

CONNECTION AND EMOTION: EXTENSIVE CLAUSE COMBINING IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE FICTION

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Abstract

This paper looks at the phenomenon of extensive clause combining in written Japanese discourse. Extensive clause combining, in which multiple clauses are combined to make an extremely long sentence, is usually associated with spoken discourse. However, some contemporary writers use it in their writing along with other features of spoken language. By examining novels targeting young adult readers, I observe that writers are using sentences with extensively combined clauses to describe a lengthy process in which each step is closely connected to another. Interconnectedness is expressed iconically with chained clauses. Writers may also use sentences with extensively combined clauses to convey heightened emotion. Successive chaining of clauses is appropriate for presenting continuous thoughts/emotions appearing in an unorganized manner.

Keywords: Written language; Youth language; Clause combining; Japanese; Style; Speech and writing.

1. Introduction

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate differences between written and spoken discourse. While the differences are not necessarily considered to be absolute, but are rather described as relative and continuous, they have been systematically noted in the context of multiple languages (e.g., Tannen 1982, 1984; Pawley and Syder 1983; Linell 2005). Similar studies have been conducted on Japanese. The following list summarizes the observed differences between written and spoken Japanese.

- (1) a. The canonical word order in Japanese is subject-object-verb (Kuno 1973). In writing, SOV order is more consistently maintained, while the word order in spoken discourse is more flexible, with subjects, objects, and other constituents frequently appearing after the predicate (Kuno 1978; Clancy 1982; Maynard 1989; Ono and Suzuki 1992; Iwasaki and Ono 2001; Ono 2006).
- b. Writers tend to use what would be conventionally thought of as “sentences” (an intermediate level of organization between the unit of a clause and the unit of a discourse). In contrast, speakers

often combine a number of clauses, using non-finite forms of predicates and/or connective expressions. As a result, a “sentence” in speech could be much longer than one in writing (Clancy 1982; Iwasaki and Ono 2001, 2007). Further, in spoken discourse a clause is broken down into smaller units, each of which is preceded by a pause and has a distinct intonation contour (Clancy 1982; Maynard 1989).

- c. Post-positional particles are used to mark elements such as topic, subject, and object in writing. These particles are often missing in speech (Shibatani 1990; Lee 2002; Ono and Thompson 2003).
- d. Final particles that indicate interaction-based meanings such as emphasis and confirmation are often used in speech but are not often used in writing (Clancy 1982; Maynard 1989; Shibatani 1990).
- e. While written discourse is static, spoken discourse is dynamic. Speakers may reformulate their sentence after they start, may change the structure of a sentence in the middle of it, or may use part of one sentence as part of another. The mechanism of speech is interaction-based and constantly adjusting to the immediate environment (Maynard 1989; Iwasaki and Ono 2001).
- f. Ellipsis is more prevalent in speech than in writing (Clancy 1982; Maynard 1989; Shibatani 1990).
- g. In spoken discourse, the addressee constantly participates in communication by providing feedback such as back-channeling expressions and gestures, which influences the speaker’s output. This is obviously not present in writing (Clancy 1982; Maynard 1989).

Historically, writing and speech in Japanese have been significantly distinct from each other. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, there were multiple varieties of writing, including *kanbun* ‘Sino-Japanese writing’, *wabun* ‘classical Japanese writing’, *gabun* ‘elegant writing’, *sooroobun* ‘epistolary writing’, and *wakan kongoobun* ‘mixture of Chinese and Japanese writing’ (Heinrich 2005: 115). None of the prestigious written styles were close to vernacular Japanese and they needed to be learned at school (Heinrich 2005: 115). During the Meiji era (1868-1912), when various efforts to modernize Japan were carried out by the government, a language reform movement known as *genbun itchi* (‘unification of spoken and written styles’) emerged. Influential scholars and writers promoted the representation of spoken Japanese in writing, since the dissimilarity between speech and writing was considered a hindrance for the accelerated delivery of information (Shibatani 1990; Wetzel 2004; Heinrich 2005). They advocated the approach to “write as you speak (*hanasu yoo ni kaku*): To write a passage as if it were actually spoken” (Sakakura 1964: 25-26 cited in Inoue 2006: 84).

Today, written language in Japanese is not as distinct from speech as it once was. Still, there are crucial differences between spoken and written styles, as mentioned in (1) above. Recently, however, there have been a number of contemporary writers who incorporate various features of spoken language in their writing. Their style of writing has been labeled as “new *genbun itchi* style” or “Heisei¹ *genbun itchi* style,” referring to the *genbun itchi* (‘unification of spoken and written styles’) movement in the Meiji era. Satake (1995: 54) describes the new *genbun itchi* style as the style in which writers “write as you speak to your friend (*nakama ni mukatte hanasu yoo ni kaku*)”. It is characterized as having abundant final particles such as *ne*, *yo*, and *sa*, slang expressions such as *choo* ‘super,’ colloquial and contracted forms such as *chau* (short for *te-shimau* ‘finish –ing’), and interjections such as *a*, *soo soo* ‘oh, by the way’ as well as some orthographic inventions. Ueno (2000: 35) states that the new style started with male writers’ attempts to simulate women’s colloquial speech and describes it as *shitashii yuujin ni hanashikakeru yoona koogotai* ‘colloquial style in which you write as if you were talking to your close friend’.

This phenomenon has been discussed in the field of literary criticism (e.g. Komori 1992; Ueno 2000; Saito 2002) as well as in linguistics (e.g., Satake 1995; Maynard 2007; Suzuki 2009). Most of the discussions on this new style of writing have focused on lexical and morphological features, such as colloquial expressions and casual sentence-final endings, and have not paid much attention to structural characteristics.² This paper examines the style of writing adopted by contemporary writers who incorporate structural characteristics of spoken language. Specifically, it is concerned with the phenomenon of extensive clause combining (mentioned in (1-b) above) and its functions. Although Satake’s description (1995) does not include extensive clause combining as a feature of the new *genbun itchi* style, Ueno (2000) illustrates this style with some examples of extensive clause combining. She describes writing with extensive clause combining as *daradara shita buntai* ‘meandering, long-winded writing style’ (Ueno 2000: 44). This description is similar to Koiso’s (2008: 95) characterization of extensive clause combining in speech as *daradara to hanashitsuzuketeiru* ‘(the speaker is) speaking in a meandering, long-winded manner’. I regard extensive clause combining as part of the new *genbun itchi* style not only because Ueno (2000) includes it, but also because it is found in contemporary fiction and non-fiction books that utilize colloquial stylistic features such as final particles, interjections, and contracted forms. For example, of the fifteen young adult novels with colloquial style randomly chosen for this study, nine novels (written by eight different authors) contained one or multiple instances of extensive clause combining. From this, we could say that extensive clause combining is not an idiosyncratic style of a particular writer, but a literary technique shared by a number of writers.

The organization of this paper is as follows. The phenomenon of extensive clause combining in spoken Japanese is described in Section 2. Extensive clause combining in contemporary fiction writing is discussed in Section 3. A definition, discussion of the data, as well as a brief history of the phenomenon are included in this section. Why extensive clause combining is used in speech and why contemporary fiction writers are using it in their writing are topics addressed in Section 4. The paper concludes with Section 5.

¹ ‘Heisei’ is the name of the current era in Japan. The Heisei era started on January 8, 1989.

² The exceptions are Maynard (2007: chapter 4) and Suzuki (2009). Ueno (2000) also mentions examples of writing with structural characteristics of speech, but she does not focus on them.

2. Extensive clause combining in spoken Japanese discourse

Iwasaki and Ono (2001) observe that extensive clause combining³ is characteristic of spoken discourse. Their description of the phenomenon is given below.

The clause-combining system in Japanese allows for sentence formation to be flexible, whereby the (potential) sentence's end can always escape final closure and can be left 'open' for further continuation until it is concluded by a finite predicate form. [...] More specifically, it is a rather extensive system, in that a variety of clause-ending forms with such non-finite forms as *-te*, *-tara*, *-to*, and *-ba*, as well as with conjunctive particles such as *kara* and *kedo*, results in the open structure of spoken Japanese discourse. (Iwasaki and Ono 2001: 196-197)

As a result, a sentence, as conventionally construed with a finite predicate at the end (as Japanese is characterized as an SOV language), could be much longer in spoken than in written discourse. An example from Iwasaki and Ono (2007) illustrates this. Responses from the addressee are omitted. A non-finite predicate form at the end of each clause (or intonation unit) is underlined, while a finite predicate form in the final clause is presented in bold.⁴

- (2) *koo yatte netetara*
nanka shita kara ... dan to osareta yoona kanji n natte
nani ka na to omotte
ochitaraa
okitara
*moo sugoi **yureteru desho***
 'While I was lying down like this
 I felt as if I were pushed from down below with ... thump
 what is it, I thought
 when I fell down
 when I got up
 the ground was really shaking, you know?' (Iwasaki and Ono 2007: 141)

(2) shows that each clause (or intonation unit) ends with a non-finite form until the last clause and that clauses are chained together to form a long sentence.

In her study of oral and written narratives, Clancy (1982) found that the median number of clauses per sentence in the written narratives was 2.5, whereas the median for the spoken narratives was 8.3 per sentence. She even had one speaker who told her

³ What I call 'extensive clause combining' is sometimes simply called 'clause chaining'. However, in the context of Japanese, the term 'clause chaining' is sometimes more narrowly defined than intended here. For example, Myhill and Hibiya (1988: 363) define clause chaining as "the use of non-finite forms not headed by a conjunction with temporal or circumstantial meaning". This definition is also implicit in Martin (1992).

⁴ As the meaning of each lexical item is not important for the purpose of this study, I do not provide the gloss. I did all the translations in this paper, including examples from other researchers. The structure of a translated sentence mirrors that of the original Japanese sentence, which is sometimes not well formed in the prescriptive sense; therefore, translated sentences may not be well-formed, either.

entire 34-clause story in a single long sentence. Koiso (2008) also observes that such long “sentences” are found in spoken Japanese discourse. Even though such sentences give the negative impression that the speaker’s manner of speech is meandering and long-winded (*daradara to hanashitsuzukete-iru*), she notes that they are common in certain forms of speech.

The phenomenon of extensive clause chaining is found in other languages as well. Haiman (1988: 49) notes that narratives in Hua and other Papuan languages are “characterized by extensive clause chaining within the bounds of a prosodic sentence”. In his study of oral narrative discourse in English, Chafe (1980) noticed that some speakers produced a long sequence of idea units⁵ or even a whole narrative before ending the discourse with a final intonation.⁶ And in their comprehensive cross-linguistic study of spoken narratives produced by children and adults, Berman et al. (1994)⁷ noted that some speakers produced narratives with chained clauses that are linked with connectives.

As is evident from these descriptions, narrative discourse seems to be conducive to extensive clause combining in speech. In addition, Iwasaki and Ono (2007) observe that producing multiple clauses within the bounds of a sentence may occur when a speaker is performing an intricate and complicated speech act, such as presenting a problem for discussion, proposing a plan, offering a solution to a problem, or recalling a past event.

3. Extensive clause combining in contemporary Japanese fiction

As shown above, extensive clause combining is a phenomenon observed in narrative or other types of complex spoken discourse. As mentioned in the introduction, however, there are contemporary writers who also adopt extensive clause combining in their writing. In order to identify extensive clause combining in writing, I used the following definition.

- (3) A sentence is identified as containing extensive clause combining if the following conditions are met:
- a. Clauses are successively linked to produce a long sentence, which is punctuated with a period.
 - b. Clauses may contain finite predicate forms, non-finite predicate forms such as *-te*, *-tara*, *-to*, and *-ba* and/or finite predicate forms followed by conjunctive particles such as *kedo* and *kara*.
 - c. There are at least five clauses before the final clause.⁸

⁵ Chafe (1980: 13) observes that spontaneous speech “is produced, not in a flowing stream, but in a series of brief spurts”. He calls such spurts “idea units”, which tend to have clause-final intonation contour, to be separated by a brief pause, and to consist of a single clause.

⁶ A final intonation in the narrative usually involves a falling pitch.

⁷ The study examined narratives in English, German, Spanish, Hebrew, and Turkish.

⁸ Directly quoted clauses as well as parenthetical clauses were excluded from the analysis.

Conditions (3a) and (3b) have been adopted from Iwasaki and Ono (2001), but they have been modified in order to characterize extensive clause combining *in writing*. (3a) explicitly mentions the presence of a period, a punctuation device in writing.

(3b) is different from the definition of extensive clause combining in speech presented in (2) by Iwasaki and Ono (2001). It says that clauses (and not just the final clause) may contain finite predicate forms without conjunctive particles. I added this condition so that what Maynard (2007) calls rhetorical sentences can be included in the definition. Maynard (2007: 90) defines rhetorical sentences as “a string of grammatically complete sentences [which] are connected through a series of commas”. I found the functions of rhetorical sentences to be quite similar to those of sentences in which clauses with *-te*, *-tara*, *kedo*, *kara*, etc. are successively combined, so I include rhetorical sentences in the definition here.⁹ I will discuss later in the paper (in Section 4.2) and in more detail the inclusion of rhetorical sentences in the definition.

I also added (3c) as I needed to specify what it means for a sentence to feel ‘long’. I chose five clauses as the number that defines a long sentence upon consulting with three native speakers. After looking at multiple samples of written discourse, they determined that when a sentence contains at least five clauses before the final clause, the sentence could be considered long and characterized by extensive clause combining.

Before moving on to discuss data, I should mention segmentation differences between writing and speech. With extensive clause combining in speech, the unit that is successively combined corresponds more to an ‘intonation unit’. Chafe (1988: 1) defines intonation units as spurts of vocalization which “exhibit a single coherent intonation contour characterized by one or more intonation peaks and a cadence that is recognizable as either clause-final or sentence-final”. Intonation units often correspond to clauses, but not always. In Japanese speech, intonation units tend to be shorter than clauses (Clancy 1982; Maynard 1989; Koiso 2008). In this paper I will use a clause (a segment of an utterance that consists of an explicit or implicit subject and a predicate) as a unit.

As many scholars have noted (e.g., Honda 1982; Toyama 1983), punctuation in Japanese writing does not always neatly indicate separate grammatical units. Typically, a unit followed by a comma corresponds to a clause. However, not every writer follows this pattern. For example, in the following sentence, some units bound by commas contain multiple clauses. The punctuation of the English translation mirrors that of the Japanese original.¹⁰ Clausal boundaries are indicated by a forward slash.

⁹ Of the 15 instances of extensive clause combining I found in the data, two instances involved rhetorical sentences. One (example 8) contained only rhetorical sentences (i.e., each clause had a finite verb form) while another (example 9) had a mix of finite and non-finite clauses.

¹⁰ I am treating English and Japanese punctuation as equivalent. However, their functions are not identical. Japanese texts used to be only sketchily punctuated or not punctuated at all. During the Meiji Period (1868-1912), “the practice of punctuating texts slowly gained a foothold in Japan” (Twine 1991: 254) due to exposure to the west.

In the Japanese examples in this paper, only two punctuation symbols are pertinent, *kuten* (。) and *tooten* (、), which are transliterated as a period and a comma. The primary purpose of *kuten* is to mark the end of a sentence, which is the same as the primary function of the English period. *Tooten* is “used for listing items, after connectives, to mark modifying clauses, to signal long modification clauses; for pause and break to facilitate reading; between subordinate clauses, usually more generously used than the English comma” (Maynard 1998: 301).

- (4) (The narrator is describing how she became a wellness room teacher in a high school.)

*keredo yonensei daigaku ni haireru hodo no gakuryoku ga nakute/, jaa hokenshitsu no sensei nanka doo ka naa to/ nantonaku sono shikaku no toreru tandai ni susundara/, shinseki no ojisan ga kono shiritsu kookoo de jimuin o shiteite/, choodo ketsuin ga ari/ kone de hoken no sensei ni yatotteyaru to iu node/, natta no **da**.* (Yamamoto 1995: 174)¹¹

‘But I did not have enough academic ability to be accepted into a four-year college/, thinking well then I should perhaps become a school wellness room teacher/ and so went to a junior college to obtain the license for that/, then it turns out that one of my uncles was an office worker at this private high school/, there happened to be a job opening for a wellness room teacher/ they said they would hire me because of the personal connection/, so I became a wellness room teacher.’

Although example (4) has only four units that are bound by commas, it includes more than five clauses before the final clause. (4) is thus considered to contain extensive clause combining for the purpose of this paper.

Satake (1995) observes that *shin genbun itchi tai* (the new writing style that incorporates features of spoken language) is found in the writing of young writers. My preliminary research, however, shows that it is not only found in the writings of the young, but also in books and articles targeting young readers. Further, I found that this new style of writing is frequent in texts that are written from the first person perspective. Thus, I selected as data for this study novels targeting young adults in which the first person is used. I also limited my selection to those novels which have been written in the last fifteen years and in which the characters who are narrators are young (in their teens or twenties). In selecting the novels I consulted book guides for young adults (Hokkaido Shoten Shoogyo Kumiai 2006; Kanehara 2009).¹²

To limit the scope of the study, other printed media such as magazine and newspaper articles are not included as data. Online communication media (e.g., electronic bulletin boards, chat rooms, social network sites) would be a place where one would find the typical fusion of speech and writing,¹³ but these are also excluded from the analysis in this paper. This is because online communication operates and develops quite differently from communication that takes place within regular printed media. It belongs to a different category, which deserves separate research. This paper is concerned with how contemporary writers in a traditional medium (i.e., books) are manipulating their writing.

¹¹ In examples (4) - (9), a non-finite predicate form or a finite predicate form followed by a conjunctive particle is underlined, while a finite predicate form is presented in bold. Sentences within parentheses in (7) contain finite predicate forms, but they are excluded from the analysis, so they are not presented in bold. Units marked by commas do not always contain a predicate form.

¹² This does not mean that extensive clause combining is never found in books intended for other age groups. Some authors writing for general adult audiences use it for various purposes. However, its use along with other features of spoken language discussed in (1) is more typically found in books intended for young (adult) audiences. This paper is concerned with the use of extensive clause combining as part of the *shin genbun itchi* style.

¹³ Personal letters written by the young may be another medium where one would find the fusion of speech and writing. Kataoka (2003) analyzes pictorial signs and unconventional punctuation in Japanese girls’ and young women’s personal letters.

In the fifteen novels for young adult readers I examined,¹⁴ various characteristics of spoken Japanese (mentioned in (1) above) abound. In addition, these novels employ diverse colloquial expressions and sentence-final forms that are associated with speech. Of the fifteen novels, nine contain instances of extensive clause combining. All together I found fifteen instances of extensive clause combining, as some novels have multiple cases. Examples are given below:

- (5) (The narrator is describing how she felt when she broke her long-distance running record. She is a beginner.)
sore made no jikokiroku datta 5 kiro no rain o koeta shunkan, massarana gayooshi mitaina michi no ryooiki ni karada goto tobikonda ki ga shite, sono saki ni nani ga aru no ka mitai no to kowai no to, doko made ikeru no ka fuan na no to tanoshimina no to, omokunatte-iku ashi to mada saki o mezasoo to suru kokoro to, saigo wa moo tairyoku to kiryoku no semegiai mitai ni natte, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, to hitasura jibun ni iikikasete, yatto no koto de tootatsushita 7 kiro chiten.¹⁵ (Mori 2008: 236)
 ‘The moment when I passed the 5 kilometer point which was my record until then, I felt like my whole body jumped into an unknown domain like a blank drawing paper, I wanted to see what was ahead and was scared, I was nervous and excited about how much more I could run, I had legs that were getting heavy and a mind that wanted to go further, at the end my physical and mental abilities were competing with each other, patience, patience, patience, patience, patience, is what I kept telling myself, and I finally reached the seven kilometer point.’
- (6) (The narrator, a high school student, is explaining how he started eating lunch with his female friend.)
ore wa gakushoku no pan ga suki de, wazawaza katte tabeteita noni, hahaoya ga bentoo o tsukutte kurenai kawai soo na hito da to omowareta no ka, aru hi ‘obentoo wakete ageyokka?’ no hitokoto ni hajimari, sono uchi wakete moratte ita no ga betsu no chiisana bentoobako ni bunkasuruto, sore ga kondo wa dondon kyodaikashite otoko hitori ga kutte choodo yoi shiromono ni natta. (Shiraiwa 2008: 27)
 ‘I liked bread from the student cafeteria, so I was purposely buying it from the cafeteria and eating it, but perhaps she thought I was a poor guy whose mother would not make a box lunch, one day it started with her saying ‘Should I share my box lunch with you?’, we went gradually from sharing her box lunch to having a separate box for me, and then the size of the box got bigger and bigger until it was the perfect size for a man.’
- (7) (The narrator, a junior high school student, is describing his classmate and what he is upset about.)

¹⁴ The novels selected are listed in the Appendix. When novels recommended in the guidebooks for young adult readers (Hokkaido Shoten Shoogyoo Kumiai 2006; Kanehara 2009) were not readily available, other novels or short stories by the recommended authors were selected.

¹⁵ Since a colloquial style is used, the finite copula form *datta* ‘was’ is omitted here.

toriwake, boku no kurasumeeto ni, tottemo otonashikute medatanakute, oozei no joseito no naka ni majitteiruto hotondo iru ka inaika wakaranai kuraina no da keredo, sekigae de tonari ni natte miruto korega jitsu wa tottemo kireina ko de, jimi ni shiteru kara wakaririkui kedo kaodachi mo totonottete, migime ga honno sukoshi shashi no tokoro ga mata kawaikute, yoku shiriatte miruto atama mo yokute hanashi mo omoshirokute seikaku mo yokutte to iu kudoo-san to iu onna no ko ga iru no da keredo (mawarikudokute gomennasai. dakedo kanojo no koto wa doredake itte mo iitarinai), sono kudoo-san ga totemo sonkei shite aidoku shiteiru sakka ga (kanojo wa aidokuka na no sa!), sono daihyoosaku no naka de, bokutachi no sumu machi no koto o zubari hitokoto, 'mino ga hikui' to kaiteiru no o hakken shita to nageku no o kiite irai, kanari haradatashiku omou yoo ni natta. (Miyabe 1997: 8)

‘Especially, there is a classmate of mine, who is quiet and inconspicuous, you almost cannot tell whether she is there or not when she is with a crowd of girls, you find out she is actually a very pretty girl when you sit next to her in the classroom, she dresses plainly so it is hard to tell but her face is beautiful, her right eye is cockeyed and that adds to her cuteness, when you get to know her you find out that she is intelligent and interesting and nice this girl’s name is Kudoo-san (Sorry to be winding. But I cannot say enough about her), the writer that this Kudoo-san very much respects and whose work she often reads (She is a voracious reader!), in his representative work, wrote bluntly that the town we live in is ‘culturally at a low level’ since I heard her lament this discovery, I have come to be quite angry about this.’

Before concluding this section, I should mention that extensive clause combining is not a brand-new phenomenon. Sakakura (1970) describes Classical Japanese as having *hiraita koozoo* ‘open structure’. In his discussion of a portion of *Genji Monogatari* (‘The Tale of Genji’), the masterpiece written by Murasaki Shikibu in the early 11th century, he illustrates that its clauses are loosely connected with forms such as *-te* and that this loose connection allows the clause ending to be ‘open’ for further development. He notes that this loose structure (which includes extensive clause combining as well as what Iwasaki and Ono (2001) call interpolation and bridging) appears in *kudoku yoona chooshi no jujutsu* ‘narratives told tediously and importunately’ and considers it as *kootoo-go* ‘spoken language’. However, during the Middle Ages Japanese moved from *hiraita hyoogen* ‘open expressions’ to *tojita hyoogen* ‘closed expressions’ with tighter constituent relations and a more succinct style, as it was influenced by translations of Chinese writing (Sakaura 1970: 32). Since then, sentences with clear-cut boundaries, which are more appropriate in expressing logic and accurate descriptions, have become the norm in writing.¹⁶

¹⁶ Some writers over the years have digressed from the norm. For example, Junichiro Tanizaki’s novel published from 1943 through 1948, *Sasameyuki* ‘The Makioka Sisters’, contains sentences with extensive clause combining. However, such digressions have been isolated instances.

4. Analysis

4.1. Why extensive clause combining occurs in speech

Several researchers offer explanations as to why extensive clause combining occurs in speech. Pawley and Syder (1983) state the following:

It is apparent that conversationalists often link constructions by conjuncts like *and*, *so*, and *but*, not in order to signal a semantic connection of addition, succession, consequence, or contrast between them, but in order to signal continuity of exposition; the speaker is simply informing the address that *he has not yet come to the end of what he has to say about the subject in hand*. (Pawley and Syder 1983: 575, emphasis added)

Iwasaki and Ono (2007) make a similar observation on extensive clause combining in Japanese speech. They say that although non-finite forms such as *-te*, *-tara*, *-to*, and *-ba* as well as certain conjunctions are used to chain multiple clauses, these forms do not always have rich meanings and that speakers chain these clauses in order to hold the conversational floor.

In their earlier work, Iwasaki and Ono (2001) refer to the flexibility of speech as follows:

The clause-combining system in Japanese allows for sentence formation to be flexible, whereby the (potential) sentence's end can always escape final closure and can be left 'open' for further continuation until it is concluded by a finite predicate form. This decision to continue or end a sentence comes very late in the process of clause formation [...]. (Iwasaki and Ono 2001: 196)

Koiso (2008) also refers to the flexibility and gradual, dynamic formation of utterances in speech. She says that speakers may change their discourse in mid-utterance depending on the addressee's reactions and the changes in their own thoughts. In addition, Iwasaki and Ono (2007) observe that sentences with extensive clause combining are deficient in fluency. They attribute this lack of fluency to the process of utterance formation in which the speaker pays attention to the complexity of the task (such as recalling details of the past event) while taking note of politeness levels appropriate for the addressee.

4.2. Why writers use extensive clause combining

In the previous subsection, various explanations for why extensive clause combining occurs in speech were presented. The speaker may be signaling to the addressee that s/he still holds the floor, may be delaying the decision to end the utterance, and may be making changes as s/he pays attention to the task at hand as well as to the feedback of the addressee. None of these factors are relevant to written language, as it does not involve face-to-face communication. In fact, Pawley and Syder (1983) say in the following quote that extensive clause combining does not occur in writing:

In writing, the conditions that favor the use of long, paragraph-like constructions are removed. Writers do not have to compete for the floor, or to maintain more or less even

and continuous floor of speech, as conversationalist-narrators have to. Nor are writers obliged to keep signaling to their audience that they have more to say. Writers can take their time in working out and reworking their thoughts. (Pawley and Syder 1983: 577)

However, despite the fact that these conditions are missing in written language, long, paragraph-like constructions with multiple clauses do occur in contemporary Japanese fiction written for young audiences. Why do these contemporary fiction writers use extensive clause combining in their work?

Before answering this question, I would like to discuss the rhetorical sentences that Maynard (2007) mentions.¹⁷ As I mentioned earlier, I include rhetorical sentences in the definition of extensively combined clauses in writing, although Iwasaki and Ono's (2001) definition of extensively combined clauses in speech did not include them. I justify the inclusion below.

In the data I collected, I found an instance of what may be called a rhetorical sentence, i.e., a complete sentence (with a finite form at the end) connected with a series of commas as shown below.¹⁸ Each finite form of a predicate before a comma is presented in bold.

- (8) (The narrator is describing her reaction to her live-in boyfriend's reply after she told him that she was pregnant.)

*koitsu ga issho ni sodatete kureru hazu wa **nakatta**, daitai inomata wa yachin mo haratte inai no **datta**, toriaezu no henji o shiteiru dake na no **datta**, man ga ichi kodomo ga itatte furari to nomi ni iki futsuka mo mikka mo kaette konai ni **chigainakatta**, zenbu **wakatteita**, wakatteita keredo watashi wa naita.* (Kakuta 2008: 70)

'There was no way he would bring up a child with me, Inomata was not even paying rent, he was just responding to my announcement for the time being, even if we had a child I was sure he would casually go out to drink and would not come home for two or three days, I knew all that, even though I knew, I still cried.'

In describing one author's use of rhetorical sentences, Maynard (2007) says the following:

The writer's choice of mixing this linked segment gives an impression that the writer is talking while connecting her winding thoughts. The linking effect enhances the presentation of the seemingly unorganized but continuing thoughts in a thinking-aloud mode; the story unfolds through the sequence of linked thoughts. (Maynard 2007: 94)

Maynard (2007: 90) also says that rhetorical sentences represent "the writer's immediate continuous sentiments" and that they are presented as "a rush of related thoughts".

¹⁷ To repeat Maynard's definition, rhetorical sentences are "a string of grammatically complete sentences [which] are connected through a series of commas" (Maynard 2007: 90).

¹⁸ In Maynard's definition, those units that end with finite forms are sentences, while in my definition they are clauses (which end with finite forms).

This description also applies to sentences with *-te*, *-tara*, *kara*, *kedo*, etc. if we interpret Maynard's 'thoughts' as including recounting events and actions. Recall, for instance, example (5), which is repeated here.

- (5) (The narrator is describing how she felt when she broke her long-distance running record. She is a beginner.)

sore made no jikokiroku datta 5 kiro no rain o koeta shunkan, massarana gayooshi mitaina michi no ryooiki ni karada goto tobikonda ki ga shite, sono saki ni nani ga aru no ka mitai no to kowai no to, doko made ikeru no ka fuan na no to tanoshimina no to, omokunatte-iku ashi to mada saki o mezasoo to suru kokoro to, saigo wa moo tairyoku to kiryoku no semegiai mitai ni natte, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, to hitasura jibun ni iikikasete, yatto no koto de tootatsushita 7 kiro chiten. (Mori 2008: 236)

'The moment when I passed the 5 kilometer point which was my record until then, I felt like my whole body jumped into an unknown domain like a blank drawing paper, I wanted to see what was ahead and was scared, I was nervous and excited about how much more I could run, I had legs that were getting heavy and a mind that wanted to go further, at the end my physical and mental abilities were competing with each other, patience, patience, patience, patience, patience, is what I kept telling myself, and I finally reached the seven kilometer point.'

In example (5) the narrator, an amateur runner who recently started long distance running, recounts how she reached the stage where she could run 7 kilometers, which was quite monumental to her. She is describing what happened and how she felt at the time in "the seemingly unorganized but continuing" manner. These multiple clauses may be described as "a rush of related thoughts".

Example (7), which is repeated here, presents two main ideas: That there is a girl in the narrator's class named Kudo-san, who is favorably described in detail, and that the narrator is upset about what was written by a writer Kudo-san likes. While in standard (or prescriptive) written discourse these two ideas would be presented in at least two sentences, this writer chooses to present them in one extremely long sentence, as if the narrator is communicating his thoughts in "a thinking-aloud mode".

- (7) (The narrator, a junior high school student, is describing his classmate and what he is upset about.)

toriwake, boku no kurasumeeto ni, totemo otonashikute medatanakute, oozei no joseito no naka ni majitteiruto hotondo iru ka inaika wakaranai kuraina no da keredo, sekigae de tonari ni natte miruto korega jitsu wa totemo kireina ko de, jimi ni shiteru kara wakaririkui kedo kaodachi mo totonottete, migime ga honno sukoshi shashi no tokoro ga mata kawaiakute, yoku shiriatte miruto atama mo yokute hanashi mo omoshirokute seikaku mo yokutte to iu kudoo-san to iu onna no ko ga iru no da keredo (mawarikudokute gomennasai. dakedo kanojo no koto wa doredake itte mo iitarinai), sono kudoo-san ga totemo sonkei shite aidoku shiteiru sakka ga (kanojo wa aidokuka na no sa!), sono daihyoosaku no naka de, bokutachi no sumu machi no koto o zubarai

*hitokoto, 'mino ga hikui' to kaiteiru no o hakken shita to nageku no o kiite irai, kanari haradatashiku omou yoo ni **natta**.* (Miyabe 1997: 8)

'Especially, there is a classmate of mine, who is quiet and inconspicuous, you almost cannot tell whether she is there or not when she is with a crowd of girls, you find out she is actually a very pretty girl when you sit next to her in the classroom, she dresses plainly so it is hard to tell but her face is beautiful, her right eye is cockeyed and that adds to her cuteness, when you get to know her you find out that she is intelligent and interesting and nice this girl's name is Kudoo-san (Sorry to be winding. But I cannot say enough about her), the writer that this Kudoo-san very much respects and whose work she often reads (She is a voracious reader!), in his representative work, wrote bluntly that the town we live in is 'culturally at a low level' since I heard her lament this discovery, I have come to be quite angry about this.'

As we saw above, sentences with *-te, -tara, kara, kedo*, etc. are quite similar to rhetorical sentences. In the data I also found example (9), in which some clauses have non-finite predicate endings (underlined) and some clauses have finite endings (in bold).

- (9) (The narrator, who runs competitively in high school, is describing his thoughts after he witnessed Senba, who is his best friend Ren's rival in short-distance running, being cheered on by Taniguchi, a girl he likes.)
*ano yaroo wa, ichioo, ren no raibaru de, senba ga ganbareba ren ga **makeru daroo**, toka, takoo no senshu o **ooen sunna** yo, toka, sonna n janakute, taniguchi ni ooensarete tereru n **janai**, sore wa ore no, ore no, sore wa ore denakutewa **naranai**?' (Sato 2006: 211-212)
 'That guy was, for the moment, Ren's rival, if Senba tried hard, Ren might lose, and, [I would like to say to Taniguchi] 'Don't be cheering on a runner from another school', and, it's not that, [I would like to say to Senba] 'Don't be embarrassed by Taniguchi's cheer', that is my, my....., she should be cheering me on?'*

Going back to the discussion of why contemporary fiction writers are using extensive clause combining, there may be two motivations. One concerns examples that describe a process, or a series of events that eventually reach an end point. Examples (4) and (6), which are repeated here, belong to this type.

- (4) (The narrator is describing how she became a wellness room teacher in a high school.)
*keredo yonensei daigaku ni haireru hodo no gakuryoku ga nakute, jaa hokenshitsu no sensei nanka doo ka naa to nantonaku sono shikaku no toreru tandai ni susundara, shinseki no ojisan ga kono shiritsu kookoo de jimuin o shiteite, choodo ketsuin ga ari kone de hoken no sensei ni yatotteyaru to iu node, natta no **da**.* (Yamamoto 1995: 174)
 'But I did not have enough academic ability to be accepted into a four-year college, thinking well then I should perhaps become a school wellness room teacher and so went to a junior college to obtain the license for that, then it turns out that one of my uncles was an office

worker at this private high school, there happened to be a job opening for a wellness room teacher they said they would hire me because of the personal connection, so I became a wellness room teacher.

- (6) (The narrator, a high school student, is explaining how he started eating lunch with his female friend.)

ore wa gakushoku no pan ga suki de, wazawaza katte tabeteita noni, hahaoya ga bentoo o tsukutte kurenai kawaiiso na hito da to omowareta no ka, aru hi 'obentoo wakete ageyokka?' no hitokoto ni hajimari, sono uchi wakete moratte ita no ga betsu no chiisana bentoobako ni bunkasuruto, sore ga kondo wa dondon kyodaikashite otoko hitori ga kutte choodo yoi shiromono ni natta. (Shiraiwa 2008: 27)

'I liked bread from the student cafeteria, so I was purposely buying it from the cafeteria and eating it, but perhaps she thought I was a poor guy whose mother would not make a box lunch, one day it started with her saying 'Should I share my box lunch with you?', we went gradually from sharing her box lunch to having a separate box for me, and then the size of the box got bigger and bigger until it was the perfect size for a man.'

In both of these examples, the narrator is describing a rather lengthy process using extensive clause combining. By not distributing the process over separate sentences, the writer is presenting each step of the progression as closely connected to another. The writer is presenting successive events as continuous and indivisible. If the writer used periods in the middle, instead of successively linking clauses with only commas as punctuation marks, it would disrupt the continuing flow of events. Events would be represented by sentences rather than successively linked clauses, and therefore would be interpreted as more discrete and independent events rather than as continuously connected events. The use of extensive clause combining thus makes sense in terms of iconicity. The close representation in the form (i.e., extensive clause combining) is appropriate for expressing closeness in the meaning (i.e., a continuous succession of events).¹⁹

This recalls one of the functions of extensive clause combining in speech, which is to hold the conversational floor. A speaker may use extensive clause combining to fend off interruptions and hold the floor. A writer obviously does not have to ward off interruptions since s/he does not have an immediate audience, but s/he may use extensive clause combining to signal the need for non-interruption and thereby express the inter-connectedness of events. S/he communicates to the reader that the events/thoughts expressed are chained together tightly so as not to allow any interruptions in the form of sentence endings. Writers evoke one of the functions of extensive clause combining in speech (i.e., holding the floor) with this usage.

¹⁹ Some might say that periods and commas occupy the same physical space, so iconicity is not relevant. However, "the comma signals a shorter time span than a period and hence the contrast [between the comma and period] is an example of one of the most basic principles [of iconicity]" (John Haiman, p.c.). Haiman is referring to the notion that "formal distance corresponds to conceptual distance" (Haiman 1985: 106). He is discussing the English comma and period, but the same principle applies to the Japanese comma (*tooten*) and period (*kuten*). *Tooten* represents a shorter time span than *kuten*, which indicates the completion of a sentence.

The second kind of motivation may be similar to the motivation behind the use of extensive clause combining in Classical Japanese. As mentioned earlier, Sakakura (1970) notes that sentences with open structure appear in *kudoku yoona chooshi no jujutsu* ‘narratives told tediously and importunately’ and considers them as *kootoo-go* ‘spoken language’. He further observes that because of their fluid boundaries and semantic ambiguities, sentences with open structure are not appropriate for *kooshitsu no bunshoo* ‘hard writing’ in which clear logic is unfolded, but suited for *nanshitsu no bunshoo* ‘soft writing’, which is more poetic and appeals to the emotion of the addressee. He sees a parallel between sentences with open structure and *kudoki* ‘speaking parts’ of *youkyoku* ‘Noh songs’, in which the singer/narrator reminisces and speaks of deep emotions. By inhaling and exhaling only sparingly between phrases, the singer/narrator of *kudoki* is supposed to convey that the expressed feelings linger on even when *kudoki* is over. In other words, sentences with open structure are appropriate for expressing intensified (and lingering) emotions. This may explain why extensive clause combining, which is one kind of open structure, is used in examples such as (8) and (9) in contemporary Japanese, which are repeated here.

- (8) (The narrator is describing her reaction to her live-in boyfriend’s reply after she told him that she was pregnant.)
koitsu ga issho ni sodatete kureru hazu wa nakatta, daitai inomata wa yachin mo haratte inai no datta, toriaezu no henji o shiteiru dake na no datta, man ga ichi kodomo ga itatte furari to nomi ni iki futsuka mo mikka mo kaette konai ni chigainakatta, zenbu wakatteita, wakatteita keredo watashi wa naita. (Kakuta 2008: 70)
 ‘There was no way he would bring up a child with me, Inomata was not even paying rent, he was just responding to my announcement for the time being, even if we had a child I was sure he would casually go out to drink and would not come home for two or three days, I knew all that, even though I knew I still cried.’
- (9) (The narrator, who runs competitively in high school, is describing his thoughts after he witnessed Senba, who is his best friend Ren’s rival in short-distance running, being cheered on by Taniguchi, a girl he likes.)
ano yaroo wa, ichioo, ren no raibaru de, senba ga ganbareba ren ga makeru daroo, toka, takoo no senshu o ooen sunna yo, toka, sonna n janakute, taniguchi ni ooensarete tereru n janai, sore wa ore no, ore no, sore wa ore denakutewa naranai? (Sato 2006: 211-212)
 ‘That guy was, for the moment, Ren’s rival, if Senba tried hard, Ren might lose, and, [I would like to say to Taniguchi] ‘Don’t be cheering on a runner from another school’, and, it’s not that, [I would like to say to Senba] ‘Don’t be embarrassed by Taniguchi’s cheer’, that is my, my....., she should be cheering me on?’

Immediately prior to (8), the narrator tells her live-in boyfriend, who is described as jobless and irresponsible, that she is pregnant. To her surprise, he says, “OK. Let’s bring up this child together”. Example (8) is her reaction to this unexpected reply. The last clause expresses that she cried, but other clauses express various thoughts that were crossing her mind *as she cried* (that the boyfriend would not bring up a child, that he

would go drinking, that he would not come home for three days, etc.). The writer presents the crying as crying for joy²⁰ (as well as other mixed emotions) even though those negative thoughts are crossing her mind. Extensive clause combining, with successive chaining of clauses, effectively represents the narrator's heightened (and somewhat confused) emotional state with various thoughts appearing in her mind one after another.

Example (9) also describes the narrator's heightened emotional state. In this scene the narrator realizes for the first time that he is in love with a girl named Taniguchi, because he felt jealous when he witnessed Taniguchi's interaction with another boy (Senba). He is upset and confused. Various thoughts (that Senba is his best friend's rival, that he does not want Taniguchi to cheer on Senba, that he does not want Senba to act embarrassed about Taniguchi's cheers, that Taniguchi should be cheering him on, etc.) are flooding into his mind. The writer's use of extensive clause combining is perfect for expressing this state of mind. Recall Maynard's (2007) description of rhetorical sentences, in which thoughts are presented as unorganized and continuing.

Both the first motivation (the expression of close connections of events/events/states/thoughts) and the second motivation (the expression of a heightened emotional state) may be behind some uses of extensive clause combining. (5), which is repeated here, is an example.

- (5) (The narrator is describing how she felt when she broke her long-distance running record. She is a beginner.)

sore made no jikokiroku datta 5 kiro no rain o koeta shunkan, massarana gayooshi mitaina michi no ryooiki ni karada goto tobikonda ki ga shite, sono saki ni nani ga aru no ka mitai no to kowai no to, doko made ikeru no ka fuan na no to tanoshimina no to, omokunatte-iku ashi to mada saki o mezasoo to suru kokoro to, saigo wa moo tairyoku to kiryoku no semegiai mitai ni natte, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman, to hitasura jibun ni iikikasete, yatto no koto de tootatsushita 7 kiro chiten. (Mori 2008: 236)

'The moment when I passed the 5 kilometer point which was my record until then, I felt like my whole body jumped into an unknown domain like a blank drawing paper, I wanted to see what was ahead and was scared, I was nervous and excited about how much more I could run, I had legs that were getting heavy and a mind that wanted to go further, at the end my physical and mental abilities were competing with each other, patience, patience, patience, patience, patience, is what I kept telling myself, and I finally reached the seven kilometer point.

In (5) the narrator describes the process in which she ran from the 5th kilometer point to the 7th kilometer point. She discusses the events and thoughts that were occurring in the process leading up to the 7th kilometer goal and presents them as closely interconnected to each other by using extensive clause combining. By chaining clauses, the writer effectively conveys that the events/thoughts leading up to the goal were continuous and not interrupted. At the same time, the use of extensive clause combining, by presenting

²⁰ Immediately after (8), the narrator explains that she cried because she realized that the baby in her body belonged to the boyfriend, whom she loved despite the fact that she was having sexual relationships with other men.

these events/thoughts as unorganized and somewhat chaotic, expresses the narrator's heightened emotional state, in this case elation because the narrator, who is a beginning runner, tried very hard and as a result extended her record by two kilometers. In this way, (5) illustrates that both functions could co-exist in the use of extensive clause combining.

Before reaching the concluding section, I would like to mention an interesting detail. Of the nine novels in which I found sentences with extensive clause combining, only one was written by a man. I should also point out that while eight out of ten female-authored books contained sentences with extensive clause combining, only one out of five male-authored books contained them. Although the sample size is very small, this might suggest that the use of extensive clause combining is gendered. Ueno (2000) characterizes *Heisei genbun itchi tai* in general as a gendered phenomenon and claims that it started with male writers' attempts to simulate female speakers' speech. Whether or not her characterization is accurate, it might be worthwhile to examine the relationship between the use of extensive clause combining (as well as other stylistic variations that seemingly simulate speech) and gender in future studies. As Miller (2004, 2011) observes, many linguistic inventions in Japan originate with women.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper I observed that writers of some contemporary Japanese fiction are using extensive clause combining, in which multiple clauses are connected to make an extremely long sentence. These writers successively link clauses to signal that the expressed events or thoughts are closely connected. The meaning of interconnectedness is thus expressed formally by the use of chained clauses. Writers may also use extensive clause combining to communicate the narrator's intensified emotional state. The second use is similar to the use of 'open structure' sentences in Classical Japanese.

As mentioned earlier, Sakakura (1970) considers such sentences in Classical Japanese as *kootoo-go* 'spoken language'. Similarly, given the fact that extensive clause combining is mostly found in speech in contemporary Japanese, the use of extensive clause combining in writing is easily associated with spoken language. On the surface, it might look as if writers were simply practicing *hanasuyoo ni kaku* 'writing as one speaks'. However, although writers are evoking speech when they use extensive clause combining, they are doing more than that. The use of extensive clause combining in speech is usually not planned. It is often triggered by conversational circumstances. In writing, on the other hand, writers do not inadvertently use extensive clause combining. The use is intentional and calculated. This is why the contexts in which extensive clause combining occurs in speech are different from the contexts in which extensive clause combining occurs in writing. Writers deliberately communicate close connections of events or thoughts as represented in the clauses, express a heightened emotional state, or both.

Finally, the observations made in this paper are based on the examination of fifteen instances of extensive clause combining in contemporary Japanese fiction. Since this figure is small, the present study should be considered an exploratory case study. More comprehensive studies are needed to fully investigate the phenomenon of

extensive clause combining and to assess how widespread the use of this literary technique is in written Japanese.²¹

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²¹ Suzuki (2009) discusses some instances of extensive clause combining in contemporary Japanese *non-fiction*.

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Appendix

The following are the fifteen books selected by consulting guidebooks for young adult readers. Nine of them (with an asterisk) contain one or multiple instances of extensive clause combining.

- *Asano, Atsuko (2006). *The manzai 3 [The comic dialogues Part 3]*. Tokyo: Jive. 235 pages.
- *Ekuni, Kaori (2003). *Gookyuusuru junbi wa dekitteita [I was prepared to wail]*. Tokyo: Shincho-sha. 233 pages.
- Isaka, Kotaro (2007). *Chirudoren [Children]*. Tokyo: Kodan-sha. 325 pages.
- Ishida, Ira (2001). *Ikebukuro uesuto geeto paaku [Ikebukuro West Gate Park]*. Tokyo: Bungei Shunju-sha. 367 pages.
- Kaneshiro, Kazuki (2005). *Furai, dadi, furai [Fly, daddy, fly]*. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten. 246 pages.
- *Kakuta, Mitsuyo (2008). Kyooei haitsu 305: Sugunami-ku kugayama 2-9-xx [Kyooei Apartment #305: 2-9-xx, Kugayama, Sugunami-ward]. In Kanehara, Mizuhito (ed.), *Kanehara Mizuhito YA serekushon* -

Mijikai nemuri ni tsuku mae ni: Mayonaka ni yomitai juu no hon [Mizuhito Kanehara young adult selection - Before falling asleep: Ten stories to read at midnight], 61-71. Tokyo: Jive. 240 pages.

Kazuki, Hinowa (2003). *Yokai apaato no yuuga na nichijoo [Elegant daily life in a ghost apartment]*. Tokyo: Kodan-sha. 218 pages.

*Miyabe, Miyuki (1997). *Yume ni mo omowanai [I would not dream of it]*. Tokyo: Chuo Koron-sha. 318 pages.

*Mori, Eto (2007). *Karafuru [Colorful]*. Tokyo: Bungei Shunju-sha. 259 pages.

*Mori, Eto (2008). *Ran [Run]*. Tokyo: Riron-sha. 463 pages.

Sasau, Yoko (1996). *Bokura no saitee no natsu [Our worst summer]*. Tokyo: Kodansha. 164 pages.

*Sato, Takako (2006). *Isshun no kaze ni nare: Ichi ni tsuite [Run like swift wind: On your mark]*. Tokyo: Kodan-sha. 242 pages.

*Shiraiwa, Gen (2008). *Nobuta o puroduusu [Producing of a wild pig]*. Tokyo: Kawade Shobo. 201 pages.

*Yamamoto, Fumio (1995). *Zettai nakanai [I will never cry]*. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten. 208 pages.

Yumoto, Kazumi (2001). *Natsu no niwa [A summer garden]*. Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten. 226 pages.