Comparison of Argumentative Styles:
Japanese College Students vs. American College Students
— An Analysis Using the Toulmin Model

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1. INTRODUCTION

How one organizes one's thought and how one expresses it is a reflection of one's culture. When this idea is applied to ESL instruction, we can observe that even some grammatically correct ESL texts seem to violate native English reader expectations at the discourse level. This notion, initially articulated by Robert Kaplan (1966), has come to be known as contrastive rhetoric. Kaplan argued that rhetorical logic, how ideas are arranged in a text, is shaped by culture and that there is a preference for certain types of discourse patterns in each culture. Therefore, students from different linguistic-cultural backgrounds transfer their preferred discourse patterns when they write in English, which often results in patterns which are unacceptable in academic English. This notion of Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis has undergone through a number of criticisms for being too simplistic, too general, and too prescriptive. (Ferris and Hedgcock, 1998, p. 11) However, it is still influential in ESL instruction. (Connor, 1996, for example)

Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis has helped us realize that there are culturally-influenced writing patterns. But we should not view it as something that has determining power, nor should we find stereotypes in its view. While expecting that logical patterns of organization differ cross-culturally and cross-linguistically, the writing teachers should find a way to present logical patterns and audience expectations in English academia, and should come up with an effective pedagogy to teach those notions to ESL students. However, because of the complexity of the issue, there have not been many presentations of ways that reflect the fruit of contrastive rhetoric research.

In this paper, I would like to explore the possibility of setting up a new framework in teaching the argumentative essay to Japanese college students based on the findings in contrastive rhetoric. The argumentative essay is probably the most difficult type of essay to teach, being the genre in which logical organizational differences emerge most apparently. Composition textbooks usually do not offer much information on how to teach argumentative essays. At most, they introduce syllogism or logical fallacies, which are basics in western logic. Syllogism is important as a basis for teaching logic, but its application to actual composition teaching is very ineffective. That is because the essays the students write or the models they use are usually much more complex than can be covered by the simplistic model of syllogism. Many textbooks include instruction in logical fallacies. However, this is a negative approach, as they simply tell students not to make any of these kinds of logical fallacies. We need to find a good methodology that writing teachers can use to help students write an effective argumentative essay.

In this paper, I will explore the possibility of applying the Toulmin Model, a model of argument developed by Stephen Toulmin (1958), in the analysis of argumentative essays. I would like to further show that this model can be an effective tool in teaching argumentative essays to Japanese college students. This paper is constructed as follows: First, the Toulmin Model will be discussed in the literature review section. Then, based on the model, I will present several questions in an attempt to make clear some of the differences of argumentative styles of Japanese and English. A range of literature on this subject will be reviewed. In order to confirm some differences found in the literature review, an empirical study involving Japanese college students and American college students was conducted. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were made, employing some elements from the Toulmin Model. Lastly, pedagogical implication involving the Toulmin model will be discussed.
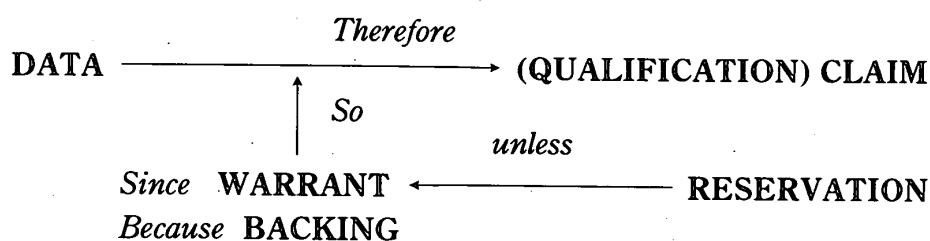
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 Toulmin Model

In contemporary argumentation research the model presented by Stephen Toulmin (1958) has been widely used. Speech instruction has largely abandoned the syllogistic paradigm and most recent texts in public speaking, argumentation and persuasion are now using a model of argument developed by Stephen Toulmin (1958). (Kneupper, 1978, p. 237) The model visually represents how an argument is structured. In its simplest form, the model contains three elements. (1) **Claim**, (2) **Data** (sometimes called **Evidence**) and **Warrant** (sometimes called **Link**). Toulmin (1958) defines each element as follows (pp. 85–113):

(1) Claim: the conclusion of the argument and the point at issue in a controversy.
(2) Data: facts or evidence serving as the basis for a claim
(3) Warrant: a statement that justifies the leap from data to claim.
The diagram below represents the Toulmin Model.[1]

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                        Therefore
    DATA ──────────────────────────→ (QUALIFICATION) CLAIM
                  ↑  So
                  │              unless
    Since  WARRANT ←───────────── RESERVATION
    Because BACKING
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Sometimes the warrant alone is vulnerable to attack and it may invite a **counter-argument**. Therefore, in order to consolidate the argument, the writer must provide reasons to convince people that his or her warrant is valid. This purpose can be achieved by **BACKING**. Both warrant and backing support the claim; the difference between warrant and backing is that the former is hypothetical while the latter is substantial. (Lee & Lee, 1989, p. 91) In other words, the **backing** supports or justifies the **warrant**.

There are two additional elements: **Reservation** and **Qualification**.[2] They are statements of possible exceptions to the warrant and claim. The reservation specifies the

conditions in which the warrant does not apply. The best definition of **reservations** may be "a sort of safety valve or escape clause" made by Ehninger and Brockriede. (1978, p. 45) The reservation applies to the warrant, and the qualification applies to the claim.

Although Toulmin may not have intended the model to serve as a general template for all forms of argumentation, it is used in many textbooks on argumentation. (Winterowd, 1981, Lee and Lee, 1989, Renkema, 1993, among others) The model seems especially indispensable in teaching debate. (Matsumoto, 1987, Matsumoto, 1992 among others) That is because it presents the structure of an argument visually and it calls our attention to the different function of each element of the model.

Despite its popularity, Toulmin's model has been subject to criticism by many scholars. (e.g. Renkema, 1993) One important objection pointed out is the artificiality of the distinctions between some elements in the model.[3] For example, when this model is actually applied in the analysis of an argument, there can be a case of confusion in distinguishing the data from the warrant. Later researchers have classified the data and warrant into several subcategories in order to avoid confusion. (Lee and Lee, 1989, for example)

Despite these shortcomings, I believe that the Toulmin Model is useful both in the analysis and teaching of argumentative essays. If we find that some elements in the model are missing in a given argument, we can make valuable interesting inquiries as to why they are not explicitly mentioned, or how the absence of a particular element contributes to any weakness of the argument.

2.2 The Questions on the Differences in Argumentative Styles

Setting the Toulmin Model as a point of departure, I present the following questions in an attempt to compare Japanese-style arguments with those based on Western-style rhetoric,[4] since the present research involves the writings of Japanese college students and those of American college students. A number of studies have already shown that there are differences in Japanese and English argumentation. (Hinds, 1983; Kobayshi, 1985; Oi, 1986 among others) In this section, I would like to analyze the differences in view of Toulmin Model.

Questions: [5]

1) **Does Japanese rhetoric employ such things as data, claims, and warrants as does Western rhetoric?**

2) **Does Japanese rhetoric constitute data and warrants differently from Western rhetoric?**

3) **Is the form of Japanese logical development the same as that of Western logic?**

4) **Does Japanese rhetoric attribute the same force to logical arguments as Western rhetoric does?**

5) **Are the Japanese people capable of using logical arguments to the same degree as other people?**

Drawing upon literature on this subject, I would like to make a summary in response to

each question.

1) Does Japanese rhetoric employ such things as data, claims, and warrants as does Western rhetoric?

As I have written previously (Oi, 1997), the mere concept of "making an argument" is foreign for the Japanese people. Japanese people have a way of communication called *haragei* which refers to tacit communication between people where no words are spoken (Matsumoto, 1978). Because Japan is such a high-context society (Hall, 1976), they sometimes resort to communication styles where things are not articulated precisely. In such a case, the **claim** would not be directly stated. They have to "feel out" someone's claim. It is often said that Westerners put emphasis on facts, statistics and quotations, while **data** may not always be present in Japanese argument. (Okabe, 1983)

The **warrant** and especially the **backing** are often absent or unexpressed in Japanese argument. Nakamura (1964) says that the Japanese will avoid theoretical arguments, and go directly to a conclusion. Onoda (1996) says that Japanese people are not aware that one must mention one's ground for his statement explicitly. The meaning of "theoretical argument" in Nakamura or "ground" in Onoda is equivalent to **warrant** and **backing** in Toulmin's terms.

We can conclude that the Japanese do not make the same use of such things as **data**, **claims**, and **warrants** as do Westerners/Americans. Table 1 summarizes the above discussion.

Table 1: Parts of a Logical Argument

	English	Japanese
Claim	Explicit	Sometimes not made = implicit, being expected to be felt out
Data	Highly valued, emphasis on facts, statistics	Sometimes not mentioned
Warrant/ Backing	Often present	Sometimes absent, unexpected

2) Does Japanese rhetoric constitute data and warrants differently from Western rhetoric?

Much research claims that Japanese put emphasis on group harmony and interdependence while Americans emphasize the individual and independence (Barnlund, 1975, for example). In addition, the Japanese are said to have a preference for subjective over factual or objective data (Nakamura, 1964; Okabe, 1983). Therefore, we can infer that **warrants** and **data** have different constituents for the Japanese than Americans. This reflects the notion that the values most central to a culture are often expressed in the warrants of an argument. (Condon and Yousef, 1975) This is shown in Table 2.

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Table 2: How to Constitute a Logical Argument

	English	Japanese
Data	Factual/objective data	Subjective data, maxims, axioms
Warrant = expresses the value most central to a culture	Emphasis on the individual and independence	Emphasis on group harmony and inter-dependence

3) Is the form of Japanese logical development the same as that of Western logic?

This question overlaps the previous two questions, but it also specifically asks about the overall organization of a logical argument.

There have been many names given to the Japanese way of constructing "logic." Okabe (1983) calls it "a stepping-stone mode"; Kaplan (1966) calls it "a widening gyre" as compared with the English linear style. Kunihiro (1977) says Japanese give presentation of one item after the other in a highly anecdotal or episodic vein.

Matelene (1985) characterizes the Eastern rhetoric as "delayed argument followed by a turn, and the final unconnected assertions" (p. 801) and this can also be applied to Japanese rhetoric. Hinds (1983) introduces the Japanese way of organizational pattern "Ki-sho-ten-ketsu" (Beginning-continuation-turn-conclusion). In other words, a "thesis statement" that is normally included in the introductory part in an English essay will appear in the concluding part of an essay in Japanese. Kobayashi (1985) calls the English way of organization "General-Specific" and the Japanese way "Specific-General", wherein "General" refers to "a thesis statement" and "Specific" refers to examples as support for the thesis statement. The former uses deductive reasoning; the latter resorts to inductive reasoning. This organizational dichotomy has been confirmed in several studies. (Oi, 1986, for example) In other words, while in academic English, the reader can usually find the contention of the writer at the beginning of an essay, in Japanese writing, the reader usually waits for a final assertion to be reached at the end. This can be summarized as in Table 3.

Table 3: The Form of the Logical Development

English	Japanese
Linear reasoning	dotted (point) reasoning, widening gyre anecdotal or episodic vein
General-Specific (deductive reasoning)	Specific-General (inductive reasoning)

4) Does Japanese attribute the same force to logical arguments as Western rhetoric does?

The answer to this question may be best offered in Okabe (1983)'s comment that Japanese have a strong preference for the emotional over the logical. In Kamimura and Oi (1998)'s work, it is asserted that the typical argumentative strategies used by Americans

are more logically oriented, while those of Japanese writers are more emotionally-oriented. Okabe (1983) also says that Japanese prefer the tentative and interdependent over the confrontative and independent.

From this, we can infer that Japanese people pay greater attention on human relationships and emotions and place less emphasis on instrumental results as is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: The Force of a Logical Argument

English	Japanese
Logical	Emotional
Dependence	Tentative/ interdependence

5) Are the Japanese people capable of using logical arguments to the same degree as other people?

Despite all the differences mentioned above, the answer to this question is obvious. Of course, through education and training, Japanese are capable of articulating logical arguments. As my previous studies show (Oi and Kamimura, 1997; Oi, 1997), Western styles of rhetoric and logic can be quite easily taught to Japanese students. Tenma (1998) also says that inability of logical thinking of Japanese is due to lack of training in logical thinking at school.

So far, I dealt with the questions in the form of literature review. The references cited are largely based on the individual authors' observations, rather than on substantial or concrete data. Therefore, I will now draw on concrete examples in order to make clear the differences of rhetorical structures in logic between Japanese college students and North American college students and point out some of the problems concerning Japanese EFL students' writing.

3. EMPIRICAL STUDY
3.1 PROCEDURE
3.1.1 Subjects

There were two sets of subjects for this project. One group was thirty-three college students enrolled in Freshman English class at Mankato State University in Minnesota, who represented American samples. The other was thirty-two Japanese college students (sophomores). Their ITP scores (equivalent of TOEFL scores) range from 467 to 537, with the mean score of 499.6.

3.1.2 Task

The students in both groups were asked to write an argumentative essay. The title was: 'What do you think of euthanasia (also known as mercy killing or doctor-assisted suicide)? Are you for or against it?'[6] This topic was chosen because it was considered to be such a controversial topic that it would lead the students into careful consideration in order to decide on position (either pro or con) and to work out a variety of argumentative

strategies to support the position.

3.1.3 Analysis

The samples were analyzed mainly based on the Toulmin model. The analysis was made on two levels: first quantitative and then qualitative. In the quantitative analysis, (1) CLAIM, and (2) WARRANT were investigated. In my earlier studies, it has been shown that Japanese are hesitant to take a position. (Oi, 1986, Oi and Kamimura, 1997) I would like to see if this assumption also holds true in the present study. This means whether the students set out their claims clearly or not. For **warrant**, I would like to investigate what types of warrants are used by both the groups and also to see if there is any particular proclivity in the types of warrants for each group. All the warrants found in students' essays were put into the different categories as shown in the results section.

In the qualitative analysis section, comments were made based on the actual students' writings characteristic for some aspects. Other elements in the Toulmin Model such as BACKING, and RESERVATION were discussed with concrete examples.

3.2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.2.1 Quantitative analysis
(1) Claim

As Table 5 shows, a quarter of the Japanese subjects did not make a clear claim, while only two students showed an ambivalent attitude toward this problem in the American sample. A chi-square test confirmed that there were statistically significant differences between the American students and the Japanese students. ($x^2=5.39$, $p<0.01$) The American students took a more decisive attitude, while some Japanese remained indecisive.

Table 5: Distribution of positions taken by two groups

	For	Against	Ambivalent
American (n=33)	24 (72.72%)	7 (21.21%)	2 (6.06%)
Japanese (n=32)	21 (65.63%)	3 (9.38%)	8 (25.00%)

(2) Warrants

The warrants were classified into different categories for both "for" and "against" claims. Table 6 lists the number of the warrants which fell into the different categories. When examined by a chi-square test, it was found that there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of the categories for the two claims. ($x^2=61.56$, $p<0.01$)

A close look at the content of warrants given by the respective groups shows a striking contrast. Of special significance is the fact that the categories of warrants for the "against" position are split. It is no wonder that half of the subjects in the American group give "God forbids suicide" as their main warrant because they represent religious people of the Midwest region of the U.S. On the other hand, warrants given by the Japanese group vary from individual to individual.

Categories of warrants for the "for" position show similar attitudes across the groups. The warrant most often drawn upon is "Euthanasia stops the torture" for both groups. What is rather surprising is that six instances for the warrant "Organ transplant is possible" are among the Japanese subjects. This may be due to the fact that when this data was taken there was much talk on the debate whether organ transplant should be legalized in Japan.

Table 6: Distributions of Warrants

Warrant	American	Japanese
<Against>		
1. God forbids suicide. (It's a sin to commit suicide)	6 (50.00%)	
2. Suicide is ethically wrong.	2 (16.67%)	
3. Suffering brings us closer to God.	1 (8.33%)	
4. Life is meant to be painful.	1 (8.33%)	
5. There may be a cure ahead.	1 (8.33%)	
6. Euthanasia is inhuman.	1 (8.33%)	
7. The patient's decision is unreliable.		1 (14.29%)
8. The family may regret afterwards.		1 (14.29%)
9. It is wrong to give pressure to die to the patient		1 (14.29%)
and the old with the idea of euthanasia.		1 (14.29%)
10. It is wrong to give the doctor the power of life and death.		1 (14.29%)
11. The idea of euthanasia deprives the patient's energy		1 (14.29%)
to fight the disease.		
12. The person has a right to live/Life is precious.		2 (28.57%)
<For>		
a. Euthanasia stops the torture.	11 (31.43%)	14 (28.57%)
(Too much suffering is torture.)		
b. A person has a right to choose euthanasia.	12 (34.29%)	8 (16.33%)
c. The family will be relieved.	3 (8.57%)	2 (4.08%)
d. Euthanasia is the safest and most civil way	1 (2.86%)	
to end one's life.		
e. The vegetable state is not worth enduring.	3 (8.57%)	5 (10.20%)
f. Animals must die anyway.	2 (5.71%)	
g. It's better to put the matter to a professional.	1 (2.86%)	
(i.e. a doctor)		
h. If kept alive by the machine, the medical costs will be high.	1 (2.86%)	3 (6.12%)
j. I want to have good memories until the very end.		1 (2.04%)
k. Euthanasia is also the doctor's responsibility.		3 (6.12%)
(Euthanasia is one of the medical treatments.)		
l. Organ transplant is possible.		6 (12.24%)
m. Vegetables are kept alive by mechanical power.		1 (2.04%)
(They are not actually living)		
n. There is no chance of recovery.	1 (2.86%)	2 (4.08%)
o. I don't want to see myself looking ugly.		1 (2.04%)
p. Other countries are doing it; so why not Japan?		2 (4.08%)
q. Doctors/nurses may give cold shoulder to a		1 (2.04%)
terminally ill patient.		

3.2.2 Qualitative Analysis

In this section, I would like to comment on the characteristics found in Japanese students' writings as contrasted with American students' writings,[7] and point out weakness of Japanese students' writing in terms of (1) indecisive argument, (2) inconsistent argument, and (3) undeveloped argument.

(1) Indecisive Argument

There are many instances of failure to make a claim among Japanese subjects. This point is clearly shown in the quantitative analysis. The task prompt was "What do you think of euthanasia (also known as mercy killing or doctor-assisted suicide)? Are you for or against it?" This question clearly asks the students to take a position. Despite that, a quarter of the Japanese students were hesitant about taking either position. This tendency of not taking a position reflects the Japanese tendency to hesitate taking up a decisive opinion and proclivity for taking a middle or vague position. (Hayashi, 1996, p. 167)

Because the prompt deals with such a difficult issue, i.e., life or death of a human being, it is quite understandable for the students to feel difficulty in making up their minds. A number of students expressed such difficulty honestly. This trend is characteristic among Japanese subjects. The following is such an example:

> I can't answer this question clearly. It is very difficult for me and will be important question for us more and more. Because the way of thinking about death of human is different each people. For example, patients and their relative side.
>
> If I think it from patient's point of view, I am lived by machine, a lot of tubes, and I am very hard to live, I will think I want to die like a human. But from relative's point of view, they want the patient to live longer more and more. They never want him or her to die.
>
> I have not experience real situation, someone's death yet, and I don't know how I think.(J-14)

In this sample, the writer displays her inability to make a judgment, and she is not ashamed of it. In the Japanese composition, being faithful to oneself is valued. Sometimes Japanese even take sort of "self-deprecatory" attitude in which they show their inability and weakness more than necessary. This essay is nothing but the representation of her inner dialog.

In the traditional type of Japanese composition, a writer expresses his/her inner dialog and makes it into a composition. In a society where expressive writing has been an institution (Oi, 1999), Japanese students view writing as self-expression and they reveal their feelings and ideas in a rather unstructured manner. They include all their thinking processes in their writings. In other words, they write as their ideas develop. However, in English composition, writing does not start until the thinking process is completed and the writer reaches some kind of conclusion. Writers then structure their writing from the

introduction, with a thesis statement, to the conclusion; enough support is usually given in the middle.

In order to contrast this point, let us now take a look at an American sample. While this sample also shows indecisiveness, the writer did reach a certain conclusion with many **qualifications** and **reservations**. We might suppose this is because the writer knows that he/she has to take a position one way or another.

The topic of a mercy killing is very delicate subject. The answer is definitely not obvious to most, but to some people it could be. The answer to this question on mercy killing is very personal, and I think the answer will vary greatly between each and every person. I don't think it is the answer for everyone. If someone is in great physical pain, and there is no hope for a cure, remedy, or medication for the pain this would probably be the safest and most civil way to end your life if you really want to die that badly. (A-8)

We can teach the use of **qualification** and **reservation** to Japanese students in order to make the statement contain whatever nuances the writer wants to express. Instead of saying, "It's case by case" as is often seen in the Japanese samples, we can tell them to spell out the possibilities and exceptions before they conclude.

Another example of **qualification** found in the American samples is:

....I only believe in this mercy killing though if the patients doctor knows beyond a doubt that his or her patient is really going to die a slow and horrible death and only if this patient was suffering to the point where they were in bed all day long in pain and they could not do anything. (A-16)

As is seen in the above samples, many students expressed difficulty in deciding which position to take at the beginning of their essays. Table 7 shows some of the examples from the Japanese subjects:

Table 7: Japanese Samples of Expressions of Difficulty

Whether approving euthanasia is right or wrong is a difficult question, because there is not a clear answer for it. (J-17)
I don't really know many situations about this, so that I'm not sure how it works. (J-2)
It's difficult for me to think. (J-6)
This essay is very difficult for me. Because I did not think about "euthanasia" little. (J-7)
I find that euthanasia is a difficult problem. (J-8)
I can't answer this question clearly. It is very difficult for me and will be important question for us more and more. (J-14)

Now I would like to contrast this lack of decisiveness of Japanese students with the American samples. It is noteworthy that they never acknowledge their inability to make a

decision; they never say "I cannot decide"; they instead claim that it is *difficult simply because there are many different ways to consider.*

Doctor assisted suicide is a tough topic to agree or disagree with because there is such a fine line between right and wrong. The conditions in which doctor assisted suicides should be carried out vary in the minds of everybody. Nobody is right and nobody is wrong but the problem is that nobody agrees with everybody. (A-15)

Another example:

...The topic of mercy killing is a very delicate subject. The answer is definitely not obvious to most, but to some people it could be. The answer to this question on mercy killing is very personal, and I think the answer will vary greatly between each and every person. I don't think it is the answer for everyone.... If someone is in great physical pain, and there no hope for a cure, remedy, or medication for the pain this would probably be the safest and most civil way to end your life if you really want to die that badly. (A-18)

What we can see in the above American samples is that although they admit the difficulty of the issue, they try to reach a certain conclusion by way of qualifying their statements so that they sound valid.

I would like now to look at the some of the thesis statements given by American subjects. Table 8 shows some of them. Notice the underlined expressions. They help the thesis statement sound very strong and make the writer sound confident about the issue. These strong statements make a great contrast with the indecisiveness that the Japanese samples give.

Table 8: American Examples of Strong Thesis Statements

I do not agree with a doctor assisted suicide <u>at all</u>. (A-9)
<u>I believe</u> that a person who is going to die has the right to end their lives by their own will. (A-10)
<u>In my opinion</u>, there <u>shouldn't be any</u> way that someone could inflict such a thing on oneself. (A-11)
Yes, I <u>do approve</u> of doctor-assisted suicide <u>completely!!!</u> (A-27)
This is why I am <u>one-hundred percent</u> for doctor-assisted suicide. (A-28)
When a person is terminally ill and has constant discomfort, I approve of euthanasia <u>100%</u>. (A-29)

The difficulty of offering a decisive opinion is not an intrinsic problem for Japanese students learning English. It should not be so difficult for them to formulate an opinion decisively. It is a matter of attitude that can be learned. If they know the decisive thesis statements fit better in the genre of argumentative writing, they will learn to take a position and write such a thesis.

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(2) Inconsistent Argument

In the following sample, first of all, the first three sentences must represent the writer's true feelings but show her inability to make a judgment as well. They should have been deleted.

> This essay is very difficult for me. Because I did not think about "euthanasia" little. But I try to think about this topic.
> I disapprove "euthanasia" privately. Because I think about the family's feeling. Family whose member is a vegetable state think that he may be able to open his eyes and get up next morning. If I am a member of that family, I will also think so. So, I disapprove "euthanasia."
> But, I approve the part of "euthanasia." Because people of "euthanasia" can't live in their own power. They live in mechanical power. When I think so, I think that they never die. Well, when do they die? I think that we should decide the term of "brain death." And I think that we may approve "euthanasia" after the term of "brain death."
> In conclusion, I approve the part of "euthanasia." If I cannot live in my own power for a long time, it is the same as death for me. (J-7)

This is another characteristic of Japanese writing that is often pointed out. This kind of fluctuating argument gives the impression of "widening gyre" as Kaplan (1966) pervasively mentioned, and also "being illogical" to the readers who are used to the linear reasoning of English.

(3) Undeveloped Argument

There are an undue amount of unsupported statements in the Japanese samples. The following one is such an example:.

> These days doctor-assisted suicide has been taken up as a big problem. Although there are many opinions to this, I do approve t this. First, if you become vegetable I think there is no meaning living. Though they may feel things, and cry or smile a little it cannot be enough for the hard time they are going through. Second, if a person is going to die from a big disease and that man is suffering from it, and also there is no way helping that man, I think you can choose doctor-assisted suicide. It will be hard for the people looking the man suffering so much. Finally, approving to this opinion, it doesn't mean you can choose death easily like a normal suicide. It depends on what kind of situation you are in. (J-4)

The reader will question: "What do you mean by 'it depends on what kind of situation? Exactly what kind of situation are you talking about?" However, the essay ends there. The reader's reaction to this essay will be one of dissatisfaction; he/she will feel something is missing. This is due to the fact that the writer does not give enough support for her statement.

Now I would like to contrast this with an American writers' sample where many words are used to explain his/her idea and what it means to be terminally ill is depicted fully:

The terminally ill really have no life. What kind of life would it be if one could not do what everyone else is able to do. <u>They are trapped in a hospital bed, lying in pain, and waiting for it all to end. They cannot go for a walk outside</u>. They <u>cannot play with their friends, or their children</u>. <u>They cannot enjoy the little things, such as a ball game, a picnic, or even just sitting outside on a nice day.</u> They have the constant worry, in knowing that they will soon be gone. They wish that they could go, but the pain keeps them going for another day. What kind of life would this be? (A-6)

Notice that the level of English is not highly sophisticated so as to be unattainable for Japanese students. The difference is extent of explanation: the points the writer wanted to make are described fully.

English is a "writer-responsible language", while Japanese is "reader-responsible." (Hinds, 1987) The writer has a responsibility to convey his/her thought to the reader. The Japanese writer should be aware of the responsibility a writer must assume in writing in English.

One way to supply enough support for one's claim is to use **backing**, the term used in the Toulmin Model. The following passage from an American sample shows the effective use of **backing**.

...Anyone who can not live in pain and who does not want to live with machines the rest of their lives should be allowed to make a decision so they do not have to suffer. Euthanasia allows the person the freedom to decide that if they can't live without machines they don't have to live at all. No one should have to live a life in pain, <u>knowing that the statistics show they will never fully recover</u>....(A-5)

In the sample shown in Appendix, the student's arguments are well presented with **warrants** substantiated sufficiently by **backings**. In the sample passage, **the backing (1)** serves to clarify the **warrant 1** that it is important to end one's life gracefully, **the backing (2)** serves to support the **warrant 2** that a person in extreme pain may not be thinking clearly and so might end up taking one's life away and put the family in a terrible misery, and **the backing (3)** strengthens the **warrant 3** that euthanasia is effective for someone who cannot live without machines. In this way, using many warrants and backings, the writer's argument has been solidified.

Now, if this part of the sample in Appendix is presented in the outline form, we have the following:

[**Claim**]   I. I approve of euthanasia.
[**Warrant**]   A. It is important to end one's life gracefully.
[**Backing**]   1. Deteriorating in a bed or living on machines for years is not a graceful way.

[Reservation]	(Euthanasia should be only performed when it is hopeless)
[Warrant]	B. People in extreme pain may not be thinking clearly.
[Backing]	1. A friend's mother with brain tumors commits a suicide
	2. put the family in a terrible misery
[Warrant]	C. Euthanasia should be performed for someone who cannot live without machines.
[Backing]	1. A woman who stayed in the rest home for eight years.

As we can see in the outline form, the **claim** corresponds to the roman numerals, the **warrants** correspond to capital letters and the **backing** corresponds to numerals in the outline. This is another way to look at the firmness of the structure of an argument.[8]

4. CONCLUSION

In this empirical study, several characteristics of argumentative styles of Japanese students' English writing have been revealed. They are (1) being hesitant in making a claim and being indecisive in reaching a claim, (2) being inconsistent about the claim, and, (3) lacking support. They present problems in writing strong and effective argumentative essays in academic English. In each section, I contrasted Japanese samples with American samples in order to show some strategies for improvement.

As Matalene (1985) says, rhetoric is "a way of thinking about the relationship that exist among speakers, subject matter, purpose, and audience," it reflects one's culture. Japanese people's lack of explanations come from Japanese "high-context" culture (Hall, 1976), where a message is deeply embedded in shared assumptions; therefore a lot of explanation is not necessary. On the other hand, the American students' writings reflect "low-context" American culture, in which an aphorism, "Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you have told them" exists. Naturally, therefore, their writings reveal all the elements of the Toulmin Model, such as Warrants, Backing, Reservation, Qualification, not to mention Data and Claim.

It is also made clear that the Japanese students include their inner dialog in their writings. In the writing activity, it is, of course, important to go through several stages of thinking process, fluctuating back and forth, before reaching a final claim. However, it is not necessary to show these processes directly in the writing itself. Iribe (1998) says, "Revealing one's inner dialog in writing as logic is as shameful as walking on a thoroughfare wearing pajamas. That is to say, the thinking process is not equal to the development of logic." (p. 15) [Translated by the author.]

These shortcomings reflect distinctive traits of Japanese culture and the nature of the tradition of composition teaching in Japan and they present problems in terms of academic English context. However, they are not inherent problems. Through education, the Japanese students will be able to learn the styles required by academic English. The truth of the matter is that even the American students need training in order to express their opinions persuasively. According to Atkins and Ramanathan (1995), "socialization into middle-class 'essayist literacy' begins at home in early childhood and is powerfully

reinforced through the elementary/high school years, and is unconsciously assumed of literate middle-class adults in higher education and beyond." (p. 558) What this means is that the seeming differences in logical organization between the American samples and the Japanese samples are not an inherent problem, but the product of education. Therefore, if the Japanese students are exposed to the Western rhetorical tradition and learn the styles academic English requires, they will be able to write what is expected of academic English. For that purpose, the Toulmin model may be of help. The writer should have a clear **claim** backed by enough **warrants**, preferably with sufficient **backing**, and also modified by **reservations** and **qualifications** so as not to show any weakness in argument that might invite **counter-argument**.

In brief, writing teachers in Japan should realize the shortcomings of the Japanese students' writings that result from writing convention and educational tradition in Japan, and try to introduce the expectations of academic English in order to prepare them for the age of globalization.

Notes:

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[1] The model for argumentation presented in this section is adopted from Winterowd (1981).

[2] Toulmin himself used the term QUALIFIERS to indicate such adverbs as "perhaps," "undoubtedly." However, I decided to use QUALIFICATION, the term Winterowd (1981) uses, which has more extended meaning than what can be expressed by just adverbs.

[3] Toulmin himself admits that it is difficult to draw any sharp distinction between the elements, asking "how absolute is this distinction between data, on the one hand, and warrant on the other"; however, he concedes that "we shall find it possible in *some* situations to distinguish clearly two logical functions." (p. 99) (Emphasis is made by Toulmin)

[4] The "Western rhetoric" I refer here is the one largely based on Aristotelian rhetorical logic.

[5] I owe the outline of these questions to Hazen (1987).

[6] I must admit that the term "euthanasia" was not clearly defined at this point. The students as well as I disregarded the fine classifications of different types of euthanasia.

[7] The samples incorporated in the text are the original ones with the students' grammatical errors kept intact.

[8] The similar idea is found in Keupper (1978).

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Appendix

Euthanasia has been a controversy since it was first performed. Is it ethical? Are we playing god? Are the ones being helped truly awarded of their decision, or is their decision clouded by the pain? These are just a few of the questions many people have on their minds. Still, with all of the controversies, I approve of euthanasia.

Claim = [Thesis Statement]

Although it may seem like we are playing god (to those who believe), I think that anyone who is in an extreme amount of pain or is no longer able to function on their own, should have the right to end their life in a graceful manner. Yes, I say it is graceful because, I don't think deteriorating in a bed or living on machines for years is a graceful way to die.[1] I think that euthanasia should only be performed when there is no more help, when it is hopeless.

Warrant 1

Backing 1

Perhaps [people] in extreme pain may not be thinking clearly, but would you, if you were in the same situation? Does that mean that you should stay alive to endure it? I have a friend that had a mother with brain tumors. The woman was in excruciating

Warrant 2

Backing 2

Warrant 3

Backing 3

pain and there was nothing more that the doctors could do. One day the pain must have been too much to handle, so she took a shotgun and shot herself in the head. Her son then came home and had to see this. He still has nightmares about it to this day.[2] I believe that if euthanasia was more accepted and available, the mother would have had this performed. It then would prevented the son from the misery he still bears today. Euthanasia will help prevent people from taking these drastic measures. Another example when euthanasia should be performed is when someone is on feeding or breathing machines. If a person will never be out of the bed and conscious again, why keep them alive. I know a woman that stayed in the rest home for eight years on feeding tubes, unconscious until she finally died. This is a terrible thing to witness, someone lying there alive against her will,[3] the machines pumping unwanted life into her. ....(A-30)

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