

Some Linguistic Resources for Arguing, Japanese Style

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This study describes a style of arguing in Japanese university faculty meetings. Approaching argument as an interactional event in which two or more participants exchange opposition over a particular matter, the analysis focuses on roles played by two linguistic resources, short responses known as *aizuchi* and markers of opposition such as *demo* ('but') and *tada* ('but'). The analysis shows that these resources enable the participants to construct a style of arguing marked by relatively long oppositional turns that perform a variety of actions. Following the analysis, the cultural implications of this style of arguing are discussed.

Keywords: Argument, Cultural style, Conversation Analysis, *Aizuchi*, Opposition

1. Introduction

The primary goal of this study is to provide a description of a style of arguing in a specific institutional setting in Japan, namely, university faculty meetings. The approach to argument follows conversation analysts who have treated arguing as an interactional sequence in which two or more participants exchange opposition over a particular matter (Greatbach and Dingwall 1997; Hutchby, 1996, 2001). In particular, the analysis focuses on two linguistic resources, short response items known as *aizuchi* ('back-channels') and markers of opposition such as *demo* ('but') and *tada* ('but'), which enable the faculty member participants in the data to construct a style of arguing marked by relatively long oppositional turns. In addition to expressing opposition, the analysis shows that the participants use these linguistic resources within their oppositional turns to accomplish other actions that include explanations, the introduction of new information, and requests.

A secondary goal of this study is to discuss briefly the cultural implications of the style of arguing described in the analysis. Despite prior studies that have analyzed occurrences of arguing in Japanese contexts (Iwai 1996; Saft 2004; Takagi 1999), it has sometimes been noted that Japanese speakers are under strict cultural constraints in terms of the expression of opposition in interaction (Barnlund 1989; Nakane 1970; Ozaki 1978). It has even been suggested that cultural constraints make it virtually impossible for Japanese participants to argue, and it has likewise been claimed that Japanese patterns of logic do not allow for the production of 'logical' arguments (Nakane 1972; Morita 1998; Okabe 1983). However, the claim is made in this study that what makes the style of argu-

ing presented in this study distinctly 'Japanese' is less a result of the influence of underlying constraints and patterns of thought and more an outcome of the participants' ability to deploy on a turn-by-turn basis the linguistic resources available to them.

2. Data

The data for this paper come from monthly departmental faculty meetings at a 4-year Japanese university in Northern Japan that were audio-taped for a 14-month period in 1998–1999. In total, approximately 15 hours of interaction from the meetings were taped and transcribed with the help of first language speakers of Japanese. The meetings were attended by 11 participants, including myself, all of whom were male and members of the International Department at the university.¹ The meetings were not typically argumentative in nature, but it was not unusual for the participants, as a part of discussing matters pertaining to the administration of their department and the university in general, to oppose statements from their colleagues and to engage in arguments that could last for several minutes. The analysis below examines some of the common features of those sequences of argument.

3. Analysis

As I have described elsewhere (Saft 2004, 2007a), the meetings typically begin in a 'reporting framework' with one of the faculty members reporting information to the rest of the participants, who remain, temporarily at least, silent recipients of the talk. However, it was common in the meetings for one of the recipients to interject talk into the reporting framework of a 'current speaker', which sometimes led to the exchange of opposition. Excerpt (1) begins as one of the faculty members, Tanaka, interjects into a report that was being made by Suzuki. Just prior to Tanaka's interjection which begins in line 1, Suzuki had been explaining that a recent change in the university curriculum to a semester system (from a system in which the same classes were taught for a full year) might mean that the faculty have to write four different syllabi for their seminar classes, two for their junior seminar (one for each semester) and two for their senior seminar (also one for each semester). Instead, Suzuki had suggested as part of his report that the faculty, in order to lessen their burden, write just one syllabus to cover all of their seminar classes.²

¹ All names of participants and departments in the analysis are pseudonyms.

² The transcription conventions and abbreviations appearing in the interlinear gloss can be found in the two appendices following the body of the paper.

(1) 1-22-98

- 1 Tanaka: *demo ne: so-soo suru to gakusei ga hora rishuutodoke o*
but FP that do if student S look registration form O
- 2 *dasu toki ni shi[rabasu o mite (.5) sono enshuu no ichi=*
hand in time syllabus O see that seminar LK 1
'but if we do it that way, the students, when they hand in their registration, will look at the syllabus (.5) and that seminar 1'
- 3 Suzuki: *[ee::*
yes
'yes'
- 4 Tanaka: *=t- wareware wa ichi ka ni ka tte yutteta deshoo*
we TM one or two Q QT were saying COP
'(before) we were saying either 1 or 2, right'
- 5 Suzuki: *ee:*
yes
'yes'
- 6 Tanaka: *un kokusai en[shuu*
yes international seminar
'yes, the International Department seminar classes'
- 7 Suzuki: *[ee:*
yes
'yes'
- 8 Tanaka: *de sono ichi mo ni mo nakute:: (.) sono: (.) u-u- shirabasu*
COP that one also two also not have that syllabus
- 9 *mita toki sono (.) kamokumei ga (.) enshuu dake tte yuu*
look time that class name S seminar only QT say
- 10 *no wa (.) okashii (.) tsumari sannensei de are suru*
NOM TM strange basically 3rd year student COP that do
- 11 *no to yonensei to toozen chigaimasu yo ne:*
LK and 4th year student and naturally different LK FP
'and without either 1 or 2 (.) that (.) when the students look at that syllabus (.) and the class name, (.) only seminar is strange, (.) basically what we do in third year (seminars) and fourth year (ones) are of course different'
- 12 Suzuki: *tashika ni ei no ichi toka*
to be sure A LK 1 and the like
'to be sure, (we will use) A1 and the like'
- 13 Tanaka: *un=*
uh-huh
'uh-huh'

- 14 Suzuki: =*soo yuu katachi de rishuu sasenai to naranai*
that say form COP register have to make do
- 15 [*n desu kedo mo*
NOM COP but
'we will have to make them register in such a way, but'
- 16 Tanaka: [*un un*
uh-huh uh-huh
'uh-huh uh-huh'
- 17 Suzuki: *bunka to wareware de wa moo sude ni*
Culture Dept. and us LOC TM already already
- 18 [*jikan no zure ga aru=*
time LK gap S have
'there is already a time gap between us and the Culture Department'
- 19 Tanaka: [*un*
uh-huh
'uh-huh'
- 20 Suzuki: =*wake desu yo*
reason COP FP
'that's what has happened'
- 21 Tanaka: *un*
uh-huh
'uh-huh'
- 22 Suzuki: *bunka wa kakunen saikuru o sur[u to yuu koto ni natte=*
Culture TM every year cycle O do QT say matter become
'the Culture Department works on a specific cycle every year'
- 23 Tanaka: [*un*
uh-huh
'uh-huh'
- 24 Suzuki: =*wareware wa sono opushon de yaranai to yuu koto*
we TM that option COP not do QT say matter
- 25 *ni nattemasu no de*
is becoming because
'it has been decided that we will not make use of such an option'
- 26 Tanaka: *un*
uh-huh
'uh-huh'
- 27 Suzuki: *sono hen de moo sude ni (.) mukoo wa mittsu kaku ka mo*
that area LOC already over there TM three write
- 28 *shirenai de kotchi wa futatsu toka (.) zurete kuru wake*
maybe COP here TM two and the like skew come reason

- 29 *desu ne* (.) *soo yuu imi* *de wa gakubukan de*
 COP FP that say meaning COP TM within School LOC
- 30 *tooitsu suru tte yuu imi* *de wa* (.) *tonikaku enshuu o*
 unify do QT say meaning COP TM anyway seminar O
- 31 *matomete kaite* (.5) *de sono ei ichi ni tte yuu no*
 put together write COP that A one two QT say LK
- 32 *aku made rishuu* *toorokujoo no* (.) *soochi ni*
 to the end registration enrollment LK device
- 33 *shitai* *to yuu* (.) *kangae nan desu yo*
 want to make QT say idea NOM COP FP
- 'and, if already (.) they are going to possibly write three syllabi and we will write two or something like that (.) it will be skewed, to avoid that, it is important to unify things within the School (.) so at the least, putting the contents of the seminar together and writing one (.5) and leaving the A-1 and 2 as merely a (.) device used at the time of registration is what we have been (.) thinking of doing'

In lines 1–2, Tanaka begins by noting that students will be looking at the syllabus when they register for their seminar classes. He then explains in lines 4 and 6 that the faculty themselves had called the seminars by different numbers before claiming in lines 8–11 that it will be strange if the one syllabus (suggested by Suzuki) has only the title of 'Seminar'. In other words, he has constructed in these first 11 a point that opposes the one-syllabus proposal made by Suzuki, ending his turn with the claim that it is going to be 'strange'. In response to this opposition, Suzuki in lines 12 and 14–15 acknowledges that they will have to use letters such as 'A' and numbers like '1' to help students register correctly, but Suzuki then begins in line 17 to build support for his proposal. As he explains through line 33, writing only one syllabus will allow the department to restore synchrony with another closely related department known as the Culture (*Bunka*) Department. Essentially then, in this excerpt, Tanaka and Suzuki have exchanged opposition over a particular matter; Tanaka has maintained that writing one syllabus will cause problems for students trying to register and Suzuki has rebutted by stating that his proposal is necessary because it will enhance the department's relationship with another department.

This is a very rich excerpt with many places of interest, but there are two points about the organization of the argument to be focused on here. First, it can be noted that neither Tanaka nor Suzuki, in initiating their opposition, just put forth what Jones (1990) has termed a 'blunt opposition'. In other words, the participants do not use straightforward utterances such as 'I disagree', 'you are wrong', or 'that is incorrect'. Instead, in line 1, Tanaka begins with the 'marker of opposition' *demo* ('but') before building his opposition through line 11, and in lines 14–15 Suzuki offers an 'acknowledgement preface' (Saft 2000) as a precursor to constructing his rebuttal. In this analysis, I want to give

attention especially to the role of markers of opposition.³ As the analysis will show, by beginning oppositional turns with opposition markers, participants are able to display that they have a problem with the previous turn, but they can also, at the same time, continue on to construct an oppositional turn that performs a variety of actions.

The second point about the organization of this argument sequence is the frequent usage on the part of the recipients of short responses such as *ee* ('yes') and *un* ('uh-huh') that are commonly referred to as *aizuchi* (often translated as 'back-channels' in English). In line 3, we can see that soon after Tanaka utters the oppositional marker *demo* and begins explaining his point Suzuki provides the short response token *ee*. Suzuki then continues offering *ee* tokens in lines 5 and 7 as Tanaka develops his point. Then, in lines 13, 16, 19, 21, 23, and 26, we can observe that Tanaka produces *un* tokens as Suzuki constructs his counterpoint.⁴ Research on *aizuchi* as a category of responses in Japanese, besides noting the high frequency with which they occur in Japanese, has suggested that they function as indicators of agreement and support on the part of a listener for some spate of talk (Iwasaki 1997; Locastro 1987; Maynard 1989; White 1989; Yamada 1992). In excerpt (1), it is possible that the *aizuchi* from Suzuki and Tanaka are playing a supportive role by encouraging a current speaker to continue with their talk, but it is doubtful that they are functioning as agreement given that Tanaka and Suzuki do not seem to be agreeing on this particular point. As I have argued previously (Saft 2007a) and will pursue further here, *aizuchi* have an even more important function in terms of the social organization of arguments in the faculty meetings. Excerpt (2) below will allow me to further show how markers of opposition and *aizuchi* serve as resources for arguing in the faculty meetings. Like excerpt (1), it focuses on the change in the curriculum in which seminar classes will be held for one semester at a time instead of for a year as in the past. At the beginning of this excerpt, Ogawa is explaining to the other faculty members a discussion about the change that occurred in another meeting he had attended earlier. Just prior to line 1, Ogawa had stated that the participants in the other meeting had become

³ Jones (1990) uses term discourse markers of opposition to refer to a similar set of items and Gruber (1998) uses the term disagreement markers to describe a set of comparable items in the German language. Gruber describes disagreement markers as a subclass of discourse markers and in doing so aligns his work with work by Fraser (1990) and Schiffrin (1986, 1987). Both Gruber and Schiffrin have suggested that these 'discourse markers' function in the 'interpersonal' aspects of turn taking rather than the 'mechanical' aspects (cf. Gruber 1998: 455 and Schiffrin 1986: 372). While there are certainly interpersonal aspects of the oppositional turns to be described in my study, I have chosen not to preface 'marker' with 'discourse' in order to focus more on the structural aspects of the oppositional turns in the data, particularly, how markers of opposition allow participants to structure their subsequent turns in different ways.

⁴ The fact that Tanaka employs *un* and Suzuki *ee* can be at least partly explained by the difference in their social positions. Tanaka is an older faculty member occupying the position of full professor (*kyooju*) while Suzuki is a junior faculty in the position of assistant professor (*kooshi*). While interesting, this difference in their *aizuchi* will not be pursued in the analysis.

confused (using the Japanese term *konran*) trying to figure how the new system is going to work.

Excerpt (2) 6-17-98

- 1 Ogawa: *ima tsuunen de: (.) sannensei no zemi o yatteru yatsu*
 now full year COP 3rd year LK seminar O doing thing
- 2 *o ichigakki de baa to yatte (.) de::: sono tsugi no toshi*
 O one semester COP quickly do COP that next LK year
- 3 *no yonensei de tsuunen de yatta yatsu mata ichigakki ni*
 LK 4th year COP full year COP did thing again one semester
- 4 *katamete katamete gaa tte yaru wake desu yo*
 push together push together hastenly QT do reason COP FP
- 5 *ne*
 FP
 'now as one full year (.) the 3rd year students' seminar is taking place
 but we will take that and do it all (.) in one semester, and the next year
 we will take the 4th year seminars and also do them in one semester,
 we will push them together and just take care of the semesters quickly'
- 6 Kida: *tada mukashi ne:*
 but before FP
 'but before'
- 7 Ogawa: *un*
 uh-huh
 'uh-huh'
- 8 Kida: *mukashi boku oboeteru kedo sa: (.) ano: ikkai ni sanjikan*
 before I remember but FP SF one time 3 hours
- 9 *(.) futakoma tsuzuki de yatta [(**)]*
 two units continuous COP did
 'I remember that (.) in one semester we did three hours, (.) two units of
 classes we did them back to back (**)
- 10 Ogawa: *[un yatta n desu*
 uh-huh did NOM COP
 'uh-huh, we did that'
- 11 Kida: *dakara are de kangaeru to ne: boku are no hoo ga*
 therefore that COP think if FP I that LK alternative S
- 12 *jikan ga: juubun torete yokatta ne (.) ima jissai ni ima no*
 time S enough take was good FP now really now LK
- 13 *sannensei sore de yatteru no ne*
 3rd year students that COP are doing FP FP
 'so, thinking about that, I feel doing it that way gave us plenty of time
 and I think that was good (.) now, actually for my 3rd year seminar, I

- am doing it that way'
- 14 Ogawa: *un*[:
uh-huh
'uh-huh'
- 15 Kida: *[futakoma tsukuzi datte (*) tte kanji de*
two units continuous COP QT feeling COP
'doing two units back-to-back gives you a feeling of (*)'
- 16 Ogawa: *un*
uh-huh
'uh-huh'
- 17 Kida: *jissai ne (.) de soo yatta hoo ga ne gakuseitachi*
really FP COP that did alternative S FP students
- 18 *shuuchuudo tte yuu ka ne:(.) are hakadoru n da yo*
concentration QT say Q FP that progress NOM COP FP
- 19 *na dakara boku wa sono tame konran wa shinai daroo*
FP thus I TM that reason confuse TM not do perhaps
- 20 *to yuu ki wa suru yo ne*
QT say feeling TM do FP FP
'in reality (.) that way of doing it, if you talk about students' level of concentration (.) it will let them make more progress (.) so for that reason I have a feeling that there will not be much confusion in the new system'

Just as Ogawa has explained through line 5 that faculty in the new system will have to teach in one semester the content that they had previously taught in a full year (which means that the instructors will need to have longer classes in order to cover the necessary material), Kida enters in line 6 with an utterance that begins with the marker of opposition *tada*. Ogawa next produces an *aizuchi un* ('uh-huh') in line 7 which prompts Kida to continue explaining in lines 8–9 that they had in years past taught two units of seminar classes back-to-back. With Ogawa providing more *un* tokens in lines 10, 14, and 16, Kida then further notes in lines 17–18 that such a procedure raises the level of the students' concentration and then finishes in lines 19–20 by stating that he does not think there will be much confusion in the new system. In doing so, Kida employs the same Japanese term *konran* that Ogawa had originally used to describe the feeling of some members of the university toward the new system. He has thus used his turn beginning in line 6 to oppose the idea put forth by Ogawa that the new system was going to be confusing.

Crucial to the development of this point of opposition is the employment of *aizuchi* by Ogawa and the marker of opposition *tada* by Kida. As I have noted in other work (Saft 2007a, 2007b), *aizuchi* may express support and agreement, but one of the basic functions they perform in Japanese interaction is allowing participants to acknowledge

their role as willing recipients of a spate of talk. And, with one participant expressing a willingness to be a recipient, *aizuchi* make it possible for a currently-speaking participant to develop a point of opposition, as Kida did in excerpt (2). When two participants, as Tanaka and Suzuki did in Excerpt (1), 'take turns' using *aizuchi* and choosing themselves as recipients, then participants can exchange oppositions, in other words, have an argument. In terms of the structure of the interaction, this means that *aizuchi* help shift the talk from an organization in which one person reports information to the rest of the (silent) participants to an organization in which two participants can argue over specific matters. *Aizuchi* are thus important resources for enabling the participants in the faculty meetings to accomplish arguments.

Markers of opposition such as *demo* and *tada* are important in this structural shift because they, as the initial part of the utterance, make it clear that a participant has a problem with a current spate of talk.⁵ Markers of opposition do not by themselves express what that problem is, and undoubtedly for this reason, there were no instances in my data where a marker of opposition stood by itself as a full and complete turn. In fact, by commonly responding with *aizuchi* to turns prefaced with markers of opposition, participants seemed to orient to the fact that more talk was expected after a marker of opposition. Subsequently, current speakers were allowed to continue to develop their points. In Excerpt (2), Kida's use of *tada* as a part of *tada mukashi ne*: ('but before') prompted *aizuchi* from Ogawa, which in turn made it possible for Kida to explain why he had problems believing that the new system was going to be confusing. Likewise in excerpt (1), Tanaka's preface of *demo* in line 1 resulted in *aizuchi* from Suzuki, which enabled Tanaka to elaborate on his problem with the one-syllabus proposal.

In this sense, it would appear that the marker of opposition and the subsequent expression of the problem are in a mutually informative relationship; the marker of opposition, on the one hand, lets the listeners know that they should understand the talk to follow as opposition-relevant, and the subsequent talk, on the other hand, informs participants how they should understand the marker of opposition. In excerpt (1), the talk following Tanaka's *demo* made it apparent that Tanaka had a problem with the title of the seminar class on a single syllabus, and in excerpt (2), the subsequent talk after Kida's *tada* showed that he believed that the semester system would not be confusing. In both of these excerpts, the markers of opposition and *aizuchi* worked together to allow the participants to utter and elaborate their points of opposition.

Observation of the data, however, indicates that markers of opposition sometimes functioned as resources for using turns to do more than just elaborate their points. Excerpt (3) provides an example. It begins as Ogawa explains that the first day of class-

⁵ In my data, the markers of opposition most commonly used were *demo*, *tada*, and *iya* ('no'), but other possible linguistic items in this category would be *tadashi* ('however'), *shikashi* ('but'), *tokoro ga* ('however'), and *kedo* ('but'). It would be interesting to give consideration to all of these items in the analysis, but because of a lack of space, the rest of the analysis will focus on usages of *tada* in the data.

es for each semester will be used to gather all of the students together and have a guidance session, meaning that instead of regular classes, they will use the time to distribute report cards to students and discuss with them what they need to accomplish in the upcoming semester.

Excerpt (3)

- 1 Ogawa: *futsuu no jugyoo o yaranai de (.) dakara minna*
regular LK class O not do COP thus everyone
- 2 *deru hitsuyoo wa: nai yo ne (I) kurasu tannin ga*
take part necessity TM not have FP FP class advisor S
- 3 *dete kite soko de (.) seisekihyoo kubatte gaidansu o okonau*
take part there LOC report cards hand out guidance O do
- 4 *wake desu kedo mo*
reason COP but
'regular classes will not be held (.) and there is no need for everyone to take part (.), the class advisors will attend and they will (.) distribute the report cards and do the guidance but'
- 5 (.)
- 6 Yamada: *tada ano: bunka no eigo ichi (1) no ken desu*
but SF culture LK English one LK matter COP
- 7 *kedo mo (.) ee kurasu o (.) mittsu ni wakete kurasuwake o*
but SF class O three divide class division O
- 8 *shinakya naranai desu ne:*
have to do COP FP
'however, um, its about the Culture's English 1 class but (.) um we will (.) divide it into three classes and so we have to make that division at some time'
- 9 Ogawa: *aa*
oh
'oh'
- 10 Yamada: *de: ano: (.) getsuyoobi: no gozenchuu ni: (*) (.) saisho no*
COP SF Monday LK morning first LK
- 11 *(.) jugyoo ga (.) aru to omou n de*
class S have QT think NOM COP
'and um (.) it is Monday in the morning (*) (.) that the first (.) class occurs (.) I think
- 12 Ogawa: *nijikanme desu ne*
2nd period COP FP
'2nd period'
- 13 Yamada: *ni-nijikanme desu yo ne desu kara: sono toki ni: bunka no (.)*
2nd period COP FP FP COP so that time Culture LK

- 14 *ichinensei* (.) *zenin atsumatte moratte* (.) *de tada: ano:*
1st year students all gather receive COP only SF
- 15 *sentaku: na n desu kedo mo* (.) *shikashi hotondo ga*
choose COP NOM COP but however almost S
- 16 *moo eigo ichi torimasu no de ne* (.) *sore de* (.) *ano:*
already English 1 take because FP that COP SF
- 17 *sono ba de* (.) *kurasuwake o: ano: shitai to*
that place LOC class division O SF want to do QT
- 18 *omotte iru n desu kedo mo*
thinking NOM COP but
'2nd period, right, therefore, at that time, since the Culture (.) 1st year students (.) will all be gathered together (.) and its just a matter of them choosing their classes (.) however almost all of the students will take English 1 (.) and so (.) um at that place (.) I would like to take care of the class division'
- 19 Ogawa: *ii n ja nai desu ka: (.) Mori sensei wa sentaa*
good NOM not COP Q Mori AT TM Center
- 20 *da kara doo desu ka*
COP because how COP Q
'that should be okay (.) Professor Mori you are in the Center so what do you think?'

After Ogawa offers the information in lines 1-4 that only the class advisors will attend the guidance session and hand out report cards, Yamada, after a micropause, utters in line 6 *tada* and then immediately goes on to note that the students taking a class entitled English 1 need to be divided into three sections. Short responses from Ogawa in lines 9 and 12 lead to further information which reveals that Yamada wants to use the guidance time, when all of the students taking English 1 will be together, to accomplish this division. The division, as he alludes to in lines 14-15, is only a matter of having students choose the class they want to take.

Like the first two excerpts, the talk following the marker of opposition informs understanding of the marker of opposition, but there seems to be at least a couple of possible differences. First, Yamada does in a sense explain his reason for uttering *tada* but more than just making an explanation, he introduces new information, namely, that the students in English need to be divided into three sections. This is itself is not necessarily surprising because in excerpt (2), we saw that Kida, as part of explaining his point, brought in new information about his previous experiences. Yet, the second point about this excerpt is that Yamada does not really use this new information to oppose a previous point. Instead, Yamada appears to be accomplishing more of a request than an opposition. He expresses his desire in lines 16-18 to do the class division during the guidance meeting. Indeed, we can see that Yamada's point is treated by Ogawa as a request as he

first gives his permission in line 19 but then directs in lines 19–20 the question to Mori, a participant who is affiliated with the Educational Research Center, the part of the university that is responsible for creating and overseeing guidance sessions.

Excerpt (3) thus shows a turn prefaced by *tada* being used to accomplish the introduction of new information and a request, but since it is difficult to see anything oppositional about Yamada's talk, it also might raise questions about the characterization of *tada* as a marker of opposition. Still, there is evidence in the data that participants themselves treated *tada* as a marker of opposition. Excerpt (4), which is a continuation of excerpt (2), serves as an example.

Excerpt (4): Continuation of (2)

- 21 Ogawa: *tada mondai wa ne (.) sono (.) sore o yaru deshoo: de*
 however problem TM FP that that O do COP COP
- 22 *zenki de yatte kooki de mo yaru- yaru n da*
 first half COP do later half COP do do NOM COP
- 23 *kedo sore ga onaji ningen ga kuru to yuu koto ga*
 but that S same persor S come QT say matter S
- 24 *hotondo nai*
 almost not have
 'however, the problem is (.) that (.) if we do it that way, we will be fine in the first half and then when we try to also do it in the second half we will not be getting the same students'
- 25 (.)
- 26 Kida: *onaji ningen [ga:?*
 same person S
 'same students'
- 27 Tanaka: *[soo soo soo soo*
 that that that that
 'that's right, that's right, that's right, that's right'
- 28 Ogawa: *un daka[ra*
 uh-huh thus
 'uh-huh, thus'
- 29 Tanaka: *[moo jiyuu da kara (.) bonbon*
 already free COP because more
- 30 *bon[bon=*
 more
 'because it's an open system, more and more will come'
- 31 Kida: *[jiyuu da:?*
 free COP
 'it's open?'

- 32 Tanaka: =un do-dore demo haitte kuru kara
uh-huh whoever enter come because
'yes, anyone can just enter the seminar'
- 33 Kida: ee chotto matte sore wa juugyoo doo yuu fuu ni yaru
huh little wait that TM class how say way do
- 34 ka to jissai kankei nai n ja nai no onaji ningen
Q with actually relation not NOM not Q same person
- 35 ja nakutemo futakoma tsuzukete yareru giron
not even two units continuous can do argument
- 36 ni naranai
not become
'huh, wait a second, that does not matter in terms of how we teach our
classes, even if it is not the same students, we can have two units back-
to-back, that's not an argument'

Following Kida's usage in excerpt (2) of the oppositional marker *tada* to begin explaining why the new semester system would not be confusing, Ogawa in line 21 employs *tada* to introduce some information that he believes will be problematic. He states in lines 21–24 that the students entering the seminar in the second semester may be different from those who took the class the first semester. After a micropause in line 25, it becomes clear that Kida, as he repeats the phrase *onaji ningen ga* ('the same students') with a question intonation, has failed to understand the import of such a remark. Ogawa in line 28 begins to attempt a repair, but it is Tanaka in lines 29–30 who tries to explain further by noting that students will be free to take whatever seminar they want. However, Kida once again displays a lack of understanding by using a question intonation to repeat the phrase *jiyuu da* ('it's open') that was used by Tanaka. Tanaka tries to clarify the point in line 32 by asserting that anyone can enroll in the seminar, but this prompts Kida in lines 33–36 to claim the irrelevancy of such a point and then, using a bit of a playful tone, to admonish Ogawa and Tanaka for not keeping to the argument. In other words, Kida appears to have been expecting Ogawa and subsequently Tanaka to provide an opposition to the point Kida himself had just made. When Kida is unable, after several tries, to see the connection between his previous point and the proposed opposition, he employs the phrase *giron ni naranai* ('that is not an argument') in lines 35–36 to complain that Ogawa and Tanaka are doing something outside of the realm of arguing. Largely responsible for Kida's expectation is the usage by Ogawa of the marker of opposition *tada* to preface his turn in line 21. This helps lead Kida to try to understand the subsequent talk from Ogawa (and Tanaka) as an opposition.

This excerpt, then, suggests an orientation on the part of participants to the mutually informing relationship between markers of opposition and subsequent talk. Prefacing a turn with a marker of opposition can result in an expectation that the subsequent talk will provide listeners with the means for understanding the point of opposition. When

Kida could not see the connection between the *tada* uttered by Ogawa and the rest of the turn, he claimed that Ogawa and Tanaka were not 'playing by the rules'.

And, although Kida's reaction in this excerpt suggests that *tada* has an oppositional quality to it, this does not necessarily mean that participants will always use markers of opposition in the same way in interaction. In fact, the excerpts presented in the analysis indicate that markers of opposition can preface turns that do a variety of actions, including explain points, introduce new information, and make requests. In particular, based on Yamada's move in excerpt (3), we might want to recognize that at times the most immediate outcome of the use of *tada* is not an opposition or argument but instead a content shift in the discussion. Hence, one way of summarizing the interactional import of a marker of opposition such as *tada* would be to refer to it as a versatile linguistic resource that allows participants to accomplish multiple actions in interaction, some of which may contribute to the building of arguments. The same can be said for *aizuchi*. They serve as versatile resources which may be serve multiple roles in Japanese interaction, including the giving of support, the expressing of agreement, and the determining of reciprocity. In some contexts, such as the faculty meetings in this study, they may also function as resources that create an interactional organization such that the participants can engage in arguments.

4. Discussion: arguing style as cultural style

With the frequent employment of *aizuchi* and markers of opposition, a style of arguing often emerges in the faculty meetings that appears to differ from the image of an argument in western communication. Rather than exchange blunt statements of opposition, the Japanese participants tend to develop and exchange rather lengthy points of opposition that are full of explanations, the introduction of new information, and content shifts. Sometimes even, as in excerpts (3) and (4), participants may use markers of opposition but yet seemingly develop their turns in ways that appear to be only marginally oppositional. To some observers, especially those with a perception of western communication as being marked by direct statements of purpose (including opposition), the style of arguing used in the Japanese faculty meetings might seem indirect and even sometimes illogical. They might, in short, be used as evidence supporting the notions that there exists in Japan an aversion to argument or that the Japanese way of thinking (logic) is different from that of the west. By way of conclusion, I would like to suggest, however, that we not jump too quickly to conclusions. First of all, although there exists microanalyses of arguing in western societies (Greatbach and Dingwall 1997; Gruber 1998; Hutchby 1996, 2001), it is perhaps too early to state with any confidence that the style of arguing in the Japanese faculty meetings are 'different'. Until we have more research in institutional settings like universities (and other settings), it is difficult to know just what types of linguistic resources are employed and what kinds of interactional organizations are created in other languages. Likewise more research is needed on arguments in other Japanese

contexts. Takagi (1999), for one, has described an argument in Japanese in which the participants seemed to employ more ‘direct’ oppositions.

At the same time, though, while being careful about drawing generalizations too quickly, we can still refer to the methods described in the analysis as a ‘cultural’ style of arguing. What makes it Japanese, though, may not automatically be the cultural ideals or thought-patterns (whether or not there are restrictions on arguing or a different logic) underlying or mediating the interaction, but rather the mobilization by the participants of the interactional resources available to them. The participants in the transcription excerpts provided above were all first language speakers of Japanese who produced this style of arguing one turn at a time by using their inferences concerning the linguistic items most appropriate for that particular situation. By choosing markers of opposition, whether they be for expressing opposition, making explanations, or accomplishing requests, and *aizuchi*, whether they be used for support, agreement, and/or determining recipientship, the participants were creating (and constantly recreating) a particular ‘cultural’ style. Markers of opposition and *aizuchi* themselves, thus, should be seen as versatile cultural resources because of their usage in creating this style. This does not mean, necessarily, that this would be a unique style of arguing—more research would be necessary across languages—but we can still say that the participants in the faculty meetings organized their arguments in a very Japanese (cultural) way.

Appendix 1. Transcription conventions

[the point where overlapping talk begins
]	the point where overlapping talk ends
(0.0)	length of silence measured in tenths of a second
(.)	micropause
<u>underline</u>	indicates some form of emphasis, which may be signaled by changes in pitch and/or amplitude
::	lengthening of previous syllable
-	cut-off of the preceding sound
=	“latched” utterances—indicating no usual interval between end of a prior unit and the beginning of a next utterance
?	rising intonation
(difficulty)	unsure hearings
(*)	unintelligible stretches of talk—each * represents .5 of a second

Appendix 2. Abbreviations appearing in the interlinear gloss

COP:	various forms of copula verb be
FP:	final particle
LK:	linking nominal—occurs between two nouns
NOM:	nominalizer
O:	object marker

S:	subject marker
TM:	topic marker
Q:	question marker
QT:	quotative marker
SF:	speech filler
LOC:	Locative

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