論　文 ニダバ (*Nidaba*) 31(2002), 111-120

Korean learners' acquisition of Japanese conditionals

— A parameter setting approach —

Harry SOLVANG

In a previous study (Solvang, 2001), the concept of markedness defined in terms of the Subset Principle was applied to predict relative degree of difficulty when Norwegian learners of Japanese acquire conditional expressions. A markedness scale based on differences in modal restrictions between Norwegian and Japanese conditional markers was suggested. Results from experimental studies clearly supported the assumption that this markedness scale was reflected as relative areas of difficulties. In this paper, focus is set on Korean learners of Japanese conditionals. A comparison of modal restrictions on the use of conditional markers in Korean and Japanese shows that both languages can be equally placed on a markedness scale. Although both languages would constitute a superset/subset relationship with Norwegian, they are similarly – though not identically - marked compared to each other. This paper discusses how this relationship possibly will affect the acquisition process in the case of Koreans learning Japanese. An experimental study, where Korean students of Japanese were put in a position where they could not avoid using Japanese conditionals, was conducted. Results suggest that Korean learners to a certain degree follow the same path of acquisition as Norwegians.

1.Background

It should be a well-known fact that among Japanese conditional markers, *ba* and *to* are subject to modal restrictions, while *nara* and *tara* are not. In this respect, the latter two coincide with Norwegian conditional markers, which also can be combined with any kind of modality in the consequent clause. Based on this comparison, I have suggested that Japanese and Norwegian constitute a superset/subset relationship with respect to this linguistic property (Solvang, 2001). Next, since the Subset Principle has been suggested to apply in cases where grammars are in a superset/subset relationship、I hypothesized that Norwegian learners would acquire Japanese conditionals starting with the unmarked values before the more marked values, thus reflecting the scale of markedness below.

Table 1 Japanese conditional markers on a markedness scale

Most marked ←	Markedness	→ Less marked
ba *to*		*tara* · *nara*

Experimental studies demonstrated that Norwegian learners had little problems acquiring the unmarked *tara* and *nara*. On the other hand, when they had to reset their unmarked Norwegian parameter value, which is a prerequisite in order to acquire *to* and *ba*, difficulties occurred. There was a strong tendency showing that learners in fact did not make the necessary parameter value shift, but that the use of *to* and *ba* was extended into areas subject to modal restrictions.

2. Japanese conditional markers and modal restrictions

An exhaustive description of conditionals and modality is beyond the scope of this paper. In the case of conditionals, see for instance Comrie (1986), Haiman (1986) or Akatsuka (1985) for instructive descriptions. In this context, I will merely define conditionals as expressions where a conditional marker is used in order to connect the antecedent clause to the consequent clause. With respect to Japanese, this means one of the four conditional markers *to, tara, ba* and *nara*. It should be known that there are cases where more two or more of these conditional markers could be used to convey the same meaning, as well as there are cases where only one alternative is acceptable. For detailed descriptions of uses and meanings of *to, tara, ba, nara* I recommend Masuoka, (ed.,1993) . I will here just point to the fact that the modality (detailed explanation of modality can be found in Palmer, 1986) expressed in the consequent clause seems to be an important clue to understand the restrictions on the use of the Japanese conditional markers. It is generally agreed upon that modal restrictions for *to, tara, ba, nara* can be summarized like in Table 2 below.

Table 2 *to, tara, ba, nara* and their respective areas of modal tolerance

AREA OF MODALITY	*to*	*tara*	*ba1*	*ba2*	*nara*
EPISTEMIC	○	○	○	○	○
DEONTIC	×	○	×	○	○

The symbol ○ under respectively *to, tara, ba, nara* means that there are no restrictions within the actual modal area, while × indicates restrictions. Since the modal restrictions on the use of *ba* vary with the nature of the predicate in the antecedent of the conditional sentence, I have divided it into *ba1* and *ba2*. If the predicate is a dynamic verb, only *epistemic* modality · like knowledge, beliefs,

opinions and inferences inferences - can be expressed in the consequent (*ba1*). On the other hand, if the predicate is a static verb, the modal restrictions are lifted, and *ba* can also express *deontic* modality like will, desire, invitation, request, warning and command (*ba2*).

3. Modal restrictions in Korean conditionals

Before we discuss possible relationships between Japanese and Korean conditional parameter values with respect to modal restrictions, let's take a brief look into the Korean conditional inventory.

According to Kim(1995), there are four basic conditional markers in Korean: *-(u)myen* ,*-tamyen*, *-(e)ya* and *-ketun*. From a viewpoint of modal restrictions, their respective characteristics can be described as below.

3.1. *-(u)myen*

Despite dissimilarities between the two, Kim (172, 185) considers *-(u)myen* to be the counterpart of the Japanese *tara*. It follows that *-(u)myen* can be used regardless of modality type in the consequent.

3.2. – *tamyen*

Kim gives a number of example sentences, pointing to the similarity between *-tamyen* and the Japanese *nara*. Like *nara*, there are cases where *-tamyen* would not be used, but formal modal restrictions are nonexistent.

3.3. *-(e)ya*

According to Kim(p.93), a characteristic feature of *-(e)ya* is that the antecedent only gives a necessary condition for the consequent to be realized. When *-(e)ya* is used, it gives a strong feeling of an unmentioned, opposite alternative, like the example below shows.

1) saney kaya pemul kapci

If you go to the mountains, you can catch a tiger.

The sentence does not mean that one will actually catch a tiger, even if one goes to the mountains. It just implies the opposite alternative, namely

2) If you don't go to the mountains, you will not be able to catch a tiger.

Based on this and other characteristics, Kim (p.70) regards *-(e)ya* being aquivalent to the Japanese *to*. Consequently, it's not surprising that *-(e)ya* is subject to the same modal restrictions as *to*.

3.4. *-ketun*

The most striking characteristic of *-ketun* is that it can be applied only when the consequent contains deontic modality. According to Kim (p.127), its main function is to

convey requests and commands to the interlocutor. Consequently, it is regarded as being somewhat impolite. Even so, *-ketun* can not be used to convey warnings [7].
The modal restrictions in Korean conditional markers can be summarized as in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Korean conditional markers and their respective areas of modal tolerance

AREA OF MODALITY	*-(u)myen*	*-tamyen*	*-(e)ya*	*-ketun*
EPISTEMIC	○	○	○	×
DEONTIC	○	○	×	○

4. Predictions for Korean learners

Based on the assumption that Norwegian is a subset of Japanese with respect to modal restrictions in conditionals, it was a rather straightforward task to make predictions for the acquisition of Japanese conditionals by Norwegian learners. As the table below shows, the picture seems to be a bit more complicated in the case of Korean learners.

Table 4 Comparison of modal restrictions in Japanese and Korean conditionals

Restrictions on *epistemic* modality		*No* modal restrictions		Restrictions on *deontic* modality	
Japanese	Korean	Japanese	Korean	Japanese	Korean
	-ketun	*tara*	*-tamyen*	*to*	*-(e)ya*
		nara	*-(u)myen*	*ba1*	
		ba2			

It should be obvious that Japanese and Korean conditionals do not constitute a superset/subset relationship with respect to the item in question. Hence, our predictions have to be based on other observations. As table 4 shows, both Korean and Japanese contain conditional markers subject to modal restrictions, as well as markers not subject to such restrictions. From the viewpoint of linguistic universals and markedness, it is evident that both languages contain marked parameter values. A closer look will however demonstrate that these marked values are not identically marked. One can imagine the following two fundamental parameter values:

Value 1: No modal restrictions.
Value 2: Modal restrictions.

However, since it's possible to set value 2 in various ways, according to the kind of

modal restrictions that could be existent in a given language, a number of possible settings for value 2 is imaginable.The parameter values and settings present in Japanese and Korean can be summarized as in table 5 below.

Table 5 Parametric variation of modal restrictions in Japanese and Korean conditionals

Value 1: no modal restrictions	Value 2: modal restrictions	
	Setting A	Setting B
Korean *-(u)myen, -tamyen* Japanese *tara, nara, ba (ba2)*	epistemic modality not allowed Korean *-ketun*	deontic modality not allowed Korean *-(e)ya* Japanese *to, ba (ba1)*

As illustrated above, Japanese and Korean include three different parameter settings for the relationship between conditional marker and modal restrictions. Both languages share parameter value 1, but parameter value 2 is set differently. While both languages contain conditional markers that can not be combined with deontic modality in the consequent (value 2B), value 2A is present only in Korean.

Now, where do these observations take us? What kind of predictions can possibly be made in a case where learners have the marked parameter value instantiated in their native language and are learning a language that also requires the marked – though not identically marked - value? First, let's recall the fact that the marked parameter value by definition contains the unmarked parameter value. Next, let's recapitulate the acquisition process from a first language acquisition point of view. If we still imagine that children somehow are constrained to choose the parameter value generating the smallest, unmarked language, we can assume that Japanese and Korean children will start by applying conditional markers as if these were not subject to modal restrictions. At some point, they will however receive positive evidence - possibly also negative - and will be motivated to reset the parameter to the marked value. Consequently, since it is rather unlikely that children will master all four conditional markers simultaneously, one can assume that Japanese children will successfully acquire *tara* and *nara* first, while *-tamyen* and *-(u)myen* will be the equivalents for Korean children.

Now, assuming that second language acquisition proceeds more or less the same way as first language acquisition, in the sense that unmarked parameter values are set before marked values, Korean learners will acquire Japanese conditionals the same way as Japanese children do. In other words, *tara* and *nara* will be readily accessible.

On the other hand, until the necessary shift to the marked parameter value of *to* and *ba* is performed, these markers cannot be successfully acquired. Furthermore, due to the subdivision of *ba* into *ba1* and *ba2*, Korean learners will presumably face relatively more trouble in order to acquire *ba* than *to*. So far, the predictions are identical with the predictions made for Norwegian learners (Solvang, 2001). However, as opposed to Norwegian learners, Korean learners will already have the experience of having shifted from the unmarked to the marked parameter value. The question is how this prior knowledge affects the acquisition of Japanese conditionals. My assumption is that this will give Korean learners a head start over Norwegian learners. The notion that the relationship between conditional markers and the type of modality expressed in the consequent clause can be fixed, as in the case of *-(e)ya and –ketun*, will be internalized in Korean learners. This fact will in all likelihood motivate them to take into account the possibility that the same kind of phenomena might be existent also in Japanese, which in turn will have positive effect on the acquisition.

Although language learners in general may not think in terms of parameter values, it is quite common to recognize matches or mismatches between the native and the target language in the course of the acquisition process. Korean learners will presumably at an early stage perceive the similarity between *tara/nara* on the one hand and *-(u)myen/-tamyen* on the other hand. Furthermore, the match in the parameter value for *-(e)ya* and *to* might induce the learners to map the two values on to each other, in the sense that *-(e)ya* sentences in Korean will trigger off *to* sentences in Japanese.

However, in the case of *-ketun* there is no Japanese equivalent. The learner must therefore adopt some kind of method or strategy to help him remember how *-ketun* sentences best could be expressed in Japanese. In lack of one-to-one correspondence, the most obvious would be to establish a connection between *-ketun* and Japanese markers frequently used to express deontic modality. A natural choice would be *tara* or *nara*.

To sum up, my predictions can be divided into four:

① Korean learners will acquire Japanese conditionals with less difficulties than Norwegian learners.

② *tara/nara* will be acquired before *to,* which in turn will be acquired before *ba*.

③Korean *-ketun* sentences will bring about *tara/nara* sentences in Japanese, while *-(e)ya* sentences will bring about *to* sentences.

④ The learning difficulties will be more manifest when the starting point is an *-(u)myen/tamyen* sentence.

5. The experiment

36 Korean conditional sentences containing different kinds of modality were prepared. Each sentence was made up so that the conditional marker used would be a natural choice in the actual context. The distribution of conditional markers was nine of each. Needless to say, since the occurrence of *-(e)ya* and *-ketun* respectively exclude epistemic and deontic modality in the consequent clause in Korean, this had to be taken into account when preparing the experimental sentences. The ratio of deontic and epistemic modality in *-(u)myen/tamyen* sentences was seven to two. The sentences were presented to ten Korean students of Japanese at Chosun University, located in Kwangju, South-Korea. The students were in the middle of their second year of Japanese training, which approximately would correspond to the level of Norwegian students in an earlier experiment (Solvang, 2001). They were asked to translate the Korean sentences into Japanese, and were specifically instructed to use the target structure, i.e. a conditional marker, in each sentence.

6.Results

The responses obtained from the experimental group are given in tables 6-9 below. *Sent.nr.* refers to sentence number in the order they appeared in the survey. D refers to deontic modality, while E refers to epistemic modality. A more detailed description of the modality used in each sentence is put in parenthesis. Numbers refer to the respective frequency of occurrence of the conditional markers. Highlighted numbers refer to the number of times a marker has been incorrectly used. Non – highlighted numbers under *ba* indicates the number of times the predicate of the antecedent clause is static.

Table 6. Korean *-ketun* sentences translated into Japanese

Sent.nr.	*Modality*	*to*	*ba*	*tara*	*nara*
2	D (advice)	1	1	8	0
5	D (command)	0	1	7	2
8	D (request)	0	1	7	2
10	D (request)	0	2	5	3
13	D (request)	0	2	8	0
28	D (request)	1	1	7	1
30	D(permission)	1	3	1	5
31	D (advice)	0	0	7	3
36	D(permission)	0	4	2	4
Sum frequency		3	15	52	20

The strong tendency to apply especially *tara* is in support of the hypothesis that Korean learners have been trying to establish a correspondence between *-ketun* and

Japanese markers frequently used to express deontic modality. The tendency is reinforced by the fact that *nara*, which also is commonly used to convey deontic messages, comes next to *tara* in frequency of use. Put together, these two markers were applied in 72 out of 90 sentences. As can be read out of tables 7-9 below, none of the other Korean markers triggered off *tara/nara* sentences with a frequency like *-ketun*.
The use of *to* and *ba* (*ba1*) to express deontic modality indicates that some learners have not yet been able to move from the unmarked to the marked parameter value. A more detailed breakdown of the results is however needed to clarify whether the (correct) use of *ba2* is a coincidental consequence of this fact.

Table 7. Korean *-(e)ya* sentences translated into Japanese

Sent.nr.	*Modality*	*to*	*ba*	*tara*	*nara*
1	E (inference)	2	5	2	1
3	E (habitual)	9	1	0	0
4	E (inference)	4	3	3	0
6	E (inference)	3	3	2	2
24	E (inference)	3	4	3	0
25	E (inference)	2	6	2	0
29	E (habitual)	3	5	1	1
32	E (inference)	1	7	0	2
33	E (inference)	3	4	3	0
Sum frequency		30	38	16	6

According to the predictions made in③above, *-(e)ya* sentences would most likely trigger off *to* sentences in Japanese, since learners would try to link *-(e)ya* to a Japanese conditional marker exclusively used to express epistemic modality. As can be seen, this link was established in one third of the cases. However, it seems that learners have discovered that *ba* also represents a very convenient alternative to convey *-(e)ya* - like messages.
Since epistemic modality falls within the permissible range of all four conditional markers in Japanese, it follows that possible errors must arise from violations of other restrictions. An example of such is sentence nr. 29, where one of the objects have applied *nara* to express habitual action[2].

Table 8. Korean *-(u)myen* sentences translated into Japanese.

Sent.nr.	*Modality*	*to*	*ba*	*tara*	*nara*
12	E (inference)	1	1	0	8
15	D (command)	1	6	1	2
16	D (will)	1	1	6	2
17	D (command)	1	2	2	5
20	D (request)	1	3	3	3
26	D (invitation)	2	2	5	1
27	E (inference)	2	7	1	0
34	D (advice)	2	3	3	2
35	D (advice)	0	0	10	0
Sum frequency		11	25	31	23

Table 9 Korean *-tamyen* sentences translated into Japanese.

Sent.nr.	*Modality*	*to*	*ba*	*tara*	*nara*
7	D (prohibition)	0	1	3	6
9	D (will)	0	3	7	0
11	D (will)	3	3	3	1
14	D (request)	3	3	0	4
18	D (advice)	0	6	2	2
19	E (inference)	4	5	1	0
21	E (habitual)	9	0	1	0
22	D (will)	2	2	4	2
23	D (advice)	1	2	2	5
Sum frequency		22	25	23	20

When the starting point of the learners is an *-(u)myen* or a *-tamyen* sentence, it is no longer an obvious learning strategy to make a link to an equivalent Japanese marker. In this case, if the shift from the unmarked to the marked parameter value is not performed, the learners will define the territory of *to/ba* to be equivalent to the territory of *tara/nara*. As the results show, this is exactly what is being done in a number of cases. The tendency is most distinct for *-tamyen* sentences.

7.Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to discuss how Korean learners acquire Japanese conditionals. It has been demonstrated that while *-ketun* sentences in Korean trigger off *tara/nara* sentences in Japanese, *-(e)ya* sentences trigger off *to/ba* sentences. This indicates that Korean learners have taken into account the possibility that a Korean-like fixed relationship between conditional markers and the type of modality expressed in the consequent clause also might be present in Japanese. However, when the starting point were *-(u)myen/tamyen* sentences, some Korean learners apply *to/ba*

within "forbidden area". This suggests that these learners have not made the necessary parameter shift, and that they consequently have set the permissible range of *to/ba* to be just as wide as *tara/nara*. The tendency is stronger for *ba* than it is for *to*, suggesting that *ba* is the most difficult marker to acquire also for Korean learners.
Compared to Norwegian learners in an earlier experiment (Solvang, 2001), Korean learners undoubtedly acquire Japanese conditionals with relatively less difficulties.

Comments

[1]Kim points to a number of cases where *-ketun* can not be applied, even if the consequent contains deontic modality. Such limitations in use are due to syntactic and/or pragmatic restrictions.
[2]As should be known, there are more restrictions to the use of Japanese conditionals than modal ones. In this paper I have however tried to approach the problem solely from a modal viewpoint. Still, there are a few examples where the errors committed are not due to violations of modal restrictions. Due to lack of space I will not comment on these errors further.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Nam Deuk Hyun for offering valuable assistance in composing the experimental sentences in Korean language. I am also grateful to Michio Sato, who made it possible to carry out the experiment at Chosun University, South – Korea.
Needless to say, errors and shortcomings are solely my own.

References

Akatsuka, N.(1985) Conditionals and the epistemic scale. *Language, vol.61/3*,pp.625 – 639.

Comrie, B.(1986) Conditional : A typology. In E.Traugott et al. (eds.) *On Conditionals*, pp.77-99 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haiman, J. (1986) Constraints on the form and meaning of the protasis. In E.Traugott et al. (eds.) *On Conditionals*, pp.215-227Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kim, Eun-Hee (1995) *Jookenbun no nichichootaisho.* Doctoral dissertation, Institute of Linguistics, Faculty of Letters, Hiroshima University.

Masuoka, T. (ed.) (1993) *Nihongo no joken hyogen.* Kuroshio shuppan.

Palmer, F.R. (1986) *Mood and modality.* Cambridge University press.

Solvang, Harry (2001) The Subset Principle, Markedness and the Acquisition of a Superset Foreign Language. *NIDABA* 30