

Analyzing and raising students' awareness of textual patterns in authentic texts

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Significance of the problem

The practical pressures of language teaching mean that teachers will always, rightly, want to evaluate carefully any descriptive insights before taking them wholly to heart as teaching points. (McCarthy 1996: 170)

EFL teachers working in Japanese colleges and universities would be fully aware of the current situation in Japan: a nationwide decrease in the number of students which brought an increase in large new required EFL courses particularly relating to the *TOEFL* and the *TOEIC* (see Gilfert 1995), primarily because of students' new objectives to study at overseas universities (i.e. *ryugaku*) and to transfer from a two-year college to a national or foreign university (i.e. *hennyu*). As is generally known, these institutions require a certain level of language proficiency of their applicants decided on the basis of test scores especially on the TOEFL. Because of this rapidly growing demand, Japanese junior colleges began introducing such special courses in their curriculum (see *FD Foramu* 1999) along with scholarship schemes for freshmen (see *Gakusei Bindan* 1999: 94) in order to maintain their enrollment and to motivate sophomores.

This new change in learning environments ultimately brings practical pressures of language teaching especially to improve students' abilities in the area of 'reading comprehension' in addition to 'oral communication' (see *Monbusho* 1989) since reading is a crucial component in all competitive exams (Owen et al. 1997: 42, Brown and Yamashita 1995, and Farooq 1996: 87), and since most Japanese students find the area difficult to improve according to long-term research carried out by Redfield (1999: 51). Additionally, Loughheed (1992: 2), from a reliable report on TOEFL

scores of speakers of nineteen different first languages, states that reading comprehension was among the areas statistically proved weakest for Japanese learners. It seems to be the result of learning strategies employed in Japanese schools (see Mulvey 1999: 125). The strategies grossly comprise 'learning of grammar rules' and 'item-by-item vocabulary' (Thompson 1995: 223), 'rote learning', 'memorization', and reliance on the 'Grammar-Translation-Method' (Gorsuch 1998: 7; and Susser 1998: 55) which ultimately force learners to read slowly.

The argument so far suggests that teachers, especially ones working with EFL classrooms of these new Japanese students, are likely to have a responsibility, to look for an approach such as 'a discourse-based approach to reading' to deal with the above issue, by first getting some experience with the approach and then utilizing their experiences to help these learners to change their reading habits and hence prepare them to be successful in competitive exams. This is what this paper attempts to discuss.

1.2 Objectives of the paper

In view of the preceding discussion, this paper aims

[a] to analyse a given text (see Appendix A) by creating a diagrammatic representation of the text and commenting upon the following: What overall pattern best characterizes the 'text': 'problem-solution'; 'general-specific'; or 'claim-counterclaim' pattern? What 'signals' help to decide on this? What subordinate patterns does the text display? How are they signaled? How do they relate to the overall pattern;

and using the experience gained in [a]

[b] to choose an authentic text (in English) which could be used in a language classroom of basic-level Japanese students in an EFL context to raise

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students' awareness of textual patterns; to explain its choice and to discuss how the text could be exploited.

(see Holland and Lewis 1997: 114, # 2)

The report will *first* briefly provide information on the background of the problem through a literature review; *second*, describe the procedure involved in analyzing the given text; *third*, provide an account on the choice of an authentic text; *fourth*, discuss how the text can be exploited in the classroom ; and *last*, discuss the outcomes of the study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overall patterns

While there could be several overall textual patterns as pointed out by Holland and Lewis (1997: 27), McCarthy (1996: 157), and Mikulecky and Jeffries (1996: 295 - 296), prevailing studies have reported three types of common patterns that are broadly classified as *problem-solution*, *claim-counterclaim*, and *general-specific*.

The problem-solution pattern, identified by Hoey (cited in Holland and Lewis 1997: 12),

consists of [four] basic elements: *situation* (within which there is a complication or problem), *problem* (within the situation, requiring a response), *response* or *solution* (to the problem), and *evaluation* or *result* (of the response / solution).

The claim-counterclaim pattern is one where a series of claims and contrasting counterclaims is presented in relation to a given issue (Holland and Lewis 1997: 23). The pattern similar to the *hypothetical-real* (see McCarthy 1996: 80) is reported to relate to the problem-solution pattern in that “instead of presenting the ‘facts’ of a situation, it presents a ‘hypothesis’ about the likely facts or situation” (Winter 1998: 62). The general-specific pattern, on the other hand, is one in which a generalization is followed by more specific statements, perhaps exemplifying the generalization which

resembles the *preview-detail relation* of Hoey (cited in McCarthy and Carter 1994: 57), and the *Listing* pattern of Mikulecky and Jeffries (1986: 103 - 137, and 1996: 103 - 131).

2.1.1 Signaling of overall patterns

Each overall pattern is associated with certain words known as *discourse-organising* [or *signaling*] *words* whose job is to organise and structure the argument (McCarthy 1996: 75), and to help a reader to locate the pattern in written text. Lists of signaling words are reported for the problem-solution pattern by Holland and Lewis (1997: 16), and McCarthy (1996: 79); for the claim-counterclaim, by Holland and Lewis (1997: 26), Jordan (cited in McCarthy 1996: 80), and Winter (1998: 62 - 63); and for the general-specific, by Coulthard (1998: 7), and Mikulecky and Jeffries (1986:103, and 1996: 103).

2.2 Clause relations

As opposed to the whole or overall structure of a text,

clause relations can be seen as the relations between clauses, both clauses within the same sentence or across sentence boundaries, that is links between a given sentence and the sentences which precede and follow it (Holland and Lewis 1997: 29).

The literature reports two types of clause relations : logical relations and matching relations. Logical relations are further categorized as (i) cause / consequence; (ii) instrument / achievement; (iii) condition / consequence; (iv) denial / correction; (v) basis / conclusion; (vi) concession and cause; (vii) phenomenon / reason; and (viii)

phenomenon / example, whereas matching ones are categorized as (i) *matching compatible* and (ii) *matching contrast*. Details of the concepts along with exemplified data including analysis are reported by Holland and Lewis (1997: 30 - 32), Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1997: 79 - 81), McCarthy (1996: 155 - 157), and Winter (1998: 50 - 53).

2.2.1 Signaling of clause relations

Like the discourse-organizing words, the clause relations are connected through what is known as *Vocabulary 1*, *Vocabulary 2*, and *Vocabulary 3* which respectively comprise subordinators, coordinators and lexical items including nouns, verbs and adjectives according to Winter (cited in Holland and Lewis 1997: 32), and Carter (1996: 74 - 78).

2.3 Relationship between overall and subordinate patterns

In contrast to the logical relations, matching relations are reported to relate the overall pattern of a text to its smaller-scale elements through matching compatibility and matching contrast (Holland and Lewis 1997: 18). The definitions of the two aspects of the relation are found in the literature as follows: (i) where one compares or matches one attribute, person, action, event, thing etc in respect of their similarities (compatibility) and differences (contrast) (Winter 1998: 50 - 52), (ii) when segments of a text are compared or contrasted with one another (McCarthy 1996: 29), (iii) when information is matched by comparison and parallelism (Coulthard 1992), and

[iv] when the signal of the realization of hyponyms in text is often a matching relation, that is the partial repetition of a piece of text where a combination of repeated constant and new variable forces the reader to see items not otherwise overtly linked as comparable (Coulthard 1998: 7).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT TEXT

3.1 Overall pattern

The first step was to look for signal words that could help decide the overall pattern of the assessment text (shown in Appendix A). Words such as *argument* (sentence 1), *agreed* (1), *uncontested* (2), and *disagreements* (3) even in the opening paragraph indicated the possibility of the overall pattern as being claim-counterclaim, with which they strongly associate according to McCarthy (1996: 79, 81), and this was subsequently confirmed by the words like *argued* (11), *H(h)ypothesis* (12, 18, 25), *reject* (18), *disputed* (19), *theory* (20, 24, 28), *contention* (20, 35), *argument* (30), and *claim (s)* (17, 38). Taking into consideration the components or internal structure of a claim-counterclaim pattern, common in longer text as reported and exemplified by Holland and Lewis (1997: 23-25), the second step was then to decide the structure or the parts of the diagrammatic representation of the text (see Appendix B).

3.1.1 Common ground

Words and phrases like *generally agreed*, *proved beyond much reasonable doubt* and *uncontested* signaled the 'common ground' of the pattern (see Appendix A: 1 - 3).

3.1.2 The issue of the argument

Signal word *disagreements* and contrastive discourse marker *however* (Appendix A: 3) showing a change or contrast from the previous sentence pointed to the issue as 'what happened in the period immediately preceding this, that is the astonishing transition from 'man-like ape' to the 'ape-like men'.

3.1.3 Claims

Four claims following one after another (see Appendix B) as is reported to be more common in longer text (Holland and Lewis 1997: 23) were marked respectively by words like *argued* (Appendix A: 11), *according to* (12), *Savannah Hypothesis* (12), and *claims* (17).

3.1.4 Counterclaims

The ordering of the counterclaims which was the same as that of the claims (see Appendix B) was indicated by such discourse signals as *aquatic hypothesis* (Appendix A: 25), *In their account of* (28), *With regard to* (33), and *As for* (35), whereas their

specific statements were marked by phrases like *Simply stated* (25), *stress the fact* (28), *point to the fact* (33), and *aquatic contention* (35).

Winter (1998: 63), discussing how a counterclaim structure works linguistically besides through signaling words, points out that one may contradict outright or reformulate as hypothetical [= claim] and then contradict or deny it, stating what is seen as the truth (real [= counterclaim] or rival situation). The application of the concept can be seen in the current text as follows: sentences 18 - 23 (Appendix A) can be considered as the reformulation of the claims signaled by *other* (20); *observes*, and *see* (21), contradiction by *not* (24), and followed by statements (24 -36) of what is seen as the truth signaled by the contrastive discourse *however* (24).

3.1.5 General summary of counterclaims

Signal words for 'general summary' (see Appendix A) could be *thus, proposed* (37), *aquaticists claim* (38), *this*, and *characterised* (39) which relates to the issues in sentences (3) through (8).

3.2 Subordinate patterns

The text, in the first place, seemed to display one long subordinate pattern, comprising the second paragraph through the last paragraph, as the general-specific pattern (see Appendix A). Sentences 4 - 8 can be considered as general statements signaled by the phrase 'disputes persist between competing theories' (8), with the theories referring specifically to 'the Savannah' and 'the Aquatic' in the third to fourth paragraphs, and fifth to eight paragraphs, respectively. However, 'competing theories' does not explicitly refer to 'the Savannah' and 'the Aquatic' theory. Nor can the 'most widely accepted theory' (9) be taken as an explicit reference to the 'Savannah'. Additionally, lexical items such as 'major changes' (9) can be said to be a superordinate of 'evolutionary changes' (12) (also see Coulthard 1998: 7). This may imply, therefore, that it is highly probable to see the second and the third paragraphs as general statements comprising clarification of the 'missing link' (4) and general claims of the 'most widely accepted theory' (9), followed by three specific claims made by the

Savannah theory that are 'standing on two legs' (13 - 14) , 'shedding of body hair' (15), and 'ventro - ventral sex' (16 -17).

Likewise, the fifth paragraph consists of the original Aquatic Hypothesis as a general statement (18) followed by three specific pieces of information signaled by *other* (20) as the reformulation of the claims made by the Savannah hypothesis regarding 'bipedalism' (21), 'shed fur' (22), and 'sex' (23).

Furthermore, sentences 24 -27 in the sixth paragraph may indicate a general counterclaim of the Aquatic hypothesis followed by detailed or specific counterclaims including 'bipedalism' (28), 'loss of body hair' (33), and 'ventro - ventral sex' (35 -36) along with a summary of counterclaims (eighth paragraph) including a proposed solution of the 'missing link' as '*homo aquaticus*.' linking back to sentence 4.

3.3 Relationship between overall and subordinate patterns

The first two paragraphs (see Appendix A) can be regarded as connected through a matching relation (see section 2.3) of compatibility where the element 'period immediately preceding this' (3) is repeated in the second paragraph as 'this crucial period' (8) referring to 'the intervening 5 millions years', and relating to the synonyms 'missing link' (4), 'gap' (8), and 'yawning void' (8). Likewise, the first paragraph seems to establish a relation of matching compatibility with the third and the fourth paragraphs comprising claims where 'the astonishing transition from 'man-like ape' to the 'ape-like men'' (3) is *repeated* (see Hoey 1996: 52 - 62) as 'the startling evolutionary changes leading from ape to human' (12): 'astonishing' and 'transition' are *reiterated* (see McCarthy 1996: 65 - 68) as synonyms of 'startling' and 'changes' respectively along with 'from man-like ape to the ape-like men' as that of 'from ape to human'.

The paragraphs (third and fourth) then establish a relation of matching (i) compatibility with the fifth paragraph in terms of similarities in 'adaptations to climatic change on the African continent at the time' (9) and 'climatic change and the transformations undergone on the savannah' (19) with exact repetition of 'climatic change', and synonymy of 'African continent at the time' and 'savannah' (see sentence

10 after 'plains'); and (ii) contrast with the text (20 - 23), indicated by *however*, where the claims are reformulated. The fifth paragraph (20 - 23), in turn, establishes a matching contrast with the sixth and the seventh paragraphs, consisting of counterclaims signaled and followed by *however* (24).

Lastly, the sixth and the seventh paragraphs relate to the last paragraph again in terms of matching compatibility established through a summarized list, that is a repetition of counterclaims; and through the sentence 'The 'missing link' is, from this point of view, best characterised as *homo aquaticus* ' (39), where the phrase 'this point of view' refers to all the reformulated claims (20 - 23) and stated counterclaims (25 - 36) made by the Aquatic hypothesis in responding to the 'missing link' (4) which relating the last paragraph to the second paragraph consequently links with the first paragraph.

4. CHOICE OF AN AUTHENTIC TEXT

Apart from specialist learners, who tend to have precise reading and writing needs, it is still difficult to gauge precisely what types of written text are most useful in language teaching and to find the right balance between reading and writing in most general language courses. (McCarthy 1996: 148-149)

Before attempting to select an authentic text, it is of crucial importance at the outset to look briefly at certain relevant factors that may affect the output such as learners' language background, their attitudes toward and assumptions about reading, and their specific learning needs, as suggested by Nunan (1999: 266 - 268).

4.1 Learners' language background and specific need

The expected learners are the writer's first-year junior college students in Aichi Prefecture, Japan (see Okugawa 1993: 231, p jc) and of low language proficiency level ('false beginners'). They belong to the 'British and American Studies department' and study for the 'TOEFL course' conducted 90-minute per week for half a year as their required subject (see syllabus 1999: 22-23), and have studied English for at least 6 years prior to entering the college (see O'Sullivan 1994: 105; and section 1.1).

4.2 Learners' attitudes toward and assumptions about reading

Information obtained from a questionnaire given to these students (see Appendix C) indicates that the majority have a habit of reading slowly (01); and believe that to improve reading it is important to read aloud (02) and to focus mainly on learning vocabulary (07, 10). The information while reflecting the way they have been taught so far also manifests their difficulties in reading (see section 1.1). It is highly probable that these learners responded while imagining non-authentic texts, and if authenticity of texts is taken into consideration, it may add to their reading difficulties especially in terms of unknown vocabulary which is essential to be taken into account when employing authentic materials in the classroom.

4.3 Choosing an authentic text

Selection of an authentic text may, in addition, involve the consideration of its (i) length, either comprising a few sentences or several long paragraphs or texts, and (ii) type (see Cook 1997: 95). However, a text, no matter how long or short it is or whether it contains unfamiliar vocabulary, is likely to be appropriate provided, through careful exploitation, it can fulfill learners' needs and ultimately benefit them to change their reading habits. It can be argued that a text will be valuable in terms of increasing learners' awareness of textual patterns if it displays certain characteristics: (i) It contains a wide variety of textual patterns, visual features of the text through pictures and cartoons, current language, and information relating to learners' real-life. (ii) It permits learners to use their world knowledge or schema gained through their L1. (iii) It attracts learners in that it is different in its physical appearance from the ones they have encountered in their previous learning environment. (iv) It is cheap, widely available, and provides easy access.

In the light of the definition of authenticity of texts or teaching materials found in the literature (see Grundy 1998: 7; and Harmer, Morrow, Nunan, and Wilkins (cited in Taylor, D. 1994: 2), it is difficult to think of a text other than an English newspaper essentially a local newspaper which is likely to contain all the above characteristics.

4.3.1 Choosing a particular pattern

To make lower language proficiency students aware of all the existing patterns even the overall ones at the same time is neither plausible nor essential as it may confuse the students. As a starting point, however, it seems wise to direct their attention to one particular overall pattern that is more frequent than others. Such a pattern is reported to be the problem-solution (see Coulthard 1998: 8; Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997: 144; Hoey 1998; McCarthy and Carter 1994: 55; and McCarthy 1996: 30), and on the basis of its ease of understanding, it is rather practical to introduce the claim-counterclaim pattern (see section 2.1).

Furthermore, the problem-solution pattern can be argued to be the most common in an entire English newspaper besides being in its advertising texts and in texts reporting technological advances, as is pointed out by McCarthy (1996: 161). A brief look even at news pictures, captions and their headlines will reveal that they make a reader feel unpleasant through such frequent words as *crash*, *bombing*, *murder*, *earthquake*, and the like. A careful analysis by the writer of two Japanese English newspapers, *The Japan Times* and *The Daily Yomiuri*, showed that most of the reported news were unpleasant. This may imply that each news article in one way or other may associate with a situation indicating a certain type of problem or difficulty which may, in the main text, then be evaluated and / or presented with a response along with its evaluation in the same way as an academic research article is intended to report and draw inferences from a series of events as pointed out by Hunston (1998: 192). Otherwise, the purpose of merely informing readers about a piece of news can also be served by other broadcasting media such as radio or television.

4.3.2 Choosing parts of the authentic text

Five texts were selected (see Appendix G1 - G5 and H) from a Japanese newspaper *The Japan Times* (see March 30, 1999). Although the reasons for choosing these texts are the same as mentioned above (section 4.3), they seem appropriate for the expected students (section 4.1) in terms of their lengths, in particular the text in Appendix H which, in addition, comprises all the components of the problem-solution pattern and was selected keeping in mind the number of vocabulary items that were

compatible with those in the texts the students encounter in their required TOEFL learning materials (see Sharpe 1999).

5. CLASSROOM EXPLOITATION OF THE TEXTS

Employing the selected texts, pedagogical tasks were then designed. The tasks constitute a process comprising the following three phases. Each phase requires students' knowledge and experience of actively working on the previous phase. The phases are aimed to increase students' awareness of textual patterns gradually.

5.1 Phase one

As the expected students are mostly beginning level, it is essential to introduce, in the first place, the concept of a pattern or fixed structure, and have students realize how an organized system can help retain information in the mind. Adopting the idea offered by Mikulecky and Jeffries (1986: 101), students will first work in groups and present the results of Task 1 (see Appendix D) in front of the class.

5.2 Phase two

The students will then be focused on a series of tasks summarized in the Appendix E, which, for simplicity, presents a general framework of the task with examples of model texts in Appendices F, and G1 - G5. The task, taking its starting point from pictures, is primarily aimed to raise students' awareness of the components of a problem-solution pattern, lexical relations of repetition and reiteration, and consequently in doing so to develop their world knowledge or schema. With the exception of task 2.1 (see Appendix F), which requires students' responses on certain questions relating to the problem-solution pattern, students are involved in matching certain items in a predetermined order: first, matching of pictures to their captions (Appendix G1-G2); second, captions to their headlines (Appendix G2-G3); third, headlines to the first paragraphs of the texts (Appendix G3-G4); fourth, the first paragraphs to the texts'

last paragraphs (Appendix G4-G5); and last, inserting intervening texts between the first and the last paragraphs. It is to be noted that the inclusion of the last part here (where the texts are omitted for space reasons) makes little sense in terms of assigning students to find a text when its first and last paragraphs are known because of its simplicity. However, besides providing the students with complete texts, the last stage implicitly asks them to see how the subsequent paragraphs are related, and to look for information not appearing so far in the task.

Alternatively, students can be directed to underline words which are repeated or reiterated preferably with the help of a teacher or a bilingual dictionary since the students are basic-level. In subsequent stages when students get confidence, they are invited to locate their proposed answers (see Appendix F: Task 2.1) or the components of the problem-solution pattern through signaling words especially in longer texts for the awareness of the pattern as proposed by McCarthy (1996: 78-79).

5.3 Phase three

On the assumption that the students have achieved some experience in finding signaling words of the problem-solution pattern and developed some vocabulary by working on additional texts in the way described in task 2 (Appendix E), they may then be able to focus on the subordinate patterns of matching and logical relations in addition to the overall pattern. Task 3 (see Appendix H) is designed for this purpose adopting a method pointed out by McCarthy (1996: 156 - 157). The task is designed by first analyzing a text with the objectives of looking for signaling words of the problem-solution pattern (see Appendix H: underlined words) and linking of matching relations (words in bold) and logical relations (words in italics), and then deleting the places where the words appear in the text. Students can be asked to put the signaling and missing linking back in their blanks with the belief that while doing so the students would repeat the same process that was involved in locating these signal words. Here again the students are assumed to work on three tasks in the order of choosing the signal words for the (i) overall pattern, (ii) matching, and (iii) logical relations from three given lists of deleted words (see Appendix H).

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Outcomes of the study

The following discussion may offer a rationale for the validity of the designed tasks, based on the selected authentic texts, in a wide context including both ESL and EFL learners.

6.1.1 Schema theory based tasks design

It is safe to state that EFL learners in general and Japanese learners in particular lack contextualised vocabulary and the world knowledge which may discourage teachers from exploiting authentic texts in a language classroom or have them focus mainly on advanced learners (for instance, see Holland and Lewis 1997: 104, and McCarthy 1996: 150, 153, 156, 163, and 165). However, one must not forget the fact that learners may possess a great deal of isolated L2 vocabulary and grammar rules, and world knowledge acquired through L1. For instance, the learner, through her 6 years' learning experience (see section 4.1), may bring into the classroom a vast knowledge of vocabulary (Thompson 1995: 223) and grammar rules (Ellis 1997: 160) apart from a knowledge of her *Universal Grammar* (Freeman and Long 1994: 228; and Shortall 1996: 35) existing in her *long-term memory* which is likely to be exposed and employed for designing schema-building tasks which facilitate reading comprehension as is recommended by Owen et al. (1997: 49) and Nunan (1996: 32 - 33; 1999: 260).

Based on the preceding arguments, Tasks 1 - 3 (see Appendices D-H) are designed taking Schema theory into consideration which

suggests that the knowledge we carry around in our head is organised into interrelated patterns. These are constructed from our previous experience of the experimental world and guide us as we make sense of new experiences (Nunan 1991: 68).

6.1.1.1 Task 2

After gaining a firm grasp of the concept of a structure through task 1 (Appendix D), learners in Task 2 (Appendix E) begin with the existing knowledge of their L2 and the acquired world knowledge through L1 as *Old 1* information and utilize them to notice the situations and the existing problems through the pictures as the *New1*. This experience as *Old 2* then guides them to form their hypothesis of the components of the problem-solution pattern and of unknown vocabulary and to test them with the language they encounter in the 'Captions' as *New 2*, which in turn becomes *Old 3* knowledge to help notice the next *New 3* information and the language. This process continues as the students finally realize all the existing components in the texts in the last stage of the task.

The process can be exemplified through the selected texts (Appendix G) as well: Words such as *traffic jams; disaster; expelled; and spilled the oil* signal problems (see lines 01, 06, 10, 13); whereas *Red Cross; CLEANUP, remove oil* as solutions of or responses to the existing problems (see lines 07, and 12) students are likely to be aware of from their world knowledge and the pictures. With regard to the lexical relations, the texts display a number of words (see Appendix G) which are repeated and are likely to be noticed, for example, *cleanup* (lines 12, 20, 32) and *volunteers* (12, 20), reiterated as *volunteers* (20), *volunteer workers* (31) and *global projects* (44); and *aid* (20) and *help* (32) as synonyms.

6.1.1.2 Task 3

In Task 3 the students not only depend on a knowledge of Task 2, they also focus on three different tasks which differ in terms of *Old* and *New* knowledge. For instance, in the first task (*New* information), with which they have already experimented in the Task 2, they look for the components of the overall pattern such as *stomach cancer* (problem), *a new technique* (solution), *earlier detection and better treatment* (positive evaluation) (see Appendix H: lines 01-03) followed by realizing matching relations of compatibility and contrast by inserting words like *same* (line 02), *less* (05), *but* (10), and *different* (15) (as *New* information). Finally, in the third task, after experiencing this signaling of overall pattern, the students focus on logical

relations by inserting such words as *lead to* (02), *using* (07), and *If* (17) which respectively refer to the relations of cause / consequence; instrument / achievement; and condition / consequence; and by doing so they realize how clauses or parts of a sentence (s) are related.

6.1.2 Changing learners' reading habits

Quoting research relating to the *Task Types*, Nunan outlines a number of features which significantly increase learners' reading speed and their comprehension. Some of them are as follows:

[i] Task typically makes use of authentic and challenging texts, and [ii] involves the students interacting with the text and with each other. [iii] Students identify the overall organizational pattern of a text; [iv] understand relations within the sentence; [v] use background knowledge; [vi] make their hypothesis explicit; [vii] evaluate other students' hypotheses and check against the text; [viii] order a sequence of pictures; [xi] compare texts and pictures; and [x] avoid bad habits such as reading word-by-word (1999: 262-266).

It is worth mentioning here that the model presented in this paper contains all the above features which can be justified but is avoided due to space limitations. If the model is carefully implemented in a language classroom, giving sufficient time to each task and encouraging learners in group work and presentation essentially in L1 because of their low L2 language proficiency (see Farooq 1993: 87-89, McCarthy 1996: 166, and Willis 1996: 59), it not only increase their awareness of textual patterns and develop vocabulary and schema it will also introduce them to a way to work on their own; and hence, help them change their reading habits which is so essential to cope with competitive exams.

6.2 Further research

A recommendation for further research should be towards the implementation of the selected authentic text, that is an English newspaper, through similarly designed tasks

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in the actual classroom setting with the objective suggested by the proponents of the classroom research that “. . .claims made by SLA researchers outside the classroom can be settled only by validating studies inside the classroom” (Nunan 1991: 149; also see Ellis and Hedge 1993: 9-10; and Ellis 1997: vii-viii).

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Appendix A: Assessment text 1 (see Holland and Lewis 1997: 116-117)

Note: The following paragraphs contained underlinings as requested in the assignment brief. Since this question is still in use we don't really feel we should publish this part of the answer, so the underlining has been removed!

First paragraph

[1] While there may be some argument over details, palaeontologists are generally, agreed on the developments that human beings underwent on the African plains from the emergence of *Australopithecus* about 3.7 million years ago. [2] The development of tools, of a hunter-gatherer economy, and of radically new social structures constitute a process which has been proved beyond much reasonable doubt and is now largely uncontested. [3] There are major disagreements, however, amongst those attempting to explain what happened in the period immediately preceding this - the astonishing transition from 'man-like-ape' to the 'ape-like-men' of 3 million years B.P.

Second paragraph

[4] The problem centres around what is popularly known as the 'missing link'. [5] We have fossil evidence of man-like apes (*Ramapithecus*) which lived in the East African Rift Valley around 9 million years ago. [6] There are relatively plentiful fossilised remains of *Australopithecus*, *Homo Habilis* and *Homo Erectus*, from the same area and dating from 3.7 million years B.P. onwards. [7] Analysis of bones from these later anthropoids suggests that they already exhibited many of the features which typify modern man: they were, for example, bipedal. [8] But there is a gap (what Leakey described as the 'yawning void') in the fossil record for the intervening 5 million years and, in the absence of hard evidence from this crucial period, series - and often bitter - disputes persist between competing theories of human evolution.

Third paragraph

[9] The most widely accepted theory attempts to account for the major changes in proto-human physiology in terms of adaptations to climatic change on the African continent at the time. [10] A progressively hotter, drier climate and the consequent replacement of forests by grassy plains (*savannah*) over large areas of the land mass meant that certain species of ape were gradually deprived of what had been their natural environment. [11] It is argued that early hominids were descendants of those

apes which emerged from the dwindling forests onto the plains - a move which inevitably meant alternations in diet, precipitating a development from vegetarian to carnivore and, ultimately, to hunter.

Fourth paragraph

[12] According to the 'Savannah Hypothesis', all the startling evolutionary changes leading from ape to human proceed from here. [13] The proto-humans learned to stand on two legs in order to see further - providing 'early warning' of the approach of predators across the plain. [14] Standing upright left their hands free to make tools and - as their tool-making skills progressed - bipedalism had further advantages, since they could now run after prey and carry weapons at the same time. [15] Hunting on the hot plains was uncomfortable for creatures which had evolved in the shady forest, and they shed most of their body hair to prevent overheating. [16] The developing hunter-gatherer economy led to the need for new social arrangements - particularly regarding the care of the young - which made monogamous 'pair-bonding' a positive survival behaviour. [17] The savannah theory claims that ventro-ventral (face-to-face, literally '*belly-to belly* ') sex, which is almost unheard-of among other primates, developed as a means to increase sexual intimacy and thus cement the pair-bond.

Fifth paragraph

[18] The 'Aquatic Hypothesis' - originally put forward by Sir Alister Hardy and more recently associated with Elaine Morgan* - does not reject the savannah theory as such. [19] The centrality of climatic change and the transformations undergone on the savannah from 3 million years BP onwards are not disputed. [20] However, the theory takes as its starting point the contention that other factors must have been involved. [21] It observes that numerous animals have survived on the African savannah and evolved into efficient carnivorous predators without ever developing bipedalism: after all, four legs are generally much faster than two and in evolutionary terms it's difficult to see how a little extra vision would have offset the loss of speed. [22] Nor have other animals found it necessary to shed their fur; indeed, a hairy coat provides better protection against both daytime sun and night-time cold than the apparently deviant evolutionary strategy adopted by the 'naked ape'. [23] A number of other primates practice pair-bonding (gibbons are in fact much more strictly monogamous than

humans) but continue to copulate ventro-dorsally, as is the norm for almost all terrestrial animals.

Sixth paragraph

[24] It is not, however, the norm for marine creatures, and it is this insight which lies at the heart of the aquatic theory. [25] Simply stated, the aquatic hypothesis is that during the catastrophic changes in the African climate, the man-like apes initially moved not from forest to plain but from the land into the water - just as the precursors of modern marine mammals must at one time have done. [26] Unlike the ancestors of the whale and the dolphin, these proto-humans later moved back onto dry land, but the creatures which emerged from the water were much changed. [27] Various pre adaptations to the physiological differences between them and other primates had already been introduced, and it was these which led to the development of *homo sapiens* on the savannah. [28] In their account of bipedalism, proponents of the aquatic theory stress the fact that no mammal - with the single exception of man - has ever developed the habit of walking and running on two feet, with its spine perpendicular to the ground. [29] Even those which do occasionally stand on their hind legs (and it is admitted that this constitutes an advantage for spotting predators on the plain) invariably drop back onto all fours in order to run. [30] The argument proceeds by noting that a four-legged creature, during the initial stages of adaptation to an aquatic environment, would naturally tend to stand upright in order to keep its head out of the water to breathe, and that it would be better able to do so due to the buoyancy that water provides. [31] A prolonged period (we are talking here about several million years) standing in, and/or 'treading', water would result in a shift in the creature's centre of gravity, in the development of a more flexible spine, and in an altered pelvic structure. [32] All these would make it more difficult for such an animal to revert to quadropedalism on its return to a terrestrial existence.

Seventh paragraph

[33] With regard to the loss of body hair, they point to the fact that fur, once wet, provides poor insulation, this purpose being far better served by fat *under* the skin - hence the thick layer of blubber in relatively hairless marine mammals like the whale, and a lot of subcutaneous fat in wallowing creatures like the hippopotamus and pig.

[34] Subcutaneous fat is demonstrably far more extensive in humans than in any other ape, indeed *homo sapiens* is the only primate which lays down surplus fat in a layer under its skin. [35] As for our odd predilection for ventro-ventral sex, the aquatic contention is that this is only peculiar in land-dwelling animals: if humans are seen as 'aquatic apes' then the practice no longer appears unusual. [36] The vast majority of marine mammals copulate ventro-ventrally, and the exceptions are largely those species which come ashore to mate.

Eighth paragraph

[37] It is thus proposed that bipedalism, loss of body hair, and ventro-ventral sexual intercourse are in fact evidence for an aquatic, or semi-aquatic, phase in human evolution. [38] The aquaticists claim that the similarities between human beings and their marine relatives (a number of other shared features include the shedding of tears and a diminution in the olfactory sense) are simply too numerous and too striking to be mere coincidence. [39] The 'missing link' is, from this point of view, best characterised as *homo aquaticus* .

* see Morgan's *The Descent of Woman* (1972), *The Aquatic Ape* (1982) and *The Scars of Evolution* (1990).

Appendix B: A diagrammatic representation of the assessment text 1
(see Holland and Lewis 1997: 116-117)

Note: this page originally contained a diagrammatic analysis of the assessment text. Since this question is still in use we don't really feel we should publish this part of the answer!

Appendix C: Results of the Questionnaire

In order to know about learners' attitudes toward and assumptions about reading, seventy-nine students from the *British and American Studies* department of the writer's college

(see Okugawa 1993: 231, p jc) were randomly asked to respond to the statements 01 - 10 below (adapted from Mikulecky and Jeffries 1996: 2). Each statement is followed by its literal translation in *Japanese* .

Statements	Agree	Disagree
01 I always read every word of a passage. [<i>watashi wa bunsho no ichigo ikku ni me o toshite yomimasu.</i>]	62%	38%
02 Reading aloud helps me improve my reading. [<i>ondoku wa ridingu no benkyo ni yakudachimasu.</i>]	82	18
03 I say the words aloud when I read. [<i>yomu toki wa, itsumo koe ni dashite yomimasu.</i>]	48	52
04 When I read in English, I understand more when I read slowly. [<i>eigo o yomu toki, yukkuri yonda ho ga naiyo o yoku rikai dekimasu.</i>]	94	6
05 If I don't know the meaning of a word in English, I always look it up in the dictionary. [<i>shiranai tango ga aru to, itsumo jisho de shirabemasu.</i>]	47	53
06 The best way to improve my reading in English is by learning as much grammar as possible. [<i>ridingu jotatsu no tame ni wa, bunpo o shikkari to benkyosuru koto ga ichiban taisetsu desu.</i>]	57	43
07 The best way to improve my reading in English is by learning as much new vocabulary as possible. [<i>ridingu jotatsu no tame ni wa, goi o fuyasu koto ga ichiban taisetsu desu.</i>]	70	30
08 When I am reading materials in English, I need to know every word in order to understand. [<i>eibun o yomu toki wa, naiyo rikai no tame ni, subete no tango o shitteiru koto ga hitsuyo desu.</i>]	30	70

Analyzing and raising students' awareness . . .

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|----|
| 09 | To read well in English, I must be able to pronounce every word. [<i>eibun o rikaisuru tame ni wa, subete no tango no hatsuon ga dekinakereba ikemasen.</i>] | 16 | 84 |
| 10 | I can't understand a paragraph if it has several new words in it. [<i>shiranai tango ga ikutsu ka aru to, bunsho o rikai dekimasen.</i>] | 73 | 27 |

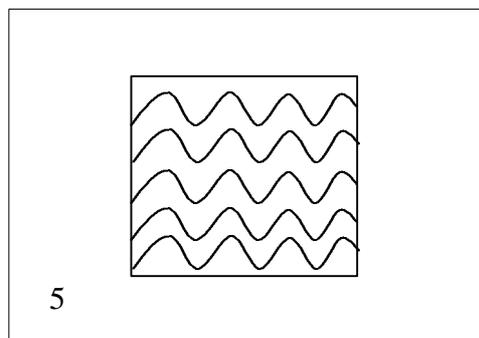
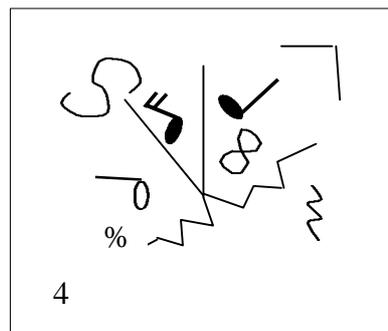
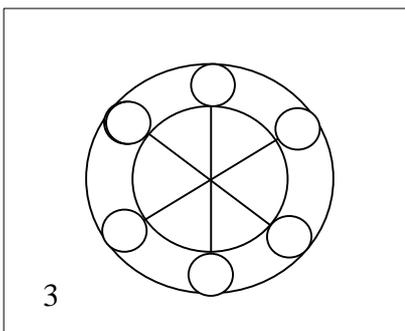
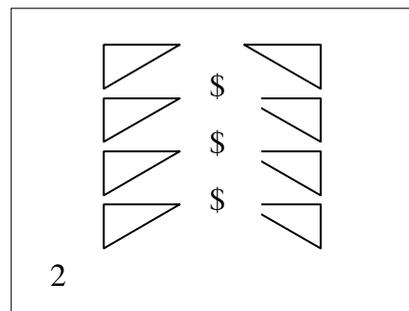
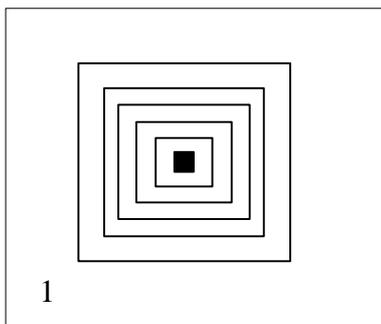
Appendix D:

Task 1

Objectives: (i) To introduce students to the concept of a pattern through picture charts (see Mikulecky and Jeffries 1996: 101), and (ii) to have them realize the necessity of such a systematic structure in order to store information in the mind.

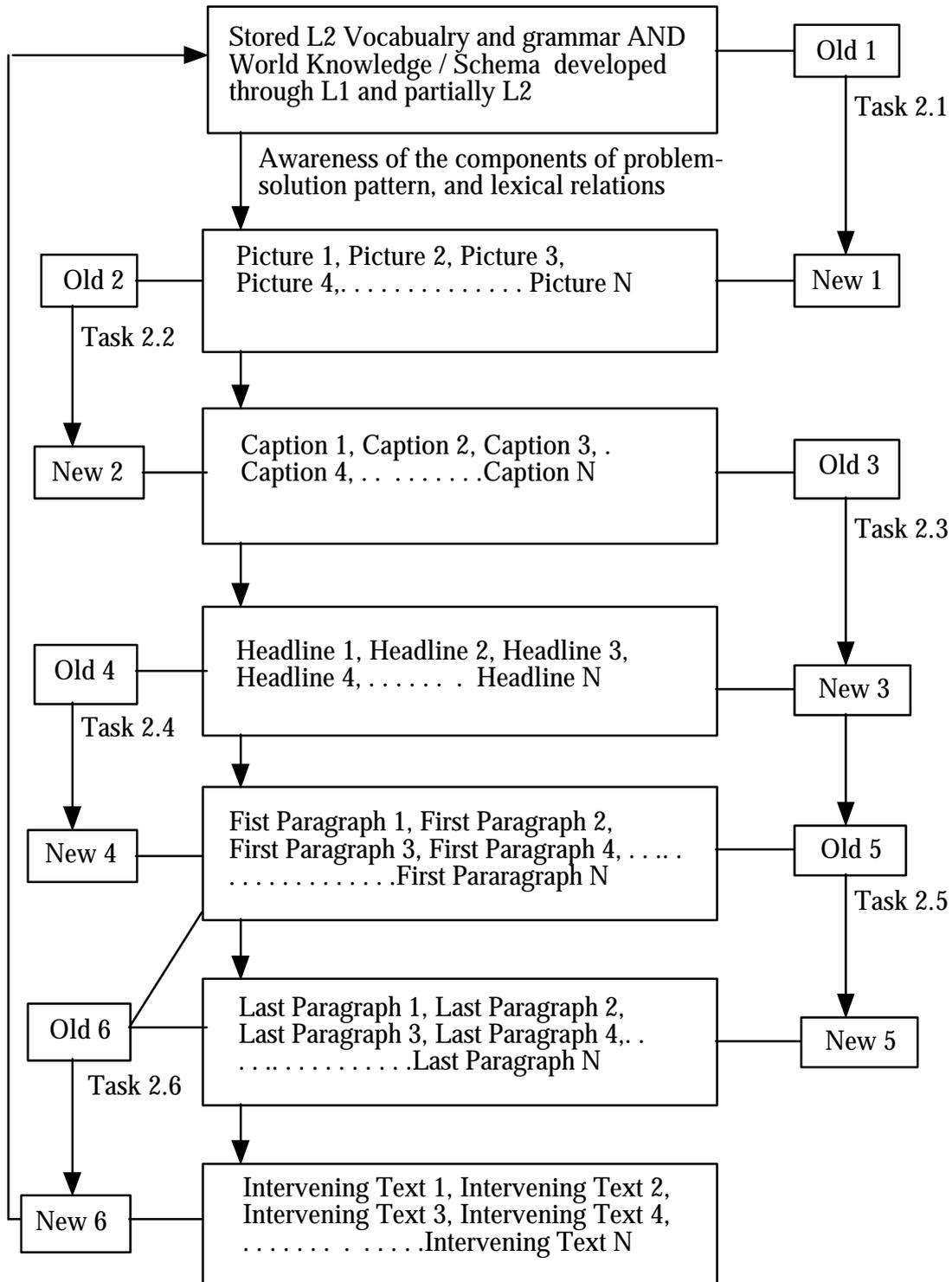
Directions

Carefully look at the picture charts below for 60 seconds, then draw the pictures without looking at the original pictures. Working in groups, discuss which pictures were easy or difficult to remember in 60 seconds and why.



Appendix E A general framework of the Task 2 (see Appendix F)

Old 1 - 6: Known Information
 New 1 - 6: Unknown Information



Appendix F:

Task 2

Objectives: (i) To make students aware of the problem-solution pattern, lexical signaling, and lexical relations; and (ii) to develop schema

Directions

Working in a group, complete the tasks below in order and then report to the class.

Task 2.1

First, carefully study the four pictures below and decide the answers to the questions:

- (1) What problems can you see in each picture?
- (2) What solution (s) / response (s) do you suggest to the existing problem with the intention to help?
- (3) How good or helpful do you think your proposed solution (s) is ?

Task 2.2

Second, match each picture to its associated caption. What signal words help you to decide? Find as many signal words / reasons to support your group opinion as you can.

Task 2.3

Third, match each caption to its associated headline. What signal words help you to decide? Find as many signal words / reasons to support your group opinion as you can.

Task 2.4

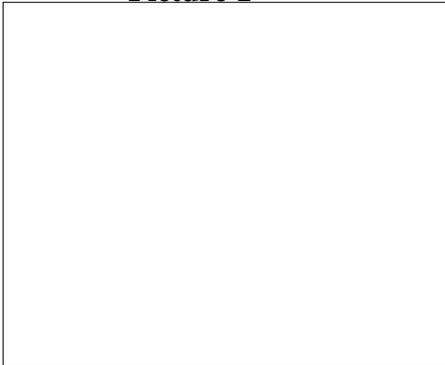
Fourth, match each headline to its associated first paragraph in the main text of the news. What signal words help you to decide? Find as many signal words / reasons to support your group opinion as you can.

Task 2.5

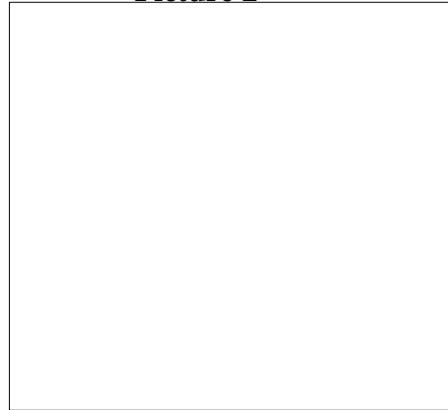
Fifth, match each first paragraph to its associated last paragraph in the main text of the news. What signal words help you to decide? Find as many signal words / reasons to support your group opinion as you can.

Appendix G1: Pictures (sorry – pictures not available. Originals were black and white images extracted from the Japan Times)

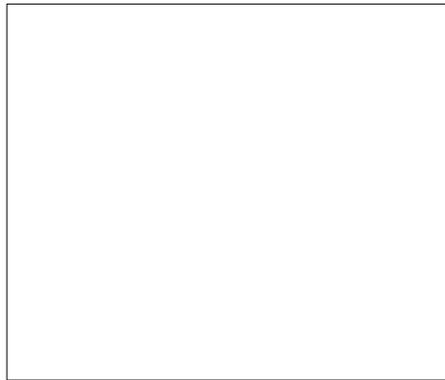
Picture 1



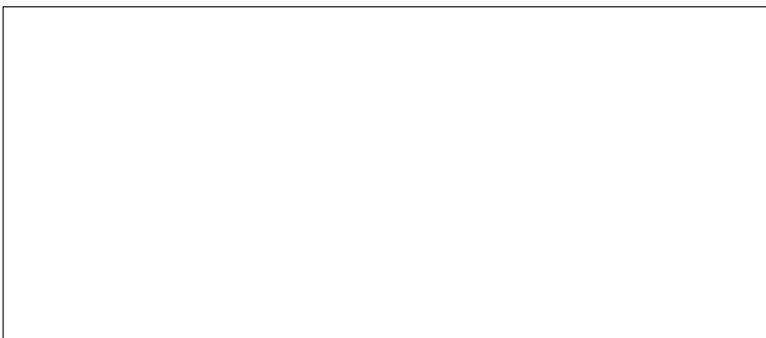
Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



(Extracted from *The Japan Times*, March 30, 1999: 19, 9, 1, 4)

Appendix G2: Captions

01 [1] LONDON -- Traffic jams and the other roars of urban life are more than just
02 irritating -- scientists have found evidence they increase the chance of heart
03 attacks, 03 accelerate aging and harm sleep and emotional well-being.

04 [2] LA PAZ -- Emergency personnel examine the principal road in a La Paz
05 suburb Sunday after it was destroyed by activity along a geologic fault that
06 triggered a landslide. About 50 families lost their homes in the disaster and were
07 recovering personal effects with the assistance of the Red Cross.

08 [3] MORINI, Albania -- An ethnic Albanian refugee takes a breather at the border
09 crossing of Morini after pushing his grandmother in a wheelbarrow into Albania
10 Sunday. Thousands of ethnic Albanians are being systematically expelled from
11 Kosovo by Serb forces.

12 [4] CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS work to remove oil from beaches in Mikuni,
13 Fukui Prefecture in 1997 after a Russian tanker spilled the oil in the Japan Sea.

(Extracted from *The Japan Times*, March 30, 1999: 19, 9, 1, 4)

Appendix G3: Headlines

- 14 [1] EUROPEAN SOUND LEVELS BOOMING
- 15 Scientists' findings that noise can kill fall on deaf ears

- 16 [2] Cameroon volcano erupts

- 17 [3] NEIGHBOR NATIONS URGE HELP
- 18 NATO steps up bombing as thousands flee Kosovo

- 19 [4] KOBE EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS RUSHED TO HELP
- 20 Volunteers aid Fukui oil cleanup

(Extracted from *The Japan Times*, March 30, 1999: 19, 9, 1, 4)

Appendix G4: First paragraphs

21 [1] BERLIN -- Near the A-114 highway onramp in the crowded eastern Berlin
22 district of Prenzlauerberg, it is easy to understand why harried locals long for the
23 peaceful isolation of the communist era.

24 [2] YAOUNDE (AFP-Jiji) Mount Cameroon, a volcano about 70 km from
25 Cameroon's economic capital, Douala, erupted and began spewing lava late
26 Sunday, people living close to the mountain said.

27 [3] BELGRADE (AP) Ordering up more firepower, NATO raced against time
28 early Monday to smash Serb military units and head off what it called "genocide"
29 against Kosovo Albanians.

30 [4] In 1997 when a Russian heavy oil tanker spilled a large amount of crude oil
31 along the coast of Mikuni in Fukui Prefecture, many volunteer workers from all
32 over the country flew in to help with the large-scale cleanup.

(Extracted from *The Japan Times*, March 30, 1999: 19, 9, 1, 4)

Appendix G5: Last paragraphs

33 [1] Although public tolerance of environmental disturbances is notoriously low in
34 Northern European countries, noise researchers are finding less concern -- and
35 less willingness to fund improvements -- in the EU's Mediterranean member
36 countries, which are more accustomed to daily clatter.

37 [2] Mount Cameroon, which rises to 4,100 meters, erupted the last time in 1982,
38 causing severe damage and claiming several lives.

39 [3] The Tanjung state news agency reported that two NATO missiles hit army
40 barracks Sunday night in the southwestern Kosovo town of Djakovica, causing
41 material damage but no human casualties.

42 [4] Other information is available through the foundation's extensive Internet
43 home page (<http://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp>). Despite the Nippon
44 Foundation's intense international involvement in global projects, the Web site is
45 currently available only in Japanese.

(Extracted from *The Japan Times*, March 30, 1999: 19, 9, 1, 4)

Appendix H:

Task 3

Objectives: (i) To make students aware of all the components of the Problem-Solution (overall pattern), and Matching and Logical relations (subordinate patterns)

General Procedure:

Students working in groups are required to choose words from a given randomly ordered list and fill in the appropriate blanks in the order of underline (Task 3.1), bold (Task 3.2), and italic (Task 3.3) in the text below. Each group then reports to the class and gives reasons for their choices.

Key to symbols

Underline: Words/phrases signaling overall pattern

Bold: Words/phrases signaling subordinate patterns: matching (comparison or similarity and contrast/difference) relations

Italic: Words/phrases signaling subordinate pattern: logical relations

New scanning method may provide earlier detection of stomach cancer

Paragraph 1

01 LONDON (Reuters) Scottish scientists are **hoping** a new technique that
02 scans genes in much the **same** way bar codes scan groceries will *lead to* earlier
03 detection and better treatment of stomach cancer.

Paragraph 2

04 *Although* that is the second deadliest type of cancer, killing three-quarters of a
05 million people worldwide each year, **less** is known about its causes and
06 development than other cancers.

Paragraph 3

07 Dr. Karen Oien and Dr. Nicol Keith of the University of Glasgow are *using* a
08 device called SAGE (serial analysis of gene expression) that allows scientists to
09 see
10 the gene activity in cancerous cells.

Paragraph 4

10 “I am hoping it will show us genes that are expressed in stomach cancer **but** not in
11 normal cells, *which* should give us a handle on genes to use for improving
12 diagnosis and improving how we can assess the outlook for these patients,” Oein
13 explained. “*But* most importantly for therapy.”

Paragraph 5

14 Genes carry the instructions that tell cells when to reproduce. Genes that
15 are switched on in healthy cells are often **different** from those that are active in
16 cancerous ones.

Paragraph 6

17 *If* scientists knew which of the up to 100,000 genes in a cell are highly active
18 in cancer, they could use them as targets for gene therapy or drugs to destroy the
19 tumor.

Paragraph 7

20 “You can **compare** the test I do with scanning groceries through a supermarket
21 checkout. **Each item, or** individual gene, has a bar code which is recorded,”
22 Oien said.

Paragraph 8

23 “What I then do is **compare** what the two shoppers had in their grocery
24 baskets -- in effect , what was happening in their cells.”

Paragraph 9

25 *When* the comparisons **differ**, the first stage of changes from a healthy
26 stomach cell to a cancerous one can be detected.

(Extracted from *The Japan Times*, March 30, 1999: 20)