Understanding and Teaching Japanese Discourse Principles: A Case of Newspaper Columns

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This paper reports the results of analysis of Japanese mass media discourse, specifically 38 entries of newspaper opinion columns, "Columns, My View," taken from Asahi shimbun (1994). Based on the results, I explore the possibilities of introducing discourse principles into the craft of teaching students how to read Japanese.

By appealing to the concept of "commentary" sentences, I examine how and where in the column the writer presents his or her views. The study reveals that (1) a paraphrase of the headline appears at a point somewhere around 86.73% into the column, (2) sentences in column-initial *danraku* are 12.24% commentary sentences, whereas sentences in column-final *danraku* are 51.02% commentary sentences, and (3) the sequencing of non-commentary to commentary sentences is prevalent in *danraku* (81.51%). Accordingly, I conclude that the newspaper column writer's opinions appear on multiple levels toward the end of the discourse—within *danraku* as well as within the entire column.

Based on a review of the literature on applied linguistics, I discuss possibilities of applying the discovered rhetorical sequencing as well as other principles of Japanese discourse to the teaching of reading. In addition, a schematic structure for a sample column is presented as an example of a possible pedagogical tool.

INTRODUCTION

Reading Japanese is a task that we perform on a regular basis. To facilitate this task, instructors inevitably engage in various pdagogically motivated activities—selection of material, preparation of vocabulary sheets and grammar notes, and planning of student tasks and assignments. More than a comprehensive

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knowledge of vocabulary and grammar is required, however, for students to comprehend the content.   This is because, as pointed out by many previous studies (Kaplan 1972; Hinds 1983; Nagano 1983; Honna 1989; Nishihara 1990; Nishida 1992; Kirkpatrick 1993), organizational principles of discourse differ across genres and across languages.   Given variabilities of organization in discourse, it seems important first to investigate discourse principles of different genres, and second, to explore how the findings may be effectively applied for pedagogical purposes.

This paper first reports one of my recent discourse analytical studies (detailed discussion available in Maynard 1996), and then considers its pedagogical applicability along with the usefulness of organizational principles of Japanese discourse in general to the instruction of reading.   The study asks the question of how and in what sequential context the writer's view and/or opinion is presented in Japanese newspaper columns.   If conveying one's views (and such is assumed here) is the purpose of writing a newspaper column, in what ways, at which point in the discourse and in what discourse-internal context does the writer either implicitly or explicitly commit to expressing his or her opinion?

Data for this study consist of 38 newspaper columns taken from *Asahi Shimbun*, titled "*Koramu Watashi no Mikata*" (Column, My View), written by 38 different reporters and writers.   I have collected every column appearing in the *Asahi Shimbun* (International Satellite edition) from January through April, 1994.   Each column is approximately 1,500 characters in length and appears sporadically in the newspaper's political/economic as well as editorial sections.   As made explicit by the column title, in this format writers are expected to present their views or opinions on current events and issues with which they are familiar.

When inquiring into potential cultural differences in the rhetorical ordering of persuasion, the logical progression of the text is often focused upon.   In this regard, it has been said that Japanese discourse generally lacks a "logical" foundation, sometimes suggested to be "illogical" or simply "alogical."   This stereotypical generalization is misleading.   When comparing Japanese ways of rhetoric with Western ways, the so-called Western "logical" foundation normally refers to a logical syllogism which occurs only in limited cases in everyday rhetoric in the West.

Certainly, the logic-based prescription is suitable for some discourse types—both in the West and Japan.   A more accurate picture seems to be that depending on genres, Japanese texts use a mixture of discourse organizational principles including and beyond deductions (enthymemes) and inductions (use of examples).   Thus, before making sweeping generalizations on the logical or "illogical" nature of rhetorical styles, the variability of rhetorical structure must be studied genre by genre, and language by language.   This study squarely addresses this issue and as a starter examines a particular discourse type within a specific language.

As will be presented in what follows, the manner of argumentation observed

in Japanese newspaper opinion columns follows the sequencing of information: (1) providing relevant information, and (2) presenting one's views through a variety of what I call "commentary" strategies.   Indeed, tracing the representational manner and sequencing of commentary strategies reveals that Japanese persuasive discourse develops along the lines of ordinarily probable and sensible combinations of information and commentary strategies.

Background

Regarding the discourse organization and the sequencing of rhetorical elements, perhaps Kaplan's (1972) bold and controversial cross-cultural contrast of rhetorical organizational patterns deserves mention.   According to Kaplan, five different types of rhetorical movements (from topic introduction to conclusion) are found in expository writing; circular (Oriental), straight linear (English), zigzag (Romance), broken zigzag (Russian) and broken parallel linear (Semitic). The English way of argumentation is captured as a direct straight line starting from the topic to conclusion; Oriental (presumably including Japanese) goes around in circles before reaching a conclusion.   Clearly, this characterization is overly simplified, if not somewhat ethnocentric.   But it highlights important distinguishing perceptions of how different cultures organize rhetoric.

More recently, Kirkpatric (1993) provides evidence for cross-cultural variability in the information sequencing of Chinese in comparison to English. After examining extended spoken discourse in Chinese, Kirkpatrick concludes that, unlike English, Chinese follows a BECAUSE—THEREFORE order where the reason/cause for the speaker's position is given first, which is then followed by the speaker's position.

As for Japanese discourse organization, Nagano (1983) examins 38 different news-commentary segments (called *terebi koramu*, Television Column) taken from Japanese television programs and focuses on where the announcement of content appears.   Nagano contends that unlike written text, in orally presented television news-commentary, the central message is announced at the beginning, presumably to cue the audience immediately as to what follows in the presentation.   Nagano mentions, although only in passing, that the conclusive statement appears toward the end in the presentation of the written news-commentary.   Kirkpatrick's and Nagano's studies point to the different organizational principles at work across discourse types as well as across languages.

At this point I should mention a traditional discourse principle favored by Japanese.   The Japanese are known to use a traditional four-part organizational principle of *ki-shō-ten-ketsu*.   *Ki-shō-ten-ketsu* originates in the structure of four-line Chinese poetry and is frequently referred to in Japanese as a model rhetorical movement or structure in expository (and other) writings.

> *ki*   (topic presentation) presenting topic at the beginning of one's argument
>
> *shō*   (topic development) following *ki*, developing the topic further

> *ten*   (surprise turn) after the development of the topic in *shō*, introducing
> a surprising element, indirectly related to or connected with *ki*, and
> *ketsu* (conclusion) bringing all of the elements together and reaching a
> conclusion

A classic example of the *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* four-part organization is a well-known four-line description presented in the following, taken from Tokieda (1977 [1960]: 71).

> *Osaka Motomachi Itoya no musume.*
> Daughters of Itoya [the thread shop] in the Motomachi of Osaka.
> *Ane wa jūroku, imōto wa jūgo.*
> The elder daughter is sixteen, and the younger one is fifteen.
> *Shokoku daimyō wa yumiya de korosu.*
> Feudal lords kill [enemy] with bows and arrows.
> *Itoya no musume wa me de korosu.*
> The daughters of Itoay "kill" [men] with their eyes.

Note that the *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* organization structure pushes the conclusion toward the very end of the discourse. Rather than forming a circular pattern, the *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* progression moves in a linear direction with *ten*, an unexpected turn of the event placed between topic development and conclusion.

Although the structural force of *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* seems to resemble other kinds of discourse organizational principles, a curious particularity also becomes evident. It differs from logical progressions (such as [problem → hypothesis → testing → results → discussion/conclusion] or [problem → statement → evidence → solution/claim] and so on). The *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* progression also differs from the ideational logical relationship such as BECAUSE—THEREFORE, the kind of relationship discussed by Kirkpatrick (1993).

The *ki-shō-ten-ketsu*'s open-ended principle in Japanese discourse necessitates an additional analytical perspective. In what follows I explore these directions and address them in detail by appealing to the concept of commentary sentences.

Commentary Sentences in *"Column, My View"*

I propose that sentences appearing in the data (and in fact in Japanese discourse in general) can be divided into two groups, commentary and non-commentary. Commentary sentences directly express the writer's personal attitudes including feelings, emotions, reactions, views, opinions, desire, suggestions, and so on. Obviously, every sentence expresses the writer's personal attitude one way or another. The syntactic choice of a sentence itself conveys the writer's perspective. Thus, I am *not* saying that only commentary sentences are equipped to express the writer's personal feelings, emotions, reactions, and so forth. I *am* saying that commentary sentences are marked by limited types of linguistic features, identifiable in terms of their forms, and that these linguistic features all point to the writer's expression of modality and related meanings.

Commentary sentences	Aspects of Discourse Modality
nominal predicate *no da*, *kara da*, *wake da*	Information qualification (perspective, information status): (offering explanatory accounts expressing the writer's perspective and signaling information status)
referring to the act of "speaking" or "writing" *ieru*, etc.	Speech act declaration and qualification: (marking direct discourse that reflects the direct voice of the writer)
verbs of "thinking" "feeling" and so on *omou*, *kanjiru*, *hoshii*, etc.	Interactional appeal (personal emotion): (exposing personal thoughts and feelings)
speculative modal expressions *darō*, *rashii*, *kamoshirenai*	Information qualification (epistemic modality): (qualifying the level of certainty and evidentiality, also signaling sociolinguistic style)
sentence-final manipulation for presenting opinion *dewa nai (darō) ka*, etc.	Interactional appeal (sociolinguistic style): (marking one's view in a manner of presentation appropriate to social conventions)

In commentary sentences, overtly marked personal attitude cues become primary and are critically important.

Commentary strategies bear modal and other self-expressive linguistic features often appearing in combination with the predicate. These frequently occurring devices used for commentary purposes are best understood as discourse modality indicators (as discussed in Maynard 1992, 1993a). I proposed in my earlier studies four aspects of discourse modality (1) information qualification, (2) speech act declaration and qualification, (3) participatory control and (4) interactional appeal. Although overt discourse modality indicators often function in multiple aspects, strategies used for commentary sentences appearing in our data are primarily associated with the aspects as shown above.

Sample commentary sentences include:

(1) (Following a sentence: For example, the United States rarely maintains a strong position on the improvement of human rights in Saudi Arabia.) (January 29, 1994)
Beikoku no kokueki   ga kakatteiru kara   da.
U.S. LK national interest S depend on because BE
This is because U.S. national interests depend on them.

(2) (January 19, 1994)
Ima watashi wa, sō dewanai, to   iikirenai.
now I   T   so BE-NEG QT cannot quite state
Now I cannot quite state that is not the case.

Although most devices marking commentary sentences appear at the sentence-final position, they are not limited to the setence-final positions only. See, for example, (3) in which the verb *shitekishitai* (want to point out) appears as an overt metalinguistic expression referring to the writer's act.

(3)   (January 21, 1994)
> *Shitekishitai   no   wa "hāto" ga mottomo*
> want to point out one T   heart S most
> *taisetsuna fukushi keikaku no sakutei o*
> important welfare plan   LK planning O
> *bijinesu to toraeru gyōsha   ni*
> business as treat   industry IO
> *makasete   ii   no   ka to yū koto   da.*
> leave to other's control fine NOM Q QT say NOM BE
> What I want to point out is the following: Is it acceptable to let the profit-motivated outside service industry control the planning of welfare which requires precious "hearts" of people?

In addition to the overt linguistic expressions mentioned above, commentary sentences relevant to this study meet the following condition.   All commentary sentences must directly reflect the writer's point of view.   When the writer takes the position of "talking" to the reader directly with an intention of sharing his or her own views, the text represents direct discourse.   In other words, the position the writer takes is that the writer "talks" to the reader as a reporter-commentator.   As in (4), the *wake da* sentence that refers to someone else's explanation does not qualify as commentary sentence.

(4)   (Following sentences: We cannot totally depend on outside service industry.   One-fourth of the project expense must be met by the local governments.) (January 21, 1994)
> "*Gyōsha ni, jitsugen   fukanōna koto o*
> industry for realization impossible thing O
> *tsugitsugito   morikomaretara   komaru"   to yū wake da.*
> one after another added-PASS-COND problematic QT say reason BE
> (Their) reason is that "if the outside service industry people plan things one after another that are impossible to realize, that would be indeed problematic."

It should also be noted that commentary sentences can appear on different textual levels.   For example, the writer may "talk" to the reader about details of reported events or situations by adding his or her personal experience.   The writer may also "talk" to the reader about his or her own general view or position regarding the entirety of the main issue discussed.   In other words, the writer's "talking" may occur as the writer positions himself or herself within the framework of the reported event/situation, or outside of it.

Out of the total 1,512 sentences appearing in our data of 38 opinion columns, I found 256 sentences in direct quotation that are graphologically so marked. Excluding direct quotations, which dominantly represent voices other than the

writer's, the number of sentences attributable primarily to the writer's voice numbers 1,256. Of these 1,256 sentences, commentary sentences appear 252 times (20.06%).

Non-commentary sentences are the opposite of commentary. Non-commentary sentences offer relevant information including public or general knowledge, historical facts, and or detailed description of the situation, event or affair. In fact in "Column, My View," these non-commentary sentences dominate, comprising approximately 80% of the sentences, excluding direct quotations.

Commentary and non-commentary sentences appear frequently mixed within a paragraph, but some paragraphs contain only one or the other. On the one hand, Paragraph 5 in the column given in Appendix 1 includes the writer's personal evaluative commentary. Paragraph 1 on the other hand, describes events and situations as the writer takes an objective reporter's position (rather than an involved commentator's). The writer distances himself or herself from what is described as he or she treats the description as being factual. In this sense, commentary versus non-commentary sentences help define the discourse function of paragraphs, or even a long stretch of text.

Rhetorical Sequencing in Japanese Discourse

I now focus on where the writer's view is presented in the column. There are two possibilities for the sequencing of information in terms of commentary and non-commentary as shown in Figure 1 (arrows indicate the sequencing).

Although these two orders are possible, as suggested by previous studies, it seems reasonable to assume that Japanese text takes Type I. In fact the Japanese language's preference toward Type I discourse organization has been suggested, if indirectly, by a number of scholars.

In this regard, Ōkuma (1984) states that three possible organizational structures are used for Japanese *ikenbun* (opinion text):
1. *bikatsushiki* (tail-organization)—first, reasons or grounds are provided and then toward the end, the writer's opinion is presented;
2. *tōkatsushiki* (head-organization)—the writer's opinion first, then the reasons or grounds follow;
3. *sōkatsushiki* (head-and-tail-organization)—combination of 2 and 1, the writer's opinion is given first, followed by the reasons or grounds, then

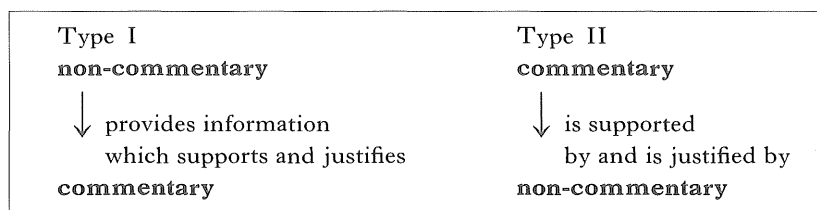| Type I	Type II
non-commentary	**commentary**
↓ provides information which supports and justifies	↓ is supported by and is justified by
commentary	**non-commentary**

Fig. 1 Types of Commentary–Non-Commentary Sequencing

concluded again with the writer's opinion.

Ōkuma does not mention which type is more frequently used (under which circumstances), but the only example he gives follows Type I, in which the writer first presents appropriate reasons/cause or grounds for his or her opinion that follows. In other studies that discuss the information sequencing in some way or other, the genral consensus is that opinions (or, central messages in *ikenbun*) are likely to appear toward the end of the text.

Two studies that contrast the Japanese information sequencing in discourse with that of English should be mentioned at this point. Honna (1989) discusses information sequencing in an essay in English and its Japanese translation. Relevant to our study are the initial two sentences given in (5) and (6).

(5.1)   By the year 2000, if current birth rate trends remain unchecked, world population will reach a staggering six billion people.

(5.2)   All other world problems—pollution, depletion of natural resources, poverty, etc.—can be linked to world over-population.

(6.1)   *Sekai no dekigoto ga kono mama tsuzukeba, seireki nisen-nen ni wa, sekai no jinkō wa rokujū-oku to yū taihenna kazu ni naru darō.*

(6.2)   *Kōgai ya hinkon, tennenshigen no kokatsu nado zensekai ga chokumen-shiteiru hoka no ōkuno mondai wa, sekai no jinkō mondai to missetsuni kankeishiteiru.*

While English native speakers found the ordering of (5.1) and (5.2) most appropriate, Japanese native speakers, when given (6.1) and (6.2), responded that the sequencing of (6.2) followed by (6.1) is also acceptable. In fact, out of 38 Japanese subjects, 17 responded that this reverse ordering is preferable. Significantly, (6.1) is the topic-sentence in English and it is the commentary sentence in Japanese (note the use of *darō*). The Japanese preference of placing commentary sentence after non-commentary is evident in this study.

Another study by Nishihara (1990) also shows an interesting result. Nishihara compares the order of sentences in a report written in English by a native Japanese speaker with that of a native English speaker's correction and concludes that while English rhetoric prefers presenting information that gives an overall introduction to the statements to follow, Japanese rhetoric prefers presenting information gradually and leading to the conclusion, following the *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* order. Both Honna's and Nishihara's studies have confirmed that Japanese discourse prefers the order as suggested by many others.

Where the Central Message Appears

Given Ōkuma's three possible organizational schemes, in order to identify the information sequencing in "Column, My View," I examined columns with the purpose of finding where the cental message appers. The central message, being the writer's primary and conclusive statement, will inform us at what point the writer offers a conclusion in semantic terms. Given the specific format of "Column, My View," it is likely that each essay contains a statement

paraphrasing the headline. In fact out of 38 entries, only one (13 April 1994 column) lacked such a paraphrased re-statement of the headline.

The headline paraphrase rarely appears early on in the text; one such example is (7), titled "*Kyū Yūgo, Jindō Shien ni Tesse*" (Former Yugoslavia, Concentrate on Human Aid), in which the headline paraphrase appears in the third paragraph.

(7) (January 15, 1994)

    Ketsuron kara ieba   kyū   Yūgo
    conclusion from say-COND former Yugoslavia
    kakukoku   nitaishite nihon ga okonaeru
    each country toward   Japan S can do
    kōken   wa iryōhin   ya shokuryō nado
    contribution T medical supply and food   and others
    jindō   enjo igaini   michi wa nai   to omou.
    humanistic aid other than way   T BE-NEG QT think
    Putting the conclusion first, as for the contribution that Japan can make toward each country of former Yugoslavia, I think there is no other way but to offer humanistic aid such as providing medical supplies and food.

In (7) when the headline paraphrase appears in the third paragraph, interestingly, it is preceded by the sentential adverb, *ketsuron kara ieba* (putting the conclusion first). This seems to indicate that an earlier presentation of the conclusion (in this case the writer's view and opinions) is a marked case, thus the writer found it necessary to issue warning of such.

After identifying the headline paraphrase for 37 columns, the earliest-occurring paraphrase was assigned with the corresponding paragraph number (ranked from first to last) in which it appeared. The paragraph number then was converted into a percentage figure which reflected the distance from the discourse-initial position. For example, in the 15 January 1994 column given in (7), the earliest-occurring headline paraphrase is located in the third paragraph, 3 out of 9 paragraphs, and so the figure of 33.33% was assigned. The average of this percentage figure for 37 columns is 86.73%. This shows that the writer's conclusive statement appears 86.73% into the column.

Sequencing of Commentary Sentences within Columns and within *Danraku*

Given that the central message is located well into the discourse, I now examine how commentary sentences in "Column, My View" are sequenced. First, facing the possibility that in fact the column may take the sequencing of commentary first followed by non-commentary, the characteristics of the discourse-initial paragraph are examined by identifying each of the paragraphs in terms of their being either commentary or non-commentary. And second, I identify the from-non-commentary-to-commentary progression of the text to

track the overall rhetorical sequencing of "Column, My View."

Before proceeding, a few words on the concept of paragraph are in order. The English word "paragraph" is most frequently translated as *danraku*. Paragraph, however, differs from the traditional *danraku*.　The concept of paragraph in English rhetoric is known to have been introduced to Japan through Bain's (1886) book on rhetoric.　Stressing that unity is the defining quality of the paragraph, Bain states, "(T)he paragraph should possess unity; which implies a definite purpose, and forbids digression and irrelevant matter" (1886: 151).　Bain prescribes that in English, excluding the initial introductory paragraph(s), the paragraph initial sentence is expected to specify paragraph topic. Although this does not occur in all cases in real-life English writings, English paragraphs possess relatively well defined semantic consistency.

The Japanese concept of *danraku* remains less clear, and one finds *danraku* only in its form (*keishiki danraku*), which contrasts with *imi danraku*, the *danraku* as a semantic unit similar to the English paragraph.　The *danraku* appearing in "Column, My View" are usually short and most are *keishiki danraku*, frequently lacking topic sentences and semantic completeness.　The average number of sentences per *danraku* in the data is merely 3.18 (1,512 sentences in 475 *danraku*).

Sentences in column-initial *danraku* mostly fall into non-commentary sentences.　Of 113 sentences appearing in column-initial *danraku*, 15 are direct quotes.　Non-commentary sentences appear 86 times (87.75% of the sentences excluding direct quotations), while commentary sentences appear 12 times (12.24%).　This illustrates that nearly nine out of ten times, sentences in initial *danraku* do not bear overt commentary strategies, further providing supporting evidence that column-initial *danraku* are not likely to offer the writer's conclusive view and/or opinion.

Sentences in column-final *danraku* are expected to be commentary, at least more likely than sentences in column-initial *danraku*.　Of the 104 sentences appearing in column-final *danraku*, six quoted sentences were excluded.　Of the remaining 98 sentences, 50 were commentary sentences (i.e., 51.02%).

Among non-commentary sentences in the column-initial *danraku*, most frequently observed are sentences providing information the writer personally accessed, such as experienced, observed, witnessed, and so on.　These sentences resulted in 24.78% of the total.　The text-initial *danraku* containing at least one personally accessed non-commentary sentences results in 39.47% of the total.

Now, the overall sequencing of information in "Column, My View" is examined in terms of commentary or non-commentary.　Given the observation so far, most typical sequencing of "Column, My View" can be described as the following.　Starting with non-commentary *danraku*, sporadically sprinkled with additional, often tangential, commentary, the discourse eventually comes to an end which frequently contains conclusive commentary.　This sequencing is presented in Figure 2.
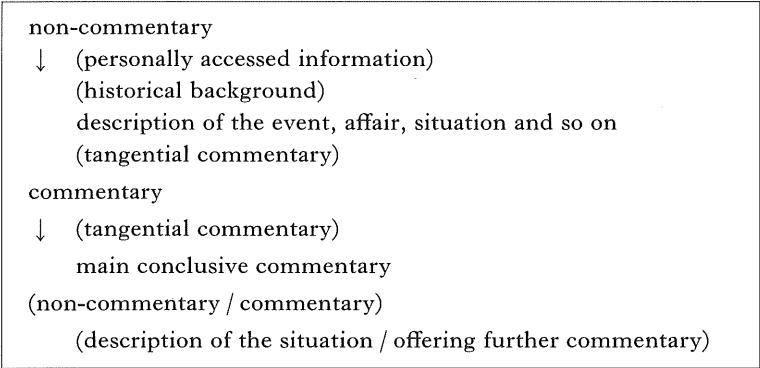
non-commentary
↓   (personally accessed information)
    (historical background)
    description of the event, affair, situation and so on
    (tangential commentary)
commentary
↓   (tangential commentary)
    main conclusive commentary
(non-commentary / commentary)
    (description of the situation / offering further commentary)

Fig. 2   Typical Overall Structures of "Column, My View" in terms of Commentary and Non-Commentary Sentences

Table 1   Frequency of From-Non-Commentary-to-Commentary and From-Commentary-to-Non-Commentary Sequencing Appearing in Each *Danraku* of 38 Columns

Sequencing	Frequency (%)
From-non-commentary-to-commentary	119 (81.51%)
From-commentary-to-non-commentary	27 (18.49%)

It should be added that each element listed above may contain internal structure that follows the from-non-commentary-to-commentary sequencing on a small scale, resulting in the kind of discourse that contains multiple cases of such sequencing on different levels.

I now turn to how the sequencing of commentary sentences is formed within *danraku*. In order to identify the *danraku*-internal sequencing, for each *danraku* the first-occurring combination of non-commentary and commentary (either order) was noted and the ordering label assigned. Those *danraku* not containing at least one sentence of non-commentary and commentary were excluded. The total number of *danraku* in our data was 475, out of which 146 *danraku* contained at least one commentary and non-commentary sentences. The results of sequencing frequencies (Table 1) show significant preference toward the direction of non-commentary-to-commentary sequencing within *danraku*.

Pedagogical Implications

Given these findings, how should we approach Japanese reading instruction? According to Omaggio (1986), reading involves a variety of knowledge as given below.
   1.   Recognizing the script of a language;

2.　Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar vocabulary;
3.　Understanding information that is stated explicitly;
4.　Understanding implications not explicitly stated;
5.　Understanding relationship within sentences;
6.　Understanding relationship between the parts of a text through cohesive devices, both grammatical and lexical;
7.　Identifying the main point or the most important information;
8.　Distinguishing the main idea from the supporting detail;
9.　Extracting the main points in order to summarize;
10.　Understanding the communicative value and function of the text.

It is said that L2 (second language) readers often process a text "bottom-up" —focusing on surface structure features and building comprehension through analysis and synthesis of this visual input. Language learning research has revealed that L2 readers tend to be more linguistically bound to the text than are L1 (first language) readers. This is partly because L2 readers' word recognition skills are not quite satisfactory until advanced levels of study, and as a result, L2 readers are often unable to allocate sufficient cognitive resources to carry out higher-level interpretive processes effectively.

In fact, because the L2 reader continually faces unknown lexical iterms and syntactic structures, mere "practice" may only create frustration, particularly if the learner is unable to comprehend what he or she is reading. It is not difficult to predict that when there is no "payoff" in terms of comprehension, readers may simply stop reading. In the past, interpretive processes of the reading material were largely left to the individual student, often with no guidance given in discourse strategy. Students were often left in the dark only to test their patience. Although developments in discourse analysis over the past two decades have encouraged language instructors to incorporate discourse organizational information in their Japanese language instruction, it is fair to say that instructors are often poorly equipped for making significant pedagogical application of discourse-based comprehension strategies.

By providing L2 readers with a set of discourse-based activities designed to assist them in the higher-level interpretive process, the processing skills might be utilized to a greater degree and cognitive resources used more efficiently. The explicitly taught discourse organizational principles would likely to be related to those already employed subconsciously by the learner in L1 reading. Under such circumstances, training would essentially involve bringing those already-possessed strategies into conscious awareness so they might be used in an L2 context. Culturally specific rhetorical strategies—for example the non-commentary to commentary sequencing revealed in this study regarding Japanese newspaper columns—need to be learned.

It is true that in many langues, the main idea is often stated in a similar place in discourse. Omaggio (1986: 163) points out that in English "the main idea is often the first sentence in a paragraph" and "students can learn to locate the key ideas through practice." In contrast to this observation, we saw earlier

that the main idea in Japanese newspaper columns is likely to be located toward the end of *danraku* and of the column. This Japanese rhetorical preference must be explicitly learned. In other words, it is important for instructors to be aware of knowledge that can be incidentally acquired versus abilities that can be intentionally learned, both of which are essential and both of which need to be integrated in the language acquisition/learning process.

A related issue here is the question of at which level should the training in discourse organization be introduced. Among novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, and distinguished levels, it is perhaps intermediate-high to advanced levels that discourse training should be included. Note that at the novice level, reading normally involves functionally clear and practical discourse that does not necessitate extensive discourse. However, as specified by the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines for Japanese, at the intermediate-high level, the students are expected to begin connecting the meaning of sentences in discourse. At the advanced level, students are expected to possess knowledge of connectives and pronouns to determine logical progression and organization of discourse. Thus, perhaps intermediate-high is the level that one can seriously begin to incorporate explicit and implicit discourse tasks and training. For teaching Japanese, the knowledge gained regarding the Japanese newspaper columns, therefore, becomes relevant in preparing pedagogical materials for intermediate and advanced levels.

I should point out that when considering the level of the students and the complexities involved in the selected reading material, it is important to evaluate not only the text itself but the required tasks. Students can be challenged when reading a relatively simple text if they are required to perform complex and demanding tasks that involve advanced skills beyond reading. One should also note that, as Hadley (1993) reminds us, factors such as topic familiarity, reader focus, and cognitive strategies play a decisive role in rendering a text comprehensible for language learners.

We realize that reading involves comprehension on at least two levels, content and organization. In concrete terms, instructors may develop materials that monitor the comprehension of the content by designing questions to clarify:
1. plain facts,
2. implied facts,
3. suppositions, and
4. evaluation of the text.

And, for monitoring the comprehension of the discourse organization, questions may be designed to clarify:
1. the text's function,
2. its general argumentative organization,
3. the occurrence of cohesive devices, and
4. the understanding of intersentential relationships.

These two aspects are not mutually exclusive, but build on each other, and

therefore a careful development of reading materials is needed.

Take, for example, a situation where the column presented in Appendix 1 is selected as advanced, superior, or distinguished proficiency level reading material. Here are possible discourse organization-related activities that instructors may incorporate into the reading instruction.

Preparation (Pre-task): Discussing with students the following:

1. Where does this text appear? By whom, for whom, for what purpose is the text created? Are there similar text types in L1? What is the overall structure typical of such text in L1 and L2?
2. What is the topic? What do you know about this topic? Do you have an opinion on this topic? What do you predict the column would be like?
3. Identify the words in the headline and recognize them as potential key words of the column.

Skimming (getting the gist): Incorporating activities that promote:

1. Identification of *danraku*,
2. Identification of frequently occurring words, and
3. Identification of headline paraphrases in the text.

Scanning (locating specific information): Guiding the students to

1. Identify and pay attention to the *danraku*-final stentences,
2. Look for the conclusion of the column toward the end,
3. Summarize each *danraku*, and
4. Identify non-commentary and commentary sentences and locate where the writer's opinion is expressed.
   This activity is particularly important for newspaper columns where the writer "talks" to the reader through commentary sentences. And, if we consider interpretation of text as a communicative act, these are the sentences the reader must interpret and evaluate in relation to what the reader knows.

Intensive Reading: Making sure that students

1. Identify cohesive devices (connectives, demonstratives and so on), and incorporate that information in the interpretation,
2. Identify the main idea, the critical opinion of the writer, and the supporting details. See how the writer's opinion and the supporting details are semantically connected, and
3. Identify the organizational structure of the column, perhaps by engaging in schematic activities—a sample of which is given in Appendix 2.

It is particularly important to emphasize the students' participation in these activities and encourage students to come up with main ideas, questions and schemas.

Review: Discussing with students the following:

1. How do you evaluate the opinion of the writer? What did you learn from the column? How did your prediction fare? Did the column change your opinion on the topic?

And ask the students to think of how they would respond to the column if asked to write a letter to the editor.

All these activities help students grasp the overall organization of what they are reading.   This understanding is likely to assist students' interpretation of smaller units, such as individual sentences and uncertain vocabulary.

Toward Incorporating Discourse Principles in Language Instruction

Now, one may wonder about the pedagogical effectiveness of introducing discourse-related activities.   Let me direct your attention to second language research results supporting the usefulness of rhetorical instruction.   Kern (1989) reports an interesting experiment involving French instruction, with the subjects being 53 students enrolled in intermediate French at the University of California, Berkeley.   The findings of his study provide empirical evidence that explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can improve intermediate-level French students' ability to comprehend texts and to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words from context.   Furthermore, the study found that students who had the greatest difficulty reading derived particular benefit from the instruction.   Improvement was more significant among poor readers of French, which implies the importance of incorporating rhetorical learning among these students, in particular.   I should add that as summarized in Bernhardt (1991), there are other studies as well—for example, Carrell (1984)— that advocate the use of discourse knowledge.

The experimenal treatment of Kern's study centered around reading skill development in the following areas:

Word analysis: Cognates, prefixes, suffixes, and orthographic cues were systematically presented in class.

Sentence analysis: Questioning strategies were used to direct student attention to cohesive relationships and to logical relationships signalled by connectives.

Discourse analysis:

1.   Diagramming, cloze, substitution, multiple choice, and jumbled sentence exercises were used to promote students' awareness of cohesion and signalling cues at the discourse level.
2.   Students were encouraged to think about what they were reading and to form hypotheses about what to expect next in the text through exercises.
3.   Questioning strategies were also used to focus students' attention on important cues and main ideas.   (Does the paragraph have a main idea, or is it a set of equally important propositions?   Which sentence is more important, sentence X or sentence Y?   How do you know?   What words tell us how X is related to Y?, etc.)
4.   Mapping and hierarchical outlining were also performed to increase students' awareness of structure.

The discourse-level activities Kern (1989) lists here offer suggestions for Japanese instruction as well. It seems important that instructors make an effort to involve students in these activities, including the schematic activities for processing L2 reading materials, rather than merely supplying vocabulary and grammar notes related to specific texts. A schematic model for the column given in Appendix 1 appears in Apendix 2.

In another interesting psycholinguistic study, Segal, Duchan and Scott (1994), conducted a psycholinguistic experiment of L1 adult comprehension of simple narratives. The study resulted in the following conclusions which are encouraging to our understanding and teaching of connectives. First, interclausal connectives help to mark the "deictic center" and readers use these connectives to signal deictic continuity or discontinuity in their mental representation of the story. Second, interclausal connectives carry meaning and connect textual meanings at both local and global levels. Furthermore, connectives mark discourse continuity and discontinuity both in the text and in the inferred meaning taken by the reader. In other words, interclausal connectives are neither empty nor redundant to the information provided by propositions in the text. Rather, "(T)hey shape the interpretation of the clause that they precede and guide its integration into the story" Segal, Duchan and Scott (1994: 52).

The above mentioned psycholinguistic experiments support the importance of discourse-oriented instruction. Such importance becomes even more obvious when we consider that among many comprehension models for the reading process, following Samuels and Kamil (1988), the Stanovich's compensatory-interactive model (1980) seems most reasonable. A compensatory-interactive model of processing hypothesizes that a pattern is synthesized, based on information provided simultaneously from all knowledge sources and that a process at any level can compensate for deficiencies at any other level. This means that as shown in Figure 3, processing can occur interactively incorporating knowledge from multiple levels. In our reading instruction, some of the

graphic features
letters
words
phrases
sentences
local cohesion
paragraph structuring
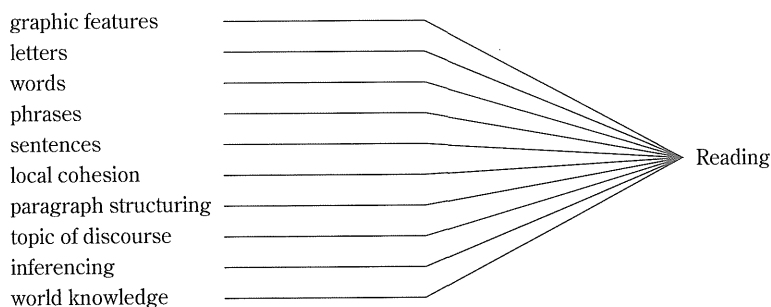topic of discourse
inferencing
world knowledge

Reading

Fig. 3   A Simplified Interactive Parallel Processing Sketch (modified from Grabe 1988)

higher level knowledge (although presented toward the bottom of the figure) seem to have been under-utilized.

In Japanese instruction, beyond the commentary–non-commentary distinction and the sequencing of information discussed earlier, there are many other aspects of discourse that can be incorporated in our Japanese instruction. For example, the *ki-shō-ten-ketsu* organization and the so-called 3- and 5-part organizational structures of Japanese discourse (see Maynard 1997a, 1998) should be brought into instruction. Sentence types such as Mio's (1948) *genshōbun* and *handanbun* are helpful for characterizing *danraku* and the chaining of sentences. Topic structure, tense shifts, quoted versus non-quoted voice, cohesive devices such as connectives, demonstratives, and discourse markers, are all useful concepts that can be incorporated into discourse activities (for the detailed presentation of these, see Maynard 1997b, 1998).

Yet, discourse analysis in Japanese has only begun. Much research is needed before we compile a critical mass of knowledge so that we may systematically apply discourse knowledge to Japanese pedagogy. The myth of vague and incomprehensibly meandering "illogical" Japanese discourse must be seriously challenged through empirical research such as I reported herein. Misconceptions must be corrected one by one, discourse type by discourse type, and genre by genre. We have a long way to go, indeed. As I stated elsewhere (Maynard 1993b), we face, for the first time in history, the task of presenting the Japanese language in communication to non-native speakers of the world on a global scale. Understanding Japanese discourse principles in comparison with other languages, both Western and non-Western, requires much future research. Moreover, developing discourse-oriented pedagogical materials that satisfactorily answer the needs of individual learners will require extensive understanding of the mechanism of language acquisition and learning. I hope the content of this paper will prompt active research and pedagogical practice in this yet-to-be-explored area of inquiry.

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Appendix 1:　コラム私の見方　宇宙開発の夢，国民に示せ

1. オレンジ色の光が細長く伸びていく．ごう音が 3.5 キロ離れた記者の髪を，ビリビリと震わせる．初の純国産大型ロケット H2 が 4 日，鹿児島県の宇宙開発事業団種子島宇宙センターを飛び立った．開発にてこずった第一段主エンジンもうまく動き，二つの衛星も軌道に乗せる大成功だった．

2. 日本の宇宙開発は，39 年前，長さ 23 センチのペンシルロケットから始まった．H2 ですぐ有人飛行に移れるわけではないが，静止軌道に 2 トンの衛星を打ち上げられる能力は，米欧やロシアと並んだ．

3. 日本も「宇宙先進国」入りしたと評価する声は多い．成功直後の記者会見で山野正登・事業団理事長は「世界に並ぶ基幹的な技術を獲得した．今後は世界をリードしたい」と語った．確かに衛星打ち上げの国際市場に名乗りを上げられるし，将来は宇宙と行き来する日本版スペースシャトルの計画もある．だが，それだけで「先進国」と言えるだろうか．

4. 宇宙から「地球は青かった」と伝えた旧ソ連による初の有人飛行や，米国のアポロ 11 号の月面着陸は，多くの人に感動を与えた．1975 年には，米ソの宇宙船，アポロとソユーズがドッキングし，当時の緊張緩和を世界に示した．超大国の駆け引きの面を割り引かなければならないが，宇宙先進国は開発に世論の支持も受けてきた．

5. H2 はどうか．「打ち上げに感動した」という人は，周囲にも多い．だが，「H2 の次の目標は」との問いに，国民の何人が即答できるだろうか．感動が去れば，「ロケットが何の役に立つのか」「税金の無駄遣い」「経済的な見返りがない」といった声が出ないとは限らない．

6. サッカーが大好きという種子島宇宙センターの若手は，H2 の打ち上げ前，J リーグのファンになぞらえて，「宇宙開発のサポーターを増やしたい．そのためにも H2 をぜひ成功させたい」と，しきりに話していた．

7. 日本の宇宙開発予算は年間約 2 千億円．H2 の開発には，十年間で約 2 千 7 百億円かかった．巨費は税金で賄われている．宇宙開発に携わる人たちは，その必要性や成果を，絶えず分かりやすく示してほしい．

8. この夏以降に打ち上げられる技術試験衛星や気象衛星が，生活にどう役立つのか．着陸場さえ決まっていないのに，日本版シャトルの開発を進めるのはなぜなのか．素朴な疑問に答えてこそ，サポーターも付く．

9. 打ち上げ前，ある事業団幹部は「第一段ロケットの燃焼さえうまくいけば，あとはどうなっても成功」と語った．万一の失敗を用心してのことだろうが，あまりに内向きの発言に聞こえた．宇宙が一握りの科学者や技術者，企業の「クラブ」になってはいけない．

10. 税金を使うのだから，打ち上げ費用もできるだけ安い方がよい．日本の宇宙開発は，世界でも珍しい分業を採っている．実用分野は宇宙開発事業団，科学分野は文部省宇宙科学研究所．両方の打ち上げ場がある鹿児島の県民ですら，その分担を知っている人は多くない．二本立てを改め，技術と人をムダなく生かす時期だろう．96 年には二つの組織が協力して，軽便な J1 ロケットを打ち上げる計画もある．

11. そうした努力をした上で，宇宙に乗り出しても，まだ手付かずのところは，いっぱいある．例えば，人類が住むスペースコロニー建設の構想もある宇宙空間の調査や冥王星(めいおうせい)の探査はどうだろう．太陽発電衛星の建設も考えられる．

12. 日本は，非軍事を掲げながら大型ロケットの技術を育てた．何もかも自主開発にこだわる必要はないが，「自前で宇宙に挑む」夢を国民に示せれば，サポーターも増えるだろう．

Appendix 2:   A Sample Schematic Activity for the Column Presented in Appendix 1
(The Dream of Space Exploration, Share it with the Public)

Introduction	Issue	Suggestion and Advice	Concluding Opinion
Personal account of the rocket H2 [1]	U.S. and Russian space programs supported by the public [4]	Rationale for budgetary support [7] CS:—*shimeshite hoshii*	Future aspirations for space programs [11] CS:—*wa dō darō,—mo kangaerareru*
History of space exploration [2]	Lack of public support for H2 [5] CS:—*dekiru darō ka,—to wa kagiranai*	Rationale for specific program [8]	Conclusion — Share the dream with the Public [12] CS:—*fueru darō*
Status of Japanese space program [3] CS:—*ieru darō ka*	Desire for support [6]	Non-exclusivity of space program [9] CS:—*natte wa ikenai* Time to build economically efficient program [10] CS:—*yasui hō ga yoi,—jiki darō*	
Overall Structure: *Ki-Shō-*	*Ten-*	*Ketsu-*	*Ketsu*

Numbers in square brackets refer to twelve *danraku* appearing in the column given in Appendix 1. CS refers to commentary sentence.   Items in this schematic presentation may be given in Japanese using key phrases, and some of the items may be left blank for students to fill in.   Distinction between non-commentary and commentary sentences may be noted by directing students to provide some of the commentary sentences.