

A TAXONOMY OF JAPANESE DISCOURSE TYPES*

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This paper presents a taxonomy of Japanese discourse types, patterned after an approach outlined in Longacre (1968, 1971, 1972). Longacre recognizes five major discourse types, presented in (1) with brief descriptions.

- (1) a. *Narrative* – recounts some sort of story
- b. *Procedural* – tells how to do something
- c. *Expository* – any sort of explanatory essay
- d. *Hortatory* – attempts to influence or change conduct
- e. *Drama* – consists entirely of dialogue

He arranges these types according to the parameters in (2). Drama is omitted from the chart for reasons which will become apparent.

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The major failing of Longacre's schema is that he relegates Drama, or Dialogue, to a subcategory of Narrative. In fact, the basic discourse type is Dialogue, and Longacre's Narrative, Procedural, Expository, and Hortatory are special subtypes of this. This position is supported by the observation that all forms of discourse comprise an interaction between a speaker and an addressee, although in special cases, such as writing, the addressee may not be physically present.

By recognizing the primacy of Dialogue, two additional parameters, mentioned first in Hinds (1975), may be formed. The first parameter indicates the degree to which the addressee needs to give an uninvited acknowledgment, either verbal or nonverbal, that he understands or is following what is being said.

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| (3) | <i>Narrative</i>
-acknowledgement | <i>Procedural</i>
acknowledgement |
| | <i>Expository</i>
-acknowledgement | <i>Hortatory</i>
acknowledgement |