

**GROUNDING AND DEIXIS:
A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE GROUNDING
PHENOMENON IN JAPANESE NARRATIVE***

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ABSTRACT

The present study proposes a composite and comprehensive cognitively-based framework which may account for the grounding phenomenon in Japanese narrative. The framework is based on two distinct but complementary approaches to narrative analysis, namely, grounding analysis (as developed by Hopper and Thompson 1980, and further refined by Fleischman 1990) and *Deictic Shift Theory* (Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt 1995).

Grounding¹ is the Gestalt perspective of figure vs. ground spatial contrast in cognitive psychology. In narrative studies, the perceptual (visual) contrast of grounding is translated into textual feature. It is also considered as feature of such grounding that it characterizes certain parts of the narrative as more psychologically salient (foreground) than others.

The present study undertakes to show that a foregrounded segment is most likely to coincide with an element that signals a shift of the *deictic center*².

* Though a good portion of this paper is from Chapter 1, 2, and 3 of my doctoral dissertation titled “Grounding and Deixis: A study of Japanese first-person narrative” (2001), substantial revisions have been made since then. The author wishes to thank two anonymous reviewers whose comments contributed to revisions made. Any errors in the paper are of course mine.

¹ Imagine a pop-up picture book for children. Major characters and some crucial back-drops pop up—foreground, while the rest remains as a flat and static background picture—background.

² Segal (1995:15) defined a *deictic center* as follows:

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This claim challenges the fundamental findings derived from the traditional notion of grounding as proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980). Unlike their morpho-syntactic driven notion of grounding—which is based on verbal transitivity it is found in the present study that low transitive linguistic elements, such as perceptual and mental predicates, can be foregrounded, enabling readers to access the narrator’s consciousness without mediation.

1. INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Gestalt perspective of figure vs. ground contrast is a spatial principle. This contrast in the visual field is translated into a foreground vs. background contrast in discourse. Hopper and Thompson’s 1980 article *Transitivity in grammar and discourse* established a benchmark in the literature of discourse studies, and contributed to development of theoretically more sophisticated and refined accounts of the grounding phenomenon in narrative. Hopper and Thompson (1980:252) listed ten components of transitivity—participants, kinesis, aspect, punctuality, volitionality, affirmation, mode, agency, affectedness of O (Object), and individuation of O—each of which contributes to the degree of transitivity. Foregrounded segments contain verbs high on the transitivity scale, while content that is backgrounded contains verbs relatively low on that scale. In discourse, such contrast in verbal transitivity is associated further with temporal sequentiality—temporally ordered narrative events contain verbs or predicates high on the transitivity scale and are perceived as being foregrounded content against a relatively stative background. Though this is a rather oversimplified definition of foreground vs. background contrast, it sums up the essence of the traditionally accepted notion of grounding in narrative.

In traditional narrative studies, grounding was described as

... when one reads a narrative as it is meant to be read, he or she is often required to take a cognitive stance within the world of the narrative. A location within the world of the narrative serves as the center from which the sentences are to be interpreted. In particular, deictic terms such as *here* and *now* refer to that conceptual location. It is thus the *deictic center*.

distinguishing narrative events from non-narrative events. Narrative segments were considered to constitute the framework of a story³ and to be marked as foregrounded (Labov 1972, Hopper and Thompson 1980). Because of the associated binary distinction between narrative and non-narrative events, grounding was often viewed as a simple binary opposition. However, in recent years, a continuum approach to information saliency (Cf. Fleischman 1990) has been adopted and is considered to be more consonant with linguistic data. Of all the modified approaches proposed by researchers (Wallace 1982, Chvany 1984, Reinhart 1984, Fleischman 1990, *inter alia*), I consider that Fleischman's four criteria for identifying foregrounded segments (1990) are the most detailed and comprehensive. In the following, I will discuss some relevant concepts in order to explicate the theoretical background and conception of the present study.

1.1 Necessity for a new approach

Most linguistic work on narrative has been on oral narratives, such as those studied in Labov (1972). There is, of course, a vast quantity of literary critical work on written narrative but, with the exception of Fleischman's classic study, there is relatively little in depth from a cognitive perspective. The absence of such analyses is particularly striking for Japanese⁴, though there is now increasing interest in oral narrative⁵. I am aware of a few studies of first-person oral narrative in Japanese, one of which is a MA thesis on first-person oral narrative by Reiko Nishikawa at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (1999).

In discussing the process of communicating a point in Japanese oral narrative, Nishikawa (1999:54-58) argued the importance of background and general preliminary information (i.e., "Orientation" according to the Labovian narrative terminology) as well as that of the

³ It is generally referred to as the "backbone" or "skeleton" of the text (Cf. Hopper and Thompson 1980).

⁴ In Japanese linguistics, narrative analysis is often considered and employed as one method to study first and second language acquisition. Otherwise, it is employed as part of Conversation Analysis.

⁵ Maynard (1989, 1993) has done some extensive studies on Japanese conversation.

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narrator's evaluation. Though she did not correlate saliency of those functional elements of narrative with grounding, her claim—the function of “Orientation” is other than the referential function—seems to be consonant with Fleischman's claim regarding the importance of “Orientation” in conjunction with grounding in narrative.

The present study is intended to fill in the gaps in the literature of narrative analysis, and to propose a new integral approach to analyze Japanese written narratives.

1.2 Fleischman's four criteria (1990)

Fleischman (1990:170-181) incorporated several grounding perspectives in discourse analysis and proposed the following four criteria for identifying foregrounded segments: (1) *temporal sequence*—Are events temporally ordered?, (2) *human importance*—Are some events perceived to be more important than others?, (3) *significance in developing the plot*—Are events marking or introducing a new turn / twist or development to move forward?, and (4) *unpredictability*—Are events perceived to be a surprise element? Though many researchers have considered temporal sequence as the most reliable criterion for identifying foregrounded segments (i.e., events in a temporally organized narrative sequence are inherently foregrounded), Fleischman questioned this one-to-one association between temporal sequence and foregrounding by pointing out that “not all temporally ordered events are of equal importance” (1990:170).

More importantly, her criteria also shed light on the psychological saliency of backgrounded segments. She pointed out that backgrounded segments are not uniform in their degree of saliency. That is, when a given segment, whether narrative or non-narrative, is perceived to be of greater human importance than the other(s), even though neither are particularly prominent, it still possesses a relatively higher degree of psychological saliency (NB: Both *human importance* and *unpredictability* can be construed and defined in the following simplistic manner: We, as readers, tend to perceive certain words, phrases, and/or events to be more crucial or surprising than others for some *reason*. This “reason” lies in the linguistic structures of

“important” or “surprising” words, phrases, and/or events which capture readers’ attention). It is clear that both the criterion of human importance and the criterion of unpredictability are strongly founded on our “cognition” as readers. Furthermore, by making an association with psychological saliency, Fleischman’s grounding criteria reveal *cognitive* aspects of grounding in narrative, and enable us to justify and integrate a narrative analysis of grounding with other cognitively-based approaches in order to establish a more comprehensive view and approach.

To complement Fleischman’s criteria, I propose to incorporate Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt’s cognitive approach *Deictic Shift Theory*⁶ (1995) (hereafter DST) into grounding. Though details in relation to DST will be discussed later, I note here that DST reveals that manipulation of the *deictic center* is related to the criteria of human importance and unpredictability (see [Footnote 2](#) for a definition of *deictic center*). Furthermore, these two criteria most strongly mark psychological saliency for non-narrative events, in which temporal sequentiality has little or no significance.

1.3 Note on “deixis”

Deixis has been studied both in linguistics and philosophy. It is referred to by terms such as “indexical signs” by Pierce (Burks 1949), and “egocentric particulars” by Russell (Gale 1967). Its function has been discussed in a variety of fields, primarily in pragmatics, semantics, propositional logic, and discourse analysis, all of which, however, can be subsumed under cognitive linguistics.

In relation to Japanese, Kuno’s study of *empathy* (1987) needs to be mentioned. He explored deixis from a different perspective and provided a discussion of the function of deictic verbs in Japanese such as *yaru* ‘give’, *morau* ‘receive’, *kuru* ‘come’, and *iku* ‘go’. In the same vein, Tokunaga (1986) explored the affective deixis of directional verbs (*kuru* ‘come’ vs. *iku* ‘go’) in Japanese. These deictic verbs intrinsically indicate either the speaker-oriented perspective or the hearer-oriented perspective. Compare the following examples:

⁶ The detailed explanation of DST will be presented later.

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- (1) a. *Watashi-wa kare-ni ai-ni ki-ta.*
I (fe⁷)-T he-D meet-D came
'I **came** to meet/see him.'
- b. *Watashi-wa kare-ni ai-ni i-tta.*
I (fe)-T he-D meet-D went
'I **went** to meet/see him.'

In (1a), by selecting *ki-ta* 'came', the speaker empathizes with the terminal point, *kare*, while in (1b) the speaker indicates empathy with the original point, *watashi* with *i-tta* 'went'. By empathizing with the terminal point of movement in (1a), the speaker spatially orients herself with the deictic center, *kare*, from whose perspective readers are also guided to position themselves to construe a given situation. If deictic verbs are switched as from *ki-ta* to *i-tta* in this for example, this switch shifts the deictic center from *kare* to *watashi* in the narrative.

As those studies show, Japanese directional verbs (*iku* 'go' and *kuru* 'come') and giving verbs (*yaru* and *kureru* 'give') have deictic functions and express perspectives that differ in the degree of empathy (Kuno 1987). These verbs can function also as auxiliary verbs as in

⁷ List of abbreviations:

(fe) feminine	Np: Non-past	T: Topic marker / <i>-wa</i>
(ma) masculine	Onm: Onomatopoeia	A: Accusative case / <i>-o</i>
(di) distal	P: Passive	N: Nominative case / <i>-ga</i>
(pr) proximal	Plt: Polite	D: Dative case / <i>-ni</i>
Com: Complementizer	Prt: Particle	G: Genitive case / <i>-no</i>
Cop: Copula	Pst: Past	L: Locative case / <i>-de</i>

V-te-kuru, *V-te-iku*, *V-te-yaru*, and *V-te-kureru*. It is no surprise that those auxiliary verbs denote the speaker's epistemological stance, paralleling the function of the original independent deictic verbs.

The speakers can indicate with *whom*, *where*, *when* or *what* they empathize most by using deictic verbs. In fictional narrative, the narrator can shift the placement of empathy by switching between complementary deictic verbs to create context to do some contextual work. A shift in empathy in Japanese is, thus, synonymous with a shift in deictic center in Deictic Shift Theory.

1.4 Deictic Shift Theory (1995)

Deictic Shift Theory (Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt 1995) is essentially concerned with ways to track the process of the narration (hereafter DST). DST constructs a model of the narrative by tracking shifts in the perception of characters and events across space and time, positing a *deictic center* (Segal 1995:15), which serves as an orienting locus in the narrative. This tracking of the deictic center is considered to enable readers to construct the world of the story by helping them locate themselves within the sequence of events. Segal (1995:66-67) presented the basic assumptions of the theory regarding narration, as follows:

The narration guides the reader through a story world. The reader presupposes that the story world exists with its own spacetime. Narration is used to place the reader at a particular location within the preexisting storyworld . . . although narration generally moves us consistently through story time, . . . we have the possibility of direct access to many spacetime locations within the story world . . . The reader relates linguistic elements within the discourse to the objects and events of the story according to a complex set of principles . . . The reader finds himself or herself cognitively within the story. He or she is located at the Deictic Center, the moving spacetime location from which the sentences are interpreted. The recurring characters usually move with the Deictic Center, or reappear within it . . . The power of narrative discourse is such that (a) the author and reader can each use it to transport themselves from the spacetime location from which the narrative is written or read, to a place where they observe and experience physical and mental events they might not be able to witness in the real world; and (b) the reader can understand and keep track of the relations between objects and events and the

changes in recurring objects.

In other words, the reader is seen as constructing a mental model of the story world, with the deictic center functioning as a kind of moving window through which the events in the story are viewed. This is termed as the *focalizing* perspective. As a corollary, what is viewed through the focalizing perspective is the *focalized* entity (Zubin and Hewitt 1995:132-133). In addition, the following four basic components are found in the deictic center of a story:

- (1) the participants, the **WHO**,
- (2) the locations, the **WHERE**,
- (3) the time, the **WHEN**,
- (4) a **WHAT**, an inanimate entity (such as a painting or a pearl) or an “object of intention by a WHO” (135).

These components continuously work together in relation to each other and in the process create changes to the story’s deictic center according to which readers must adjust or re-adjust their orientation toward the story. Some WHOs, WHEREs, WHENs, and WHATs may differ from others at certain times in being the foci of the readers’ attention, and hence are referred to as the *focalized* WHO, WHEN, WHAT or WHERE. Events may be seen through the eyes of one of the participants, including a postulated narrator, who can be referred to as the *focalizing* WHO.

Linguistic elements such as tense-marking, lexical items indicating time and location such as demonstratives (*ko-* ‘this’, *so-* ‘that (proximal)’, *a-* ‘that (distal)’) and deictic verbs (*kuru* ‘come’, *iku* ‘go’) all assist readers in locating themselves cognitively in the story world and identifying which elements of the story are more important to the central progress of the action (the foregrounded elements) and which are supporting detail (the backgrounded elements).

In narrative, the focalizing WHEN is linguistically realized in the *unmarked* past tense⁸ sequentially connecting one event to another. Relative to the focalizing WHEN, a new time frame is introduced as the *focalized* WHEN, which is projected from the *story-now* time frame established by the focalizing WHEN. The spatial component, WHERE is usually fixed by the current WHO. That is, as the participant (WHO) moves in the story, the location (WHERE) moves

⁸ I refer to the Japanese past tense as TA, its non-past to RU following the conventions widely practiced by linguists of Japanese.

along. Note that the current WHO has important properties in narrative. It is a subject of intention whose thought, feelings, or perception is relevant to the story and imposes a particular interpretation on the story by the readers. These three deictic components, WHEN, WHERE, and WHO may be maintained or shifted together as the narrative progresses.

A shift in any of those components is linguistically realized in the following ways (Zubin and Hewitt 1995:145-151):

- (a) initial or preposed temporal or spatial adverbial phrases / clauses,
- (b) presentative structures (e.g., a “there” / “it” + “be” + NP construction, and a preposed adverbial phrase or clause + subject NP),
- (c) perceptual and mental predicates,
- (d) definite NPs (including names) in subject position,
- (e) deictic adverbs and verbs,
- (f) a shift in the other deictic center component.

A shift or a deictic center shift, realized by these devices, is textually distinguished from the rest of the narrative and identified as a crucial element by readers. This shift is a particular point that requires the operation of the reader’s cognitive activities for interpretation of a story.

1.5 Note on the “subjectivity”

In narrative analysis of grounding and DST, the speaker’s as well as the readers’ subjectivity is central. In narrative, any participant, not only the narrator, can assume the role of the speaker through whose point of view or perspective events or scenes are filtered and presented to readers.

Maynard (1993:12) restricted the term *subjectivity* primarily to the producer of the language’s *subjectivity* as reflected in the expression of the producer’s personal attitudes and feelings. Fleischman (1990:305) suggested “subjectivity in fiction is normally linked to the Speaker, whom—unless we are told otherwise or led to believe is unreliable—we assume to be the purveyor (real or proxy) of evaluations and reference point for the ideology of the text.” That is, subjectivity is the speaker’s consciousness, thought or perception as reflected in the speaker’s language.

Traditionally, the notion of subjectivity has been a central issue for many philosophers and linguists. Benveniste (1971) considered the word “I” as the source of subjectivity and identified “I” with the speaking-self. But, in fictional narrative, “I” is not always the speaking-self. There are narratives in which the speaking-self may be a third person character or even an effaced narrator. Arguing against Benveniste’s notion of subjectivity, Ricoeur (1974) associated subjectivity with “our bodily interactions with the world” (Wiebe 1995). This particular view anchors the source of subjectivity in our bodily orientation and experience. By associating subjectivity with our bodily interactions with the world, subjectivity is detached from the restricted notion of the speaking-self / “I.”

In narrative studies, Banfield’s (1982) notions of represented thought/perception and represented speech are closely related to the notion of subjectivity. In DST, Banfield’s explicit association of subjectivity with types of speech/sentences is taken up and examined in depth: Not just “I”, but any character can be the *focalizing* character whose subjectivity can be expressed in various ways in narrative. Furthermore, the relationship to subjectivity is considered to be “the most important aspect of deixis” (Galbraith 1995:23), whereas, in the process of grounding, the speaker’s subjectivity is seen as “involved in determining what is to be highlighted in a report of events,” and it “manifests itself through reliance on—or deliberate skewing of—the linguistic strategies conventionalized by the language for grounding and evaluation” (Fleischman 1990:183). Subjectivity in narrative is thus “the aspect of fiction that offers us the illusion of direct experience of another’s private mental states” (Hewitt 1995:325), and it is often linguistically realized in represented speech or thought/perception presented in subjective sentences given within a subjective context which is “a maximal block of subjective sentences with the same subjective character” (Wiebe 1995:265). By tracking the speaker’s subjectivity manifested in the language, readers cognitively map their own subjectivity onto the speaker’s and that enables them to experience the events as the speaker does vicariously.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS OF GROUNDING

Several studies of grounding need be mentioned for their

contributions to the development and refinement of the present study.

As noted earlier, the Gestalt perspective of figure vs. ground contrast is the spatial principle. In narrative studies, temporally ordered narrative events are perceived as being foregrounded content against a relatively stative background.

Labov (1972) divided the components of a story into narrative and non-narrative events. Narrative and non-narrative events⁹ are differentiated according to (1) whether or not they are presented in temporal sequence such as (i) Event X in time x ->, (ii) Event Y in time $x+1$ ->, (iii) Event Z in time $x+2$, and (2) whether those temporally ordered events are presented in a main clause or not. Narrative events are expressed as temporally ordered main clauses. All other events are considered as non-narrative. Clearly Labov's obvious dichotomies—temporally ordered or not, main clause or not—have contributed much to the traditionally accepted binary opposition of grounding.

Hopper and Thompson (1980) correlated the narrative vs. non-narrative contrast with the foreground vs. background contrast, and examined the notion of grounding in terms of their Transitivity Hypothesis. According to Hopper and Thompson, transitivity is “a global property of an entire clause, such that an activity is ‘carried-over’ or ‘transferred’ from an agent to a patient” (1980:251). They stated:

. . . the foregrounded portions together comprise the backbone or skeleton of the

⁹ Narrative and non-narrative segments are further subdivided into the following scheme (Cf. Labov 1972, Fleischman 1990). While *Abstract* and *Coda* are being optional elements, *Evaluation* is said to “make explicit why the story is told—its *raison d’etre*” (Fleischman 1990:136).

[<i>Speaker-now</i>]	[<i>Story-now</i>]	
Abstract	[Narrative segments]	[Non-narrative segments]
		Orientation
		(Internal, External) Evaluation
		Resolution
	Complicating Action	
	Peak	
Coda		

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text, forming its basic structure; the backgrounded clauses put flesh on the skeleton, but are extraneous to its structural coherence . . . for foregrounded clauses are ordered in a temporal sequence; a change in the order of any two of them signals a change in the order of real-world events. Backgrounded clauses, however, are not ordered with respect to each other, and may even be movable with respect to the foregrounded portions (Hopper and Thompson 1980:281).

Hopper and Thompson's notion of grounding depends heavily on the temporal and aspectual features of verbs. Recall their ten components mentioned earlier. The verbs are examined for aspect (*telic* vs. *atelic*), mode (*realis* vs. *irrealis*), and argument structures. Verbal properties like telicity, realis mode, and agent and object arguments are associated with high transitivity. Such verbs must be in a main clause to be considered foregrounded.

According to Hopper and Thompson's definition, the following are examples of sentences with foregrounded content and high on the transitivity scale because they are main clauses, temporally ordered, involve both an agent and an object, and the verbs are telic:

- (2) a. I **washed** those apples thoroughly, **peeled** them with my silver knife, and **ate** them all.
- b. He **kicked** the door open and **turned** on the light.

Compare example (2a) and (2b) above with (3a) and (3b):

- (3) a. I **was** careless.
- b. Tom **likes** wine.

The predicates in (3a) and (3b) are stative and hence low on the transitivity scale because they denote non-action and non-punctual states. (3a) above involves only one participant, while (3b) has an inanimate mass noun as object. Since the inanimate mass noun is less individuated than a definite animate object, the clause is low in transitivity. Thus (3a) and (3b) are categorized by Hopper and Thompson as examples of sentences with backgrounded content.

But it is far from clear that transitivity and main clause status are totally appropriate criteria. As pointed out by Fleischman (1990:173), many transitivity features are related to sequentiality rather than foregrounding *per se*. Thus the association between transitivity and sequentiality is rather problematic.

Hopper and Thompson correlated grounding with the binary contrast of main clause vs. subordinate clause. This treatment is similar to Labov's, and automatically categorizes all subordinate clauses as background. Part of the rationale for this treatment is due to their claim that subordinate clauses do not form a temporal sequence. However, as we shall see, this is not always the case.

Reinhart (1984) accepted temporal sequentiality as a criterion for foregrounding, but her analysis is considerably more sophisticated. She argued that backgrounded clauses can, in fact, have some degree of foregrounding, or rather, saliency, and she examined non-temporal backgrounded clauses in detail. She contended that segments not temporally sequenced may be more salient than temporally sequenced segments when they provide elements essential to the progress of the plot. She thus separated the notion of grounding from temporal sequentiality.

Thompson (1987), examining extended written data, noted that subordinate clauses can indeed form a temporal sequence:

Unlike Labov and Waletzky, I do not define away the possibility of subordinate clauses' predicates being part of the set of temporally sequenced predicates, and unlike Reinhart, I do not call the set of temporally sequenced clauses the "foreground" (445).

She, then, proposed the following two-part hypothesis:

- a. The vast majority of subordinate clause predicates will not be on the time line.
- b. Those which are on the time line are doing other discourse work in addition to naming a temporally sequenced event.

To support her hypothesis, Thompson carefully compared various subordinate clauses in temporal sequence in her data. The examples below are her examples. In (4) and (5), subordinate clauses include predicates that form temporal sequence, and in (6), a subordinate clause does something other than forming temporal sequence. It has an orienting function to guide readers back to "the time line in a way that a simple independent clause could not have done" (Thompson 1987:448). Note that the predicates in temporal sequence are in italics:

- (4) Only after he *stopped smiling* and *shrieking* did he go to Stephanie and hug her (446).
- (5) Finally, I *secured* a good grip around his wrist and with just enough

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- of a twist, I was able to persuade him *to come out* (450).
(6) When he *finished grooming* Josh, Nim *turned* to Stephanie and her family and repeatedly *signed “play”* (447).

Acknowledging that most subordinate clauses are not temporally sequenced, Thompson pointed out that those which are so sequenced have other discourse functions, functions such as creating cohesion, recapitulating important prior events, and maintaining the continuity of the narrative line.

In Fleischman (1990), the aforementioned studies are reviewed and analyzed so that her account of grounding is more thorough, more comprehensive and more applicable in analyzing the vast linguistic data extracted from the “Romance texts” ranging from the medieval performance to the modern fiction in Romance languages.

3. MORE ON FLEISCHMAN’S CRITERIA

For Fleischman (1990:6), grounding is a textual function, which is one of the strategies used “for signaling levels of saliency or information relevance—for creating texture within text.” Another crucial factor to be noted is a linguistic manifestation of past. Fleischman noted that narration is viewed “from a *retrospective* vantage; the experience is by definition ‘past,’ whether it occurred in some real world or not . . . The tenses appropriate to the verbal activity of narrating are accordingly tenses that include past time reference as part of their basic meaning” (1990:23-24). In Fleischman’s analysis of narrative in Romance languages, the past or preterit tense is associated with perfective aspect and is contrasted with a past progressive or imperfective such that the former typically marks the *foreground* of a discourse, while the *background* is marked by the imperfective counterpart. She argued that these properties arise from the interaction of the basic meaning of the preterit (past time reference plus perfective aspect) with the discourse context of narration. Thus in Romance narratives, she viewed the foregrounding ability of the preterit and the backgrounding ability of the imperfective as contextual (expressive) implicatures.

Now recall Fleischman’s four criteria for identifying foregrounded segments. The most critical factor in Fleischman’s account of

grounding is the identification of non-narrative events that are foregrounded. Both the human importance and unpredictability criteria have communicative functions and are rather subjectively measured. Fleischman (1990:173) noted that human importance is contextually determined, which means that descriptive or orientational segments can only be viewed as salient in a particular context. Unpredictability is viewed as contextual informativeness. An unpredictable element in a particular context is more informative than a predictable one—a given segment singled out as psychologically salient serves to communicate important information to readers. The narrator relies on such contextual features to convey his/her commentary or evaluation to make the point of the story.

Fleischman's criteria are useful, but she noted that labeling a given element more psychologically salient than others could involve subjective judgments. Two of her criteria—human importance and unpredictability—tend to be more subjective than objective. Yet, more importantly, “what is humanly important” has been taken to be synonymous with the term foregrounding, and unpredictability “reflects the perceptual neutrality of the Gestalt figure-ground opposition” more than any other criterion (Fleischman 1990:172, 181) (see [Footnote 1](#): The way *perceptually salient* entities or elements could be *visually presented* in a pop-up picture book is most relevant to the criteria in question).

In narrative, the speakers are likely to foreground what they consider to be *important* and / or *unpredictable*. The readers, in return, pick up those important or unpredictable elements and even other elements that they consider to be crucial, and register them in their construal of the story. Both processes are intrinsically subjective, thus the speaker's judgments do not necessarily conform to the readers', or vice versa. Nevertheless, we normally assume that good narratives should be founded on the mastery of creating illusions that enable readers to have vicarious experiences. These vicarious experiences are only possible when the readers' judgments reflect the speaker's in narrative. That is, the speaker's use of language provides readers with sufficient cues and clues that enable them to navigate through the story world as the speaker wishes.

Assuming all that, Fleischman (1990:183-196) countered much of subjective judgments as follows: (1) the normative grammatical correlates of a given text needs to be established, and (2) such norms

single out what constitutes “marked” tense(s). These two procedures further separate the unmarked tense, which is considered to tag temporally sequenced segments (i.e., narrative events), from non-sequential non-narrative segments. Non-sequential non-narrative segments may take marked tenses, and could house *important* and / or *unpredictable* elements. Conversely, elements of importance or unpredictability may hover around or be confined within a clause or a sentence with “marked” tense(s). That is exactly the case in the literary pieces in Romance languages that Fleischman examined.

4. GROUNDING AND DEIXIS

4.1 Incorporation of different frameworks

I follow Fleischman’s definition of grounding which is based mostly on textual features, and also agree with her claim that textual features are linguistically manifested by lexico-grammatical devices such as tense-aspect features, lexical items, stylistic shifts and so forth. Those textual features create notable contextual effects which both the narrator and readers perceive to be salient in the text. An investigation of Fleischman’s criteria and DST thus shows that

- (1) *grounding* and *deixis* are in fact two sides of the same coin,
- (2) subjectivity plays a crucial role in narrative, adding extra semantic information to a given segment, which explains the contextual effects of grounding,
- (3) subjectivity is closely related to focalization and the action of a deictic center in DST, and
- (4) both saliency in grounding and subjectivity in DST are indicated by particular features that shift a deictic center.

Clearly the functions of a deictic center and its components can be successfully translated in terms of grounding. Fleischman’s four criteria for identifying foregrounded segments are supplemented by the notion of deixis as developed in DST. Moreover, in those two frameworks, subjectivity is the most crucial and underlying notion that is construed as “the aspect of fiction that offers us the illusion of direct experience of another’s private mental states” (Hewitt 1995:325). The following table summarizes and contrasts those two frameworks on which the present study is established:

Table 1. Fleischman’s notion of grounding and Deictic Shift Theory.

<i>The grounding criteria</i>		<i>Deictic Shift Theory</i>
<i>Temporal sequentiality</i>	Past tense as the unmarked tense	<i>Focalizing WHEN</i> as a temporal deictic component
<i>Human importance</i>	Linguistic elements expressing “importance” and / or use of marked tense(s)	Subjectivity of the current <i>WHO</i> presents an element of importance as a deictic center shift
<i>Development of the plot</i>	Temporal adverbials and achievement or accomplishment situations	<i>Focalized WHEN</i> or <i>WHERE</i> expressed by initial preposed adverbials
<i>Unpredictability</i>	Linguistic elements expressing “unpredictability” and / or use of marked tense(s)	Subjectivity of the current <i>WHO</i> presents an element of unpredictability as a deictic center shift

Fleischman’s criteria of temporal sequentiality and development of the plot are textual and associated with particular tense-aspect features, and most of all, they are quite self-explanatory. But identifying either important or unpredictable elements requires extra work, for both are composite features of textual and contextual elements. Thus it seems appropriate to sub-categorize the four criteria into two separate discourse categories as follows:

Table 2. Fleischman’s four criteria for grounding.

FLEISCHMAN’S CRITERIA	
<u>Textual Criteria</u>	<u>Textual and Contextual Criteria</u>
<i>Temporal sequentiality</i> & <i>Development of the plot</i>	<i>Human importance</i> & <i>Unpredictability</i>
Sequential	Non-sequential
Narrative segments	Non-narrative segments
<i>Identifiable for tense-aspect features</i>	<i>Identifiable for tense-aspect features in contrast with those in sequential narrative segments</i>

Grouping the four criteria into two and treating the two as separate discourse categories helps us correctly identify foregrounded segments

confined within non-sequential non-narrative segments, which, in the traditional notion of grounding, were often overlooked.

However, the languages Fleischman was dealing with are significantly different from Japanese (i.e., English and Romance languages). That is also the case in DST, except for one study on Korean narrative (Chun and Zubin 1995). As is widely known, the structures of Japanese are inherently different from those of English and other Romance languages that have been studied and analyzed in depth by many researchers. Therefore, in order to investigate and analyze Japanese data, it is imperative to consider the parametric characteristics of Japanese, and it might even be necessary to modify those frameworks to some extent. That in turn will test their cross-linguistic validity and applicability. Such attempts are made and conceptualized in the present study in hopes of enhancing the explanatory abilities of grounding. Before discussing further, first, a few critical studies need be mentioned pertaining to Japanese.

4.2 Structural features of Japanese narrative

Iwasaki's study of subjectivity in Japanese (1993) introduces a wide range of lexical and morphosyntactic items expressing speaker subjectivity. These encompass deictic elements of DST: epithets, figurative expressions (e.g., *ikujinashi* 'coward', *namaiki* 'insolence', *gaki* 'brat', *chikushoo* 'son of a bitch' and so forth), case particles, negative polarity, passives, the terminative aspect (*V-te shimau*), giving-receiving expressions, directional predicates, honorifics, affixes expressing intention (e.g., *ikoo* 'will/shall go'), and mental process verbs. To this, Maynard (1993) would add stylistic shifts.

Japanese has a variety of contrasting speech styles, each style conveying particular information about the speaker: (1) polite vs. plain, (2) polite vs. vulgar, (3) written vs. spoken, and (4) male vs. female. Stylistic differences are expressed using (1) vocabulary (e.g., *kodomo* 'child' vs. *gaki* 'brat'), (2) morphosyntactic elements (e.g., honorifics), and (3) sentence-final particles (e.g., *-wa* may be used to indicate a female speaker, while *-ze* indicates a male speaker). These lexical elements reflect the speaker's particular thoughts or attitude, or evoke a specific image of the speaker. The use of a polite form, for example, reveals the speaker's sensitivity to the listeners or addressees. This is in clear contrast with the use of an abrupt or plain form for "casual and

less formal interaction” (Maynard 1993:180).

Obviously, styles are pointers orienting readers to gender differences, format differences, and attitudinal differences, closely associated with the speaker’s subjectivity and focalization in Japanese. Furthermore, by categorizing styles as a discourse modality marker, Maynard (1993) associated particular styles with grounding in Japanese. For instance, in a carefully planned written narrative, a sudden stylistic change in midstream often signals not just a willful stylistic shift but a shift of perspective, and guides readers to identify a segment as foregrounded. In the following excerpt from Yoshimoto’s “Kicchin” (Kitchen), two styles—a polite form (*-desu-*) and a plain form (*-ta*)—are used within the same paragraph, and signal a shift of deictic center from the protagonist to the narrator—a shift of the WHO—momentarily:

- (7) Shikashi, kizuku-to hoo-ni namida-ga poroporo-to munamoto-ni
but notice-and cheek-D tear-N Onm-Com bosom-D
‘However, when I realize, tears rolling down the cheeks to my
bosom,

ochitei-ru-de wa nai-**desu**-ka. Tamage-**ta**.
falling-Np-L T not-Cop/**PIt**-Prt surprised
aren’t they? Surprised.’ (Kicchin [Kitchen]: 54)

Maynard (1993:179) contrasted abrupt forms and polite forms, pointing out that the polite form indicates the speaker’s “high awareness of ‘thou’.” In written narrative, this awareness of “thou” is construed as the speaker’s awareness of readers. In (7), the polite form indicates that the focalizing WHO, the narrator Mikage, is aware of the readers, as is also evident in the use of the interrogative particle *-ka* addressing readers in *hoo-ni namida-ga poroporo-to munamoto-ni ochitei-ru-de wa nai-desu-ka* ‘tears are rolling down the cheeks to the bosom, aren’t they?’ In “Kicchin [Kitchen],” the unmarked tense is established as TA-form (past tense) in its consistent use throughout the story, and it is thus evident in *tamage-ta* ‘(I was) surprised’ at the end of this segment. Accordingly the use of *desu-ka* in the first sentence indicates that the narrator momentarily exits the story world and addresses readers directly, shifting from *story-now* to *speaker-now*. Thus far it is reasonable to conclude that this type of stylistic shift coincides with a deictic center

shift.

Despite some notable features of Japanese (or parametric features of Japanese), different from those of English or Romance languages as shown by Fleischman (1990), some fundamental¹⁰ narrative features are also observed in Japanese. In addition, those features serve as foregrounding devices in narrative. In what follows, based on my general survey of Japanese features, both parametric features as well as fundamental features of Japanese foregrounded segments are summarized:

- (a) past tense (TA-forms) is the unmarked tense,
- (b) completive aspects (e.g., terminative/emotive, conclusive, etc.) could mark situations of achievement or accomplishment,
- (c) clause chaining with *-te*,
- (d) in contrast with TA-forms, non-past (RU-forms), as historical present, could tag sequential narrative segments,
- (e) adverbial phrases and expressions to mark spacio-temporal points,
- (f) stylistic shifts (1) polite vs. plain, (2) polite vs. impolite, (3) written vs. spoken, and (4) male vs. female to shift a perspective,
- (g) particles,
- (h) perceptual / mental predicates.

Both past tense and completive aspects are fundamental features of narrative to mark temporal sequentiality as well as development of the plot. In Japanese, the *-te* form (a gerund verb) is used as a connective in many aspectual forms, and RU-forms are employed as historical present (Cf. Soga 1983, Iwasaki 1993) in contrast with the unmarked tense. Stylistic shifts are notable features as shown in the example (7). Of all the particles in Japanese, sentence-final particles such as *yo*, *ne*, *wa*, *zo*, *ze*, *sa*, *nee*, and *naa* are typically related to stylistic shifts, and characteristically employed in oral speech, especially in informal casual settings. For that reason, they are considered as tell-tale indicators of style and modality in narrative. Perceptual and mental

¹⁰ “Fundamental” in this sense does not necessarily mean “universal.” However, certain features of narrative such as the use of past tense as the unmarked tense have been observed and attested in narrative studies (Cf. Fleischman 1990, Labov 1972, *inter alia*). Such features are most frequently found cross-linguistically, but not necessarily universally.

predicates are often considered as lower on the transitivity scale, and are thereby considered as less salient rather than more salient. However, they could highlight humanly important or unpredictable story elements, and signal a shift of the WHO. Note that significance of perceptual and mental predicates in Japanese narrative will be discussed and made clear in the following sections.

In the following section, I will examine and analyze Japanese literary works with special attention paid to certain structural differences in Japanese different from those occurring in other languages. In the course of my analysis, some notable features—from (a) to (h)—will be examined in light of Fleischman’s grounding and DST, to which all necessary additions and modifications are made in order to analyze the Japanese data.

4.3 Data from Japanese fictional written narratives

In this section, I present some findings culled from my analysis of data comprised of Japanese fictional written narratives. For the purpose of my analysis, fictional written narratives by two prominent contemporary writers in Japan are selected—Haruki MURAKAMI and Banana YOSHIMOTO. These writers are the most best selling authors both inside Japan and also abroad in translation.

The popularity of the works of these writers in part may arise from the fact that they are written in an informal contemporary style, the themes being related to issues in everyday contemporary life in Japan. From a standpoint of narrative studies, three major characteristics are shared by the selected narratives: (1) they are all first-person narratives, (2) the protagonist is a somewhat younger counterpart of the narrator, and (3) events in the story serve as a vehicle “for communicating the speaker’s feelings about a given state of affairs” rather than the major substance of narrative (Fleischman 1990:143). Therefore, in these narratives, the narrator’s perspective is central, and the content of the story itself may have lesser importance.

4.3.1 Foregrounded temporal sequentiality

Generally speaking, the skeleton of the story can be shown simply by placing the foregrounded narrative segments in temporal order. Often, but not necessarily always, past tense (TA-form) is used to express a *telic*

action (i.e., an action viewed from its endpoint), and is considered as the unmarked tense in Japanese narratives (Iwasaki 1993). In the following excerpt from Yoshimoto's "Muunraito Shadoo [Moonlight Shadow]," the events making up the skeleton—the basic story line—are presented in temporal order and foregrounded with the unmarked tense, TA-form:

- (8) Machi-awase-ta depaato-no yon-kai-no kissaten-ni
wait-met department store-G four-floor-G cafe-D
'At the cafe on the fourth floor of the department store where we
were supposed to meet,

gakkoo-gaeri-no Hiiragi-wa seeraafuku-de **yatte-ki-ta.**
school-return-G Hiiragi-T (girls') sailor suite-L **afar-came**
Hiiragi came in a girl's sailor-suite style school uniform on his way
back from school.

Watashi-wa hontoo-wa totemo hazukashika-tta ga kare-ga amari
I-T truth-T very embarrassed but he-N quite
To tell the truth I was quite embarrassed, but

futsuu-ni haitte-ki-ta node heesee-o **yosoo-tta.**
normal-D enter-came since composure **put up**
because he entered normally, I was able to appear composed.

Watashi-no mukai-ni **suwaru** to "Ma-tta?" to iki-o tsuite
I-G opposite-D **sit** and waited Comp breath-A take
He sat down across from me at one table and without pausing for
breath said, "Did you have to wait long?"

ii watashi-ga kubi-o **furu** to akaruku **wara-tta.**
saying I-N neck-A **shake** and bright **smiled**
When I shook my head, he smiled brightly at me. (Muunraito Shadoo
[Moonlight Shadow]:175)

In (8), while the verbs in matrix clauses take TA-forms, *suwaru* 'sit', *ii* 'say', and *furu* 'shake' are in non-past tense, for they either appear in subordinate clauses with *to* 'when / if / whenever' (which syntactically requires the preceding verb be non-past) or take a gerund

form which functions similarly to the English participle. Of course, there are other ways to tag sequential narrative events and to foreground temporal sequentiality. In addition to TA-forms and gerund forms, there are other crucial syntactic devices to foreground temporally sequenced narrative segments.

In contrast with the unmarked past tense (TA-form), “historical present” or RU-form may be employed to highlight a certain phase of temporally ordered narrative events. Though RU-form is non-past in a default situation, it may refer to past situations when employed as historical present. But why use “historical present” if only it tags temporally sequenced narrative segments in the same way as TA-forms?

The use of RU in temporal order highlights a sense of *ongoingness* in addition to foregrounding the skeleton of the story. RU-form as historical present functions to make the past vivid “by bringing past events into the moment of speaking” (Schiffrin 1981:58). By aligning with the time of the narration (the narrator’s NOW) as well as the time of reading (the reader’s NOW), historical present (the protagonist’s NOW) projects a strong sense of *being there*—for readers to be vicariously at the very time and place of event. Once the *story-now* time frame has been established, a tense switch from TA to RU does not necessarily change the reference time. Instead, it indicates that the focalized WHEN realized in RU is projected from the *story-now* time established with TA. Thus, rather than either tense being consistently employed throughout the text, a certain degree of mixture of TA and RU / historical present may be expected in narrative. Interestingly, this further suggests that when there is a departure from the unmarked tense or aspect form in the text, such departure signals some contextual effects at work. That is, a deliberate textual change, whether syntactic or lexical, is indicative of contextual effect(s).

In the following segment from “Naya o yaku [Barn burning]” by Haruki Murakami, a mixture of TA and RU is employed. In the story, the narrator is a writer who narrates an encounter with a man who confesses to him that he would occasionally burn down barns. This confession leads to a philosophical argument about existence between the man and the writer. Subsequently, the man tells the writer that he is planning to burn a barn in the writer’s vicinity fairly soon. In an attempt to find out which barn is to be burned, the writer decides to jog around the areas where several barns are located. Despite the writer’s wish to find out, he fails:

Koyama, Nobuko

- (9) Yoku asa-no rokuji boku-wa toreeningu uea-ni joggingu
next morning-G six o'clock I (ma)-T training wear-D jogging
'The following morning at six I put on my training gear and jogging

shuuzu-o haite sono koosu-o **hashitte-mita** . . .
shoes-A put that (pr) course-A **running-tried**
shoes, and tried to run that course . . .

Mazu ie-o dete chikaku-no daigaku-no guraundo-o gururito
first house-A out near-G university-G ground-A round
'First, out of the house, I do a quick circuit around the field of the
local university,

mawari sorekara kawa-ni sotto hitokenonai mihosoo dooro-o san
circle then river-D along deserted unpaved road-A three
then run along by the river for three kilometers on a lonely unpaved
road.

kiro **hashiru**. Tochuuni saisho-no naya-ga aru.
km **run** halfway first-G barn-N Cop/Np
Half way along, there is the first barn.

Sorekara hayashi-o **nukeru**. Karui nobori zaka-da.
then woods-A **run through** light uphill slope-Cop/Np
Then I run through woods. It's/There is a slight uphill slope.' (Naya o
yaku [Barn Burning]:73)

Notice that the writer's actions are temporally sequenced and presented in four main clauses: *hashitte-mita* 'tried to run', *mawari* 'circle', *hashiru* 'run', and *nukeru* 'run through', and the last three clauses describing jogging are in the historical present. Prior to *hashitte-mita* 'tried to run,' *story-now* has been already established by the overall frequency of past tense in the story, so a switch from TA to RU / historical present is prominent and the temporally sequenced actions in historical present are salient above.

4.3.2 Foregrounded endpoints of situations

The use of temporal phrases is the simplest and the most efficient way to shift a deictic center. Regardless of tense or aspect, temporal adverbial phrases can move the narrative forward by indicating particular *points* of time or temporal shifts in deictic center (the WHENs), and these shifts are foregrounded for marking significant states as well as actions.

Fleischman (1990:175) noted that “intrinsically atelic situations are converted into achievements through the agency of punctual time adverbs.” For example, phrases such as “yesterday at 3 pm” “then” “all of a sudden” clearly refer to particular points of time. Furthermore, when such temporal phrases are presented as initial¹¹ adverbials, they could signal “a topic shift” (Brown and Yule 1983), “a new mental space” (Fauconnier 1985), or a temporal deictic center shift (Zubin and Hewitt 1995:150-151). Such temporal points signal a shift of the WHEN—a temporal deictic component, and locate readers to a new temporal, spatial or story participant in a story world. In other words, signaling *points* of time has this propensity to dynamically change a *whole*, rather than parts (WHO, WHEN, WHERE) of a narrative event. That is, a series of narrative events can be foregrounded when they are marked by those temporal points.

In narrative, not only actions but also states can be foregrounded by the narrator, because they also advance the plot in that, for example, they may indicate a causal relation to a major event. The narrator can also depart from the chronological order of events, moving the story back in time, or jumping forward. Deviations from an iconic temporal sequence are marked phenomena, thereby bringing particular elements into special focus.

According to Fleischman (1990:175), such deviation is signaled by “PFV (perfective) achievement or accomplishment situations” that advance the plot. These situations of achievement and accomplishment are part of various aspects of the event (the event profile) which also include activity and state situations. These event profiles define situations as well as specify sentences representing them.

In Japanese, the distinction between simple past and perfective is

¹¹ Sentence initial positions are considered most salient. In that sense, what’s placed initially (not restricted to a temporal phrase) could be salient and foregrounded.

obliterated in surface forms. Instead of perfective, aspects such as the terminative (or the emotive) aspect *V-te shimau* (*shimau* ‘put away’) and compound verbs like *V-i-owaru* (*owaru* ‘finish [intransitive]’) and *V-i-oeru* (*oeru* ‘finish [transitive]’) can function to bring out a sense of completion, or the terminal points of situations or actions in Japanese. While compound verbs *V-i-owaru* (*owaru* ‘finish [intransitive]’) and *V-i-oeru* (*oeru* ‘finish [transitive]’) indicate the endpoint of action or state straightforwardly without emotivity, the terminative / emotive aspect *V-te shimau* not only expresses a sense of termination but also is loaded with an emotivity to which readers are readily accessible. If a sentence expresses an undesirable or unintentional action, *V-te shimau* implies the speaker’s regret. If a desirable action, however, it implies the speaker’s pride (Soga 1983:166-167). Thus, when used in narrative, more specifically when it is uttered by the focalizing WHO—a personal co-ordinate to the origin of the deictic center, it singles out the focalizing WHO’s emotion and simultaneously locates readers in the mind of the focalizing WHO. It suggests to readers that the emotivity highlighted by the aspect somehow weighs more than the terminated actions. Otherwise, completed or terminated actions could be simply described in clauses with TA-forms.

The segments below are from “Utakata [Evanescence]” by Banana Yoshimoto, in which the narrator-protagonist Ningyo, a female college student, is writing a letter to her boyfriend only to feel that she has failed to convey how worried she has been about her mother. As she discards one version after another, her unexpressed frustration and anxiety culminates in a chain of clumsy actions. While the ongoing actions are described in the TA-forms, the use of terminative / emotive aspect—*V-te shimau* (*shimau* ‘put away’)—communicates her frustration. In that, the frustration of the focalizing WHO is obvious, and the terminative / emotive aspect expressing the frustration is foregrounded against the temporally sequenced actions:

- (10) Chotto kakudo-o tsuke-sugite potto-no futa-ga gasha-to
little angle-A add-over pot-G lid-N Onm-Com
‘When I tilted a tea pot too much, the lid

kappu-no naka-ni **ochite-shima-tta.**
cup-G content-D **fall-shima-Pst**
fell inside the cup.’ (Utakata [Evanescence]:90)

- (11) Tossani anna-ni kuroo-shi-ta-n-dakara-to
momentarily that (di)-D trouble-did-Nom-because-Com
Just as I was thinking that I had gone through so much trouble
writing it,

kaki-oe-ta tegami-no hai-tta fuutoo-o satto **hii-tara**
write-finished letter-G inside/Pst envelope-A quickly **pull-then**
when I quickly grabbed the envelope in which I had inserted the
letter,

osara-goto kappu-ga yuka-ni **ochi** mochiron kappu-no
plate-together cup-N floor-D **fall** of course cup-G
the cup and saucer together fell onto the floor. Of course, the lid

naka-ni haittei-ta potto-no futa-mo **ochite** basshaan-to
inside-D being inside/Pst pot-G lid-also **fall** Onm-Comp
inside the cup fell as well, and loud breaking noises resonated

iu-yoona sugoi oto-ga mise-juu-ni **hibiki-watari** minna
say-like great sound-N store-allover-D **resonate-spread** all
throughout the cafe, and everything was smashed

konagona-ni **natte-shima-tta.**
smithereens **become-shima-Pst**
into smithereens.’ (Utakata [Evanescence]:90)

Note that the non-past verbs, *ochi* ‘fall’ and *watari* ‘resonate’ in (11) are verb stems and function in exactly the same way as the *-te* forms¹² that link clauses. Though superficially non-past, they conform to the tense of the matrix clause verb, the TA-form.

Notice that the majority of clauses except for *hiitara* ‘when I grabbed’ in (11) have inanimate grammatical subjects such as *kappu* ‘cup’, *futa* ‘lid’, *oto* ‘sound’, and *minna* ‘all (or everything)’. Generally inanimate subjects express lower transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980, Iwasaki 1993), and the events are generally perceived to be less salient. In narrative, they often function as an anti-shifting device to

¹² Linking by *-te* is a very common and productive way to link sequential actions or states in Japanese.

block a shift to a new character, reminding the readers that they are still tracking the same focalized character (Zubin and Hewitt 1995:147). However, in (10) and (11), the use of the terminative / emotive aspect *V-te shimau* does some interesting contextual work to be noted.

The terminative / emotive aspect clearly differentiates the action (or happening) and the perspective. In (10) and (11), a cup falling and everything being smashed are objectively described by an active verb *ochite* ‘fall’ and a stative verb *konagona-ni natte* ‘become smashed’ respectively. But the terminative aspect attached to these verbs expresses and highlights the focalizing WHO’s perspective. It clearly foregrounds the focalizing WHO’s *sense of regret*: the readers are made aware of whose perspective narrative segments are presented and viewed from.

This separation is more evident when the terminative / emotive aspect is attached to a verb which has the focalized WHO as a subject referent, as in the following excerpt from Yoshimoto’s “Muunraito Shadoo [Moonlight Shadow]”:

- (12) Sono toki Hiiragi-ga futo tachi-doma-tta node watashi-mo
that (pr) time Hiiragi-N abruptly stand-stopped since I (fe)-also
‘At that moment, Hiiragi abruptly stopped, so I also

tsui **tachi-domatte-shima-tta**
unconsciously **stand-stopped-shima-Pst**
stopped without realizing it.’ (Muunraito Shadoo [Moonlight
Shadow]:199).

In (12), the terminative / emotive aspect divides the focalized WHO—the character or the experiencing-self who stops in a story world, and the focalizing WHO—the narrator or the narrating-self who views the experiencing-self’s action. While *tachi-domatte* ‘stop’ describes the focalized WHO, the terminative aspect expresses the focalizing WHO’s evaluation. More interestingly, a sense of regret is an underlying modality expressed by the terminative / emotive aspect in (12), but what is inferred from this context is a sense of unexpectedness, as evident in *tsui* ‘unconsciously / without realizing.’

The use of terminative / emotive aspect is a very expressive device to define a given action to be a completed one. It is expressive, because (1) it adds emotivity to a given completed action or situation, and (2) its association with the focalizing WHO divides a clause into an objectively

described action and a perspective which imposes a subjective view through which to look at the action. It is a device to foreground a completed action highlighting or implying the focalizing WHO's evaluation.

4.3.3 Perceptual / mental predicates as a foregrounding device

As observed in the contextual work done by the terminative / emotive aspect, subjective perspective—the manifestation of the speaker's consciousness—is a crucial aspect of first-person narrative, since it reveals the narrator's attitude or perspective on the narrative, one that, in turn, influences the reader's interpretation, so that a shared perspective is created. In some narratives, as Flesichman noted (1990:143), the message or the point of a story “often transcends the events themselves: the narrative may be merely a vehicle for communicating the speaker's feelings about a given state of affairs.” In such narratives, a linguistic realization of a first-person perspective—a subjective representation—tends to be foregrounded because it makes the experiencer's inner thoughts or feelings more accessible to readers (Cf. Iwasaki 1993), and it provides significant information to readers.

Consequently, first-person narratives tend to be rich in perceptual and mental predicates such as *kanjiru* ‘feel,’ *omou* ‘think,’ *kiko-e-ru* ‘(able to) hear,’ *kangaeru* ‘contemplate,’ *hoshii* ‘want,’ *kanashii* ‘sad,’ *samui* ‘cold’ and so forth, for these predicates draw readers into the consciousness of the character or the narrator and help distinguish significant actions or states from less important ones. However, an abundance of perceptual and mental predicates in first-person narratives does not necessarily mean that every instance of those predicates is equally salient in the text. What is salient, or, more precisely, what needs to be salient for a reason is textually treated in such a way that it is ensured to stand out in the text—it is made textually marked or deviant. More importantly, when perceptual and mental predicates are textually highlighted, they serve to remind readers of the perspective from which the narrative segments are being viewed, and to highlight humanly important or unpredictable story elements by signaling a shift of the WHO.

One method to make story segments more prominent is violation of

certain syntactic constraints¹³. For example, stative verbs such as *mieru* ‘can see’ and *dekiru* ‘be competent’ do not normally co-occur with the ‘*te-iru* construction’¹⁴ (Tsujimura 1996:315). If they do, however, their clauses are marked clauses, and thus more prominent and noticeable in the text. Compare the following:

- (13) a. Koko-kara yama-ga **mieru**.
here-from mountain-A **see able**
‘(I) can see a mountain from here (A mountain is seen from here).’
- b. Koko-kara yama-ga **mietei-ru**.
here-from mountain-A **seeing able/Pst**
‘A mountain is being seen from here’

The sentence in (13a) employs a normative usage of the perceptual and stative verb *mieru* ‘can see’, whereas the sentence in (13b) apparently violates the syntactic constraint of *mieru*—no co-occurrence with the ‘*te-iru* construction’—and, as a result, implies some subtle nuance to be read by the listener or reader. In (13b), by employing the ‘*te-iru* construction’, rather than the present situation or state, instantaneity or a unique moment is strongly focused. That is, *mietei-ru* in (13b) implies that a mountain is not usually seen under the normal circumstances, but that for some reason, it is being seen at the very moment of narrating and the narrator apparently feels necessity to stress such special circumstances by using the ‘*te-iru* construction’. Thus, because of its added or extra nuanced reading, (13b) is made more salient and foregrounded, compared to (13a). More importantly, it reveals the narrator’s perspective at the very moment.

As shown in (13b), marked clauses can be effectively used to foreground a segment, whether it is a narrative or a non-sequential non-narrative segment. In what follows, there are two instances from

¹³ However, that does not mean to render ungrammatical or unacceptable clauses. If a given clause is ungrammatical, it would be made textually prominent by virtue of ungrammaticality. Violation of certain syntactic constraints in this study means stretching beyond the default of normative reading.

¹⁴ The ‘*te-iru* construction’ primarily gives either the progressive or the resultative interpretation.

Yoshimoto's "Mangetsu [Full Moon]" occurring in non-narrative segments in which the non-stative mental verb *shiru* 'get to know / find out' (Kuno 1973:140) is foregrounded by virtue of its marked form. Morphologically speaking, when referring to a present situation or present state, the unmarked form of *shiru* takes either *shi-tta* 'got to know (thus currently in a state of having knowledge of a certain thing / entity in question)' or *shittei-ru* 'know (thus currently possessing knowledge of a certain thing / entity in question)'. Consequently, the unmarked form of *shiru* in the past tense takes either *shi-tta* or *shittei-ta*.

- (14) Yaru dake-no koto-wa ya-tta-to iu ki-ga **shi-ta**.
do only-G Nom-T did-Com say feeling-N **did**
'I felt that I did what I could do.'

—Watashi-wa **shiru**. Tanoshika-tta jikan-no kagayaku kesshoo-ga
I (fe)-T **know** joyous-Pst time-G shining crystal-N
—I know. Shining crystal of joyous times,

kioku-no soko-no fukai nemuri-kara totsuzen samete ima
memory-G bottom-G deep sleep-from suddenly awaken now
suddenly awakening from deep sleep at the bottom of the memory,

watashitachi-o **oshi-ta**.
we-A **pushed**
now pushed us (forward).' (Mangetsu [Full Moon]:152)

- (15) Yuuichi-no egao-wa pikapika hikari watashi-wa jibun-ga
Yuuichi-G smile-T Onm shine I (fe)-T self-N
'Yuuichi's smile shone, and I know that I (myself)

"nanika"-o honnno suu senchi oshi-ta
"something"-A little a few centimeter pushed
may have pushed something a few centimeters.

kamoshirenai-koto-o **shiru**.
maybe-Nom-A **know**

"Jaa iku-ne. Takushii-ga nige-chau."

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Col go-Prt taxi-N escape-Col/shimau
“Well, I gotta go before the taxi is gone.”

Watashi-wa itte doa-ni **muka-tta.**
I (fe)-T say door-D **approached**
I said (so) and approached the door.’ (Mangetsu [Full Moon]:155)

In (14) and (15), the first-person female narrator-protagonist, Mikage reveals her resolutions in non-narrative segments that momentarily stop the progression of the narrative. Normatively, non-narrative segments are less salient than narrative counterparts. However, in both cases above, the presence of *shiru* makes non-narrative segments stand out in the text, and captures the reader’s attention.

In (14), the narrative is suddenly suspended when *watashi-wa shiru* ‘I (will / shall) know’ appears, but quickly resumes in *oshi-ta* ‘pushed’ in the same paragraph. Much in the same way in (15), the narrative, momentarily suspended in the clause with *shiru*, resumes in the default past tense in *muka-tta* ‘approached.’ *Shiru* appears along with TA-form clauses, suggesting that its tense is deviant, though acceptable. Note that it is acceptable, if it is understood as a historical present equivalent to *shi-tta* ‘knew’. If the occurrences of *shiru* in (14) and (15) are in fact historical present, the clause is presenting the situation as if the reader is watching it happen. *Shiru* thus refers to *story-now*; its grammatical subject is the focalized WHO, the character Mikage in the story world. This is obviously the case for *shiru* in (15), since the content of Mikage’s knowledge is explicitly present and embedded within the same sentence. Thus, the RU-form in (15) is an example showing that RU as historical present is “an INTERNAL EVALUATION DEVICE: it allows the narrator to present events as if they were occurring at that moment,” as Schiffrin (1981:59) proposed.

However, it is also possible that occurrences of *shiru* in (14) and (15) refer to a future situation. In this case, this verb takes on a more volitional sense, expressing the speaker’s intention to find out something in the future. The speaker in this case is the focalizing WHO, the narrator Mikage in the *speaker-now* time frame. This seems plausible for (14)¹⁵ but less so for (15). In (14), the RU-form of *shiru* describes the narrator

¹⁵ It is arguable to conclude whether what immediately follows *shiru* in (14) indicates the content (i.e., the object) of *shiru*.

Mikage's resolutions—her external Evaluation (i.e., 'external' here means 'external' to the story world).

Interestingly, the time reference of *shiru*, whether historical present or future, logically determines the identity of the current WHO as well as indicating a type of Evaluation. The historical present is associated with the focalized WHO, the *character* Mikage ('internal' Evaluation), while the future interpretation indicates that the perspective is that of the focalizing WHO, the *narrator* Mikage ('external' Evaluation). In either case, the RU-form of *shiru* in non-narrative segments has a discourse function to signal to readers the current WHO's resolutions, and it is foregrounded.

4.3.4 Focalization of a third-person character

As observed in 4.3.3, syntactic or morphological manipulation of perceptual and mental predicates is effective in shifting the reader's focus from one foregrounded action (or state) from another. It is also operative in foregrounding non-prominent characters momentarily.

In Murakami's story "Kaze no uta o kike [Listen to the song of winds]," there is a short sub-narrative in which the narrator completely effaces himself and focalizes another character rather than the character-counterpart of the narrator. Such focalization of a non-counterpart of the narrator is not the norm in first-person narratives, and in fact it occurs only once in the selected stories that constitute our data.

In (16) and (17) below, the first-person narrator is effaced. Instead, the character named Nezumi's inner thoughts are presented without mediation:

- (16) Nezumi-wa mojimoji-shi nagara atemonaku poketto-o sagu-tta.
Nezumi-T fidget-do while aimlessly pocket-A felt
'Nezumi, while fidgeting, aimlessly felt in his pocket.

San nen buri-ni mushooni tabako-ga sui-taka-tta.
three year since-D strongly cigarette-N smoke-wanted
He had a strong urge to smoke a cigarette for the first time in three
years ' (Kazeno uta o kike [Listen to the song of winds]: 27)

- (17) Nezumi-wa mata nanika-o shabera-nakerebanaranai yoona
 Nezumi-T again something-A talk-must like
 ‘Nezumi felt/thought that he had to talk about something again.’
 (Kaze no uta o kike [Listen to the song of winds]: 27)

ki-ga shi-ta.
 feeling-N did

The narrator’s focalization is evident in the use of the suffix *-taka-tta* ‘wanted’ in (16) and the mental verb *ki-ga shi-ta* ‘felt/thought’ in (17). These two linguistic items shift the focalizing WHO from the narrator to Nezumi, allowing readers to locate themselves inside Nezumi’s mind. Note that such change in focalization is unique to a first-person narrative, while it is quite typical to a third-person narrative (Cf. Genette 1980, Fleischman 1990). So for their unique function and presence, (16) and (17) could stand out in the text. Nonetheless, we could delve into the workings of such foregrounded segments from a different perspective. While Nezumi’s thoughts and feelings are subjectively represented in (16) and (17), they could also have been represented objectively. The following table enables us to compare the use of perceptual and mental predicates in (16) and (17) with objective counterparts representing the same propositional contents:

Table 3. Subjective vs. objective representation of Nezumi’s thoughts.

<i>Subjective representation</i>	<i>Objective representation</i>
(a) San nen buri-ni mushooni tabako-ga sui-taka-tta. ‘He had a strong urge to smoke a cigarette for the first time in three years.’	(a’) San nen buri-ni mushooni tabako-ga/o sui-tai yoo da-tta. ‘He seemed to have a strong urge to smoke a cigarette for the first time in three years.’ (a’’) San nen buri-ni mushooni tabako-o sui-ta-ga-tta. ‘He displayed his desire to smoke cigarette strongly for the first time in three years.’
(b) Nezumi-wa mata nanika shabera-nakereba-naranai yoona ki-ga shi-ta. ‘Nezumi felt/thought that he had to talk about something again.’	(b’) Nezumi-wa mata nanika shabera-nakereba-naranai yoona ki-ga shi-ta yoo da-tta. ‘Nezumi seemed to feel/think that he had to talk about something again.’

As shown in Table 3, the difference between the use of the speaker's perspective (subjective) and the alternative of a third-person's perspective (objective) gives rise to the contrast in grounding, a linguistic manifestation of the former being foregrounded while that of the latter is backgrounded. Iwasaki (1993:19-20) referred to these two perspective types as S (First-person subject)-perspective and O (Third-person subject)-perspective respectively, and categorized the following linguistic items, *-tai*, *-garu*, and *yoo*, based on his data. The suffix *-tai* (its past tense form *-taka-tta*) expresses Nezumi's desire as he felt it and presents it through his own consciousness. The objective counterparts have either the derivational suffix *-garu* (in its past tense form *-ga-tta*) or the evidential marker *yoo* 'appear / seem,' both of which mark a third-person's perspective. But *-garu* cannot be used in rephrasing (b). As Iwasaki (1993:27) pointed out, the *-garu* suffix "refers to external appearances but never internal states." While smoking a cigarette is externally observable, feeling something internally, as in (b), is not. The evidential marker *yoo* 'seem / appear' marks the narrator (as the focalizing WHO) as an outside observer viewing the situation.

Considering all those lexical constraints and differences, the following figure indicates the contrast between subjective and objective representation in terms of the reader's accessibility to Nezumi's thoughts and degree of information on his state of mind (i.e., the informativeness of the text):

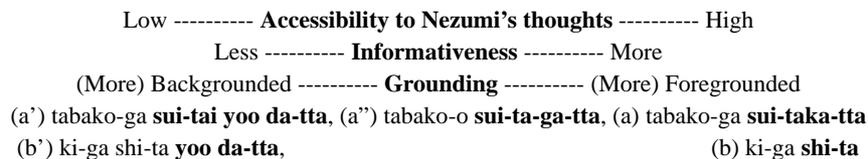


Figure 1. Grounding contrast in (16) and (17).

Phrases such as (a) and (b) above—more informative about Nezumi's state of mind and highly accessible to Nezumi's thoughts—shift the focalizing WHO from the narrator to Nezumi. Moreover, the higher on the scale of accessibility and informativeness, the more foregrounded.

In (16) and (17), the perceptual and mental predicates thus shift the focalizing WHO and are foregrounded to reveal Nezumi's thoughts directly. They allow readers to experience "thoughts, feelings or perceptions without referring to the experiencer at all" (Chun and Zubin 1995:315). Thus, readers are allowed to access first-hand information

(Nezumi's thoughts) which has been made available through the narrator's focalization. Of course, this first-hand information is crucial for readers constructing the story world. The desires and emotions experienced by Nezumi, as presented in (16) and (17), constitute a "vital component of the reader's experience of a story" that offers "vicarious experience of other's lives" (Hewitt 1995:328). In "Kaze no uta o kike [Listen to the song of winds]," sentences (16) and (17) stand out because of the unusual shift in focalization to present another character's experience from a character-internal perspective.

4.3.5 Spoken vs. written style

In narrative, two major styles—written narrative and oral narrative—contrast with each other. Written narrative allows careful planning in presenting a story and selecting the most appropriate style to follow. The time allocation devoted to constructing narrative contributes to the following differences in written and oral narrative: (1) word order (Clancy 1982:70-75), (2) copula forms (e.g., *-desu* vs. *-da* in Japanese) (Maynard 1993:180), and (3) communicative aspects and syntactic integration (Chafe 1982:35-49). For instance, in oral narrative, word order tends to be more flexible than in its written counterpart. The speakers are more involved in communicating their experiences and feelings. Characteristically, speech segments are fragmented (Chafe 1982:38-47).

Not just a stylistic shift between written and oral, but any stylistic shift essentially signals a shift in deictic center, for a sudden stylistic shift in narrative is a deliberate act by the narrator in order to signal to readers that something important or different is being presented. It signals a shift in deictic center, and at the same time, it foregrounds a segment for specific narrative purposes. For instance, a sudden shift from a relatively rigid and formal written style to a colloquial expression is salient when it occurs in the middle of the text, and it also singles out *represented speech and thought*¹⁶ (Banfield 1982:65-108). That is a shift from the reporter to the experiencer, a shift in the focalizing WHO.

In Japanese, besides the contrast between written vs. oral, the oral or spoken style is further sub-categorized into the following stylistic shifts

¹⁶ They are sometimes referred to as *free indirect discourse* or *narrated monologue* (Fleischman 1990:227).

that correspond to shifts in deictic center in our data: polite (copula *-desu* or *masu*) vs. abrupt (copula *-da*), and male vs. female (e.g., gender-specific sentence final particles and lexical items¹⁷). Generally speaking, female speech is associated with politeness and indirectness, while male speech is often associated with crude or impolite forms. Shibamoto (1985:19) claimed that female speech is considered as marked speech, since “the middle-class, male adult is taken to be the canonical speaker.” Maynard (1993:180) categorized a style as a discourse modality marker and associated a particular style with foregrounding or backgrounding. She contended that the speaker foregrounds information by the use of formal style (copula *-desu*), while the abrupt form (*-da*) is used to mark backgrounded information (164-180). In sum, female speech is considered characteristically polite and marked, and associated with foregrounding in discourse.

In what follows, examples show how a shift from the written to the spoken (female) style in the middle of the text is singled out and signals a shift in deictic center—most notably a shift from the focalized WHO (the character) to the focalizing WHO (the narrator). (18) and (19) below are from Yoshimoto’s “Kicchin [Kitchen],” and (20) from her “Kanashii Yokan [Sad Premonition],” in both of which the narrators are identified as first-person female narrators.

- (18) Shikashi, kizuku-to hoo-ni namida-ga poroporo-to munamoto-ni
 but notice-and cheek-D tear-N Onm-Com bosom-D
 ‘However, when I realize, tears are rolling down the cheeks to my
 bosom,

ochitei-ru-de wa nai-**desu-ka**. Tamage-ta.
 falling-Np-L T not-Cop/Plt-Prt surprised
 aren’t they? Surprised.’ (Kicchin [Kitchen]: 54)

- (19) Iyana koto-wa kusaru hodo ari michi-wa me-o
 bad thing-T rotten as much there path-T eye-A
 ‘I suppose that we wish to look away from the reality filled with
 disgusting things

¹⁷ For example, ‘*iku-zo*’ (I will go) is considered as distinctively male, while ‘*iku-wa*’ (I will go) as female. ‘*Kuu*’ (eat) sounds impolite and male-specific, while ‘*taberu*’ (eat) is considered otherwise.

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somuke-tai kurai kewashii.....to omou hi-no nanto
look away-want as much steep Com think day-G how
and rocky roads.....like that, how often we think.

ooi koto **deshoo**. Ai sura subete-o sukutte-wa kure-nai.
many Nom Cop/Plt love even everything-A save-T give-not
Not even love can save everything.’ (Kicchin [Kitchen]: 66)

- (20) Yoku iru **deshoo** kaodachi-wa iyoo-ni utsukushii-noni doo
well be Cop/Plt face-T strange-D beautiful-though how
‘I suppose that you know someone like her. A person whose face is
extremely beautiful

shiyoo-mo-naku yabottai hito.
way-also-not unfashionable person
but who is so unfashionable.’ (Kanashii Yokan [Sad Premonition]: 4)

The polite forms used in the excerpts correspond to their abrupt counterparts as follows:

(18) <i>-desu</i>	<i>-da</i> (copula)
(19) <i>-deshoo</i>	<i>-daroo</i> (copula)
(20) <i>-deshoo</i>	<i>-daroo</i> (copula)

Figure 2. The polite vs. abrupt style contrast.

Note that in the texts where all three excerpts appear, (1) past tense TA-forms and (2) abrupt forms are employed as the unmarked forms. More importantly, a stylistic shift and a shift in the WHEN occur simultaneously. That is, there are (1) a shift from *story-now* marked by the TA-form to the focalized WHEN, which is realized as *speaker-now* marked by the RU-form, and (2) a shift from the focalized WHO (the character), to the focalizing WHO (the narrator), revealing the narrator’s inner thoughts.

Maynard (1993:179) contrasted abrupt forms and polite forms, pointing out that the polite form indicates the speaker’s “high awareness of ‘thou’.” In written narrative, this awareness of “thou” is construed as the speaker’s awareness of the reader. In (18), the polite form indicates that the focalizing WHO, the narrator Mikage, is aware of the reader, as

is also evident in the use of the interrogative particle *-ka* addressing the reader in *hoo-ni namida-ga poroporo-to munamoto-ni ochitei-ru-de wa nai-desu-ka* ‘tears are rolling down the cheeks to my bosom, aren’t they?’ As stated earlier, the unmarked tense TA is established thus in its consistent use and frequency elsewhere in the text. Thus, the use of *desu-ka* in the first sentence indicates that the narrator momentarily exits the story world and addresses the reader directly, shifting from *story-now* (manifested in the past tense TA-form) to *speaker-now* (manifested in the non-past tense).

In (19) and (20), much in the same way, a shift of WHEN and that of WHO occur simultaneously. The shifting WHEN and WHO is salient in the text and foregrounded, for the combination use of *speaker-now* (RU) and a style reflecting the narrator’s individuated voice directed to the reader creates illusions that the reader is being addressed by the narrator in person. It is clear that a style shift coincides with a shift in deictic center from the reporter role of the narrator to the experiencer role of the narrator. Such role shift within the narrator singles out the consciousness of the narrator and is made salient and foregrounded in the text.

In the examples above, we have examined female-specific styles; however, whether distinctively female or male, a style shift in the midst of narrative is a surprise element whose content is foregrounded and serves some discourse functions.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The basic principle of the present study is that foregrounding and a shift in deictic center are likely to co-occur and that they are intrinsically synonymous in function and nature. It is predicted that low transitive linguistic elements such as perceptual and mental predicates can lead the reader deep into the narrator’s consciousness without mediation, which unquestionably constitutes the *raison d’être* of first-person narrative. Based on such assumptions, we have examined and presented some of the crucial examples extracted from fictional first-person written narratives in Japanese. The selected examples have shown that not just the story line or the main character—as the traditional account of grounding based on the verbal transitivity would predict—but also certain non-narrative segments are foregrounded as proposed in the present study.

Of all the possible foregrounding devices, we have focused on five notable features of foregrounded segments in Japanese narrative: (1) foregrounded temporal sequentiality (e.g., a switch from TA to RU), (2) foregrounded endpoints of situations (e.g., the use of the terminative / emotive aspect, *V-te shimau*), (3) perceptual / mental predicates, (4) focalization of a third-person character in a first-person narrative, and (5) a style shift from written to spoken. The single most crucial characteristic found in all cases is that foregrounding coincides with a deictic center shift that compels a shift in focalization, or “the deictic center window” (Zubin and Hewitt 1995:131). That induces a change in our consciousness and cognition as readers.

In the process of narrating or reading a story, we are captured and moved by the foregrounded shifts which subsequently cause us to adjust or re-adjust our construal of the story accordingly. Such a process results in separating the more foregrounded segments from the less. We readily pick up and are drawn to the foregrounded segments in reading, just like children pay more attention to pop-up pictures than static background in a pop-up picture book. In written narrative, instead of using pop-up pictures, linguistic entities are manipulated to bring out such illusions of “popping-up pictures.”

However, what may significantly differ in written narrative from children’s pop-up picture books is that “how” and “why” a certain event takes place could weigh more than “what” really happens in the story world. We are more interested in or tend to be drawn more to what is contained inside the character’s or the narrator’s mind than in what is physically materialized as an event. Thus, in fictional written narratives, a shift in deictic center—flagging of crucial story elements—is carefully crafted and deployed. It is thus linguistically marked and concurrently foregrounded.

Finally in this study, we have not examined cases in which foregrounding does not coincide with a deictic center shift. I assume that it is highly unlikely that there may be such cases, but should there be some, they would be well worth examining. Characteristics of male-specific speech have not been discussed in depth¹⁸; nonetheless, the examples of female-specific speech have demonstrated how

¹⁸ Substantial portion was devoted to male-specific styles in Japanese narrative in my doctoral dissertation, but I believe that male-specific styles deserve more careful examination and attention.

gender-specific styles can be foregrounded and mark a deictic center shift. Those two areas deserve to be the next topics to explore according to the composite framework that the present study proposes.

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