

How do foreign language students narrate personal stories and how can we help them?

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Abstract

In telling personal stories, inclusion of characters' mental states is imperative to create coherence and enhance vividness. This study investigated how characters' mental states were represented in personal stories narrated by college students taking 2nd-, 3rd-, and 4th-year Japanese. The corpus consisted of 345 and 32 written narratives collected from learners and native speakers of Japanese, respectively, and 36 hours of oral interview from 24 learners and 4 hours of interview from 8 native speakers. Quantitative analysis found that the amount of mental representation significantly increased from the 2nd-year to the 4th-year level. In particular, the 4th-year students produced mental representation as frequent as the native speakers. Qualitative analysis, however, revealed that the students were not only increasing the amount but also changing the usage. The 2nd-year students overproduced the combination of an evaluative adjective and a mental verb, while the 3rd-year students used the combination of a modal auxiliary and a mental verb. The 4th-year students started to employ the explanatory modal auxiliary *noda* with mental verbs. They also frequently adopted the strategy of enactment in their oral narratives but not in their written narratives. In comparison, the native speakers often combined rhetorical questions with mental verbs in their written narratives. In their oral narratives, the 4th-year students framed mental representation as self-directed speech, using casual register and the sentence-final particle *naa*. The findings suggest that beginners should be instructed to use more modal auxiliaries than adjectives with mental verbs, and that advanced learners should be discouraged to use enactment in oral narratives.

Instruction should also include practice in self-directed speech, in particular casual register and the particle *naa*.

Keywords: narrative, mental representation, learner, re-enact

1. Introduction

1.1 Mental representations in narrative

Mental representations convey characters' mental states at the time of an event or the narrator's current view of the event, and they slow down the pace of storytelling. Mental verbs such as *omou* 'think' either foreground or background statements on mental process, depending on the accompanying tense. If a mental verb carries past tense as in *omotta* 'thought', it foregrounds the mental state of a character in the past. If a mental verb carries non-past tense, it hedges the statement that the verb accompanies, functioning as a device for conveying evaluation. This study will discuss only the former type of mental state as mental representations. When mental verbs are used in the past tense, the audience directly accesses the characters' sentient and cognitive processes. This enhances the story's vividness in a way similar to how speech representation enhances the story's vividness. The verbs that fall into this category include *omou* 'think', *kanjiru* 'feel', and *kangaeru* 'ponder', *negau* 'wish', and *ki ga suru* 'feel'. The following is an example of mental representation.

Excerpt 1: 301_34

1. *Gozen yoji-han datta.*
'It was four-thirty a.m.'
2. *Soto ga *kurokute ((kurakute)) nani mo mienakatta.*

‘The outside was dark, and I couldn’t see anything.’

3. *Kuruma ni *haite ((haitte)) mizuumi ni itta.*⁽¹⁾

‘I got in the car and went to the lake.’

4. *Unten shinagara “dooshite *kore o suru no ((konna koto shiteru n daroo))” to kangaeta.*

‘While I was driving, I thought, “Why am I doing this?”’

In this excerpt, lines 1 to 3 simply describe the physical appearance of the scene. Line 4 delivers the mental representation of the person at the time. This short representation of her thoughts fills in details about the scene, telling that the person was not willing to go to the destination, and that she was unsure of her action. Describing the character’s mental state helps the audience understand her puzzling action of going to the lake when it was still dark outside. This seemingly odd action becomes meaningful with the description of the mental state. It also makes the scene more vivid as the audience can feel what went through her mind. In this fashion, including characters’ mental states is indispensable for making a story more vivid and rendering characters’ actions as more purposeful, thus providing more coherence to a story.

1.2 Definition of a narrative

The present study adopts the definition of a minimal narrative proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967). They view a narrative as comprised of a succession of clauses placed in the same order as the inferred sequence of events. A defining property of the narrative is a string of clauses that represent the temporal manner of an event sequence. It is not the act of illustrating past events per se that constitutes narrative. To be considered a narrative, the manner of illustration has to be in temporal order. The following three versions of the same story offered by Labov and Waletzky (1967) illustrate this point. According to their

criteria, Version A is a narrative, for the sequenced clauses match the inferred sequence of events. Versions B and C, on the other hand, are not narratives, since the inferred sequence of events are not presented in temporal order.

Excerpt 2

Version A

1: Well, this person had a little too much to drink

2: and he attacked me

3: and the friend came in

4: and she stopped it.

Version B

1: A friend of mine came in

2: just in time to stop

3: this person who had a little too much to drink

4: from attacking me

Version C

1: A friend of mine stopped the attack.

2: She had just come in.

3: This person was attacking me.

4: He had had a little too much to drink.

(Labov and Waletzky, 1967, p.20)

Two clauses that encode two temporally sequenced actions constitute the minimum requirement of a narrative. “I hit him and killed him” is a narrative consisting of two narrative clauses, as the actions hit and kill are temporally ordered and not interchangeable. “On weekends, I watched movies and she went shopping,” on the other hand, is not a narrative. The clause “I watched movies” and the clause “she went shopping” are interchangeable; thus, they are not temporally ordered.

2. Literature review

2.1 Adjectives and adverbs

F. Watanabe (2007) categorizes adverbs into five semantic groups and compares how native and non-native speakers employ adverbs in written narratives. His study’s most

prominent finding is that the native speakers frequently used adverbs expressing the mental state of a character. The following are examples of such adverbs:

Excerpt 3

tanoshiku/tanoshisoo ni/tanonshige ni
 ‘delightedly’
ureshiku/ureshi soo ni
 ‘happily’
hisshi ni
 ‘desperately’
isshookenmei
 ‘hard’

(F. Watanabe, 2007, p.69)

The non-native speakers did not use this type of adverb nearly as often as did the native speakers. He also notes that the native speakers rarely placed adjectives that express subjective judgment in the predicate position. Most of the adjectives were clustered in noun-modifying clauses. The English-speaking learners, in contrast, often used such adjectives in their predicates.

2.2 Mental verbs

Little research has been carried out on how learners of Japanese use mental verbs in narratives. However, research on modality usage, which treats the mental verb *omou* ‘think’ as a modal expression, provides some insights. Thus, I will briefly review studies discussing how learners and native speakers use the mental verb *omou* ‘think’ with respect to the use of modal auxiliaries.

Studies of how second language learners of Japanese use modal expressions report that learners fail to produce epistemic and evidential modal expressions sufficiently, but overproduce the mental verb *omou* ‘think’ (Sasaki & Kawaguchi, 1994; Ijuin & Takahashi, 2004; Oshima, 1994; Yamamori, 2006). Sasaki and Kawaguchi (1994) examine modality use in native speakers’ and learners’ compositions. Their study asked 520 native and 40 non-native

speakers to write an expository essay. The former consisted of thirteen groups of Japanese students, ranging from elementary to college level. Their results show that the learners overproduced *omou* ‘think’ and underproduced modal auxiliaries. Some native speakers also overproduced the mental verb, but the distribution of such individuals peaked at around grade seven. Yamamori’s study (2006) adds support to Sasaki and Kawaguchi’s results. The study examines how advanced learners use epistemic and evidential modality in oral interview, e-mail writing, and a discourse completion task. He reports that the learners had difficulty using modal auxiliaries such as *sooda* ‘appear’, *mitai* ‘look’, and *rashii* ‘seem’, but comfortably used the verb *omou* ‘think’. Such frequent use of *omou* ‘think’ was also reported by Ijuin and Takahashi (2004) and Oshima (1993). Interestingly, studies focusing on learners of English and other European languages also report that learners’ overuse of mental verbs equivalent to the English verb think (Ringbom, 1998; Salsbury & Bardovi-Halig, 2002; Aijmer, 2002; Hasselgren, 2002). This suggests that employing a mental verb equivalent to ‘think’ in the target language is cross-linguistically preferred by learners in expressing mental states.

3. Procedures

3.1 Method of narrative collection

This study adopts Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) interview method to elicit oral narratives. While other scholars (Polanyi, 1985; Norrick, 2000; Ochs & Capps, 2001) collect narratives appearing spontaneously in conversations, the abilities of the present study’s learners made this approach impractical. Since the present study analyzed beginner to intermediate learners, who have difficulty leading conversations, not to mention initiating personal stories, interview was chosen. Moreover, it allows direct comparison with learners’ written narratives, which are typically

produced by a teacher's prompt at these levels of foreign language instruction.

3.2 Corpus

This study analyzed narratives collected from 385 intermediate to advanced learners, who were studying Japanese at the University of Washington, and 40 native speakers of Japanese. The corpus consists of four data sets.

The first data set consists of 345 written narratives. Once a quarter in an academic year, the researcher visited second-, third-, and fourth-year Japanese classes and asked for volunteers to write their personal stories. Students who volunteered were asked to choose one of the following three topics:

1. A happy, fun, interesting, exciting, sad, or upsetting event that took place over the break.
2. A happy, fun, interesting, exciting, sad, or upsetting traveling experience.
3. A happy, fun, interesting, exciting, sad, or upsetting experience from high-school.

The stories were written during 20 minutes of a regular class period without the use of a dictionary, textbook, grammar book, or notebook.

The second set of data consists of transcripts from 72 interviews conducted with 24 volunteering students of Japanese. Once a quarter in an academic year, the researcher met students for a 30-minute interview. In the interviews, the researcher elicited the students' personal stories. The most typical stories elicited were happy, fun, sad, exciting, or embarrassing recent events or memorable events from the past.

The third data set consists of 32 narratives written by native speakers of Japanese who were studying at the University of Washington and Toyo University in Japan. The researcher gave a form to write a story and asked them to write their stories in 20 minutes. As with the

written narratives elicited from the learners, native subjects were also asked to choose one of the three topics. However, they wrote their stories at their convenience and brought back the form when they finished.

The fourth data set consists of eight thirty-minute recordings of personal narratives elicited from eight native speakers of Japanese whose age ranged from 18 to 38. Unlike the learners who had three 30-minute interviews, each native subject had only one 30-minute interview.

3.3 Methodology of analysis

3.3.1 Length of written and oral narratives

As shown below, for all the written narratives, the number of words appearing in each story was counted using a word-counting scheme partially adopted from Takei and Akahori (2005):

- 1) All free morphemes, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and particles, that stand by themselves were treated as separate words.
- 2) Counters were counted as individual words.
- 3) Bound morphemes used to inflect adjectives and verbs were in general counted according to the number of morphemes in each particular inflection. For instance, morphemes such as *-(ja)nai* 'not', *-masu* 'affirmative polite', *-(r)eru* 'able', *-yoo* 'will', *-seru* 'cause', *-miru* 'attempt', *-ri* 'things like', *desu* 'am/are/is', *-deshita* 'was/were', *-da* 'am/are/is', *-datta* 'was/were', *-nakatta* 'was/were/did not', and *-masen* 'negative polite' were counted as separate tokens. However, the inflection *-ku* and the particle *ni* in adverbials such as *ookiku* 'largely' and *shizukani* 'quietly' were not treated as words. Morphemes for the *te*-form and past tense were also not treated as words to ease the counting process, because the *te*-form and past tense are extremely frequent in storytelling.

For oral narratives, the same counting scheme was applied to all utterances produced by the learners, including both narrative and non-narrative segments. This was because it is difficult to quantitatively separate narrative and non-narrative segments. It should also be pointed out that the counts included English words, repeated phrases, and the Japanese fillers *eeto* and *etto*, but not the utterances *uh* and *uhm*.

3.3.2 Identification of mental representations

This study identified mental representations of characters in the following fashion. Utterances were taken as mental representation if they were accompanied by quotative markers, mental verbs, changes in voice quality (for oral narratives), or quotation markers (for written narratives). If mental verbs were in the non-past tense, rather than in the past tense or *te*-form, they were not considered to be mental representation from the time of events but were viewed as hedging. For instance, in sentence A below, the verb *omoimasu* ‘think’ is in non-past tense. Thus, the verb functions to hedge the evaluative comment *taihen* ‘difficult’. In sentence B, however, the verb *omoimashita* ‘thought’ conveys that the thought *taihen* ‘difficult’ occurred at the time of the event. Thus, this sentence qualifies as a mental representation.

Excerpt 4

A. *taihen da to omoimasu*

‘I think, “it is difficult”.’

B. *taihen da to omoimashita*

‘I thought, “it was difficult”.’

In some cases, however, errors in tense marking made it difficult to strictly follow this procedure. Under these circumstances, utterances were considered as mental representations even when marked with mental verbs in the present tense, if lack of past tense marking was considered to be an error. For instance, the following sentence ends with the

non-past tense verb *omoimasu* ‘think’. However, the context suggests that the tense marking intended must have been the past tense.

Excerpt 5

*kodomo no toki uma ga sugoku yasashii doobutsuda to *omoimasu ((omoimashita)) kara*

‘because when I was a kid, I *think, “Horses are a kind animal.”’

Here the first phrase *kodomo no toki* ‘when I was a kid’ indicates that what follows is a mental representation in the past, despite the fact that the mental verb is marked with non-past tense.

4. Results

4.1 Results: Quantitative distributions of mental representations

Quantitatively, the use of mental representations increased with proficiency, reaching a level comparable to that of the native subjects in written narratives but not in oral narratives. Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate how mental representations were distributed across the learners’ written and oral narratives. Overall, the representation of mental states increased with proficiency. The 2nd-year students, who learned the verb *omou* ‘think’ at the beginning of the academic-year, expressed past mental states at the rate of 0.13 per 100 words in written narratives and at the rate of 0.05 in oral narratives. The 3rd-year students described past mental states at the rates of 0.26 in written narratives and 0.11 in oral narratives. The 4th-year students delivered characters’ past mental states at the rates of 0.41 in written narratives and 0.28 in oral narratives. The native subjects, in contrast, produced mental representations at the rates of 0.45 in written narratives and 0.60 in oral narratives. When the native subjects’ and the learners’ production rates were compared, it became clear that the 4th-year students’ frequency in written narratives was comparable to the native

subjects' level. In contrast, their production rate for oral narratives, 0.28, was less than half of the native subjects' rate.

Table 1: Frequency of Mental Representation in Written and Oral Narratives

	Proficiency level	Number of words	Number of mental representations	Frequency of mental representation (per 100 words)
Written Narratives	2 nd -year students	17490	23	0.13
	3 rd -year students	22154	57	0.26
	4 th -year students	6847	28	0.41
	Native subjects	7372	33	0.45
Oral Narratives	2 nd -year students	25331	13	0.05
	3 rd -year students	36723	42	0.11
	4 th -year students	50958	142	0.28
	Native subjects	18120	108	0.60

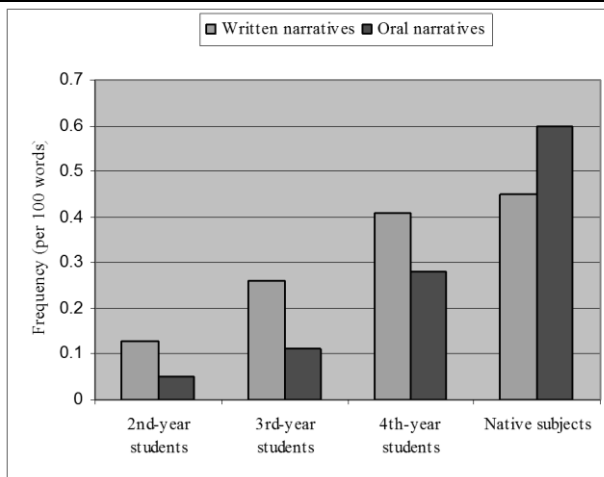


Figure 1: Frequency of Mental Representation

4.2 Results: Qualitative differences

Along with the increase in the use of mental representations, qualitative changes were also evident in the stories from 2nd-year to 4th-year students.

4.2.1 2nd-year students' narratives

The 2nd-year students mainly used mental verbs to frame past feelings expressed with adjectives in both oral and written narratives. Simple adjectives such as *tanoshii* 'fun',

omoshiroi 'interesting', and *suki* 'like' appeared with the verb *omoimashita* 'thought'. The following are some examples.

Excerpt 6: 202-20 (written)

Pianisuto wa totemo joozu da to omoi mashita.

'I thought, "the pianist was very good."'

Excerpt 7: 202-40 (written)

*Kono tabi wa chotto *koowai ((kawai)) to omoi mashita.*

'I thought, "this trip was a little scary."'

In excerpt 6, the evaluation *joozu* 'good' is expressed as an adjective and the mental verb is attached. In excerpt 7, the adjective **koowai* ((*kawai*)) 'scary' conveys the sentiment, and the verb emphasizes that it is the past mental state of the person. The combination of adjective and mental verb was frequent in the corpus, most likely because this construction does not require much conjugation other than adding *to omotta* 'thought' to a predicate adjective, which is one of the easiest means to express evaluation in storytelling (F. Watanabe, 2007).

4.2.2 3rd-year students' narratives

The 3rd-year students used a more variety of expressions in mental representations. In particular, modal auxiliaries were frequently used, including volitional form, *soo* 'seem', *kana* 'I wonder', *daroo* 'probably', *hazu* 'most likely', and desiderative *tai* 'want'. The following are some examples of mental representations.

Excerpt 8: 301-30 (written)

Menyuu no shashin ga oishisoo to omotta.

'I thought, "The pictures on the menu look delicious."'

Excerpt 9: 301-2 (written)

Furansugo o daigaku de benkyoo shiyoo to omotteita node, zehi itte mitakatta.

‘Because I thought, “I’m going to study French in college,” I really wanted to go.’

Excerpt 8 contains the epistemic auxiliary *soo* ‘appear’; Excerpt 9 has the volitional form of verb *suru* ‘do’. Such inclusion of epistemic modality in mental representation was found in the 3rd-year students’ written narratives but not in the 2nd-year students’.

Excerpt 10: Sonia (oral)

de ichiyoo ga- eigo ga benkyoo dekiru
kanaa to omotte
‘So, anyway, I think, “I wonder if I can study English.”’

Excerpt 11: Rachael (oral)

geisha wa totemo omoshirosoo to
omoimasu to omoimashita
‘I thought, “Geisha seem interesting.”’

Excerpts 10 and 11 contain the epistemic modal auxiliary *kana* ‘I wonder’ and the evidential *soo* ‘appear’, respectively. These modal auxiliaries enhance the image that the audience is accessing mental states of characters, since modal expressions signal the speaker’s subjective stance toward the propositional content.

4.2.3 4th-year students’ written narratives

The 4th-year students further advanced in including modality within mental representations. What is worth observing here is that the 4th-year students, along with the native subjects, often used *noda* in mental representations. *Noda* is a modal auxiliary that indicates that the speaker is explaining some information or talking about something emotively, as if it were of common interest to the speaker and hearer (Makino & Tsutsui, 1986). *Noda* has the effect of highlighting the subjectivity of the storyteller by reminding the audience of the presence of the teller (Iwasaki, 1993; Matsuki, 2001; Maynard, 1992, 1999). It gives the impression that the narrator is directly

addressing the audience outside of the story world (Maynard, 1999). *Noda* is often delivered in the non-past tense (Iwasaki, 1993; Kodama, 1998; Takahashi, 1996), and this in turn creates dramatic effect and conveys that what is delivered is the speaker’s current view (Iwasaki, 1993; Koyama, 2004; Nara, 2001; Soga, 1983; Szatrowsky, 1985; Takahashi, 1996; N. Watanabe, 1998). In the unfolding story, *noda* serves to connect segments of the story (Iwasaki, 2002, p.314; Yoshimi, 2001). In particular, *n desu ne* draws the audience to the next story segment, signaling the location of a high point of the story (Yoshimi, 2001). The following example illustrates how *noda* was used in representing mental states of characters by the 4th-year students.

Excerpt 12: 402-13 (written)

**Anogoro ((ano koro)) booryoku de*
kaiketsu shinakute wa ikenai toki mo aru
n da to omotta.

‘I thought at that time, “There are times when one needs to resort to violence to solve issues.”’

In Excerpt 12, the colloquial form of *noda*, *n da*, is inserted before the quotative particle *to*. The colloquial form is important since it creates the effect of accessing the character’s plain, unembellished inner thought. The expression is followed by the quotative particle *to* and the verb *omotta* ‘thought’. The 4th-year student use of *noda* in mental representations, indeed, was similar to how the native subjects used *noda* in mental representations. For example, Excerpt 13, below, is from a native subject’s story.

Excerpt 13: Native 7 (written)

Jibun wa konna ni badominton ga suki na
n da to kanji mashita.

‘I felt, “I like Badminton this much.”’

As we can see, the colloquial form of *noda* is followed by the quotative particle *to* and the mental verb *kanjimashita* ‘felt’. In this fashion,

the 4th-year students proficiently used *noda* in combination with mental verbs to represent mental states.

Another interesting feature of the 4th-year students' mental representations is that mental states were frequently represented without mental verbs in oral narratives. The following excerpt contains a direct representation of a mental state without any mental verb.

Excerpt 14: Keith (oral)

1. *eeto robii no robii no naka doaman *toiu hito ga watashi ni denwa kakete ((kite))*
'Well, a person—doorman—in the lobby called me.'
2. *eeto eeto eeto *hitotsu ((hitori)) no wakai kanojo *kanojo ((josei)) ga Swallow sama no tame ni omachi ni *narimasu ((natte orimasu)) to itte*
'Well, uh, uh he says, "A young lady, lady is waiting for Mr. Swallow."'
3. *watashi wa Ee? Dare?*
'I was, "uh? Who?"'
4. *watashi wa nanka oosutoraria ni iru *kara koso ((node)) watashi wa koko ni tomodachi ga ((i)) nai hazu *desu ((data)) kedo*
'I am, like, in Australia so that there shouldn't have been any friend, but.'
5. *demo eeto nanka omoshiroi to omotta kara*
'but, well, like, because I thought, "That's interesting."'
6. *eeto heya *ni ((o)) dete robii ni itte*
'I get out of the room and go to the lobby.'

This is a story when the learner ran into his classmate when he went to Australia. Line 1 explains that he got a call from a doorman at the lobby of the hotel which he just checked in. Line 2 represents what the man said on the phone. In line 3, Keith represents his past mental state by changing his voice quality without any mental verb or quotative particle. It

directly describes his thought at the time. He represents his thought once more in line 5. In this case, however, he attaches the quotative particle *to* and the mental verb *omotta* 'thought' after *omoshiroi* '(that's) interesting'. The direct representation of mental states as displayed in line 3, however, seems to be unique to oral narratives. In the written narratives, no learner presented mental states in this fashion. This difference between oral and written narratives is most apparent when the written version of the same story is compared. The following excerpt is the same scene of the event depicted in his written story.

Excerpt 15: Keith (written)

1. *keredomo, beddo ni hairu toki denwa ga *dorudoru site ((jirijiri natte)),*
'but, when I get into bed, the phone rings.'
2. *berunaso ((beruman)) ga "wakai josei *wa ((ga)) Swallow sama no tame ni *noobi ((robii)) de matteiru" to iimashita.*
'The bellman said, "A young lady is waiting for Mr. S. at the lobby."'
3. *dare daroo to kangaete*
'I think, "Who could it be?"'
4. *dokidoki shite kanojo *o ((ni)) ai ni *roohi ((robii)) made *hashite ((hashitte)) ikimashita.*
'I nervously went to the lobby to see her.'

Here in this version of the story, the narrator used *dare daroo to kangaete* 'I thought, "Who could it be?"' in line 3. The question *dare daroo* is followed by the quotative particle *to* and the mental verb *kangaete* 'thought, and'. It contrasts well with the oral version *watashi wa ee? Dare?* 'I was, "uh? Who?"', which lacks a quotative particle and a mental verb.

4.2.4 Native Subjects' Narratives

In the native subjects' written narratives, 17 out of the 33 items that represented mental states contained expressions of modality including volitional, desiderative, epistemic, and *noda*. Moreover, sentence-final particles, namely *na* and *ka* were frequently found. This use of these sentence-final particles in expressing mental states was rarely found in the learners' stories. Only two learners used these particles. In contrast, for the native subjects, 9 out of 33 mental representations, 27%, contained either *na* or *ka*. The following excerpts show how they used these two particles, placing them right in front of the quotative particle *to*.

Excerpt 16: Native 24 (written)

*Kono toki, boku wa "sannenkan, hontoo ni mudana jikan o sugosita **na**" to omoimasita.*
 'In high school, I thought, "I really wasted three years.'"

What is interesting is that the interrogative particle *ka* can be used as part of a rhetorical question. The following excerpt contains the particle *ka*, but here it is used to form a rhetorical question.

Excerpt 17: Native 12 (written)

*Sore kara suukagetsu kan wa shiawase to wa kono koto **ka** to kanjite ita ga higeki wa moo sude ni sematte ita*
 'For several months after that, I was feeling, "Could this be what is called happiness?"'
 'But, tragedy was already approaching.'

Here the particle *ka* rhetorically questions if what he was happy or not. In other words, "Could this be what is called happiness?" meant "This was really what is called happiness." The rhetorical form conveyed the sense that he himself could not believe his good fortune. In this fashion, rhetorical questions were one aspect that distinguished the native subjects' narratives from those of learners.

The most significant difference between the native subjects' and the learners' narratives is that the native subjects frequently used a style conveying the self-directed content of mental representation. As the following excerpt shows, the sentence within the quotation resembles speech directed to oneself.

Excerpt 18: Native subject (oral)

uchi ni kaeranakya ikenai naa to omotte
 'I think, "I should go home.'"

Here, the quotation *uchi ni kaeranakya ikenai naa* 'I should go home' describes the thought that occurred to the character at that time. The colloquial expression *nakya* 'have to', which contrasts with a more formal expression *nakutewa ikenai* 'have to', helps identify the utterance as inner speech or talking to himself. The particle *naa* here further strengthens the image that the speech is addressed to the speaker himself. Makino and Tsutsui (1995, p. 196) explain that "*Naa* expresses such positive feelings as happiness, thankfulness, and admiration and such negative feelings as unhappiness, envy, pity, ridicule, and contempt." They also note that it often appears with the quotative marker *to* and mental verbs such as *omou* 'think', *kanjiru* 'feel', and *kanshin suru* 'be impressed'. Since the particle often describes feelings and appears with mental verbs, its presence enhances the image that the audience is accessing the inner mental state of characters. As a result of these components, the audience can easily notice that the quoted segment constitutes speech that can be only heard by the speaker. Overall, while the native subjects frequently used this style of self-directed speech, the learners rarely produced such forms, suggesting the difficulty of applying self-addressed speech to quotations.

5. Discussion

The present study has identified developmental patterns of how learners represent mental states in both written and oral

narratives. Analysis reveals that the 2nd-year students heavily relied on evaluative adjectives in expressing mental states. Frequent use of evaluative adjectives in combination with the mental verb *omoimashita* ‘thought’ was found both in their written and oral narratives. In particular, written narratives heavily used this combination, while the oral narratives tend to avoid mental verbs. The 3rd-year students decreased this dependency on adjectives and increased using words other than adjectives in combination with *omoimashita* ‘thought’. In particular, modal auxiliaries started to appear frequently. The 4th-year students further increased the use of modal auxiliaries in combination with mental verbs. In particular, *noda* was often found in their written and oral narratives.

Comparison of the written and oral narratives found that the oral narratives contain a large number of mental representations without quotative particles or mental verbs. Learners often used voice quality to indicate that an utterance constituted a mental state that occurred at the time of the event. Some proficient learners, however, were able to use quotative particles without mental verbs. When the native subjects’ narratives were compared with the 4th-year students’, it was found that the native subjects’ written and oral stories included more sentence-ending particles such as *ka* and *na*. In particular, the latter particle enhances the image of self-addressed speech. Furthermore, the oral narratives often embedded thoughts expressed in casual register inside of mental verbs. The casual register enhances the image that the audience is accessing the character’s plain, spontaneous inner thoughts. While most of the quotations were marked with a quotative particle and mental verb, some were marked with the quotative particle *tte* and the modal auxiliary *mitai* ‘appear’. Another feature of the native subjects’ narratives was that their written stories sometimes used rhetorical questions in combination with mental verbs, which the

students’ stories did not use at all. Thus, although the 4th-year students’ produced mental representation almost at the rate of the native subjects in terms of quantity, qualitatively their usage was different from the native subjects’ usage.

The finding that the 2nd-year students overproduced adjectives in their mental representation agrees with F. Watanabe’s results (2007). His analysis of third-person narratives finds that the native speakers rarely placed adjectives that express subjective judgment in predicate position. Most of such adjectives cluster in noun-modifying clauses. The English-speaking learners, in contrast, often used such adjectives in predicates. This study found that the 2nd-year students frequently used evaluative adjectives in the predicate position in combination with the mental verb *omou* ‘think’. The 4th-year students’ increased use of *noda* in combination with mental representation has not been observed in previous studies. Three studies by Takei and Akahori (2005), F. Watanabe (2007), and Yoshimi (2001) investigate the use of *noda* in storytelling, but none report on how learners use *noda* in mental representation. While Yoshimi (2001) argues that some usages of *noda* are harder to use and master in storytelling, this study found that the 4th-year students can handle *noda* in combination with mental verbs. Moreover, Clancy (1982) found that native speakers of Japanese do not use *noda* in written narratives, but this study found that native subjects use *noda* inside of quotation in written narratives. Nevertheless, Clancy’s finding is compatible with the finding of this study, since her narratives were vicarious narratives, elicited with a cartoon video clip, while this study analyzed personal narratives. The observed difference highlights the importance of quotation in personal narratives.

The lack of quotative particles in the 4th-year students’ mental representations in oral narratives agrees with Kamada’s (1990) and

Ishida's (2006) finding that English-speaking learners of Japanese tend not to use quotative particles in representing speech. Both researchers conclude that the lack of quotative particles stems from first language transfer, since English does not mark territory of information as extensively as Japanese does. Although it was not speech representations but mental representations that the learners expressed, a similar mechanism seems to have been at work. Interestingly, this transfer effect did not take place with the 2nd-year and 3rd-year students. Omission of quotative particles and mental verbs was only frequently found in the 4th-year students. Furthermore, when the learners represented mental states in their written narratives, the students generally provided quotative particles and mental verbs. There are two possible explanations for this. The first is that the learners dropped quotative particles and mental verbs in oral narratives because their cognitive processing was too demanding in oral narrative. Additional supplying of particles and verbs could have been overwhelming in oral narrative which takes place at a much faster pace than written narrative. In contrast, in writing stories, the learners had plenty of time to think about the story and apply grammatical rules correctly. However, this explanation does not adequately account for the fact that the 2nd- and 3rd-year students provided mental representations with quotative particles and mental verbs in oral narratives. Another possibility is that the students were frequently employing the strategy of re-enactment when narration reached high points in their stories, entering what Takahashi called re-enactment mode. Watanabe's (1998) analysis of *rakugo* and Takahashi's (1996) analysis of storybook narratives suggest that when the narrator is in the mode of re-enactment, embedded dialogue is delivered with a variety of paralinguistic devices that help differentiate utterances of different characters. Such items include voice quality, body direction, posture and other non-

verbal cues (N. Watanabe, 1998, p.186-189, Clark & Gerrig, 1990). When the re-enactment mode is in high gear, even the quotative markers *to* and *tte* seem to disappear (Takahashi, 1996, p.197-206, N. Watanabe, 1998, p.174-181). Thus, it is possible that the learners were using this re-enactment mode more frequently than the native subjects. If this is correct, it could be interpreted that the students did not drop quotative particles and mental verbs in their writing, because re-enactment mode is more likely to operate in speech than in writing. Furthermore, the 4th-year students may have entered re-enactment mode more often than the 3rd-year students since it requires some extent of fluency for the narrator to forget about the act of narrating and immerse oneself into re-enacting.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study suggest that beginner level learners should be encouraged to use words other than adjectives in representing mental states. The 2nd-year students of this study frequently resorted to combining adjectives with the mental verb *omou* 'think' in both oral and written narratives. Such overproduction of adjectives made their stories dull and repetitive. Thus, learners at beginning levels should be encouraged to employ a variety of modal auxiliaries such as desiderative, volitional, and epistemic.

Direct representation of mental states without mental verbs is crucial in oral narratives. Native subjects frequently represented mental states without relying on mental verbs. The key to such representation is the use of quotative particles. This study found that the 2nd- and 3rd-year students did not produce mental states only with quotative particles, and that only some fluent 4th-year students were able to use quotative particles without mental verbs. Although it is not clear if the learners were unaware of this strategy, the strategy itself is simple and brief instruction will likely produce good results. Simply

attaching the particle *tte* or *to* at the end of quotations is not cognitively demanding. Once learners realize that this is a valid way of representing mental states in storytelling, they can benefit enormously, as they do not have to choose or conjugate mental verbs.

To be able to fully expressing oneself in narrative, learners also need to practice self-addressed speech, which is often neglected in formal instruction, perhaps because it has not been considered crucial in interpersonal communication. The findings of this study suggest that the importance of teaching self-addressed speech as part of narrative and communication skills. This study further suggests that learners can start by using a simple pattern, *de, ... naa tte*. In this construction, the first *de* signals that the sentence that follows starts a new frame in the sequence of events. The component *... naa tte* signals that this segment represents the narrator's inner thought at the time of the event. Teaching this pattern would be helpful, since chunks reduce cognitive processing and the narrator can spend more of his or her cognitive resources on other aspects of storytelling.

End Notes

- (1) An asterisk indicates an error in the learner's expression. The correct expression is presented in the parentheses that follow.

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