

# ラジオ番組「人生相談」の分析

## Analyzing “The Radio Call-in Counseling Show”

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### 1. Introduction

This paper aims to discern characteristics of one radio program, namely ‘The Call-in Counseling Show’. The discourse of the counseling with a professional expert is primarily assumed to be institutional. Yet, different from other more strictly institutionalized discourse such as parliamentary debate, communicative or interactional sequences of the counseling display features of casual conversation. Ile (2001) describes the situation, the occurrence of spontaneous conversation within the institutional frame, as ‘semi-institutional’.

Apart from casual conversational features, the Radio Counseling Show manifests features of various other types of discourse. Since the whole counseling is carried out by phone, the interactants inevitably follow certain protocols of telephone conversation. For the most part, the discourse of the counseling consists of institutionally framed question-answer adjacency pairs, which are quite similar to exchange patterns of news interviews. However, if we focus on evaluative comments frequently made by the personality and the professional, the discourse is also like classroom exchanges. When the problem is related to legal matters, the discourse shows similarities of that of lawyer and client. Yet unlike in the case of lawyer-client interactions, the importance of moral values is often emphasized, which rather resembles preaching. In order to find out characteristics of the mixed discourse of the radio counseling, further comparisons are to be made with a range of other types of discourse.

The goal of a counseling can be defined straightforwardly as problem solving. In the counseling, a limited number of participants, the caller, the personality and the professional interact for this common goal, which is essentially internally oriented. On the other hand, the counseling show as a media product has its distinctive goals such as educating or enlightening the general public and most probably raising the rating. These institutional goals are external by nature. Thus, the radio counseling show is seen as institutionalized in a dual sense with opposing orientations. Some institutional strategies are identified to function to preserve the private and confidential atmosphere of the counseling. Also, various discursive roles the personality assumes are seen to bridge the gap between the two institutions.

### 2. Method

Twenty programs of radio shows (each slightly over 15 minutes duration: 8 male and 12 female callers) are recorded almost at random (1997, June-July) and transcribed for data. One somewhat deliberate attempt made while recording is to include as many male callers as possible. For

whatever reason, the majority of callers are female of varying ages.

According to the kind of the problem, one personality and one professional are called on among several others, respectively. Admittedly, each personality and each professional exhibit his or her own inclinations or preferences. For example, some are more willing to reveal their real life roles while others tend to remain in their institutional roles as the personality or the professional. Yet, presumably they all act according to the institutional criteria or conventions. Thus, no attempt is made to differentiate their individual characteristics. Rather, both personalities and professionals are treated as a collective figure respectively.

The approach to analysis is interdisciplinary - discourse analysis, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and critical linguistics.

### 3. Institutional strategies found in 'The Radio Counseling Show'

The program has nearly 40 years of broadcast history. They deal with counseling for a wide range of problems such as legal, money, parental, marital as well as extra marital, love-affair, sexual and so on excluding health problems. They provide counselling sessions twice a week for one and half hours each. In the studio, several personalities (they all are males and professionals themselves though their expertises are not directly relevant to counseling such as cartoonist, essayist, poet and psychologist) and several professionals (lawyer, educational expert, psychiatrist, medical doctor etc) await to attend to callers. As the institutional routine, the caller is to talk with a staff member first (not a personality nor a professional) to outline his/her problem. According to the problem, one personality and one professional are pre-assigned to the caller before the counseling. Those counseling sessions are recorded and some are selected for the program. One episode is put on the air everyday except on Sunday.

In the actual program, first the mimic telephone bell is rung twice signaling the beginning of the show. After commercials the narrator tells the standard narration with the theme music which is summarized as 'In life, there are various happy and sad moments. If you are in trouble and have no one to consult with, we are here to help you'. Then the name of the personality is introduced but not the professional's. In appearing, the personality repeats a similar message emphasizing the importance of 'sharing' the problem (different personalities use slightly different versions). Then the mimic telephone bell rings twice, this time announcing the start of the counseling session. In answering the summons of the mimic telephone bell, the first utterance of the personality is invariable:

〈After the bell〉

Personality: *Hai, kochira jinseesoodan no kakaridesu, doozo.*

Yes, I am in charge of the counseling, go ahead.

Against what is generally expected at the beginning of most radio shows, the personality does not introduce himself by name. Also, although the telephone bell is used symbolically as a cue, the beginning part differs from ordinary telephone conversations where the receiver answers the summons usually with his/her family name in Japanese society. Instead, the personality refers to his institutional role.

Conversation analysts have recognized several exchange sequences as adjacency pairs. For example, question-answer, greeting-greeting and summons-reply. These interactional patterns are rooted in us all as social interactants. Therefore, an explicit self-introduction by the personality automatically conditions the caller to reciprocate the same. At least the caller is likely to feel uncomfortable not to do so. Such a potential face-threat is carefully avoided and thus the anonymity of the caller is strictly protected.

The first utterance of the personality fulfils plural functions. First the very name of the institution articulately frames the institutional setting – namely the counseling. Furthermore, his go ahead sign provides the caller with the next turn slot to start his/her account of the story right at once, which is evidenced in a few cases:

〈After the bell〉

Personality : *Hai, kochira jinseesoodan no kakaridesu, doozo.*

Caller (male) : *Ah, watashi nijyuukyuusai, hai, oyato dookyoshitemashite.....*  
I am 29 years old and I stay with my parents.....

But when the caller fails to follow the cue, another summons-answer sequence is observed to occur still following the telephone protocols. One typical example is :

〈After the bell〉

Personality : *Hai, kochira jinseesoodan no kakaridesu, doozo,*

Caller (male) : *Anoo, moshi moshi.*  
Well, hello.

Personality : *Hai, hai.*

Yes, yes.

Caller : *Ah, yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*  
I trust it to your discretion.

Although the personality's first utterance provides the next turn slot where the caller can legitimately start the story immediately, the majority of the callers do not do so. Instead, they tend to give a greeting as the preface of the talk by saying '*Onegaishimasu*' (I will ask you a favor.) or '*Osewaninarimasu*' (I am going to owe you.) This preface manifests one example of culture specific common practices of Japanese behaviors.

Through institutionally framed question-answer sequences (the caller's age, occupation, familial relation and the configuration of the problem), when sufficient information is elicited, the personality calls on the professional by introducing his /her name and expertise who has been overhearing but has not participated the interactions.

Similarities with ordinary telephone conversations are detected towards the end of the counseling, too. One similarity is that when the purpose of the call is to ask for a favor, the caller expresses his/her thanks to the receiver at the end. In the radio counseling, the caller thanks the professional guest and the personality. In most other radio shows, the personality is the one who thanks the guest as well as the participants when finishing the show. Another similarity to telephone conversation is the existence of pre-closing sequences in the counselling show. They are

socially motivated to probe whether the other party has anything else to say before finishing the conversation. On the part of the caller, this is a chance to ask an additional question or to make a confirmation and some callers actually make use of the turn provided to fulfill these purposes. Yet, while the caller is usually the one who moves to pre-closing sequences, the personality, the receiver of the call initiates the pre-closing in the counseling. For example, by saying '*Yoroshiidesuka*' (Is this all right with you?) or '*Ganbatte kudasai*' (Try to do your best) or '*Dewa sonnakotode*' (That would be all). Following the signal, majority express thanking words such as '*Arigatoo gozaimasita*' or '*Sumimasen deshita*'. The Initiative is always taken by the personality.

The most striking thing about the counseling show is complete lack of address to the audience. As a rule, the host or the master of ceremonies starts the program by addressing the audience. The standard phrase is something like '*Konnichiwa, minasan ogenki desu ka*'. (Hello, how are you?) For that matter, there is no announcement of the topic of the program and the audience has no idea at all what it is about until the caller has started talking. In most radio shows, even during the program, the listening audience is addressed to more often than not as an interlocutor to the effect that the discourse takes on features of quasi-dialogue between the host and the individual listener. In the radio counseling show, there is no thanking (for listening) nor farewell remarks targetted to the audience, either. The seeming exclusion of the audience works effectively in that the private or confidential nature of the counseling is secured. At the same time, this is effective for the program as well in that the audience can feel that they are provided with a chance to overhear someone's confidential personal matter.

By focusing on the beginning and on the end of the counseling show, similarities as well as differences with telephone conversations and other prototypical radio shows are pointed out. As a media product, the counseling show is broadcast targetting the audience. Yet, due to institutional strategies, the existence of the audience is backgrounded or almost excluded, which is not the case in most dialogic programs. As a result, the interactions within the limited number of participants are internally closed, which creates a confidential and private atmosphere just appropriate to counseling.

#### 4. Characteristics of the Counseling Show

To find out further characteristics of the radio counselling show, it is worthwhile to make comparisons with other types of discourse – both institutional and non institutional. Conversation analysts define everyday conversation, with minimally two parties, as a primary mode of communication. Thus defined, it is naturally expected that spontaneous conversation pervades all kinds of speech events - however strictly institutional. The counseling show, characterized as semi-institutional, presents a considerable proportion of non purposeful spontaneous talk typical of conversation. From a different perspective, Fairclough (1995) points out that conversationalization of the institutional discourse is a recent trend resulting from "the colonization of public orders of discourse by the discursive practices of the private sphere..."(p19) Whether the trend is in the direction of true democracy or a mere manipulation of speech style in order to promote commercialism, conversationalized exchanges are frequently recognized:

〈The caller is a 26 year old male who has been scrounged for money several times by his

superior at his work place. >

Professional: *Ne, to yuukoto wa jooshi ni kane o kashitara kono jooshi wa dame ni*  
(male medical doctor) *narunaato omottara kane o kasanakya iindayo.*

See? This means if you think your superior will be spoiled if you lend money to him, you'd better not to do so.

Caller : *Soo yuu baai wa desune doo yatte kotowareba iindesuka.*  
In such a case, how can I reject him?

Professional : *Ee, watashi okane ga naikara anoo anata ni okashi dekimasen to. Okane ga*  
*irundattara ginkoo tokasa.*

Well, I do not have money so I cannot lend it to you. If you need money, go to a bank, for instance.

Then, the personality, who has kept quiet during the above sequences intervenes the providing an anecdote, which he had read somewhere - Fukuzawa Yukichi, a famous enlightening intellectual of the Meiji Era, when he was young, one of his seniors at school spoke to him and suggested that they go for a drink. He immediately noticed that was "blackmail", so he said straight away, 'Thank you for the invitation, but I have no money,' then the senior walked away. The whole episode is told in an entirely casual way which could happen in any non-institutional setting. The closing part is significant in that the personality and the professional are in perfect alignment to show compassion on the caller to the extent that the interactions have become somewhat dramatized.

Professional : *Ganbatte goran!*

Try to do your best!

Caller : *Hai, arigatoogozaimasu.*

Yes. Thank you very much.

Personality : *Ganbattene!*

Do your best.

Professional : *Anmari naa hito yosugiruto ikite ikenaiyo.*

You cannot survive if you are too good-natured.

Personality : *Soo. Kane kasunaa!*

That's right. Don't lend him money!

Professional : *Kane to hanko osunaa!*

Don't lend money or sign anything!

Personality : *Osunaa!*

Don't sign!

Caller : *Wakarimashita.*

I see.

Professional : *Nee, kono jooshi wa moo saiteina yatsu nandakara sonna yatsu ni kimi ga*  
*makennayo, bakabakashii.*

See, this man - your superior is really awful. You must not lose to his

pressuring. It would be ridiculous if you did.....

The personality, through question-answer sequences, paraphrases the caller's reply and points out causal relation or significance of the incidents the caller him/herself is often unaware of. Though not explicitly targetted, this editing or underlining of the problem may be meant for the audience so that they can grasp the situation properly within a limited time which is exemplified in:

〈The caller is a 34 year old male working as a truck driver. He is married but his wife, with their baby, has left him recently. He is also involved with money trouble.〉

Personality : *Anata waruikedonee etto okyuuryoo donokurai?*

I am sorry to ask this but how much is your salary?

Caller : *Eetto tedoru 25 mankuraidesu.*

Well, I take home about 250,000.

Personality : *Sorede anatamo maa ee nijyuugomankurajia yatteikenaitte yuuwakede sarakinkara karichattawakeda.*

And you could not live with 25 0,000 and therefore you had to borrow money from a sarakin, too.

Caller : *Soodesune.*

That's right.

Personality : *Donokurai karita?*

How much did you borrow?

Caller : *Hyakunijyuumankuraidesu.*

About 1200,000.

Personality : *Hyakunijyuumankkurai? Uun kaesuno taihendanee.*

About 1200,000? Must be very hard to return.

As mentioned, recurring patterns of question-reply adjacency pairs are often followed by the personality's evaluative comments which have strong resemblances to classroom interactions. Yet, the personality has no authority to sanction ultimate good or bad to the caller's reply. For the most part, while collecting information, the personality's verbal acts are limited to back channels or to making general comments. Since it is a prerequisite to elicit adequate information for solving the problem, the dialogue between the personality and the caller tends to be similar to news interviews. While the news interviewer and the interviewee stay in their institutional roles throughout, the personality and the professional are often seen to step out of their institutional roles and assume real or social life roles especially when giving an advice. For example, providing a favorite anecdote or articulating emotional alignment with the caller as evidenced above. As mentioned, depending on the nature of the problem, the discourse of the counseling takes on different characteristics. For example, the dialogue related to legal matters are likely to be identified with that of a lawyer and a client:

〈The caller is a 50 year old wife whose husband had enormous amount of debt from various

sources. In talking about her husband, she says that if he is not involved in money trouble, her husband is a very good and respectful person. Although a divorce seems to be an easy solution to the problem, she is reluctant to do so because their daughter is very fond of him. >

*Professional : Uuu, shiharai no rentai shitenno sekininga arimasukedomo ne, gensoku to*  
(Male lawyer) *shite, uuun, haiguusha no ippoo ga shita shakkin ni tsuite tahoo no haiguusha ga*  
*sekinin o motanakya naranaito yuu koto wa hooritsujoo arimasen.*

You have joint liability for the debts. But, legally, one spouse has no legal responsibility for the debt the other spouse has made .

Caller : *Hai*

Yes

Professional : *Ne, kashinushi wa waiwai yuukedo.*

See, creditors will make a fuss, though.

Caller : *Hai.*

Professional : *Sore wa maa nanio itte mo hooritsu no mondai ja gozaimasen kara ano*  
*uun hooritsu joo wa shinpai nai wake yo ne.*

Well, there is no legal problem, whatever fuss they make. You will be all right legally.

However, in the next turn, the professional starts commenting about her husband.

Professional : *Anone, ii hitotte bokuniwa omoenain dakedo. Sonkeidekiru hitotte omoenaindakedo ne.*

Well, he does not sound like a good person. I do not think he is to be respected.

Here, the professional steps out of his institutional role and poses a sub-topic namely 'the personality of the husband' and spontaneously expresses his feelings against him as a real-life person. Furthermore, the personality, who has kept quiet while the professional is talking, joins them with another non-institutional sub-topic asking a question:

Personality : *Anoo, musumesan niwa kareshi wa irukana?*

Does your daughter have a boy friend?

Caller : *Iie.*

No

Personality : *A soo.*

I see.

Caller : *Ah hai.*

Yes

Personality : *Mata sukina hito ga detekuruto*

If she has a boy friend,

Caller : *Hai*

Yes

Personality : *Iroiro otoosan toka okaasan ni taisuru mikata mo kawattekuru karane,*  
*kodomowane*

She may begin to look at her father or mother differently.

Caller : *Ee.*

Yes

Personality: *Ima wa totemo nakaiinde syookedomo, iroiro, koo soogootekina koto kangae masuto mada mada sakiga arimasu kara.*

They may have a very close relationship at the moment but considering various matters as a whole, she has a long future ahead.....

Even when asked for a legal advice and, therefore, technical words are used like in a dialogue between a lawyer and client, the final conclusion the professional makes often seems to be quite different from that of a typical lawyer's.

〈The caller is a 26 year old male whose wife has been having an extra-marital affair and has become pregnant. The husband is upset and is now thinking of demanding compensation from her.〉

The professional called upon is an experienced lawyer. After instructing him of the necessary legal procedure if the caller should ask for compensation, the lawyer continues:

Professional: *Watashi bengoshi dakedo konna koto yuuto ikenaikamo shirenaikedo ne.*

(Male lawyer) As a lawyer, I should not say such a thing but...

Caller : *Hai.*

Professional: *Saibansyo ni ikuto uun jikan kakarutone., dandan dandan okotteta ikarino kanjoo mone dandan surihette kurundayo.*

If you go to court, your initial anger will gradually lessen.

Then he concludes that demanding compensation is not worthwhile and gives a more practical advice:

Professional : *Ee mada anata wakai kara nee.*

Well, you are still young.

Caller : *Hai.*

Professional : *Moo ikkai yoi josei mitsukeru koto mo dekirude shoo.*

You have other chances to meet nice girls.

The personality becomes aligned with the professional and offers further encouragement in the following turn:

Personality : *Ne? Mada mada yoi josei mo detekuru deshoo kara. Ganbatte kudasai.*

See? You will meet nice girls eventually. Try to do your best.

The counseling show, as a kind of educational program, naturally esteems moral values.

〈The caller, a 38 year old wife with two children, are having love affairs through a telephone date club.〉

The professional called on is an educational authority. He shows antipathy to the caller from



the beginning and immediately starts preaching her in a rather strict way:

Professional: *Gaman shinakya ikenai koto wa nani ka. Donna ni kurushikutatte ha o kuishibatte yatte ikanakya ikenai koto wa nani ka. Sore o mitsumete iku no ga ningen no michida to omou.*

What must you endure? You must grit your teeth and continue, no matter how hard. I believe that to do so is being human.

Caller : *Hai.*

Yes

Professional: *Futatsu ni hitotsu. Ima no jinsei wa yamete hoshii.*

There is only one choice for you. I do want you to stop leading a life like this.

Arguably, the audience is strongly in favor of the way misbehavior is reproached and moral justice is pursued. It is usually the case that the personality is in alignment with the caller. Sometimes this position might be in conflict with that of the professional's. One example is: <The caller is a 27 years old wife who is troubled with her own character. She is also worried about what others think of her.>

The professional, a medical doctor, expresses his critical attitudes to her throughout and advises her to think about more important things such as environmental problems or the future of the earth, rather than being preoccupied with her own problems. The personality intervenes to alleviate the tension. His follow-up functions to complement the professional's strict advice:

Personality: *Anonee, wakaokusan.*

Look, young wife

Caller : *Hai*

Personality: *Moo, Morita-sensei wa nee*

Well, as for Dr.Morita

Caller : *Hai*

Personality: *Yuumeina gakusha dakara nee.*

b He is a famous scholar and therefore,

Personality: *Moo sooyuu fuuni kitsui koto yuukedo saa.*

He speaks in a strict way.

Caller : *Hai*

Personality: *Anoo, boku wa chotto atama waruikara yuukedo saa.*

Since I am not as smart as him, I will say this,

Caller : *Hai*

Personality: *Moo sonnani muzukashiku kangae naide.*

Don't think too hard.

And further more at the end:

Personality: *Omowaretatte iija naino. Ikite ikerukara daijoobudayo.*

It does not matter what others think. As long as you are alive, it's all right.

Sometimes the professional invites the personality to make his comment:

〈The caller is a 70 year old female who has had a long relation with a married man. The man had borrowed money from her and recently has died suddenly without leaving any evidence of the loan.〉

The professional who is called on is a female lawyer. After pointing out that it would be extremely difficult to claim the money from his family without any written evidence, she continues :

Professional : *Shitagatte sooyuimidewa kazokumo aa kooyuuhitoga itanokanaato kikasaretemo*

Therefore, this means that even if his family hears that he had been involved with such a person,

Caller : *Hai*

Professional : *Nanimosurukini naranaito*

Probably, they do not feel like doing anything about that.

Caller : *Sooyuu kanjiga shimasukedonee. Sensei, doodeshoone?*

I think so. Sensei, what do you think about this?

IPersonality : *Soodesunee, boku, anoo hooritsutekina kotowa wakaranaikeredomo, ano anatani-wane*

Well, I do not have any legal knowledge, but to you,

Caller : *Hai*

Personality : *Taihen kitsuikoto o yuuyoodakedo*

I am going to say something very strict.

Caller : *Hai*

## 5. Conclusion

The counseling programs discern similarities and differences with various types of discourse. Similar features found are those of telephone conversation, spontaneous casual conversation as well as institutional varieties like legal or educational or interview-like interactions. The discourse takes on different features which is often influenced by the nature of the problem.

The primary (institutional) role of the personality is not only to elicit but also edit information ready for the counseling with a time constraint. Though the audience is never directly addressed to, the personality's task contributes to mediate the counseling and the lay audience. In addition to this primary role, he acts as a mediator or an arbitrator between the caller and the professional. Furthermore, he is seen to take a more active role by providing his own viewpoint which might potentially challenge the authority of the professional. The significant authority the personality is empowered with is most likely to result from the fact that he himself is a famous worldly wise professional. His high authority is fully acknowledged by the professional. Thus, the professional reciprocates a respectful address term 'sensei' to call the personality and sometimes even asks for his comments. With legitimate authority, the personality steps out of the institutional role and reveals his personality relatively freely.

For that matter, the professional also deviates from the standard institutional role and often

speaks as a real-life person. As a result, these deviations contribute to augment human aspects of the counselling. Perhaps, it would be rather boring to observe strictly institutionalized discourse such as court interactions or legal procedures. The general audience is likely to be more interested in non institutional, therefore more entertaining, parts of real human dramas.

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