



Title	OTHER'S VOICE/OWN VOICE : (RE)PRODUCTION OF OTHER'S VOICE AND ITS APPRENTICESHIP IN JAPANESE YOUNG CHILDREN.
Author(s)	CHEN, Shing-Jen
Citation	乳幼児発達臨床センター年報, 20, 1-10
Issue Date	1998-03
Doc URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2115/25325">http://hdl.handle.net/2115/25325</a>
Type	bulletin (article)
File Information	20_P1-10.pdf



[Instructions for use](#)

## OTHER'S VOICE/OWN VOICE : (RE)PRODUCTION OF OTHER'S VOICE AND ITS APPRENTICESHIP IN JAPANESE YOUNG CHILDREN.

Shing-Jen Chen  
*Hokkaido University*

...the voices of the others are indispensable in the "theater" of our inner speech.

Kozulin (1990), p. 179.

...I must find myself in another by finding another in myself.

Bakhtin (1984), p. 287.

### INTRODUCTION

We listen to others before we speak. Even from the very beginning of our lives, the voices of others invoke images and gestures in our mind. They direct our attention to some part of the world or some part of our own consciousness. Except for the first cries and other so-called vegetative sounds that we produce, our first vocalizations are probably evoked by the voices of others. These voices of others serve as guides and objectives, comforting, enraging, encouraging, and saddening us, before some of them are echoed, transformed, amplified and (re)produced, to form a part of our own voices.

In this paper, I am going to focus on a particular genre of voices observable in children's daily interaction with peers. What distinguishes this particular genre of voices from ordinary voices of children is their seeming inappropriateness as children's expression, and their echoic quality. While children's ordinary utterances have the 'childlike' characteristics appropriate for children, this particular genre of voices to be described in this paper can be recognized as more appropriately belonging to the adults. Furthermore, they have the quality of being voices borrowed by children. These voices of the adults exist in the child's daily life: voices heard in 'real' life, or utterances enacted in story telling by teachers, parents, or conversations in mass media such as TV or movies. From among the larger pool of voices of the adults which children encounter, or are exposed to, there is a smaller set of them which attract children's attention, for their adult-sounding quality, and no doubt, for their special effects whose implications on power politics children begin to understand and to make use of in their interaction with peers.

As these special voices include not only subtle interpersonal relationship (such as superiority, friendliness, antagonism, casualness, etc.), but also specific context requirements, it probably takes a few years before a child can begin to quote this genre of voices, assuming the intonation and/or accent of parents or adults, in order to imple-

ment a different effect than what the child's own 'naked' voice can achieve.

At some point in development a child begins to understand some aspects of what these voices mean and their effects on interpersonal politics by being in the context, either real or staged. This preliminary understanding then prompts the child to (re) produce them when opportunity arises. The implementation of assuming another's voice provides the child with opportunity to see its effects on other participants and on oneself. From an ontogenetic, developmental point of view, these voices of the others (adults) have to be implemented, rendered into sounds in the air, with actual participants present in order for the speaker to experience the multitudinous features of the voices by observing the reactions of the participants, by observing the numerous effects of the particular implementation on both others and on the child him/herself. In this sense, theoretically it is possible to find subtle intra-individual variations in the renderings of a particular voice, especially in early childhood when children are exploring this area of their experiences.

### THREE EPISODES OF CHILDREN (RE)PRODUCING VOICES OF THE OTHERS

#### 1. The Voice and Its Echoes

Here we observe how a specific adult voice arises and echoes among children, and the different appropriations, presumably for political ends.

Episode 1: 'Chotto. Anta'. 97/12/04.

Participants observed were 3 girls: YKI, NAO, and STM, all five years old.

Place: Around the wooden tower in the sand pit area, outside the building of the kindergarten affiliated to RCCCD.

Playing around a wooden tower-like construction in the middle of the sand pit, the three girls occasionally exchanged words while one boy (out of sight) was playing nearby by himself. Two of the girls (NAO & STM) started to quarrel about the ownership of a plastic shovel, but they soon solved their problem by resorting to *janken* ('paper, scissors and stone', See Chen & Rand, 1996). The other girl, YKI, who was at the platform on the top stair of the tower, while STM and NAO was standing below just outside the tower. Having perhaps overheard the quarrel between NAO & STM below, YKI began assuming an adult's voice, admonishingly.

01 YKI: Kamawanaide okinasai. (You leave each other alone!)

NAO looked up toward YKI and protested, finding no real word.

02 NAO: Wa. (Bah!)

03 STM: Amari tonchinkanda. Ahaha. Aha. (Sounds quite nonsensical.)

STM started a forced giggle at-(k) anda. To this, NAO spoke insultingly, invoking an adult's voice.

04 NAO: Aho. Anta. Shikkari shinasai. (You fool. It's time to get smart.)

Upon hearing NAO's voice, and seemingly being reminded of the expression and its meanings, YKI immediately uttered the voice downward to where NAO and STM were. However she did not mean to call anyone's attention by this.

05 YKI: Chotto. Anta.

This was overheard and echoed (within less than 0.3 sec) by the boy who was nearby but was not in sight. As this expression usually has a overtone of disapproval, the boy's utterance was perhaps a reaction to this.

06 BOY: Chotto. Anta.

YKI stopped her play and stepped down one level toward NAO. By now STM had moved a short distance away from the tower's entrance. She started stirring the snow in her plastic pail, paying no special attention to either YKI nor NAO. YKI announced to NAO, commenting her relation with STM.

07 YKI: Atashi STMchan no koto, anta to iu. (I adress STM using the word ANTA.)

There was a 2.5 second silence before NAO managed to match up, by repeating the same.

08 NAO: Atashi mo (..) STMchan no koto anta to (...). (I too address STM using the word ANTA.)

Stepping down further and turning to STM over the wall of the tower below, YKI now applied the expression with the intention of geeting STM's attention, but STM continued her play without looking up.

09 YKI: Anta. Chotto. Anta. (You. I say, hey.)

Watching YKI's unanswered attempt, NAO laughed and repeated the expression mockingly, with a twist of accent.

10 NAO: Hehe. Anta. Chotto. Anta.

YKI's first utterance of 'Chotto anta' (05) was simply an echo of NAO's immediately previous utterance (04) which contained the word 'anta' produced in the same admonishing tone as 'Chotto anta'. The (re)production of this voice by YKI served to invoke some more specific matrix of relationship in her mind: her immediate addressee (NAO) and the person to whom she could or would like to apply the utterance, namely STM. Thus, we saw YKI approached NAO and addressed to her about her relationship with STM (06). Note that line 06 was a comment on her own relation with STM, not a direct address to STM. It would be almost impossible for a 5 years to explain her relation with others using expository words. This was more effectively achieved by quoting this voice 'anta'. When YKI made this comment to NAO, STM was present but was not addressed. Challenged by YKI's claim that she could address STM as 'anta' (implying that she could speak like an adult; or that she would gain a slight sense of superiority, etc.), NAO raised herself just as high. Now, YKI turned toward STM and uttered the expression to see its effect in real context (09). She repeated it and attempted to strengthen its effect by shaking the cylindrical shaft attched to the wall of the tower to produce noise, but STM would not look up. Seeing this, and perhaps remembering that she was not able to rebut more effectively, NAO laughed and made a mock on YKI's words by imitating them in a derisive accent (10). The boy's (re)production (06) was obviously motivated by YKI's (05), and was both an echo and a slight mock similar to NAO's last (re)production.

## 2. The Voice and the Face

When children assume other's voice for a specific effect, they are probably aware of the shift or the change in the 'speaking personality and speaking consciousness' (Holquist and Emerson, 1981, p. 434; Wertsch, 1991, p. 51). This is suggested in specific facial expression usually observable in concomitant with the (re)production of the voices as was observed in Episode 2 below.

Episode 2: Anta, yokuminasai. 95/06/05.

Participants: Two 5 year old girls, FYA and YOK.

Place: At a corner of a play room in the kindergarten affiliated to RCCCD.

All other children and adults except the observer had gone outside. FYA and YKO had been playing house, kneading plasticine to prepare a meal. HTM, a toddler, appeared and invited herself to the play. She did not say a word during the observation. YOK was looking for chopsticks to do cooking.

01 YOK: Are ohashi, oryorino ohashi ga nai. (Well, there are no chopsticks for preparing dishes here.)

Pointing to a nearby box, FYA made a suggestion.

02 FYA: Kono naka ni aru wa yo. ( You find them in here.)

Leaning over the box, YKO saw the chopsticks and began to reach for them.

03 YKO: Ah. Hontoda. (You are right.)

FYA emphasized that she was right in saying that the chopsticks were inside the box. FYA looked up, making an exaggerated smiling face to YKO, she admonished her jockingly.

04 FYA: Kon naka jya nai no ka.(..) (Aren't they there.)

05 FYA: Anta yoku minasai. Chotto.(..) (Watch with more care, I say.)

06 FYA: YKO chan yoku mite yo. (YKO, watach more carefully, wouldn't you.)

Here again, we hear the expression, 'Anta,.... Chotto' (04). While FYA was playing the role of an older sister (as YKO was addressing her 'Onechan' throughout the observation), she did not want to offend YKO by this expression. The exaggerated smiling face was made to signal that it was a play (Bateson, 1972). It seems that children of this age are familiar with the psychological effects of many such voices. This awareness is evident in children's facial expression when they speak with other's voices.

## 3. The Apprenticeship in the (Re)production of other's Voices

In this episode we observe one child's insistence on the correct (re)production of others voices through repeated demonstrations and explanations.

Episode 3: Speak with true voice. 95/06/05.

This was observed some 15 minutes after Episode 3. The place and the participants were the same as that of Episode 3, except HTM, was a 21 months old

toddler, appeared during this episode. HTM invited herself to their play, trying to join YKO by imitating her putting plasticine clots into the plates YKO had prepared. By now, YKO had finished preparing. She had set three plates on the floor. She was filling the plates with plasticine balls.

01 YKO: Hai. San nin tsukutta wa. Kore ga watashi no. (There, for three. This one is mine.)

HTM came close to YKO and without saying anything she started to fill one of the plates with plasticine colts taken from another container near her. Seeing that one of the plates she was preparing now contained clots other than what she intended to be food, YKO picked out the clots and tried to stop HTM from continuing.

02 YKO: Dame dame. (No. No.)

Upon hearing this, FYA moved near YKO and HTM and squatted down. She tried to explain to HTM using a less harsh tone.

03 FYA: Kore wa dame nan da yo. (Not this one.)

However, HTM continued to grab the plasticine clots and placed them onto the plates. YKO tried to stop HTM from mixing the clots with her food.

04 YKO: Koko ni oicha dame da yo. Dame damee. Dame yo. Ii. (Don't put them here. No. No. Please, don't. Okay?)

Not satisfied with the tone of voice that YKO spoke to HTM, FYA demonstrated her ideal voice.

05 FYA: Soide iwanai de. Ano ne. Tojjya ikenai kara. Kore daiji na mono dakara, to itte, akachan ga wakaruru to omo yo. (Don't say it that way. Well, because it is not acceptable to take. Because this is important. If you say so, baby will understand. I think.)

FYA and YKO suddenly reminded themselves that they had to get some items from the other side of the play room. So they left their kitchen and spent a few minutes away. Then FYA asked YKO to go back to their 'home' first. YKO ran a few steps home. As she arrived, she reported to HTM that she was home and apologized that she was late. She asked HTM to wait for the meal she was going to get ready.

06 YKO: Tada ima. HTMchan. Akak(.) HTMchan, tada ima. Osoku te gomen ne.(...) Chotto omachi na sai. Chotto matte te ne. (I am home, HTM. Bab(y), no, HTM, I am home. I am sorry I am late. Just wait. Please just wait a bit.)

Upon hearing this, after FYA returned and said she was home, she immediately corrected YKO's tone of voice.

07 FYA: Tada ima. Chotto machi na sai to ittara kawaiso dakara, chotto matte nee te itte. (I am home. It sounds harsh if you say 'Chotto machi na sai'. Say 'Chotto matte nee.')

08 YKO: Chotto matte nee.

At this time, HTM again was picking up one piece of plasticine clot from a different container. YKO tried to stop her from putting it to her plate.

- 09 YKO: Ah, damee. (Oh, no.)  
 FYA heard YKO's expression and was disturbed. The way she complained to YKO almost betrayed what she tried to preach. She demonstrated again.
- 10 FYA: Damee te ittara (dame). Dame da yo to iu no. (it is no good (dame) to say no good (dame). You should say, 'Dame da yo.')
- YKO accepted the correction and said it again to HTM.
- 11 YKO: Dame da yo (..) ii. (Dame da yo. Okay?)  
 FYA was not satisfied with this. She demonstrated it again, adding that one should speak with true voice. When she demonstrated, she accentuated her model voice by nodding her head bending the and upper part of her body.
- 12 FYA: Son na jya dame. Dame da yo, ii, te. Honto no koe. (No, not like that. 'Dame da yo, ii'. Like this. With your true voice.)
- 13 YKO: Dame da yo, ii. (..) Kore kurai. (..) Onechan. ('Dame da yo, ii'. Like this. Sister?)  
 YKO was trying very hard. She said it, then she waited for FYA's judgement. But FYA did not seem to pay enough attention to this, for she was busying with her foodmaking.
- 14 FYA: Uh?
- 15 YKO: Dame da yo, ii. (..) de iu kanji. ('Dame da yo, ii'. Something like this?)  
 FYA eventually nodded. She repeated that it should be uttered with tenderness.)
- 16 FYA: Un. Yasashiku ne. Yasashiiku. (Ya. With tenderness.)  
 HTM was watching the exchange as it went on. Now she made another attempt to grab the plasticine balls again. This invoked YKO's prohibition. No sooner had she uttered the prohibition, than she looked to FYA and modified her utterance. FYA rejected again. She demonstrated once more.
- 17 YKO: Dame damee. (..) Dame yo, ii.
- 18 FYA: Chigau chigau. Dame yo, ii. (No, no. 'Dame yo, ii'.)

Although it is not easy to pin down the exact meanings and the underlying motivation of each utterance made by the participants, it is nevertheless possible to make the following observations: (a) While adults speak with two other receivers in mind, the second and the third receiver, children speak in a world where the third receiver only begins to emerge. It seems that this third receiver, or what Bakhtin called superaddressee, begins to make its appearance when young children hear voices. In other words, when a young child begins to speak with two voices, his/her own and that of the others; (b) The quoting of other's voices to implement a particular intention of the speaker is immediately recognized as such by the listeners, and can invoke echoes; (c) These voices of the others eventually become the child's own voices when he/she is a full member of the language community; (d) Depending on the intentions of the

speakers, the same voices and their many echoes constitute a drama of multivoices.

### INTERNALIZATION & IMITATION

The fact that the three episodes involved almost exclusively only girls is no accident. In agreement with the conclusions arrived at by studies in the peer culture (Corsaro, 1996) or in the development of gender identity (Gilligan, 1982), our observations concerning the imitation of other's voices suggest that this phenomenon is observed predominantly among girls. Boys that we observed tended to show imitation of physical activities, often with violence or aggression, with hardly any tendency to imitating adult's voices.

We do not know how the differential tendency begins in an earlier age in life and why. I suspect the sex typing that begins very early in life could create different sensitivities to different aspects of the world. For example, girls may be more interested in the different nuances in the auditory qualities of verbal expressions, or in the relational connotation in other's utterances, while boys are more interested in action related aspects of language. Tendencies like these are further strengthened by peer interactions which both encourage the participants' preferred mode of action as well as satisfy the common desire of the participants. Thus, girls like to play house, and the different roles they play encourage elaboration in the direction of imitating interaction in adult's social world.

These processes can be understood by using concepts such as internalization, appropriation, or imitation (Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993). In the ever changing context and relative relationship in an interaction, with some patterns repeatedly emerging, and some novel features appearing, a social affordance is perceived for the participants to feel that it is more appropriate to say one thing rather than another, in a certain tone of voice than in another. A certain adult voice is selected for its effect in a similar context and implemented. As no two contexts are exactly identical, this process always involves an element of risk that an individual has to be creative. It is in this way that the girls appropriate what attracts them in their lives, i.e., other's, especially adult's voices, for example. Through (re) production or imitation of these voices, they take some aspects of the adult's voices, or of the relationships implied in these voices in particular, and integrate them into their own repertory, enlarging their understanding of human relationship and their capacity to interact within such relationship and context.

### HYPOTHESES AND SPECULATIONS

In all three episodes presented above, what can be observed were the almost sudden emergence of the voices. However, a competent observer would have no difficulty in recognizing the voices as being quoted or borrowed from beyond the immediate context under observation. In other words, there is an invisible link between the observed context in which the voices were (re)produced and other social contexts in which the voices were heard or witnessed, whether the latter were 'real life' situation or enacted, virtual situation. There are individual differences in the social life of the children; some live in an environment where this particular genre of voices are relative-



ly frequently broadcast in the air and some live in a different environment. There are also individual differences in the sensitivity to these voices, as suggested by the differences between FYA and YKO in Episodes 2 and 3.

While the link with situations or contexts beyond the immediate time and space captured in the episodes is invisible and has to be inferred, the temporal and interpersonal (and intrapersonal) link of each utterance of the voice within one episode can be traced. For example, in Episode 1, YKI was observed to utter the voice 'anta' four times: the first utterance, 'Choto, anta' (05) was immediately after NAO's first utterance, 'Anta, shikkari shinasai' (04); her second utterance was embedded in her comment on her won usage of the word (06); her last two utterances, 'Chotto, anta, chotto' were directed to STM in repetition. NAO was observed to have uttered the word three times in this episode: the first was uttered to snap STM (04), the second utterance was a repetition of YKI's comment (07); the last utterance was also a repetition of YKI's attention getting usage, but in a mocking tone. The other utterance of this word was by a boy who was echoing to YKI's first utterance, perhaps also in a slightly mocking tone, in reaction to the usually disapproval overtone of the expression.

In Episode 2, FYA's utterance of the words 'Yoku minasai, anta, chotto' (05) was preceded by the utterance 'Kon naka ni aru jya nai ka' (04), an utterance already framed in an admonishing tone. Furthermore, after having uttered the 'anta, chotto' (05) with an exaggerated smile, FYA finished with another utterance in the same admonishing tone, 'YKO chan yoku mite yo' (06), slightly apologetically. These within episode links seem to suggest the existence of particular images or gestures in the mind of the speakers and the audience corresponding to some specific 'speaking personality and speaking consciousness'. No doubt, these images or gestures invoke emotions, both of the audience and of the speaker, which have to be regulated.

In Episode 2, immediately after FYA pointed out to YKO that she could find the chopsticks in the box, FYA suddenly assumed an adult's voice (04). She added another utterance (05) in the same form of 'chotto, anta' as also appeared in Episode 1. The context and the intersubjectively felt relationship between FYA and YKO must have been perceived as social affordances for implementing these utterances. However, the anticipated effects of one's utterance is constantly monitored and, if necessary, regulated during the process of dialogue. FYA's exaggerated smile beaming at YKO suggests such a monitoring and regulation process. YKO did not say anything but she smiled a little as if to say that she understood FYA's metalinguistic message that she did not mean it seriously. This probably motivated FYA's further regulating the effect of her prior utterances by another one (06) in a begging and appeasing tone. What we observe here, I suggest, is a process of meaning making through negotiation and mutual adjustment in interaction. Once uttered, these voices probably created an effect which FYA felt was too strong if left alone. Now the context revealed a new affordance for FYA to apply a further assurance to round off whatever effect the prior utterances might have left. To FYA it must have been a challenge and a satisfying experience to be able to quote an adult's voice. It was also a lesson for her to actually experience its effects on her partner and to regulate them by continuing the dialogue. Dialogue continues to be generated while the participants can see and experience the actual un-

folding of the meaning and its effects on all parties. Thus a dialogue is continuously mutually constructed by the participants during the whole process (Collins & Marková, 1995).

In Episodes 2 and 3, we see a rare case of the apprenticeship of the (re)production of others voices. It seems that FYA was such a child who was unusually sensitive to the very subtle change in tone of voice and its putative effect on others, especially on younger infants. She was observed to have insisted on teaching her playmate YKO to (re)produce the right tone of voice to the toddler HTM who did not complain or showed any negative signs of being affected by YKO's 'incorrect' voices. FYA's insistence on this particular genre of voice seems to reflect a value widely found in Japanese society in general; the emphasis on being considerate, being kind and tender to others, especially to the young. This episode also showed that YKO was so compliant to the instruction, a fact perhaps not unrelated to her role as a younger sister in their play. However, the fact that YKO did not get the voice right in spite of repeated trials, seems to suggest that the (re)production is not as easy as one might think. Further investigation will be necessary to find out what constitute the seemingly spontaneous (re)production observed in other occasions such as in Episode 1.

Undeniably, the episodes and the interpretations offered in this paper contain subjective elements. There were many other episodes in my collection of children's daily life in our kindergarten; the recording of each episode was actualized as a result of numerous decisions made consciously as well as unconsciously. The episodes presented in this paper allow other interpretations. For example, YKI's utterance (07) could have been the result of YKI's attempt to clarify that she did not mean to offend NAO. Furthermore, just as the participants in this episode were probably not exactly sure of the meaning and intention of every utterance made by others, the author was and is doing his best in trying to understand the verbal interactions and their meanings. By analysing these episodes many times with other colleagues, the interpretation given above is one that a competent participant in similar situation would agree as acceptable.

The views I am trying to point out in this paper can be evaluated relatively independently, i. e., even when we allow a certain degree of uncertainty in the interpretation of these episodes. Indeed, one of the issues to be raised is the nature of children's interaction, or human interaction in general, for that matter. In daily interaction, it is not uncommon to find as many viewpoints as there are participants. Just as in ordinary casual conversation in general, one can hear more than one voice from a single utterance. It is never easy, indeed impossible, to pin down the precise meaning of an utterance. Especially in comparison with adults, the uncertainty of meaning and/or intention in the interaction of young children, who tend to lack the capacity and skills necessary for clarification and confirmation, looms even larger. Nor is it necessary for each participant to be absolutely sure of the precise meaning or intention of others for the interaction and the conversation to go on.

## REFERENCES

Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis:

- University of Minnesota Press.
- Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. New York : Ballantine.
- Chen, S. J., & Rand, R. J. (1996). Towards an understanding of cultural psychology : a case for *jan-ken*. *Annual Report of the Research and Clinical Center for Child Development*, Faculty of Education, Hokkaido University, No. 18, 45-52.
- Collins, S., & Markova, I. (1995). Complementarity in the construction of a problematic utterance in conversation. In I. Markova, C. Graumann & K. Foppa (Eds.), *Mutualities in dialogue*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press.
- Corsaro, W. A. (1996). *The sociology of childhood*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Pine Forge Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice : psychological theory and women's developmet*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press.
- Holquist, M., & Emerson, C. (1981). Glossary for the *Dialogic imagination : four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist. Trans. M. Holquist & C. Emerson. Austin : University of Texas Press.
- Kozulin, A. (1990). *Vygotsky's psychology : a biography of ideas*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press.
- Lawrence, J. A., & Valsiner, J. (1993). Conceptual roots of internalization : from transmission to transformation. *Human Development*, 36, 150-167.
- Wertsch, J. (1991). *Voices of the mind : A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press.