

## L2 acquisition of Japanese compound noun accent rules

This study investigates acquisition of compound noun accent rules of Tokyo Japanese (Kubozono 2006, 2008) by first language (L1) English speakers who are studying Japanese as a second language (L2). In English noun-noun compounds, the first noun stress has the main prominence of the whole compound, and second noun stress is subordinated to have a secondary prominence (e.g. *Énglish t acher*). By contrast, in Japanese noun-noun compounds, the first noun stress is completely deleted and the whole compound has one accent. The compound accent falls either on the rightmost, nonfinal foot of the compound (e.g. *tuki + kizu* → *tuki-kizu* ‘prick’, * aka + k ai* → *ak ai-gai* ‘arch shell’) or on the original accent position of the second noun (e.g. *g ogaku + ky ooshi* → *gogaku-ky ooshi* ‘language instructor’) (Kubozono 2008). Ito & Mester (2007) propose that the stress subordination in English and the accent deletion in Japanese are attributable to head status of accents: Japanese pitch accent must be the head of a minimal prosodic phrase, whereas English stress accent must be the head of a minimal prosodic word. As a result, Japanese noun-noun compounds cannot have two accents though both nouns form independent prosodic words, just like English counterparts.

In second language acquisition, L1 English learners of L2 Japanese (ELJs) should not have a syntactic problem in acquiring compound nouns since both English and Japanese have productive right-headed noun-noun compounds (Compounding Parameter in Snyder 1999). However, it has not been investigated whether ELJs have a prosodic problem in acquiring compounds. The compound accent rules are not explicitly taught in a classroom, accordingly, ELJs have to acquire the accent deletion as well as the positions of junctural accents in Japanese from natural input. Full Transfer/Full Access Theory (FTFA) (Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996) suggests that L2 learners initially have L1 grammar and change it into L2 settings in line with input. If FTFA is applicable to prosody, ELJs should initially produce compounds with two accents (i.e. English setting), but they should correctly produce compounds with junctural accents (i.e. Japanese setting) at later stages of development, despite the L1-L2 differences in parameters in assigning head status of accents. In order to test this prediction, a production test adapted from Sugisaki & Isobe (2000) with modifications was performed with 10 ELJs, whose proficiency levels were elementary and intermediate. As a control group, 5 native Japanese speakers participated in the test. The results so far show that the ELJs performed better in line with their proficiency, supporting FTFA. Nevertheless, the intermediate ELJs were not accurate in deciding positions of junctural accents. It is concluded that the difference between the ELJs and the native Japanese speakers is attributable to lack of sufficient L2 input, and implications for FTFA will be discussed.

### Selected references

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