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## Hierarchical Socialization Process in Caregiver-Child Interaction

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# Hierarchical Socialization Process in Caregiver-Child Interaction

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## 1. Introduction

People play a variety of social roles through their lives. In order to become active members of any language community, children must learn to speak not only grammatically but also appropriately, according to the variety of sociolinguistic and social-interactive rules that govern appropriate language use. Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) call the process of the acquisition of socio-cultural knowledge and norms through language or through language use, “language socialization.” Children are socialized in culturally specific ways. Therefore, the study of language socialization is meaningful to understand the nature of the culture and to see the language development processes of children.

The hierarchical human relationship is one of the important concepts in Japan. People need to behave appropriately in the proper place as the holder of one’s status. Language socialization helps children to acquire such a social norm and also to construct their social identities. I particularly call the process in which children learn to use language in a status-appropriate way, hierarchical socialization. Although the sibling relationship is categorized as a representation of horizontal relationship in Nakane (1967), I claim that the relationship among siblings is not only horizontal, but also vertical because of their age difference. Japanese are sensitive to such things as rank, order, slight differences in age, graduation time, the time of entry into a company, and so on (Lebra 1976). Because Japanese extremely sensitive to relational positionalities, I assume that this socio-cultural value influences the caregivers’ instruction toward children in the family.

In this paper, I focus on the family interactions in which children’s identity is constructed and socialized as Ochs (1993) emphasizes, and examine how caregivers inculcate hierarchical social norms in the family interactions and how children come to understand their social roles as an older sister/brother or as a younger sister/brother.

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## 2. Language Socialization of Status and Role

According to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986: 183), language is a major tool of information for children to learn the ways and world views of one's culture; therefore, the research on language socialization reveals the way in which children become competent members of social groups. As long as children are involved a social group, they need to understand their social identities, and also other's. Ochs (1993) refers to social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities as "social identity." It is not easy for children to understand the notion of social identity. This complexity is due to the following facts: (1) people have quite a few social roles, and such social roles are overlapped in the social interactions (Lebra 1976: 250); (2) linguistic features such as verbal expressions, acts and stances do not neatly correspond with the social identity (Ochs 1993: 290); and (3) the social identity is not constructed by oneself, but also by the social identities of other interlocutors (Ochs 1993: 289). In the words of Ochs (1993: 301), "the interactions are the means through which social identities are constructed and socialized." It is significant to look at the family interactions in order to examine how caregivers instruct social appropriate roles to children, and what kind of social identity children try to construct in performing a particular kind of verbal act or in verbally expressing this kind of stance.

Although a large number of studies have been made on the research of children's interactions, little is known about children's knowledge of status and role in the interactions (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986: 178). In the research of the register variation, Andersen (1986) investigates children's acquisition of social-interactional differences through role-play. Andersen's research shows that children are aware of family-interactional differences such as the role of father, mother and baby even though the roles of father and mother are not children's actual social role in reality. In order to fit the different roles in the role-play, children make slight distinctions among types of speech acts, and choose sentence structures, lexical items, and phonological features. This research suggests that children have already acquired the rules governing appropriate language use in their social group by the age 5.

In the research conducted to examine socialization, Kawakami (1997) focuses on gender social roles in naturally- occurring caregiver-children interaction, and particularly examines how caregivers implicitly instruct their children gender-related norms. Through gender socialization, a mother implicitly imparts gender-appropriate behavior to her daughter in Japanese society. This finding implies that

caregiver's continual covert instruction of gender norms construct children's gender ideology. If that is the case, I assume that other socio-cultural norms, such as hierarchical social norm, are also passed on to children through caregiver-children interactions. I would like to discuss the hierarchical social norm that typifies the Japanese behavioral social interaction.

### 3. Status-Proper Orientation in Japanese Society

In Japan, people need to behave appropriately in a manner that is expected of their gender and status. However, status counts more. It is called the norm of *bun* in Lebra (1976): *bun* could be translated either status or role in English. According to Lebra (1976), the concept of *bun* has three implications, regarding a society as a whole of organism and an individual as a part of that organism: (1) the individual is conceived as a fraction; (2) *bun*-holders are interdependent; and (3) every member of society is supposed to be *bun*-holders. Lebra (1976) states, "the norm of *bun* occupancy is clearly reflected in status orientation." This status refers to a position in a hierarchical social system, which Nakane (1967) calls *tateshakai* or 'vertical society.'

In the status orientation, people are motivated to behave "like" the holder of one's status, "like" being translated as *rashii* or *rashiku* in Japanese; for example, a child should behave *kodomo rashiku* 'like a child,' a woman should be *onna rashii* 'like a woman' and so forth (Lebra 1976: 78). If one fails to behave "like" the holder of one's status, one is criticized for his/her socially inappropriate behaviors with the negative emotion of "shame." In Clancy's (1999) socialization research, Japanese mothers criticized children's behavior with the use of *hazukashii* 'shameful,' although this affect lexicon was not found in English-speaking caregiver-children's conversation. Benedict (1946) views Japanese society as a "shame culture," and Lebra (1976: 79) emphasizes that Japanese sensitivity to shame is primarily due to their status orientation.

From the linguistic point of view, Japanese lacks status-neutral vocabulary while status-indicative expressions are rich and elaborate particularly in the spoken Japanese (Lebra 1976). This language function forces people to be sensitive to the slight differences in age, graduation time, the time of entry into a company, and so on. Japanese therefore tend to differentiate one another as *sempai* 'senior' and *kohai* 'junior' on the basis of a rank difference. In addition, address terms also aid to remind people of this status orientation; for instance, *sensei* 'teacher,' *oneesan* 'older sister,' *obaasan* 'grandma'

and so on. Lebra (1976: 79) states, “these terms are an important mechanism for resocializing an individual through different life stages.”

Nakane (1967) defines such a status orientation society as *tateshakai* ‘vertical society.’ Regarding *ie* “house” as a basic social orientation in Japanese society, Nakane (1967: 70-71) describes that the relationship between parents and children is representative of the vertical relationship while the relationship among siblings is representative of the horizontal relationship. In other words, under horizontal relationship, people have the same qualifications in a particular social group. Under the group, they are equal; therefore, they compete with each other for their same qualification. On the contrary, people in the vertical relationship are based on *joretsu ishiki* ‘seniority.’ However, the relationship between two parties is reciprocal. While those who are lower in status are expected to be obedient to their superiors, the latter are obliged to look after the former to maintain equilibrium in the vertical relationship.

I claim that the relationship among siblings is not only horizontal, but also vertical because of their age difference. I assume that the relationship of siblings is complicated on the early age of children. In this paper, I will examine how caregivers instruct hierarchical social norms to children in the family through the role of siblings, and how children construct their identity as a younger sister/brother or as an older sister/brother in family interactions.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Subjects

The participants in this study are two middle-class Japanese families: Family M and Family H. Family M lived in a suburb of Tokyo at the time of the study while Family H lived in Hawaii for the father’s study. However, in Family H, both father and mother were born and grew up in Japan. Both families were college-educated and the mothers did not work outside the home. The children’s ages range from 0 to 6: Family M has one girl and one boy, Aki<sup>1</sup> and Taku, aged 3 and a baby less than a year old; Family H has two girls, Hinako and Kana, aged 6 and 3. In Family H, children were born and raised in the U.S. although their parents only use Japanese at home. I should have studied only children who were born and raised in Japan, but being in Hawaii, I was under the restrictions.

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<sup>1</sup> All names of the subjects are fictional.

## 4.2. Data Collection

The conversations were audiotaped for two hours and a half in Family M and for seven hours and a half in Family H. When the conversations were recorded, I was not present in order to minimize the influence of an outsider. As such, I left the recording schedule to the subjects' decision. Considering the convenience of the subjects, it is not a continuous recording during the whole recording session, but it is recorded about for thirty minutes each time. I only asked the families to record lunch/dinner-time conversation, because a family tends to involve children at the dinner-time, which is a daily routine (Cook 1997). It is not necessary for all family members to present in all recording sessions. The fathers are not often present due to their busy work. The entire conversation was transcribed in compliance with the transcription conventions (see Appendix).

## 5. Data Analysis

In this section, I will first analyze caregivers' instructions of the sibling roles as a horizontal relationship. Secondly, I will examine caregivers' instructions of the hierarchical norm both explicitly and implicitly. Finally, I will show children's acquisition of their social roles as a younger/older sister/brother in the family.

### 5.1. Horizontal Relationship

Let me show you how caregivers instruct the sibling roles in the horizontal relationship through their interaction. In the horizontal relationship, all of the children in a family have the same status regardless of their age; therefore, caregivers instruct them that they are equal. In Excerpt 1, the father looks at his children's picture and gives his comment about this picture to his family:

**Excerpt 1: (Family M)**

→ Father: Uwaa, Taku-chan mo ii kao shiteru nee. Aki-chan mo ii kao shiteru nee.  
'Wow, Taku looks good. Aki looks good, too.'

The father admires not only Taku, his younger son, but also Aki, his older daughter. Here, the father implies that both children are equally cute and there is no difference between them. The next excerpt

also shows that the mother treats children equally:

**Excerpt 2: (Family H)**

((Hinako took a snack on the table.))

Hinako: Mama nani kore?

‘Mom, what’s this?’

→ Mother: Sore? Iiyo. ja futari ni ageyoo. Sukoshizutsu.

‘That? O.K., I’ll give it to two of you, a little bit to each.’

Hinako: Waai wai.

‘Great.’

In this excerpt, even though a younger daughter is not engaged in this conversation, the mother treats children equally. She seems to regard both Hinako and her younger sister as occupying the same status in the family.

On the contrary, Nakane (1967: 104) states that persons in the horizontal relationship oppose each other because they are under the same qualification. In the next excerpt, the mother encourages a younger daughter to emulate her older sibling to eat all the food on the plate:

**Excerpt 3: (Family H)**

((During dinner-time))

Kana: Nobody?

Mother: Aaaan. Nobody ja nakute, hayo tabenno. Everybody has to eat nano.

‘Oh, eat first without telling nobody. Everybody has to eat.’

Father:

[

Tabete. tabete, mou.( )

‘Eat, eat it. It might be better

shitahou ga iinokana.

to do ( )’

Kana: Nyaa.

- ‘Nyaa.’
- Father: Hora, jibun de taberu ka. Sa, hora, tabete. ( )  
‘Hey, you eat by yourself. Eat it. ( )’  
[
- Kana: Anyayaanya.  
‘Anyayaanya.’
- Mother: Haaa.  
‘Hmmm.’
- Father: Oishii?  
‘Is it delicious?’
- Kana: Aaan.  
‘Aaan.’
- Father: Oishii desho?  
‘Is it good taste, right?’
- Kana: Funyafunyafunyafunyafunyafunya.  
‘Funyafunyafunyafunyafunyafunya.’
- Mother: **Yappari Hina-chan wa erai, chanto taberu monnee.**  
‘Good girl. She eats everything.’
- Father: **Erai nec. Kana-chan mo tabeteru kanaa.**  
‘Good girl. Is Kana also eating?’
- Kana: Aan, kore ( ).  
‘Aan, this ( ).’

In order to let Kana eat like Hinako, the mother compares Kana with her older sister, Hinako. Such a competition is based on the social norm that all of the children should be under the same status in the family; therefore, children should have the same ability. Despite the age difference, Excerpt 3 implies that both Hinako and Kana should be able to eat all the food because they have the same qualification as a daughter of the same parents. The next excerpt indicates more direct competition between siblings:



**Excerpt 4: (Family M)**

- Mother: Daijoo! Hai. Hai. Taku-chan kigaete. **Dotchi ga hayai kana?** Pappa pajama da. Taku-chan mo otete tooshite. ((to Taku)) Aa nemui wa nee. Nemui desu nee, nee.
- ‘O.K. Hey, Taku. Change clothes. Which one is faster? Pappa pajama. Get into pajamas as your sister does, Taku. ((to Taku)) Oh, you must be sleepy. Sleepy, right?’

In Excerpt 4, the mother asks children which one is faster to change clothes. Although Taku is just a baby and he cannot change clothes by himself, the mother still tries to let Taku do the same thing with his sister even with his mother’s help. In all of the excerpts, the caregivers try to instruct that children’s status in the same family should be equal. When one of children fails to do the same thing as his/her sibling, caregivers encourage him/her by comparison with the other child.

**5.2. Vertical Relationship**

However, caregivers do not necessarily instruct all of their children to behave equally in the family as I showed in the previous section. Rather, they implant the hierarchical social norm by making the sibling roles clear. First, I will examine explicit linguistic instructions on sibling roles. Reference terms are a common example to show the status difference:

**Excerpt 5: (Family M)**

- Mother: Taku-chan, moo chukochi **oneechama ga** ha o migaiteru kara omachi kudasai ne. At ( ). ((to Aki)) Ii shite kudasai. Riu riu riu riu Aan shite. ((checking Aki’s teeth)) Hai, yoshi.
- ‘Taku, please wait a little more until your sister’s done to clean her teeth.
- ( ). ((to Aki)) Please say iii. Riu riu riu riu. Open your mouth.
- ((checking Aki’s teeth)) Yes, O.K.’

In Excerpt 5, when the mother talks with Taku, she refers to his older sister as *oneechama* ‘older sister’

which is a kinship term, instead of her first name, Aki. The mother tries to construct Aki's identity as an older sister of Taku. Although I could not find examples of address terms in my data (except one example in Excerpt 7), it is also common for family members to address an older daughter/son to *oneechan/oniichan* 'older sister/older brother.'

In addition to the reference terms, the use of verbal polite forms also aids to socialize the hierarchical norm:

**Excerpt 6: (Family H)**

- Kana: Kureyon tsukaenaai, Kana-chan. Maamaaa. Kana-chan kureyon anan tsukaenai. Kana-chan. ((crying))  
'I cannot use crayons. Mom. I cannot use crayons. ((crying)).'
- Mother: Daijoubu yoo. Naana wa yasashii kara kanarazu tsukawashite kureru. Naana (Hinako) hodo yasashii oneechan inain dakara. Ne.  
'Don't worry. Your sister is kind, so she lets you use her crayons. No other sister is as kind as her. Right?'
- Hinako: Un.  
'Yeah.'
- Mother: Kana-chan. Onegai shite goran. Chaaaanto onegai sureba, zettai zettai daijoubuuu.  
'Kana, ask your sister if you can use her crayons. If you ask her in the right manner, she absolutely lets you use them.'
- Father: Onegai shitemina. Kana-chan.  
'Try to say please, Kana.'
- Kana: Uaaaaaaaaan. ((crying))  
'Aaaaaaaaaan.' ((crying))
- Father: Onegaishimasu tte.  
'Say please.'
- Mother: Onegai shinakya damedayo, nandemo soudakedo ne. Iii?tte ittatte dame nanndayo.

‘You cannot borrow it without asking. All right? It is not good enough to ask her even if you say ‘can I?’’

Hinako: Kana ehehehehe ((laugh)) omoshiroi nee.

‘Kana is funny.’ ((laugh))

In this excerpt, both the mother and the father suggest Kana to ask her older sister to lend her crayons with the appropriate manner. In the mother’s last utterance, the mother says, “Iii?tte itatte dame nandayo.” Even though “Iii?” is one of expressions to ask one’s favor, the mother states that it is not good enough to ask Kana’s older sister. In the previous utterance, the father corrects Kana’s inappropriate use of deferential terms by explicitly stating the correct usage under the given circumstances, “Onegaishimasu.” This expression includes the “masu” form that is one of verbal polite forms as opposed to “Iii?” usage which is casual. On the other hand, if an older sister asks Kana “Iii?,” the usage is quite allowed and conforms to the relational expectations that are part of the Japanese culture. It will be clear that caregivers instruct the appropriate manner on the basis of seniority. As a supportive evidence of this argument, I could not find any opposite examples that older siblings ask their favor to their younger siblings with the polite expressions such as ‘masu’ and ‘desu’ in all of my data. Moreover, the parents never instruct older siblings to use polite expressions toward the younger siblings as they did to younger siblings.

I also found many examples of caregivers’ behavioral instructions, not only linguistic instructions on the hierarchical socialization:

**Excerpt 7: (Family M)**

Mother: Kirareru, pajama?

‘Do you want to change into pajamas?’

Aki: Kuguri moo shiteru no.

‘I’m trying.’

Mother: Kuguri moo shiteru? Hai, dekimashita. Hai. ((about Taku))

‘Are you trying? O.K., you did it. O.K. (( about Taku)).’

Aki: Taku-chan hayai na.

'Taku is so fast.'

→ Mother: Taku-chan hayaku nai no yo. Mada hadakanbo. Okusuri tsuketeru.

**Taku-chan wa ne, hitori de hakenai no yo ne. Oneechama wa hakeru kana? Aki-chan mo senaka kayui?**

'Taku cannot put on his clothes by himself. Can you (Oneechama) do it by yourself? Does your back feel itchy, too?'

Aki: Kayui. Asemo ga dekiteru.

'Itchy. I have prickly heat.'

In this excerpt, the mother tells Aki (older sister) that Taku cannot put on his clothes by himself. After this utterance, the mother asks Aki if she can put on clothes by herself or not. In this utterance, the mother compares the two as to how each one of them is dependent on her. Here, the mother addresses Aki "Oneechama" (older sister). This address term helps to emphasize the status difference between Aki and Taku. Although the mother's instruction is not direct, the mother implies that the older sister should be independent unlike the younger brother.

Caregivers instruct an older daughter not only independent behavior, but also endurance as a quality of older siblings, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 8: (Family H)**

((Mother took bread for Hinako.))

Mother: Kore taberu?

'Do you want to eat this?'

Hinako: Ieeei.

'Wow.'

Mother: Bataa ni suru?

'Do you want to put batter on?'

Hinako: Ieei, batabatabata.

'Wow, batter, batter.'

→ Mother: Bataa ni syugaa. **Dakedo Kana-chan ga tabete nai kara dameda mada.**

**Kana-chan ga tabetara.**

'Batter and sugar. But you cannot eat it until Kana's eaten it. After Kana's done.'

Hinako: O.k.

'O.K.'

Mother: Hai. Kana-chan tabete.

'Hey, Kana, eat it.'

In this excerpt, the mother first asks Hinako if she wants to eat bread with batter, and Hinako answers "Yes." However, when the mother realizes that Kana left a meal half-eaten, she changes her mind and tells Hinako that she needs to wait until her younger sister finishes eating the meal. Although this mother's utterance could be based on the horizontal operation of siblings that she wants to treat both children equally, the mother also tries to instruct Hinako to be patient for her younger sister. The endurance will be one of qualities for superiors in the hierarchical relationship, because superiors are required to take care of lower status persons in a close relationship.

On the contrary, it of course happens for superiors to do something first. It is more natural in the hierarchical operation:

**Excerpt 9: (Family M)**

Aki: Papa kite ii yo.

'Da, you can come here.'

Mother: Sore (wa ) kashira. Nan ka sugoku zuibun ashi ga nagaku hosoi na.

'I wonder that it is ( ). It seems that your legs are so long and slender.'

Father: Un.

'Yeah.'

→ Mother: Taku-chan ga mii. Otto o ( ) Taku-chan nemui kara saki haitte mo ii wa. Irete mo ii, Aki-chan?

'Taku is. Wait ( ) Taku looks sleepy, so he can take a bath first. Can I let him in first, Aki?'

Father: Aa, taihen datta ne. Ofune.  
'Yeah, you are very tired, aren't you? A boat.'

In Excerpt 9, the mother asks Aki if Taku can take a bath before Aki does. This order is followed by their seniority. The mother unconsciously conducts status-oriented order of children in this interaction.

The next excerpt shows that the mother instructs an older sister's role which an older sibling takes care of a younger sibling:

**Excerpt 10: (Family H)**

→ Mother: Hayo, okatazuke shinasai, sakini. Doushite okatazuke dekinainoo. A, **Hina-chan yasashii. Jibun ga yattenakutemo yareru. Eraaai, yappari uchi no Hina-chan wa orikou da.** ((pause)) A, Kana-chan mo yatteru. Papa mo otetsudai shite.  
'Put your room in order, first. Why can't you do it? Wow, Hina is so kind. Even though she didn't litter Kana's room, she can help her. Good girl. As I thought, my daughter, Hina, is a good girl. ((pause)) Oh, Kana's just started. Hey darling, please help them.'

In this excerpt, the mother admires Hinako's behavior, because Hinako put a room in order for her younger sister. By this compliment, the mother reinforces Hinako's role as a superior in the hierarchical relationship. There is one more example of this socialization:

**Excerpt 11: (Family H)**

((Mother is going to meet Hinako's teacher for the school interview, so she is asking Hinako what she should say to the teacher.))

Mother: Aa, souda. Hina-chan wa itsumo homework wa hitori de yarimasu tte iwanakucha.  
'Oh, I have to tell your teacher that Hina always do homework by herself.'

Hinako: Un.

‘Yeah.’

- Mother: Ganbatte yarun damon ne. Sorede, mama no iukoto o kiku yoiko desu tte ittokanakya. Soudesho? Atowa? Nanka itte morai tai koto aru? A, souda. Hina-chan wa piano mo yoku rensyuu shimasu tte ittokanakya. Sorekara, ehon mo Kana-chan ni yonde agerareru n dayo ne.
- ‘You’ll do your best, won’t you? And, I also have to tell your teacher that you are a good girl as you always listen to me. Right? Anything else? Do you have anything else you want me to say? Oh, I also have to say that Hina often practices to play the piano. And, she reads picture books for Kana, right?’

The mother enumerates Hinako’s outstanding points in order to see her teacher: Hinako can do her homework without help, she obeys her mother, and she often practices to play the piano. At last, the mother adds to tell Hinako’s teacher that Hinako reads picture books for Kana. This last point is Hinako’s special ability as an older sister, rather than as a daughter or as herself. Through her compliment, the mother instructs that an older sister should give benefits for a younger sister. In this utterance, the mother constructs Hinako’s identity not only as her daughter, but also as an older sibling.

All of the caregiver’s implicit instructions serve as evidence of hierarchical socialization. Older sisters are socialized as superiors in the hierarchical operation. Caregivers instruct that superiors should be independent, patient, and benevolent especially toward those who are younger than they. All of these qualities are fundamental values that underlie the hierarchical socio-cultural framework of Japanese society.

### 5.3. Children’s Acquisition of Social Role

Let me leave caregivers’ instructions and turn to children’s acquisition of their social role in the hierarchical relationship. There is evidence in plenty to show that children have knowledge of their sibling role. I will give some examples from their language use.

There is the usage of imperative forms which are one of typical superiors’ linguistic features in older sisters’ speech:

**Excerpt 12: (Family H)**

((Hinako starts to clean dishes.))

- Hinako: **Kana-chan mo yatte.**  
'Kana, help me, too.'
- Mother: Souyo. Chanto yaranakucha dame nandayoo.  
'She's right. You should do it.'

((Both Hinako and Kana clean dishes.))

- Mother: Uwaa, eraina, futari tomo orikoodanee.  
'Wow, good. You are good girls.'

In this excerpt, Hinako uses an imperative form toward Kana, because Kana does not help wash dishes. Those who are higher in familial status address others more directly than those who are lower in status. This example shows that Hinako already knows her social role in sibling relationship. The next excerpt serves the linguistic similarity between mother's role and an older sister's role:

**Excerpt 13: (Family H)**

- Mother: **Soko, katazukete.**  
'Pick up the stuff.'
- Hinako: **Kana-chan, katazukete. Kana-chan ga dashita n dakara.**  
'Kana, clean it, because you used it.'
- Mother: Un.  
'Yeah.'
- [[
- Kana: Mite, paatii no ( )  
'Look, it's party's ( ).'
- Hinako: **Kana-chan saki ni katazukete. Watashi tonikaku tsuku n nai yo.**  
'Kana, tidy up the room first. Otherwise, I don't make it anyway.'



After the mother tells Kana to put the room in order, Hinako follows the mother's example by ordering her sister to do the same. This excerpt demonstrates that both mother and older sister assume a commanding role toward the youngest member of the family. Because of the superior status the familial relationship allows Hinako, she can order her younger sister in the same tone as her mother's. In common day occurrence, it is hard to find imperative utterances issuing from younger siblings.

The next two excerpts also show the similarity between caregiver's language use and an older sister's:

**Excerpt 15: (Family H)**

- Kana: Kana-chan medical doctor.  
'I'm a medical doctor.'
- Mother: Medical doctor ni naruno?  
'Do you want to be a medical doctor?'
- Hinako: **Medica ja nai, medical.**  
'It's not 'medica,' but 'medical.'
- Mother: Chanto ittayo nee. Kana-chan nee.  
'She said that, Kana-chan.'
- Hinako: **Medical doctor tte itte.**  
'Say 'medical doctor.'
- Kana: Uaaaaan. ((crying))  
'Uaaaaan.' ((crying))
- Mother: Yutta. Kana-chan orikou dakara mou chanto iemashita.  
'She did. Because Kana is smart, she could say that.'

**Excerpt 16: (Family H)**

((During dinner-time))

- Kana: Gooooiiii.  
'Traaaaaash.'
- Father: **Gomi desu tte iwanakya. Gomi desu yooo tte.**

‘Why don’t you say that it is trash?’

In Excerpt 15, Hinako directly corrects Kana’s inappropriate language use while the father also corrects Kana’s language error in Excerpt 16. After Hinako corrects Kana’s language use, she uses an imperative form in order to ask Kana to restate. The linguistic correction exercised by both father and older sister derives from the power relations that exist between the youngest member in the family and the rest. Because power relations heavily depend on seniority in Japanese society, the mother wields more power than older sister as exemplified in excerpt 15. The fact that the mother offers verbal defense for the younger sister when the older sister imperatively corrects Kana’s language use signifies the underlying hierarchical structure that exists in Japanese familial circles.

The next excerpt also exemplifies an older sister’s role:

**Excerpt 17: (Family M)**

Father: Taku-chan mo origami asobi ga suki mitai ne.

‘It seems that Taku also likes Origami play.’

→ Aki: Un. Papa nimo chukutte agetara ii noni.

‘Why don’t you make one for dad?’

Father: Soo da ne.

‘It’s a good idea.’

In this excerpt, Aki suggests her younger brother to give his Origami to their father. Suggestion is also one of the linguistic features of superiors.

Not only an older sister, but also a younger sister knows her social role in the hierarchical relations with her sister:

**Example 18: (Family H)**

Kana: (papapa, papapa).

Hinako: Are nureteru kara dameda yo.

‘Don’t touch that because it’s wet.’

→ Kana: Hai.  
'Yes.'

When Hinako says that Kana cannot touch the clothes because it is wet, Kana answers “Hai” instead of “Un.” “Hai” is more polite answer than “Un.” This is good evidence to prove that Kana knows her social role as a lower in the hierarchical operation.

It follows from what has preceded that children have already acquired the rules that govern appropriate language use under the given hierarchical conditions. The language use of older sisters is similar to caregivers'. The commanding status older sisters occupy in conversational situations is comparable, if not equal, to that of their parents. The relational structure that is manifested in the instances I cited above well reflect the societal and familial mores that prevail in Japan.

## 6. Conclusion

All of the findings in my data lead to the conclusion that the seniority exists in the sibling relationship. Although caregivers instruct that children should be equal in the same family, they also try to instruct status appropriate behavior in the siblings. At the same time, children also start to construct their identities as a superior or a lower in the family social group. The status acquisition of older siblings can be explained by the similarity of language use between caregivers and older siblings.

My research reveals that one's social identity is complicated. Even in one social operation, people play some social roles. The older sister's role in the family gives evidence for this: she had two social roles as a superior and as an equal of her young sister. Therefore, in social familial interactions, older sisters need to configure and reconfigure their social identity according to the conversational distance between their younger sister/brother and themselves. Much further research might be necessary on the difference of hierarchical status between caregivers and older siblings.

**Appendix: Transcription Convention**

- [[ simultaneous utterances
- [ overlapping utterances
- = contiguous utterances
- (( )) details of the conversational scene or gesture descriptions
- ( ) transcriptionist doubt
- ? a rising inflection, not necessarily a question

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論文要旨

介護者と子供の対話における序列の社会化の過程

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子供は言語活動を通して社会文化的規範に基づいた適切な言語使用を習得する。その過程を言語の社会化 (language socialization) と言う (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986)。本稿では、日本社会でも顕著な序列の社会規範の習得過程に注目する。特に家庭内においては、介護者の言語行動には社会的規範が反映されており、その影響から姉(兄)には上の者としての社会的役割に適した言語行動が期待されているのではなかろうか。

本稿では、実際に二人以上の子供を持つ親とその子供たちとの談話を分析することにより、親子の対話において親はどのように社会文化規範である序列の社会化 (hierarchical socialization) を行っているのか、また子供は上の者、下の者としての社会的な役割をどのように理解し、自らのアイデンティティーを構築しているのかを考察した。その結果、親は兄弟関係にある子供たちを対等に扱うだけでなく、姉(兄)として、妹(弟)としての家庭内の序列に基づいた言語使用を暗示的にも直接的にも指導していた。また、3歳、5歳という幼い年齢であっても、姉という上の者としての言語使用を習得していることを、同じく家庭内で上の者である親との言語行動の類似性から明らかにした。