

APPLYING WRITTEN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS  
IN A JAPANESE EFL CLASS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

What we want to say and how we say it are events often addressed by spoken discourse analysts. Behind every utterance is an illocutionary force, or the purpose of the utterance. This purpose is defined by the grammatical structures, the lexical items and the intonation used. The perlocutionary effect is the interpretation of the words. (Coulthard 1985). Thus, for the utterance to be interpreted in the intended sense, context and participant co-operation is important (Brazil 1992).

The same can be said of written discourse (Moon and Caldis-Coulthard 2001). A text is written within a certain context, aimed at specific readers. The writer's purpose is realized with the structure and lexis used.

However, while we can rely on visual/aural clues to understand spoken language, the clues for written texts are not so obvious, necessitating an understanding of the relations between paragraphs, sentences and clauses.

Connections between sentences and ideas are possible because all texts have structure. This structure is created through an overall textual pattern, lexical signals, inter-clause relations, and lexical and grammatical cohesive links (Cook 1989).

However, recognizing this structure and the relations found within the text can be problematic for second language (L2) learners, negatively affecting their language acquisition. The ability to see how grammar and vocabulary contribute to the linking of sentences and ideas not only helps in their comprehension of the language but helps them to develop the ability to use the language in a more fluid manner.

Section 1 of this paper will summarize some of the key infrastructures of texts, section 2 will analyse an essay in exemplification and section 3 will discuss a text from the point of view of L2 learner awareness and classroom application.

## 1 – TEXT INFRASTRUCTURE

When discussing textual organization, three key elements are considered: text patterns, clause relations, and cohesive links. While these elements work together, they will be addressed individually in this section.

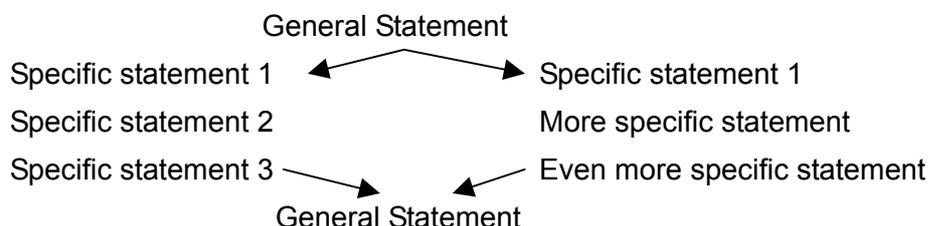
### 1.1 – Text Patterns

Three commonly exploited textual patterns are: the General-Specific pattern (G.S), the Problem-Solution (P.S.) pattern and the Claim–Counter-claim (CCC) pattern. Although one pattern forms the overall organization of a text, quite often other patterns are imbedded within, creating sub-patterns (McCarthy 1991; Johnson and Holland 2001).

In G.S. organization, the text begins with a general statement regarding a particular topic followed by a series of specific statements that exemplify, explain, or justify the original statement, culminating in a general statement that re-states the original (Johnson and Holland 2001).

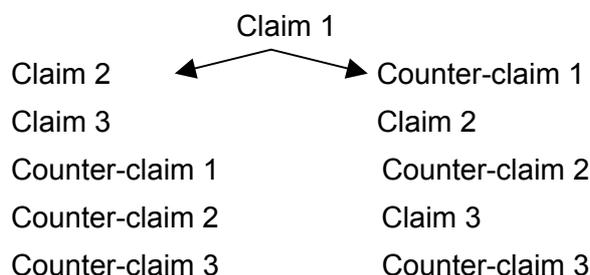
As Diagram 1 demonstrates, there are two possible realizations of this pattern.

Diagram 1 – General Specific pattern.



The second pattern, C.C.C., is often found in texts where there is an element of controversy. This pattern can also be organized in two ways (Diagram 2, overleaf).

Diagram 2 – Claim-Counter-claim pattern



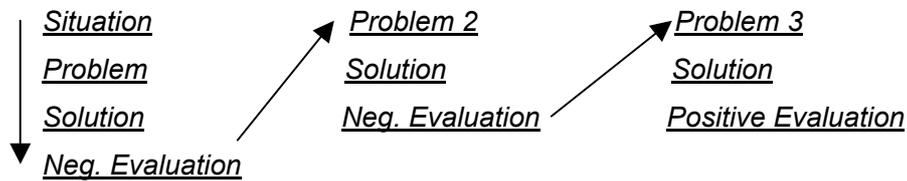
Both the G.S. and the C.C.C. patterns often include common ground information. This can be presented at any point within the text, although it has been suggested that the position is of strategic importance for both illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect (Johnson and Holland 2001).

The P.S. pattern follows a question-answer style of English thinking (Hoey 1994:29):

- Situation → Where does the story take place?  
When?  
Who is involved?
- Problem → What happened?  
Why did you do what you did?
- Solution → What did you do?  
How did you react to the problem?
- Evaluation → How did the event end?  
Was the problem solved?

Evaluations can be negative, thus creating a second problem, resulting in a recurring problem – solution – evaluation cycle (Diagram 3, overleaf).

Diagram 3 – Problem-Solution pattern



How text patterns are recognized is where clause relations and lexical signals come into play, for as McCarthy states,

“...some of the discourse-organising words...give us indications of the larger text-patterns the author has chosen, and build up expectations concerning the shape of the whole discourse.”

(1991:76)

## 1.2 – Clause relations

For ideas to be logically presented, they must follow a certain sequence. Clause relations are the building blocks of these sequences, as demonstrated with the following examples (Hoey 1994:27).

Example 1.

1. I was on duty.
2. I saw the enemy approaching.
3. I opened fire.
4. I beat off the enemy attack.

Within this four-sentence text there are only two acceptable combinations. Any other combination would produce either an incoherent text or would require substantial rewriting.

The unmarked version in Example 1 has a direct chronological order, as well as a condition/cause – consequence relation. Sentences 1 and 2 are the condition while 3

is the consequence. As well, sentence 2 is the cause for the result in sentence 3.

Example 2 is an acceptable but marked version: if it were spoken, it would require intonation or pausing to indicate that sentence 2 is an aside. In written form, this notation is accomplished with the use of parenthesis.

Example 2.

1. I saw the enemy approaching.
2. (I was on sentry duty).
3. I opened fire.
4. I beat off the enemy attack.

The following list shows the clause relations which have been identified so far:

1. cause – consequence
2. instrument – achievement
3. condition – consequence
4. denial – correction
5. basis – conclusion
6. concession – cause
7. phenomenon – reason
8. phenomenon – example

These relationships, however, are not always salient and require either lexical or grammatical structures to signal them (McCarthy 1990).

### **1.3 – Lexical signals**

Winter has classified these lexical signals into three categories (Appendix 1), termed Vocabulary 1 (subordinators), Vocabulary 2 (co-ordinators) and Vocabulary 3 (nouns, verbs, adjectives) (Coulthard and Johnson 2001; McCarthy 1991).

Tadros (1994), Francis (1994), and Caldis-Coulthard (1994) recognized the

following groups of items as being functions of Vocabulary 3 words: enumerators, labels and reporting verbs. Enumerators are signals that commit the writer to specification. If someone wrote, 'There are a number of advantages to this', we would expect these advantages to be given (Tadros *op cit*).

Advance labels (cataphoric nouns), for example 'the following', are akin to enumerators – they indicate that exemplification is to follow. Retrospective labels (anaphoric nouns), for example 'those ideas', function to encapsulate previously given information (Francis *op cit*; McCarthy *op cit*).

Reporting verbs have various functions, depending on their relation to the reported clause (Caldis-Coulthard *op cit*; Tadros *op cit*). Illocutionary verbs, for example *urge*, *declare* and *state*, name the speech situation, clarify and exemplify the illocutionary force of the quote (Caldis-Coulthard 1994). Other verbs are descriptive, indicating the manner and attitude of a speaker; while a third group are discourse signaling words that clarify either the relationship of the quote to other sections of the text or how the text is developing (*ibid*:306). These signals include *repeat*, *agree*, *add*, and *continue*.

It has been argued that these lexical signals enhance rather than detract from comprehension:

“If discourse organizing words are seen as signals of the authors intent, then inability to understand them...could cause problems.”

(McCarthy 1991:76).

#### **1.4 - Cohesion**

The third textual element is cohesiveness, or the grammatical and lexical links that join clauses, sentences and paragraphs together. These include the use of referents, substitution, ellipsis and parallel structures, as well as reiteration, collocation

and super-ordination.

All of these elements will be demonstrated with an analysis of an essay on human evolution (Appendix 2).

## **2– THEORY OF EVOLUTION**

While no title has been provided for the essay, it would be obvious to an L1 reader or a skilled L2 reader that the topic concerns two competing theories of human evolution, such is the strength of the textual cohesion.

Inter-paragraph and intra-paragraph cohesion will be examined and from this analysis, the essay's pattern of organization will be described. For referencing, the paragraphs have been lettered and the sentences numbered.

### **2.1 – Inter-Paragraph Cohesion**

References, repetition and parallelism of ideas, and hyponymy are three cohesive devices abundantly used to create smooth transitions between paragraphs.

#### **2.1.1 – References and encapsulation**

An issue is presented with “There are major disagreements...amongst those attempting to explain...”(A3). The words ‘disagreements/attempting to explain’ imply the absence of a solution, indicating a problem. That sentence is encapsulated with “The problem centres around..”(B1), creating a link between paragraphs A and B.

The sentences “The most widely accepted theory”(C1) and “A progressively hotter, drier climate...”(C2) are condensed into “the Savannah Hypothesis”(D1). Paragraphs C and D are further linked with an anaphoric referent “here”(D1), encapsulating “when apes...emerged from the dwindling forests”(C3).

A cataphoric reference is made with “competing theories of evolution”(B5), which is realized with “Savannah Hypothesis”(D1) and “The Aquatic Hypothesis”(E1).

Paragraphs G and H are related to D by direct reference to arguments put forth in D (Chart 1).

Chart 1 – Cohesion between Paragraphs D, G and H

Paragraph D	Paragraph G	Paragraph H
'learned to stand on two legs'. 'shed most of their body hair' 'ventro-ventral sex.... almost unheard of in other primates	"In their account of bipedalism'	'With regards to loss of hair' 'As for our odd predilection for ventro-ventral sex..'

### 2.1.2 – Repetition and parallelism

A third bridge between paragraphs C and D is built by repetition, with “hominids were descendants of those apes”(C3)“changes leading from ape to human”(D1). In C3, the direction is *hominid from apes*, as opposed to *ape to human*, making a unique parallel structure.

Repetition of ideas link paragraphs D and E (Chart 2, overleaf). Another more obvious link is made with the first clause of each paragraph, where the competing theories are named: “According to the Savannah Theory”(D1)“The Aquatic Hypothesis”(E1).

Chart 2 – Repetition of ideas in paragraphs D and E

Paragraph D	Paragraph E
bipedalism	bipedalism
run after prey and carry weapons	carnivorous predators
shed body hair	shed body fur
pair-bonding	pair bonding

Paragraph E flows into F with “as is the norm for almost all terrestrial animals”(E6)“It is not the norm for marine mammals”(F1). This author wonders if the switch from *animals to mammals* was done to vary the lexis or to make a stronger association between ‘humans’ and mammals, rather than animals, suggesting elitism.

The final paragraph ties everything together by summarizing all of the points mentioned in both theories: bipedalism, loss of body hair, sexual intercourse.

### **2.1.3 – Lexical links**

Lexical links feature prominently, of which some may be exemplified in Chart 3 on the following page. As can be seen, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy are well exploited within four categories basic to the essay, making effective inter-paragraph relations.

Chart 3 – Lexical links throughout the text

	evolution	human beings	bipedalism	argument
Paragraph A	development; transition	human beings man-like ape ape-like man		argument disagreements
Paragraph B	evolution missing link	man-like apes Australopithecus Homo Habilis Homo Erectus modern man anthropoids	bipedal	problem disputes
Paragraph C	changes in physiology	proto-human ape hominds		theory argued
Paragraph D	descendants alterations	ape to human proto-humans primates	stand upright bipedalism	hypothesis claims
Paragraph E	evolutionary changes change transformation evolutionary strategy	naked ape primates humans terrestrial animal	bipedalism two (legs)	hypothesis theory contention not disputed
Paragraph F	creatures much changed physiological differences	marine creatures primates man-like apes proto-humans homo sapiens		hypothesis theory
Paragraph G	adaptation development result in altered		bipedalism on two feet stand on hind legs quadropedalism	their account argument
Paragraph H	a shift in the centre of gravity development of a flexible spine	humans ape homo sapiens primate		contention point to the fact
Paragraph I	evolution missing link	human human beings homo aquaticus	bipedalism	claim

## 2.2 – Intra-Paragraph Cohesion

An examination of cohesion within the paragraphs shows how the argument is presented at a micro-level, as well as the perlocutionary effect of the words on the presentation of the argument.

### 2.2.1 – Lexical cohesion

The text's opening gambit is made in paragraph A with the introduction of a conflict in theory (see 2.1.1):

“While there may be some argument over *details*, palaeontologists are generally agreed...” (A1).

The subordinate clause is acknowledging where the differences in opinion exist, which is in the *details*. Matched with:

“There are major disagreements... attempting to explain what happened in the period immediately preceding this...” (A3)

we get a narrowing of time to the period under scrutiny. The links are made with the phrases ‘some argument (A1)/major disagreement’(A3).

The second paragraph is more focused by stating where the problem lies:

“The problem centres around...the ‘missing link’”(B1)

This is signaled with ‘centres around’. From here, there is continuous recycling of vocabulary related to human evolution and evidence, or lack of it, since the problem regards the ‘missing link’. There is the following chain of hyponyms:

missing link (B1)→ man-like apes (Ramapithecus)(B2)→ Australopithecus(B3)→  
H. Habilis(B3)→H. Erectus(B3) → anthropoids(B4) → modern man(B4)

What is interesting with this set of words is that the order of ‘species’ is listed in the order of believed human evolution, creating a very strong image of the topic of evolution. Furthermore, there are five references to fossils, including ‘bone analysis’

and 'hard evidence', which is equated with fossils.

While making a self-contained text, the use of 'problem' and 'disputes persist' to begin and end the paragraph also signal the fact of conflict.

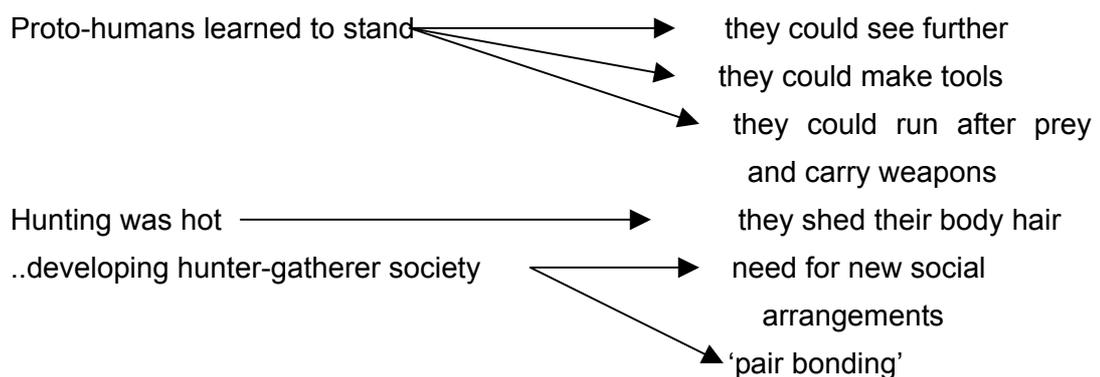
The enumerating phrase "...attempts to account for.... in terms of " (C1) signals that the elements accounting for changes in physiology will be listed. In a sense, this is one of Austin's performatives: doing what one says one is doing (Coulthard 1985).

"Meant" was used twice in paragraph C, indicating that the following information is an interpretation, or consequence of the previous situation (condition-consequence clause relation). The use of "It is argued' (C3) implies that the argument is a theory which has not yet been proven.

### 2.2.2 – Clause relations

Clause relations play an important role in paragraph D's cohesion, as can be seen below (Diagram 4).

Diagram 4



All of the above clauses are part of the savannah argument, and are condition – consequence relations, as the co-ordinates signaled: in order to, and, so, led to. The

final claim is framed as a phenomenon-reason clause structure:

ventro-ventral sex developed  $\longrightarrow$  cement the pair bond

Each event has a direct influence on the occurrence of the next event.

### 2.2.3 – Lexical signals

Paragraph E is presenting common ground information, realized with the lexical choice 'It observes', followed by animal facts. Yet having this information here is of strategic importance since these observations mock the simplicity of the savannah theory. If how ideas are worded influences the interpretation of the discourse, presenting the savannah theory in a simple linear fashion of condition-consequence with no hard evidence to support its claims, weakens the argument. This weakness is emphasized in E, which deals with current evidence on how life for all creatures on the savannah exists, followed by a more substantial argument in support of the aquatic theory. Thus, it is in essence acting as an opening to the counter-arguments against the savannah theory. This is accomplished with puns ('it's difficult to see [understand] how a little extra vision'), mocking clauses (the apparently [questionable] deviant evolutionary strategy adopted by the naked ape) and asides ("(gibbons are in fact much more strictly monogamous than humans)").

In contrast, the arguments put forth in support of the aquatic theory 'read' in a more academic manner and include examples to support its claims, as well as vocabulary which lend to a sounder, more confident argument. For example, lexical signals include: *this insight, simply stated, had already been introduced, stress the fact, proceeds by noting, would result in, point to the fact, demonstrably.*

#### **2.2.4 – Co-ordinating vocabulary**

There are more instances of co-ordinating vocabulary in the aquatic theory as opposed to the parallelism found in the savannah theory's argument. Co-ordinates create the image of an argument substantiated by facts. Without a contrasting element, parallel structures can weaken an argument by blending the clauses into each other. Most co-ordinations are made with 'and' in the savannah theory, as contrasted with these in the aquaticists' stance:

'not from..but from.., however' (paragraph F), 'with the single exception of man', in order to, due to, result in' (G) 'hence, is far more... than.., if.. then..' (H).

## **2.2 - Text Patterns**

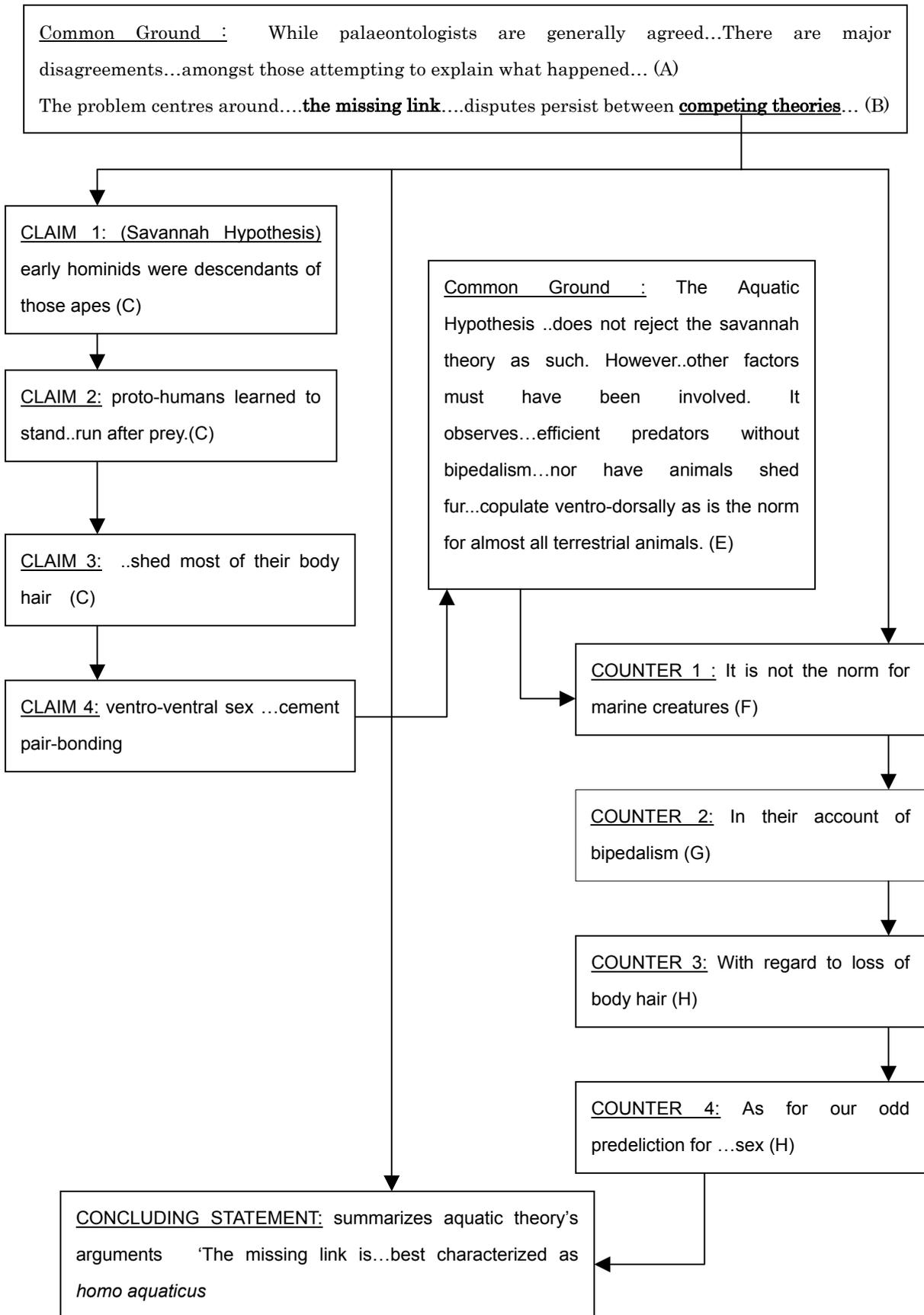
### **2.3.1 – Main pattern**

The inter-/intra-paragraph cohesive elements discussed above can be shown in Diagram 5 (overleaf). As may be discerned from this schematization, the essay is structured on a Claim – Counter-claim pattern. Paragraphs A and B provide the context for the argument with common information.

The first claim for the savannah theory is made with 'early hominids were descendants of those apes' (C3). Claims 2 through 4 are presented in paragraph D, as signaled by 'According to the savannah theory...'

As discussed in section 2.3.3, paragraph E appears to have a dual function of presenting common ground and of introducing the counter-claims that are expanded upon in paragraphs G and H. The argument is brought to a close in paragraph I.

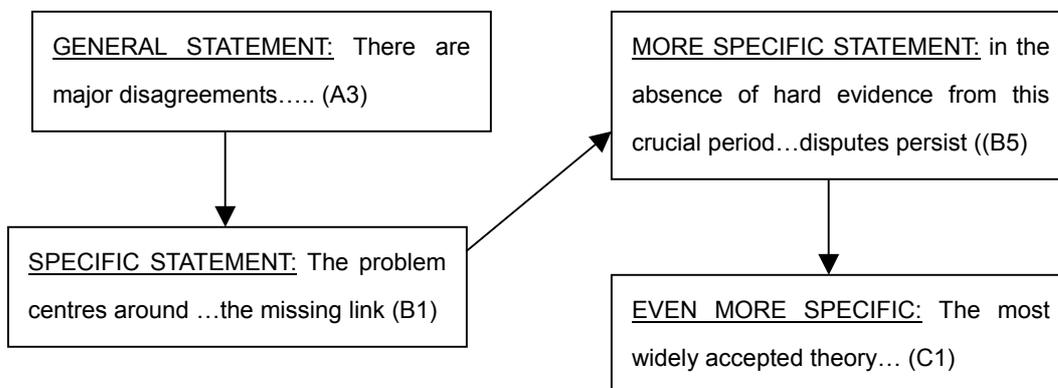
Diagram 5 – Overall structure of the essay



### 2.3.2 – Sub patterns

A sub pattern of G.S. is evident in the presentation of paragraphs A, B and C. As Diagram 6 suggests, the paragraphs outline where the problem of theories of human evolution lie, with the most specific statement made in C, followed by the claims supporting the savannah theory.

Diagram 6 - General-Specific sub-pattern in the essay



## 3 – TEXT ANALYSIS IN AN L2 CLASSROOM

### 3.1 – The need to address reading skills in Japanese classrooms

As demonstrated in section 2, text cohesion relies on the interaction of various linguistic elements such as clause relations, vocabulary and grammatical structures. For L2 learners, understanding and making the relations between these elements can be difficult (Holland 2001), especially when the approach to language learning is bottom-up (Johns 1994; Cook 1984). This is a situation in which many Japanese learners appear to find themselves (Gorusch1998).

Progressing from studying grammar and vocabulary in non-contextualised

instances to understanding longer texts can be frustrating for the learner, with some learners developing anxiety towards reading (Matsuda and Gobel 2001; Holland 2001). The misuse, overuse or lack of cohesive links can lead to confusion for the reader; either because of ideas being joined incorrectly ('Because I went to the store, I wanted to buy some milk.') or the wrong ideas being joined, making incoherent text ('I went to his office but he wasn't there. I wanted to speak to Peter'.)(Kharma, cited in McDevitt 1989:22; see also, Zamel 1982; Tomlinson 1983).

The question is not only how to teach learners to recognize cohesion in a text but also how to use it; for while a text may include multiple elements of cohesion, addressing all of them and maintaining focus on the message would either aggravate reading anxiety or alienate the students. From personal experience, losing the interest of students when having a reading class is a primary concern as many already have a relatively negative view of reading in English. This could be a culmination of: reading anxiety, grammar-translation from secondary school (*yakudoku*), a false sense of security regarding their reading ability and the misconception that communication equals speaking, not reading and writing.

I have chosen a newspaper article entitled 'Japan's New Children' (Appendix 3) to consider this problem. It will be analyzed for its cohesive elements and textual patterns in order to decide upon a suitable method of exploiting it in my classroom.

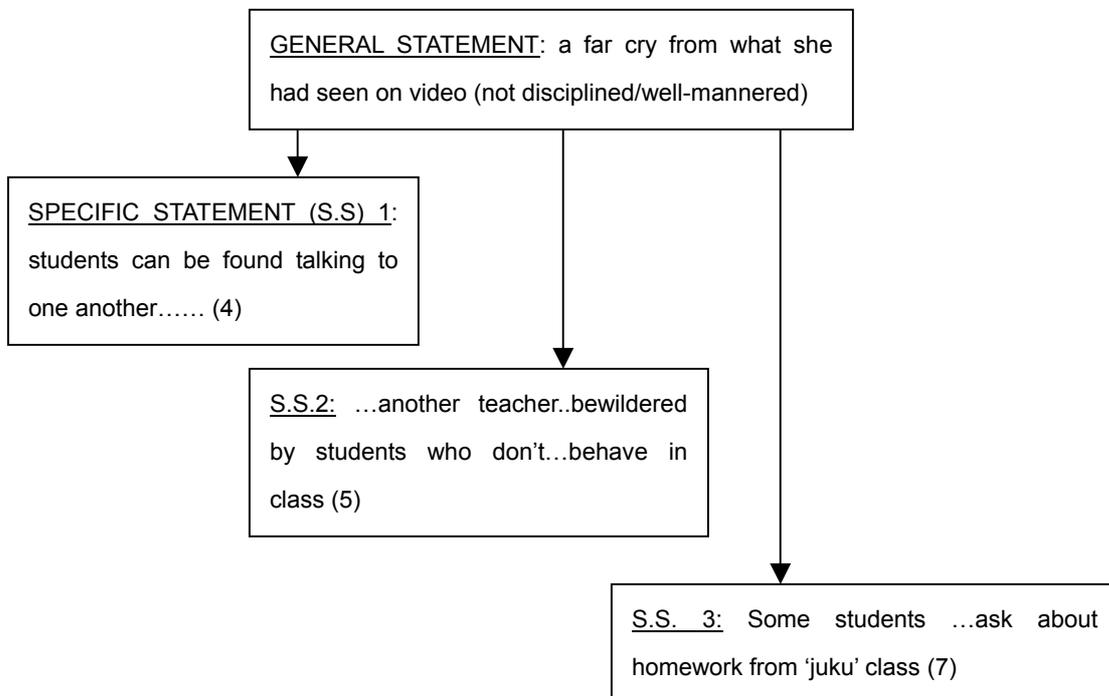
### **3.2 – Analysis of 'Japan's New Children'**

The text seems to be structured on a cause-effect pattern, with two sub-patterns: a contrasting pattern and a general-specific pattern. For ease of reference, the sentences of the article have been numbered.

The first paragraph introduces the problem under discussion by contrasting two situations: 'Before Jessica Parker came to Tokyo(1)/What she found at two public junior high schools in Tokyo' (2). This contrast is immediately evident with 'However' although the phrases 'Before...came to Tokyo' / 'what...found in Tokyo' indicate it, as well. It is also signaled with the lexical choice - on the video, students were 'disciplined and well-mannered'(2), but in reality, it 'was a far cry from what she had once seen on video'(3).

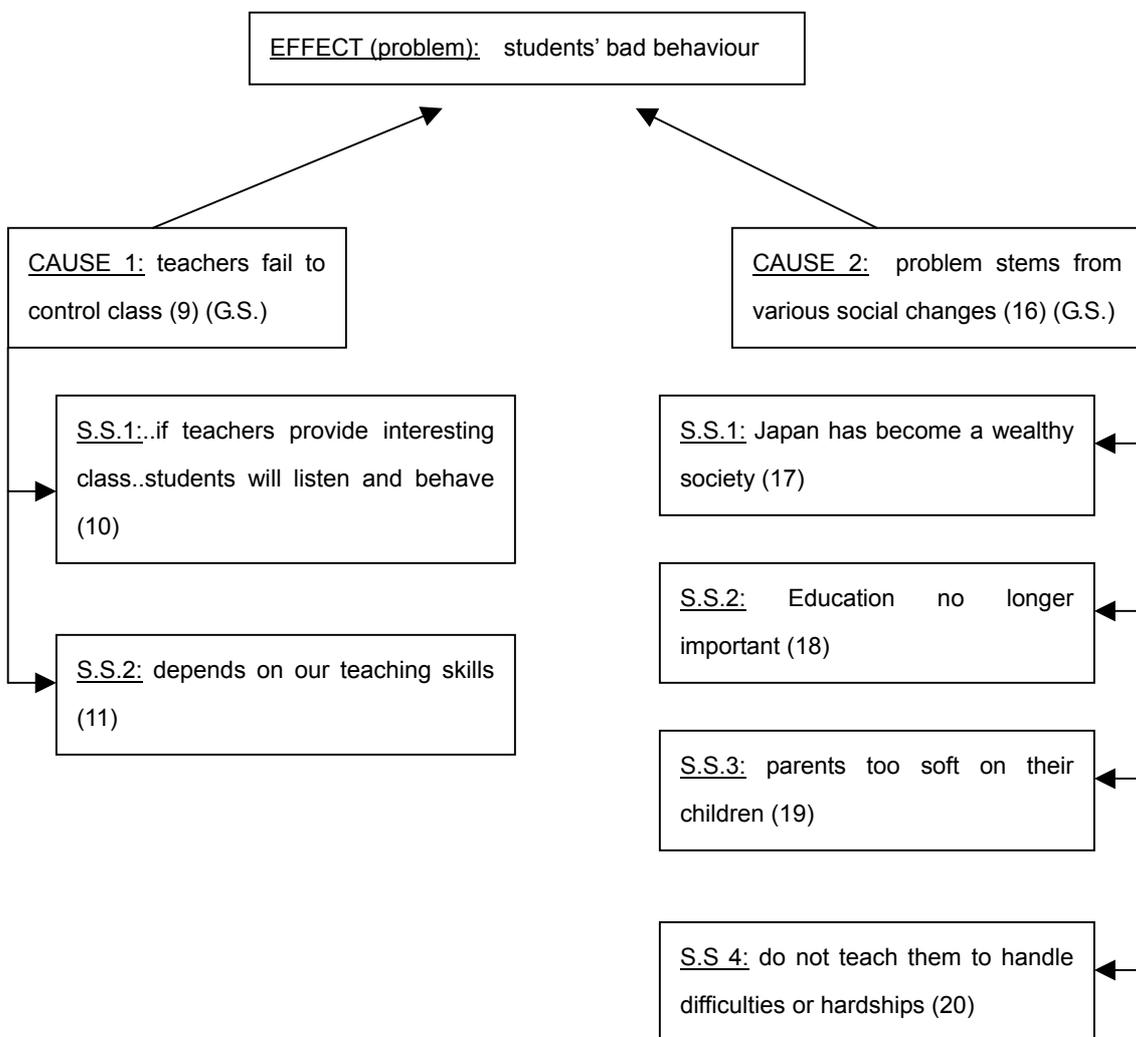
This contrast introduces the problem of students' bad behaviour, indicated by the lexical choice stated above. Sentences 4, 5 and 6 provide examples of this, creating the second sub-pattern of G.S. (Diagram 7)

Diagram 7 – General-Specific sub-pattern of “Japan’s New Children”.



This G.S. pattern appears two more times, always relating back to the problem of students' bad behaviour in attempts to explain why this problem exists. This creates an overall pattern of Cause and Effect (Diagram 8), with the students' behaviour the effect of two main causes. These are introduced with 'She confesses that she blames herself' (9) and 'Kawakami says the problem is not so simple' (16).

Diagram 8 – Cause-Effect pattern with sub-pattern of General-Specific



Within the text, sentences 13 through 15 appear to function as a reformulation of the first Cause-Effect presentation, indicated by the reporting verb 'agrees' (13). At the same time, it is providing further justification for the claim made regarding students attitudes.

How knowledge of this pattern and these inter-textual elements can be exploited in class will be addressed in the next sections.

### **3.3 – Reasons For Choosing This Text**

The article was part of a series addressing education issues in Japan. This particular one discussed the negative attitudes of today's youth towards formal education, particularly English class.

Japanese news media and television dramas bombard us with negative images of today's youth: their lack of manners and ambition, their anti-social tendencies, bullying and violence. Do students agree with this depiction?

There is also the attitude that the education system is ineffective and classes are boring. It seems to concern my students as well. They have weekly reading assignments based on CALL (computer assisted language learning) and many have chosen texts related to formal education and home schooling. Do the students agree with the suggested causes of why students misbehave?

Apart from what the content has to offer the students, it also exhibits strong elements of cohesion and textual patterning which lend themselves to classroom teaching.

### **3.4 – Class Context**

My learners are first year university students, aged 18-19. As they are taking class because it is required, their level of motivation varies. Furthermore, while they have had six years of English grammar and vocabulary through 'yakudoku', they cannot communicate effectively.

Since one course goal is to improve communication, there will be the three-fold aim of recognizing one pattern of text organization, improving comprehension of referents and subordinate clauses and applying them in both written and spoken English. This will be done through a consciousness-raising approach.

#### **3.4.1 – Lesson 1**

The students are given a task worksheet to prepare them for the reading (Worksheet 1). In Task 1, students are asked to discuss the questions in their group. The questions were chosen for their potential interest raising power. 'Be-Bob High School' is a famous animation and comic book series about high school delinquents. Thus, the pre-discussion should immediately focus students to the questions being asked.

Worksheet 1

- Task 1
1. Do you know the animation 'Be-Bop High School'? What is the school like?
  2. Is your high school similar to Be-Bop high school? Why or Why not?
  3. Student life is often a topic on news programs and t.v. dramas. How do they describe students? For example, 'Students spend most of their time studying' or 'Bullying (*ijime*) is happening more'.

Task 2

Japan's New Children

Before Jessica Parker came to Tokyo as an AET from Canada, she was shown a video of a Japanese public junior high school's students in class to help prepare for her new job. Parker was impressed by the disciplined and well-mannered students. However, what she found was a far cry from what she had once seen on video.

**on video, students  
are (disciplined and  
well-mannered \_\_\_\_\_)**

**V.S.  
(however)**

**what she found was  
(a far cry from what  
has seen on video)**

Task 3 : Read these 2 sentences. Which one best describes Jessica Parker's feelings?

1. Japanese students are good.
2. Japanese students are bad.

The teacher asks the students to look at Task 2 and tells them that there are two opposing ideas about Japanese students. The teacher asks them to read the

paragraph and complete the diagram. They are encouraged to work in their group.

After the activity has been corrected, the students are given a choice of two summarizing sentences (Task 3). At this point, the students may not know the answer because of difficulty with some vocabulary: *impressed*, *disciplined*, *well-mannered* and *a far cry from*; but they will be encouraged to guess. The teacher then gives them the article to read. The subordinate clauses have been blanked out, and referents have been highlighted (Worksheet 2 Task 4). They are directed to read the article, draw arrows from the referent to its noun, and try to answer Task 3's question one more time. The purpose of this is help them focus on the ideas of the text; connecting the referents with their noun is to aid in comprehension.

The teacher then asks them, How do you know the answers? Hopefully, a few students will brave an answer, with the teacher responding, 'Ah-hah! Yes, the article gives examples!! Because, of course, if someone gives their opinion, they should give examples of why they think so!!'. The teacher proceeds to ask if these things happened in their classes in high school. Do they do these things in university class?

Students are then given a second task sheet with a diagram on it (Task 5). Students complete it using the information from the previous discussion, thus demonstrating how they can organize their thoughts when preparing to write.

The teacher then draws to their attention that there are two other people besides Jessica Parker, and elicits their names. The question is then posed: Why are these people's words in this article? Are they giving examples of students' bad behaviour?

Worksheet 2 - Task 4: 'Japan's New Children' (excerpted from the Japan Times)

Before Jessica Parker came to Tokyo as an AET from Canada, she was shown a video of a Japanese public junior high school's students in class to help prepare for her new job. Parker was impressed by the disciplined and well-mannered students \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. However, what she found \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ was a far cry from what she had once seen on video.

\_\_\_\_\_, students can often be found talking to one another, reading comics, drawing cartoons, writing letters to friends and sometimes even playing cards.

Keiko Sato is another teacher \_\_\_\_\_ frequently bewildered by her students \_\_\_\_\_.

"\_\_\_\_\_, they don't even try to hide it because they don't think are doing anything wrong. Some students even have the nerve to ask me questions about their homework from 'juku' during class."

If she scolds them or interrupts what they are doing, some of her students become irritated and begin cursing at her, saying 'kudaranee' or 'urasee'.

**She confesses that** she often blames herself for failing to control the class. "**Some people say that** if teachers provide an interesting class, then the students will listen and behave. So it totally depends on our teaching skills.

"They may be right, but I've lost confidence in myself as a teacher."

**Ryoichi Kawakami agrees that** it is difficult for one teacher to change students' attitudes. "Many students today have a very strong ego, and they have difficulty accepting other people's opinions. At the same time, they are vulnerable to peer pressure."

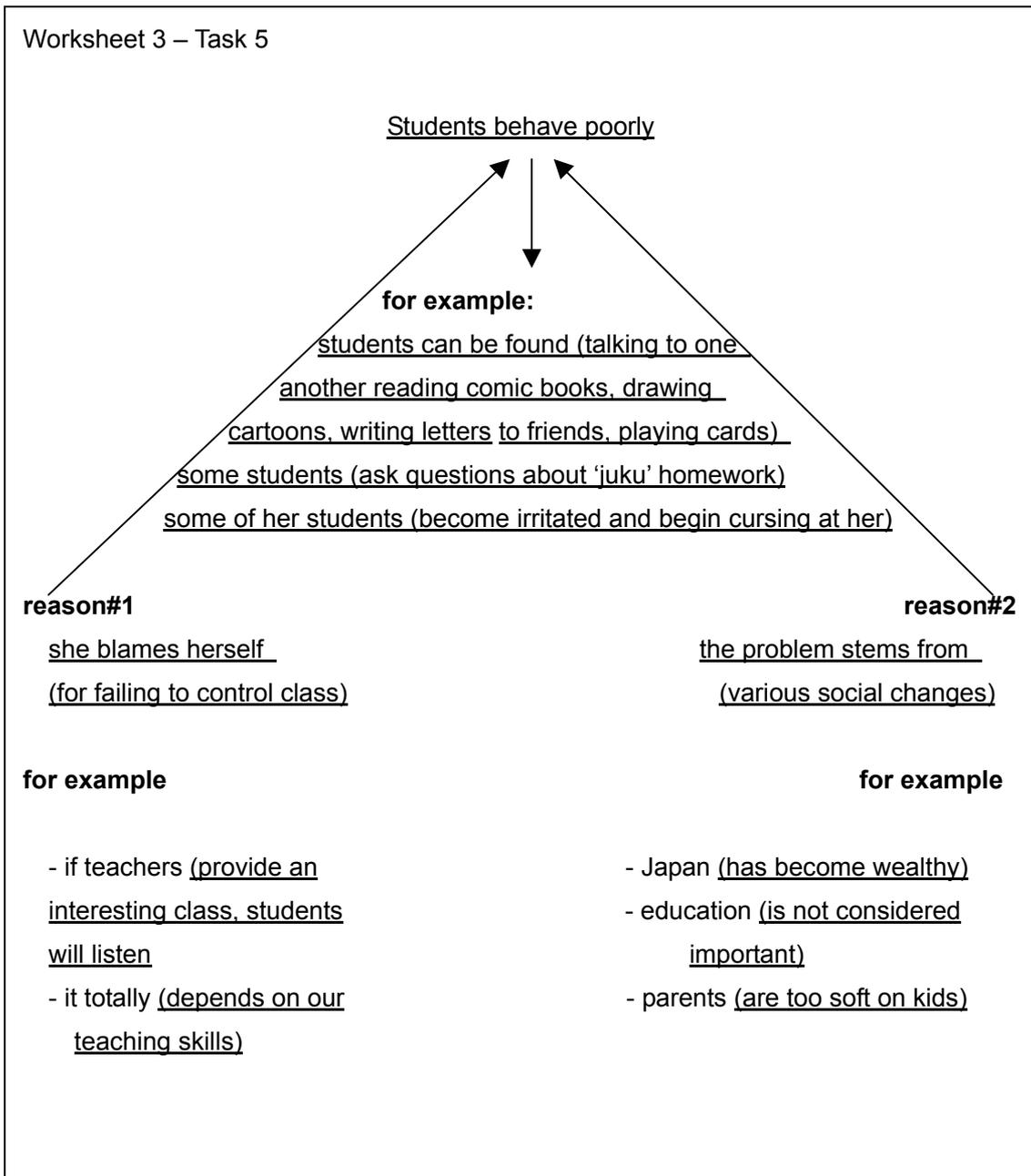
**Kawakami says** the problem is not so simple as poor teachers, but **that it stems from** various social changes.

"Japan has become a wealthy society, and people can support themselves, at any type of work. Education is no longer considered important as a way to escape poverty."

He also feels that parents today are too soft on their children. While they may care about their children, they do not teach them how to handle difficulties or hardships."

The focus shifts to 'She confesses that' and 'Kawakami says that it stems from'. As

these phrases could be problematic, the class works together to understand them.  
 “These people are giving reasons why they think students misbehave”. With this clue,  
 students complete the rest of the diagram from Task 5.



Hopefully, the students can see the pattern and understand how useful it is in

organizing and presenting their ideas. To have students try to apply this, they will be assigned a writing task to consider and answer this problem. “Do you agree that some students have a bad attitude in class? Do you agree with either of the two reasons given in the article? Why? Try to think of examples from your high school days.” Depending on the time, this will either be done in class or for homework. The next class will deal with the subordinate clauses, which were removed from their copy of the text.

### **3.4.2 – Lesson 2**

To begin the class, students are put into groups for a small discussion: how many students think that students have a bad behaviour and what examples can they provide. For students who think that there is, why do they think it happens?

The teacher then asks, was yesterday’s article difficult, or could you understand it? He/she then draws attention to the blanks and says the missing information was not necessary for understanding the text, but it gave **extra** information.

The students are then given the missing subordinate clauses to read over. If there are not any questions with their meanings, they then proceed to try and fit them into the article. They can work in their groups.

After they have had time to solve the ‘problem’, they then form new groups to compare answers. I would let them discuss this in Japanese because discussing this in English is beyond the level of my classes, and the purpose is for them to understand why the clauses fit in where they do, not to explain their choices. They would also be asked if having these clauses in the text makes it more difficult to read, or if it does not make a difference. If it is more difficult, then the suggestion is made that when they

have a text with clauses like these in them to ignore them at first.

Because students have studied relative clauses before but have difficulties in using them, they would be given a grammar exercise involving a short text. The students would need to condense it using referents and where possible, relative clauses. The relative clause marker would be given. For example:

Do you have a favourite season? My favourite season is winter because I love winter sports. I especially love snowboarding, although I'm not very good at snowboarding. I often go snowboarding with my friend. **(who)** My friend is a snowboarding instructor and a slalom racer. My friend says that I am getting better, and that I am almost good enough to enter a competition, although I may not win a competition. My friend suggested I try the course at Ajigasawa. **(which)** The course at Ajigasawa is challenging but safe for intermediate level 'boarders like myself.

At this point, class would shift to a discussion activity where they would need to first organize their thoughts before presenting their opinion, which would recycle the previous lesson. Keeping within range of the reading's topic, the question might involve giving an opinion on the question: Would you rather have a native speaking English teacher or a Japanese speaking English teacher?

#### **4- DISCUSSION**

From past experience, it seems that while students have confidence in reading in English, they tend to lose sight of the ideas being conveyed in a text due to the multiple

use of referents and the clause relations. It was for this reason that “Japan’s New Children” was approached in the way it was. While time-consuming at first, I feel that establishing the links between referents and their nouns makes the most basic of links highly visible, allowing the reader to follow the ideas more easily. By seeing how they are used, hopefully the learners can gain a better understanding of the application of pronouns.

My learners in particular confuse the use of pronouns and personal pronouns. They know the difference in meaning, but they seem to apply them at random. Some of this misuse could simply be from lack of effort ‘to get things right’, but this does not seem to be true in many instances.

Sub-ordinate clauses, especially relative clauses, seem to be problematic, as well, even though they have been covered quite thoroughly in high school. This could be a case in point for the argument against discrete point grammar learning: knowing what the structure is and being able to form it in an isolated instance, but being confused by it in a longer text.

While the above treatment of these two elements is not extensive, they can be recycled regularly in almost any lesson, especially the referents.

As for Task 5, it is hoped that by having the students complete the diagram of organization, they will understand a little better one way of organizing their ideas, whether in a written activity or a speaking one. Taking this approach rather than explaining how to organize ideas is done with the idea of student discovery in mind. If students discover the patterns then it will be more meaningful and thus they will retain the knowledge longer. Again, this is a knowledge that can be re-applied in almost any class.

It seems that reading does not get the proper treatment it deserves in ESL/EFL classes and by this I do not mean the studying of English literature. Once more, from experience in both English conversation schools and at universities, the proscribed approach has been either only oral English or in some form of proficiency test preparation. This neglect can be felt in many aspects, of which three will be mentioned.

If learners are to increase their vocabulary, they need exposure to it and not in the form of lists or in topic related categories. They need to see how the vocabulary can be used before they can use it in any meaningful way. Texts are a rich source of lexis, and by choosing ones that are not overly long nor beyond the level of the learners, students can glean so much, not only in collocations but simply by expanding their semantic maps, as would happen for advance learners with the evolution essay.

Learners can express themselves quite eloquently in their L1 but naturally have difficulties in composing thoughts of the same caliber in their L2. They can study and manipulate structures with substitution tables and other grammar exercises, but to see how ideas relate in longer texts requires exposure to authentic texts.

With the expansion of the global community, the importance of being able to communicate orally seems to be of high importance in Japan. However, most learners will not be posted overseas nor will they have regular face-to-face communication with other English speakers. Instead, the author contends that the demand for English communication will likely manifest itself with e-mail or the accessing of web based information. This would seem to insinuate a greater demand for better reading and writing skills than is at the present, thus making written discourse more than just a poor cousin of spoken English.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper has summarized some of the elements inherent in text organization, and has attempted to demonstrate how written discourse analysis can be adapted to a second language classroom. As well, it has tried to raise some issues related to the second place importance that is put on writing and reading in EFL classes in Japan.

Patterns of organization, and the ways in which grammar and vocabulary work to make ideas relate to each other in a comprehensible manner, is relevant to both oral and written communication. Not only are texts rich sources of them, but by choosing texts which are of topical interest to students, reading and writing lessons can blend into oral lessons, providing students with the multiple exposure to the language, which helps them to eventually incorporate it into their store of L2 resources.

## Appendix 1 – Winter’s Classification of Lexical Signals

Vocabulary 1 : Subordinators	Vocabulary 2 : Co-ordinators	Vocabulary 3 Lexical Items of Connection
<p>After; (al)though; as; (as though); as far as; apart from ___ing; as well as ___ing; at the same time as; on the basis that; because; before; besides ___ing; by ___ing by the time that; except that; far from ___ing; for; from the moment that; given that; granted that; on the grounds that; how; however; if; as if; even if; in addition to ___ing; in order to/that; in spite of ___ing; in case; instead of –ing; insasmuch as; no matter how; now that; once; on condition that; provided that; rather than ___ing; seeing that; short of –ing; since; so that; so...that; such that; so much so that; than; supposing that; that; unless; until; what; whenever; when; whatever; where; wherever; whereas; which; while; who; why; with the result that; etc.</p>	<p>Accordingly; in addition; All the same; also; Alternatively; and; Anyway; as such; As a result; at any rate; At least; at the same time Basically; besides; but; In that case; In such circumstances; In comparison; Consequently; In contrast; conversely; On the contrary; Correspondingly; Differently; equally; Essentially; in the event; For example; for instance; For this reason; For this purpose; Furthermore; generally; In general; hence; Here; hitherto; however; Indeed; in effect; In fact; in reply; in return; In short; in turn; instead In this way; in other words In spite of this; likewise; Meanwhile; moreover; Nevertheless; otherwise; On the other hand; rather; In particular; similarly; So; more specifically; Still; then; therefore; Thereafter; thereby; There; therein; though; Thus; that is to say; To be more precise; Etc.</p>	<p>Achieve; addition; action Affirm; alike; analogous; Antithesis; attitude; Attribute; basis; case; Cause; characteristic; Change; common; Compare; compatible; Concede; conclude; Condition; confirm; connect Consequence; constant; Contradict; contrast; Correct; corressond; deny Deduction; depend; differ Differentiate; distinction; Distinguish; do; effect; Equal; error; evaluation Event; exemplify; except Exception; explanation; Fact; feature; follow; form Function; general; grounds Happen; hypothetical; Identify; instance; Instrumental; justification; Kind; lead to; like(ness) Manner; match; matter; Mean; means of; method; Move; name; observation; Object; opposite; parallel Particular; point; problem; Real; reason; reciprocate Repeat; replace; reply; Requirement; resemble; Respect; result; reverse Same; similar; situation Sort; solution; specify; state; subsequent; Synonymous; technique; Time; truth; unique; way Etc.</p>

## Appendix 2 – Essay on Human Evolution

A 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. (1) 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. (2) 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. (3)

B The problem centres around what is popularly known as the ‘missing link’. (1) We have fossil evidence of man-like apes (*Ramapithecus*) which lived in the East African Rift Valley around 9 million years ago. (2) There are relatively plentiful fossilized remains of *Australopithecus*, *Homo Habilis*, and *Homo Erectus*, from the same area and dating from 3.7 million years B.P. onwards. (3) 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. (4) But there is a gap (what Leaky 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, serious – and often bitter – disputes persist between competing theories of human evolution. (5)

C 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. (1) 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. (2) It is argued that early hominids were descendants of those apes which emerged from the dwindling forests on to the plains – a move which inevitably meant alterations in diet, precipitating a development from vegetarian to carnivore and ultimately, hunter. (3)

D According to the ‘Savannah Hypothesis’, all the startling evolutionary changes leading from ape to human proceed from here. (1) The proto-humans learned to stand on two legs in order to see further – providing ‘early warning’ of the approach of predators across the plains. (2) 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.

(3) Hunting on the hot plains was uncomfortable for creatures which had evolved in the shady forests, and they shed most of their body hair to prevent overheating. (4) 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. (5) 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. (6)

E 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. (1) The centrality of climatic change and the transformation undergone on the savannah from 3 million years BP onwards are not disputed. (2) However, the theory takes as its starting point the contention that other factors must have been involved. (3) 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. (4) 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’. (5) 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. (6)

F It is not, however, the norm for marine creatures, and it is this insight which lies at the heart of the aquatic theory. (1) 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 mammals must at one time have done. (2) 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. (3) 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. (4)

G 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. (1)

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 on to all fours in order to run. (2) 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 so to do so due to the buoyancy of that water provides. (3) 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. (4) All these would make it more difficult for such an animal to revert to quadropedalism on its return to a terrestrial existence. (5)

H 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. (1) 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. (2) 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. (3) The vast majority of marine mammals copulate ventro-ventrally, and the exceptions are largely those species which come ashore to mate.(4)

I 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. (1) The aquaticists claim that the similarities between human beings and their marine relatives (a number of 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. (2) The 'missing link' is, from this point of view, best characterized as *homo aquaticus*.

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

**Appendix 3 – Article: Japan’s New Children** (excerpted from the Japan Times, circa 1998/99, precise date unknown)

JAPAN’S NEW CHILDREN (The Japan Times)

Before Jessica Parker came to Tokyo as an AET from Canada, she was shown a video of a Japanese public junior high school’s students in class to help prepare for her new job. (1) Parker was impressed by the disciplined and well-mannered students who were listening quietly and seriously to their teachers. (2) However, what she found when she actually began teaching at two public junior high schools in Tokyo a year ago was a far cry from what she had once seen on video. (3)

During one of the classes she is currently teaching, students can often be found talking to one another, reading comic books, drawing cartoons, writing letters to friends and sometimes even playing cards. (4)

Keiko Sato is another English teacher who is also frequently bewildered by her students who don’t seem to know how to behave in class. (5)

“When students are not paying attention to the teacher, they don’t try to hide it because they don’t think that they are doing anything wrong. (6) Some students even have the nerve to ask me questions about their homework from ‘juku’ class”. (7)

If she scolds them or interrupts what they are doing, some of her students become irritated and begin cursing at her, saying ‘kudaranee’ or ‘urasee’. (8)

She confesses that she often blames herself for failing to control class. (9) “Some people say that if teachers provide an interesting class, then the students will listen and behave. (10) So it totally depends on our teaching skills. (11) “They may be right, but I’ve lost confidence in myself as a teacher.” (12)

Ryoichi Kawakami agrees that it is difficult for one teacher to change students’ attitudes. (13) “Many students today have a very strong ego, and have difficulty accepting other people’s opinions. (14) At the same time, they are vulnerable to peer pressure.” (15)

Kawakami says the problem is not so simple as poor teachers, but that it stems from various social changes. (16)

“Japan has become a wealthy society, and people can support themselves, at any type of work. (17) Education is no longer considered important as a way to escape poverty.” (18)

He also feels that parents today are too soft on their children. (19) While they may care about their children, they do not teach them to handle difficulties or hardships. (20)

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