Subordinators as Interactional Resources: A study on Stand-Alone Adverbial Clauses in Japanese Conversation

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Outline

• Introduction:
  – What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?
  – What are problems with Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?

• Data & Methodology

• Analyses: Prominent interactional patterns

• Discussion: Subordinators as Interactional Resources

• Concluding remarks
What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?
What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?

• “Canonical” structure of Sentences featuring Adverbial clauses

[adverbial clause]-subordinator, [main clause]

[高いから、] [It’s expensive]-kara,
[買えません] [we can’t buy it].

[体は小さいけど、] [He is small]-kedo,
[力は強い] [he is strong].
What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?

• A subordinator, or *setsuzoku-joshi* (接続助詞) is attached at the end of one clause and marks it as an **adverbial clause**
  – Kara
    • Marks a clause as **evidence/rationale** for its main clause
  – Kedo
    • Marks a clause as **contrastive and backgrounded information** with respect to its main clause
What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?

• Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses
  – Occur without their main clauses
  – Appear frequently in Conversation
What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?

• Example: Stand-alone Kara Clause

1  →  B: =.h あたし (>ちょと<) , 十一月と十二月さ:,  
   I, well, during December and November, 

2  A: うん.  
   Uh-huh 

3  →  B: 先輩と一緒に住むから.  
   ...am gonna live with Sempai -kara. 

4  (0.7) 

5  A: は?  
   What? (CF1684)
What are Stand-alone Adverbial Clauses?

• Example: Stand-alone Kedo Clause

1 B: あ:そうなんだ.
   *Oh, really.*

2 A: [そう.]
   *yeah*

3 → B: [ポールは]なんか受かったって聞いたんだけど.
   *(I) heard that Paul passed some audition* -kedo.

4 A: え, ポール?:.
   *Paul?* (CF1684)
What are problems with SACs?
What are problems with SACs?

• **Syntactically incomplete but functionally complete**
  – Cf. Independent use of subordinate clauses
    • Widely reported in various languages in the world
    • Called “insubordination” (Evans, 2007)

• **Unique pragmatic effects**
  – Seemingly irreducible to lexical properties of subordinators (Ohori, 1995; Takahashi, 1993)

• Previous studies tend to **treat SAC as a distinct construction** from “canonical” complex sentence featuring *kara/kedo*.
  – Multiple functions in each linguistic form?
What are problems with SACs?

• In real-time conversation, we can’t tell whether the AC is used as a part of a complex construction or as a stand-alone construction at the point which it is produced.

((Talking about smell of Kendo uniforms))

1 A: すごい酸っぱい[香りがしそう] Sounds like it smells sour.
2 B:                     [あ::] yeah.
3 C:                      [すごいよね ] = It surely does.
4 C: えでもあたし酸っぱいハ- (0.2) 香りってよくわかんないんだけど. But I don’t quite know what “sour smell” is like -kedo.
5  →  (1.0)
6 C:  酸っぱいの:]? Is it sour?
7 B:   [う:] ん Well, (chiba0332)
What are problems with SACs?

• Research Questions
  – How can we capture the pragmatic effects of stand-alone *kara/kedo* clauses?
  – How do stand-alone *kara/kedo* clauses relate to “canonical” usages of *kedo/kara* in complex sentence?
Data & Methodology
Data

• Recordings of naturally-occurring, everyday conversations among native speakers of Japanese

• Three data sources
  – Corpus constructed by the author
  – “CallFriend” Corpus (MacWhinny, 2007)
  – “Chiba-U Three Party Conversation Corpus” (Den & Enomoto, 2007)

• 18 hours in total
Methodology

• Qualitative Analysis
  – Using several findings from studies in Conversation Analysis as analytic tools

• Find prominent patterns
  – Patterns of interactional sequence
  – Patterns of co-occurring linguistic element (as indices of the interactional context)
Analysis (1):
Stand-alone *kara* clauses
Stand-alone *kara* clause

• Prominent patterns
  – Offering explanation answering to participants’ puzzlement
  – Correction of other participants’ wrong assumption
  – Making announcement with a large epistemic gap
Offering explanation answering to participants’ puzzlement

- Pattern of interactional sequence
  [participants’ puzzlement is manifested]
  ↓
  [explanation]-kara
Offering explanation answering to participants’ puzzlement

1 A: 7時- 7時半で予約してんのに (0.5) けえへん.
   *Although (I) reserve (seats) at 7 or 7:30, (she) doesn’t show up.*

2 (0.4)

3 B: hahahaha

4 E: hahahah

5 C: お:::. WOW.

6 (0.5)

7 → B: 営業は↑^ね_ 残業がつきものですから. ((gaze at C))
   *For sales people, you know, it is usual to work overtime -kara.*

8 C: う::::ん. Hmmmmm

9 D: う:::ん. Hmmmm (Three Couples)
Correction of other participants’ assumption

• Pattern of interactional sequence
  [other participants’ some assumption is manifested]
  ↓
  [contradicting information]-kara

• Pattern of co-occurring linguistics elements
  – Frequently prefaced by *Iya* (token of resisting to recipients’ presupposition; cf. Kushida & Hayashi, 2000)
  – Can be paraphrased using particle *tte* without significant difference
Correction of other participants’ assumption

1 A: 「げろの匂い[がす [る]ってゆった]ときさ, 向こうの[:,
   When you said “it smells like vomit,”

2 B: [uhhh[hh

3 C:  [uhuhu      ] [ .hh

4 A: .hh 方で店員さんが, いきなり包丁研ぎ始める°(の)°.’シュッ’
   A staff in the kitchen starts sharpening a knife, like “Shhuh”

5 (0.2)

6 C: ha[hahaha]

7 A: [「シュッ」] “Shhuh”

8 (.)

9 → B: いやいや[や. そんなホラーな, [話じゃないか[ら.
   No no, it’s not such a horror story -kara.

10 A: [「シュッ」] [「シュッ」] [「シュッ」
   “Shhuh”    “Shhuh”    “Shhuh” (chiba0432)
Announcement with a large epistemic gap

• Pattern of interactional sequence
  (no preceding “target” of the stand-alone kara clause)
  ↓
  [announcement]-kara
  ↓
  [display of interest/concern]
  ↓
  [storytelling]

• Pattern of co-occurring linguistics elements
  – Frequently 1st person pronouns, which are syntactically optional in Japanese, are explicated in utterance initial position
Announcement with a large epistemic gap

1 B: 電話した？=前.
   (Did you) call (me)? The other day.

2 A: (だ)Bさんとこもした. あたしはBさんとこにはメッセージのこさな- =
   (I) also called you. I didn’t leave you a message--

3 =先輩とこも残さなかったの: =
   (I) didn’t leave Sempai (a message), neither.

4 B: =は:ん.  OK.

5 A: どっちも:= Both.

6 B: =あ:ん.  OK.

7 A: .hでも:, たいがいちょっとあれだな:と思って[:， ]
   But (I started to) feel it’s a bit awkward, so,

8 B:  [うん.] uh-huh

9 A: anghah[もういいや. メッセージでも,] =一つでも残しとうどが[思って,]
   “All right, (I) try to leave just a message”

10a B:  [ちょっと残してみた? ]    Left a bit?
Announcement with a large epistemic gap

10b  B: [本当に?] >どうも[どうも.] < =  Really?  Thanks.

11  A: [hh ]

12  → B: =.h あたし(>ちょっと<), 十一月と十二月さ:
    I, well, during December and November,

13  A: うん.  Uh-huh

14  → B: 先輩と一緒に住むから.   ...am gonna live with Sempai -kara.

15  (0.7)

16  A: は?: ((with aspirated voice quality)) What?

17  B: ってかね, クミチャンがさ, ナルミんところいったっかったんだよもう.
    I mean, Kumi-chan left to Narumi’s place

18  A: あ:::やっぱり?: Oh, I expected it.


20  A: (0.2) h::m

21  B: <だから^ら>: , hhhh あ, 今はまた別の人が住んでんのね?:あそこに:.  
    SO, .hhh different person lives there now, you know.

22  A: うん uh-huh.  (CF1684)
Stand-alone *kara* clause

- Prominent patterns
  - Offering explanation answering to participants’ puzzlement
  - Correction of other participants’ wrong assumption
  - Making announcement with a large epistemic gap
Analysis (2):
Stand-alone *kedo* clauses
Stand-alone *kedo* clause

- Prominent patterns
  - “Response Cry” against “deviance from expectations”
  - Soliciting further description/explanation
  - Consulting about a present problem
“Response Cry” against “deviance from expectations”

- Pattern of interactional sequence
  [some event/state is deviant from speaker’s expectation]
  ↓
  [describing the event/state] - kedo
  ↓
  [attention from people co-present]

- Pattern of co-occurring linguistics elements
  – Prefaced by disjunction marker (e.g. え、でも)
  – Occur with Intensifiers (e.g. まじ、超、めっちゃ)
“Response Cry” against “deviance from expectations”

1  G: ((drops a cutlery basket from their table))

2  B: ((Walking back from the entrance of the restaurant))
    ていうか土[砂降り↑じゃ↓ない?]  
    I mean, isn’t it raining awfully hard?

3  G: [ eh heh heh heh    ]

4  E: かなり, ^すごいよ.=  Pretty awful.

5  G: =失礼いたしました. hh ((mimicking a voice of a restaurant staff))
    So sorry about that.

6  →  B: ((Walking back to her seat)) え, まじ土砂降りなんだけど.
    Wow, it’s really raining awfully hard -kedo.

7  E: (0.3)すごい[よ:?]  It is.

8  B:  [ ^す]すごい土砂降り. ((Sitting down))
    It’s raining awfully hard.

9  E: (0.8) [ ほんとすごいよ? ]  It surely is.

10 B:  [->ありがとうと<ございま][す. ] ((Passing a card back to G))
    Thank you very much.
Soliciting further description/explanation

• Pattern of interactional sequence
  [topic talk on “B-event”] (Labov & Fanshel, 1977)
  ↓
  [Hearsay/Evaluation]-*kedo*
  ↓
  [further description/explanation]

• Patten of co-occurring linguistics elements
  – Hearsay-verb
  – subjective/evaluative predicate
A: Passed an audition for a national tour. She.

B: Who?

A: Ivy.

B: Oh, awesome.

A: So, (she) will come to N.Y. for her rehearsal in February and (the show) will start in L.A. April.

B: Oh, really.

A: yeah

→ B: (I) heard that Paul passed some audition -kedo.

A: Paul?

B: Yeah.
A: なにに:. Which one?

B: ニューヨーク. N.Y.

(0.9)

B: 行くって私は引越し[するって聞いたよ?]  
I heard he is moving to N.Y.

A: [ < そ れ が あ ]行くって>本人も言ってたのよ:.  
Yeah, he SAID so.

(But), when I called Daniel, he said

B: [うん.] yeah

A: .h 僕とポールはオーシャンドームに戻ることを考えています」だって.  
"Listen, Paul and I are thinking to go back to the Ocean Dome”  
(CF1684)
Consulting about a present problem

- Pattern of interactional sequence
  [asymmetry in responsibility on a topic become evident]
  ↓
  [describing a present problem]-kedo
  ↓
  [coping with a problem / account for not do so]

- Pattern of co-occurring linguistics elements
  - Prefaced by vocative expressions (e.g. ねえねえ、すいません)
Consulting about a present problem

1 C: う:o:,.(.) やばいこれ. (0.5) >どうしよ<.
   Ooops! No! What should we do?

2 D: (0.5) あ::, 結構いってる? Oh, is it quite bad?

3 C: (..)いっチャーいったっちゃった. (0.8) あこれやばいやばい.
   Bad, bad. Oh, this is terrible.

4 (0.7)

5 F: [^ん:]. Yeah.

6 B: [ s : ]し[み ? ] Spot?

7 E: こぼれちゃったんすけど
   Excuse me, here too, wine is a bit spilled -kedo.

8 (0.7)

9 E: こぼれちゃったんすけど.

10 D: (0.3) huh hu hh ((looking at around E’s glass))

11 F: [^ん:].
Consulting about a present problem

12 (1.1)
13 C: あ, あ. Oh, oh.
14 (2.0) ((E is wiping table. D is looking at him.))
15 D: もうね:, やっぱここ, (.) 人が住んでる家なんでね:この:, You know, this house is owned by someone else, so,
16 (0.5)
17 B: 確か[に][ね:?] Right.
Stand-alone *kedo* clause

- Prominent patterns
  - “Response Cry” against “deviance from expectations”
  - Soliciting further description/explanation
  - Consulting about a present problem
Discussion: Subordinators as Interactional Resources
Subordinators as Interactional Resources

• Markings by subordinators
  – *Kara*
    • Marks a clause as evidence/rationale for its main clause
      -> indexing that the speaker can draw some conclusion based on that information
  – *Kedo*
    • Marks a clause as contrastive and backgrounded information with respect to its main clause
      -> indexing that the information as contrastive and backgrounded
Claiming Absolute Epistemic Primacy

• Kara: indexing that the speaker can draw some conclusion based on that information

=> Resource for claiming the speaker’s Absolute Epistemic Primacy over the recipient

  – The speaker knows about that matter much better than the recipient.
  – The speaker knows rightly, while the recipient’s assumption is wrong.
Claiming Absolute Epistemic Primacy

• Claiming the speaker’s **Absolute Epistemic Primacy** over the recipient
  – Offering explanation answering to participants’ puzzlement
  – Correction of other participants’ wrong assumption
  – Making announcement with a large epistemic gap
Contrasting speaker’s cognition against recipients’ cognition

• Kedo: indexing the information as contrastive and backgrounded

=> Resource for contrasting the speaker’s cognitive state against the recipients’ cognitive state
Contrasting speaker’s cognition against recipients’ cognition

- Contrasting the speaker’s cognitive state against the recipients’ cognitive state
  - “Response Cry” against “deviance from expectations”
  - Soliciting further description/explanation
  - Consulting about a present problem
Concluding remarks
Concluding remarks

• Japanese subordinators such as *kara* and *kedo* are also used as *utterance final particles*

• Lexical properties of *kara/kedo* are *employed* to achieve various interactional jobs

=> Subordinators as Interactional Resources
Thank you!