



9 Japanese Communication Strategies: Collaboration toward Persuasion

Six different strategies show how the Japanese work toward collaboration in communication. Negotiating with someone across cultures raises a question as to the effectiveness of one's strategies. It has been suggested that Japanese and American negotiating styles differ, and it is worth discussing these differences. Conversation cannot take place without listener participation. Listener behavior in Japanese casual conversation contrasts with that in American conversation. A nonverbal sign pervasive in Japanese talk, that is, head movement, is one example of the contrast. Head movement performs what I call an "interactional dance." Both listener response and head movement in Japanese conversation illustrate the close coordination between participants.

Americans and Japanese collaborate, but certain strategies found in Japanese are significantly absent in English. Critics of *nihonjinron* 'discussions of the Japanese' may find the characterization of these differences disturbing, but empirically supported differences in communication strategies do exist, and I find it important to focus on these phenomena.

Another characteristic strategy observed in Japanese communication is silence. Although silence is communicative in all cultures, the Japanese are said to tolerate silence more readily than Americans. Silence in Japan functions in several different, even opposing, ways.

Japanese speakers place importance on cooperation and collaboration in face-to-face encounters, but Japanese people find them-

selves in situations of conflict as well. Conflicts, in fact, occur more pervasively than usually presumed. The Japanese work to avoid the occurrence of emotionally upsetting situations in a number of ways. Considering the increase in global communication—and in the number of potential conflicts between Japan and other cultures and nations—an understanding of how the Japanese deal with conflict has practical importance.

The last part of this chapter shifts its focus to another communication strategy, rhetorical structures. Beyond the use of western rhetoric, certain Japanese genres follow the principle of *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu*, which once again demonstrates the Japanese preference for a rhetoric of commentation.

Negotiating and Persuading

Japanese and American Business Negotiation Practices

According to John L. Graham and Yoshihiro Sano (1984, 1986), Japanese and Americans use different rhetorical strategies and show different behavioral patterns in a typical business negotiation. Graham and Sano call American negotiation “the John Wayne style” (1984, 8–9). An American negotiator believes that he can handle any negotiation situation alone, just like the independent and self-realizing lone gunman in the western myth. The negotiator insists on being called by given name (emphasizing equality), even when this may make the Japanese negotiator uncomfortable. And the American negotiator—secure in the ability to deal with any situation singlehandedly—has no need to “check with the home office” unlike the Japanese counterpart. The American wants to “get to the point” as quickly and precisely as possible, expects the other party to “lay his cards on the table,” expects the other party to speak up, is not likely to take no for an answer, and so on.

The John Wayne behavioral paradigm often works well between Americans. But with a Japanese negotiating team, its effectiveness is questionable, since it may lead to disengaged interaction. Once the negotiation process starts, additional problems arise because the importance placed on the various steps of the negotiation process differ. Graham and Sano (1986, 59) offer a list (a simplified version follows) summarizing the behavior of Japanese and American business negotiators at four stages during negotiation.

TABLE 7. Stages in Negotiations

Japan

1. *Nontask sounding.* Considerable time and expense
2. *Task-related exchange of information.* The most important step: first offers (usually highly priced) with long explanations and in-depth clarification
3. *Persuasion.* Primarily behind the scenes; vertical status relations dictate bargaining outcomes
4. *Concessions and agreement.* Concessions made only toward the end of negotiations—a holistic approach to decision making; progress difficult to measure for Americans.

The United States

1. *Nontask sounding.* Relatively shorter periods
2. *Task-related exchange of information.* Information given briefly and directly; first offers (usually with “fair” price)
3. *Persuasion.* The most important step; minds changed at the negotiation table and aggressive persuasive tactics used
4. *Concessions and agreement.* Concessions and commitments made throughout—a sequential approach to decision making.

The differences are striking. Japanese take much more time in nontask sounding and exchanging personal information, which is used to judge the trustworthiness of the negotiators. While Americans spend more time and effort in attempting to persuade the Japanese negotiators by using aggressive tactics and arguing for their declared position, the Japanese tend to offer only a wild ballpark figure, “listen,” and then ask questions during the persuasion stage. For Americans, reaching a final agreement step-by-step (linear progression) is more comfortable, while for the Japanese, a holistic approach is preferable. Japanese and American negotiators may find themselves trapped in the middle of negotiations if they both behave in accordance with their normal rhetorical and behavioral patterns.

Are You Ready to Argue?

Part of the reason Japanese and American negotiators are sometimes unable to engage in satisfying and fruitful interaction lies in the fact that Japanese people tend to dislike arguing unless the situation is one in which arguing is encouraged or expected. Alicia M.

Prundy, Donald W. Klopf, and Satoshi Ishii (1990) conducted a psychological survey that measured the approach and avoidance tendencies of argumentativeness of 168 Japanese and 153 American college students. The results found that (1) the Japanese subjects were not inclined to argue, but the Americans were prone to do so, (2) Japanese were more intuitive and nonargumentative, (3) confronting differences was a serious blunder in Japan, and (4) Americans viewed argument as a positive communication exchange. These tendencies come through in the analysis of business negotiations as well.

Of course, as has been pointed out by many researchers repeatedly, and as Graham and Sano (1984) carefully note, we must be aware of the danger involved in stereotyping Japanese and American businesspeople. Not every Japanese or American person behaves in the ways described above. There are argumentative Japanese and nonargumentative Americans. The personality of the negotiator influences the negotiation style used at the real-life Japan–U.S. negotiation table. Other factors—age, gender, relative rank of the negotiator, and relationship between the companies the negotiators represent—play a role in determining negotiation style, whether Japanese or American.

In this regard, Graham (1981) makes an interesting point about America's trade friction with Japan. In Japan, negotiating parties feel more comfortable if status distinctions exist and are understood, and buyers always hold a higher social status than sellers. Americans go out of their way to establish equality between buyers and sellers. In the United States, aggressive persuasive tactics—threats, warnings, and the like—are used by both parties in a business transaction. In Japan, however, although aggressive tactics are used, they tend to be reserved for the buyer, in the later stages of negotiation (when all else fails). While bargaining between Americans is an exchange between brothers, bargaining in Japan is more an exchange between father (buyer) and son (seller). The two are not equal partners; the seller must be more open to accept the buyer's decision, because refusing it or engaging in open argument will jeopardize the relationship.

Graham concludes that “a Japanese seller and an American buyer will get along fine, while the American seller and the Japanese buyer will have great problems” (1981, 9). He is not suggesting that a change in negotiation style would, by itself, solve

international trade friction, but it is useful to understand the different sociocultural expectations and to appreciate the hidden messages that a choice of persuasive style conveys in an already difficult intercultural discourse.

Communication Strategies in Negotiation

Haru Yamada (1990) reports that in cross-cultural business communication, Japanese and Americans optimize different cultural strengths. The Japanese strength is shown in the group and the American strength in the individual. After examining Japanese, American, and Japanese-American intercultural business meetings, Yamada notes, “American participants take long monologic turns, distribute their turns unevenly among participants, and take the highest proportion of turns in the topics they initiate; Japanese participants take short turns, distribute their turns relatively evenly among participants, and continue to distribute their turns evenly regardless of who initiates a topic” (1990, 271).

Overt responses to relationality cues are clearer in the Japanese interactional style than in its American counterpart. The Japanese often remain vulnerable, frustrated, and hurt because their negotiation style does not allow them to express their disagreement, resentment, or anger as explicitly as their American counterparts do. The rhetorical style that postpones the conclusion to the end of the sentence and the discourse also agrees with the sense of relationality. The conclusion is reached only after a long prelude—after gauging the other’s responses, expressing abundant warning, and seeking assurances of the other’s sympathy.

Serious consequences can result from misunderstandings about negotiation style. According to the August 1983 issue of *Time*, “At one top-level conference, for example, President Nixon asked for a cut in Japanese textile exports, and Prime Minister Sato answered, ‘*Zensho shimasu*,’ which was translated literally as ‘I’ll handle it as well as I can.’ Nixon thought that meant ‘I’ll take care of it,’ but the Japanese understood it to mean something like ‘Let’s talk about something else’” (40).

Although these incidents are frequently cited in the Western press to ridicule the indirect and confusing ways in which the Japanese people negotiate, misunderstandings are never caused by one party. The true meaning of the expression *zensho shimasu*, for example, must be interpreted in the context of the Japanese negotiation

style. To interpret otherwise and blame the misunderstanding on one party does little to improve mutual understanding.

Inviting and Being Invited

Other situations of negotiation and persuasion that differ cross-culturally are occasions of inviting and being invited. Not knowing how to negotiate such situations can result in traumatic experiences. This is because inviting, being invited, and responding to that invitation are closely associated with the human feelings of being accepted or refused, being courteous or rude, and so on.

Polly Szatrowski (1992) points out two aspects that characterize Japanese invitation and refusal interaction. First, Japanese participants rely more on their coparticipants in the conversation, which results in coproduced stages. Second, Japanese speakers develop the invitation process by (1) showing “sensitivity for the invitee,” and (2) showing compassion or sympathy. For example, Szatrowski provides an interaction example in which an invitee, whose goal may be to refuse, leaves open the possibility of accepting while developing the conversation toward a refusal.

Szatrowski cites Judy Davidson’s (1984) work in discussing English invitation strategies. Although Davidson’s work is based on British English interaction, American discourse seems to be similar. Davidson demonstrates that when there is potential for refusal, the inviter proceeds in such a way as to make the invitation more acceptable to the invitee. The inviter provides subsequent versions of the invitation by adding components, inducements, reasons for acceptance, and alternatives. So, for example, if an inviter senses that the invitee may not be expressly interested in accepting the invitation, he or she adds something like, “Well, we’ve got wonderful entertainment planned for the evening.”

According to Szatrowski, a Japanese inviter will go through several “invitation stages”; he or she shows sympathy for the invitee by always leaving some option for a refusal. In the invitee’s “answer stages,” he or she gradually develops a story, always gauging the inviter’s response, trying to convince the inviter that he or she cannot accept the invitation after all. Through this prolonged give-and-take negotiation process, both participants successfully avoid losing face.

Responding to an invitation with a flat no almost always causes

awkwardness both in Japan and in the United States. We all thank the inviter. And we all tell lies and make excuses when we cannot accept invitations from others. The real reason for your refusal could be that you know from past experience that the party you are being invited to will be unbearably boring. But we cannot voice such a response to a friend's face. Japanese and American invitation-refusal interaction processes differ in the kind of strategies used and the level of negotiation processes involved. Here again, Japanese speakers behave depending on relationality cues, adjusting spontaneously to the interactional exchange (which they themselves help create), and continuously decide on a course of action based, in part, on the other's response.

Listener Responses

In observing conversation we usually notice the speaker's actions more than the listener's. It is obvious, however, that conversation cannot go on without a listener. The brief comments and utterances offered by a listener are called "back channels." These expressions, since they often do not have an easily identifiable meaning, have sometimes been considered marginal and insignificant semantically, but they are quite meaningful in conversational interaction. What, then, are the characteristics of listener responses in Japanese casual conversation? What are their types, frequencies, and functions? How do they compare with listener responses in American conversation? (See Maynard 1987a, 1989 for further discussion.)

By back channel I mean: (1) short messages the listener sends during the partner's speaking turn; (2) short messages the listener sends immediately following the speaker's turn (without a pause); and (3) short messages that include (a) brief utterances, (b) laughs, chuckles, and so on, and (c) clearly visible head movements. Brief utterances are phrases such as "uh-huh," "hmm," and "yeah." Another type of utterance frequently observed in conversation is laughing. As for clearly visible head movement, I have limited my discussion to vertical head movement (nods) and horizontal head movement (headshakes).

Having identified specific types of conversational behavior to focus on, let us look at a segment of Japanese conversation taken from the data collected.

About becoming a Japanese-language teacher

Back-channel expressions as well as head movements (H) occurring as back channels are placed near the words they respond to. Japanese particles and auxiliary expressions are given in parentheses. (The transcription appears in the appendix.)

- (1.1) *A:* But
 (1.2) there's great pressure
 (1.3) 'cause (I'm graduating from) law school.
 H H H
 (B1: Oh, I see, I see.)
- (1.4) So
 (1.5) I'm told that it's not good enough for me (*sa*).
 (1.6) *B:* You mean (you hear that) from people around you (*ne*).
 (A1: H)
- (1.7) From your parents' view, if the child does.
 H H H
 (A2: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah)
- (1.8) *A:* But nowadays parents don't,
 (B2: I see.)
 (1.9) say those things.
 (B3: HH)
- (1.10) The way my friends look at it, they say things like, "It's not good enough for you" (*sa*).
 (B4: Uh huh.)
- (1.11) You see, we're all together
 (1.12) in the same Japanese-language teacher training class (*sa*)
 (B5: Yeah.)
- (1.13) and although we aren't exactly friends, there are people who are taking the class together (*no*).
 (B6: Uh huh.)
- (1.14) There are nine or ten students in the class and
 (B7: Uh huh.)
 (1.15) we've become friendly with each other.
 (B8: H)
- (1.16) Most of them are older (*sa*)
 (B9: Uh huh.)
 (1.17) women, many of them are.
 H
 (B10: Uh huh.)
- (1.18) They wish to become teachers after leaving clerical positions at companies (*ne*).
 (B11: Hmm.)

- (1.19) And those people (*sa*)
(*B12*: Hmm.)
- (1.20) say to me, “The job isn’t good enough for you” (*yo*).
- (1.21) *B*: Oh, I see, they say (something like) you’re graduating
from D University’s law school.
(*A3*: Yeah, yeah.)
- (1.22) *A*: “I graduated from C University you know,” they say (*yo*).
- (1.23) *B*: So although we are talking about D University (*ne*)
- (1.24) more than the way those of us on the inside can see it
(*A4*: Uh huh.)
- (1.25) as you know what I mean by the expression I just used
(*A5*: Yeah.)
- (1.26) when seen from the outside
(*A6*: H)
- (1.27) the Law School at D University is still good and is first-
rate, I should say (*ka*).
H H H
(*A7*: Yeah, yeah, yeah.)

In this conversation segment, twelve cases of B’s back channel and seven cases of A’s back channel are found. Some back-channel devices are strictly verbal, as in the case of B’s back channel (B2); some are strictly nonverbal, as in A’s back channel (A1). Some listener back-channel behavior combines verbal and nonverbal, as in B’s short utterance (B1). During this segment, which lasted forty-seven seconds, listener back channels occurred nineteen times, at least once every 2.47 seconds.

The total number of back-channel expressions in our conversational data was 871. The most frequently occurring types among all back-channel expressions were brief utterances such as *um* ‘uh huh,’ *bontoo* ‘really,’ and *soo* ‘I see,’ which totaled 614 (70.49 percent) of all back channels. Head movement accompanied these brief utterances 62.87 percent of the time (386 out of 614). The second most frequent category, head movement independent of verbal cues, occurred 164 times (18.83 percent). Head movement occurred either independently or with verbal back-channel expressions 63.15 percent (550 out of 871) of the time. Except for one horizontal headshake, the head movement was all vertical. Laughs occurred 93 times.

Back channels in Japanese conversation appear only in certain contexts. Most often, they respond to a speaker’s use of interactional particles immediately followed by a pause, as shown in (1.6), (1.10), (1.12), (1.13), (1.16), (1.18), (1.19), and (1.27). In our data

there were 688 contexts followed by back channels. Because more than one back channel can occur in a single context, the number of contexts is smaller than the number of back channels. Particle endings marked 40.84 percent (281 out of 688) of contexts. Auxiliary verb endings can function like final particles. Such endings as *deshoo* ‘isn’t that right?’ and *janai* ‘isn’t it?’ marked 54 contexts with back channels. Speaker overtly solicited listener response by using final particles or auxiliary verb forms in 48.69 percent (355 out of 688) of contexts.

Of the 688 contexts where back channels occurred, 352 (51.02 percent) came at major grammatical junctures. Some were accompanied by particles and/or head movements. Speaker’s head movements appeared in 38.08 percent (262 out of 688) of contexts. Use of particles in non-sentence-final position increased the opportunities for back-channel expressions. This linguistic property of Japanese suits the way the language is used in interaction.

Back channels apply to a broader range of behavior, including at least the following six functions:

1. continuer (a signal sent by the listener to the speaker to continue the talk)
2. displaying of understanding of content
3. giving emotional support for the speaker’s judgment
4. agreeing
5. strong emotional response
6. minor additions, corrections, or requests for information

Listener Responses in American Conversation

I also analyzed back-channel behavior (specifically “uh huhs” and the like, brief comments, head movements, and laughter) among Americans. Segment 2, given below, a forty-seven-second segment taken from our data, has four cases of back channel, two each by speakers A and B.

About a restaurant named K. Miller

- (2.1) *A*: I ordered some escargots/
 (2.2) and got me a Coke./
 (2.3) I was like/
 (2.4) *B*: I have never been to K. Miller./
 (2.5) *A*: I don’t know just like/
 (2.6) strikes me as being very pseudointellectual./

- (2.7) Don and I were walking past (?) going to that little shop/
 (2.8) past it's open only three days or something./
 (B1—Um hmm)
- (2.9) you know the one I bought my uh/
 (2.10) dice bag./
- (2.11) B: Yeah I think I know what you mean./
 (A1—Yeah)
- (2.12) A: And we were going there and this guy came out of
 K. Miller because he notices us looking at the menu and he
 goes/
 (2.13) “Hey, Babe, want a drink? Come on inside, I'll pay for
 you.”/
 (B2 Laugh)
- (2.14) And we were like “Oh, go away.”/
 (2.15) B: Weird./
 (A2—Yeah)
- (2.16) No, I heard the food's actually good, though./
- (2.17) A: All I know is Polly offered me a slimy little escargot and I
 said “Thank you but no.” Laugh/
 (2.18) B: Oh, I like escargot./
- (2.19) A: I don't./
- (2.20) I just keep on thinking slime/
 (2.21) sludge/
 (2.22) sea bottoms, you know./

After examining the American conversational data, I found a total of 428 cases of back channels, 373 near or at an identifiable pause.

The most common American back-channel strategies were brief utterances like “uh huh,” “yeah,” and “right,” which accounted for 50.23 percent of the total. Head movement accompanied these brief utterables 50.70 percent of the time, somewhat less frequently than in the Japanese data (62.87 percent). American pairs engaged in head movement without verbal cues 150 times (35.05 percent), while the Japanese pairs did so 164 times (18.83 percent). The Americans laughed 63 times (14.72 percent), as compared with 93 times (10.68 percent) for the Japanese.

In looking at back-channel contexts in American English, I focused on devices similar to those in Japanese, namely, (1) grammatical junctures, (2) sympathetic circularity sequences (“you know”), and tag questions (as in “aren't you?” in “You're going, aren't you?”), and (3) head movement. In the American data, 82.84 percent of back channels occurred at the point of grammatical com-

pletion. Sympathetic circularity sequences were the context only 6.97 percent of the time; head movement, only 7.78 percent. In American conversation, the grammatical completion point is clearly the single most powerful context for back channel.

Muttering versus Silent Listener

The continuous flow of back channels sent by the Japanese listener and the speaker's ready acceptance of such frequent feedback suggest that Japanese speakers have a strong inclination toward mutual monitoring and cooperation. While in English, other speaker behaviors and listener back-channel strategies that I have not investigated (such as eye gaze, as suggested by Adam Kendon 1967, 1977) are used for similar purposes, back-channel monitoring through brief utterances and head movements is characteristically Japanese.

The difference in back-channel behavior is partly a function of the language itself, as certain devices are available only in Japanese. Some have suggested that Japanese interactional particles function like English tag questions. But in Japanese, such particles can be placed in the middle of the sentence, while in English the tag question is used only at the end of the full sentence—and that usage is much more restricted.

English and Japanese offer different contexts for back channels. The Japanese language provides a comfortable environment for more frequent back channels, which suggests that merely stating that Japanese speakers resort to frequent back channels tells only part of the story. The language and the manner in which people use it are conducive to the production of a back-channel filled text.

The typical Japanese listener seems to be muttering as he or she listens to the speaker. Muttering indicates listening. Back channels are almost like background music accompanying the speaker's utterance. American listeners are more silent while listening to the speaker. Being attentive here means listening silently, inserting back channels mostly at grammatical junctures. Grammatical completion points provide coherent semantic units, and back channels send the message that the meaning has been understood, and there is no need to relinquish a speaking turn. Both Japanese and American listeners are attentive, but how they express their goodwill differs. Unless one understands this, the difference in conversation management style will leave a sense of disengagement—however successfully and naturally other aspects of the conversation may be performed.

Misinterpretation of Conversation Management

If Japanese and American ways of managing conversation are so different, what happens when a Japanese speaker talks with an American speaker? Even when either or both speakers know the other's native language, difficulties may arise. A Japanese speaker may use both verbal and nonverbal back-channel devices frequently in a very short span, creating in the American speaker a feeling of mindless agreement or inappropriate rushing. Such difficulties are caused in part by different values and social meanings associated with similar signs.

Different values attached to specific behavior in a given context often become sources of misunderstanding in intercultural communication. The more the behavior resembles one's own mannerism, as in the case of back channels and head movements, the more difficult it is fully to appreciate cross-cultural differences. Whether participants interact in English or Japanese, Japanese speakers are more likely to engage in frequent vertical head movement. The Japanese listener may look for signals to send back channels, such as the speaker's head movement, but without success. Conversely, an American speaker may wonder why Japanese speakers send frequent back channels where there is no need for them. Differences in listener responses can become a source of irritation and frustration.

Head Movement as Interactional Dance

Despite considerable interest in nonverbal communication in recent years, few empirical studies have examined specific body movements in Japanese discourse. I focus here on the vertical and horizontal head movement already identified. Head movement is both pervasive and obvious in Japanese conversation. Since it is observable in American conversation as well, the contrast should reveal useful similarities and differences in one aspect of Japanese and American nonverbal communication.

One may argue that head movement is not a significant communication sign but rather a purely stylistic device peculiar to each individual. Head movement, however, occurred frequently in all the subjects I examined in a manner that can be predicted and interpreted. While head movement often occurs with other verbal and nonverbal signs and may have only a secondary and sometimes

redundant role in communication, its pervasiveness and prominence deserve our close attention.

Based on observations of the Japanese conversational data, I maintain that head movement is multifunctional. At the phonological level, head movement occurring with phonologically prominent segments may mark emphasis or a request for clarification. At the syntactic level, it functions as a clause boundary marker. And at the interactional level, head movement serves as (1) affirmation, (2) a claim for the end of the speaking turn and turn transition, (3) pre-turn and turn claim, (4) turn-transition period filler, (5) back channel, and (6) rhythm. All these functions work together to manage the conversation appropriately.

Head movement occurs in the context of conversational interaction. Paying close attention to the turn-taking environment, let us now examine segment (3), taken from my Japanese casual conversational data. An English translation follows. Note that H (the underlined H) shows that both participants are nodding at the same time.

About the city of Narashino

(3.1) *A*: Nani Kimitsu ni onsen ga ann no?
 what Kimitsu in hot spring S there is IP

(3.2) *B*: Aa nani geetobooru taikai datta kamo-
 oh what croquet match BE may
 shinkattari-shite./(laugh)

(3.3) Yoku Chiba iku n da yo ano hito./
 often Chiba go NOM BE IP that person

(3.4) *A*: c: H Aa
 ah

d:H
 ima wa Chiba ni sunderu n janai no ka./
 now T Chiba in live NOM BE-NEG NOM Q

(3.5) *B*: Iya dakara uchi to ato Chiba ni Narashino
 no so home and other Chiba in Narashino
 tte tokoro ga atte/—
 QT place S there is

e:H
 (*A*:—Un aru)
 yes there is

- (3.6) Soko ni itoko ga sunden no ne./
 there in cousin S live COM IP
 f:H-H-H
 g:H
 (A: Hun)
 uh huh
- (3.7) de nanka Chiba ni geetobooru tomodachi ga
 and like Chiba in croquet friend S
 h:H i:H
 iru ka ra/
 there is because
 (A: j:H)
- (3.8) Tenki no ii hi wa/ (laugh)
 weather S good day T
 k:H
 (A: Ten laugh)
 wea . . .
- (3.9) l:H
 Soo tenki no ii hi wa taitei dakara itoko n
 yes weather S good day T mostly so cousin LK
 chi itte/
 home go
 (A: m:H)
- (3.10) asonde te/ n:H-H
 play
 (A: o:H)
- (3.11) A: Soo ka uun Narashino tte ano yakyuu no
 so Q uh Narashino QT that baseball LK
 p:H
 Narashino kookoo ga aru toko?/
 Narashino high school S there is place
- (3.12) B: Un anmari chikaku janai no kamoshirenai kedo/
 yeah not so near BE-NEG may
 r:H s:H
 chikaku janai
 near BE-NEG
- (3.13) A:
 t:H
 no ka./
 NOM Q

- u:H
 (3.14) *B*: Un demo ano ichioo kihontekini wa Narashino
 yeah but well more or less basically T Narashino
 de./
 BE
- (3.15) *A*: $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{v:H} \\ \text{w:H-HAa} \end{array} \right.$ demo moo Narashino to ka ittara
 ah but already Narashino QT Q say
 sokono hen machi shika nai n
 there area town only BE-NEG NOM
 $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ja-nai} \quad \text{ka tte./} \\ \text{BE-NEG} \quad \text{Q} \quad \text{QT} \end{array} \right.$ $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(laugh)} \\ \text{y:H-H} \\ \text{(laugh)} \end{array} \right.$
 (*B*: Machi shika nai) (*B*:
 town only BE-NEG
- (3.16) Ikenai wa/
 wrong IP
 (*B*:z:H-H)
- aa:H
 (3.17) Konna koto itcha ikenai no ka./
 such thing say wrong NOM Q
- (3.18) *B*: Sokorahen ni Narashino pureeto toka miru
 around here in Narashino license plate or see
 to sa/ (laugh)
 when IP
 Hoo to ka omotchatte./
 oh well QT Q think
- (3.1) *A*: You mean there are hot springs in Kimitsu?
 (3.2) *B*: Well, I hear there are Japanese croquet meets or something
 there.
 (3.3) She goes to Chiba often.
 (3.4) *A*: Oh, doesn't she live in Chiba now?
 (3.5) *B*: No, she's at our house, and there's a place called Narashino
 in Chiba,
 (*A1*: Yeah, there is.)
 (3.6) and that's where my cousin lives.
 (*A2*: Uh huh)
 (3.7) And she has some friends to play Japanese croquet with in
 Chiba, so . . .
 (3.8) on the days when the weather is good,
 (*A3*: Weath[er] . . .)

- (3.9) right, when the weather's good, most of the time she goes to my cousin's place
- (3.10) and plays there
- (3.11) *A*: I see . . . Narashino . . . You mean Narashino where that Narashino High School, which is famous for their baseball team, is located?
- (3.12) *B*: Yeah, but (the school) may not be really that close.
- (3.13) *A*: Oh, it's not nearby.
- (3.14) *B*: But basically it is in Narashino City.
- (3.15) *A*: Oh, well, when you mention Narashino, there must be nothing but just a small downtown.
(*B*1: [only] downtown)
- (3.16) It's wrong,
- (3.17) I really shouldn't say such a thing.
- (3.18) *B*: When I see a Narashino license plate, I think, "Oh, well . . ."

In segment (3), which is forty-eight seconds long, there are twenty-seven occurrences of head movement, fifteen by speaker A and twelve by speaker B. A makes seven head movements—a, d, p, r, s, t, and aa—during A's turn, and five—e, g, j, k, and m—during B's turn, while B makes six head movements—f, h, i, l, q, and u—during B's turn, and three—x, y, and z—during A's turn. A makes three—c, o, and w—and B makes two—n and v—head movements during the turn-transition period. There is also one case, b, where the head movement spans B's turn and the transition period.

Head Movement in American Conversation

American head movement is indicated in the following segment of conversation, also forty-eight seconds long.

About a basketball game

- a:H
- (4.1) *A*: You think that/
- (4.2) I think/
(*B*: Yeah b:H)
- c:H
- (4.3) I think they have a tournament at the RAC/ \nearrow
(*B*: \nearrow At the
RAC d:H)
- (4.4) in March./ \nearrow
(*B*: \nearrow Right)

- (4.5) I think they advertised it the last game I went to./
- (4.6) B: Because we were in it not too long ago you know./
- (4.7) Rutgers was a contender/
- (4.8) one of my/ earlier years here./
- e:H f:H
- (4.9) My freshman or sophomore years they went/ up there./
- (4.10) A: Oh, we saw that thing in the pub, Tom./
- (4.11) 1978 they won [twenty-six in a row./
- g:H h:S
- (4.12) B: [Yeah, but I wasn't here then./
- (4.13) Yeah, I know that./
- (4.14) A: But I'm saying/
- (4.15) probably that was the last year they really did that well./
- (B: \sum Uh huh)
- i:H
- (4.16) B: Probably we lack in that we have lost Joe./
- (4.17) A: Yeah, Joe/
- (4.18) Joe Johnson, 195 pounds draft./ (laugh)
- (4.19) B: He's got cut out all those articles of the paper./
- (4.20) I mean I can't/ (laugh)
- (4.21) I can't I'm surprised that he's not/
- (4.22) like you know/
- (4.23) all ah all/
- (4.24) what's that word I'm looking for?/
- (4.25) A: All-American.
- j:S
- (4.26) B: Oh no no no what would you get/
- k:H l:H m:H
- (4.27) when people keep praising you and stuff./

In this segment there are eleven cases of vertical head movement, two by speaker A and nine by speaker B. A makes all the head movements during his own turn, while B makes six head movements in his turn and two in A's. There is one instance of head movement by B, head movement f, during the turn-transition period. There are also two headshakes, h and j.

The Japanese conversational data yielded 1,372 occurrences of head movement; the American, 452. The primary function of head movement in American casual conversation is as a back channel followed by emphasis, although it was considerably less common than in the Japanese counterparts.

We can draw the following conclusions from comparing head movement in Japanese and American conversation.

1. Japanese speakers use head movement much more than Americans do.
2. Head movement in both Japanese and American conversation signals the listener's response.
3. Japanese speakers often nod during their speaking turns (458 times, or 33.38 percent of occurrences). Americans are much less likely to do this (37 times, or 8.19 percent of occurrences). Japanese speakers use head movements to punctuate the flow of discourse much more frequently than Americans.
4. The second most frequent use of American head movements is the vertical head movement that occurs with phonological prominence with the emphatic function (15.71 percent of all occurrences). In Japanese the emphatic use is uncommon (1.24 percent).
5. American speakers use the headshake more often (7.74 percent) than Japanese (1.24 percent).

Interactional Dance and Empathy

Head movements in Japanese conversation often occur in pairs, triplets, or even quadruplets. Such examples are found in head movements b, f, n, w, y, and z in the first example, about becoming a Japanese-language teacher. The reason for this phenomenon is unclear, but it may be interpreted that head movement fills in and reinforces the “rhythmic ensemble” (Ron Scollon’s term [1982]) of conversation. Repetitious head movement contributes to the rhythm by beating the tempo of the conversation. In the data examined, the speed of each head movement seems to match the overall speed of conversation: fast-paced conversation is accompanied by fast head movement, slower conversation by slower head movement. When head movements appear in groups, they do not occur randomly, but are distributed in such a way as to be synchronized with the tempo of the talk.

The rhythmic synchrony of head movement made by both participants occurs four times in the first Japanese data set—in head movements b/c, h/j, n/o, and v/w. The speaker-listener synchrony of head movements h and j shows how completely they are “in sync” in maintaining a flow of conversation. As speaker B marks the

clause boundary, speaker A responds to it with a continuer, as if she had predicted B's head movement. Likewise, the synchrony of head movements *n* and *o* demonstrates the smooth coordination participants achieve when filling the turn transition. It seems reasonable to interpret this phenomenon as an example of rhythmic ensemble on the part of two speakers. These synchronized head movements are like dances the participants perform as a demonstration of empathy. They both express mutual cooperation and acknowledgment. The participants are conversing at the same tempo, making the identical movement in synchrony, and staying on the beat even during turn transition. Such rhythmic ensemble, along with various functional aspects realized by head movement and other strategies, helps interactants feel comfortable with each other as they make their way through the complex social and verbal entanglement of face-to-face encounters.

Head movement helps manage conversation in Japanese. Face-to-face conversational interaction without head movement would most likely make the participants feel awkward, as if something was missing. This sense of awkwardness is found not in the language *per se*, but in the strategies of conversation management.

Although plural head movements occur in American conversation for rhythm taking, I found no case of rhythmic ensemble—no dance of synchronized head movements—performed by both participants. This lack of synchronized head bobbing is the most striking difference between Japanese and American head movement. Although Americans may use other signs to communicate similar messages, they do not tend to achieve coordination in discourse through head movement. In Japanese, head movement plays important communicational roles in segmenting discourse, for example, notifying participants of the clause-final position and the turn-final position. The synchrony of head movement between the speaker and the listener also functions as a sign of constant and consistent empathy-building on the part of both participants.

The Eloquence of Silence

Silence is not an empty space, failed to be filled with words. It is meaningful. As William J. Samarin (1965, 115) aptly puts it, “Silence can have meaning,” and “Like the zero in mathematics, it is an absence with a function.” In both Japanese and American culture,

silence plays an important social role. In America, for example, some institutional settings—houses of worship, libraries, and hospitals, for example—require silence. Such is the case in Japan as well.

Daniel N. Maltz (1985) presents an interesting case of silence (and noise) related to styles of worship in England and America. Many Americans think of a moment of silent prayer as an expression of religiosity, and the constitutionality of such activity at public schools is a politically sensitive issue. According to Maltz (1985), Puritans in the sixteenth century, Quakers in the seventeenth century, and Pentecostals in the twentieth century responded differently to criticism, and each protested the dominant religious assumptions of their time. Puritans stressed inspired preaching in response to ritualistic reading and recitation. Quakers stressed the silence of inner religious experience in response to the superficiality of talk. And Pentecostals advocate the making of a joyful noise. The use of silence by the Quakers and noise by the Pentecostals show that both silence and noise have important social connotations.

Silence or pauses within speech, however, have different cultural values. Ron Scollon (1985) proposes that American speech is a kind of perpetual-motion machine. “If one assumes the engine should be running, the silences will indicate failures. Smooth talk is taken as the natural state of the smoothly running cognitive and interactional machine” (1985, 26). It is difficult for people and researchers alike to give up the idea that we are a “humming conversational machine” (Scollon 1985, 26). Silences during conversation are viewed negatively in America.

If we were to place cultures along a silence-noise continuum, Japanese culture is skewed toward silence. Satoshi Ishii and Tom Bruneau (1988, 311) state, “The Western tradition is relatively negative in its attitude toward silence and ambiguity, especially in social and public relations.” They remind us that silence is not the empty absence of speech sound: “Silence creates speech, and speech creates silence” (1988, 312). Following Ishii and Bruneau, we may consider that silence and speech “function as the ‘figure’ and the ‘ground,’ one being possible because of the other’s existence, but dynamically so. Generally, silence is regarded as the ground against which the figures of speech are perceived and valued. The two should sometimes be perceived in the reverse way; silence should be treated as the figure against which the ground of

speech functions. Most people, especially in Western cultures, are unconscious of this interdependence between speech and silence” (1988, 312).

Takie Sugiyama Lebra (1989) cites the significance of silence among Japanese by listing four dimensions of silence that she regards as culturally salient and mutually contradictory: truthfulness, social discretion, embarrassment, and defiance. First, the Japanese view a person as split into inner and outer parts; truth resides in the inner part. Spoken words form outer parts and therefore cannot be completely trusted. Truthfulness is found in silence. Second, Japanese people may choose silence in order to win social acceptance or to avoid social rejection. Lebra’s first and second dimensions of silence function in opposite ways. While the first dimension attaches truthfulness to silence, the second often functions to hide truthfulness. Not saying certain things and keeping silent can be socially beneficial, but not being completely frank may give others an impression of concealment and disguise.

Third, silence helps people avoid embarrassment. For example, a husband and wife may be too embarrassed to express their love in words, so they remain silent. Fourth, silence may express hostility or defiance. The defiant silence, unlike the silence of social discretion, is openly expressive and self-assertive. Silence for Japanese, then, is a communicative device that can express many intentions and feelings.

Silence across Cultures

The different values and interpretations silence sustains in Japan and in the United States can cause problems in intercultural discourse. The following negotiation exchanges are taken from Don R. McCreary (1986, 36). Speakers E, G, and H are American negotiators; J and K are Japanese.

- H:* We don’t really want to have to absorb the uh the costs on this
- E:* I just think it’s only fair that you do absorb a certain amount of those costs
- G:* We wanna know if you’re gonna give us a small break on the unit cost
- E:* I don’t understand why we just can’t get a—a general idea of your feelings about that

- G: Do you understand that?
 J: (30-second silence, downturned face.)

In this negotiation, repeated complaints from American negotiators were met with silence or evasions because the Japanese team had not reached a consensus on any discount and so was unprepared to give an answer. But the need to appear favorably disposed to the general process of negotiation was finally reflected by a yes in English from the assistant manager, K.

- G: Can I assume then that we have reached some tentative agreement on . . . the cost factor per unit . . . ?
 K: Uhh . . . yes.
 G: Good!

Speaker K, in this case, is only maintaining the interactional relationship with his interlocutor. He is *not* agreeing to the terms, but is saying, “Uh-huh, I am listening to you, the information has reached me, and I am paying attention to you.” In this situation, silence was not returned by silence, but by continuous speech on the part of three members of the American negotiating team.

Not being able to maintain silence or to respond in silence to another’s silence can be quite costly. According to McCreary (1986, 53), western negotiators’ inability to refrain from speaking in response to silence caused the following incident. Howard Van Zandt, who spent seventeen years as ITT’s top manager in Japan, recalls an occasion when the head of a Japanese firm, presented with a contract to sign, did nothing. Van Zandt’s ITT boss hastily sweetened the deal by \$250,000, which made Van Zandt gasp: “If he had waited a few more minutes, he would have saved the company a quarter of a million dollars” (Greenwald 1983, 42).

McCreary (1986, 54) explains that this was just a case of *haragei* ‘nonverbal communication; negotiating without the use of direct words.’ The Japanese negotiator’s silence was more likely to have been directed at the Japanese behind him, “those lower-level managers who had negotiated the deal and settled for something less than what their superior believed was the optimum position.” If U.S. negotiators are not amenable to changes that their counterpart’s silence may require, they may become angry, impatient, or both, and their reaction may surprise or confuse the Japanese.

Conflict and the Myth of Harmony

Japanese communication strategies place importance on cooperation and collaboration, but this does not mean that Japanese people do not engage in conflict. The idea that Japanese people never disagree is as much of a myth as the notion that Americans always speak their minds and often become argumentative. Japanese society has plenty of conflict—witness the frequent spats and domestic fights featured in Japanese television dramas. Television series without a high incidence of conflict are virtually nonexistent. Of course, conflict is an important feature of drama. Still, a desire for—if not a preoccupation with—maintaining nonabrasive human relationships is strong in Japanese discourse. Given the Japanese desire for cooperation and collaboration, or what Kimberly Jones (1990, 1992) calls the “myth of harmony,” an examination of how Japanese people handle conflict linguistically should once again reveal the society-relational nature of the Japanese language.

Everyday conflicts are mostly among *uchi* members. Blatant and blunt confrontations often occur among close friends, where the *amae* relationship is well established. Here the raw emotions and hard feelings that may result from confrontation and conflict are usually assured of being mended. The *amae* relationship is expected to survive day-to-day emotional skirmishes among its members.

Conflicts between people who do not share the *amae* relationship, however, can be potentially harmful, even destructive. Strongly voiced disagreements with people to whom one is expected to show deference are considered especially damaging. In some situations, however, as Jones (1992) explains, conflicts are “ratified”—considered appropriate—in Japan. The television debate where participants argue about issues is a good example. In televised debates, participants are expected to disagree on political or economic issues, and they can do so with abandon. The main concern is not conflict avoidance but “focusing on issues, keeping the talk on the subject, choosing controversial topics to discuss, establishing individual positions, and arguing without compromising” (Jones 1992).

When the conflict is not socially ratified, participants must work hard to ratify it. Jones discusses a case where coworkers were involved in a rather tense conflict. After a few minutes of strained conversation, the participants reached an impasse. They abruptly

stopped talking, turned away from each other, and returned to their desks without having resolved anything. Even in these circumstances, however, there was a concern for ratification. For example, one sign Jones (1992) observed was a concerted effort to make light of the situation; coworkers strove for a playful tone, introducing laughter and jokes during the confrontation. They attempted to put the conflict situation into a framework of play. Every ratification of conflict Jones found in her data involved some sort of reframing of the conflict as play. Defusing the conflict through play dissipates the threat of a troublesome encounter.

I suspect that this reframing strategy of “play” is fairly common in communication across cultures. Certainly Americans use it, too. The differences between American and Japanese reframings lie in their explicit and inexplicit strategies. Jones (1990, 305) notes that in the coworkers’ conflict, in addition to explicit opposition moves, participants used inexplicit strategies of conflict reframing, including style-switching, repetition, parallelism, and laughter.

If, after all reframing strategies are exhausted, the conflict is still not ratified, Jones (1990, 306) concludes, “It seems . . . impossible for the participants to dispute with each other comfortably.” Even the Japanese may have bought into the myth of harmony—good Japanese should not and do not quarrel in public. Japanese people are discouraged from engaging in conflict unless the situation is ratified, either socially or interpersonally; Americans seem less threatened or hurt when they find themselves in conflict discourse. Americans may not always need to reconcile themselves in conversation. Differences of opinion are not felt to harm the relationship.

Speakers of Japanese, however, are likely to feel that achieving reconciliation or agreement in conversation is important and that unresolved differences of opinion may threaten the future relationship. Situations where anger and antagonism can be appropriately expressed without damage are rarer in Japan than in the United States. Among Americans, open, frank, and fair conflicts do not necessarily cause lasting ill-will. A certain level of opposition is even expected from each individual, since everyone is encouraged to behave on his or her own. But Japanese people remain relationally vulnerable, and unplanned conflicts in the *soto* relationship normally result in psychological and emotional stress. The bitter aftertaste of an unexpected verbal spat in Japanese discourse can linger on in the hearts of the participants for a very long time.

Rhetorical Structures

Communication involves more than managing interactional strategies. Discourse, composed of units larger than the individual sentence, is exceedingly important. How sentences are put together in Japanese, some have claimed, differs from the rules governing western rhetoric. What are the characteristics of Japanese rhetorical structures, the organizational principles of Japanese discourse?

Although the organization of discourse has much in common across languages, some differences exist. What is cohesive in meaning in one culture may not hold in another. Although the premise of cohesiveness is its logical property—it makes sense—sociologists and anthropologists have long known that logic, like language, is culturally bound.

Both the Japanese and other peoples have criticized the Japanese language's lack of a "logical" foundation. The language has been called "illogical" or "alogical." This view is misleading, however, because the so-called logical foundation normally refers to the logical syllogism, which occurs only in limited cases in everyday rhetoric. In the traditional model of western rhetoric (for example, Aristotle's), what is advocated is the rhetorical syllogism (or enthymeme) whose premises and conclusion are probable. They need not be logically valid. Not all English statements come with supporting reasons introduced by "for," "because," "since," or an "if . . . then" clause.

Logic-based rhetoric is suitable only for certain types of discourse, both in the West and in Japan. Japanese writers use logical progressions, although to a more limited extent than English writers do. Depending on the genre, Japanese texts employ mixtures of rhetorical structures, including—and going beyond—deductions (enthymemes) and inductions (use of examples). English texts do, too, but Japanese writers seem to have more freedom. Some methods of creating connected discourse are effective and ideal in Japanese, but do not work in English. This often creates the impression that Japanese texts are difficult to understand, too subjective, and lacking in cogent arguments—and that the writer's intention is ambiguous, at best.

Robert B. Kaplan (1972) describes rhetorical patterns across cultures in a bold and controversial way. According to him, five different types of rhetorical movements (that is, from the introduction

of a topic to its conclusion) are found in expository writings: (1) circular (Oriental), (2) straight linear (English), (3) zigzag (Romance), (4) broken zigzag (Russian), and (5) broken parallel linear (Semitic). English argumentation is characterized as a straight line running directly from topic to conclusion. Orientals (presumably including the Japanese) go in circles before reaching a conclusion. Kaplan uses a diagram of a line spiraling inward (explanation) toward the center (conclusion). Obviously, his characterization is oversimplified. But it raises an important point about the nature of so-called logical cohesiveness.

Japanese discourse organization shows multiple types of cohesiveness, and often mechanisms are mixed in real-life discourse. For example, the basic discourse structure is tripartite, consisting of initial, middle, and final parts. As in English, this simplest organization reveals itself in brief expository discourse. Beyond this are other organizations. A five-part organization rules Japanese traditional (Buddhist) rhetoric. Its elements are: *okori* 'beginning,' *uke* 'leading,' *hari* 'main point,' *soe* 'supplement,' and *musubi* 'conclusion.' Another organization, *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu*, has four parts.

Ki-shoo-ten-ketsu

Ki-shoo-ten-ketsu has its origin in the structure of four-line Chinese poetry and is frequently referred to in Japanese as a model organizational structure for expository (and other) writing. The four elements are: (1) *ki*, presenting a topic at the beginning of one's argument, (2) *shoo*, following *ki* and developing the topic further, (3) *ten*, introducing a relevant idea not directly related to or connected with *ki*, and (4) *ketsu*, bringing all the elements together and reaching a conclusion.

A classic example of this four-part organization is a story about the daughters of Itoya.

(5.1) *Ki* (topic presentation)

Daughters of Itoya (the thread shop) in the Motomachi of Osaka.

Oosaka Motomachi Itoya no musume.

Osaka Motomachi Itoya LK daughter

(5.2) *Shoo* (topic development)

The elder daughter is sixteen, and the younger one is fifteen.

Ane wa juuroku, imooto wa juugo.

elder daughterT sixteen younger daughterT fifteen

(5.3) *Ten* (surprise turn)

Feudal Lords kill (the enemy) with bows and arrows.

Shokoku daimyoo wa yumiya de korosu.
provinces feudal lord T bows and arrows with kill

(5.4) *Ketsu* (conclusion)

The daughters of Itoya “kill” (the men) with their eyes.

Itoya no musume wa me de korosu. (Nagano 1986, 102)
Itoya LK daughter T eye with kill

Note the pun on the word *korosu* ‘to kill,’ which is achieved by *ten*, a diversionary train of thought. All of a sudden the story line switches to the “killing” of feudal lords, which is reconnected to the girls’ “killing” (attracting) men through their devastatingly attractive glances.

The point of the discourse reveals itself only at the *ketsu* stage. Comprehending *ketsu* in relation to the preceding parts becomes crucial, because the beginning gives no clues about where the discourse is headed. To complicate matters, *ten* leads the discourse astray by adding an unexpected thought. Unlike some writings in English in which conclusions are stated at the beginning of the paragraph or the discourse (topic sentence), in certain Japanese discourse, the conclusion may not be revealed until the very last sentence of the essay. This often gives the impression that Japanese discourse is difficult to comprehend.

The prevalence of the *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* principle in Japanese discourse may give the impression that somehow Japanese people fail to create or appreciate logically cohesive discourse (or worse, that they are incapable of logical, rational thinking). Nothing could be further from the truth. In straight news reports, Japanese writing is more “objective” (in the sense of being based on facts) than English writing. According to Suzuko Nishihara and Tomoyo Shibahara (1995), an examination of eighty articles of identical length reporting on identical topics in the Japanese *Asahi Shimbun* and the *International Herald Tribune* yielded the following interesting information. Japanese articles contained primarily factual information (such as factual occurrence, background information, and reference). English articles contained, in addition to factual information, more speculative statements (conjecture, implication, citation, and prediction).

Rhetorical structures in Japanese are multiple. Depending on

the purpose of communication, different (combinations of) organizational principles are chosen. In line with the spirit of collaborating toward persuasion, Japanese writers present conclusions gradually (sometimes indirectly), often after giving extensive background information. (Similar strategies are used by Japanese business negotiators as discussed earlier.) The tendency to place the conclusion toward the end of the text is evident in Japanese newspaper columns as well. I examined thirty-eight newspaper opinion columns called *Koramu Watasbi no Mikata* 'Column, my view,' all written by different reporters, appearing in the *Asahi Shimbun* International Satellite Edition distributed through its New York facilities for the months of January through April, 1994. Given that in "Column, My View" the reporter's conclusion is summarized in the headline, I located the position in the text where the headline paraphrase appeared. The earliest headline paraphrase appeared, on average, at a point 86.73 percent into the column, corroborating the tendency to put the conclusion toward the end.

I also investigated where in the column the writer's comments appear. Commentary sentences are marked by linguistic devices directly conveying the writer's personal views (nominal predicates, verbs referring to the writer's act of writing, speculative modal expressions, and so on). These commentary sentences constitute 20.06 percent of all sentences (excluding direct quotation), but their appearance in the column-initial paragraph is limited to 12.24 percent. Paragraph-initial sentences are predominantly noncommentary (87.16 percent of the time). Sentences within each paragraph follow a noncommentary to commentary pattern 81.5 percent of the time. Writers clearly delay offering personal commentary in newspaper columns.

I must mention that the *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* organization has come under fire in Japan. For example, Takeshi Shibata (1992) suggests that the information age requires discourse in which the conclusions appear at the beginning, especially in practical genres. But the Japanese continue to use various rhetorical structures, and *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* is expected to play a significant role in literary and other genres.

The *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* mode of rhetorical progression matches Japanese sentence structure, which places the verb at the end. Additionally, other structural features of the Japanese language—extras, attitudinal adverbs, topic-comment structure, nominal predicates,

and so on—all work to create a specific kind of discourse. Rather than giving priority to the propositional information (who-does-what-to-whom) in sentence and discourse, wrapping the referential information becomes important. The wrapping process prioritizes the rhetoric of commentation in Japanese.

Japanese communication strategies offer varied ways of responding to relationality cues. Rather than thriving in confrontational discourse, the Japanese tend to collaborate toward persuasion. Belief in the myth of harmony may restrain people from exploring their anger except under appropriate conditions. The muted confrontational business style of the Japanese people seeks collaboration from the other party. One's action is constantly evaluated and aligned, it seems, in its relation to the addressee and to the context. Context is actively manipulated and created by extensive listener response and a nonverbal interactional dance, both of which require active participation from a partner. The multiple functions of silence in Japanese discourse also help accommodate the need to show sensitivity toward a society-relational orientation. When a conflict situation occurs in Japan, participants work to ratify it by turning it into play.

In contrast to the Japanese preference for avoiding unexpected confrontation and conflict, Americans show their respect and concern for a partner by being open, straightforward, and, if necessary, by expressing the confrontation explicitly, not in silence. Americans' collaboration is based on these sincere actions, and they seek solutions not by avoiding them but by negotiating through them.

I am not saying that the Japanese people are collaborative while Americans are not. Rather, I am pointing out that how people confront each other and how they collaborate to reach solutions differ. More specifically the communication strategies used in conflict situations show marked differences.