

Intersubjectivity and Emotion in Narratives of Inherited War Memories

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Abstract

Inherited-memory transfer differs from direct-experience transfer, although the mechanisms, effects, limitations, and transformations in terms of how historical facts are transmitted across first, second, and third generations remain unclear. This study explores the expression of stance and emotion in narratives of inherited war memories, as recounted by second-generation Japanese narrators reflecting on the wartime experiences of family members during World War II. The study draws on the theoretical frameworks of dialogic syntax and stance theory, focusing on the analyses of lexical and syntactic resonance. The following conclusions were drawn: First, the narrative of inherited memory is jointly constructed, and it features layered stances that encompass the first-generation's depiction and evaluation of past events, alongside the second-generation's evaluation of both the narrated events as well as the first-generation's oration. The first generation's evaluation is presented through intensive repetitions, evidential markers, and demonstratives, whereas the narrator's evaluation involves meta stance using particles that affect the listener's cognition. Second, additional narrative organizational elements, such as textual and interactional markers, are included to connect themes and rhemes. These multilayered structures, featuring syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations with multiple subjectivities, facilitate the development of a cohesive narrative. Third, the joint engagement creates an intersubjectively-constructed narrative space as a foundation for aligning with the listener, aiming to foster intersubjectivity with the third generation.

Keywords: Intersubjectivity, Dialogic Syntax, Narrative, Inherited War Memory, Resonance, Stance

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Introduction

Nations worldwide, including Japan, face challenges in transmitting the memory of their sacrifices during World War II (WWII). This study aims to explore the mechanisms, effects, limitations, and transformations involved in transmitting historical facts across the first, second, and third generations, examining how people recount events that they have not experienced and the structure of inter-generational narratives.

The study examines the linguistic expression of stance and emotion in narratives of inherited war memories recollected by second-generation WWII narrators, relating to the wartime experiences of a family member. Inherited-memory transfer differs from direct-experience transfer. Especially in narratives of inherited war memories, stance and language play significant roles. Stance is a multi-faceted construct that involves the use of grammatical resources not only to shape personal or political identity, but also to construct the social world and engage in social action (Johnstone, 2007). The topic of war memories has been widely explored across various domains. Studies on narratives of memory and post-memory (Hirsch, 2008) have identified differences between first-generation and second-generation narratives. First-generation narratives (Hoffmann, 2004) reflect the emotional aftermath of the atrocities experienced, focusing on “a chaos of emotion ... rather than any coherent narration” and “a universe of absolute forces and absolute unreason, a world in which ultimate things happened without cause or motive.” Conversely, second-generation narratives (Sicher, 2000) represent memory, generational distance from history, highlighting the need to preserve memory and its evolving function. To date, no study has explored the discursive and linguistic aspects of such narratives. At best, studies of narrative discourse analysis have highlighted content-related aspects, such as causality within the narrative or considerations about where to begin the story, what to include, and what to omit (Labov, 2008). They also address function-related aspects such as sense-making (Bruner, 2008), construction of identity along multiple story lines (Harré, 2008), and positioning and stance-taking (Schiffrin, 2006).

Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that narrators employ linguistic resources, including structural and lexical resonance, to build intersubjectivity with their parents, and further foster intersubjectivity with their listeners while constructing in-the-moment narratives. Narrators especially express their emotional and moral interpretations through resonance, while dynamically shaping these interpretations by integrating and synthesizing the past and the present.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study relies on the theoretical frameworks of dialogic syntax (Du Bois, 2014) and stance theory (Du Bois, 2007). Dialogic syntax is a linguistic framework conceptualized by Du Bois (2014), which explores how grammar organizes mappings between utterances to create meaning and facilitate engagement. The dialogic syntax encompasses analytical tools such as parallelism (Sakita, 2006), priming, analogy, and dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981).¹ Its central mechanism is resonance, or the process of activating inherent affinities and relationships

¹ Dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981) is not limited to cross-turn exchanges but stems from within the utterances of a single speaker, for it points to “engagement with prior words and structures” (Du Bois, 2014, p. 372).

between comparable linguistic elements. The dynamic structural organization of language that crosses the boundary between interlocutors or utterances is represented on the diagram.

Speakers selectively recycle features of prior utterances to express and negotiate their upcoming stance. Stance and stance relations are often embedded and effectively highlighted through a structural frame of resonance (Du Bois, 2007; Nir, 2017; Sakita, 2013, 2017). Stance-taking involves the stance subject evaluating the stance object, and by so doing, positions herself/himself. It establishes a relationship, particularly in alignment with a prior stance-taker. In this sense, stance-taking often not only involves subjectivity, but also intersubjectivity (Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012). This study examines how intersubjectivity unfolds in stories told by narrators who are not direct experiencers but share an intersubjective space with the experiencer.

Methodology

I interviewed Japanese second-generation WWII narrators and collected retellings of the most memorable personal memories shared by their parents. The data were transcribed and analyzed for stance-taking and language, especially the use of resonance. The analysis focused on (1) how the narrator positions herself/himself in relation to the first generation and her/his own experience, (2) how the narrator expresses her/his stance in terms of vocabulary and syntactic structure, and (3) how the narrative unfolds, by emphasizing resonance on diagraphs. Narrative excerpts were represented in diagraphs as a tool for analyses. The descriptive and evaluative expressions were analyzed from the perspective of stance subjects, stance contents, positionings, connection to themes, linguistic characteristics and co-occurring expressions, epistemicity, and evidentiality.

Results

Narrative Content and Organizational Structure

(1) is an excerpt from a narrative by a second-generation Japanese male. During WWII, his father lived with his family in a Japanese colony in Pyongyang, North Korea. His grandfather was captured by Russian soldiers and never returned. His father often shared his memories with his son. In excerpt (1), the narrator recounted his father's descriptions of Russian soldiers wearing watches that they had stolen from Japanese people; (2) is its English translation.

(1) その時計を右手にも左手にも腕にも、いっぱい、こう、つけていると。何個も何個も何個も、腕、腕に、つけているって言って。(中略) 変なことをするっていうね、例で。まあ、おかしい人たちっていう、例でね、そういう例がね、い、いっぱい出てくるんですよ。その、手、腕中に、こう、つけている、(中略) 日本人から、こう、ね、奪ったものを、腕中に、こう、何か、こう、勲章みたいだね、こうやって何個も、1個でいいのにな、時計はって言って。その、常識と、常識はずれっていうふうなことをすごい言ってるわけです。で、こんなに腕につけてるんだとか言って、結局僕が、聞いている僕が、変だねって思うような、感じなのね。物言いですよ

(2) They wore the watches both on the right and left wrists as well as on arms; many, like this, they were wearing (he says). Many, many, many, arms, on arms, they were wearing (he) says. ... (They were) doing strange things, you know, such examples. Indeed, they were insane people, such examples, you know, that kind of examples came up a lot, you know. Well, hands, all over the arms, like this, wearing, ... What they

stole from the Japanese, like this, you know, all over the arms, like this, such as, like this, like medals you know, like this many. One is enough you know, as for watch, (he) says. The, common sense and, lack of common sense, something like that, (he) was saying very much. And, they wear them on arms like this many, (he) says and, after all, I, I who is listening, consider it as strange, kind of thing, you know. Such a manner of speaking, you know.

This is spread out on Diagram 1. The white rows have Roman scripts, and gray rows represent English annotations.²

Diagram 1: Overall Structure for (1)

Textual, Interpersonal	Demonstrative, Meta	Evidential, Cognitive
1 sono tokei o the watch OBJ	migite nimo hidarite nimo ude nimo right hand on too, left hand on too, arms on too	
2 ippai, many	kou, DEM	tsukete iru to. wearing QT ①
3 nanko mo nanko mo nanko mo many many many	ude, ude ni, arms, arms on	tsukete iru tte itte. wearing QT say and
4 henna koto o suru strange thing OBJ do	tte iu ne, rei P mean FP example	de. and. +1
5 maa, DM	okashina hito tachi insane people	de ne, and FP ②
6 sou such	iu, rei mean example	ga ne, SUB FP ②
7 i-ippai m- many		detekuru n desu yo. appear N COP FP
8 sono, DM	te, ude ju: ni, hands, arms, all over, on	tsukete iru, wearing
9 nihonjin kara, Japanese from		kou, ne, ubatta mono o, DEM FP stolen item OBJ +2 ①
10 ude ju: ni, arms, all over, on	kou, DEM	
11 nanka, DM		kou, kunshou mitaini ne, DEM medal like FP ①
12 kou yatte nanko mo, like this many		
13 ikko de ii noni ne, one good enough but FP		tokei wa tte itte. watch TOP QT say and ①
14 sono, DM	jo:shiki common sense	to, P
15 jo:shiki hazure common sense lack	tte iu huuna koto o P mean like thing OBJ	sugoi itteru wake desu. very much saying reason COP ②
16 de, and	konna ni this much	ude ni arms on
17 kekkyoku boku ga, after all I SUB		tsukete iru n da toka itte wearing N COP or say and ①
18 kiiteru boku ga, listening I SUB		
19 henda ne strange FP	tte omou youna P think like	
20		kanji nano ne. impression AUX P FP
21		mono ii desu yo. manner of speaking COP FP

Diagram 1 maps the correlation between linguistic features and evaluations with first- and second-generation narrator subjectivities using the marked resonance. Among horizontal lines,

² The following abbreviations are used for grammatical terms in linguistic interlinear glossing in diagrams.

- AUX = auxiliary verb
- COP = copula
- DEM = demonstrative
- DM = discourse marker
- FP = final particle
- N = nominalizer
- OBJ = object marker
- P = particle
- QT = quotative marker
- SUB = subject marker
- TOP = topic marker

the non-circled parts (lines 1–3, 8–10, 12–13, 16) represent first-generation subjectivity (as marked with the encircled 1 on the right side of the diagraph). The yellow-highlighted parts in dotted circles (lines 4–7, 14–15, 17–21) represent second-generation subjectivity (encircled 2). Line 11 is a combination of first- and second-generation subjectivities (encircled 1 and 2). The resonance is noticeable within the unity of the evaluations and descriptions attributed to each generation, which will be explained with separate diagraphs below. Meanwhile, among vertical columns, the pink-highlighted circles encompass narrative organizational elements. The column on the extreme left includes textual or interactional features, the central column represents demonstrative adverbs or meta-level expressions, and the column on the extreme right includes evidential or cognitive markers. To scrutinize the narrative content and organizational structure, Diagraph 1 is classified into three diagraphs containing utterances made from first- and second-generation stances with corresponding subjectivities.

Diagraph 2 is an excerpt of the horizontal lines that reflect the evaluations made with first-generation subjectivity. The narrator’s father’s first-generation evaluation of the enemy soldiers is, “The soldiers unnecessarily wore on their wrists many watches that they had stolen from the Japanese.”

Diagraph 2: First-Generation Stance

	Theme			Rheme	
1	<i>sono tokei o</i> the watch OBJ	<i>migite nimo hidarite nimo ude nimo</i> right hand on too, left hand on too, arms on too			
2	<i>ippai,</i> <u>many</u>		<i>kou,</i> DEM	<i>tsukete iru</i> wearing	<i>to.</i> QT
3	<i>nanko mo nanko mo nanko mo</i> <u>many many many</u>	<i>ude, ude ni,</i> arms, arms on		<i>tsukete iru</i> wearing	<i>tte itte.</i> QT say and
8	<i>sono,</i> DM	<i>te, ude ju: ni,</i> hands, arms, all over, on	<i>kou,</i> DEM	<i>tsukete iru,</i> wearing	
9	<i>nihonjin kara,</i> Japanese from		<i>kou, ne,</i> DEM FP	<i>ubatta mono o,</i> stolen item OBJ	+2
10		<i>ude ju: ni,</i> arms, all over, on	<i>kou,</i> DEM		
12	<i>kou yatte</i> like this	<i>nanko mo,</i> <u>many</u>			
13		<i>ikko de ii noni ne,</i> one good <u>enough</u> but FP		<i>tokei wa</i> watch TOP	<i>tte itte.</i> QT say and
16	<i>de,</i> and	<i>konna ni</i> this <u>much</u>	<i>ude ni</i> arms on	<i>tsukete iru n da</i> wearing N COP	<i>toka itte</i> or say and
	Textual, Interpersonal		Demonstrative		Evidential

quantifier body part+locative *ni*

<The soldiers unnecessarily wore on their wrists many watches that they had stolen from the Japanese.>

Judging from the content, these lines directly reflect the narrator’s father’s descriptions based on what he had directly experienced or witnessed. Principally, the narrator reports his father’s depiction of the enemy soldiers. First, the non-colored part includes information categorized into themes and rhemes. The theme section includes watches, Japanese, numerousness, and arms and hands, while the rheme section incorporates wearing and robbing. These construct the main body of the first generation’s subjective evaluations of enemy soldiers. Within each column, the repetitive use of certain features can be observed. In the theme section, the resonance of stance quantifiers *ippai* and *nanko mo* (many) that intensify numerousness leads to the evaluative comment “one is good enough, isn’t it?” in line 13. This intensity is amplified by another resonance in the column of “body part and locative particle *ni*.” Starting from *migite nimo hidarite nimo ude nimo* (on right hand too, on left hand too, on arms too) in line 1, the repetitive use of *te* (hands), *ude* (arms), *ude ni* (on arms), *ude ju:ni* (all over the arms) amplifies the unusual behavior of the enemy soldiers. In the rheme section *tsukete iru* (wearing) repeatedly appears. Second, the rest of the vertical columns (colored pink) connect these pieces

of information to organize a narrative structure. The middle column between the theme and rheme contains the demonstrative adverb *kou* (this way) that connects the speaker and hearer in terms of the spatial-temporal axis. Events from the past are carried into the present conceptually, as the narrator does not actually physically re-enact them.³ This demonstrative *kou* assumes the function of a discourse marker that directs listeners to focus on what follows—in this case “wearing”—emphasizing that the enemy soldiers were indeed wearing numerous watches. The column on the extreme right mostly contains evidential markers, including quotative particles (*to*, *tte*) and *say* verbs (*itte*), which explicitly attribute the descriptions and evaluations to his father. The *say* verb is suffixed with a conjunction particle *-te* (and) representing continuity. The column on the extreme left contains textual and interpersonal connectives: a discourse marker and a conjunction *and*. They organize the oral narrative text.

In addition to the themes and rhemes that compose the main body of the narrative, evidentials and demonstratives also play significant roles to directly attribute the evaluations to the first generation and direct listeners to experience first-generation emotions. In each column of different functions of the narrative, resonance is observed.

Meanwhile, Diagraph 3 excerpted the horizontal lines that are evaluations containing the second-generation narrator’s subjectivity. The narrator’s message is, “I heard my father recounting about the enemy soldiers being strange, insane, and lacking common sense.”

Diagraph 3: Second-Generation Stance

	Theme				Rheme		
4		<i>henna koto o suru</i> strange thing OBJ do	<i>tte</i> P	<i>iu ne,</i> mean FP	<i>rei</i> example	<i>de.</i> and	+1
5	<i>maa,</i> DM	<i>okashina hito tachi</i> insane people	<i>tte</i> P	<i>iu,</i> mean	<i>rei</i> example	<i>de</i> and	<i>ne,</i> FP
6		<i>sou</i> such		<i>iu,</i> mean	<i>rei</i> example	<i>ga</i> SUB	<i>ne,</i> FP
7	<i>i- ippai</i> m- many				<i>detekuru</i> appear	<i>n desu</i> N COP	<i>yo.</i> FP
14	<i>sono,</i> DM	<i>jo:shiki</i> common sense	<i>to,</i> P				
15		<i>jo:shiki hazure</i> common sense lack	<i>tte</i> P	<i>iu huuna</i> mean like	<i>koto o</i> thing OBJ	<i>sugoi itteru</i> very much saying	<i>wake desu.</i> reason COP
17	<i>kekkyoku</i> after all	<i>boku ga,</i> I SUB					
18	<i>kiiteru</i> listening I SUB	<i>boku ga,</i> I SUB					
19		<i>henda ne</i> strange FP	<i>tte</i> P	<i>omou youna</i> think like			
20					<i>kanji</i> impression	<i>nano</i> AUX P	<i>ne.</i> FP
21					<i>mono ii</i> manner of speaking	<i>desu</i> COP	<i>yo.</i> FP

Textual, Interpersonal

Meta

Cognitive

<I heard my father recounting about the enemy soldiers being strange, insane, and lacking common sense.>

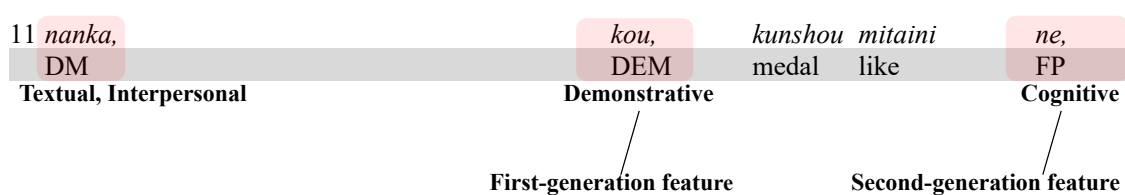
First, in the non-colored portions, the narrator’s depiction of his father recapitulating about enemy soldiers emphasizes that their actions are strange (*henna*) (line 4), that they are insane (*okashina*) people (line 5), and lack common sense (*jo:shiki hazure*) (lines 14 and 15). The narrator *boku* (I) who was listening to his father’s story is specified as a subject of these

³ Hoshino, Tajima, & Takasaki (2022) reported that among the 1,781 occurrences of *kou* that they examined, 911 were adverbial use, preceding verbs, while 870 were categorized as not (often without gesture) and function as fillers to gain attention to or prompt the succeeding utterance. The *kou* in Diagraph 2 has a verb to modify but does not accompany gesture, thus falls on a continuum between a demonstrative adverb and a discourse marker.

evaluations, by being marked with a nominative case-marking particle *ga* (lines 17 and 18). The rheme column illustrates that the narrator is positioning himself at a meta-level to objectively comment on how his father recalled the events, by repetitive use of *rei* (example) with the expressions *kanji* (impression) and *mono ii* (manner of speaking). Second, the vertical columns colored pink connect the evaluations to organize a narrative structure. The middle columns between the theme and rheme encompass the repetitive use of meta-stance expressions “mean,” “think,” and “like,” to denote the nature of the evaluations as interpretation and approximation. Although the particles *tte* and *to* share morphological features with the quotative final particles present when examining first-generation subjectivities in Diagraph 2, the ones in Diagraph 3 are nominalizing particles that connect between theme and rheme. The column on the extreme right contains final particles *ne* and *yo*, in contrast to the repetitive use of the quotative markers in the column on the extreme right of first-generation evaluations in Diagraph 2. The particles *ne* and *yo* work on the listener’s perception to accept the narrator’s view, according to Izuhara (2003). *Ne* assumes that the listener accepts the speaker’s perception, and through the process of seeking the listener’s consent, it functions to draw the listener into the speaker’s cognitive domain. *Yo* influences the listener’s perception to induce certain changes, or encourage a specific action. In lines 5 and 6, the narrator has evaluated the enemy soldiers as strange and insane by judging from his father’s narration. With the final particle *ne*, the narrator draws the listener into his cognitive domain, seeking alignment from the current audience, in an attempt to extend the already-established intersubjectivity between his father and himself to embrace the current audience. In line 7, using the particle *yo*, the narrator expects the listener to realize that he viewed his father’s narration as full of examples that the enemy soldiers were strange and insane. In lines 20 and 21, using the particles *ne* and *yo*, the narrator expects the listener to accept his impression that his father’s oration was full of resentment toward the enemy soldiers. In the column on the extreme left, discourse markers fulfill the textual and interpersonal connective work; and an adverb *kekkyoku* “after all” or “in the end” sums up the ordering and narrative causality.

Additionally, Diagraph 4 reveals that line 11 is a combination of the first- and second-generation grammatical features that was observed in the previous two excerpts.

Diagraph 4: Mixed Stance



The demonstrative adverb *kou* was the first-generation feature in Diagraph 2. When combined with a discourse marker *nanka*, it often assumes a set use of a discourse-marker *nanka kou* and co-occurs with an approximation marker *mitaini*, as observed in Diagraph 4. The final particle *ne* was the second-generation feature in Diagraph 3.

Diagraphs 2, 3, and 4 are interconnected and construct Diagraph 1 within a narrative that contains layered stances, encompassing the first-generation’s depiction and evaluation of past events, alongside the second-generation narrator’s personal evaluation of both the events and past narrative retelling. The narrator recounts the first generation’s subjective evaluation of the threat and chaos through repetitive phrases featuring evidential quotative markers and

demonstratives, whereas the narrator's evaluation involves meta-level stances, with the particles affecting the listener's cognition to accept the narrator's view.

Discussion

The spontaneous oral narrative that the narrator develops appears seemingly irregular, marked by frequent stumbling, repairs, and repetitions, as observed in (1). It seems to possess an unplanned haphazard structure, which has often been mistakenly attributed to daily language. However, when spread out on diagraphs, its systematic nature is revealed. Linguistic resources with various functions are resonated, paralleled, and structured in paradigmatic and syntagmatic grammatical relations, across multi-layered rows and columns. Correlations between linguistic features and the first- and second-generation narrator subjectivities are clearly mapped through marked resonance. The narrator's stance shifts over time, with evaluations from each stance organized within the narrative structure, as represented in the diagraphs.

Diagraph 1 illustrates that the narrative features of the first and second generations, which past studies examined independently, appear together in the inherited-memory narrative in a cyclical order, with specific linguistic resources accompanying each narrative features. In the present data, when recounted with first-generation subjectivity, a chaos of emotion, absolute forces and unreason, ultimate things without cause or motive (Hoffmann, 2004) appear with intensity, while with second-generation subjectivity, distanced and meta-level stances (Sicher, 2000) are often included. What was extracted in Diagraph 2 was more of a depiction of "truthful" facts, when the narrator positions himself as his father's spokesperson to convey the information he had received from his father. He uses intense and amplified resonance, filled with repetition and exaggeration, to describe how the enemy soldiers' behaviors were extremely unreasonable, which reflects his father's original evaluation. The narrator attributes factuality and fidelity to his father using evidential markers, while using demonstrative markers to render reality. Here, the evaluation is supposedly based on his father's subjectivity, but is conveyed through the narrator's linguistic choices, aiming to elicit an empathic response from the listener. The intersubjectivity between the narrator and his father further arouses intersubjectivity with the listener. Meanwhile, what was extracted in Diagraph 3 was the narrator's personal evaluation of his father's story and the manner in which it was narrated. Here, he positions himself as a receiver of his father's story. He repeatedly uses evaluative words such as "strange," "insane," "common sense," the meta-talk expressions "example," "impression," "manner of speaking," and the final particles that invite listeners' cognitive engagement. With his evaluation from his personal stance, he induces the listener's empathic intake of what he presents, arousing intersubjectivity between them.

Furthermore, the organizational elements of the narrative are positioned across the two diagraphs, as vertical mappings in resonance. These include textual and interactional expressions, elements linking theme and rheme, meta-stance features, and evidential or cognitive markers, depending on the subjectivity involved. In this manner, the multilayered structures with syntagmatic and paradigmatic grammatical relations, effectively construct a cohesive narrative.

Conclusion

In the narrative of inherited memories, participants from the past and present are jointly engaged in the retellings of events within a complex structure that includes both objective

events and personal evaluations. It reflects the subjectivity of the narrator and the first-generation original experiencer. In addition to first-generation evaluations of the events, the narrator introduces his own evaluations in a cyclical manner, developing an intersubjectively-constructed narrative. Their intersubjectivity enhances emotional involvement and engagement, fostering alignment with the third-generation listener, leading to tripartite intersubjectivity as the goal of narrative telling.

Besides, the narrative of inherited memory is not based on the narrator's direct experience; thus, the narrator's accountability is limited, and the first generation occupies much of the intersubjective space as a premise. Simultaneously, it represents a potentially transitional process where subjective accountability is assumed, and the narrator's interpretation and evaluation are intertwined. Ultimately, the narrative of inherited war memory is an integration of memory, stance, emotion, empathy, and language.

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