

# The Use of Textual Patterns in Reading

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## 1. Introduction

Much has been written over the past three decades regarding the use of textual patterning (van Dijk 1977; Hoey 1983, 1994: and McCarthy 1991). Since English instruction in Japanese high schools has tended to be of a traditional nature, the employment of a methodology incorporating the teaching of discourse patterns has been somewhat neglected. As Cook points out, a good deal of language teaching has tended to focus on the bottom-up approach: focusing mainly on vocabulary acquisition (Cook 1989). Needless to say, reading English requires that L2 learners are able to understand the discourse. Is it possible then, to understand written discourse from their considerably large-sized vocabulary built up through the six years of hard memorization that took place during high school? This is one of the biggest problems for L2 learners to encounter while learning English. It often happens that they can read a text aloud and know all words used in it, but they cannot understand its overall message. This means that they cannot make coherence of the text. It should be noted, therefore, that it is necessary for L2 learners to learn how to identify the coherence of discourse. As summed up by McCarthy, “finding patterns in texts is a matter of interpretation by the reader, making use of clues and signals provided by the author” (McCarthy 1991: 161).

Learning the structure of English discourse is essential to L2 learners, because discourse is “more than just language use; it is language use, whether speech or written, seen as a type of social practice” (Fairclough 1992: 28). Therefore, understanding discourse means understanding real English, which is used in society. With this knowledge, it can be expected that “this tacit knowledge may enable [students] to communicate successfully” (Cook 1989: 49).

The aim of this paper is to consider how effective the knowledge of textual patterns is concerning L2 learners’ reading ability. In the following section, the Literature Review (Section 2), ‘discourse analysis’ will be discussed, including the major textual patterns: Problem-solution, General-specific, and Counter-Counter-claim. Following the Methodology (Section 3), Analysis and Discussion (Section 4) will be dealt with. This will investigate how a knowledge of textual patterns may help L2 learners’ reading. For this purpose, a section from an authentic text (short story) was used in an American Literature seminar class, and later employed for the analysis in this study. Textual patterns will be determined through this analysis, the results of which will be presented as a diagrammatic representation in Section 5.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 *Discourse Analysis***

Discourse analysis can be divided into two types: micro-analysis and macro-analysis. Fairclough (1992) states that the former is to explain “precisely how participants produce and interpret texts on the basis of their members’ resources” and the latter is “to know the nature of the members’ resource [...] that is being drawn upon in order to produce and interpret texts” (Fairclough 1992: 85). Micro-analysis focuses on vocabulary and

grammar including cohesive relations and grammatical regularities. For instance, Halliday and Hasan (1976) develop lexical collocation at the textual level. Macro-analysis investigates the organization of texts such as patterns and types. In this strategy, the delicate relationship between language forms and particular contexts and its users is discussed (McCarthy 1991). Given that (1) the micro-analysis seems to have a longer tradition (rather than the macro-analysis (Brown and Yule 1983)); and (2) the teaching of grammar and vocabulary seems to be more focused on at school, it is necessary to consider the knowledge of text organization to be very effective for L2 learners in improving their English ability. This is because a number of different texts show that “there is a distinct preference for certain ways of organizing and presenting information, and that some rhetorical or discourse patterns tend to recur with a regularity which cannot be coincidental” (Holland and Johnson 2000: 14). Hence, learning text patterns can be expected to enable L2 learners to decode the spoken/written text at the level of macro structure. This, however, does not mean that one of them will be more effective than the other in teaching English to L2 learners. McCarthy indicates;

The main point is that macro-patterns themselves do not seem to be lacking once reasonable general competence has been achieved, and that where the macro-patterns are absent, there seem to be basic clause- and sentence-level problems that demand higher priority in teaching. (McCarthy 1991: 166)

For the purpose of interpreting texts, the knowledge of macro-analysis, as well as that of micro-analysis can be said to be efficient. That is, the lexical and grammatical aspect and the aspect of the textual pattern are significant to teach English to L2 learners. As Fairclough claims, it should

be recognised that “micro- and macro-analysis are [...] mutual requisites” (Fairclough 1998: 86).

## **2.2 Signaling of textual patterns**

### **2.2.1 Vocabulary as a signal of textual patterns**

Winter (1977) shows that the relationship between clauses can be signaled by three types of vocabulary: Vocabulary 1 such as subordination; Vocabulary 2 such as sentence connectors; and Vocabulary 3 such as lexical items. The last one, Vocabulary 3 is crucial to understanding text organization, although his main concern is the operation of lexical signaling at the level of the paragraph. He expresses as follows;

I have included the following five items which represent a larger clause-relation in English. My reason for doing so is that these relations may sometimes exist as clause relations within the unit of the paragraph. The items are *situation*, *problem*, *solution*, *observation*, and *evaluation*. (Winter 1977: 19)

Although he focuses on the function of vocabulary, this can also explain the structure of the text. For instance, ‘crisis’ implies that a sentence including it suggests a ‘problem,’ which will be discussed in the text, and the word ‘decision’ implies a ‘solution’ to it. In this way, particular words in a text can act as a signal to identify textual patterns. In other words, L2 learners can reach text organization through an understanding of how vocabulary functions.

It is, however, necessary to understand that identifying textual patterns should be influenced by the vocabulary size of each L2 learner. A poor command of vocabulary cannot make it possible for L2 learners to recognise

that a certain word can be a signal to a textual property. Moreover, not only learning the meanings of each word, but also learning the cohesive relations of words is important in raising learners' consciousness to identify textual patterns. It is this cohesive relationship between 'crisis' and 'problem' which makes it possible to recognise that a sentence, containing the word 'crisis,' should suggest a problem. As a result, lexical knowledge can be considered to be an essential element in identifying textual patterns.

### **2.2.2 Schemata**

Discourse does not explain all detailed information to readers, and Cook (1994) offers a good example to explain it. For instance, when a person is requested to explain what he/she did during the morning, he/she explains as follows;

I woke up at seven forty. I made some toast and a cup of tea. I listened to the news. And I left for work at about eight thirty. (Cook 1994: 12)

This will be recognised as a sufficient description in explaining what he/she did. More detailed information will not need to be added to it, such as "I was in bed. I was wearing pajamas" (Cook 1994: 12) after the first sentence. This means that discourse permits some information to be omitted, and readers are expected to fill in the gaps with their imagination. They have to presume what is missing and determine the coherence of the context. It is the reader's experience and knowledge that makes it possible to make up for the missing information. This phenomenon can be explained through schema theory. McCarthy describes it as follows;

The theory is that new knowledge can only be processed coherently in

relation to existing knowledge frameworks, and that the efficient reader activates the necessary frameworks to assist in decoding the text being read. (McCarthy 1991: 168)

This means that the readers interpret the text with reference to general knowledge in society, as well as lexical knowledge. One aspect of general knowledge is concerning textual patterns. Learning typical patterns of organization in texts makes it easier for L2 learners to predict how a text will develop, and in doing so they can be expected to understand the context more precisely. That is to say, once textual patterns are recognised, the L2 learners' reading ability can be improved effectively.

There is, however, an important problem to be considered: L2 learners cannot always be expected to share the cultural and social experience with native speakers. L2 learners are social outsiders of a different kind. Hence, it is requisite to learn the cultural background in order to raise the language ability. This should be the readers' experience and knowledge, which is effective in determining the coherence of discourse.

### **2.3 Textual patterns**

There are mainly three patterns of text organization (McCarthy 1991; Holland and Johnson 2000): Problem-Solution, General-Specific, and Claim-Counter-claim (or Hypothetical-Real). Here, each pattern of text organization shall be discussed, although Problem-Solution and General-Specific will be mainly used in the analysis in 4.2.

#### **2.3.1 Problem-Solution Pattern**

In his article, Hoey (1994) introduces the main stream of discourse analysis structure. According to him, any genre of text, such as the plots

of fairytales, or the writing of scientists, includes ‘the problem-solution structure’ (Hoey 1994: 27). He explains this by breaking a short passage consisting of four sentences, and rearranging the sentences in proper order without any signaling expressing a time sequence.

I was on sentry duty. I saw the enemy approaching. I opened fire. I beat off the enemy attack. (Hoey 1994: 28)

He claims that there is a sort of regularity to make this order of sentences: ‘the problem-solution structure.’ That is, the discourse consists of the four main parts: Situation → Problem → Response → Evaluation (Hoey 1994: 28). It is noteworthy that it is not vocabulary such as nouns and conjunctions that decide this order, but rather ‘text cohesion.’ The question, however, is how he could identify the property in each sentence. Schema theory (See 2.2.2), dictates that L2 learners discover text structure according to their own experience. In addition to it, Hoey advocates “projection into dialogue” (Hoey 1994: 28). This is derived from the idea that a monologue can be regarded as a dialogue in which a writer assumes replies from readers while writing it. That is, each sentence can be recognised as a writer’s answer to a question (from the reader), such as “what is the situation/problem/solution/result?” Hoey’s sample texts can be decoded as follows;

A: What was the situation?

B: I was on sentry duty.

A: What was the problem?

B: I saw the enemy approaching.

A: What was your solution?

B: I opened fire.

A: What was the result? And how successful was this?

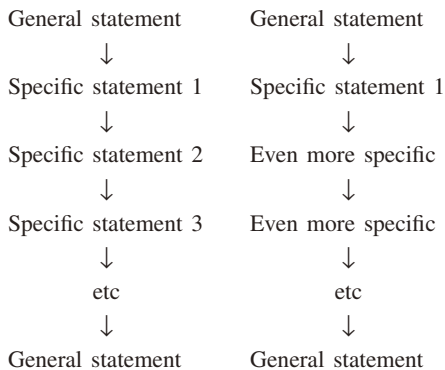
B: I beat off the enemy attack.

(Hoey 1994: 30)

Although it is necessary to understand that a number of questions can be provided according to each segment, it is considerably effective to give a possible question to each one for the purpose of determining the property of sentences.

### 2.3.2 General-Specific Pattern

The basic structure of this pattern is that text includes “an initial general statement, followed by a series of (progressively) more specific statements, culminating in a further generalization” (Holland and Johnson 2000: 21). In a typical case, a passage including a general statement is followed by another passage, which expands the generalization, such as exemplifying, explaining, and/or justifying. McCarthy offers diagrammatic representations:



(McCarthy 1991: 158)

### 2.3.3 Claim-Counter-claim Pattern

The third textual pattern consists of a series of claims and contrasting



counterclaims, which is presented on a given topic: Claim 1 → Counter-claim 1 → Claim 2 Counter-claim 2 → ... This pattern can be found more frequently “in political journalism, as well as in the letters-to-the-editor pages of newspapers and magazines” (McCarthy 1991: 161), and also “the stock-in-trade of many a ‘Compare and Contrast ...’ academic essay” (Holland and Johnson 2000: 23). For the purpose of identifying the textual pattern, lexical signals are very useful. For instance, through lexical items, such as *claim*, *assert*, *truth*, *false*, *in fact*, ‘segments’ containing them, can be identified as elements of the ‘Claim-Counter-claim’ structure. Jordan (1984) provides a sample list of 31 lexical items, which can be signals of this textual pattern, including: *according to*, *apparently*, *believe*, *estimate*, *evidently*, *imagine*, *likely*, *might*, *perhaps*, *probably*, *seem*, and *suggest* (Jordan 1984: 148).

### **3. Methodology**

The text analysed here is a passage cited from a short novel by Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Cask of Amontillado’ (1846) (shown in 4.1). This short story was used in an American Literature seminar class by 15 students (female n=9; male n=6) at a university in Nagoya, Japan. Subjects were English majors, aged 20-22, and were generally considered to be motivated to learn English. In class, students were requested to read the story and discuss their interpretation (student-student).

#### **3.1 The aim of the analysis**

This short story seemed to be difficult for the subjects to read. This is largely due to the fact that they could not construct the (overall) coherence of the story with their lexical knowledge, even though they could understand the meanings of each individual word being used (the use of

dictionaries was permitted).

In fiction, generally speaking, it is not possible to expect authors to provide readers directly with all the information needed to comprehend the story. Therefore, readers have to provide the missing information with their imagination, anaphoric information, and their own experience. As discussed above, reading the text with the aid of textual patterns can be expected to help L2 learners create the coherence of a text. “One of the skills of efficient readers of English is the ability to recognise typical patterns of organization in the texts” (McCarthy and Carter 1994: 58). The discourse analysis done here is a trial to help L2 learners interpret the short story at the level of textual structure, as well as at the lexical level.

## **4. Analysis and Discussion**

### **4.1 *The discourse for analysis***

The opening section (the first two paragraphs) of the story is shown below. Sentences are numbered for ease of reference.

[1] The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; [2] but when he ventured upon insult, [3] I vowed revenge. [4] You who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. [5] A length I would be avenged; [6] this was a point definitely settled — [7] but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. [8] I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. [9] A wrong is unredressed [10] when retribution overtakes its redresser. [11] It is equally unredressed [12] when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

[13] It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. [14] I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and [15] he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

## **4.2 Analysis of the discourse: the major structure**

### **4.2.1 Analysis of the major structure**

The text shown above is explaining why the narrator ‘I’ decides to kill his friend Fortunato and how ‘I’ is going to do it. According to Hoey’s (1994) projection of monologue into dialogue (See 2.3.1), five major elements of the Problem-solution pattern can be identified as follows;

Situation

Q: What was the situation?

A: [1] The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could.

Problem

Q: What was the problem?

A: [2] [when] he ventured upon insult.

Response to problem

Q: What was your response to the problem?

A: [3] I vowed revenge. [4] You who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. [5] At length I would be avenged; [6] this was a point definitely settled — [7] but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. [8] I must not only punish, but punish with impunity.

Result of response

Q: What did you do as a solution of the response?

A: [13] It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. [14] I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face.

Evaluation of result of response

Q: What was the result? Or how successful was this?

A: [15] he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

This shows that it is possible to change the monologue into a dialogue.

It is shown, therefore, that the text analysed here contains the problem-solution structure.

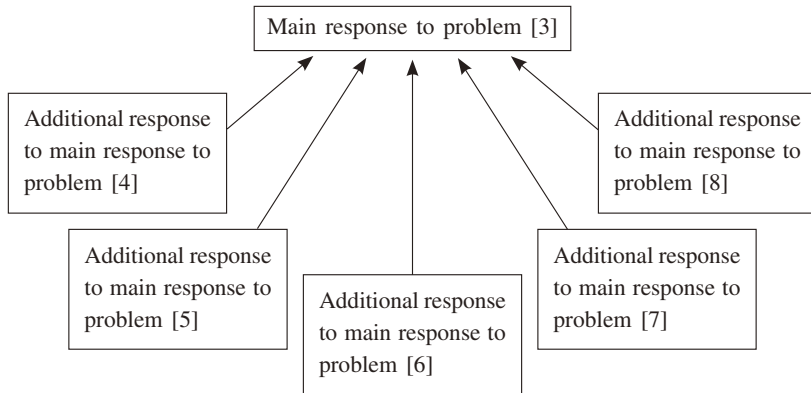
#### **4.2.2 Discussion of the major structure**

The first question determines the situational statement. Normally, it would be natural for the noun in the first sentence to be marked by the indefinite article, since the main use of the definite article (in this case) would be to indicate anaphoric reference. In the case of literary narratives, however, especially in the opening sentences, the tendency is to use the definite article as a determiner in noun phrases of which neither refer to earlier indefinite noun phrases, nor default elements of schema. Cook explains the phenomenon as two characteristic devices of narratives: (1) for the purpose of making readers accept the discourse as though the relevant schema were shared with the narrator or characters when in fact it is unknown; and (2) for the purpose of giving readers a kind of unwarranted intimacy to make them construct the necessary schema as quickly as possible (Cook 1994). This means that the first phrase in the first sentence [1], ‘*The* thousand injuries,’ works as a signal of the introductory clue to the story for the reader. In addition to this, ‘the’ transforms a general noun ‘injury’ into a more significant word, which should have a specific meaning later in the story. Hence, readers are offered a certain situation in which the story is developing. Moreover, the past perfect tense is also a signal to suggest the situation of the story. The phrase, ‘had borne,’ introduces the background of ‘I’ to the reader. By this information, the reader can gain the necessary situational information to begin the story.

The second question requires the situational statement [1] to develop and introduce a concrete aspect of the problem. A co-ordinating conjunction ‘but,’ leading [2], lets readers predict that something is going to happen,

and ‘when’ specifies a certain occasion when it actually happens. Through these signal words, it can be concluded that [2] suggests a problem which will be dealt with later in the text.

The third question identifies the actual response to the problem. Since there should be a concrete act to the problem, it is expected to be strongly connected to [2]. In this case, a subordinate conjunction, ‘when’ in [2], is very useful in determining a response to the problem, since the conjunction leads to an immediate response in the subordinate clause. Therefore, [3] can be recognised as a response to [2]. Moreover, it is possible to make a cohesive relation between ‘revenge’ in [3] and ‘insult’ in [2]. These signals make it possible to consider [3] as a response to [2]. It is interesting to consider that the reader is involved in the story intentionally by the narrator in [4]. ‘You’ and ‘so well’ request them to share the information, that “I [did not give] utterance to a threat,” with the narrator; and the present tense of [4] suggests that the shared information is not gained now, but had been gained earlier on. Thus, the narrator involves his readers into his story intentionally, and lets them understand how serious his plan is. The segments [5] to [8] are developed from [3]. ‘At length’ and ‘would’ in [7] show the narrator’s strong intention to his plan, and it is emphasised more insistently by ‘this’ and ‘definitively’ in [6]. Although ‘but’ is a co-ordinating conjunction, the following segment [7] does not contrast with the previous segment [6]. Rather the lexical repetition of ‘definitively’ and ‘definitiveness,’ and the word ‘resolved’ put greater emphasis on the narrator’s will. The segment [8] also declares his strong decision, although it is different to others in terms of tense: it is expressed in the present tense. (This problem regarding tense will be discussed in 4.3.1.) As a result, it is possible to make a minor textual relation in ‘Response to problem’ as follows;

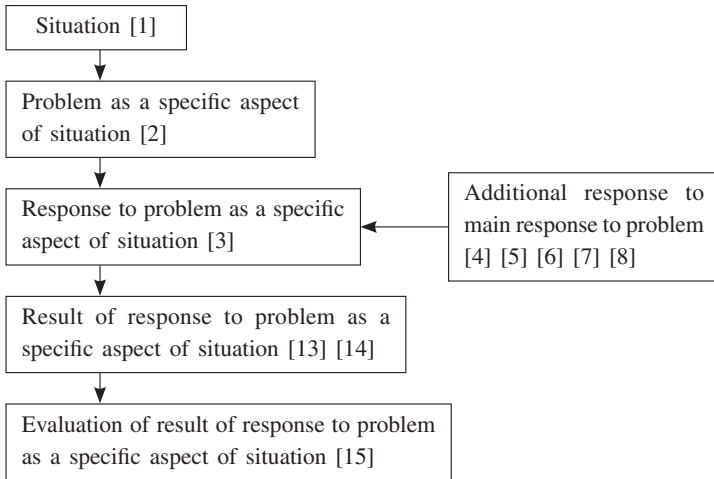


This diagrammatic representation shows that there is a substructure in ‘Response to the problem’; [4] to [8] work as assistant segments of [3].

A solution, which is requested by the fourth question, should be an actual response to [2] and a more practical reaction from the decision made in [3]. In the second paragraph, [13] to [15], the narrator lets the reader in on his plan. This follows the first paragraph which provides a background to the whole story. As a result of the response in [3], the character ‘I’ decides to execute his revenge. [13] + [14] show the actual action made by ‘I.’ ‘[C]ontinue’ in [14] suggests that this character’s plan is carried out: in other words, his plan has been initiated here.

It may be considered that [15] does not estimate the result of the character’s decision, which is shown in [13] + [14], and it may be able to be recognised as another result to his response. The question, which identifies the segment ‘Evaluation of result of response’ in 4.2.1, asks whether the narrator can gain satisfaction from the result of his action. Considering that the phrase ‘he did not perceive’ in [15] meaning what ‘I’ hoped, it is obvious that the narrator was delighted with his friend’s response. Hence, [15] can be recognised as the part expressing an evalu-

ation of the narrator’s plan, thus making his intention successful. It can be concluded, therefore, that the text has a problem-solution pattern as its major structure. With the aid of these clues, the coherence of this structure can be shown as follows;



This diagrammatic representation shows that segments [9] to [12], between ‘Result of response’ and ‘Response to problem,’ are omitted. Considering the property of the segments, they can be recognised as elements to explain ‘Response to problem’ ([3] to [8]). It can be seen that they are related with ‘Response to problem’ due to the cohesive relation: revenge – threat – avenge – risk – punish – redresser. It is noteworthy, however, that it is difficult to connect [9] to [12] with [13] + [14] lexically, as well as coherently. This may explain why L2 learners could not construct coherence from the text; the segments [9] to [12] make it difficult for learners to follow the story’s development. How these segments are related to the structure pattern will now be discussed.

### **4.3 Analysis of discourse: the minor structure**

It is not unusual that the major structure contains several other minor structures. “It is important to realise that structuring a text using one pattern does not in any way preclude other forms of patterning” (Holland and Johnson 2000: 27). That is, any text can contain more than one of the textual patterns. In case of the text analysed in this paper, a minor structure can be determined in its main structure, ‘Problem-solution’ pattern.

#### **4.3.1 Analysis and discussion of the minor structure**

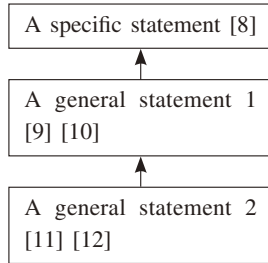
As mentioned in 4.2.2, the segments [9] to [12] are distinctively different to other segments in the text. They are expressed in the present tense, although there are some exceptions in other segments, such as [4] and the beginning part of [13]; and the word ‘wrong’ mentioned in [9] + [10] does not mean the bad behaviour of the narrator’s friend. This difference has the effect of making the discourse harder for the students to comprehend, and separates it from other parts of the text. In other words, what is mentioned in [9] to [12] is diverted from the main stream of coherence.

The segments [9] to [12] can be determined to make the ‘General-specific’ pattern. As mentioned in 2.3.2, this structure consists of a general statement and a specific statement. When considering that a general statement should contain common information, which can be shared by other people, it is natural for the statement to be described in the present tense with the third person. Hence, the sentence [9]+[10] can be recognised as a general statement. The indefinite article indicates that the following word ‘wrong’ is a general noun; and the present tense informs the reader that the context does not share the same time frame as other segments. This general statement is followed by another general statement [11]+[12]. The second statement [11]+[12] contains several elements to show that it follows on from the first

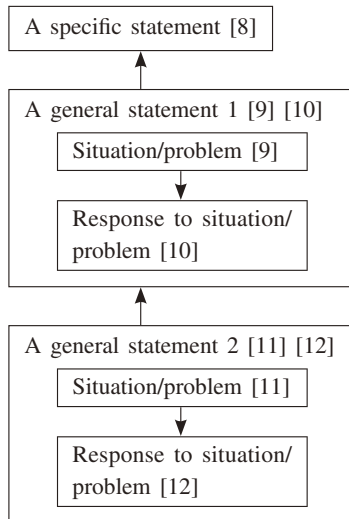


one. The pronoun, ‘such’ and personal pronouns ‘himself’ and ‘him,’ as well as the definite article prove that [11]+[12] contain anaphoric phrases, and the repetition of the sentence structure, ‘ $S_1 + is + C$  when  $S_2 + V + O$ ,’ also shows [9]+[10] and [11]+[12] to be strongly related. Moreover, ‘equally’ can be considered as signaling their strong connection. The word suggests that the following sentence should add more information to the previous sentence. As a result, [9]+[10] and [11]+[12] can be considered to have the same property: providing a general statement.

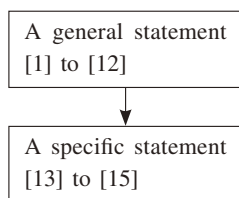
It is noteworthy that [9]+[10] and [11]+[12] follow another sentence in the present tense, [8]. Although [8] can be recognised as a part of the ‘Response to problem’ in the Problem-solution structure (see 4.2.2), it is different to other segments of the structure in terms of tense. The present tense in [8] implies that it is related to [9]+[10] and [11]+[12]. Although [9]+[10] and [11]+[12] are general statements, [8] can be identified as a specific statement. The subject of [8] specifies the act ‘punish’ as the narrator’s personal activity, while [9]+[10] and [11]+[12] deal with the act ‘unredress (a cohesive relation can be found among ‘punish’ – ‘redress’ – ‘unredress’) as a general act. This relationship has the opposite sequence in structure to what McCarthy indicates (see 2.3.2). From the text analysed in this paper, it can be seen that one specific statement leads to two general statements. The diagrammatic representation (below) shows that it is necessary to convert the basic structure of the ‘General-specific pattern’ in order to make the discourse coherent; meaning that the textual pattern structure needs to be flexible. The segments [8] to [12] can form the following structure.



Let us now consider the relationships between [9] & [10], and [11] & [12]. The conjunction ‘when’ usually makes a conditional sentence, and in this case, a subordinate clause shows its response. That is, it is possible to determine a part of the structure ‘Problem-solution pattern’ in a when-clause sentence. [9] can be recognised as a ‘structure/problem’, and [10] as a ‘response to structure/problem.’ The same pattern can be identified in the relationship between [11] and [12], showing that it is possible to make several structures with the same segments. As a result, the structure of [8] to [12] is formed as follows.



When the idea, that the discourse can contain several structures at the same time, is applied to the whole text, another ‘general-specific’ structure can be determined. The first paragraph, consisting of [1] to [12], provides general knowledge to the reader, which is necessary in understanding the narrator’s background. On the other hand, the second paragraph, consisting of [13] to [15], develops the narrator’s actual action. That is, the first paragraph can be a general statement, while the second paragraph can be a specific statement.

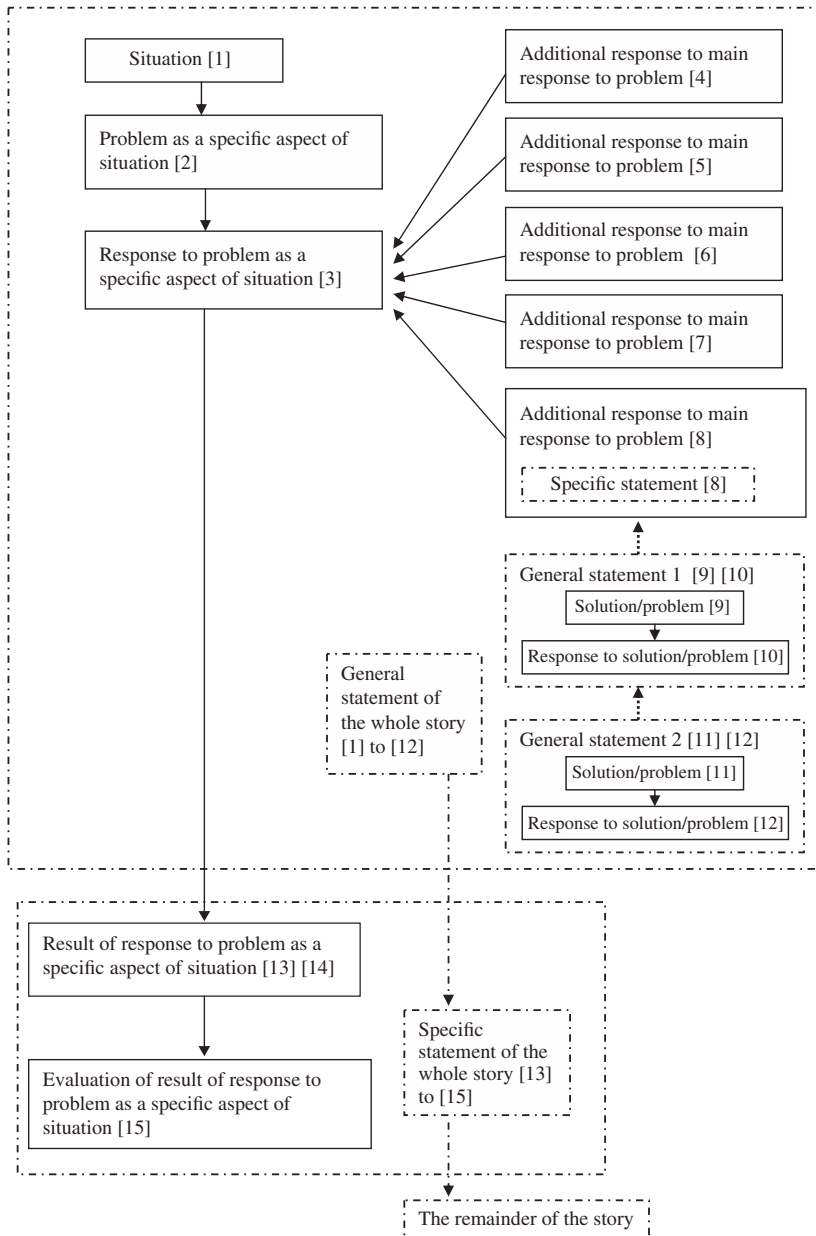


In this structure, the specific statement does not lead to another general statement like the basic structure shown by McCarthy (See 2.3.2). This may be because the text, analysed here, is the two opening paragraphs quoted from the whole story. Labov (1999) explains that the basic stream of a fully-formed narrative is Abstract → Orientation → Complicating action → Evaluation → Result or resolution → Coda, though it is necessary to change some of the elements according to types of narrative. It is possible to consider that the text cited here is a part of the large structure. Although it is not possible to complete the ‘General-specific’ structure in the text, it can be expected to develop in the remainder of the story.

## 5. Result

As a result of the analysis and the discussion of textual patterns determined in 4.2 and 4.3, the ‘Problem-solution’ pattern can be identified as the overall (major) structure and the ‘General-specific’ pattern can be identified as the subordinate (minor) structure. The ‘Claim-Counter-claim’ pattern cannot be determined in the text.

The overall text structure, discussed in 4.2 and 4.3, can be built as follows (solid lines represent ‘Problem-solution’ structure and dotted lines represent ‘General-specific’ structure);



## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, discussion was based on the analysis of authentic material, which had actually been used in a seminar class. This was done for the purpose of finding possible solutions to problems, which L2 learners had encountered in reading. Since they had no trouble concerning vocabulary and grammar while reading the text, it is my belief that the cause of the problem stemmed from an insufficient knowledge of textual structure.

In the discussion, learning textual patterns was concluded to be an effective method for L2 learners in improving their reading ability. It is my contention that when students are able to identify discourse patterns, they can predict what follows and how the text will develop. This tacit knowledge can be expected to make it easier for L2 learners to understand the text through the use of textual patterns, namely: ‘Problem-solution,’ ‘General-specific,’ and ‘Claim-counter-claim’ patterns. McCarthy (1991) indicates that finding patterns in texts is “a matter of interpretation by the reader, making use of clues and signals provided by the author” (McCarthy 1991: 161). Good readers (at least) are constantly attending to the segments of discourse that determine textual patterns. In fact, the analysis of this paper showed that the text also contains ‘Problem-solution’ patterns. Moreover, the finding of another textual pattern, ‘General-specific’ pattern explains that texts are capable of containing several textual patterns at the same time. Although it is easy to provide L2 learners with a knowledge of textual patterns, the problem is in teaching students how to identify them. It may require time to practice and apply such knowledge to actual reading. Learning discourse patterns means understanding conventional and culturally characteristic patterns of the language. In addition to ‘text structural knowledge’ and ‘lexical knowledge,’ L2 learners should, therefore, be encouraged to gain a ‘cultural knowledge’ of their target language and in doing so make it a

useful strategy in improving their reading skills as a whole.

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