The main aim of this paper is to reveal how Japanese native and non-native speakers learn how to collaborate in introducing and developing topics in conversations involving contact situations between native and non-native speakers. This concept of collaboration was proposed by Okazaki (1994), who suggested that not only non-native speakers but also native speakers should learn how to speak in contact situations.

In Chapter 1, the aforementioned research purpose is presented with its background. Problems to be solved and the composition of the research are also described.

Chapter 2 first reviews three paradigms of Japanese language teaching and the competencies in each paradigm. The keyword in the first paradigm of Japanese language teaching was “teaching,” and the main focus entailed understanding linguistic structures using the audio-lingual and direct methods. The second paradigm used the keyword “supporting” and placed the most importance on the ability to communicate. In the 1980s, two significant hypotheses related to language learning were proposed: the input hypothesis and interaction hypothesis, which prompted researchers to focus on the language performance of native speakers. Many papers regarding this paradigm thus analyzed foreigner
talk and the negotiation of meaning in conversations. The third paradigm used the keyword “coexisting” or “symbiosis”; during this period, the main focus of Japanese language teaching shifted from “how to teach” to “how to learn.” In this paradigm, “symbiosis Japanese language teaching” suggested that both native and non-native speakers needed to learn about language performance in their conversations. Prompted by the proposals, some researchers started analyzing how native speakers learn the “symbiosis” of the Japanese language through the experience of interacting with non-native speakers.

Previous research concerning conversation topics is subsequently reviewed in this chapter. Specifically, research on the linguistic features of topic shifts, contents of introduced topics, and the roles and relationships of participants is presented with what is left to be analyzed.

Chapter 3 illustrates what most concerns native and non-native Japanese speakers concerning topics in conversations involving contact situations. This chapter presents semi-structured interviews with eight native and eight non-native speakers. All the data were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. Thus, it was revealed that both types of speakers cared about topic selection and topic development in many ways. Moreover, the experience of interacting with each other and that of learning in Japanese language classes (Japanese language teaching classes for native speakers) were found to be factors that can influence what native and non-native speakers care about.

In Chapter 4, the research method is described in detail. Using the results of the semi-structured interviews presented in Chapter 3, this research controlled native and non-native speakers according to different contact experiences, which are defined as the experiences of participating in contact situations. Five types of first encounters were audio recorded and videotaped: (1) between native speakers, (2) between native speakers with considerable experience and non-native speakers with considerable experience, (3) between native speakers with considerable experience and non-native speakers with a little experience, (4) between native speakers
with a little experience and non-native speakers with a little experience, and (5) between native speakers with considerable experience and non-native speakers with a little experience. Each type of first encounter consisted of eight conversations; 40 conversations in total were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

In Chapter 5, the results of discourse analysis of topic introduction are described. The first section illustrates the expressions that both the native and non-native Japanese speakers used when they shifted conversation topics in first encounters. Consequently, collaborative shifts with closing expressions of both types of speakers were observed more in the native speakers, unilateral shifts with a closing expression of either type of speaker or interlocutor were observed more in the non-native speakers with considerable experience, and unexpected shifts without any closing expressions were observed more in the non-native speakers with a little experience. Furthermore, it was revealed that the native and non-native speakers with considerable experience shifted topics without closing or opening expressions, but only in limited contexts. However, it was apparent that the non-native speakers with a little experience shifted topics in a risky manner.

The second section analyzes the types of topics that the speakers introduced and how the contact experience influenced both the native and non-native speakers. The results enabled identifying five topic categories: "basic information," "countries and languages," "future," "student life," and "other." The quantitative analysis showed that the non-native speakers with a little experience tended to introduce topics related to "countries and languages" more often from the beginning of conversations, whereas the non-native speakers with considerable experience tended to introduce topics related to "student life" more frequently. The researchers determined that topics on "countries and languages" emphasized the differences between the speaker types, whereas "student life" topics emphasized the similarities. The qualitative analysis suggests that non-native speakers with a little experience should be careful to avoid overemphasizing differences.
Chapter 6 analyzes how native and non-native speakers develop each topic. In the first section, the results of analyzing the participation roles of speakers and listeners are presented. The main speakers of each topic were coded and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Overall, the speakers with a little experience tended to participate as the main speakers, whereas those with considerable experience tended to participate as listeners. In conversations between the native speakers with considerable experience and the non-native speakers with considerable experience, both types tended to participate as speakers, and many topics were introduced and developed in a friendly manner.

The second section analyzes the types of relationships that the speakers emphasized when they developed each topic. The results suggested that the speakers with considerable experience tended to emphasize symmetrical relationships, even when they developed topics related to nations and cultures. By contrast, the speakers with a little experience tended to emphasize asymmetrical relationships such as that between Japanese people and Chinese people and that between native and non-native speakers.

In Chapter 7, the results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 are considered from the perspective of collaboration. After analyzing the data on the observed collaborative behaviors of the native and non-native speakers, it was discussed how both types of speakers could learn the behaviors and how Japanese language teachers might be able to incorporate them into an educational framework.

Finally, Chapter 8 illustrates the tasks of future research.