

Preface and acknowledgements

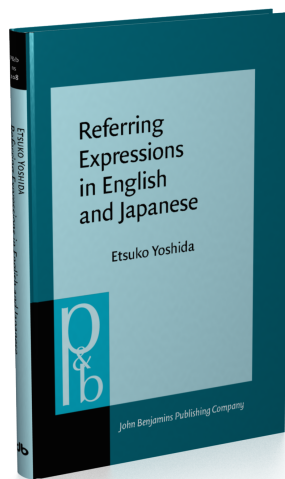
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**Referring Expressions in English and Japanese: Patterns of
use in dialogue processing**

Etsuko Yoshida

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Preface and acknowledgements

The main aim of the book is to investigate how discourse entities are linked with topic chaining and discourse coherence by showing that the choice and the distribution of referring expressions is correlated with the center transition patterns in the centering framework. The book provides an integrated interpretation in understanding the behaviour of referring expressions in discourse by considering the relation between referential choice and the local and global coherence of discourse.

The book has three stages: (1) to provide a semantic and pragmatic perspective in a contrastive study of referring expressions in English and Japanese spontaneous dialogues, (2) to analyse the way anaphoric and deictic expressions can contribute to discourse organisation in structuring and focusing the specific discourse segment, and (3) to investigate the choice and the distribution of referring expressions in the Map Task Corpus and to clarify the way the participants collaborate to judge the most salient entity in the current discourse against their common ground.

Significantly, despite the grammatical differences in the form of reference between the two languages, the ways of discourse development in both data sets show distinctive similarities in the process by which the topic entities are introduced, established, and shifted away to the subsequent topic entities. Comparing and contrasting the choice and the distribution of referring expressions of the four different transition patterns of centers, the crucial factors of their correspondent relations between English and Japanese referring expressions are shown in the findings that the topic chains of noun phrases are constructed and are treated like proper names in discourse. This can suggest that full noun phrases play a major role when the topic entity is established in the course of discourse. Since the existing centering model cannot handle the topic chain of noun phrases in the anaphoric relations in terms of the local focus of discourse, centering must be integrated with a model of global focus to account for both pronouns and full noun phrases that can be used for continuations across segment boundaries.

Based on Walker's cache model, I argue that the forms of anaphors are not always shorter, and the focus of attention is maintained by the chain of noun phrases rather than by (zero) pronouns both within a discourse segment and over discourse segment boundaries. These processes are predicted and likely to underlie other uses of language as well. The result can modify the existing perspectives that the focus of attention is normally represented by attenuated forms of reference,

and full noun phrases always show focus-shift. In addition, necessary extension to the global coherence of discourse can link these anaphoric relations with the deictic expressions over discourse segment boundaries. Finally, I argue that the choice and the distribution of referring expressions in the Map Task Corpus depends on the way the participants collaborate to judge the most salient entity in the current discourse against their common ground.

The text which follows is a revised version of my doctoral thesis completed at the University of Edinburgh in 2008. The process of reorganising my argument to make it more accessible to a wider audience has been the most challenging and rewarding experience for my academic career. This work would never have been accomplished without many people who have supported and encouraged me throughout the past ten years.

First of all, I am deeply grateful to Ronnie Cann for his consistent and painstaking guidance throughout all the chapters and stages of writing, and who eventually provided me with a spurt of energy in shaping my book and giving it focus. I have learnt a great deal from him and my hope is that I have been able to give this book some of the intellectual depth and clarity that I have become aware of in the supervision for my research. His criticism and suggestions were extremely helpful in considerably improving the whole text. Without his assistance and support, this book would have been far more difficult and far less stimulating.

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Etsuko Yoshida