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The Use of *Firaa* in "Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture" Textbooks for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) Levels

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ABSTRACT

Filler, also known as *Firaa* in Japanese, is a discourse marker which frequently used by Japanese people in daily communication. However, Japanese learners are less likely to employ this discourse marker. This study aims to identify the types of *Firaa* and their functions in the textbook "Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture" for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels. The data observed were collected from 217 audios of *chokai* (listening) and videos of *kaiwa* (conversation) as supplements in the Marugoto for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels textbooks. The type of *Firaa* and their functions were then categorized using Yamane's (2002) theory, and a total of 271 *Firaa* appear in conversations has been collected. The findings of this study showed that only six types of vowel sound *Firaa* type from the eight types of Yamane's theory, namely the *'Eeto'* *Firaa* type, the *'Ko-So-A'* *Firaa* type, the *'Hai'* *Firaa* type, the *'N'* *Firaa* type, the *'Maa'* *Firaa* type, and the *'Saa'* type were found and introduced in the Marugoto textbooks at the beginner and elementary levels (A1 & A2). Moreover, it is found that the *Firaa* introduced to Japanese learners were based on their level of proficiency, so as the level increases, the *Firaa* types introduced in the textbooks also increase. Further, in the beginner level (A1), we found 74 times *Firaa* and five *Firaa* types, while at the elementary level (A2), the *Firaa* are used in much higher frequency. Hence, we can conclude that Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels has its' own the criteria as textbooks which use communicative approach by introducing *Firaa* as one of the Japanese characteristic discourse markers from the beginner level.

INTRODUCTION

Sending messages from the sender to the recipient is a communication activity involving two or more persons. This communication process is sometimes disrupted, resulting in silence or a delay in speaking. In this case, the process of delay or silence is a pause or information barrier. If during the process of composing sentences in Japanese, there are obstacles, then *Firaa* usually appears in the form of words such as anoo, *Eeto*o, and others (Yamane, 2002). According to Schiffrin (1987), *Firaa* is a discourse marker that plays an

essential role in spoken language. *Firaa* is derived from an English word, filler or filled, which means 'pause.'

According to Fujita (2001), *Firaa* is a form of discourse marker representing the speaker's attempt to establish an interpersonal relationship with the interlocutor. In conclusion, discourse markers in Japanese are used as cataphoric markers or anaphoric markers to help the speaker focus on certain utterances that may be important to the interlocutor.

Firaa and *aizuchi* are two characteristics of Japanese culture, specifically spoken discourse, in which they are frequently used to improve communication fluency. *Firaa* is a signal marker used by the speaker in a conversation, while aizuchi is used by the listener. Yamada stated that the speaker pronounces *Firaa* such as *dee*「で（ー）」, *sonoo*「その（ー）」, *anoo*「あの（ー）」, *ee*「えー」 when the speaker cannot find the right word. *Firaa* is also used as a signal to the interlocutor so that the interlocutor can predict what the speaker will say according to the context of the conversation (Watanabe, 2005; Watanabe, Hirose, Den, & Minematsu, 2005). It can be concluded that *Firaa* has a vital role in Japanese, especially in spoken discourse.

Linguists such as Daikuhara were involved in some of the *Firaa* studies. Daikuhara (2010) suggests that his research indicates that *Firaa* contributes to Japanese spoken grammar. As a result, *Firaa* should be introduced in Japanese language courses. Kim (2007) analyzed Japanese fillers as well. Let us look up words like *anoo* "Ano" or *eeto* "Eh" in a dictionary. We will find the term *kuuhaku-hojuugo* 「空白補充語」 with the explanation that the word is used to avoid silence in a conversation. Therefore, *Firaa* has an important communicative function, which Japanese people use to maintain harmony in communication in addition to its primary function as a filler for pauses or silences.

According to Kim (2007), the key to harmonious Japanese cultural values dominates the Japanese lifestyle. It is based on the principle of not getting into trouble with other people, a traditional Japanese behavior pattern. As a result, instead of making the conversation clear or accurate, Japanese people tend to say it in a hazy and indirect manner (avoiding the clarity of verbal intervention).

Park (2019) conducted another study comparing the *Firaa* function of Japanese and Korean people. Park claims the two languages have similar functions, but Japanese people use them more daily than Koreans in intercultural situations. Meanwhile, Lukamto (2012) describes that discourse signs such as *anoo*, *kono*, *sono*, *eeto*, *nanka*, and *maa* are essential for smooth communication, and that discourse signs need to be actively taught to Japanese language learners (Higgins & Ikeda, 2021). However, after examining the actual conditions of how *Anoo, Kono, Sono,* Eeto*, Nanka,* and *Maa* are contained in Japanese textbooks, it turns out their use in textbooks is insufficient. According to Ohta, Kitaoka, and Nakagawa (2014), pauses between sentences filled with filled pauses (*Firaa*) can improve user understanding and increase the naturalness of the spoken dialogue system.

According to Nakajima (2009), *Firaa* has three functions based on location: the first is at the beginning of a speech, the middle position, and the end position of speech, all of which have different functions. The highest usage rate of the 1680 *Firaa*s found in natural discourse recordings was 32.7 percent for KO-SO-A *Firaa*s, followed by vowel sounds at 18.3 percent and Nanka filler *Firaa's* at 7.1 percent. Nakajima collects data from native Japanese speakers in the form of natural conversations.

Januarika (2018) conducted another study on the use of *Firaa* by non-native speakers. The use of *Firaa* by foreign Japanese speakers does not vary as much as it does by native speakers, according to Januarika's research. Another research by *Firaa* related to Japanese language learners was conducted by Nagai (2017). The conclusion is that Japanese learners from Korea and China often use some *Firaa* unfairly compared to native Japanese speakers, so it is necessary to teach the use of natural *Firaa*.

However, the studies on Japanese *Firaa* used by Japanese language learners are still insufficient. In the fourth semester of the Japanese Language Education study program at the state university in Semarang, we conducted a preliminary study on the students. The result is that students admitted they did not understand the different types of *Firaa* and how they were used in conversation. As for the lack of understanding and use by learners like them, they are only used to using *Firaa*, anou, and *Eeto*. The lack of understanding of Japanese language learners for this type and function of *Firaa* is a research gap that researchers want to see from the point of view of whether the textbooks that students have used are

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sufficient to illustrate that filler has been introduced or not.

Daikuhara (2010) observes *Firaa* concerning learning Japanese in Japanese language textbooks. Daikuhara data were drawn from sixteen Japanese textbooks and references ranging from elementary to advanced. It can be concluded that these references still lack an introduction to Japanese fillers.

Therefore, we try to analyze textbooks that use a different approach published by the Japan Foundation in 2013. Marugoto's textbooks have been used by Japanese Language Education Study Program in a state university in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia since 2018. These textbooks focus on communication skills where the filler is found in live conversations. This study aims to identify the different types and functions of the Japanese language *Firaa* in Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for Beginner Level (A1) and Basic Level (B1) students (A2).

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative descriptive approach is used in this study. Data sources used in this study are conversation dialogue on audio choukai and video kaiwa on marugoto plus in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level 1 and 2 (A2). The data objects that are the focus of this research are conversational dialogues using *Firaa* on choukai audio and kaiwa video, which are complementary materials for learning the Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture textbook for Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level (A2).

The listening method with an advanced note-taking technique was used in this research to collect data. The researchers then used data analysis techniques, such as reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions, as described by Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2013). In addition, the following are steps in this research's data analysis: a) Listening to the conversational dialogue in choukai audio and kaiwa video are complementary materials for learning the Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture textbook for Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level (A2); b) Recording the appearance of *Firaa* contained in the conversational dialogues in choukai audio and kaiwa video, which are complementary materials for learning the Marugoto Japanese Language and

Culture textbook for Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level (A2); c) Classify data and analyze it based on the types of *Firaa* according to Yamane's theory (2002); and d) Summarize the findings of the data analysis and make suggestions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Firaa Types in Marugoto Textbooks

Based on the results of data analysis, 271 Firaa appear in 217 conversations in the video and audio of the Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture textbook. Yamane's *Firaa* theory is used to investigate the classification of *Firaa* types in Nagai (2017). Table 1 shows the data on research findings of the different types of *Firaa*.

Table 1: *Firaa* types and variations in Marugoto Beginner (A1) and Basic Level (B1) (A2).

Firaa' type	Variation of *Firaa*	Video Kaiwa Marugoto Plus	Marugoto Starter (A1)	Marugoto Beginner level 1 (A2)	Marugoto Beginner level 2 (A2)	Total	Frequency (%)
vocal	ア	2	4	3	6	15	5,5
	アー	0	1	0	4	5	1,8
	エ	1	0	0	0	1	0,4
	エー	1	5	2	5	13	4,7
Subtotal		**4**	**10**	**5**	**15**	**34**	**12,5**
Eeto	エート	2	7	7	4	20	7,3
	エーット	1	8	11	9	29	11
Subtotal		**3**	**15**	**18**	**13**	**49**	**18,1**
Ko-So-A	ソーデスネ	3	12	14	9	38	14
	アノ	0	0	2	0	2	0,7
	アノー	9	34	26	35	104	38,3
Subtotal		**12**	**46**	**42**	**44**	**144**	**53,1**
Nanka	ナンカ	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hai	ハイ	2	0	0	4	6	2,2
Maa	マー	0	0	1	0	1	0,4
Moo	モー	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	ウーン	4	2	15	14	35	13
Saa	サー	0	1	0	1	2	0,7
Total		**25**	**74**	**81**	**91**	**271**	**100**

As presented in Table 1, the number of *Firaa* that appear in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for Beginner Level (A1) was only 74, with variations in the types of *Firaa,* namely Vowel Sound, *Eeto*, *Ko-So-A, N*, and *Saa.* Meanwhile, in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture Elementary Level (A2) textbooks, the

number of *Firaa* that appeared was 81 times (Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture Basic 1), and 91 times (Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture Basic 2).

In addition, five different *Firaa* types were discovered in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture for Beginner Level (A1) textbooks, namely *Eeto, Ko-So-A, N,* and *Saa* vocal sounds. Meanwhile, *Firaa Hai* and *Maa* are two types of *Firaa* found in the basic level Japanese language and culture Marugoto textbook (A2) but not previously introduced in the beginner level Japanese language and culture Marugoto textbook (A1). The types of *Firaa* in the beginner-level Japanese language and culture Marugoto textbook (A1) and the Elementary level in Marugoto Language and Culture textbook (A2) are divided into the following classifications based on the findings in Table 1.

Vowel sound type (Boon-gata)

We found the examples of sentences using *Firaa boon-gata* as follows.

(1) K01: <u>あ</u>、金曜日、生花コンテストが
      ありますよ。
      <u>*A*</u>, *kinyōbi, seika kontesuto ga arimasuyo.*
      Ah, Friday, there's a flower arrangement contest.
      K02: ああ、いいですね。先生はみに
      行きますか。
      Aa, īdesune. sensei hami ni ikimasu ka.
      Oh that's good. Will you come to see it?
      K01: はい、いつも行きます。今年も多分
      みに行きます。
      hai, itsumo ikimasu. kotoshi mo tabun mi ni ikimasu.
      Yes, always come. This year too may come to see it.
      (Marugoto plus A1, can do 31, 0050-00:22)

(2) K01: いらっしゃいませ。
      Irasshaimase.
      Welcome
      K02: <u>えー</u>、すみません。ハンバーガー
      １つとコーヒー２つください。
      <u>*Ee*</u>, *sumimasen. hanbāgā hitotsu to kōhī futatsu kudasai.*
      <u>Mmm, excuse me. I ordered 1 hamburger and 2 coffee.</u>
      (Marugoto A1 Katsudou, Lesson 6, Audio 084,00:01-00:12)

From the examples of conversations (1) and (2) above, it can be seen that the variations in the type of *Firaa* used are the short vowel form '*a*' 「あ」 and the long vowel form such as '*ee*' 「えー」. According to the dictionary, the form of *Firaa* is '*a*' what is in the example conversation (1) has the meaning of a form of surprise expression when you find something. Next is the form of '*ee*'; if you look at its meaning in the example conversation (2), it expresses affirmation or agreement.

We find a lot of data about this *boon-gata* type of *Firaa* or vowel sound at the beginning of the speech, though examples also appear in the middle.

Eeto *type* (Eeto gata)

We found that examples of *Eeto-gata* variations differ from the variations found at the start of the speech and in the middle of the speech. Here is an example of the *Eeto*-gata form in the middle of a speech.

(3) K01: すみません、たいしかんに行きたい
      んですが.
      Sumimasen, tai shikan ni ikitaindesuga..
      Excuse me, I want to go to the embassy.
      K02: たいしかんですか？<u>ええっと</u>、
      あそこに白くて大きいたてものが見えま
      すね。
      Taishikan desuka? <u>*ē tto*</u>, *asoko ni shirokute ōkīta te mono ga miemasune.*
      Embassy huh? Hmmm, from here, the big white building can be seen right.
      K01: 白くて大きいたてもの。はい。
      Shirokute ōkī tate mo no. hai.
      Big white building. Yes.
      (Marugoto Elementary 1 A2 katsudou, Lesson 6, Audio 057, 00:01-0:20)

The *Eeto-gata* variation is found in the middle of the speech, as shown in the example of conversation (3) above. Regarding the *Eeto gata* writing style, we distinguish between the '*Eeto*' and '*Eetto*' forms. '*Eeto*' is a word or phrase that comes to mind as you consider the next word or thing to say. It became "Hmm" in the translation we discovered in Marugoto's textbook. This type of *Firaa* usually appears at the start of a speech, but it can also appear in the middle, as shown in the conversation example (3).

Ko-So-A *type* (Ko-so-a gata)

The *Ko-So-A gata* is the most common type of *Firaa* found in Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks, accounting for 53.1 percent of all *Firaa* found in both beginner (A1) and

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elementary (A2) levels. The most varied forms of the *Ko-So-A* gata are '*soudesune*', '*ano*,' and '*anoo*.' The following is an example of its use in conversation.

(4) K01: <u>あのう</u>、ここからくうこうまでどう
やって行きますか。
Anoo*, koko kara kūkō made dō yatteikimasuka.*
Hmm, how do I get from here to the airport?
K02: ここは電車がいいですよ。便利です
から。
Koko wa densha ga īdesuyo. benridesukara.
From here it is better to take the train. Because it's more convenient.
K01: じゃあ、電車で行きます。どうも
ありがとう。
Jā, Densha de ikimasu. dōmo arigatō.
Then I'll go by train. Thank you.
(Marugoto A1 Rikai, Lesson 13, Audio 217, 001:01-00:21)

(5) K01: キムさんは、どんなエコ活動を
していますか。
Kimu-san wa, donna eko katsudō o shiteimasu ka.
Mr. Kim, what kind of eco-friendly activities are you doing?
K02: エコですか?<u>**そうですね**</u>、わたしは
料理をするときだいどころから
あぶらをながさないようにしてますよ。
Eko desu ka? ***Sō desune****, watashi wa ryōri o suru toki dai dokoro kara abura o nagasanai yō ni shitemasuyo.*
Environmentally friendly, right? Well, I try not to throw oil out of the kitchen while cooking.
(Marugoto Elementary 2 A2 Katsudou, Lesson 15, Audio 157, 00:01-00:15)

The forms of *Ko-So-A gata* found in the Marugoto: Japanese Language, and Culture textbook are examples of conversation (4) and conversation (5). When the type of *Firaa* 'Anoo', a word used when calling someone, is translated into English, many of the equivalents are "excuse me/sorry/hmm," as shown in the example conversation (4). According to the data in Table 1, the *Firaa 'Anoo'* type has the highest frequency of occurrence compared to the other types, at 38.3 percent.

In the example conversation (5), the type of *Firaa* '*Soudesune*' denotes the speaker's approval or affirmation of the other party. This *Firaa* also used when someone thinking and doubting something.

Hai *type* (Hai gata)

This type of *Hai gata* is also found in the conversational data. Here is an example of its use.

(6) K01: おー
Oo.
Wow.
K02: <u>はい</u>。私はどくしょが好きです。
やまさきさんの趣味はなんですか。
Hai*. watashi wa dokusho ga sukidesu. yamasaki san no shumi wa nandesu ka.*
Yes. I like reading. What's Mr. Yamazaki's hobby?
K01: 音楽です。
Ongaku desu.
Musik.
K02: どんな音楽が好きですか。
Donna ongaku ga suki desuka?
What kind of music do you like?
K01: ジャズが好きです。
Jyazu ga suki desu.
I like Jazz.
K02: そうですか。
Sou desu ka.
Oh, I see.
(Marugoto Plus A1, Can do 28, 00:05-00:23)

The '*hai' firaa* that appears in conversation (6) does not appear as a form of *aizuchi* but rather as a *Firaa* that is used to attract the interlocutor's attention. '*Hai*' type of *Firaa* can be paired with 'yes' in English in the Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for beginners (A1) and elementary (A2). This type of *Firaa 'hai'* does not appear in the middle or at the end of a speech; instead, it predominately appears at the start of a speech, as in the example of conversation (6).

Maa *type* (Maa Gata)

This type of *Firaa Maa-gata* or type of *Maa* is the type of *Firaa* with the fewest occurrences among others, only 0.4 percent. The following is an example of the occurrence of the *Firaa Maa* type in the conversation data (7).

(7) K01: <u>**まあ、**</u>かわいいセーターですね。
Maa*, kawaii seetaa desune.*
Wow! What a cute sweater huh.
K02: あっ、ありがとうございます。
A, arigatou gozaimasu.
Ah, thank you.
(Marugoto Elementary 1 A2 Katsudou, Lesson 17, Audio 170, 00:01-00:03)

The *Firaa 'Maa'* utterance is a speech used when someone is impressed by something, such as a conversation example (7). Both beginner level (A1) and elementary level (A2) of the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbook are combined into English to form 'Wow.' This type of *Firaa Maa-gata* only appears at the beginning of the speech and not in the middle nor at the end of speech.

N *type* (N gata)

This type of *Firaa N-gata* appears more than the type of *Firaa Boon-gata,* which is as much as 13 percent. The following is an example of using *N-gata* in conversation (8).

(8) K01: あのう、ちょっといいですか。
この言葉の使い方がよくわかりません。
説明してくださいませんか。
Anou, chotto īdesu ka. kono kotoba no tsukaikata ga yoku wakarimasen. setsumei shitekudasaimasen ka.
Excuse me, can I speak for a moment? I do not understand the use of this vocabulary. Would you please explain?
  K02: この言葉ですか？<u>う一ん</u>、難しい
ですね。私もよくわかりません。
すみません。
Kono kotobadesuka? <u>**Ūn**</u>, *muzukashī desune. watashi mo yoku wakarimasen. sumimasen.*
This vocabulary huh? Hmm, that's hard. I also don't understand. I'm sorry.
  K01: あ、そうですか。じゃあ、先生に
聞きます。
A, sō desuka. Jā, sensei ni kikimasu.
Oh, I see. Then I ask the teacher.
  (Marugoto Elementary 1 A2 Rikai, Lesson 9, Audio 148, 00:01-00:27)

There is only one variation of the *N-gata* type in the Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture textbook for both beginner level (A1) and elementary level (A2), which is *Firaa 'Uun'*. In conversation (8), the meaning of *Firaa 'Uun'* is when the speaker tries to say something but gets stuck on a word or thought, usually followed by negative speech as described above. The English equivalent word of this type of *Firaa, 'Uun,'* is usually translated as "hmm...no." This type of *N-gata Firaa* is found not only at the start of a speech but also in the middle of a speech, such as in a conversation example (8).

Saa *type* (Saa gata)

The last type of form is *Firaa Saa-gata*. This type of *Firaa* occurred much more than *Maa-gata Firaa* which is 0,7%. Below is an example of *Saa-gata Firaa* in conversation (9).

(9) K01:<u>さあ</u>、ルパさん何がいいですか。
Saa, Rupa san nani ga ii desuka?
<u>**Hmm,**</u> Rupa san, which do you want?
  K02: ええっと。
Eetto.
Hmmm…
  K01: 私がいつも食べるのはよせなべです。
とり肉とやさいがたくさんはいてますよ。
Watashi ga itsumo taberu no wa yose nabedesu. tori niku to yasaiga takusan wa itemasuyo.
What I always eat is Yosenabe. There is some chicken and vegetable on it.
  (Marugoto Elementary 1 A2 Rikai, Lesson 9, Audio 148, 00:01-00:27)

The only variation of this *Firaa Saa gata* is the *'Saa'* form. *Firaa 'Saa'* is a word used by the speaker when surprised, happy, or confused, according to the dictionary. Conversation (9), for example, demonstrates that the meaning is a muddled form of speech. This type of *'Saa' Firaa* is frequently combined with other English words to form "Hmm...", "Come on," "lets go," and "okay." This type of *Firaa* does not appear near the end or in the middle of the speech. It is only found at the start of a speech, such as in the example of a conversation (9).

Functional Analysis on The Types of *Firaa*

Table 2 summarizes the research findings on the functions of *Firaa* types. In Januarika (2018), Yamane's theory is used to analyze the classification of functions of *Firaa* types. According to Yamane (2002) and Xinyan (2015) in Januarika (2018), the functions of *Firaa* including 1) Discourse adjustment function, which is divided into four variations: (FG1) Starting a topic or speech; (FG2) Defend the right to speak; (FG3) Time generator; and (FG4) Change of speaker. 2) The interlocutor's adjustment function is divided into three variations: (FG5) refining, (FG6) doubts, and (FG7) common understanding.

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Table 2: Types of *Firaa* and the Functions of Types of *Firaa* in Marugoto Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level (A2).

Firaa Type	*Firaa'* Variation	Firaa's type function							Total
		FG 1	FG 2	FG 3	FG 4	FG 5	FG 6	FG 7	
vocal	ア	5	0	5	0	4	0	1	15
	アー	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	5
	エ	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	エー	4	1	3	0	4	0	1	13
Eeto	エート	1	0	19	0	0	0	0	20
	エーット	2	0	23	0	3	0	1	29
Ko-So-A	ソーデスネ	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	38
	アノ	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	アノー	55	0	1	0	47	0	1	104
Nanka		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hai	ハイ	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Maa	マー	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Moo		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	ウーン	0	0	11	0	12	12	0	35
Saa	サー	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total		75	3	103	0	73	13	4	271

Table 2 shows that there are only six types of *Firaa* introduced in Marugoto textbooks on Elementary Japanese Language and Culture (A1) and Beginner Level (A2), namely 1) Discourse adjustment function, with three variations of functions, including (FG1) Starting a topic or speech, with 75 occurrences (28 percent); (FG2) Defending the right to speak, with 3 occurrences (1.1 percent); and (FG3) Time generator, with 103 occurrences (38 percent). 2) Interlocutor adjustment function, with three variations: (FG5) Smoothing, with 73 occurrences (27 percent); (FG6) Doubt, with 13 occurrences (4.8 percent); (FG7) Mutual understanding, with 4 occurrences (1.5 percent).

According to data analysis, the Discourse Adjustment function (the function of starting a topic or speech, the function of defending the right to speak, and the function of producing time) was used more than 181 times (66.8 percent) compared to the adjustment function with the other person (smoothing function, function of indecision, and the function of mutual understanding), which was used 90 times (33.2 percent). We discovered *Firaa "Saa"* in the Marugoto: Elementary Japanese Language and Culture textbook (A2), which has a function to begin a topic or speech (FG 1) and a function to express doubt (FG6).

Moreover, the types of *Firaa* and their functions that most often appear in the Marugoto: Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level (A2) textbooks are the *Ko-So-A type*, especially the '*anoo*' *Firaa*, which carries the function of starting a topic or speech (FG1), used as many as 55 times (20.3 percent) occurrences and the type of '*Eeto*' carrying the time generating function (FG3) was used 42 times (15.5 percent).

CONCLUSION

The benefits of communication skills-oriented textbooks such as the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture are that the types of *Firaa* and the functions of the types of *Firaa* were sufficiently varied to be introduced from the beginning, namely at the Beginner Level (A1) and Elementary Level (A2). The sound of *Firaa* types, the other types of *Firaa* such as '*Eeto*' type, *'Ko-So-A'* type, *'n'* type, *'maa'* type, and *'saa'* types are all included in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbook for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels.

The functions of the types of *Firaa* in the Marugoto Japanese Language and Culture textbook for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels include 1) to start topics and speeches, 2) to defend the right to speak, 3) function as time generator, 4) to refine, and 5) to show hesitation (Yamane, 2002; Momose, 2022). There is no *Firaa* with a speaker switching function in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels. This is because the *Firaa* with this function is usually found at the end of the sentence (Nakajima, 2009), while of all the *Firaa* introduced in the Marugoto: Japanese Language, and Culture textbook for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels, there is no *Firaa* that is located at the end of the sentence was introduced.

The level of Japanese language education has an impact on the *Firaa* presented to Japanese language learners. This is demonstrated by differences in the number and variety of *Firaa* types found in the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels. As can be seen from the results and analysis in this study, the Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture textbooks for

Beginner (A1) and Elementary (A2) levels have included *Firaa* in the teaching materials. As a result, additional research is required to determine whether the communicative approach used in this reference book represents one of the communicative textbooks.

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