

A Process to Reach a Conclusion in a Discussion of Japanese and Chinese

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Foreign students always claim that, when having discussion with Japanese speakers in many situations such as meeting or seminar, the Japanese has a different negotiation method. We suggest that it may come from several reasons. The first reason is the transition of topic in a discussion. The second reason is an influence of the user's linguistic culture. Therefore, we can examine the transition of topic, which differs in each linguistic culture by observing the characteristic of the languages when the speaker is using their mother tongue in the discussion. However, at the moment, the earlier researches in this area are still not sufficient. Comparing two different languages is an effective method for grasping the characteristics of a process in arriving at a conclusion in a discussion. Therefore, in this research, we'll take up a discussion of Japanese and Chinese to describe how they reach at a conclusion in a discussion in their own language.

This research used three frameworks about the paratone concept to analyze a discussion. The first framework involves the transition of topic. It can be discussed in the perspective of *Large paratone* and *Little paratone* (Kawachi, 2003; Sakuma, 2003). The second framework involves the perspective of *Discussion paratone* and *Digression paratone*, in which either the speakers try to achieve the discussion goal or not. In the last framework, the concept of *Continuous type* and *Discontinuous type* are being discussed in order to clarify the connection of paratone (Yamamoto, 2003).

Under the topic of “the five most desired quality in finding job or boyfriend/girlfriend”, the analyzed result shows that, the basic structure of

Discussion paratone in Chinese and Japanese languages are similar, i.e. they start from “suggest condition” to “tune condition” and later “decide speaker’s order”. However, these two languages are different from the appearance position of the Discussion paratone, which concern the discussion form. In both languages, it can occur at the beginning and the end of the discussion, but in case of the Japanese, they also occur during discussion such as before and after “suggest condition” paratone or “decide speaker’s order” paratone, while it is hardly seen in the Chinese case.

When Digression paratone’s structure is considered it can be concluded that, in Japanese, Little paratone can occur and then develop in Digression paratone continuous type, while in case of Chinese they don’t continue for a long time. In addition, when the overall discussion is considered both languages have more than fifty percent Discussion paratone concerning about the discussion goal. However, the number of Large paratone in the Japanese is more than that in Chinese’s due to the Japanese’s larger “cut in” phenomenon by “discussion form” paratone or Digression paratone.

Hence, we concluded that in a discussion, Japanese speakers have more feeling to maintain good conversation atmosphere than Chinese speakers. For this reason, “cut in” phenomenon and Digression paratone which involves Little paratones inside are permitted in Japanese discussion while speakers are still conscious of a discussion goal. From this conclusion, we can say that the permission for continuing Digression paratone while considering the discussion’s goal is a characteristic of Japanese discussion. Conversely, tendency to achieve the goal of discussion and not permit Digression paratone for a long time is characteristic of Chinese discussion. However, since the result is difficult to generalize, in the future, we need to consider it continuously, and plan to use these characteristics to consider any problem about discussion when speakers in different linguistic culture have a contact such as style of participant or discussion’s proceeding.

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