A Discourse-Pragmatic Functional Study of the Discourse Markers Japanese *Ano* and Chinese *Nage*

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Abstract

An expanding body of research in linguistics deals with discourse markers (DMs), the expressions that have emotive rather than referential functions (Holker, 1991). Taking a discourse-pragmatic approach, this study examines the usages of the Japanese DM *ano* and the Mandarin Chinese DM *nage* in conversational discourse, both of which are derived from demonstrative adjectives, equivalent to "that" in English. Through investigating 302 cases of *ano* and 252 cases of *nage* in natural conversations, this study argues, neither *ano* nor *nage* merely serves as a verbal "filler" in utterances; rather, each carries similar multiple discourse-pragmatic functions in various social contexts, which include 1) to introduce a new referent/topic in a highlighted while less imposing way; 2) to mitigate various Face Threatening Acts; and, 3) to indicate the speaker's hesitancy in sharing certain personal information. This study claims that the DMs *ano* and *nage* are politeness markers (Brown & Levinson, 1987) as well as modality markers (Maynard, 1992), and such usages are derived from their original forms as demonstrative adjectives, which reflect a close relationship between physical and psychological distance.

Keywords: Discourse-pragmatic, discourse marker, filler, politeness, face, hesitancy, modality

Introduction

An expanding body of research in linguistics deals with discourse markers (DMs), the expressions that have emotive rather than referential functions (Holker, 1991). Taking a discourse-pragmatic approach, this study examines, from a cross-linguistic perspective, the usages of the Japanese DM *ano* and the Mandarin Chinese DM *nage* both of which are derived from demonstrative adjectives, equivalent to "that" in English. The specific focus of this study is to analyze their discourse-pragmatic functions in conversational discourse.

DMs are characterized as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31); in English, this definition includes particles such as *oh*, *well*, *now*, and *then* and connectives such as *so*, *because*, *and*, *but* and *or* (Schiffrin, 1987). The function of DMs is to refer to the utterance that occurs before or after them. In the last few decades, DMs have become an important topic in applied linguistics. Among the numerous studies on DMs (e.g., Schiffrin, 1987 on English; Miracle, 1991 on Mandarin Chinese; Onodera, 2004 on Japanese), Holker (1991, pp. 78-79) provides a thorough summary of their general linguistic features:

(1) Semantically they neither affect the truth conditions nor add anything to the propositional content of the utterance; (2) Pragmatically they are related to the speech situation instead of the situation talked about; and (3) Functionally they have an emotive, expressive function rather than a referential denotive function.

According to Holker's (1991) criteria, so-called "fillers" are regarded as a typical type of DM. The present study aims to use *ano* and *nage* as examples to demonstrate that such "fillers" actually carry multiple discourse-pragmatic and social functions through which the speaker achieves an interpersonal rapport with the addressee.

Previous Studies and Background of *Ano* and *Nage*

Researchers on grammaticalization and emergent grammar (e.g., Hopper & Traugott, 2003) have proposed that language is not preexistent or unchangeable, but changes as it progresses through language uses. Previous studies (Cook, 1993; Huang, 1999; Tao, 1999) have suggested the usages of *ano* and *nage* as fillers or DMs are derived from their usages as demonstratives.

A Japanese deictic demonstrative adjective *ano,* same as *that* in English, occurs immediately before a noun phrase, and points to an object that is located at some distance from both the speaker and the addressee. Cook (1993) hypothesizes that the deictic function of the demonstrative adjective *ano,* which physically "aligns the speaker and addressee on the same side"(p.22), is extended to a psychological alignment. Therefore, *ano* is also commonly used to introduce a referent that is assumed to be known by both the speaker and the addressee, as in the following constructed sentence.

(1)

     Ano *sensei no koto oboeteru?*
     that teacher NML thing remembering
     "Do you still remember that teacher?"

Similar to *ano*, the Chinese demonstrative *nage* is also a distal deictic word, referring to an object far away from the speaker. As Tao (1999) argues, when the addressee is assumed to be able to identify the referent, it is likely to be introduced with a distal form (*na*-series). The subtle difference between the demonstratives *nage* and *ano* is that, while *ano* is not used to refer to objects that are far away from the speaker but close to the addressee, *nage* does not make such a distinction – it is generally used to point to any object that is far away from the speaker, disregarding its distance from the addressee.

This paper suggests that the two common features of the demonstrative adjective *ano* and *nage* are that they both refer to something far away from the speaker as well as something known by the addressee. These features lay a base for the usages of *ano* and *nage* as DMs in conversations.

As a DM, *ano* has drawn attention from many Japanese linguists. For instance, Sadanobu & Takubo (1995) investigate the DMs *ano* and *eeto* with respect to a speaker's mental processes, and argue that *ano* functions to extract a speaker's linguistic information

from a mental database in which various information is stored. According to their arguments, the multiple usages of *ano* can be divided into two types: the search for names and the search for appropriate expressions.

The following example, <u>which is from the database of the present study,</u> shows a <u>typical</u> case of *ano* being used as a "filler" when the speaker searches for a lexicon among the information stored in the database of his mind, according to Sadanobu & Takubo's (1995) argument.[1]

(2)

    1) K: *Yasukute umai   n   dattara::: (.) bafe ga   dekimashita ne.*
       cheap   delicious NML COP-if   Buffet NOM built   FP
       "Speaking of inexpensive and delicious restaurants, a buffet opened, right?"

    2) O: *Bafee?*
       Buffet?

    3) K: *E::: **ano::** e::to tabehoodai ga:::*
         Yeah   um   NOM
         "Yeah, *ano*:::: *tabehoodai* [Lit. to eat as much as you can]"

During the mental process of K searching for the Japanese lexicon that is equivalent to the English word "buffet", he meanwhile employs three fillers – *"e:::"*, *"ano:::"* and *"e::to"* – to reveal his mental movements, and thus to show his intention of continuing the turn.

However, in most cases, the speaker uses the DM *ano* not because he needs extra time to search the names (or syntactic formation) in his mental database, but because he is hesitant about how to produce his/her utterance in a pragmatically appropriate way. Such cases, which belong to the second type of *ano* according to the classification by Sadanobu and Takubo (1995), will be further categorized and analyzed in this study.

Cook's work (1993) also focuses on the second type of DM *ano*. From a social-pragmatic perspective, Cook (1993) examines the DM *ano* used in naturally occurring conversation data, and proposes that *ano* and the Japanese sentence final particle *ne* have a similar social function: to index the interpersonal rapport between interlocutors. In Cook's conclusion, *ano* helps a speaker redress Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-threatening act (FTA) through which the speaker interrupts a listener's "freedom of action" (p. 134) with orders, requests, or suggestions. Furthermore, a recent study by Fujita (2001) suggests that the DM *ano* serves as a cataphoric marker, emphasizing the discourse that immediately comes after *ano*.

In contrast to the Japanese *ano*, most of the studies on the Chinese *nage* have focused on its demonstrative usages (Huang, 1999; Tao, 1999,), while as a DM, *nage* has been neglected as merely a verbal filler. Among the few studies on the DM *nage,* Liu (2009) observes that the speaker often pauses after *nage* or *zhege* and these words are not stressed when used as DMs. Huang (1999, P. 88) analyzes the distal *nage* and the proximal *zhege* as pause markers used by

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[1]   The abbreviations used in the discourse transcripts are listed in the Appendix.

speakers to "make a lexical choice or to formulate a syntactic frame or to gather their thought." However, none of these researchers have examined the pragmatic or social functions of *nage* as a DM in Chinese natural conversational discourse.

Primarily inspired by the previous functional studies on the DM *ano,* this study aims to explore whether the arguments of the DM *ano* in Japanese are also applicable to its counterpart in Chinese – the DM *nage.* I m jm m m hm m hn what contexts do the DMs *ano* and *nage* tend to occur? What kinds of discourse-pragmatic functions do *ano* and *nage* carry in conversational discourse? How do such functions of the DMs *ano* and *nage* relate to their original forms – the demonstrative adjectives? These research questions motivate and direct the analysis of this study.

Using a methodology of qualitative discourse analysis, this study examines the actual usages of *ano* and *nage* in authentic conversational contexts, and claims that the Japanese *ano* and the Chinese *nage* are not merely so-called verbal "fillers" – as DMs, they do not only fill gaps and hold the speaker's turn, but also carry multiple pragmatic and social functions in conversations: 1) to introduce a new referent or a new topic into the discourse in an emphasizing but less pressing way; 2) to mitigate various FTAs such as offensive questions, disagreements, negative comments, or requests; and, 3) to show the speaker's hesitation in sharing certain personal information. In any case, *ano* and *nage*, like other DMs, show the speaker's interpersonal concern for the addressee, and help achieve an interpersonal harmony among the interlocutors.

Data Collection

The database used in this study includes 10 conversations by native Japanese speakers and 12 conversations by native Mandarin Chinese speakers. A total of 15 Japanese speakers (8 males and 7 females) and 11 Chinese speakers (4 males and 7 females) participated in this project. While all the Japanese participants were graduate or undergraduate students at a university in the northwest part of the United States, the Chinese participants include graduate students, post-doctoral fellows or scientists working at the same university as well as people working at companies. All the Chinese participants were married, and most of them were young parents in the 30-40 age range. In contrast, all the Japanese participants were single and in the 18-35 age range. Given that the social backgrounds of the speakers may influence the usages of *ano* and *nage* in their utterances*,* the contrast of the marital status between the Japanese and Chinese participants is recognized as one of the limitations of the current study. It awaits additional data collection with a broader diversity of participants in the future studies.

The data was collected in a semi-natural setting. Two participants were invited to pair together to have a free-form conversation without particular conversation topics assigned. The participants were aware that their conversations would be used as linguistic data, but they were not informed of the particular topic and purposes of the current research. The researcher set up the recording system before the conversations started, and was absent during the recording process. The genders and familiarities of the two speakers in each pair were balanced as much as possible in the arrangement of the conversational pairs, as shown in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2.

Table 3-1. Descriptions of Each Conversation in Japanese Data

Data	Participants	Relations	Style	Length
F-M	F: male, junior MA. student, 20s M: female, Ph.D student, 30s	Strangers	polite	9:30
F-T	F: male, junior MA student,20s T: male, senior MA student, 20s	Strangers	polite	9:30
S-R	S: male, senior MA student, 30s R: female, junior MA student, 20s	Strangers	polite	9:10
H-N	H: male, junior MA student, 30s N: female, senior MA student, 30s	Strangers	polite	10:00
K-O	K: male, Ph.D student, 30s O: male, junior MA student, 20s	Acquaintances	polite	10:10
T-E	T: male, senior MA student, 20s E: female, senior MA student, 20s	Acquaintances	polite	11:50
H-Y	H: male, junior MA student, 30s Y: female, senior MA student, 30s	Acquaintances	polite	9:50
T-N	T: male, senior MA student, 20s N: female, junior MA student, 20s	Intimate friends	non-polite	9:40
B-D	B: male, undergraduate student D: female, undergraduate student	Couples	non-polite	8:50
U-C	U: male, undergraduate student, C: female, undergraduate student	Intimate friends	non-polite	6:40
Total	8 males and 7 females			140 minutes

Table 3-2 Descriptions of Each Conversation in Chinese Data

Data	Participants	Relations	Length
F-H	F: female, visiting parent, 50s H: female, accountant, 30s	Strangers	10:20
J-H	J: female, housewife, 20s. H: female, accountant, 30s	Strangers	10:10
J-M	J: female, housewife 20s. M: female, Ph.D student, 30s	Strangers	15:00
Y-W	Y: female, Ph.D student, 30s W: female, stuff, 30s	Acquaintances	12:10
L-E	L: male, engineer, 30s E: male, scientist, 30s	Acquaintances	11:30
L-M	L: male, engineer, 30s M: female, Ph.D student, 30s	Acquaintances	34:20
S-L	S: male, scientist, 30s L: male, engineer, 30s	Intimate friends	23:50
S-L	S: male, scientist, 30s L: male, engineer, 30s	Intimate friends	13:20
L-W	L: male, engineer, 30s W: female, stuff, 30s	Intimate friends	12:10
L-N	L: male, engineer, 30s N: female, scientist, 30s	Intimate friends	10:10
Q-J	Q: male, scientist, 30s J: female, MA student, 30s.	Intimate Friends	8:40
J-Y	J: female, MA student, 30s. Y: female, Ph.D student, 30s	Intimate friends	17:50
Total	4 males and 7 females		203 minutes

The audio taped Chinese conversations were transcribed by the researcher, and the Japanese conversations were transcribed by two native Japanese speakers.2 The occurrences of *ano* and *nage* were highlighted and analyzed in the sequential contexts.

In the analysis, this study has excluded other usages of *ano* and *nage*, such as demonstrative pronouns or adjectives, and limited the scope only to the DMs *ano* and *nage*. The distinction between the demonstratives and the DMs was based on native speakers' institutions, as well as some remarkable prosodic or syntactic features of *ano* and *nage*. For instance, Liu (2009, P. 365) has noticed that the DM *nage* is often followed by a pause and is not prosodically stressed, while Cook (1993) points out that the last vowel of the filler *ano, o*, is often prolonged. In addition, some syntactic features also help distinguish a DM from a demonstrative; for instance, when *nage/an*o is followed by a proper noun, it is generally identified as a DM rather than a demonstrative adjective.

In total, in the 140 minutes of Japanese conversations, 302 tokens of *ano*, and in the 203 minutes of Chinese conversations, 252 tokens of *nage*, were obtained and investigated.

Multiple Functions of *Ano* and *Nage*

Based on the investigation into the 302 cases of the DM *ano* and the 252 cases of the DM *nage* in the present conversational database, this study claims that these two DMs carry similar functions in conversational discourse. Beyond filling verbal gaps, their major discourse-pragmatic functions can be classified into three types of purposes: first, to introduce something new into the discourse in a highlighted while using a less imposing tone; second, to serve as a politeness strategy and mitigate various potential Face Threatening Acts (FTAs); and third, to show the speaker's hesitation in sharing certain personal information. Furthermore, in all these cases, like many sentence-final particles, the DMs *ano* and *nage* serve as modality indicators to express the speaker's subjective attitude toward the relevant information or the addressee, and also as a politeness marker to mitigate various acts that may threaten the address's face or the speaker's own face.

To Introduce a New Referent or Topic.

One of the remarkable findings that occurred during the investigation of this database is that the DMs *ano* and *nage* tend to occur immediately before a new referent, or before a new conversational topic. As a matter of fact, previous studies on *ano* and *nage* have provided certain hints in order to explain such a phenomenon. For instance, Huang (1999) points out that the distal demonstrative *nage* is frequently used in a non-subject position where "the introduction of new objects of topical significance into the discourse typically occurs." Huang calls this type of *nage* a "grammaticalized definite article," which signals identifiability and introduces familiar but new objects into conversation. Cook (1993) also finds that "*ano* often

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2 The Japanese data transcription is mainly indebted to the two Japanese native speakers, Maki Shimotani and Kasumi Satoo.

occurs when the speaker starts a conversation or a new turn, tries to get the attention of the addressee, highlights a proposition that immediately follows *ano*, starts a new topic…" (p. 23). Cook argues that since a way to draw the addressee's attention to a new conversational topic, a new turn or a proposition, is to elicit the addressee's involvement by stressing common ground, *ano,* a marker of alignment, is selected.

Despite their different focuses, both Huang (1999) and Cook (1993) suggest that the appearance of *ano* and *nage* immediately prior to a new referent or a new topic is not just a result of delayed verbal production; rather, it has something to do with their original usages as demonstratives that point at an object assumed to be known by the addressee, or in other words, are commonly shared between the speaker and the addressee.

Consider the Japanese case (3), in which *ano* introduces a new referent – "*Keioo* New York" into the conversation.

(3)
    1) Y: *Eigo   wa (.) Eigo wa doo.*
        English TOP   English TOP how
        "English- How is your English?"

    2) H: *Eigo   wa:: ma:: [**ano:::** Keioo Nyuuyooku tte gozonji   desu ºkaº*
        English TOP well ano   Keioo New York QM know (Honorific) COP Q
        "My English is…well…[*Ano::: "Keioo New York"-* have you heard about (it)?"

    3) Y: *[U:::n*
              "Yeah"

In this sequence, Y, who is a senior graduate student, would like to know whether the new graduate student H has difficulty with his English. In the response to Y's question, H cuts off a direct answer; instead, after producing a couple of fillers, *ma::* and *ano:::,* he politely requires whether Y knows an institution called "*Keioo* New York," which is an international high school where H obtained his high school education. Nagura (1997) argues that *ma(a)* is a cohesion marker which always requires a certain presupposition overly expressed. It indicates something such as: the topic, the state of affairs is supposed to be acknowledged by the addressee. Therefore, H expects that Y has heard about "*Keioo* New York." Here, *Ano,* which appears in front of "*Keioo* New York" serves as a DM to draw the addressee Y's attention on the new referent, "*Keioo* New York." Disregarding the fact that Y is uncertain of whether H knows anything about the institution or not, by using the alignment marker *ano*, Y could present the new referent as if it were an institution H was already familiar with, and thereby easily draw H's attention. Therefore, *ano* in (3) can be considered as a kind of attention-getter, which draws the addressee's attention to the new referent that is going to be introduced. Also, when a new referent is presented as if it is something that the addressee already knows, the addressee will feel less imposed upon by the new referent, especially if it is irrelevant to the previous talk. In this case, instead of answering Y's previous question directly, H brought "*Keioo* New York" into the conversation, and abruptly asks Y a question about this new referent, which seems to

have nothing to do with Y's previous question in Line 1. Here, *ano* on one hand highlights the new referent, and on the other hand, reduces the abruptness of the speaker H's act of introducing a seemingly irrelevant referent to the discourse.

(4) shows another example in which *ano* introduces a new referent to the conversation. In the conversation prior to this sequence, R has told S that he went to *Aso*, which is known as a tourist place famous for horseback riding.

(4)

   1)   S: = *a, demo Aso   itta   n   dattara   jaa **ano-** (.)*
          oh, but   went NML COP-Past   if   riding

   2)   *jooba   toka wa [uma ni*
          horseback riding   like TOP horse on
          "Oh, but if you went to *Aso,* then *ano-* did you go horseback riding?"

   3)   R: *[↑jooba tteiuka*
                      horse-riding

   4)   *uma   wo tada sawatta [dake hhh desu ne*
          horse ACC only touched only   COP FP
          "Rather than horse-back riding, I only patted the horses."

The DM *ano* in S's question attracts R's attention to the new referent, *jooba* (horseback riding), and also shows S's hesitation about asking a further question that may be perceived as asking too much about R's experiences. It helps shift the conversation towards a new direction in a less imposing way.

Now let us observe a Chinese case in which *nage* is also used to introduce a new referent to the conversation. In the sequence prior to the following fragment, S tells L that his wife was not able to transfer credits from her college in China to the current graduate school. In Line 1 and 3, S mentions that probably the policy about transferring credits has changed. From Line 5 to Line 7, S and L continue talking about how much time S's wife needs in order to finish her graduate school. In Line 9, L uses a *nage* with an elongation followed by a short pause to introduce a story about his former coworker, who could not transfer credits within two schools in the United States.

(5)

   1)   S: *Haoxiang shi yi- yiqian keyi zhuan, [dan shenme-*
          seem   COP   before may transfer but what
          "It seems that you can transfer credits before, but-"

   2)   L: *[Ao::*
                    Oh

3)   S: *keneng xin guiding haishi shenme, gao bu qingchu*
        maybe new policy or   what   make NEG clear
        "Maybe it is a new policy. I am not sure"

4)   L*: A::*
        "I see"

5)   S: *Keneng bixu zai xiu (.) keneng zai xiu liang men ke*
        maybe must further take maybe further take two MW class
        "Maybe (she) needs to take more- maybe two more classes"

6)   L: *Hai dei xiu liang men, na jiu yi ge xueqi   ma*
        still must take two MW then only one MW semester FP
        "She still needs to take two more classes? Then it will be only one semester"

7)   S: *Yi xueqi,   fanzheng zuihou yi xueqi*
        one semester anyway last   one semester
        "One semester. It is the last one semester, anyway"

8)   (0.2)

9)   L: *En:: wo juede buneng zhuan. Yinwei **nage::(.)** yiqian wo jide,*
        I think cannot transfer because   before I remember
        "Eh… I think she cannot transfer (credits), because nage:: I remember"

10)   *women nar   you ge tongshi, xianzai ta zai erhaier. Ta cong zhege xuexiao*
        our place there is one coworker now he at Ohio he from this school
        "I had a coworker before. He is in Ohio now."

11)   *zhuan   dao lingwai yi ge xuexiao dou buneng zhuan*
        transfer to else   one MW school even cannot transfer
        "Even though he transferred from this school to another school (in the U.S.),
        he was not able to transfer credits."

12)   S: *shi ma?*
        COP Q
        "Really?"

In Line 9, after L has stated directly his opinion on transferring credits, he appears to be ready to give the reason behind the opinion. However, the reason is not a simple one, but is based on a piece of information or story about his former coworker's experience. L produces a DM *nage* and short pause, prior to telling S about his coworker's experience. If we compare this Chinese *nage* with the use of *ano* in the Japanese example (3), it is noticeable that in both

cases, the speakers of the DMs produce utterances that seem somehow to deviate from the prior speaker's previous utterance. In (3), instead of answering the prior speaker's question about his English level directly, H begins to talk about his high school, *Keioo* New York. In (5), L seems to interrupt the on-going talk about S's wife's issue, and starts to talk about his former coworker's case. Fujita (2001) has suggested that by using the Japanese DM *ano*, "the speaker produces an utterance that may interrupt the listener but effectively avoids making the listener feel interrupted." In the cases (3) and (5), the DMs *ano* and *nage* both serve as highlighters, or what Fijita calls "cataphoric markers", to remind the addressee that the upcoming utterances may seem to deviate from the current topic, but are in fact important and relevant, and thus assist the addressee in preparing for the new referent or information. Thus, the new referent is introduced in a less abrupt and imposing way to the addressee.

The following is a Chinese case in which *nage* is used to introduce a new conversational topic. Prior to this sequence, Y and J were talking about the community garden. After a long silence (2.0), Y uses the DM *nage*, which is elongated and followed by a short pause, to initiate a new topic: the pregnancy of one of their friends.

(6)

   1)   J: *Nabian zhenshi you   haoduo jiucai, haoduo qincai ya*
          there   really there is a lot   chive a lot celery FP
          "There are so many chives and a lot of celery over there"

   2)   Y: *O::*
          "Oh"

   3)   (2.0)

   4)   Y: ***Nage::*** (*.) Emily ta ma   shi ge nühair*
                          her mother COP MW girl
          "Nage….Emily's mom is (pregnant with) a girl"

   5)   J: *Shi ma?*
          COP Q
          "Really?"

To initiate a new conversational topic without confirming whether the addressee has knowledge of the topic, or whether or not the addressee would like to talk about it, may be perceived as imposing to the addressee. By using the DM *nage*, which is often followed by pauses, the speaker Y shows his/her hesitation to initiate a new topic. Also, since the DM *nage* is derived from its demonstrative form which refers to a referent identifiable to the addressee, it marks the new topic that the speaker is going to introduce as if it is something known by the addressee, and thus mitigates the abruptness of the topic.

This section has discussed the cases in which *ano* and *nage* function as initiators to introduce new referents or topics into the on-going conversation. In either case, by using the DMs *ano*

and *nage,* the speaker is able to mark the new referent, information, or topic as something the addressee is familiar with, and thus consequently draws the addressee's attention to it. Meanwhile, by showing the speaker's hesitation, the DMs *ano* and *nage* serve to soften the sense of abruptness caused by imposing something new or seemingly irrelevant into the talk.

To Mitigate Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)

In addition to introducing new referents/topics, this study suggests that another major function of the DMs *ano* and *nage* is to mitigate Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). This claim supports previous studies (Koide, 1983; Cook, 1993) on the Japanese filler *ano*.

Face, as a fundamental concept, has been broadly studied in the fields of sociology, sociolinguistics, politeness theory and psychology. Face is defined by Goffman (1955, p. 213) as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact." Brown and Levinson (1987) expanded Goffman's theory of face in their politeness theory, which differentiates between positive and negative face by defining positive face as the desire that a positive self-image be appreciated and approved of, while negative face as "the want of a competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 62). They suggest that in human interaction, when a speech act may threaten or damage the interlocutor's positive or negative face, various politeness strategies tend to be used to mitigate such FTAs. According to their politeness theory, initiating a new referent or new topic into a conversation as an imposing action is qualified as a FTA in that it potentially threatens the addressee's negative face. Therefore, *ano* and *nage* can be regarded as politeness strategies since they minimize such imposition.

Although scholars such as Brown and Levinson (1987) have recognized face as a universal concern of human beings, Bond (1991, p. 121) suggests "the difference between Chinese and American concepts of face is that face simply has greater social significance for the Chinese." The Chinese proverb "a person needs face as a tree needs bark" is often used to show how important the concept of face is in Chinese people's consciousness. In Chinese and Japanese culture, "losing face" is particularly regarded as a social act that may cause serious consequences. Huang (1987, p. 71) points out that "the fact that Chinese lexicalizes losing face (*diulian, mei mianzi*), but not gaining face is a potent reminder that losing face has far more serious implications for one's sense of self-esteem or decency than gaining face." Pharr (1989) also stressed the importance of "losing face" in Japanese comparative politics. Therefore, in daily interaction, Chinese and Japanese speakers are highly motivated to employ various strategies to save the addressee's face, when they suspect their speech acts may cause their interlocutors to lose face.

The data of the present study shows that the DMs *ano* and *nage* are frequently used as one of the politeness strategies to mitigate typical FTAs such as requests, disagreements, negative comments, offensive questions, and so on.

A request is generally regarded as a FTA that intrudes on the addressee's territory. Let us start with the example in which the Japanese DM *ano* serves as a politeness marker to mitigate a request. In the following segment, Y, who is the person recording the conversational data, produces an *ano* before reminding the participants that the recording has started. The

reminder itself is an implicit request, while a direct request such as "please start talking with your partner" has been omitted after the reminder.

(7)
1) F: *Sono::: nanimo- are desu ka. Betsuni nanimo nashide*
   that anything that COP Q especially anything without
2) *kaiwa   shi temo ii   n desu ka.*
   conversation do even if fine NML COP Q
   "That- nothing- Does that mean that it's okay to have a conversation without anything?"

3) Y: *Hai. Soo desu.*
   Yes so COP
   "Yes, that's right"

4) (0.1)

5) F: *Sore dake=*
   that only
   "That's it?"

6) Y: =*Hai sore dake desu. **Ano::(.)** rokuon   ga hajimarimashita node*
   yes that only COP   recording NOM started   because
   "Yes, that's it. Ano…, since the recording has started…"

7) M: *Hai.*
   "Okay"

8) Y: *Yoroshiku onegaiitashi[masu.*
   take care beg [honorific form]
   "Thank you for your help"

Notice that in Line 6, Y's quick response to F's second question signals her desire for the participants F and M to end the "small talk" and start "real" conversation for purpose of the research as soon as possible. On the other hand, Y meanwhile uses a DM *ano* to show her hesitant attitude and thereby avoids utilizing a demanding tone in making this request.

(8) is a Japanese example in which *ano* serves to mitigate the speaker S's disagreement with R's positive assessment on living in developing countries.

(8)
1) S: *kankoku:::to   Barito   itt (0.3) ni wa   itta   koto*
   Korean   and Bali island go to TOP went thing
2) *atta n da kedo::: >iwayuru souiu <*

there-was NML COP but so-called

3) *hattentojoukoku ni [sunda koto ga nakatta   kara*
    developing country at lived thing NOM there-was-NEG because
    "I have been to Korean and Bali. Because I have never lived in such
    developing countries"

4) R: *[a- ha h suggo   ii desu yone::watashi mo souiu*
                very good COP   FP   I   also such

5) *toko sunde [mitai*
    place live see-want
    "Oh, that is great. I also want to live in such kind of places."

6) S: *[un. nanka*
              umm well

7) *(.)ano::(0.2) ii   tteiuka(.) ii   imi   demo warui imi demo =*
    good rather than good meaning like bad meaning like
    "Umm.. well, rather than 'good'- it is neither good nor bad"

8) R: *=sou. ii   tte   iikata   tyotto hen   n   desu kedo::*
    right good QM wording   a little strange NML   COP FP
    "Right. It is a little strange to call it good."

In the beginning of this sequence, R expresses her positive evaluation of S's experience of living in developing countries. Disagreeing with R, S denies that experience is "good" and repairs it as "neither good nor bad" in Line 7. However, before actually performing the disagreement, in Line 6, S first produces a filler *nanka*, which often imply uncertainty and hedges the speaker's commitment. In Line 5, after a short pause, S uses another filler *ano* to initiate the disagreement. These devices, including both fillers and pauses, delay S's dispreferred response (cf. Pomerantz, 1984) from occurring immediately following R's utterance, and also show S's hesitation in expressing the different opinion.

Similar to the Japanese *ano*, the Chinese DM *nage* is observed in various contexts, as in (9) and (10), where the speaker's utterances could potentially offend the addressee. Example (9) shows a case in which *nage* softens a question that may embarrass or offend the addressee, and (10) presents a case in which the speaker uses *nage* to mitigate her disagreement with her conversational partner.

In the sequence prior to (9), two acquaintances, Y and W, who are both pregnant, have been discussing their babies' zodiac signs. After a relatively long pause, in Line 2, Y shifts the topic, and starts to ask W about her baby's gender.

(9)
    1) (0.5)

2)   Y: ***Nage*** *shenme? Na ni- (0.2) ni cha chulai nühaier mei shi ba.*
      Nage what   so you   you test out girl   no thing FP
      "Nage… so when you found out it was a girl, you were okay, right?"

3)   *(.) meiyou shi ba.*
      no   thing FP
      "Nothing (happened), right?"

4)   W: *A:::: meiyou:: (.) Wo xihuan nühaier*
      Oh   nothing I like   girl
      "Oh, I am fine. I like girls."

In order to understand the usage of *nage* in this sequence, it is critical to get to know the background information of the speakers. W, whose first child is a girl, is pregnant with her second child. Considering the Chinese traditional norms of preference for boys over girls, it can be assumed that W must hope that the second baby will be a boy. However, W has just found out that her second baby will be another girl. With knowledge of this background, Y's question *ni cha chulai nühaier mei shi ba* (You were okay when you found out it was a girl, right?) could embarrass, upset, or even offend W. Thus, prior to this potentially offensive question, Y adds a hesitation expression, *nage shenme* (what was that?), as well as a cut-off and a short pause. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 187) also suggest that "to implicitly convey a reluctance on the part of S (speaker) to impose on H (hearer)" is considered a Politeness Strategy. In this example, by employing the so-called filler *nage*, which is associated with other discourse markers and strategies, Y shows W that she is hesitant and reluctant to ask the upcoming sensitive question. As a result, it mitigates the offensiveness of Y's question and somehow avoids causing the addressee W's negative feelings towards Y and her question.

Different from (9), the use of *nage* in (10) occurs in the middle of an on-going sequence instead of at a discourse boundary. In the beginning of this sequence, J declares her puzzled and negative attitude toward the phenomenon that most Chinese people living in the U.S. have two children.

(10)
1)   J: *Ai, wo jiushi ting::: ting- ting bu da lijie   de (.)*
      I just   very very very not much understand NML
2)   *Jiushi weishenme zhongguoren zai zheer dou yao sheng liangge*
      that is why   Chinese   at here all want bear two-MW
      "I just don't really understand - why the Chinese people here all
      want to have two children."

3)   (0.2)

4)   *Jibenshang dou yao sheng liangge, shiba?*
      basically all want bear two-MW right

"Basically (they) all want to have two (kids), right?"

5) *Haoxiang shi [sheng   yige de hen   shao*
   seem   COP bear one-MW NML very few
   "It seems very few have one (child)

6) H: *[Fanzheng daduoshu ba.*
   anyway most   FP
   "Probably most people do, anyway"

7) *Dan wo juede **nage**(.) zenme shuo ne? Fanzheng wo de xiangfa-*
   But I think   how   say FP anyway I NML thought
   "But I think nage- How to say it? Anyway, my thought is-"

8) *Wo jiu juede yige   haizi ting gudan de*
   I just feel one-MW child very lonely NML
   "I just feel one child is too lonely."

After facing a delayed uptake from H, in lines 4-5, J further seeks H's agreement by downgrading her statement to a factual confirmation, i.e., "very few Chinese people have only one child." As pre-disagreement, H first confirms such a fact in line 6. In lines 7 and 8, H inserts a DM *nage*, as well the filler-like expression *zenme shuo ne* (how to say it), into her utterance before she reveals her positive opinion and claims the disadvantage of having only one child. To give disagreement is considered one of the strongest FTAs in that it threatens the addressee's positive face, which in turn damages the addressee's self-esteem and denies solidarity with the addressee (Brown & Levinson, 1987). By using the DM *nage*, H shows her hesitation or reluctance to conduct the disagreement. Furthermore, as discussed previously, because of the distal deictic usage of *nage*, it also marks that what the speaker is going to say is something that the addressee may know or understand. Thus, the double implications of *nage*, – namely, showing hesitation and marking sharedness – qualify it as a politeness strategy that may mitigate the disagreement, which otherwise would likely hurt the addressee's feeling and damage the rapport of the conversation.

Thus, the cases in this section have demonstrated that both *ano and nage* serve as politeness strategies intended to mitigate various potential FTAs by primarily showing the speaker's hesitation and reluctance.

To Show Hesitation in Sharing Personal Information

In addition to introducing a new referent/topic and mitigating FTAs, the present paper also observes that *ano* and *nage* are often used in contexts where the speaker shares personal information with the addressee, especially when that information is something the speaker feels shameful, embarrassing, immodest, or merely too private to share with others. The following Japanese example shows a case in which the speaker Y is hesitant to "show off" her talents/skills.

(11)
1) H: *Naruhodo- a:: dakara- [nihonjin no ruumumeeto ga*
    Indeed   therefore Japanese NML roommate NOM
    "I see. So a Japanese roommate would be (better)."

2) N: *[u:::n un   soo soo soo*
                          Yeah yeah right right right
                         "Yeah, yeah, that is right"

3) H: *[fu:::n*
    Mmm

4) N: *[demo saisyo   wa   jitsuwa::: **ano:::** supeinngo wo hanaseru:::=*
    But   beginning TOP actually   Spanish ACC can-speak

5) H: *Hai*
    Okay

6) N:= *ruumumeeto ga   ii na to omotte*
    roommate NOM good FP QM think
    "But actually in the beginning, I thought *ano::* if a roommate who could speak
     Spanish would be better…"

The information that N is hesitant to share with H is that she was looking for a roommate who could speak Spanish, which indicates that N is a Spanish speaker. In Japanese culture, showing a reserved or modest attitude is highly valued, while "bragging" about one's skills is considered a negative characteristic. The stretched DM *ano* reveals N's hesitation to share this piece of information that may be regarded by others as expressing immodesty. Thus, the use of the DM *ano* in this case, in a certain sense, serves to save the speaker N's own face; N may be afraid that if she were to not insert the *ano*, the addressee would probably take her utterance as the inappropriate act of "showing off."

In general, when a speaker is going to say something that may threaten his/her personal image considerably, the speaker will be hesitant or reluctant to produce the utterances, and will tend to find a way to minimize their effect. In such cases, DMs, especially so-called "fillers", are frequently employed as a conversational device. Because of the usage of the DMs, the addressee is able to perceive hesitancy on the part of the speaker, and may withdraw or switch the current topic. The utterances that may threaten the speaker's own face take on a wide variety. For instance, in the following Chinese case, the speaker uses an elongated DM *nage*, which is associated with pauses when he shares a piece of family information that he feels ashamed for others to know.

(12) (L tells E that his company has given him two movie tickets for his birthday)

1)   L: *Yikaishi   W shuo ba Honghong song dao bieren jia, ranhou women qu kan.*
       beginning say bring   send to other home then we   go watch
       "In the beginning W [L's wife] said (we could) send M [L's daughter] to other
       people's home, and then we go to watch (a movie)"

2)   *Houlai wo xiang(.) **Nage::** (.) Honghong ye mei kan guo dianying=*
       later   I think   also not watch ever movie
       "Later I thought, *nage*… M has never watched a movie yet."

3)   E:=*Ao::, Honghong hai mei kan guo dianying ne.*
       Oh   yet not watch ever movie   FP
       "Oh, M hasn't watched a movie yet."

In (12), L tells an acquaintance E that he and his wife were discussing how to use the free movie tickets. He wanted to bring their 6 year-old daughter Honghong with them, since she has never been to a movie theater. Due to cultural or economic reasons, some Chinese immigrants, such as L's family, rarely go to a movie theater, which may sound incredulous to some Americans. The DM *nage*, as well as the pauses surrounding it, show L's hesitation in sharing this piece of personal information that may damage his and his family's image.

Notice that the usage of the DMs *ano* and *nage* in showing hesitation about sharing personal information partially overlap with their usage in mitigating FTAs and introducing new referents or topics. That is, they all show the speaker's hesitancy in potentially causing certain negative reactions in the listener. In other words, the consistent concern of the partner's feeling is an important element that motivates the speakers' uses of the DMs.

Conclusion

The present study has examined two of the most common "fillers": *ano* in Japanese and *nage* in Mandarin Chinese, which are both derived from distal demonstratives. By analyzing their actual usages in authentic conversations, this study claims that both *ano* and *nage* are more than verbal fillers in communication; rather, they both carry multiple discourse-pragmatic and social functions. In particular, both of them can draw the addressee's attention to new references or topics in a highlighted while less imposing way; they can mitigate the speaker's potential FTAs such as requests, offensive questions and disagreements; and they can show the speaker's hesitation in sharing certain personal information with the addressee which may damage his/her own face. In general, in daily conversations, the Japanese DM *ano* and the Chinese DM *nage* both function as politeness markers used to mitigate a speaker's utterance when that utterance may threaten the addressee's or the speaker's own face. Meanwhile, they both serve as so-called "modality marker/indicators" (Maynard, 1993), intended to show the speaker's hesitancy producing certain utterances, concern for the addressee's reaction, as well as their desire for drawing the addressee's intention, their stressing sharedness with the addressee, and creating conversational rapport. Maynard argues that, "Japanese has a strong tendency to express this attitude stance, i.e., one's personal voice by adding and/or avoiding

certain linguistic devices" (p. 4).

This study has provided research that challenges Maynard's view on the uniqueness of Japanese culture by showing that the Chinese *nage* shares major functions with its Japanese counterpart: they both show the speaker's personal attitude or emotion, and they both contribute to interpersonal relationships between the speaker and the addressee.

Furthermore, both *ano* and *nage,* when used as demonstrative adjectives, originally refer to objects that physically have distance from both the speaker and the addressee. As pointed out by Lakoff (1974, p. 355): "There is a clear linguistics link between emotional and spatial closeness and distance." It can therefore be assumed that the physical distance between the speaker and the object has been extended to a psychological distance between the speaker and his/her utterances. The speaker thus tends to use the distal demonstrative markers as "fillers" in order to show his hesitant attitude in saying what he/she is going to say. Therefore, the DMs *ano* and *nage* deliver a personal voice such as "I don't know how to say it" or "I am not sure whether I should say it or not." As a consequence, the DMs *ano and nage* are not only employed as negative politeness strategies intended to illustrate the speaker's non-imposing attitude in performing certain FTAs that threaten the addressee's face, but are also employed in contexts in which the speaker is hesitant or reluctant to share certain personal information with the addressee, which may potentially threaten his/her own positive face.

On the other hand, it has been discussed that the distal demonstratives physically align the speaker and the addressee to the same side since they both physically locate at places that have a distance from the object. As proposed by Cook (1993), such physical alignment is extended to psychological alignment, and the distal demonstrative adjectives *ano* and *nage* tend to refer to a referent that is identifiable to both the speaker and the addressee in discourse. Such demonstrative usages leave a trace in the uses of DMs; that is, they direct the addressee's emotional sharedness, attention and involvement to the referent, and thus make the introduction of new referents or topics proceed smoothly. Also, by marking sharedness, the DMs *ano* and *nage* save the addressee's positive face and thereby lessen the potential damage to the addressee's feelings. In such cases, *ano and nage* seem to carry a tone such as "You know what I am talking about" or "We both share the same opinion", and thus create an emotional common ground between the speaker and the addressee.

In sum, this study demonstrates that both the Japanese DM *ano* and the Chinese DM *nage* serve as strategic devices employed by the speaker to build rapport with the addressee in daily conversations. This suggests that DMs such as "fillers," which tend to be overlooked or belittled by formal linguists, indeed play important roles in people's daily communications through their ability to reveal speakers' personal modality.

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Appendix

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
COP	copula
FP	sentence-final particle
FI	filler
MW	measure word
NEG	negative
NML	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
QM	quotation
Q	question
TOP	topic

Transcript Symbols

Symbol	Interpretation
(.)	A short, untimed pause
(0.0)	A timed pause
hh	Audible breath
::	Lengthened syllable
-	Glottal stop self-editing marker
=	Latched utterances
[	The point where overlapping talk starts
]	The point where overlapping talk ends
?	High rising intonation
↑	Notable shift up in pitch
↓	Notable shift down in pitch
> <	Increase in tempo