

# On the “Long-Distance” Nature of the Polite Form of Japanese Locative Demonstratives

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## Introduction

One way employed in Japanese to express honorification/politeness is honorific expressions, which use the honorific prefix (HP) *o-/go-*:

- (1) Sensei-no go-kazoku-ga soto-de o-mati-desu/o-mati-da/mat-tei-masu/mat-teiru.  
Professor-Gen **HP**-family-Nom outside-at **HP**-wait-**Polite**/**HP**-wait-is/wait-is-**Polite**/wait-is  
‘The family of the professor is waiting outside.’

In (1) the honorific expression *sensei-no go-kazoku* shows that the professor is respected (cf. Sakai & Ivana (2009)). Honorific expressions are grammatical regardless of whether the verb in the sentence has honorification/politeness or not.

In contrast to honorific expressions, the polite forms of the locative demonstratives, namely, *kotira/sotira/atira/dotira* ‘here/there/there/where’ clearly interact with the honorification/politeness of the sentence. The aim of this presentation is to provide an analysis for their distribution. Building on the proposal of Miyagawa (2012) about the agreement involved in sentences with *desu/masu*, I propose that the items agree with the same element with which the polite items *desu/masu* agree.

## The Polite Form of the Locative Demonstratives

The examples in (2) show that locative *kotira* ‘here’ can appear where the verb has a honorific prefix, the polite items *desu/masu*, or both (examples with *kotira* ‘here’ represent *kotira/sotira/atira/dotira* ‘here/there/there/where’; other items behave in the same way.)

- (2) a. Yamada-sensei-wa kotira-ni o-sumai-desi-ta/o-sumai-dat-ta/sum-dei-masi-ta.  
Y-professor-Top **here**-at **HP**-live-**Polite**-past/**HP**-live-is-past/live-is-**Polite**-past  
‘Professor Yamada was living here.’
- b. \*Hanako-wa kotira-ni sum-dei-ta yo.  
H-Top **here**-at live-is-past Excl  
‘Hanako was living here/there.’
- cf. Hanako-wa kotira-o eranda yo  
H-Top **this**-Acc chose Exclamative  
‘Hanako chose this one.’

Be careful not to confuse locative *kotira* ‘here’ with partitive *kotira* ‘this one,’ which allows the verb to be in the plain form.

In embedded clauses, using locative *kotira* ‘here’ is grammatical if the embedded verb is in the honorific form (3a), while it is not when only the matrix verb is in the honorific form (3b) (cf. the acceptability of the plain locative item *koko* ‘here’ in (3b).)

- (3) a. Taro-wa [Yamada-sensei-ga kotira-ni o-sumai kadooka] tazune-ta.  
T-Top Y-professor-Nom here-at **HP**-live whether ask-past  
‘Taro asked whether Professor Yamada is living here.’
- b. Yamada-sensei-wa [Taro-ga **koko**/\***kotira**-ni sum-deiru kadooka] o-tazune-ni-nat-ta.  
Y-professor-Top T-Nom here/here-at live-is whether **HP**-ask-Dat-become-Past  
‘Professor Yamada asked whether Taro is living here.’

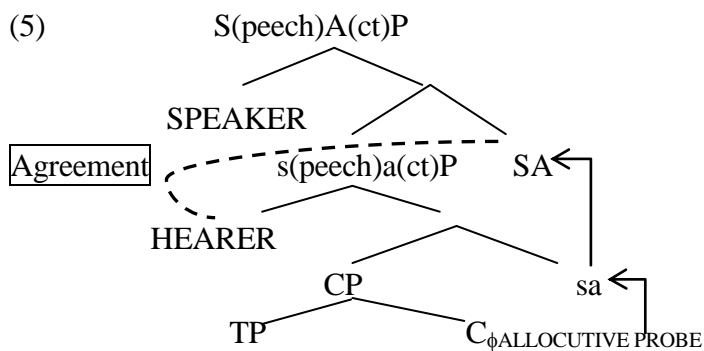
*Kotira* ‘here’ is also allowed in embedded clauses if the matrix verb is in the polite form accompanying *desu/masu*, as in (4). The plain locative item *koko* ‘here’ does not have this difference in grammaticality.

- (4) Taro-wa [Hanako-ga kotira-ni sum-deiru kadooka] tazune-{\*ta/masi-ta}.  
 T-Top H-Nom here-at live-is whether ask-past/**Polite**-past  
 ‘Taro asked whether Hanako is living here.’
- cf. Taro-wa [Hanako-ga **koko** -ni sum-deiru kadooka] tazune-{ta/masi-ta}.  
 T-Top H-Nom here-at live-is whether ask-past/**Polite**-past  
 ‘Taro asked whether Hanako is living here.’

The behavior of *kotira* ‘here’ suggests that it can be licensed in a long-distance manner by the polite items *desu/masu* in the matrix clause, since *kotira* ‘here’ can appear in sentences with *desu/masu* only in the matrix clause (4). This contrasts with the ungrammaticality of *kotira* ‘here’ with only the matrix verb in the honorific form in (3b), which is in line with previous researches that honorific agreement is strictly local (cf. Sakai & Ivana (2009)).

### Analysis

According to Miyagawa (2012), the polite forms *desu/masu* are instantiations of allocutive agreement, in which an appropriate agreement marker is realized depending on the hearer. He proposes the following structure for the C domain of sentences containing *desu/masu*:



C hosts the probe of allocutive agreement and this probe raises to ‘Speech Act’ head via ‘speech act’ head. Here, the probe agrees with the goal HEARER.

Taking into account the “long-distance” nature of *desu/masu* licensing, I claim that *kotira/sotira/atira/dotira* ‘here/there/there/where’ undergo long-distance agreement with an item in Speech Act P of (5) in the matrix clause, required by the existence of *desu/masu*. Specifically, I argue for a simultaneous agreement between the probe and the two goals: HEARER in the matrix Speech Act P and *kotira/sotira/atira/dotira* ‘here/there/there/where’ in the embedded clause.

This simultaneous long-distance agreement also explains the behavior of *desu/masu* in complement clauses of *negaw* ‘hope’ observed by Uchibori (2008) (which, according to Uchibori (2008), is simultaneous long-distance licensing of *desu/masu* in embedded clauses and those in matrix clauses by some modal head in the matrix clause.) The polite items *desu/masu* in embedded clauses are grammatical with occurrences of the matrix polite *desu/masu*, not the matrix honorific verb:

- (6) Oohisama-wa [ame-ga huri-masu-yoo(ni)] negai-masi-ta / ??/?\* negaw-are-ta.  
 queen-Top rain-Nom fall-**Polite**-C hope-**Polite**-past / hope-**Honorific**-past  
 ‘The queen hoped that it would rain.’

**References:** [1] Miyagawa, Shigeru (2012) “Agreements That Occur Mainly in the Main Clause,” *Main Clause Phenomena: New Horizons*, ed. by Lobke Aelbrecht et al., 79-111, John Benjamins. [2] Sakai, Hiromu and Adrian Ivana (2009) “Rethinking Functional Parametrization: A View from Honorification in the Nominal Domain in Japanese,” *EL* 26, 437-459. [3] Uchibori, Asako (2008) “A Short Note on Japanese Politeness Verb *-des/mas* in Embedded Contexts,” *Scientific Approaches to Language* 7, 103-122.