instead of simply providing further details or more exact information to clarify the prior utterance (see 4.1), the recasting *tteyuu* sheds new light on how to understand the climax by highlighting its humorous aspect. The recipients' understanding that they are engaged in the activity of 'funny' storytelling also helps them figure out the speaker's action in this environment.

In Excerpt 6, A is telling a story about her then two-year-old son. There are three story recipients, but only one of them, B, is visible in the video. A first described how her son got obsessed with cars and learned the names of many car models except for sedans, in which he was not interested, and kept calling them ‘vroom-vroom’ (*buu-buu*). She then began talking about the time she and her son went for a drive. They got stuck in bad traffic, and although it seemed to begin flowing again, an old man was driving his sedan in front of them so slowly that their car did not move much (see lines 1 and 3).

(6) Recasting *tteyuu* [Vroom-vroom] (Contest.2011035_2:35-3:08)

- 1 A: *doomo mae no* (0.6) *sedan °ga° oziityan datta no ka*
seemingly front LK sedan SP old.man CP:PST FP FP
Apparently, in front (0.6) an old man was driving his sedan
- 2 B: ((nods)) ((nods)) ((nods))
- 3 A: (0.7) *torotoro torotoro torotoro tte kanzi no?*
slowly slowly slowly QT feeling FP
(0.7) ever so slowly?
- 4 A: (1.2) *n'nara asi bo:n tte ue ni nokkete,*
then leg thud QT top on put:TE
(1.2) Then, (my 2-year-old son) throws his legs up and
- 5 A: *ʔnan ya nen syassyato ike yo! mae no buubuu!* tte itte,
what CP FP quickly go FP front LK vroom-vroom QT say:TE
says "What are you doing? Move it! Vroom-vroom in front!"
- 6 A: (0.3) *"syassyato ike yo" tte yuuteru kusenī*
quickly go FP QT say:ASP despite
(0.3) Even while yelling "Move it!"
- 7 A: *yappari buubuu na n desu yone?*
as.expected vroom-vroom CP N CP:POL FP
he still says vroom-vroom, you see?
- Fig. 
- 8 B: ((smiles and nods))
- 9 C/D: *u::n.*
Mmhmm.
- 10 A: → *daka sondake kutitassya ni nattete:,*
so that.much glib.tongue PT become:ASP:TE
So, no matter how glibly he can talk, and
- 11 A: → *dondake syasyu sitte temo,*
how.much car.model know:TE even
no matter how many car models he knows,
- 12 A: → *mae ni otta sedan ya toka buubuu yuuteru no ga,*
front PT exist:PST sedan CP such vroom-vroom say:ASP N SP
that he still calls the sedan that was in front of us vroom-vroom
- 13 A: → *kodomo kusunama[iki(h)na(h) kao site nani o yuuton nen tteyuu.*
child cheeky face do:TE what OP say:ASP FP TTEYUU
is like, what are you saying, you little cheeky kid? tteyuu.
- 14 C/D: [mhuhhhhhhh hh hh hh hh

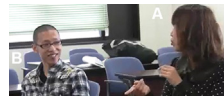


Figure 4

In lines 4–7, A delivers the climax of the story—her son shows aggression towards the old man and his sedan, but he still uses the baby talk ‘vroom-vroom’ in doing so (Figure 4). However, there is only a minimal response from the story recipients B, C/D (they are both out of the camera angle and cannot be identified). In line 8, B simply smiles and nods, and in line 9, C/D only gives an acknowledgment ‘Mhmm.’ It is in this sequential position that A recasts the climax with the *tteyuu*-ending utterance in lines 10–13, highlighting what makes the climax humorous. In particular, what A

does is make a hypothetical quip (*tsukkomi*)⁸ about her son's incompatible behavior. The quip re-characterizes the climax from a charming one to a mocking one.

While A's *tteyuu*-ending utterance is related to her prior unit of talk (the climax), because it highlights the humorous aspect, which pertains to the central purpose of telling a 'funny' story, it also gives rise to pragmatic inferencing that recasting *tteyuu* is doing something directly relevant to achieving the purpose of the ongoing storytelling activity.⁹

4.2.3 Recasting the prior talk to explicate the laughable incongruity

The third example comes from a talk-radio monologue. In Excerpt 7, the personality talks about a paid online anger management counseling he and his wife began to attend after having no luck with a free service.

(7) Recasting *tteyuu* [Anger management] (Radio.20200904_18:14-18:42)

1 (0.7) *demo nanka (.) uti no kamisan to ore*
 but like home LK wife with I
 (0.7) **But, like (.) my wife and I were**

2 *ryohoo de koo uketeta n da kedo,*
 together with um take:ASP:PST N CP but
in the online counseling together,

3 *kooyuu hito na n desu yo: mitai nante,*
 like.this person CP N CP:POL FP like QT
and my wife was telling the instructor I was such-and-such a person,

4 *sitara .h sono angaamaneezimento no koosi ga*
 then that anger.management LK instructor SP

5 *ore no sono:: higorono okonai nitaisite nankakireteta kigasun*
 I LK um daily LK behavior toward like lose.temper feel N
da kedo.
 CP but

[Lines 4–5] And then, the instructor seemed like they were losing their temper with my umm everyday behavior.

⁸ In the present sample, quips were more common in the storytelling by Kansai-dialect speakers.

⁹ As such, from the perspective of language change and grammaticalization, the environments where the recasting *tteyuu* appears can be considered “bridging contexts” (Evans and Wilkins 1998: 5).

- 6 → (1.1) †*ano hito wa angaamaneezimento dekiten no kana tteyuu.*
 that person TP anger.management can:ASP FP FP TTEYUU
 (1.1) †**Is the instructor capable of managing their own anger? tteyuu.**

In lines 1–3, the personality explains that his wife was telling the online instructor about him. He then reports that the instructor seemed like they¹⁰ were losing their temper with his daily behavior as described by his wife (lines 4–5). Then, after a 1.1 s pause, in line 6, he asks a rhetorical question with *tteyuu*. This utterance recasts the prior description in lines 4–5 to explicate the laughable incongruity that the anger management instructor does not seem to know how to manage their own anger. This function was only found in talk-radio monologue.

The talk radio show's main purpose is to entertain the listeners and make them laugh. In this setting, the recasting *tteyuu* explicating the laughable incongruity also gives rise to the pragmatic inferencing that the *tteyuu*-ending utterance is doing something essential to fulfilling the purpose of the ongoing speech activity (i.e., entertaining the listeners and making them laugh).

As illustrated in this section, *tteyuu*-ending utterances are used to recast the prior unit of talk to focus on, highlight, or explicate a particular aspect of the prior talk in the environment where the participants share the understanding that they are engaged in a speech activity with a clear communicative purpose (e.g., topic-based discussion, telling of a 'funny' story, and talk-radio entertainment). The recasting *tteyuu* also motivates activity-bound pragmatic inferencing, contributing to the emergence of a new construction as described in the next section.

4.3 Activity-sensitive usage (II): delivering a key action

In the previous two sections (4.1 and 4.2), we saw that *tteyuu*-ending utterances are used to clarify and recast the prior talk. These are both pragmatically dependent on the preceding discourse. In this section, we look at the use of *tteyuu* that is not dependent on the prior talk. In this usage, *tteyuu*-ending utterances deliver a key action in the ongoing speech activity, such as a summary of the discussion or the climax of a story. To my knowledge, this usage has not been identified in previous literature. The usage appears to have emerged from the activity-bound pragmatic inferencing engendered by the recasting *tteyuu* as discussed in the previous section. The key action delivering *tteyuu* is used by a smaller number of speakers and its use is accompanied by more salient multimodal contextualization cues than the other two usages.

¹⁰ This is a singular 'they' as the gender identity of the instructor is unknown.

4.3.1 Delivering a summary of the discussion

The following group conversation comes from the same corpus as Excerpt 5. Again, the participants are given a topic to start their conversation. The topic for this group is the same as the previous group: ‘Are you a dog person or a cat person?’ As shown in Figure 5, as soon as the recording started, one of the participants, C, picked up the topic card and placed it in front of her. The card was kept there for about 5 min, then she began touching it and eventually held it in her hands.

Prior to the segment in Excerpt 8, A began talking about a film set in Hokkaido called ‘Sinking of Japan’ (*Nihon Tinbotu*). As partly shown in lines 1, 3, and 4, A tells others that the film gave her a strong impression that there were ranches in Hokkaido.

(8) Key action delivering *tteyuu* [Dog persons] (Sakura.10_7:33-8:05)

1 A: *soko ni bokuzyoo* (.)
there at ranch
There are ranches (.)

2 B: *hhhhhh*

3 A: *ga a(h)tte(h),*
SP exist:TE
the(h)re(h) .



Figure 5

4 A: *damonde hokkaidoo wa bokuzyoo:* (.) [*aru imeezi ga tuyoi.*
so Hokkaido TP ranch exist image SP strong
So, I have a strong impression there're ranches in Hokkaido.

5 C: [*are sugoi CG da yone? nanka*
that lot CG CP FP like
That has a lot of CG, doesn't it?

6 A: *uhuhuhuhuh* ((nods))

7 C: *hhhh*

8 (7.0)

9 A: *tteyuu doodemoii hanasi.*
tteyuu unimportant talk
(That was) a random talk.

10 ALL: ((laugh))

11 C → *.hh kekka inuha ga ookatta tteyuu.*
result dog.person SP many:PST TTEYUU

Fig. *.hh In the end, there were more dog persons tteyuu.*

12 B: *un.*
Yeah.

13 D: *inuha da ne.*
dog.person CP FP
(We are) dog persons.

14 C: *.hh [°inuha da ne.°*
.hh °(We are) dog persons.°

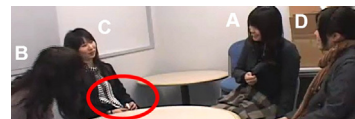


Figure 6

15 B: [*to- tooron ni nannakatta ne:*,
debate PT become:NEG:PST FP
It- it didn't become a debate.

In line 5, C makes an unrelated remark concerning the film, and A affirms it by nodding in line 6. This exchange is followed by what feels like a long lapse of 7.0 s (line 8) during which everyone looks down. Then, A looks up and utters ‘(That was) a random talk.’ in line 9. Interestingly, this utterance involves a turn-initial *tteyuu* whose function differs from those of the utterance-final *tteyuu* as discussed in this paper: the turn-initial *tteyuu* closes the preceding sequence by labeling it with a head

noun.¹¹ The unexpected labeling of her own talk as a random one prompts laughter from everyone (line 10).

Immediately following this line, in line 11, C gives the *tteyuu*-ending utterance ‘In the end, there were more dog persons *tteyuu*.’ while touching the topic card (Figure 6). Although both A’s utterance in line 9 and C’s utterance in line 11 sound abrupt, A’s utterance is dependent on what she just talked about, whereas C’s utterance can only be understood in relation to the larger speech activity of a topic-based discussion. The other participants’ responses, D’s ‘(We are) dog persons.’ in line 13 and B’s ‘(It) didn’t become a debate.’ in line 15 display that they interpreted C’s *tteyuu*-marked utterance as a summary of the discussion activity. C’s visible behavior up to the point of her utterance (i.e., picking up the topic card and holding it in her hands as if selecting herself to be in charge of the discussion activity) as well as her use of the word ‘in the end’ (*kekka*) likely served as contextualization cues.

4.3.2 Delivering the climax of the story

In the next solicited storytelling, A tells a story about his high school friend. At the beginning of the telling (not shown), A described that this friend was very smart and an excellent student but lived in a run-down house as his family was very poor. Before the segment shown, A told that when the friend was taking a bath, the door got stuck, and he was locked inside. The friend panicked for a second, but he looked around and decided to get out of a small window. Just prior to the segment, A made an assessment that the friend’s decision to get out of the window was smart.

(9) Key action delivering *tteyuu* [Bathroom] (Contest.2018035_1:34-1:49)

- 1 A: (0.2) *motto* *aitu wa kasikoi nde:*,
more he TP smart because
(0.2) **cause he’s even smarter than that,**
- 2 A: → (0.6) *ano: osiri ni sekken o nut(h)te:*,
um butt PT soap OP lather:TE
(0.6) **um he lath(h)ered soap on his butt, and**
- 3 B: *haha.*
- 4 A: → (.) °*ano*° *turun t[te deta(h) tte(h)yuu(h) uhuhuhuh*
um slither QT go.out TTEYUU
- Fig. (.) °*um*° **slid out of the window *tte(h)yuu(h) uhuhuhuh***
- 5 B: [ahahhhh
- 6 B: *hahahahh*



Figure 7



Figure 8

After a preamble in line 1 with an anticipatory comment ‘he’s even smarter’ and a 0.6 s pause, A delivers the climax in a *tteyuu*-ending utterance in lines 2 and 4. As he says ‘slither’ (*turun*), he puts his hands up and moves them down to animate the sliding motion (Figures 7 and 8). This is also the only point in his entire storytelling

¹¹ Line 9 is a new turn following C’s remark in line 5 and A’s response to the remark in line 6 (and a 7.0 s lapse, which indicates discontinuous talk, in line 8).

where A gives audible laughter. All of these ‘moves’ work as multimodal contextualization cues that the climax is being delivered.

4.3.3 Delivering the punchline

Excerpt 10 is a continuation of the talk-radio monologue in Excerpt 7. For clarity, the segment begins from line 6 from Excerpt 7 in which the recasting *tteyuu* explicated the laughable incongruity.

(10) Key action delivering *tteyuu* [Anger management] (Radio.20200904_18:37-19:00)

6 (1.1) ↑*ano hito wa angaamaneezimento dekiten no kana tteyuu.*
that person TP anger.management can:ASP FP FP TTEYUU

(1.1) ↑**Is the instructor capable of managing their own anger? *tteyuu.***
(Two lines omitted.)

9 (0.9) *.hhh de kamisan ga iya kono hito to- tonikaku ano*
and wife SP um this person anyway um

10 *ningensee to seikaku: .hhh naoranai n desyoo ka tte ittara:,*
nature and personality treat:NEG N CP:POL Q QT say:CND

[Lines 9–10] (0.9) *.hhh* And my wife asked “Well, anyhow, um, is it not possible to treat his nature and personality issues?”

11 → *sono <NANBAA WAN ANGAAMANEEZIMENTO KOOSI GA>*
that number one anger.management instructor SP
Then, <THE BEST ANGER MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTOR (says)>

12 → *.hhh (0.6) °sore wa naoranai n desu tteyuu°.*
that TP treat:NEG N CP:POL TTEYUU
*.hhh (0.6) °they cannot be treated *tteyuu.*°*

In line 9, the personality says that his wife asked the instructor if it was possible to treat his nature and personality issues (lines 9–10). In the next line 11, he sets up an upcoming punchline. The combination of the incomplete syntax and conspicuous prosodic features creates a moment of suspense and projects a continuation. Then, after an audible inbreath and a 0.6 s pause, he delivers the punchline in a *tteyuu*-ending utterance in a softer whispering voice (line 12). Several multimodal cues assist the interpretation of this *tteyuu*-ending utterance as the punchline: a contrast

between the loud voice (and a decreased speaking rate) leading up to the punchline and the whispering voice in delivering the punchline, an anticipatory audible inbreath and a short pause before the delivery of the punchline, and the use of the word ‘the best’ (*nanbaa wan*) highlighting the implication that the instructor’s answer does not live up to such tagline.

This section illustrated the use of the utterance-final *tteyuu* to deliver a key action in the ongoing speech activity. Its interpretation is guided by the participants’ understanding of the main communicative purpose of the speech activity as well as rich multimodal cues given by the speaker.

4.4 Summary

To summarize the findings, there are three usages of the utterance-final *tteyuu*. The first most general usage is to clarify something expressed in the prior talk. In this usage, *tteyuu* serves as a discourse-pragmatic connective or a discourse marker (Schiffrin 1987) signaling how the current utterance relates to something already expressed without interfering with the talk’s progressivity. As we saw in Excerpts 1, 2, 3, and 4, the clarifying *tteyuu* is deployed to respond to a variety of local contingencies.

The second more specialized usage is to recast the prior talk to focus on, highlight, or explicate a particular aspect of the prior utterance that is relevant to the main communicative purpose of the ongoing speech activity. We saw examples of *tteyuu*-ending utterances being used to recast the interlocutor’s prior utterance from a statement about her preference to one about her take on the discussion topic (Excerpt 5), to highlight the humorous aspect of the already delivered climax when facing inadequate responses from the recipients (Excerpt 6), and to explicate the laughable incongruity of the previously described event (Excerpt 7). These uses of *tteyuu* are activity sensitive and invite pragmatic inferencing that the *tteyuu*-ending utterance is doing something directly relevant to fulfilling the main communicative purpose of the ongoing speech activity.

The third usage of *tteyuu* likely developed from this pragmatic inferencing. In the same specialized speaking environments as the second usage, the *tteyuu*-ending utterances are used to deliver a key action for the ongoing speech activity. Unlike the first two usages, this usage makes an independent move in discourse and thus can be considered an emerging construction. We saw that this usage is accompanied by more salient multimodal contextualization cues than the other two usages. It is also notable that the key action delivering *tteyuu* is only used by four speakers among twenty-nine speakers who used utterance-final *tteyuu* in my data. One speaker used it to deliver a summary of the discussion, as shown in Excerpt 8. Two storytellers

used it to deliver the climax of their stories, one of which was presented in Excerpt 9. And the talk-radio personality used it recurrently to deliver his punchlines, as shown in Excerpt 10.

5 Conclusion

The present study demonstrated the context-dependent nature of linguistic fixedness through the analysis of the utterance-final *tteyuu* and its three related usages in varied speaking situations. Different speaking environments afford different patterns of interaction and language use. Informal conversation affords moment-by-moment development and negotiation of practices and actions among conversational participants who are active interlocutors and whose participatory roles shift dynamically throughout the interaction. In this environment, the utterance-final *tteyuu* has come to be used as a discourse-pragmatic connective to retroactively clarify the preceding utterance in response to different local contingencies. It is important to note that informal conversation can contain other more specialized speech activities such as storytelling and discussion; these activities provide different affordances and constraints than those provided by conversational interaction.

Unlike informal conversation, the specialized speech activities examined in this study (i.e., topic-based discussion, solicited funny storytelling, and talk-radio monologue) have activity-specific overarching goals. Within these environments, the utterance-final *tteyuu* has developed into a rhetorical device to recast the prior unit of talk in a way that highlights its relevance to the main communicative purpose of the speech activity, while its general function is also being utilized. The recasting function seems to have given rise to activity-bound pragmatic inferencing that the *tteyuu*-ending utterance does something essential to achieving the activity-specific communicative purpose, leading to the emergence of a new construction. The use of *tteyuu* to deliver a key action in the specialized speech activities is no longer dependent on the preceding discourse, but it requires sufficient multimodal cues to be contextualized and interpreted appropriately. As such, it is necessary to be rather skillful in adopting the new construction, which may explain why only a few speakers used it in the present study.

The partially overlapping features of the three usages suggest that they make up the network of utterance-final *tteyuu* expressions. At the same time, each usage is inextricably intertwined with its contextual specificities. I believe the key findings add important nuance to our understanding of linguistic formulaicity.

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