

L2 Learners of Japanese: Socialization of Private Assessments in a Host Family Setting

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Abstract

The present study uses audio- and video-recorded naturally occurring interactions to examine how five high-intermediate second language learners of Japanese are socialized to participate in assessment activities in interactions with their host parents during study abroad. Through direct participation as well as peripheral exposure to host parents' models of private assessments, students demonstrated increasing ability to shift to the plain form of speech to index a private, off-stage stance. Specifically, the analysis reveals how models and scaffolding in the form of co-construction, recasts, and repetition sequences socialized students to: (a) shift from the formal to the plain form for private assessments and (b) use more culturally and semantically appropriate assessment descriptors. The data also show that the students' socialization experiences differed in terms of their exposure to assessments in both the formal and the plain form, and how often they participated in assessments on repeated topics. Ultimately, the study shows that second language acquisition through socialization, namely through interactions with host family members, facilitated the students' linguistic, social, and cultural competence.

Résumé

La présente étude utilise des enregistrements audio et vidéo d'interactions qui se produisent naturellement pour examiner comment cinq apprenants du Japonais langue seconde à un haut niveau de l'intermédiaire sont socialisés à participer dans des activités d'évaluation avec leurs parents hôtes lors d'un séjour d'études à l'étranger. Par de la participation directe ainsi que de l'exposition périphérique aux modèles d'évaluations privées des parents hôtes, les étudiants ont démontré une habileté accrue de changer d'une forme de discours simple pour répertorier une position privée, en coulisse. Plus spécifiquement, cette analyse révèle comment le modelage et l'étayage sous la forme de co-constructions, de reformulations et de séquences répétitives ont socialisé les étudiants à : (a) changer du discours formel à une forme simple de discours pour les évaluations privées et (b) utiliser plus de descripteurs d'évaluation appropriés culturellement et sémantiquement. Les données montrent aussi que les expériences de socialisation des étudiants différaient quant à l'exposition aux évaluations dans les formes formelles et simples, ainsi qu'à la fréquence de leur participation à des évaluations sur des sujets répétés. Ultimement, cette étude démontre que l'acquisition de la langue seconde par le biais de la socialisation, notamment par les interactions avec les membres de la famille hôtesse, ont contribué aux compétences linguistiques, sociales et culturelles des étudiants.

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Introduction

Everyday talk is filled with assessment activities, speech acts that entail the evaluation of some “assessable” in the ongoing talk (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992). Accordingly, how learners of Japanese acquire the ability to participate in assessment activities has been of interest to researchers for the past two decades (Ishida, 2009; Masuda, 2009, 2011; Ohta, 2001; Yoshimi, 1999). Most of these studies focus on how learners produce assessments with sentence final particles (SFPs), which occur in utterance final position and index a variety of social meanings like epistemic and affective stance (Yoshimi, 1999). Assessments with SFPs are addressee-oriented, made public because they include the hearer. For instance, *ne*-marked assessments (e.g., *samui ne* [It’s cold, isn’t it]) index alignment and shared knowledge of the assessable (Masuda, 2009, 2011; Yoshimi, 1999). *Yo*, another SFP used with assessments (e.g., *samui yo!* [It’s cold I’m telling you!]), indexes the speaker’s epistemic authority and, like *ne*, is addressee-oriented (Kamio, 1997; Morita, 2012). In contrast, assessments with no SFPs are private assessments expressed in what is called the “bare plain form” (a plain speech style with no SFPs), which denotes a lack of addressee awareness, an off-stage personal evaluation (Maynard, 1993).

Of the abovementioned studies, only one has examined how learners are socialized to produce assessments, including the use of SFPs. Ohta’s (2001) year-long study of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) classrooms focuses on how learning is socially constructed through participation in interactional routines; specifically, Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) and extended assessment routines. Although her findings are important, the results cannot be generalized to socialization in non-classroom environments. For instance, her students were often restricted to producing third-turn assessments with SFP *ne* (indexing addressee-oriented alignment) in strictly structured IRF routines. They rarely had opportunities to produce private assessments without SFPs like “*sugoi!*” (Wow!), that were non-aligning, non-addressee oriented. Moreover, unlike non-classroom interaction, Ohta’s (2001) students were socialized through overt models and corrective recasts and scaffolding (e.g., written scripts).

Socialization into indexical uses of linguistic forms is particularly difficult to achieve in second language (L2) classrooms. Ohta’s (2001) students produced their assessments in the formal form even in learner-learner dyads when the plain form would have been more appropriate for same-age classmates. Research (Cook, 1996; Saito, 2010) has shown that Japanese native speakers (NSs) conversing formally shift to the plain form for assessments that index a private, off-stage persona. Study abroad research has also shown that even though L2 learners begin study abroad speaking almost entirely in the formal form, they acquire some ability to shift to the plain form for speech acts like private assessments (Iwasaki, 2010; Iwasaki & Kizu, 2011; McMeekin, 2014; Taguchi, 2015). What remains to be seen is how these learners, despite their predominant use of the formal form, are socialized in the study abroad environment to do this.

To this end, the present study analyzes the interactions of five high-intermediate L2 learners of Japanese in daily interactions with their host families over a period of 5 to 8 weeks of study abroad. The goal is to describe how students acquire the ability to produce non-aligning, private assessments in the plain form, noting in particular what role

socialization processes such as modeling, scaffolding, repeats/imitation, and recasts play in students' developing ability to use: (a) the plain form for private assessments and (b) appropriate assessment vocabulary. This study thus contributes generally to research on the benefits of non-classroom communicative settings and specifically to research on how L2 learners acquire language skills and/or are socialized to participate appropriately in interactions with NSs in a study abroad context (Barron, 2006; Cook, 2008; Di Silvio, Donovan, & Malone, 2015; Iwasaki, 2013; Iwasaki & Kizu, 2011; Kinginger, 2015; McMeekin, 2014).

Background

Socialization and Assessment Activities

Socialization is when novices gain social, cultural, and linguistic competence through interaction with more competent interlocutors (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Very few studies explore how novices are socialized to produce assessments and/or participate in assessment activities (DuFon, 2006; Ohta, 1999). This study draws on Ohta's (2001) longitudinal classroom study about how JFL students learn to participate in assessment routines. She proposed that learning through interactional routines follows a gradual process. She showed first how learners' ratified observation of instructors' listener responses during IRF/assessment routines socialized them to use appropriate evaluative vocabulary, recognize turn sequencing, and understand the use of *ne*, a particle that indexes shared alignment. The next step was direct participation in learner-learner semi-scaffolded (i.e., scripted) interactions that prompted them to include different assessments in the third-turn follow-up response. This progressed from mere repetition of the models provided to independent production of a variety of assessments that differed prosodically to indicate emphasis and affect. Lastly, unaided participation in the routines provided learners with opportunities to practice without any guided help. Ohta (2001) also looked at the learners' use of SFP *ne*, used to express alignment with the assessment. The learners were able to progress from producing no assessments, to producing assessments without SFPs to using formulaic assessments expressing alignment with SFP *ne* (*ii desu ne* [That's good]) to producing those same assessments marked by differential use of prosody with *ne* (*ii desu ne:::* [O::h that's great]), to finally varying their assessment types to express feelings like empathy (*zannen desu ne* [Oh that's too bad]).

This entire process was facilitated not only through peripheral and direct participation but also by other socialization processes, including modeling and scaffolding. Models provide learners with positive evidence of what is linguistically appropriate in any given routine. Scaffolding is any kind of assisted performance that enables learners to produce utterances slightly beyond their current level (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). Recasts, for instance, provide both positive and negative evidence (evidence of what constitutes errors in a language) "by changing one or more sentence components while still referring to its central meaning" (Long, 1996, p. 434). Question-answer and *ne*-marked sequences can also provide scaffolding that prompt repetition or imitation (Moore, 2012; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Ohta (2001) showed, for instance, that students repeat utterances and recasts in teacher-fronted interactions. Such "uptake" constitutes production, albeit more rote, and is often cited as an important indicator of learning—the evidence has been "noticed" and incorporated into the learner's interlanguage (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Schmidt, 1990).

Negotiation, a process used to deal with problems in understanding (through confirmation, clarification requests, etc.), as well constitutes a type of scaffolding that provides learners with comprehensible input, positive evidence (Long, 1981), and promotes output (Swain, 1985). Similarly, co-construction, such as finishing a learner's utterance, is a type of assisted performance and one that research has shown is quite typical of Japanese NS-NS interaction (Hayashi, 2003). What is most important, however, is that, whatever form it takes, scaffolding positions learners into what sociocultural theorists call the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the gap between what a learner can do without assistance versus with assistance, where learning is thought to occur (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978).

Speech Style, Assessments, and Study Abroad

There are two main Japanese speech styles: formal and plain. The formal form indexes an on-stage, formal stance while the plain form indexes a private, informal stance that decreases interpersonal distance. Assessments meant to index an off-stage, private rather than on-stage, public persona, such as when a speaker remarks “*sugoi!*” (Cool!) or “*ah hidoi*” (That's terrible), are naturally expressed in the plain form without SFPs. Contrast this with assessments in the formal form (e.g., *sugoi desu* [That's cool]), which index awareness of the addressee and a public display mode (Cook, 1996, 2006; Maynard, 1991). To illustrate this, Jung (2010) has described how in a cooking program, Japanese hosts shifted to the plain form to make personal assessments of the food (e.g., *oishii* [It's delicious]). This allowed the host to shift from a public stance (toward the audience/chef) to a lack of one, which allowed for private expression in a public domain (TV).

Since using the plain form is a positive politeness strategy meant to relay meta-messages of reduced interpersonal distance, friendliness, and solidarity (Usami, 2002), L2 learners who do not master the use of the plain form can be perceived as lacking in affect or genuineness (Iwasaki, 2010). Unlike the L2 classroom, which is often conducted primarily in the formal form, study abroad environments offer considerable exposure to the plain form through peer and host family interactions (Cook, 2008; Iino, 1996; McMeekin, 2014). This occurs so much that during or after study abroad, L2 learners demonstrate improved use of speech styles (Iwasaki, 2010; McMeekin, 2014; Taguchi, 2015). McMeekin (2014) in particular noted that even though her participants used mainly the formal form during their stay, they began to use the plain form appropriately in genuine social interactions, including shifting to the plain form for private assessments. The present study extends McMeekin's (2014) line of inquiry from simply examining learners' use of the plain form to investigating how learners are socialized to shift to the plain form and use appropriate descriptors in private assessments. In addition, while a detailed analysis of students' SFP use is beyond the scope of this paper, there is some comparison of assessments that occur with and without SFPs to illustrate the difference between addressee (public) and non-addressee oriented (private) assessments (see previous explanation of SFPs).

The Current Study

Method

In order to examine how students were socialized to produce private assessments in the plain form, conversation analysis was used to analyze assessment activities in conversations with their host family members. For each student, this included three 50-minute audio and video recordings taken from the beginning (first week), middle, and end of the study abroad period. This resulted in a total of 12.5 hours of recorded data. Line by line, the assessments from each of these recordings were analyzed and compared to reveal patterns of socialization and vocabulary as well as speech style use. The “remote observation method” of having the participants set up the equipment and record themselves without the researcher present was used to avoid “observer’s paradox” (Iino, 1996).

Participants

The participants in this study were JFL learners who participated in a summer language program at one of two Japanese summer language institutes. They were five university students, one male and four females (pseudonyms: Amy, Brad, Jamie, Lynn, and Mandy). All were middle-class, Caucasian, NSs of English between the ages of 19 to 24 years old. Prior to the study, they had all studied Japanese for 2 years at different universities. Brad and Lynn were Canadians who studied at Canadian universities while Amy, Jamie, and Mandy were Americans studying at American universities. None had been on a study abroad program to Japan before. The length of their stay varied: Brad’s stay was 5 weeks, Lynn’s was 6, and Amy’s, Jamie’s, and Mandy’s were 8 weeks. Using a placement test, they were all placed in a high-intermediate class in their respective study abroad institutions. All five knew the plain form and were able to produce the plain form linguistically as indicated by their placement tests.

The students did not have many opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities such as clubs or jobs outside of the language institute. They reported that their interactions with NSs were mostly limited to those who worked at the institute where they studied (e.g., teacher, staff), their host family members, and occasionally their host families’ friends and extended family. They all lived with a host family for their entire stay. The host families included a host mother (HM) and father (HF), with no children and no other host students living in the house with them. Brad’s and Jamie’s families had never hosted before, but the others had hosted students for 4 to 10 years. Whereas all the HMs participated in all three recordings, only two HFs participated: Amy’s once and Mandy’s three times.

Table 1

Participant Background Information (Ordered From Shortest to Longest Stay)

Student	Class Level	Age (in yrs)	Length of Stay (in wks)	Recordings (in week #)	Host Family Member (age in yrs)
Brad	High-Int.	24	5	1, 3, 5	HM (42)
Lynn	High-Int.	22	6	1, 3, 6	HM (61)
Amy	High-Int.	19	8	1, 5, 8	HM (55) HF (60)
Jamie	High-Int.	20	8	1, 5, 8	HM (63)
Mandy	High-Int.	20	8	1, 5, 8	HM (63) HF (65)

Note. HM = Host mother; HF = Host father.

As mentioned previously, this study is an extension of McMeekin (2014), in which the same students participated. McMeekin's (2014) study revealed that the students spoke mainly in the formal form because they believed that they have to speak politely to their host parents. The host parents, however, spoke mainly in the plain form, except for Brad's HM, who spoke mainly in the formal form.

Coding and Analysis

The recordings were transcribed and examined using the transcription codes outlined in Appendix A. First, instances of both students' and host family members' private assessments were identified. Assessments were defined as utterances that expressed the speaker's "experience of the event, including their affective involvement in the referent being assessed" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992, p. 155). Private assessments were identified by whether the content of the utterance was deemed as solely in the speaker's territory (opinion, private thought, etc.) and not in the hearer's (Kamio, 1997). Private assessments can also be identified by accompanying linguistic and non-linguistic features. These include things such as exclamatory interjections (e.g., *aah*, *waa*, *hee*, Hasegawa, 2006), facial expressions indicating disgust, surprise, or delight, and higher volume indicating spontaneity, emotion, or emphasis. Also included are other prosodic cues such as stress, vowel lengthening, and lower volume (indicative of monologic or soliloquy-like speech).

In addition, in all the assessment transcripts, the formal form is underlined and plain form is bold-faced for easy identification. *Deshoo* (the tentative form of *desu*), however, is marked as plain form. As Cook (2008) pointed out, although *deshoo* has a plain form counterpart, *daroo*, it sounds rough and therefore, *deshoo* is often used as plain form speech.

Analysis

Student Use of Formal Form for Assessments

The host family members used the plain form for private assessments whereas students often used the formal form. The data thus revealed several exchanges in which the formal form was used for private, spontaneous assessments that would have been more appropriately expressed in the plain form. The period in time when the students mainly used the formal form for private assessments is considered the novice stage. The following

exchange illustrates one such example between Mandy (M) and her HM who recorded their conversations at dinnertime.

Excerpt 1: Mandy (Recording 1, week 1)

- 1 HM: *un tempura sore irechatte* (points to sauce)) (Yes, it's tempura. Dip it in there.)
- 2 M: ((takes a bite, chews)) (.5) OISHII DESU! (It's good!)
- 3 HM: *oishii deshoo taberareru deshoo* (It's good right? You can eat it right?)
- 4 M: *un oishii desu* (Yes, it's good.)

After tasting the food, Mandy emphatically describes it as delicious/good (line 2). This phrase sounds somewhat unnatural in the formal form as it is a spontaneous and personal reaction to the food, as indicated by the exclamation and louder volume. The same assessment appears subsequently in line 4. Here the plain form is more appropriate as it is not a spontaneous, personal reaction and it is in response to the HM's question, therefore is more addressee-oriented than line 2. This next exchange with Lynn (L) and her HM shows a similar phenomenon.

Excerpt 2: Lynn (Recording 1, week 1)

- 1 HM: *kore kinjo no hito kara moratta no* ((holding up key chain)) (I received this from a neighbour.)
- 2 L: *a:h kawaii desu!* ((eyes widen, mouth opens, smiles)) (A:h it's cute!)
- 3 HM: *kawaii deshoo? u:nto oosutoraria no omiyage* (It is cute, isn't it? U:m, it's an Australian souvenir.)
- 4 L: *a:h* (A:h.)
- 5 HM *lynn san suki nara ageru yo* (If you like it, I'll give it to you)
- 6 L: *hontoo desu ka. ureshii desu!* ((eyes widen, smiles)) (Really? I'm happy!)

Although facial cues, the use of an exclamatory interjection (*a:h*), and the emphatic tone indicate that Lynn's reaction (line 2) is a spontaneous utterance expressing her thoughts, the assessment is in the formal rather than plain form. The HM agrees with and repeats Lynn's assessment in line 3. A similarly affect-laden private assessment (line 6) is expressed in the formal form, when Lynn shows surprise and delight that the HM has offered her the key chain.

The students' assessments in both these excerpts are indexing two conflicting social meanings at once. On the one hand, emphatic assessments with facial expressions

indicating surprise or delight are thought to connote private, off-stage assessments normally expressed in the plain form. However, the students' use of the formal form contradicts this by indexing distance and increased awareness of the addressee. This duality makes the utterances seem awkward at best and may be interpreted as disingenuous or lacking in personal candour (N. Iwasaki, personal communication, December 16, 2011). Their behaviour indicates that they do not yet understand that shifting to the plain form is not impolite, rather, it indexes a personal, off-stage stance, and is a positive politeness strategy that builds rapport and intimacy.

Modeling and Peripheral Exposure

Studies have shown that positive evidence through modeling is the dominant type of input learners receive (Carroll, 2001). Indeed, the present data contain several instances of host parent models of private assessments as in this exchange where Amy (A) is talking about summer plans:

Excerpt 3: Amy (Recording 2, week 5)

- 1 A: ...*natsu itaria de um (.1) ryokoo suru tsumori desu* (Next year I intend to um
(.1) travel in Italy.)
- 2 HM: *he: sugoi!* (A:h wow!)
- 3 A: *hai, soshite sotsu-sotsugyo shimasu* (Yes, then graduate.)

The HM's response (line 2) to Amy's travel plans is a private assessment in the bare plain form. The absence of a SFP, for instance *ne*, marks the utterance as unshared, which denotes her own personal feeling or thought on the matter.

In terms of acquisition, one questions how noticeable plain form private assessments are because the host parents speak predominantly in the plain form anyway. An argument toward noticing here is that private assessments are strongly affect-laden and include indexical cues such exclamatory tokens (e.g., *eh*, *ah*), vowel lengthening, higher volume, and emphatic intonation, marking them as highly expressive and distinct from other parts of the dialogue, and therefore more likely to be noticed. Moreover, these types of assessments often occur as single, isolated words, simple to process because they lack a deeper sentence structure. It is therefore likely that these models were highly noticeable.

Unlike the exchanges where private assessments were couched in plain form speech, Brad's (B) interactions with his HM provided an extra layer of input (positive evidence) through exposure to shifts from the formal to the plain form. Brad's HM used the formal form with Brad more than the other HMs did with their students. Oftentimes this was to index an on-stage, teacher voice (Cook, 2008), as occurs in the following exchange:

Excerpt 4: Brad (Recording 1, week 1)

- 1 HM: *natsu wa sonna ni atsukunai desu ka?* (Summer isn't that hot is it?)
- 2 B: *natsu wa sanjuu ni do gurai desu.* (In summer it's about 32 degrees.)
- 3 HM: *he:: **atsu:i*** (Ah that's ho:t)
- 4 B: *fuyu wa sanjyuu do- ah mainasu [desu=*
- 5 HM: *[eh? =**samu:i!** (.3) **samumukunai no?***
 ((widens eyes, head moves forward)) (What? That's co:ld! (.3) Isn't that cold?)
- 6 B: *hai, **samui** desu* (Yes, that's cold.)

Though she starts with the formal form (line 1), the HM models appropriate shifts to the bare plain form for private assessments in lines 3 and 5. The lack of SFPs indexes a non-shared, private assessment (i.e., I think that's cold!), whereas the SFP *no* in line 5 along with the upward intonation and use of the negative marks the utterance as addressee-oriented (Isn't that cold?), which prompts Brad to answer.

Exchanges like this are important because the shifts demonstrate that even when speaking in predominantly formal speech one can change to the plain form for certain types of utterances. It also juxtaposes bare plain form utterances that index a non-shared, personal evaluation with plain form utterances with SFPs that index communicative, public evaluations. Whether these features are noticed by Brad is not known. What can be said definitively is that NS models of shifts to the plain form for private assessments add another layer of positive evidence that mixing speech styles is possible in certain environments.

Scaffolding

Co-Construction. While positive evidence alone may not be sufficient for acquisition, one of the main tenets of socialization is that scaffolding provides novices with assistance in ways that facilitate linguistic development. Different forms of scaffolding were found in the present data, including co-construction, negotiation, question-answer, *ne*-marked sequences, and recasts. There were several exchanges, for instance, when host members co-constructed students' sentences, providing appropriate assessment vocabulary expressed in the plain form, as in this exchange:

Excerpt 5: Mandy (Recording 2, week 5)

- 1 M: *kore wa chott:o u:m* ((holding up apple)) (This is a li:ttle u:m..)
- 2 HM: ((takes apple, presses finger to it)) *a:h dame **da** (.2) **dame da yawarakai***
 (A:h it's no good, no good, it's soft.)

- 3 M: *a:h yawarakai* (A:h it's soft.)
 4 HM: *un dame da* (Yeah, it's no good.)

Hesitation markers (vowel lengthening, fillers) in line 1 indicate that Mandy is having trouble finding a word to describe the apple. After checking the apple, the HM (line 2) provides two different appropriate assessments in the bare plain form to complete Mandy's unfinished sentence. Mandy repeats the last assessment in line 3 exactly as the HM has said it—in the bare plain form. This is preceded by a change-of-state token, indicating a change from not knowing to knowing that this is the sought-for word. A lack of upward intonation suggests that Mandy already knows the word and has realized that it can be used to describe the apple. The HM responds (line 4) by repeating one of her assessments from line 2.

From the standpoint of second language acquisition, this type of co-construction meets the requirements of providing positive evidence in the form of salient, comprehensible input and promoting learner uptake. In terms of input, Mandy is provided with not one but two evaluative assessments for expressing her meaning and one of them was repeated three times. Both assessments were provided in the bare plain form. In addition to the quantity and the quality of the input, it was provided at exactly the moment when it was most likely to be noticed, understood, and hence facilitate linguistic development (ZPD). As for output, Mandy's change-of-state token and her immediate repetition of the assessment in the bare plain form make visible her noticing, understanding, and uptake; these are conditions required for acquisition.

Negotiation. Similar to co-construction, assisted performance through negotiation was found throughout the data. The following is an example of how instances of non-understanding resulted in negotiated input that affected the student's output. Here, Lynn is talking about Japanese dramas with her HM.

Excerpt 6: Lynn (Recording 1, week 1)

- 1 L: *naito kun ga suki desu!* (I like Knight!)
 2 HM: *un naito kun kakko ii ne* ((nodding head)) (Yeah, Knight is good looking isn't he?)
 3 L: *kakko ii?* ((slight raised eyebrows)) (Good looking?)
 4 HM: *un (.2) hansamu* ((nods head)) (Yeah (.2) handsome)
 5 L: *hai kakko ii (.2) watashi no tomodachi [a:h nite imasu]?=*
 (Yes, he's good looking. (.2) He looks like a:h my friend?)
 6 HM: *[un (Yeah) = he: soo? (O:h, it that so?)*

7 L: *hai* (Yes.)

8 HM: *robotto dakara kakko ii* (Because he's a robot he's good looking.)

Lynn begins the exchange with an emphatic assessment about a character in a drama. Typical at this stage is her use of formal form despite the private, emphatic, personal tone of the assessment. The HM agrees (line 2), but offers a different *ne*-marked assessment, addressee-oriented in that it includes Lynn in the assessment and prompts her to respond. Lynn repeats the assessment in the bare plain form with rising intonation, seeking clarification (line 3). The HM clarifies the word in line 4 as meaning "handsome." Lynn agrees with and repeats the assessment (*kakko ii*) in the bare plain form (line 7). The HM later repeats the same assessment in line 8, adding an additional comment to it.

In this case, *kakko ii* has become comprehensible input (Long, 1981) and then output through negotiation (Swain, 1985), both elements that are essential for language acquisition. In terms of comprehensible input, the assessment is not only defined and clarified, it is modeled twice by the HM in different sentences that juxtapose shared *ne*-marked alignment and non-shared private assessment. Moreover, Lynn displays uptake or output by repeating not only the word, but also how the word is said, in the bare plain form. Negotiation within assessment activities thus provided the students with opportunities to learn meanings of assessments they did not know and practice their output based on the input provided by their family members.

Recasts and recast-like utterances. Studies have shown that in asymmetric interactions, other-correction like recasts or repairs is restricted (Hosoda, 2000; Wong, 2000) and often embedded in the interaction, almost "*en passant*" (Kurhila, 2006, p. 33). The excerpt below (the continuation of Excerpt 6 above) shows that recasts to reformulate utterances in assessment routines do occur *en passant* as in this one:

Excerpt 6 continued: Lynn (Recording 1, week 1)

9 L: *soo desu ne (.2) um riiko mo kirei desu.* (Yes, that's true. (.2) Um Riiko is also pretty.)

10 HM: *u:n kawaii ne* (Yeah, she's cute isn't she?)

11 M: *hai, kawaii* ((slight head nod)) (Yes, she's cute.)

In line 9, Lynn shifts back to the formal form to assess the female lead in the drama as "pretty." The HM displays alignment in line 10, but reformulates the assessment to *kawaii* (cute) with SFP *ne*, which prompts Lynn to respond. Lynn agrees and repeats the HM's assessment (line 11) of *kawaii* in the bare plain form.

Although nothing is grammatically wrong with Lynn's assessment, the HM reformulates it to model a more appropriate way of assessing the item at hand. One could argue that line 2 in Excerpt 6 is also a type of *en passant* recast, though perhaps more ambiguous than line 10. Both recasts function as a vehicle for socialization by providing sociocultural information that a common assessment of a handsome young man is *kakko ii*

and a more appropriate assessment of a young female is *kawaii* (cute) rather than *kirei* (pretty).

These recasts occur a number of times in the data, mostly to tweak lexical choices rather than grammatical errors. Another example occurs in the following excerpt when Brad uses the word *ookii* (big) in line 1 when describing Canadian streets. His HM recasts this assessment in her response as *hiroii* (broad), a more semantically appropriate word, which Brad repeats in line 3.

Excerpt 7: Brad (Recording 2, week 3)

- 1 B: *kanada no ma- michi wa O:OKII desu* ((hands display “bigness”))
(Canadian streets are bi:g.)
- 2 HM: *un hiroi deshoo, nihon yori* (Yeah, they are broad, aren’t they, more than Japan.)
- 3 B: *hai, hiroi* (Yes, they are broad.)

The fact that these reformulations are embedded in the ongoing discourse, not marked in any way, might suggest that they are not as salient or effective as other types of assistance. However, students clearly oriented to these recasts as corrections (or at the very least, as providing a better descriptor) as shown by how they repeated and incorporated them into their utterances, meaning they were noticed and taken up. The recasts thus functioned as a vehicle for socialization by providing both positive and negative evidence of appropriate lexical choices for assessing things.

Question-Answer and *ne*-marked sequences. Several instances of scaffolding in the data involved the host parent asking a question or providing a *ne*-marked assessment that simultaneously prompted the students and provided them with the appropriate answer, a model of the assessment in the bare plain form. Consider, for instance, this exchange between Amy and her HM:

Excerpt 8: Amy (Recording 2, week 5)

- 1 HM: *doo datta? tanoshikatta?* (How was it? Fun?)
- 2 A: *hai tanoshikatta* (Yeah, it was fun.)
- 3 HM: *ame futta no ni?* (Even though it rained?)
- 4 A: *un tanoshikatta* (Yes, it was fun.)

In line 1, the HM essentially asks a question and, at the same time, provides the correct response. The preferred response, if answering affirmatively, is to repeat the assessment as it was proffered, in the bare plain form, which Amy does twice (lines 2 and 4).

Similarly, when a host parent offers a *ne*-marked assessment, it prompts the student to respond by repeating the assessment already provided. This is demonstrated in the following example where Jamie (J) and her HM are talking about a lecture at the summer institute:

Excerpt 9: Jamie (Recording 2, week 5)

- 1 HM: *ya: tsumannakatta ne* (A:h it was boring, wasn't it?)
 2 J: *hai tsumaranakatta* (Yeah, it was boring.)
 3 HM: *ne?! (Right!?)*
 4 J: *hai (.1) soshite muzukashikatta desu!* (Yes, and it was difficult!)

The HM produces a *ne*-marked assessment in line 1 that indexes shared assessment and prompts Jamie to respond. Jamie aligns herself with the assessment by repeating it in the plain form, and then shifts back to the formal form for a different assessment in line 4, even though it is a private assessment that would be better expressed in the plain form.

In both cases, the host parents' question-answer and *ne*-marked utterances provided scaffolding for the students to produce the appropriate response. The scaffolding that promotes students' repetition in these and all the examples above is deceptively simple and often overlooked as facilitative of acquisition. Repetition in L2 socialization contexts is not merely imitation. Rather, it provides learners opportunities to observe, become aware of, and practice linguistic forms with the result of becoming increasingly autonomous in their use of the form or in their performance of the activity in question (Moore, 2012). While the repetitions generally lack the autonomy and spontaneity of self-produced private assessments, they are constitutive of a process by which learners become aware of, understand, and participate in assessment activities as novices with limited knowledge of linguistic and cultural practices. Thus, it is through production, often in the form of scaffolding that promotes repetition, that the students are socialized to use not only appropriate descriptors, but also the plain form for certain types of assessments.

Developmental Stages

Novice stage. In this stage, the students used the formal form for private assessments in their first recordings (see Excerpts 1 and 2) but still produced plain form private assessments, albeit through various forms of scaffolding (Excerpts 5 to 9).

Intermediate stage. It was not until the second recordings that students began to display independent shifts to the bare plain form to index private assessments. In this intermediate stage, appropriate shifts occurred in some places but not in others. Consider this example, in which Jamie talks about her job as a bartender having to clean up customers' vomit:

Excerpt 10: Jamie (Recording 2, week 5)

- 1 J: *ah sono ato sou- souji shimasu. KIMOCHI WARUI!*
(Ah and after that I clean it. It's disgusting!)
- 2 HM: *ah taihen* (That's tough.)
- 3 J: *hai, ano::* ((makes disgusted face, hold up hands)) (Yes, u::m...)
- 4 HM: *a:h iya da?* (A:h, it's gross?)
- 5 J: *hai! iya da!* ((makes disgusted face)) *KIRAI DESU!* (Yes! It's gross! I hate it!)

Jamie seamlessly and appropriately shifts to the plain form for a private assessment in line 1. In line 3 she initiates a word search, to which the HM responds by offering an assessment that completes Jamie's utterance. The rising intonation prompts Jamie to confirm the proffered assessment, which she does in line 5 by repeating it. Rather than mere imitation however, Jamie "revoices" (Moore, 2012) it by adding exclamation and emphasis, thereby infusing it with her own affect and stance ("It's gross!"). However, in that same line, Jamie shifts back into the formal form to express a spontaneous, affect-laden private assessment ("I hate it!"). By not shifting to the plain form for this assessment, she reveals an incomplete understanding of the plain form as more socially appropriate in this instance.

What we see here is an interlanguage phase where Jamie makes an appropriate shift to the plain form for a private assessment in line 1, is assisted in producing the private assessment in line 5, revoices it to make it her own, but then fails to shift to the plain form in line 5. This is typical of all the students at this stage, where ability to shift to the plain form to index private assessment is not yet solidified.

Advanced stage. All the students showed a more consistent shifting to the plain form to index private assessments somewhere between their second and third recordings. This was especially apparent in interactions where students engaged in repeated assessment activities about specific topics for each recording, like Lynn's repeated exchanges about Japanese dramas as in this example:

Excerpt 11 Lynn (Recording 3, week 6)

- 1 HM: *ah ano: matsumoto jun?* (Ah u:m Jun Matsumoto?)
- 2 L: *hai kakko ii!* (Yes, he's good looking!)
- 3 HM: *ah soo ne kakko ii ne* (Yes, that's right. He is good looking, isn't he?)

In line 2, Lynn produces a private assessment of an actor as *kakko ii!* (good looking) using the bare plain form. Recall that in Excerpt 6 Lynn did not know this vocabulary and repeated it after her HM explained it to her. Lynn's use of *kakko ii* in line 2 is indicative of

her understanding of this phrase, that it can be used appropriately here to assess young men and that, as this assessment is a private one, it can be expressed in the bare plain form.

Research has shown that this is how children acquire their first language (see Lightbown & Spada, 2013, for a review). In beginning stages children imitate words/phrases in particular contexts they are just starting to understand. They may not necessarily be aware of the full range of meaning or use nor do they always know how to linguistically manipulate them, however, after more exposure to and practice of the word/phrase, they develop an understanding of how it is used and in what contexts, its full range of meaning, and how to manipulate it.

Besides using the bare plain form for spontaneous, emphatic private assessments, the data showed that students started using the bare plain form for private assessments that index other similar meanings, for instance, for soliloquy-like utterances as in this example:

Excerpt 12 Amy (Recording 2, week 5)

1 HM: *ah soo desu ka. u::n soko no ah tonari ga hanarete imasu ka neebaa?*

(Oh, is that right. U::m there ah is the neighbour a distance away?)

2 A: *u:n muzukashii ah tonari wa uh noojoo desu?*

(U:m this is difficult, next door is a farm?)

Both Amy and her HM are using the formal form, but Amy shifts into the bare plain form in line 2 for a private assessment (“It’s difficult”) that expresses her frustration. She then shifts back into the formal form in the same line. This excerpt shows that Amy has acquired some ability to shift into the plain form to index private soliloquy-like thoughts.

Shifting to the bare plain form for private assessments to express humour and build rapport was also noted in the data as in this exchange between Brad and his HM:

Excerpt 13: Brad (Recording 3, week 5)

1 HM: *kyoo no rekuchaa wa omoshirokatta desu ka?* (Was today’s lecture interesting?)

2 B: *uun tsumaranakatta:* (No, it was bo:ring.)

3 HM: *ah ha ha tsumaranakatta?* (Ah ha ha It was boring?)

Brad’s HM starts out this exchange using the formal form in her characteristic manner. Brad shifts to the bare plain form in line 2 to make a private assessment of the lecture as boring. His use of the bare plain form along with his lengthening of the final vowel, perhaps in an attempt to demonstrate just how boring the lecture was, suggests an attempt to reduce interpersonal distance by indexing a tone of humour or playfulness. The HM’s laugh and subsequent shift to the plain form to repeat his assessment (line 3) displays

alignment but also suggests that she orients to this part of the interaction as humorous and a decrease in interpersonal distance.

To summarize, what the students demonstrate in these later stages is a varied use of the bare plain form to index: spontaneous and emphatic private assessments, soliloquy-like assessments, assessments that show reduced interpersonal distance, and humour to build rapport.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study sheds light on how L2 learners of Japanese are socialized to use the bare plain form for private assessments in interactions with their NS host family members. In particular, the analysis revealed that there were multiple layers of socialization including peripheral exposure to private assessments through modeling and direct participation in assessment routines with scaffolded help.

Peripheral exposure to private assessments modeled by the host parents provided the students with positive evidence not only of appropriate indexical uses of the bare plain form and co-occurring features, but also of semantically appropriate lexical items to use for assessments. Unlike the other students, Brad's HM modeled shifts from the formal to the plain form for private assessment, providing Brad with positive evidence of how and in what circumstances NSs might shift into the plain form.

The data also revealed that students' production of private assessments was scaffolded in various ways. Co-construction stemming from a word search or negotiation occurred as when a HM would finish a student's sentence with a plain form assessment and the student would reproduce the assessment in the plain form as a repetition. Embedded recasts were also an important part of scaffolding as when HMs recast students' assessments to introduce more culturally acceptable descriptors that reflected certain cultural norms and values, and that the students then incorporated into their own utterances. Repetitions in these as well as in question-answer and *ne*-marked sequences also scaffolded students to produce plain form assessments already modeled by the host parent in the previous turn. Repetition was an important layer of socialization that provided comprehensible input and opportunities for production. As Moore (2012) pointed out, "repetition is at the heart of language socialization" and "is central to the formation and the performance of the competent and creative speaker/member" (p. 220).

All of these layers of socialization contributed to students' progression from using the formal form for private expression, to repeating or producing plain form assessments in scaffolded exchanges, to being able to more independently provide their own private assessments in the bare plain form without scaffolding. This was most evident in exchanges on repeated topics (e.g., food, dramas), which provided students with multiple opportunities to learn culturally appropriate vocabulary and linguistic and non-linguistic features of assessments in a predictable framework. Although this progression was not without lapses, students demonstrated gradual competence in shifting to the plain form not only for spontaneous, emphatic private assessments but also for soliloquy-like assessments and assessments that reduced interpersonal distance by creating an atmosphere of playfulness and humour, which contributed to the students' ability to index social meanings important to creating their desired social personae in Japanese. Ultimately, their pragmatic competence in producing private assessments indicated that they learned the complex

associations between the bare plain form, affective and epistemic stance, and co-occurring linguistic and non-linguistic features.

There is some indication that raising students' awareness of indexical uses of speech styles through explicit instruction may facilitate pragmatic development (Ishida, 2007). In fact, the ability to raise students' awareness may be an advantage the classroom setting has over the study abroad host family setting. Nevertheless, complex associations between linguistic forms and their indexical uses are less likely to be learned in a traditional JFL classroom. This is not only because the formal form is used more often and students are not taught to shift styles, but also because the focus is on *ne*-marked, shared assessments. Chances for students to be exposed to and practice, for example, spontaneous private assessments that are not shared are rare in the classroom. Classrooms are also unlikely to provide the depth and complexity of interactions needed to master the subtleties of speech style shifts that index both affective and epistemic stance. In contrast, private assessments in the study abroad host family setting are frequent (Cook, 2012), embedded within the ongoing interaction (vs. pedagogical practice), and encourage students to express their affective stance toward a wide range of assessables (e.g., objects, events, topics). Indeed, the present analysis shows that learners in the host family setting were provided with ample opportunities to observe and engage in personalized interaction that promoted the foregrounding of their private psychological states (thoughts, opinions, and feelings) in different scaffolded and unscaffolded environments using multiple linguistic and non-linguistic resources, such as speech style, lexicon, pragmatic particles, facial expressions, and prosodic cues.

While the present study is suggestive of how learners are socialized to use the bare plain form to index private assessments, the small number of participants, the short duration of the study abroad program relative to a longer year-long study abroad, and the extent to which host family interactions differed preclude generalization to a larger population. Future studies investigating a larger number of learners and how they are socialized to participate in different types of assessment activities, both private and shared, over a longer period of time would provide much needed support and confirmation of findings from this and other studies on socialization in a study abroad setting.

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Appendix A

Transcription Conventions (Modified From Ohta, 2001)

[overlapped speech
=	latching
(.2)	the number indicates the length of a pause in seconds
(.)	unmeasured micropause
()	English translation
(())	commentary
::	sound stretch
WORD	loudness
° °	portions which are delivered in a quieter voice
-	cut-off
?	rising intonation
hh	aspiration, or laughter
@word@	word said with laughter