

An Analysis of Realization  
of Theme in Japanese

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### 1. Introduction

This short paper is the beginning of a series of inquiries concerning the Japanese language from a systemic functional perspective. The paper will focus on the element which functions as Theme, though the whole of the research should ultimately analyze the language in terms of the three metafunctions in the framework of lexicogrammar, register and genre. The paper aims to verify the notion of Theme which has been discussed in the English language (Halliday 1985), applying the framework into the Asian language which has a different sense of value from Western one as well as a different lexicogrammatical system.

Theme is the element which proposes the framework of a message. It provides the starting point which the text concerns or a reference which the message pertains to. The framework element, in the case of English, is indicated by its position in the clause: Theme comes first (Halliday 1985). Therefore the element tends to be realized through a noun group or a prepositional group in the first position of the clause, such as *All of the students* in *All of the students have to submit the reports by Monday*, or *On Friday* in *On Friday John is leaving for New York*. Theme is not selected at random; rather, it should be carefully chosen to accomplish successful verbal communication. The element expressing the framework of the message must be positioned in the first. *On Friday* is the Theme in *On*

*Friday John is leaving for New York*, therefore the message is arranged to convey information about *On Friday*, not about *John*. If the message is expected to mean something about *John*, the clause should be *John is leaving for New York on Friday* with the Theme *John*. If this manipulation is not carried out systematically, the message may include possibilities to be understood unsuccessfully, or even danger to cause misunderstandings between the message sender and the receiver. The context of situation also plays an important role in selecting Theme. The context may pertain to textual relations such as cohesion and coherence or nontextual ones, for instance, presupposition or audiovisual information with which the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader are involved. Therefore, tracing the development of the Themes in text tends to figure out what the speaker/writer wants to say/write about, or what he or she focuses on as the view point to give information (Halliday 1985; Eggins 1994; Sasaki 1993). In other words, he or she effectively exchanges messages by manipulating Theme appropriately in reference to the context of situation or the context of culture.

First position in the clause does not necessarily mean that the element is Theme. The procedure to manifest the thematic element differs from a language to another. Some languages, for example, English utilizes its syntactic configuration to expose Theme<sup>1</sup>, however, some other languages adopt specific markers to illuminate the message framework. Japanese is one of the languages: it adopts a thematic marker, namely, *wa* a specific particle attached to what should be Theme. Halliday (1985: 37) introduces this pattern of controlling Theme as ‘In some languages which have a pattern of this kind, the theme is announced by means of a particle: in Japanese, for example, there is a special postposition *-wa*, which signifies that whatever immediately precedes it is thematic.’ Mikami (1960) also emphasizes the function of the particle. Hence the Theme in a Japanese clause is identified with the element with *-wa* such as *Watashiwa* and *Sono kurumawa* in the following clauses.

- (1) *Watashiwa 1963nenni umareta.*  
 I in 1963 was born  
 ‘I was born in 1963.’
- (2) *Sono kurumawa taka-katta.*<sup>2</sup>  
 The car expensive was  
 ‘The car was expensive.’

However, here a question must be raised: Is attaching *-wa* the only way to make the element Theme? The answer seems skeptical because there are clauses in Japanese which do not have the thematic marker as shown in (3).

- (3) *Asu sochirani ukaga-i-masu.*  
 Tomorrow there come (Polite)  
 ‘I’m coming there tomorrow.’

The example cannot be said to have no Theme only because there is not the thematic element attached. Rather, a new way of identifying Theme should be applied to the case, such as word order and a concept of hidden Theme, or it might be better to change our notion of Theme. This presentation aims to discuss Theme in Japanese in terms of the specific marker *wa* as well as other thematic strategies. The purpose of the paper is twofold: (1) to identify thematic markers: (2) to examine whether or not the first element in a clause functions as Theme.

## 2. A Definition of Theme

To discuss the notion of Theme in Japanese, it should be necessary to confirm what the concept means. The technical term may have been taken for granted among those who study languages only because of its familiarity: Theme stands for an element functioning as the starting point of the message. Mathesius (1942), often cited as one of pioneers in functional linguistic approaches, defines

Theme as follows:

We shall use the term theme to refer to a formal category, the left-most constituent of the sentence. Each simple sentence has a theme 'the starting point of the utterance' and a rheme, everything else that follows in the sentence which consists of 'what the speaker states about, or in regard to, the starting point of the utterances.

Crystal (1987) seems to simplify Mathesius's idea by defining Theme as the element at the beginning of a sentence that expresses what is being talked about. Halliday (1994: 37) also defines it as the starting element as follows: 'The Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned.' However, the notion of Theme does not seem so simple. It should be more elusive because there are differences in interpretation of what 'the starting point' or 'the point of departure' is. On one hand, Crystal emphasizes on the physical or chronological aspect of the starting point: it comes at the beginning of the sentence. Halliday, while persisting with the first position of the clause, insists on the semantic aspect of the point of departure. He argues that Theme is not what comes first but what provides a framework with which the clause is concerned. Halliday (1985: 38) claims as follows:

First position in the clause is not what defined the Theme; it is the means whereby the function of Theme is realized, in the grammar of English. There is no automatic reason why the Theme function should be realized in this way; as remarked above, there are languages which have a category of Theme functionally similar to that of English but which nevertheless express it in quite a different way. But if in any given language the message is organized as a Theme-Rheme structure, and if this structure is expressed by the sequence in which the elements occur in the clause, then it seems natural that the position for the Theme should be at the beginning, rather than at the end or at some other specific point.

Halliday (1985: 32) recognizes, in the expression ‘psychological Subject’, that Theme is identified with the semantic motivation in reference to the message organization system. He does not concentrate on the formal category of Theme but focuses on the semantic function of the element. As for the definition of Theme in Japanese, there are similarities. Thomson (1994), for instance, can be classified into the ‘first position’ camp. She indicates that Theme in the language is the first element in the clause, straightly applying Halliday’s notion. Appealing the difference between Topic/Comment and Theme/Rheme, Thomson implies Theme is just the element accidentally coming first, *viz.*, chronologically first. On the other hand Maynard (1994: 234) provides more constructive insights concerning the matter. She defines Theme excluding the idea of the element coming in the first position:

Theme is the element — in the form of a phrase of a proposition — that presents a framework to which information is linked, or to which the propositions apply, and that provides a thematic cohesion in discourse by presenting information in accordance with the information flow from known to new.

The concept of theme as described above is similar to Chafe’s (1976). I avoid equating theme with the initial element of a sentence — in the way Halliday (1967) does — for the following two reasons. First, as Downing (1991) makes explicit, initial elements are not necessarily what the clause is going to talk about, but rather, they offer a broad framework within which the clause can be interpreted. This framework can include not only participants but also circumstantial or situational settings. Second, although it is true that thematic markers may not appear on the surface, Japanese offers specific thematic markers (primarily *wa*, but others as well such as *mo* and *to ieba*). While thematic phrases and clauses marked by thematic markers often appear sentence-initially, they can and do often appear elsewhere. Thus equating directly the position of the element with the concept of theme is less useful in Japanese.

Here this paper adopts the essence of the definitions proposed by Halliday and Maynard. The word Theme in the rest of the paper refers to the element which stands for the semantic point of departure of the clause as well as the framework with which the clause is involved, namely 'what the clause is about.' Theme sometimes pertains to a clause functioning as the framework of other clauses in the case of clause complex.

### 3. Realization of Theme

#### 3.1 Functions of *Wa*

It is not thoroughly revealed at the present stage of investigation how many thematic strategies there are in Japanese, but attaching a particle *wa* is obviously one of them. As for the function of the thematic marker *wa*, this paper goes along with Mikami (1960). He indicates that *wa* has two functions, namely *hommū* the main function and *kemmū* the function simultaneously executed. The former function is to correlate Theme and Predicate in the form of a sentence which typically consists of two parts as *Xwa Y*. The latter function is to substitute the case markers such as *-ga*(subjunctive), *-wo* (objective), *-ni* (dative, locative), *-no* (possessive), and *-φ* (equivalent to a comma). The following examples show clauses which are expressed through the case markers on the left and the corresponding clauses which have the element being thematized with *wa* on the right. As long as the clauses on the right hand, Themes can be enumerated as *Tarowa*, *Hanakowa*, *Zowa*, *Terebiwa* and *Kinowa* respectively.

- (5) *Taroga Hanakoni kisushita.*    *Tarowa Hanakoni kisushita.*  
 Taro to Hanako kissed  
 'Taro kissed Hanako.'            'As for Taro, he kissed Hanako'
- (6) *Hanakoni Taroga kisushita.*    *Hanakowa Taroga kisushita.*  
 To Hanako Taro kissed

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
|     | ‘(It’s) Hanako (who) Taro<br>kissed.’                | ‘As for Hanako, Taro kissed.’   |
| (7) | <i>Zono hanaga nagai.</i><br>of elephant trunk long  | <i>Zowa hanaga nagai</i><br>‘As for an elephant, it has<br>a long trunk.’ |
| (8) | <i>Terebiwo karega kowashita.</i><br>TV he broke     | <i>Terebiwa karega kowashita.</i><br>‘As for the TV, he broke it.’        |
| (9) | <i>Kino Tokyoni itta.</i><br>yesterday to Tokyo went | <i>Kinowa Tokyoni itta.</i><br>‘I went to Tokyo yesterday.’               |

However, here some questions must be raised: (1) Is there any difference between a clause with *wa* and another without the particle?: (2) Does not the word order take any role in thematizing?:(3) In which occasion is *wa* attached to Theme? The first question concerns to whether or not a clause expressed with case markers have the Theme. If it has the Theme, how can the element be signified? The second one relating with the first one, asks whether or not the first element stands for Theme in the clause without *wa*. The question also implies ambiguity to identify Theme in the case of the clause that has the first element with *wa* in the second position, for instance, *Kinou Tarowa Hanakoni kisushita*. The third one, based on the previous two questions, is related with text organization as a whole. The following sections will deal with these matters from the view points of a thematic marker *wa*.

### 3.2 Case Markers and the Word Order

As the examples listed above, there are many clauses that do not include the specific thematized elements with *wa*. These clauses convey their meanings through the semantic relations among case markers and the lexical configurations. For example, *Taroga Hanakoni*



*kisushita* means that the Actor *Taro* executed an action ‘kissed’ to the Goal *Hanako*. If the clause is expressed as *Tarowa Hanakoni kishushita*, the Actor can easily be identified as Theme, however, *Taroga Hanakoni kisushita* is less obvious in terms of its Theme. The clause has two possibilities on one hand *Taro* can be thematized as *Tarowa Hanakoni kisushita*, on the other hand *Hanako* can stand for the framework in the form of *Hanakowa Taroga kisushita*. Which is the point of departure of the clause? Does it express the action ‘kissed’ about *Taro* the Actor of the process or *Hanako* the person who was kissed?

To search the answer, it would be better to change the case marker with the particle *wa* based on Mikami’s substitution theory. First, the subjunctive marker *ga* can be converted into *wa* without any other change as *Tarowa Hanakoni kisushita*, which conveys ‘As for *Taro*, he kissed *Hanako*.’ This sounds natural and the clause can easily translated into the equivalent English clause *Taro kissed Hanako*. Second, if the dative marker *ni* attached to *Hanako* is changed into the thematic marker *wa* as *Taroga Hanakowa kisushita*, the clause makes *Hanako* the starting point, meaning ‘As regards *Hanako*, Taro kissed her.’ It makes sense in a certain context but less acceptable. Rather, it should be changed into *Hanakowa Taroga kisushita*, which derives from *Hanakoni Taroga kisushita*.

Before drawing something decisive, it should be also taken into consideration that the word order sometimes is changeable and that it plays a role to realize the message. *Taroga Hanakoni kisushita* can be rewritten into several patterns such as *Hanakoni Taroga kisushita*: *Taroga kisushita Hanakoni*: *Hanakoni kisushita Taroga*: *Kisushita Taroga Hanakoni*: *Kisushita Hanakoni Taroga*. These deviations, some of which should require a narrow range of context to make themselves acceptable, still maintain their case markers and, consequently, the ideological semantic relations, i. e., an action of kissing with two participants Actor *Taro* and Goal *Hanako*. However, these six clauses individually can be no longer said to hold the same meaning in terms of the message they convey. For instance,

*Hanakoni Taroga kisushita* sounds to focus on *Hanako* the Goal who was kissed rather than the Actor *Taro*, while *Kisushita Taroga Hanakoni* emphasizes on the action itself ‘kissing.’ In other words, if the clause is designed to convey the meaning focusing on the Actor, it should start with *Taroga* as *Taroga Hanakoni kisushita* whereas if the clause pertains to the Goal, it begins with *Hanakoni* as *Hanakoni Taroga kisushita*. This syntactic manipulation is carried out depending on what the message concerns.

This simple comparison seems to figure out the answer which can be expressed as a hypothesis that the first Participant with a case marker can be identified as Theme on condition that there is no other element with the specific thematic marker *wa* in the clause. Hence *Taro* is recognized as the point of departure in the case of a clause *Taroga Hanakoni kisushita*, while *Hanako* is identified as Theme in the clause *Hanakoni Taroga kisushita*. In other words, a case marker attached to the first Participant can function as a thematic marker insofar as the particle *wa* does not emerge in the clause.

Thomson (1994) already has pointed that the first element with a case marker in a clause can be identified as Theme. She treats the case markers and the particle *wa* equally, excluding the idea that *wa* is the thematic marker. However, the case marker should be treated as a thematic marker within the limited circumstance defined above, otherwise one will face difficulties to identify Theme of a clause which consists of the first element with a case marker and the second element thematized with *wa*. Here is an example below.

(10)

*Shibarakumaemade, shinbunwa, jouhougentoshite, hijouni juyoudatta.*<sup>3</sup>  
 until recently a newspaper as a source of information very important was  
 ‘Until recently a newspaper has been very important as a news and  
 information source.’

According to Thomson, the Theme of the example is *Shibaraku-maemade* consisting of *Shibarakumae* and a postposition *made* meaning certain range of time, which gives a temporary framework. If it were true, how could the element thematized with *wa* be handled? Does the message have two Themes *shibarakumaemade* and *shinbunwa* simultaneously? It would not be reasonable to assume such double Themes because the message conveys the content starting with the point of departure which is labeled as Theme. It also needs to be born in mind that *shibarakumaemade* is Circumstance while *shinbunwa* is Participant of the clause. Therefore, when there is Participant thematized with the marker *wa*, the element should be identified as the point of departure. The Theme of the example above should be *shinbunwa*.

Insisting on the existence of the thematic marker would not necessarily mean rejecting possibilities of thematized circumstantial elements such as *shibarakumaemade*. Time elements and spatial elements can stand for the starting point of the message as *Kinowa Tokyoni itta* meaning 'As for yesterday, I went to Tokyo' connoting 'As for Today or some other day, I will go/went to somewhere else.' The circumstantial elements will be appreciated as Theme insofar as they are with the particle *wa*. However, Circumstance cannot stand for Theme just of because it comes first without the thematic marker because of the following aspect explained below.

The aspect refers to unmarkedness of the word order of the clause, which varies from a language to another. In the case of English the typical word order is Participant ^ Process ^ Participant ^ Circumstance, and the first element tends to coincide with Theme. For instance, it is the Actor *Taro* in *Taro kissed Hanako yesterday*. The element is conflated with the point of departure, reflecting an unmarked Theme in the language. If the circumstantial element is thematized as in *Yesterday Taro kissed Hanako*, the Theme *Yesterday* is interpreted as a marked Theme because it is not what is expected to come in the first position. The Japanese language, though, has a different word order pattern. Teruya (1995) reports

that a typical word order in verbal process type clauses should be Circumstance ^ Participant ^ Participant ^ Process. Mikami also indicates that the elements with case markers as *ni* and *kara* concerning to time and location can come before the element with a subjunctive case marker *ga*. If the first position theory is always applied to the Japanese clauses, the language thematizes Circumstance rather than Participants such as Actor, etc. However, there is no obvious reason to justifying Circumstance as unmarked Theme, rather, just as the Participant is conflated with Theme and accounted as an unmarked Theme in English, so should be the first Participant following Circumstance in Japanese. It would be natural as in Japanese to imagine a clause is likely to convey the meaning about the Participant as the point of departure.

### 3.3 Discourse Theme

The previous two sections have revealed two strategies to identify Theme. They are (1) the element thematized with *wa*, and (2) the first Participant with a case marker on the condition that there is no other thematized element with the particle. However, they cannot thoroughly provide a guideline to figure out what is Theme because real language activities are not so simple as seen within a narrow range of scope dealing with a single independent clause. There are other patterns of how Theme is realized. The patterns are related with discourse itself, therefore they will be explained tentatively under the title as 'Discourse Theme,' which can be classified into the threefold: (1) a kind of hidden Theme which is embedded in the clause, (2) a kind of continuous Theme which influences on the sequence of clauses; (3) the Theme exclusively retrievable from contextual information shared between the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader, e. g., presupposition or what they are looking at, etc. This section will deal with the first two of the cases leaving the last one as a topic for further study.

First, a kind of hidden Theme will be accounted. This is the Theme that does not emerge on the surface of the clause while

being retrievable through the clause as a whole. I will tentatively call this hidden Theme as ‘Embedded Theme.’ In the case that a clause has no personal Theme, the embedded Theme deserves to be examined first. Embedded Theme is crucial in a clause that usually conveys the meaning about the first person because Japanese clauses often do not inevitably have any element meaning the first person as the Participant in declarative clauses. The embedded Theme is *watashiwa* or ‘I’ in the example below.

- (11) *Kino*            *tokyoni*    *itta.*  
 Yesterday    to Tokyo    went  
 ‘I went to Tokyo yesterday.’

As the equivalent English translation shows, the message is about *watashiwa* or ‘I.’ Some of the linguists assume that the clause reflects an ellipsis of the first personal pronoun such as *watashiwa* ‘I’ in declarative clauses on the analogy of the case in English. However, there is no need to suppose a basic form of the Japanese clause includes a personal pronoun. Rather, from the other edge of viewpoint, it seems possible to assume that basically in Japanese no personal pronoun is conveyed, and that the marked personal pronoun other than the first personal pronouns are added. If the example is designed to convey the same action about the third person, it should be, for example, *Karewa kino tokyoni itta.* Another similar case can be observed in an interrogative clause in which the second personal pronoun should be retrieved. In the example below the embedded Theme *kimiwa* or *anatawa* ‘you’ is also retrievable.

- (12) *Kino*            *Tokyoni*    *itta?*  
 Yesterday    to Tokyo    went  
 ‘Did you go to Tokyo yesterday?’

Second, a continuous Theme ought to be born in mind. This is the Theme which is signified once in a clause and covers several

proceeding clauses. The Theme with *wa* continues to stand for what it is until a new Theme is introduced with *wa*. Mikami calls this function of the particle as ‘crossing period,’ therefore, I will name the Theme ‘Crossing Theme’ for the sake of convenience.

The crossing Theme can be easily retrieved by tracing the preceding element with the particle *wa*. The example below is cited from an E-mail sent from a friend of mine asking about a computer software and it shows transition of the crossing Theme.

(13)

*Emyuleitaano namaewa yoku kibunodesuga, ittai sorewa nandesuka?*  
of emulator name often hear (what) on earth that what is

*Dokoni arunodesuka? Kaerunodesuka? PowerPCni tsuitekurunodesuka?*  
Where exist available with PowerPC come with

*Soretomo sofutoni fuzuishitekurunodeshouka?*  
Or with software accompany with

‘As for the name of ‘emulator’, I often hear the name. What on earth is that? Where is it? Is it available at a shop? Does it included in PowerPC set? Or does it come along with a software?’

In the first clause the Theme is *Emyuleitaano namaewa*, the Theme in the second one is replaced into *sorewa*. The second Theme *Sorewa*, then, continues to function as Theme in the following four clauses, which can be rewritten into the following with retrieved Theme as *Sorewa dokoni arundesuka? Sorewa kaerunodesuka? Sorewa PowerPCni tsuitekununodesuka? Soretomo sorewa sofutoni fuzuishitekurunodeshouka?*

This ‘crossing period’ feature of the particle *wa* might contribute to solving the question: What differentiates a clause having Theme signified with *wa* from another having Theme suggested with a case marker and the word order? Mikami(1960:24) indicates the difference is the matter of relational power of the particles. A relational

particle *wa* is powerful enough to relate with the rest of the clause and consequently to keep associating the power to the end of the clause, while case markers such as *ga*, *no*, *ni* and *wo* are less powerful than *wa* and they just relate the elements preceding the markers with verbal groups only. For instance, in *Tarowa Hanakoni kisushita*, the meaning of *Tarowa* influences the clause as a whole whereas in *Taroga Hanakoni kisushita*, *Taroga* is related with more directly with *kisushita*. Mikami explains that *wa* generally correlates the element with other elements while other case markers tightly associate the elements with the verbal group.

This idea presumably agrees to what Downing advocates on the difference between Topic and Theme. She explains ‘Topic will identify what a particular part of the text is about, while Theme (or initial element) represents the point (s) of departure of the message’ (Downing 1991:127). Her argument can be interpreted in the case of the elements thematized with *wa* and other elements with case markers by substituting the expression ‘Theme’ and ‘Topic’: The element with a case marker will identify what a particular part of the text is about, while the element thematized with *wa* represents the point(s) of departure of the message. The following examples will illustrate this notion.

(14) *Tarowa* *Hanakoni kisushita.*

Theme

(15) *Taroga* *Hanakoni kisushita.*

Topic

The example (13) shows the Theme *Tarowa*, which functions as the framework of the clause, while the example (14) shows *Taroga* as the Topic, which can also function as Theme if there is no thematized element preceding as follows.

(17) *Taroga* *Hanakoni kisushita.*

Theme/Topic

However, the example can be modified with another Theme as follows.

- (18) Kinowa Taroga Hanakoni kisushita.  
Theme    Topic

If an element is once thematized with *wa*, the element has potential to influence the semantic power to the clause itself, even the proceeding clauses. On the other hand an element with a case marker basically functions as Topic or a kind of minor Theme, which can function as Theme under the limited circumstance. This means that once Theme with *wa* appears, it should be examined whether or not the Theme still functions in the following clauses, whereas, if Theme is conflated with Topic, it ought to be considered whether or not the crossing Theme or the embedded Theme exists around the clause. In other words, a speaker desires to construct a certain amount of information about something, he or she is likely to start the message with the element thematized with *wa*, but the message sender will begin the verbal signs with the element with a case marker when he or she aims to convey a bit of information more neatly.

#### 4. Conclusion and Prospects

This paper has revealed several patterns of realization of Theme in Japanese. First, Theme falls on the element thematized with *wa*. Second, Theme falls on the first Participant with a case marker whenever there is no thematized element with the particle. Third, Theme is embedded in the clause itself. Fourth, Theme can be traced to the preceding clause. These patterns indicate that the first element in a Japanese clause is not necessarily Theme and that word order is one of the factors to decide what is Theme.

These patterns are, however, mere hypothetical ones drawn from an independent clause model. They should be examined in terms of



the validity when being applied to actual text analysis. Among the four, the embedded Theme particularly needs to be analyzed in reference with genre because frequencies of the hidden Theme depend on whether the clause is produced in a casual setting or in a rather formal setting. The embedded Theme is expected to be observed more often in the casual one than the formal one.

The crossing Theme also deserves to be analyzed more precisely. It does not only seem to have a certain relation with genre just like the embedded Theme, but also has potential connection with the difference between *wa* and *ga*, so, as a consequence it should be analyzed in the informational framework such as the dichotomy of NEW/GIVEN information and THEME/FOCUS, etc. Besides that, the crossing Theme would shed lights on multiple Theme of the Japanese clause.

In reference with the multiple Theme, the word order in a clause should be also studied. If the word order varies between the clauses maintaining the same ideological relations, it means something different from that expressed in another. For instance, the clause *Shibarakumaemade, shinbunwa, jouhougentoshite, hijihouni juuyoudatta* can also be expressed as *Shinbunwa shibarakumaemade jouhougentoshite, hijouni juuyoudatta*, but the clause takes the order as what it is. The factors working to fix the lexical configuration will be in the scope of the further investigation.

Finally I would like to justify this study by indicating possibilities to apply the different thematic system between Japanese and English to the English language teaching, particularly, the writing class. Until recently or partly nowadays still in classes of the English language at Japanese school from junior high school to college, English composition had been understood as an art of sentence-to-sentence translating from the Japanese to English. Teachers enthusiastically have explained how to map the English words, phrases or clauses into the form of English sentence, while students have been genius to transform Japanese expressions below clause level into the equivalent English outputs. However, still

there are many Japanese students complaining that they cannot express themselves in the written mode of the familiar international language. This might be because few students have opportunities to train themselves in terms of the message organization. The students can hardly understand how to start the message in English. However, if they know what the Japanese messages in mind are going to say about, they can find the point of departure in the corresponding English expressions. Teachers, if they know what the Theme in Japanese clauses, can instruct the students how to translate the native language text into the corresponding acceptable expressions. Ultimately, if the students have a class in which a teacher can tell the difference in message construction between the two languages, they can probably map the point of departure of the message in the slots where the appropriate Theme is expected to come.

### Notes

1. In the case of spoken English, it is not unusual to find intonation pattern indicating the Theme.
2. The analysis is based on Okutsu (1978).
3. This is extracted from a news article titled as *Watashino Shinbun Katsuyohou*, Chunichi Shimbun Oct. 20 1995.

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