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***Kedo*-ending turn format as a formula for a problem statement with a deontic implication**

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Abstract: In many languages, some turn formats are highly fixed and closely associated with specific interactional contexts, and thus function as formulas for particular actions. In Japanese, one of the recurring turn formats for referring to a problem found in the surrounding situation or other’s conduct is a clause ending with the contrastive particle *kedo* ‘but’. Based on close examination of examples from naturally-occurring conversations using the analytic framework of Interactional Linguistics, this article illustrates that the format with *kedo* is used to assign a deontic authority concerning an observed problem to the recipient and thereby leaving to the recipient a decision about how the problem should be dealt with and by whom. This shows a clear contrast with the turn format ending with *yo*, which is used to inform the recipients of what the speaker knows as a problem, and thereby to ask the hearers to register it.

Keywords: deontic authority; *kedo*; problem statement; turn format

1 Introduction

Statements made by participants in interaction are not only for conveying information. A statement about a problematic event or state found in the surrounding situation or others’ conduct, which is called a “problem statement” in the present article, may serve as a vehicle for various kinds of social actions, including complaints and requests among others (Kendrick and Drew 2016; Schegloff 1988). For example, in his well-known argument on the utterance “You didn’t get an ice cream sandwich,” Schegloff points out that a statement of a negative event (e.g. something which did not happen) can be used as a resource for complaining, especially if it refers to a recipient’s failure (Schegloff 1988: 119–125). Also, Kendrick and Drew (2016) claim that “reports of needs, difficulties, or troubles” can be exploited as a method to solicit (or to “recruit” in their terminology) assistance from other

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participants.¹ They further argue that, compared to requesting, which is a more direct method for recruitment, “such reports do not establish a normative obligation for the other to assist but rather create an opportunity for the other to volunteer assistance” (Kendrick and Drew 2016: 6). They show an example where one participant says “The one thing I dislike with this camera being on is that I have to eat my dinner in front of it.” and thereby the other person ends up volunteering to stop the video recording.

The mere fact that a statement is about a problematic event or state does not automatically determine the social action it implements. For one, its context plays a crucial role: depending on who the recipient is, a problem statement can achieve different social actions (Heritage 2013). According to Heritage (2013), an utterance like “Someone just vandalized my car” can be a request for assistance, an account for non-attendance, a complaint/request for sympathy, or a request for a ride, depending on to whom it is addressed. As another factor, the turn format, or the morphosyntactic and prosodic details of the utterance, can contribute to specify what the speaker is going to achieve (Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Curl and Drew 2008; Thompson et al. 2015, among others). In many languages, some turn formats are highly fixed and closely associated with specific interactional contexts, and thus function as formulas for particular actions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014).

In Japanese, one of the recurring turn formats for problem statements is a clause ending with the particle *kedo*. Examples below are utterances appeared in excerpts to be examined in the present paper.²

- (1) a. *chotto hayaku naru n da kedo.*³
little fast become N COP KEDO
(You) are speeding up a bit {KEDO}.
- b. *anosa, shisse:i ga warrui n da kedo.*
ITJ posture NOM bad N COP KEDO
Hey, you are in a bad posture {KEDO}
- c. *torampetto sakasama da to omou n da kedo kore:.*
trumpet upside.down COP QUO think N COP KEDO DEM
I think the trumpet is upside down {KEDO}, this one.
- d. *wain nakunatta kedo.*
wine disappear.PST KEDO
There's no more wine left {KEDO}.

1 The notion of problem statements in the present study does not completely overlap with Kendrick and Drew's “reports of needs, difficulties, or troubles,” since “reports of needs” are not concerned with problematic events or states.

2 In this article, utterances are transcribed based on the conventions shared in and around the field of Conversation Analysis (Jefferson 2004; See Appendix for the list of the symbols). In accordance with the transcription policy that spoken words should be transcribed as close as possible to their phonetic realizations, the Hepburn system is used for romanization.

3 Abbreviations used are as follows: N (Nominalizer), COP (Copula), ITJ (Interjection), NOM (Nominative), QUO (Quotative), DEM (Demonstrative), PST (Past tense), PRT (Pragmatic Particle), POS (Possessive), POL (Politeness marker), NEG (Negation marker), 1SG (1st person singular), TOP (topic marker).

The lexical meaning of *kedo* is roughly translatable as ‘but,’ although compared to English ‘but,’ Japanese *kedo* conveys a weaker sense of contrast, one of its prominent usages being to merely mark the preceding clause as backgrounded or prefatory (Nihongo Kijutsu Bunpoo Kenkyuukai 2008; Yokomori 2013). The grammatical status of *kedo* has been described as a connective particle, which comes at the end of one clause and marks it as a subordinate clause, whether it precedes or follows its main clause. Although *kedo*-clauses are used much more frequently with their main clauses (Yokomori and Endo 2022), it is widely known that, without any “main” clause, a clause with *kedo* alone can constitute a complete turn (Itani 1992; Nakayama and Ichihashi-Nakayama 1997; Ono et al. 2012).

The function of utterance-final *kedo* has long been described as softening or hedging the tone of utterance (Itani 1992; Nakayama and Ichihashi-Nakayama 1997). In contrast, by focusing the scope of their study on the *kedo*-ending format used in decision-making sequences instead of exploring some general feature of the format across varying contexts, Ono et al. (2012) provide the more specific observation that speakers can “put the recipient on the spot to respond” by ending their turns with *kedo*. Taking their analysis as a starting point, the present study aims to investigate interactional characteristics of problem statements with *kedo* in Japanese conversation.

Thus, the research questions are twofold: What can speakers accomplish by using a turn format with *kedo* when describing a problem? How do such *kedo*-marked problem statements differ from problem statements framed in a different turn format, specifically [clause + *yo*]? After a brief description of the data and method used for this study, the ways in which *kedo*-marked problem statements are reacted to and treated by participants will be examined. Then, *yo*-marked problem statements will be analyzed in order to contrast with the characteristics of the target turn format.

Through the investigation, I will demonstrate the formulaic nature of the *kedo*-ending turn format. First, an examination of naturally-occurring conversations will exemplify how recurrently the format appears, even though it is unpredictable from, and even contradicting with, the traditional/prescriptive grammar of Japanese, which basically treats the particle *kedo* as a connective and something to be followed by another clause. Second, and more importantly, it will be shown that the format is closely associated with a particular type of action: to assign a deontic authority or responsibility concerning an observed problem, thereby leading to a unique interactional consequence.

2 Data and method

The data used for this study comes from approximately 50 h of video recordings of naturally-occurring face-to-face interaction in various physical and social settings and 10 h of audio recordings of telephone conversations. Some fragments are taken from *Sakura Corpus* (Miyata et al. 2010) and a pilot version of *Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation* (Koiso et al. 2018), which is being developed by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics. Audio files from the *CallHome Japanese Corpus* (Canavan and Zipperlen 1996) are used as part of the phone call data. The author's own collection of video- and audio-recordings are also included in the data examined. The sources are indicated in the headings of each excerpt.

The audio and video recordings were investigated in the framework of Interactional Linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018), an approach for understanding the roles of linguistic structures in participating in interactions. In order to analyze the effect of turn formats in implementing social actions when describing a problematic event or state, the ways in which *kedo*-marked and *yo*-marked problem statements were reacted to and treated by participants were examined. Thus, problem statements implementing “first” actions in an action sequence such as complaints were collected from the data, resulting in 40 cases of problem statements with *kedo* and 25 cases of those with *yo*. Problem statements produced in Second Pair Part positions (Schegloff 2007) and those produced during storytelling (Jefferson 2015) are not included in the examples for this study.

3 Analysis

3.1 Problem statements with *kedo*

As a result of analysis, I have found that *kedo*-marked problem statements are responded to by either (1) the recipient's apology, (2) the recipient's remedy of the problem, or (3) the recipient's resistance to register the problem in accordance with the original speaker's claim. Also, it has been observed that the original speaker, who has produced the *kedo*-marked problem statement, waits for or pursues the recipient's apology or remedy until it is produced. In sum, both recipients and speakers show their understanding that *kedo*-marked problem statements are used to solicit the right person(s) to do the right thing(s). This suggests that the *kedo*-ending format is used as a formula to attribute the deontic authority concerning the problem (Stevanovic 2012; Stevanovic and Peräkylä 2012) to the recipient and thereby to leave to the recipient a decision about how the problem should be dealt with and by whom.

Let us now look at examples that illustrate the points above. Excerpt 2 below shows an example where the recipient of a *kedo*-marked problem statement makes an apology. This excerpt is from rehearsals of a string quartet, composed of four players: First Violin, Second Violin, Viola, and Cello. From the beginning of the excerpt, the quartet plays a canonic passage, where players play the same or very similar melodies one after another. Following the cellist (Vc) and the violist (Va), the second violinist (Vn2) joins the canon in line 3. Then, the violist abruptly stops playing and utters *chotto hayaku naru n da kedo* ‘(You) are speeding up the tempo a bit,’ pointing out a problem in their play using the *kedo*-ending turn format (line 5).

(2) [Speeding up the tempo a bit] (Author’s collection)

```
01 Vc: ((starts playing a canonic passage))
02 Va: ((joins))
03 Vn2: ((joins))
04 Va: ((stops playing))
05 chotto hayaku naru n da +kedo. ((staring at her music sheet))
    little fast become N COP KEDO
                                +Fig1
    (You) are speeding up the temp a bit {KEDO}
06 Vn2: gomen
      PRT
      Sorry.
07 ALL: ((resume playing))
```

Note that, even though the violist does not direct her gaze toward any particular player when making the problem statement as shown in Figure 1, the second violinist quickly produces an apology: *gomen* ‘sorry,’ which indicates that she understands that the problem has been attributed to her.⁴ The fact that the players resume playing right after line 6 suggests that the second violinist’s apology is an appropriate and more or less expected response to the *kedo*-marked problem statement. In other words, an action sequence (Schegloff 2007) initiated by the *kedo*-marked problem statement is completed by the apology.

Another prominent type of response to a *kedo*-marked problem statement is to remedy the problem. Excerpt 3, taken from the *Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation*, shows a scene where a family—a mother, a father, and their kids (Sho and his elder brother)—have just started dinner. A document attached to the corpus explains that Sho is an elementary school kid and his age is 10 or older. At the beginning of the excerpt, Sho starts biting a piece of chicken (line 1). Then, Sho’s mother pats his shoulder and produces a *kedo*-marked problem statement focusing on Sho’s posture, *anosa, shisse:i ga warrui n da kedo*. ‘Hey, you are in a bad posture’

4 One possible source of such an understanding is the fact that the second violinist is the one who joined in the canonic passage right before the *kedo*-marked problem statement by the violist. In a canonic passage, where players start the same or similar melody one after another, it is relatively easy to single out who played differently from other members. Here, the violist does not specify, verbally or non-verbally, to whom she is addressing, but that very fact makes it understandable that she is reacting to something that happened right before her turn, just as a turn in conversation is heard as directed to a prior turn unless it has a special marking (Sacks et al. 1974: 728). The author owes this point to one reviewer’s comment.



Figure 1: The violist (VA) gazes at her music sheet.

(lines 2–3). Figure 2 shows us the moment when Mom starts talking. On hearing his mother’s utterance, the recipient Sho slightly moves up his body, which shows his orientation to the problem, but ends up keeping the almost same posture since he cannot chew the chicken right away (line 4). After the 0.9-s pause where Sho displays his orientation to the problem through his body movement, his mother adds *bokuchan. hora*. ‘Hey, boy’ to her preceding utterance, pursuing Sho’s proper response (line 5).⁵ Almost simultaneously with his mother’s *hora*, Sho succeeds to bite the chicken away and remedies his posture as in Figure 3 (line 6).

(3) [You are in a bad posture] (CE)C_T011_005)

- 01 SHO: ((starts biting a piece of chicken))
 02 MOM: ((pats SHO))
 03 anosa, +shisse:i ga warrui n da kedo.
 ITJ posture NOM bad N COP KEDO
 +Fig.2
Hey, (you) are in a bad posture {KEDO}
 (0.9)
 ((SHO first tries to straighten up his body, but
 ends up biting the chicken in almost the same posture))
 05 MOM: >bokuchan. +Hora.<
 boy ITJ
 +Fig.3
Boy, look!
 06 SHO: ((finishes biting the chicken and remedies his posture))

⁵ Since Mom’s utterance at line 5 is composed of addressing expressions (*bokuchan* ‘boy’ and *hora* ‘look/hey’), which are typical items that appear after a possible completion point of turns, it is hearable as an increment (Couper-Kuhlen and Ono 2007) to her previous utterance, extending her turn and thereby pursuing Sho’s response. A phonetic contrast between line 3 and line 5 also supports that the latter is not an independent unit but an addition to the former: the noun *shisei* ‘posture’ and the adjective *warrui* ‘bad’ in line 3 are prosodically emphasized via elongation and consonant gemination indicated in the transcript (*shisse:i* and *warrui*), whereas her utterance at line 5 is produced quickly.



Figure 2: Mom starts talking to Sho after patting him.



Figure 3: Sho corrects his posture.

In this excerpt, both the speaker (Mom) and the recipient (Sho) demonstrate their understanding that the sequence launched by the *kedo*-marked problem statement does not come to its closure until Sho remedies the problem in his posture. For example, Sho's understanding that he should remedy the problem is observable in his quick attempt to stretch up his body in line 4, right after Mom's *kedo*-marked problem statement. Also, a 0.9-s silence that can be seen as a delay or absence of Sho's response is followed by Mom's extension of her turn with an addressing item *bokuchan hora* 'Hey, boy,' suggesting that she understands that the sequence she has initiated with her *kedo*-marked problem statement needs to be completed by Sho's remedy.

Excerpt 4 below also presents a case in which a speaker who has produced a *kedo*-marked problem statement pursues its recipient's proper response, although,

During the production of the *kedo*-marked problem statement in line 4, Suda keeps staring at the manuscript (Figure 4). Even though Suda does not address Higa verbally or non-verbally, Higa displays his attention to Suda via his eye gaze and volunteers to respond to Suda's problem statement (line 6), embodying his orientation to his role in this group as an editor-in-chief. Through his response to Suda, Higa confirms what Suda has noticed, repeating the predicate *sakasama* 'upside down' appeared in Suda's prior turn. By providing confirmation instead of other actions such as an apology and a remedy, Higa treats Suda's prior turn as asking for Higa's confirmation, which is subsequently reinforced by *hai* 'yes' added after a 0.4-s pause (line 8). This treatment of Suda's prior turn suggests that the trumpet being upside down is not surprising or problematic at all for Higa.⁷

Note that, in line 9, overlapping with Higa's additional *hai* 'yes,' Suda repeats *kore* 'this,' an item that has appeared at the end of his prior turn at line 4. In so doing, Suda suggests that the action sequence that he launched by the *kedo*-marked problem statement has not been completed, thereby tacitly rejecting Higa's confirmation and pursuing something else that counts as a proper response. This understanding is also underscored by the fact that Suda keeps the same posture as in line 4 when repeating *kore* 'this' (Figure 5). Thus, just as in Excerpt 3, the speaker who produced the *kedo*-marked problem statement (Suda) extends his turn when a proper response is not produced.

What is distinct with Excerpt 4 is that the recipient (Higa) ends up explicitly resisting treating the mentioned state of the trumpet image as problematic. After Suda's pursuit of response, Higa expresses, with audible laughter, his question whether they should fix the trumpet, challenging the importance of the direction of



Figure 4: Suda looks down at the manuscript while Higa looks at him.

⁷ See Hayano (2013) for epistemic stance marked by repetitional confirmation to YES-NO questions in Japanese. Also, the use of a "oh" here may remind readers of Heritage's works on the English *oh* in responsive turns to questions and assessments (Heritage 1998, 2002).



Figure 5: Suda maintains his posture even after Higa's reaction.

the trumpet.⁸ Facing with other participants' alignment with Suda (lines 12, 13, 15),⁹ Higa adds an account of why he does not conceive the trumpet as problematic: he had noticed the potential problem, but he thought it was an intentional design.

Just because Higa does not accept the state of the trumpet as problematic does not mean the *kedo*-marked turn format does not work to attribute the responsibility to its recipient. Rather, Higa shows his orientation to his responsibility via every bit of his behavior when he resists treating the trumpet as problematic. For example, Higa's question with the modal auxiliary *tahoogaii* 'should/had better' is evidence that he understands well that Suda is not merely describing what he has found but claiming that some action needs to be taken to deal with the issue, which Higa is in charge of. In addition, Higa remarks in line 16 that he thought it was intentionally designed, admitting that he did consider the trumpet's direction as something noticeable.

Excerpt 5 below also illustrates a case in which a speaker produces a *kedo*-marked problem statement without explicitly specifying its addressee, and the one who is in charge of the issue ends up responding to the statement. What is noteworthy about this example is that participants show their orientation toward the deontic authority by passing a problem to the person who could and should deal with it. This excerpt is from a conversation where Kyoko, Natsuki, and Sae visit an apartment where their friend Mari and her husband Takayuki live. Mari used to work at a company with the three guests. Having finished their dinner, Sae and Mari are out of the camera frame washing dishes, Kyoko and Natsuki are relaxing, and Takayuki is working on a laptop preparing to show the guests some pictures. In line 1, Kyoko says *nee nee* 'Hey' without directing her gaze at any participants, and Natsuki responds to it by her *n?* 'Huh?' in line 3. This exchange is an example of what Schegloff (2007: 48) describes as a "generic pre-sequence," where one participant summons

⁸ Holt (2012) reports that responsive turns with laughter can express resistance to the prior, responded turns.

⁹ It is not clear what Mita meant to do with her abandoned turn at line 14, and it seems that it has no consequence to the following interaction.



Figure 6: Kyoko looks at the glass/bottle.

another implying that, if the recipient shows his or her readiness to participate in the coming interaction, the summoner will take some substantial action that needs to be responded to such as a question or request, while the type of the projected action is not specified. Thus, solicited by Kyoko's summon, which does not specify the addressee, Natsuki volunteers to be the one who will respond to an action to be produced by Kyoko after line 3. Then, Kyoko produces a *kedo*-marked problem statement, looking at the wine glass or bottle that she holds (line 5) (Figure 6).

(5) [There's no more wine left.] (Author's collection)

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01 KYO:  nee nee, ((gaze at the table))
          ITJ ITJ
          Hey,
02      (0.3)
03 NAT:  n?
          ITJ
          Huh?
04      (0.4) ((KYO pours the rest of wine.))
05 KYO:  wain nakuna+tta kedo. ((gaze at the wine glass/bottle))
          wine disappear.PST KEDO
          +Fig.6
          There's no more wine left {KEDO}
06 NAT:  wain naku[natta +tte. ]
          wine disappear.PST QUO
          +Fig.7
          She said there's no more wine left. ((to TAK))
07 TAK:  [* (n so(h)o(h) ha) ] (0.3) *[$hai.$
          ITJ PRT PRT
          (Oh, is that so.) Yeah.
          tak: *glances at the bottle *turns back to a laptop
08 NAT:  [Tak-chan.
          NAME
          Tak?

09 TAK:  u[meshu ga aru. ]
          plum.wine NOM exist
          There's umeshu.
10 NAT:  [ ( ) shite]kite?
          do.REQUEST
          Can you ( )?
11      (1.3) ((TAK finishes a keyboard work))

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12 TAK: (sniff) umeshu? ((turns to KYO))
           plum.wine
           (sniff) Umeshu?
13         (0.3)
14 TAK: Nomu?
           drink
           Would you like some?

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It is worth noting that, instead of responding to Kyoko's problem statement, Natsuki turns her gaze to Takayuki (Figure 7) and "passes" the problem to him, telling him that Kyoko said "There's no more wine left" using the hearsay particle *tte*. In overlap with Natsuki's "pass," Takayuki responds to the problem, although at this point, he only registers (*n soo* 'Oh, has it') and confirms it (*hai* 'yes') with a laughter and a smile, treating the problem lightly. Simultaneously with Takayuki's *hai* 'yes,' Natsuki adds *Tak-chan*, pursuing a further response from Takayuki. Natsuki's behaviors here demonstrate her understanding that the problem mentioned by Kyoko at line 5 is what Takayuki could and should take care of.

While Natsuki still extends her turn with an element expressing that she is asking him to do something for Kyoko (line 10),¹⁰ Takayuki suggests that he can offer *Umeshu*, a type of liquor made of Japanese apricot (in line 9). After a 1.3-s pause, where he finishes his keyboard work, Takayuki asks Kyoko if she would like to have *Umeshu*, checking if it could solve the problem raised by her at line 5. Here, the fact that Takayuki stopped what he has been engaged with (line 11) points to his



Figure 7: Natsuki shifts her gaze to Takayuki.

¹⁰ What Natsuki asks here is hard to tell from the recording, but from the context, it may be to bring another drink.

understanding that Kyoko's *kedo*-marked problem statement and his subsequent turns have attributed to Takayuki a responsibility concerning the problem.

In this section, we examined the cases where speakers describe a problematic event or state using the *kedo*-ending turn format and thereby attribute the responsibility to one participant. To highlight the pragmatic effect associated with the *kedo*-ending turn format, we will look at cases where problem statements framed in the *yo*-ending turn format.

3.2 Problem statements with *yo*

Another turn format for describing problematic events or states in Japanese is a sentence marked with the final particle *yo*, a linguistic resource to indicate the speaker's epistemic primacy over the recipient (Hayano 2011, 2013; Morita 2012). An examination of examples of *yo*-marked problem statements has shown that participants display their orientations to epistemic gaps when one speaker makes a reference to a problematic event or state with the particle *yo*. One evidence is that *yo*-marked problem statements are typically responded to with information receipt or agreement from the recipient. In other words, a problem statement with *yo* is used to inform the recipients of what the speaker knows as a problem, and thereby to ask the hearers to register it. Thus, the *yo*-ending turn format for describing problems is mainly concerned with epistemic asymmetry (Heritage 2012) between the speaker and the recipient. This shows a clear contrast with *kedo*-marked problem statements, which concern the recipients' responsibility for the reported problem.

Excerpt 6 below is taken from the same recording as Excerpt 5. Prior to the excerpt, Natsuki and Kyoko were talking about a group of their younger female colleagues, focusing on their appearance. Natsuki argued that the younger colleagues were not that flashy, but Kyoko firmly disagreed. In lines 1–2, Natsuki expresses her puzzlement concerning Kyoko's disagreement. Then in line 3, Kyoko quickly comes in saying *Itadakimas*, a conventional and ritualistic phrase before a meal, which shows that she is about to start the dessert served by the host couple.¹¹ After Natsuki follows Kyoko with her own *Itadakimas* (line 5), which suggests that both Kyoko and Natsuki are done with their prior exchange, Mari points out that they misunderstood each other, using the *yo*-ending turn format (line 6).

¹¹ The expression *Itadakimas* is composed of the honorific verb *itadaku* 'to humbly receive/eat something good' and the politeness-marking suffix *mas*, and the literal meaning is "I shall have this," usually entailing the speaker's gratitude toward the person who provided the food and/or toward the food itself.

- (6) [You two are talking about different things.] (Author's collection)
- 01 NAT: he:::? .h nanka sonna gyaru tte kanji janaku
 ITJ PRT that flashy.girl QUO impression COP.NEG
 02 kanjita n ya kedo [na:.
 feel.PST N COP though PRT
Oh, yeah? To me, she didn't look that flashy though.
- 03 KYO: [itada[kima::s.=
 PRT
Itadakimas
- 04 MAR: [un kekko(h)h .h
 ITJ wedding
Yeah, weddin-
- 05 NAT: =ittadakima:[::s.
 PRT]
- 06 MAR: *Itadakimas* [hanashi ga ima]ne, kuichigatteru yo.
 talk NOM now at.cross.purposes PRT
(you two) are talking at cross-purposes {YO}
- 07 (0.3)
- 08 NAT: a soo na noꝯ
 ITJ so COP N
Oh, are we?
- 09 SAE: ["hh"]
- 10 KYO: [e:?] soo na nꝯ
 ITJ soo COP N
Huh? Are we?
- 11 MAR: +>atashi no< kekkonshiki no
 1SG POS wedding POS
 mar: +points to NATSUKI
- 12 to[kini kiteta tokini tteyuu hanashi de:,]
 when come.PST when QUO story and
(Natsuki) was referring to the time when (they) came to my wedding,
- 12 NAT: [tokini:, >unun< mita no wa:, son]nani,
 when ITJ see.PST N TOP that.much
Yeah, when (I) saw (them there), (they) were not that...
- 13 MAR: Kyoko wa, nyuushashita
 NAME TOP start.working.PST
- 14 toki[ni:,mitaina] hanashi [janai?]
 When like story COP.NEG
But Kyoko was referring to the time when (they) started working at our company, right?
- 15 SAE: [Hahahahah]
- 16 KYO: [nande wa]katta n.
 why figure.out.PST PRT
How did you figure it out?

Note that Mari's *yo*-marked problem statement about the recipients' behaviors at line 6 is produced as an informing, an action that provides a piece of information to a recipient who has not known it (Heritage 1984; Thompson et al. 2015). This analysis is confirmed by the recipients' reactions. In response to Mari's problem statement with *yo*, Natsuki utters *a soo na noꝯ* 'Oh, are we?' (line 8) and then Kyoko says *e:? soo na nꝯ* 'Huh? Are we?' (line 10), both indicating that they did not notice the problem and have now come to register it by Mari's utterance. From line 11, Mari explicates the details of the misunderstanding between Kyoko and Natsuki mentioned at line 6, instead of waiting for further responses from them or launching a new action sequence. Thus, Mari's turn from line 11 indicates her understanding that she is in the position to inform Kyoko and Natsuki of what they

have not fully recognized: In line 6, Mari pointed out that Natsuki and Kyoko had been assessing the younger colleagues' behavior and appearance at different occasions. It is evident that Mari's *yo*-marked problem statement has been made to solve Natsuki's and Kyoko's epistemic problem.

Excerpt 7 is another case where a *yo*-marked problem statement is treated as an informing. Here, four college students have been asked to chat freely to record conversational data for corpus construction. At the beginning of this excerpt, the participants are facing difficulties in finding a good topic to keep on talking about, resulting in sporadic productions of interjections or discourse markers as well as unfilled pauses from lines 1 to 8. In line 9, C makes a negative comment about the situation using the particle *ne*, a device to indicate that the speaker is sharing information or an opinion in question with the recipient (Hayano 2013: 51–57), followed by his laughter. This leads to other members' emphatic laughter (line 10). Then he turns his gaze to his watch and produces another negative statement that highlights an undesirable status of the time, ending the turn with *yo* instead of *ne* (line 11). C's problem statement marked with *yo* is responded to by A's *maji* 'Really?' in line 13, which claims that A has gained new information by C's *yo*-marked problem statement.¹²

- (7) [Time has not passed at all.] (Sakura02)
- 01 (0.3)
 02 D: un.
 ITJ
Yeah.
 03 (0.4)
 04 A: ehe::.. (0.6) <sokka.>
 ITJ PRT
Well..., I see.
 05 (3.0)
 06 A: n:::..
 ITJ
hmmmm
 07 D: .hh un.
.hh yeah
 08 (1.7)
 09 C: maa, tsuzukanai ne:: ((laughs))
 PRT continue.NEG PRT
Well, (we) can't keep on (chatting that long), huh?
 10 ALL: ((laughter))=
 11 C: =mada, (kore), zenzen tattenai **yo** ((gaze at his watch))
 yet DEM at.all pass.NEG YO
(Time) hasn't passed at all {YO}.
 12 (0.1)
 13 A: <ma [ji:]>
 PRT
Really?
 14 D: [() ((gaze at C))

¹² Although D's utterance in line 14 is not intelligible, it is evident that she produces it with her gaze at C, so we can infer that D is also registering the information provided by C here.

If C had framed his statement in line 11 with *ne* just as in line 9, that would solicit an emphatic response. In reality, C selected to use the *yo*-marked format here, showing more attention to epistemic negotiation.

Finally, a recipient can treat the prior turn as informing by some way other than claiming that he or she has received information that was previously unknown. To claim that he or she did know the just provided information can be a response showing the recipient's orientation to the fact that the prior turn is produced as an informing.

Excerpt 8 taken from CallHome Japanese corpus illustrates the case in point. In this excerpt, a wife temporarily living in the US and her husband in Japan are talking over the phone. Right before the excerpt, their young son Ryo, who lives with the husband, was on the phone. After Ryo passed the phone to him, the husband (Ryo's father) checks the connection with the wife by saying *moshimoshi?* 'Hello?', which is responded to by the wife's *moshimoshi?* in line 2. Having confirmed that they resumed their conversation through lines 1–4, the wife makes a statement about a negatively evaluated status found in Ryo in line 6, ending the turn with the particle *yo*.

(8) [Ryo sounded half-asleep.] (CallHome1003, 6:20)

- 01 Hus: moshimoshi?
PRT
Hello?
- 02 Wif: moshimoshi?
PRT
Hello?
- 03 (0.2)
- 04 Hus: n:.
ITJ
Yeah.
- 05 (0.2)
- 06 Wif: **nandaka nandaka, Ryo-chan, neboketeru yo?**
HEDGE HEDGE NAME half_asleep YO
Uh, Ryo sounded half-asleep {YO}
- 07 (0.3)
- 08 Hus: n a:, ima okiteki[ta].
ITJ ITJ now wake.up.PST
Yeah, well, he just woke up.
- 09 Wif: **[nanka wakewakannai, hen[too shite]ru yo?**
HEDGE pointless response do YO
Well, he was responding to me oddly {YO}
- 10 Hus: [()]
- 11 (0.2)
- 12 Hus: n:.
ITJ
Yeah.

13 Wife's utterance at line 14 is marked with *kedo*, but this is not an example of a *kedo*-marked problem statement, the target of the present paper. First, it is an increment added to her prior utterance at line 9 and thus is not produced as an independent statement on its own. Second, it is not taken as describing something problematic in this context.

- 13 (0.1)
 14 Wif: <itsumo:>no koto da kedo.¹³
 usual thing COP KEDO
 It's normal (for him) though.
 15 (0.3)
 16 Hus: n:.
 ITJ
 Yeah.

In response to the wife's problem statement with *yo*, the husband first confirms with *n* 'Yeah' and then adds the interjection *a*: 'oh' and information that can account for why Ryo was half-asleep (line 8). Note that the added information that Ryo just woke up is something witnessed only from the husband's side, and thus he holds stronger access to it. Those features found in the husband's turn in line 8 suggest that he not only receives the wife's statement but also claims that he has already recognized Ryo's condition. Such an epistemic resistance is another form of indication that the recipient orients to what is implied in the prior *yo*-marked problem statement.¹⁴

In sum, the three cases of *yo*-marked problem statements above demonstrate that problem statements with *yo* are used to present information as something that the speaker knows better than the recipient, making information receipt (or other forms of orientation to the epistemic gap) a relevant response. This finding about *yo*-marked problem statements in turn highlights the characteristics of the *kedo*-ending turn format for describing a problem examined in 3.1.¹⁵

4 Summary and conclusion

In this article, the interactional properties specifically associated with the turn format ending with the particle *kedo* 'but' were examined, focusing on the situations where the format is used to describe or report a problematic event or state found around the speaker. Based on an analysis of examples of *kedo*-marked problem statements collected from naturally-occurring conversations, it has been illustrated that the *kedo*-ending format serves as a resource to attribute the responsibility or deontic authority concerning the mentioned problem to someone who could/should

¹⁴ See Heritage and Raymond (2005) for resources and practices found in English conversation to avoid being in an epistemically subordinate position when producing an agreement to an assessment.

¹⁵ The comparison between *kedo*-marked and *yo*-marked problem statements makes us suspect that *yo*-marked problem statements tend to present 'lighter' problems. As one reviewer pointed out, the examples of the *yo*-ending marked format describe problems that the recipients do not have to remedy. A future study would be needed to address the diversity of "problems" mentioned in social interaction and its correlation with speakers' choice of turn format.

deal with it. This analysis has been supported by participants' orientations observed from their second-by-second behaviors. Notable evidence includes (1) the recipients' responses to *kedo*-marked problem statements such as an apology, a remedy, and a resistance against a remedy and (2) the speakers' pursuits of a response from the recipients when the recipients do not respond to it or when they just receive or confirm the statements.

In contrast to problem statements ending with *kedo*, it has been shown that *yo*-marked problem statements are used to inform the recipient of what the speaker recognizes as a problem, asking the recipient to register it. Again, the examination of the examples has illustrated that participants in fact treat *yo*-marked problem statements as an informing, an action of providing new information that the recipient has not fully recognized, displaying their orientation to the epistemic asymmetry (Heritage 2012) between the speaker and the hearer via their conversational behaviors such as the recipients' registering responses.¹⁶ This analysis is consistent with previous studies of the particle *yo*, which have described the particle as a marker of epistemic primacy (Hayano 2011, 2013; Morita 2012).

Traditionally, the turn final use of *kedo* has been analyzed as a device for softening or hedging the tone of the utterance (Itani 1992; Nakayama and Ichihashi-Nakayama 1997). *Kedo*-ending turns may work as softening or hedging when they are used to present the speakers' opinions or thoughts, but this does not necessarily apply to the cases where the *kedo*-ending format is used to implement a different type of action in a different type of interactional context. Just as Ono et al. (2012) shows that a *kedo*-marked utterance can “put the recipient on the spot to respond” when used in a decision-making sequence, we can obtain more specific and practical descriptions of the turn format by taking into account interactional specificities in each context.

The research attitude to pay more attention to the details of interactional contexts when investigating the functional properties of specific linguistic constructions resonates with the recent trend in Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics to focus on the morphosyntactic details of turns (Curl and Drew 2008; Drew 2013; among others). The growing awareness about associations between specific linguistic structures and specific interactional properties has resulted in the notion of “turn format” (Couper-Kuhlen 2014), which can capture

¹⁶ The author does not claim that any tokens of *yo*-marked problem statements will never be followed by response types such as an apology or a remedy. As mentioned in Introduction, the pragmatic status of a turn cannot be determined solely by its linguistic design. Thus, depending on its context and/or semantic content, a *yo*-marked problem statement could be responded to with an apology or a remedy. The current paper is concerned with examining how speakers show their orientation to the *kedo*-ending turn format as one of the multiple interactional resources, as opposed to giving an exact prediction of the consequence of using the format.

the formal and functional characteristics in formulaic expressions with special reference to their use in interaction. The present article is written with the hope of contributing to studies of turn formats in languages by illustrating that the *kedo*-ending turn format is a conventionalized expression associated with the interactional function of deonticity attribution and with the context of a problem statement.

There are issues that could not be covered in this article in both the formal and functional domains related to the target phenomenon. Future research should examine other turn formats in Japanese for describing a problematic event or state. Also, other types of actions or sequences that the *kedo*-ending turn format can play a role may be of interest to those who work on conversational Japanese under the framework of Interactional Linguistics.

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Appendix: Transcription symbols

,	continuing intonation
.	terminal intonation (falling)
?	rising intonation
ˆ	slightly rising intonation
—	level intonation
[]	overlapping speech
()	uncertain hearing
(.)	micro pause
(2.1)	long pause and its length in seconds
:	lengthening
-	truncated speech
=	latching (no gap between two lines)
huh	laughter or laughing quality
h	hearable exhalation
(h)	laughter produced with a lexical item
°	soft voice
—	loud voice
< >	slowed down speech

> <	accelerated speech
\$ \$	smiley voice
(())	situational or non-verbal information
+	the moment when the corresponding figure captures
*	the moment when the transcribed bodily behavior starts

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