

# Discourse Analysis of Japanese Essays for Beginners

## Sub Theme Family

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### 要旨

家族について書かれた作文には、家族の人数や兄弟の数、兄弟や両親の職業などが書かれている。家族の人数、兄弟姉妹の人数、年齢などは、学生が自分の家族について述べるときに使った表現である。小論文のテーマは自己紹介であったが、小論文を書いた学生の個人的な状況を説明するために家族というサブテーマが選ばれた。本研究の目的は、学生が自分の家族についてどのように記述しているかを知ることである。調査方法は質的方法である。研究の結果、小論文の引用文は、パーソンスキーマモデルの社会的認知を参照していることがわかった。このことは、学生が自分の家族について話すことに焦点を当てていることから見て取れる。この小論文における文脈は、微細構造の側面として見ることができる。

キーワード：作文、談話分析、言語表現、社会的認知

### Abstract

*Essays (sakubun) written about the family state the number of family members, siblings, and also siblings and parents job. The number of family members, sibling numbers, and age were expressions used by student in describing their family. Even though the essay's focus theme was self introduction (jikoshoukai), the sub-theme of the family was chosen to explain the personal situation of the student who wrote the essay. This research aimed to find out how students describe their families. The research method used was qualitative method. The research found that the written essay quotation referred to the social cognition of the person schema model. This could be seen by student focusing on talking about their family members. The context in this essay could be seen as microstructure aspect.*

**Keywords:** *sakubun, discourse analysis, language expresion, social cognition*

## 1. Introduction

In studying Japanese as a foreign language in Senior High School (SMA), the assignments given focus on the appropriateness of the grammar used. The application of speaking skills is also based on exemplary conversation patterns. This is because Japanese as a foreign language in high school only reaches beginner level with limited vocabulary mastery. At SMAN 1 Sukasada, class XI IBB 1 there is an assignment to write an essay on the theme of self introduction (*Jikoshoukai*). This assignment is interesting to analyze because students are given the freedom to write essays without being fixated on the sentence patterns that are exemplified. Therefore, students can use vocabulary and sentence patterns they have learned, not limited to certain patterns.

Every essay has a main idea. This main idea becomes focus of the discourse and is very helpful in making it easier for readers to understand the intention of author's essay. Essays can be seen as discourse. Syamsuddin (2018:8) said that the identification of discourse's characteristics such as (a) Discourse can be in the form of a series of sentences spoken directly (spoken) and indirectly (written) or through a series of speech acts, (b) Discourse can reveal an object, (c) An orderly, systematic, coherent, complete presentation according to supporting events, (d) Having a single mission in a series, and (e) Formed by segmental and nonsegmental elements. Based on this explanation, even simple essays are included in the discourse category.

The results of students' essays will be discussed using a discourse analysis approach. Discussion of student essays using discourse analysis has been carried out in previous research. Episiasi (2018) which analyzes the written work of STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau students. Episiasi (2018) uses discourse analysis to analyze cohesion errors in students' written work, using the discourse analysis theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The research results show that students still have difficulty using cohesive devices in written work. For this reason, lecturers need special attention to provide more in-depth explanations about cohesion to students. So that students can create better written work.

Apart from being discourse, essays can also see errors in the use of language. Putri and Rahayu (2019) analyzed errors in using sentences in Japanese essays made by Japanese language students at Andalas University. Six errors were found in the data obtained in the form of essays, namely there were several omissions, errors in formation, and types of formation in sentences which caused readers to become confused.

Discourse analysis is an analysis of linguistic units regarding the use of spoken and written language which involves the person conveying message and person receiving message in a communication act (Slembrouck, 2003). In general, discourse analysis aims to determine whether there is a pattern or order expressed by a text, the interpretation of a linguistic unit that can be clearly identified, including the message or information to be conveyed, why it must be conveyed, and how the message can be conveyed well.

Van Dijk (1995) sees a text as consisting of several structures/levels, each part of which supports each other and then divide it into three levels. First, macro structure. This section is the global meaning or general meaning of a text which can be observed by looking at the topic or theme that is put forward in a discourse. Second, superstructure. This is a discourse structure that is related to the framework of a text, how the parts of the text are arranged into a complete message. Third, micro structure, is the meaning of discourse that can be observed and small parts of a text, namely words, sentences, propositions, clauses, paraphrases and images.

According to Eriyanto (2001:221), the model used by Van Dijk is often referred to as "social cognitive". The term this approach was actually adopted from an approach from the field of social psychology, especially to explain the structure and process of forming a text.

From the results of observations of 17 student essays, it was found that there were four sub-themes chosen by students. These sub themes are family, hobbies, desires and self. From the results of data reduction, the family sub-theme in discourse has micro elements that are interesting to discuss. Therefore, this research will discuss the family sub-theme in the essays of beginner Japanese language learners at SMA N 1 Sukasada.

## 2. Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method which only presents data as obtained and then explained or described in detail. The research was conducted by analyzing six essays (family sub-theme) by class XI IBB1 students at SMAN 1 Sukasada using a discourse analysis approach.

Data was obtained from student essay assignments, collected using data cards. Next, it is classified and reduced according to the research objectives, namely essays with the family sub-theme. Analysis is carried out by looking at the macro and micro structure of the discourse. Results and conclusions are obtained from a comprehensive overview of the analysis.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The results of the analysis found that in explaining self introduction (*Jikoshoukai*) as the main theme, students at a macro level choose the family sub-theme as a theme that is close to themselves. There are six essays of family sub theme that can be seen in the following discussion.

Table 1. Student Family Data 1

Discourse analysis framework model	Information	Data Code
Text	“ <i>Watashi wa roku nin kazoku desu. Yo nin kyoudai desu. Chichi to haha ga imasu. Ane ga hitori to imouto ga futari imasu. Ane wa juu kyu sai desu.</i> ”	K.S.K. 01
Social Cognition	Person schema	
Context	Superstructure (Contents, conclusions, closing)	

In Table 1, it is known that the number of family members, the number of siblings, and the age of the older sister. So in the quote from student 1's essay he refers to the person schema model of social cognition. This can be seen from student 1 only focusing on telling about his family members. Then the context of this essay can be seen from the superstructure perspective. This can be seen as the student only focuses on telling the story of the family as a whole. However, in describing the family, student 1 was only able to mention the age of his older sister.

Table 2. Student Family Data 2

Discourse analysis framework model	Information	Data Code
Text	“ <i>Watashi wa yo nin kazoku desu. Futari kyoudai desu. Chichi to haha ga imasu. Ani ga hitori imasu.</i> ”	K.S.K. 02
Social Cognition	Person schema	
Context	Superstructure (Contents, Conclusions, Closing)	

In the results of student 2's essay, it was found that he was able to describe himself using the vocabulary he had learned in learning Japanese. It is known to use person schema social cognition sequentially. This can be seen from the clear delivery of information about family members, starting from telling about parents and the number of siblings. Judging from the context, student 2's essay refers to supermacro as seen from the sentence "*watashi wa yo nin kazoku desu.*" which means that student 2 has 4 family members excluding himself.

Table 3. Student Family Data 12

Discourse analysis framework model	Information	Data Code
Text	“ <i>Sanin kyoudai desu.</i> ”	K.S.K. 04
Social Cognition	Person schema	
Context	Microstructure (Expressions of language)	

In Table 3, student 12 only states the number of siblings. Judging from the text, the quote refers to the social cognition of the person schema model. Then the context of the quotation leads to the microstructure of the stylistic part, namely the choice of words used in the discourse. This can be seen from the delivery of information by student 12 when describing his family members, who only mentioned the number of siblings, as Japanese people say when describing their family. The quote does not refer to the influence of the Indonesian language which mentions the number of siblings such as "*watashi wa san nin kyoudai desu.*"

Table 4. Student Family Data 13

Discourse analysis framework model	Information	Data code
Text	“ <i>Futari kyoudai desu.</i> ”	K.S.K. 05
Social Cognition	Person schema	
Context	Microstructure (Expressions of language)	

In Table 4, student 13 only states the number of siblings. Judging from the text, the quote refers to the social cognition of the person schema model. Then the context of the quotation leads to the microstructure of the stylistic part, namely the choice of words used in the discourse. This can be seen from the delivery of information by student 13 when only revealing the number of his or her siblings, just as Japanese people say when describing their family.

Table 5. Student Family Data 14

Discourse analysis framework model	Information	Data Code
Text	“ <i>Go nin kyoudai desu.</i> ”	K.S.K. 06
Social cognition	Person schema	
Context	Microstructure (Expresions of language)	

In Table 5, student 14 only states the number of siblings. Judging from the text, the quote refers to the person schema model of social cognition. Then the context of the quotation leads to the microstructure of the stylistic part, namely the choice of words used in the discourse. This can be seen from the delivery of information by student 14 when he revealed his five sibling members.

Table 6. Student Family Data 15

Discourse analysis framework model	Information	Data Code
Text	“ <i>Futari kyoudai desu.</i> ”	K.S.K. 07
Social Cognition	Person schema	
Context	Microstructure (Expresions of language)	

In Table 6, student 15 only states the number of siblings. Judging from the text, the quote refers to the person schema model of social cognition. Then the context of the quotation leads to the microstructure of the stylistic part, namely the choice of words used in the discourse. This can be seen from the delivery of information by student 15 when he revealed his two sibling members.

From six essays about family sub-theme was found in the social cognition of the person schema model. Then the context of the six essays leads to the microstructure of the stylistic part or word choice (language expression). Its use is limited to the vocabulary learned, and the number of family members is the expression choice that most students choose.

#### 4. Conclusion

An essay that tells about a family states how many family members there are, siblings, and the occupations of siblings and parents. Number of family members, number of siblings, and age are expressions used by students to describe their family. Even though the main theme of the essay is self introduction, the sub-theme of family is chosen to explain the

personal situation of the student who wrote the essay. So the essay quote refers to the person schema model of social cognition. This can be seen as students focus on telling stories about their family members. Then the context in this essay can be seen as a microstructure aspect.

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