

The Structure of Japanese Argumentative Text:

Review on the Relationship between Introduction and Closing Paragraphs

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Abstract—The construction of Japanese argumentative texts shows a close relationship between the paragraphs that form the passage, known as cohesion and coherence in the study of text structures. In particular, the coherence between introduction and closing paragraphs of the text is indicated by the various related meanings. This is an analysis of the structure of Japanese argumentative text based on the relationship between introduction and closing paragraphs. Through this analysis, this research is expected as a reference for text structure research which contributes to the development of Japanese language teaching, especially to improve reading and writing skills. The structure analysis of the Japanese text used a quantitative approach through interpretive method. The result of the analysis concludes that the Japanese argumentative text structure in terms of the relationship of introduction and closing paragraphs is classified into six categories, namely (1) the closing paragraph begins with the return of the topics raised in the introduction paragraph; (2) the relationship between question and answer; (3) the relationship between the problem and solution; (4) the relationship of space and time sustainability; (5) the contrastive relationship of two or more objects discussed; and (6) the relationship in prediction.

Keywords—text structure; argumentative text; introduction paragraph; closing paragraph

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning Japanese as a foreign language is easy. Bigger differences between the learner's mother tongue and Japanese may increase the level of difficulty in learning Japanese as L2. The learner's difficulties in learning Japanese are namely understanding Japanese's characters (*Kanji*), daily expressions and collocations, sentence structures, and text composition. The latest aspect to learn, including Japanese texts in the form of articles becomes the most difficult aspect for the learners [1]. It can be said that Japanese text structures are complicated, and thus, the students are difficult to find out the messages, as well as comprehend the text.

Learners, both Indonesian and Japanese, think that they may understand the meaning of vocabulary used in sentences, understand sentence structure, and understand the meaning of

sentences. As the sentences are put into into a text, however, learners have difficulty understanding the meaning as well as messages conveyed in the text. This issue is closely related with understanding the Japanese text structure. The uniqueness of the Japanese text structure is implemented in the form of rhetoric. Japanese rhetoric is in the form of oriental, its characteristics include the core of the conversation being in a circle, indirect and rotating speech style to convey intentions, and the difficulty of predicting the intention, the implied message that wants to be expressed [2].

Issues related to the understanding Japanese text structure have been studied by many scholars. This paper is intended to elaborate the text structure from various points of view. In addition, the research is enhanced as well to the text genre with diverse structural characters. Related studies in the area of Japanese text structure, the main focus is on dismantling the characteristics of the text structures and descriptions that can be made based on the characteristics of each text genre (see studies by Ichikawa [3], Nagano [4], Teramura [5], and Sakuma [6]). These studies focused on the introduction and discussion of concepts in text structure. In addition, they focused on some applicable studies of certain theories in Japanese texts. Recent related researches have been limited to several types of Japanese texts in general and have not specifically designated a particular text genre. This is unfortunate considering that each text genre has different structure with specific characteristics. In other words, the Japanese text as well as its application has not been studied and developed comprehensively.

Some issues related with Japanese text structure has not been analyzed, such as how the unity of meaning in Japanese texts is formed based on text elements, the characteristics of text elements, the correlation between the elements of the text to form the unity of meaning in the text, etc. These are the basic to understand the text structure.

Based on the elaboration above, this article describes the results of text analysis namely the coherence of the Japanese argumentative text viewed from the relationship of the introduction and closing paragraphs. In other words, the unity of the text is formed through the relationship of its constituent

elements. Therefore, the relationship between the paragraphs that form the text always builds a unified text relationship.

Based on some relevant theories, texts—in some extent, it is considered as discourse by some experts—is the highest and most complete language unit in which there is a unity of meaning (cohesion and coherence). The understanding of these two concepts is often overlapping, not even often distinguished in part by covering some others. This article does not discuss the concept of cohesion and coherence due to the limitations in this paper. However, this paper corroborates that tracing the characteristics of the unity of the text based on the relationship between the introductory and closing paragraphs can be realized in the relationship of cohesion and coherence of the text. Furthermore, the following description will review the theory briefly on the introductory and closing paragraphs of the Japanese texts.

The initial idea that conceptualizes and introduces the highest and most comprehensive language unit in Japanese linguistic studies is a study from Tokieda Motoki [7]. One of Tokieda's views emphasizes the function of the introduction of the text to understand text construction. The introduction of the text is considered as *the floor*, the basis of the building of which function is to understand the overall content of the text [7].

Tokieda's view has been expanded by Ichikawa [3] who emphasizes the structure of the Japanese text through two perspectives namely the relationship between the text elements "*rensaron*" and the construction of the structure "*hairetsuron*". In particular to the idea of the construction of the structure "*hairetsuron*", Ichikawa [3] proposes a form and function of the relationship of the introduction and closing paragraphs in the structure of the text. Both of these views have also prompted Kisaka [8] to examine the structure of the essay genre texts in the "*tenseijingo*" a specific section of Japanese newspapers. Kisaka concluded that each introductory and closing sections of text complement each other. Kisaka [8] divided the findings into six categories as the relationship of the introductory and closing paragraphs in newspaper essays.

Other similar studies have more to do with the structure of oral language discourse, especially with regard to the expression of discourse structures, forms of expression in discourse and their function in understanding discourse structures. For example, the studies by Nakai [9] and Lee [10] focus more on variations of expressions used in spoken language to find out the expressions of verbal discourse at the beginning and the end of a conversation. Characteristics of the expression are used as an important information in the field of teaching discourses.

The current researches have not analyzed the relationship between the introductory and closing paragraphs in relation to forming the unified text. Although Kisaka's study are likely the same in some extents, Kisaka's research analyzed and classified the characters of the opening and closing paragraphs partially and did not question the relationship between the two sections for the text unity. In addition, the characteristics of the argumentative text structure, or other text genres, become interesting to be studied, therefore the understanding of the Japanese text structure becomes more comprehensive by examining various text genres.

II. METHOD

A. Data

This study utilized the editorials in Japanese newspapers, namely the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, *Asahi Shinbun* and *Mainichi Shinbun* in March 2011 and the *Yomiuri Shinbun* in January 2009. All data totaled 207 editorials. The data were documented and obtained through the official websites of the mentioned newspapers.

The editorial texts of the newspapers are categorized into argumentative text genre. This text genre employs a discussion of a hot and interesting issue in that day through the opinion and advocacy (of editor's view) of the newspapers. This genre is built upon the views, opinions and bases for the arguments which are aimed on influencing the opinion of the general public on the theme of the discussion. Most texts consist of 8-10 paragraphs, ranging 20 to 25 sentences, or approximately 450 words in one text.

Every day, each newspaper publishes two editorial texts with different themes. However, among the three newspapers, they might share the same theme on the same day. In the weekend, editorial texts in the newspapers are relatively longer with only one editorial text is published.

B. Data Analysis

The data in the form of text were interpretatively analyzed based on the view in the introduction and closing paragraphs of which the two parts have a close relationship in forming the unity of the text. The forms of the relationship were analyzed in terms of similarities. Based on these similarities, this study presented the results in the form of categorization of the relationship between the introduction and closing paragraphs in relation with the unity of the text.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

This paper questions the relationship between the introduction and concluding paragraphs of the text which has the relationship between the two parts in order to form the coherence of the text. The description of this relationship would become the basis to classify the text, especially questioning the text construction based on the characteristics of the introduction and closing paragraphs. The relationship between these two parts contributes to identify the coherence of the text.

The first issue that should be discussed is the determination of the introduction and closing paragraphs in the editorial texts. The results of the analysis asserted that the identification of the introduction and closing paragraphs of the Japanese texts is not always based on the characteristics of the form (marking through the new tabs in every beginning of the new paragraphs) as a characteristic of paragraph markers. The discourse units are likely to refer to the unity of meaning (see Sakuma [6], Teramura [5], Ichikawa [3]). The next aspect is that the relationship created between the introduction and closing paragraphs in the editorial texts are classified into two groups, namely the relationship between the two parts of the text which is shown through linguistic markers and the relationship between the two parts of the texts without being indicated by linguistic markers or

predictive relationships. Such groups are classified into several types.

The following description is the classification of the two groups and their derivatives in the Japanese argumentative text structure.

1) *The Relationship in the Form of Topic Repetition*

「原油100ドル—中東ドミノへ不安と期待」(朝日新聞社説 3/3)

開始部：

3年前の超原油高を思い起こさせるような高騰ぶりである。産油国が集中する中東で民主化のうねりが噴き出し、政変や混乱が続いている。それを不安材料として、欧米などの先物市場では原油価格が相次ぎ1バレル=100ドルを突破した。

(It is the first time in the soaring time to remind me of the high crude oil price three years ago. In the Middle East where the oil-producing countries concentrate, the undulation of democratization burst out, and political changes and confusion continue. Using it as anxious material, crude oil prices in Europe and the United States and other future markets successively broke through 100 dollars per barrel.)

終了部：

中東民主化のうねりは、そのサウジにも広がる可能性がある。だが、それでも民主化は長い目でみれば、原油の取引を公正、透明で、より安定したものにする可能性がある。原油輸入の9割を中東に依存する日本も、そうした視点から当面の動きに目をこらしたい。民主化が中東の政治的安定と世界経済の安定につながるよう、国際社会の一員として見守り、協力の道をさぐるべき場面である。

(The undulation of democratization in the Middle East could spread to Saudi Arabia. However, even with democratization in the long run, there is a possibility of making crude oil transactions fairer, more transparent and stable. In Japan, in which 90% of crude oil imports rely on the Middle East, I would like to focus on the immediate movements from that perspective.)

The editorial text in *Asahi Shinbun* dated on March 30th, 2011 raised the topic of oil price fluctuations caused by the democratic movement in the Middle East and its impact on the world. This issue was considered serious considering the world's oil needs mainly depend on the production of oil-producing countries in the Middle East. The democratic turmoil has implications for the world's economic turmoil as well. This issue became the topic of discussion in the editorials along with some proposals which were logically compiled in the form of opinions to solve the problem. However, the contents of the body text section related

to several possible influences of rising volatility in oil prices. The influence of this price had an impact on the Japanese economy because it would push the increasing exchange rate of Japanese Yen's against the US Dollar, though this problem is becoming the problem for Japan.

The coherence in this editorial text is formed through the relationship of the introduction and closing paragraphs which emphasizes on similar topic discussion (repeating topic discussion). The form of repetition in each paragraph is identified from the repeated language expressions in the form of words, phrases, or clauses. Repetition in the type of word repetition could be complete, partial repetition, repetition through synonymy is an attempt to build text coherence.

The first paragraph starts the topic by introducing a wave of democratization in the Middle East. This topic is repeated again in the closing paragraph through complete repetitions such as *chutuominshuka no uneri, chuutou, minshuka* or repetition with related meaning such as *fuan* " (introduction paragraph) repeated with an antonym *antei*" (in the closing paragraph). Likewise, the use of the word like *seeiji teki ante, sekai keizai no ante* is able to establish the meaning of relationships in the opening paragraph expressions, especially in *fuan zairyuu*.

Repetition of the topic in the text means that the two parts of the text have relationship related to one another in building text coherence. In addition, the repetition of the topic in the closing paragraph implies the return of the initial topic in the opening paragraph of the text to ensure the unity of meaning.

2) *The Relationship in the Form of Problems, Questions, and Solutions or Answers*

「企業トップ襲撃 卑劣な暴力団テロを根絶せよ」(読売新聞社説 3/9)

開始部：

福岡市内で、九州電力会長宅と西部ガス社長宅を爆発物で狙ったとみられる事件が相次いだ。手投げ弾のようなものが投げ込まれたといい、九電会長宅では車庫の一部が焦げた。一つ間違えば大きな被害が出るところだった。

(In Fukuoka city, there were a series of incidents that seemed to have aimed at Kyushu Electric Power Co.'s chairman's home and West Branch's chairman's house with explosions. It was said that things like hand-throwing bombs were thrown into the houses, and part of the garage was burnt at Kyushu chairman's house. If it made one mistake, it was where the great damage was coming.)

終了部：

暴力団のような反社会的勢力を封じ込めるには、最高幹部の検挙と資金源の遮断が必要だ。警察に与えられた“武器”に限界が見えるのであれば、法改正も検討されるべきだろう。暴力団に限定して、通信傍受法で「盗聴」

が可能な対象犯罪を広げ、傍受の要件を緩和することも一策ではないか。

(In order to contain anti-social groups like gangsters, it is necessary to clear up the top exclusive positions and cut off funding sources of the groups. If there is a limit to weapon given to the police, law revision should be considered. It is also a good idea to broaden target crimes that can be a special agent or body to spy secret information by the communication intercept law and relax the requirement of interception, which is limited to gangsters.)

This text raises the topic of a discussion about the provocative actions by a group of terrorists who have aggravated the situation amidst the nuclear power plant accident in Japan. The bombing incidents which were considered as provocative actions were also experienced at the residence of the chairman of the Kyushuu Power Plant and the chairman of the gas company in the Seibu area. This topic appears in the opening paragraph. This topic continues to be developed in body text related to several events with the same motif carried out by Kudou organization. While Japan is known as a country that is safe from acts of terrorism, this incident has forced the security forces to take immediate action to take immediate actions.

The closing part of the text proposes a solution to overcome criminal actions committed by the *Kudou* group. The last three sentence of the final paragraph construction proposes a solution to the problem. The use of expression forms such as *hitsuyouga aru*, *beki darou*, and rhetorical questions in the final sentence as a solution to the problems which have been raised in the introduction paragraph.

3) *The Relationship in the Form of Time and Space Order*

*** 社説 1 * 「2次補正成立 両院協を審議延ばしに使うな」** (読売新聞社説 1/28)

開始部 :

両院協議会の混乱で、景気対策のための2008年度第2次補正予算の成立が遅れた。両院協議会の場が、審議引き延ばし的手段に使われてはなるまい。参院は26日、政府案から2兆円規模の定額給付金部分を削除する野党提出の修正案を可決した。

(With the turmoil of the House Council, the establishment of the second supplementary budget for fiscal 2008 for the economic stimulus measures was delayed. The place of the House Council shall not be used as a means of prolongation of deliberation. On the 26th, the House of Council passed a revision proposal to submit the opposition that removes the fixed-amount benefit portion of 2 trillion yen from the government plan.)

終了部 :

今後は、09年度予算案の審議入りを急ぎ、今年度内に確実に成立させることも肝要だ。麻生内閣は支持率が低迷したままだ。25日の山形県知事選では野党各党が支援した新人が当選するなど、自民党には“逆風”が続いている。政府・与党は、態勢を立て直し、09年度予算案の早期成立に全力を挙げてもらいたい。

(In the future, it is also vital that you settle deliberations on the 2009 budget proposal in a hurry and ensure it is formed within this fiscal year. The support of the Aso cabinet seems sluggish. In the Yamagata Prefectural Governor's election on the 25th, the LDP has continued to “catch up” as the newcomers supported by opposition parties won. The government and the ruling party want to rethink the posture and make full efforts to establish early the 2009 budget proposal.)

The introduction paragraph in this text shows the issue of the implementation of the 2008 government budget to provide a stimulus for Japan's economic downturn which is still experiencing a long way because of opposition by the opposition parties. Discussions about the deadlock over various policies led by ruling parties supporting the government and the resistance shown by the opposition party fill the body text. The closing paragraph continues and stretches the topic to the 2009 government budget as a follow-up policy based on the time sequence according to the topic of the reconciliation. This time sequence becomes the basis for the formation of text to be coherent.

The introduction and closing paragraphs in the argumentative text establish a relationship in the form of time and space order which indicates the unity of the text.

4) *The Comparison Relationship of Two Objects or More*

*** 社説 1 * 「日本経済の試練—再生へ、総力で挑もう」**

(朝日新聞社説 3/25)

開始部 :

大震災で日本経済も深手を負った。一日も早く生産と物流、生活を立ち直らせることが、被災地救援と復興に欠かせない。震災に強い日本への再生をかけた挑戦の第一歩でもある。

(The Japanese economy also suffered by the tremendous earthquake. It is indispensable for relief and reconstruction of afflicted areas to recover production, logistics and living as soon as possible. It is also the first step of the challenge of regenerating Japan that is strong against the earthquake disaster.)

終了部 :

震災からの復興と日本再生に挑む強い意志を私たちが共有する限り、この惨禍を新たな改革と発展の契機にて

きる。敗戦の焦土から立ち上がった歴史的経験と、阪神大震災からの復興を思い出し、総力を結集しよう。

(As long as we share the strong will to challenge the reconstruction from the disaster and the revival of Japan, we can make this disaster the opportunity for new reform and development. Let's gather all the power by remembering the historical experience standing up from the scorched land of defeat and the restoration from the Great Hanshin Earthquake.)

This argumentative editorial text raises the topic of the earthquake that occurred at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. After the topic is being raised in the introduction paragraph, the topic continues with various efforts to overcome the scarcity of staple goods as the effect of closing production needs in Japan due to a shortage of electricity supply. Body text is constructed with various types of actions to ease the burden on Japanese society through the contribution of various parties such as transportation companies, banks, companies and government offices.

On the contrary, the closing paragraph raised the idea of learning from past experiences on how to deal with the earthquake disaster that occurred in Osaka and the difficult times when losing the Second World War is believed able to generate Japan into a great country because of the spirit of togetherness.

Two major events are compared and how the forms of solution are displayed in contrast in the introduction and closing paragraphs of the text in a balanced manner. The relationship between these two parts forms a comparison relationship to create unity of the text.

5) Assumption Relationship

*** 社説 1 * 「中国全人代 政治改革は不可避だ」** (毎日新聞社説 3/6)

開始部：

中国の温家宝首相が 5 日、全国人民代表大会で「政府活動報告」を行い、今年の施政方針を明らかにした。中国では来年の共産党大会と再来年の全人代を通じて胡錦濤国家主席や温首相らが引退し、習近平国家副主席らの次世代政権に移行する。中国を世界第 2 の経済大国に導いた胡温体制にとって、今年の温首相報告は総括である。

(Chinese Preme Minister Wen Jiabao, on Wednesday, conducted a "government activity report" at the National People's Congress to clarify the administration policy this year. Retired President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen, et al, through all Tamiyo of next year and the Communist Party tournament year after next in China, to shift to the next generation administration of Xi Jinping National Vice President et al. For the Hu temporal regime, which led China to the world's second largest economy, this year's Prime Minister Wen's report is a summary.)

終了部：

政策調整を実行するには、特殊権益集団を監視する仕組みが必要だ。政治改革による民主化である。首相報告が絵に描いた餅になればどうなるか。エジプト型デモを最も恐れているのは中国指導部だろう。

(To implement policy adjustment, a mechanism to monitor the special interest group is necessary. It is democratization through political reform. What will happen if the Prime Minister's report becomes a rice cake drawn in a picture? It is the Chinese leadership that most fears the Egyptian demo.)

The results of the analysis on the entire argumentative text of the three Japanese language newspapers are classified in Table I. In Table I., it is clearly illustrated that the classification 1, characterized by the relationship of the introduction and closing paragraphs in the form of the similar topics of conversation. The closing paragraph employs the topic by repeating the topic through repetition of words, pairing of synonymous words, repetition through word collocation. Classification 1 is the most classification with a total of 36% of 207 texts. Furthermore, classification 2 has a meaningful character in the form of a relationship in the form of problems vs. solutions and questions vs. answers relationship. This argumentative text is 32%. While the classifications 3, 4, and 5 were only 32%.

TABLE I. TABLE STYLES

Classification Text	Subject Data				
	ASAHI	MAINICHI	YOMIURI	YOMIURI	Total
1	21	16	19	19	75
2	20	20	16	11	67
3	3	5	9	6	23
4	2	2	3	2	9
5	9	7	8	9	33
Total	55	50	55	47	207

¹ Classification is based on five categories, namely classification 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

B. Discussion

The results of the investigation on the classification of editorial text structures have been summarized as in Table I. These results clearly prove that the argumentative editorial texts of Japanese newspapers are divided into two principal classifications as they are analyzed based on the relationship between the introduction and closing paragraphs. The first classification of the introduction and concluding paragraph relationships is indicated by the use of language forms such as the components of cohesion and coherence that result in the interconnection of these two parts. This group consists of Classifications 1 to 4. When observed in the results of the table, it can be said that almost 70% of 207 texts can be seen as the unity between the introduction and closing paragraphs. It is concluded that most editorial texts as argumentative genre texts guarantee text coherence through the relationship between the introduction and closing paragraphs. Although the results for

Classification 5 consist of the texts of which the relationship between the two parts were difficult to predict, the numbers are not too significant. In relation with the Classification 5, further investigation for unpredicted relationship pattern is needed to explain various reasons that can be submitted.

The discussion of expressions that guarantee the coherence relationship in Japanese argumentative texts in these two paragraphs is an understanding of the structure of Japanese text characters that the use of partial repetition is not intact (as opposed to complete repetition) through synonyms, antonyms, other names being chosen in building unity of text through the repetition of topic (Classification 1). The form of expression used such as the use of demonstrative words such as ((*kono* + topic) "this + topic", (*konkai no* + topic) or also the use of conjunctions like *kono you ni*, *sono you ni*). Complete repetition is indeed minimized in Japanese argumentative texts to avoid the monotonous impression, and emphasis where complete repetition is always carried out. The function of some forms of this expression is as an expression form to initiate and show an important part in the conclusions of Japanese text (Ishiguro [11], Takazaki [12]).

IV. CONCLUSION

This article questions the structure of a text, generally called as coherence which is built through the introduction and closing paragraphs. The analysis focused on the relationship between the two parts of which the relationships are mainly related to the form of expression. The similarities obtained become the basis for classifying texts based on the relationship of the introduction and closing paragraphs into five categories. Each category has the character to build text coherence. This classification is expected to be the basis for application in teaching of texts, composition, and listening to the texts as a strategy to facilitate learners in understanding Japanese argumentative texts. However, the classification made is still not able to propose clear

benchmarks so that it still needs to examine the argumentative text in more numbers, or propose other types of Japanese argumentative texts. Therefore, the conclusions can be more comprehensive. This problem will be one of the topics that should be done in further research.

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