PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF NEGATIVE QUESTIONS IN JAPANESE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis suggests improvements on instruction of negative questions. In a given context, the choice of expressions other than negative questions can result in cultural incoherence. Given that the goal of learners is to be able to interact effectively, instruction must facilitate the learning of negative questions.

The learning process of cognitively mature learners of Japanese as a foreign language is conscious and affected by their first language. Since the amount of instruction time is limited, instructional materials should utilize their cognitive maturity.

Both declarative knowledge of what negative questions are and procedural knowledge of how to use negative questions, are necessary. Therefore, instruction should not only provide information, but experience in practice. Although information enables learners to talk about negative questions, their knowledge of negative questions needs to be demonstrated in communication. First, this thesis investigates the important functions of negative questions, and then reviews instructional materials by investigating their efficacy in facilitating the development of declarative and procedural knowledge.

It is found that the speaker’s choice of negative questions over other expressions can be attributed to the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s agreement to his/her proposition, and the speakers’ avoidance of imposition of his/her proposition. Particularly, the latter is important given interaction in Japanese culture. For instance, when what the speaker’s wants to convey in the utterance can threaten communication if expressed with declaratives or imperatives, negative questions should be utilized to maintain an appropriate
distance with the addressee. Instructional materials do not necessarily provide sufficient information for the development of declarative knowledge, and mechanical practice is not always followed by contextualized practice.

I suggest 1) reconsideration of the overall organization of instructional materials, and 2) contextualized practice after mechanical practice. The overall organization, if organized by structural complexity, can avoid introducing expressions similar in the speaker's intent, and enhance the appropriate use of negative questions repeatedly as well as coherently. Practice should be provided under such an organizational principle. Mechanical drills for building lower level skills should be combined with those for higher level skills, enabling learners to demonstrate the appropriate utilization of negative questions in context.
Dedicated to my family
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used to indicate the meaning of grammatical functions.

CND—conditional
COP—copula
CST—consultative
GER—gerund
NEG—negative
NOM—nominal
OBJ—object marker particle
QT—quotative
SBJ—subject marker particle
SFP—sentence final particle
TNT—tentative
TOP—topic marker particle
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Learners of Japanese frequently resort to declarative sentences when expressing their own propositions. Let us observe the following shopping conversation in which a learner is playing a role of a customer (B):

(1) A (clerk): *Hatinya kyuu-en no okaesi desu.*
89 yen of change COP

‘Here is 89 yen in change.’

98 yen COP SFP

‘It’s 98 yen, right?’

Utterance (1)B is syntactically correct, and would most probably prompt a clerk to check whether s/he has miscalculated. In this regard, the learner’s utterance above is useful in order to obtain the correct change. However, native speakers of Japanese find the utterance awkward. Indeed, it is unlikely for native speakers of Japanese to utter (1)B as customers. They are more likely to say (2):

---

1 I will use the romanization used in Japanese: The Spoken Language (Iordan and Noda, 1987-1990). Capitalized words in the gloss indicate the meaning of grammatical functions listed in page ix.
(2) Kyuzyuu hatt-en zyu arimasen ka?

Isn’t it 98 yen?"

Even though learners’ goals in learning Japanese may not lie in the achievement of nativeness, utterances such as (1)B may make it difficult to view the interaction in Japanese with a Japanese speaker smoothly and recognize her/him as a cognitively and socially mature conversation participant. This study examines the pedagogical implications of cases in which choosing to use or not use negative questions is determined by grammatically sound, but culturally incoherent utterances.

Utterance such as (1)B may inhibit comfortable communication in Japanese. Native speakers’ employment of negative questions in the same situation as shown in (2), highlights a more effective communication strategy. Why then do learners not use negative questions in this situation? Do they avoid using negative questions because of their lack of confidence in the construction of negative forms? Are they unaware of negative questions as an effective communication strategy, due to the instruction they have received? Do instructional materials adequately provide explicit information on negative questions? Do they include practice by which learners can develop the ability to use negative questions effectively in communication? The present study investigates whether or not instruction facilitates the knowledge necessary for the effective use of negative questions. The following subsection discusses assumptions made in the present study regarding learners and their goals.

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*The present study limits its scope to negative questions whose proposition is affirmative. Thus, the proposition of (2) is that the change is actually 98 yen.*

2
1.1. Assumptions

1.1.1. Cognitively Mature Learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language

This thesis focuses on cognitively mature learners of Japanese as a foreign language whose first language is English. In this study, the assumed learners of Japanese are differentiated from cognitively less mature counterparts as well as native Japanese speaking children. According to Unger et al. (1993: 8), their learning process is conscious and strongly affected by the linguistic code of their first language, in contrast to those who acquire Japanese outside their awareness. Furthermore, the length of formal instruction that learners receive may be limited. It is a necessary for instruction to optimally facilitate their learning.

The fact that Japanese requires the longest formal instruction among foreign languages taught at the Foreign Service Institute (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982), does not justify simplification of instructional content. Rather, instruction needs to be designed in a way that helps learners build a solid foundation in Japanese on which they will be able to further incorporate new information outside of formal instruction. Ausubel et al. (1978: 82; 343-344) claim that the advantage of the cognitively mature learners lies in the fact that they do not have to rely upon direct experience with many concrete instances in order to gain abstract concepts and generalizations, i.e. the mastery of syntax, the internalization of language, and the acquisition of more abstract and relational terms, as compared to their less cognitively mature counterparts.6 Clearly, instruction should assume and utilize learners' cognitive maturity.

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6 According to Ausubel et al. (1978: 206), the advantage of cognitively mature learners which may become more observable from the junior-high school period onward, lies in their understanding and manipulation of abstract ideas without the benefit of concrete direct experience. However, such intuitive may vary from culture to culture.
While bearing in mind the advantage of cognitive maturity, this study examines the use of negative questions, from the perspective in which language learning is kind of skill learning such as playing sports. While it is important for instruction to efficiently provide sufficient information, skill learning also requires direct experience in practice. Although given information may enable learners to talk about negative questions, their knowledge of negative questions needs to be demonstrated in the course of actual communication. In this respect, both knowledge of what negative questions are as declarative knowledge and knowledge of how to use negative questions as procedural knowledge, are necessary for facilitating optimal learning on the part of the focused learners. The important aspects of knowledge are explained further in Chapter 2.

1.1.2. Goals of Learners

Individual goals for learners may vary from one learner to another. Nevertheless, regardless of their concrete goals, it is important for them to communicate in Japanese as cognitively and socially mature adults, not as a child who is ignorant of the underlying socio-cultural norms. Thus, the basic assumption on the goal of learners is assumed here to be effective interaction as cognitively mature non-native speakers in Japanese. Unger et al. (1993: 16) state,

The purpose of learning Japanese is not to become Japanese, but rather to become an informed foreigner who can function in Japanese society in a way that does not make Japanese feel uncomfortable or otherwise impede the attainment of practical goals, whether in work or in everyday affairs.

Especially in situations which call for negotiation of different assumptions between conversation participants, learners need to be aware of the optimum strategy for comfortable communication. It is often the case that the way disagreement is handled in Japanese is not the same as in their native language. The use of negative questions such as (2), instead of
the culturally incoherent (1)B, illustrates the importance of negative questions for comfortable communication as a learners’ goal.

1.2. Organization

This thesis consists of four chapters: Chapter 2 investigates important functional properties of negative questions and how they should be reflected in instruction, from the perspectives of both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. In order for learners to successfully employ negative questions in real-life situations, it is necessary for them to build both declarative knowledge, explicit and conscious knowledge of definitions of facts about, and rules about negative questions, and knowledge that allows them to produce and interpret negative questions appropriately in given situations without premeditation. Chapter 3 critically reviews the currently available instructional materials which place emphasis on communicative competence, investigating whether they provide ample opportunities for learners to build both declarative and procedural knowledge for comfortable communication. Chapter 4 clarifies the necessity of improving instruction in order to facilitate learners’ use of negative questions.
CHAPTER 2

FUNCTIONS OF NEGATIVE QUESTIONS

This chapter discusses functional properties of negative questions identified in previous studies, and claims that the underlying functions of negative questions are conduciveness and hedging. In the course of discussion, it is identified that politeness and its important role in the use of negative questions in Japanese. I discuss these in relation to declarative and procedural knowledge. Given the goal of learners elaborated in Chapter 1, I discuss how to best facilitate the development of declarative and procedural knowledge for cognitively mature learners’ optimal learning of negative questions. Although both declarative and procedural knowledge are important, Chapter 2 specifically focuses on declarative knowledge of negative questions. In light of the disadvantages and advantages of cognitively mature learners, I assume that it is efficient in the limited length of instruction in the restricted environment to utilize their capacity to understand and manipulate abstract ideas.

2.1. Declarative Knowledge and Procedural Knowledge

As stated in Unger et al. (1993), language learning is skill learning. Learners need to learn the skills necessary to meet their goal, comfortable communication in Japanese. According to Anderson (1985: 232), skill learning occurs in three stages: (i) a cognitive stage, in which a description of the procedure is learned; (ii) an associative stage, in which
a method for performing the skill is worked out; and (iii) an autonomous stage, in which the skill becomes more and more rapid and automatic. Restated from the perspective of declarative and descriptive knowledge, declarative knowledge is established first, on which procedural knowledge is developed.

Anderson (1985: 245) also provides the following analogy: Chess players only become experts after years of playing. In order to enable themselves to focus their problem-solving efforts on sophisticated aspects and strategies of chess, they must store a great deal of information, such as the correct analysis of many positions. Readily, they when necessary, retrieve the stored information. This implies that information on negative questions needs to be retained as stable knowledge and it must be readily retrievable.

2.1.1. Building Declarative Knowledge

As Ausubel et al. (1978: 67-68) claim, new information is built and retained as declarative knowledge for learners' utilization in the future when it is linked nonarbitrarily to what has already been internalized. Thus, it is important for new information to be presented in such a way that the interaction takes place between what is new and relevant existing ideas. The way new information is processed demands a delineation of similarities and differences between the new information and what has been learned previously. In the case that the new information and ideas are unstructured or poorly organized, it is not likely to be retained as stable knowledge:

If, for example, the learner cannot discriminate between new idea A' and old idea A, A' does not really exist for him; it is phenomenologically the same as A. Furthermore, even if the learner can discriminate between A and A' at the moment of learning, the discrimination must be sharp and free from ambiguity and confusion. If not, there will be a tendency over time for A' to be reduced to A (as the two ideas interact during the retention interval) more rapidly than is usually the case. (Ausubel, 1978: 193)
Therefore, we need to define the functions of negative questions in a clear and unambiguous fashion so that declarative knowledge about communication in Japanese can be built and retained stably.

Given that learners may have been exposed to various expressions which may appear to convey the same intention on the part of speaker, it is important to clarify what underlies the choice of negative questions over other expressions. Hence, we need to examine negative questions by differentiating them from other expressions.

2.1.2. Developing Procedural Knowledge

Suppose information on functional properties of negative questions is built as declarative knowledge by learners. Declarative knowledge by itself is not sufficient for comfortable communication, something which can be easily determined by observing performance. The goal of language learning is for learners to reach the stage in which language performance becomes increasingly smooth with less errors. In other words, the retrieval of the obtained knowledge needs to be smooth and fast for comfortable communication. For learners to use negative questions in such a way that it enables them to create and sustain comfortable communication in Japanese, they need to develop procedural knowledge which enables utilization of the provided information with less conscious efforts. Anderson (1985: 233) states:

If we look at novices - someone trying to communicate in an unfamiliar language... difficult and quite novel problem domains for novices. Through practice, however, we have become relatively expert.

Similarly, Ausubel et al. (1978: 311) point out the importance of multiple presentations or trials for retention and utilization during practice for the development of procedural knowledge:
Both learning process and outcome customarily encompass various qualitative and quantitative changes that take place during these several trials. Learning and retention, therefore, ordinarily imply practice. Such practice, is typically specific (restricted to the learning task) and deliberate (intentional).

The next section, therefore, explores the nature of practice which can facilitate the development of procedural knowledge.

2.1.2.1. Nature of Practice

For efficient retrieval of procedural knowledge, practice should be planned and organized in a way that maximizes its availability. Redundancy in practice reinforces newly given information and enhances its availability during actual communication. In this way, information is retained as the anchoring knowledge which is applicable to various contexts. Given that newly presented information is related to and differentiated from what has been already learned, ideally, each segment of knowledge should be internalized before the subsequent information is presented. It is such anchoring knowledge that functions as a reliable foundation for learners’ performance at a later date because it enhances the learner’s responsiveness to subsequent presentations of a similar context, and facilitates their learning and retention of related new information. Adequate stabilization of the gained knowledge is necessary for it to be utilized for different contextual elements.

As for the broader applicability of knowledge of negative questions, the more learners associate contextual elements with obtained knowledge, the more likely they will be to recognize similar contextual elements in real-life situations. Contexts in which negative questions are studied should correspond to real-life situations. The degree of availability of the obtained knowledge on real life situations depends on the similarity between the situation and the contexts in which the knowledge is gained.

The development of procedural knowledge does not occur incidentally. New materials should be introduced with an assumption of mastery of all previous steps.
According to Ausubel et al. (1978: 197), it is achieved through confirmation, correction, clarification, differential practice, and review in the course of repeated exposure. Redundancy which promotes the development of procedural knowledge refers not only to the repeated practice of the identical targeted segment, but also includes repeated practice of the same segment as a component of the different targeted segments in different contexts. Considering skills as consisting of segmental subskills, as argued by Gagne (1973), each of the subskills should be obtained in a hierarchy in which the lower level skills are prerequisites for the higher level skills.

In order for the development of procedural knowledge to be facilitated, practice should be carefully organized and structured in the following manner. First, sequencing of practice must allow learners to encounter similar contexts repeatedly, and gradually encounter different contexts in which negative questions should be utilized. Second, practice for lower level skills and higher level skills need to be hierarchically organized in such a way that they are repeatedly utilized in the targeted negative questions. The lower level skills, for example, transformation from one syntactic form to another, must be practiced first. These should be used as a subskill for the higher level skills, such as employing negative questions appropriately in context.

2.2. Information on Negative Questions for Declarative Knowledge

Foreign language learning by cognitively mature learners can be heavily influenced by English. This study assumes that such learners benefit from conscious utilization of their knowledge of English in instruction. In this respect, they are different from, for instance, their younger counterparts who may not need to use English as a medium to acquire Japanese.

Automaticity in the targeted skill, for example, transforming a declarative sentence into a negative question, may be attained through practice without explicit knowledge of
meaning of negative questions. In real-life situations, what is required in communication is more than such a skill in isolation. The appropriate use of negative questions in context necessitates that such segmental skills be integrated with other skills. What is more, it is important to know when to choose negative questions over other expressions. Practice of each skill in isolation is useful for building the basis of, but by itself is insufficient for the appropriate choice of negative questions. Without explicit information on negative questions in Japanese, it is possible that learners may rely on their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge of English. Given the limited amount of formal instruction in the restricted environment for direct experience that cognitively mature learners receive, they should benefit from the development of procedural knowledge on the basis of declarative knowledge. Assuming the importance of declarative knowledge, this chapter investigates the functions of negative questions as useful information for learners in building declarative knowledge.

In the following sections we review accounts from previous studies of negative questions in terms of the functions of negative questions, namely, conduciveness (Hudson, 1975), reintroduction of the speaker’s proposition (Inoue 1994, 1996), and politeness (Shibatani, 1972). There are overlapping areas in Inoue’s (1994, 1996) accounts with both Hudson’s (1975) and Shibatani’s (1972). In relation to Shibatani’s (1972) argument about politeness, we find Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) proposal on politeness useful in describing the use of negative questions. The speaker hedges by the use of negative questions to maintain the appropriate politeness level. What we find particularly important here is that, politeness is defined in terms of social position and group affiliation in Japanese culture as claimed by Matsumoto (1988).

2.2.1. Conduciveness

This section examines what underlies negative questions by comparing them to affirmative yes-no questions. Hudson (1975) claims that negative questions in English
manifest the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s response i.e., they are conducive to the addressee’s response.

Hudson (1975) analyzes yes-no questions in English, and uses the term, “conduciveness” to indicate the presence of the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s response to his/her proposition. According to Hudson, the difference between the two sentences below lies in conduciveness:

(5) Do you stock Heinz baby-foods?
(4) Don’t you stock Heinz baby-foods?

(Hudson: 1975, 17)

Utterance (3), which is non-conducive, indicates that the speaker does not presuppose [stocking Heinz baby-foods] is true, and the addressee is free to answer “yes” or “no” on the basis of all the information available to the addressee. On the other hand, in (4), which is conducive, the speaker presupposes that the addressee does or does not stock Heinz baby-foods, and based on this s/he anticipates the addressee’s response. Hudson’s account highlights the factors which underlie the choice of negative questions over affirmative yes-no questions.

English speaking native learners’ existing knowledge of the difference between sentences (3) and (4) may be useful in helping them to realize the difference between the Japanese equivalents of (3) and (4), which are listed as (5) and (6) respectively. Observe the sentences below:

(5) Haintu no bebii-hoodoo arimaazu ka?
Heinz of baby-foods exist SFP

(6) Haintu no bebii-hoodoo animasen ka?
Heinz of baby-foods exist-NEG SFP
If we apply Hudson’s claim to (5) and (6), both of which have the same propositional content, (6) is considered conducive. A negative question, (6) implies the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s agreement to the propositional content.

Kuno (1973), Angels et al. (1999), Nitta (1991), Nakada (1980), and McGloin (1972) make similar accounts of negative questions in Japanese. Kuno (1973) claims that “anticipation of a positive answer” is one of the underlying functions of negative questions (see also Angles et al., 1999). Nitta (1991) calls it “negative questions with a positive bias”. Also, Nakada (1980) claims that negative questions are questions which anticipate agreement with the speaker’s propositional content; the speaker anticipates or presupposes the addressee’s affirmative response to the propositional content. For instance, given this anticipation (i.e., conducive), the speaker puts the proposition in a negative question as in (6).

McGloin (1972) points out that negative questions indicate the speaker’s emotional attitudes (i.e., surprise, disappointment, etc.) toward what the speaker assumes to be incompatible with his/her proposition by which the speaker suggests the addressee consider changing the addressee’s mind. Observe the following:

(7) Inu wa kitune yori rikoo desu ka?
dog TOP fox than smart COP SFP

‘Are dogs smarter than foxes?’

(8) Inu wa kitune yori rikoo yu arimasen ka?
dog TOP fox than smart COP-NEG SFP

‘Aren’t dogs smarter than foxes?’ (McGloin, 1972: 125)

*‘Hainau no hehii-hondo arimasen ka’ is not within the scope of this study since its proposition is negative (see Footnote 2 in Chapter 1, p. 1).
McGloin claims that (7) is an ordinary information-seeking question, while in (8) the speaker believes that dogs are smarter than foxes, and seeks the addressee’s agreement. In other words, the speaker assumes that the addressee may not be aware of the truth value of the propositional content, and the speaker’s disappointment or surprise is conveyed by the negative question, anticipating the addressee’s affirmative response to the proposition. The proposition is considered incompatible with what s/he assumes from the contextual information available (i.e., the addressee is not aware that dogs are smarter than foxes). Inoue (1994, 1996) also explains negative questions in terms of the speaker’s anticipation, focusing more on such incompatibility, that is, the speaker’s assumption about conflicts between his/her propositional content and contextual information.

2.2.2. Reintroduction of the Speaker’s Proposition

Inoue (1994, 1996) claims that one of the functions of negative questions is “possibility-evoking”\(^5\). According to him, the speaker uses negative questions as a means to bring up the proposition about which s/he has a doubt about whether it is true or not. The speaker assumes that the truth value of his/her proposition has been denied in context. S/he uses the negative element when s/he puts the proposition into question despite his/her doubt about the truth value of the proposition in context. There is a conflict between a speaker’s proposition and the context which has already been established up until the point of the speaker’s utterance of a negative question. Observe the following:\(^5\):

\(^5\) Inoue (1994, 1996) divides negative questions into two types: 1) genuine yes-no questions (genuine YNQs), and 2) possibility-evoking questions (PEQs). This thesis focuses upon the latter (see Chapter 1).

\(^5\) Bracketed parts in examples are the same as those in Inoue (1996). **Hontou wa** is used to clarify the speaker’s proposition in (9)(3A). In contrast, **hontou ni** is used to ask about the truth value of information that has been asserted or implied in the preceding context (1996: 280). Observe the following: **Sonou koto itte, hontou ni (saimakamari) ka?**

“You say that (you are not cold), but is it that you aren’t really cold?”

14
(9) 1A: *Kono heya suki ni [samui] ka?*
    this room a little cold SFP
    'Is this room a little cold?'

2B: *Iya, sonna ni [samukunai] yo.*
    no that extent cold-NEG SFP
    'No, I don’t feel that cold, you know.'

3A: *Sonua koto itte, honoo wa [samuku]nai ka?*
    that kind of thing say-GER truth TG cold-NEG SFP
    'You say so, (but) really, isn’t it that you are cold?'

(Inoue, 1996: 281-282)

Speaker A’s proposition, the room being cold, has been denied by B’s utterance. In spite of the excluded possibility of [samui] in context, A does not discard his/her original proposition. In other words, judging from B’s appearance, A hypothesizes that B is cold even though this hypothesis conflicts with B’s preceding utterance. Then A reintroduces the possibility of B being cold into context, and asks whether A’s proposition (i.e., affirmative assumption) is not true with a negative question.

Inoue’s example indicates that negative questions ask whether or not the affirmative proposition is true rather than ask about the negative proposition. This is in spite of the surface form presented by the speaker in the syntactic form including a negative element. Despite the speaker’s acknowledgment of the denied possibility of having his/her proposition implemented, s/he does not discard his/her affirmative proposition and presents it in the form of a negative question. The speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s acknowledgment of his/her proposition underlies negative questions. In this regard, we can consider reintroduction of the proposition as an example of conduciveness.

Inoue attributes the employment of the negative question in the following example to what Inoue calls “reintroduction of the speaker’s proposition (i.e., evoking the
possibility denied in context" which conflicts with the context which is not limited to the addressee’s preceding utterance:

(10) *Sumimassen ga, kore o eegoni yakuite moraemasen ka?*  
excuse-NEG but this OBJ English into translate-GER give-can-NEG SFP

‘Can’t I have you translate this manuscript into English?’

(Inoue, 1996: 285)

According to him, the speaker presupposes that the possibility of implementation of the proposition by the addressee may be denied at the level of the intention of the addressee. The speaker assumes that his/her request may not be accepted because it will give the addressee some trouble. Nevertheless, the speaker brings up the proposition. According to Inoue, the proposition is introduced first in the assumption of the speaker, which is reintroduced in his/her actual utterance as a negative question. In other words, the speaker does not completely discard the proposition even though the speaker is conscious of the possibility of having the proposition denied at the level of the addressee’s intention.

Unlike the negative question in (9), what conflicts with the speaker’s proposition is not the addressee’s preceding utterance, but the speaker’s assumption about the addressee’s intention (i.e., whether or not the addressee has the intention of translating the manuscript into English). Jorden and Noda (1987: 33) also point out the use of negative questions from the perspective of the speaker’s assumption. According to Jorden and Noda, there are cases in which the speaker uses negative questions to check on the possibility of a negative situation contrary to the speaker’s underlying assumptions. How the speaker interprets unverbalized information which is related to the addressee in context, also plays an important role in the use of negative questions. In (10), what is it that makes the speaker assume that the propositional content is something troublesome to the addressee? Inoue calls negative questions such as (10) ‘reserved request’ by which he means the speaker’s
reservation when making requests. The speaker's hesitation to trouble the addressee, relates to politeness, an important concept which affects the way the speaker perceives contexts.

2.2.3. Politeness

Scholars who examine negative questions in Japanese have often discussed the use of negative questions from the perspective of politeness. Shibatani (1972), for instance, claims that the motivation for the use of negative questions lies in the speaker's avoidance of imposing his/her proposition. The negative form implies politeness in making a suggestion or request because the speaker is not making a positive assumption about his/her suggestion or request. According to Shibatani's account, it is not polite to imply the speaker's positive assumption about the suggestion or request because the effect of such an assumption obligates the addressee to follow the suggestion or accept the request. Let us observe again the examples presented in Chapter 1:

(1)A (clerk): *Hatizyu kuuyu-en no okaesi desu.*

89 yen of change COP

'Here is 89 yen in change.'

B (customer): *Kyuuyu kuuyu-en desu ne.*

98 yen COP SFP

'It's 98 yen, right?'

(2) *Kyuuyu kuuyu-en zya arimasen ka?*

98 yen exist-NEG SFP

'Isn't it 98 yen?'

Despite the same intention (i.e., the change is supposed to be 98 yen.), (1)B differs from (2) in terms of politeness. The expression of the speaker's intention in (1)B is more explicit
than in (2), which avoids imposing the intention. Hence, according to Shibatani’s (1972) claim, (2) is more polite.

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) provide a universal account of politeness and include Japanese examples. They relax the speaker’s avoidance of imposition to politeness. In their claim, a willful fluent speaker of a natural language, a Model Person (MP), is considered to possess ‘rationality’ and ‘face’. They explain these terms as follows:

By ‘rationality’ we mean something very specific—the availability to our MP of a precisely definable mode of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends. By ‘face’ we mean something quite specific again: our MP is endowed with two particular wants—roughly, the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of certain respects. (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 58)

Linguistic strategies used by MP are means to satisfy communicative and face-oriented ends. The notion of ‘face’ is derived from ‘socially-given self-image’, which is explained by Goffman (1967). Due to the mutual vulnerability of face, MPs try to act in such a way that they maintain each other’s face. ‘Face’ is the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of the negative face and the positive face which are two related aspects of basic wants. The negative face is the want of having his/her action unimpeded by others. For instance, it includes the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The positive face is the want of having his/her wants desirable to at least some others; people expect positive reactions to their desires from others. Given the negative and positive faces, a MP wants appreciation and approval of his/her self-image.

There are face-threatening acts (hereafter, FTAs) which intrinsically threaten the above mentioned face by running contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker. In the case that the speaker does not avoid impeding the addressee’s freedom of action, the addressee’s negative-face want is threatened. When the speaker indicates that
he/she does not care about the addressee’s feelings and wants, the addressee’s positive face is threatened. Orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, warnings, offers, promises, compliments, and expressions of hatred, criticism, and disagreement can be potential FTAs.

As it is mutually beneficial for MPs as the interlocutors to maintain each other’s face, they try to minimize FTAs by choosing an appropriate strategy, that is, avoidance of FTAs or performing a redressive act along with FTAs. The latter strategy is explained in terms of politeness. The redressive action to the addressee’s negative face is interpreted as negative politeness whereas that directed to the addressee’s positive face wants indicates positive politeness.

The following examples indicate that the use of negative questions is accounted for by the maintenance of negative face. Unlike (11), (12) indicates the speaker’s avoidance of imposing his/her expectation of the addressee’s affirmative response, as claimed by Shibatani (1972).

(11) Koko ni kaitē kudasai.
here in write-GER give
‘Please write it here.’

(12) Koko ni kaitē kudasaimasen ka?
here in write-GER give-NEG SFP
‘Won’t you write it here?’

The propositional content of (11) and (12) are same, (12) is interpreted as a request rather than as a question. However, (11), though a request, almost functions as a command, imposing an affirmative reaction on the proposition, whereas (12) leaves room for the possibility of a negative response. The avoidance of imposition of the proposition which is observed in (10) is accounted for by negative politeness postulated by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Similarly, Kabuya et al. (1998) state that the important function of showing
politeness can be served by an utterance that appears as if the speaker has left the addressee the right to decide whether to comply with the proposition or not (thus giving the sense that the speaker has not imposed the proposition). They propose that the level of politeness is determined by the following: (i) who implements the propositional content; (ii) who is in the position to decide whether the propositional content is implemented or not; and (iii) who receives the benefit by the implementation of the propositional content. Politeness is conveyed most saliently when it is indicated that the speaker intends to implement the propositional content, leaves the decision to the addressee as to whether it is to be implemented or not, and implies the speaker's own benefit from its implementation. (11) and (12) above are the same with respect to two of the three conditions above (i.e., (i) and (iii)). However, (12) is more polite in that it is not the speaker but the addressee (at least on the surface) that is in the position to decide upon the implementation of the propositional content. Both imply that the addressee is the one to carry out the propositional content, by which the speaker receives the benefit. On the other hand, the imperative form in (11) makes the sentence sound as if it were the speaker that decides whether the addressee implements the propositional content or not. The level of politeness in (12) in comparison to (11) is realized in the speaker's hedging to avoid imposing the proposition.

Based on Kabaya et al.'s account, let us reexamine examples (1) and (2), from the perspective of politeness:

(1) A (clerk): Hatizyu kyuu-en 89 yen of change COP

no okaesi desu.

"Here is 89 yen in change."

1 In accordance with Japanese: The Spoken Language (Jordan and Nida, 1987-1990), kudasai is considered as the distal-style imperative form of the polite verbal kudasaru.
98 yen COP SFP

'It's 98 yen, right?'

(2) Kyuuzuu hani-en zyu arimasu ka?
98 yen exist-NEG SFP

'Isn't it 98 yen?'

Utterance (2) is more polite than (1)B in that (2) gives the addressee the right to decide whether or not to respond affirmatively to the speaker's proposition (i.e., the change is supposed to be 98 yen.).

Closeness of the conversation participants also influences the effect of using and not using negative questions. In the following example of exchange between two close friends, (13)B is more acceptable than (1)B, despite the speaker's proposition being the same.

(13) A: Hatozyuu kyuus -en kouzu no.
89 yen return SFP

'Here is 89 yen (which I borrowed).'

B: Kyuuzuu hati-en.
98 yen

'(You borrowed) 98 yen.'

(14) Kyuuzuu hani-en zyu -nai?
98 yen COP NEG

'It is 98 yen, isn't it?'

From the perspective of the speaker's avoidance of imposition, (14) is more polite than (13)B. However, (13)B though not a negative question, is more acceptable than (1)B, which is uttered instead of a negative question. The difference between (13)B and (1)B lies in the speech style. (13)B is direct and (1)B is distal. The direct-style in (13)B makes it perceived as less polite than its distal-style counterpart. As Jorden and Noda (1987: i64)
state, speech styles reflect the degree of closeness and the level of formality the speaker feels toward the addressee. The speaker’s choice of distal-style is based on his/her perception of the appropriate distance toward the addressee. The different relationship between the assigned roles of the interlocutors demands a different level of politeness. For instance, the expected politeness level between a clerk and a customer differs from that between close friends. The degree of closeness and level of formality expected in the relationships determine the appropriate distance which should be maintained. The relationship between close friends does not require as much distance as that between a clerk and a customer. Thus, especially in the latter case, the employment of negative questions is necessary for the maintenance of the appropriate distance to the addressee.

We have observed the underlying politeness of the speaker’s avoidance of imposition of his/her proposition in negative questions. The different acceptability of negative questions’ declarative counterparts in the direct and distal-style which reflect the speaker’s perception of his/her relationship with the addressee indicates that negative questions are closely related to the maintenance of the appropriate distance from the addressee. In other words, the speaker employs negative questions as a means of maintaining the appropriate distance to the addressee by avoiding imposing his/her proposition.

The use of negative questions as a means for communication, thus, assumes the knowledge of nature of interpersonal relationship in Japanese culture. Matsumoto (1988: 418) argues that any utterance in Japanese necessitates appropriate morphological or lexical choices which depend on the interpersonal relationship between the conversational participants. Matsumoto discusses social positions and group affiliation, which are important in determining politeness in Japanese.
2.3.1. Social Position and Group Affiliation

Matsumoto (1998) highlights the importance of the notion of group in Japan, arguing that Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) do not fully take into account the important role of social context in politeness in Japanese. According to her, Japanese is a society in which relative social positions are assigned to individuals who are identified according to the group they belong to. What is to be maintained is one’s self-image as a group member rather than that as an individual, given that a person is expected to act properly according to his/her relative position or rank in relation to other members of the group.

First, Matsumoto presents sociological and anthropological studies of Japanese. She refers to Nakane (1967, 1972), who claims that Japanese society is a ‘vertical society’ in which the primary relations are among persons who are related to each other hierarchically within a social grouping such as a household, a company, or a university. In a vertical society, it is important for a person to become and remain accepted by the other members of the group. Matsumoto also uses Doi’s (1971, 1973) concept of amae (i.e., a feeling of dependency whose prototype is an infant’s want of his/her mother’s affection) to confirm that in Japanese culture a person tries to be accepted by others rather than insisting on his/her own territory. It can be said that the characteristic of Japanese society in which acceptance by others is of importance is manifested by the “conformity training” which was observed in conversations between Japanese two-year-old children and their mothers by Clancy (1986). Lebra (1976) explains interdependency among members in Japanese society as bue (lit. portion, share, part, or fraction) holders. An individual as a bue holder is conceived as a fraction within a society as a whole. Thus, a bue-holder’s action becomes meaningful and comprehended only in relation to others. With these observations, she emphasizes the importance of the social positions defined by the group in Japanese.

Second, Matsumoto also examines formulaic expressions, honorifics, and the verbs of giving and receiving as manifestations of cultural principles underlying Japanese
linguistic behavior. That is, these expressions have functions which reinforce the impression that behavior is in accordance with the social expectations of a situation, and demonstrate the speaker's understanding of the sociocultural system. Those expressions provide linguistic evidence that various aspects of social factors are encoded in communication, such as relationships between the interlocutors, the referents, the bystanders, and the setting.

Using the sociological and anthropological studies of Japanese as well as analyses based on linguistic evidence, Matsumoto explains that it is important to acknowledge and maintain the relative social position of others which is defined by group in Japanese society.

In light of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, negative questions can function as a strategy to maintain the addressee's negative-face want by avoiding imposing the speaker's proposition which can be face-threatening. Whether or not the propositional content is face-threatening, though, is determined not simply in terms of the maintenance of territory of any individual. (11) is appropriate when uttered by a lecturer to ask his/her graduate teaching assistants to write down students' grades. However, (12) becomes more appropriate than (11) when the assigned roles of interlocutors are reversed. Since the concept of individual is based on group affiliation in namely, the case of Japanese, it is necessary to take into account what Matsumoto (1988) emphasizes, the relative social positions of interlocutors as determinants of the appropriate distance. It is particularly important for such appropriate distance, not just between any individuals, to be maintained by politeness manifested, for instance, in the employment of negative questions as hedging.
2.2.4. Underlying Functions: Conduciveness and Hedging

I have identified what underlies the employment of negative questions, namely, conductiveness and the speaker’s avoidance of imposition, namely, hedging. As observed in the overlapping areas of Inoue’s (1994, 1996) accounts of both conductiveness and hedging, conductiveness and hedging cannot be completely separated into two distinct entities.

Such utterances as (6) and (9), whose propositional contents are not particularly face-threatening, highlight conductiveness of negative questions, in that the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s affirmative response to the proposition is more salient, compared to their affirmative counterparts.

When the propositional content can be face-threatening as in (1) and (10), the speaker hedges using negative questions in order to avoid imposing his/her proposition because s/he presupposes that it is not appropriate for the proposition to be expressed as obvious anticipation of the addressee’s affirmative response. In contrast with other forms such as declarative and imperative, the speaker’s avoidance of imposition of his/her proposition makes negative questions more polite. Negative questions reflect avoidance of imposition of the proposition on the addressee with whom distance must be maintained. In the situations in which the speaker assumes his/her proposition can impede the appropriate distance determined by the relative social positions between interlocutors, for instance, when making requests and indicating disagreements, it is important for communication strategies, such as negative questions as hedging, to be effectively employed. Given the patterns of interaction in Japanese culture which value and maintain “conformity”, as stated by Clancy (1986), it is especially necessary for learners to be provided with explicit information on negative questions as hedging.

The following considerations are important in order to facilitate the development of declarative knowledge of negative questions. First, the speaker’s propositional content
should be clear for the choice of negative questions over affirmative yes-no questions. Second, the choice of negative questions needs to be clarified from the perspective of politeness. The speaker chooses negative questions as a means to avoid imposing his/her propositional content when s/he presupposes it is not polite to put the proposition in such expressions as declaratives and imperatives. Taking these two into consideration, negative questions need to be presented within an exchange in which the contextual information is clear instead of as isolated entities. Specifically, the contextual information must identify the propositional content and relative social positions of interlocutors which are manifested in the speech style.

2.3. Pedagogical Implications

Chapter 1 has distinguished language learning by cognitively mature learners of Japanese and first language acquisition by Japanese native speakers. Cognitively mature learners of Japanese assumed in this thesis are in a different psychological position and environment from that of native speakers who acquire Japanese as their first language. As Jorden (1987: 8) states:

When an adult American studies a foreign language, that person automatically and inevitably works through an American linguistic and cultural filter. The basic vocabulary and syntactic code of English as learners first language, and the cultural mindset which they have already mastered, affect their learning of Japanese. Without explicit information on negative questions in Japanese, learners may depend on their knowledge of English, which can result in culturally incoherent utterances such as (1)b.

Learners have limited time for formal instruction. On the other hand, their cognitive maturity does not require concrete-empirical experience to digest and utilize every abstract
concept. It is more economical and efficient for instructions to utilize their cognitive capability so that they obtain declarative knowledge which serves as a foundation for further learning. Ausubel et al. (1978: 149) state that:

Subject matter can be adequately organized and programmed, relevant ideas can be identified in available cognitive structure, material can be presented lucidly, misconceptions can be corrected promptly, and suitably motivated students can learn meaningfully and pay attention to such considerations that students can retain over a lifetime most of the important ideas they learned in school. At the very least one would expect them to be able to relearn, in short order and with relatively little effort, most of what they have forgotten.

As discussed in this chapter, the importance of facilitating learners’ employment of negative questions for comfortable communication lies in the attunements of both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Instruction needs to provide the following, undermining learners’ cognitive maturity: i) explanation of functions of negative questions in comparison with other expressions which appear to convey similar propositional content; ii) ample presentations of negative questions in contexts which clarify propositional contents rather than as isolated sentence; iii) contextual information which identifies the relationships and relative social ranks of interlocutors; and iv) sequencing by which skills and subskills are consolidated for the smooth application of negative questions.

Due to differing local conditions, it is difficult for classroom instruction on negative questions to be investigated in this study. Instructional materials, however, are limited in number and less subject to the differences which may arise from instructional styles of individuals. By examining negative questions in a set of instructional material as a whole, it is possible to identify whether the functional properties of negative questions are clarified, or they are treated as a derived form of yes-no questions and/or an extension of inflec-tional patterns of predicates. Even in the case that the functions of negative questions are well-articulated, instructional materials may not necessarily provide sufficient useful practice to
make such knowledge usable with the automaticity which is necessary for comfortable communication. Thus, instructional materials used at the tertiary level should be reviewed from the perspective of declarative and procedural knowledge crucial for the attainment of the goal of learners.

2.4. Summary

Learners need to build both declarative and procedural knowledge. In order for them to engage in and sustain comfortable communication in Japanese, it is necessary for information on negative questions to be built as declarative knowledge, on which, ideally, procedural knowledge is developed through practice. Bearing in mind the importance of clarity and stability of declarative knowledge of negative questions as a solid foundation, this chapter has identified the functional properties of negative questions by differentiating them from other expressions such as declaratives and imperatives.

It is not a negative question as an isolated sentence but one presented as a meaningful unit in context that articulates the functional properties. Analyses on negative questions only from the perspective of the presence of the negative element in a yes-no question or that of a conventionalized phrase of politeness may not suffice to facilitate the development of declarative knowledge.

Underlying functions of negative questions, namely, conduciveness and hedging, have been discussed. When compared to affirmative yes-no questions, conduciveness (i.e., the speaker's anticipation of the addressee's affirmative response to the proposition) is observed in the use of negative questions. In addition, politeness required for the maintenance of the relationship between interlocutors motivates the employment of negative questions as a means to hedge to avoid imposing the proposition. Given the patterns of interaction in Japanese culture, politeness implied by "hedging" negative questions functions as an effective strategy when other expressions such as declaratives and
imperatives can threaten comfortable communication. Thus, it is important for learners to be provided with information on the appropriate use of negative questions, especially ones with hedging functions. In order for the information to be effectively assimilated as declarative knowledge, propositional contents, and relationships between and relative social ranks of the interlocutors are clearly presented.

Information given by explicit explanations of negative questions helps learners gain knowledge about negative questions as a necessary tool for communication in Japanese. Although such knowledge enables learners to analyze various negative questions they encounter, the analyses by themselves do not enable them to utilize negative questions smoothly in communication. In order for negative questions to be produced for comfortable communication, learners need to have opportunities in which they can put the built knowledge into practice in context. This process of utilization may require repetition for smooth delivery that is expected in communication in real-life situations. Both declarative and procedural knowledge of negative questions are crucial for the successful attainment of the goal of learners. Declarative knowledge requires the explicit explanation on functional properties of negative questions, and procedural knowledge is developed through practice in appropriate contexts in which the propositional content and the roles assigned to interlocutors are clear. The opportunities for practice can never be too numerous for the enhancement of the automaticity that is necessary for comfortable communication.
CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a critical review of instructional materials used in the United States for cognitively mature learners of Japanese as a foreign language, in accordance with the pedagogical implications stated in Chapter 2. Doing so will lead us to suggestions for the future improvement on instructional materials which would facilitate learners' employment of negative questions for comfortable communication in Japanese.

Chapter 2 has discussed the important role played by declarative and procedural knowledge for learners' use of negative questions. Language learning is a type of skill learning whose indispensable components are declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Thus, it is necessary that instructional materials facilitate the development of both declarative and procedural knowledge, here, particularly, in the use of negative questions. The information on functions of negative questions needs to be explicit enough for a solid foundation for actual communication in real-life situations. Such a solid foundation becomes obtainable when it is possible for the information on negative questions to be related to as well as differentiated from other expressions. When the speaker anticipates the addressee's affirmative response to his/her proposition, we can observe conduciveness in his/her choice of negative questions rather than affirmative yes-no questions. Furthermore, what is more important in order for learners to communicate in
Japanese, especially in situations in which the speaker's proposition can impede the appropriate relationship with the addressee, is the function of negative questions as hedging. Politeness which is implied by the speaker's avoidance of imposition of his/her proposition for the maintenance of the appropriate distance from the addressee, motivates the use of negative questions as an effective communication strategy. Information on negative questions, for instance, the functions of negative questions we have discussed, is beneficial for cognitively mature learners to efficiently build declarative knowledge. In order for learners to utilize the given information in actual communication, procedural knowledge must be developed.

We will investigate whether instructional materials are effectively designed to facilitate the development of declarative and procedural knowledge on which learners build further skills for application of negative questions as a communication strategy in real life situations. From this perspective, we can observe in instructional materials different levels of the presentation of negative questions. At the lowest level, there are cases in which examples of negative questions exist but whose differences from other expressions are ambiguous. For instance, let us consider the presentation of negative questions as isolated sentences without contextual information, those as a derived form of yes-no questions which are often explained as an extension of inflectional patterns. Lacking in sufficient contextual information to clarify the speaker’s proposition and the appropriate distance from the addressee, such a presentation does not clarify the underlying motivation for the speaker's employment of negative questions. In another level, the explicit explanation for negative questions is simplified. For instance, information of negative questions as different conventional phrases makes them usable only in limited contexts. At the above two levels, efficacy of practice is limited to skills in isolation such as production of negative questions from declaratives. Next, despite information on negative questions on which declarative knowledge can be built, there is no means for the development of procedural
knowledge. Efficient retrieval and utilization of the gained information, which is indispensable for smooth communication, requires opportunities for the information to be put into practice. At the optimum level, functions of negative questions are clarified with sufficient contextual information in relation to and delineated from other expressions. The explanation is carefully sequenced so that negative questions can be used in an integrated fashion while subsuming newly introduced elements. Such clear and coherent explanation enables information about negative questions to be built as declarative knowledge. Practices are sequenced from mechanical ones to those which require utilization of negative questions in contexts.

We will review instructional materials based upon the description of each level of the presentation of negative questions. In other words, our focus is on the following:

i) explanations of functions of negative questions in comparison with other expressions which appear to be similar in the speaker’s intention;

ii) presentations of negative questions within exchanges, rather than as isolated sentences, to clarify the propositional content, with contextual information which identifies the appropriate distance between interlocutors;

iii) sequencing of practice by which lower level skills are integrated into higher level skills for the smooth application of negative questions.

The first and second are important for the attainment of declarative knowledge of negative questions. Without the third, which leads to procedural knowledge, the first and second cannot be readily utilized for comfortable communication in real-life situations.

3.2. Instructional materials

We will review the following instructional materials: Nakama (Makino, Hatasa and Hatasa, 1998), Japanese for Busy People Volumes I through III (Association for Japanese-Language Teaching 1995-1997), YooKoso! Volumes 1 and 2 (Tohsaku, 1994-1995)

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Situational Functional Japanese Volumes I through III (Tsukuba Language Group, 1991-1992), and Japanese: The Spoken Language Part 1 through 3 (Jorden and Noda, 1987-1990). These instructional materials have been chosen because their pedagogical principles assert the importance of communicative competence in Japanese. For instance, Nakanishi states that "... our textbook is very much concerned with the learner's level of proficiency in using Japanese for realistic, communicative purposes" (xiv). Japanese for Busy People emphasizes natural and authentic linguistic patterns actually used in Japanese communication (Vol. I, II, and III, viii). According to Tohsaku, Yookoso! has been developed according to two basic premises: (1) proficient communication is the goal of foreign language instruction; and (2) language's primary function is to allow people to communicate, interact, and negotiate meaning (1994, 1995, xiii), and the main purpose of the materials is to teach students how to use language in real-life situations for different communicative purposes (1994, 1995, xviii). Situational Functional Japanese states in its preface (Vol. One: Notes) that it aims primarily at enabling learners to acquire a basic ability to communicate with Japanese people in Japanese, with two main objectives in mind: providing grammatical knowledge and teaching communication skills. Noda states that the collection of instructional materials based on and including Japanese: The Spoken Language help learners develop an understanding of the Japanese language as a system of communication in Japanese society (Noda, 1998a: 5).

As we have observed, negative questions play an important role as a strategy for comfortable communication in Japanese, in that the speaker's employment of negative questions provides a means to convey his/her proposition without conflicts with Japanese socio-cultural norms. Hence, the importance of negative questions as a strategy for communication must be reflected in the instructional materials.

*For consistency' sake, I will continue to use the romanization used in Japanese: The Spoken Language (Jorden and Noda, 1987-1995) for examples in this chapter, even if they are from the other instructional...
3.3. Declarative Knowledge Development

This section examines whether or not the selected instructional materials effectively provide explicit information on negative questions based on which learners build declarative knowledge. In accordance with the first and second criteria stated in Section 3.1, we investigate the following: i) assumptions about the importance of information on structural patterns, which is closely related to how instructional materials explain and present negative questions; ii) organization of each unit, which should facilitate learners’ building of declarative knowledge; iii) contextual information, which should clarify the speaker’s proposition and the appropriate distance from the addressee; iv) differentiation from other expressions such as declaratives and imperatives; v) explanations of politeness which determines the appropriate distance from the addressee; vi) information on negative questions as hedging for smooth communication; and vii) sequencing, which should allow information on negative questions to facilitate the development of stable knowledge of negative questions.

3.3.1. Information on Structural Patterns

Instructional materials should provide information on structural patterns which include negative questions, based on which learners can build declarative knowledge. Before investigating the information presented in instructional materials, first of all, let us examine instructional materials’ assumption about the importance of information on structural patterns.

Japanese for Busy People and Yokoso! put less emphasis on the importance of providing accurate information on structural patterns than other instructional materials. Japanese for Busy People’s limiting explanations for the sake of immediate use of Japanese in common situations in which non-native speakers need to communicate in Japanese.
seems insufficient to help learners build declarative knowledge. It claims that "simplistic or even juvenile ways of expression that abound in most introductory texts have been abandoned in favor of uncomplicated adult speech" (Vol. I, viii). The sections mainly devoted to explaining language structures aim to explain the points that many non-native learners commonly find difficult to grasp, as accurately and briefly as possible (Vol. I, ix). As for Yookoso!, its pedagogical principle assumes that learning of vocabulary is more important than knowledge of structural patterns for achieving communicative competence (1994, xix). The role of grammar in language learning is stated as follows (1994, xviii):

The study of grammar is neither sufficient nor a necessary condition for learning to communicate ... grammar is presented in simple terms and via charts whenever possible.

Similarly, explanations on structural patterns in Nakama are simplified for the sake of faster attainment of structures despite its acknowledgment of the high correlation between successful communication and grammatical accuracy (xxi).

On the other hand, the assumption of the importance of knowledge of structural patterns for communicating is reflected in the explanations of negative questions in Situational Functional Japanese and Japanese: The Spoken Language. Situational Functional Japanese advises learners to obtain information contained in Notes, which are the main instructional (i.e. explanatory) materials, before they use the corresponding Drillbooks for practices. The basic underlying assumptions of Japanese: The Spoken Language, too, warn against omitting reading explanations (Part I, xvii) which provide knowledge about Japanese and are important as a basis for attaining usable skills for communication through practice.

Instructional materials which assume the need for accurate information on structural patterns without simplifying explanations, such as Situational Functional Japanese and
Japanese: The Spoken Language, could reasonably be expected to provide information on negative questions necessary for declarative knowledge to be built.

3.3.2. Organization of Each Unit

Instructional materials should utilize learners' cognitive maturity by providing information for facilitating learners' building of declarative knowledge before providing actual practice. This chapter examines the organization of each unit in the selected instructional materials.

Each unit in Japanese for Busy People contains: a main exchange, followed by a list of vocabulary, a Grammar & Lesson Objectives section, a Notes section which provides more detailed analyses of important words and phrases, Practice, Short Exchanges and a Quiz. This instructional material provides information on newly introduced items before putting them into practice.

There are three sections in each unit in Japanese: The Spoken Language. Both Sections A and B start out with exchanges (Core Conversations), and their corresponding Miscellaneous Notes and Structural Patterns provide information on the context and the target structure, respectively. Response drills aims at learners' attainment of prompt and accurate production of the target structure in the minimum context of an exchange. Application Exercises, on the other hand, suggest practice that utilizes the firm control of the target structure in context. Section C provides further opportunities for learners to utilize the gained skills appropriately as subskills in various context. In Utilization, learners are required to integrate the newly acquired skill in the lesson into the skills which have been obtained prior to the lesson. In Check-up at the end of each unit, learners confirm their declarative knowledge on the information introduced in the unit. As observed in the organization of sections A and B, information on newly introduced items is provided first, preceding practice. In this respect, as far as the organization of each unit is concerned,
Japanese for Busy People and Japanese: The Spoken Language utilize learners’ cognitive maturity by providing explanations for new items before practices.

As for Situational Functional Japanese, by obtaining information in Notes first before practicing in Drillbooks, it is possible for learners to build declarative knowledge on which procedural knowledge can be developed. Three volumes of Notes, which are the main instructional materials, are accompanied by the corresponding Drillbooks for practices. Each lesson consists of a model exchange, the summary of the main conversation in the form of reports and diaries, a list of new words and expressions, Grammar Notes, and Conversation Notes. Conversation Notes provide information on linguistic expressions that are based on interpersonal relations, as well as appropriate strategies for successful communication. Drillbooks require learners to put the knowledge obtained in Notes into practice. There are drills in each lesson which corresponds to the lesson in Notes.

Unlike other instructional materials, Nakama and Yookoso! provide separate explanations for each newly introduced item. Each divided explanation is followed by practices. As a result, there are cases in which learners need to use new structures which will be explained later in the unit. From the perspective of building declarative knowledge or information, such organization may not be efficient.

Each unit of Nakama consists mainly of sections entitled New Vocabulary, Dialogue, Culture, Language, Reading, Listening, Communication, and Integration. The New Vocabulary section itself provides practices for the immediate use of newly introduced vocabulary. The topics of the Culture section are related to the Communication section which explains communication strategies later in the chapter. Each unit presents five new grammatical points which are explained in the Language section. Explanations for each grammatical point is followed by practice (Practice and Conversation). The Communication section also provides practice after explanations for communication strategies. The Integration section is intended for learners to practice incorporating new vocabulary into
new structural patterns. The accompanying *Workbook/Laboratory Manual* is designed to complement and reinforce practices in the main instructional material (*Workbook/Laboratory Manual*, vii).

The main components of each unit of *Yoekoso!* are as follows: Vocabulary and Oral Activities, Grammar and Exercises, Active Vocabulary and Kanji, Reading and Writing activities, Language Functions and Situations, and Listening comprehension practice (1994, xv-xvi). The Vocabulary and Oral activities sections are intended for learners to build up and use knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in context. The Grammar and Exercise section provides explanations of grammar, followed by practices. The Language Functions and Situations section presents exchanges which illustrate the focus functions and situations of the chapter, aiming to enable learners to engage in communication in context. In addition, there are Communication Notes, Culture Notes, Grammar Notes, and Linguistic Notes for presentation of helpful information for learners.

There seems to be information necessary for learner’s building of declarative knowledge in each section. However, the Vocabulary and Oral Activities section necessitates learners to put into practice new structures which will be explained later in the Grammar and Exercise section as well as in the Language Functions and Situations section. For optimal utilization of learners’ cognitive maturity to build declarative knowledge, they should first read the corresponding parts in which the new structures are explained.

3.3.3. Contextual Information

This section examines whether or not instructional materials provide sufficient contextual information. For learners to build declarative knowledge of the appropriate use of negative questions in context, instructional materials should provide contextual information in which the speaker’s proposition and the appropriate distance from the addressee are clear.
All the main exchanges in *Nakama* are accompanied by cartoon strips. Prior to the presentation of the first main exchange, the instructional material encourages learners to familiarize themselves with the faces of the characters in order to retrieve more contextual information by matching each character’s line with the corresponding number of the cartoon strips (31). However, the information accessible in cartoon strips does not suffice to explain the appropriate distance from addressees such as fellow students, clerks and doctors. Other example exchanges do not clearly identify relationships and relative social positions which affect the appropriate choice of negative questions among other expressions. The roles of characters by themselves, without explicit explanations, do not illustrate what underlies the choice of negative questions.

*Japanese for Busy People, Yookoso! and Situational Functional Japanese* provide separate pages for the introduction of the characters who appear in the main exchanges. *Japanese: The Spoken Language*, too, makes such information accessible in its CD-ROM program (Noda, 1998b). Apart from the pages for introduction of characters (Vol. II, 1), *Japanese for Busy People* does not provide detailed contextual information for each main exchange. Thus, relationships and relative social ranks of interlocutors are not clear in exchanges, especially in Volume I. In *Yookoso!*, prior to Chapter 1, characters are introduced with information which helps learners understand the relationships among them (1994, xxv-xxvi). However, the contextual information provided to exchanges is limited to names of interlocutors and the place where the exchange takes place. As with *Nakama*, it is difficult for learners to retrieve information on the appropriate distance between interlocutors for the choice of negative questions over other expressions.

*Situational Functional Japanese* provides more contextual information than *Nakama, Japanese for Busy People*, and *Yookoso!*. In addition to its introduction of the characters (Vol. I, 59), it explains the interlocutors as well as the situations in which the main exchange occurs in the beginning of each lesson. Nevertheless, there are cases in
which contextual information is not sufficient to clarify what underlies the choice of negative questions over other expressions. Negative questions are often treated as isolated example expressions for communication strategies rather than the focal point of the main exchange in each lesson.

Each exchange in *Japanese: The Spoken Language* is accompanied by the contextual information in the corresponding Miscellaneous Notes. Unlike other instructional materials, it does not require learners to go back to the separate pages for the introduction of interlocutors in order to clarify the politeness level which underlies the use of negative questions.

3.3.4. Differentiation

Information on negative questions is efficiently retained for declarative knowledge when it clearly differentiates negative questions from other expressions with superficially similar functions. When there are expressions in which the speaker's intention is similar, explanations should clarify differences between negative questions and other types of expressions for building stable knowledge which enables choosing or not choosing negative questions appropriately.

All the instructional materials except *Japanese: The Spoken Language* introduce *masyoo ka* with negative questions *masen ka* as invitations. *Japanese for Busy People* does not explain differences between *masen ka* and *masyoo ka*, presenting them under the same headline which indicates the function of inviting and offering to do something (Vol. I, 104). *Nakama* and *Situational Functional Japanese* each provide different explanations for *masen ka* and *masyoo ka*. *Nakama* explains that *masen ka* is to invite someone whereas *masyoo ka* is to elicit someone's agreement (290). *Situational Functional Japanese* explains that *masen ka* is used for making an invitation whereas *masyoo ka* conveys the speakers
proposed intention (Vol. I, 60-61). However, such explanations may not be sufficient for learners to build knowledge of the appropriate use of *masen ka*. On the other hand, *Yookoso!* contrasts *masen ka* with *mazyoo ka* more explicitly. It points out that *mazyoo* form is less polite than *masee ka* since it expresses the speaker's volition without consideration to the addressee's preferences. In addition, it explains that *mazyoo ka* can be used without making the utterance too imposing when the speaker already knows the addressee is willing to do something together with him/her (1994: 193).

Whereas *Nakama* does not clearly differentiate such negative questions as invitation from *-tai desu ka*, *Yookoso! and Japanese: The Spoken Language* warn against inappropriate choice of *-tai desu ka*. *Yookoso!* states that it is not polite to use *-tai desu ka* to superiors (1994: 378). *Japanese: The Spoken Language* points out that *-tai desu ka* is not to be equated with expressions of invitation, for which negative questions are the regular Japanese pattern (Part 3, 142).

*Nakama* and *Situational Functional Japanese* present both negative questions *X (wa) arimasen ka* ('Isn't there X?') and *X (wa) arimasu ka* ('Is there X?') to ask for a piece of merchandise.9 The imperative form, *X (o) misete kudasai* ('Please show me X') is also shown together in *Situational Functional Japanese* in the shopping situation.10 In a similar situation in *Japanese for Busy People*, a customer asks a clerk for a discount by saying *Yasuku sitir kudasaimasen ka* ('Couldn't you make them cheaper?') in one case (Vol. III, 41) and *Yasuku narimasen ka* ('Can't you make the price cheaper?') is another (Vol. III, 44). There is no explanation for differences between these expressions presented together in the shopping situation. In the same situation, interchangeable use of affirmative questions, negative questions and imperatives may be acceptable. Hence, it is difficult to

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9 Translation by A. Nagatomi.
10 Translation by A. Nagatomi.

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build knowledge of the appropriate choice of negative questions among different expressions in other situations.

We have observed cases of insufficient explanation of differences among negative questions and other expressions presented together in the same situation. The choice of negative questions to maintain the appropriate distance to the addressee by avoiding imposition rather than, for instance, imperatives, is not always clear. In order for declarative knowledge of the appropriate use of negative questions to be developed for comfortable communication in various situations, explanations need to clarify differences among expressions.

In addition to differences among expressions such as negative questions, affirmative questions and imperatives, there are also differences to be clarified among negative questions themselves. For instance, the speaker's avoidance of imposition is observed in both kuremasen ka and kudasaimasen ka as expressions for requests, but they are not identical in politeness level.

3.3.5. Politeness

It cannot be simply assumed that learners know the appropriate distance to the addressee in Japanese. Maintenance of the appropriate distance requires politeness in utterances. This section examines whether or not explanations in selected instructional materials for politeness in Japanese are sufficient for building declarative knowledge of negative questions. Example changes for different politeness levels must explicitly identify the assigned roles of the interlocutors. In particular, group affiliation of interlocutors needs to be always clear, since the same referent, including the addressee, can shift to an in-group member or out-group member, depending on the situation.

Nakama mentions the concept of group affiliation within a limited context. Chapter 10 provides information on the Japanese family (322):
The Japanese rarely praise members of their own family when they talk to someone outside the family. They are very conscious of the distinction between in-groups and out-groups. It is very important to be polite to those who are not in one's in-group, and praising members of your own family, the primary in-group, is considered impolite.

The distinction between in-group and out-group is reflected only in family terms. Chapter 12 includes negative questions among expressions which ask for permission (415). As equivalents of 'May I smoke a cigarette?'; Tabako o sute mo ii desu ka?, Tabako o sute mo ii desyoo ka?, and Tabako o sute mo kamaimasen ka? are shown together. The mere presentation of such example exchanges between a student and a teacher without explanation as below may not suffice to clarify the choice of the negative question in the given context (415):

(15) Student: Sensee, tsuyoo o yasunde mo kamaimasen ka?

professor  class OBJ absent-GER too matter-NEG SFP

'Professor, may I be absent from the class?'

Teacher: Desu ka?

how do-GER COP SFP

'Why?'

Student: Tyotto netu ga aru n desu.

a little fever SBJ exist NOM COP

'I have a little fever.'

Teacher: Aa, soo desu ka... i desu yo,

oh  so COP SFP fine COP SFP

'Oh, is that so. That's fine./You may.'

We cannot assume learners' inference of politeness in Japanese without explicit clarification of the importance of relationships and relative social ranks of interlocutors in the choice of the appropriate expression.
Similarly, *Japanese for Busy People* limits explanations of politeness for the sake of immediate use of Japanese. The socio-cultural concepts which underlie linguistic information do not appear to be emphasized as important elements for communication:

Although we have concentrated chiefly on offering linguistic information, in some cases we thought it necessary to add some social or cultural references. (Vol. I, ix)

Negative questions as requests are presented in multiple lessons in Volume II and III, in which the insufficient explanation of politeness in Japanese makes the difference between *kuremasen ka* and *kudasaimasen ka* ambiguous. The Notes section provides the explanation (Vol. II, 75) as follows:

*-te kuremasen ka* is a form of request, but it would not be used when speaking to a superior. The meaning is "do (something) for (me/us)."

Short exchanges are presented as examples without explicit definition of superiority in Japanese. The presentation of *-te kudasaimasen ka* later as a "more polite" equivalent of *-te kuremasen ka* (Vol. II, 205) does not touch on the issue of superiority. For instance, a section chief uses a negative question as request to an employee (Vol. II, 80):

(16) Section Chief: *Dare ka yotto te o zasite kudasai.*

who Q a little hand OBJ lend-GER give

'Won't someone lend me a hand for a moment?'

Watanabe (an employee): *Non desyo ka?*

what COP-TNT SFP

'What is it (you want)?'

Section Chief: *Kono saryo o katazakete kuremasen ka?*

this paper OBJ put away-GER give SFP

'Do me a favor of putting away these papers.'
Watanabe: *Hai, wakarimashita.* yes understood

'Yes, certainly.'

It is Lesson 11 (Vol. III, 120) that first mentions the hierarchy within the company as well as the concept of group affiliation. Lesson 13 (Vol. III, 146) explains more on what determines the use of polite forms:

The first determinant is the order of hierarchy. While the speaker chooses respect language when speaking to or about seniors or elders, social status, power and patrilineage are also factors which may come into play. The second determinant, ... is ingroup-outgroup relationships.

Such explanation, however, does not suffice to explain why the higher-ranking employee suddenly starts using direct style to the lower one in the main exchange which includes a negative question as request from the higher-ranking employee (Vol. III, 176):

(17) Katoo (higher-ranking employee): *Moo iti-do syorai ni me o toosite* more once paper to eye OBJ look over-GER

*meno ni kaite aru toori ni haitoyo na syorai o* meno in write-GER exist like to necessary COP paper OBJ

*soroet(e) oite kurenai ka?* put away-GER give-NEG SFP

'Look the papers over again and get the necessary document ready, as was written up in the memorandum.'

Suzuki: *Itu made ni sureta yorosii desyou ka?* when by to do-CND fine COP-TNT SFP

'When does (it) have to be finished?'

In Lesson 18, Johnson, one of the characters, uses a negative question to ask for his colleague’s opinion (Vol. II, 201).
(18) Johnson: *Nihon no *syukan o *siranai* no de Japan of custom OBJ know-NEG NOM COP
  *osete kudasaimasen ka?* teach-GER give-NEG SFP

  ‘Since I don’t know Japanese customs, would you please tell me (something)?’

Later, Johnson asks a clerk to send flowers to his friend (Vol. II, 202):

(19) Johnson: *Tanzyoobi no* *purezento ni suru* *tunori desu* *kara,* birthday of present for do intention COP because
  *kono kaado o takete todokete kuremasen ka?* this card OBJ attach-GER deliver-GER give-NEG SFP

  ‘(They’re) meant to be a birthday gift, so would you include this card and deliver (them)?’

The introduction of the characters’ age, gender, occupation and interests provided in the beginning of Vol. II (1), does not explain why Johnson uses *kudasaimasen ka* to his colleague and *kuremasen ka* to the clerk. The social positions assigned to Johnson and the addressee, Suzuki are equal (Vol. II, 1-3), and the situation does not necessitate formality in particular. Grammar & Lesson Objectives section of this lesson states as follows:

The polite expressions in this lesson can be compared with others previously introduced. (Vol. II, 204)

Although the difference in the politeness level between *kuremasen ka* and *kudasaimasen ka* is pointed out, it is not clear when, to whom in what situations *kudasaimasen ka* becomes more appropriate.

It is stated that “simplistic or even juvenile ways of expression that abound in most introductory texts have been abandoned in favor of uncomplicated adult speech” (Vol. I, viii). There is a contradiction in the statement. Making explanations for structures and
cultural elements uncomplicated does not enable learners to communicate in Japanese as a capable adult. Particularly, simplified explanations for the speech styles do not provide information for learners to build declarative knowledge for communication as a socially and cognitively mature adults.

*Yookoso!* expends more pages on what underlies the employment of negative questions in terms of politeness in Japanese. There are explanations of negative questions as possible communication strategies throughout two volumes.

Chapter 4 introduces negative questions as requests (1994, 278):

The most common way to make a request is to use the te-form of a verb + kudasai (please give me the doing of ... ). Politer forms of request include the following, in increasing order of politeness:

- te-form of verb+ kudasaimasu ka
- kudasaimasen ka
- kaishudakemashu ka
- kaishudakemasen ka

The explanation above in Communication Note points out the differences implied in them, but it does not define determinants of the level of politeness. The distinction between in-group and out-group is not made until Chapter 5 (1994), and even here, group affiliation is explained only at the vocabulary level such as family terms. It is Notes in Chapter 5 of the second volume (1995: 289, 290, 298) that explain the speech styles in terms of group affiliation in detail:

The Japanese language has significant built-in indicators of respect to the listener or a third party (1995, 289).

... but how do you decide who is superior to you? Actually, both personal and contextual factors affect this decision... Personal factors include, for instance, position within an organization. Lower-ranking employees use keego to their superiors, with the people in each position using keego to the members of the organization who rank above them in the hierarchy. Age is another important factor: younger people use keego in speaking to older people. Length of experience is another personal factor. Even when two people are at the same rank in the same occupation, the one with the longer experience is usually considered superior to the one with less experience. This is also true among university students, who speak politely to their sensei, the members of the classes ahead of them and the alumni of

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their school. A benefactor-recipient relation can also influence the use of honorifics. (1995, 290)

One characteristic of honorifics in Japanese is the consideration of in-group and out-group. Depending on the situation, you may refer to the same person with either honorific or humble forms (1995, 298).

Prior to the above explanation of politeness in Chapter 5, the introduction of the negative request forms in Chapter 2 (1995) puts the following three in the decreasing order of politeness:

Negative te-form of verb+kudasaimosen ka/kudasai/hare (1995, 117)

It is problematic that at this point learners need to engage in practice without knowing the politeness level associated with each. Since the propositional content of “negative requests” which are the target language function can be face-threatening, it is especially important for learners to know under what circumstances each should be chosen. In this respect, the order above without contextual information is not useful for the appropriate employment of negative questions.

Situational Functional Japanese explains in the introductory lesson (Vol. 1, 20-23) the importance of social relationships, which is reflected in the Japanese language:

The Japanese language has certain words and forms which are used to express the social distance between the speaker and the other participants in a conversation. This distance has two dimensions: vertical and horizontal.

1) Vertical distance (Social status)

... Both seniority and rank contribute to social status; in this book, we will, for the sake of easy reference, refer to a ‘person of higher social status’ as a Higher, and a ‘person of lower social status’ as a Lower. Where appropriate, ‘senior’ and ‘junior’ will also be used. Persons of equal social status/age will be referred to as equals...

2) Horizontal distance

The Japanese traditionally have a strong sense of belonging to a group; this may be their family, school, company or even their country. The term ‘ingroup’ (un) refers to those who are considered to be members of the group with which one identifies
in a particular situation. 'Outgroup' (soto), on the other hand, refers to those perceived as being outside this group...

The explanation of Vertical distance is also accompanied by charts which show different speech styles used to different addressees in a university, a company and a family (Vol. 1, 21).

Lesson 14 includes negative questions among other expressions of polite requests. The usefulness of polite request forms such as kudasaimasu ka, kudasaimasen ka, itadakemasho ka and itadakemasen ka is explained as communication strategies. It states that requests in the negative form are more indirect and therefore more polite than affirmative ones, and tells learners compare the range of variation (Vol. 2, 172).

(Could you please~?) -te kuremasu ka, kuremasen ka, kudasaimasu ka, kudasaimasen ka, kudasaimasu deshoo ka, kudasaimasen deshoo ka
(Would you mind ~ing?) -te moraemasu ka, moraemasen ka, itadakemasho ka, itadakemasen ka, itadakemasho deshoo ka, itadakemasen deshoo ka

However, it is not clarified in what situation and to whom, negative questions are more appropriate than others. The instructional materials contain isolated sentences and exchanges in which the relationship and relative social positions of interlocutors are not clear.

The early presentation of relationships and relative social ranks of the interlocutors, which affect the speech styles in Japanese, gives learners the rationale for choosing or not choosing negative questions. In addition, as in Yoosoko! (1995: 258), Situational Functional Japanese at least hints at the flexible nature of the boundary of in-group and out-group. Nevertheless, the lessons themselves introduce multiple expressions, including negative questions, without sufficient explanations or example exchanges. It may be difficult for learners to relate the initial explanation of politeness to negative questions.

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Japanese: The Spoken Language first points out the difference between Ohayoo and Ohayoo gozaimasu in its introductory chapter (Part 1, 25). The former is used to a family member or friend or colleague or inferior casually whereas the latter is a formal greeting addressed to a superior. Lesson 4 explains the verbal kudasaru from the perspective of the group affiliation, that is, it indicates giving from (out-group) to (in-group) (Part 1, 93). However, learners must wait for the detailed explanation of the concept of group affiliation until Lesson 7 (Part 1, 164):

... the participants have been colleagues who maintain a certain distance - who do not speak to each other as close friends or intimates. But even within this style - as well as within direct-style - Japanese differentiates between plain and polite forms. Whereas direct-style reflects the degree of closeness and the level of formality the speaker feels toward the addressee, the second axis - which relates to politeness - is determined by the relative social positions of the person to whom the predicate refers, the addressee, and the speaker. Playing a crucial role in this is the distinction between in-group and out-group. Any individual Japanese belongs to a number of societal groups - the family, the school group, the work group, clubs, sports teams, etc. - and of primary importance in determining the kind of language to be used on any occasion is the identification of these group to the setting of the moment. The groups are constantly shifting, depending on the participants and the speaker's viewpoint. Group affiliation is so basic that it is probably valid to consider an individual who, at the moment, is operating in isolation, as a "minimal in-group." (Part 1, 164)

The differentiation of negative questions as requests from other expressions below gives learners rationale for choosing or not choosing negative questions:

... the polite verbal kudasaimasu occurs in its imperative (=command) form: ite kudasai 'please go' (lit. 'give me going'). In form, this combination is direct and abrupt, but the politeness of the verbal itself and the fact that the request is made in terms of something that is to be given to the speaker make the combination relatively polite. However, the request can be made less direct and significantly softer by replacing the imperative kudasai with a corresponding distal-style negative question; itsu kudasaimasen ka. 'Would you be kind enough to go?' (lit. 'won't you give me going?'). The use of negative here is indisputably related to its use in invitations. In addition to requesting activities (with verbal gerunds), things (expressed as nominals) can also be requested in parallel constructions: Sore (o) kudasai and Sore (o) kudasaimasen ka?
The explanation of the speech styles is expanded further in Lesson 8 which introduces casual-style (Part 1, 197). As lessons proceed, the choice of the speech styles become more complex when the exchanges in which the relative social ranks of the interlocutors are different. Thus, each explanation on the speech styles reviews what has been already introduced before. Lesson 9 clarifies distal/direct-style, polite/plain-style, careful and casual-style, gentle/blunt-style, and masculine/feminine-style (Part 1, 226). Negative questions is direct-style appear here in exchanges between in-group members. In Lesson 11, negative questions are employed in context which involves both in-group and out-group members. The context draws careful attention to group affinity, with one’s own and others’ family in mind. Then the exchange in Lesson 26A (Core Conversation 3) and its Miscellaneous Notes highlight the hierarchical relationship within a group which affects the appropriate choice of negative questions:

(20) Aa, mosi ka sura to, koohai to site wa hanasikata ga oh perhaps question do case junior colleague as do TOP way of talking SBJ
sita-sugitan ze airmasen ka? familiar-too NOM COP-NEG SFP

'Oh, isn’t it perhaps the case that your way of talking has been too familiar for a junior colleague?' (Part 3, 40)

Distinguishing among senpai, dooryoo (doohai), and koohai is crucial in Japanese society. This relationship affects interaction at every turn within many spheres—the workplace, school, clubs, and so on. (Part 3, 44)

Similarly to Situational Functional Japanese, learners are provided with explicit information on politeness in Japanese. Furthermore, information on relationships and relative social positions of interlocutors is available when necessary and clear enough for the motivation of negative questions to be identified. In particular, taking into account the constantly shifting boundaries of in-group and out-group in various situations, exchanges are always accompanied by the identification of group affiliation of interlocutors. However, such
terms as in-group and out-group should be accompanied by explanation or reference should be made to the detailed explanation which appears later.

In order for learners to build declarative knowledge of negative questions, politeness, which is the underlying motivation of the choice of negative questions, needs to be explained clearly. Exchanges must be backgrounded with sufficient information on factors such as relationships and relative social ranks of interlocutors. The explanation of politeness at an early stage is effective, but it should be reinforced by such explicit contextual information for negative questions in exchanges, especially regarding the boundaries of group affiliation.

3.3.6. Hedging

We have observed that politeness underlies the use of negative questions. Negative questions’ functional properties, especially hedging, can be employed as an effective means to maintain the appropriate distance from the addressee. Information on negative questions should help learners build declarative knowledge of negative questions as a communication strategy usable in many situations.

Yookoso!, Situational Functional Japanese, and Japanese: The Spoken Language include negative questions as a means to hedge when the speaker states his/her opinion. Yookoso! presents *omoimasen ka?* as a means to ask and express opinions in Communication Note in Chapter 6:

When soliciting agreement with your view, you can say
... to *omoimasen ka?*
‘Don’t you think (that)?’

For instance,
*Ano resutoran wa, takasugiru to *omoimasen ka?*?
‘Don’t you think that restaurant is too expensive?’

In addition, you can use this phrase to try to change someone’s opinion.
*Do nio, saubetsu ga it to *omoimasen ka?*
‘But don’t you think that their service is good?’ (1994, 363)
Negative questions in the Communication Note in Chapter 7 (1995, 431) for a strategy for expressing disagreement, are also explained separately:

... Agreeing first and then giving a negative qualification is another common strategy for refusing.

A: Atarashii kompyuta o kau koto ni simashoo yo.
   "Why don’t we buy a new computer?"  \(^{11}\)
B: Ee, de mo, moo asoko matta hoo ga ii ni zya arimasen ka?
   "Yes, but wouldn’t it be better to wait a bit?"

As stated in the beginning of the instructional material (1994, xviii-xl), it is assumed that the size of vocabulary is more important for communicative competence, especially at the early stage of language learning, than grammatical knowledge. This material is rich in the number not only of lexical items but also of phrases. Negative questions which are not identified as invitations or requests in this material are introduced as set phrases for different communication strategies.

Situational Functional Japanese encourages such negative questions as a means to deal with the situation in which a speaker has a wrong number (Vol. 1, 168-169). The function of the negative question in the following exchange is made explicit (= zya arimasen ka? can be used to double-check on the telephone number)  \(^2\):

\(^2\) The following exchange is translated by A. Nagatomi.

\(^{11}\) Translation by A. Nagatomi.

(21) A: Moi moji. Inoue-in desu ka?
    hello    Inoue hospital COP SPF

    'Hello. Is this Inoue hospital?'

B: Hie, tegaimasu.
    no wrong

    'No. You have the wrong number.'

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A: *sumimassen, Ano, 52 no 3181 zya arimasen ka?*
*Oh excuse-NEG well 52 - 3181 COP-NEG SFP*

'I'm sorry. Um, Isn't this 52-3181?'

B: *ie, uti wa 53 no 3181 desu yo, no here TOP 53 - 3181 COP SFP*

'No, This is 53-3181.'

A: *deo mo sumimassen desita, oh in every way excuse-NEG*

'Oh, I'm sorry.'

In *Lesson 10*, the strategies for asking for advice (Vol. 2, 57) include negative questions as part of responses which are referred to as expressions of one's opinion and explained later in *Lesson 22* and *Lesson 24*. On the other hand, negative questions in *Lesson 12* (Vol. 2, 85) as well as those in *Lesson 15* (Vol. 2, 179), such as *Et, basu de ita hoo ga ii n zya nai ka sira* ('I think it might be better if you go by bus.'). *Dare ka karite nero n zya nai ka na* ('Someone must have borrowed it.'), are treated as separate items without being related to those in *Lesson 10*, 22 and 24.

Negative questions which are used as an effective communication strategy when the speaker complains directly to the addressee (*Moo sukosi sizuka ni site moraemasen ka?* 'Please be a little more quiet.'), in *Lesson 21*, can be captured within a framework of requests. However, these are treated here as a separate entity. It may be difficult for learners to relate each of the divided explanations across multiple lessons which stem from the basic function of negative questions. The application of negative questions is limited to contexts which are quite similar to the one provided as an example.

*Japanese: The Spoken Language*, on the contrary, explains the function of negative questions as hedging in a more integrated fashion. It articulates how negative questions can be utilized when the speaker states his/her own opinion without making the utterance too
imposing, in the exchange (Core Conversation 1) in Lesson 26B and the corresponding
Miscellaneous Notes:

(22) (J): Nippon wo, zutto anna tenki da to ii no ni nee. Japan too by far that kind of weather COP QT good NOM but SFP

‘Don’t we wish Japan would have that kind of weather all the time, too?’

(N): De mo, onazi yoo na tenki bakari iu nuitya, but same like COP weather nothing but continue

omosiroku nai desyyoo. fun-NEG COP-TNT

‘But with nothing but the same weather continuing, it’s probably tiresome.’

(J): Sore wa soo desu kedo, as i is tenki damasu, that TOP so COP but that say weather COP-CND

ii to omoinasu kedo nee. good QT think but SFP

‘That’s so, but I think it’s great if it’s weather like that, but—you know what I mean.’

(N): Kisetru ni yotte, ona kuu nattari samuku nattari suru hoo ga season in depend-GER hot become cold become (alternate) side SBJ
tanosi to omoinasen ka? fun quotative think-NEG SFP

‘Don’t you think it’s more enjoyable for it to be hot sometimes and cold sometimes, depending on the season?’

(J): Sikasi desu ne. Tatoeba, Nippon ni iru to, but COP SFP exemplify-CND Japan in be QT

maini tenki no koto bakari ki ni siter everyday weather NOM thing nothing but mind in do-GER

(i)nazukerya(a) naranai desyyoo must COP-CND
'But, you know, for example, when you're in Japan, all you seem to do is have to worry about the weather every day.' (Part 3, 63) 

The two participants politely express a difference of opinion on the subject of weather. Note how this is handled in an indirect, nonthreatening, and nonconfrontational way... Suzuki's response makes very clear that he persists in his wish that Japan's weather were like that of Guam, but he softens his disagreement with Smith... Smith, pursuing his own contrary opinion, responds with a question that, by its form, also suggests that agreement by Suzuki can be assumed: 'Don't you think...?' (implying that surely everyone would)...

(Part 3, 66-67)

This passage explains negative questions, which may not be interpreted as request or invitation on the surface, in such a way that learners can relate them to other negative questions which have been introduced. Unlike Yookoso! and Situational Functions: Japanese, negative questions are not treated as a variety of isolated communication strategies. Rather, with the increased complexity allowed in an utterance which includes negative questions, such an utterance become accessible for comfortable communication. As the opportunities for learners to state their own opinions increase, it becomes more important for them to utilize negative questions as a means to avoid overly imposing their own opinions. The Miscellaneous Notes for information on exchanges, clarify such effective use of negative questions in context.

Presenting negative questions as separate communication strategies is not efficient since it increases the number of items to be internalized. In addition, such presentation limits applicability of negative questions to particular situations. It is important that instructional materials sequence negative questions which are interpreted as invitation, request and opinion depending on context in such a way that the underlying important function of hedging in negative questions is captured with coherence.

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11Interlocutors are identified (N) as a non-native speaker of Japanese and (J) as a native Japanese (Jordan and Noda, 1997; 28). Hence, (N) and (J) are identified as Smith and Suzuki, respectively in the corresponding Miscellaneous Notes.
3.3.7. Sequencing

Information on negative questions should be provided in a way that makes it stable for declarative knowledge by relating it to other information, differentiating it from information on other expressions, and increasing its applicability to various real-life situations. Even though there is information on negative questions available across units, the lack of coherence of each piece of information may prevent the facilitation of building stable knowledge.

All the materials except *Japanese: The Spoken Language* present the negative form of *nominal + copula desu* first. Then they introduce negative questions as invitation *masen* ka with *masyoo* ka, subsequent to their explanation of the negative form of verbs. *Nakama* presents negative questions as invitation and *-tai desu* ka, and proceeds to negative questions as requests. Although *Japanese for Busy People* and *Yookoso!* put negative questions with different politeness level as request together, such presentation precedes the explanation of politeness. As for *Yookoso!*, the explanation differentiating negative questions from *-tai desu* ka mentions the underlying politeness. Nevertheless, the imperative forms *kure* and *kudosai* are presented with *ludasainasen* ka prior to the detailed information on group affiliation. Learners must wait for *omoinasen* ka for expressing opinions until almost the end of the first volume, Chapter 6 (1994). Besides, such negative questions are not relatable to others used for expressing disagreement which are introduced later in the second volume (1995, 431). *Situational Functional Japanese* introduces the negative questions *zya arimasen* ka as a means to hedge immediately after those used for requests. However, these are not explicitly related to each other. On the assumption that learners are familiar with the explanation of politeness in Japanese in the introductory lesson, the presentation expands to negative questions with different politeness levels. Lesson 21 in the third volume explains negative questions as a communication strategy for making complaints, which are treated as a separate category. Although *Yookoso!* and
Situational Functional Japanese integrate negative questions with newly introduced elements such as different speech styles, they deal with negative questions as set phrases for particular, isolated situations.

Japanese: The Spoken Language does not limit explanation to smaller units such as negative questions for expressing imitations, requests, opinions, and disagreements. It does not introduce the negative form of /nominal+copula/ but verbal first. At the same time, explanation of negative questions is provided as early as in Lesson 1, as a foundation by which learners can confirm the function of negative questions introduced later (Part 1, 33-34):

Negative questions occur in the following types of contexts:
1. to check or confirm a negative situation already introduced into the context or assumed, on the basis of general context, as correct ".
   *Irkimassen, 'I can't do it.' Dekimasen ka? 'You can't do it?'
   *Kimassen ne? 'You're not going to go-right?'
2. to check on the possibility of a negative situation contrary to the speaker's underlying assumptions.
   *Tukurimasen. 'I'm not going to make it.' Dekimasen ka? 'You can't do it? (i.e., I thought you could, but ...)
3. as an invitation:
   *Kimassen ka? 'Won't you come?'

Such negative questions in the beginning are integrated with newly introduced elements in different speech styles. Since information on negative questions can be built up based on the initial explanation in accordance with the increased complexity of new structures, it is easier for learners' repertoire of negative questions to attain coherence and thus applicability to various situations.

What differentiates Japanese: The Spoken Language is its organization of units, which appears to be the key for the effective sequencing of information for declarative knowledge. As stated in its basic underlying assumptions (Part 1, xvii), units are

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14 As stated in Chapter 1, the scope of this thesis does not include 1 above.
systematically ordered so that learners can develop necessary skills by confirming and utilizing what has been already introduced. Under organization which divides units by particular language functions in specific situations, it seems more difficult for information to be built up for stable knowledge since what serves as a foundation for negative questions is unclear.

3.4. Procedural Knowledge Development

For actual communication, it is necessary and efficient for cognitively mature learners to develop procedural knowledge on declarative knowledge. Ideally, practice should facilitate the development of procedural knowledge. It is necessary for negative questions to be practiced for their smooth production, which later should be integrated as lower level skills into other skills to employ negative questions appropriately as higher level skills in context. There is a difference in objective between the former and the latter types of practice: the former has as its main objective the smooth formation of newly introduced structures, whereas the latter endeavors to let learners simulate the usage of new structures in context. Since the degree of availability of knowledge for real-life situations depends on the similarity between the real-life situation and the contexts in which the structure has been practiced, contextualized practice must provide as many opportunities for such simulation as possible. Although mechanical practice does not directly enable learners to practice utilizing negative questions in situations which are quite likely to occur, it is useful as a necessary component for contextualized practice. Mechanical practice can be pedagogically meaningful, as Noda (1994) states, as the building blocks for what should be attained by contextualized practice.

Therefore, practice must provide opportunities for knowledge of negative questions to be developed into lower level skills as well as into higher level skills in which negative questions incorporate other elements which enable them to be utilized appropriately in
context. In addition, practice must be sequenced, from mechanical practice as building blocks, to contextualized practice for the integration of skills to produce higher level skills which can be used in plausible situations. First, we will examine mechanical practice, then move to contextualized practice, and finally, discuss how practice is sequenced.

3.4.1. Mechanical Practice

All the instructional materials provide mechanical practice for negative questions. There are different kinds of mechanical practice. Mechanical practice in Japanese for Busy People consists of transformation drills and substitution drills such as follows:

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**Eega ni ikimasu. -> Eega ni ikimasyoo.**

movie to go

movie to go-CST

'**I will go to a movie.*' 

'Eega ni ikimasyoo ka.'

movie to go-CST SFP

'Shall we go to a movie?*

'Eega ni ikimasen ka?'

movie to go-NEG SFP

'**Why don’t we go to a movie?**' (Vol. I, 106)

Make dialogues by changing the underlined parts as in the examples given. ex: A: **Biko no dorubu ni ikimasyo ka**

where to drive for go-CST SFP

'Where shall we go for a drive?'

B: **Umi no taka ni ikimasen ka?**

sea of near to go-NEG SFP

'Why don’t we go near the sea?'

A: **Ee, ikimasyoo.**

Yes go-CST

'Yes, let's go.'

1. **kaimonoo, ginza (‘shopping, Ginza’) 2. suki, nikkoo (‘ski, Nikkoo’)¹⁵**

(Vol. I, 106)

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¹⁵These are the words provided for substitution for the underlined parts.
The activities in the example practice above are not likely to occur in real-life situations. When engaging in communication, learners are not provided with sentences to be transformed or words to be substituted. Such mechanical practice does not directly facilitate the ability of the appropriate usage of negative questions in context. However, it is useful when its purpose is to create building blocks necessary for higher level skills, letting learners concentrate on formation of targeted structures.

Both Nakama and Situational Functional Japanese have separate volumes for practice in which the firm control of the syntactic form of negative questions is further promoted by mechanical practice. In the following practice, learners concentrate on negative questions with a certain level of politeness without the unidentified addressee's relative social position (Vol. 3, 127):

Taipuraitaa o takuu -> Taipuraitaa o takawasete itadakemasen ka?
Type-writer OBJ use type-writer OBJ use-CAU-GER receive-NEG SFP
'use a type-writer' 'Could you let me use the type-writer?'

Mechanical practice in response format in Japanese: The Spoken Language aims at learners' attainment of prompt and accurate production of target structures. Let us observe one of the examples of such drills (Drill K, Part 1, 45):

Tissai desu ka?
expensive COP SFP
'Is it small?'

Ee, Ookika dekimassen ka?
Yes big can-NEG SFP
'Yes. Can't you make it bigger?'

According to Quinn (1991), learners can practice not only formation of the syntactic form of negative questions, but also a means of posing a suggestion. It is similar to mechanical practice above in that it provides certain lexical items to be used such as takai, tumaranai, and ookii for the practice above. However, here it is possible for learners to build lower level skills within exchanges as a plausible part of communication.
Although there are short exchanges for substitution drills in both Japanese for Busy People and Yookoso!, it is often the case that these are merely for introduction of vocabulary.

Dialog: *Boku ga denwa simayoo* (I will make the phone call.)

I — SBJ phone do-CST

*Kawamura-san* to *Hayashi-san* — ga hanasite imasu.  
Kawamura Mr. and Hayashi Mr. SBJ talk-GER exist

‘Mr. Kawamura and Mr. Hayashi are talking.

*Kawamura: Ina, nan-ka? desu ka?*  
now what time COP SFP

‘What time is it now?’

well 2 o’clock half COP Brown Ms. late COP SFP

‘Uh, it’s two thirty, Ms. Brown is late, isn’t she?’

*Kawamura: *Ee, Buraun-san ni denwa simase ka?  
yes Brown Ms. to phone do-CST SFP

‘Yes, shouldn’t we call her (*l-literally, Ms. Brown)?’

*Hayashi: *Ee, boku ga denwa simayoo.  
yes 1 SBJ phone go-CST

‘Yes, I will make the call.’

*Kawamura: Onegai-simasu.  
favor do

‘Thank you. (*literally, Please do it for me.*)’

(Yookoso! 1994: 170)

Unless explicit instruction is given, for instance, that learners should memorize them, such exchanges are not useful for the development of skills. Furthermore, in Yookoso!, despite information on negative questions as various communication strategies, practice is not available for such negative questions since they are not introduced in the main exchanges.
Production of negative forms itself may be initially difficult when new types of predicates are introduced. It is important for the purpose of mechanical practice to be clearly identifiable as the development of skills as building blocks for higher skills. In actual communication, however, learners are not asked to transform a specific form to another, or fill in the missing parts. Activities in practice at this stage do not suffice to provide plausible scenarios. Thus, practice at later stages should gradually shift its focus more on how to the appropriate usage, that is, contextual practice.

3.4.2. Contextualized Practice

Contextualized practice must provide opportunities for developing the knowledge of how to utilize the lower level skills attained through mechanical practice in context. The more learners practice using negative questions in plausible context, the more likely it is that they will be able to employ negative questions successfully when encountering similar contexts in actual communication. There must be clear contextual information to motivate the use of negative questions, such as relative social ranks of interlocutors, which determine the distance maintained by politeness level. To enhance applicability of negative questions to real-life situations, practices should require learners’ careful attention to the appropriate distance from the addressee. Thus, there needs to be a variety of roles in context which reflect the flexible nature of boundaries of group affiliation.

However, contextual information available in practice does not necessarily make it contextual practice. In *Japanese for Busy People*, the Quiz section asks learners to choose a sentence which is appropriate to the given situation (Vol. III, 187):

Choose a sentence appropriate to the situation described.

Tell a close friend not to be late (as man to man).

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Translation by A. Nagatomi.
1. Yakusoku o sita kara okurenaide kudasaimasen ka?
   Appointment OBJ did because late-NEG-GER give-NEG SFP
   'Because of having the appointment made, could you not be late?'

2. Yakusoku no zikan ni okureru na yo.
   Appointment of time to late NEG SFP
   'Don't be late for the time for the appointment.'

3. Yakusoku no zikan ni okureru yo.
   Appointment of time to late SFP
   'You will be late for the appointment.'

The multiple-choice format does not require learners to demonstrate their skill in utilizing their knowledge of negative questions. Such practice, even in context, is useful only to confirm whether or not learners can recognize the appropriate speech style in accordance with the given information. In this respect, this kind of practice is for testing declarative knowledge rather than for facilitating the development of procedural knowledge.

Although role plays in Nakama present situations in which negative questions are used in context, the lack of identification of relationships and relative social ranks of interlocutors makes them ineffective for teaching the appropriate employment of negative questions, especially as expressions of request. Learners may not be able to employ negative questions in context unless they are instructed to do so since negative questions are not clearly differentiated from other expressions of request in Nakama.

Similarly, Yookoso! does not provide learners opportunities to deal with situations which require careful consideration of social rank and group affiliation. Role plays which are also included in review chapters further confirm the use of negative questions. However, the target of the practice is limited to a narrow area of use. Lack of clarification of the politeness underlying negative questions makes practice aimed for negative questions as requests less useful for communication in real-life situations. Although Yookoso!
provides information on negative questions which are not explained as invitation or request, there are no opportunities for such negative questions to be practiced in context.

In *Situational Functional Japanese*, there are contextualized practice for negative questions which are differentiated from other forms for invitation and request. In addition, role plays with sufficient contextual information, like relative social positions of interlocutors, enhance careful utilization of negative questions in an appropriate speech style. Such contextualized practice gradually increases in complexity, from negative questions addressed to fellow students to those used with senior students and professors. Nevertheless, even the practice which is more complex in speech styles does not fully reflect the important socio-cultural norm inherent in the group affiliation in Japanese which was explained in the introductory part. The notion of in-group and out-group is put into practice only in a limited number of roles. Even in the third volume, the roles of interlocutors are limited to one's seniors or juniors at school, professors, strangers, friends. *Japanese: The Spoken Language* also gives sufficient contextual information which motivates careful and appropriate employment of negative questions. However, unlike *Situational Functional Japanese*, there are more various but plausible roles assigned for contextualized practice such as a close friend, a professor, a classmate, a slight acquaintance, a doctor, a section chief, and a colleague. Such roles enable the constantly shifting distinction between in-group and out-group to be put into practice for appropriate utilization of negative questions in various real-life situations.

3.4.3. Sequencing of Practice

We have found in the previous sections that not all the instructional materials provide both mechanical and contextualized practice. All the instructional materials provide mechanical practice for the attainment of the firm control of the syntactic form of negative questions. What is attained by mechanical practice, however, does not avail itself readily
for comfortable communication without contextualized practices. It is indeed true that since contextualized practice is for integration of skills into higher level skills which requires the smooth production of negative questions as a lower level skill, mechanical practice is indispensable and should precede contextualized practice. The activities in mechanical practice become meaningful when their purpose as building blocks for higher level skills is clear. However, there are cases in which the purpose of mechanical practice is not clear. In other words, mechanical practice is not always regarded as a necessary step for contextualized practice.

The lack of contextualized practice in *Japanese for Busy People* limits the efficacy of practice. Similarly, in *Nakama*, despite the number of practices in the workbook as well as in the main instructional material, practice is beneficial only as far as learners’ attainment of the control of production of negative questions is concerned. Because of the insufficient contextual information contextualized practice in *Nakama* does not provide opportunities for learners to simulate the usage of negative questions in plausible contexts.

In *Yookoso!*, practice first promotes development of skills of newly introduced elements, and then proceeds to skills which are more contextualized for actual communication. Such sequencing is effective for the development of procedural knowledge, except for the cases in which short exchanges are presented without instruction.

*Both Situational Functional Japanese and Japanese: The Spoken Language* promote the skill-getting of negative questions as lower skills in mechanical practices first, and then enhance appropriate usage of lower level skills in integration. What is more, they sequence context hierarchically, toward those which require more careful attention to relationships and relative social positions.
3.5. Summary

Nakama and Japanese for Busy People do not assume the importance of accurate information on structures on which declarative knowledge is to be built. Information on negative questions is insufficient for learners to differentiate them from other expressions. Practice, mainly mechanical, has limited efficacy, for instance, in the attainment of formation of negative questions or production of negative questions as conventionalized expressions. Similarly, Yookoso! does not put emphasis on explanation for declarative knowledge. However, it repeatedly presents negative questions with other expressions as communication strategies. Detailed explanation of negative questions as strategies for communication is also observed in Situational Functional Japanese. In this respect, these two sets of instructional materials do not ignore these important functions of negative questions. Since Situational Functional Japanese provides more contextual information for exchanges than Yookoso!, the rationale for the use of negative questions is more identifiable. Although both of them sequence practice hierarchically, their treatment of negative questions as a variety of separate communication strategies may limit applicability to similar situations to those in which the units are organized. Japanese: The Spoken Language does not organize each unit by communicative functions, unlike other instructional materials. It does not divide negative questions into different communication strategies for each different situation. Rather, the usage of negative questions, whose structures gradually become more complex by subsuming newly introduced elements, can be referred to in the initial explanations. Newly introduced elements are aimed to be built as lower level skills by response drills and then integrated into negative questions utilized appropriately for required politeness in context.

Even in the case that declarative knowledge is assumed to be importants, the situation-oriented organization makes the clear differentiation from other expressions in a coherent manner difficult. As a result, newly introduced information is difficult to
incorporate into the learners' declarative knowledge. Moreover, it is difficult for procedural knowledge to be developed on such unstable information. Mechanical practice is useful for the attainment of, for instance, faster production of negative questions in isolation. There are cases in which the purpose of mechanical practice is not clear and thus it does not function as a necessary step before contextualized practice. The skills built through mechanical practice need to be utilized in context for comfortable communication in real-life situations.

The structure-oriented organization appears to be more effective for explaining and practicing negative questions, since it can avoid dealing with similar expressions simultaneously and can subsume previously introduced negative questions under more structurally complex ones for use in various real-life situations. Different negative questions can be integrated into a single effective communication strategy, from the perspective of the underlying politeness of maintaining the appropriate distance to the addressee, and these negative questions can thus become applicable to a variety of situations.

Relationships and relative social ranks which motivate the choice of negative questions should be clarified in the beginning and reintroduced as necessary, especially in regards to group affiliation, which constantly changes according to the situation.
CHAPTER 4

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

In Chapter 1 we have observed a case in which learners’ not choosing negative questions can hinder comfortable communication in Japanese:

(1) A (clerk): *Hateyuu kyuu-en no okaesu desu.*  

\[
\text{89 yen of change COP} 
\]

‘Here is 89 yen in change.’


\[
\text{98 yen COP SFP} 
\]

‘It’s 98 yen, right?’

Such use of declarative sentences instead of negative questions is linguistically sound, but culturally incoherent. Given the goal of learners to interact effectively as socially mature non-native speakers in Japanese, it is important for them to be able to employ negative questions when necessary. In order for negative questions to be utilized as an effective communication strategy, explicit information on negative questions needs to be available for learners to build stable knowledge. However, declarative knowledge - knowledge about negative questions - does not suffice for guarantee learners’ ability in using negative questions smoothly in real-life situations. Learners need to develop knowledge about how to make given information readily usable; that is, they need procedural knowledge. Both
declarative and procedural knowledge of negative questions are important for the effective employment of negative questions.

Chapter 2 has investigated the important functional properties of negative questions which are necessary for declarative knowledge to be built. It is shown that the speaker's choice of negative questions rather than yes-no affirmative questions is attributed to his/her anticipation of the addressee's agreement to his/her proposition. What motivates the use of negative questions is not conduciveness alone. By examining previous accounts of Japanese negative questions, we have observed the important role played by politeness which is inherent in negative questions. We should take into consideration politeness which may arise from the speaker's avoidance of imposition of his/her proposition, specifically in the situations in which the proposition can impede the appropriate distance from the addressee if expressed in declaratives or imperatives. In light of the learners' goal of comfortable communication, this "hedging" function of negative questions necessary for maintenance of the appropriate distance from the addressee must be clarified and encouraged.

Chapter 3 has reviewed whether or not instructional materials clearly and explicitly provide information on what underlies the use of negative questions in order for learners to build declarative knowledge. It has been shown, however, that currently available instructional materials do not necessarily provide sufficient information in this respect. The chapter has also investigated whether or not instructional materials provide practice by which procedural knowledge can be developed for actual communication. For procedural knowledge, there needs to be both mechanical practice for the development of lower level skills such as automatic production of negative forms, and contextualized practice in which previously obtained skills are integrated for the appropriate utilization of negative questions as higher level skills in given situations. It is important for practices to be sequenced from mechanical practice to contextualized practice. However, it is not always the case that
practice in instructional materials provides opportunities for the development of usable skills in real-life situations.

Whether or not instructional materials provide accurate and sufficient information, especially for structural patterns, relates to their efficacy in facilitating the development of declarative knowledge of negative questions. When information is modified for the sake of immediate use of newly introduced elements such as vocabulary and expressions, the attainment of sufficient declarative knowledge may be compromised. Negative questions are not differentiated clearly from other expressions when introduced together with other expressions which are similar in intent. Here, what underlies the choice of negative questions is not identifiable. In particular, explanations of politeness are often simplified, or provided in ways that are difficult to incorporate into knowledge about negative questions.

All the instructional materials reviewed provide mechanical practice. However, in some of these instructional materials, the purpose of mechanical practice is not clearly presented as a necessary step for later contextualized practice. Mechanical practice is important, and effective for skills such as the formation of negative questions and production of negative questions as conventionalized expressions. Without contextualized practice, however, the usefulness of the skills developed by mechanical practice is limited, since learners may not know when, how, why and to whom they use these skills.

4.1. Information for Building Declarative Knowledge

Successful acquisition of new information on which declarative knowledge is built depends on the way the new information interacts with what has already been internalized. For the newly introduced information on negative questions to be efficiently obtained, explanations need to relate old and new information on negative questions, and differentiate negative questions from other expressions.
When the organization revolves around focal situations, the situation in which the main exchange takes place is clear. However, the use of negative questions in such a limited situation without sufficient explanations may not make negative questions applicable to different situations. Each presentation of negative questions treats them as discrete items, such as invitations, requests, or means to state one's opinion or disagreement. In addition, the simultaneous presentation of expressions which can be used in the focal situation does not differentiate negative questions from other expressions. As a result, learners may choose what becomes most readily available for them at that point, for instance, a declarative sentence as in (1)B.

When negative questions are explained as separate entities such as invitation and request, it is often the case that the important function of negative questions as a communication strategy is not well-articulated or emphasized. However, we cannot overlook the function of hedging. In Japanese society which values and maintains conformity as pointed out in Chapter 2, stating one's opinion and disagreement can be considered threatening and inappropriate. The speaker needs to bear in mind the importance of avoidance of imposing one's proposition, and accordingly should be motivated to learn to utilize negative questions as a means for comfortable communication.

For materials in which each specific situation provides different information on negative questions, it becomes necessary for learners to induce the connection between separate pieces of information for building stable knowledge. As Fujita (1997: 121) points out, learners are expected to make linguistic generalizations based on various data provided by situations or themes. However, we cannot assume that such an inductive approach enables learners to make the generalizations correctly and easily, given that they, as cognitively and socially mature learners, are subject to the filter of their first language and culture. To facilitate more efficient development of declarative knowledge, instructional materials need to provide information in a way that learners can utilize their cognitive
maturity fully. In this respect, it appears more effective for units of instructional materials to be organized by structural complexity than by situations. If structurally simple negative questions are introduced first with explanations which can relate to more complex ones that will be introduced later, learners can build solid knowledge more efficiently. Such sequencing gives more opportunities for previously introduced information on negative questions to be reviewed repeatedly by having it subsumed by what is newly presented. Moreover, coherence in each item of information can enhance applicability of negative questions to various real-life situations. Learners can avoid false generalization which may inhibit comfortable communication since the organization can avoid introducing expressions which appear similar in the speaker's intention but differ in appropriateness in given contexts.

As we have discussed, the structure-oriented organization of units is effective from the perspective of facilitation of declarative knowledge of negative questions. Given the importance of negative questions as a communication strategy, instructional materials should introduce negative questions early so that they are constantly reviewed in a sequence. Such early presentation should also enable negative questions to be clearly differentiated from other expressions when, for instance, imperative forms are introduced. Similarly, politeness in Japanese needs to be explained early, and reviewed and reinforced whenever it motivates the appropriate choice of negative questions over other expressions.

4.2. Practice to Facilitate Development of Procedural Knowledge

Given that declarative knowledge of negative questions, the solid foundation on which procedural knowledge has been developed, practice needs to provide opportunities for new information to be retained and made readily available when necessary. When negative questions are introduced, mechanical practice should promote their smooth production. Then contextualized practice must internalize such negative questions as
plausible parts of communication. In accordance with the sequencing of negative questions, contextualized practice should help learners integrate newly introduced elements as lower level skills into previously developed skills. Thus, greater complexity in structures and the choice of speech style should be assumed in later practice.

The purpose of mechanical practice should be clear as building blocks for the appropriate usage of negative questions. For that identified purpose, practice which require certain syntactic forms such as declaratives to be changed to negative forms, though not a plausible part of actual communication, are effective. Short exchanges may be also used for substitution practice in which learners can work more on formation of negative questions with a variety of predicates. Response drills, being short exchanges, can assume minimal contextual information as a plausible part of communication in order for learners to attend to the appropriate distance to the addressee. The mere presentation of short exchanges in sections intended for practice, as observed in some instructional materials, could be improved if explicit instructions were given.

We have also observed multiple-choice format practice in which learners choose appropriate expressions. With the contextual information sufficient to motivate the appropriate choice of negative questions rather than other expressions, or an appropriate speech style within negative questions, learners may confirm knowledge of negative questions in such practice. However, confirmation of what they know about negative questions cannot be equated with their ability to use negative questions. On the other hand, although practices which present sentences to be translated from English to Japanese do require production of negative questions, they tend to overlook the importance of politeness in Japanese, by failing to provide sufficient information, especially on relative social ranks of interlocutors. Contextual practice must provide contextual information with which learners should demonstrate that they can produce negative questions attending to the appropriate distance from the addressee.
Role plays are useful in that they actually require learners to demonstrate how appropriately negative questions can be utilized. Many role plays could increase their efficacy if they required more careful attention to be paid to the distance between interlocutors and incorporated group affiliation in a variety of roles. As learners’ repertoire increases, role plays should describe situations which assume more complexity in structures and choice of speech styles related to group affiliation.

4.3. Summary

Explaining negative questions as one kind of yes-no question, for instance, as an extension of affirmative yes-no questions, does not sufficiently facilitate learners’ appropriate utilization of negative questions. It is necessary for information on negative questions to explain what underlies the choice of negative questions over other expressions. What motivates the use of negative questions includes their conductiveness (i.e. the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s affirmative response to his/her proposition) and hedging to avoid imposing the speaker’s proposition. These functional properties of negative questions differentiate them from other expressions such as declarative and imperative sentences. Moreover, negative questions as a means of hedging are indispensable when the speaker’s intentions may threaten comfortable communication in Japanese. In order for learners to achieve their goal of interacting effectively as cognitively and socially mature non-native speakers, it is important for them to use negative questions appropriately. Instructional materials, therefore, must provide sufficient information on negative questions on which learners can build stable knowledge, as well as practice by which procedural knowledge can be developed for the smooth utilization of negative questions in real-life situations. The overall organization of instructional materials play an important role for facilitating learners’ development of declarative and procedural knowledge of negative questions. It should introduce structurally simple negative questions
before more complex ones, and the appropriate utilization of negative questions in context after mechanical practice.

4.4. Future Study

The present study has focused on negative questions whose proposition is affirmative, and the efficacy of their presentation in existing instructional materials from the perspective of a cognitive approach to language learning in which both declarative and procedural knowledge are indispensable. There are areas which require further investigation which may enhance effective employment of negative questions.

First, it requires time and effort for the development of ideal instructional materials. As pointed out by Unger et al. (1997: 42), it may be more efficient for us to explore how instruction in classrooms should complement what needs to be improved in the existing materials. Instruction which learners receive depends not only on information in instructional materials but also on how such information is delivered.

Second, if we hypothesize that learners use the sentence final particle ne with tag questions, declarative sentences like (1)B as an equivalent to tag questions in English are an issue to be investigated. For instance, learners may come up with such utterances as (1)B, assuming ne as an equivalent of 'don't you think ... ?'. Considering the cultural incoherence of (1)B, however, we should clarify overlapping areas as well as differences, examining appropriate and inappropriate cases for each in context.

Third, as stated in Chapter 1, this study does not include negative questions whose proposition such as (23) is negative:

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17 Regarding the account on the overlapping area between English tag-questions and Japanese sentence final particle ne, see Makino and Yusa (1980), Martin, Samuel E., (1975), Misutani and Misutani (1977), and Onoe (1997).
It is necessary for instructional materials to encompass how the presentation of negative questions effectively differentiates the syntactically identical negative questions (i.e. (23) above and [Hii] masen ka? ‘Won’t you go?’). Sufficient contextual information is indispensable, but instructional materials also draw attention to the intonation for learners to utter them in given situations. Tanomura (1988) that there is a difference in intonation between negative questions with affirmative proposition and those with negative proposition. Eda (1998) points out that such information as the speaker’s emotional state, attitude toward the addressee and attitude toward the context, can be conveyed by the intonation. We should consider intonation as one of the important pieces of information in context. Therefore, we cannot ignore the importance of accompanying audio-visual materials such as audio tapes, video tapes and CD-ROMs. In addition to the issue of the intonation, the speaker’s intention can be interpreted differently depending on affirmativity or negativity of the propositional content:\footnote{Sentences (24) and (25) were indebted to M. Noda (personal communication).}

(22) Kono mae kaita hon, kaesite kudasaimasu ka?
    this before lend book return-GER give SFP
    ‘Will you return the book I loaned you the other day?’

(25) Kono mae kaita hon, kaesite kudasaimasen ka?
    this before lend book return-GER give-NEG SFP
    ‘Won’t you return the book I loaned you the other day?’

Assuming that the propositional content of (25) which can be face-threatening is affirmative, (25) as a negative question should be employed for the function of hedging, in accordance with what we have discussed. However, compared to its affirmative
counterpart (24), (25) does not appear to be an effective communication strategy. On the contrary, if the propositional content of (25) is considered negative, it functions to confirm the negative situation (i.e., the addressee has not returned the book yet) and hence sounds imposing. Furthermore, the limited scope of this study leaves functions of different kinds of negative questions unexplored. For instance, such negative questions as direct-style predicate with zya nai ka (i.e., Ikus zya nai desu ka), and nominalized direct-style predicate with zya nai ka (i.e., Ikus n zya nai desu ka), may not have the functions which have been discussed in this thesis.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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