

JAPANESE ACCENTUATIONS BY FOREIGN STUDENTS AND JAPANESE SPEAKERS OF NON-TOKYO DIALECT

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ABSTRACT

This study is the first attempt toward the unified theory of acquisition of Tokyo dialect accentuation by non-native speakers of Japanese and the Japanese speakers of non-Tokyo dialect, i.e., speakers from Ibaraki prefecture in Japan.

The data are analyzed in regards to the interim accentual system, which is predicted to be produced in the process of the acquisition and be different from that of their mother tongue (dialect) or that of target language (dialect), and which is called interlanguage [1] or interdialect [9].

The characteristics of both interlanguage and interdialect was examined and it was found that all subjects seemed to have created the same system under the strong influence of their target language accentual system.

1. METHODOLOGY

The whole data is discourse of spontaneous utterances by subjects. The main data is discourse collected three times, 1 month (Stage 1), 2 months (Stage 2), and 5 months (Stage 3) after start of learning Japanese by 11 subjects (S1 - S11) with various mother tongues (Table 1).

Table 1: background of 11 subjects

subject	country	mother tongue	sex
S1	France	French	m
S2	Viet Nam	Vietnamese	m
S3	Korea	Korean (Kyung Sang Do)	m
S4	China	Chinese	m
S5	India	Bengali	m
S6	Thailand	Thai	m
S7	Iran	Persian	m
S8	Czech	Czech	m
S9	Turkey	Turkish	f
S10	China	Chinese	m
S11	Tanzania	Swahili	m

Data is tape-recorded, transcribed and then analyzed mainly

from the view point of the location of accent nucleus (AN).

The results of the analysis are compared to those of the author's previous 2 researches. One of them is on a data consisting of 6 individual conversations between an advanced level student, whose mother tongue is English, and a native Japanese speaker [10, 11, 12, 13]. The other one is discourse of 8 students of Ibaraki dialect speakers who were born and raised in Ibaraki prefecture and their parents are also native Ibaraki dialect speakers [14].

2. INTERLANGUAGE STRATEGIES (IS)

It was confirmed by the data analysis that the subjects seem to have created three types of accentual patterns.

2.1. Formation of IS

Through the analysis of subjects' misaccentuations it was deduced that subjects seem to have created the following three types of accentual patterns (i.e., interlanguage strategies "IS"), two of which are identified with English speaking subjects at advanced stage. The third type seems to be produced not frequently by subjects at advanced stage, and none of Ibaraki dialect speakers produced it. Underlines in the following indicate correct accents, while accent marks indicate the accents placed by the subjects.

<Type 1>

[ISA] The first syllable is accented. E.g., *tákusan* "a lot".

[ISB] The mora preceding the boundary of components is accented. E.g., *watási-no* "my",

[ISC] The second mora from the end of component is accented. E.g., *kíríi-na* "beautiful".

[ISD] The third or more morae from the end of component is accented. E.g., *konkúríito* "concrete".

[ISO] Phrase is not accented. E.g., *sensei-ga* "teacher".

<Type 2>

[ISOA] ISO+ISA E.g., *watási-no héya-ga* "my room".

[ISOB] ISO+ISB E.g., *kono okó-san-ga* "this child".

[ISOC] ISO+ISC E.g., *totemo kantán-no* "very simple".

[ISOD] ISO+ISD E.g., *kono aatisuto-ga* “this artist”.

<Type 3>

More than 2 accent nucleuses are placed in a phrase.

E.g., *nigiyaka-désita* “was lively”.

Type 1 seems to be the basic type of interlanguage strategies and overgeneralizations of the patterns of the target language. Type 2 and 3 are variations of type 1.

2.2. Development of IS Applications

It may be surmised that there is a certain order of IS development [10,11,12].

(1) Three Types of IS

Table 2: Application of IS by non native speakers of Japanese

	Type1	Type2	Type3	Total no. of <i>bunsetsu</i>	Correct accents
Stage 1	189(34.6%)	2(0.4%)	17(3.1%)	547	62.0%
Stage 2	210(27.6%)	11(1.4%)	38(5.0%)	760	64.5%
Stage 3	286(24.2%)	18(1.5%)	18(1.5%)	1184	71.3%
Advanced stage	319(8.4%)	206(5.4%)	25(0.7%)	3787	80.0%

As shown in Table 1, Type 1 is applied most frequently throughout at Stage 1 to the advanced level and seems to be the main IS. While the percentage of total number of applications of Type 1 by 11 subjects in total number of accentual phrases is decreased as subjects' leaning continues, the percentage of applications of Type 2 increases at more advanced stage. As for Type 3, subjects seem to use it more frequently at the earlier stage of learning Japanese.

Hence it seems that Type 1 is basic IS, Type 2 is comparatively advanced IS, and Type 3 is primitive IS.

The same order of IS development is admitted in case of Ibaraki dialect speakers. (Table3).

Table 3: Application of IS by Ibaraki dialect speakers

	Type 1	Type2	Total no. of <i>bunsetsu</i>	T1/T2	Correct accents
Group1	290(10.7%)	157(5.8%)	2714	1.8	(77.6%)
Group2	56(3.8%)	61(4.1%)	1478	0.9	(87.6%)
Group3	22(1.5%)	14(0.9%)	1422	-	(96.6%)

The number of subjects of Group1 is 4, Group2 is 2, and Group3 is 2. According to percentage of correct accents, Group3 is the most advanced group, and Group 2 is more advanced than group1. The ratio of application of Type 1 to Type2 by Group1 is 1.8 and is higher than that of 0.9 by Group2, i.e., more advanced group. Therefore, Type2 seems to be more advanced than Type 1. However, none of Ibaraki

dialect speakers has applied Type3 IS. As far as the stage of Group3 is concerned, subjects produce correct accents 96.6% and the number of misaccentuations is limited. Therefore, it is impossible to compare which type is more improved between Type 1 and Type2 by Group3 subjects.

(2) Perceptual Sense Unit (PSU)

According to Kohno[5,6], the flow of sounds is perceived as a succession of units in both speaking and listening processes. This unit is generally composed of 7 ± 2 or less syllables and a unit of meaning is closely attached to it, i.e., *bunsetsu* which corresponds to an accentual phrase in Japanese. It is also claimed that in case of language learners, this unit is shorter and becomes longer as the learning advances and improve their understanding of meaning.

Based on this notion of unit, it can be explained that Type 1 is a basic and main IS, Type 2 is an advanced IS, and Type 3 is a relatively primitive IS.

In case of speakers from Ibaraki prefecture, it is a natural result that Type 3, which is primitive and shorter IS, is not applied, because Japanese is their mother tongue and they have already acquired meanings as well as grammar.

2.3. Variability of Applications of IS

Accentuation by all 11 subjects is variable [3] same as the results of advanced level Japanese learners [10,11,12] and Ibaraki dialect speakers [14]. A single subject may apply different IS even for a particular word depending on occasions. For example, L11 used Japanese word “teacher” 9 times in Stage 3, once correctly *sensei*, 5 times like *sensei* using ISA, and 3 times using ISO.

3. INTERLANGUAGE SYSTEM

A notion of interlanguage system is, as Corder [2] proposed, an internal representation of target language by the learners. I propose that it consists of the following 4 components:

1. universal property,
2. mother tongue (and other familiar languages),
3. input of target language, and
4. strategies for the above 2 and 3.

3.1. Universal Property

In general, the accent has a function of grouping an accentual phrase. A unit of accentual phrase often corresponds to perceptual sense unit (PSU), which is proposed by Kohno [5,6]. According to Kohno, PSU is a unit supported by “echoic memory” which is an innate competence of human beings. Moreover, he claims that this is one of the basic competences for acquisition of phonetics by second language learners.

In case of Japanese, this unit is *bunsetsu*, which consists of one independent component (morpheme or word) with or without one or more additional components. When subjects apply ISA, ISB, ISC, or ISD, placement of an accent nucleus (AN) in a phrase indicates an accentual unit.

However, in case of elementary level 11 subjects, the application of ISO, in which no AN is placed, shows a variety of endings which indicate an accentual unit by marking the border of each phrase. For example, the last syllable of a phrase is pronounced with high pitch, or with the falling pitch from high to low, or with longer syllable. On the other hand, some subjects raise the pitch of ending syllable at each phrase whether it is accented or unaccented. It appears that all of above examples indicate a unit of accentual phrase although none of these endings exist in target language.

Ibaraki dialect speakers have the same tendency to raise the pitch of the last syllable of a phrase when it is unaccented. This phenomenon occurs mostly among subjects who are not at advanced stage.

The function of grouping a phrase may be a universal property of accentuation.

We may conclude, therefore, that subjects apply the above universal property to indicate a unit of accentual phrase mainly for unaccented phrases.

3.2. Mother Tongue (and Other Familiar Languages)

(1) Mora and syllable

There are a lot of examples of misaccentuations by 11 subjects for accented long syllables that have 2 morae, as well as by English speaking advanced level subjects. This is because subjects do not count morae in their mother tongues, and AN is placed on the second mora in many cases. However, it is essential in Japanese to count and place the AN on the first mora of a long syllable, e.g., *okaásan* "mother".

(2) Borrowing of accentual pattern or strategy

Some examples appear to borrow the pattern from subjects' mother tongue or other familiar languages such as English [2]. They have been found in our data, for example, *Amérika no* "American".

In addition, we could find other examples which seem to borrow the strategies from their mother tongue or other familiar languages, for example, the first component of a compound word is accented as in English, e.g., *Kanázáwa-daigaku* "Kanazawa university" although only the second component should be accented in Japanese.

3.3. Input of Target Language

Interlanguage strategies, i.e., accentual patterns, appear to be created by subjects under the strong influence of target

language accentual system, such as overgeneralizations of accentual rules of Japanese.

Furthermore, subjects seem to apply the very target language strategies, here which native speakers of Japanese use.

These two features under the influence of the target language through input are considered to be the main constituent of interlanguage system of Japanese accentuation.

3.4. Strategies

The subjects appear to apply some strategies mainly (1) when they intake, generalize, and internalize individual examples as a system of IS, and moreover, (2) when they connect generalized IS to a individual phrase for pronunciation (output).

The subjects appear to employ the same strategies as those which native speakers use, i.e., more general and wider categories than ordinary rules [8], and are not concerned with the exact location of AN as shown in the following examples [10, 12].

(1) Foregrounding Strategy

According to this strategy, the AN is used to turn attention to a morphemic boundary, for example, *tate-mono* "building", *tosyo-kan* "library". However, words which are used very often and become familiar tend to have no AN, or sometimes lose AN. For example, some technical terms are unaccented when they are used among specialists [4], or some words which have been used for a long time sometimes lose their AN such as *densya*→*densya* "train". Probably this is because those words are perceived as one morpheme.

Subjects often produce misaccentuations to which they seem to employ this strategy, e.g., *watasi-no* "my"(ISB), *Nihón-go* "Japanese language"(ISB).

(2) Right Dominance Strategy

According to this strategy, whatever the accentuation of the left component is, if the right component has an AN, it is retained, e.g., *Nihon-ryōri* "Japanese food", *gohun-gurai* "about 5 minutes".

Examples of subjects' misaccentuations probably using this strategy are; *wakara-nai* "do not understand"(ISC), *hurui-désu* "old"(ISC).

Many other strategies are also applied by subjects, and those strategies appear to overlap each other [8, 12].

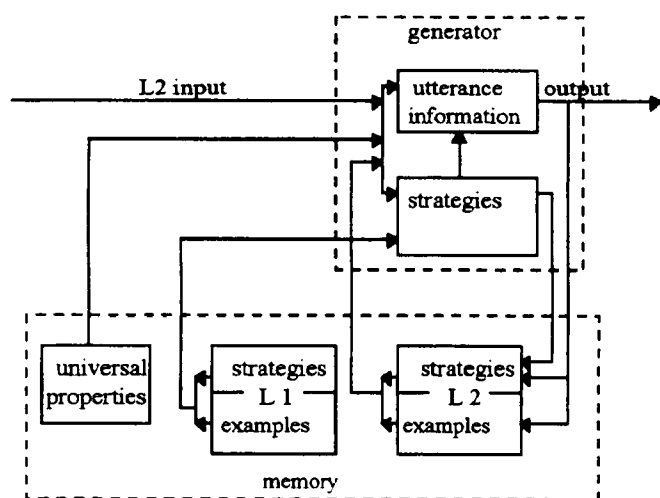
When strategies are used by native speakers, each of them seems to be connected with ordinary rules internally. However, when strategies are applied by subjects, they appear to be not connected with target language rules, which they have not acquired yet. Therefore, subjects produce overgeneralizations easily.

Furthermore, especially at early stage of learning, it may not be easy for subjects to understand accentuation from input [7], and the number of internalized examples of individual accentuation must be limited. Therefore, they appear to apply innate properties or accentual patterns of mother tongue instead, as strategies.

3.5. Model of Interlanguage System

The model of interlanguage system is shown below.

Figure 1: Model of Interlanguage system



4. CONCLUSION

Interlanguage system produced by subjects, whose mother tongues vary, has the same features as the interdialect system produced by the Japanese speakers of non-Tokyo dialect. Although their mother tongues are completely different from each other, it is likely that this phenomenon of unison takes place even for the accentuation because the target language for all of them is the same Tokyo dialect.

It seems that the main constituents of the system are target language input and strategies created through their perception of the target language rather than their mother tongue.

The interim accentual system, i.e., interlanguage and interdialect may constitute the learners' mental models with which they represent the target system.

The development of the application of interlanguage and interdialect strategies (IS) seems to parallel to the improvement of their perceptual sense unit (PSU).

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