

## “YOU ARE NOT LUCKY”:

Identity Construction in Narratives of a Korean Speaker of Japanese<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Recent research utilizing Conversation Analysis suggests that ethnic and cultural identities are discoverable through careful, close examination of conversational data from an emic perspective (Higgins 2007, Mori 2003, Nishizaka 1995, 1999). Using Conversation Analysis, this study examines a series of stories told by the same speaker (a Korean learner of Japanese) to discover how the teller and the recipient of a story co-constructs the teller's identity. Telling personal stories is a common conversational activity. These stories portray a life event with specific conversational objectives. Those objectives frequently provide justification for one's actions or explain to the listener what happened. In any case, the point-making process is the part that the listener and even the teller seek. The data is from a larger project that has 45 hours of recorded conversations of five Korean learners of Japanese studying at a university in the Chubu region of Japan. One set of stories recorded between one native speaker of Japanese and the Korean learner of Japanese was selected for analysis. The research questions are the following:

1. In this series of stories, what identities and membership categorizations were constructed?
2. How are these identities tied to the point-making process in this series-of-stories?

The analysis demonstrates that the participants engage in talk indicating their cultural identities through the telling of the stories. The narrator uses the same point in both stories, although the second time it is implicit. This allows the two stories to be tied together and the recipient's evaluation that follows links the stories. As a result, the participants construct additional identities not portrayed in the preceding story. This article will also discuss how the findings of this study can be used by learners in the JFL classroom and beyond.

### 1. Introduction

The study of the construction of identity and intercultural statuses in conversation is not new. One approach to examining identity and interculturality is to assume that culture and identity are static entities that can be used to explain certain behaviors found in conversational interaction. That is, by studying the culture of a people we can discover how “they” as a people will interact in society. This suggests, for example if someone is Japanese, they will act according to their cultural values.

Recent research utilizing a microanalysis approach to data known as Conversation Analysis, suggests that how ethnic identity and cultural identity are exhibited in society is best discovered through careful, close examination of conversational data from an emic perspective that demonstrates how the participants themselves indicate identity (Higgins 2007, Mori 2003, Nishizaka 1995, 1999, Zimmerman 2007a, 2007b). For this study, interculturality is defined as the participants' joint orientations to similarities and differences. This is accomplished by examining the participants' emic view as prescribed by Conversation Analysis. Approaching interculturality as a socially constructed phenomenon (Nishizaka 1995), this eliminates the analyst's subjective analysis of the data and uncovers how the participants construct identity and interculturality. What it is to be an intercultural member or to be constructing one's identity must be defined through interaction with other people. This study specifically examines the participants' formulation of their various identities vis-à-vis the other participants in the interactions, and shows how they display their understandings of each other and the specific topic.

Part of the process of revealing our identity to others whether this identity is an intercultural one or not, can be found in the images we construct of ourselves in conversation. As conversational participants, we constantly move in and out of conversational roles, constructing various social identities. One of the most common conversational activities where identity construction is prevalent is found in telling stories and personal narratives about experiences in our lives. These narratives create a mosaic of our lives and portray an event in conversation for specific conversational objectives. Those objectives may be “to

illustrate, substantiate, [and/or] prove some asserted state of affairs” (Ryave 1978: 123). The purpose of the narrative may be to provide justification for one’s actions or to explain to another about what happened. In any case, the point-making process is the part that the listener and even the teller seek.

This article will address to two aspects of the construction of narratives. First, following the principles of Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorization Analysis, the identities were not assumed. Instead, through careful observations and analysis of the data, the participants’ orientations from an emic perspective were uncovered. The second aspect to be investigated is the point-making process and the use of evaluation in narrative. The analysis will show that the narrator uses the same point in both stories, although the second time it is implicit. This allows the two stories to be tied together and the evaluation from the recipient that follows links the stories and creates an opportunity for the construction of an additional identity not portrayed in the preceding narratives.

## 2. Narrative from a Conversation Analysis Approach

Narratives as a discourse activity have distinct parts. The parts of a story, as defined by Sacks (1974) in his discussions of jokes as stories, are the preface, the telling, and the subsequent responses to the telling. To tell a narrative<sup>2</sup> typically involves more than one turn of talk (Sacks 1992). The teller maintains the floor across at least several turns of talk and this is mutually achieved with the other participant(s) who are receiving or shaping the narrative.

Moving from an individual story level to the overall discourse level, the study of series-of-stories indicates that conversational participants will draw connections between stories that appear in succession. Ryave (1978) defines series-of-stories as those that “occur in close proximity to one another” (p. 120) and that there is some type of relationship that is established between the two. Ryave’s (1978) study examined stories told by different speakers in order to show how the second teller uses their story to show how the point of the first story is related to their story. This study examines a series-of-stories told by the same speaker. The participants show through the interaction how these stories are interactionally related and function similarly to Ryave’s definition for series-of-stories (i.e. a relationship is established between the two narratives that are told).

Another feature of a story is a defined coherence throughout the narrative activity that typically extends over more than just a few lines (Jefferson, 1978). The narrative may have words or phrases that are “carriers of the story” (Sacks 1992: 19). These carriers are classes of words or phrases which participants use instrumentally to develop the topic of the story. In a series-of-stories, this relationship is extended across the boundaries and the participants must establish the relevancy among the stories.

Narrative studies that examine speakers of Japanese have typically focused on native speakers. These studies find that the participants are working to show their shared point of view, which is established in the setting or background information that the narrator provides (Maynard 1989, Nishikawa 1999). A few studies such as Fujii (2007) and Shimazu and Nishikawa (2005), also examine similar aspects for non-native speakers. Examining Chinese and Korean learners of Japanese, Shimazu and Nishikawa (2005) show that these participants used interactional strategies to achieve common ground with the recipient(s) of the narratives. They found that participants with different backgrounds (i.e. those from different countries and with different educational and life experiences) will find ways to work through difficulties they encounter while telling a story by using negotiating strategies. This current study examines how a shared view point is constructed by the participants, by examining how identity is linked to the point-making process of the two narratives.

## 3. Identity and Narrative

Conversation Analysis (hereafter, CA) has another branch of inquiry for the construction of identity in talk mainly, Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA). This approach to identity, as developed by Sacks (1992), focuses on the process of organizing and reorganizing people into categories or groups within the sequential actions of talk. These categories can be labels or descriptions (Zimmerman 2007a). The discursive practice of *labeling* refers to the production of explicit membership categorizations that are locally occasioned in talk. *Description*, on the other hand, is the categorical analysis that speakers accomplish in talk. Unlike labeling, speakers indirectly index membership categories without the use of explicit category terms in the interactions. These descriptions can be implied through *formulations* (Schegloff 1972), i.e., inferences which are grounded in the recipient’s response to the previous turns. Because the categories are based on participants’ responses to previous turns in talk, any category label that emerges in an analysis is emic in nature, rather than based on the analyst’s viewpoint.

One means for accomplishing identity constructions is through the telling of a narrative. As Edwards (1997) aptly explains, participants engage in narrative to accomplish social action. Identity then is not just the explicit naming of a person. Identities are carefully constructed through the participants' sequential actions. The co-construction of identity in conversation implies that the speaker and the recipient of the narrative both have roles in shaping the narrative. To provide an English example, the following is an actual conversational example of a narrative told in a phone conversation between **A**, who is a social agency staff member and **B**, who had been told to call the agency, because of his marital troubles.

Segment 1: From Sacks 1992: 113

- (1) A: Yeah, then what happened?  
 (2) B: Okay, in the meantime she {wife of B} says, "Don't ask the child nothing." Well, she stepped between me and the child, and I got up to walk out the door. When she stepped between me and the child, I went to move her out of the way. And then about that time her sister had called the police. I don't know how she... what she...  
 (3) A: Didn't you smack her one?  
 (4) B: No.  
 (5) A: You're not telling me the story, Mr. B.  
 (6) B: Well, you see when you say smack you mean hit.  
 (7) A: Yeah, you shoved her. Is that it?  
 (8) B: Yeah, I shoved her.

In regards to identity in this segment which is not discussed in Sack's original analysis, we see that **B** is telling a story about an incident with his wife. Before **B** can finish telling his story, **A** provides an assessment as a possible ending to the story in line 3 (*Didn't you smack her one?*). **B** denies this in line 4 with "No." **A** then accuses **B** of not telling the truth in line 5 to which **B** reformulates the term "smack" to "hit" as a means to downgrade the action. It is then that **A** further reduces the action to "shove," which **B** finally admits to having done. Through this exchange, **A** and **B** negotiate the characterization of **B**'s actions. Instead of constructing a possible identity as a violent husband, the downgrade from a "smack" to a "shove" orients to **B**'s actions as less aggressive than that of the initial assessment suggested by **A**. The participants' orientations to the previous person's talk allows for the progression from **A**'s accusations of **B** doing something wrong to his wife, to a minimization of those actions. Thus, the point of the story is co-constructed by the recipient **A**, and the teller **B**, which ends by reducing the severity of **B**'s actions.

Identity, therefore, is not just the explicit naming of a person as a "wife beater." As this example demonstrates, the identities are carefully constructed through the participants' sequential actions. The results are that the severity of **B**'s actions are negotiated down to a shove, and thus not the harsh actions of a "wife beater." As this study will show, it is through the telling of the narrative that the participants construct identity. The point of the individual narratives and the coherence among the series-of-stories has implications for those constructions. Incorporating both sets of previous literature, this study will examine a series-of-stories (Ryave 1978) for the point-making process, the relevance that is established between them, and the indication of identity work that is a result of that work. This is an area that has not been examined before in narratives told with learners of Japanese.

#### 4. Methodology and Data

While the CA methodology stresses the importance of not assuming the identities of the participants a priori to examining the data, some background information is necessary. This actually is in keeping with an applied CA methodology, because there is information that the participants themselves possess about the interaction which the researcher must be familiar, in order to even approach the data. Moerman (1988) was the first to propose Culturally Contexted Conversation Analysis, a hybrid of CA and ethnography that provides a more contextualized analysis of talk-in-interaction. Employing an applied approach to CA, some researchers in the fields of sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and more recently, studies of second and foreign language learners, have utilized CA for discovering the interactional practices of the participants and how this relates to the wider context (examples of this type of study are Bilmes 1992, 1995, 1996, Cicourel 1992, Kasper 2004, Mori 2003, Saft 2000, Zimmerman 2004). This contextual information, however, must be essential for understanding and analyzing the data from an emic perspective. In addition, it must be somehow internally made relevant in the conversation.

The data was collected as part of larger project that has 45 hours of recorded conversations among five main participants. The main participants in the study were all Korean speakers of Japanese who were studying at a university in the Chubu region of Japan. They were asked to record conversations of friends and acquaintances with mini disk recorders. They were required to ask permission to make these recordings. This particular study examined 18 hours of conversations to find narratives told by these main participants and I selected one set of narratives for analysis. The data to be examined is a conversation recorded in Japan between one “native” speaker of Japanese and one Korean” learner” of Japanese. The research questions are the following:

1. In this series of stories, what identities and membership categorizations were constructed?
2. How are these identities tied to the point-making process in this series-of-stories?

The analysis is in three parts: the first narrative, the second narrative and the evaluative talk that follows.

## 5. Analysis

This series-of-stories takes place at a café/restaurant where the main participant, San Ki Ha and his boss (*buchoo*) were having something to drink, while they waited for San Ki Ha’s car to be repaired by an acquaintance of the boss.<sup>3</sup> Almost the entire conversation, which lasted about 33 minutes, was about car-related topics such as buying used cars and finding parking. In comparison to the rest of the recording which was typical conversational turn-taking, the main sequential characteristics of this segment were that of a narrative structure with two narratives told in succession. The first narrative is told in response to a question asked by the boss. San Ki Ha, the teller, constructs the narrative in a way that provides descriptive identity characterizations that capture a portrait of his identity in this moment. These descriptions tell us about San Ki Ha’s driving and his attitude toward his car, which is linked to the identity constructions in the talk.

### 5.1 The First Narrative

The analysis will begin by examining the descriptive identity constructions found within the first narrative. The segment opens with non-narrative talk that provides the topic for the narrative that follows.

Segment 2 San Ki Ha MD 11 Track 1

SH= San Ki Ha B= buchoo (San Ki Ha’s boss)

584 SH: *yokatta desu ne.*  
was great COP IP.  
'It was great.'

585 (1.2)

586 B: *un?*  
*huh?*  
'huh?'

587 (0.3)

589 SH: *ii hito shookai shite kurete arigatoo gozaimasu.*  
good person introduce do give thank you.  
'Thank you for introducing ((to me)) a good person.'

590 (0.4)

591 B: *un. ii hito to (shika) tsukia(wanai) no. .hhh [hehehe*  
*uh-huh. good person with (only) associate NOM. .hhh [hehehe*  
*'uh-huh. ((I)) (only) associate with good people. .hhh [hehehe'*

592 SH: *[hehehe*

- 593 (3.0)
- 594 B: ( )
- 595 (6.0)
- 596 SH: *kono mae ni nanka kizu ga takusan aru kara, (0.6) aijoo*  
 this before DAT well scratches S a lot exist because, (0.6) love
- 597 *ga (0.4) nakunarimasu: yo.*  
 S (0.4) disappears IP.  
 ‘recently, well because there are a lot of scratches, (0.6) ((my) love disappears.’
- 598 (0.5)
- 599 B: *a::[:.....]=*
- 600 SH: *[kuruma ni taishite,*  
 [ car DAT regards to  
 ‘for ((this/my)) car,’
- 601 B: *=a soo.*  
 =oh really.  
 ‘=oh really.’
- 602 (1.0)
- 603 SH: *kirei datta ra nanka (0.5) daiji ni shitai kedo,*  
 pretty was if well (0.5) careful DAT want to but,  
 ‘if ((it)) was pretty, well (0.5) ((I)) would want to be careful  
 ((with it)) but,’
- 604 B: *he*
- 605 (1.1)
- 606 SH: *iroiro butsukatte shimatte.*  
 various collide with did ((indicates with regret)).  
 ‘various ((things)) were hit.’
- 607 (0.3)
- 608 B: *he he he*
- 609 (1.0)
- 610 SH: ((clears throat))
- 611 B: *butsuketta koto aru no?*  
 run into experience exist NOM?  
 ‘have ((you)) run into ((something))?’

- 612 (1.1) ((sounds like hitting cup with spoon and dragging something across table))
- 613 SH: *hai ikkai (0.7) butsukette,*  
yes once (0.7) run into,  
'yes once (0.7) ((I)) ran into((something)),'
- 614 (0.5)
- 615 B: *nani butsuketta no?*  
what run into NOM?  
'what did ((you)) run into?'
- 616 (2.0)
- 617 SH: *o- (0.7) nanka (0.5) sedan:: no kuruma mae to (0.7) watashi ga*  
o- (0.7) well (0.5) sedan:: LK car in front with (0.7) I S
- 618 *ushiro kara (0.3) tsuitotsu desu.*  
behind from (0.3) rear-end collision COP.  
'o- (0.7) well (0.5) the sedan car in front of me (0.7) and I from behind (0.3) it was a rear-end collision.'
- 619 B: *un.*  
uh-huh.  
'uh-huh.'
- 620 (1.1)
- 621 SH: *nanka (0.4) kowaretta janai desu ka.*  
well (0.4) crashed not COP Q.  
'well(0.4) ((I))crashed didn't ((I)).'
- 622 B: *un un.*  
uh-huh uh-huh.  
'uh-huh uh-huh.'
- 623 SH: *sore gurai nano mae no kuruma wa (0.2) zenzen [daijoobu*  
that about NOM in front LK car TM (0.2) completely [okay
- 624 *datta n desu yo. (0.7) =*  
it was NOM COP IP. (0.7)  
'as for the car in front about only that much (0.2) it was completely [okay (0.7) ='
- 625 B: *[un.*  
[uh-huh.  
['uh-huh.'
- 626 SH: *=demo nanka ano (1.2) yarareta kanji de (0.4) nijuuroku man*  
=but well well (1.2) affected seems and (0.4) 260000
- 627 *mata haraimashita.*

again paid.  
'but well well it seemed affected and (0.4) I paid  
another 260000 ((yen)).'

- 628 (1.0)
- 629 SH: *sono toki nanka (0.3) ((sniff)) (0.2) menkyo teishi datta n de;*  
that time well (0.3) ((sniff)) (0.2) license suspension was NOM and;  
'at that time well (0.3) ((sniff)) (0.2) ((my)) license was suspended  
and;'
- 630 B: *un.*  
*uh-huh.*  
'uh-huh.'
- 631 (0.2)
- 632 SH: *hoken tsukawanakute,*  
insurance not use,  
'((I)) couldn't use ((my)) insurance,'
- 633 (0.3)
- 634 B: *un.*  
*uh-huh.*  
'uh-huh.'
- 635 (0.9)
- 636 SH: *okane de zenbu harachaimashita.*  
money LOC all paid ((with regret indicated)).  
'I paid all in cash((with regret indicated)).'
- 637 B: *a:::::*
- 638 SH: *ano hito mo nanka (0.2) kuruma seibi:: (0.3)*  
that person also well (0.2) car maintenance mechanic (0.3)
- 639 *suru hito datta kara,*  
to do person COP because,  
'as for that person well (0.2) ((he)) also was a maintenance (0.3) mechanic'
- 640 (0.2)
- 641 B: *un.*  
*uh-huh.*  
'uh-huh.'
- 642 (0.4)
- 643 SH: *takusan totta to omoimasu.*  
a lot took QT think.  
'((I)) think ((he)) took a lot.'

- 644 (1.3)
- 645 SH: *waza to.*  
deliberately.  
'deliberately.'
- 646 (1.7)

San Ki Ha constructs and orients to three identities using descriptions through the telling of the narrative. These are the facts that he is a car owner, a person who caused an accident, and a person who had his license suspended. Starting with the identity of the car owner, the teller establishes this identity in his abstract in lines 596-606 when he explains that he has lost the love for his car. His status as a car owner is inferable from the description and also his specific reference to his car in line 600. He builds on this point so that he is not just any car owner, but a car owner, who has caused an accident. At first, San Ki Ha makes this as a justification for why he no longer loves his car. Next, his boss, indicating his willingness to be a recipient of a possible narrative, asks a question to obtain further details about San Ki Ha's accidents (*butsuketta koto aru no?* 'have ((you)) run into ((something))?' line 611). The response is "*hai ikkai (0.7) butsuketta,*" ('yes once (0.7) ((I)) ran into ((something)). San Ki Ha could have expanded on his talk, however, a 0.5 pause occurs and the boss follows up with another question to elicit more information in line 615. This interactional move by the boss demonstrates his interest in hearing more about San Ki Ha's experience. The second question provides San Ki Ha with the interactional space to take the floor and his response results in a narrative about hitting another car. His boss's question, therefore, leads to the telling of San Ki Ha's story as a car owner, who caused an accident. The categorization of "the person who caused an accident" is constructed through San Ki Ha's narration in lines 606 and from 617-628. The final identity in this story is found in the culmination of his story where through description he explains that his license has been suspended in line 629. This description of his identity as someone with a suspended license is an essential element for his construction of his identity.

Turning to the construction of the point of the narrative, it is found in lines 632-636. Leading up to his point, San Ki Ha provides background information for his story from lines 617-632. Each detail, as found with other Japanese narrative studies (Maynard 1989, Nishikawa 1999), provides background information so as to orient the listener. These details focus on the type of car he hit, how the car was hit, the fact that the car he hit did not look like it had been damaged, how much he had to pay, and the fact that his license had been suspended. He uses these details to develop his point which is, he had to pay for the whole thing in cash (line 636). He then provides his evaluation of the situation in line 638-645 when he explains that he believes that the maintenance mechanic charged him more than was required.

The story unfolds in such a way that his identities (car owner, person who caused an accident and person with a suspended license) shape his telling and his final point. Each one of these identities constructed in this narrative builds upon the other, culminating in San Ki Ha's point, which is, he could not use his insurance because he had a suspended license. The implication of his telling is that he was the victim in this incident. While the victim identity is never specifically stated in the talk, this is parallel to the findings of Sacks (1992) when he provided the following example of a hotrodder.

Segment 3 Adapted from Sacks 1992: 136

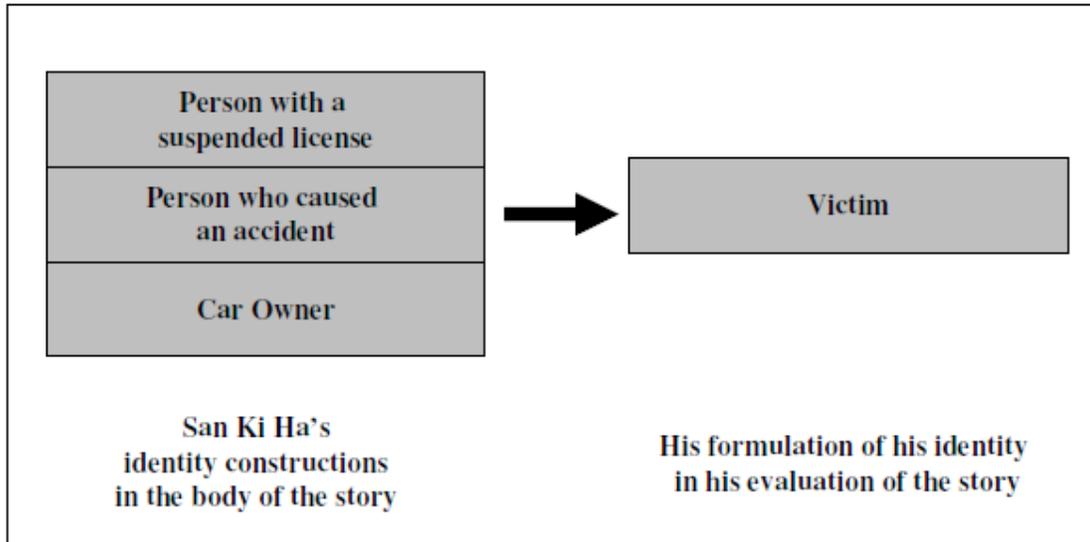
1. Joe: (cough) We were in an automobile discussion,
2. Henry: discussing the psychological motives for
3. Mel: drag racing on the streets.

These three participants collaborate to produce the utterance as an invitation to a new member joining the discussion. The activity of drag racing points to one possible membership category of "teenagers." The participants' descriptions formulate the category of teenagers as bound to the category of drag racing in this context. Notice that the category or term used to categorize members does not appear in the talk. In this case, the member and non-members make inferences as to the population that would be doing drag racing, hotrodders. This is similar to the identity construct that occurs here. San Ki Ha's descriptions and details provided through his narrative formulate the identity of "victim." While he never states this identity, he

reinforces this in line 643 when he alludes to the fact he was overcharged by the person whose car he hit. Thus, by ending his telling with the focus on his status as the victim of the maintenance mechanic who made him pay 260,000 yen (about 2,400 dollars), San Ki Ha's portrayal of this part of the incident minimizes his own part in this accident (i.e. rear-ending the other car and driving without a license),

The descriptions of San Ki Ha's identity as constructed through this narrative are diagrammed in the following figure:

**Figure 1: Descriptions of San Ki Ha's Identity**



The identities he constructs build on one another as the narrative is formed and this culminates in his evaluation which is a characterization of himself as a victim.

## 5.2 The Second Narrative

The second narrative begins with another question from the boss which eventually leads to San Ki Ha taking the floor to tell another narrative that provides more details about a specific part of his first narrative.

Segment 4 San Ki Ha MD 11 Track 1

SH= San Ki Ha B= buchoo (San Ki Ha's boss)

646 (1.7)

647 B: *me- menkyo mentei ga- chuu datta no?*  
 li- license- suspended license S- note was NOM?  
 'li- license- ((your)) license was suspended?

648 (0.3)

649 X(SH?):((sniff))

650 (0.4)

651 X(SH?):((sniff))

- 652 SH: *naka saresugite.*  
naka ((name of police division)) give too many.  
'naka ((name of police division)) gave ((me)) too many.'
- 653 (0.3)
- 654 B: *un?*  
huh?  
'huh?'
- 655 (1.0)
- 656 SH: *naka sareta no wa (0.5) hachi ten ga*  
naka ((name of police division)) gave LK TM (0.5) 8 points S
- 657 *takusan ookatta n de,*  
a lot over NOM and,  
'as for the ones ((points)) naka ((name of police division)) gave ((me)) (0.5) 8  
points over and,'
- 658 B: *un.*  
uh-huh.  
'uh-huh.'
- 659 (1.3)
- 660 SH: *kuruma menkyo tori ni itta ra, (0.2) ai- (0.8) anata wa ima (0.2)*  
car license take DAT went if, (0.2) ai- (0.8) you TM now (0.2)
- 661 *menkyo teishi desu tte iwarete.*  
license stopped COP QT said.  
'when ((I)) went to get my license, (0.2) ai- (0.8) they said now  
your (0.2) license has been suspended.'
- 662 (0.5)
- 663 B: *uso.*  
you're kidding.  
'you're kidding.'
- 664 (1.0)
- 665 SH: *sore de (1.4) ano:: juu go nichi kan? (0.7) menkyo teishi datta n*  
then and (1.4) well:: 15 days? (0.7) license stop was NOM
- 666 *desu kedo.*  
COP but.  
'and then (1.4) well:: for 15 days (0.7) ((my)) license was stopped  
but,'
- 667 (0.4)

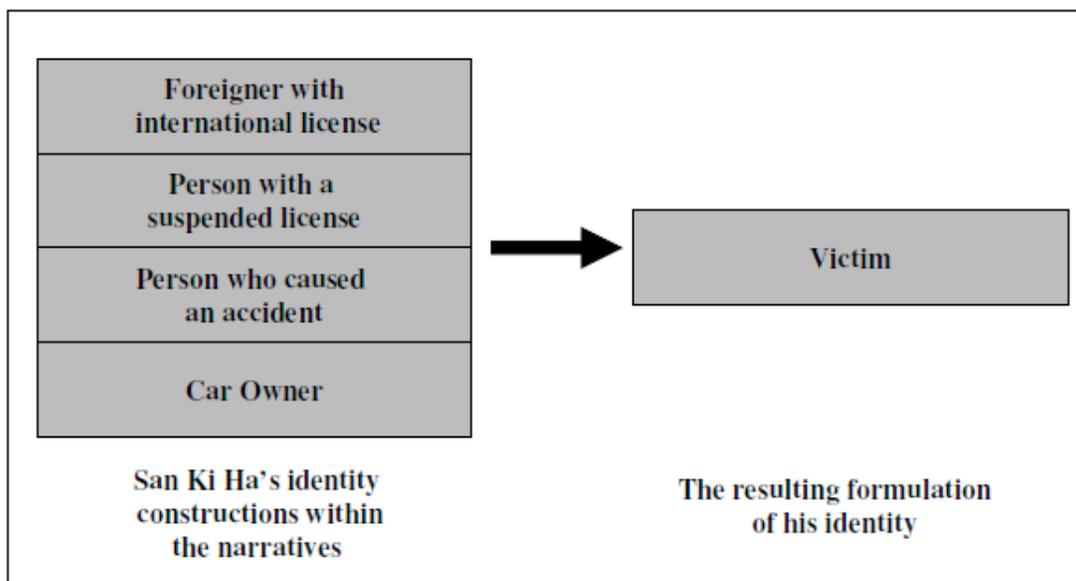
- 668 B: *un.*  
uh-huh.  
'uh-huh.'
- 669 (0.3)
- 670 SH: *tsugi no h- (0.1) tsugi no hi ga (0.2) toteru (0.2) hi datta*  
next LK d- (1.0) next LK day S (0.2) able to take (0.2) day was
- 671 *n desu yo.*  
NOM COP IP.  
'the next d- (1.0) the next day (0.2) was the day (0.2) ((I)) would  
be able to get ((it)).'
- 672 B: *a:::*
- 673 SH: *menkyo wa*  
license TM  
'((my)) license'
- 674 B: *un.*  
uh-huh.  
'uh-huh.'
- 675 (0.8)
- 676 SH: *sore nano ni hhh butsukatte shimatte, (0.8) dooshio*  
this NOM DAT hhh collide with do ((with regret)), (0.8) what to do
- 677 *moo nakatta. (0.8) nanka sono toki kokusai menkyo mo*  
already nothing. (0.8) well that time international license also
- 678 *atta n desu kedo,*  
existed NOM COP but,  
'even this hhh ((I)) collided with ((it))((with regret)), (0.8) there was nothing I  
could do. already well. (0.8) well that time ((I)) also had an  
international license but,'
- 679 (0.1)
- 680 B: *un.*  
uh-huh.  
'uh-huh.'
- 681 (0.7)
- 682 SH: *tsukaeru kadooka wakaranakatta n de,*  
usable whether did not know NOM and,  
'((I)) was not sure if I could use it or not and,'
- 683 (2.8)

This time the analysis will begin with his narrative's main point and then examine the additional identity constructions. As with the first narrative, the second narrative is also initiated by a question from the boss in line 647. This time, the boss orients to a detail from San Ki Ha's first narrative by asking the question "*me- menkyo mentei ga- chuu datta no?*" ("((your)) license was suspended?") The boss's elicitation of additional information topically links the first narrative to the second. San Ki Ha's response in line 652 is interpreted by the boss as an insufficient answer as indicated by his *un?* in line 654. As Shimazu and Nishikawa (2005) found for interactions among Chinese and Korean learners of Japanese, this "*un?*" is an interactional strategy employed to seek clarification from San Ki Ha. In response to this request for clarification in line 654, San Ki Ha provides a longer response with more details after this elicitation of repair. He launches into a telling about his suspended license. Then, he provides another topical link to the first narrative, by alluding to the first narrative's point about not being able to use his insurance, when he explains that the next day he would have been able to get his license back if he had not hit the car. To further his point, he mentions that he had an international license, but that he was uncertain if he could use it. This narrative returns to the theme of "I had an accident but I could not use my insurance." Sequentially, the boss asks the question to get the narrative on the floor and the narrator sequentially links the two stories through his points.

Turning to the construction of identity in this second narrative, San Ki Ha indicates two identities; one which is repeated, a person with a suspended license and one that is newly provided, his foreigner status. The first identity is that of a person with a suspended license as suggested through the previous analysis of the point. This is in the forefront of the narrative. The second identity, his foreigner status, is accomplished by his explanation that he possessed an international driver's license. A native to Japan would not be able to use his international driver's license within the confines of Japan nor would a Japanese person mention this as part of their story (see lines 676-678 the reference to *kokusai menkyo* (international driver's license). This, as is alluded to, is the privilege of foreigners. Following the CA perspective, while he is orienting to his foreigner status within Japan, he is not specifying that he is Korean, because it is not relevant for the talk at hand. He also does not make his foreigner identity the most important identity of the talk. As we will see in the evaluation that follows, his boss also does not orient to this identity categorization either. It is mentioned as another detail for building his case to limit his responsibility for the incident and to continue seeking affiliation from his interlocutor.

The identities that are constructed in this narrative, build upon the ones previously established in the first narrative, as shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2: San Ki Ha's identities as constructed through both narratives**



This figure demonstrates that the identities in the second narrative build upon the ones from the first narrative. The car owner and person who caused the accident are implied again through the context of the second narrative. The suspended license is established again through the questions asked by the boss. The foreigner with an international license identity is added through narrative description at the end of the narrative. As shown in the diagram, these identities are the building blocks used within the telling for establishing his victim identity.

### 5.3 The Evaluation

The final segment to be analyzed is the evaluation that follows immediately after the two narratives. Typically, narrative studies, such as Labov (1972) and Labov and Waletzky (1967), demonstrate that the evaluation comes within the telling of the narrative which is provided by the narrator. As Nishikawa (1999) and Maynard (1989) show for Japanese narratives, the evaluation is not always established by the narrator. The listener or recipient may provide the evaluation. This is what happens in this narrative. This evaluation is the boss's response to these two stories and he makes relevant another identity which refocuses the narrator's interpretation of the narrative.

Segment 5 San Ki Ha MD 11 Track 1

SH= San Ki Ha B= buchoo (San Ki Ha's boss)

684 B: *tsuitoran ne.*  
Not be lucky IP.  
'((you)) are not lucky.'

685 (0.9)

686 B: *he he [he he he he he he*

687 SH: *[nanka un ga warukatta desu yo.*  
[well luck S was bad COP IP.  
'[well ((my)) luck was bad.'

688 B: *un ga wa(h)ru(h)i(h) ne(h). hehehe ( ) [hehehe*  
luck S b(h)a(h)d(h). hehehe ( ) [hehehe  
'((Your)) luck is b(h)a(h)d. hehehe ( ) [hehehe'

689 SH: *[honto desu yo.*  
[really COP IP.

690 *honto*  
really

really'

'[it really is.

691 B: *he he he he*

692 SH: *watashi wa anmari un yokunai desu yo.*  
I TM not really luck bad COP IP.  
'As for me, ((my)) luck is not very good.'

693 B: *hehehehe .hhhh (1.5) .hh he he*

694 SH: *tamatama*  
by chance  
'by chance'

- 695 B: *hehe tamatama notte itte,*  
hehe by chance driving,  
'hehe and ((you)) are driving by chance.'
- 696 SH: *un.*  
uh-huh.  
'uh-huh.'
- 697 (0.4)
- 698 B: *a:*
- 699 SH: *warui toki wa takusan arimasu.*  
bad times TM a lot exist.  
'so many bad times happen.'
- 700 B: *hehehehe*
- 701 SH: ((clears throat))
- 702 SH: *zutto yoku unten shite kita no ni, (0.5) tsugi no hi ni*  
all the way well drive do come NOM DAT, (0.5) next LK day DAT
- 703 (0.3) *ii no ni. (1.2) butsukatte shimatte,*  
(0.3) good NOM DAT. (1.2) hit do ((with regret)),  
'even though I always drive carefully, (0.5) the next day (0.3) it would have  
been okay. (1.2) I hit ((it)),'
- 704 (0.7)
- 705 B: *shokku datta na::*  
shock was IP::  
'((you)) were shocked::'
- 706 (1.7)
- 707 SH: *ano kuruma takusan okane kakarimashita.*  
that car a lot money took.  
'that car has taken a lot of money.'
- 708 (1.1)
- 709 B: *soo.*  
yes.  
'yes.'
- 710 (2.3)
- 711 B: *u:::n.*  
uh-hu:::h.  
'uh-hu:::h.'

In line 684, the first evaluation of this narrative is provided by the boss (*tsuitoran ne/((you) are not lucky)*). This phrase originally comes from “*un ga tsuku,*” a phrase that means luck will come or to have luck. Following this initial evaluative phrase, there is a pause which is followed by laughter from the boss. Indicating his agreement, San Ki Ha rephrases the boss’s evaluation with “*un ga warukatta desu yo*” ((my)) luck was bad). This response shows alignment with the boss’s evaluation. This is followed by the boss shifting the topic from the time frame of this particular event to the present with “*un ga warui*” in line 688. While the topic is still about San Ki Ha’s luck, the use of the present tense implies that San Ki Ha is still unlucky, which comments on San Ki Ha’s fate in general. This shift accomplishes two things. First, it provides further moves to direct the conversation away from the victim status and second, it shifts the blame from the incident to personal luck.

Another set of tokens that show that the boss is moving a way from the victim status are the laughter tokens found throughout the segment. While laughter by the teller and the recipient in unison shows affiliation in trouble talk (Jefferson 1978), the laughter tokens in this segment are not found by both parties. The laughter through out this section is not a chuckle here and there, but a full laugh. This laughter appears to be directed at the humor the boss finds in San Ki Ha’s unluckiness. When San Ki Ha mentions again that his misfortune is real and his luck is not very good (lines 689 and 692), his boss continues to laugh and then points out in line 695 that San Ki Ha is still driving and taking his chances with fate.

When the laughter ends, San Ki Ha does not pursue further negotiation about his fate, but provides a minimal response (*un/uh-huh*) in line 696. San Ki Ha then summarizes again over the next few lines all of the bad things (lines 702-703) that have happened to him. This provides for an opening for an affiliative move from the boss, which appears in line 705, when the boss states “*shokku datta na.:,*” (((you)) were shocked:?.). While this does not indicate that the boss agrees with San Ki Ha’s characterization of himself as a victim, it does allow for closure of this evaluative sequence. It also shows that they have arrived at a shared point of view. They agree that he was unlucky, but never address the alluded to victim status.

If we diagram how the evaluation is related back to the original narratives, San Ki Ha’s narrative diagram would be the following:

**Figure 3: Diagram of relationships between narratives**

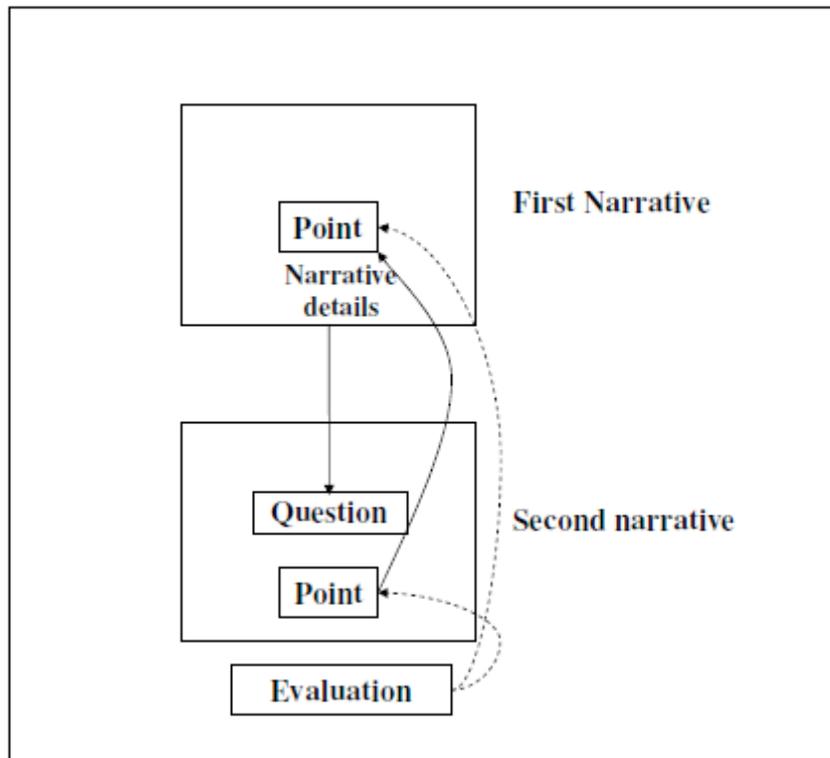
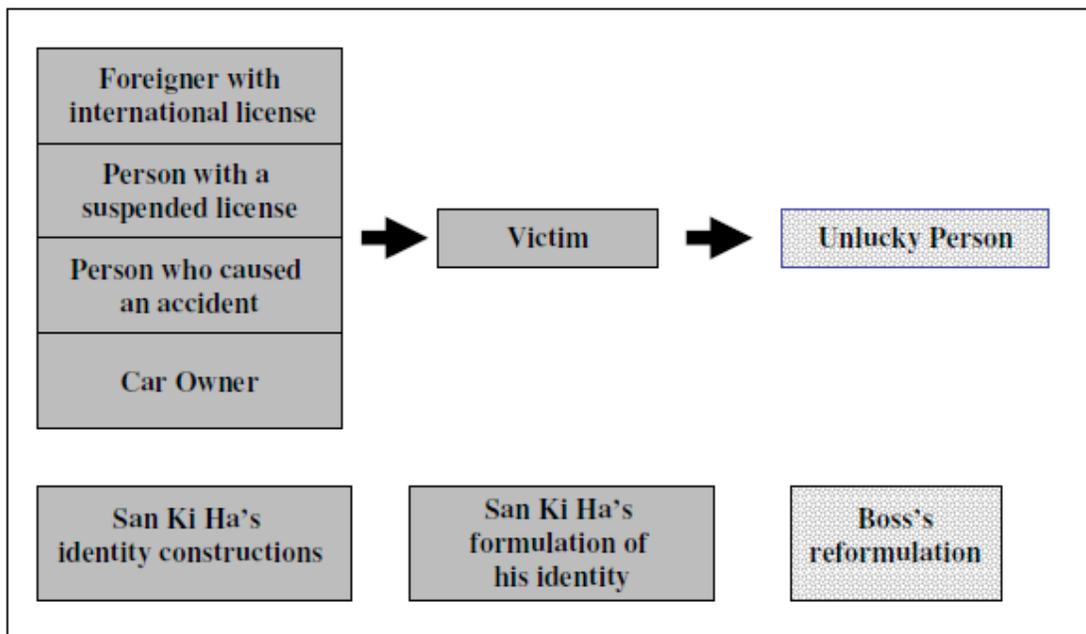


Figure 3 above shows what occurs in the narrative in regards to the way the point is communicated. First, each story had a point and the second story implied the same point from the first. Second, the details from the first narrative are employed by asking a question that lead to the second narrative. Finally, the identity work that occurs, centers on San Ki Ha's car ownership status (owner of a car, foreigner with an international driver's license, person with a suspended license and a person who caused an accident). These formulated and labeled identities in the narratives as constructed and oriented to by San Ki Ha are building blocks for the evaluative identity that the boss provides. The boss's interpretation of the events is that San Ki Ha is an unlucky person. This evaluation of an unlucky person points back to all the events of the two narratives. This is summarized in figure 4.

**Figure 4: Reformulating San Ki Ha's Identity**



The point for these two narratives was that he could not use his insurance because his license was suspended. As the analysis showed, the narratives were told by San Ki Ha to limit his responsibility. The boss's evaluation did not place the blame on San Ki Ha for this incident, rather it minimized his responsibility and focused on naming fate for the reason. In the end, the boss reformulates the identity and provides a different perspective from San Ki Ha's victim description. In fact, the boss moves to shift from the past to the present in his indication of San Ki Ha's unluckiness. It is this shift in the evaluation which is important for arriving at a shared point of view (Maynard 1989, Nishikawa 1999). The participants indicate that they agree to this shift for two points: first, for San Ki Ha's unluckiness for both the event and in general, and second for the shock it must have been for him. This agreement and alignment between these two in this moment does not mean that the boss approves of San Ki Ha's actions in the narrative. The evaluation allows the boss to sidestep addressing the victim status and avoid a possible disconnect between the two parties.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis shows that San Ki Ha, through the telling of the series-of-stories, formulated his stance as the victim in the car accident. Then, in the evaluation, the boss labels San Ki Ha as unlucky and San Ki Ha agrees to this categorization. This thereby shifts San Ki Ha's focus from his victim status to one who is unlucky. The next question is why would the boss reformulate San Ki Ha's categorization of himself and link it to fate/chance?

In the fields of sociology and anthropology, there has been extensive research in studies of Japanese language and culture. These studies tend to point to cultural concepts such as *wa* (harmony), *omoiyari* (empathy), and *enryo* (restraint) as the starting point for analysis of how Japanese people communicate with each other (e.g. Lebra 1976, 1992, Lebra & Lebra 1986, Nakane 1970, Wierzbicka 1991). Conversation analysts that examine Japanese interactions such as (Mori 1999) and Saft (1999, 2000, 2001) have questioned whether cultural values should be the starting point for analysis of conversational interaction. From a CA perspective, analysts should be examining language use, non-verbal behavior, and communicative style, with an attention to the details of the evolving talk from an emic perspective. Furthermore, Saft (2001) in particular suggests that we should not outright reject the cultural concepts, but rather his work advocates “more detailed accounts of how social actions are accomplished in various interactional situations” (p. 259). Thus, CA is calling for a bottom up approach to the data and for discovering how culture is constructed by participants in interaction.

As the analysis demonstrated, the participants work to find a shared point of view which has been deemed important in Japanese narratives (Maynard 1989, Nishikawa 1999). The narrator linked the two narratives through the points, which led to the evaluation of the narratives as a whole from the boss. The participants made correlations between the stories in two ways. First, the narrator uses the points of his narrative to focus the talk towards his status as a victim. Second, in the evaluation, the boss, as the recipient and as someone who can shape the narrative, reformulates San Ki Ha’s identity by labeling him as “an unlucky person.” This is accomplished through the building of identity constructions that lead to a reformulation of San Ki Ha’s identity to the status of an unlucky person. The boss’s reformulation avoids pointing to San Ki Ha’s own culpability in the narrative. He also avoids a display of agreement to the victim status. The boss provides an opinion that it was luck or a lack thereof, to which San Ki Ha repeatedly agrees with the boss in the lines that follow. This along with the affiliative move by the boss in line 705, (*shokku datta na* (you must have been shocked)) indicate an arrival at shared point of view and avoids confrontation which have been deemed important factors in Japanese conversation.

## 8. Classroom Application

In recent years, I have used conversational data in the language classroom as an avenue for exposing learners to what native speakers do in conversation. For my 200-level students, the procedure for this instruction involved several steps. First, the students listen to the data without a transcript and take notes. Second, they discuss in small groups what they heard and understood. Third, a transcript is provided and they listen to the data again. Next, they work with a partner to discuss what they found and they are able to listen to the audio as many times as needed. Fifth, they discuss as a class what they found. Sixth, I provided them guidance on items that they should know. Finally, they listen to the data one last time.

This fall a similar project will be conducted in a full semester class. This class will examine various conversations for conversational strategies such as turn-taking and *aizuchi*. The students will also conduct projects on real data. The goals of this semester are the following:

1. Students gain knowledge about how conversation works
2. Students acquire skills for doing detailed analysis of data
3. Students acquire new vocabulary, grammatical structures and phrases
4. Students become more adept at interpreting and understanding conversations above their level

I hope to be able to conduct research on this project and report on results in the near future.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This research was funded by the Naval Academy Research Council. The IRB code for this project is USNA.2007.0005-IR-EM4-A.

<sup>2</sup> Narrative and story are used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> The participants in this conversation provide contextualization cues (Gumprez 1982) indicating their relationship to each other. The first cue is the use of the *desu/masu* form by San Ki Ha, while his boss used the plain form. This is an indication of San Ki Ha’s respect towards his boss. Another cue that does not occur in this segment of talk but in many others in the corpus, is the title of *buchoo* (boss). When addressing and referring to his boss, he always uses *buchoo*. This also is an index of their relationship.

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## Appendix A: Transcription Conventions

.	Falling intonation, declarative intonation
,	Falling-rising, continuing intonation
?	Rising intonation, question intonation
-	False start
:	Elongated vowel
=	Latched turn with no gap or overlap, or continuation by same Speaker from non-adjacent line
[	Overlap
(0.5)	Length of pause
(difficulty)	Unsure hearings
( )	Unclear speech
(( ))	Comments: laugh, breath out.
°e::tto°	Quieter than rest of speech
<u>li</u>	Greater than normal stress
ha	Laughter token
(h)	Laughter token within a word
h	Audible outbreath, more letters indicate longer outbreath
.h	Audible inbreath, more letters indicate longer inbreath

## Appendix B: Abbreviations appearing in the interlinear gloss

Cop	Various forms of copula verb be
Cop-tent	Various forms of copula verb be in its tentative form
IP	Interactional 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
CONJ	Conjunction
DAT	Dative