

# Innovations

## Interpersonal Meaning of Teacher Talk in Japanese Classroom

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**Abstract :** *This study aims at analyzing teacher talk of new teachers and experienced teachers in Japanese classroom at the level of mood, comparing the similarities and differences in the mood distribution, revealing the interpersonal meanings conveyed by different choices of mood, and then exploring how teachers can enhance teacher-student interaction by improving the mood of discourse. Based on the results of the data analysis, the findings of this research can be stated as follows:(1) The use of declarative and interrogative moods was the highest in both types of teacher discourse, while imperative mood was used the least frequently;(2) Compared with new teachers, experienced teachers tended to use more declarative and interrogative mood to give instructions in order to make their proposals or statements sound more polite and negotiable. Based on interpersonal meaning theory, teachers should master various mood structures and use them appropriately in the classroom, pay attention to the diversity of teachers' discourse, spend more time communicating with students and be fully aware of their role in the classroom.*

**Keywords:** *discourse analysis ; teacher talk; interpersonal meaning; mood; teacher-student relationship;*

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### 1. Introduction

Blanchette (2009) found teachers play a supporting role in classroom teaching by continuously engaging in organizing, explaining, summarizing, reformulating, and redirecting what has been said both by themselves and by students. A teacher is a center and facilitator in the English learning process in the foreign language classroom (Incecay, 2010). The educator Sukhomlinsky once said that the efficiency of students' mental work in the classroom is largely determined by the teacher's language skills. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* defined Teacher talk (short for TT hereafter) as “various actions taken by teachers during the teaching process. When teachers trying to communicate

with students, they often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of foreigner talk and other simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners" (Richard, 2002).

TT of university foreign language teachers is different from daily interpersonal conversations, and is not an arbitrary combination and use of utterances. Foreign language teachers are often information transmitters, language demonstrators, classroom activity organizers, guides, and monitors, and their classroom discourse can often affect students' moods and even determine the effect of their foreign language learning (Cai, 2015). In other words, teachers' discourse is one of the important channels for realizing interpersonal meaning in foreign language teaching, and different choices of teachers' discourse will convey different interpersonal meanings, which will, to a certain extent, affect the effect of interaction in the classroom and the classroom atmosphere, and influence the implementation of the classroom activities, which will have an impact on the effectiveness and quality of teaching. Therefore, it is of great necessity to give a careful reconsideration of the nature of teacher talk (Xu, 2010).

Taking Halliday's interpersonal meaning theory as a perspective, this study conducts an analysis of TT at the mood level, and attempts to address the following questions :

1. What are the similarities and differences in mood distribution of new and experienced teachers in Japanese classroom?
2. How do Japanese teachers achieve interpersonal meaning through mood in teacher talk?

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Interpersonal meaning theory is derived from Systemic functional Linguistics. In Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the metafunctions of language can be categorized into three types: ideational, interpersonal and linguistic metafunction. Thompson points out that when discussing functional grammar, interpersonal function equates interpersonal meaning (Thompson, 2000: 26). He explains interpersonal meaning as the string of meanings that arise when we use language to interact with others, to build and maintain relationships with them, to influence their behavior, to express our views about what is going on in the world, and to change their views (Thompson, 2000: 41, 47-48, 62; Zhou, 2022: 14-19).

Egins proposed the following methods to study interpersonal meaning: 1) the amount of discourse; 2) What the speaker does after his speech; 3) Who gives information or services and who demands; 4) Who uses cognitive modality; 5) Who uses mandatory modality (Egins, 1996). Bartlett analyzed the role of modal

operators in the realization of interpersonal meaning. His research focused on the Modality system of interpersonal function (Bartlett, 2016). Miao suggested that interpersonal meaning can represent the interaction between communicators, and that the Mood system and the Modality system provide crucial grammatical resources for the construction of discourse in the process of communication (Miao,2004). Rahma studied the interpersonal meaning of teachers' scaffolding discourse and found that the most commonly used mood in teachers' scaffolding discourse was the imperative sentences, followed by the interrogative sentences (Rahma,2012).Conclusions can be drawn from these studies that Mood system and the Modality system are the core components of interpersonal meaning of TT.As Halliday pointed out , the interpersonal metafunction is mainly accomplished through the Mood system and the Modality system (Halliday, 2000).

The Mood system is one of the most important components of interpersonal function. As one of the cores of interpersonal communication elements, the mood system expresses what the speaker wants to achieve through speech. Christie noted that teachers could use mood to offer information, to guide behavior or to indicate something's importance (Christie,2002:45-66). Rahma suggested that declarative mood was the one mostly used in scaffolding talk, followed by imperative and interrogative mood (Rahma, 2012). Fikri analyzed the mood structure of female and male teacher in EFL classroom through observation (Fikri, 2015). Cai also conducted quantitative and qualitative research on TT in classrooms of college foreign language teaching competitions in terms of Mood system, focusing on English classroom (Cai, 2015). From the discussion of the studies on the interpersonal meaning of TT, it can be learned that the researchers have applied mood system, modality system to analyze TT. In addition, most researchers have been conducted in English classrooms.Few researchers have focused on Japanese language classrooms and few comparative studies have been done, which will be conducted in the present study.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The following is the research method specifically applied to the research.

#### **3.1 Source of Data**

The data for this study comes from the videos of Japanese teachers participating in the China 2022 Foreign Language Institute Multilingual "Teaching Stars" Competition, a large-scale public welfare event for foreign language teachers in colleges and universities nationwide in China. With the purpose of

leading the development of teaching, innovating teaching concepts and exchanging teaching methods, the competition is based on the principles of professional standard, standardized process and scientific evaluation, and features multilingualism, multi-level and multi-modality, and is widely recognized in the field of foreign language education in colleges and universities nationwide. The data source of the Analysis Report of the National Teaching Competition for Teachers in General Universities.

Based on the definition of new teacher and experienced teacher from Liao & Lian(Liao & Lian,2002), this study defined new teachers as teachers with 0 to 5 years of teaching experience and low ranking titles, and experienced teachers as teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience and high ranking title. The corpus of the study was based on six classroom sessions and their transcriptions, all 10 minutes long, in classes taught by three new teachers and three experienced teachers. This paper uses ET1, ET2, and ET3 to represent the three experienced teachers and T1, T2, and T3 to represent the three new teachers.

### **3.2 Treatment of Data**

The selected teacher videos are transcribed into written text with the help of a video transcription tool, named *FEISHU*.The transcribed data are then labeled according to the analytical framework described earlier in Interpersonal Meaning Theory by adopting UAM Corpus tool, which is extremely convenient to code language resources as this tool has been equipped with some built-in schemes including mood,modality system according to Systemic Functional Grammar.This tool can help researchers directly annotate texts by clicking on the name of each category without manual typing, which saves much time and energy.

## **4.Findings and Discussion**

The Mood system plays an important role in the interpersonal function of language(Thompson, 2000:41) .Different moods can achieve various interpersonal functions, such as stating opinions, showing positions, asking questions and ordering. Based on the data, the purpose of this section is to analyze distribution of mood and the realization of interpersonal Meaning in TT of college Japanese classroom.

### **4.1 The Distribution of Mood Structures in Teacher Talk**

According to interpersonal meaning theory, there are three types of mood: declarative mood, interrogative mood, and imperative mood. The declarative

mood is the mood most commonly used to provide information, goods or services. The interrogative mood is usually used to ask for information, goods or services. It can be divided into Yes/no-interrogative and Wh-interrogative. The former expresses the “negotiation” with the audience, while the latter mainly requires the audience to supplement the information, expressing the speaker’s attempts to seek information from the audience. The imperative mood is regarded as a demand and command for the exchange of goods and services, rather than an open negotiation (Halliday, 2000).

The quantitative analysis of the collected data reveals the distribution and frequency of each mood structure in the T of six teachers. The results are as follows:

**Table 4-1 The Distribution of Mood Structures in Teacher Talk**

Mood Subjects	Declarative		Wh-interrogative		Yes/no-interrogative		Imperative	
	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)
ET1(66)	29	43.9	17	25.8	8	12.1	12	18.2
ET2(78)	34	43.6	14	17.9	16	20.5	14	18.0
ET3(54)	24	44.4	11	20.4	9	16.7	10	18.5
T1(76)	36	47.4	10	13.2	8	10.5	22	28.9
T2(80)	38	47.5	10	12.5	11	13.8	21	26.2
T3(82)	38	46.3	11	13.4	10	12.2	23	28.1
Total:436	199	45.7	73	16.7	62	14.2	102	23.4

\* F= Frequency P= Percent

The following table compares the three mood structures of experienced teachers (ET1, ET2, ET3) and new teachers (T1, T2, T3):

**Table 4-2 Mood Distribution of Two Types of Teachers**

Mood Subjects	Declarative		Wh-interrogative		Yes/no-interrogative		Imperative	
	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)
ET1+ET2+ET3(198)	87	43.9	42	21.2	33	16.7	36	18.2
T1+T2+T3(238)	112	47.1	31	13.0	29	12.2	66	27.7

\* F= Frequency P= Percent

Table 4-1 shows that declarative mood is the most frequently used mood type by both types of teachers at 45.6%, interrogative mood goes the second place at 30.9%, and imperative mood is the least used at 23.4%. According to Halliday, this indicates that teachers provide information to students much more often than teachers ask for information from students. In addition, the least use of the imperative mood indicates that the exchange in the classroom is primarily for information rather than services (Halliday, 2000). It can be concluded that these six teachers play the role of information providers and they are in a dominant position in the classroom. However, they try to change the traditional teacher role by using the interrogative mood, which is not only a mood of communication but also a tool to stimulate learners' thinking and prompt them to engage in more language output and communication.

As can be seen from the data in Table 4-2, experienced teachers use slightly more total declarative and interrogative mood than new teachers, with percentages of 81.8% and 72.3% respectively. However, in terms of imperative mood, new teachers use relatively more, with percentages of 18.2% and 27.7% respectively. This suggests that experienced teachers provide learners with relatively more information and are more consultative and interactive with their students in the limited 10 minutes they have, while being less likely to demonstrate oppression of students. There are few differences between the two types of teachers, however, indicating that all six teachers are providers of information, that all six classes are teacher-driven. The next section will analyze in detail the interpersonal meanings conveyed by the three mood structures in the six teachers' discourse.

## **4.2 The Realizations of Interpersonal Meaning in Mood**

Eggs (1994) states that "by looking at how people use the system of mood in the clauses they exchange with each other, we can see speakers or writers making meaning about such interpersonal dimensions as: the power or solidarity of their relationship, the extent of their intimacy, their level of familiarity with each other, and their attitudes and judgments." This section discusses how Japanese teachers realize interpersonal meaning through different mood in teacher talk.

### **4.2.1 The Realizations of Interpersonal Meaning in Declarative Mood**

From Table 4-1, declarative mood dominates the distribution of mood structures. Declarative sentences accounted for 43.9% to 47.1% for two types of teachers, which indicates that teachers provide more information than is requested. Teachers mainly play the role of information providers. Based on the basic view of interpersonal meaning theory, declarative mood is one of the most representative mood structures capable of communicative activities for the

purpose of providing goods and services or conveying information (Halliday, 2000). However, in addition to these two basic functions, declarative mood can also perform other interpersonal functions in the teaching context. Through observation of Japanese classrooms, these interpersonal functions can be categorized by the content of the information or goods and services provided in TT (Comrie B ect., 1995; Zhou Panpan,2022).

As seen in Table 4-3, the declarative mood is primarily used to provide information (experienced teachers: 35.6%; new teachers: 57.1%). However, TT is very different from other discourse. In addition to simply providing information, declarative mood can also be used to repeat students' responses (experienced teachers: 19.5%; new teachers: 28.6%), evaluate students' performance (experienced teachers: 23.0%; new teachers: 4.5%), give orders or instructions (experienced teachers: 10.3%; new teachers: 7.1%), indicate their own feelings and attitudes (experienced teachers: 5.8%; new teachers: 2.7%), encourage students (experienced: 5.8%; new teachers: 0), etc.

Overall, experienced teachers provide far less information to learners than new teachers, at 35.6% and 57.1%, respectively. Experienced teachers make less reference to the content of the materials, gradually shifting the focus of the classroom from the teacher and the materials to the students, making the students the masters of the classroom as much as possible and allowing the students to internalize the content and produce their own ideas. In addition, based on the audio recordings and transcriptions, the percentage of experienced teachers providing non-instructional information to students is much higher than that of new teachers. Experienced teachers are more likely to provide students with a broader range of additional information or related topics outside of the textbook than they are to read from the textbook, to increase students' knowledge and broaden their horizons. It is also more likely that other interesting information and content will be included in the classroom to increase students' interest and enthusiasm for learning.

**Table 4-3 Interpersonal Functions of Declarative Mood**

Frequency & Percent Interpersonal Functions		ET1	ET2	ET3	T1	T2	T3	ET1 + ET2 + ET3	T1+ T2+ T3
	<b>To offer the teaching</b>	<b>F</b>	12	11	8	19	23	22	31
	<b>P</b>	41.4	32.3	33.3	52.8	60.5	57.9	35.6	57.1

<b>content</b>									
<b>To repeat students' responses</b>	<b>F</b>	6	6	5	12	11	9	17	32
	<b>P</b>	20.7	17.6	20.8	33.3	28.9	23.7	19.5	28.6
<b>To give instructions</b>	<b>F</b>	3	4	2	3	1	4	9	8
	<b>P</b>	10.3	11.8	8.3	8.3	2.7	10.5	10.3	7.1
<b>To evaluate students' performance</b>	<b>F</b>	4	9	7	1	3	1	20	5
	<b>P</b>	13.8	26.5	29.2	2.8	7.9	2.6	23.0	4.5
<b>To indicate feelings and attitudes</b>	<b>F</b>	2	2	1	1	0	2	5	3
	<b>P</b>	6.9	5.9	4.2	2.8	0	5.3	5.8	2.7
<b>To encourage students</b>	<b>F</b>	2	2	1	0	0	0	5	0
	<b>P</b>	6.9	5.9	4.2	0	0	0	5.8	0

\* **F= Frequency P= Percent (%)**

All six teachers repeat students' answers after they answer the questions, which is an inevitable colloquialism in everyday teaching. However, new teachers repeat student responses more often than the 19.5% of experienced teachers, at 28.6%. It is noteworthy that the recorded and converted text messages show that the students of the new teachers are relatively silent for most of the class, and even when they answer the teacher's questions, their voices are low and sound a little unconfident. Therefore, it is important for their teachers to increase the frequency of repetition in order to encourage students to actively participate in classroom communication and interaction.

New teachers use only 4.5% of declarative clauses to assess, evaluate, or give positive feedback to students' behavior, while experienced teachers use 23.0%. It is well known that positive assessment not only allows learners to understand how well a task is being accomplished, and to monitor their learning, but also helps to stimulate positive feelings and attitudes in learners. Therefore, new teachers should spend more time actively evaluating their students. In addition, experienced teachers (5.8%) are more likely than new teachers (0%) to encourage, guide, or reassure students who are thinking after asking a question, rather than simply remaining silent, waiting for their answer, or interrupting the thinking process by telling them the answer when the class is silent. Teachers' support and encouragement often motivate students to learn, stimulate their autonomy and initiative, and also develop their self-confidence and sense of accomplishment. Encouragement and affirmation are the keys to students' mental

health and good emotional development, and they are the keys to opening students' hearts, establishing a harmonious and cordial teacher-student relationship, and creating a relaxed, pleasant and cooperative teaching atmosphere. Students' timidity and lack of confidence in answering questions will dissipate with the teacher's continuous encouragement and affirmation.

When giving commands, experienced teachers tended to use more declarative mood to express them, accounting for 10.3%, while new teachers used only 7.1% of declarative sentences, slightly less than experienced teachers. This phenomenon may be due to the latter's use of the imperative mood as the main means of communicating commands which would exert a certain degree of pressure on learners and is not conducive to the creation of a relaxed and harmonious learning atmosphere or the shaping of an equal and democratic teacher-student relationship.

In summary, the tables and transcriptions show that the experienced teachers provided more information not directly related to the content to broaden students' horizons and used more sentences with substantive content rather than simple words such as "OK," "good," and "right" as a means of evaluation. In addition, they are more willing to share their true feelings and ideas with students. They also encourage students when they have difficulties in completing tasks and provide timely help rather than giving direct answers. Experienced teachers use more of a declarative rather than an imperative tone to issue commands in order to be less overwhelming to students. They act as information providers, organizers, designers, instructors, evaluators, friends, and partners in the teaching process

#### **4.2.2 The Realizations of Interpersonal Meaning in Interrogative Mood**

Table 4-2 shows the overall distribution of each mood type. Both the Yes/no-interrogative mood and the wh-interrogative mood were subordinate to the -interrogative mood, with 39.9% (experienced teachers) and 25.2% (new teachers) of teachers in the two categories, respectively. Table 4-1 shows that the proportion of Yes/no-interrogative sentences is relatively small for almost all teachers, which indicates that both types of teachers use wh-interrogative sentences more often for effective questioning, which is good for provoking learners' thinking and developing their critical thinking. While this distribution reflects good classroom interaction, teachers do not seem to strike a balance between asking open-ended questions and giving answers to them.

In other words, teachers ask more wh-interrogative questions, and too many wh-interrogative questions may lead to questions that are too open-ended for students' thinking levels, or questions with unclear purposes that instead cause more classroom silence. Teachers of both types should screen the questioning

content in advance and control the difficulty of the questions so that they match the cognitive level and learning ability of the learners. Test students' understanding or give them clues and ideas for answering relatively difficult special interrogatives through an appropriate number of yes/no-interrogative sentences. Provide lots of help and inspiration to students and act as a guide for their learning.

It is known through systematic functional grammar that interrogative mood also has different interpersonal meanings in the classroom and is usually used to ask for information or goods and services, but it can also be used for functions such as ordering, requesting, suggesting, inviting, and persuading (King H V. A, 2010). Shi Liangfang believes that interrogative mood has three functions: to guide students to participate in instruction, to provide clues to make students pay more attention to certain specific information, and to check whether students have mastered the content so as to provide more effective instruction (Shi Liangfang, 1999). Socrates once said that the better way to educate is not to impart existing, superficial knowledge to learners, but to transmit to students the process of indirect experience, by asking appropriate questions to guide students' thinking and inspire them to uncover the hidden truths within (Zhang Hua, 2001).

**Table 4-4 Interpersonal Functions of Interrogative Mood**

<b>Frequency &amp; Percent Interpersonal Functions</b>		<b>ET1</b>	<b>ET2</b>	<b>ET3</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>ET1 + ET2 + ET3</b>	<b>T1+ T2+ T3</b>
<b>To ask for the teaching content or language</b>	<b>F</b>	10	12	9	9	10	9	31	28
	<b>P</b>	40.0	40.0	45.0	50.0	47.6	42.9	41.3	46.7
<b>To repeat questions</b>	<b>F</b>	3	3	2	4	7	5	8	16
	<b>P</b>	12.0	10.0	10.0	22.2	33.3	23.7	10.7	26.7
<b>To stimulate student</b>	<b>F</b>	4	5	3	2	3	3	12	8
	<b>P</b>	16.0	16.7	15.0	11.1	14.3	14.3	16.0	13.3
<b>To clarify or confirm</b>	<b>F</b>	5	4	3	1	0	1	12	2
	<b>P</b>	20.0	13.3	15.0	5.6	0	4.8	16.0	3.3
<b>To give instructions</b>	<b>F</b>	2	3	2	2	0	1	7	3
	<b>P</b>	8.0	10.0	10.0	11.1	0	4.8	9.3	5.0
<b>To get other</b>	<b>F</b>	1	3	1	0	1	2	5	3

<b>Information</b>	<b>P</b>	4.0	10.0	5.0	0	4.8	9.	6.7	5.0
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\* **F= Frequency P= Percent (%)**

Table 4-4 shows that 41.3% of the interrogative sentences were used by experienced teachers to ask students for information related to the content, compared to 46.7% of the discourse of new teachers. In addition, interrogatives were used to repeat their questions to students (experienced teachers: 10.7%; new teachers: 26.7%), invite students to answer questions or stimulate active participation (experienced teachers: 16.0%; new teachers: 13.3%), confirm or substantiate (experienced teachers: 16.0%; new teachers: 3.3%), issue instructions (experienced teachers: 9.3%; new teachers: 5.0%) and obtaining other information (experienced teachers: 6.7%; new teachers: 5.0%).

In summary, new teachers preferred to use interrogative mood to serve as a prompt for teaching content. Therefore, they are more focused on teaching content. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, were more concerned with students' receptiveness and response, and they always gave priority to students' feelings while providing information to them. They are relatively more concerned with the status, learning attitudes, responses, and cognitive levels of learners than newer teachers. In addition, experienced teachers often use an interrogative mood to give orders or make demands in order to avoid learners' feelings of overwhelm, tension, and anxiety in the process of learning Japanese. As a result, learners in experienced teachers' classrooms are relatively more relaxed and more willing to express their opinions and participate in classroom activities. New teachers are also doing their best to develop learners' interest and motivate students to participate in class through a variety of questioning styles. They are clearly trying to shift their traditional role as monologists and return the classroom to the students. When silence occurs, the six teachers tend to use repetitive questioning to give students more time to think.

#### **4.2.3 The Realizations of Interpersonal Meaning in Imperative Mood**

Based on the basic view of interpersonal meaning theory, the imperative mood is mainly used to issue commands or instructions to get goods and services. From Tables 4-1 and 4-2, we can find that the imperative mood makes up a relatively small proportion of the teacher discourse sample, 18.2% of the experienced teachers' discourse and 27.2% of the newcomer teachers' discourse. Too much imperative mood may create a sense of oppression and tension for learners, which will further inhibit their impulse to participate in classroom interactions. As a result, teachers often tend to adopt declarative and interrogative

moods when giving commands, requests, or suggestions, which sound relatively more polite and consultative than imperative tones to relieve students' tension and stress. Although the teacher's primary role in the classroom is that of a dominant informant (as indicated by the largest proportion of declarative tone in the teacher's discourse), the lesser use of imperative mood in the classroom is an effective strategy for changing the traditional dominant position of English teachers. However, the appropriate occasion and number of imperative sentences can save time, increase teaching efficiency, and have positive effects, as described below.

**Table 4-5 Interpersonal Functions of the Imperative Mood**

Frequency & Percent Interpersonal Functions		ET1	ET2	ET3	T1	T2	T3
	<b>To give instructions</b>	<b>F</b>	6	8	5	16	13
	<b>P</b>	50.0	57.1	50.0	72.7	61.9	56.5
<b>To provide advice, help and encouragement</b>	<b>F</b>	6	6	5	6	8	10
	<b>P</b>	50.0	42.9	50.0	27.3	38.1	43.5

\* **F= Frequency P= Percent (%)**

The function that accounts for the largest proportion of the use of the imperative in teacher discourse is to give instructions. In many classrooms, teachers must use short, clear, and direct sentences in order to show students what to do in a limited amount of time, and this is where the imperative becomes their best choice. For example, experienced teachers often have a variety of activities or games to attract students' attention and interest in learning, and they need to explain the rules of the activities or games to students in a short time.

(1) T: 3分間で、この文章を素早く読み、そのメインアイデアを見つけるようにしてください。同時に、この文章の構造と各パートの重要な情報を分析してください。  
(Now you have 3 minutes to go through the passage quickly and try to find the main idea of the passage. At the same time, analyze the structure of this passage and the key information of each part.)

(2) T: 私について、読んでください。(Please read after me.)

In these two examples, the teacher communicated to the students the content, requirements and notes of the next class session through the imperative mood, so

that the students could quickly understand what they needed to do next, thus greatly improving the efficiency and quality of teaching and learning in the Japanese classroom.

In addition to giving instructions, the imperative is also used for interpersonal functions such as offering help and advice and encouraging students.

(3) T: やってみてくださいませんか。(Have a try, OK?)

(4) T: ビデオを見てください。(Let's watch a video together.)

In addition to giving instructions, the imperative is also used for interpersonal functions such as offering help and advice and encouraging students. In examples (1) and (2), teachers often use "てください(Let's ...)" in order to reduce the pressure of the imperative on learners and to make the command sound more moderate or negotiable, as in example (4). The "Let's" structure can be used to provide suggestions or commands, indicating that the teacher wants to invite students to complete the task together. Such sentences not only reduce stress, but also allow students to participate in the activity. "Let's" can be interpreted as the teacher inviting students to work on a task together, and in this context, students may be less stressed and more relaxed to participate in classroom activities. Adding "ませんか" to the end of a command like in example (3) makes the mood of the command euphemistic, which also greatly reduces the students' stress.

In summary, from Tables 4-5, it can be concluded that experienced teachers use less imperative mood to issue instructions and provide suggestions than new teachers, and they use imperative sentences mostly to motivate students. Teachers not only play the role of a conductor, organizer, and guide, but also are assistants and partners of their students. In the Japanese classroom, a certain number of imperatives is necessary to save instructional time spent on actions such as introducing rules or requirements for teaching activities, and to improve the quality of students' understanding of complex teacher instructions and their learning efficiency, so that students can accept these commands in a more reasonable manner and without threatening their dignity. The addition of words such as "ませんか" and "いいですか", when appropriate, can also reduce the oppressiveness of the imperative.

## 5. Conclusion

The major findings are summarized and the pedagogical implications are presented. Besides, the limitations and suggestions are presented for the future research.

### 5.1 Major findings

This study analyzed the frequency of use of declarative mood, interrogative mood and imperative mood in teacher talk to reveal the role of teacher talk and

the teacher-student relationships established with students. The data showed that the use of declarative and interrogative moods was the highest in both types of teacher discourse, while imperative mood was used the least frequently. The declarative mood was mostly used to provide instructional information; the interrogative mood was used to test learners' mastery of what they had learned and to enhance students' activeness; and the imperative mood was mostly used to issue requests and make suggestions.

The comparison revealed that there were differences in the mood structure of the two types of teachers, which were mainly reflected in the fact that the proportion of declarative and interrogative mood in the discourse samples of experienced teachers was relatively higher than that of new teachers, while the use of imperative mood was relatively less than that of new teachers. These differences reflect the experienced teachers' efforts to build an equal and harmonious teacher-student relationship and create a good classroom atmosphere. Compared with new teachers, experienced teachers tended to use more declarative and interrogative mood to give instructions in order to make their proposals or statements sound more polite and negotiable, to reduce the teacher's authority, and to shorten the distance between teachers and students. It is widely believed that experienced teachers have more knowledge, experience, and competence than students.

In the eyes of students, teachers are often seen as the transmitters of content, designers and organizers of classroom activities, managers of classroom order, leaders of classroom atmosphere, or even as experts or authoritative beings, and thus teachers often play a dominant role in the traditional classroom. However, both types of teachers are making every effort to change their traditional role as monologists. Teachers attempt to build collaborative teacher-student relationships by making extensive use of questioning tone and personal pronouns in the classroom in order to engage students' interest in learning and to promote their participation in teaching activities and classroom communication.

## **5.2 Pedagogical Implications**

The comparative analysis of the mood level between experienced teachers and new teachers in the previous section can provide some insights or suggestions for future Japanese language teaching, especially for improving the quality of classroom discourse of second language teachers, thus promoting the harmonious development of teacher-student interaction and thus benefiting the language acquisition of learners.

First, teachers must master various mood structures and use them appropriately in the classroom. On the one hand, it can help teachers express

their attitudes effectively in specific contexts and maintain an appropriate and harmonious teacher-student relationship. On the other hand, it can provide students with more immediate and comprehensible input and help them better understand how language achieves interpersonal meaning, which can greatly help learners' language learning and communicative competence.

Secondly, teachers should pay attention to the diversity of teachers' discourse. Including various dictions, sentence patterns and modal expressions, etc., not only can make the teaching content more fascinating, but also provide students with practical cases of the target language. For example, use interrogative mood to interact with students and impart knowledge. When issuing orders, more declarative and interrogative or imperative "ましよう let's" sentence patterns can be used to reduce the sense of oppression for students and create a relaxed and harmonious learning environment. Although all teachers are aware of the importance of choosing the right teacher words, many of them employ only one or two fixed questioning patterns throughout the class, such as "おしえてまらいませんか can you tell me..." etc. The lack of language diversity may lead to a lack of flexibility in the teaching process, which in turn affects the image of teachers as knowledgeable and authoritative.

Again, teachers should spend more time communicating with students to understand their true feelings and opinions, encourage them, and provide timely help, which can facilitate the construction of a good interactive relationship between teachers and students. Teachers should create opportunities for students to express themselves and participate in activities as much as possible, and give them specific evaluations or feedback rather than simply "good" or "great".

Finally, teachers should be fully aware of their role in the classroom. They should not be limited to being the transmitter of knowledge in the classroom, but should also be the facilitator and facilitator of students' learning, the organizer, designer, and participant of classroom activities, and the partner of students. Teachers should develop learners' ability to acquire knowledge on their own initiative as much as possible, promote the development of students' independent learning ability and initiative, create opportunities for language learners to express their attitudes, opinions and suggestions freely, and encourage students to cooperate and communicate with others. Teachers and students should respect each other in the process of teaching and learning, form a "learning community" and make the class a harmonious and friendly "learning community".

### 5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for the Future Research

Due to the limitations of the conditions and some subjective factors, this study has the following limitations:

First, the sample size of this study, in which the classroom discourse of six Japanese teachers was transcribed and analyzed in text, was limited to cover the full range of teacher discourse of all new and experienced teachers, which may lead to a lack of generalizability and reliability of the final results. The sample size should be expanded in future studies to make the data more convincing.

Secondly, this study focused on the analysis of the mood system of teacher talk; there are other aspects related to interpersonal functions, such as intonation and evaluation systems, which also play an important role in teacher-student communication and interaction and are not addressed in this study, and there is still much to be explored. It is hoped that more research in this area will be conducted from these perspectives in the future.

Finally, although data analysis can decipher the classification of teachers' discourse and the differences among different teachers' discourses, it is still subjective to use it only to analyze the reasons behind the existence of differences in teachers' discourse. In future research, it is recommended that questionnaires be combined with data to explore more deeply the interpersonal meanings generated by different types of teachers' discourse.

In conclusion, this study provides a comparative analysis of teacher discourse between new and experienced teachers from the perspective of interpersonal meaning. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a supplement to previous research and a reference for future research, and ultimately contribute to improving teacher discourse and teacher-student relationships in foreign language classrooms.

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