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Elizabeth Anne Thompson
University of Wollongong

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Exploring the Textual
Metafunction in Japanese:
A case study of selected written
texts

Volume One

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

from

University of Wollongong

by

Elizabeth Anne Thomson,
BA Macq, MA (TESOL) Syd

Faculty of Education

December, 2001

Dedicated to the memory of my two Dads,
Jim and Tom
who nurtured my curiosity and encouraged me
to study.

Certification

I, Elizabeth A. Thomson, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Elizabeth A. Thomson
December 7, 2001

Acknowledgements

Writing a thesis is a bit like running a marathon. There is the race start, the middle race, the end race and crossing the line. At each stage throughout the race, there are support people offering a hand and urging you on. I had more than my fair share of support people during my thesis marathon and I would like to use this space to thank them.

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So having come to the end of this process, this marathon, I can look back and say that it has been a formative, testing process of both my intellect and stamina. It feels good to be finished. Now, I need to recover and re-hydrate.

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Key to Notations

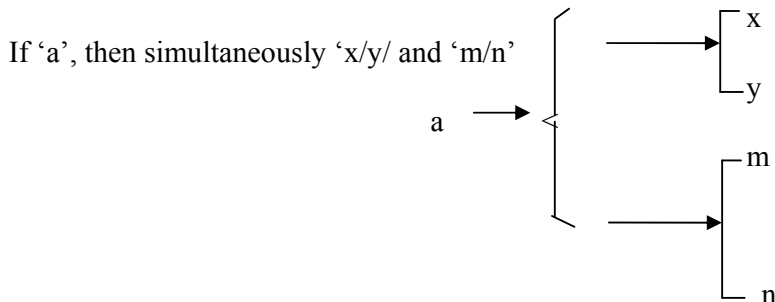
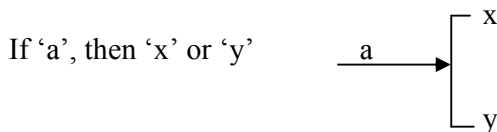
1. Colours used in the tables and figures

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-----------|
|  | represents generic stages |  | Paragraph |
|  | Theme |  | Section |
|  | Headline | | |

2. Various systemic markers

| | | | |
|-------|---------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| x | enhancement | α | hypotactic dominant |
| = | elaboration | β | hypotactic dependent |
| + | extension | 1,2,.. | parataxis |
| [[]] | rank shifted clause | ^ | ordering, “followed by..” |
| << >> | included clause | | clause boundary marker |
| ” | locution | , | idea |

3. system network conventions



4. Parsing

| | |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| T-U | T-unit |
| i, ii, iii | Clauses within a clause complex. |

5. Transcription Conventions

The romanisation convention, *romaji* used in this study is a modified version of the Hepburn system as described in Mizutani and Mizutani (1988:xii). The full set of *romaji* is tabled below. The reason for choosing this romanisation convention relates to the use of double vowels instead of the **macron**, or bar above single vowels to indicate vowel lengthening. This is because a symbol which would serve as the macron in the word processing application was not available.

Abstract

This study sets out to explore the relationship between the grammar of the textual metafunction within Systemic Functional Grammar and the organisation of a set of Japanese selected written texts into discrete text types or genres. The study is motivated by the need for grammatical descriptions of Japanese discourse for teaching Japanese as a Second/Foreign Language. Descriptions of how Japanese organises textually, as a coherent message, are limited, with most work centred on clause level descriptions. This study looks at the resources of textual organisation above the clause.

This study investigates the proposition that in Japanese, the clause is patterned in a motivated manner in its discourse environment and that this patterning correlates with the organisation of discourse.

The theoretical resources of the Systemic Functional model of language are used to investigate these patterns above clause rank. In order to capture the organisational patterns above the clause, the study utilizes the T-unit or Theme-unit (Fries 1995c), the use of which can account for the operation of co-referential ellipsis and clause chaining in Japanese.

The corpus of this study consists of eight instances of five separate genres. The five genres are 1) the factual news commentary, 2) the hard news story, 3) the soft news story, 4) the nursery tale and 5) the narrative. Each instance is segmented into T-units. The order of the constituents within the T-units in each text is quantified. The quantitative results indicate that the choice of what is selected as first in the T-unit is significant and equates with Theme. The system of THEME as it appears in the corpus is thus described. Following the description of the system of THEME, each text in the corpus is examined for patterns which demonstrate that the choice of Theme keys into the method of development of a text and that certain configurations of Theme serve to realise the function of each of the generic stages in each text.

The description of each text begins with an examination of the generic stages. This is followed by an examination of the selection of Themes within each stage and how these collectively work to produce a particular method of development. The generic stages are then described logically in relation to each other and consideration is given to the distribution of given and new information and how these configurations

also key into the method of development. The picture of each text as an instance of a particular genre is built up.

- Fries, P. (1995c). Patterns of Information in Initial Position in English. Discourse in Society: Systemic Functional Perspectives, Meaning and Choice in Language: Studies for Michael Halliday. P. Fries and M. Gregory. Norwood, Ablex Publishing Corporation. **L:** 47-66.
- Mizutani, N. and O. Mizutani (1988). An Introduction to Modern Japanese. Tokyo, The Japan Times.