TYPOLOGY OF PRONOUNS AND L2 ACQUISITION OF THE OPC EFFECT IN JAPANESE

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1. PURPOSE

2. The Overt Pronoun Constraint (OPC)

Overt pronouns cannot take quantified antecedents in null subject languages (Montalbetti 1984).

(1) English

a. Everyone said that he will come.
b. John said that he will come.

(2) Spanish

a. Nadie sabe que él vendra. Nobody knows that he will come.
   ‘Nobody knows that he will come.’

b. Juan cree que él es inteligente. John believes that he is intelligent.
   ‘John believes that he is intelligent.’

Sources: Alonso-Ovalle & D’Introno 2001, Montalbetti, 1984
(3) Japanese

a. Dare-ga_i [kare_i/j-ga/pro_i/j kuruma-o katta to] itta-no?
   Who-Nom he-Nom /pro car-Acc bought that say-Pst-Q
   ‘Who_i said that he_i/j/pro_i/j bought a car?’

b. Jon-ga_i [kare_i/j-ga/pro_i/j kuruma-o katta to] itta
   Jon-Nom he-Nom /pro car-Acc bought that say-Pst
   ‘John_i said that he_i/j/pro_i/j bought a car.’
Table 1. Interpretive differences of pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>language</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish/Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>antecedents</td>
<td>referential, quantified</td>
<td>referential, quantified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns</td>
<td>overt</td>
<td>overt, null</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bound variable interpretation</td>
<td>- Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-referential interpretation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Spanish overt pronouns exceptionally can take quantified antecedents when a null/overt alternation does not occur, such as in PPs, Focus and possessives. In contrast, Japanese overt pronouns consistently cannot take quantified antecedents.
3. PREVIOUS STUDIES


The OPC in Japanese and Spanish is acquired by L1 English speakers at early stages.

→No previous study exists on Japanese and Spanish as a L2-L1 combination.

RQ: Do L1 English speakers and L1 Spanish speakers acquire the OPC in Japanese in the same way? If they do not, is their L2 knowledge attributable to their L1s?
4. PREDICTION

FT/FA (Schwartz & Sprouse 1996)

FT: The initial state of L2 grammar is the end state of L1 grammar. All L1 properties can be transferred to the L2.

FA: L2 properties can be acquired by means of UG.

Prediction

L1 Spanish speakers should outperform L1 English speakers in observing the OPC at lower levels of proficiency.
5. STUDY

Participants: 15 Native Japanese speakers
30 L1 English speakers of L2 J (15 adv. 15 int.)
30 L1 Spanish speakers of L2 J (14 adv. 16 int.)

Table 2. L2ers’ proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 groups</th>
<th>J proficiency test [%] (mean (range))</th>
<th>Age of onset [years old] (mean (range))</th>
<th>Naturalistic exposure to J [years] (mean (range))</th>
<th>Use of J [hours per week]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>80 (71-91)</td>
<td>18 (11-23)</td>
<td>2.3 (0.1-6)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>52 (37-66)</td>
<td>20 (14-26)</td>
<td>2.6 (0.1-11)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>78 (69-97)</td>
<td>21 (14-33)</td>
<td>3.2 (0-11)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>50 (40-63)</td>
<td>24 (17-32)</td>
<td>1.4 (0-4)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Production of null subject pronouns in the translation task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>group</th>
<th>J-proficiency (%)</th>
<th>Production of null subjects</th>
<th>Mean (%) (range)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Matrix clause (%)</td>
<td>Complement clause (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All L2ers produced null subject pronouns at least 25% of the time
5.1 **Task1**: coreference judgment task

(4) Quantified antecedents (*everyone, someone*)

Minna_{i}-ga kinoo kare_{i/j/-ga/pro_{i}}-ga konpyuutaa-o tukatta to itteimasita
‘Everyone_{i} was saying that he_{i/j/pro_{i}} used a computer yesterday.’

Q. ‘Who used a computer?’

A. (a) ‘Same as everyone’ (bound interpretation)
   (b) ‘Another person’ (disjoint interpretation)
   (c) ‘I don’t know’

(5) Referential antecedents

Hayasi_{i}-san-wa atode kare_{i/j/-ga/pro_{i}} denwa-o kakeru to itteimasita
‘Mr. Hayashi_{i} was saying that he_{i/j/pro_{i}} would call later.’

4 conditions, n=4 for each condition
No difference between the controls and the L2 groups in rejecting bound variable interpretations of *kare*. A two-way ANOVA comparing the English groups with Spanish groups showed no significant main effect of L1 ($F(1,56)=0.135$, $p>0.05$) and a significant main effect of proficiency ($F(1,56)=5.20$, $p<0.05$).
Only the EI group did not make a distinction between the antecedents for *kare* \((t(14)=0.61, p=0.55)\)
Individual results (Task1)

Choice of *kare* with quantified and referential antecedents (EI)

6 out of the 15 EI L2ers allowed both antecedents over 50% of the time.
Summary of Task1

- All L2 groups chose *kare* with quantified antecedents less frequently than *pro* with quantified antecedents, just like the controls.

- However, the EI group failed to make a distinction between quantified and referential antecedents for *kare*.
5.2 Task2: truth value judgment task

(6) Quantified antecedents (*everyone*)
Minna_i-ga kinoo kare*_{i/j}-ga/pro_i-ga konpyuutaa-o tukatta to itteimasita
‘Everyone_i was saying that he*_{i/j}/pro_i used a computer yesterday.’

Q. ‘Does the picture match the meaning of the sentence?’
(a) ‘True’ (b) ‘False’ (c) ‘I don’t know’

Figure 1. Bound variable context
(7) Referential antecedents

Hayasi\textsubscript{i}-san-wa atode kare\textsubscript{i/j}-ga/pro\textsubscript{i} denwa-o kakeru to itteimasita

‘Mr. Hayashi\textsubscript{i} was saying that he\textsubscript{i/j}/pro\textsubscript{i} would call later.’

Q. ‘Does the picture match the meaning of the sentence?’
   (a) ‘True’ (b) ‘False’ (c) ‘I don’t know’

Mr. Hayashi

Figure 2. Coreferential context
The EI group accepted *kare* with quantified antecedents more often than the controls (*t*(25)=2.09, *p*<0.05).
The EI group also failed to make a distinction between quantified and referential antecedents for *kare* ($t(14)=0.52$, $p=0.61$).
Individual results (Task2)

Acceptance of *kare* with quantified and referential antecedents (EI)

7 out of the 15 EI L2ers allowed both antecedents over 50% of the time
Summary of Task2

- The EI group accepted *kare* with quantified antecedents more frequently than the controls.

- The EI group also failed to make a distinction between quantified and referential antecedents for *kare*. 

6. DISCUSSION

The prediction: L1 Spanish speakers should outperform L1 English speakers in observing the OPC at lower levels of proficiency. → supported

Finding 1: The SI group performed better than the EI group.
(The EI group accepted *kare* with quantified antecedents more often than the controls in the TVJ. The EI group also failed to make a distinction between the antecedents in both tasks. In contrast, the SI group had target-like interpretations.)

→ This is attributable to the L2ers’ L1s: the OPC is operative in Spanish, but not English.
Finding 2: The EA group had target-like interpretations while the EI group did not. 

→ This result supports FA.

L2ers acquire the correct interpretation as their proficiency improves. Given that the L2 interpretation is not easy to determine from naturalistic input or L1, the result suggests that UG is operative in L2 acquisition, which supports FA.
7. CONCLUSION

This study investigated whether the OPC is acquired by L1 English and L1 Spanish speakers of L2 Japanese in the same way.

The results suggest that the OPC is not fully operative in L1 English speakers’ L2 grammar at earlier stages due to L1 transfer. However, it becomes operative as L2ers’ proficiency improves, which supports the FT/FA.
REFERENCES


Thank you!