Refusal strategies among Chinese learners of English and Japanese

: A language socialization account

International Graduate Program in Language Sciences

Cui Haining B5KM2007

Introduction and Research Questions

In recent Japan, where Japanese is a dominant language, students from all around the world start using not only Japanese but also English as an academic Lingua Franca, and this multi-language environment raises again the question “how to do things with words”. Take for example the speech act of refusal, which is a typical face-threatening act and requires a high level of pragmatic competence to protect the speaker’s as well as the interlocutor’s face. However, refusals by non-native speakers are often assessed as impolite due to their limited pragmatic competence (Martí-Arnáñdez & Salazar-Campillo 2013). It is a matter of urgency to explore refusal strategies by speakers for whom English is a second or a third language.

In this study, I will follow language socialization approach and give account for speech act of refusal from a more socially oriented standpoint. Below are my research questions:

1. Do native speakers of Chinese use similar strategies in term of frequency and of semantic formulas when they refuse in Chinese, in mainland China, Japan, and United State, respectively?

2. Do Chinese who speak English and Japanese with fluency, and who are living in Japan, behave differently from native speakers of Japanese or English in term of frequency and of semantic formulas when they refuse in Japanese or English?

Theoretical background

Politeness, Speech act of refusal and Semantic formulas

Brown & Levinson (1987) proposed a universal model of linguistic politeness. Their central concept is face, or the public self-image that every person tries to protect. When a speaker is forced to threaten an addressee’s face, he/she must mitigate the face-threatening act using various politeness strategies. They further claimed that politeness is realized linguistically by means of various strategies across cultures, so cross-cultural research in pragmatics is essential to answer the questions “to what extent is it possible to determine the degree to which the rules that govern the use of language in context vary from culture to culture and from language to language?” and “to what extent is it possible to specify the particular pragmatic rules of use for a given language, rules which second language learners will have to acquire in order to attain successful communication in the target language?” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984:196) These questions have provoked study of face-threatening speech acts, which require a high level of pragmatic competence to protect both the speaker’s as well as the interlocutor’s face. One of the best-known topics is refusal, which would threaten positive face, or desires to be appreciated and approved of. Beebe et al. (1990), for example, analyzed the speech act in Japanese, American English, and in the interlanguage of Japanese speakers learning American English, and coded refusal strategies used by speakers to express certain intentions. Thus, “I’m sorry, I have theater tickets that night, maybe I could come by later for a drink” (Beebe et al. 1990) is coded as {expression of regret} {excuse} and {offer of alternative}, respectively. The order, frequency, and intrinsic content of the semantic formulas are compared among native speakers of American English native speakers of Japanese, Japanese in the United States. Following them, Chang (2009) investigates semantic formula of refusal strategies by Chinese and American, and show American excuses were less specific than Chinese ones.

But all these studies examine differences of mitigating strategies in a mono-cultural situations. Few studies have addressed the problem of speakers’ refusal under multi-cultural and multi-lingual situations, and this study may fill this gap by adapting a language socialization approach.
Language socialization approach and Semantic formulas

Language socialization is one of the theories trying to give account for interlanguage pragmatics, and it examines the process in which language learners are socialized through language focusing on culturally relevant communicative practices and activities. The language socialization in this theory concerns two major areas of socialization: socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language, both open to investigating language socialization throughout the human lifespan across a range of social experiences and context (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In Language socialization approach, semantic formulas can be categorized as formulaic language, which is an important notion within the theory of language socialization. By redefining formulaic language, this approach counts into lexical chunks—including one word, phrase, or a string of a few words—often used in verbal routines (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) or interactional routines (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

Semantic formulas in this way could give directions for reexamining speech act production from a new point of view. However, few studies have accounted for non-native speakers’ speech act strategies from the language socialization perspective.

Research method and Discussions

To answer the two research questions, within the framework of language socialization theory, six groups of participants are gathered, and asked to fill an online platform survey which contains two parts, personal language history survey (Li, P., Zhang, F., Tsai, E., Puls, B. 2014) and a four-situation Discourse Completion Test (DCT), which is a modified form of Beebe et al.’s work to fit the current research. The DCT situations are classified into two main refusal types: refusal of request and suggestion. Each type has been further divided based on the social status differences between refusers and refusées.

This study expects that Chinese who have a good command of Japanese and English, and use Chinese and English in Japan, where Japanese is a dominant language, adopt Japanese refusal strategies more often than their native Chinese and English counterparts. In other words, our aim is to clarify whether Chinese undergo Japanese language socialization through communicative practices and activities in Japan.

Hopefully, our research will contribute to the field of intercultural pragmatics as well as second language pragmatic learning and cross-cultural communication, and give some help to teachers and learners who teach or study under a multicultural environment.

Although this approach may make account for current study, but still due to the time and experiment design, this study has several limitations need to be further investigated, such as collecting authentic data as well as conduct other type of speech act.

References


Abstract

This research will analyze a multimodal metaphor employed in Steven Universe, a recent American cartoon, using cognitive linguistic framework. To be specific, it will explore the show’s phenomenon, “fusion”, and will make use of a discourse analysis to show that this phenomenon is a metaphor for cooperative relationships. This paper aims to extend the scope of application of cognitive linguistic theory to phenomena beyond typical linguistic data dealt with in the literature, i.e. spoken and written language. To do so, this paper first articulates the cognitive linguistic definition of metaphor and how it is used to explain purely linguistic phenomena. Next, it articulates how non-linguistic data can be analyzed linguistically. Then this paper explores the peculiar properties of cartoons, a blend of visual representation and linguistic expression, and what that entails in relation to understanding the metaphor. This paper aims to show that the visual aspects of the medium work in conjunction with the linguistic aspects in order to deliver a metaphor. This study finally ends with an exploration of how this analysis can be extended into further studies in the future.

Introduction

Children spend a large amount of their time (around 25 hours weekly) watching television and most of what they watch are programming catered to children such as cartoons (Nielsen, 2009). Put simply, some children can pick-up a lot of things from cartoons and there has been numerous research done which supports this idea (Huesmann 1986, Bar-On et al., 2001, Strasburger et al. 2010). But the topics of cartoons are not always simple. Complex subjects such as death, multi-ethnicity, environmental issues, and politics have been and are still being tackled in cartoons. This raises a question, given the presumed underdeveloped cognition of children, are they able to understand these complex ideas? Stated differently, how are they able to comprehend such ideas? An answer Lakoff and Johnsen proposes is through the use of metaphors. According to them, people’s concepts and their conceptual systems structure what they perceive and how they interact with the world. Further, these conceptual systems are largely metaphorical in nature (2003, p. 4). This structuring allows for someone to have a partial understanding of one thing in terms of another (2003, p. 14). In other words, a child can understand the content because it is presented as a metaphor, to which our minds are naturally attuned to.

This is what makes a cartoon so unique in regards to delivering a metaphor, it is a live and moving visual manifestation of someone’s conception about the world. As a writer for the animated series The Simpsons once said when asked why he ended up as a writer despite his mathematics degree, “Animation is all about control. What you storyboard, what you script, appears on screen.” (Haran). To unpack that quote, the reason this is the case is because every aspect of a cartoon must be designed and structured in order to come to life. This can be something relatively trivial in relation to the plot like adding a mathematical equation in the background to something as detailed as the character’s personalities and dialogues with one another. Further, physical laws do not limit animation. If an animator would like the show to include a talking dog, to be about intergalactic adventures, or to revolve around a sheep in the city, there is little to stop them from doing so. But due to constraints such as audience or genre for example, an animator has to structure the show in a way which can be understood by children. One way to do so is to show something that can be understood metaphorically. For example, a child doesn’t have to have in-depth knowledge about quantum mechanics to appreciate characters travelling in space. It can be understood metaphorically with something like SPACESHIP IS TRANSPORT. In addition to the imagery, animators can also make use of sounds, such as music and sound effects, and language, verbal or written, to convey what they want to get across on the screen. Hence there are many modes, material carrier and transmitter of information (Forceville, 21), a metaphor can be delivered in.

But an important thing to consider is that although the show is metaphorically structured, not everything in a cartoon is an instance of a metaphor. For example, the name of a character may simply be an introduction to that character. On the other hand, it can be an allusion or a foreshadowing of the plot, a different type of figure of speech all together. It is by understanding the context in which a particular scene or word was presented which can allow one to determine a metaphor. It is then the aim of this paper to analyze such instances using a linguistics framework.
Given this, the scope and limitations of this paper is as follows. This research will focus on a particular animated cartoon called *Steven Universe*. This is because; first, it is a show that can be demonstrably shown to have a lot of multimodal metaphors. Therefore, there is ample amount of data which can be studied. Next, it has a recurring metaphor, the phenomenon called Fusion, which is used to further focus the scope of the study. Finally, the show has a viewership in the millions, at least in the United States (Kondolojy, 2014), enough to entertain the idea that it’s a show that is known to a sizeable population; acceptable for the purposes of an empirical study. In the next section, I will elaborate the framework that I will use to analyze this phenomenon and define what metaphor means within cognitive linguistics.

**Framework**

To begin, this research treats cartoons as a physically manifested mental space. Mental spaces are constructs distinct from linguistic structures but are built up in any discourse according to the guidelines provided by the linguistic expressions (Fauconnier, 1994, 16). The guidelines that build and develop this space is the cartoon’s story or discourse. Modes included in this discourse is the visual animation, music, vocal performances and readable language. Further, mental spaces can refer to other mental spaces through the use of connectors. Connectors are pragmatic functions which links objects of a different nature (in the most general sense of the term) to one another, so that one object can be used to refer to another. (Fauconnier 1994, p.3-4). Applying this to animated cartoons, the argument is that some of the things portrayed in a cartoon connects to an idea in the real world. This can be overt, as in when someone does an actual representation of something in reality like portraying Japanese classrooms in the slice of life genre of anime. But also, these can be indirect. For example, the turning of a character into a pig as they consume more and more food to represent greed. These latter type of connection, specifically the metaphorical cases, are what this research will be studying.

Metaphors are seen to reside in what is termed as blended spaces. A blended space consists of a set of connections between a source space and a target space. The target space is the one being structured metaphorically (Langacker, 2008, p.51). This research will view some instances in the show as blended spaces, the target space being the show and the source space being notions in reality. The notions in reality can be understood because there is a pragmatic function connecting the two. Finally, this research will turn to cognitive grammar and its notion of construal to explain the metaphor’s meaning. The term refers to one’s manifest ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways (Langacker, 2008, p.43-44).

**Methodology**

This research will begin by demonstrating that the show does makes heavy use of metaphors. This will be done by compiling instances of the show. To demonstrate my argument, a qualitative discourse analysis of the compiled data will be done. Next, once it has been established that fusion is a metaphor for a cooperative relationship, every available instance portraying this phenomenon will be compiled, both within the show and outside, limited to only what has been officially released by the studio making the show. This will serve as this research’s main corpus. This research will then do a discourse analysis, in line with the frameworks listed above, to first show that they are structured in a particular way. This particular structure, analyzed in conjunction with the medium’s constraints, will be explored to reveal that the metaphor provides only a partial understanding of cooperative relationships. Finally, this research will end with discussion based on the data.

**References**


A study of complaints by Taiwanese university students with special reference to gender differences

International Graduate Program of Language Sciences
B5KM2009  Liang-Pu Tao

Introduction

The paper aims to analyze the complaint speech acts used in different contexts in a university setting by male and female Taiwanese students, examining whether gender difference has a significant impact on complaint strategies. There have been several studies to define complaints, such as Searle’s (1979) theory, which has been applied to many succeeding studies. Searle classified five types of illocutionary acts, and he claims that complaints are an assertive illocutionary act and can occur instantly.

Here, I build on Abe’s (1982) study, which according to Kuribara Shea (2003) states “a complaint is an utterance, or set of utterances, which identifies a problem or trouble source and seeks remediation, either from the person responsible for the trouble source or a third party who has the power to affect the situation.” I think this definition is a precise description of the term “complaint”, which I shall apply in my study.

There are several studies which mention that women, in general, are more polite than men in speech communities. Brown(1980) goes further to say that “In Mayan community, women use more strengthening particles when speaking to women(and to men) and they also use more weakening particles when speaking to men” (Mills 2003:179) This observation suggests the speaker’s speech may have been influenced by the addressee’s gender. My study focuses on Taiwanese university students, assuming that they constitute a speech community, to investigate the effect that speaker and addressee gender difference has in pragmatic strategies which speakers use for complaints.

Moreover, according to Hartley(1999), social power and speaker’s gender exerted significant influence on the directness levels of complaints in American university students. In contrast, Kuribara Shea (2003) claims there is no significant influence of the speaker’s gender and addressee’s gender on a complaint speech act in Japanese university students. Therefore, through the previous studies mentioned above, one can question where Taiwanese society stands in this paradigm, whether the gender difference has a significant influence on the frequency of complaint strategy in Taiwanese university students.

Research Questions

Are differences found in the complaint strategies used when:
A. both interlocutors are female.
B. both interlocutors are male.
C. the speaker is female and the hearer is male.
D. the speaker is male and the hearer is female.
Methodology

This study uses a role-enactment interview which is an elicitation technique in which participants perform a role that is part of his/her everyday life and take on a personality in a situation which they are familiar with. The participants first listen to recorded descriptions of a complaint-provoking situation, after which they would be asked “What would you say to [your female professor]?” the addressee in the bracket is changed depending on the particular situation. Immediately after hearing the question, the participants will be asked to provide an answer to the interviewer. The complaint situations are targeted in university settings, including seat-occupying, privacy offending, and low evaluation, and the situations don’t include the addressee’s responses. Participants respond to six complaint situations, structured in a way so that the role relationship between the complainer and the addressee are varied by the relative status and gender. Participants have the choice of not complaining (i.e. Opt Out) if they think that they would not say anything in the certain situation. In order to make comparisons for gender difference, the complete data collected will have four types of gender relationships for each situation: male to male, male to female, female to male, and female to female.

There are two stages to my data collection. The first stage is a preliminary data collection of the role-enactment interviews to explore initial constraints and factors of participants on complaint strategies. The second stage is the role-enactment interviews mentioned above where participants spontaneously respond to complaint-provoking situations (male and female participants will be interviewed separately), and data will be analyzed.

Provisional Results

I have finished conducting a pilot study on 8 participants (4 male, 4 female), in which I have collected audio recordings of role-enactment interviews with them. I am still in the process of analyzing the data collected to design the second stage of my data collection. Provisional results from the data I have collected in the pilot study indicate the following:

1. When the female participants’ face a situation in which their privacy is offended against their negative face, they use a direct disapproval strategy to complain to the male.
2. When female participants face a situation in which their privacy is offended by another female, they would accept or opt out.
3. When female participants face a situation in which they receive a low evaluation from a female professor, they would use an explicit complaint but without sentences to go against her; however, to a male professor, they would state a problem to inquire.
4. When male participants face a situation in which they receive a low evaluation from a male professor, they would use an explicit complaint but without sentences to go against him; however, to a female professor, they would state a problem to inquire.

My current plan is to collect more data in the second stage of this study by finding more participants. Upon analysis of this data, I hope to test the provisional results mentioned above and make more conclusive results.

Reference

On VP-Ellipsis with Auxiliary Verbs in Mandarin Chinese
International Graduate Program in Language Sciences
B5KM2011  WANG Yitong

1. Introduction

In Chinese, there is a type of ellipsis phenomenon in which predicates following auxiliary verbs can be elided. (Henceforth, I will call it the Aux Construction for convenience.) Take sentence (1) for example:

(1) Zhangsan hui xihuan zhe-bu dianying, Lisi ye hui Δ.
Zhangsan will like this-CL film, Lisi also will Δ.

“Zhangsan will like this film, and Lisi will Δ too.”

The missing part, marked by “Δ”, can be interpreted as xihuan zhe-bu dianying ‘like this film’ just like the verb phrase in the antecedent clause. Xu (2003) analyzes it as a VP-ellipsis construction analogous to its counterpart in English, while Li (2008) argues that the missing part should involve what she calls a True Empty Category (TEC). In this study, I will try to unravel the nature of the Chinese Aux Construction.

2. Central hypothesis

My hypothesis is that the Chinese Aux Construction involves vP-deletion. According to that, the structure of (1) should be as shown in (2).

(2) ...
TP Zhangsan, hui [t v [vP xihuan [DP zhe-bu dianying]]], ...
TP Lisi, ye hui [t v [vP xihuan [DP zhe-bu dianying]]]

The ellipsis in the construction is licensed by a lexical item of T, namely hui ‘will’, and then the vP as the complement of T is elided. I assume the analysis of ellipsis in terms of PF-deletion (Chomsky and Lasnik, 1993; Sag, 1976; and Merchant, 2001, etc.), and I will explain why the missing parts in the Chinese Aux Construction must not be empty throughout the derivation.

3. Supporting arguments

According to my hypothesis that the Aux Construction involves vP-deletion, it is predicted that whereas adjuncts that are generated outside vP should not be included in the empty part of the construction, adjuncts that belong to vP should be able to be understood as being contained in the missing portion.

Cinque (1999) provides cross-linguistic evidence, including empirical data in Chinese, that there is a universal hierarchy of adverbs. And according to the classification used by Koizumi (1993), adverbs can be divided into MP-adverbs, IP-adverbs and VP-adverbs which are generated inside MP, IP (or TP) and VP(or vP) respectively. I assume that while the adverb dagai ‘probably’ is an adjunct generated in a position higher than vP, the adverb zaodian ‘early’ is a case of VP-adverb. Let us consider the following examples:

(3) Zhangsan dagai yao rang erzi likai, Lisi ye yao Δ,
Zhangsan probably will let son leave, Lisi also will Δ,
#Danshi wo bu queding Lisi yao-bu-yao.
But I not sure Lisi will-not-will.

“Probably Zhangsan will let his son leave, and Lisi will too, #but I’m not sure if Lisi will.”

(4) Zhangsan yao rang erzi zaodian likai, Lisi ye yao Δ,
Zhangsan will let son early leave Lisi also will Δ
#Danshi Lisi yao rang erzi wandian likai
But Lisi will let son late leave

“Zhangsan will let his son leave early, Lisi will too, #but Lisi will let his son leave late”

In (3), the missing part of the second clause cannot be interpreted as containing the adjunct dagai ‘probably’. In order to express the meaning that it is not necessarily the case that Lisi will let his son leave, the adjunct dagai ‘probably’ must be repeated in the second clause. In (4), on the other hand, the adjunct zaodian ‘early’ can be understood in the interpretation of the second clause.

Moreover, if my current observation is correct, the Chinese Aux Construction allows both subject and object extraction.

(5) Wo zhidao shui ting-le zhege gushi hui xiao, shui bu hui.
I know who heard this story will smile who not will

“I know who will smile after hearing this story, and who will not.”

(6) Wo zhidao na-ben shu ta neng du, na-ben shu ta buneng.
I know which book he can read, which book he cannot

“I know which book he can read, and which book he can’t.”

(5) is an example of subject extraction with an unergative verb, and (6) exemplifies object extraction. If we assume the VP-internal subject hypothesis, the remnant subject in (5) must be extracted from vP. Also, as the remnant in (6) is an object, it should originate from vP. In other words, they have moved out of the ellipsis sites, which strongly suggests that the ellipsis sites must not be syntactically null, contrary to the LF-copy theory (Williams, 1977; and Chung, Ladusaw, and McCloskey, 1995, among others) or the True Empty Category analysis. In my thesis, I will try to explain various properties exhibited by the Chinese Aux Construction by assuming that it involves PF-deletion.

4. Conclusion

The Chinese Aux Construction has not received much attention in the literature on Chinese syntax. My study aims to uncover what properties it has, contributing to the research on ellipsis in general in the language. I plan to include more empirical data in my thesis to support my central hypothesis.

References


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Introduction

Modern Japan has established a widely used form of standardized Japanese (known as *hyoujungo*) through compulsory education, mass media, leveling, and urbanization (Loveday 1986). Regional dialects in Japan have faced a decline in post World War II Japan due to the emphasis placed upon Standard Japanese. The influx of Standard Japanese starting from the Meiji era has caused shifting attitudes toward the different dialects in Japan among native citizens. For example, Carroll (2001) states that “Attitudes towards these non-standard dialects have changed over the years, ranging from a policy of eradication earlier this century to recent more favourable evaluations of their qualities”. The campaign at the turn of the century to discourage dialects in Japan attached much shame and disgust to speaking in non-standard Japanese. Since then, non-standard Japanese dialects have declined in frequency of use, but attitudes toward them seem to have improved, as shown in a sociolinguistic survey distributed by Daniel Long (1999). The survey asked Japanese informants from different areas to identify areas in Japan, what speech pattern that area speaks, how pleasant it is, and what defining characteristics it has. Most informants rated the dialect of their own area to be most pleasant. However, the informants in Tokyo, which is the geographical area most known for speaking standard Japanese, associated the most pleasantness with the Tokyo area and the Kyoto dialect while associating the least pleasantness with the Osaka dialect (Long 1999). The goal of my research is to quantitatively verify that the perceptions towards the Kyoto dialect among standard Japanese speaking Tokyoites are equally, if not more, positive in the realm of personal sympathy (sociability, likeability, pleasantness) when compared to standard Japanese.

Background

The typical attitude of many Tokyoites towards non-standard, non-Kanto Japanese is generally perceived as negative. Dialects that differ from standard Japanese are often referred to as “inaka” or “country” (Shibata 1999), implying that those who speak with a dialect are less sophisticated and thus carry less prestige. This has given some Japanese natives who speak with a dialect a “dialect complex” which brings feelings of shame of inferiority to the speaker (Shibata 1999). One’s own ability to speak in standard Japanese proficiently correlates to higher levels of perceived intelligence and education. This was also found to be true in American English when standard English speakers with no obvious variants were compared against English speakers with a “Southern” dialect in a sociolinguistic study (Soukup 2009). While informants did not rate the Southern dialect speakers high in the categories of education and intelligence, the female Southern dialect speaker was rated the highest in the traits of personal sympathy when compared to the standard English speakers. Johnstone (1999) similarly discussed the ability of Texan women to style-shift into a Southern accent in order to appear more likeable and persuasive. While not being perceived as more educated, intelligent, or prestigious as standard American English speakers, female Southern dialect speakers are regularly perceived as more likeable and charming.

Research in other countries has shown that the sounds and words of a dialect are less relevant to perceptions than the characteristics of the area the dialect is associated with (Carroll 2001). However, when someone refers to one’s accent in America as “country”, it can often be indicating a Southern accent. The negative stigma that comes with the word “country” or “inaka” that implies a lack of intelligence is contrary to a non-standard dialect speaker’s ability to be perceived as more pleasant than standard speakers. It is possible to maintain a positive perception even when speaking in a non-standard dialect. While Shibata (1999) argues that anywhere outside of Tokyo, even urban centers like Kyoto, can be perceived as “inaka” by Tokyoites, Carroll (2001) states that the Kyoto dialect has “continued to enjoy high status partly because of the city’s centuries-long status as capital; it is widely seen as being more beautiful, gentle, and refined than Tokyo or standard speech.” This attitude could explain why informants from Tokyo rated Kyoto the highest in pleasantness behind the Kanto region in Long's (1999) study. Kyoto seems to still carry a perception of prestige that has lingered from past eras of Japanese history when it was still the capital. This may lessen its perception of being an “inaka” non-standard dialect among
Tokyoites. Thus, it would follow that the Kyoto dialect has the most potential to be found more likeable and prestigious when compared to other non-standard dialects by Tokyoites. The research questions to be answered are as follows:

1. Are dialects in Japan often perceived as “inaka”?
2. Does the Kyoto dialect score high in the categories of personal sympathy compared to other Japanese dialects?
3. What linguistic factors lead to a dialect being more likeable when compared to another in the same language?

**Methodology**

**Progress**

A few changes I have made to methodology include having the speaker of the dialect do a monologue, and to have it be shorter. Doing a dialogue with another person may affect the outcome of the data too strongly if there is a person speaking standard Japanese. It also creates an added difficulty of finding 2 individuals to record. The survey has been created and properly assigned its adequate Japanese equivalents for each set of adjectives. I have set a time table to conduct the survey in April. A single speaker who can do multiple dialects to record has yet to be located, but I am currently in the searching process.

**Preparing Data Analysis**

Since it is possible that the results will not match my hypothesis and background research, I am currently creating a method to deal with those possible outcomes. In the event that a different dialect other than the Kyoto dialect is found to be more pleasant in terms of solidarity, I will be able to identify the reasons why. I will not be able to do any further analysis until I receive the data from the surveys. It is the case that students must identify what dialect they think they are hearing, so it is possible that the Kyoto dialect will be chosen as the most pleasant but incorrectly identified. This outcome will work with my current research.

**Data Gathering**

- Each informant will be given a sheet with 8 sets of adjectives (4 in personal sympathy and 4 in competence) that are diametrically opposed: uneducated – educated, unlikeable – likeable, dirty – clean, etc. and will have to be written in their Japanese equivalents.
- The informants will rate each example of speaking in all categories on a scale of 1 to 5 will be asked to listen to a sample of speech from each dialect.
- They will not be told where the dialects are from, but will asked to identify which Japanese prefecture they think the dialects belong to. The data from the filler dialects may be disregarded, and the data from the Standard and Kyoto dialects will be collected.
- The data will then be analyzed to see which style of speaking scored the highest and lowest in each individual set of adjectives, and overall.

**References**


ABSTRACT

I. Introduction

Second Language Acquisition processes acknowledge the fact that Second Language Learners will substitute or transfer sounds in order to simplify speech; and use similar sounds from L1 when some sounds from L2 are not present in their phonological system (Crystal, 1987). However, Trubetskoy (1969) studied the perceptive operational process in SLA, giving in his well-known “phonological filter” proposal that stands for the speaker inability of perceiving non-native segments rather than just not being able to utter them. SLL will face these phenomena in all their range: the distribution and number of phonemes in the contrastive systems, syllable structure, allophonic variations, prosodic shortening and lengthening, diachronic usage, among others.

At segmental level, Japanese and Spanish share some phonological similarity (Ueda, 1977), but certainly there are segments not shared in both sound systems, which will be the subject of this study. Dealing with the suprasegmental level, in the case of Japanese syllable structure, it certainly interferes with the pronunciation of SLL (Carruthers, 2005). Spanish has more syllable types than Japanese, which makes its pronunciation quite challenging for Japanese learners.

Due to the scarcity of research pairing Japanese and Spanish, the aim of this research is dual: 1) to show a contrastive analysis of Japanese and Spanish phonological systems in order to identify their single segments differences and to identify potential substitutions/transferences according to their features; and 2) to end up giving some input to start building up an Asian Spanish Speech Corpus.

II. Design and Methodology

Through L2 phonological acquisition theories of perception (Flege, 1995) and contrastive analysis between phonetic inventories of Spanish and Japanese, it is intended to analyse Spanish learners’ speech in order to attain an empirical registry of potential articulatory interferences in their SLA. For it, the perceptual assimilation model (PAM) developed by Best et al. (Lambacher et al., 2001) will be referred to rank the phenomena in 3 degrees of perceptual differentiation; however, it might be necessary to adapt the model for these two paired languages.

In order to accomplish the aforementioned, 60 Japanese students of Spanish, within their first year of language learning, have recorded multiple sets of audios. Each audio will be analysed through a speech processing software (PRAAT) to discriminate single segments. Then, data will be schematised and rates of use frequency will determine if certain segment uses are due to phonological interferences of L2 into L1 or not.

Furthermore, due to some phonological correspondence in both languages, only a limited set of segments within the phonetic inventories of both languages are going to be considered for this study. Despite there will not be cluster analysis due to the syllabic nature of Japanese language, some considerations based on epenthesis phenomena (mainly anaptyxis) in echo vowel will be revised, as well as gairaigo and gaikokugo lexicon.
(Labrune, 2012; Daulton, 2008); so that, if transfers or interferences are present, they could be described separately.

Some variables will be sorted out to define whether the age of acquisition, amount of exposure to L2, formal or informal instruction, etc. are key to determine and standardise the interferences found in the sample.

Furthermore, some implications of L3 language acquisition theories will be analysed to discriminate if the presence of a previous L2 in the sample subjects might contribute to phonological improvement of L3 (Wrembel, 2014).

III. Results

Up to now, 12-audio-recordings sets of 26 Japanese university students of Spanish (18 females and 8 males) have been examined, all of them were oral assessments taken in their Spanish subjects. From them, 329 utterances containing the segment [r] were found and organised in 7 lexical units (restaurant, Rico, Riqui, Ramos, guitarrista, Rosa, aburridas). The articulatory success ratio, including all allophonic deviations, reached 20.66%, leaving 76.31% of phonological interferences organised in 3 segmental groups and 3.03% of utterances from other variables. [r] segment is normally found in initial or middle positions, but never in final position. However, when it is located in middle position, it tends (not including some exceptions) to graphically appear with double grapheme ‘rr’. However, there were not significant difference for both positions. [r] interferences were classified in 3 main segmental units: [ɺ] which is the main Japanese segment, [ɾ] and [l] which are mainly Spanish but that share certain features with the latter.

The next step will be to compare the results with other segment ratios so that it is possible to scale them up and find out which interferences create a more difficulties to SLL.

III. Conclusion

Several research papers widely present phonological interferences between Japanese and other languages, but Spanish has been addressed in only some specific concerns. In my experience, having a better understanding of how the phonological system of a certain language works can improve significantly the pronunciation performance of SLL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lex. Units / Interf.</th>
<th>ɺ</th>
<th>ɾ</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramos</td>
<td>17.95</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>21.79</td>
<td>39.74</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rico</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurante</td>
<td>28.28</td>
<td>46.46</td>
<td>13.13</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riqui</td>
<td>46.15</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>26.92</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aburridas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69.29</td>
<td>26.92</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guitarrista</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>23.72</td>
<td>35.87</td>
<td>20.66</td>
<td>16.72</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Asian English Speech Corpus Project, created in 2008 by six universities in Asia, made available a wide number of sources for further research in this area. Thus, part of my work and expectations deal with the chance of creating a similar corpus pairing Spanish with many other Asian languages, so that many researchers in Latin America may have access to useful and accurate data for further research.

IV. References


Wrembel M. (2014). VOT Patterns in the Acquisition of Third Language Phonology. Adam Mickiewicz University.
The researcher aims to affirm or negate the claim that ESL writing and ESL speaking, apart from their differences as actions, are two different cognitive skills that use different registers. It has been suggested that writing a second language more often than speaking it in the beginning stages of acquisition eventually has an effect on word choices and fluency during speaking, but not enough studies have been done with actual language data to corroborate these findings. Moreover, Japanese ESL learners are known to have more trouble with speaking skills than with reading and writing. The 訳読 yakudoku method of instruction, which overemphasizes grammar instruction, has been blamed for this phenomenon on many occasions, but it is not clear to what extent an underdeveloped speaking skill is a product of overemphasized writing instruction. The research planned for the next 18 months will shed some light on what differences there are in the word choices and fluency of learners when they speak and write in expositive as well as communicative situations.

The last 16 months of research have been spent on the first two aims of this doctorate thesis, as were laid out in the first title presentation back in January, 2015:

1. Document the research to date on the two skills, English L2 speaking and English L2 writing;
2. Track the development of the two skills in a group of university undergraduate subjects;

The research found that rating and documenting the speaking skills of nonnative English speakers generally involves overcoming problems associated with rater bias and objectivity. To this end, a research paper has been completed and submitted for review. The paper outlines a system which objectively rates the speaking skills of university level ESL learners in Japan.
The Objective Subjective (OS) scoring system elaborated in the paper put subjects in the role of subjective self-evaluatros using an objective criterion based on the preceding performance statistics of every subject. Sessions of group conversations, 150 sessions in total, were captured on video to gather actual language data, after which subjects transcribed their conversations using the Computerized Language Analysis (CLAN) program.

This system enables an unprecedented level of subject involvement in scoring, and eliminates the need for corpuses and tagged data with which subjects are often unfairly compared. The 45 subjects showed a definite increase in mean length of speaking turn after three sessions of OS Scoring ($F(2,132)=5.67$, $p=0.004$, $\eta^2=0.079$); they were motivated to beat their preceding score each time by speaking with fluency and coherence in mind.

Thus far, the researchers involved in the publication have done a validation of the OS Scoring system using three variables, type/token ratio, mean length of speaking turn, and total time spent speaking. These three variables were used as analytic scales to compute a composite score for each subject. The composite score helps to gauge fluency and its development, which are difficult concepts to qualify and quantify. The OS scoring system can also be utilized as a data analysis tool alongside a conventional speaking test. As a fluency assessment tool for schools and universities in areas outside the US, the UK, and other regions where English is dominant, OS Scoring can be a less expensive, more subject sensitive alternative to conventional speech raters. As a learning tool which is easy to implement and free to set up in an existing language lab, the system can serve to motivate students who are often discouraged by intimidating, expensive international speaking tests.

OS Scoring proved useful for increasing mean length of speaking turn, was robust in dealing with stable language features such as type/token ratio, and motivated subjects to tune into one another by coercing subjects to allow less communicative speakers more time to speak and by discouraging overbearing speakers. It facilitated formative instruction in morpho-syntactic errors innate to Japanese L1 learners and thereby doubled as a learning tool.

The most useful aspect of OS Scoring is that it focuses on actual language production data instead of a set of predetermined criteria. This attribute has been singled out as indispensable for speech rating research by other researchers as well, among them ETS speech rater® developers. The viability of the system as a plug-in to a
conventional test is therefore worth considering. The system will be developed through the next 18 months to deliver more accurate information regarding the perceived development of the fluency of ESL learners at the university level in Japan.

The development of the OS Scoring system is part of the thesis which investigates the effect of ESL writing on speaking at the Japanese university level. The next phase will involve gauging the effect of writing instruction on speaking skills using OS Scoring data. The first step in the next phase will involve a test group and control group with subjects describing a cartoon, both in writing and in a spoken response. The differences in word choices and fluency will be documented and an analysis will discuss the findings alongside literature already published on the subject. A similar study has been done on a smaller scale by researchers at Kinjo Gakuin Daigaku; Baba, K. et al. (2013) *Relationship between Second Language Speaking and Writing Skills and Modality Preference of University EFL Students in 金城学院大学論集 社会科学編 第10巻第1号*. What will set the current research apart from research done in the past is an innovative scoring system with more concrete data, the OS Scoring system described above, and a larger sample of at least 180 subjects.

With aims no. ① and ② nearing completion, the research conducted over the next 18 months will aim to do the following:

③ Analyse the preference of writing and speaking for each student, and gauge if student preference coincides with which skill develops more quickly;

④ Implement and analyse a battery of tests, once at enrolment and once at the end of the first year to gauge how speaking and writing develops lexically as well as syntactically;

⑤ Compile the results in a thesis to be used for pinpointing what sets L2 speaking apart from L2 writing and how better to instruct students in each skill.

Aims ③, ④, and ⑤ will be concluded over the next 18 months, answering the following research questions: i) How do language choices differ between L2 speaking and L2 writing; ii) Which skill develops more quickly and why? iii) How are expositional tasks handled differently when it comes to four measures postulated by Baba et al. (2013): number of words used, measure of textual lexical diversity (MLTD), content word frequency, and average sentence length.
The results will be published in three more research papers, one outlining OS Scoring for ESL writing skills, one validating EIKEN speech rating for first high school students in private senior high schools, and one outlining the relationship between speaking and writing at the university level in Japan.

As for the first paper outlining OS Scoring for speaking skills, already submitted and currently pending publication, this paper will be presented at the 16th Annual JALT PanSIG Conference under the title ‘Objective Subjective Scoring for ESL Speaking.’ The feedback from this conference will be used in the doctoral dissertation in collaboration with the feedback form a conference already attended by the researchers in August, 2016 in Dalat University, Vietnam, which focused on the speaking skill development of Vietnamese ESL learners.

The second paper outlining OS Scoring for writing skills is currently being written and will be submitted for review at the end of April, 2017. The third paper, which investigates one of the most popular speaking skill raters in Japan, the EIKEN interview for 3級 or third grade, is also currently being written. The data of 34 first year students from six different classes in a private high school in Sendai city, as well as data from 20 third grade students from the same school have been compiled and this data will be used to discuss how the test correlates with the grades the same students received from their teachers for their English classes at school. This correlation validation will shed some light on how well the EIKEN test is indicative of proficiency in speaking and how well it serves as a test for school English. This may seem off topic in the current doctorate thesis; however, one of the overall aims of the thesis is to document speaking skill rating in Japan in general using empirical data alongside data form research already published by others in the field of speaking test validation.

To conclude, two of the five aims, documenting previous research and gathering data, are well under way. The results of these studies have been submitted and are currently under review. The remaining goals, which make up the actual investigation of the effect of writing on speaking, will be reached within the next 18 months and the results published in three more research papers, after which the four papers will be edited and submitted as a doctoral dissertation in September, 2018.