An overview of the question–response system in Japanese

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ABSTRACT

Based on an examination of 350 question–response pairs identified across 10 different video-taped, face-to-face interactions among native speakers of Japanese, this paper presents an overview of the question–response system in Japanese conversation. Its descriptions focus on the lexical/morphosyntactic/prosodic resources used for question formulation, the range of action types commonly performed with question-formatted utterances, the kinds of methods used for next speaker selection, and the patterns of fittedness between questions and their responses.

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1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the question–response system in Japanese based on the data collected for the comparative question–response coding project. The data consist of 350 instances of questions identified across 10 different video-taped, face-to-face interactions among native speakers of Japanese. To avoid selective sampling, the first 35 instances of questions were gathered from each of the ten recordings. The interactions examined are maximally informal, spontaneous conversations among 3–4 adult friends and/or family members. The participants consist of 26 female speakers and 10 male speakers, and their age range is 25–55. Because morphosyntactic markings of questions appear to vary across different dialects of Japanese, as much effort as possible was made to include only those interactions whose participants are speakers of the Tokyo-based, *kyootsuugo* (common language) variety of Japanese. Though some regional features were detected in the speech of several participants, no discernible effect of dialectal variation was observed in the instances of questions (and responses to them) collected.

The description provided in this paper focuses on “functional questions” ($n = 320$), i.e., those questions that are produced to seek information, confirmation, or agreement rather than those that are interrogatively formatted but do not appear to seek a response (e.g., rhetorical questions). The following section discusses the results of the present study, focusing on lexical/grammatical/prosodic resources used for formulating functional questions in Japanese (section 2.1), the range of social actions performed by speakers using these different structural resources (section 2.2), the methods used by questioners to select who should respond to their questions (section 2.3), and the patterns of fittedness between questions and responses to them—i.e., whether a response supplies an answer or not, whether answers are ‘type-conforming’ (Raymond, 2003) or not, etc. (section 2.4). The paper closes with brief concluding remarks.

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Table 1

Distribution of different types of questions.

Question type	Percentage
Polar	85% (<i>n</i> = 274)
Q-Word	15% (<i>n</i> = 47)
Alternative	<1% (<i>n</i> = 1)
<i>Total</i>	100% (<i>n</i> = 322)

Table 2

Distribution of different sub-types of polar questions.

Polar Q. type	Percentage
Interrogative	31% (<i>n</i> = 85)
Declarative	39% (<i>n</i> = 108) ^a
Tag	30% (<i>n</i> = 81)
<i>Total</i>	100% (<i>n</i> = 274)

^a 69% (*n* = 74) of the declarative-type questions are marked prosodically through the use of rising intonation at the end of the declaratively-formatted utterance, while the remaining 31% (*n* = 34) do not employ any morphosyntactic or prosodic resources for question formulation. See section 2.1.1.2.

2. Results

2.1. Lexical/grammatical/prosodic resources for question formulation

As is the case with most of the languages examined in this project, there are three major types of question formats observed in the Japanese corpus: polar (i.e., ‘yes/no’-type) questions, Q-word (i.e., ‘wh’-type) questions, and alternative questions. The overall distribution of these question types in the current data is presented in Table 1.

Polar and Q-word questions thus account for all the functional questions except for one case, with polar questions occurring nearly 6 times more frequently than Q-word questions. For polar and Q-word questions, we also observe a number of subtypes that are formulated with different lexical/grammatical/prosodic resources. Below I illustrate these subtypes with examples from the data and provide information regarding their distribution.

2.1.1. Polar questions

In the current data, I identified three major types of turn-designs used to formulate polar questions in Japanese: the interrogative type, the declarative type, and the tag-question type. The distribution of these three types of polar questions observed in the current data is presented in Table 2.

2.1.1.1. Interrogative type: use of sentence-final ‘question particles’. Unlike languages like English, in which the default method of forming an interrogative sentence is to use syntactic inversion, the default method (or at least what conventional grammars regard as the default method) of constructing an interrogative sentence in Japanese is to use a sentence-final ‘question particle’ that indicates that the sentence it attaches to is a question (Kuno, 1973; Shibatani, 1990; Iwasaki, 2002). In the current data, this type of polar questions accounts for 31% of all polar questions.

The particles *ka* and *no* are the two most common particles used as question particles in the data. Generally speaking, *ka* is used when the predicate (e.g., verb) of the sentence is in the polite form, as in (1), where the copula is in the polite form, *desu*. When the predicate of the sentence is in the non-polite, plain form, e.g., *ii* ‘good’ in (2), the particle *no* is used.¹

(1) [J008002] ((To a co-participant who said that he is not good at getting up in the morning.))

A: teeketsuatsu desu ka.
low.blood.pressure CP:POL Q
Do ((you)) have low blood pressure?

(2) [J009014] ((K, who has never used electronic airline tickets, asks about how to use them.))

K: insatsu shitokeba ii no?
print have.done:if good Q
Should ((I)) just print ((it)) out in advance?

¹ It is not impossible to use *ka* after the non-polite, plain form of a predicate, or to use *no* after the polite form of a predicate, to formulate questions in Japanese. However, neither of these combinations is found in the 74 instances of polar questions formed with the sentence-final particles *ka* and *no* observed in the current data (there are two cases in which both *no* and *ka* in that order follow the plain form of a predicate). Using *ka* after the plain form of a predicate sounds somewhat coarse, and female speakers are said to avoid it. Using *no* after the polite form of a predicate, on the other hand, is often regarded as a feature of strongly feminine speech style (Iwasaki, 2002:302).

Note that the only lexico-morphosyntactic difference between the questions in the examples above and their corresponding declarative sentences is the presence/absence of the sentence-final question particles. Thus, for instance, if one were to omit the sentence-final *ka* from the question in (1), one would have a declarative sentence, i.e., *teeketsuatsu desu*. ‘((I/you/he/she/we/they)) have/has low blood pressure.’

With regard to prosody, both *ka*-marked and *no*-marked polar questions are produced either with a rising intonation or with a flat to falling intonation at the end of the sentence. In the current data, *no*-marked questions are more likely to be produced with a rising intonation (72% of all *no*-marked questions) than *ka*-marked questions (41% of all *ka*-marked questions).

There is one other sentence-final particle worth noting here. Seven cases are found in the current data in which polar questions were formed with the particle *kke*. Martin (1975) calls it a ‘retrospective particle’, which denotes ‘thinking back, recollecting to oneself, or questioning oneself about some situation to be recalled’ (p. 937). While Martin’s characterization focuses on self-addressed usage of *kke*, in conversation the particle is commonly used in utterances addressed to another participant. A typical situation in which *kke* is used in the current data is one in which the speaker solicits help from the addressee in remembering something that the speaker once knew, but apparently has forgotten or is unsure about now. The following example illustrates this.

(3) [J009022] ((The participants discussing one another’s visas to stay in the United States.))

T: are i-ichinen deshita *kke*.
 EXCL one.year was RP
 Wait, is ((your visa valid)) for one year? (Lit., ‘Thinking back,
 I seem to recall hearing your visa is valid for one year--am I
 correct?’)

Thus, unlike *ka* and *no*, *kke* makes implicit reference to knowledge or information previously held by the speaker and shared with the addressee, but which the speaker has somehow forgotten or is unsure about. The particle then serves to enlist collaborative participation of the addressee in the process of regaining that knowledge/information.

2.1.1.2. Declarative type: use of rising intonation and/or ‘B-event’ statements. In spontaneous conversation, declaratively-formatted utterances without morphosyntactic interrogative marking (e.g., question particles) are nonetheless used as ‘questions’ quite often. In the current data, these ‘declarative questions’ account for 39% of all polar questions.

There are two major types of resources (which are not mutually exclusive) used to formulate declarative questions. One is to use rising intonation at the end of a declaratively-formatted utterance, as in (4). In this type of question, only prosody distinguishes the question from its declarative counterpart.

(4) [J004004]

K: *jaa ato de ii?*
 then later PT okay
 Then, is ((it)) okay ((to pay you back)) later?

These prosody-based questions are built not only with fully-fledged declarative sentences, but also with ‘sentence fragments’ or phrasal utterances, as seen in (5).

(5) [J006009] ((Participants are discussing college classes they have taken. ‘BTW’ refers to a course rubric and ‘250’ refers to a course number.))

1 A: *bii tii* [daburyuu] totta *sshoo*.=
 B T W took AUX
 ((You)) took BTW, right?
 2 D: [°*bii*°]
 B
 3 -> D: =*nihyaku gojuu?*
 two.hundred fifty
 250?
 4 A: *u:n.*
 Yeah.
 5 D: *un.*
 Yeah.

As illustrated by this example, prosody-based phrasal questions are typically used for an ‘understanding check’, i.e., as a way to check the speaker’s understanding of the previous speaker’s utterance.

Another resource for formulating declarative questions is to use B-event statements (Labov and Fanshell, 1977), which are ‘declarative utterances in which the speaker formulates some matter as one to which the recipient has primary access’ (Heritage and Roth, 1995:10). By making claims about a matter within the addressee’s domain of knowledge, such an utterance makes the addressee’s confirmation or disconfirmation relevant in the next turn. While some B-event statements are produced with a rising intonation at their end, others ($n = 34$; 31% of all declarative questions) do not employ any morphosyntactic or prosodic resources for question formulation. These non-prosody-based B-event statements are thus

formally indistinguishable from declarative sentences and can be regarded as “questions” from a function-only perspective. The following fragment presents an example.

- (6) [J007004] ((K vaguely remembers that one of the co-participants dislikes beer, but she says that she can't remember who it was. M claimed that none of them dislikes beer and asks if K is in fact talking about herself.))

1 M: sore keeko san dak(h)e ja na:i?
that Keeko TL only CP NEG
((You)) are the only one ((that dislikes beer)), aren't you,
Keeko?

2 (0.8)

3 M: (soo de mo [nakatta?])
so CP PT NEG:PST
Not really?

4 K: [biiru: ?]
beer
Beer?

5 (0.7)

6 -> M: nigate de wa nai.
dislike CP PT NEG
((You)) don't dislike ((it)).

7 (0.4)

8 K: zenzen_i
not.at.all
Not at all_i

Here, M's declaratively-formatted utterance in line 6 addresses a matter to which the addressee, K, has primary access, and it makes K's confirmation or disconfirmation relevant in the next turn (line 8).

It is worth noting that, of the 34 cases of non-prosody-based B-event statements found in the current data, one third ($n = 11$) employ the same sentence-final expression, *n da* (nominalizer *n* + copula *da*), as seen in (7).

- (7) [J010033] ((The participants are discussing N's commuting situation. The 'commuting hell' refers to having to ride overcrowded commuter trains, which is a common situation in large cities in Japan.))

1 N: aruite maa nijuppun:.
on.foot more.or.less 20.min.
((It's)) about 20 minutes on foot.

2 (0.5)

3 -> H: sugo:i.=ja [tsuukin]:: jigoku toka shiranai n da.
great then commuting hell QT know:NEG N CP
Grea:t.=Then ((you)) don't know the 'commuting hell'.

4 A: [hu:::n]
I see.

5 N: a SOre wa na::i.
oh that TP NEG
Oh ((I)) don't have THAT.

While the varied functions of the sentence-final *n da* have been studied extensively in Japanese linguistics (e.g., Kuno, 1973; McGloin, 1980; Maynard, 1992; Iwasaki, 1993; to name a few), no study, as far as I am aware, has offered an account for its usage in B-event statements as illustrated above. It appears that *n da* is used in this type of utterance to register newly acquired knowledge or realization as noteworthy.

2.1.1.3. Tag-question type. The third type of polar questions discussed here is those with tag-like endings. This type of question accounts for 29.6% of all polar questions in the data. Included in this category are utterances with a variety of sentence-final expressions that are used to seek the addressee's agreement or confirmation to the proposition asserted in the preceding part of the sentence. In the current data, I identified three major types of tag-like sentence-final expressions: the 'grammaticalized negative expression' (Iwasaki, 2002:283) *janai* and its variants, the modal auxiliary *deshoo*, and the combination of sentence-final particles *yo* and *ne* in that order.²

² While tag-question-like expressions discussed here and the question particles described in section 2.1.1.1 occur in sentence-final position, there are some crucial differences between the two. First, as mentioned above, tag-question-like expressions are functionally specialized for seeking agreement or confirmation to the proposition asserted, while question particles are not. Second, question particles can and do occur with Q-word questions, while tag-question-like expressions cannot, perhaps due to the fact that one could not seek agreement or confirmation with a Q-word question. Third, tag-question-like expressions can occur by themselves in a turn at talk (though not very commonly) to seek agreement or confirmation to an assertion made in the preceding turn, while question particles cannot be used in such a 'stand-alone' manner. These facts provide sufficient grounds to treat tag-question-like expressions separately from question particles.

Grammaticalized negative expression *janai* and its variants

Janai consists of the copulative expression *ja*³ and the negative morpheme *nai*. Rather than contributing to the propositional content of the sentence to which it is attached, *janai* functions as a sentence extension seeking agreement/confirmation from the addressee. Its truncated form, *jan*, and the polite equivalent, *ja nai desu ka*, are also found in the data.

- (8) [J008032] ((The participants have been debating whether body temperature goes up or down when one falls asleep. Here, S is responding to A, who has claimed that body temperature has to go down for one to fall asleep.))

S: (demo) powaan to suru kara neyasui n *janai*?
 but MIM QT do because easy.to.sleep N TAG
 (But) because ((you)) feel warm and relaxed, ((it))'s easy to fall asleep, isn't it?

- (9) [J006005] ((C has asked A if a 1.5-page writing assignment that A has to do for her class is to be hand-written on the Japanese-style manuscript paper called *genkooyooshi* (400 characters per page) or to be typed on regular paper (1,500+ characters per page).))

1 A: taipu,
 type
 ((I have to)) type ((it)).

2 C: eh taipu:?
 RC type
 Gee, ((you have to)) type ((it))?

3 A: ta[ipu.]
 type
 ((I have to)) type ((it)).

4 -> C: [a taipu ja kekkoo:- ge[nkooyooshi yori ippai a[ru jan.]
 oh type CP rather ms.paper than much exist TAG
 Oh if ((it))'s typed, then there's much more ((to write))
 than writing on *genkooyooshi*, isn't there?

5 A: [<kokkoo,>] [aru ne.]
 rather exist FP
 Quite a bit, There is.

- (10) [J003006] ((The participants are looking at photos from their recent trip.))

1 H: ya da na:: demo anmari nanka jibun no shashin
 dislike CP FP but not.much like self LK photo

2 mi[ru no ()] ehhhh heheh
 see LK
 ((I)) don't like ((it)), though, like looking at myself in the pictures.

3 A: [iya ore mo iya ya:.]
 well I also dislike CP
 Well, I don't like ((it)), either.

4 -> S: n: ii *janai desu ka*.
 good TAG CP Q
 Uh ((it))'s fine, isn't it?

Modal auxiliary *deshoo*

Deshoo and its plain-form equivalent *daroo* are often described as auxiliaries of conjecture ('probably', 'I think'; Makino and Tsutsui, 1986). When used with rising intonation, they ask for the addressee's confirmation to the speaker's conjecture being presented. The following example illustrates this use of *deshoo* (no instance of *daroo* was found in the current data).

- (11) [J005024] ((T, who has never been to India, is speaking to a couple that used to live there for several years.))

T: >demo< I:ndo mo sugoku atsui n *deshoo*?
 but India also very hot N AUX
 But ((it))'s very hot in India, too, right?

Presenting (and seeking confirmation to) the speaker's conjecture does not seem to be the only function of *deshoo*, however. There are a number of cases in the current data in which *deshoo* is used to present a proposition that the speaker already knows for a fact. In such cases, *deshoo* does not so much seek confirmation to conjecture as to seek agreement to the proposition being presented. This is illustrated by the following example.

³ To be more precise, *ja* is the contracted form of *de wa* (the continuative form of the copula *de* followed by the topic particle *wa*).

Table 3
Distribution of different sub-types of tag-type questions.

Tag question type	Percentage
Grammaticalized negative expressions (<i>janai</i> , etc.)	30.9% (<i>n</i> = 25)
Modal auxiliary <i>deshoo</i>	22.2% (<i>n</i> = 18)
Final particles <i>yo ne</i>	40.7% (<i>n</i> = 33)
Other	6.2% (<i>n</i> = 5)
<i>Total</i>	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 81)

(12) [J007019] ((K is explaining to M how to prepare filling for dumplings.))

1 -> K: *chotto shio ireru* [to *shinnari suru desho?*]
a.little salt add if tender do AUX
If ((you)) add a little bit of salt, ((it)) gets tender, right?
2 M: [.hhhhh aa:::::::::::::] un un
.hhhhh Oh::::::::::::: yeah yeah

Particles *yo ne*

Yo is often described as a particle that marks the speaker's assertion, while *ne* is commonly glossed as a particle indicating the speaker's request for confirmation or agreement (Makino and Tsutsui, 1986). Together, these particles are used sentence-finally to make an assertion while seeking confirmation/agreement to it from the addressee.

(13) [J002003] ((The participants are eating some kind of sweets that they are not familiar with, and they are trying to guess what it is.))

A: *demo .hh purin ni shitara chotto amasa ga: (.) tsuyoi*
but pudding PT do:if a.little sweetness SP strong

yo ne:,
FP FP

But .hh ((it))'s a bit too sweet for a pudding, don't you think?

Most grammatical descriptions of Japanese do not treat sentences ending with *yo ne* as questions. I included them here as a type of polar questions because they fulfill the functional criterion used to define questions in our project—i.e., that the speaker's utterance makes the provision of information, including confirmation/disconfirmation and agreement/disagreement, a relevant next action by the addressee.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the sub-types of tag-type questions.

2.1.2. Q-word questions

As a notable feature of Q-word questions in Japanese, it is often pointed out that the Q-word appears *in situ*, i.e., in the position in which the constituent supplying the requested information would appear in the corresponding declarative sentence, rather than being moved to sentence-initial position as observed in Q-word questions in English (Kuno, 1973; Iwasaki, 2002). This is illustrated by the following constructed sentences.

- (14) a. *Ken wa Mari ni yubiwa o katte-agemashita.*
Ken TP Mari for ring O buy-gave:POL
Ken bought a ring for Mari.
- b. *Ken wa Mari ni nani o katte-agemashita ka.*
Ken TP Mari for what O buy-gave:POL Q
What did Ken buy for Mari?

Interestingly, however, in the current data the Q-word does appear in sentence-initial position in 65% of all questions containing Q-words (28 out of 43 cases). In many cases, this is due to the fact that constituents other than the Q-word are left unexpressed because they are recoverable from the context (i.e., so-called 'zero-anaphora', which is the default type of reference used for non-initial mentions in Japanese discourse; see Clancy, 1980; Hinds, 1982). This is not surprising because, in conversation, many questions are produced in response to a co-participant's prior utterance, and in such situations, the syntax of the question utterance tends to be 'parasitic' on the syntax of the prior utterance that has prompted the question. The following fragment illustrates this.

(15) [006020]

- 1 A: *keesanki nakushite n ya n ka:.*
calculator lost N CP N Q
((I)) lost ((my)) calculator.
:
:
{SEVERAL LINES OMITTED}
:
:
- 2 A: *nakushita n da kedo enjinieringu hooru ni ittara detekita no:.*
lost N CP but engineering hall to go:when showed.up FP
((I)) lost ((it)), but when ((I)) went to the Engineering Hall,
((it)) showed up.
- 3 (0.3)
- 4 C: [()]
[]
- 5 D: [()]
[]
- 6 A: [()]=
- 7 -> D: *=doko kara detekita no.*
where from showed.up Q
Where did ((it)) show up from?

If the question in line 7 were produced with an overt mention of the subject of the sentence, for example, with the demonstrative *sore* 'that one', then the Q-word *doko* may not appear in sentence-initial position (*sore doko kara detekita no*).

In other cases where a Q-word is employed at the beginning of the question, its sentence-initial placement appears to be a result of either the fronting of the Q-word or the post-posing of other constituents that would appear sentence-initially. The following example illustrates the latter.

(16) [J001020] ((Y has been using a friend's bicycle to go to work, but she will have to return it to the friend soon.))

- 1 Y: *daka moosugu nakunaru n desu jitensha.*
so soon disappear N CP bicycle
So ((I))'ll lose the bike soon.
- 2 *mata aruki no seekatsu n(h)i.*
again walking LK life to
((I'll go back)) to the 'walk-to-commute' life soon.
- 3 S: *he::::*
I see.
- 4 (1.7)
- 5 -> S: *nan pun kakarimasu: i jitensha de.*
what minute take:POL bicycle by
How long [Lit. How many minutes] does ((it)) take by bike?

In the question in line 5, the instrumental phrase *jitensha de* 'by bicycle' is placed in post-predicate position. In a more standard word order, *jitensha de* would be placed before the sentence-final predicate, such as in *jitensha de nan pun kakarimasu?*.

Although it is inconclusive from the data at hand, it might be interesting to explore whether there is an orientation to placing Q-words in sentence-initial positions, and if there is, what motivates it.

With regard to the distribution of different types of Q-word questions in the current data, we have the following statistics (Table 4).

Table 4
Distribution of different types of Q-word questions.

Q-word question type	Percentage
'Who'-type (Person)	9% (n = 4)
'What'-type (Object)	2% (n = 1)
'What'-type (Event)	17% (n = 8)
'What'-type (Prior Talk)	21% (n = 10)
'Which'-type (Object)	4% (n = 2)
'Which'-type (Event)	2% (n = 1)
'What kind'-type (Object)	9% (n = 4)
'Where'-type (Place)	13% (n = 6)
'When'-type (Time)	0% (n = 0)
'Why'-type (Reason)	6% (n = 3)
'How'-type (Manner)	11% (n = 5)
'How many/much'-type (Amount)	6% (n = 3)
<i>Total</i>	<i>100% (n = 47)</i>

It is unclear why no instance of the ‘when’-type question was found in the data, as they are not an uncommon type of Q-word question.

Below I illustrate each type of Q-word question with an example from the data. For the ‘when’-type question, I present an example from a transcript not used for this study.

‘Who’-type (Person)

(17) [J006010] ((slightly extended version of fragment (5) above))

- 1 A: *bi i tii* [*daburyuu*] *totta sshoo*.=
 B T W took AUX
 ((You)) took BTW, right?
 []
 2 D: [*°bi i°*]
 B
 3 D: *=nihyaku gojuu?*
 two.hundred fifty
 250?
 4 A: *u:n.*
 Yeah.
 5 -> D: *un. dare sensee.*
 yeah who teacher
 Yeah. Who’s the teacher?
 6 (.)
 7 A: *hau:: a erikku.*
 oh Erik
 Ho::w, oh Erik.

‘What’-type (Object)

(18) [J004029] ((The participants are choosing what cake to eat.))

- 1 -> K: *nani ga ii::?*
 what SP good
 What do ((you)) like? [Lit. What is good?]
 2 Y: (*a*)*tashi chokoreeto.*
 I chocolate
 I’ll have the chocolate ((cake)).

‘What’-type (Event)

(19) [J001009]

- 1 -> K: *nani shini kiteta no are.*
 what to.do came Q that
 What did ((he)) come for? [Lit. What did he come to do?]
 2 M: *iya: chotto yottemita dake rashii n da kedo.*
 well a.little stopped.by only seem N CP but
 Well, it seems like ((he)) just stopped by.

‘What’-type (Prior Talk)

(20) [J004017] ((Students studying in the US are discussing the ‘Optional Practical Training’ (OPT) visa to work in the US after graduation.))

- 1 K: *oopiitii wa >shigoto nakutemo< ii tte yutteta::=*
 OPT TP job not.have:even.if okay QT were.saying
 ((They)) were saying that if ((you)) have an OPT, it’s okay ((to
 stay in the US)) without a job.
 2 Y: *=>oopiitii wa shigoto ga nakutemo ii [n da.<]*
 OPT TP job SP not.have:even.if okay N CP
 Oh if ((you)) have an OPT, it’s okay ((to stay in the US))
 without a job, I see.
 3 R: []
 [*nani*] *oopiitii*
 what OPT
 What is OPT?
 4 tte.
 QT

'Which'-type (Object)

(21) [J004027] ((The participants are choosing which cake to eat.))

- 1 R: *dore ga ii su ka=*
 which SP good CP Q
 Which one would ((you)) like?
- 2 Y: *=°dore ga ii?°*
 which SP good
 Which one do ((you)) like?

'Which'-type (Event)

(22) [J003014] ((Looking at a photo from a recent trip.))

- H: *eh! kore wa dore:*
 RC this TP which
 Huh? Which ((side trip)) is this from?

'What kind'-type (Object)

(23) [J007015] ((Discussing how to make dumplings.))

- A: *nihon de wa (doo yuu) no de tsukuttemashita:?*
 Japan in TP what.kind.of N with were.making
 What kind of stuff ((=ingredients)) did ((you)) use in Japan?

'Where'-type (Place)

(24) [J003027] ((Looking at a photo from a recent trip.))

- H: *eh! kore doko? a:: A: A: A:: asoko ka:.*
 RC this where oh oh oh oh that.place Q
 Huh? Where is this? Oh::, oh: oh: oh::, that place.

'When'-type (Time)

(25) [KG 24]

- 1 -> Y: *eh: mari chan itsu kara iku tte?: rokugatsu no:?=*
 RC Mari TL when from go QT June LK
 Hey, Mari, when did ((you)) say ((you)) are going ((to Hawaii))?
 June::?
- 2 M: *=watashi ne::, (0.2) ima no yotee de wa: [ima no] yotee yo.*
 I FP now LK plan CP TP now LK plan FP
 I am:::, (0.2) as of now... This is a tentative plan for now.
- 3 Y: [u:::n.]
 Mhm.
- 4 M: *rokugatsu no ne:, [ju:]::[go.]*
 June LK FP fifteen
 June 15th.
- 5 Y: [un.] [un.]
 Mhm Mhm

'Why'-type (Reason)

(26) [J009018]

- 1 T: *u- uchi no hito nande ka shinnai kedo happyaku ikura n=*
 my LK person why Q know:not but 800 something PT
 ((I)) don't know why, but my husband's ((airline ticket)) was
 800 something dollars,
- 2 *natte.=nande daroo na.=*
 became why AUX FP
 ((I)) wonder why.
- 3 -> K: *=nande:::?*
 why
 Why:::?

'How'-type (Manner)

(27) [J005005] ((T and K moved from a mid-size city to a small town, and S asks them how the city they used to live in compares to where they live now.))

- 1 -> S: *koko to kurabetara d(h)oo.*
here with compare:if how
How ((is it)) compared to this place?
- 2 T: *ya:: [sore wa zenzen chigaimasu yo::.*
well that TP utterly different FP
We::ll, it's completely different.
- 3 K: *[iya moo DAi tokai desu yo::.*
well EMP big city CP FP
Well, ((it))'s a metropolis ((compared to this place)).

'How many/much'-type (Amount)

(28) [J009016] ((T and K are discussing airfare.))

- 1 -> T: *a demo katamichi iku- katamichi da to [ikura (desu ka.)]*
oh but one.way one.way CP if how.much CP Q
Oh, but one-way, if ((it))'s one-way, how much is ((it))?
- 2 K: *[(< sore ne:: >)]*
that FP
Good question.
- 3 *(ikura) n natten no ka na::.*
how.much PT become N Q FP
((I)) wonder how much it is.

On a final note in this subsection, I should mention that some of the morphosyntactic and prosodic resources used for the formulation of polar questions discussed in the previous subsections are also observed for the formulation of Q-word questions. The sentence-final particles *ka* (e.g., (28)) and *no* (e.g., (19)), as well as rising intonation (e.g., (18)), are used in some (but not all) of the Q-word questions identified in the current data.

2.1.3. Alternative questions

As there is only one example of alternative question in the data, not much can be said about their structural properties. I only note here that, just as in alternative questions in English, the alternatives are presented in juxtaposition for the addressee to choose one. In the following example, *guuzen* 'by chance' and *hitsuzen* 'necessity' are presented side-by-side (line 2) and the addressee is asked to choose one.

(29) [J003004] ((The participants are discussing the arrangement of photos in the photo album that they are looking at.))

- 1 -> A: *omot:ta n da kedo:, kono:: koko ni:: (.) kita riyuu wa*
thought N CP but this here PT came reason TP
- 2 -> *guuzen hitsuzen.*
chance necessity
- ((I)) was wondering about the reason why ((this photo)) came here ((in this slot))--Is ((it)) by chance or necessity?
- :
- :
- {SEVERAL LINES OMITTED WHERE S JOKES ABOUT A'S QUESTION}
- :
- :
- 3 S: *a:: guuzen desu.*
oh chance CP
Oh ((it))'s by chance.

This section has provided an overview of the range of different types of questions observed in the data, with a focus on lexical, morphosyntactic, and prosodic resources used for question formulation in Japanese. The next section discusses what types of social actions are commonly performed with these question utterances.

2.2. Social actions performed through questions

The overall distribution of the major types of social actions performed through question utterances identified in the current data is as follows.

Below I discuss each of these actions with examples from the data and provide additional distributional information.

Table 5
Distribution of social actions being implemented by question type.

Social action	Polar	Q-word	Alternative	Totals
Requesting information	60% (<i>n</i> = 53)	39% (<i>n</i> = 34)	1% (<i>n</i> = 1)	27% (<i>n</i> = 88)
Initiating repair	50% (<i>n</i> = 12)	50% (<i>n</i> = 12)	0	8% (<i>n</i> = 24)
Requesting confirmation	100% (<i>n</i> = 159)	0	0	49% (<i>n</i> = 159)
Offering assessment/opinion, while seeking agreement	100% (<i>n</i> = 49)	0	0	15% (<i>n</i> = 49)
Other	50% (<i>n</i> = 1)	50% (<i>n</i> = 1)	0	<1% (<i>n</i> = 2)
<i>Total</i>	85% (<i>n</i> = 274)	15% (<i>n</i> = 47)	<1% (<i>n</i> = 1)	<i>N</i> = 322

2.2.1. Requesting information

While requesting information may be thought of as a prototypical type of action performed with questions, as shown in Table 5, it is not the most common type of action performed by the questions observed in the current data. Requesting information is performed with all types of question formats discussed in section 2 except for tag-type questions (i.e., those discussed in section 2.1.1.3). Two most common question formats used for requesting information are polar questions with sentence-final question particles (i.e., those discussed in section 2.1.1.1; 39%; *n* = 34) and Q-word questions (39%; *n* = 34). If we consider these two types of questions to be more 'prototypical' questions than tag questions and declarative questions, we may say that requesting information is skewed toward more 'prototypical' question formats.

For examples of questions used for requesting information, readers are referred to (1) and (2) above for *ka/no*-marked polar questions and to (17)–(19), (21)–(28) for Q-word questions.

2.2.2. Initiating repair

As is the case with English, question formats are commonly used for other-initiation of repair (OIR; Schegloff et al., 1977) in Japanese. Of the variety of different question formats discussed above, the two most common formats used for OIR is Q-word questions (50%; *n* = 12) and declarative questions with sentence-final rising intonation (i.e., those discussed in section 2.1.1.2; 46%; *n* = 11). The following examples illustrate these two types of questions used for OIR.

(30) [J002027] ((D, a mother of a teenage daughter, is telling the others that her daughter now wears her old clothes because the type of fashion that used to be popular when D was young is getting popular again now. Miho is the daughter's name.))

- 1 D: *jibun no ki ni itta no dake totto[ita no yo.*
self LK liked N only kept FP FP
((I)) held on to only those I liked.
[
- 2 A: [un {un un un
Yeah yeah yeah yeah
[
- 3 B: [u:::n.
Mhm.
- 4 D: *ato wa sutechatta kedo:.=*
rest TP have.thrown.away but
((I)) threw away the rest ((of them)), though.
- 5 B: =u:::n.
Mhm.
[
- 6 ? : =u:::n.
Mhm.
- 7 D: *soshitara sore hakeru no ima.*
then that can.wear FP now
Then ((she)) can wear them now.
- 8 B: >hon<TO:::??=
>Rea<LLY:::??
- 9 D: =un.
Yeah.
- 10 -> A: *dare ga?=
who SP
Who?*
- 11 D: =n, *Miho ga haiten no.*
Miho SP is.wearing FP
n, Miho is wearing ((them)).

(31) [J002022] ((This segment takes place a few minutes before the segment in (30).))

- 1 C: demo are mukashi wa, aya- (.) anna no hayatta desho?=
but that old.times TP such LK was.popular CP
But that type ((of clothes)) was popular a long time ago, right?
- 2 D: =hayatt(a). (.) watashi [ne::, atta no ne::,=
was.popular I FP had FP FP
((It)) was popular. (.) I had ((them)).
- 3 C: [onnaji yo ne:::..
same FP FP
((It))'s the same ((style)), right?
- 4 A: =U:N a:ru [wa yo.
yeah have FP FP
Yeah, of course ((you)) do.
- 5 D: [Miho ga [kiten no.
Miho SP wearing FP
Miho is wearing ((them)).
- 6 B: [mukashi no shashin?
old.times LK photo
Old photos?
- 7 C: a!=
Oh!
- 8 -> B: =EH! [jibun no [mono o?
oneself LK thing O
Oh! Your stuff?
- 9 C: [ho:nto::..
Really::..
- 10 D: [Un. burausu.
yah blouse
Yeah. ((My)) blouses.

It turned out that, compared to the other languages examined in this project, Japanese has a relatively lower percentage of questions used for OIR (8% in Japanese vs. 15–25% with many languages). Interestingly, if we look at Q-word questions only, the percentage of OIR in Japanese (25%) is close to the average among the other 9 languages (28%). This suggests that the low percentage of OIR in Japanese may stem from its paucity in polar questions. It is not entirely clear why there are fewer OIRs in polar questions in Japanese than in the other languages, but it may have to do with a relatively high percentage of tag-type questions in polar questions in Japanese observed in the current data (nearly 30% in Japanese vs. 10–20% with many languages). As discussed below, tag questions (at least in Japanese) are mostly used to present an assertion while seeking agreement. This function of tag questions does not appear to be very compatible with the work that typically gets done by OIR. Thus, a high number of tag-type questions in the current data may have contributed to a low number of OIRs in Japanese.

2.2.3. Requesting confirmation

As shown in Table 5, requesting confirmation is by far the most common action performed with questions in the current data. While all the three types of polar questions (interrogative, declarative, and tag-type questions) are used for this function, declarative questions (especially B-event statements) are more commonly used for this function than the others (see Table 6).

In contrast to polar questions, no Q-word question is used for requesting confirmation. The reason is obvious—requesting confirmation is done through presenting a complete proposition for the addressee to confirm or disconfirm, and Q-word questions, by definition, do not present complete propositions.

For examples of questions used for requesting confirmation, readers are referred to (3), (4), (6), (7), (9), and (11) above.

2.2.4. Offering assessment/opinion while seeking agreement

In the current data, we observe a skewed distribution of question formats used for offering assessment/opinion while seeking agreement. 88% of the questions used for this function are tag-type questions. This may account for a high percentage of questions performing this action identified in the Japanese data compared to the other languages (15% in Japanese vs. an average of 5% among the other 9 languages). As discussed above, the Japanese data contain a relatively high

Table 6
Distribution of sub-types of polar questions used for confirmation request.

Polar Q. type used for confirmation request	Percentage
Interrogative	27% (n = 42)
Declarative	50% (n = 80)
Tag	23% (n = 37)
Total	100% (n = 159)

number of tag-type questions. It may thus be natural to see a higher percentage of questions devoted to offering assessment/opinion while seeking agreement in Japanese than in the other languages.

Most of the examples of tag-type questions presented in section 2.1.1.3 illustrate this function ((8), (10), (12), and (13)). It should be noted, however, that tag-type questions are not the only type of question format used for this function. In the following fragment, for example, a negatively-formatted polar question is used to convey an assertion of the opposite polarity, i.e., affirmative, while seeking agreement from the addressee. This is an instance of what Koshik (2005) has called “yes/no reverse polarity questions”.

(32) [J006031] ((The participants are discussing the negative impact on children of a TV commercial in which a beautiful woman burps loudly in public.))

- 1 A: kireena onesan ga (ne) yaru no ka to omou yo ne?=
pretty elder.sister SP FP do N Q QT think FP FP
((Children)) would think pretty women do ((it)), don't you think?
- 2 C: =u::[::::~n.]
Yeah:::~n.]
- 3 D: [uhuhhuh!]
uhuhhuh!
- 4 -> C: >te ka-< (1.0) te yuu ka yattemo ii to omocchawana:i?
QT Q QT say Q do:if okay QT think:AUX:NEG
>Or,< (1.0) Or, wouldn't ((they)) think ((it))'s okay to do ((it))?
- 5 A: so da ne::.
so CP FP
((That))'s right.

Here, the negative polar question, *yattemo ii to omocchawana:i?* ‘Wouldn't ((they)) think ((it))'s okay to do ((it))?', is used to convey a reserve polarity assertion, i.e., *yattemo ii to omocchau* ‘((They)) would think ((it))'s okay to do ((it))’, while seeking agreement from the addressee.

This section examined the range of different types of social actions performed through questions observed in the data. The next section discusses the range of methods whereby questioners select whom to respond to their questions.

2.3. Next speaker selection

Questions are a prime example of an adjacency pair first pair-part, which makes the addressee's response a relevant next action (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). This means that, when a question is brought to completion, the person addressed by the questioner is expected to take a turn and respond. While this operation of turn-taking may seem unremarkable, one should bear in mind that, in multiparty conversation where there are more than one person that can be addressed by the current speaker, the questioner needs to work to indicate which current non-speaker(s) the question is being addressed to. There are a number of resources that questioners can use to do this work (Sacks et al., 1974; Lerner, 2003), including the use of address terms, eye gaze, and the addressee's “domain of authority”, i.e., through formulating a question regarding a matter that a particular addressee has authority over or knowledge about (e.g., B-event statements).

In the current data, an overwhelming majority of questions clearly select next speakers (99%; $n = 297$).⁴ Of these, only 4% ($n = 11$) make use of an address term. Questions are asked about a matter that falls within a particular addressee's domain of authority in 52% of the time ($n = 164$). Gaze appears to be the most robust resource utilized for next speaker selection in the current data; 87% of questions ($n = 275$) are accompanied by the speaker's gaze at the addressed recipient.⁵ The percentage of the questions accompanied by the speaker's gaze is the highest in Japanese among the ten languages examined in the project.

Though its use is not as common as those resources mentioned above, there is one other method for next speaker selection observed in the data that is worth mentioning here. It concerns the use of different registers.⁶ Broadly speaking, there are two registers commonly used in Japanese conversation – the polite register (*keetai* or *desu/masu*-style) and the plain register (*jootai*) – and different verb forms are used to indicate in which register the speaker is speaking. Generally, the plain register is used among friends and family members, while the polite register is used when a speaker is speaking to someone to whom s/he has some social distance (e.g., someone that s/he has met for the first time, social superiors like professors, bosses, etc.). Consider, then, the following fragment taken from a conversation between two married couples. Throughout this conversation, Y, the wife of the host couple, consistently uses the polite register when she addresses the guest couple (M – husband, S – wife). When she addresses her husband (K), on the other hand, she consistently uses the plain register. In line 5 of the following fragment, then, Y produces a question in the polite register indicated by the polite form of the copula *desu*.

⁴ All the ten conversations from which the data for the present study are taken are multiparty conversations rather than dyadic ones.

⁵ Uses of address terms, gaze, and addressees' domain of authority are not mutually exclusive. They can be used in conjunction with one another.

⁶ See also Tanaka (1999) for a description of this method of next-speaker selection.

(33) [J001023] ((The participants have been talking over tea and cake.))

- 1 M: *kaeri wa tsuitsui::* (0.8) [*aruichau na::*.
return TP unthinkingly walk:AUX FP
((I)) walk ((home from the train station)) without thinking much
about it.
- 2 K: [*so kka::*.
so Q
I see::.
- 3 S: *narechau to ne.*
get.used.to:AUX if FP
((You do it)) once ((you)) get used to ((it)).
- 4 M: *tte yuu ka an moo nareru to, (.)*
QT say Q um EMP get.used.to if
I mean, um, once ((you)) get used it, (.)
- 5 -> Y: *kajiritsuite ii desu ka: hhh .hh hhh*
have.a.bite okay CP Q
Is it okay if ((I)) have a big bite ((of this cake))? hhh .hh hhh
- 6 S: *haa=*
Yes.
- 7 M: *=doozo (doozo).*
please please
Please go ahead.

Y's question in line 5 is not accompanied by an address term or gaze—she looks down at a piece of cake in front of her that she is eating when producing the question. The question does not deal with a matter that falls within any particular recipient's domain of expertise or territory of knowledge, either. Also, given that this question is not prompted by anything that was said previously (in fact, it is initiated interruptively in the middle of M's turn), it is not the case here that the questioner selects as next speaker the speaker of a prior turn by virtue of the fact that the question is a response to that prior turn. The major resource for next speaker selection in this case, then, appears to be the use of the polite register. It indicates that Y's question is selecting the guest couple (both M and S) as next speaker (or next speaking party, to be precise) rather than her husband (K), based on the consistency with which Y uses the polite register when addressing the guest couple. Indeed, both S and M respond in the subsequent turns.

This section discussed resources with which the questioner indicates selects who should respond to the question being produced. The next section examines the patterns of fittedness between questions and responses to them.

2.4. Fittedness

As Sacks (1992, vol. 1:49) points out, while there are particular grammatical structures that are prototypically associated with questions (e.g., interrogative morphosyntax), there are no such structures for answers. The most powerful resource for an utterance to be heard as an answer is its sequential location, i.e., after a question. It should be noted, however, that not every utterance produced after a question counts as an 'answer' to that question. In the current data, there are a range of utterances produced after questions that *do* respond to the preceding questions, but which do not provide an 'answer' (i.e., requested information, including confirmation and agreement) to them. Distributionally, 28% ($n = 89$) of the questions that make the provision of an answer relevant next receive these 'non-answer responses.' (Table 7).

One common type of non-answer response produced in the next turn is repair initiation. This is observed in (5) above, in which a tag question requesting confirmation (*bii tii daburyuu totta sshoo* '(You) took BTW, right?') is responded to with a repair initiation (*nihyaku gojuu?* '250?'). As seen in this example, however, these repair initiations are often done to pave the way for providing an answer subsequently (e.g., line 5 in (5)). Thus, while repair initiation itself is a non-answer response, it usually does not cancel the relevance of supplying an answer to the prior question.

There is another common type of non-answer response which does cancel the relevance of supplying an answer to the prior question. This is done with a claim of lack of knowledge/information being requested by the question, as seen in (34).

Table 7
Distribution of response types.

Response type ^a	Percentage
Answer	61% ($n = 197$)
Non-answer response	28% ($n = 89$)
No response	11% ($n = 35$)
Total	100% ($n = 321$)

^a A response can be made either vocally or visually (e.g., nod, head shake) or both. A visual component is present in 47% ($n = 135$) of the responses observed in the current data. Of these, nine cases (3% of all responses) have responses made solely through visual conduct.

(34) [J003013] ((S is looking at the intricate design of a decorated spoon provided to her by Y.))

- 1 S: *konna no hajimete mimashita.*
like.this N first.time saw
((It))'s ((my)) first time to see anything like this.
- 2 (0.7)
- 3 S: *kore yakitsuketearu n desu ka.=*
this is.plated N CP Q
Is this plated?
- 4 -> Y: *=ya! wakannai (h)atashi ni w(h)a*
well know:NEG I PT TP
Well, I don't know.

Now, even when responses to questions do provide answers, there are a number of ways in which that gets accomplished. For example, answers to polar questions may be provided in a 'type-conforming' or 'non-conforming' manner (Raymond, 2003). Polar questions, by definition, make relevant a choice between 'yes' and 'no', and answers built with 'yes'/'no' tokens are said to be type-conforming, i.e., conforming to the constraints set by the question format. Tokens used in type-conforming answers in Japanese include such confirming (i.e., 'yes') forms as *un*, *hai*, and *ee*, and disconfirming (i.e., 'no') forms such as *ie*, *iee*, *iya*, and *uun*. In the current data, an overwhelming majority of type-conforming 'yes'-answers take the form of *un*, with varying degrees of vowel stretch, e.g., *u::n*. A majority of type-conforming 'no'-answers, on the other hand, take the form of *iya* and *uun*. It is worth noting that, while a 'yes'-form is often used as a stand-alone token in response to a question (e.g., (35)), a 'no'-form rarely constitutes a whole turn by itself. In most cases, a 'no'-token is accompanied by a subsequent turn component, which typically provides an account for the disconfirming response, as seen in (36).

(35) [J009014] ((K, who has never used electronic airline tickets, asks about how to use them.))

- 1 K: *insatsu shitokeba ii no?=
print have.done:if good Q
Should ((I)) just print ((it)) out in advance?*
- 2 -> M: *=u::n.=
Yeah.*
- 3 T: *=un=un=un.
Yeah=yeah=yeah.*

(36) [J001028] ((Ya in line 3 is a variant of *iya*..))

- 1 S: *are oshigoto gaeri datta n desu ka::?*
that work on.the.way.back was N CP Q
Were ((you)) on ((your)) way home from work ((when we saw you))?
- 2 (0.4)
- 3 -> Y: *ya are wa kaisha no:: (0.6) takkyuu taikai ga atta*
no that TP company LK ping-pong competition SP existed
- 4 -> *nde::, sore itta kaeri na n desu.*
because that went on.the.way.back CP N CP
No, ((my)) company held a ping-pong competition, so ((I)) was
on ((my)) way home from that.

The fact that a 'no'-token rarely appears on its own and is often accompanied by an account suggests that Japanese speakers orient to the dispreferred nature of a disconfirming answer as English speakers do (Ford, 2001).⁷

Let us now turn to non-conforming answers. Non-conforming answers are 'answers' in that, unlike non-answer responses, they provide confirmation/disconfirmation to the preceding questions. However, they do so with a means other than offering 'yes'/'no'-tokens. One such means commonly observed in the current data is to repeat a part (or whole) of the prior question. In Japanese, this is typically done with a repeat of the predicate (e.g., verb, adjective, etc.) of the preceding question, as seen in the following fragments.

⁷ Note also that, while a 'no'-token can be used for a *confirming* answer to a negatively-formatted question in English (e.g., A: You don't like tomatoes? B: No.), the same does not hold in Japanese. A 'yes'-token is used for a confirming answer in Japanese irrespective of the polarity of the question. The following provides an example of a 'yes'-token used for a confirming answer to a negatively-formatted question.

C: *>kiita koto< nai? soo yuu no*
heard N not.exist such N
((You)) have never heard of such a thing?

A: *u::n kiita koto nakatta.*
yes heard N not.exist
u::n (=Yes) ((I)) had never heard of ((it)).

(37) [J004004]

- 1 K: yayoi chan go doru kuzureru?
Yayoi TL 5 dollar can.break
Yayoi, can ((you)) break a \$5 bill?
- 2 (0.7)
- 3 Y: (ku) zurenai. [hhh]
can.break:NEG
((I)) can't break ((it)). hhh
[]
- 4 R: [hi:]::: .h [hi .hi]
hi::::: .h hi .hi
[]
- 5 K: [eh: ja]a ato de ii:?
RC then later PT okay
Gee, then, is ((it)) okay ((to pay
you back)) later?
- 6 -> Y: ii yo:.
okay FP
((It))'s okay.

(38) [J002021]

- 1 C: demo are mukashi wa, aya- (.) anna no hayatta desho?=
but that old.times TP such LK was.popular CP
But that type ((of clothes)) was popular a long time ago, right?
- 2 -> D: =hayatt(a).
was.popular
((It)) was popular.

A repeat answer that conveys disconfirmation takes the form of repeating the predicate used in the question and adding the negative morpheme *nai* to it. This is observed in the following fragment (line 3 of (37) also exemplifies this).

(39) [J006001] ((*Yoru to kiri* 'Night and mist' is the Japanese title of a book by Austrian psychologist Viktor E. Frankl. Its English title is "Man's Search for Meaning".)

- 1 A: yoru to kiri tte shitteru?
night and mist QT know
Do ((you)) know "Man's Search for Meaning"?
- 2 (0.5)
- 3 -> C: shiranai:.
know:NEG
((I)) don't know.

Distributionally, repeat answers are more frequent in Japanese than in English and some other languages examined in this project, including Danish, Dutch, Italian, and Korean (18% in Japanese vs. an average of 9% in the other 5 languages). Despite a relatively high percentage of repeat answers, they are not the default type of answers to polar questions, as 'yes/no'-type answers are much more frequent (59%) (see Table 8). Thus, the situation is different from that in languages like Tzeltal, where repeat answers are used more frequently than 'yes'/'no'-type answers (65% vs. 35%) and thus appear to be a basic means of answering polar questions.

It is not clear at this point what motivates the answerer's choice between 'yes/no'-type answers and repeat answers in Japanese. A cursory observation of the data suggests that repeat answers tend to be used when the question addresses a matter that the answerer has some sort of epistemic authority over. This remains as yet speculative, and future research is needed to confirm (or disconfirm) it.

Table 8
Distribution of answer form.

Answer form	Percentage
Yes/no type answer	59% (n = 107)
Repeat	18% (n = 32)
Soo ('Right')	8% (n = 15)
Combination of Yes/No + Repeat	7% (n = 12)
Combination of Yes/No + Soo ('Right')	<1% (n = 1)
Tabun ('Probably')	1% (n = 2)
Transformative answer ^a	7% (n = 13)
Total	100% (n = 182)

^a See fragments (40) and (41) for examples of transformative answers.

I will discuss one other type of non-conforming answer observed in the data before closing this section. Consider the following fragment.

(40) [J008001] ((S said that getting up in the morning has been a problem for him since childhood.))

```

1      N:  itsumo chikoku      bakkari:?
        always late.for.school all.the.time
        ((Were you)) always late for school?

2      (0.8)

3  ->  S:  girigiri    ni okite iku.
        last.minute in get.up go
        ((I)) would get up at the last minute and go.
```

Here, neither a 'yes'/'no' token nor a repeat is used in the answerer's turn. Yet, the answerer produces an utterance that in effect provides an 'answer', i.e., disconfirmation, to the preceding question. Stivers and Hayashi (2010) argue that the answerer uses this type of response to convey a problem with the preceding question's design or its agenda. In this case, the agenda of N's question focuses on requesting confirmation about what she thinks is a likely (or even inevitable) consequence of having difficulty getting up in the morning as a child that S mentioned previously. Saying a type-conforming 'no' might potentially undermine S's prior claim (which was somewhat exaggerated) regarding how hard it was for him to get up in the morning. S thus transforms the question into one about how he dealt with the issue of having to go to school in time and answers it in such a way as to maintain his claim that getting up in the morning was still difficult. Stivers and Hayashi (2010) call this type of answer a 'transformative answer'.

This section discussed some aspects of the fittedness between questions and responses to them observed in the Japanese data. As fittedness is a little-studied area, the description provided here is necessarily sketchy. Many interesting issues surrounding the patterns of fittedness remain to be investigated in future research.⁸

3. Conclusions

This paper provided an overview of the question–response system in Japanese, with a focus on the lexical/morphosyntactic/prosodic resources used for question formulation, the range of action types commonly performed with question-formatted utterances, the kinds of methods used for next speaker selection, and the patterns of fittedness between questions and their responses. While I believe the descriptions presented in this paper have covered basic aspects of the question–response system in Japanese, they are by no means exhaustive. I hope this will serve as a point of departure for more extensive and more detailed studies on various phenomena related to the organization of the question–response sequence in Japanese interaction.

Appendix A

Abbreviations used in the interlinear gloss:

AUX	Auxiliary	CP	Copula	EMP	Emphasis marker
EXCL	Exclamation	FP	Final particle	LK	Linking particle
MIM	Mimetics (sound effect)	N	Nominalizer	NEG	Negative morpheme
O	Object particle	POL	Polite register	PST	Past tense
PT	Particle	Q	Question particle	QT	Quotative particle
RC	Response cry	RP	Retrospective particle	SP	Subject particle
TAG	Tag question	TL	Title	TP	Topic particle

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⁸ For example, Hayashi (2007) examines the use of the response token *eh* at the beginning of an answer to a question, and shows that *eh*-prefacing is used to index the preceding question's departure from the answerer's expectation or supposition with regard to its relevance or appositeness in the local context.

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