HUMOR IN JAPANESE CONVERSATION

by

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DEDICATION

for my parents,

Charles and Barbara McCarter,
who taught me to value both
education and a sense of humor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of humor in Japanese conversation. Analysis of spontaneous humor in Japanese conversations is conducted using discourse analysis and applying previous research done primarily on Western cultures. Based on an overview of the areas of humor research to date, and in an attempt to reflect the multiple levels on which humor is used, the paper is divided into three sections: conversational management, interpersonal management, and social control. Applying these concepts to Japanese conversational humor shows that, like Western humor, teasing, jokes, and personal anecdotes are used, and to similar ends. However, Japanese humor also serves to express the concepts of *uchi* and *soto*, which are important in Japanese social interactions. This study is a first step in the discourse analysis study of humor in spontaneous Japanese conversation.

INTRODUCTION

> "There seems to be no lengths to which humorless peole will not go to analyze humor. It seems to worry them. They can't believe that anything could be funny just on its own hook."
>
> --Robert Benchley

Humor is an important part of people's interaction with others, but its role in conversation is not well understood. Recently, studies have been done in an attempt to determine the scope and role of humor in conversational interaction, but this work is only in its beginning stages. One reason for this is the that the overwhelming majority of humor studies are based in English-speaking cultures. Another problem is that the approach to humor is multidisciplinary, with research on humor being generated in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and linguistics. As a result, much information has been gathered, but this information lies in different, seemingly unrelated, areas.

Not surprisingly, the use of humor is not limited to a set of easily-defined boundaries. From the previous research, it is clear that humor's role is multifunctional

and operates in several different areas: conversational management, interpersonal management, and social control.[1]

This paper attempts to analyze the use of humor in naturally-occurring Japanese conversation. To this end, the previous relevant cross-disciplinary research will be presented and synthesized. Instances of humor in the Japanese data will then be analyzed with respect to both these previous findings and to attempt to determine what, if anything, is specifically Japanese about humor use.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Research in the area of humor has been somewhat sporadic, and a focused method of research has not been established. Perhaps part of this is due to the fact that humor is a very interdisciplinary topic; studies occur in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and linguistics. Presented here is a summary of humor research that attempts to capture the major ideas or events previously studied, and

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[1] These concepts have been suggested by various people who have worked on humor over the years. However, these divisions are based in large part on Neil Norrick's work and his division of humor into these three categories.

especially those relevant to my own present study of humor in Japanese conversation.

The majority of humor research has been carried out in English and focusing on English data, despite some early examinations of humor in tribal societies. Only in the last twenty-five years has the attention of scholars interested in humor started to shift away from English-speaking cultures.

Aggression Theory

The theory of humor as masking aggression is one of the oldest theories of humor use. Freud (1905) viewed humor as a way of expressing masked aggression. If such aggression was countenanced as a joke, it was not likely to be taken as seriously. Two conflicting ideas are immediately apparent in Freud's interpretation: aggression versus social acceptance. That is, aggression can be displayed in other ways, but with humor it is more subtle and even "socially acceptable."

Building on both Freud's work and Adler's theory of inferiority[2], Ziv (1984) sees aggression as one function of humor. Humor is used to place people on a more equal footing. Bringing someone who is of higher status down to one's level is an aggressive move which temporarily equalizes people and satisfies one's desire to increase one's status. "Humor that points its arrows at a person of high position is actually an expression of aggression towards him. However, humor has a way of disguising aggressions, so that we are not always aware of its hostile element and think that we are only enjoying the sharp-wittedness" (page 8).

Norrick (1993) deals with humor as it functions in conversation, and adds another dimension to the use of humor as a form of aggression. Norrick believes that some forms of humor are more aggressive than others and ranks them in order from least to most aggressive. Humorous personal

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[2]This theory deals with "man's never-ending effort to hide his feelings of inferiority. The main motive of human behavior is the constant effort to cover up the feelings of inferiority implanted in us from an early age. We compensate for these feelings by trying to achieve and prove superiority." (Ziv, 7)

anecdotes are the least aggressive, since they share information about the speaker and usually make fun of the speaker himself. Puns aggressively test for understanding and shared knowledge and issue a challenge to respond. Most aggressive are mockery and sarcasm because they directly attack someone for a character trait or an action. The resulting response to the humor--either positive or negative--can influence the flow of the conversation. This idea of different amounts of aggression in different forms of humor is new and is unique because it places various types of humor on a continuum of aggression, making the role of aggression more variable than it had previously been.

Interpersonal Management and Social Control

The social control function of humor is very large, and covers a broad array of uses and situations. I have attempted to divide these into two categories: "interpersonal management" and "social control." Interpersonal management focuses on the relationships between the speakers in a conversation, and specifically how

humor affects this relationship. I use the term social control to refer to larger issues, such as those involving societal beliefs and norms.

Interpersonal Management

Goffman (1955) argues that humor is used to "lighten up" a situation and defuse the tension arising from a potentially face-threatening moment. In a sense, it functions as a rapport builder; giving the participants something to laugh about provides them with a temporary bond which negates the face-threatening act. Brown and Levinson (1987) also see humor as fostering rapport, since a special bond of intimacy is assumed in order for the humor to be successful (124). Wilson (1979) comments that:

> "[t]he expression of innocent humour within social groups reduces prevailing anxieties and hostilities and fosters rapport and personal attraction. The humor is the oil in the social machine, lubricating group dynamics, easing the recurrent frictions that threaten group solidarity" (228).

Fine (1983) also notes the unifying function of humor. By establishing a set of joking references that are

understood by only those in the group, the group members use humor as a means of unification. However, for such an attempt to be successful, "its content must be comprehensible to the group...must be usable in the group context--not taboo or otherwise offensive...[and] must be functional" (170).

In addition to discussing humor as aggressive, Ziv (1984) sees humor as enhancing interpersonal relations by testing for shared knowledge. If such shared knowledge is present, the social distance is narrowed, resulting in increased intimacy (Norrick, pages 86, 146).

Social Control

Another social function of humor is that of enforcing societal beliefs. For example, Wilson (1979) notes that humor in the form of ridicule "...provides a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of personal antagonism, releasing inevitable hostilities in an acceptably restrained manner" (229). One such example is ethnic humor. For example, telling jokes about a different ethnic group allows

all the members of the group to laugh because their laughter and ridicule is directed at someone outside their societal group.

Wilson (1979) also discusses how ridicule enforces social norms.

> "Laughter and smiling at ridicule provides an overt expression of shared sentiment that serves to express consensual criticism within a group. The threat of becoming the target of ridicule and suffering the consequent feelings of isolation and rejection tends to enforce convention and conformity" (230).

Ziv also addresses the idea of humor being used to challenge social norms. This type of humor is scripted by nature--in the form of canned jokes or satirical works. Ziv notes that, "...in totalitarian countries satire directed against the ruling government is banned, and any manifestation of satire earns harsh punishment. Attacks on a regime must therefore be underground work" (42). This statement is evidence that humor is indeed a powerful tool in shaping social norms.

Of course, there is some overlap between interpersonal management and social control, since both are concerned with

the effects of humor on a group. However, social control issues usually have a broader scope, such as enforcing societal beliefs rather than personal ones.

Teasing

One of the few areas of humor that has been examined in some detail is teasing. Teasing appears to be a phenomenon that occurs almost universally across cultures. A study of Mexicano families revealed that teasing was a form of social control, used to express criticism in a non-threatening way. Teasing was also shown to foster and show closeness; a special relationship is required for teasing to be accepted (Eisenberg, 1986).

Eder (1993) studied teasing in adolescent girls and found that teasing was used to strengthen rapport through the enjoyment of the act of teasing. Teasing was also used as a way to mock traditional gender roles and display jealousy.

Straehle (1993) presented teasing as a way to create alliances among the three participants based on the intimacy

of the relationships of the speakers involved. In her study, two of the speakers only knew each other because of their relationship to the third speaker. These first two speakers often joined to tease the third because they knew her better. With intimacy comes the ability to tease, and the first two speakers did not feel intimate enough with each other to tease each other, so they often joined together to tease the third speaker, since they both knew her very well. The two speakers avoided teasing each other, since it could be perceived as threatening. In addition, by aligning themselves against the third speaker, the first two speakers fostered a rapport among each other while at the same time avoiding a potentially threatening situation.

All of the studies on teasing note a specific social or interpersonal function that is served by the teasing, whether it is used as social control or to manage interpersonal relations. None of the studies done on teasing include Japanese data.

Studies of Humor in Japanese

Despite the amount of time and energy devoted to humor, very little has been done outside of English-speaking cultures. Exceptions include Radcliffe-Brown's (1940) study of "joking relationships" in preliterate African tribal societies, Philips' (1975) study on teasing among northwestern Native Americans, and Basso's (1979) account of joking in Cibeque Apache. In fact, to date I have found no studies devoted specifically to the study of conversational humor in Japanese conversation in either Japanese or English.

A 1979 issue of *Gengo Seikatsu* dealt with *warai* ("laughter/humor"). In one article, Haga discussed the phenomenon of interpersonal versus intrapersonal laughter. Interpersonal laughter occurs when we are with other people but intrapersonal laughter occurs when a person is alone. At the end of the article, he mentions that verbal communication "covers" laughter (27); that is, laughter is not really a type of verbal communication, but it still conveys information. One of the problems with this article

is that it offers little in the way of data, methodology, or sources.

A recent volume of the Japanese journal *Gengo* (Vol. 23, No. 12, 1994) was entirely about *warai* ("laughter/humor"). However, the issue consisted mostly of essays by humorists, not by researchers. No articles contained an analysis of discourse data (or any other type of data).

While the topic of humor has seemingly not been widely researched in Japanese linguistics, humor is adressed in several English works dealing with Japanese linguistics. Yamada (1989) discusses the importance of laughter in business talk, and what the different types of laughter signify. Maynard (1989) also touches on laughter used as a backchannel. Jones (1990) discusses laughter as it relates to conflict in Japanese. However, these discussions of laughter are discussed only in relation to their respective topics, business talk, backchanneling, and conflict.

DATA/METHODOLOGY

The data for this study comes from excerpts of ten conversations of native Japanese speakers. Age, speaker relationships, and other background information are summarized in Appendix A.

These conversations will be analyzed for types and strategies of humor used. All participants in these conversations are native Japanese, and most of the conversations occur in Japan. The majority of the conversations are in the Tokyo dialect ("Tokyo standard"), but the Kansai dialect is also represented. In all cases the participants knew that they were being taped at the time of the taping.

Humor will be identified and analyzed by both the occurrence of laughter and the conversational context. In many instances, laughter is sufficient to determine the presence of humor, but such is not always the case. For example, a humorous remark which did not receive the proper response (e.g., laughter or other, more verbal

acknowledgment), would be overlooked if the presence of laughter were the only criteria used. Conversely, the presence of laughter does not always determine the presence of humor in the conversation, as will be noted in the discussion of laughter below.

After identification, the strategies for the uses of humor will be determined by an analysis of the context and the effect (or perhaps lack of effect) of the humor on the conversation. However, before this can be done, the subject of laughter must examined in more detail if it is to be used accurately in locating humor in the conversations.

Laughter

Automatically assuming that laughter equals humor in any given context is problematic. Jefferson, for example, says that laughter may be used to reduce tension in talk about problems (1984). Yamada (1989) distinguishes between three types of laughter: nervous, supporter, and funny. She argues that "nervous" laughter is not intended to convey a recognition and appreciation of humor, but is used to show

a participant's discomfort. "Supporter laughter" is used in response to a joke by the current speaker to show that the conversation is going well. Finally, "funny laughter," although not explicitly defined, can be interpreted as laughter whose primary goal is to express appreciation for the humor that previously occurred in the conversation. However, Yamada uses the terms "funny laughter" and "supporter laughter" almost interchangeably, which suggests that the difference between the two is minimal.[3]

In her work on conflict in Japanese, Jones (1991) also discusses laughter. Her view is different from that of Yamada's; she maintains that laughter cannot be easily categorized and suggests it is easier to visualize as a continuum. Jones also maintains that laughter is sometimes used to establish a frame of play, thus making the conflict less serious.

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[3] In fact, the primary difference between "supporter laughter" and "funny laughter" seems to be the fact that "funny laughter" is only used to express a response to humor. "Supporter laughter" also sends the message that the conversation is proceeding apace. However, I find it difficult to believe that the two functions can be viewed as separate and completely divorced from one another.

Maynard's (1989) discusses laughter in Japanese conversation as a backchannel. Like other backchannels, it is used to show show agreement with the speaker. This idea is important, since it establishes laughter as a way to convey support and solidarity.

"But Why is it Funny?"

In a paper on humor, one would expect to find a definition of the topic. However, while people know what humor is, it is not easily defined. Ziv elaborates:

> The many efforts to define humor have not been very successful. In...*L'Humour (Humor)*, Robert Escarpit (1963) tied to do so, but the title of the first chapter is 'On the Impossibility of Defining Humor,' and from there he struggles with the problem...People intuitively 'know' what humor is...Nevertheless, the difficulties of definition do exist, mainly because we refer to humor in its different forms as if it were a unitary concept." (x-xi).

This proved very true the more I researched humor. People refer to "humor" but often offer little in the way of definition.

For the purposes of this paper, I propose the following definition of humor: an utterance or utterances (including paralinguistic cues) that attempts to elicit amusement, usually in the form of laughter, from the hearer(s). This definition addresses the problem of "why is it funny?" because the only ones who need to find the humor funny are the participants in the conversation. This provides a working definition from which to begin.

However, the listener's reactions must also be factored into a definition of humor, since humor is interactionally negotiated. That is, if someone says something intending it to be funny, and the hearer interprets it differently (perhaps taking it seriously), then a difference of interpretation clearly exists. Defining humor as something that both parties will find humorous all of the time is a difficult task at best, due to the subjective nature of humor.

Listener reactions can range from laughter (which implies agreement that the intended humor was perceived as funny); comments or paralinguistic cues (such as a

disapproving look) that indicate the hearer understands that the utterance was supposed to be funny but did not think it was; or other comments or reactions that clearly indicate that the utterance was interpreted differently than had been intended.

There is also the possible situation where the hearer laughs at something the speaker said which was not intended to be funny. When both parties arrive at a mutual understanding of why such laughter occurred, the utterance can be seen as humorous.

Falling under the broader scope of humor are specific types of humor, such as the joke, the humorous personal anecdote and the tease. All of these are utterances that attempt to elicit laughter, but what makes them different from each other? For the purposes of this paper, the following definitions will be in effect: a joke is an utterance designed to elicit laughter from the hearer(s); it may be rehearsed or spontaneous. A humorous personal anecdote is a story a speaker tells about him or herself with the goal of eliciting laughter. Finally, a tease is a

remark about another person that is designed to elicit laughter; while teasing can also be seen as a way of expressing aggression towards the person being teased, its use is usually to elicit laughter and not anger.

Part of what makes humor effective is its deliberate ambiguity. However, this same quality poses a serious problem when attempting to define humor. Since humor is very subjective (what one person laughs at, another may not), I have done my best to describe each conversation and explain why the comments are "funny." But even so, it is possible that the examples may not seem particularly funny. However, the definition of humor employed in this paper will provide a framework from which to begin.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

Since, according to the previous research, humor has a variety of applications, I will discuss Japanese humor as it relates to three factors: conversational management,

interpersonal management, and social control. For the purposes of this paper, conversation management is limited to how the humor affects the conversation itself, including topic changes, floor changes, and turn taking. Interpersonal management relates the effect of the humor used to the relationships of the participants. Finally, social control, the broadest of the three areas I am investigating, explores the role of humor in establishing social "norms."

CONVERSATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Management of a conversation is determined by the speakers, their utterances, their relationships, and other factors. However, in the large corpus of studies devoted to conversational management, humor has often been overlooked. In this section, I attempt to show humor used to effect change in the course of a conversation. But before going further into detail, some definitions are in order.

Defining "Turn" and "Floor"

"Turn" and "floor" are often referenced when discussing conversations and how they work. Indeed, it seems difficult to discuss conversation without using these terms. Yet, while their use is very frequent in the literature, their definitions vary from study to study.

Edelsky (1993 [1981]) provides an exceptional summary of the research regarding "turn" and "floor" in linguistics. Most notable is the idea that these two terms do not have standard definitions, and that the definitions used vary from author to author. Even more confusing is that most of the literature "...uses 'turn' and 'floor' interchangeably" (205). As a result, Edelsky attempts to synthesize definitions of both "turn" and "floor" which work for interactional linguistics.

Hayashi (1990) constructs a definition of "floor" based on both Japanese and English conversations. She defines floor with respect to its cognitive aspects. The floor "...is a cognitive entity which the interactants jointly create in the course of a conversation" (157). She also

maintains that the floor influences conversation on all levels, including "levels of interaction, social and affective production, and intentionality" (157). This version of "floor" is complex and difficult to concretely define.

For the purposes of this study, I have adopted Edelsky's definitions. Edelsky defines a turn as "an on-record 'speaking' (which may include nonverbal activities) behind which lies an intention to convey a message that is referential and functional" (207). "On-record" means that the utterance is addressed to the entire group as part of the conversation and is not a "side comment" addressed to only a portion of the other participants. This definition of turn also means that not every utterance comprises a turn. Backchannels, for example, do not comprise a turn, since they do not convey a referential message; that is, no meaning is added to the conversation.

Again adopting Edelsky's definition, the floor is "the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space" (209). With this definition, it is possible for

speakers to take turns without taking the floor. Wisecracks, for example, can be addressed to the entire group and are more than backchannels, but they do not constitute the floor. Edelsky calls such turns "non-floor holding turns" (209).

The Role of Humor

The role of humor in conversational management has been largely overlooked or dismissed. For example, Norrick states that humor often leads to a conversation going off on a tangent and straying from its current topics, or even causes a conversation to degenerate into a "joke-telling session" (pages 20-21). While this situation can and does occur, other instances arise in which humor helps to facilitate rather than detract from the conversation. Although Norrick acknowledges this, he concentrates mostly on stock phrases used to deal with openings, closings, and topic shifts.[4]

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[4]Examples of stock witticisms include the closings "See you later alligator" the response, "After a while, crocodile" and such

My approach examines the use of spontaneous humor and how it shapes the conversation, and does not include a discussion of stock phrases. The humorous personal anecdote occurs frequently in my data, and very often it seems to exhibit some form of management over the conversation. For example, in Conversation 2, speaker M begins telling a humorous personal anecdote after the three participants finish a discussion on the topic of age. The narrative is on a related topic, since the main focus of the story is how M and a friend of hers tried to look younger by dressing up and the subsequent encounter they had with some Osaka high school boys. Thus, M uses a humorous personal anecdote to begin a new (but related) portion of the conversation and to successfully take the floor. Before beginning her narrative, M's participation in the conversation was about equal to the other participants, but after beginning her story, she takes more turns at talk and holds the floor,as the following example shows.

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transition markers as "Meanwhile, back at the ranch." For a further discussion of these phenomena, see Norrick, pages 26-28.

Example 1[5]

M: ...Ano=,
: Hanashita kamo shirenai kedo,
: ...Godaikun ni wa hanashite nai daroo ne.
H: ((clears throat))
M: ...Ano=,
: ...de,
: ...Gooruden wiiku.
G: un.
M: ...Atashi hora,
: ((H clears throat))
M: ...konsaato gayoi shite ta ja nai.
G: u=n.
M: ...Sorede,
: ...mata rei ni yotte sono sempai to,
X: ..[un].
M: [sono] nempai yobawari sareta sono sem[pai] [to],
G: [un].
H: [un].
M: ..futari de mata,
: ...suupaa sapooto no= h...ano=...[pansuto] o haki [no],
H: [haite].
G: [un].
H: un.
M: ...minisukaato o haki [no].
H: [un].
G: un.
M: ...Sorede,
: ...ano= omoikiri wakazukuri o shite=,
G: un.
M: ...de futari de mata shibuya no machi o ne,
H: un.
M: ..Ano enuechikee hooru de konsaato ga at[ta kara],
G: [un].
M: ...noshiaruite ta wake.
X: un.
M: ...Sorede=,

---

[5]Transcription conventions are based on DuBois (1991) with slight modifications. Conventions used are listed in Appendix B.

```
 :  ...soshitara=,
 :  nanka sonomae ni,
 :  daibu jikan ga atte=,
H:  un.
M:  ...A,
 :  ikinari konsaato ni iku n ja nakute=,
 :  doose maa oyasumi dashi=,
H:  ((clears throat))
G:  [un].
M:  [tookyoo] wa suite ru daroo [kara],
G:                              [un].
M:  ...dokka de,
 :  ..ocha o shite,
 :  ..sorekara,
 :  ...yukkuri ikimasho.
 :  toka tte itte,
 :  ((H clears throat))
 :  hayame ni machiawase o shita no.
G:  un.
```

Translation[6]

```
M:  I may have told you, but
 :  I probably have not told you, Godai(kun).
H:  ((clears throat))
M:  Um..
 :  and
 :  (It was) Golden Week,
G:  mhm
M:  I
H:  ((clears throat))
M:  was going to a concert.
G:  mhm.
```

---

[6]Translations of transcripts involve a wide variety of issues and problems. In these translations, I attempt to provide a translation only of the words and, where possible, indicate laughter. However, due to the different word orders of the Japanese and English languages (SOV and SVO, respectively), displaying overlaps is very confusing. For this reason, I have not included overlapping speech markers in the translations. I hope that the reader will be able to use the original Japanese to see how the conversation works and refer to the English only for content.

M: And
: as usual with that senior person
X: mhm
M: with that senior person who was told she was old
G: mhm
H: mhm
M: The two of us
: wearing Super Support pantyhose again
H: wearing
G: mhm
H: mhm
M: wearing a miniskirt
H: mhm
G: mhm
M: And
: trying our best to dress young
G: mhm
M: we two were on the streets of Shibuya
H: mhm
M: Since there was a concert at NHK hall,
G: mhm
M: we were wandering around
X: mhm
M: And
: then
: before that,
: we had a lot of time
H: mhm
M: Ah,
: instead of going to the concert directly,
: since it was a holiday,
H: ((clears throat))
G: mhm
M: Tokyo will probably be empty
G: mhm
M: "Somewhere,
: let's have tea and
: then,
: wander over there."
: I said, and

H: ((Clears throat))
M: we decided to meet a little early.

From the point where she begins her anecdote, M takes more turns at talk. In the example above, M is the only one who has any turns at talk. Both H and G provide only backchannel responses, which, according to Edelsky's definition, does not constitute a turn. And, since she is the only person who is taking turns at talk, M has become primarily responsible for moving the conversation forward.

M has gained the floor by employing a humorous anecdote, and maintains the floor by continuing this anecdote. She holds the floor for a large portion of this conversation, until she concludes her narrative. Humor is used to effect both a topic shift and a floor shift, and the humor is also used to continue to move the conversation forward.

When M concludes her humorous anecdote and some discussion of it has taken place, another speaker, H, begins a humorous anecdote of his own. Thus, twice in the same

conversation the same strategy is employed both to obtain the floor and to continue the conversation.

This same strategy of employing a humorous anecdote to gain the floor is used again in Conversation 6. Speaker M is talking about a party she attended where foreigners had to get up in front of a group and speak in Japanese. The humorous part of this anecdote occurs primarily at the beginning; what follows is a discussion of the event with the other speaker. While the humorous story itself did not dominate the conversation, it proved to be a pivot point used to direct the conversation toward the topic introduced by the humorous anecdote (the speech).

Norrick (1993) comments that anecdotes are less disruptive than other kinds of conversational joking because they "...produce almost immediate audience participation" (page 49). This holds true for my data. While speakers are telling their anecdotes, other participants are free to join in, and frequently do. From Conversation 2:

Example 2
M: <Q Sonna koto yutte jibunra mo kodomo chau non @>?
@toka itte.
H: [@@@@]

G: [@@@@]
M: @Kansaiben [de sa].
G: [@Kansaiben de yutta] no.
H: @Yutta no.
M: Yutta no [yo].

Translation
M: "You say that, but aren't you guys kids, too?" @I said.
H: @@@@
G: @@@@
M: @In Kansai dialect.
G: @{you/she} said it in Kansai dialect.
H: @{You} said.
M: I said.

Here, G comments on M's use of the Kansai dialect when speaking to the Osaka boys, and H adds, "She/You said..." commenting on her choice of words. Somewhat later in the same conversation, the following exchange occurs:

Example 3
M: <Q sunmasen=.
: hoshitara=,
: ano=,
: kinen ni=,
: shashin ichimai tottemo ee desu ka Q>.
: [toka tte itte ne=],
H: [@@@ Doko] kara kita no [2 tte kanji da ne @@ 2].
G: [@@@]
M: [2 @So=rede ne 2],
: ...@So=rede ne,
: ...Utsurundesu motte n [no] yo.
H: [un].
G: unun.

M: ...[ko- ko- kocchi ni] gaidobukku motte te,
H: [<X utsurundesu X>]
M: kocchi ni [2utsu2]rundesu mot[te n] no.
H: [2 un 2].
: [un].
G: un.

Translation
M: "Excuse me,
: then,
: um...
: to commemorate this
: can we take a picture of you?"
: they said and...
H: @@@It gives you the feeling of "Where did you come from?" @@
G: @@@
M: And so..
: And so they had a disposable camera
H: mhmm.
G: yeah.
M: In..in..in this hand, they had a guidebook and
H: disposable camera
M: In this hand, a disposable camera.
H: Mhm.
: Mhm.
G: Mhm.

In this example, H interjects a question into the narrative, which expresses his surprise at what the boys asked M. Also, H says "*utsurundesu*" at the same time M does, which indicates a feeling of freedom to participate in the conversation. For this reason, the use of personal

anecdotes in directing the flow of conversation does not appear to be especially disruptive.

However, while other speakers are free to participate in the conversation, it is interesting to note that they never take the floor away from M or attempt to change the subject. The turns that they take are non-floor holding turns, which means that they do not add any information to the conversation. These turns, along with the pervasive laughter and backchannels, create a supportive environment that encourages and allows M to continue her narrative. This encouragement also helps facilitate the flow of conversation.

Bateson's concept of framing has been shown to apply to humorous situations. The frame denotes the context in which an action is to be taken. In other words, if the frame is one of "play," then what transpires within the frame is not to be taken seriously. Norrick (1993) and Straehle (1993) both see the frame as important in the understanding of humor; Straehle emphasizes its importance in teasing. A personal anecdote also establishes a humorous frame, since,

like other joking situations, it involves a speaker establishing a frame that is different from the rest of the conversation and conveys the message "this is play."

Once such a frame has been established, everything done within that frame, including aggression that might otherwise be taken seriously, can elicit laughter (Straehle, 1993). This can also lead to the other participants in the conversation contributing humorous comments or teasing to the anecdote, as illustrated above. The humorous anecdote encourages the participation of other speakers, rather than discouraging it.

However, personal anecdotes are not the only type of humor used in conversational management. Elsewhere in Conversation 2, we find an instance of teasing being used to manipulate the floor. H has begun telling his personal anecdote:

Example 4
H: ...sorede,
: ... <Q kokkara roppongi tooi desu ka Q> toka <@ kikarete sa @>,
: [@@
: a sore- soo da kke.

```
 :  @@]
M:  [sore atashi to issho no <@ toki ja nai no @>]
H:  <@ soo dakke @>.
M:  <@ oboe warui @>.
 :  ano ko doko no ko [daroo ne].
H:                      [an- ano toki wa] ano toki wa,
 :  nishiazabu kara kita no ka na [ano ko].
M:                                  [soo soo],
 :  are sa,
 :  gaiennishidoori.
 :  ...[ano hora],
H:     [soo soo soo].
M:  chichuukai doori yo.
 :  asoko o aruite iru toki [ni=],
H:                            [soo soo soo].
M:  ...mae kara sa,
 :  otoko no ko ga hitori de aruite kite [sa],
H:                                        [un].

Translation
H:  And then,
 :  "Is Roppongi far from here?" I <@was asked.@>
 :  @@
 :  ah.  That...I think that's right.
 :  @@
M:  Wasn't that the time <@I was with you?@>
H:  <@Is that so?@>
M:  <@You have a bad memory.@>
 :  Where was that kid from?
H:  Th..that time, at that time,
 :  hadn't he come from Nishiazabu? That kid.
M:  Yes. Yes.
 :  That,
 :  On Gaiennnishidoori.
 :  That time.
H:  Yes yes yes.
M:  Chichikukaidoori,
 :  When we were walking through {there}
H:  yes yes yes
M:  In front of us,
```

: a single boy came walking.
H: mhm.

H begins telling his story of how he was once approached by a kid who was asking how far Roppongi was. M interjects with "Wasn't that the time I was with you?" and begins laughing. H ponders this and laughs, saying, "Is that so?" M then teases him, saying that he has a bad memory. Caught slightly off guard, H tries to continue his story, but M interjects again, and this time begins telling it for him, since she was there when it happened.

Here, M interjects a bit of humor, specifically a tease, and then proceeds to take the floor, even though H is still making an effort to speak. Once M has gained a foothold on the floor, she uses it to extend her turn at talk to the point where she takes the floor away from H and continues telling his story. In this example, we have humor being used to gain a foothold into the conversation, from which the speaker expands her presence on the floor. Humor is again used to accomplish a shift in the control of the

conversation, although this time it is not a shift in topic but rather a shift in speaker and floor that takes place.

Humor, however, can also be used to resist a topic shift. In Conversation 9, K, a woman in her late twenties is talking with C, an 18-year-old male. The topic of conversation is the man's current girlfriend and their relationship; the flow of the conversation has been particularly stilted, since the man, C, does not seem to want to pursue this topic, as indicated by his minimal responses to most of K's questions. In addition, K has been pressuring him to admit that C's relationship with this woman is no longer what it once was. The male speaker, C, is growing increasingly uncomfortable with the topic, and issues a threat: he will unplug the tape recorder if they continue discussing his girlfriend.

Example 5
K: fu=n,
: sooyuu fuu ni miseteru no ka mo shinnai yo.
C: nukuzo kore. ((TAPERECORDER))
K: dame dame <@ dame dame dame @>.
C: XXX.
: sooyuu fuu ni mishiteru= ?

Translation:
K: Hmm.
: She may be making herself look like that [innocent].
C: I'll unplug it! This {tape recorder}!
K: No no <@no no no@>
C: XXX
: She appeared that way...

The humor in this excerpt comes from C's statement *Nukuzo kore* ("I'll pull this out!") C is referring to the plug on the tape recorder, and he says this with a very exaggerated, almost dramatic tone. Also, the postposing of the noun phrase after the verb serves to place additional emphasis on his statement (Hinds, 1976). Thus, it seems that C is attempting to exaggerate the situation, to make himself seem so overly serious that it is amusing. However, the message underlying C's stance is clearly one of discomfort.

K's response is to use humor in an attempt to placate C and convince him that the situation is perhaps not as threatening as he feels, a strategy identified by Goffman (1955). The repeated phrase *dame dame dame dame dame* ("No! No! No! No! No!") is used to match his mock urgency and perhaps illustrate that she understands his position. In

the end, he acquiesces, since the conversation continues, as does the recording. So, just as humor can be used to shift the topic, it can also be used to resist a topic shift.

Teasing can also be used to direct topics and the flow of conversation (Norrick, 1993). Conversation 1 takes place among three friends, M, K, and T (two female and one male, respectively), and begins with K's admission that she finds it very hard to call people on the telephone. The focus of the conversation then shifts to her relationship with her boyfriend, and how often they are able to see each other. While discussing K's relationship with her boyfriend, M (the other female speaker) makes a comment likening their relationship to that of a famous star-crossed couple in Japanese (and Chinese) folklore.

Example 6

```
K:   So=,
M:   <@ tanabata no yoo da @>.
K:   tanabata [[no yoo] na kankei ka mo shire]]nai.
T:            [[Tanabata da na=,
     hontoni]].
K:   ...(.7)
     Dak[[[ara,
M:       [[[He=,]]],
K:   soo iu no to]]] nee=,
```

M: .. Ma%,
ta[bun],
K: [kekkonshi]tara urus[[aku nat chau n ja]]nai ka naa,
M: [[jibu=n]],
K: te ki ga suru no yo ne=.

Translation
K: Yes,
M: <@Like *Tanabata*@>.
K: It might be a relationship like *Tanabata*.
T: It's *Tanabata*. Definitely.
K: (.7)
: Therefore,
M: Wow.
K: With someone like that,
M: Well,
: probably,
K: I think that if we get married, he'll get obnoxious.
M: himself,
K: I have a feeling.

The tease in this example is used in the same way as in Example 4. To break into the conversation, M uses the joke, "*Tanabata no yoo da*" ("You're just like *Tanabata*"[7]) in an attempt to gain the floor. She uses hyperbole to make K's situation more humorous by taking it to an extreme. She gains support from T, the male speaker, who agrees with her assessment. K, the one who originally had the floor, is somewhat surprised by this remark, and it takes her some

[7]*Tanabata* is the story of two lovers who became stars, and as stars, they are only able to see each other once a year, when they meet in the night sky. A festival is based on this legend.

time to recover. This time is also enough for M to take over the conversation and begin talking about K's future with her boyfriend, extending the *Tanabata* reference into the next topic of conversation. M uses a joke as a springboard to project the conversation forward and to take direction of the floor.

A similar tactic is used in Conversation 5 to close out an old topic before beginning a new one. Norrick addresses the idea of jokes being used to close out old topics, but the jokes he provides are merely stock phrases used to signal transition from one topic to the next. Norrick's discussion of spontaneous joking occurring in "crucial points of conversation" is limited to openings and welcoming new participants (page 27). However, in Example 7 below, a spontaneous joke is used to close out a topic and provide a break before moving on to the next.

Example 7
T: aa ore kono kaban dokka @de mita koto aru
((THE_BAG_FOR_THE_RECORDING_EQUIPMENT))
: to omotte tara ,
: kore kamera baggu ya .
H: nani ga
T: kono kaban .
H: kamera bakku tte= ?

T: kamera ga ireru keesu.
H: ho=nto ?
T: un= .
: demo kore sagete sa ,
: ushiro <@ seote XX @> ,
: (HH) maiku pekotto tsukete sa= ,
: de kotchi wa= ,
: hidarite ka nanka ni wa sa= ,
: shuuon maiku o sa ,
: [kookando 1] no shuuon maiku o sa= ,
H: [fuun 1] ,
: fun ,
T: pitte tsukete 'sa= ,
H: un= ,
T: ma ,
: ikko de ee wa ,
: XX shuuon maiku <X o X> .
H: [un 1] .
T: hode [ko yatte 1] ,
: tada tanni rokuon shinagara arukiottara ,
: omoroi yaro no .
H: @@
T: mukashi Ichikoo no ,
: sotsugyoo kinen no ,
: ano= ,

Translation
T: Ah, I've seen this bag somewhere before,
: when I thought that,
: It's a camera bag.
H: What is?
T: This bag.
H: What do you mean, "camera bag"?
T: A case to put the camera in.
H: Really?
T: Yeah.
: But carrying this on my back and
: <@wearing it@> on my back and XX.
: Putting the mike
: on this side,

: And in my left hand
: a mike,
: a highly sensitive mike
H: hmmm.
: hm.
T: wearing it and
H: yeah.
T: well,
: just one is good.
: a mike (direct object)
H: hmm.
T: And like this,
: just walking around while recording.
: It would be interesting.
H: @@
T: Long ago, Ichikoo
: (high school)graduation commemoration,
: um...

In this excerpt, T is explaining to H, his wife, that the bag in question is indeed a camera bag. He explains how it is used--by being slung over the shoulder. Then, as if to illustrate, he makes a joke about how interesting it would be walking around town with a camera and a mike in this bag taping things. His wife responds with a bit of laughter--probably only enough to show appreciation for his efforts. This recalls Maynard's concept of "supporter laughter," which is used to show that the humor is recognized and also convey the message that the conversation is going well. But

what is interesting here is that the next utterance is on a completely different topic, T's high school days.

The joke has been used to both to explain the topic at hand, the camera bag, and to close out the topic. It appears as if, by illustrating the camera bag's function with humor, he has exhausted all of the conversational value from the current topic, or perhaps he has answered his wife's question and there is no more she desires to know about this topic.

This transitional use of joking, however, differs from the others types of humor observed because, unlike the other examples, the speaker did not need to use a joke to gain the floor, since he already held the floor and his wife only offered backchannel responses to his treatment of the topic of the camera bag. Also, the joke used here has no further relevance on the following conversation, unlike the immediately preceding example, which was used to expand the topic in a new and extended direction (the conditions of K and her boyfriend's married life based on the *Tanabata* reference and previous discourse). The only explanation I

can offer is that, since this conversation is a very informal, relaxed one, the husband may have been feeling somewhat playful and may have simply chose to close out this topic of conversation with a joke about how he might use the camera bag which was the subject of discussion.

Summary

In this section, we have seen how humorous anecdotes, teasing, and jokes help to facilitate and direct conversation. Anecdotes provide a topic of discussion and encourage active participation by speakers other than the storyteller. Teasing and joking can be used to participate in an anecdote, or to assist in enacting topic changes, floor changes, or speaker changes, as demonstrated above. In all these ways, humor plays a significant role in conversational management in Japanese casual conversations, but the use of humor is certainly not limited to conversational strategies; humor has greater "social" uses, such as affecting the relationships of the participants and

enforcing social norms, which will be discussed in the following sections.

INTERPERSONAL MANAGEMENT

The interpersonal management function of humor in conversation relates to how humor is used to enhance the relationships between the conversational participants. For example, teasing has been cited as a very aggressive form of humor, since it attacks another conversational participant directly (Norrick, 1993) and can align participants against one another.

However, humor is more often used as a way of increasing intimacy and solidarity. Previous studies have shown that humor is used to defuse tense situations (Goffman, 1955), claim solidarity or in-group status (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Wilson, 1979), and decrease social distance by testing for shared knowledge and beliefs (Ziv, 1984). Yamada's analysis of "supporter laughter" also has an interpersonal function since it indicates that the conversation is proceeding apace. This type of laughter supports the speaker and strengthens the feeling of

solidarity by reinforcing the laugher's understanding of the speaker.

In the ten conversations examined, two types of joking seem to be primarily responsible for affecting interpersonal relations during the course of the conversation: humorous personal anecdotes and teasing. Both of these were examined earlier in the context of conversational organization, but here these types of joking will be analyzed with respect to how they affect the relationships of the conversational participants. Specific points of analysis will focus on speaker response to the strategies employed and the realignment (if any) of the participants after the completion of the joking. However, before examining the data, explanation of some concepts used in discussing society will prove helpful.

Uchi and *Soto*

The concepts of "in-group" and "out-group" are not unique to Japanese society, but they are certainly very important. In discussing Japanese society, Nakane (1970)

maintains that the Japanese view of the world is one in which group formation is important. Japanese often position themselves and think of themselves as belonging to a group, and identification with a group is more important than one's own personal attributes (3).

From this philosophy come the terms *uchi* and *soto*, which the Japanese use to determine their behavior in a given situation. The significance of these terms can be seen in their lexical meanings. Often translated as "in-group," *Uchi* literally means "house" or "inside," while *soto*, often translated as "out-group," literally means "outside." Thus, if a person or situation is considered *uchi*, it means that the reaction will be more intimate, while a *soto* situation involves people with whom one is less intimate.

Lebra (1976) notes that the lines between *uchi* and *soto* vary widely and are "...drawn not by social structure but by constantly varying situations" (112). The division of groups into *uchi* and *soto* is not governed by a constant formula but rather by an individuals' reaction to a number

of factors. However, these divisions are very real to the Japanese.

In addition, Bachnik (1994) discusses four concepts that she feels are factors in the delineation of *uchi* and *soto*. These issues include the "interdependent self," context, emotional aspects, and relationships between self and society (18-19). Rosenberger (1994) also discusses the difficulty involved in making distinctions between *uchi* and *soto*. In her article, she examines a typical family evening at home; one of the difficulties she encounters is the constantly changing roles of the participants.

> "Making a still life of *soto* and *uchi* contexts has its problems because these are always fluid according to the perspective one takes. The two derive meaning only in relation to each other. Like a series of Chinese boxes, what is *soto* in relation to one *uchi* soon becomes *uchi* in relation to a more public, detached level of *soto*" (98).

It appears then that determining *the boundaries* of *uchi* and *soto* is not easy. In fact, one of the main focuses of the book *Situated Meanings* is to show how variable the boundaries of *uchi* and *soto* are. While this may be

confusing to a non-Japanese, these considerations are certainly important and play a key role in Japanese society.

Uchi and *soto* are shaped by environment, conversational participants, hierarchical relations, and other factors. Their boundaries are also determined in part by the conversational participants and their perception of these factors; the speaker can thus use *uchi* and *soto* to his or her advantage in conversation.

Teasing

Brown and Levinson (1987) note that teasing may have the effect of bringing the participants closer together in certain relationships because the act of teasing contradicts the concept of negative politeness (124-125). Straehle's (1993) work also illustrates an interesting interpersonal phenomenon. In her article, she discusses the phenomenon of teasing in a three-person conversation. Two of the participants know the third very well, but do not know each other well at all. Through teasing the third party, the first two participants foster solidarity directly with the

third speaker, and foster solidarity with each other indirectly.

Straehle's speaker alignment is interesting especially when considered as "in-group" and "out-group." By temporarily assigning the role of out-group to the third party, the first two people create a bond between them that did not previously exist. The relationship between the two speakers is thus made more intimate. The relationship of each of these speakers to the third speaker, who is acting as "out-group," is not made any less intimate because their relationship was much more intimate before the conversation began; thus, the teasing has the effect of bringing all three speakers closer together.

Teasing is one of the most common forms of conversational joking and occurs frequently in my data. In Conversation 9, the woman uses a tease to try to create solidarity between her and the listener.

Example 8
K; de kusareen dakara yo .
; de saisho ni sa ,
; kawaii toki ni ,
; mada kookoo ichinensei ,
; uiuishii toki ni <R atchatte ,

```
 ;  a koitsu kawaiina= R> to omotte ,
 ;  a korya ii na= [to omotte 1] ,
C; [@@ 1]
K; <R sono imeeji ga mada nokotte n deshoo R> .
C; [@@@ @== 2]
K; [mo son=na ,
 ; anoko wa <R moo .. otona ni 2] natte shimatte iru R> .
 ; zenzen chigau .
```

Translation:

```
K:  And because it's the old relationship,
 :  and at first,
 :  when she is cute,
 :  still a high school freshman
 :  you met her when she was naive and
 :  thought, "This girl is cute."
 :  And you think, "This is good."
C:  @@
K:  That image is still there, right?
C:  @@@ @==
K:  well,
 :  that girl has already become an adult.
 :  {She's} completely different.
```

In this example, K attempts to claim solidarity with C by showing that she understands what he was thinking at the time he met his girlfriend a number of years ago. She presents this in the language she thinks a high school student would use, and she also alters her voice in an attempt to make it sound more masculine and youthful. By this mocking imitation, she is attempting to use humor to reinforce her claim of solidarity and understanding.

C's reaction to this is laughter, which seems to indicate that K is on the right track with her assessment. C also explicitly agrees with her that his girlfriend has become an adult.

Solidarity-building is a use of teasing that occurs repeatedly in my data. However, the success or failure of this depends upon the reactions to the tease, and its result on the conversation can be surprisingly varied. Consider this example from Conversation 1:

Example 9

K: [Damena no wa]tashi=.
Hito ni denwa kaken no yana no.
T: Datte,
datte saa,
...(1.0) dare ga deru wake jakute,
honnin shika denai [wake desh]o=?
K: [M=],
demo yana no.
T: (0) Nande?
K: (0) Nanka yana no.
Dokidoki shi chau no.
M: ... @@,
[@@@@].
K: [@@@@].
T: [Sore de],
<@ sore de,
mawashite,
gachan[to kit chau kuchi ka=]. @>
M: [@Gachanto @@@@].
K: .. @Atashi,

rusubandenwa ikkai de kiru mon.
Kanarazu.
...(.8) <Q Mata omae,
<@ ikkai kitta r[o @>Q>.
<@ te yoku iwareru]= @>.
M: [@A @@@].

Translation
K: I'm hopeless.
: I hate calling other people.
T: But,
: But,
: (1.0)It's not a question of who'll answer,
: he's the only one who'll answer, right?
K: Mm..
: But I don't like it.
T: (0) Why?
K: (0) Somehow, I don't like it.
: My heart pounds. I get nervous.
M: @@
: @@@@
K: @@@@
T: And then,
: <@and then,
: you dial and
: you're the type of person who will quickly hang up.@>
M: @hang up @@@@.
K: @I
: If an answering machine answers, I'll hang up.
: Definitely.
: He often says, "Hey you, you called and hung up again."
M: @A @@@.

In this section, K admits to becoming nervous when she has to make a phone call. T then teases her, saying "So, you're the kind of person who will hang up." M latches on to the word *gachanto* (literally meaning, "clang," which means in

this case to hang up the phone quickly) and joins in the teasing, siding with T against K, as Norrick suggests occurs in such teasing relationships. K, however, responds with a humorous remark of her own that reinforces the statement T made: *Mata omae ikkai kitta ro te yoku iwareru* (My boyfriend often calls and says, "Hey you, you called and hung up again." This somewhat self-depreciating remark not only strengthens the truth in T's statement, but also indicates that she recognizes his remark as a joke and does not take it seriously.

Responding to humor with humor serves to unify the participants, although it is possible that the situation could turn into a contest to see who can have the proverbial last laugh. Norrick argues, however, that such cases, while perhaps appearing directly aggressive and confrontational, carry the metamessage of play. That is, since the contest is framed as non-serious and non-threatening, the humor serves to increase the group solidarity.

Responding to a tease with more humor is only one strategy, however. In another example from Conversation 1,

T (the male) is the person being teased, and he reacts very differently than K did.

Example 10

```
K:   (0)Kamae chau.
     Dokidoki shi chau mon.
     Nanka.
T:   U=m.
     [Ore tegami so= da yo].
M:   [Demo,
     sono ten sa=],
K:   <X Uttooshi[[i no
M:              [[tegami]].
K:   k]][[[amo shirenai]]]X>.
T:      [[[Betsu ni dokidoki]]] wa shinai kedo [4 sa= 4].
K:                                          [4 E=, atash4]i,
     [5 tegami no hoo ga ii na 5]=.
M:   [5 <@Bushoona dake jan @> 5].
K:   @@@@.
T:   ... E=,
     dat[te tegami ga] mendo[[kus-]]
K:      [Fudebushoo].
M:                          [[Bush]]oona dake.
```

Translation

```
K:  I {have to} prepare [work up the nerve.]
 :  I get nervous.
 :  Somehow.
T:  Mhm.
 :  I feel like that about letters.
M:  But, that point is,
K:  It may
M:  Letters.
K:  be troublesome.
T:  I don't get especially nervous, but,
K:  Yeah.  For me,
 :  letters are better.
M:  You're just lazy.
```

K: @@@
T: Yeah,
: but, letters are troublso--
K: Lazy at letter writing.
M: He's just lazy.

At this point in the conversation, K is still discussing her dislike of making phone calls, specifically the fact that she gets nervous. T attempts to sympathize with her, saying "*Ore, tegami so da yo*" ("I feel that way about [writing] letters"). M immediately teases him, saying "*Bushoona dake jan*" ("Isn't that because you're just lazy?")

T's response is not one of humor, as K used earlier; instead he continues in a serious manner, trying to make the case that letter writing is truly difficult; he seems to be rejecting the tease. K interjects that he's just "*fudebushoo*" ("lazy at letter writing") and M joins in again, calling him lazy. Even at this point, T does not respond to the teasing and continues explaining why he thinks letter writing is difficult.

Why is T's response to teasing different from K's? Perhaps he views the framing differently. Instead of seeing the frame as humorous, perhaps he perceives the aggressive

function of their teasing, as noted by Norrick (1993, 44). In this case, the teasing seems to have created a temporary rift in the group's unity, since T's continued attempts at explanation suggest that he feels he is being treated unfairly.

Teasing can also be found in sibling relationships in Japanese, just as in other cultures. Teasing is a part of an intimate joking relationship, which often occurs among familial relations (Eisenberg, 1986; Norrick, 1993). Consider the example below from Conversation 4. Two of the participants, K, R, are sisters, and M (who does not speak in this example), is their Mother, and P their father.

Example 11

```
K:   <Q Kozuechan Q> a ... ah--
     <Q Kozuechan no oneechan tte kawa=ii=  Q>,
     to ka itte.
     <Q Kozuechan ga oneesan mitai Q> to ka [itte].
R:                                          [@@@@@@@]
P:                                          [@@@@@]
K:   ... <Q Kozuechan no hoo ga oneesan mitai=,
     kawaii,
     <WH Nanka suggoi to hito ga yosasoo Q> to ka,
     <Q kawaii WH>Q> to ka,
     Moo zessan= [de=].
R:             [@@]@@
H:   @@
     <@ De,
     Kozuechan wa,
```

```
     <Q hito warusoo Q> to [2 ka yutte 2]@>,
R:                        [2 @@@@@ 2]
K:   <Q Sonna [3 koto nai n da kedo sa Q>3].
H:            [3 XXXXXXX 3].
R:   [4 @@@@@ 4]
P:   [4 @@@ 4]
K:   Uso,
     uso.
R:   [2 @@ 2]
P:   [2 @@ 2]
K:   [3 <Q Soo deshyoo Q> tte 3]
R:   [3 Itta n da yo 3],
     i%-
K:   <Q Soo deshyoo Q>,
     to ka ittoita ichioo ne.
R:   (0) Ittoita ichioo.
     .. U=n.
     erai,
     erai.

Translation
K:  "Kozuechan uh..
 :  Kozuechan's sister is cute, they said.
 :  "Kozuechan looks like the older of the sisters," (they
   said.)
R:  @@@@@@@
P:  @@@@@
K:  "Kozue looks like her older sister.
 :  She's cute.
 :  She looks like a really nice person," they said.
 :  "She's cute," they said.
 :  They praised her.
R:  @@@@
H:  @@
 :  <@ And,
 :  Kozuechan said,
 :  "She looks like a bad person." @>
R:  @@@@
K:  That's not the case, but,
H:  XXXXXXX
```

R: @@@@@
P: @@@
K: Not true.
: Not true.
R: @@
P: @@
K: I just said, "It's true."
R: You just said {that}.
K: Well, I said, "It's true."
R: (0)You said it.
: Yeah.
: How noble.
: How noble.

In this passage, K is reporting what her friends said about her in her picture--that she looked like the older of the sisters. She also reports that they said her older sister looked like a cute and kind person. She then adds a comment, "They gave her such praise." From her tone of voice and her emphasis on the words, it sounds like K is exaggerating a bit. At this point, two of the participants laugh.

H, who is not a sibling of the speaker, adds what may have happened next: K told her friends that her older sister looks like a really bad person ("*hito warusoo*"). There is sudden laughter from several participants including R, the older sister being discussed, and K adds that she

said she was not as nice as her friends thought: "*Sonna koto nai n da kedo sa*" ("She's not like that, but..."). There is more laughter, including from R, and then K quickly protests, "*Uso, uso.*" ("Not really, not really"), as if she is trying to make sure her sister knows it was a joke. She continues, saying that she agreed with her friends' assessment of her sister. R, the subject of the tease, responds, "*Ittoita ichioo. Un. Erai.*" ("Yeah, you said it anyway. How noble.")

Up until R spoke, K had been talking about her sister, teasing her a little bit by reporting to the group what her friends had said about her. H, however, adds a comment that makes the tease seem a much more direct attack. As a result, K reframes what H reported she said, giving her version of the story. Her "*Sonna koto nai n da kedo sa,*" ("She's not really like that") is certainly much less aggressive than what H reported she said, "*Hito warusoo*" (She's a bad person"). This rephrasing suggests K felt that the play frame was not apparent and chose to "scale down" the aggressiveness of H's joke in an attempt to make the

frame more obvious. However, she does not dismiss H's statement entirely right away. She uses H's comment for a tease of her own, but a less powerful one than H's joke.

Finally, K tells everyone that she didn't really say that, and that she responded to her friends' suggestion with "*S*oo *deshy*oo" (It's true..."), which is certainly a much different response than either of the two that have been reported for K. Her sister R, however, invokes a tease of her own in response, commenting sarcastically on how "noble" her sister was to agree with her friends. R's comment at the end suggests that she was aware of the fact that she was being teased, especially since her comment is a humorous one. Had R been truly upset, she would have most probably taken a much different stance, as T did in example 10 above.

As a result of this exchange, there does not seem to be any relationship breakdown between K and her sister R, since R's comment is the last mention of this topic. This type of teasing seems to serve to demonstrate the intimacy of the participants, and thus help to make their relationship stronger.

Participant Alignment

Straehle (1993) notes that teasing results in an alignment of the participants; in her data, the first two speakers often aligned against the third, since they both had the most intimate relationship with her. However, in my examples, the speakers all share close relationships with each other; this leads to not only participant alignment, but also realignment throughout the conversations.

Examples 9 and 10 are from Conversation 1. The speakers M and K are female and T is male; they are all good friends. In Example 9, T teases K, and M joins in, creating a situation where T and M are aligned against K. This alignment can be viewed as an extension of the in-group and out-group, where T and M are the in-group and K is the out-group. This alignment, however, is short-lived, as K confirms T's statement with a humorous remark of her own, thus joining the in-group and making the out-group a zero unit. K uses humor to restore solidarity and break down the in-group/out-group distinction that was first established with humor.

Example 10 shows T, who is attempting to sympathize with K, becoming the target of M's tease. Thus, M creates a division where M is the in-group, T is the out-group, and K has not yet been placed. T then takes a stance that challenges M's assessment; instead of acquiescing, as K did in Example 10, T resists and continues his explanation, thus further dividing the participants. M also contributes to this divisiveness by continuing to tease T. At this point, K joins in the teasing, effectively siding with M and conclusively making T the out-group.

Example 11 involves the sisters R and K and their friend H, who is dating one of the sisters (speaker R). Outlining the participant alignment again, K begins to set herself up against her older sister, R, who is the current topic of conversation. She begins by recounting what her friends said and then goes on to tease her by saying *Moo zessan* ("They praised her.") H, however, interjects and, by reporting what K said, escalates the amount of "aggression" in K's tease. R responds only with laughter, along with several of the other participants. However, K

works to make H's statement less harsh, first by reporting her version of what she said, and then by saying she agreed with her friends. It is interesting to note that, although K marks her sister R as "out-group," R's only response to this is laughter. Finally, at the end of K's anecdote, R comments sarcastically on her sister's noble actions. Interestingly, none of the other participants sided with either K or R in this passage. While H interjected a comment in the beginning, this appears to be a strategy to escalate the interaction between K and R.

In my data, teasing is used to both demonstrate and increase rapport. By siding against each other, the participants demonstrate the closeness of their relationship which allows them to tease one another. In addition, by teaming up against a third participant, two participants form a close "in-group" that makes them closer to each other than the "out-group" during the course of the teasing. Teasing is one way of bringing participants closer together.

Personal Anecdotes

According to Tannen (1989), telling personal stories is one of the primary conversational strategies used for creating rapport. Logically, then, humorous personal anecdotes have the same, if not greater, potential to increase rapport, since as seen above, humor itself can be used to build rapport. Norrick (1993) concurs, "Laughing together further enhances the rapport which develops from sharing personal anecdotes" (45). The humorous personal anecdote encourages the participation of speakers other than the storyteller, as demonstrated above; when this interactional function is combined with the interpersonal function, the humorous personal anecdote can be very successful in the production and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

In conversation 7, the topic of discussion is siblings. Throughout this conversation, the participants discuss their brothers and sisters. This sharing of stories about a single topic serves to create rapport among the speakers, as

they share experiences with each other. In the following example, K is talking about her younger sister.

Example 12

```
K:   Uchi=,
     datte,
     minna,
     watashi mo okkii [shi=,
M:                    [<@<HI takumashii kara HI>@>].
K:   imooto nante,
     ..] gotsui ja nai?
M:   @@
T:   @ @ @ [@]
K:         [Nanka],
     <Q onna no ko Q> mitai na,
     soo yuu,
     <Q fuwafuwa Q> tto shita no ga nai wake.
M:   @ @@[@]
K:       [De],
     sono ko ga kuru to,
     <Q ha=,
     onna no ko daa Q>,
     mitai na,
     soko dake <Q potto Q>,
     koo [hana ga saita [[<@ yoo] na @>]],
M:       [@@@@]
T:                      [[@Hx @]]
     @H
M:   @Hee=.
K:   Honto ni nee
```

Translation

```
K:  In my family,
 :  well
 :  everyone
 :  including me is big,
M:  <@It's because you're strong.@>
```

K: My little sister is
: kind of big, isn't she?
M: @@
T: @ @ @ @
K: Somehow,
: none of us have
: that sort of girlish softness.
M: @ @@@
K: And,
: when she [another girl] comes,
: "Oh,
: it's a girl"
: with just that kind of response, she's
: like a small flower blooming.
M: @@@@
T: @ @
: @
M: @Really?
K: Really.

Speaker K begins by discussing her sister in the context of her family. She says that her whole family is large, and so, as a result, her younger sister appears somewhat "rough." She then goes on to comment that when people see her, they comment that she is "like a small flower blooming." The other speakers all find this humorous, since they laugh at this analogy.

Since this excerpt is on the same topic as the rest of the conversation, siblings, this anecdote helps to create a

rapport among the speakers, which is evidenced by their shared laughter.

K also uses this story to present her younger sister in an amusing way. Judging from the laughter this presentation elicits from the other participants, this is an experience to which they can all relate. Poking fun at a sibling is an experience that anyone who has siblings can relate to; by using this common experience as part of her narrative, she increases the rapport between herself and the other conversational participants.

The lengthy personal anecdote from Conversation 2 also demonstrates how humor affects interpersonal relationships. Speaker M is telling a story of what happened when she and a co-worker met some boys from Osaka. In the example below, she describes her first look at the boys.

Example 13
M:...asoko de=,
 :...yonin gurai no ne=,
 :...toshi no koro nara,
 :juu=shi chi hachi.
H:un.
M:...hachi.
 :...zettai ne,
 :kookoo o sotsugyoo suru ka shinai ka tte yuu n de=,
H:[un].

G:[un].
M:...kitto ano=,
 :...asobi ni kita n da to omou no ne.
G:un.
H:un.
M:..Kansai no kotachi na no.
H:@@@
M:...de,
 :...<Q ano=,
 :...konohen yattara=,
 :...doko ittara omoshiroi desu ka= Q>?
 :toka itte kiite kuru wake.
 :..moo (/mo/) nikibizura no [sa=],
H: [un].
M:@@...teratera shita yoo na [2 wakai 2] otoko no ko na no.
H: [2 un 2].

Translation
M: Over there
 : four of them
 : their age,
 : seventeen or eighteen.
H: Yeah.
M: Eighteen.
 : I wasn't
 : sure if they had graduated from high school or not.
H: hm
G: hm
M: I think
 : that surely they'd come to play.
G: hm.
H: hm.
M: Kids from Kansai.
H: @@@
M: And,
 : "Um,
 : where are interesting
 : places to go around here?"
 : they asked.
 : They were pimple faced.

H: hm
M: @@ Their faces shone with oil, these young boys.
H: hm.

M uses age, dialect, and regional stereotypes to place the Osaka boys in the out-group and she and her friends in the in-group. Here, she uses the tactic of ridiculing the out-group to create solidarity in the in-group (Wilson 1979, 230).

Since the speakers had just finished a discussion of age prior to M's beginning her anecdote, the age distinction M raises is particularly important. She comments that they were seventeen or eighteen, and that she "wasn't sure if they had graduated from high school yet" ("*kookoo o sotsugyoo suru ka shinai ka tee yuu n de*"). She comments, "I think that surely they had come to play" ("*kitto ano asobi ni kita n da to omou no ne*"). Her final comment on the boys' age is that they are "pimple-faced" and that "their faces shone with oil."

All of these statements portray the boys in such a way as to make them appear young--and indeed they are young; M's comments during her telling of this story emphasize their

youth, and consequently, their distance from the speaker and the other conversational participants, who are all of similar ages.

M creates a bond with the other participants by emphasizing the point that her age is closer to theirs than to the boys she is discussing. By disassociating herself so actively with the boys in the story, she is claiming solidarity with the other conversational participants. As her story progresses, she makes further reference to their ages.

Age, however, is not the only criteria M uses to distinguish herself (and her friends, by association) from the boys. In example 13, she also comments that they are from Kansai, the western part of Japan. She is able to discern this from the way they talk, since they are speaking Kansai dialect. Since she and her friends all speak Tokyo standard Japanese, she uses this as another criteria to create an in-group which includes only the conversational participants and excludes the Osaka boys in her story.

M clearly defines the boys from Kansai as out-group based on the criteria she establishes. This active creation of an out-group has a dual function: (1) furthering the rapport created by M's narrative, and (2) establishing the out-group for ridicule.

Ridiculing of the out-group has the effect of enforcing the in-group's norms. This then leads to an increased feeling of solidarity within the group, since their relationship is strengthened by the sharing of ideas (Norrick, 1993). Ridiculing the out-group also leads to the reinforcement of societal norms, which is discussed in the following section on social control.

Anecdotes also create an environment of "play" in which other participants are free to join in with jokes or humorous comments of their own. Re-examining Examples 2 and 3 in this way, the personal anecdote not only assists in conversational maintenance by stimulating speaker participation, it also contributes to interpersonal management by creating a frame in which speakers feel able to interject comments freely. This familiarity helps to

increase the comfort level and the rapport among the speakers.

Summary of Interpersonal Management

Humor contributes to the management of interpersonal relationships through teasing and humorous personal anecdotes. Teasing indicates a significant amount of familiarity and solidarity, as evidenced by the responses to teasing seen in the data. The responses were usually humorous themselves, indicating familiarity among the speakers. Teasing often also resulted in a realignment of the participants; in an environment which was more serious and less intimate, the speakers would probably be less likely to engage in such realignment.

Humorous anecdotes serve to facilitate speaker relationships by sharing information about oneself, which increases the intimacy of the participants, and by creating a frame in which speakers can participate freely. The humor used in these anecdotes facilitates familiarity, sometimes at the expense of an "out-group" which may or may not be

part of the conversation. Ridiculing the out-group also has greater social control ramifications which will be discussed in the next section.

SOCIAL CONTROL

Social control is the ability of humor to ridicule and affect behavioral changes that do not conform to social norms. Ziv (1984) maintains that humor is used to comment on undesirable social behavior, and that those who are objects of ridicule "will take care in the future not to repeat the behavior that has evoked punishment" (39). Norrick (1993) agrees. When discussing personal anecdotes, he says, "We should also note the social control function of the story. The description and evaluation of the funny event reveals norms and attitudes the teller assumes his hearers share" (52).

Humor used as social control can be found in Japanese conversation. People use humor to express ideas that reinforce societal beliefs. Just as in other cultures, the exclusion of outsiders can be a consideration for humor as social control in Japanese. Those who are thought to be different from the speaker and the speaker's "in-group" can easily become objects of ridicule. This use of humor can be seen as a way of delineating the boundaries between *uchi*

("in-group") and *soto* ("out-group"), which is determined by the converstional participants, as mentioned earlier.

In conversation 6, M is telling a story about a presentation she attended where the foreigners had to give speeches in Japanese. When she mentions the person's name who was to speak next, she gets the following response from the other participant.

Example 14
M: .. uchi no kaiin no sa ,
: .. Garukin te iun dakedo .
K: .. un .
M: .. de [sa=] ,
K: <@ [namae] ga ii ne ,
: nani sono namae @> .
M: (0) e ?
K: Garukin ,

Translation
M: From our group,
: was the one called "Garukin," but,
K: hm
M: And, well,
K: <@ What a nice name.
: What kind of name is that? @>
M: (0) Huh?
K: Garukin.

K interrupts her friend's narrative to comment on the person's name. "*Namae ga ii ne. Nani sono namae.*" ("What a nice name. What kind of name is that?") The tone of K's

voice suggests that she is being sarcastic, and that she does not find his name especially "nice" at all and in fact finds it rather odd. M is caught off guard, not expecting such a reaction to this person's name, perhaps because she knows him and no longer thinks of his name (or him) as being anything unusual.

The best example of social control in my data comes from Conversation 2, where M tells the story of how she and her friend met some boys from Kansai during Golden Week. In Example 13 in the previous section (p. 75), M attempts to disassociate herself from the boys by using the criteria of youth; she begins drawing the lines of *uchi* and *soto* so that she and her friends form the "in-group" and the boys in the story are the "out-group."

However, in the same example, she adds another factor to her uchi/soto criteria: that of dialect. The boys from Osaka speak Kansai dialect, while M and her friends all speak Tokyo standard. Thus, she uses dialect as another criteria to define the Osaka boys as out-group.[8]

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[8]Regional dialects have been a social issue in Japan for many years. Until very recently, the feeling was that standard

Once she has established the boys as "out-group" she goes on to ridicule them. After describing the boys and their initial encounter, M continues her story by saying that she decided to tease them. She then goes on to say:

Example 15

M: <Q Sonna koto yutte jibunra mo kodomo chau non @>?
@toka itte.
H: [@@@@]
G: [@@@@]
M: @Kansaiben [de sa].
G: [@Kansaiben de yutta] no.
H: @Yutta no.
M: Yutta no [yo].
H: [Dowa] toka uketa.
M: ...Soo so[shi]tara,
H: [un].
M: ...<Q Iya,
: ...moshikashite,
: ...oosaka no hito desu [ka Q>.
: ...toka tte itte sa],
H: [@@@@@@]
M: ...nanka mukoo ga sa=,
: m= me ga kagayaichatte sa,
: <Q Uun, chigau kedo Q>.
: ..[<@ toka itte @>.
: [@@@@@@]
H: [@@@@@@]
G: [@@@@@@]

Japanese (the Tokyo dialect) was superior and the other dialects (including Kansai, Fukuoka, etc.) were inferior. While this trend seems to be reversing, those who speak Tokyo standard still consider their dialect the "correct" one, much as those who speak the "standard" American English dialect maintain that it is better than other dialects or BVE (Black Vernacular English).

H: @bairingaru XXXX.
G: [@@@@]
M: [@soo soo soo soo soo soo].
: tanoshikatta sorede sa,

Translation:
M: "You say that, but aren't you guys kids, too?" @I said.
H: @@@@
G: @@@@
M: @In Kansai dialect.
G: @{you/she} said it in Kansai dialect.
H: @{You} said.
M: I said that.
H: (Was it) well received?
M: When that happened,
H: mhm
M: They said,
: "oh, are you
: from Osaka?"
H: @@@@@@
M: And they,
: their eyes lit up.
: "No, I'm not."
: <@ I said. @>
: @@@@@
H: @@@@@
G: @@@@@
H: @Bilingual XXXX
G: @@@@
M: Yes yes yes yes yes yes.
: It was fun. And then,

M answers their question with a question, and in Kansai dialect, much to their surprise. Both the listeners pick up on this fact and say so explicitly while they are laughing,

which suggests that they are in agreement with her on the status of the out-group as something to be ridiculed.

M then reports that their next question is, "Are you from Osaka?" and their expressions while they asked the question, "their eyes lit up." Here, she seems to be portraying the kids as wide-eyed and especially naive, and her colleagues find it very amusing that they thought M was from Osaka. It is readily apparent that at this point, everyone is laughing at the high school boys M has been describing, which again can be seen as increasing solidarity by fostering a sense of unity against the out-group. In addition, by laughing at the youth and naivete of these young people, the speakers are setting themselves up as superior by using aggressive humor. M's last comment of "*tanoshikatta*" ("it was fun") seems to emphasize this display of superiority.

M takes this even further by reporting now on what she assumes the boys will do once they return home with the picture they had taken of her. Instead of dealing in

concrete facts and quotes, she starts using stereotypes and supposition to further her narrative.

Example 16

```
M:  <Q sunmasen=.
 :  hoshitara=,
 :  ano=,
 :  kinen ni=,
 :  shashin ichimai tottemo ee desu ka Q>.
 :  [toka tte itte ne=],
H:  [@@@ Doko] kara kita no [2 tte kanji da ne @@ 2].
G:  [@@@]
M:                          [2 @So=rede ne 2],
 :  ...@So=rede ne,
 :  ...Utsurundesu motte n [no] yo.
H:                          [un].
G:  unun.
M:  ...[ko- ko- kocchi ni] gaidobukku motte te,
H:     [<X utsurundesu X>]
M:  kocchi ni [2utsu2]rundesu mot[te n] no.
H:            [2 un 2].
 :                               [un].
G:  un.
M:  ...Kansai no yoningumi [de sa=],
H:                          [horya omae] inaka kaettara
:  omae=,
 :  tomodachi ni omae,
 :  <Q mi- mite mi,
 :  mite mi,
 :  omae tookyoo de ooeru ni nanpa [shita yo ne Q> nanka @@]
M:                                  [So=, so- soo soo soo.]
 :  <Q Tookyoo no gyaru ya [de=] Q> toka tte yutte sa.
H:                          [e= @@]
G:  [@@@]
M:  [@@@@]
H:  @@Hie= [2 @@@ 2]
```

Translation
M: "Excuse me,
: if it's okay,
: um...
: to commemorate this
: can we take a picture of you?"
: they said and...
H: @@@It gives you the feeling of "Where did you come from?" @@
G: @@@
M: And so..
: And so they had a disposable camera
H: mhmm.
G: yeah.
M: In..in..in this hand, they had a guidebook and
H: disposable camera
M: In this hand, a disposable camera.
H: Mhm.
: Mhm.
G: Mhm.
H: These four guys from Kansai,
: when they return to the country,
: they will say to their friends
: "L-look,
: look,
: we picked up some office ladies in Tokyo."
M: Ye-yes yes yes.
: "They're Tokyo girls," they'll say.
H: yeah @@
G: @@@
M: @@@@
H: @@Oh my! @@@

Here M describes the youths as having "a guidebook in one hand" and "an *utsurundesu* (disposable camera)" in the other.

This time she makes them out to be tourists--another type of outsider.

Interestingly, another speaker, H, then breaks in with what he thinks they will do when they return home. He says "*inaka kaettara*" ("When they return to the country...") He explicitly verbalizes his agreement with M's assessment of the boys with this statement, especially the use of *inaka* ("country"), as he could have simply said *kaeru*, which means "return home." The explicit use of *inaka* marks H's position as agreement with H. In addition, Osaka is the second largest city in Japan and is hardly the "country."

He also proceeds to make fun of how they will show their friends this picture of the two women they "picked up" in Tokyo. His extrapolation of the situation is in agreement with M's current description of the Osaka boys, which is indicated by her emphatic agreement denoted by "*So=, so- soo soo soo*" ("Yes yes yes yes yes"). The image one receives from this passage is that of the boys as country bumpkins, unworldly and unsophisticated.

This assessment is met with agreeing laughter. And earlier in this passage, H interrupts M's narrative about them asking to take her picture with "It gives you the feeling of 'Where did you come from?'" His meaning here appears to be, "where did they get that idea?" or something in that vein. He appears to be criticizing their openness in asking a total stranger for such a thing. Again, both M and A concur with their laughter.

However, at this point, it is interesting to note that the laughter comes from the supposition of what the kids will do when they return home. Up until this point, all of the laughter has been a result of their actions as reported by speaker M. Here, this ridiculing of the out-group is taken one step further as they laugh at the hypothetical situation H proposes will occur. I do not understand where this supposition comes from, except perhaps from the idea of the country bumpkins on vacation in the big city. This would seem to be based on the stereotypes that the people of Kanto have regarding the people of Kansai.

Also worth pointing out is that when H is explaining his imagined situation of what the boys will do upon returning home, he does not use the Kansai dialect. Instead, he uses a dialect that Japanese speakers--especially Tokyo speakers--would recognize as a dialect used by unsophisticated country people (Ono, personal communication). This dialect use supports the idea of ridiculing the Osaka boys as "out-group."

M later brings up the issue of intelligence. After finishing her narrative, she explains that she does not think that the boys really knew what they were doing. This further adds to the negative portrayal of the "out-group" while using humor. Her theory is as follows:

Example 17

```
M:  soko wa yappari kodomo ga sa,
 :  ...asahaka ni kangaete ru aida ni,
 :  oneesan tachi wa [sassa] to itte [2 shimatta no yo 2].
H:                    [@@]
G:                                    [2 @@2][3@@ 3]
H:                                           [3 soo ka= 3].
M:  ...omoshirokatta yo=.
G:  hu=n naruhodo ne=.
```

Translation

```
M:  As I thought,
 :  while the kids are trying to think of something clever
    {to say},
```

: we will have left quickly.
H: @@
G: @@ @@
H: Is that so?
M: It was interesting.
G: mhm. I see.

Here again, M continues her commenting on the Osaka high schoolers by saying that while they were foolishly trying to think of what to say, M and her friend will have left quickly. This comment reveals that M does not seem to think that people from Kansai are particularly intelligent or sophisticated, since they have to "come up" with things to say to women. This example serves to reinforce her image of the Osaka boys as "country bumpkins." It also further expresses her ideas about their age, since she specifically uses the word "*kodomo*" ("kids"). Again, the laughter from the other participants suggests they agree with M's characterization.

Throughout this conversation, M has used humor to both ridicule the "out-group" and to reinforce her ideas on social norms. These two coincide because the criteria M uses for the "out-group" are social criteria such as dialect and age. She and her friends, throughout the course of this

conversation, assert their views about social norms and. through their mutal agreement, reinforce them throughout this conversation.

Metalingual Joking

Another form of social control is metalingual joking, since it enforces beliefs about language use. According to Norrick, metalingual joking focuses on the use--or perceived misuse--of language, including incorrect forms, archaic constructions, etc. Metalingual joking is usually used to aggressively point out problems with a person's choice of words or language use.

The largest use of metalingual joking is M's anecdote that appears in conversation 2. Dialect is one of the criteria she uses for marking the Osaka boys as "out-group," so in a sense, this decision and the humor that arises from it are metalingual in nature. For example, in Example 15, after she decides to tease them, she responds to their question with a question. "*Sonna koto yutte jibunra mo kodomo chau non?*" (You say that, but you guys are kids too,

right?") But more importantly, she uses their dialect to respond. Both of her friends laugh when they hear this, and note aloud that she used the Kansai dialect.

In the same example, speaker H makes the comment that M is "bilingual." This is another metalingual joke. Since M has demonstrated that she can speak Kansai dialect, H is using hyperbole to extend M's ability with Tokyo standard and Kansai dialect to that of a "bilingual." Perhaps H means that when M is speaking Kansai dialect it is like she is speaking another language; the implication is that she is certainly speaking something different than what H and the others consider the "standard."

Metalingual joking can also be seen in example 14, where K is making fun of the foreigner's name. K makes Garukin-san an out-group, or perhaps part of a larger out-group--that of foreigners, and makes fun of him on the basis of a linguistic feature: his name, which is obviously not Japanese. She does this in the same way that M uses another linguistic characteristic, dialect, to mark the Osaka boys as an out-group and ridicule them as well. Indeed, in all

of my data, every instance of metalingual joking serves to ridicule the out-group. Perhaps this is not surprising, since metalingual joking by definition uses humor to draw attention to the way other people talk, but the aggressive function of humor seems to be more obvious in this type of joking than in others.

Summary of Humor as Social Control

Humor as social control occurs in narratives and teasing. In the larger frame of a narrative, it is incorporated into specific comments made by the storyteller and also by comments and questions interjected by the other participants. Also, the narrative allows a frame in which the person relaying the story can establish criteria for in-group and out-group and act accordingly, as seen from the extensive examination of conversation 2. Thus, humor in Japanese conversation also has a social function--to monitor the traits of others and mark those that are not considered "normal."

CONCLUSION

Humor in Japanese conversation occurs in each of the areas discussed: conversational management, interpersonal management, and social control. Japanese uses of humor as conversational control include taking the floor, maintaining the floor, initiating topic shifts, and closing topics. These uses are similar to the uses of humor described in previous research.

Humor used as interpersonal management in Japanese conversation helps to establish solidarity and enhance rapport, both of which are uses found in Western humor. Humorous personal anecdotes, by providing personal information and a humorous focus, help to make the speakers feel more intimate. Teasing also expresses intimacy since it is a visible confirmation of how comfortable the participants feel with each other. If they did not feel comfortable with each other, they would not employ teasing as a type of humor, since teasing has a certain degree of aggression that can be misinterpreted.

In the area of social control, Japanese humor, like Western humor, uses humor to reinforce the social standards of the speaker and his or her society. Humorous personal anecdotes are used to describe events which are not considered "normal," and the speakers comment on the abnormality of the behavior exhibited. Also, metalingual joking, joking which ridicules a person's style of speech or language use, is also used to reinforce social standards about spoken Japanese. For example, the boys from Osaka (in Conversation 2) are made fun of by the conversational participants (who speak Tokyo standard) for the way they speak and act.

While the uses of Japanese humor seem to parallel Western humor strategies, there are aspects of humor which appear distinctly Japanese. *Uchi* and *soto*, the terms used to describe whether a situation is "in-group" or "out-group" for a Japanese speaker, are central to Japanese society. Teasing demonstrates an extensive awareness and use of *uchi* and *soto* in conversational interaction. *Uchi* and *soto* were recreated within the conversations and the boundaries

between the two were very fluid and changed rapidly. One noticeable difference was the rapid realignment of the speakers in the Japanese conversations. This continual realignment seems to be due to the heightened awareness of grouping and alignment in Japanese society. Since this type of realignment occurred in more than one conversation, further study may show that this phenomenon is in fact characteristic of teasing in Japanese conversation.

Japanese humor also did not exhibit all of the characteristics of Western humor. One aspect of humor use that was notably absent in Japanese conversation is humor used to challenge social norms. While humor used to reinforce social norms was present in my data, humor as a tool of rebellion or protest did not occur. This is most probably particular to my data set.

The data and analysis presented here show similarities of humor strategies and types in Japanese and Western conversation. These similarities suggest that these concepts are cross-cultural and perhaps even universal. The findings presented here suggest the need for further study.

I hope that this study serves as a beginning for research on humor in Japanese conversation. I have attempted to outline some important uses of humor in Japanese conversation. I see this study as a first step in delineating humor use in Japanese conversation and linking it to humor use in other cultures.

APPENDIX A:
SUMMARY OF SPEAKERS AND CONVERSATIONS

CONVERSATION	SPEAKER	SEX	AGE	RELATIONSHIP	DIALECT
1	M	F	late 20's	friends	Tokyo
	K	F	late 20's	friends	Tokyo
	T	M	late 20's	friends	Tokyo
2	G	M	28	friends	Tokyo
	H	M	30	friends	Tokyo
	M	F	27	friends	Tokyo

CONVERSATION	SPEAKER	SEX	AGE	RELATIONSHIP	DIALECT
3	H	M	26	company colleauges	Tokyo
	O	M	28	company colleagues	Tokyo
4	R	F	27		Tokyo
	K	F	30	R's older sister	Tokyo
	M	F	54	R and K's mother; P's wife	Tokyo
	D	M	64	R and K's father, M's husband	Tokyo
	H	M	26	Friend of R	Tokyo

CONVERSATION	SPEAKER	SEX	AGE	RELATIONSHIP	DIALECT
5	T	M	32	husband	Osaka
	H	F	32	wife	Osaka
6	M	F	26	friends	Tokyo
	K	F	26	friends	Tokyo
7	K	F	late 20's	friends	Tokyo
	M	F	late 20's	friends	Tokyo
	T	M	late 20's	friends	Tokyo

CONVERSATION	SPEAKER	SEX	AGE	RELATIONSHIP	DIALECT
8	T	F	23	T is H's high school teacher's daughter	Tokyo
	H	M	27	H is a former student of T's	Tokyo
9	K	F	30	housemates	Tokyo
	C	M	18	housemates	Tokyo
10	A	M	28	friends	Tokyo
	H	M	30	friends	Tokyo
	M	F	27	friends	Tokyo

APPENDIX B:
TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

@	1 syllable of laughter
<@ word @>	word(s) said while laughing
X	uncertain syllable
<X word X>	uncertain word
[word]	overlapping speech; if many overlaps in one place, double brakcets (Ex. [[word]]) or brackets with numbers (Ex. [3 word 3]) may be used
(0)	latching speech (no pause between current and previous utterance
<Q word Q>	direct quote
-	unfinished word (Ex. wo-)
=	elongated vowel (hello=)
..	short pause
...	long pause
(0.7)	timed pause
.	sentence-final intonation
,	non-sentence-final intonation
?	rising (question) intonation
{they} said	word not said in original Japanese; included in translation for clarity

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