

# 'High-Context' Nature in Function Words and Their Relatives as Seen in Grammatical Samples from the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Level 1

日本語能力試験 1 級 ‘〈機能語〉の類’ を中心とした  
日本語の表現文型に見る高コンテクスト性

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## Abstract

This paper examines function words and their relatives (FWs) in the grammatical samples of Level 1 of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test. Based on their characteristics, many of the FWs are divided into two groups: FWs made by omission, and FWs that have special parts. The latter group is further subdivided into two categories: one in which the special parts are made from basic verbs or function nouns, or words derived from them, and the other, in which special parts are derived from classic Japanese or Chinese.

In the first group, FWs made by omission, the omitted parts are those which carry meaning. The FWs in the second group have no special meaning, and just join two parts of a sentence. However, receivers understand not only the explicit meaning, but also the implicit nuances due to “preprogrammed information that is in the receiver and in the setting” and the shared cultural context of the communication mentioned by Hall (1976). These FWs exhibit ‘high-context’ characteristics, and are an example of the ‘high-context’ nature of the Japanese culture which was presented by Hall (1976).

**Keywords:** Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, function word, high-context

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Previous work on Japanese language in comparison to foreign languages, especially English

It is written by Nakajima (1987) that the development of each language is influenced by the culture of people who speak that language (p. 1). This paper examines characteristics of the Japanese language which reflect the 'high-context' nature of the Japanese culture presented by Hall (1976). Hall (1976) is recognized as one study on Japanese society or culture by a non-Japanese author; other notable studies on this subject include Benedict (1946) and Vogel (1979).

There has been previous research done on comparing Japanese to other languages, especially English, and finding unique linguistic and cultural characteristics (Suzuki, 1973; Ikegami, 1981; Nakajima, 1987).

Nakajima (1987) says that Japanese expression is static, descriptive, and instinctive due to its structure based on predicate, while English expression is dynamic, propositional, and logical due to its structure based on subject (pp. 13–15). Nakajima (1987) continues that sentences in English start with and are centered around the subject, while Japanese sentences, in which the subject does not play a central role, progress towards the most important part of the sentence — the predicate at the end (pp. 188–189). Nakajima (1987) concludes that the Japanese people think events happen following the course of nature, and have little individual awareness and weak sense of individual responsibility, because a sentence in the Japanese language does not have a certain subject that plays a central role (pp. 193–194).

Nakajima (1987) also mentions that Japanese sentences have a lot of elliptic expressions which depend on the situation or context of the story (p. 188). Nakajima (1987) says that, in order to explain sentences of this type grammatically, one needs support from "discourse grammar", such as semantics or pragmatics (p. 182). Nakajima (1987) continues that this characteristic of Japanese sentences, which has a lot of elliptic expressions, is caused by the structure of Japanese sentences which is very flexible and is not constructed logically, since a subject in Japanese sentence does not perform a role as a

theme of the sentence (p. 182). On the other hand, English sentences are much more independent from the situation or context, and have more organized structures, as they are composed of objective expressions centered on the subject of that sentence (p. 182). However, his explanation concerning elliptic expressions in Japanese sentences is from the aspect of syntax. In this paper, characteristic of Japanese sentences with regard to this theme, elliptic expressions in sentences, is examined from the communicative aspect rather than the aspect of syntax.

## **1.2 What is 'high-context' presented by Hall (1976) ?**

Given a local context pertaining to, for example, a single conversation, and a more global context, such as one pertaining to a whole culture or society, it is the latter that we mean when we say 'context' in this paper, and that Hall (1976) referenced.

As mentioned in 1.1, this paper examines characteristics of the Japanese language which reflect the 'high-context' nature of the Japanese culture presented by Hall (1976). The following is an explanation of the 'high-context' nature termed by Hall (1976).

A 'high-context' culture explained by Hall (1976) is that in which "people are deeply involved with each other", and in which "information is widely shared and simple messages with deep meaning flow freely" (p. 39). As we can see from Hall's explanation about "the lower end of the context scale, where nothing can be taken for granted" (Hall, 1976, p. 66), reactions and recognitions for various things in a 'high-context' culture are shared among the people as a matter of course. He pointed out that culture in Japan is "a very high-context approach to life" from the fact that "It is very seldom in Japan that someone will correct you or explain things to you. You are supposed to know, and they get quite upset when you don't" (Hall, 1976, p. 66, p. 112).

As per Hall, "A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (Hall, 1976, p. 91). However, "Internal contexting makes it possible for human beings to perform the exceedingly important function of automatically correcting for distortions or omissions of infor-

mation in messages” (Hall, 1976, p. 117).

Hall also mentions that “HC transactions feature preprogrammed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information in the transmitted message” and “In general, HC communication . . . is economical, fast, efficient, and satisfying; however, time must be devoted to programming. If this programming doesn’t take place, the communication is incomplete” (Hall, 1976, p. 101). He explains as follows:

People raised in high-context systems expect more of others than do the participants in low-context systems . . . . The result is that he will talk around and around the point, in effect putting all the pieces in place except the crucial one. Placing it properly — this keystone — is the role of his interlocutor. (Hall, 1976, p. 113)

### 1.3 The purpose of this paper

Starting in 1984, the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) has been offered as a reliable means of evaluating and certifying the Japanese language proficiency of non-native speakers. According to the *Test content specifications* of JLPT, which contains a list of vocabulary, *kanji* (Chinese character) and grammar items required for each level, ‘*kinougo no rui*’ are neither particles nor auxiliary verbs, but words similar to those particles or auxiliary verbs, such as ‘~*ni kanshite* (concerning)’, ‘~*ni itaru made* (up to the)’, ‘~*o tooshite* (through or throughout)’, ‘~*to iedomo* (even)’ and ‘~*zaru o enai* (cannot help ~ing)’ (Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services, 2006, p. 151). In this paper, ‘*kinougo no rui*’ are referred to as ‘function words and their relatives (FWs)’, since they are not only single words, but sometimes parts of words or combinations of multiple words.

The purpose of this paper is to examine FWs from the grammatical samples of Level 1 in the *Test content specifications* of the JLPT, and to demonstrate that those FWs have ‘high-context’ nature, which means those FWs are examples of the ‘high-context’ nature of the Japanese culture presented by Hall (1976).

The JLPT system has been changed since 2010, and the current test (new test) has been divided into five levels, although there were four levels in the old version (old test).

Moreover *Test content specifications* are no longer offered as the new test aims to measure communicative competence required to perform tasks. However, using the old test in this paper is still considered to be reasonable, because it is indicated in the *New Japanese-language proficiency test guidebook: An executive summary and sample questions for N1, N2 and N3* not only that the passing standard is basically the same for N1 in the new test and Level 1 in the old test, but also that *Test Content Specifications* for old tests can provide useful information (Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services, 2009, p. 9). To pass Level 1 of the old test, which was the highest level, implied that the examinee “[has] an integrated command of the language sufficient for life in the Japanese society” (Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services, 2012).

## 2. Characteristics of FWs in grammatical samples of Level 1 of the JLPT

Many of the FWs from the grammatical samples of Level 1 of the JLPT (JLPT Level 1) can be grouped as follows based on their characteristics.

[1] FWs made by omission

[2] FWs that have a special part

A: The special part is a basic verb or a function noun, or a word derived from them.

B: The special part is a word or part of a word which is derived from classic Japanese or classic Chinese<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.1 FWs of JLPT Level 1 made by omission

Out of 105 samples<sup>3</sup> of FWs in the JLPT Level 1, there are 11 FWs made by omission, which is 10.5% of the total number of samples. For Level 2, 5.2% of the samples use omissions. As for Level 3 and 4, no omissions were recognized.

Here, four examples — ‘~to atte’, ‘~to areba’, ‘~to bakari ni’ and ‘~naradewa no’ — are chosen from the 11 FWs of JLPT Level 1 made by omission, and explained.

- (1) ~to atte : nen ni ichido no o-matsuri to atte ~<sup>4</sup>  
 because ~ : year per once festival because  
 'Because the festival takes place once a year, naturally or obviously ~'

'*Nen ni ichido no o-matsuri to atte*' is made by the omission of '*iu tokubetsuna riyuu ga* (a special reason called)' from the complete clause '*nen ni ichido no o-matsuri to iu tokubetsuna riyuu ga atte* (because there is a special reason that the festival takes place once a year~)'

Although this '*~to atte*' is a short expression, it has much more information than a simple conjunctive particle for expressing reason, such as '*~kara* (because)' or '*~node* (since)'. This FW indicates not only reason, but also that the reason is special, and alludes to the consequences that are expected to be understood as a matter of course. This sentence, which has a FW made by omission, can be understood because of the human ability of 'internal contexting', as Hall (1976) mentioned, which "makes it possible for human beings to perform the exceedingly important function of automatically correcting for distortions or omissions of information in messages" (p. 117).

Some other examples which have a FW made by omission are shown below.

- (2) ~to areba : kodomo no tame to areba ~  
 if ~ : a child for sake if  
 (complete clause) : kodomo no tame to [iu tokubetsuna baai de] areba ~  
 'If that is a special case for the sake of my child, of course ~'
- (3) ~to bakari ni : nake to bakari ni ~  
 as if to say~ : cry as if  
 (complete clause) : nake to [iwan] bakari ni ~  
 'As if trying to tell us to cry ~'

- (4) ~naradewa no               : kare    naradewa no    kaikyo  
 impossible if it's not~    : he      if it's not        splendid accomplishment  
 (complete clause)        : kare naradewa [dekinai] kaikyo  
   'The splendid accomplishment that only he could make'  
   The part in [ ] is the omitted part.

As we can see from these examples, each sentence which has a FW made by omission contains a lot of information and even the notion of significance given the brevity of the expression. Level 2 also has 5.2% FWs made by omission, although the omission that happens in Level 2 is different in that a part is dropped from the whole FW. For example, dropping the '*shite*' from '*~o moto ni shite* (based on)' results in '*~o moto ni*'.

- (5) hontou ni    atta            koto o    moto ni [shite]    kakareta    hanashi  
 really        happened    matter    based on        written    story  
 'The story written based on what had really happened'

The difference between the omissions in Level 1 and Level 2 is that in the former, words containing meaningful information are omitted, while in the latter, words used only for structure of the FWs are omitted. In fact, most of the FWs made by omission in Level 2 are made by just dropping '*shite*' from the entire expression. This type of FW seen in Level 2 is used both in the omitted form and in full form, whereas in Level 1, FWs that omit meaningful information are only used in the omitted form.

The distinction of the FWs made by omission in JLPT Level 1 is that the omitted words have meaning, unlike those in Level 2, which are just structural components of the FWs. Therefore, the short expression has a lot of meaning and nuance; this kind of omission is difficult to recognize, and needs a lot of time to be acquired. These FWs demonstrate the "HC transactions" mentioned by Hall (1976). As it is written in 1.2, "HC transactions feature preprogrammed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information in the transmitted message" and "In general, HC commu-

nication, in contrast to LC [low-context], is economical, fast, efficient, and satisfying; however, time must be devoted to programming” (p. 101).

## 2.2 FWs in JLPT Level 1 which have a special part

### 2.2.1 FWs whose special part is a basic verb or a function noun, or a word derived from them

In this paper, five verbs, ‘*suru* (to do)’, ‘*aru* (to be or exist)’, ‘*naru* (to become)’, ‘*iru* (to stay or be)’ and ‘*iu* (to say)’ are chosen as basic verbs which compose FWs, while four function nouns<sup>5</sup>, ‘*koto* (thing, matter)’, ‘*mono* (thing, object)’, ‘*tokoro* (place, which includes abstract place, such as time, situation and degree)’ and ‘*wake* (reason)’ are extracted from samples in the *Test Content Specifications* of JLPT.

Nakajima (1987) organizes verbs into three groups, represented by the verbs ‘*suru*’, which expresses an action or an operation, ‘*aru*’, which expresses existence, and ‘*naru*’, which expresses a process or a change of state (p. 157). Sunagawa (2006) says that ‘*iu*’ represents the language activity, which is the basic operation of the human, in general (p. 92). In contrast to ‘*aru*’, ‘*iru*’ expresses the current state of an animate object. The five basic verbs used in this paper were thus chosen primarily based on the research of Nakajima (1987) and Sunagawa (2006).

Table 1

*Percentage of FWs which Have Basic Verbs and Function Nouns*

<i>Level</i>	$\alpha$	$\beta$	<i>Total</i> <sup>6</sup>	$\gamma$
Level 4	4	84	88	4.5%
Level 3	21	98	119	17.6%
Level 2	53	125	178	30.4%
Level 1	31	78	109	28.4%

$\alpha$  : FWs which have basic verbs or function nouns

$\beta$  : FWs which have neither basic verbs nor function nouns

$\gamma$  : Ratio of  $\alpha$  to the total



Table 1 indicates that  $\gamma$  in both Level 1 and Level 2 have approximately 30% of total FWs, while  $\gamma$  in the lower levels have a smaller proportion.

Table 2

<i>Distribution of Basic Verbs</i>		(Percentage of Total)						
<i>Level</i>	<i>suru</i>	<i>iu</i>	<i>aru</i>	<i>iru</i>	<i>naru</i>	<i>Total</i>		
Level 4	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	4		
Level 3	6 (46.2%)	1 (0.77%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	4 (30.8%)	13		
Level 2	9 (34.6%)	8 (30.8%)	4 (15.4%)	3 (11.5%)	2 (7.7%)	26		
Level 1	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	8 (40%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	20		

Table 2 shows that no FWs in Level 4 have ‘*iu* (to say)’, which represents the basic operation of the human. It also can be seen that higher levels have more ‘*iu*’ and ‘*aru*’ (to be or exist), and have less ‘*suru* (to do)’ and ‘*naru* (to become)’.

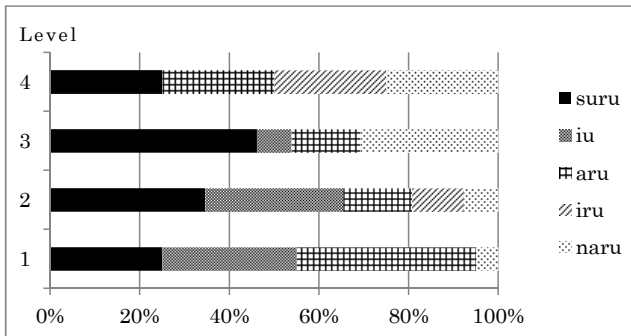


Figure 1. Percentage of each basic verb according to different levels.

Table 3

<i>Distribution of Function Nouns</i>					(Percentage of Total)
<i>Level</i>	<i>koto</i>	<i>mono</i>	<i>tokoro</i>	<i>wake</i>	<i>Total</i>
Level 3	7 (87.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	8
Level 2	11 (40.7%)	9 (33.3%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (11.1%)	27
Level 1	3 (27.3%)	4 (36.4%)	4 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	11

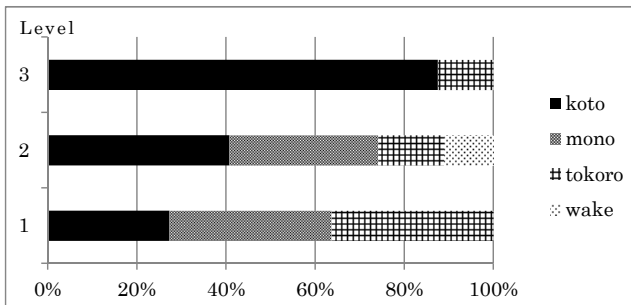


Figure 2. Percentage of each function noun according to different levels.

Table 3 shows firstly that Level 4 has no FWs which have any function nouns, and secondly that FWs in higher levels have less ‘*koto* (thing, matter)’, but have more ‘*mono* (thing, object)’ and ‘*tokoro* (place, which includes abstract place, such as time, situation and degree)’. Thirdly, Level 2 has the most variety of function nouns.

### 2.2.1.1 ‘~ni shite’, one example of FWs whose special part is a basic verb or a function noun, or a word derived from them

- (6) ~ni shite : kore wa ano hito ni shite hajimete dekiru koto da.  
 being~ : this that person being for the first time can do thing is  
 ‘Because of that person, this thing can be done for the first time (because he is such an excellent person).’

- (7) ~ni shite : ano yuushuuna kare ni shite kono youna machigai o suru no da kara~  
 being~ : that excellent he being this kind of mistake do therefore  
 'Even someone as excellent as him makes this kind of mistake, so ~'

'*Shite*' is the so called *te*-form of the verb '*suru* (to do)'. When the *te*-form of the verb is used by itself, it acts as an adverb (e.g. '*aruite* [walking] *iku* [go]' means 'go walking'), and when it is used as the predicate of a subordinate clause, it makes that subordinate clause into an adverbial clause, which is jointed to the next sentence with the meaning 'do and~' or 'ing' (e.g. '*doa o* [door] *shimete* [close and] *dekakeru* [go out]' means 'after closing the door, someone goes out'). As explained above, '*suru*' originally means 'to do'; however, '*shite*' in this FW '*N' ni shite P*' does not act as a verb, and just joins parts N and P with an implied positive evaluation of N. Accordingly, in (6), '*ano hito* (that person)' implies that he is excellent, and 'yuushuuna (excellent)' from 'ano yuushuuna kare ni shite' in (7) can be omitted. Although '*~ni shite*' does not have any special meaning, and just joints the former part to the latter, the context and common sense let receivers infer the implied 'because he is such an excellent person' from (6), and 'even someone as excellent as him' from (7). See below.

- (6)' ano hito ni shite + hajimete dekiru  
 being that (excellent) person + for the first time can do  
 'Because he is such an excellent person, it can be done for the first time.'

- (7)' ano (yuushuuna) kare ni shite + kono youna machigai o suru  
 being that (excellent) man + makes this kind of mistake  
 'Even someone as excellent as him makes this kind of mistake.'

(6)' and (7)' indicate this FW '*~ni shite*' has little literal meaning, and receivers are required to use their common sense and cultural context to understand the implied meaning.

Some FWs in Level 3 also contain ‘*suru*’, but in these cases ‘*suru*’ still keeps its meaning and function as a verb, such as ‘*~suru*<sup>9</sup> *koto ni suru* (decide to do)’ and ‘*~suru you ni suru* (try to do)’.

### 2.2.1.2 ‘*~shite kara to iu mono*’, one example of FWs whose special part is a basic verb or a function noun, or a word derived from them

- (8) *~shite kara to iu mono* : *kare ga kite kara to iu mono~*  
 since doing ~ : that person coming from called thing or object  
 ‘Since that person came, (unlike before) ~’

Fujita (2000) says that the function of the quotation marker ‘*to*’ is to describe the quoted part as admitted and accepted by the speaker (p. 444). Fujita (2000) also mentions that the hearsay expression ‘*~to iu*’ expresses the information obtained from others in one’s own words (p. 398). Accordingly, ‘*kare ga kite kara to iu*’ in (8) shows that the speaker announces the fact that he admits and accepts the change in the situation after that person’s arrival. That contains the notion which focuses on and emphasizes ‘after that person’s coming’ in contrast to ‘before that person’s coming’.

According to Makino and Tsutsui (1989), ‘*mono*’ means ‘a tangible thing’, while ‘*koto*’ means ‘an intangible thing’, and ‘*mono*’ is used when the speaker presents some situation as if it were a tangible object with emotive overtones (p. 193, p. 260). Makino and Tsutsui (1989) say, “the emotion expressed here [*mono*] is not an instantaneously appearing emotion instigated by a current event, but an emotion nurtured in one’s mind for a relatively long period time” (p. 260). Therefore, ‘*mono*’ in (8) expresses the fact that the speaker experiences the situation ‘after that person’s coming’ in contrast to ‘before that person’s coming’ in a palpable, tangible way, and with deep emotion.

Actually ‘*~shite kara to iu mono*’ and ‘*~shite kara*’ have the same meaning. However, the former focuses on and emphasizes ‘after something happens’ in contrast to ‘before something happens’. Moreover, it expresses the fact that the speaker experiences the

situation ‘after something happens’ in a palpable, tangible way, and with deep emotion. The receiver’s contextual awareness and sympathy for what the speaker expresses are necessary to understand what the speaker intends to say completely, because part of the message, composed with this FW incorporating “*iu*” and “*mono*”, a basic verb and a function noun that have little substantial meaning, is merely implied and not stated clearly. Yet without learning about this FW, it is difficult to notice invisible emotive overtones and to feel sympathy.

### 2.2.2 FWs whose special part is a word or a part of a word which is derived from classic Japanese or classic Chinese

Grammatical samples in JLPT Level 1 have a large number of FWs from classic Japanese or classic Chinese. Examples from classic Chinese sentences are grouped in Group I, while examples from classic Japanese sentences are in Group II.

- I : ‘*~ni taru* (to be worthy of)’, ‘*~o motte* (by)’, ‘*~to iedomo* (even, although)’, ‘*~taritomo* (even)’, ‘*~o kinji-enai* (cannot hold back, cannot help ~ing)’, and so on  
 II : ‘*~majiki* (will not, should not)’, ‘*~dani* ([not] even)’, ‘*~ya* (as soon as)’, ‘*~sen ga tame (ni)* (for the purpose)’, ‘*~yue (ni)* (because)’, and so on

#### 2.2.2.1 ‘*-taru*’, one example of FWs whose special part is derived from classic Chinese

- (9) *-taru* : giin taru mono ~  
 being~ : representative being person  
 ‘Those that are generally recognized as highly evaluated representatives ~’

‘*-taru*’ is derived from the noun-modifying form of classic Japanese copula ‘*tari*’. ‘*Tari*’ is not used as a copula in modern Japanese sentences, but some conjugated forms of it are still used as FWs.



to achieve the objective, and being a classic word, carries a heavy and serious sound, while *'suru'* is neutral.

### **2.2.2.3 Remarks on FWs whose special part is a word or a part of a word which is derived from classic Japanese or classic Chinese**

*'-taru'* is just a small suffix, and *'sen'* is merely one of many conjugated forms of a given verb; therefore it is difficult not only to understand the nuance that these FWs express, but even to notice their existence in the first place. It is also difficult for an unprepared person to perceive nuances such as a strong will to achieve an objective, a highly positive ethical evaluation expressed by a speaker, or prestigious and profound sound. The cultural context which is necessary to perceive these implied meanings can be acquired through experience over the years. However, Japanese people use the aforementioned type of FWs when they really need to emphasize. Therefore, communication cannot be fulfilled to the fullest without knowing expressions such as the ones discussed here.

## **3. Conclusion**

In this paper, the following were explained as a feature of the FWs in the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Level 1.

[1] There are many FWs made by omission.

[2] There are many FWs that have a special part.

A: The special part is a basic verb or a function noun, or a word derived from them.

B: The special part is a word or a part of the word which is derived from classic Japanese or classic Chinese.

In the FWs that fall into the [1] category, many omissions are related to the part which carries meaning. Those omissions are discrete, and there are no fixed rules about them. However, the message which uses this kind of FW can be understood because, as Hall (1976) says, "Internal contexting makes it possible for human beings to perform the exceedingly important function of automatically correcting for distortions or omissions of

information in messages” (p. 117). Therefore, the receiver needs to share the cultural context in order to understand the sentence or message.

For [2]-A, a basic verb '*suru*' in '*~ni shite*', for example, does not have a special meaning; it just joins the preceding and following parts with an emphasis and positive evaluation of the preceding part. Receivers are required to use common sense to understand the implied meaning, emphasis, or positive evaluation.

A basic functional noun '*mono*' in '*~shite kara to iu mono*' expresses the fact that the speaker experienced the situation 'after something happens' in a palpable, tangible way, and with deep emotion. The receiver's contextual awareness and sympathy for what the speaker expresses are necessary to understand what the speaker intends to say completely.

Concerning [2]-B, small part or a conjugated form such as '*taru*' and '*sen*' expresses highly positive ethical evaluation by the speaker, or prestigious and profound sound, or strong will to achieve an objective. The receiver needs to recognize their existence and to understand their implied nuance if he wants to communicate to the fullest.

What is written above indicates that many of the sentences or messages with FWs in the grammatical samples from Level 1 of the JLPT have very little information in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message, because most of the information is either in the external context or internalized in the person. The receiver needs to acquire that information through his experience and to share the cultural context of the sentences or messages in order to communicate fully. Although that kind of preparation takes a lot of time, once achieved, the communication becomes economical, fast, efficient, and satisfying. These features suggest 'high-context' characteristics presented by Hall (1976).

#### **4. Suggestions for Japanese-language education**

In the current methods of teaching of FWs that appear in the grammatical samples from Level 1 of the JLPT, meanings of the FWs and the way they are connected with the preceding words are mainly explained. However, Japanese language learners of JLPT Level 1, such as ones aiming to get jobs related with Japan, are expected to be able to



communicate on the same level as Japanese native speakers do. As it is shown in this paper, FWs in Level 1 of the JLPT express ‘high-context’ characteristics mentioned by Hall (1976). Those FWs, which have little information in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message, need to be learned and internalized by the speaker for successful communication, though implicit information is difficult to be recognized by Japanese language learners on their own. Therefore, in order to acquire the ability to communicate successfully, implicit information in FWs is positively advised to be introduced to Japanese language learners of JLPT Level 1 who are ready to acquire it.

### Notes

- 1 N1, N2 and N3 mean difficulty level of JLPT. N1 and N2 correspond to Levels 1 and 2 of the old test.
- 2 Classic Chinese, in this case, refers to classic Chinese expressed in Japanese style.
- 3 Some FWs, such as ‘*kiwamaru* (extremely)’ and ‘*kiwamarinai* (extremely)’, are written in the same entry in the sample list of the *Test Content Specifications* because they look similar and have almost the same meaning. However, they should be recognized as different FWs since they are unrelated. For example, ‘*kiwamarinai*’ is not the negative of ‘*kiwamaru*’. Therefore, the total number is 105 samples of FWs in Level 1, though the *Test Content Specifications* originally has 99 entries for FWs in Level 1.
- 4 All example sentences in this paper are from *Test Content Specifications*.
- 5 A function noun is a noun which lacks substantial meaning and works only grammatically. Therefore, a function noun needs to be used with other words which redeem substantial meaning.
- 6 Some FWs have several basic verbs or function nouns in the single FW such as ‘*~suru koto ni suru* (to decide to do~)’. In fact, Level 1 has 4, Level 2 has 6, and Level 3 has 5 of them. Therefore, each total number in Levels 1 through Level 3 is more than the number of samples in the original *Test Content Specifications* since the total number of basic verbs and function nouns in the FWs is counted.

- 7 N indicates a noun.
- 8 P indicates a predicate.
- 9 Words expressed in bold, such as '*suru*', are placeholders for the concrete verb which is used as one part of the FW, and is included in order to show the conjugation form prescribed by the given FW. For instance, '*suru*' in "*~suru koto ni suru*" is the so-called dictionary-form of the verb, which is equivalent to an infinitive verb in English.

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