

Organization of newspaper column articles: Distribution of commentary sentences and column title paraphrasesⁱ

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1 . Introduction

To ‘comment’ is one of the verbs denoting illocutionary acts (Searle 1969, p. 23). The present study investigated how the speech act of ‘commenting’ is accomplished in the media discourse. The study was based on the text data taken from newspaper column articles entitled ‘Koe (voices)’ posted in Asahi Shimbun, which is one of the major nation-wide newspapers in Japan. In this study, the organization of the column articles was analyzed, with special attention paid to the linguistic devices marking the commentary sentences in Japanese.

Using the study by Maynard (1996a and 1997) as a basis of the analysis, the present study looked into the different type of commentary articles to examine the variability of column article organization. The study conducted by Maynard (1996a and 1997) analyzed commentary articles called ‘*Koramu Watashino Mikata*’ (Column, My View) which were published in Asahi Shimbun. These articles were all approximately 1,450 characters in length. The present study, however, looked at shorter columns that were composed of approximately 500 characters.

2 . Background

Maynard (1996a and 1997) reported that column articles were composed of two types of sentences: commentary sentences and non-commentary sentences. Commentary sentences express the writer’s personal attitudes, including feelings, emotions, reactions, views, opinions, desires, and suggestions (1996a, pp. 396-397), whereas non-commentary sentences tend to describe events, situations, and relations. Although every sentence expresses the writer’s personal attitudes in one way or another, as Maynard suggested (1996a, p. 397), only commentary sentences are equipped to express the writer’s personal feelings, emotions, and reactions (1996a, p. 397). Maynard claims that commentary sentences are marked by limited types of linguistic features,

which identify the writer's expressions of modality and related meanings.

Maynard (1996a) explained the strategies used in the column articles, which she calls commentary strategies. These strategies are identified with modal and other self-expressive linguistic features that often appear in combination with the predicate. There are four types of strategies: information qualification, speech act declaration and qualification, participatory control, and interactional appeal. Under the strategy of information qualification, four subcategories are introduced: perspective, information status, epistemic modality, and discourse cohesion. This strategy offers explanatory accounts that express the writer's perspective and signal that the information status is given. Speech act declaration and qualification means that certain discourse modality indicators overtly mark the declaration and qualification of the speech act itself. This marks as direct discourse anything that reflects the direct view of the writer. Participatory control involves aspects most prominent in spoken discourse such as exchange structure and the designing of speaker turns. Under interactional appeal there are two subcategories—personal emotion and sociolinguistic style. This strategy expresses personal thoughts and feelings and also marks one's view in a manner of presentation appropriate to social connections.

Although these discourse modality indicators often function in multiple aspects, the primary function can be identified for each of the linguistic devices marking commentary sentences. There are five types of such devices: (1) nominal predicates, (2) expressions referring to the act of 'speaking' or 'writing,' (3) verbs of 'thinking' and 'feeling,' (4) speculative modal expressions, and (5) sentence-final manipulation for presenting opinion (Maynard 1996a, p. 398). Nominal predicates such as *noda*, *karada*, and *wakeda* offer explanatory accounts expressing the writer's perspective and signaling what the information status is (see sentence (1)). Here, the nominal predicate *karada* is used.

(1) 米国の国益がかかっているからだ。ⁱⁱ

<i>Beikoku</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>kokueki</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>kakatteiru</i>	<i>kara</i>	<i>da.</i>
US	LK	national interest	S	depend on	because	BE. ⁱⁱⁱ

'This is because US national interests depend on them.'

(Maynard 1996a, p. 397)

The second kind of linguistic devices, the expressions referring to the act of 'speaking' or 'writing,' such as an expression like *ieru*, mark direct discourse that reflects the direct view of the writer as in (2) a. This sentence is marked with the expression *ikirenai*, which is the expression referring to the act of speaking.

(2)a. 今わたしはそうではないと言い切れない。

Ima watashi wa, soo dewanai, to iikiranai.
 now I T so BE-NEG QT cannot quite state

'Now I cannot quite state that is not the case.'

(Maynard 1996a, p. 398)

Sentence (2) b below is marked with an expression referring to the act of writing.

(2)b. 市民を視野に入れた記事を書きていきたい。

...shimin o shiya ni ireta kiji o kaiteikitai
 Citizens O perspective in incorporate article O continue writing.

'I would like to continue writing articles that incorporate the citizen's perspective.'

(Maynard 1996a, p. 398)

The third type of devices are verbs of 'thinking' and 'feeling' such as *omou*, *kanjiru*, and *hoshii*, which expose personal thoughts and feelings, as in sentence (3). This sentence is marked with the verb *omou*, which means 'thinking.'

(3) その当事者の青少年の声は反映されないままだと思う。

Sono toojisha no seishoonen no koe wa
 that people involved LK youth LK voice T

han'ei sarenai mama da to omou.
 is not reflected as is BE QT think

'I think that the voice of the youth, the very people involved, continues to be ignored.'

(Maynard 1996a, p. 398)

The fourth kind of devices are speculative modal expressions, such as *daroo*, *rashii*, and *kamoshirenai*, which qualify the level of certainty and evidentiality and also signal sociolinguistic style, as in sentence (4). This sentence is marked with a modal expression, *daroo*.

(4) 例えば、法律の罰則強化も一つの方法だろう。

Tatoeba, hooritsu no bassoku kyooka mo hitotsu
 For example law LK punishment strengthening also one

no hoohoo daroo.

LK solution BE

'For example, strengthening the punishment under the law would be one solution.'

(Maynard 1996a, p. 398-399)

The fifth kind of devices is sentence-final manipulations for presenting opinions, such as *dewa nai (daroo) ka*, which mark one's views in a manner of presentation appropriate to social conventions, as in sentence (5). The sentence is marked with the expression *dewa naika*, which means 'isn't it the case.' This is considered to be the sentence-final manipulation marking the writer's own view.

(5) 国が住民の不安を解消する手をうつべきではないか。

...kuni ga juumin no fuan o kaishosuru teoutsu beki dewanaika.

country S residents LK worry O get rid of take measures for shouldn't be

'Shouldn't the country take measures to get rid of the worries of its residents?'

(Maynard 1996a, p. 399)

3. Organization of the column article

The study by Maynard (1996a and 1997) reported the findings that Japanese rhetorical sequence proceeded from non-commentary to commentary. In addition, with regard to the internal structure of paragraphs, the same sequence of non-commentary to commentary was observed.

Maynard also reported on where in the column article the writer's central message was presented based on the position of the headline paraphrase. She pointed out that the opinion column's headline presented the gist of the writer's view and opinion. The study found that the each essay contained a statement paraphrasing the headline, including the use of identical or synonymous phrases. The headline paraphrase rarely appeared early in the text, and the paraphrase expression could appear more than once. The study reported that the writer's conclusive statement appeared, on average, 86.7% of the way into the column—i.e., the central message was located well into the text.

4. Methodology

The data of the present study was composed of 70 column articles collected during the months of September and October 2004. These column articles were written by newspaper readers to express their thoughts and opinions regarding their daily and social lives as well as

politics and the economy. Each column was composed of approximately 500 characters, which was much shorter than the column articles analyzed in the study by Maynard (1996a).

The research questions that guided the present study were (1) how commentary sentences were distributed in column articles, and (2) how the speech act of ‘commenting’ was accomplished. In analyzing the data, all of the sentences in the column articles were categorized into either commentary or non-commentary, using the criteria proposed by Maynard (1996a and 1997). Then, the sequence of commentary sentences was analyzed and the organization of the column articles was examined. In order to identify where the main idea of the column was expressed, the paraphrase of the column titles was analyzed.

5 . Analysis and Discussion

The results of the present study showed that the organization of the column articles was somewhat similar to what Maynard (1996a and 1997) reported—that is, there is a general tendency in column organization to place the commentary sentences toward the end at both the paragraph and article levels. The column article in example (6) below shows such organization.

(6) Column article: Bullet train

Column article	English version
<p>新幹線レール 東京で結ばば</p> <p style="text-align: right;">会社員 中筋 敏明 (東京都目黒区 56歳)</p> <p>14日は鉄道の日。明治5年に日本で初めて新橋—横浜間に鉄道が開業した日を記念している。私は家族旅行で年に数回、新幹線を利用している立場から要望がある。</p> <p>東京駅で東海道新幹線と東北・上越・長野各新幹線のレールを結び、のぞみやひかりとやまびこ・とき・あさまなどを相互乗り入れできないかということだ。大阪・名古屋方面から東北・上越方面に直通運転すれば、利用者の便宜は増すに違いない。JR東海と東日本の間にどんな障害があるのだろうか。</p> <p>新大阪駅では会社の異なる東海道、山陽新幹線が現に乗り入れている。ここで乗り換えを迫られれば、利用者にはずっと不便なはずだ。</p> <p>新幹線は今や全国多くの都府県を走り、40周年を迎えた。大事故もなく、推進してきた関係者に敬意を表すと共に、こんな提案もぜひ検討してほしい。</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(朝日新聞 2004年10月14日)</p>	<p>Bullet train services How about connecting at Tokyo?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Company worker Nakasuji Toshiaki (Meguro, Tokyo. Age 56)</p> <p>The fourteenth was the railway day. It is the day to celebrate the first railway-service started in Japan connecting Shinbashi and Yokohama in the year 5 of the Meiji period. I have a request from the view of a person who travels with a family on bullet trains several times a year.</p> <p>My request is to connect Tokaido Shinkansen line with each of the Tohoku, Joetsu, and Nagano Shinkansen lines and establish a no-transit service. If it would connect the Osaka-Nagoya area directly with the Tohoku-Joetsu area, it would be more convenient for passengers. I wonder what troubles would exist in the JR Tokai and JR Hitashi Nihon relationship.</p> <p>At Shin-Osaka station, the Tokaido and Sanyo Shinkansen lines, which are different companies, established their no-transit service already. If passengers had to change trains there, it would be quite inconvenient.</p> <p>Shinkansen service covers many prefectures nationwide and celebrated its 40th anniversary. I will express my respect toward the people who accomplished this business without any serious accidents, at the same time, I would like to have my request considered seriously.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(October 14, 2004. <i>Asahi Shimbun</i>)</p>

The discourse segment in example (7) shows the sequence of commentary sentences found in this article. In this column, the author states his opinion specifically in the first sentence of Paragraph 2. Here, *to iu kotoda*, a linguistic device of nominal predicate that expresses the writer's opinion, is used.

(7) Commentary sentences in the column 'Bullet train'

a. Paragraph 2 (1st of 2 sentences)

相互乗り入れ出来ないかということだ。

Soogo noriire dekinaika to iukotoda.

mutual services can't do QM NOM BE

'I wonder why extension of services is impossible.'

b. Paragraph 2 (2nd of 2 sentences)

どんな障害があるのだろうか。

Donna shoogai ga aru no daroo ka.

what obstacles S exist NOM BE Q

'I wonder what obstacles there will be.'

c. Paragraph 3 (2nd of 2 sentences)

利用者にはずっと不便なはずだ。

Riyoosha niwa zutto fubenna hazuda.

users for much more inconvenient should BE

'I am sure this is much more inconvenient for the passengers.'

d. Paragraph 4 (2nd of 2 sentences)

こんな提案も是非検討してほしい。

Konna teian mo zehi kentooshite hoshii.

this kind suggestion also truly consider want

'I'd like to have this kind of request truly considered.'

In the last of two sentences in Paragraph 2, *darooka* is used as a linguistic device for the sentence-final manipulation for presenting opinion, and so this sentence is considered to be a commentary sentence.

The last of the two sentences in Paragraph 3 ends with *hazuda*, which is the nominal predicate marking the writer's opinion. Finally, the last sentence of Paragraph 4 ends with *hoshii*, which is the ending that exposes personal thoughts and feelings. Thus, based on the distribution of commentary sentences, the opinions of the author appeared toward the end of each paragraph and toward the end of the column as a whole.

The column in example (8) below is also considered to be an example that supports Maynard's findings, but in a somewhat different way from the column (6). In this column, the commentary sentences appeared rather frequently, considering the fact that the number of paragraphs is few and each paragraph is composed of only a few sentences.

(8) Column article: Priority seats

Column article	English version
<p>譲る心あれば 優先席は不要</p> <p style="text-align: center;">大学生 中田 三輪 (東京都練馬区 18歳)</p> <p>私は電車やバスの優先席は設けるべきではないと思います。毎日通学しながら見ていると、優先席の周囲に何かすごく座りにくい雰囲気を感じるのです。</p> <p>というのは、ほかの席が満席のためたっている人がいても優先席だけ空いていることがよくあります。優先席に座っていたお年寄りが、空いたほかの席に異動する光景もよく目にします。あまり居心地がよい場所ではないようです。</p> <p>優先席を設けた人たちは、多分意識してはいなかったと思われるのですが、その席に座るべき人には、どこか特別視されているように感じるのではないかと思います。</p> <p>そもそも、わざわざお年寄りや障害を持つ人に手を差しのべるために、特別な場を設けることがおかしいと思います。普通の席で普通におこなわれればいいものを、と思うのです。</p> <p>逆に、普通の席に座ればお年寄りがそばにいても優先席でないので譲らなくてもよい、などと間違った感覚に乗客が陥る面もあると思います。</p> <p>優先席がなくても、みんなが他人を思いやり、みんなに居心地がよい社会が一日も早く訪れることを願うものです。</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(朝日新聞 2004年9月27日)</p>	<p>If we have heart of yielding, no need for priority seats.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">University student Nakata Miwa (Nerima, Tokyo. Age 18)</p> <p>I believe that the priority seats on trains and buses should not be provided. While I am observing them on my way to school, I feel an atmosphere in which it is very hard to sit down in the priority seats.</p> <p>I often see the priority seats vacant, although regular seats are all taken and some people are even standing. I even see some elderly people moving from the priority seats to regular seats when they are available. It appears that the priority seats are not very comfortable.</p> <p>The people who provided the priority seats probably are not aware of it, but for the people who need to take the priority seats it must be the case that they feel awkward to be seen as something special.</p> <p>Fundamentally, I believe it is strange to make a special effort to provide these seats for the elderly and the handicapped. It should be accomplished in regular seats in the regular way.</p> <p>Oppositely, I think there must be some aspect where people might have a wrong understanding to justify that they do not have to yield their seats if they are sitting in the regular seats.</p> <p>I wish for the day when people all will care about others and we will have a society that is comfortable for everyone without providing the priority seats.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(September 27, 2004. <i>Asahi Shimbun</i>)</p>

This article contained six paragraphs, and each paragraph was composed of one or two sentences except Paragraph 2, which contained three sentences.

(9) Commentary sentences in the column 'Priority seats'

a. Paragraph 1 (1st of 2 sentences)

私は電車やバスの優先席は設けるべきではないと思います。

Watashi wa densha ya basu no yuusen seki wa mookeru
I T trains and buses of priority seats T provide

beki dewanai to omoimasu.
should BE NEG QT think

'I think that we should not provide priority seats on the trains and buses.'

b. Paragraph 1 (2nd of 2 sentences)

優先席の周囲に、何かすごく座りにくい雰囲気を感じるのです。

yuusen seki no shuuni nanika sugoku suwarinikui fun'iki
priority seats LK around some very hard to sit atmosphere

o kanjiru nodesu.
O feel NOM BE

'That is because I feel an atmosphere in which it is hard to sit down in the priority seats.'

c. Paragraph 3 (1 sentence)

その席に座るべき人にはどこか特別視されているように感じるのではないかと思います。

sono seki ni suwaru beki hito niwa dokoka tokubetsu shi
the seats at sit should people for somewhat special look

sareteiru yooni kanjiru no dewanaika to omoimasu.
being like feel NOM BE-NEG-Q QT think

'I think that the people who are supposed to sit (in the priority seats) must feel that they are treated as being special.'

d. Paragraph 4 (1st of 2 sentences)

特別な場を設けることがおかしいと思います。

Tokubetsuna ba o mookeru koto ga okashii to omoimasu.
special place O provide NOM S strange QT think

'I think that it is strange to provide a special place.'

e. Paragraph 4 (2nd of 2 sentences)

普通の席で普通に行われればいいものを、と思うのです。

futsuu no seki de futsuuni okonawarereba
ordinary LK seats at ordinary carry out-PASS-COND

iimono o to omou no desu.

good thing O QT think NOM- BE

'I think that we should (do it) using the regular seats as a normal matter.'

f. Paragraph 5 (1 sentence)

逆に、普通の席にすわればお年寄りがそばにいても優先席でないので譲らなくてもよい、などと間違った感覚に乗客が陥る面もあると思います。

gyakuni futsuu no seki ni suwareba otoshiyori ga
oppositely regular LK seats at sit the elderly S

sobani itemo yuusen seki denai node
near by BE priority seats BE-NEG because

yuzuranaku temo yoi nadoto machigatta kankakuni jyookyaku
give NEG BE good like wrong sense passengers

ga ociiru men mo aru to omoimasu.

S fall into aspect also exist QT think

'Oppositely, I think that we might fall into a wrong understanding that it would be all right not to give seats to the elderly if we are sitting in the regular seats.'

g. Paragraph 6 (1 sentence)

みんなに居心地がよい社会が一日も早く訪れることを願うものです。

minna ni igokochigayoi shakai ga ichinichi mo
everyone to comfortable society S one day even

hayaku otozurenu koto o negau mono desu.

soon visit NOM O wish NOM BE

'I hope we will have a society that is comfortable for everyone as soon as possible.'

Paragraph 1 is composed of only two sentences, and the first sentence, (9) a, ends with the *omoimasu*, a verb expressing the author's thought, so this sentence is considered to be a commentary sentence. The second sentence of the same paragraph, (9) b, ends with the nominal predicate, *nodesu*. It is rather rare to see both sentences in one paragraph being commentary sentences. Then, the first sentence of Paragraph 3, (9) c, also ends with again *omoimasu*, which is a verb that expresses the author's thought.

Paragraph 4 contains two sentences, and the first one is the commentary sentence, (9) d, which ends with *to omoimasu* —once again, a verb that expresses the author's opinion. The second sentence in the same paragraph, (9) e, ends with *omouno desu*, which is the commentary ending of the nominal predicate *nodesu*. The first sentence of Paragraph 5 ends with the verb of *omou*. The column itself ends with the one sentence in Paragraph 6, which is considered to be the conclusion, although it is a very general comment.

6 . Paraphrase of column title

The locations where the most important ideas of the authors appeared in the column articles was analyzed based on the position of paraphrases of column titles. Maynard (1996a, p. 405) pointed out that the main idea of the writer, as expressed in the title, was paraphrased in the body of the column and that the column titles were also rephrased more frequently in the later paragraphs than in the earlier paragraphs. The present data showed that the paraphrase appeared throughout the article not just toward the end.

The column title of the article in example (6), 'Bullet train,' is presented in example (10) below. It can be structurally divided into two major parts: the topic part and the predicate part. Here, the topic part is considered to be the first part, *shinkansen reeru*, meaning 'rails of bullet trains,' and the predicate part is the second part, *tookyoo de musubeba*, meaning 'what about connecting at Tokyo.'

(10) Column title of the article 'Bullet train'

新幹線レール 東京で結べば

shinkansen reeru tookyoo de musubeba

bullet trains rails Tokyo at connect-COND

'What about connecting rails of bullet trains at Tokyo?'

The discourse segment example (11) shows the distribution of column title paraphrases. The topic

part of the column title, *shinkansen reeu*, was used five times in the column, once each in Paragraphs 1, 3, and 4, and twice in Paragraph 2. The predicate part of the column title, *tookyoo de musubeba* appeared once in Paragraph 3, as *norivreru*, meaning ‘ride into,’ which is considered to be the paraphrase of *musubu*, meaning ‘connecting.’ As Maynard pointed out, the predicate part of the column title appeared in the third paragraph, which is toward the end of the column. However, the topic part of the paraphrase, which is the first half of the title, appeared throughout the column, and so it would be more accurate to state that the topic of the title is distributed throughout the column rather than only toward the end.

(11) Column article ‘Bullet train’: Paraphrase of column title

a. Paragraph 1

新幹線

shinkansen – bullet trains – ‘bullet trains’

b. Paragraph 2

東海道新幹線

Tookaidoo shinkansen – Tokaido bullet train – ‘Tokaido line’

新幹線のレール

shinkansen no reeru – bullet trains LK rail – rails of bullet trains’

直通運転

chokutsuu unten – direct service – ‘direct services’

c. Paragraph 3

新幹線

shinkansen – bullet trains – ‘bullet trains’

乗り入れる

norivreteiru – ride into – ride into’

d. Paragraph 4

新幹線

shinkansen – bullet trains – bullet trains’

The column article in example (12) also shows a similar distribution of the column title paraphrases.

(12) Column article: Luggage shelf

Column article	English version
<p>高く狭い網棚 改良できぬか</p> <p style="text-align: right;">会社役員 小野 博之 (さいたま市 64歳)</p> <p>通勤ラッシュ時の電車の輸送力を増強しようと、JRが首都圏などで導入していた折りたたみ式座席の車両のついた列車に、最近よく乗るようになった。なるべくこの車両を避けているが、ときとして乗らざるを得ない。</p> <p>立つのは一向に構わないが、困るのは網棚の位置が異常に高いことだ。棚の下にも人が立つので高くなっているらしい。しかしこれではよほど背の高い人しか利用できない。身長167cmの私が困難を感じるのだから、女性はもっと不便を感じる人が多いだろう。</p> <p>しかも、幅や奥行きがともに申しわけ程度しかなく、大きな荷物は載らない。はみだして載せて、万一落ちたら危険だ。</p> <p>この車両では読書を楽しめない。カバンを持ちながら、もう一方の手で本を持つのでは、急停止した時に危険だからだ。JRは客に立つことを求めているのだから、せめて網棚を広くするなど改良して便宜を図るべきではないだろうか。</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(朝日新聞 2004年10月9日)</p>	<p>Tall and narrow luggage shelves Isn't it possible to improve?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Company worker Ono Hiroyuki (Saitama city. Age 64)</p> <p>I recently came to ride trains with folding-type seats frequently. This is to enforce the capacity of transportation during the rush hour time. I am trying to avoid this type of trains as much as possible, but even though I do my best to avoid using these cars, I have no choice once in a while.</p> <p>I don't mind standing at all, but the problem is that the position of the luggage shelf is quite high. This seems to be due to the fact that some people stand under the shelf. However, only tall people can use the shelf under these conditions. Since I, who am 167cm-tall, feel difficulty, women probably feel even more inconvenience.</p> <p>In addition, the width and depth of the shelf are not enough, and the large luggage won't fit. It would be dangerous if the luggage too large for the shelf should fall off.</p> <p>We can't enjoy reading in this type of train. It is dangerous to read while holding a bag with one hand and a book in the other hand when the train comes to a sudden stop. JR asks passengers to stand, so they should improve the shelf by, for example, widening the size.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(October 9, 2004. <i>Asahi Shimbun</i>)</p>

With regard to the column title (example (13)), the topic part is considered to be *takaku semai amidana*, meaning 'high and narrow shelves,' whereas the predicate part is *kairyoo dekinuka*, meaning 'can't you improve them.'

(13) Column title of the article 'Luggage shelf'

高く狭い網棚 改良できぬか
takaku semai amidana kairyoo dekinuka
 high narrow shelves improve can NEG Q
 'High and narrow shelves, can't you improve them?'

As shown in example (14) below, the topic part of the column title was paraphrased throughout the column, but the predicate part appeared only in the last paragraph. Paraphrases of 'shelves,' appeared in Paragraphs 1, 2, and 4. The paraphrases of 'width,' 'narrowness,' and 'high position' appeared in Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Paraphrases of the predicate, which is the proposal to improve the situation, appeared only in Paragraph 4. Thus, the results showed that

the topic part appeared throughout, although the predicate part was paraphrased only toward the end.

(14) Column article 'Luggage shelf': Paraphrase of column title

a. Paragraph 1

電車

densha – trains – ‘trains’

b. Paragraph 2

網棚の位置

amidana no ichi – shelves LK position – ‘position of the shelves’

異常に高い

ijoo ni takaii – extremely high – ‘extremely high’

高くなっている

takaku natteiru – high being – ‘is high’

c. Paragraph 3

幅や奥行

haba ya okuyuki – width and depth – ‘width and depth’

d. Paragraph 4

網棚を広く

amidana o hiroku – shelves O wide – ‘make the shelves wider’

改良して

kairyoo shite – improve – ‘improve’

7 . Discussion and conclusion

The present study showed that the general tendency observed in the analysis in the longer column articles in Maynard’s (1996a and 1997) study was also observed in the present data. The commentary sentences generally appeared at the end, particularly within paragraphs. Although we looked at the whole column article, it was rather difficult to determine that the position of the writers’ conclusions was at the end at the column level (see, for example, the col-

umn article in example (8)).

Regarding the position of the column title paraphrases, the data of the present study showed, unlike the Maynard's findings, that the predicate part appeared more toward the end, whereas the topic part appeared throughout the column. Paraphrases of column titles all related to the commentary sentence at the end, and each of them established a crucial step for the following commentary sentences.

Although the present study looked into the organization of short column articles in comparing the results with the previous study, this area needs to be explored further. The analysis needs to be done based on a larger body of data. Furthermore, an analysis according to the category of topics would be necessary—that is to look into the influence of the topic itself, (for example relatively hard topics such as politics and economics as opposed to more soft topics such as the ones found in the author's daily life) on the organization of column articles.

Notes

- i An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Ninth International Pragmatics Association Conference at Liva del Garda, Italy, in July 2005.
- ii Examples in Japanese orthography were added by the author. Maynard (1996a) provided examples only in Roman characters.
- iii For the presentation of Japanese data, the following abbreviations were used: BE stands for various forms of the verb to be; COND denotes conditional; IO stands for indirect object marker; LK stands for linker that links nominals; NEG denotes negative marker; NOM stands for nominalizer; O denotes object marker; PASS stands for passive; Q stands for question marker; QT denotes quotation marker; S stands for subject marker; and T means topic marker.

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