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Introduction

Writing in English is arduous. One problem is incompatible emphases regarding, on the one hand, word- and sentence-level linguistic accuracy and, on the other, the communicative demands for fluency in larger discourse units like the paragraph and short essay. A more profound problem, and the focus of this paper, is Japanese students' unfamiliarity with the rhetorical norms that drive communication in English-language composition, norms such as definition, exemplification, and so forth. This second problem is rooted in sharp cultural contrasts with respect to what constitute necessary and sufficient ways of creating conventional written discourse in Japanese and English.

1. Contrasts in education and skills application

There are ample indications that difficulties for Japanese college writers result from differences between the Japanese and English-language conventions with regard to rhetoric, education and, more broadly, cultural orientation. First, many skills Japanese students have acquired in learning to write in their own language cannot be easily transferred when they begin to compose in English. While there is a paucity of hard research in contrastive rhetoric, recent data suggest that rhetorical skills in first-language (L1) writing are not readily transferred to writing in the second language (L2). In a study of Japanese college students composing in English, Carson et al. (1990) find a weak correlation, at best, between L1 and L2 skills. Second, in comparison with British and North American educational practice, Japanese students spend less time learning to write in L1. Hinds (1987) addresses this contrast, noting that most Japanese students stop studying writing in L1 by the sixth grade. Third, when Japanese students take up English composition practice, they are typically underexposed to the rhetorical and invention devices that they would need to become fluent writers. Yamada (1993) maintains that high school students expend their energies attending to grammatically correct translations of sentences from L1 to L2. Yamada further asserts that "discourse and rhetorical organization are totally ignored" (115).

2. Rhetorical contrasts

Of the various intercultural differences that arise between growing up as a native speaker of Japanese and learning English as a foreign language (EFL), the most critical are the standards for what constitutes good rhetoric in Japanese versus the rhetorical conventions of English. For example, among general commentators, Edwin Reischauer avers that in comparison with the English-language bias toward directness, speakers of Japanese "cultivate vagueness of expression" (1988:381). Among observers of Japanese written discourse, sociolinguist Hinds (1987) describes elements such as 'vagueness' (to use Reischauer's term) as part of an array of conventions that dispose Japanese rhetoric toward placing responsibility with the reader for understanding the meaning of a text. This is of course in direct contrast with English-language convention in which the writer assumes responsibility for conveying meaning clearly and directly. Even more telling, Tokyo University linguist Fister-Stoga (1993) traces the influence of classical Chinese rhetorical norms on Japanese composition and (citing Oliver 1971) itemizes a set of formidable differences with Western norms. Here is a sample (adapted from Fister-Stoga, 136).

Western	Asian
Style: variable, lively	ambiguous
Motive: self-interest	social harmony
Tone: animated, controversial	unexcited, authoritative
Audience: cooperative	subordinate

3. Contrasts in indirection, silence and well-shaped prose

The contrasts between Japanese and English cut even more deeply than rhetorical style, motive, tone, etc. Indirection, suggestion and silence, for example, are not usually classified as primary elements in English-language discourse, but they are pragmatic forms of eloquence here in Japan (see, for example, Ishii and Bruneau 1991; Fister-Stoga 1993). Indeed, silence in the form of ellipses is a distinctive feature of Japanese semantic structure. Korean observer O-Young Lee (1984) demonstrates this using a commonplace expression as his example.

Japanese words and phrases are often abbreviated into a "head." This results in a degree of linguistic truncation rarely found in other languages. It is exemplified by the much -used expression *domo,* the basic meaning of which is "very [much]," "quite," "somehow." Since *domo* is an adverb it functions at most as a kind of hat or gloves covering the word modified. Its role presupposes that there is a verbal "head" or "hands" to be covered, but the Japanese often cut away the word modified, leaving just the adverb *domo. Domo*, translated here as "how very," appears in a great many different expres-

sions, such as: "how very grateful I am," "how very sad," "how very fortunate," and "how very rude of me." These are usually shortened to the single word *domo*, "how very," and yet the Japanese understand each other perfectly well. (45)

With respect to written discourse, a brief review of the Japanese prose form *ki-sho-ten -ketsu* is instructive. This is a pervasive form of essay writing consisting of an introduction (*ki*) followed by development of the introductory theme and loosely analogous subthemes (*sho* and *ten*) and a conclusion (*ketsu*) in which the essay makes its main point (see Hinds 1983, Loveday 1986, Fister-Stoga 1993). What stands out here is how topsy-turvy the form seems in comparison with English-language prose development. It is quite proper, for instance, to introduce one topic in *ki* and insert a second or even a third topic in the middle *sho* and *ten* sections for the purpose of leading up to an argument fixed on possibly another topic in the concluding *ketsu* section. When we refer to "topic" and "argument," in fact, we are imposing English-language categories that will not adequately account for lines of reasoning much respected and still relevant in the millennia-long tradition of *ki-sho-ten -ketsu*. Nevertheless, of immediate interest as points of comparison are (a) the formatting of multiple "topics" in *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* in contrast with the privileging of a single topic in a well-formed English-language essay; and (b) the emergence of *ki-sho-ten-ketsu*'s "argument" in the concluding section while customarily academic English prose argues from the beginning to the end.

I am drawing this contrastive picture to suggest that beyond questions of Japanese writers' linguistic accuracy in EFL composition, there are complexities of rhetorical tradition, prior education and the subtleties of cultural attitudes embedded within rhetoric and education. Rather than concentrating exclusively on errors of spelling and grammar, educators may find that in considering these intercultural complexities they can create alternative opportunities for helping students develop fluency in writing.

4. Providing writers with appropriate tools

L2 writing on academic topics in the arts and sciences makes new demands on the language learner. From the teacher's perspective, the new demands entail far more than introducing additional language items such as grammar rules and vocabulary. In reviewing current L2 research, Krapels (1990) offers that students' underdeveloped skills in EFL composition are caused more by a lack of competence in writing than in general language. We can further define Japanese students' lack of competence in terms of their inexperience communicating in English-language academic contexts, a lack of communicative competence of a particular sort.

A primary requirement, then, is to initiate writers to the best possible strategies for dealing with the language items they have already acquired (grammar and vocabulary). Japanese college writers need access to the rhetorical tools in English to apply what they

know, and they need to use these tools organizing, writing and rewriting ideas related to specific contexts like ethical debate, literary summary and scientific analysis. Indeed, rhetorical norms and organizational structures for writing about such academic topics are what Cummins (1981) would identify as prerequisite strategies for developing "cognitive/ academic language proficiency" (CALP), that is, a communicative competence to exploit the discourse conventions of academic disciplinary communities.

5. Cognitive apprenticeship

Japanese college writers in a sense are serving a "cognitive apprenticeship," a developmental term coined by Collins et al. (1989) to describe an academic learning situation in which students engage in expert practice in order to become experts themselves. To extend the apprenticeship metaphor, the instructor assists students by *externalizing the thinking and writing processes* that comprise the expert's knowledge. For Japanese college writers, the know-how of writing can be rendered more explicit by means of instructors' *modeling* assignments that call upon processes of thinking and writing in English and coaching writers by way of hints, reminders, etc. (as opposed to drills and corrections in spelling and grammar). The modeling-a-process perspective helps establish methodological priorities, placing issues of learners' development front and center. Questions of error can also be prioritized within the modeling and coaching perspectives.

Methods for modeling and coaching vary depending on students' level of development and the instructor's interests. In my case, I have been investigating methods and recent research in order to help my students to write on scientific and other academic topics. For example, given the strong link between reading and writing skills Carrell (1987) finds the following implications for the teaching of academic composition. EFL writers need exposure to "top-level rhetorical, organizational structures of expository text"; they also need to learn how to select suitable structures in the process of composing, as well as "how to signal a text's organization through appropriate linguistic devices" (54). For me, these findings argue for teaching the rhetoric of classical invention, particularly the invention devices that pertain to scientific discourse, like cause and effect, description, definition and classification. Trimble, a sociolinguist who has analyzed discourse for the purpose of teaching it to EFL writers, identifies these devices as "cohesive ties" and "rhetorical functions," each essential for organizing scientific analysis and "capable of being isolated and studied separately" (1985:69).

6. Putting the apprenticeship approach to work

Working with my students at Kyushu University, I find Trimble's idea of isolating rhetorical functions an excellent point of departure for introducing and reviewing what I would call the basic, generative elements of written discourse in English. With respect to

scientific analysis, for instance, Trimble suggests that classification is simultaneously one of the most essential rhetorical functions in science and one of the most readily understood. Taking a cue from Trimble, I first invite my students to talk over topics that are easily classifiable, sports, hobbies, cars.

Then students are asked to read aloud a list of "key vocabulary" germane to both the science content and the rhetoric featured in the unit, in this case, classification. To illustrate, we review words like "category," "to distinguish" "specific/general," etc. in order to address exercises that explain and expand the concept of classifying. Students also read aloud "sentence patterns" and examples of "organizing rules" that furnish the linguistic tools that they will soon employ in their writing. Models of the patterns are reviewed: "canines can be classified into groups." "The class canine is divided into categories." I try not to introduce too many patterns or rules, just enough to give these literature and science majors a good sense of the various words and phrases available. When I provide these linguistic tools I am, from the apprenticeship perspective, externalizing the invention structures that fluent writers use.

Before asking students to write original paragraphs using the appropriate patterns, I have them work on a set of preliminary exercises that require independent thinking and some writing, but simplify the writing task to make the organizing rules more apparent. In a unit on exemplification, one exercise asks students to determine which of two related sentences is the generalization and which is the example, and then to rewrite the sentences using applicable words and phrases. Ideally, these preliminary exercises interrelate and, in aggregate, prepare young writers for more autonomous and more challenging work. In a unit on comparisons and contrasts, three preliminary exercises move from recognition to partial- and then to full-application of organizational patterns. The first exercise has students read sample paragraphs and identify words and phrases that specify comparisons and contrasts; a second exercise requires completion of sentences; the third exercise asks students to read raw data about items of comparison, a nighthawk and sea gull, for example, and to rewrite the data into a paragraph.

I want to share a brief sample of student writing to illustrate how the apprenticeship approach works. My purpose is not to display representative or linguistically exemplary items, but to give hopeful insights into the feasibility of the approach in practice. In one of my teaching units I have students integrate patterns and ideas comparing and contrasting phenomena. The writing assignment recycles a topic, a comparison of fugu and humans, that students worked on earlier. Here is the writing prompt. "Japanese pufferfish or fugu have a backbone, brain and liver. Human beings have a backbone, brain and liver. The fugu and humans have immune systems. But there are many differences! Write a paragraph that compares similarities and contrasts differences between these two species." And here is one student's response.

Humans resemble fugu that they have a backbone, brain, liver, immune systems.

> But they are many many differences! The contrast is that fugu live in the sea, but humans live in the land. And fugu swim, but humans walk, run, jump, etc. Moreover fugu can not speak language, but human can speak language. Fugu has two eyes and a mouth. Humans have same. But fugu is covered with scales and has a fin. Humans don't have that. Moreover, breathing way is what Fugu is the gill and humans are the lungs. But the interesting same point is that when the angry makes a swelling cleek!!

This student's writing is not linguistically accurate, but it is adventurous, especially in the latter half where he attempts to describe differences in how humans and fugu breathe and how each experiences swelling in the cheeks when "angry." A text like this can be improved with some help from the instructor in an encouraging, "coaching" mode. First, the instructor can provide hints about unfulfilled and missing patterns—the missing "in" for the phrase "in that" of the first line, for instance. More important, the teacher can help the student discover well-phrased equivalents of the highly original ideas contained in the last two sentences. The teacher might respond to the last sentence in the form of a question that echoes the idea but employs correct constructions: "Oh, you mean when they get angry they both have swollen cheeks?" Still imperfect, but a lot clearer, here is a second version of the last three sentences.

> Fugu are covered with scales and has a fin and a gill for breathing. Humans don't have these things but have lungs for breathing. But the interesting similarity is that when they get angry they make swolling cheeks!

Conclusion

Regarding the intercultural contrasts between growing up as a speaker of Japanese and acquiring fluency in EFL composition, a writer's most immediate need is a re-orientation to the preferred rhetorical and invention structures determining the organizational patterns of academic prose in English. Re-orientation is the right term here because, as Kaplan (1987) asserts, all rhetorical modes are possible in a language, but each has its preferences. Obviously Japanese, similar to English, has rhetorical devices for conveying cause and effect, definition, and the like, but the predominance of particular devices in determining English-language content and organization requires a writer in EFL to become familiar with their various functions in shaping academic argument.

It goes without saying, there is no easy way to become a fluent writer. Teaching writing is a big challenge, too, but can yield tangible results. I am suggesting that it can be profitable for college writers to practice writing on academic topics in units of one, two or more paragraphs.   Intercultural contexts, especially rhetorical contrasts, need to guide the teacher's methods both for stimulating the production of student writing and for its assessment. In addition, the teacher might consider methods that feature communication-based revision tasks focused on meaning rather than form. Finally, regardless of method, it seems

advisable to conceive of the writer's role as that of an apprentice acquiring expertise. The teacher's function, then, is to externalize the processes which will enable the writer to compose meaningfully and, in time, masterfully.

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