

Assignment WD/02/05

Referential Discourse Structures and the Creation of Text:

An Analysis of Student Writing Samples

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1 Introduction

Classroom materials designed to develop particular areas of writing occasionally feature activities in which the language dealt with is extended from sentence to discourse level. For Brown (1994), ‘discourse’ refers to such things as a student’s effective use of topic sentences, paragraph unity, transitions, cohesion, and rhetorical conventions. This requires learners to consider the overall purpose of their written compositions, not just the immediate sentence-bound grammatical context. During the implementation of a set of written discourse activities for an L2 classroom the notion of referential items as a means of creating ‘textuality’ beyond the immediate sentence level was introduced to students. Learners were asked to produce compositions that incorporated a variety of discourse items (e.g. pronouns, demonstratives, and articles) and adopt methods that could demonstrate their ability to refer either forward, backward, or outside the text of their own writing. In this way, they were to try linking notions and ideas over greater distances while considering the functional consequences of the referential items they used. Kallgren remarks: “The content of a text is not merely an enumeration of referents; an important part of the content is the relations that the text establishes between the referents”(1978: 150 in Brown and Yule: 201). For the purposes of this paper, discussion will focus on two separate business-related composition activities and include a detailed examination of the relevant discourse forms students were able to incorporate into their writing. In addition, a review of the literature on the topic and an explanation of the general contextual background in which the writing took place will be illustrated. Finally, a discussion of the outcomes of the trial and their implications on current teaching practice will be discussed.

1.1 Materials

Written discourse tasks assigned to the class under discussion were ‘application activities’, defined by Richards and Lockhart (1996: 165) as those in which students “complete a written assignment incorporating rhetorical and discourse devices using ideas and information of their own.” Both schematic and systemic assumptions were taken into account during the design of the activities and involved developing material students would most likely have relative knowledge about, as well as language structures to complete. In general, closed-task structures were decided on since these would provide the students with a clear goal, more support, and opportunities to incorporate specific discourse devices into their written compositions. Models of writing were provided for the students to consult when needed (see Appendices A & B).

1.2 Methodology/Learning Objectives

The degree of complexity in the writing tasks described above was based on the needs of the activity/discourse and manageability for learners. Schmitt and McCarthy (1997: 318) claim that we should assess a learner’s ability to deal with lexical items as they occur in whole texts and within a discourse task framework. In general, the activities placed a high priority on discourse-related skill development (i.e. devising effective topic sentences, paragraph unity, transitions, reference, fluency, etc.) and accorded less emphasis to the actual mechanics of writing – for instance, syntax and vocabulary building. One aim was to build ‘cohesion’ (grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements in a text) and ‘coherence’ (relationships

which link the meanings of the sentences in a text). This was to be achieved through the adoption of referential strategies (e.g. endophora, exophora, etc.) that identify retrievable entities both within and outside a text. In addition, the ‘function’ of lexical items as opposed to simply their semantic significance and ‘form’, was highlighted for students and represented a central theme in the set activities. Having learners look at specific texts and discover for themselves some of the ways English incorporates functional elements into writing assisted the process.

2 Contextual Background

2.1 Classes

A trial of the written discourse activities described above was conducted on a small group of ten Japanese students with TOEIC scores of between 550-750. All of the students had some experience communicating with foreigners: perhaps on the job, traveling, or in English conversation class. They possessed a substantial knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and had studied and could recognize a large number of idioms. The students were all employees of a foreign insurance firm and ability to communicate in English was a daily requirement for them. A formal needs analysis of the class indicated that all of the students were interested in raising their proficiency levels in English with a special emphasis on written skills in a business context. Taking into consideration the student’s familiarity with the target language, this suggested that a focus on business-related situations and tasks would be of most relevance to them and fit the overall criteria of classroom needs.

3 Review of the Literature

3.1 Grammar and Discourse

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975: 27) make a distinction between grammar - concerned with the formal properties of an item, and discourse - with what the speaker is using the item for. Coulthard (1985: 133) states that the discourse value of an item “depends also on what linguistic items have preceded it, what are expected to follow and what do follow.” Therefore, it is claimed, which function a particular grammatical item realizes can only be determined on the basis of its place in the overall discourse.

Brown and Yule (1983: 26) view discourse as the process in which language is used as “an instrument of communication in a context by a speaker/writer to express meanings and achieve intentions.” An item’s place in discourse is realized functionally by the pragmatic constraints that influence it. Brown (1994: 254) adds that such constraints play a role in conveying and interpreting meaning: “without the pragmatic contexts of discourse, our communications would be extraordinarily ambiguous.” McCarthy (1991: 18) sees this relationship as one in which “function is arrived at with reference to the participants, roles and settings in any discourse, and... linguistic forms are interpreted in light of these.” He adds that “when we say that a particular bit of speech or writing is a request or an instruction or an exemplification we are concentrating on what that piece of language is doing, or how the listener/reader is supposed to react...” That is, the stretches of language that are carrying the force of requesting, instructing, and so on are seen as performing a particular act. He adds that in

order for us to truly understand the function of particular linguistic items we must carefully consider the key situational features and surrounding text they appear in.

3.2 Reference and Discourse

Brown and Yule (1983: 27-8) see the nature of reference in text and in discourse as an action on the part of a speaker/writer. It describes what they are doing “not the relationship which exists between one sentence or proposition and another.” McCarthy (1991: 37) states that we must consider the notion of discourse segments as “functional units, rather than concentrating on sentences...and to see the writer/speaker as faced with a number of strategic choices as to how to relate segments to one another and how to present them to the receiver.” He adds that reference items can refer to segments of discourse or situations as a whole rather than to any one specified entity in that situation. Fox (1987: 139-40) claims that reference can be successfully made (for instance, through the use of pronouns) if the referent is “in focus, in consciousness, textually evoked or high in topicality” and where it “can be operationally defined in terms of the discourse structure.” To this end, referents are often realized through anaphoric (word or phrase referring backwards in a text), cataphoric (word or phrase referring forwards in a text), and exophoric (reference to assumed shared worlds outside the text) devices and can appear as functional units in discourse segmentation.

3.3 Cohesion/Discourse Coherence and Textuality

McDonough and Shaw (1993: 181-2) state that considerations of both

‘cohesion’ and ‘discourse coherence’ make up some of the criteria used when evaluating a piece of writing as communicative or not, and that sentence-level critiquing and grammar practice is not omitted but is “set in the context of a longer and purposeful stretch of language.” For Brown and Yule (1983: 191) cohesive relationships within a text are set up “where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another.” Discourse coherence, on the other hand, relates more to the ‘sense’ a reader makes of a text in semantic terms and whether it displays overall unity. Shiro (in Coulthard et al 1994: 174) adds that deciding whether a text is coherent or not results “to a large extent from the reader’s ability to infer the relations beyond sentence level that keep the text together.” This would also include particular points whose significance can only be appreciated in the light of what has gone before.

4 Trial of the Materials

4.1 Implementation

The overall approach to implementation of the written discourse activities consisted of two stages. The first stage exposed learners to models that featured a limited number of structural elements: transitional language, key phrases, fixed expressions, and other rhetorical devices. Students’ attention was also drawn to features of these texts that displayed functional uses of language at the discourse level. In the second stage they were given the opportunity to construct a piece of writing based on a business-related idea of their own. This represented a move from a lesson with a limited amount of skill-building to a looser, more process-driven one. Here the students focused

on theme and rheme considerations and began with a free-writing exercise in which they were to brainstorm ideas related to their business topic. Over the course of the activities many of the students successfully accommodated referential discourse items into their writing and associated them over great distances. Many of them were also able to establish a relationship with the reader by previewing, highlighting, evaluating and summarizing the rhetorical and organizational planes of their texts. Where reference is made to individual student compositions, refer to Appendices C & D.

5 Comments on the Outcome of the Trial

5.1 Overall Targets

The written discourse tasks the students were engaged in challenged them to construct sentences and passages based on the surrounding language context. In this way, they were to meet the logical and contextual demands of the exercise through the use of referential discourse items they felt were appropriate within a framework of cohesive restraints. This was to lead to a greater awareness of the overall ‘textuality’ (i.e. the way the parts of the text are organized and related to one another in order to form a meaningful whole) of their written compositions. To this end, there were varying degrees of success with the individual discourse activities outlined in **1.1** above.

5.2 Reference in Text and in Discourse

In addition to grammatical and syntactic criteria, the activities the students

attempted asked them to consider the possibility of binding their compositions following rules of discourse. The question of whether they could signal to their reader intentions through the use of reference is one of the issues Hoey (1991: 242-5) discusses. Native users of the language will often demonstrate an ability to carry propositions and refer backwards or forwards over great distances across a text. This is in contrast with second language learners who, even though demonstrating appropriate grammar and syntax, often limit their subject references locally to immediate adjacent sentences or to within the confines of the same paragraph. Through the use of deictic forms such as ‘it’ and ‘this’, many of the students established effective discourse structures outside such confines. ‘It’ in these cases served to directly refer to and maintain a topic already in-play, and ‘this’ reinforced theme or introduced new elements into the discourse. For instance, sample 2 discusses the small business concept of a rental rehearsal room for musicians and states that current businesses offering such services have “few differences in style”, which is later reiterated in the composition’s concluding sentence: “It must be a new style of amusement business.” A reader expects a restatement of this sort in any concluding paragraph, but what heightens the overall discourse effectiveness is that the writer also employs ‘this’ in: “this has a unique membership system”, and “this room will introduce...web reservation service”, that function to reinforce the focus of their theme and link their notion of the company’s original approach to business across sentences and paragraphs.

In contrast to the other writing samples which employed a variety of deictic forms as referential devices, sample 3 uses only the form ‘this’ to refer back to their recycle shop proposal and raise it to current focus throughout their discussion. ‘This’

functions both to make their business idea the focus of attention for the reader, but also creates new focuses of attention as the discourse progresses. For instance, the writer states that: “I propose recycle shop of daily goods as my small business. This offer daily goods for living to people who move.” The writer then begins the next paragraph with: “What I need to success this is three points” where they are now moving onto a different but related topic using the same deictic item. The notion that ‘this’ can make an entity into the focus of attention and also create new areas of attention (McCarthy 1991: 38-9) is demonstrated throughout the student’s composition. In addition, the writer employs the term “we” in their writing – presumably linked to the ‘someone’ of the sentences cited earlier as a way of drawing the reader into their world of recycling. They make the assumption that their reader has some knowledge of the recycling procedures they are describing and have probably benefited from such services at one time or another in the past. Here the writer is making use of reference to some kind of shared knowledge outside the text to further the discourse.

Sample 4 varies use of the forms ‘it’ and ‘this’ in a functional way. The student’s hand-made guitar shop proposal introduces the notion that not all customers are satisfied with the products currently on the market. This notion is introduced again through rephrasing in each and every paragraph as a way of signaling the composition’s larger textual structure across longer distances. For example, the notion of an “easy hand-making idea” in the first paragraph - emphasizing product originality and satisfaction for a customer of having a unique item - is referred to again in the second paragraph: “Generally most customer interested in music wants their original – it means not same as their friend – sound of guitar.” ‘It’ is used to maintain reader focus on the

notion of customized products and as a means of furthering the discourse. This use of ‘it’ occurs again in the third paragraph: “It is certain not hand made, but customer can get an original guitar and feel hand making with cheaper price.” And finally in the last paragraph there is a switch to ‘this’ representing a change of focus regarding the company’s size: “ After the business work well we expand the business. This is not big one. But we can provide an original guitar only one in the world to customers.” The writer here successfully signals their discourse shift to the reader.

5.3 Cohesion and Discourse Coherence

One way to assist students in establishing textuality in their writing is by having them utilize referential discourse items that link notions and propositions over greater distances. This can assist in approximating an L2 learner’s writing closer to native level where reference to subject can be made less frequently and over wider stretches while successfully maintaining cohesion and discourse coherence. In the student writing samples under discussion a number of them achieved these aims through the use of pronouns, demonstratives, and other referents to refer to subjects within their compositions and also outside the text (exophora). For instance, sample 1 makes reference outside the text to the web-oriented software “market” (something the reader is expected to have a certain amount of general knowledge about). The composition also adopts the deictic forms ‘it’, ‘this’, and ‘we’ functionally to help build the discourse structure in other ways. ‘It’ is used throughout the student’s writing to assist in maintaining focus for the reader on the viability of their web-based project:

...web projects are getting popular, it is a big market, and also needs new technology, so, the old big company and new small company have almost the same chance.

And, later, with the use of the item 'we' the learner again tries to strengthen their argument and the notion of their idea as low risk by linking the item anaphorically to the word "partner" earlier in the paragraph:

First step is focus on finding a partner, who will come up with me to establish the company...we will start more easily...we don't need many people, but we need to hire specialist on one particular area for a web project, and avoid duplication.

In the second paragraph the writer should have adopted a 'this' form instead of a definite article, but the intention the writer has of shifting focus to another topic ("outsourcing") is preserved:

Second, the [sic] strategy is base on low risk. Outsourcing will be the main way to make money. So this company does not need good and big office, and outsourcing also means our customer can help us to train our staff.

The writer then reverts to using 'it' again to tie the discourse segments together and relate them back to the subjects ('strategy', 'outsourcing', etc.) already in play.

Student writing sample 5 also successfully establishes a sense of textuality through the use of reference. The learner introduces their small business idea based on what is already their "hobby" and connects this with the composition's final sentence, which also serves as a conclusion. The writer states that: "I think it is good for me and the customer to open custom audio equipments shop." Here they have attempted to

establish a sense of textuality based on the overall notion of ‘it’ (an enjoyable hobby as a business idea). Sample 8 also adopts referential ‘it’ to describe the three different companies they respect in a functional way to maintain their established theme. The writer starts by mentioning their first company:

The first one is Sony. It is one of the oldest Japanese electronic equipment manufacturers, but always starts new businesses and leads the markets, such as music entertainment, movies, and even insurance.

They go on to adopt ‘it’ again in the opening of their second paragraph:

The second is Softbank. It is quite new company but grew dramatically and is making a huge profits with a small workforce. I think it is a new type of company that can adapt the changing market rapidly, and other companies should learn from them.

By using ‘it’ as a deictic item to refer anaphorically to their subject the writer allows the item to perform the job of maintaining focus on a topic already in-play in the discourse.

5.4 Staging and the Representation of Discourse Structure

McCarthy (1991: 52) states that theme and rheme considerations involve a speaker/writer making choices “independently of the prepositional content of the message; the speaker/writer decides how to ‘stage’ the information, where to start, so to speak, in presenting the message.” As mentioned earlier, the writer of Sample 1, in describing the advantages of starting a software development company, claims that “it is a good point to start it.” This notion is reiterated in the next paragraph with the sentence “web projects are getting popular now, it is a big market...a web-oriented software

company should make profit.” Finally, the writer claims that this company “will grow up quickly and has lower risk” as a way of again reiterating the feasibility of their small business idea. The discourse structure of the composition is effectively maintained by drawing on the reader’s shared understanding or general knowledge of Internet web projects and the possibilities of success in this medium even though this background is never explicitly mentioned. Sample 3 is another good example of the writer appealing to a reader’s general knowledge of recycling and how this can lead to a decrease in trash. The student uses a problem-solution format to present their idea of recycling furniture and other white goods in an attempt to provide a useful and environmentally friendly service to the community: “I propose recycle shop of daily goods as my small business...we believe this shop success leads to decrease trash.” The writer goes on to describe how people moving from one job to another can sell their goods to his company and then the company will re-sell them to new customers who might need them. The writer appeals to the reader’s general knowledge of recycling programs (a notion outside the text) and how they have the potential to reduce trash.

The writer of sample 7 makes an appeal to shared knowledge outside the text in its second and third paragraphs. They have been describing companies they respect and mention a popular Japanese restaurant called ‘Mos Burger’. The writer states that: “This is a burger restaurant. Its taste is pretty good and matching for Japanese taste.” Their inference seems to be to the shared notion most people would have of hamburgers as associated with Western culture (in particular, American) and how, despite what the reader might initially think, Japanese like the taste. The first sentence, “This is a burger restaurant” seems to function in a contrastive way with the second which claims that it

is “matching for Japanese taste.” In fact, contrast is one of the functions a ‘this’ item can perform in terms of overall discourse structure. The writer assumes they have provided enough for the reader to interpret the reference in this way. The third paragraph also uses this technique of contrast. The writer assumes the reader will share the notion of ‘cheap’ clothing versus ‘quality’ clothing with them:

The last one is UNIQLO. In this one or two years, the apparel company was grown up. They provide us cheap but good quality clothes, and many choices.

The writer expects that their reader will associate cheap prices with cheap quality, but this company defies the market trend and offers customers a low price and good quality. As a result, nothing more needs to be explained since the shared notion has already performed its function. Again, as in many of the other samples, shared notions are appealed to exophorically, and assisted by the deictic form ‘it’ and ‘this’ to carry propositions across longer distances in the student’s compositions.

5.5 Contextual Factors in Discourse

Some learners were able to effectively relate ideas in their writing and include personal experience, facts and opinions. In certain cases discourse criteria - such as effective use of deictic forms to refer to their subjects or establish new topics – were utilized. However, others had difficulties in this respect that included problems involving a lack of background or a breakdown in related ideas. For instance, in sample 6 the student introduces three companies they respect and begins their discussion with ‘Honda’. They describe the fact that this company produces cars and exports them all

around the world but then makes a reference to another point outside the immediate contextual environment that confuses the reader:

In our modern world there are many different companies but there are three that I respect the most. The first one is Honda. This company products a lot of cars. They exports car all around the world. I have been interested in designing robots.

This final sentence in the extract above is included presumably because the writer believes the reader will make a natural connection between the Honda company and “robots.” The writer successfully uses the deictic item ‘this’ to switch focus to what the Honda company produces, but fails to employ the item or another such topic changer in the paragraph’s final sentence. They seem to be assuming some kind of shared knowledge concerning Honda’s business operations related to cars and other kinds of activities the company is engaged in concerning robots. The problem with such a conclusion in discourse terms is that the sentence is completely isolated from the rest of the composition – from information both before and after it – and contributes nothing to the overall textuality of their writing. Except for the very tenuous connection between the Honda company and robot design, the assumptions the writer makes about shared contextual knowledge are too great and lead to problems of interpretation for the reader. As a physical ‘product’ there are no real grammatical problems with the sentence, but as an example of discourse structuring it is less effective and can hinder a reader’s comprehension of the intended message with a resulting breakdown in cohesion and coherence. Later on in the composition the writer has more success with a similar appeal to shared knowledge in the third paragraph: “The third company I admire is Sony Computer Entertainment. They are popular for not only children also adult.” Here

the student has achieved a more effective discourse structure by drawing a connection between computer entertainment and the general notion of such games as oriented more to children than to adults. The reference outside the text is more plausible and functions to stage their proposition in an effective way.

Occasionally, writers anticipated their reader inferring more than should have been reasonably expected. This, in turn, detracted from the composition's overall discourse structure. For instance, in sample 10 the student introduces two Japanese companies that they admire and respect and briefly detail why they feel this way about them. However, when they introduce the third company, 'Toshiba', they present their information differently: "Toshiba is electrical maker. I have portable phone made by Toshiba. So I use it sometimes." We learn, as we read on, that the writer is trying to communicate the importance of these three companies to daily life and notions of 'convenience' and 'user-friendliness.' The sentences under discussion fail to describe 'Toshiba' in this way.

6 Content in Relation to Current Teaching Practices

6.1 Integrated Skills Approach

The material designed for the class under discussion demanded high levels of communicative ability. Some pre-teaching and models were thought of as the best way to provide the necessary grounding in organization and layout the students would require to complete the writing exercises assigned to them. The planned activities were

regarded as an enabling device rather than as a rigid control. White (1988: 84) makes the point that once we recognize the functional use of language, the learners' needs change and are determined "not by the content of the language system but by the exploitation of that code by users in the world of affairs." To this end, introducing lexical structures and a variety of models into the activities was seen as a way of giving learners the opportunity to observe how competent writers use the target language to achieve their intentions. More importantly, however, they had started to recognize the functional uses of certain language structures and patterns and could identify which of them lent cohesion and coherence to their writing.

7 Conclusion

Providing students with the opportunity to build on the skills they already had and progress to more advanced communication levels was the overall aim of the activities the students engaged in. Learners were required to make decisions about how particular linguistic items they had chosen to use in their writing would operate under discourse conditions. This required the students to recognize the functional qualities of the language they were using and how these items ultimately depend to a large extent on other surrounding contextual factors. Task-based, process-driven materials that led students to produce compositions demonstrating discourse coherence and cohesion helped achieve these ends. As the results of the trial outlined above illustrate, this is one way that a teacher can raise learner awareness of the discourse levels of writing and make their teaching of target language forms communicative.

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Appendix A:

Activity 1

Introduction

Your company has decided to sponsor a contest for all employees. They would like to start two or three new businesses.

They are looking for some fresh, dynamic, exciting and profitable proposals (they may or may not be related to your company's core business activities).

Today, we will prepare these proposals and then you will be given a chance to present your ideas to the class.

Brainstorming

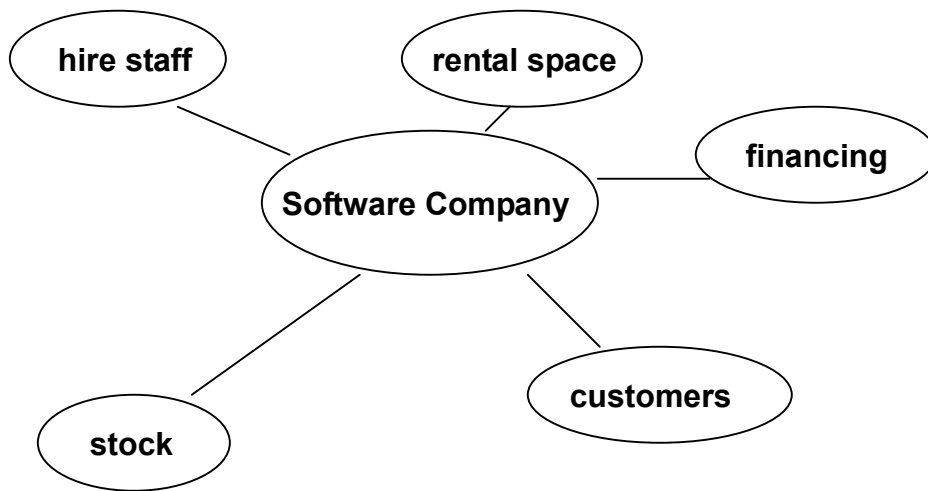
Planning Your Business Proposal

FREEWITING

- Step 1:** Write the topic at the top of your paper.
- Step 2:** Write as much as you can about the topic until you run out of ideas.
- Step 3:** After you have run out of ideas, re-read your paper and circle the main idea(s) that you are interested in developing.
- Step 4:** Take the main idea and freewrite again.

Freewriting Sample:

Topic: Proposal to Start a Small Business



Detailed Planning

Now you need to begin planning the business details. Here is a list of areas you might want to consider. Remember, your idea must be dynamic and profitable.

Details

1. Name of company _____
2. Brief description of company _____

3. Office or shop space
 - Location _____
 - Amount of space _____
 - Cost per year _____

4. Staff
 - Who? _____
 - How many? _____
 - Salaries? _____

5. Target customers
 - Who are they? _____
6. Advertising Ideas
 - Where will you advertise? _____
 - What are some ad campaign ideas? _____
 - _____

7. Financing
 - How much money will you need to start? _____
 - Projected costs? _____

Preparing

Finally, you will need to prepare for the actual final presentation. Use the form on the following page to organize it.

Remember: Underline your subjects and then circle the referents you used to mention them later (or earlier) in your text (e.g. it, this, that, etc.). Also, highlight items you feel are shared knowledge between yourself and your reader.

Appendix B:

Activity 2

Step 1: Identify referential discourse items in the paragraph below

Step 2: Write a paragraph of your own using similar devices

Task: The sentences in the paragraph below have been scrambled. Try to determine the correct order of the sentences and note the referent forms being used.

Three Companies I Respect

In our modern world there are many different companies, but there are three that I respect the most. **This company** manufactures many useful household products and, **it** is also famous for **its** professional approach to business. I think I could learn a lot about sales and marketing from **them**. One of them is Microsoft. A third company I admire is Johnson and Johnson. **They** make products useful in our everyday lives and I believe we need such companies. I have always been interested in high technology and **they** are one of the leaders in the field. They are all quite different companies, however each has its own attractions for me. **They** are famous for **their** product brand names such as "Band-Aid," "Q-tips," and the painkiller "Tylenol." I believe working in software development would be interesting and fun and I have many ideas for new computer programs I would like to design. Another company I respect a lot is Proctor and Gamble.

Appendix C:

1. Software Development Company

I have been thinking about setting up a software development company for a long time. Now, it is a good point to start it. The proposal will cover details as reason, organization, strategy, financing, market, place, etc.

Firstly, a lot of things help me. I have been a technical person for 10 years. So I have a good ideas on how to develop and organize a project, and also know how to operate a software company. A lot of good friends of mine will help me. They are all professional and playing a important role in various company, so they can help me both technology and market. Furthermore, web projects are getting popular, it is a big market, and also needs new technology, so, the old big company and new small company have almost the same chance. A web-oriented software company should make profit.

Secondly, the strategy is base on low risk. Outsourcing will be the main way to make money. So this company does not need good and big office, and outsourcing also means our customer can help us to train our staff. To make it easily, first step is focus on finding a partner, who will come up with me to establish the company. The ideal partner would be a person who has good connection with customer. In that case, we will start more easily. Of course, if he is a technical professional would be preciated highly. For the staff, we don't need many people, but we need to hire specialist on one particular area for a web project, and avoid duplication.

Thirdly, the detail of financing and staff role and wage and office. As mentioned before, the basic role as follows:

1. project manager	1	700,000/month
2. database specialist	1 or 2	600,000/month
3. architect	1	650,000/month
4. network specialist	1	550,000/month
5. programmer	2 or 3	300,000/month
6. staff	1	200,000/month

So, the initial money would like 10,000,000 yen. I pay 60% and 40% for partner. And the office will be small and not downtown, but in good condition.

Finally, I believe this company will grow up quickly and has lower risk. Of course, we need to adjust our plan somehow after one year due to the growth and market.

2. Rental Rehearsal Room

There are so much rental rehearsal rooms, but they have a few defferences in their style.

I will explain my new Rental Rehearsal Room below.

The first supporting point is the concept and the systems of the Rental Rehearsal Room.

Firstly, it's not only for the professional or semi-professional musicians. I believe there are many "used-to" musicians. Even if they don't have their band. Almost of them

would want to play. This room is for them. They can use this room like karaoke box

with abundant rental instruments. Secondly, this has the unique membership system.

The member can play with another members who don't know. If customer becomes the

member, he can visit this room alone. Thirdly, this room will be introduce the web

reservation service(then the reservation will be easier). In conclusion, this would be a

new type of rental rehearsal room.

The second supporting point is about the location. In order to be the type of rental

rehearsal room above mentioned, it should be located near the place where the office

workers come together. The it will become one of the amusement of them. So near

Shinbashi or Shinagawa would be the best place.

The third supporting point is the problems. Firstly, it would be little noisy, so that the

location should not be near the dwellings and needs sound proofing. Secondly, it needs

5 or more rooms. So it needs more than 500 square meter with space.

In conclusion, however there are many problems to run. It must be a new style of amusement buisiness.

3. Recycle Shop of Daily Goods

I propose recycle shop of daily goods as my small business. This offer daily goods for living to people who move. For example, furniture, refrigerator, TV, washing machine, micro wave oven, etc. We believe this shop success leads to decrease trash. Every year some new workers have to move for job, and some people don't need daily goods. So this recycle shop buy them in low prices, and sell them to people who want in low price.

What I need to success this is three points. The first is how we get stable customer. We connect with many company, we ask them to recommend people to move. Someone sells good they don't need and others buy them. The second is how we get reliance and popularity much. We need good advertizement and atomosphere to be familiar. The third is how we offer good quality goods to customer with low cost. We need to check in detail whether there is any problem goods bought.

These three points are important essence for my small business.

4. Easy Hand-Making Guitar Shop

There are many guitar shops nowadays. But not all customers are satisfied with selling products. This easy hand making idea provides an original guitar to customers easily and reasonable price. I'm going to explain the customer demands, method and sales plan as following.

At first I explain the customer's demands. Generally most customer interested in music wants their original "it means not same as their friend" sound and guitar. But there is some problems to realize. Usual hand made guitar is expensive. And difficult for beginners to order. These points are must cleared in this business.

To clear these points, I introduce build up system and internet order system. We prepare many kinds of guitar parts, body, strings, circuit... Customer can choose every parts they want from recommend parts list. So they only choosing parts, we build it up as they want. It is not certain hand made, but customer can get an original guitar and feel hand making with cheaper price. Also we open the web site, customer only click and choose easily, they can order.

We start this business with 8 – 10 staffs. The 1st year we try to keep income and pay as same. After the business works well we expand the business. This is not big one. But we can provide an original guitars only one in the world to customers.

5. Custom Audio Equipment Shop

I want to open custom audio equipments shop at akihabara or nippon-bashi.

Because it is my hobby to build audio equipments and it is easy and cheap to get the sound which the customer likes. Although it is expensive to change equipment in case of custom audio equipment, I change only few parts to upgrade. So it is easy and cheap to get the sound the customer likes. Also, it is pleasure to have only one equipment on the world.

To open shop, I must reserch the sound trend and costs about Maker's product and reserch which electronics parts are good sound and effective.

I must make catarogue and homepage because customer can select parts to upgrade sound.

Also before open shop I must keep money, staff and spaces. It costs about one million-yen to rent a space and it costs about 300 thousand-yen per month to hire staff. I need 10 staffs to run shop. So to open shop, I finance 10 million yen from bank. I expect to profit one million-yen per month. So I can repay within one year.

I think it is good for me and customer to open custom audio equipments shop.

Appendix D:

6. Three Companies I Respect

In our modern world there are many different companies, but there are three that I respect the most. The first one is Honda. This company products a lot of cars. They exports car all around the world. I have been interested in designing robots.

The second company I respect a lot is Starbucks Coffee. They have many shops in Japan and other country. They sell many original menu kind of coffee or sandwiches. I think that it is the most comfortable shop I have used.

The third company I admire is Sony Computer Entertainment. They are popular for not only children also adult. They product many home computer games. I'd like to buy some new game softs.

Honda, Starbucks Coffee, and Sony Computer Entertainment are all quite different companies, but each has its own attractions for me.

7. Three Companies I Respect

In our daily life, we have chance to meet a lot of companies. There are three companies I respect. The first company is Sony. This company has technology in many kinds of field, so we can see Sony products easily in shops. Consumer can buy Sony product not only one also many around. It is very useful for us to install and use product easily and have services from company.

The second one is Mos Burger. This is a burger restaurant company. Its taste is pretty good and matching for Japanese taste. And this home made style give us warm and good feeling.

The last one is UNIQLO. In this one or two years, the apparel company was grown up. They provide us cheap but good quality clothes, and many choices. This balance between price and quality is accepted from children to adult. These three companies I respect in daily life.

8. Three Companies I Respect

There are three Japanese companies I respect. The first one is Sony. It is one of the oldest Japanese electronic equipment manufacturers, but always starts new business and leads the markets, such as music entertainment, movies, and even insurance. I am always surprised at their new strategies and expecting what they will do the next.

The second one is Softbank. It is a quite new company but grew dramatically and is making a huge profits with a small workforce. I think it is a new type of company that can adapt the changing market rapidly, and other companies should learn from them.

The third one is UNIQLO. Among many apparel companies in hard times, UNIQLO is getting more and more popular among people of all ages. They changed the concept of cheap clothes. The low price does not mean the bad quality any more. Their business meets our needs exactly.

These three companies are very different from each other, but all of them are free from old ideas or customs in each business. These are the three Japanese companies that I respect.

9. Three Companies I Respect

Nowadays, there are many convenience store companies in Japan, but these are three that I respect the most.

The first one is Seven-Eleven. They have the biggest franchise in Japanese convenience store market. They always make an offer of the newest product and the informations for our usual life.

The second one is Lawson. They are the second position in their market, but they surply a lot of useful service. One of them, Lawson ticket service is very useful for the one who have no private time in day time.

The third is Mini-Stop. They are not so big in their market, but they have many unique merchandises (especially for eat in the shop). They are very popular with younger people.

In conclusion, these three companies each have unique way of their business, and they give us so much convenience and fun.

10. Three Companies I Respect

There are three companies of all I respect. These are Seiyu supermarket, Keihin Kyuko train company and Toshiba. I often go shopping to Seiyu near station. I buy fresh vegetables, fish, meat, fruits, milk, and so on.

Keihin Kyuko is a train company I always get on to go to my company and my home. It saves me to take shorter commutation.

Toshiba is electrical maker. I have a portable phone made by Toshiba. So I use it sometimes.

They are quite different companies, but these are concerned with everyday of my life.