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L1 Transfer in Interpretation of the English Progressive Marker by L1 Japanese Speakers of English*

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第二言語習得研究の主要な研究項目の一つは、第二言語の習得過程の解明（developmental　problem）であり、特に成人の第二言語習得では母語が果たす役割について議論がなされてきた。本研究の目的は、英語のアスペクト形態素（-ing）について、成人日本人学習者と英語母語話者ではその解釈に違いがあるのかどうか、またもし違いがあるのであればそれは母語である日本語に起因するのかどうかを実証的研究により検証することである。日本語の未完了マーカー「ている」は、英語の進行形マーカー（-ing）同様、活動動詞、達成動詞と共に用いられると動作の進行を表わすが、到達動詞と共に用いられると、-ing とは異なり結果状態を表す。そこで到達動詞と共に用いられた場合の-ing を、学習レベルの異なる成人日本人英語学習者（17名）がどう解釈しているかを文法性判断テストにより調査し、英語母語話者（3名）と比較した。その結果、学習レベルが低い学習者は、到達動詞、状態動詞に関し英語母語話者とはかけ離れた解釈を示し、到達動詞の解釈には母語（日本語）の影響が見られた。しかし対照的に、学習レベルが高い学習者に関しては、英語母語話者との解釈の差に統計的有意性は見られなかった。このことから、第二言語学習者は学習初期においてはアスペクト形態素（-ing）の解釈に母語干渉を受けるが、学習が進むにつれて干渉はなくなり母語話者同様の心的表象（mental representation）を獲得すると考えられる。

1 Introduction

One of the major concerns in studying second language (L2) acquisition involves the development of L2 learners' mental representations over time and the length of each stage. In investigating the development, determining the role of the first language (L1) has also been a focus of attention as researches revealed that L2 learners with different L1s seem to have a different path of the development (Hawkins 2001).

The present study investigates the interpretation of the English progressive marker,

-ing, by adult L1 Japanese speakers of English (JSEs) with different levels of proficiency. One of the major differences between the Japanese and English aspectual system is that the English progressive marker, *-ing*, denotes a progressive interpretation, while the Japanese imperfective marker, *-te iru*, allows both progressive and perfective interpretations. This study investigated whether JSEs had a different knowledge of the English progressive marker, *-ing*, from native speakers of English. It was found that they had deviant knowledge, which could be traced to the L1. On the basis of these results, I argue that JSEs develop their deviant knowledge into native-like comprehension in line with L2 input.

The following section of this paper compares English and Japanese progressive markers. Section 3 summarizes previous literature and Section 4 presents hypotheses. Section 5 presents methodological details and results of the experiment. Section 6 discusses implications of the results and Section 7 presents the conclusion of this work.

2 Progressive markers in English and Japanese

English and Japanese have some properties in common in realizing their tense and aspect systems. For instance, progressive marking is obligatory and simple present forms cannot denote action in progress at the time of speech in both languages. Accordingly, the Japanese imperfective marker *-te iru,* is often regarded as an equivalent to the English progressive marker *-ing*. However, *-te iru* does not necessarily denote the same meaning as *-ing,* as shown in Table 2.1. In the table, verbs are classified by their inherent lexical aspect into four types; activity, accomplishment, achievement, and stative[1] (Vendler 1967).

Table 2.1 shows that one of the distinct differences between English and Japanese progressive markers is in the interpretation of achievements. The English progressive marker *-ing* with achievements denotes the process leading up to the point, whereas the Japanese imperfective marker *-te iru* with achievements denotes the resultative state caused by a punctual event (Kindaichi 1950). It should be noted here that a different morpheme, *kake-te iru*, is used to refer to a process leading to a point in Japanese. This difference between *-ing* and *-te iru* with achievements is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

As for the reason why *-te iru* and *-ing* with achievements have different readings, two types of explanations have been provided so far (Gabriele, Martohardjono and McClure

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[1] Kindaichi (1950) proposes four types of classification of Japanese verbs; staitive verbs, durative verbs, instantaneous verbs and fourth verbal category. As for the correspondence between Vendler (1967)'s and Kindaich (1950)'s classifications, see Ogihara (1998: 93-96).

Table 2.1 Comparison between *-ing* and *-te iru* markers (compiled from Shirai 2000: 331-332)

Verbs	readings	English 'be –ing'	Japanese '-te iru'
Achievements	Process leading up to the endpoint.	Ken is arriving.	
	Resultative state		Ken-wa tui-**te iru**. Ken-TOP arrive-ASP-NPST 'Ken has arrived.'
	Progressive (Iterative)	Ken is banging on the door.	Ken-wa doa-o tatai-**te iru**. Ken-TOP door-ACC bang-ASP-NPST 'Ken is banging on the door.'
Durative verbs (Activities/ Accomplishments)	Progressive	Ken is making a chair/chairs.	Ken-wa isu-o tukut-**te iru**. Ken-TOP chair-ACC make-ASP-NPST 'Ken is making a chair/chairs.'
	Experiential states		Ken-wa kyonen isu-o tukut-**te iru**. Ken-TOP last year chair-ACC make-ASP-NPST 'Ken made a chair/chairs last year.'
	Habitual		Ken-wa mai nichi isu-o tukut-**te iru**. Ken-TOP everyday chair-ACC make-ASP-NPST 'Ken makes a chair/chairs every day.'
Statives	Temporary states	Ken is being lazy.	Ken-wa (ima) namake-**te iru**. Ken-TOP (now) lazy. 'Ken is being lazy (at this moment).'
	Characteristic states		Ken-wa (itsumo) namake-**te iru**/(namake-monoda) Ken -TOP (always) lazy. 'Ken is (always) lazy.'

English   Japanese

(arrive)

(English)   Ken *is arriving*.   'Ken *has arrived*.'
(Japanese) 'Ken-wa tuki-*kake-te -iru*.'   Ken-wa tui-*te iru*.
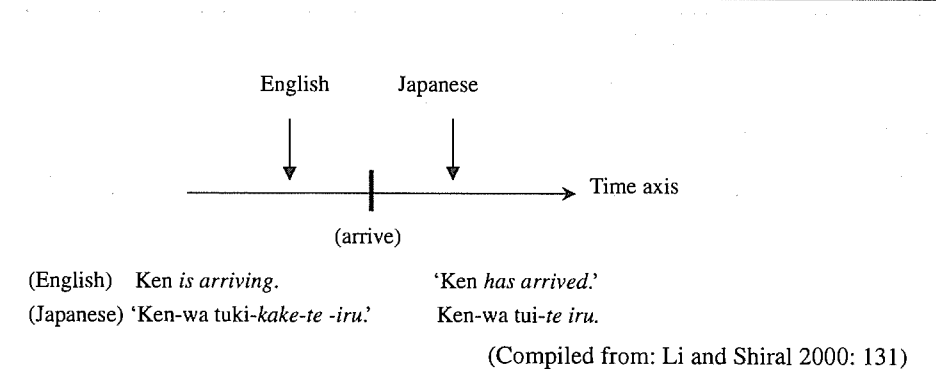
(Compiled from: Li and Shiral 2000: 131)

Figure 2.1 The conceptual difference between *-ing* and *-te iru*

2003: 90). The first explanation concerns about the lexical aspect, namely semantics of the verb phrase which *-te iru* and *-ing* are attached to. Machida (1989: 46) suggest that achievements, which are categorised as 'instantaneous verbs' in Japanese (Kindaichi 1950), denote instantaneous actions that do not have a process. As a result, *-te iru* attached to achievements cannot denote the ongoing reading but denote the resultative state. The second explanation concerns about the grammatical aspect, namely verbal inflectional morphology. Al-Hamad et al. (2002: 51-54) suggest that *-te iru* and *-ing* have different scope, following Pustejovsky (1991) and Travis (2000). Pustejovsky (1991:55) regards verbs as

a combination of two subevents, e1 and e2, as Table 2. 2 shows. In the table, e1 precedes e2, and * means that the subevent is the HEAD maker, which is prominent for an event and affects the "focus" of the interpretation (Pustejovsky 1995: 72). Travis (2000) argues that an Aspect head, which is located between the two V heads, has scope over the inner VP in Malagasy. She further proposes that grammatical aspectual forms of a language have scope, either over whole events (wide scope) or only subevents (narrow scope), which is a parameterized difference. Based on these studies, Al-Hamad et al.(2002: 54) claim that Japanese -*te* has narrow scope only over the head subevent, while English -*ing* has wide scope over all the subevents. Accordingly, when -*te iru* is attached to achievements, -*te* has scope over e2* to denote a resultative meaning.

Table 2.2 Subevents of verbs (compiled from Al-Hamad et al. 2002: 52)

*represents a prominent subevent

Pustejovsky's categorization	Vendler's categorization	Pustejovsky's definition	Explanation		Examples
			a process	a state	
Transitions	Achievements	[e1, e2*]	○	○ *	arrive
	Accomplishments	[e1*, e2]	○ *	○	bake a cake
Processes	Activities	[e1]	○	–	run, sleep
Statives	States	[e1]	–	○	know, understand

In contrast to the case of achievements, -*ing* and -*te iru* with durative verbs, namely, accomplishments and activities, have the same progressive reading. -*te iru* can have other readings, such as an experiential state and a habitual reading. Nevertheless, this happens when -*te iru* co-occurs with adverbials, such as *kyonen* (last year) or *mainich* (every day), which indicate an experiential state and a habitual reading. Thus, English and Japanese progressive markers with durative verbs appear to correspond in terms of the interpretation. Likewise, -*ing* and -*te iru* with statives denote the same reading of the temporal state, as shown in Table 2.1. Though -*te iru* can expresses characteristic states when attached to adverbials, such as *itumo* (always), both -*ing* and -*te iru* basically have temporally state readings without adverbs. In this way, -*ing* and -*te iru* express relatively similar meanings with accomplishments, activities, and statives unlike those with achievements.

3 Previous literature

Al-Hamad et al. (2002) investigate the ultimate attainment on the developmental stages of the interpretation of 'be+V-ing', base verb forms and past tense forms by proficient L2 speakers of English with different L1s; Chinese (n=6), Japanese (n=4) and verb-raising languages (Arabic, French, German and Spanish, n=10). The results from an acceptability judgement task suggest that their temporal interpretation is sensitive to the syntactic properties of the L1s. The findings indicate that JSEs are almost target-like in their interpretation of progressive achievement verbs, suggesting that the scope difference between English and Japanese is acquirable. JSEs differ significantly from native speakers in judging inappropriate continuous present with statives and inappropriate simple past with achievements. These results suggest that they allow simple past with achievements for both habitual and event in progress interpretation. Nevertheless, the reason for this has not yet been explained. To sum up, Al-Hamad et al. revealed interesting features of the grammar of L2 speakers of English. Considering the sample population, however, more data, especially from JSEs, are required to clarify the issues that remain to be accounted for.

4 Hypotheses

In the study, the following property of the English progressive marker *-ing* was investigated.

(1) English progressive forms of achievements denote a process leading up to the end
　　event.

(1) can be problematic for JSEs, if they have a one-to-one mapping of English and Japanese progressive markers at the initial state of the development. As for the end state, however, JSEs may have the same mental representation as native speakers of English. More precisely, the following hypotheses can be formulated.

(2) H1: JSEs with low levels of proficiency have different knowledge from native speakers
　　　　in the interpretation of progressive forms of achievements, which is traced to the
　　　　L1.
　　H2: JSEs with high levels of proficiency have the same knowledge as native speakers of
　　　　English in the interpretation of progressive forms of achievements.

5 Method

5. 1 Participants

The participants were three adult native speakers of English, who served as a control group, N, and 17 adult native speakers of Japanese. All of the Japanese participants started learning English at the age of 12 or 13 years at junior high school, and some had prior experience of classroom instruction at the age of 10 or 11 years at a cram school in Japan. The participants were divided into four proficiency levels; JH, 'highly advanced', JA, 'advanced', JI, 'intermediate' and JE, 'elementary', as assessed by the Oxford Quick Placement Test 2001 (OQPT). The differences in the mean scores between the four Japanese groups were found to be significant, using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 11.0J (p=0.0016, 0.000 <0.05; Table5.1).

Table 5.1 The informants

Nationality	Group	Number	Age	Occupation	OQPT score (max=60)		
					Range (%)	Average (%)	Differences
Japanese	JH	3	40 − 49	English teachers /interpreters	52 − 60 (92 − 100)	58.0 (97)	P=0.016
	JA	4	18 − 63	Post-/Under- graduate students	46 − 47 (77 − 78)	46.8 (78)	P=0.000
	JI	6	18 − 19	Undergraduate students	41 − 42 (68-70)	41.3 (69)	
	JE	4	18 − 19	Undergraduate students	34 − 36 (57 − 60)	34.8 (58)	P=0.000
British/ American	N	3	27 − 40	English teachers at universities or a translation school in Japan.			

5. 2 Task

The participants were asked to perform a sentence-conjunction judgement task. Most of the stimuli were adapted from those in Montrul and Slabakova (2003), while some were originally created. The task included a list of sentences consisting of two coordinated clauses combined with 'and' or 'but'. Half of the combinations made logical sentences (eg1), whereas the other half did not (eg2). There were four sentence types as illustrated by the following examples.

(3) a. type1: achievements (*win, get married, die, arrive*)

    eg1. My uncle was dying of cancer but he finally got well.　　(logical)

    eg2. Koji's grandmother died of cancer but she finally got well.　(illogical)

  b. type2: accomplishments (*drink a coke, write an essay, read a story, go to the lake*)

    eg1. The novelist was writing an essay but it is not finished.　(logical)

    eg2. The poet wrote a poem but it is not finished.　　(illogical)

  c. type3: statives (*be lazy, be kind, be overconfident*)

    eg1. Derek is being kind today but he is not a kind guy.　(logical)

    eg2. Adam is kind but he is not a kind guy.　　(illogical)

  d. type4: accomplishments (*carry the package to the post office, construct a building, draw a circle, make a chair*)

    eg1. I saw Tom making a chair but he has not finished it.　(logical)

    eg2. I saw Tom make a chair but he has not finished it.　(illogical)

As in Table 5.2, the task consisted of 30 sentences in total; 8 sentences included achievements (ACH), 16 sentences included accomplishments (ACC) and 6 sentences included statives (STAT). The stimuli included 16 distracter sentences (7 logical and 9 illogical). The target stimuli and the distracters were randomised and presented to the participants. The participants were asked to judge appropriateness of the combination in the sentence using a 5-point Likert scale from -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, where -2 represents a 'very odd' combination in the sentence, +2 represents a 'fully appropriate' combination. After collecting the data, 3 of the illogical items which included accomplishments were eliminated because more than two informants of the native group rated them as 2 (fully appropriate), opposed to the analysis in previous literature. (The reason for this is discussed in 7.2.) Consequently, the number of the target stimuli was finally reduced to 27, as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Numbers of target stimuli　　　　(! represents illogical items)

type1		type2		type3		type4		Total
ACH	!ACH	ACC1	!ACC1	STAT	!STAT	ACC2	!ACC2	
4	4	4	2	3	3	4	3	27

5. 3 Results

Figure 5.1 Mean scores of the groups

□ N   ■ JH   □ JA   □ JI   ■ JE

type1

ACH: My uncle was dying of cancer but he finally got well.

!ACH: Koji's grandmother died of cancer but she finally got well.

type2

ACC1: The novelist was writing an essay but it is not finished.

!ACC1 : The poet wrote a poem but it is not finished.

type3

STAT: Derek is being kind today but he is not a kind guy.

!STAT: Adam is kind but he is not a kind guy.

type4

ACC2: I saw Tom making a chair but he has not finished it.

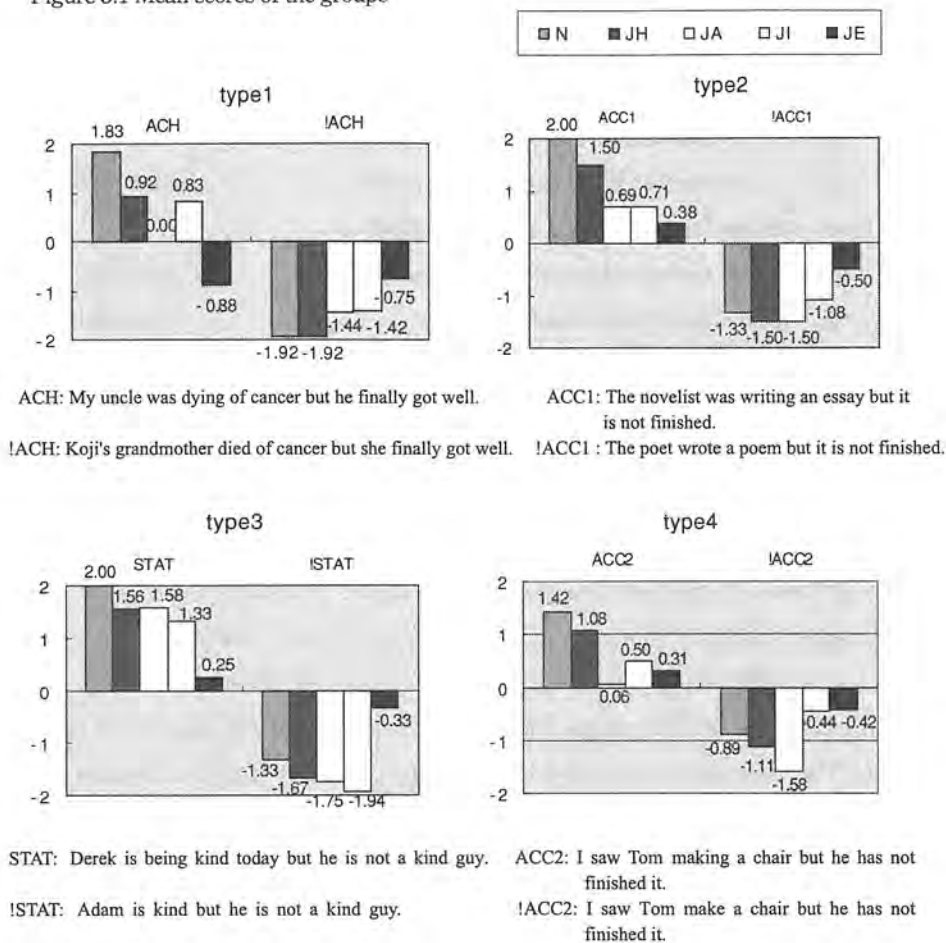!ACC2: I saw Tom make a chair but he has not finished it.

Table 5.3 Mean scores of the groups

(* represents items in which JA/JI/JE is significantly different from N. *:p<0.05, **:p<0.01)

stimuli	groups	N	JH	JA	JI	JE
type1	ACH	1.83	0.92	0.00*	0.83	−0.88**
	!ACH	−1.92	−1.92	−1.44	−1.42	−0.75
type2	ACC1	2.00	1.50	0.69*	0.71*	0.38*
	!ACC1	−1.33	−1.50	−1.50	−1.08	−0.50
type3	STAT	2.00	1.56	1.58	1.34*	0.25**
	!STAT	−1.33	−1.67	−1.75	−1.94	−0.33
type4	ACC2	1.42	1.08	0.06	0.50	0.31
	!ACC2	−0.89	−1.11	−1.58	−0.44	−0.42

Table 5. 4 Significant differences between the native and the Japanese groups (p<0.05)

Stimuli	N		JA / JI / JE		t	df	p
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.			
type1 (ACH)	1.83	0.29	0.00 (JA)	1.02	3.42	3.61	0.032
			−0.88 (JE)	0.97	4.59	5.00	0.006
type2 (ACC1)	2.00	0.00	0.69 (JA)	0.55	4.74	3.00	0.018
			0.71 (JI)	0.80	3.97	5.00	0.011
			0.38 (JE)	0.83	3.92	3.00	0.030
type3 (STAT)	2.00	0.00	1.34 (JI)	0.56	2.93	5.00	0.033
			0.25 (JE)	0.50	5.92	5.00	0.002

Figure 5.1 and Table 5.3 give the mean scores of the groups, and Table 5.4 shows the statistically significant differences between the native and the Japanese groups. Given these results, two characteristics of the Japanese groups were observed. Firstly, they showed different knowledge from the native group only in logical stimuli as Table 5.3 shows. The Japanese groups did not accept the logical stimuli as strongly as the native group. Secondly, the Japanese groups showed similar interpretations as the native group in line with their proficiency levels. In fact, the JH group did not show significantly different knowledge from the native group in any item. Accordingly, JH group may have a similar mental representation as the native group. By contrast, the JE group was significantly different from the native group in interpreting three types (ACH, ACC1, STAT) as Table5.3 represents. The JE group preferred −1, 0 and +1 rather than −2 and +2, resulting in a narrow range of mean scores between −0.88 and 0.38. The JE group seemed to be uncertain in judging sentences irrespective of their logicality. As for the JA and the JI groups, they fell between the JH and the JE groups in most of the sentence types. In type1 (ACH) and type4 (ACC2), the means of the JA group were around 0, namely, 0.00 and 0.06, which were lower than those of the JI group. This is because two members of the JA group strongly rejected more than half of the stimuli, while the remaining two members accepted them. This may be attributable to the methodological drawbacks discussed in 7.2. Overall, however, JSEs' mental representations appear to become closer to that of the native group as their proficiency level increases.

6 Discussion

In this section, I focus on the interpretation of two verbs types, namely, achievements

and statives, in which the difference between the JE group and the native group was highly significant (p<0.01). These items are highlighted in gray in Table 5.4.

6. 1 Achievements

The JE group did not accept the logical stimuli with continuous forms of achievements as strongly as the native group. This can be traced to the L1. The JSEs with a low level of proficiency may have a straightforward mapping between English -*ing* and Japanese -*te iru,* overlooking the difference between the two markers. In other words, they may not have acquired the fact that -*te iru* refers to a resulting state, attaching to an achievement verb, whereas -*ing* refers to an ongoing action as shown in Figure 2.1. Shirai and Kurono (1998: 266) assert that 'if the progressive meaning was introduced first, it is no surprise that the learners treated the progressive meaning as the prototype of -*te iru.*'

It is worth noting in passing that the JE group accepted neither achievements nor accomplishments as strongly as the native group. One might therefore consider that the JE group has knowledge different from the native group irrespective of the verb type. This analysis may not be true, however, because the JE group strongly rejected the logical sentences with achievements, while they accepted the logical sentences with accomplishments. The significant difference between the JE group and the native group in judging logical sentences with achievements (p=0.030) might arise because all the native informants judged the stimuli as 2.0, without no variance in the statistical test. Therefore, their deviate knowledge of achievements, not accomplishments, may be attributable to the L1.

As for the JH group, there is no significant difference between the JH group and the native control group in interpreting sentences with simple past forms of achievements, unlike Al-Hamad et al. (2002). This might be partly because the JH group in the present study is more advanced in the English proficiency than the Japanese group in Al-Hamad et al. (2002). In fact, the JH group ranges between 92 and 100 percent in a short type of the OPT, while the Japanese group in Al-Hamad et al. (2002) ranges between 87 and 89 percent in the OPT.

6. 2 Statives

The JI and JE groups did not accept the logical sentences with continuous forms of statives as strongly as the native group. In particular, the JE group showed apparent confusion in distinguishing present progressive forms from simple present forms, which can be

expressed by the same morphology *-te iru,* because they gave relatively similar ratings of around 0, namely, 0.25 and -0.33, for logical and illogical forms respectively. This could be partially attributable to the L1 because *-te iru* denotes not only a temporary states but also a characteristic state unlike *-ing.* At the same time, however, another factor may have made the JE group refrain from fully accepting progressive forms of statives. In junior and senior high schools in Japan, it is often taught that statives can not be used as progressive forms (Kuno and Takami 2005: 2). If this is applicable to the JE group, it seems reasonable to suppose that the JE group could not strongly accept or reject unfamiliar sentences.

7　Conclusion

7. 1　Plausibility of H1 and H2

　　　　Let us now turn to the hypotheses constructed in section 4.

　　H1: JSEs with low levels of proficiency may have different knowledge from native speakers in the interpretation of progressive forms of achievements, which is traced to the L1.

　　H2: JSEs with high of proficiency may have the same knowledge as native speakers in the interpretation of progressive forms of achievements.

　　In the present study, the JE group had a different knowledge from native speakers in interpreting several verb forms, including progressive forms of achievements, and this is attributable to the L1. By contrast, the JH group did not show any different knowledge form the native speakers. Therefore, the present study supports H1 and H2.

7. 2　Implications for future researches

　　The present study has brought a new finding which was not discussed in previous literature. In the data collection, the native group judged the following illogical stimuli to be appropriate. As a matter of fact, all of the three native informants rated (4a) as 2 (Fully appropriate), and two of them rated (4b) and (4c) as 2.

(4) a. type2 (!ACC1)　Mary drank a beer and spilled half of it on the floor.

　　b. type2 (!ACC1)　Juan read a book in the evening but didn't reach the end.

　　c. type3 (!ACC2)　I watched her draw a picture on the canvas but it is only half-finished.

A number of studies, including Smith (1997) and Slabakova (2003), point out that English bare verbal forms denote completed events. The present study, however, has shown that this is not always applicable to every accomplishment verb phrase. More specifically, some verb phrases which are categorized as accomplishments can become atelic when they are modified by certain following phrases. Further studies are needed to clarify which components in a sentence are used to decide the telicity of verb phrases.

To strengthen the conclusion of this paper, three points could be improved in the future research. Firstly, the comparison of the L2 learners with different L1s will be needed to examine L1 transfer more fully. In the present study, the argument of L1 transfer is speculative because the participants had the same L1, Japanese. Secondly, more native speakers of English with the same nationality are necessary to avoid the difference among individuals in judging the stimuli. Only three native speakers of English with different nationalities, British and American, were involved in the study. It could be problematic, however, to make them as one control group since the interpretation of the stimuli might depend on the nationality. Thirdly, the number of the stimuli was too small and could be better balanced. For instance, only *be* verb was used as statives, while four different verbs were used as achievements and accomplishments. Likewise, type1 and type2 included only past tense forms, while type3 included only present tense forms; inclusion of both forms in future studies will allow for comparison between them.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix (test design)

Achievements

1. The Brazilian team was winning the soccer championship but came up second.

!2. Nancy won the tennis championship but came up second.

3. John and Mary were getting married yesterday but today they are still single.

!4. Ken and Yuko got married yesterday but today they are still single.

5. My uncle was dying of cancer but he finally got well.

!6. Koji's grandmother died of heart attack but she finally got well.

7. The plane was arriving at the airport at 8 but appeared at 10.

!8. The transatlantic arrived at the port at 10 but appeared at noon.

Accomplishments1

1. Adrian was drinking a coke but spilled half of it on his pants.

!2. Mary drank a beer but spilled half of it on the floor.

3. The novelist was writing an essay but it is not finished.

!4. The poet wrote a poem but it is not finished.

5. Mike was reading a story in the evening but didn't reach the end.

!6. Juan read a book in the evening but didn't reach the end.

7. We were going to the lake but stayed at home due to the storm.

!8. We went to the hills but stayed at home due to the bad weather.

Statives

1. Melissa is being lazy now but she is not a lazy person.

!2. Eric is lazy but he is not a lazy person.

3. Derek is being kind today but he is not a kind guy.

!4. Adam is kind but he is not a kind guy.

5. Jim is being overconfident now but he is usually modest.

!6. Jane is aggressive but she is not an aggressive person.

Accomplishments2

1. I saw Amanda carrying the package to the post office but she lost it on the way.

!2. I saw Julia take the envelope to the post office but she lost it on the way.

3. I observed the company constructing a building but it could not finish it.

!4. I observed Mr Green build a house but he could not finish it.

5. I watched Peter drawing a circle on a white board but it is only half-finished.

!6. I watched her draw a picture on the canvas but it is only half-finished.

7. I saw Tom making a chair but he has not finished it.

!8. I saw Tom make a chair but he has not finished it.