A Suggestion from Research on Contrastive Rhetoric
Nagiko Iwata Lee


Abstract
English is the dominant language of scholarship today not only because it has become the language of research publication but also because it is used as the basis of many research models. This paper addresses an issue of English dominance and makes a suggestion from the perspective of contrastive rhetoric research. Examples are drawn from research on English-Japanese contrastive rhetoric. Lee (2009), for instance, has adopted Hyland’s model of English academic interaction (2005) to examine English and Japanese newspaper editorials, and has uncovered that a number of key resources of stance and engagement presented in Hyland’s model are non-existant or hardly found in the Japanese data. Among those scarce elements, ‘reader pronouns’ is focused in this paper, in relation to the prominence of the desiderative form of a verb in the Japanese data. A close examination reveals that the desiderative form of a verb in Japanese is a linguistic device which can be considered both as a stance marker and an engagement marker, thus questioning the dichotomy of “stance” and “engagement” in Hyland’s model. Re-examining data of Lee (2009) also reveals that cleft construction and sentential nominal appear more frequently in Japanese than in English. Further observation of a larger number of languages would be required when proposing a model of analysis in applied linguistics.

Introduction
As applied linguistics matures as an academic field, a number of research issues naturally arise, and some of them may be commonly applicable to the practice and assumption on which the current applied linguistics research is carried out. One such issue would be the phenomenon of English dominance. English is the dominant language of scholarship today not only because it has become the dominant language of research publication but also because it is used as the basis of many research models. The objective of this paper is to address this issue and to make a suggestion from the perspective of contrastive rhetoric research. Examples are drawn from research on English-Japanese contrastive rhetoric, with particular focus on those carried out using Hyland’s model of academic interaction (Hyland, 2005). Hyland’s model, which is based on English academic interaction, is obviously suited to account for the English language data, but is not always suitable for handling typologically different languages such as Japanese. This paper proposes that we need to look at data from the perspective of languages other than English as well when doing research in applied linguistics.

Major findings from English-Japanese contrastive rhetoric studies
Contrastive rhetoric as a field of study began with the publication of Kaplan (1966), in which Kaplan assumed a kind of linguistic relativity that the rhetorical aspects of each language are unique to each language and culture. This statement was made based on his observation of the ESL students’ writings, but has been criticized for overgeneralizing a highly complex phenomenon. Hinds (1983) was one of the first to point out some of the flaws of Kaplan (1966). He claims that looking at essays written in English by foreign students simply cannot guarantee that the problem results from L1 negative transfer. To correct some of the methodological problems, Hinds looked at texts in Japanese. The texts he selected were taken from a newspaper column, tensei jingo in the Asahi Shimbun. In those columns, Hinds identified what he saw as a typically Japanese digressive element in the structure of the writing (the ten of the ki-shoo-ten-ketsu arrangement), in which the writer first begins an argument (ki), then develops it (shoo), digresses (ten), and concludes (ketsu). Hinds claimed that this type of rhetoric is typical of “expository prose in Japanese.” He then presented the notion of “reader vs. writer responsibility”, proposing that Japanese is a reader-responsible language in the sense that the reader has to construct meaning when a text contains a digressive element, whereas English is a writer-responsible language since the writer has to ensure the text flows smoothly and clearly (Hinds, 1987). Kubota (1997), however, revealed that even Japanese scholars do not agree on precisely
what the *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* structure of Japanese prose consists of, and that Hinds wrongly implied that the *tensei jindo* newspaper column used for much of his research represents Japanese expository prose.

A number of researchers, however, seem to agree on the inductive nature of Japanese text (Kobayashi, 1984; Oi, 1984; Nishihara, 1990; Hinds, 1990; Maynard, 1996). For example, Kobayashi (1984) examined essays written by three groups of people: Japanese native speakers who are studying in Japan, those studying in America, and English native speakers in America. Her findings conclude that American students tend to place general comments at the beginning and develop the text to specific details, while Japanese writers tend to adopt the opposite order; specific details to general comment.

Instead of identifying where the main idea appears in a text, Lee (2006, 2009) examined how writers use language to express their opinions, judgments, and attitudes while engaging their readers in the text. Lee (2009), for instance, examined English and Japanese newspaper editorials, using Hyland’s model of academic interaction. In the course of examination, however, a number of Hyland’s categories were found to be non-existent or extremely scarce in the Japanese data. Before discussing this phenomenon, let me introduce Hyland’s model in the next section.

**Hyland's model**

Hyland (2005) defines “stance” as “the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments, while “engagement” is “the ways writers relate to their readers with respect to the positions advanced in the text”. Based on an analysis of 240 published research articles from eight disciplines and insider informant interviews, Hyland presents key resources of stance and engagement as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

**Figure 1** Key resources of stance

![Stance Diagram](image)

Examples of stance expressions given by Hyland follow:

Hedges:

Such experiments *may* not represent …

Boosters:

… we *obviously* do not see a static image as …

Attitude markers:

… are rather *important* and, for this reason …

Self-mentions:

I *argue* that their treatment is superficial …
Examples of engagement expressions follow:

Reader pronouns:
   Although we lack knowledge about …
Directives:
   Consider a sequence of batches in …
Questions:
   Is it, in fact, necessary to choose …?
Appeals to shared knowledge:
   Chesterton was of course wrong to suppose …
Personal asides:
   And – as I believe many … -- critical thinking …

Lee (2009): Data and method

Using Hyland’s model of academic interaction, Lee (2009) examined editorials which had appeared in major newspapers published in an English-speaking country and Japan, namely, The New York Times and Asahi Shimbun. The two newspapers have been chosen for their comparability in terms of the length of each editorial as well as the degree of establishment as a reliable newspaper. The following tables present the results of counting the frequency of stance and engagement expressions found in 30 editorials each from The New York Times and Asahi Shimbun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Frequency of stance expressions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Frequency of engagement expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal asides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some characteristics of English and Japanese language editorials have been identified from the data as follows:

- English language editorials use a wider variety of stance and engagement expressions.
- English language editorials use more engagement expressions than Japanese language editorials, especially ‘reader pronouns’.
- Japanese language editorials hardly use ‘boosters’.
- Japanese language editorials use more ‘questions’ than English language editorials.

Among those contrastive characteristics identified above, I will focus on the phenomenon that ‘reader pronouns’ is hardly used in the Japanese language editorials.

A paucity of ‘reader pronouns’ and prominence of the desiderative in Japanese data

The paucity of ‘reader pronoun’ in Japanese in contrast to English was explained by the linguistic characteristics of the two languages in Lee (2009), pointing out that the existence of an overt pronoun is an unmarked linguistic feature of English, while a covert pronoun is a norm in Japanese. In observing the data closely, however, we note that some of the English ‘reader pronouns’ can be expressed by the use of the desiderative form, “V-tai” in Japanese. For example, the following English sentence (1) will be expressed in Japanese as (2) or (3), but (2) is less natural than (3) in which the desiderative form, V-tai is used.

(5) We support the decision.
(6) *Wareware wa sono ketsudan o shijisuru.
    We TOP that decision ACC support
(7) [ 0 ]sono ketsudan o shijishi-tai.
    that decision ACC support-DES

It is important to note here that Japanese grammar requires the subject of the desiderative verb to be the 1st person pronoun. Thus, the subject of the example sentence (3) should be ‘I’ or ‘we’. In other words, the subject does not need to be overtly indicated in Japanese when a grammatical restriction narrows down the candidate for the subject. There are a number of predicates in Japanese which require the subject to be the 1st person pronoun. “Ureshii” is one of such predicates as follows:

(4a) Watashi wa ureshii.
    I TOP happy
    ‘I am happy.’

(4b) *Anata wa ureshii.
    You TOP happy

(4c) *Kare wa ureshii.
    He TOP happy

Examination of the Japanese data in Lee (2009) reveals that the desiderative form, “V-tai” is quite prominent, with 36 occurrences of the desiderative form in 30 editorials. In contrast, we could find only 4 examples of its English equivalent in 30 editorials from The New York Times. The four English examples consist of two occurrences of “We hope …”, one occurrence each of “We hoped …” and “We wish …”.

The desiderative form of a verb obviously is used to express the wish of the writer, and hence it is to be classified as a stance marker, more specifically an ‘attitude marker’ according to Hyland’s model. It is, however, an engagement marker at the same time since the writer is trying
to engage the reader by implying its subject to be an inclusive 1st person plural pronoun, “we”.

Interestingly, however, this phenomenon raises an issue as to whether the dichotomy of “stance” and “engagement” proposed by Hyland is viable. In the case of Japanese, the desiderative form of a verb, “V-tai” can be considered as a stance expression as well as an engagement expression. Hyland’s model, which is based on academic interaction in English, is obviously suited for analyzing English data, but is not totally applicable to the Japanese language.

**Discourse modality indicators in Japanese**

Conducting a series of studies on Japanese discourse, Maynard proposes the notion of “Discourse Modality” (Maynard, 1993). I will introduce her framework here in an attempt to discover some linguistic realizations of stance and engagement from the Japanese perspective.

Emphasizing the importance of examining modality in social interaction, and its relation to the discourse structure, Maynard proposes a framework of Discourse Modality (“DM” hereafter). According to Maynard, DM conveys the speaker’s subjective, emotional, mental or psychological attitude toward the message content, the speech act itself or toward his or her interlocutor in discourse. The linguistic signs whose primary functions are to directly express personal attitude and feelings are called “DM indicators”. Types of DM indicators listed in Maynard (1993) follow:

1. Paralinguistic DM indicators: e.g., intonation, tonal effect, eye-gaze, head movement.
2. Syntactic DM indicators: e.g., word order, active vs. passive construction.
3. Independent DM indicators: e.g., exclamatory interjections, interactional particles, modal adverbs, and discourse connectives.
4. Complex DM indicators: auxiliary verbs and adjectives which are combined with verbs when used. e.g., -rashii ’seem’, -daroo ’I guess …’
5. Multi-phrase DM indicators: e.g., da and desu/masu alternation.

Cleft construction, which would be classified as a syntactic DM, is a linguistic device to highlight a part of the sentence as focused information. The following examples, (5) and (6) are cleft sentences taken from Japanese and English newspaper editorials. The underlined word(s), “karera” in (5) and “how far the tsunami spreads, and to which countries” in (6), are the focused information in the flow of discourse.

(5) ooku no hito o sukuidashita no mo karera datta.
   Many people ACC saved That also they COP-PST
   ‘It was they who also saved many people.’ [Asahi Shimbun, March 21, 2011]

(6) What counts now is how far the tsunami spreads, and to which countries.

The cleft construction appears more frequently in Japanese editorials than in English editorials with 6 occurrences found in 30 Japanese editorials in contrast to 3 in 30 English editorials. It is not surprising to find such a difference since there is variation across languages in the frequency with which clefts are used (Gundel, 2008).

Another syntactic device which seems to be more frequently found in Japanese than in English editorials is sentential nominal. Sentential nominal refers to a sentence without the predicate da ‘be’ after the NP in Japanese as follows:

(7) Shinsai kara 10 ka.
   Earthquake since 10 days
   ‘10 days since the day of earthquake.’ [Asahi Shimbun, March 21, 2011]

Maynard (2002) states that such a nominal strategy in Japanese has generally been associated with linguistic emotivity. It is, however, not unique to Japanese. (8) is an example from The New York Times.

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It is interesting to note here that the use of sentential nominal seems to be concentrated in a limited number of editorials both in Japanese and English. All the three instances of sentential nominal in The New York Times are taken from one editorial, all the four in The Guardian are also from one editorial, and eight instances of sentential nominal in Asahi Shimbun are from only two editorials.

Cleft sentences and sentential nominal are not listed in Hyland’s model of academic interaction, but they are also linguistic devices to convey the speaker’s stance and engagement. The following section recaptures the frequency of the three linguistic devices examined in this paper; the desiderative, cleft construction, and sentential nominal.

Frequency of Desiderative, Cleft, and Sentential nominal in the data of Lee (2009)

All the three linguistic devices have been found in both English and Japanese editorials as follows:

Table 3: Frequency of Desiderative, Cleft sentence, and Sentential Nominal from the data of Lee (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The New York Times (30 editorials)</th>
<th>Asahi Shimbun (30 editorials)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desiderative</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleft sentence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentential Nominal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prominence of the desiderative form in Japanese editorials has been discussed in Section 5. As has been introduced in Section 6, there are more occurrences of cleft and sentential nominal in Japanese editorials than in the English language editorials. Due to a small volume of data, statistical analysis cannot be carried out, and hence it is not possible to claim that the difference is statistically significant. However, the point of featuring these linguistic devices here is to present a comparison from the perspective of a language other than English, and the result serves this purpose.

Based on an assumption that the three linguistic devices featured here express the speaker’s subjective, emotional, mental or psychological attitude toward the message content of information, and toward his or her interlocutor in Japanese discourse, I examined newspaper editorials on the recent earthquake disaster in Japan. The newspapers selected are Asahi Shimbun and major newspapers from three English-speaking countries; The New York Times from America, The Guardian from England, and The Age from Australia. Since the earthquake struck Japan on March 11, 2011, Japanese newspaper editorials have been commenting about topics related to the earthquake almost on a daily basis, but only a small number of editorials in English language newspapers have covered this topic; 2 editorials in The New York Times, 4 in The Guardian, 3 in The Age. The following table presents the frequency of desiderative, cleft sentences, and sentential nominal found in the four newspaper editorials during the period of March 12 to 26, 2011.
Table 4: Frequency of Desiderative, Cleft sentence, and Sentential nominal from editorials on the earthquake disaster in Japan

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desiderative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20 (2.0/editorial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleft sentence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (0.5/editorial)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12 (1.2/editorial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentential Nominal</td>
<td>3 from 1 editorial</td>
<td>4 from 1 editorial</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 from 2 editorials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples follow:

<Desiderative>

Ochitsute koodoshi-tai. [Asahi Shimbun, March 24, 2011]
Calmly act-DES
‘We want to act calmly.’

<Cleft sentence>

ooku no hito o sukuidashita no mo karera datta. [Asahi Shimbun, March 21, 2011]
Many people ACC saved also they COP-PST
‘It was they who also saved many people.’

What counts now is how far the tsunami spreads, and to which countries.
[The Guardian, March 12, 2011]

<Sentential nominal>

Shinsai kara 10 ka. [Asahi Shimbun, March 21, 2011]
earthquake since 10 days
‘10 days since the day of earthquake.’

Thousands dead or missing from the devastating earthquake and tsunami surge
Hundreds of thousands homeless. Whole village wiped out.

Although the numbers of editorials are not comparable to each other, the prominence of the desiderative form in Japanese, and more frequent use of cleft construction and sentential nominal in Japanese than in English have been confirmed.

Conclusion

In concluding this paper, I would like to quote a statement made by Maynard, with an addition of a phrase, “and form” as follows:

“While obviously expressing modality is universal among languages, the ready availability “and form” of and acceptance (or even encouragement) toward high degree of personalization differ from one genre to another and from one language to another.”

(Maynard, 1993:266, “and form” is inserted by Lee).
English is the dominant language of scholarship and has become the basis of many research models, but we need to look at data from the perspective of languages other than English as well when doing research in applied linguistics. By looking at the Japanese language, which is typologically different from English, we have found the following:

1) There is a linguistic device which can be considered both as a stance marker and an engagement marker. Japanese desiderative form of a verb is such an example.

2) There are linguistic devices other than those listed in Hyland (2005), which need to be examined for expressions of stance and engagement. Cleft construction and sentential nominal are such examples.

In this paper, examples have been drawn from English-Japanese contrastive rhetoric studies. Further observation of a larger number of languages would be required when proposing a model of analysis in applied linguistics.

References


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