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DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION THROUGH DIALOGUE : SELF-ASSERTION THROUGH SELF-INHIBITION

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As Kopp and her colleagues have suggested (Kopp, 1982., Vaughn, Kopp, & Krawkow, 1984), research on development of self-regulation in children seems to have been focusing on the process by which they acquire the ability to inhibit their own behavior according to situational demands. In Japan, however, self-inhibition in children has been found to be excessive as a result of cultural constraints (Kashiwagi, 1988). In addition, it seems to be important, but difficult, for Japanese children to become able to assert themselves effectively.

In fact, it is rarely acceptable in '*soto* (out-circle; e.g., public interaction)' to use simple assertive strategies, such as 'positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987)', which likely allows one to express his or her demands rather straightforwardly. This is because the Japanese culture has a feature distinguishing '*uchi* (in-circle; e.g., family)' from '*soto*'. And in addition, children are allowed in *uchi* to be willful to some extent, but they are expected to be 'a good child' in '*soto*'. So, self-inhibition is considered as a polite way of negotiating with others. In other words, the maintaining of 'WA (harmony among people in a Japanese way)' are so valued in Japan that the 'negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, *ibid.*)', such as the expression of '*hairyo* (considerateness)' for avoiding causing the hearer to lose face, is considered a more effective/careful assertive strategy. The typical example of '*hairyo*' behavior can be seen in the conversation between the 'invitor (the person who invites)' and the 'invitee (the person who is invited)'. When the invitor senses ('SASSHI'; reading the intention of others) the negative reaction/attitude of the invitee, such as silence or whatever, even though it is not so clear because of being 'off-record (the avoidance of unequivocal impositions)' (Brown & Levinson, *ibid.*), the invitor inhibits himself or herself by making excuses for the invitee, so that the invitee can decline the offer relatively easily (Szatrowski, 1993).

We must be careful, however, if we feel that the invitor only takes into consideration the intention of the invitee one-sidedly in the conversation above. That is not always true. By making excuses 'for the invitee', the invitor also wishes the invitee to sense what invitor really means. That is, the invitor asserts himself or herself by means of 'off-record', so that the invitee accepts the offer. This can be defined as the

strategy of 'self-assertion through self-inhibition'. As mentioned above, in Japan, reading the mutual intention (reading between the lines) is taken as so important that 'self-assertion through self-inhibition' is much more likely accepted than any kind of 'direct self-assertion'.

As in many Asian countries, a clear switching of speech-style ('style-switching') between a formal or careful and an informal or uninhibited/relaxed style is used in Japan to express the attitude of a speaker to a hearer. Even though, in certain cases, the style does not correspond with the real attitude of the speaker, along with this switching, the 'self-assertion through self-inhibition' is carried on to regulate the relationship between the participants in the conversation.

Without taking this kind of cultural feature into account, investigating the development of self-regulation cannot clarify its process and mechanism thoroughly. That is because social relationships or social interactions have a great effect on development. The Vygotskian view claiming that the utterances of individuals are regulated by dialogue in social interactions (this has been referred to as "dialogicality" by Wertsch (1991)), therefore, provides the framework for that clarification.

Thus, this study aimed to clarify the development and the social formational process of self-regulation in children, characterized as 'self-assertion through self-inhibition', through dialogicality.

Method

Subject

Eighteen-month-old boy ("Nori"), 4 year-old girl ("Miho"), and 9 year-old girl ("Miki") served as subjects. They all live in the suburbs in Tokyo and are the children of nuclear families. Nori has parents and a 6-year-old brother. Miho lives with her parents, her 9-year-old sister, and her 6-year-old brother. Miki's family consists of her parents, her 13-year-old brother, and her 8- and 5-year-old sisters.

Procedure

According to the procedure taken by Barker and Wright (1951), all the interactive activities between each child and other persons during a certain week day, from when they got up till when they went to bed, were recorded with audio-tape-recorder and video-tape-recorder by two observers who also took notes. A few days after the observation, the observers again visited each child and their families to get information necessary for the analysis, such as who a certain person who interacted with the target child is.

Then, all their interactive activities were transcribed. According to the aim of this study, all activities related to the development of self-regulation were compared among the three different aged children seeking commonal features and differences.

Results and Discussion

The characteristic commonal features and differences among the three children were observed as follows.

Eighteen-month-old boy

The 18-month-old boy, when his demands were refused or ignored by his mother for some reasons, did not keep on demanding and started to do something else (Script 1). When his mother told him to stop what he had been doing, he looked at his mother's face and tried to read her intention, then, decided to quit or not (Script 2, 3). That is, he chose either self-assertion or self-inhibition alternatively by 'social referencing (Source, Emde, Campos, & Klinnert, 1985)' to the facial expressions or the prosodic features of utterances of his mother. To restraint, he did not react simply with a compliance or a defiance, but through 'direct interaction' with his partner, he read her demands and controlled his own behavior. What 'direct interaction' means here is that the interaction proceeds without any 'mediational tools' like language. This corresponds to those situations where the socialization of the child was carried through close interactions with his mother (e. g., cooperative care-giving by sharing the roles; 'joint activity').

Script 1

18-month-old boy; Self-assertion and Self-inhibition
 <Sweets time>

Nori : Ton-ohn*¹ (patting mother on the shoulder)

Mother: Yah

Nori : (rushing for the kitchen)

Mother: Oh, already gone!? You had too much! Nori, there's no more.

Nori : Wwaaan!*² (back from the kitchen and raise his hand)

Mother: No more left. (will not move)

Nori : (come close to mother) Noh! (*tugging out tissues*)

Mother: (funnily looking at Nori's face) No more left.

Nori : (*tearing out tissue*) Tattaana*³ (*leave the room*)

*1 incomplete onomatopoeia of patting on the shoulder

*2 complaining

*3 jargon

Script 2

18-month-old boy; Social Referencing
 <Mother's directive in child's dangerous situation>

Nori : (stand on the table)

Mother: Nori, get off. Dangerous. Nori, get off, get off (these two 'get off'-s are in baby talk)

Nori : (*looking at mother's face, then crouch down trying to get off*)

Mother: (after a while, come up to Nori, and hold him in her arms to let him get off)

Script 3

18-month-old boy; Social Referencing
 <Mother's negative estimation to Nori's playing with a cable>

Nori : (drop something by tugging the cable)
 Mother: Ugh, ugh, ugh, ugh, ugh, Nori. (back to newspaper) Noh-ri.
 Nori : (*take a look at mother's face*)
 Mother: (shake head with making up a lower lip)
 Nori : (*gaze at mother's face*)
 Mother: No, no.
 Nori : (let go the cable and make up a lip lying on the floor on his back)
 Mother: No, no. Ok? That doesn't work. Mom don't care.
 Nori : (kicking the floor, rubbing the eye. still making up a lip, kicking the floor with both legs, and shaking his body)
 Mother: (start to laugh)
 Nori : (loosen his face, wry smile)
 Mother: What a boy...(looking at the flier) Today...
 Nori : N. (shake his body) Gyaah, aah (kicking the floor and enjoying)

Owing to limited language ability because of his age, this 18 month-old boy regulated his own behaviors by referring to the visual and prosodic features of the interaction which can be characterized as 'a dialogue not so much dependent on the meaning of the words'. The regulation, however, was an instance of 'self-assertion' or 'self-inhibition' as seen above. This seems due to the social relation where his participation is not so complicated, so it can be characterized as 'push or withdraw' rather than 'compete'. Another point of view, however, is that here, the beginning of '*sasshi*' or '*hairyo*' can be seen. Reading the intention of others ('*sasshi*') by the partner's facial expressions or prosodic features of utterances corresponds with the strategy which older children and adults make use of. In addition, however, older children and adults make good use of the meaning of the words.

Four-year-old girl

As for the 4-year-old girl, in common with the 18-month-old boy, she made use of 'the direct interaction' which was seen in 'physical contact' with others. She hugged her nurse at the nursery school (Script 4) or her mother (Script 5) as if she tried to ease herself or tension of the situation.

Script 4

4-year-old girl; Physical Contact
 <at nursery school, after nap>

Nurse: Miho, come on, let's go
 Miho: (come close to the nurse)
 Nurse: Mipo*¹, good afternoon
 Miho: (*hug the nurse*)
 Nurse: Goody afternoon
 Miho: Today, (/s*²) I didn' make a mess
 Nurse: (/s*²) Heave-ho! huh? (get down on her knees)
 (eye to eye)
 Miho: (with a smile) (To) day, I didn' make a mess

Nurse: Right, you didn'. Let's go and change clothes.

*1 one of Miho's nicknames.

*2 (/s) signifies the synchrony of the utterances.

Script 5

4-year-old girl; Physical Contact

<at home, talking about CD>

(Miho sits on the sofa, Mother stands beside her)

Miho : (making up a lip) Weren' you listening to that of Drabon Ball?

('Dragon Ball '*1)

(eye to eye)

Mother: Huh?

Miho : Drabon Baaall!

Mother: (slightly laughing) What of Drabon Baaall?

Miho : (*hug the mother*)

Mother: (move a little, holding Miho in her arms)

Miho : (coming down from the mother) You know, that of grown-ups

Mother: Huh?

Miho : That of grown-ups.

*1 'Dragon Ball' is the title of the Japanese famous cartoon.

The difference between this 4-year-old girl and the 18-month-old boy seems in her growing language ability. With that, she was able to make use of the words of her mother or other adults ('ventriloquation'; Wertsch, 1991), such as the nurse of the nursery school, in a negotiating situation, even in the absence of those adults. One instance of this use of language was a use of 'indirect speech'. In the following inviting-to-play conversation with her friend, the girl used this speech form and it functioned to control or regulate her own behavior so as for her assertion to be accepted (Script 6). This form was, in fact, frequently used by her mother to control the behavior of the girl in various situations such as discipline, joint activity (e.g., doing the dishes in the kitchen), and so forth (Script 7).

Script 6

4-year-old girl; Indirect speech

<at nursery school, playing with mud>

(a girl comes close to Miho)

Girl : Miihoo

Miho: (turn to the girl) Plant a persimon tree (go on playing with mud crouching down, not looking at the girl) *Do you wanna plant, too?*

Girl : Don't know. ///Let me join you. (looking at another direction)

Miho: OKay. (mixing the mud) [ia]*//*Do you wanna join me?*

Girl : Yeh, OKay.

Miho: Mother crab, has gone

Girl : (come close to Miho) Sure, I take that.
 Miho: OKay. Mother crab, is gone (look at the girl)

*inaudible

Script 7

4-year-old girl; Indirect speech of Mother
 <at home, in the kitchen, doing the dishes>

(Miho stands on the chair doing dishes, Mother cooks beside her)

Mother: *Do you wanna quit, that ?* (looking at Miho)

Miho : I wanna quit? Not yet. (not looking at Mother)

Mother: You sure?

Miho : I sure.

Another instance was the use of 'formal (careful)-speech-style'. When she was arguing with her brother (6-year-old), the girl used the speech style to assert her innocence (Script 8). With the use of the style, she seemed to try to put into her utterance the 'authority (Wertsch, 1991)' of adults, such as her mother, to persuade her brother. This usage of 'formal (careful)-speech-style' can be taken as the emergence of 'style-switching'.

Script 8

4-year-old girl; Formal-speech-style
 <at home, arguing with Brother>

Miho : Who took off this?

Mother : Huh?

Brother: You did it, you

Miho : This. Who took off?

Brother: You did it, you, yourself

Miho : *No, I did not.*

The instances above seem to indicate that she began to balance self-assertion with self-inhibition in the sense that she was able to persuade others according to the behavioral basis and strategy which she had come up with through the 'inner dialogue' with, for example, her 'absent' mother. Thus, she was able to regulate her own behavior non-alternatively. Moreover, this suggests that she was able to follow or, at least, to sense a narrow kind of social rule which is mentioned above as 'behavioral basis and strategy'.

Together with growing language ability, the expanding social relations, which means an increase in the number of people with whom the child interacts, also seems to play an important role for the emergence of the balancing of 'self-assertion'-'self-inhibition'. The more social relations expand, the more complicated it becomes to regulate one's own behavior. That is, the necessity to take in and to read the intentions of

others grows and, as a result, a simple 'self-assertion' becomes rather useless. The 'inner dialogue' with the 'absent' mother, as mentioned above, seems to serve as a facilitator for the girl to deal with this situation. In this way, she has become sensitive to the stand-point of herself and that of others, and begun to balance self-assertion with self-inhibition, which can be taken as a somewhat advanced form of 'sasshi' and 'hairyo'.

Though the emergence of the balancing of 'self-assertion'-'self-inhibition' was seen, the 'direct interaction' was still made use of. This can be interpreted as follows. The growing, but still imperfect, language ability occasionally led to a competing situation. Then, the 'direct interaction', such as 'hugging', was used to ease the tension of the situation. This suggests that the co-existence of the 'direct interaction' form and the 'indirect interaction' form can be seen at this point in the developmental process of 'self-regulation'. And also it can be said that she was able to regulate herself and her partners with both 'direct' and 'indirect' interactional strategies.

Nine-year-old girl

Compared with the 4-year-old girl, the 9-year-old girl asserted herself by obeying social rules and with authorized rules and words in society. Moreover, by making use of rules and words, she created her own rules which exceeded them ('rules over rules') to assert herself. This seems due to the still growing language ability and to the still expanding social relations (home, neighborhood, school) with whom she had social interactions and an 'inner dialogue'. Faced with a variety of social rules according to the expansion of the social relations, 'how to behave' in 'which situation' had been dialogically formed through the social interactions as 'format'. Then, with reforming it through the "inner dialogue", she made use of it in practice. As an instance, when she tried to make her intention accepted by her friends, she made use of the formal (polite)-speech-style which is used in 'public situations' such as class-room discussions (Script 9, 10).

Script 9

9-year-old girl; Authorized words
<at class, collaborating work>

Miki : Where? No. 3? Did she say No. 3? Wait a moment. Here it is, No. 3.

Girl : Sweat? All that will never come down.

Boy : I got it! Why it becomes dim. Sweat comes this way, then the gasses, and that evaporates, then dim...

Miki : Mr. Kami (Boy's last name), *we have already made this far*, so..

Boy : OK, ah, in this case, if we put No. 12, the half of the store will disappear.

Miki : That's the way.

Script 10

9-year-old girl; Authorized words to control the partner
<at class, playing with cards>

Miki : Hold 16 cards, back on top, *shuffle them as many times as your age*. Go ahead, shuffle them. Shuffle, shuffle. (two friends holding the cards)
 Boy : Don't know how to.
 Miki : You, that's not it

In another situation, when her friend asserted, on the other hand, she made use of the 'rules over rules' to assert herself (Script 11). This suggests that, though the 9-year-old girl inhibited herself by obeying the rules of the society, she already had a potential to assert herself by making use of other rules or 'rules over rules', such as by means of 'off-record'.

Script 11

9-year-old girl ; Rules over rules
 <at school, on the corridor, talking about if they play after school>

(it is raining)

Miki : Oh, oh, dark as black !

Girl1 : Oh, pitch dark !

Girl2 : (to Girl3) Going home ?

Miki : No !!

Girl2 : But, my bicycle..

Miki : That's ok.

Girl1 : Ho (sigh)

Miki : *Lead it*, and that'll be ok. What are you talking about ?

This phenomenon seems to correspond to the 'self-assertion through self-inhibition' feature of the socializational strategy by the parents or the school teacher which is based on social rules or using their 'authority' (of the parents or the school teacher) which the girl senses. The strategy emphasizes the 'reading the intention of others ('SASSHI')', so this can be defined as an 'indirect socialization'. The girl seems to adopt this strategy to her friends in the negotiating situation.

As mentioned above, she was able to make use of the 'self-assertion through self-inhibition', though not fully, occasionally with the speech-style-switching, to regulate her own behavior in order to control that of the others.

Conclusion

This observational study aimed to clarify the development and the social formational process and mechanism of self-regulation characterized as 'self-assertion through self-inhibition' along with the dialogality. The findings were as follows.

At the age of 18-months, a child is already able to assert/inhibit himself or herself according to the situation of the partner. Though the regulation is 'alternative' and carried out through 'direct dialogue', along with growing language ability and with expanding social relations according to age, it becomes rather 'indirect' and the balancing of 'self-assertion' with 'self-inhibition' emerges through 'inner dialogue (making use of the words of others; ventriloquation)'. At this point, 'direct dia-

logue' such as the 'physical contact' can also be seen, but thereafter, the child begins to regulate himself or herself to control the partner by making use of the authorized rules and words in society, of speech-style-switching, and of 'rules over rules' dialogically. Now, the emergence of the 'self-assertion through self-inhibition' is obvious, which can be added to the 'Phases of Control' table of Kopp (1982) because this can be defined as more advanced phase than 'Self-regulation' in the table.

Throughout the observation periods above, one more thing is obvious about the development of self-regulation or the child socialization, somewhat especially in Japan. That is, the 'off-record' strategy seems to be rather valued in interactions. And in addition, this strategy is a key to get into or to be accepted into social interactions, which means that it is a very important developmental task in order to be a member of society. It is true that this type of strategy can be seen in various cultures, but to sense the 'off-record' is socially demanded from early childhood in Japan. And as this study suggests, this strategy becomes available through dialogicality.

As seen above, self-regulation, therefore, develops consistently based on the mechanism of the dialogicality. That is, the function of the dialogicality (and 'ventriloquation') plays an important role in the process of social formation of cognition and behavior.

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