A Contrastive Study of Written Personal Experience Narratives between English and Japanese

— Part I —

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1. Introduction

1.1. General issues in second language writing

There have been some important changes in second language (hereafter SL)/foreign language (hereafter FL) learning and instruction theories over the past two decades. The shift from an explicit focus on language form to an emphasis on meaning exchanged through the use of language is of primary importance. This shift has resulted from the standpoint that learners can enhance their SL/FL communicative abilities through instruction that has similar characteristics to a natural language learning environment. Accordingly, language instructors have come to show greater tolerance for learner errors and to bring meaning into their instructional focus.

This trend has also influenced SL/FL writing theory. For these 20 years, the traditional product-oriented approach to SL/FL writing has been gradually changed into the process approach, which is built upon the concept that writing is a process through which the final product is generated as a result of a series of composing processes involving problem-solving. Due to the focus of the approach, the emphasis on grammar and mechanics has been

less intense on the part of writing instructors, while the focus on communicative effectiveness in writing has been stronger.

In the meantime, many research findings have been reported on such significant phenomena in second language acquisition as language transfer (Gas and Selinker 1983) and avoidance (Kleinmann 1977). In the same period, many linguists, who felt traditional morphological and syntactical tools were not sufficient to explain texts, have developed a new field interchangeably called text linguistics, written discourse analysis, and discourse linguistics, as represented by Kaplan's (1966) study, claiming that not only language but logic and rhetoric are culture specific and that learners' L1 rhetorical conventions interfere with L2 writing. With the concepts and methods employed in written discourse analysis, a substantial amount of research has been conducted not only in L1 composition research but also in SL/FL composition research so far, focusing on cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976 as a theoretical foundation for cohesion; Witte and Faigley 1981, Neuer 1983 for L1 composition; Scarcella 1984, Johns 1984, Connor 1984, Norment 1984, Oi 1984, Ng 1991), coherence (Lautamatti 1987, Söter 1988, Indrasuta 1988, and Schneider and Connor 1991), and superstructures or global text structures (Martin and Rothery 1986 for L1 composition, Tirkkonen-Condit 1986 for translation study, Connor 1987 for L2 composition), so that some discourse features influencing effective writing or the effect of L1 interference on L2 compositions can be identified. Of further relevance to the present study are those done for contrastive purposes among different languages. However, some of the contrastive studies conducted so far have been theoretically underdeveloped and sometimes have failed to capture variables which may have caused the differences claimed.

I have had the impression, as a learner and as an instructor of English as a foreign language, that English compositions written by Japanese learners often display some common rhetorical characteristics other than those derived from simple grammatical errors when they compose texts in English. The two major rhetorical characteristics which I have perceived in their English compositions are 1) a relative lack of climax or complication of the story and 2) the low frequency of transitions or transitional statements As to 1), I have felt as if they were simply juxtaposing a few pieces of loosely related information without sufficiently describing the relationships among them. Related to the second point, their use of transitional statements seems extremely limited in relation to a native speaker's standard. I have wondered if 1) is resulting from their avoidance behavior which takes place on the discourse level where they avoid elaborating one specific topic because of some factors including their linguistic limitation and make only simple statements instead. Regarding the second phenomenon, I have wondered whether they are transferring their use of cohesive devices in L1 to L2, leading to relatively ineffective use of transitional devices.

Taking into consideration these research trends in second language writing research and the problems I have perceived in Japanese EFL writers' compositions, this study seeks to investigate the problem of whether or not there are any differences in discourse features of written personal experience narrative between American English and Japanese. It also attempts to answer the question of what discourse features of written personal experience narratives in L1 are transferred to L2 narratives. Furthermore, it tries to capture avoidance on the discourse level, which is assumed

to take place when L2 writers with low L2 proficiency or low L1 writing abilities write in L2.

1.2. Purposes and significance of the proposed study

The major purposes of the current study are 1) to investigate whether or not such discourse features mentioned above are actually observed in Japanese EFL learners compositions only as the result of L1 rhetorical transfer, as opposed to those derived from variables including writers' L2 proficiency and L1 writing abilities, 2) to deliberate which L1 discourse features will be transferred into L2 and to what extent, 3) to consider factors explaining such transfer in SL compositions happening on the discourse level if such features are actually confirmed, and 4) to identify probable avoidance on the discourse level, which is assumed to take place in the process of making complicated stories and arguments by L2 writers.

I hope that the results from the present study will contribute to the following areas of SL and discourse theories and research methodology: 1) SL writing theory, especially concerning L2 discourse features, which has not yet gained consistent results regarding the transfer of L1 rhetorical patterns into L2, 2) SL avoidance theory, 3) contrastive rhetoric research methodology and 4) narrative discourse theory.

First, a substantial number of contrastive rhetoric studies, analyzing different text types, have appeared in the past two decades, but the results of these studies have not been consistent regarding the influence of L1 rhetorical patterns on discourse features of L2 compositions, as in the research findings concerning

the use of cohesive devices. In terms of research findings about superstructures or global discourse structures in a contrastive perspective, Connor (1996) maintains that research on the role of superstructures in writing is just beginning and application of well known discourse theories of global structures have been relatively few, and that different text types need to be investigated (89). As far as I can tell, there has been no contrastive study of personal experience narrative between English and Japanese, and not many concerning the transfer of L1 features on the global discourse structure level into L2. I believe findings from this study will provide Japanese EFL learners with descriptions of discourse features in English which they need to bear in mind when composing English narrative texts.

Secondly, not many studies have addressed the issue of avoidance on the discourse level, although a substantial number of studies on avoidance taking place on syntax, morphology, phonology and pragmatics level have been conducted. It seems highly probable that SL learners with lower linguistic proficiency, or those with lower L1 writing abilities, will avoid complicated arguments in L2 compositions. It is worth investigating under what level of L2 proficiency learners tend to avoid complicated arguments in L2 or at what level they attempt to include arguments as complex as those demonstrated in their L1 compositions. Furthermore, investigating relationships between learners' L1 writing abilities and their tendency to avoid complication is also intriguing. Findings related to these questions seem crucial in L2 writing pedagogy, in that, with such findings, we can indicate to L2 writing instructors some of the important factors which may improve L2 writers' compositions.

Thirdly, many of the previous contrastive rhetoric studies have been unable to control critical variables affecting the quality of written products in L2, such as differences in text types contrasted, linguistic abilities, and composition abilities of both native and non-native writers whose compositions were to be compared. Therefore, the rhetorical differences claimed by those studies may have resulted from such variables. This seems to be true of contrastive studies focusing on discourse features. It is imperative that we establish a sound research procedure which can control such variable in order to claim possible rhetorical differences between languages compared. I hope this study will contribute to creating a better method of contrasting discourse features of two different languages, excluding crucial variables affecting the result.

Finally, the problem of whether or not typical features of personal experience narratives claimed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) are universally observable across languages or regardless of the difference in mode of discourse, spoken or written narrative, has not been sufficiently answered yet. Narrative, which is claimed to be extremely powerful in creating, negotiating, and displaying the moral standing of the self (Linde 1993), seems to have certain common features, and if so, certain structural properties of narratives should be shared across cultures to some extent. The findings to be obtained from this question should be of significance for answering this specific question, and consequently for understanding universal structures of narratives.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised in order to answer

the general problems mentioned above. These research questions will be refined in the later stages, with a hypothesis provided for each detailed research question.

1) Research question 1

Contrast between J1 (Japanese personal experience narrative compositions written by native speakers of Japanese) and E1 (English equivalents written by native speakers of English)

Is there any difference between personal experience narratives by Japanese college students and those by American counterparts written in their L1 in terms of the use of cohesive devices, topical structures, global text structures and the contents of texts?

It is imperative that I have data as a base line which is gained through analyzing personal experience narratives in L1 written by both groups. It has been claimed that L1 rhetorical patterns already acquired interfere with acquiring L2 writing systems, and that problems observed in L2 writing are reflected on L1 rhetorical patterns. Therefore, it is necessary to make clear what features, in terms of the three points above, are observable in narratives in L1 written by the two groups which are free from L2 influence. It seems possible to indicate some fundamental differences in narratives in both languages by contrasting those written by the Japanese with those by Americans.

2) Research question 2

Contrast between J1 (Japanese personal experience narrative compo-

sitions written by native speakers of Japanese) and E2 (English equivalents written by native speakers of Japanese) & contrast between J2 (Japanese personal experience narrative compositions written by native speakers of English) and E1 (English equivalents written by native speakers of English)

Is there any difference between personal experience narratives in L1 and those in L2 written by the same group in terms of the use of cohesive devices, topical structures, global text structures, and the contents of the texts?

This is a contrast between narratives in L1 and L2 written by the same writer. It is quite probable that L2 proficiency affects some aspects of writers' L2 narrative writing. It is possible to identify an L2 effect on the narrative compositions when I find some conspicuous differences between the two, because I am intending to provide the subjects with similar narrative topics, one in L1 and the other in English. I hypothesize that those with lower L2 proficiency will avoid complicated or elaborated descriptions of a specific event and juxtapose superficial narrative events. If I can observe such avoidance, I may be able to argue that those learners are employing a strategy of avoidance on the discourse level, which seems significant in SL writing research. Furthermore, it is interesting to contrast two groups in terms of the avoidance behavior on the discourse level.

3) Research question 3

Contrast between E1 (English personal experience narrative composi-

tions written by native speakers of English) and E2 (English equivalents written by native speakers of Japanese) & contrast between J1 (Japanese personal experience narrative compositions written by native speakers of Japanese) and J2 (Japanese equivalents written by native speakers of English)

Is there any difference, except for in grammar and quantify, between personal experience narratives written by non-native speakers in L2 and those written by native speakers in L1 in terms of the use of cohesive devices, topical structures, global text structures, and the contents of the texts?

This contrast will be done between narratives written in L1 and those in L2 which are written by two different groups: English narratives written by native speakers of English and those by non-native speakers, and Japanese narratives written by native speakers of Japanese and those by non-native speakers. Through these contrasts, it is possible to delineate some distinctive differences between natives' typical narratives and non-native varieties. Here as well, L2 proficiency can be a crucial factor explaining the differences. However, unlike the contrast in research question 2 above, which focuses on detecting avoidance on the discourse level, this contrast may render it possible to make clear the differences between a native norm and a non-native variation.

2. Background

2.1 Review of literature

In this chapter, I will first discuss a distinctive discourse feature in Japanese written discourse which I attempt to analyze in the present study, providing reasons why I believe such features are apparent, with reference to some prevalent theories of Japanese human relationships built on distinctive social structures and of socio-psychological traits of the Japanese. Second, I will discuss a few theoretical frameworks which can support my arguments concerning Japanese written discourse features, although this discussion is usually placed in the discussion section. Next, I make clear what personal experience narratives are, on the basis of Labov and Waletzky's (1967) framework, and describe some major functions of narratives which are generally recognized, together with some problems in using this framework, derived from some related criticisms. Furthermore, I will discuss previous contrastive studies focusing on discourse features which were conducted between Japanese and English, indicating their major findings and potential problems. Finally, I will discuss major studies done to investigate the discourse features mentioned earlier so that I can address more finely tuned research questions and indicate the feasibility of those research tools.

2.1.1. A distinctive feature in Japanese discourse

As I mentioned earlier, I have had the impression, as a learner and as an instructor of English as a foreign language, with a great deal of experience reading texts written by Japanese learners of English, that their English compositions often display some common rhetorical characteristics other than those derived from simple grammatical errors. The two major rhetorical characteristics

which I have perceived in their English compositions are: 1) a relative lack of climax or complication in a story, instead juxtaposing a few pieces of loosely related information without sufficiently describing the relationships among them, and 2) the low frequency of transitions or transitional statements used in a composition. I have had the impression that the same may be true of texts written in Japanese, when compared to those written by American counterparts. To put it in other words, it has been my impression that Japanese writers may prefer loosely connected, implicit textual relationships to tightly connected, explicit ones and that this tendency will be observable through all of the following discourse units.

One of the contrastive rhetoric studies which are of critical relevance to my argument regarding discourse features in Japanese texts is Hinds (1987). Hinds argues that there are different expectations as to the degree of involvement a reader will have in reading texts, depending on the language he or she uses. He suggests that a writer or a speaker may be responsible for making clear and well-organized statements in such languages as English, while a reader or a listener is more responsible for effective communication than a writer or a speaker in other languages, such as Japanese. His reference to Yoshikawa's (1978) argument on Japanese mistrust of verbal language is noteworthy. Yoshikawa contends that the listener's responsibility to intuit a speaker's meaning may have derived from the distinction between tatemae "in principle," what is verbally expressed, and honne "true mind" what is actually intended, which has been considered to be deep rooted in Japanese sociocultural behavior patterns. Another interesting reference is made in relation to Suzuki (1975), in which

Suzuki argues that Japanese authors do not clarify or explain their views completely, instead leaving hints and nuances. Hinds further contends that transitional statements as landmarks, which plays an important role in readers' understanding, may be absent or attenuated in Japanese because it is the reader's responsibility to determine the relationships among the parts of an essay and the essay as a whole.

On the basis of these arguments by Hinds, it is possible to hypothesize that Japanese writers may prefer loosely connected implicit textual relationships to tightly connected explicit ones and that this tendency will be observable in all the discourse features I will describe below. One of the major purposes of the current study is to confirm whether or not this hypothesis is correct.

2.1.2. Japanese social structures and socio-psychological traits built upon them

One of the fundamental features of Japanese culture is its racial homogeneity. The Japanese consist of basically one race with a small number of a minority group, the Ainu, with less than a few thousand people. The other major feature of Japanese culture is its linguistic homogeneity resulting from racial homogeneity. Basically, almost all of the Japanese people speak, read and write Japanese, although there are a wide variety of dialects used for daily lives.

It appears to me that these two factors, racial and linguistic homogeneity, make it possible to generate such distinctive discourse features as mentioned above, together with its historical

and geographical backgrounds. As is often pointed out, Japan had been geographically isolated due to its location surrounded by the ocean, which prevented invasions from neighboring countries. Japan had also rejected commercial and political relationships with foreign countries for almost 300 years.

It may be possible to argue that this historical and geographical isolation of Japan, coupled with its racial and linguistic homogeneity, has rendered it possible to establish a unique society built on distinctive social structures.

As Nakane (1967) points out, Japanese society is constructed on situational frames which surround group members with different social attributes. By setting up situational frames, the members make clear distinction between in-group members and out-group members. Furthermore, in-group members within a situational frame are likely to be hierarchically structured, and it is the length of time spent in each situational frame that provides its members with relative power. The opposite is true of many of American societies, where human relationships of members with similar attributes are dominant, as in such societies as labor unions and scholastic associations. In such American societies, each member is assumed to be linked with other members on equal terms, unlike Japanese societies.

It seems to me that it is this racial and linguistic homogeneity that makes it possible for the Japanese with different social attributes to live in harmony with others within a tentatively provided social framework. This racial and linguistic homogeneity also seems to render possible Japanese reliance on intuiting speakers' intended meaning. These racial, linguistic, and social features of Japanese society, together with its historical and geographical

conditions, may have brought about relative mistrust of language and heavier reliance on intuiting the unspoken part of texts.

Doi (1971), whose theory has been dominant in explaining Japanese attitudes toward strong psychological reliance on others, argues that Japanese has a wide variety of vocabulary for expressing positive attitudes toward psychological dependence on others. He also mentions that it is difficult to find words for equivalent concepts in European languages. He further maintains that such positive attitudes toward dependence can be one of the factors facilitating hierarchical or vertical human relationships in Japanese society, which Nakane claims tends to be constructed on situational frame.

It seems to me that these theories of Japanese human relations, reflected on its distinctive social structure and of Japanese social psychology derived from such human relationships, provide solid foundations for supporting Hinds' arguments mentioned above.

2.1.3. Theories for explaining discourse features in Japanese

Based on the arguments above, it is possible to assume that typical Japanese texts may display such discourse features as a relative lack of cohesive devices, and loosely connected sentences and paragraphs which allow readers to play an active role in interpreting and intuiting the implicit part of a text. In this section, I will discuss some of the theories that can provide theoretical bases for explaining the probable distinctive features of Japanese written discourse, although I am fully aware that one single theory cannot be sufficient in explaining such complex phenomena, and that this section should be usually dealt with in a

later section after describing the results.

2.1.3.1 Cultural thought pattern as an explanatory factor

On the basis of the Whorfian view that each language influences the world view of its users, Kaplan (1966) claimed that not only language but logic and rhetoric are culture specific. He was critical of purely linguistic analyses of texts which were prevalent among Chomskyan linguists in those days. In this sense this work has been evaluated in the field of SLA as the first one which tried to extend analyses beyond the sentence level. At the same time, it caused great controversies over his too simplistic view about the relationship between language and thought as represented by his five types of paragraph formation. He maintained the rhetorical conventions of learners' L1 interfered with their ESL writing. In his subsequent work (Kaplan, 1972), he developed a text analysis using the following concepts: the discourse bloc and the discourse unit. The former refers to the central idea, as opposed to the latter's denotation of supporting ideas. However, it has been claimed that this model is a simple linearly-constructed outline of a composition, and that it is similar to subjective sentence-by-sentence analysis of semantic relations among sentences. Therefore, it does not allow us to consider some other important features of texts such as cohesion and communicative strength.

It is certain that there have been great arguments regarding his model of contrastive rhetoric, but one critical contribution he made to the field is that he introduced a discourse-based analysis to the study of second language writing, which researchers at that time totally neglected. This trend further encouraged the development of

research tools for describing and evaluating texts in the later stages of SL writing research.

Although it may be too simple to conclude that our culturally distinctive thought patterns are determined by the languages and rhetorical conventions we use, it is certain that our world views are under the influence of our languages to some extent, as the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis predicts.

2.1.3.2. The audience as co-author as an explanatory factor

Duranti (1986) maintains that participants in the speech event are dependent on the dynamics between the speaker's words and the ensuring circumstances (audience's response included) to assign interpretation, and that meaning is collectively defined on the basis of recognized social relationships. Although he uses a speaker/listener relationship in considering the concept, as in Goodwin's (1986) oral data in which speakers and audience are constantly reshaping meanings in oral texts, the argument is not restricted to a speaker/listener relationship but can be also applicable to a writer/reader relationship. He further contends that interpretation of text, sounds, etc. is not a passive activity whereby the audience is merely trying to figure out what the author meant to communicate. Rather, it is a way of making sense of what someone said (or wrote or drew) by linking it to a world or context that the audience can make sense of.

Brenneis (1986) describes the nature of audience as 'necessarily engaged in a search for hidden meanings' (340) and thus not static. He further suggests that audience members are diverse in terms of the knowledge and investment they bring to particular messages

and that they are actively involved in searching meanings which do not always lie in the text alone.

The same argument seems true of readers as an audience who are constantly searching for writers' intended meanings, although we need to make a minor revision on the premise above. That is, unlike listeners as an audience in a certain situation, readers as an audience do not usually contribute to the writers' restructuring his ideas in accordance with the immediate response from the readers. Therefore, writers need to simulate the implied readers' response. However, it is certain that, in the case of writing, a reader's responses do shape writing over time.

It is assumed that the activity of reading is cognitively similar to that of writing because readers are constantly simulating how writers have encoded meanings in the text and writers are also writing while anticipating how readers will read the text. On the basis of this assumption, it is probable that competent readers in one culture do not have much difficulty simulating how a writer encoded meaning in the text when their writer is of the same culture, because the writer is supposed to have used similar strategies in generating texts. It is also likely that competent writers in one culture are skillful in anticipating how readers will read the text and in writing in such a way that readers will not have difficulty in decoding when the readers are of the same culture. A reader's role as a co-author is not explicit because the reader is unable to provide an immediate response to the writer. However, invisible readers seem to be contributing to writers' simulations of implied responses from the readers.

It is likely that relationships between writers and readers as co-authors can be one of the factors explaining the discourse

features of Japanese texts mentioned earlier. That is to say, Japanese writers may have much stronger expectations of readers who work together with them as co-authors, and they may unconsciously leave more work for the readers as co-authors. It is highly probable that people in some cultures have different expectations toward readers as co-authors from those in others.

2. 1.3.3. Linguistic ideology as an explanatory factor

Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) define the word, 'language ideology' in the simplest form as the following: 'we emphasize language ideology as a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk.' (55) They further claim that language ideologies are crucial for social and linguistic analysis because these ideologies 'envision and enact links of languages to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality and to epistemology.' (55-56). Woolard and Schieffelin's following definition of linguistic ideology synthesizing diverse viewpoints proposed by other scholars in the field provides sufficient clues to understanding the notion:

> Linguistic/language ideologies have been defined as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use"; (Silverstein 1979: 193) with a greater social emphasis as "self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group" (Heath 1977:53) and "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic

relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 1989: 255); and most broadly as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey 1990:346).

Silverstein's definition of language ideology as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" is comprehensive and precise. On the basis of his definition, it may be possible to interpret discourse features in Japanese as a reflection of the following linguistic ideology that I believe the Japanese have; that is, "people should not speak out everything in their mind. Culturally refined men should be reserved so that they can provide others with room to intuit what they are thinking."

Woolard (1992) further identifies the following four central and recursive features of linguistic ideology, although she admits none of them is universal to all usage (237): 1) ideology is most typically taken as conceptual or ideational, having to do with consciousness, beliefs, notions, or ideas, 2) ideological concepts or notions are viewed as derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular social position, 3) the most central notion of ideology is that of distortion, falsity, mystification, or rationalization, 4) ideology is intimately connected to social power and its legitimation.

These definitions of linguistic ideologies, or the central features of linguistic ideologies provided above, are quite understandable and seem crucial in realizing how communication works. However, I wonder if there is any precise and effective method to extract such an abstract concept as a linguistic ideology. It seems to me

that linguistic ideologies are as abstract and intuitive in nature as cultural thought patterns are in such disciplines as ethnography of speaking, politics of multilingualism, and literacy studies, in which Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) argue linguistic ideologies have been dealt with as critical issues.

2.2. Theories for analyzing discourse features

In this section I would like to explore theories employed in analyzing discourse features such as global discourse structures, topical structures, and cohesive devices, after furnishing detailed definitions of personal experience narratives in terms of their structural features and functions.

2.2.1. Structure of personal experience narrative

Labov and Waletzky's (1997, originally 1967) analysis of personal experience narratives, which is a pioneering work and has been long influential in the area, presents some crucial concepts for understanding personal experience narratives. According to Labov and Waletzky's definition, a narrative clause is a clause which has the following characteristic: 'it cannot be displaced across a temporal juncture without a change in the temporal sequence of the original semantic interpretation.'(20-21) By a temporal juncture, they mean a temporal tie between two clauses which are temporally ordered in relation to each other as in the following example:

(1) I caught cramps
(2) and I started yelling

Displacement of narrative clause (1) with narrative clause (2) will bring about a change in the temporal sequence, and in this sense, these two phrases include a temporal juncture between them. In their definition, 'any sequence of clauses that contains at least one temporal juncture is a narrative.'(21) Therefore, the above example is the simplest form of a narrative. In other words, a narrative includes at least two narrative clauses.

Based on their extensive interviews with speakers from various occupations, ethnic memberships, and ages, Labov and Waletzky argue that a developed narrative may have an overall structure which contains fairly fixed ordered sets of clauses with specific functions, as in the following definitions.(27-35)

1) Orientation

A group of free clauses which comes before the first narrative and functions to orient listeners in terms of person, place, time and behavioral situation.

2) Complication

The main body of narrative clauses consisting of a series of events which lead to their climax or the point of suspense, and the complications are usually ended with a result.

3) Evaluation

Statements of what is interesting or unusual about the story or of why audience should keep listening which often come before the result or resolution or through the narrative. (Johnstone 1998, Outline 3, p.3)

4) Resolution

Defining the result of a narrative while releasing the tensions.

5) Coda

The coda functions as a device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment, showing the story is over.

Although Labov and Waletzky admit, in their concluding remark, that materials from radically different cultures need to be investigated in order to achieve greater significance of their view of narrative structure (38), their contribution to elucidating a narrative structure cannot be overemphasized. It should be remembered that, although their arguments were done not on written narratives but on oral narratives, many properties in oral narratives discussed above seem to be shared in written narratives as well.

As Johnstone (forthcoming) indicates, Labov used the term "narrative" in two ways, referring to two related but different concepts; a sequence of clauses with at least one temporal juncture, and a complete or fully-formed narrative with such things as the evaluation and coda mentioned above. When I use the term personal experience narrative in this study, it refers to the latter.

2.2.2. Functions of narrative

In addition to its distinctive structural features, narrative has its cognitive, cultural, social, and psychological functions. Of primary importance is its function of contributing to human representation of realities (White, 1981) in that humans may construct

different realities, depending on the way they narrate, and its social function.

Linde (1993) elaborates on this argument, taking life stories as her examples. According to Linde, we express our sense of self concerning who we are, how we are related to others, and how we became that person. We do this through a life story, which is a discontinuous unit consisting of a set of stories that are retold in various forms over a long period of time, and that are revised. Life stories also provide a very important means by which we communicate our sense of self to others and negotiate it with others. In addition, we use these life stories to claim or negotiate group membership and to demonstrate that we are worthy members of these groups who can follow their moral standards. Furthermore, she claims that life stories presuppose large systems of social understandings and of knowledge grouped in a long history of practice. In other words, presuppositions are necessary regarding what can be taken as expected, what the norms are, and what common or special belief systems are, in order for us to establish coherence of life stories.

As Linde mentions, coherence of a life story plays a crucial role sociologically and psychologically. With respect to this socio-cultural aspect of life stories, she further argues that a life history is the project of a member of a particular culture in intercourse with other members of that culture, and that each culture differs from one another in the content (the items a life story includes and excludes) and in the form (the structures which contribute to making it coherent). She also maintains that, for this reason, the notion of a life story is not universal but is the product of a particular culture. Another important aspect of a life story is that

it derives not only from a social demand but also from a psychological demand. This is because having a private life story helps one to organize a speaker's understanding of his or her past life, current situation, and probable future.

Linde further argues that coherence is a property of texts in that it derives from the relation that the parts have to one another and to the whole, and that the texts have to others of its type. Therefore, a text can be regarded as coherent only if two sets of relations hold; in other words, the parts need to be seen as being in appropriate relation to one another, and to the text as a whole, and the text as a whole must be seen as constituting a recognizable and well-formed example of its type.

She argues that the coherence of a text is generated at the following three levels: the structure of narrative itself represented by a sequence of past-tense clauses reflecting the actual order of the events reported; the social level of coherence, mainly consisting of principles of appropriate causality and continuity; and finally, the level of coherence system, which occupies a position midway between common sense and expert system.

2.2.3. Criticism on Labov and Waletzky's framework

Although Labov and Waletzky's (1967) theoretical framework on narrative has been particularly influential, there has been some criticism of their narrative theory, as in Hopper's (1997) critical review. Here I will consider whether or not such criticism will become obstacles in applying the framework to the current study.

Hopper (1997) indicates a few problematic aspects of Labov and Waletzky's model, saying that the model is based on two parallel

assumptions about the relation between an experience and the linguistic report of that experience, and that both of these assumptions include a dualism between meaning and language (75).

The first issue he raised in terms of the dualism is related to their precept that a linguistic form has a deep structure which is different from its surface structure and which is connected to a semantic interpretation. As Hopper indicates, there are crucial differences between the underlying form of a narrative and the deep structure of a Chomskyan sentence, in that the latter is an abstract one. This is obviously due to their misuse of the terminology in Chomskyan generative grammar which was prevalent in 1960's. Hopper criticizes their misuse of Chomskyan concepts in narrative analyses, saying, "It should be added that, despite the superficial appropriation of Chomskyan ideas, the conception of language and of the goal of analysis is in fact non-Chomskyan --- ." (77)

However, it seems to me that the narrative elicitation technique which they employed, as in the following citation, is still valid, and this seems to be the only way we can extract narratives, whatever the term they used; "the analysis will be formal, based upon recurrent patterns characteristic of narrative from the clause level to the complete simple narrative." (Labov and Waletzky 1997, p.4, originally in 1967) Therefore, this criticism does not seem to be a major problem in adopting their framework to the present study.

The second problem which Hopper raises is in terms of the duality between the experienced event and the narrated event. Hopper argues that Labov and Waletzky's analysis was done on the basis of a supposition that the speaker has independent access to an original event sequence that is distinct from his verbalization of it. (78) He mentions, referring to Smith (1981), that what is

stored in our minds is not a sequence of events but a collection of images, recollections , and ideas from the past, and that the act of narration renders this random and unordered mass into a structured form. (80) Therefore, it is not legitimate to think that all speakers' experiences are temporal and chronologically ordered.

Unlike the first problem, what Hopper indicates here seems crucial as a basic foundation in contrasting narratives, because I believe that unorderly stored cognitive event memories are more or less similar across individuals and cultures, but that it is through the process of narration that we can structure these memories and evaluate their significance. If narratives were a mere representation of past events similarly perceived across individuals and cultures, there would be no room to find differences expected in contrastive analysis. In other words, through narrative, we can reconstruct past events, which are stored in our brain, in a meaningful way. Hopper's criticism on this point is crucial in considering the significance of narrative in constructing human reality.

Finally, Hopper raises a third problem concerning another dualism between the structure of a linguistic event and the social context in which that linguistic event is adopted. He argues that Labov and Waletzky's narrative elicitation technique is based on "an underlying assumption that the narrative obtained is somehow purified of its contaminating social context." (81). He maintains that, referring to Smith (1981), narrative should be seen as a transaction rather than as an individual achievement. His following citation from Smith is noteworthy:

> People's accounts of past events are treated not as a window onto the cognitive workings of memory, but as descriptions

that vary according to whatever pragmatic and rhetorical work they are designed for, such that no single, decontextualized version can be taken as a reflection of the "contents" of a person's memory.

This criticism is also very important, but it is of little relevance to the applicability of the framework to the current study.

Hopper's criticism provides some of the crucial elements to be taken into consideration in deliberating the essence of narrative, but these points do not seem to have a direct influence on the applicability of this framework to the present study.

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