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Foreword

The study of language offers profound insights into human cognition and the origins of communication. Spatial demonstratives, like “this” or “that,” rank among the earliest documented words across languages and emerge early in children’s vocabularies.¹ They exhibit complex, multimodal dynamics, intricately tied to eye gaze and gestures, highlighting the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication. These ancient terms frequently underpin a variety of figurative meanings, serving as foundational elements in language evolution.

We are pleased to announce the release of the summer 2024 issue of *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*. This issue features six scientific articles and one book review, offering diverse perspectives on linguistic “this and that” concerning the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean languages. We extend our sincere gratitude to all contributors and reviewers whose scholarly dedication enriches our journal.

The issue opens with the article “Integration and Autonomy in Japanese Converb Constructions: A Corpus Study” by **Natalia SOLOMKINA**, who examined morphological and syntactic connectedness in converb constructions using tests and corpus data. Results show morphological independence for most cases but syntax reveals a continuum of autonomy and unity, complicating categorization and highlighting the ongoing grammaticalization process.

The article “The Use of Japanese Words *Hito*, *Hitobito*, and *Hitotachi* in L1 and L2 Written Compositions” by **Divna TRIČKOVIĆ** addresses the pluralization of nouns and differentiation of synonyms in teaching Japanese as a foreign language by analyzing three Japanese words for “people”. Using compositions from intermediate students and native speakers, the study reveals challenges in distinguishing singularity and plurality. It highlights the need for greater focus on teaching the plural forms 人々 *hitobito* and 人達 *hitotachi*.

Following is the work by **Dragana ŠPICA** “The Effect of Lexical Accent on Perceived Japanese Vowel Length: Evidence from Croatian” in which the author examined how Japanese lexical accent influences Croatian listeners’ perception of Japanese vowel length. A test with varied pitch patterns and

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-023-01697-4>

vowel positions showed that pitch patterns of words, the position of a long vowel, and participants' Japanese knowledge all affect error rates.

Yet another work that offers an insight into the Japanese language is entitled "Refusals in Japanese and Spanish: Pragmatic Transfer in L2". In it, the author **Ignacio PEDROSA GARCÍA** compares refusal strategies of advanced Japanese learners of Spanish to those of native Spanish and Japanese speakers, focusing on pragmatic transfer in refusals to requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions. The analysis revealed that higher linguistic ability in Japanese learners correlated with increased pragmatic transfer, highlighting the interplay between cultural priming and response freedom.

Next is the work on the Chinese language "The Nature and Structure of Reflexive Verb Constructions" by **YANG Yongzhong**. The author elucidates the internal structure, detailing the mechanisms by which they are constituted, with particular emphasis on the significant function of the reflexive pronoun. The whole reflexive verb construction can function either as the object in the specifier position of VP or move to the position of the light verb to function as the predicate.

MOON Chang-Hak in his article "Direct Evidentials in Korean: From the Perspective of the Multi-Store Memory Model" clarifies Korean direct evidential markers using a multi-store memory model. Markers indicate "present perception-based knowledge" or "past acquisition-based knowledge" and align with memory processes like maintenance rehearsal, elaborative rehearsal, and long-term storage.

Last but not least is the book review of the long-awaited linguistic monography on Korean language and linguistics in Slovene *Uvod v korejski jezik in korejsko jezikoslovje*. The review was written by **Albina NEČAK LÜK** who describes the monography as a work that, by incorporating recent linguistic research to interpret Korean linguistic phenomena, goes far beyond traditional grammar and, by delving into general and sociolinguistic phenomena, aids readers in understanding Korean linguistic phenomena and similar issues in other languages.

Editors and Editorial Board invite the regular and new readers to engage with the content, to question, challenge, and reflect. We hope you have a pleasant read full of inspiration and a rise of new research ideas inspired by these papers.

Editors

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Integration and Autonomy in Japanese Converb Constructions: A Corpus Study

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Abstract

Researchers still have no common opinion on the integration and autonomy of parts of Japanese converb constructions. In this article, morphological and syntactic connectedness in the most common Japanese converb constructions is examined through tests whose results can be verified using corpus data. Results show that parts of all considered converb constructions demonstrate morphological independence (except for contracted colloquial forms). As for the syntax, converb constructions demonstrate both features of autonomy and unity, forming a sort of continuum, which makes it difficult to categorize them and to distinguish syntactic subtypes for each of the constructions. This reminds us that grammaticalization is a constantly ongoing process, and word classes not falling steadily into our classifications require flexible means of description.

Keywords: Japanese linguistics, converb constructions, corpus linguistics, grammaticalization, complex predicates

Povzetek

Raziskovalci še vedno nimajo enotnega mnenja o integraciji in avtonomiji delov japonskih konverbnih konstrukcij. V tem članku smo morfološko in sintaktično povezanost v najpogostejših japonskih konverbnih konstrukcijah proučevali s testi, katerih rezultate je mogoče preveriti z uporabo podatkov iz korpusa. Rezultati kažejo, da deli vseh obravnavanih konverbnih konstrukcij izkazujejo morfološko neodvisnost (z izjemo skrajšanih pogovornih oblik). Kar zadeva sintakso, konverbne konstrukcije izkazujejo tako značilnosti neodvisnosti kot enotnosti, pri čemer tvorijo nekakšen kontinuum, kar otežuje njihovo kategorizacijo in razlikovanje sintaktičnih podtipov za vsako od konstrukcij. To nas spominja, da je slovnična zgradba stalen proces, in besedne vrste, ki se ne uvrščajo enakomerno v naše klasifikacije, zahtevajo prilagodljive načine opisovanja.

Keywords: japonsko jezikoslovje, konverbne konstrukcije, korpusno jezikoslovje, gramatikalizacija, sestavljeni povedki



1 Introduction

Compound predicates have no universally accepted definition in linguistics (Amberber et al., 2010, p. 1), so categorizing them may prove even more difficult: it is sometimes problematic to assign specific constructions of a particular language to specific types of compound predicates. Examples of such constructions are Japanese compound constructions with the converb. In Japanese, there are several complex constructions consisting of *-te/-de* converbs and what are traditionally called auxiliary verbs. Researchers have no unambiguous consensus on their syntactic and functional bondness and typological status. This study analyses the features of unity and autonomy demonstrated by the parts of some of the most widely used converb constructions (Shibatani, 2007, p. 24): progressive *-te iru*, translocative *-te iku*, cislocative *-te kuru*, completive *-te shimau*, *-te miru* ‘to try doing something’, preparatory action *-te oku*, resultative *-te aru* and benefactive constructions such as *-te ageru*. For the first time, such analyses use corpus data rather than introspection and interviews with individual native speakers. The results are also discussed from the perspective of grammaticalization theory. For benefactive constructions, we partially rely on data presented earlier in (Solomkina, 2022).

1.1 Morphological and phonological cohesion

Most researchers agree that Japanese converb constructions consist of two morphologically separate words (Shibatani, 2009, p. 268 *inter alia*). The main arguments in favor of this view are the possibility of placing particles like *mo* ‘too’ between the parts of such constructions and the possibility of attaching honorific markers to only one part of the construction. The following examples use the compound predicate *motte kaeru* ‘to bring’, consisting of the main verb *motsu* ‘to hold, to carry’ and the auxiliary verb *kaeru* ‘to return’, in neutral (1a) and honorific (1b) forms:

- (1a) 本 を 持って 帰る
 hon o mot-te kae-ru
 book ACC carry-CNV come-PRS
 ‘bring back a book’ (Shibatani, 2009, p. 268)

- (1b) 本 を 持って お帰りに なる
 hon o mot-te o-kaeri-ni nar-u
 book ACC carry-CNV HON-return-CNV become-PRS
 'bring back a book' (Shibatani, 2009, p. 268)

In a similar sentence with a verb compound, the whole compound must be marked as honorific (*o-mochi-kaeri ni naru*) to achieve grammaticality:

- (2) *本 を お持ち帰りに なる
 *hon o o-mochi-kaer-ini nar-u
 book ACC HON-carry-HON-return-CNV Become-PRS
 'to bring a book' (Shibatani, 2009, p. 268)

From the point of view of phonological unity, Japanese converb constructions form a single word. The juxtaposition of two verbs in writing (3a) does not allow us to determine whether we are looking at a converb construction with an auxiliary verb (3c) or two verbs in independent use (3b). Besides, Japanese has spaceless writing, which in itself does not provide information about the morphological and phonological independence of elements. In oral speech, it is possible to distinguish them thanks to pitch contour, but in written speech — only through context. Below, the letters H (high) and L (low) indicate a higher and lower pitch respectively.

- (3a) 買って やった
 kat-te yat-ta
 buy- CNV give-PRS

- (3b) 買って やった
 kat-te yat-ta
 H L L H
 '[I] bought [something] and gave [to someone].' (Shibatani, 2009, p. 267)

- (3c) 買って やった
 kat-te yat-ta
 L H H H
 '[I] bought [someone something].' (Shibatani, 2009, p. 267)

Thus, the components of the Japanese benefactive construction are generally considered to be two words from a morphological point of view and one word from a phonological point of view (Shibatani, 2007, p. 26).

1.2 Syntactic and functional cohesion

According to Hasegawa's analysis within the Role and Reference Grammar framework parts of converbal complex predicates (including benefactives) are linked on a nuclear level and therefore main and auxiliary verbs share all of their arguments (Hasegawa, 1996).

Shibatani (2009, p. 258) argues that Japanese converbal complex predicate constructions are monoclausal and states that in terms of argument sharing they are similar to serial verb constructions and that probably Japanese and Altaic family converb constructions should not be formally distinguished from serial verb constructions (Shibatani, 2007, p. 21).

Matsumoto (1996) argues that benefactive constructions with *morau* are made up of two words both at constituent structure and functional structure levels (and probably at argument structure as well) consisting of the main predicate and XCOMP. He also states that participial complex motion predicates (including *-te iku* and *-te kuru* constructions) constitute one word at functional structure and argument structure, although they are two words at the constituent structure level.

Nakatani (2013) summarizes both syntactic, phonological, and psycholinguistic evidence regarding the simplicity and complexity of Japanese converb constructions. He concludes that they have characteristics of both complex and simple sentential structures and proposes ways to resolve several issues within the framework of syntactic theory.

2 Methods and corpus data

In the previous section, we have briefly summarized the views that have been expressed about Japanese complex predicates with converbs. These are often based on syntactic tests, which, however, are applied to individual examples and particular types of constructions. In this study we do not intend to redefine these constructs, taking a more empirical approach. We select those tests that can be applied to corpus data and test all constructions on extensive material. The following tests have been selected for our research:

- a) inserting focus particles *mo* ('too'), *nante* ('such as'), *nanka* ('such as'), *sae* ('if only'), etc. between the components of the construction;
- b) replacing the main verb with pro-form *soo suru* 'to do so';

- c) meeting the locality condition for the restrictive particle *shika* 'only / except for' provided the main verb is in the negative form and provided the auxiliary verb is in the negative form.

For focus particles and pro-form tests, our study uses data from the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (Maekawa et al., 2014) created at the National Institute of Japanese Language in Tokyo. There are 104.3 million word occurrences in the corpus. The corpus covers various genres of written texts ranging from formal to near colloquial texts such as internet blogs and question-and-answer services. For the syntactic test on a rarely occurring construction with the particle *shika* 'only' we use the JaTenTen web corpus (Srdanović et al., 2013) with more than ten billion word occurrences.

Corpus examples were manually checked for homonymic cases and other incorrect output except for cases exceeding 30000 examples in Table 3 (nevertheless, the vast majority of these examples in the sample are correct and provide an overview of the general picture).

3 Results

3.1 Inserting focus particles between the parts of converb constructions

A large number of particles with a wide range of meanings are found between the parts of the converb constructions, which confirms their morphological independence. *Mo* and *wa* are the most common particles encountered with all the auxiliaries regardless of their semantics (see Table 1).

Martin (1991, p. 510) lists more than 10 contrastive/focus particles that can intervene between the parts of converb constructions: *wa*, *mo*, *sae*, *nado*, *nanzo*, *nanka*, *nante*, *gurai*, *bakari*, *dakewa*, *made*, and *demo* (*datte*). Besides these particles, we find examples with *sura* and *koso*.

Hasegawa (1996, p. 67) states that "only the particles *wa*, *koso*, *made*, *sae*, and *nante* can appear between the linked nuclei". Our corpus data demonstrates a much wider range of particles, although they are functionally similar to the particles listed by Hasegawa (see Table 1).

- (4) 連絡 を 取った ところで 会ってすら もらえない
renraku wo tot-ta tokoro de at-te sura mora-e-na-i
contact ACC take-PST place COP.CNV meet-CNV even receive-POT-NEG-PRS
かもしれない
kamoshirenai
maybe
‘Even if I contact him, he maybe wouldn’t even meet me.’

Table 1: Particles occurring between the parts of complex converb constructions [BCCW]

Particle	aux.	yaru 'give'	ageru 'give'	kureru 'give'	kudasaru 'give'	morau 'receive'	itadaku 'receive'	iku 'go'	kuru 'come'	miru 'see'	oku 'put'	shimau 'finish'	aru 'exist'	iru 'exist'	Total:
mo 'also'	10	9	85	4	34	10	36	54	397	7	2	39	1341	2028	
wa 'precisely'	42	4	404	17	91	14	106	231	175	94	2	34	5102	746	
bakari 'only'	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	358	360	
sae 'even'	1	1	19	2	1	2	4	0	0	6	2	2	184	224	
demo 'even'	14	0	0	0	1	0	17	3	3	0	1	0	74	113	
nanka 'things like'	2	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	90	100	
nado 'etc.'	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	53	
made 'till'	15	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	18	
nante 'and the like'	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	9	
sura 'even'	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	9	
nazo/nanzo 'etc.'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	
koso 'in particular'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	
dakewa 'only'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	
kurai 'approximately'	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Total:	90	14	512	23	134	26	164	290	575	108	8	77	7225	3676	

Despite the evident morphological independence of the converb construction parts in the standard language, contracted colloquial forms are possible with auxiliaries beginning with a vowel: *yondageru* (from *yonde*

ageru) 'I will read [to someone outside the speaker's ingroup]', *miteru* (from *mite iru*) 'is watching' etc. (see example (5)). They occur in vernacular speech and clearly demonstrate morphological unity. Regarding it as an indication of an ongoing grammaticalization process aligns with modern theory of grammaticalization (Maysak, 2005, pp. 25-30).

- (5) じゃ 私 も 手伝ったげる
 ja watashi mo tetsudat-tageru
 well I too help-CNV.AUX
 'Well, I will help too.'

In further subsections, we move on to tests for syntactic and functional bondness.

3.2 Replacing the main verb with pro-form

The use of this test in Japanese requires a separate explanation. Usually, the morphological status of a construction is checked by replacing its part with a pro-form, since parts of compound words are anaphoric islands, while parts of phrases are not. So, turning to the example from Spencer (1991, p. 42), we can refer back to *tea* in the sentence *He took **the pound of tea** and put two spoonfuls of **it** into a teapot*. But it is impossible to say *#He took the **tea-pot** and poured **it** into the cup* meaning *He poured the tea into the cup*.

However, in Japanese, the possibility of substitution for a pro-form *soo suru* 'to do so' often distinguishes constructions with more and fewer polypredicative properties, for example, forms of the desiderative mood with nominative-accusative and binominal marking of participants, permissive and persuasive (factual) causatives (Matsumoto, 1996, p. 110, p. 142).

Replacing the main verb with *soo suru* as in example (6) turned out to be possible for all auxiliary verbs (see Table 2), which indicates the independence of Japanese converb constructions' parts:

- (6) もちろん、そうして あげよう
 mochiron soo shi-te age-yoo
 sure so do-CNV give-HOR
 'Sure, let me do so.'

Table 2: Benefactives where the main verb can be replaced with *soo suru*

	yaru 'give'	ageru 'give'	kureru 'give'	kudasaru 'give'	morau 'receive'	itadaku 'receive'	iku 'go'	kuru 'come'	miru 'see'	oku 'put'	shimau 'finish'	aru 'exist'	iru 'exist'
soo shite + V	13	19	68	7	33	23	12	42	50	62	7	5	408

3.3 Meeting the locality condition for the *shika* NPI

Researchers have described two syntactic licensing conditions for *shika* ‘only / except for’ NPIs (negative polarity items). We cite Yamashita’s (2008, p. 388) wording based on earlier research:

1. *Shika*-NPIs must once be in the c-command domain of the sentential negation morpheme, and
2. Negation and *shika*-NPIs must be clause-mates.

This restriction is also known as clause mate condition (Muraki, 1978) or locality condition (Matsumoto, 1996) and it can be a test for syntactic bondness.

The locality condition implementation is illustrated with the following examples from (Shibatani, 2007, p. 26):

(7a) *太郎 は 花子 しか 来た ことを 知らなかった
 *Taroo wa [Hanako shika ki-ta] koto o shir-ana-katta
 Taro TOP Hanako only come-PST NML ACC know-NEG-PST
 ‘Taro didn’t know that only Hanako came.’

(7b) 太郎 は 花子 しか 来なかった ことを 知った
 Taroo wa [Hanako shika ko-na-katta] koto o shit-ta
 Taro TOP Hanako only come-NEG-PST NML ACC know-PST
 ‘Taro found out that only Hanako came.’
 (lit.) ‘Taro knew that everyone save Hanako didn’t come.’

(7c) 太郎 しか 花子 が 来た ことを 知らなかった
 Taroo shika [Hanako ga ki-ta] koto o shir-ana-katta
 Taro only Hanako NOM come-PST NML ACC know-NEG-PST
 ‘Only Taro knew that Hanako came.’
 (lit.) ‘Everyone save Taro didn’t know that Hanako came.’

Thus, in converb constructions there are two possibilities for negation placement: in the main verb and the auxiliary. Hidaka (2018, p. 30) in his study of *-te iku* and *-te kuru* constructions points at the case when the negation marker belongs to the main verb as less grammaticalized (8), while the case when the negation marker is attached to the auxiliary is viewed as the more grammaticalized stage of the construction development (9) (he gives examples with NPIs *dokomo* ‘nowhere’ and *mattaku* ‘at all’). Hidaka regards examples like (9) as subject to restructuring and with an aspectual meaning (more on grammaticalization vs. restructuring and why one does not necessarily imply the other, see Haspelmath (1998)):

- (8a) どこも 走らないで 行った
 dokomo hashir-ana-ide it-ta
 nowhere run-NEG-CNV go-PST
 ‘I went everywhere without running.’
- (8b) (?)どこも 走って 行かなかった
 dokomo hashit-te ik-ana-katta
 nowhere run-CNV go-NEG-PST
 ‘[I] I did not go anywhere running.’ (intended)
- (9a) *全く 消えないで 行った
 mattaku kie-na-ide it-ta
 at all vanish-NEG-CNV go-PST
 ‘[I] haven’t vanished at all.’ (intended)
- (9b) 全く 消えて 行かなかった
 mattaku kie-te ik-ana-katta
 at all vanish-CNV go-NEG-PST
 ‘[I] haven’t vanished at all’

In Table 3, we observe auxiliary verbs sorted by a decrease in the proportion of examples with a negative main verb. Thus, we can assume that they are sorted by increasing the degree of grammaticalization of the construction (see also Figure 1).

Table 3: NPI item *shika* in converb constructions (JaTenTen)

Negation marker placement	Negative main verb <i>e.</i> <i>g. shika V-naide V</i>	Negative auxiliary verb <i>e.</i> <i>g. shika V-te V-nai</i>	Total
oku	34.1% (44)	65.9% (85)	129
shimau	33.3% (2)	66.7% (4)	6
yaru	31.6% (77)	68.4% (166)	243
miru	4% (1)	96% (24)	25
ageru	1.2% (1)	98.8% (85)	86
itadaku	1.1% (1)	98.9% (88)	89
iru	0.2% (220)	99.8% (~105200)	~105420
kureru	0.2% (8)	99.8% (4757)	4765
iku	0.1% (2)	99.9% (2469)	2471
morau	0.1% (1)	99.9% (2010)	2011
kuru	~0% (5)	~100% (~30702)	~30707
aru	0% (0)	100% (414)	414
kudasaru	0% (0)	100% (47)	47

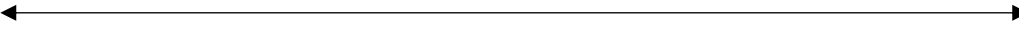
oku shimau yaru miru **ageru itadaku** iru **kureru** iku **morau** kuru aru **kudasaru**

 less grammaticalized more grammaticalized

Figure 1: Degree of grammaticalisation of converb constructions according to the *shika*-test

What creates such variation in the use of *shika* across converb constructions? Indeed, examples with negation marking the auxiliary and the main verb can be very similar in meaning and context. Compare the examples (10) and (11).

- (10) ただ 3000 円 しか もって 行かなかった ので、 何も 買う
 tada sanzen en shika mot-te ik-ana-katta node nanimo ka-u
 but 3000 yen except hold-CNV go-NEG-PST because.of nothing buy-PRS
 こと が できなくて すごく 残念 な 結果 で ただ
 koto ga deki-na-kute suggoku zannen na kekka de tada
 NML NOM can-NEG-CNV very regret PRT result COP.CNV just

歩き回った だけ でした が
 arukimawat-ta dake desh-ita ga
 walk.around-PST only COP-PST but

'However, as I only had 3000 yen to spend, I couldn't buy anything, which was a great disappointment, so I just walked around.'

- (11) 土曜日 って、 ゆうちょ の ATM 9 時 から な ん だ ね。
 doyoobi tte yuucho no ATM kuji kara na n da ne
 Saturday TOP Post.Bank GEN ATM 9 hour from ATR NML COP.PRS PRT

7 時 半 から だ と 思って、 1000 円 しか
 shichi ji han kara da to omot-te sen en shika
 seven hour half from COP.PRS QUOT think-CNV 1000 yen except

持たないで 行ったら 自動ドア 開かない
 mot-ana-ide it-tara jidoodoa ak-ana-i
 hold-NEG-CNV go-COND automatic door open-NEG-PRS

'On Saturdays, Japan Post ATM opens at 9 am. I thought it was 7.30 am, so I went there with only ¥1000, but the automatic door wouldn't open.'

(10) is one of two examples of *shika+V-naide+iku*, and there is less than 1% of *shika+V-naide+kuru* examples, which pretty much contradicts three types of *-te iku* and *-te kuru* postulated by Hidaka (not reanalysable type, optionally reanalysable type and mandatorily reanalysable type) being in active use (Hidaka, 2018).

As for benefactive auxiliary verbs (except for the more broadly functional *yaru*), constructions with a negative main verb may occur seldom for purely semantic reasons. Thus, according to Shibatani (1996, p. 160), these constructions must describe the transfer of some abstract or concrete good, which makes the occurrence of contexts for negation marker in a main verb quite uncommon (see the single example of *shika+V-naide+morau* (12)). Constructions with benefactive verbs also seem to be more grammaticalized in terms of increased obligatoriness and paradigmaticization (on this issues see Lehmann (2015)). And while Kikuta (2018) proposes three distinct types of *-te morau* constructions, two monoclausal and one biclausal, according to the locality condition 99,9% of examples with *morau* function as a syntactic unity.

- (12) 米 を 茶碗 に 半分 づつ しか 食べないで もらいたい な
 komewo chawan ni hanbundzutsushika tabe-nai-de mora-ita-i na
 rice ACC rice.bowl DAT half each except eat-NEG-CNV receive-DSD-PRS PRT
 'You should eat only half a bowl of rice each.'

- (13) 娘 に は 評判 が あまり 良なくて、ソーセージ
 musume ni wa hyooban ga amari yo-kuna-kute sooseeji
 daughter DAT TOP reputation NOM not.much good-NEG-CNV sausage
 しか 食べて もらえなかった
 shika tabe-te mora-e-na-katta
 except eat-CNV receive-POT-NEG-PST
 '[My] daughter didn't really like [this meal] so she only ate sausage.'

As for the auxiliaries that demonstrate more independence in converb constructions, such as *oku*, *shimau* and *yaru*, their relative lack of bondness is likely related to the fact that *shika+V-naide+V* and *shika+V-te+V-nai* are often different in meaning. Compare the two following examples with *-te oku*:

- (14) 1 杯 しか 買わないで おいて 良かった . . .
 ippai shika kaw-ana-ide o-ite yo-katta
 one.glass except buy-NEG-CNV put-CNV good-PST
 'It's a good thing I only bought one glass ...' (foreseeing the consequences)
- (15) 買い置きする と 飲みすぎる ので、その日に飲む分
 kaioki-sugi-ru to nomi-sugi-ru node sono hi ni nom-u bun
 stock-EXC-PRS when drink-EXC-PRS because that day DAT eat-PRS amount
 くらい しか 酒 を 買って おかない
 kurai shika sake wo kat-te ok-ana-i
 about except alcohol ACC buy-CNV put-NEG-PRS
 'If I buy a lot, I end up drinking too much, so I only buy enough to drink on that day.'

In example (14) the author thinks about the consequences in advance and doesn't buy another glass of alcohol for that reason (*kawanaide oku*). While in example (15) the author refrains from buying and keeping alcohol in stock (*katte okanai*).

4 Conclusion

We expand the list of particles that can be encountered between the parts of Japanese constructions to as many as 14 (adding *koso* 'in particular' and *sura* 'even'). Their usage might vary depending on the semantics of each converb construction, still, they all are contrastive/focus particles. In vernacular speech auxiliaries starting with a vowel can form a morphological unity with the converb, functioning like an affix, which is the sign of their ongoing grammaticalization.

The independent character of all the auxiliary verbs under consideration is also manifested in the possibility of replacing the semantic verb with a pro-form *soo suru* 'to do so'.

Regarding the fulfillment of the locality condition for *shika*, auxiliary verbs form a sort of continuum from more to less integrated. This implies the need for a flexible approach that takes into account the features of each individual auxiliary verb and the gradualness of the grammaticalization process. See the suggestion in Haspelmath (1998) to denote intermediate parts of speech in formal models, for example from ordinary verbs ($V_{1.0}$) to preposition-like verbs ($V_{.8}/P_{.2}$), verb-like prepositions and ordinary prepositions ($P_{1.0}$) (which however does not need to be taken literally):

$$V_{1.0} > V_{.9}/P_{.1} > V_{.8}/P_{.2} > \dots > V_{.1}/P_{.9} > P_{1.0}$$

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
ATR	attributive form
AUX	auxiliary
CNV	converb
COND	conditional form
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DSD	desiderative;
EXC	excessive
GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
HOR	hortative
NEG	negation
NML	nominalizer
NOM	nominative

POT	potential
PRS	present tense
PRT	particle
PST	past tense
TOP	topic

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The Use of Japanese Words *Hito*, *Hitobito*, and *Hitotachi* in L1 and L2 Written Compositions

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Abstract

The paper aims to tackle two neglected issues in teaching Japanese as a foreign language – the pluralization of nouns and the differentiation of synonyms – by analyzing three Japanese words that correspond to the meaning “people”. We examined the usage of these words in compositions written by intermediate-level foreign students and native Japanese speakers that were compiled in the corpus “A Country Easy to Live In.” Although these words appear in the sentences of both groups, our analysis reveals that in Japanese, the meanings of singularity and plurality are marked and that distinguishing them poses challenges to students. We also show that the distinction between the plural meaning of “people”, expressed by the nouns 人々 *hitobito* and 人達 *hitotachi*, needs to be given more attention in Japanese language teaching.

Keywords: collectivity, foreign language teaching, Japanese noun semantics, plurality, synonyms

Povzetek

Članek obravnava dve zapostavljeni vprašanji pri poučevanju japonščine kot tujega jezika, pluralizacijo samostalnikov in razlikovanje sinonimov, z analizo treh japonskih besed, ki ustrezajo pomenu ‘ljudje’. Preučili smo rabo teh besed v sestavkih, ki so jih napisali študenti japonskega jezika na srednji ravni in naravni govorci japonščine, zbranih v korpusu ‘Država, v kateri je lahko živeti’. Čeprav se te besede pojavljajo v stavkih obeh skupin, naša analiza razkriva, da sta v japonščini pomena ednine in množine označena ter da njuno razločevanje predstavljata izziv za študente. Prav tako pokažemo, da je treba pri poučevanju japonščine več pozornosti nameniti razlikovanju med množinskim pomenom ‘ljudje’, ki ga izražata samostalnika 人々 *hitobito* in 人達 *hitotachi*.

Ključne besede: kolektivnost, poučevanje tujega jezika, pomen japonskih samostalnikov, množinskost, sinonimi



1 Introduction

The word 人 *hito* means ‘person’ or ‘people,’ while 人達 *hitotachi* and 人々 *hitobito* only mean ‘people,’ making them synonyms.¹ The difference from the majority of previously analyzed synonym problems lies in the fact that the first word represents a hypernym for a large number of words (人 *hito*: 人達 *hitotachi*, 人々 *hitobito*, 人間 *ningen*, 人類 *jinrui*, etc.), while the other two are reserved for only a segment of its broader meaning that refers to the plural – which is generally unmarked in Japanese.

It is commonly stated that Japanese does not grammaticalize number as a category and that a single noun can indicate both singular and plural. Discussions on plurality in Japanese language teaching generally end with this observation. However, if 人 *hito* can mean the same as 人達 *hitotachi* or 人々 *hitobito*, and as we will see, this receives almost no attention in Japanese language textbooks, how do students comprehend the difference in number between these words?

The number category in the Japanese language is most thoroughly explored in the field of semantics, particularly in comparison to the English language, which we will touch upon in this study.² Our goal is to understand the lexical use of these words and highlight issues in teaching Japanese as a foreign language from the perspectives of lexicology and applied linguistics, utilizing material provided by a corpus of foreign and Japanese students’ written short essays on the theme “A Country That Is Easy to Live in” (onwards SUMIYASUIKUNI-corpus; 住みやすい国プロジェクト <https://sumiyasui.jpn.org/>). For this purpose, 86 compositions by students at an intermediate level of Japanese proficiency from German- and South Slavic-speaking regions, on one side, and Japanese students, on the other, were used. This material illustrates semantic nuances based on the syntactic behavior of the analyzed nouns through the process of acquisition of the

¹ Note: All translations into English of words and works originally in different languages were done by the author of this paper. The modified Hepburn transcription system is used for Japanese.

² In the Serbian and broader regional context of the former Serbo-Croatian linguistic domain, significant contributions to the study of number and gender of nouns designating human beings were made by Milka Ivić (1995; 2006; 2008), whose work has served as inspiration for this research.

Japanese language. Due to its emphasis on the lexicon's semantics revealed in sentence examples, our approach is akin to cognitivism.

Although we do not mention linguistic anthropocentrism as a universal phenomenon, words in different languages do not cover the same semantic space and boundaries of such spaces are determined in relation to other words in the same language, somewhat like countries on a world map whose existence relies on their internal organization and international recognition. The notion that the meaning of a word is influenced not only by its syntactic presence but also by other words it associates with, particularly derivatives and synonyms, is prevalent in cognitive and ethnolinguistic studies in Serbia, primarily due to the influence of the Polish linguistic school (Bartminjski, 2011; Ristić & Lazić Konjik, 2020). According to this approach, 'person' cannot be viewed in the same way as 'apple' for the simple reason that a word is influenced not just by its utterance but also by the lexical network formed by combining words from the same derivational nest and semantic field, which define it in relation to other similar or related words. In this study, we will investigate the relationship between the three aforementioned words.

Therefore, we will examine the current state of L2 Japanese instruction, address the general issue of quantity in the Japanese language, and, finally, present the analyzed corpus and the results of our analysis.

2 Category of number in the instruction of L2 Japanese learners

The words 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi* pose a problem in teaching Japanese as a foreign language for two reasons: firstly, due to issues with plurals and, secondly, because these three words are synonymous. Both issues are notably neglected in the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language, which we will attempt to address here.

There is a natural tendency for elements of one's native language to be unconsciously incorporated into the learning of a foreign language, leading to transfer or language interference (Lado, 1964; Suzuki, 1978, p. 12). The native languages of the students who participated in the essay writing project belong to the Indo-European language family, which has a grammaticalized category of number, unlike Japanese. Therefore, it can be expected that these students will need more explanations or practice

regarding the expression of singular or plural in the Japanese language. However, currently, this is not the case.³

Namely, the absence of any reference to the grammatical category of number in Japanese textbooks or grammar books is more of a rule than an exception. Thus, neither in SHKNG nor in MNN, for example, are the properties of nouns specifically addressed, and the plural is only briefly mentioned at the lexical level. For example, in MNN-SHK1, the suffix 達 *tachi* appears in the 22nd lesson with 私 *watashi* 'I', 私達 *watashitachi* 'we', but it is not stated that this suffix can be used with other words. In SHKNG, 達 *tachi* appears in the third lesson with a note that it is a plural suffix, but without further explanation. Classifiers and numbers are treated as lexical and syntactic units, but the issue of plurality in Japanese is not addressed.

Regarding the grammar of the Japanese language, apart from occasional mentions that, unlike European languages, Japanese nouns do not distinguish between singular and plural forms,⁴ the concept of number as a linguistic term is almost entirely neglected. The category of number is mainly mentioned in relation to pronouns (e.g., Makino & Tsutsui, 1999, pp. 28-32). McClain (1981, p. 150), a grammar handbook of Japanese written in English, states that in exceptional cases, plural is indicated by plural suffixes

³ For illustration in this study, we utilized textbooks, dictionaries, and grammar books of the Japanese language commonly used for international teaching purposes in countries participating in the SUMIYASUIKUNI-corpus project, Serbia included. (Abbreviations of the titles of the textbooks and dictionaries used here are listed at the end of the text, before the References.) However, our observations are based on a much broader review of materials, where no significant deviation from the findings presented here was noted.

⁴ For instance, under the 'noun' (名詞 *meishi*) entry, Matsumura (1971, p. 829) states that "[...] Rather, it must be considered that Japanese nouns lack distinctions of gender, number, and case, in contrast to Indo-European languages." Similarly, Higashinakagawa and Shinonome (2003, p. 24) note: "Japanese nouns do not exhibit distinctions of gender or number as found in Western languages. When it is necessary to clarify that a noun is plural, suffixes may be added, or the same word may be repeated (reduplication) but this method of forming plurals is limited to certain nouns." Additionally, we would like to draw attention to the fact that agreement in number and gender in languages characterized by such features is not always strictly adhered to (for further discussion, see Ivić, 2008, pp. 13-38; Ivić, 1995, p. 105) and "the difference between singular and (non-count) plural [is] not always grammaticalized according to the same principle" (Ivić, 1995, p. 128).

attached to nouns or pronouns or by repetition of the same word but does not pursue the further implications of this.

On the other hand, it can generally be observed that Japanese language textbooks from elementary to intermediate levels do not pay enough attention to potential and actual lexicological issues, especially synonyms. Most textbooks list new words with minimal explanations of their meanings. Examples of usage are limited to those provided in grammar exercises or illustrative dialogues focused on grammar, thus, they are necessarily very restricted both in terms of the number of examples and the types of contexts in which words may appear.

Suzuki (1978) reported similar findings already in the 1970s. However, we estimate that no significant progress in the area has been made since, although the author offers a potential solution by pointing out at translation equivalents and their source situations.⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising that when students are introduced to a new word, they are often not told that the new word does not completely align with a word in their native language used for translation.⁶

⁵ “For the most part, the traditional method of teaching foreign languages has not been concerned with a consideration of the structural framework of language. It has tended to point out so-called equivalents of individual items (i.e., “This word should be translated this way in this particular context”), even though these equivalents may be applicable in only a few instances. The most typical examples of this approach are, unfortunately, found in dictionaries. If I look up *break* in an English-Japanese dictionary I happen to have handy, I find a list of such Japanese verbs as (1) *kowasu*, (2) *oru*, (3) *yaburu*, (4) *kiru*, etc. Usually, the larger the dictionary, the longer the list, with as many as ten to twenty verbs corresponding in one way or another to *break*. It is no wonder that students become confused. Since each of the Japanese words such as *waru* and *oru* corresponds to *break* only in a very limited way, it is not sufficient to give examples of when correspondence occurs. It is equally necessary to point out when it does not occur. Otherwise, (...), we will not be able to prevent inappropriate generalizations. So far, however, no dictionary has taken this preventive measure” (Suzuki, 1978, pp. 14-15).

⁶ Furthermore, this lack of awareness extends to the various levels of meaning inherent in words in their native language, leading them to overlook the need to seek appropriate equivalents for these different nuances. For instance, the Serbian word ‘život’ (life) corresponds to several Japanese words such as 人生 *jinsei*, 生活 *seikatsu*, 命 *inochi*, etc. However, students often perceive these Japanese words as synonyms due to their equivalence with the same translated term in Serbian (Markovic et al., 2015), thus obscuring the distinctions among them. Consequently, we tend to interpret the term

For example, in the SHKNG vocabulary, the word 人 *hito* appears in the 1st lesson with the meaning ‘person,’ while the word 人々 *hitobito* only appears in the 25th lesson with the meaning ‘people, everybody,’ without comparing it to the previously learned word 人 *hito*. In MNN, 人 *hito* is listed in the 5th lesson, and 人々 *hitobito* only appears in the intermediate-level textbook, MNN-CHK, in the fourth lesson with the translation ‘people,’ appearing, for instance, in the sentence 世界中の人々が平和を願っているのである (p. 47) *Sekaijū no hitobito ga heiwa o negatte iru no de aru* ‘People all over the world are wishing for peace.’ But it is not mentioned that, for example, the given sentence could also work with 人 *hito* and that it would not introduce a significant difference in meaning. In other words, it is not specified anywhere that the word 人 *hito* also means ‘people’ and not just a single person or a man, nor is it explained how these two nouns differ. The same also holds for other synonyms.⁷

In Japanese-Japanese dictionaries, definitions for 人 *hito* primarily list words like 人間 *ningen* and 人類 *jinrui* ‘humankind/mankind’, going through other meanings by the size of the dictionary, with no special focus on the meaning of plurality. This is the case, for example, with KGJT and KJN. First entries under 人 *hito* in the KKSC Japanese-English dictionary, are: “〈人類〉 *jinrui* humankind; man; mankind; human beings; people; humans [...]” — including the plural form right at the beginning of the definition alongside the singular. The individual meaning is highlighted in the second place (“2 〈個人〉 *kojin* a person; an individual; a being; a human being [...]”⁸), and the

‘synonym’ in an expanded sense, encompassing all words that may have the same translated equivalent in the target or native language, thereby creating confusion in the acquisition process. A potential method for addressing this issue of synonyms in the target language through the analysis of online corpora integrated into teaching is illustrated by the example of the words 過程 *katei* and 工程 *kōtei*, both meaning ‘process,’ in Tričković (2024b). Nevertheless, this issue requires much more attention and exploration.

⁷ At the initial learning stage, this simplified approach may be justified. However, it seems that by the intermediate level, it becomes necessary to revisit the acquired vocabulary, particularly focusing on general, abstract nouns rich in meaning. Many of these meanings, being linguistically and culturally conditioned, remain unnoticed without a contrastive analysis with another language (Trickovic, 2024a).

⁸ In this context, an interesting meaning is highlighted where the term 人 *hito* corresponds to 自分 *jibun*, i.e., the first-person pronoun.

third entry refers to the plural form of people (“3 〈世界の人〉 *sekai no hito* people; 〈他の人々〉 *hoka no hitobito* other people; others [...]”).⁹

In the KGJT Japanese-Japanese dictionary, the term 人々 *hitobito* is defined solely as ① 多くの人 (大勢の—) *ōku no hito* (*ōzei no hito*) ‘many people’; and ② めいめいの人 (—に行き渡る) *meimei no hito* (*-ni yukiwataru*) ‘each person’. In KJN, the definition is similar but slightly more detailed. In the Japanese-English dictionary KKSC, 人々 *hitobito* is translated as “people” and “each person.”

The term 人達 *hitotachi* is not listed in any of these dictionaries.

Based on the entries in the dictionaries, it is evident that the term 人 *hito* encompasses a broader semantic range, with significant variations in meaning, while 人々 *hitobito* is specialized for expressing the plurality of people, which can be understood as either an indivisible plurality (a group as a whole) or a divisible one (the meaning of “each person” implies the possibility of segmenting parts regardless of the actual number of parts).

Neither textbooks nor dictionaries nor grammars available to students provide guidance on when this specification of meaning is necessary, i.e., when 人 *hito* : 人達 *hitotachi* : 人々 *hitobito* can or cannot be used interchangeably as synonyms, and what conditions dictate the exclusion of one of them. (Evidence of their interchangeability is observed in our test sample, which will be discussed in detail later in the analysis, where potential substitution of 人 *hito* : 人達 *hitotachi* : 人々 *hitobito* is indicated in over 30% of instances.)

Furthermore, this matter involves a slightly different phenomenon than merely a question of synonyms. The words 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi* are synonymous due to the absence of the grammatical category of number, and the fact that when the term 人 *hito* is used non-referentially, it denotes a type, and thus, a plurality, thereby equating it with the words 人達 *hitotachi* and 人々 *hitobito*. The question that arises, therefore, is: if the grammatical difference, which is natural to students (as their native languages exhibit number distinctions), is not explicitly emphasized in instructional materials, and the difference in usage between synonymous words is not highlighted, how do learners perceive this distinction and what meanings are evident in their usage of these terms in compositions.

⁹ A very similar correspondence is observed in KKSD as well.

3 Category of number in Japanese

The grammatical category of number in Japanese is based on the semantic or logical category of quantity, representing a crucial element in understanding the world around us as humans. Typically, it is expressed in the dichotomy of singular/plural, while some languages also differentiate dual or paucal (small number) forms. Mingazova et al. (2016, p. 8389-8399) indicate that the noun number category is double-based, distinguishing not only between singularity/duality/plurality but also between segmentation/collective nouns levels, where plurality and collective nouns represent indefinite quantity, while others are definite. Segmentation is sometimes referred to as individuation/individuated reference, while the lack of number marking is termed zero segmentation or number neutralization (Mingazova et al. 2016, p. 8389-8399; Yasutake, 1989, p. 22).

In Japanese, there is generally no grammaticalized category of number, and nouns do not agree with other words in number. However, plurality can lexically be expressed in the following three ways.

1. Through the use of classifiers and numbers.
2. By employing special plural suffixes such as 達 *tachi* and ら *ra*, although their usage is very limited.
3. By duplicating words (Japanese 畳語 *jōgo*), as seen in the case of the word 人々 *hitobito*, which is also a non-productive process.

The question of the use of numbers with classifiers—which places Japanese in the group of classifier languages (Sudo, 2016; Iida, 2021; Erbach et al., 2017)—will not be explored in this paper. Instead, when analyzing the usage in student compositions later in the paper, we will address plural suffixes and nominal reduplications.

The above three methods of expressing plurality in the Japanese language—numerical classifiers, plurality suffixes, and nominal reduplications—highlighted by Yasutake (1989, p. 15) as concepts where animacy, referentiality, and collectivity play important roles—do not coincide with each other. Their non-cooccurrence "points to the essentially semantic nature of these devices" (Yasutake, 1989, p. 17), which is why studies on plurality in Japanese primarily stem from the field of semantics and still have little influence on Japanese language textbooks. Since the subject of our analysis pertains to words indicating human beings, the concept of animacy, as an implicit premise, will not be further examined in this paper. Furthermore, due to the essay's topic involving inhabitants of a

country where living is easy, the use of singular referential usage is not expected. However, we will still need to address the concept of collectivity.

Regarding classifiers and the fact that Japanese is categorized as a classifier language (Yasutake, 1989, p. 16; Erbach et al., 2017, p. 235), it is important to note that its fundamental characteristic is taken to be the lack of distinction between mass and count nouns, which is typical of Indo-European languages. Typically, Japanese is compared in this domain to English, where countable nouns—usually common nouns denoting something that can be counted—and uncountable or mass nouns—which include material and abstract nouns denoting something that cannot be segmented into countable units—are distinguished. Traditionally, it is assumed that “count nouns individuate, but mass nouns do not” (Inagaki & Barner, 2009, p. 112), and they are not differentiated in Japanese without context or specific syntactic indicators (Iida, 2015, p. 64).

While there is evidence suggesting that the division of Japanese nouns does not deviate much from the division into countable and uncountable nouns in English,¹⁰ we are unable to delve deeper into this debate in this paper. However, it is important to note that many Japanese nouns, although they may not necessarily indicate the difference between singular and plural, can do so and can, therefore, be classified as countable or uncountable.

When comparing Japanese nouns with respect to countability, Erbach et al. (2017) observe a distinction between nouns such as 椅子 *isu* ‘chair’, 郵便物 *yūbinbutsu* ‘postal items,’ and 雪 *yuki* ‘snow,’ where 椅子 *isu* is countable while 郵便物 *yūbinbutsu* and 雪 *yuki* are not. In this case, 郵便物 *yūbinbutsu* represents a set, while 雪 *yuki* denotes substances, leading the authors to conclude: “The one difference between e.g., Japanese and English is that, since Japanese has a highly restricted (and even then optional) use of plural morphology, lexically simple Japanese nouns have number neutral extensions (that include entities and sums thereof)” (Erbach et al., 2017, p. 242).

Let us consider the following example. Since both, 人 *hito* and 林檎 *ringo*, given in the cited example below, are common nouns, they share a large number of properties. Therefore, Yasutake’s observation that in the

¹⁰ “Nominal denotations in Japanese are not so different from those in non-classifier languages like English (Sudo, 2016, p. 2).” The existence of the division of nouns in Japanese into mass/count is evidenced through the analysis of classifiers, as discussed in (Iida, 2021).

example “わたしは林檎を食べた。 *Watashi wa ringo wo tabeta*” it is difficult to “determine whether ‘林檎’ *ringo* should be translated as singular or plural, and whether it is necessary to use a definite or indefinite article”, applies to the noun 人 *hito* as well in many cases. However, this ambiguity is not inherently Japanese, since in Japanese, as is stated at the same source, the statement can be (and usually is) interpreted “as describing the ‘type of fruit eaten.’ The actual number of apples eaten, whether singular or plural, is considered irrelevant to the speaker’s intention” (Yasutake, 1988, pp. 64-65). In other words, in Japanese, it is generally irrelevant whether we are referring to one apple or more. However, the information can still be expressed with an additional word. The noun 人 *hito* thus falls into the category of countable nouns, i.e., nouns that can be associated with a specific number, but its basic meaning is ‘human(kind)’.

This optionality in Japanese is considered the key characteristic. Unlike Indo-European languages where the obligatory dichotomy is at the level of singular vs. plural, in Japanese, it is about whether the quantity matters or not, where the second member is marked syntactically or by context, even if it is individuated, i.e., singular.¹¹ Therefore, while in European languages, singular is unmarked and plural is marked in Japanese, both categories of are marked. ,.

When it comes to indefinite, uncountable plural, there are two ways of expressing it. Multiple entities can form a set known to have a certain number of members, or entities can be viewed as a substance with the same basic characteristics (as we saw previously in the example of 郵便物 *yūbinbutsu* and 雪 *yuki*). Regarding the meaning of a set with a certain number of members, in addition to material and abstract nouns, collective nouns that have a singular form but a plural meaning are also classified as uncountable nouns. Considering the meaning of a set with a certain number of members, nouns such as 両親 *ryōshin* ‘parents,’ 兄弟 *kyōdai* ‘siblings,’ 家族 *kazoku* ‘family,’ etc. should also be considered here, as they always imply defined sets whose members are in a mutual relationship (see the concept of transitive or relational nouns in Ivić (2006, pp. 9-17)).

¹¹ “This observation [that the plurality inferences of the reduplicated plural nouns behave exactly like those of English plural nouns] poses a challenge to the theories of plurality inferences that rely on singular nouns, as Japanese simply lacks singular nouns” (Sudo, 2017, p. 27).

According to the logic of European languages, one might think that, compared to the example given earlier, 人 *hito* would belong to the same group as 椅子 *isu* 'chair', unlike 民族 *minzoku* 'nation' or 兄弟 *kyōdai* 'siblings', which would correspond more to 郵便物 *yūbinbutsu* 'postal items', while words like 人間 *ningen* 'human being' or 人類 *jinrui* 'humankind' would correspond to 雪 *yuki* 'snow.' However, this reasoning must consider the previously stated fact: number-neutral extensions include entities and sums (Erbach et al., 2017, p. 242). In other words, on the unmarked side, there is no singular as in European languages, but rather a type, implying some form of collective meaning, which can be numerically segmented as needed. Consequently, 人 *hito*, besides the concept expressed through 椅子 *isu*, can equally correspond to the concepts of 郵便物 *yūbinbutsu* and 雪 *yuki*.

On the other hand, unlike the examples such as 林檎 *ringo* 'apple,' the word 人 *hito* inherently has a lexicalized plural meaning in the nouns 人達 *hitotachi* 'people,' and 人々 *hitobito* 'people.' This points to the existence of two examples of lexical plurality, which have not been sufficiently investigated.

Based on all the above, we conclude that students of the Japanese language have grounds to consider the nouns 人 *hito* (which can denote both singular and plural), 人達 *hitotachi*, and 人々 *hitobito* (which signify plural) as synonymous, which poses a potential usage and acquisition challenge. Through the analysis of sentences with these words from the SUMIYASUIKUNI-corpus and an examination of other words from the same semantic field, we will attempt to determine the extent of this issue.

4 Analysis

4.1 Student composition corpus and the method of analysis

Despite the potential of using L2 learner corpora in language research and foreign language studies (Lee et al., 2018; Noda & Sakoda, 2019; Lee et al., 2021), such investigations are often limited to error analysis. They can also be utilized for other purposes such as the development of multicultural competence (Murata et al., 2022; Trickovic & Miyanoya, 2024) etc.

During the initial analyses of the SUMIYASUIKUNI-corpus, it was noted that the following words frequently appear in the essays of students from Germany and Serbia, as well as native speakers of Japanese: 生活 *seikatsu*, 社会 *shakai*, 国 *kuni*, 条件 *jōken*, 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, 自分 *jibun*, 大切 *taisetsu*,

and 必要 *hitsuyō* (Murata et al., 2022, p. 279). While some of the mentioned words have been analyzed in other papers (Murata et al., 2024; Murata et al., 2023; Trickovic, 2024a), this time, our attention focuses on the pair 人 *hito* : 人々 *hitobito*, with the addition of the word 人達 *hitotachi*, precisely because both words often appear in the essays.

We analyzed 20 essays from Japanese students and 66 essays from foreign students at an intermediate level of Japanese language proficiency, established on the basis of an initial test (more on the corpus itself in Murata et al., 2024). The corpus includes essays from 20 students from the German-speaking region, while the rest are from the Western Balkans area, whose languages are related and share numerous similarities (Croatia 20, Serbia 19, Slovenia 13, and Bosnia and Herzegovina 4). We treated all essays by Japanese language learners as a single group. After each example, we noted its origin as indicated in the corpus. All compositions are numbered and prefixed with the initials of their respective countries of origin (e.g., BOS for Bosnia and Herzegovina, CRO for Croatia, GER for Germany, JAP for Japan, SLO for Slovenia, SRB for Serbia).

In the analysis of sentences from the essays, we focused on the meanings of the words 人 *hito* and 人々 *hitobito*, as well as the word 人達 *hitotachi*. Other words with similar or related meanings were also not completely excluded from consideration. During the analysis, we did not focus on usage errors but rather attempted to lay the groundwork for future exploration of new questions in the area of understanding numbers in the Japanese language and the need for a different approach to vocabulary when teaching Japanese as a foreign language. For this reason, examples will be presented in their original form with partial (sometimes assumed due to ambiguities) translations of only the highlighted parts (emphasized and underlined by us).

We anticipate that in the sentences produced by foreign Japanese language learners, there will be an overlap of two segmentation systems regarding numerosity: the singular vs. plural dichotomy and number neutral or irrelevant (meaning of type) vs. number relevant. Our aim is to gain better insight into both systems and draw attention to the usage and meaning of the words 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi*, which are not solely visible through the analysis of the Japanese language.

In the 20 compositions produced by Japanese students, the word 人 *hito* was used 31 times, and 人々 *hitobito* was used 17 times. We excluded

examples where the character 人 *hito* was part of other words, such as 人間 *ningen*, 人口 *jinkō*, 日本人 *nihonjin*, etc., although we will refer to some of them during the analysis. The word 人達 *hitotachi* is used only once.

In the 66 compositions by foreign students, the word 人 *hito* was used 148 times, and 人々 *hitobito* was used 69 times, following the same principle. Additionally, 人達 *hitotachi* appeared eight times.

From the excerpted sentences, we sampled 78 examples of usage for verification by native speakers regarding the interchangeability of these terms and the accuracy of their usage, marking acceptability, and better choice as follows: where one of the analyzed words was used in the composition, we provided all three options. The instruction was to put a question mark for uncertain choices, an exclamation mark for preferred ones, cross out the inappropriate ones, and leave all potentially interchangeable choices. Although the results were similar, they were not identical, and both of our tester participants reported being indecisive many times about whether something was acceptable or not.¹² Consider examples (1)-(3):

- (1) その人／人達／人々と友達になれば一人じゃなくて、一緒に難しい毎日を乗り越えることができ、性格が強くなって、気分が上がります。
(GER65)

Sono hito / hitotachi / hitobito to tomodachi ni nareba hitori janakute, issho ni muzukashii mainichi o norikoeru koto ga dekite, seikaku ga tsuyoku natte, kibun ga agarimasu.

'If you become friends with those people, you won't be alone.'

- (2) 人！／人達／人々は 1 人では生きていけないので、生活していく中での人付き合いは住みやすさに関与してくると思うからです。 (JAP03)

Hito! / Hitotachi / Hitobito wa hitori dewa ikite ikenai node, seikatsu shite iku naka de no hitotsukiai wa sumiyasusa ni kan'yoshite kuru to omou kara desu.

'A person/people cannot live alone.'

¹² Note: All translations of the sentences are by this paper's author, solely for illustrative purposes, and pertain only to the highlighted portion of the original sentence as relevant to the given analysis.

- (3) 住みやすい国はあらゆる種類の人?／人達／人々!がうけ入れるべきです。
(BOS08)

Sumiyasui kuni wa arayuru shurui no hito? / hitotachi / hitobito! ga ukeireru beki desu.

‘... should accept all kinds of people.’

This pilot testing showed the need to repeat the interchangeability test of the words 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi* with a larger number of participants and a slightly differently designed survey, for example, only with examples from native Japanese speakers. Therefore, we will not extensively present the results obtained from this sampling, but will mention some general and significant observations we arrived at.

4.2 The noun 人 *hito*

If we consider only the noun 人 *hito*, we can agree that it primarily conveys information about the kind or type, while the meaning of singular or plural is discerned in relation to other parts of the sentence or based on context, as suggested in the literature. In this sense, it is logical that referential use and the meaning of singular are marked in relation to the non-referential meaning of type. Yasutake (1989, pp. 22-23) states that the referential use of unmarked animate nouns “refers to a single animate being,” while non-referential use “simply designates a class of being,” which “can be regarded as a case of grammatical depersonification (or in-animation).” This also means that along with referential use, the meaning of singular is rarer and marked, as demonstrated by examples of sentences in student compositions. Namely, although one might expect that in compositions on the topic of a country where living is easy, referential use of the singular word ‘person’ would be rare, there are very few examples where we questioned whether the meaning might be singular. In those cases, the potential meaning of singular was determined by the rest of the sentence, and similar examples were found in both groups. Consider examples (4)-(9):

- (4) 言語で苦勞している人が自分だけでない。(JAP01)

Gengo de kurō shite iru hito ga jibun dake de nai.

‘I am not the only person struggling.’

- (5) これも人によってどの気候帯が合うかは変わってくると思うが、... (JAP16)

Kore mo hito ni yotte dono kikōtai ga au ka wa kawatte kuru to omou ga,...
 ‘... it differs depending on a person ...’

- (6) 幸せになれる状況も人によって違います。(GER68)

Shiawase ni nareru jōkyō mo hito ni yotte chigaimasu.
 ‘The situations also differ from person to person.’

- (7) 住みやすい国というのは、人によって違うと思います。(CRO09)

Sumiyasui kuni to iu no wa, hito ni yotte chigau to omoimasu.
 ‘I think that differs from person to person.’

- (8) 安全で不安定な国に住みたい人はいません。(BOS08)

Anzen de fuantei na kuni ni sumitai hito wa imasen.
 ‘There is no one who wouldn’t like to live in a ~ country.’

- (9) 人が住んでいる国は、自分の人生に大きな影響を与えます。(SLO03)

Hito ga sunde iru kuni wa, jibun no jinsei ni ōkina eikyō o ataemasu.
 ‘The country where one lives has a significant impact on one’s life.’

In the analyzed examples, the meaning of one person with the classifier, 一人 *hitori*, is more often associated with the idea of independence, isolation from society, or loneliness, rather than merely denoting singularity. The word 一人 *hitori* appears only once in Japanese compositions and eight times in student compositions. Consider examples (10)-(15):

- (10) 私もその一人です。(BOS05)

Watashi mo sono hitori desu.
 ‘I am also one of them.’

- (11) 人は1人では生きていけないので、生活していく中での人付き合いは住みやすさに関与してくると思うからです。(JAP03)

Hito wa hitori dewa ikite ikenai node, seikatsu shite iku naka de no hitotsukiai wa sumiyasusa ni kan'yoshite kuru to omou kara desu.
 ‘a person cannot live alone’

- (12) まずは、一人の人として生活ができるように仕事をする必要はあります。
(GER59)

Mazu wa, hitori no hito toshite seikatsu ga dekiru yō ni shigoto o suru
hitsuyō wa arimasu.

‘a person to be able to live alone’

- (13) その人と友達になれば一人じゃなくて、一緒に難しい毎日を乗り越えることができて、性格が強くなって、気分が上がります。(GER65)

Sono hito to tomodachi ni nareba hitori janakute, issho ni muzukashii
mainichi o norikoeru koto ga dekite, seikaku ga tsuyoku natte, kibun ga
agarimasu.

‘to become a friend with that person and not to be alone’

- (14) 家族とか友達がいると自分は世界で一人ではないことも大変大事だと思います。(SER06)

Kazoku toka tomodachi ga iru to jibun wa sekai de hitori dewa nai koto mo
taihen daiji da to omoimasu.

‘not to be alone in the world’

- (15) 同時に、子供達のグループから肌の色が濃い男の子または女の子の1人分離したことを見えない。(CRO04)

Dōji ni, kodomo-tachi no gurūpu kara hada no iro ga koi otoko no ko mata
wa onna no ko no hitori bunri shita koto o mienai.

‘one kid to be separated (from a group of kids)’

Unlike the compositions of Japanese students, some of the compositions of Japanese L2 learners show a clear need to distinguish between the individual and the social and trouble in doing so. This is evident in the use of the words 個人 *kojin* ‘an individual’, 個人的 *kojinteki* ‘personal’ (a total of 9 occurrences in student compositions).¹³ On the other hand, with the meaning of the individual, as opposed to group, we did not notice the use of the noun 人 *hito*. See examples (16)-(19):

¹³ In any future examination of expressions specifying individuals, such as 個人 *kojin*, 自分(自身) *jibun(jishin)*, and similar terms, it would be beneficial to do so both contrastively and to verify whether these expressions can be used in Japanese as ‘emphatically structured determinative expressions,’ akin to ‘lično’ in Serbian (Ivić, 2008, pp. 169-172).

- (16) すなわち、個人が自分のアイディアを実現できる国か、人格発達ができる国
かにより、人間が暮らしている。(GER60)

Sunawachi, kojin ga jibun no aidia o jitsugen dekiru kuni ka, jinkaku
hattatsu ga dekiru kuni ka ni yori, ningen ga kurashite iru.

‘a person to be able to express his idea’

- (17) このような条件が満たされていると否とにかかわらず、ミクロレベルで、つ
まり個人的な経験で、住みやすい国の定義が人によって非常に異なっている
と思う。(GER55)

Kono yōna jōken ga mitasarete iru to inoto ni kakawarazu, mikuroreberu
de, tsumari kojinteki na keiken de, sumiyasui kuni no teigi ga hito ni yotte
hijō ni kotonatte iru to omou.

‘by a personal experience’

- (18) デモクラシーの中で国民の個人は自分の意見で政治に携わることができま
す。(GER69)

Demokurashī no naka de kokumin no kojīn wa jibun no iken de seiji ni
tazusawaru koto ga dekimasu.

‘a single/each citizen’

- (19) 次に、人々は自分自身を個人として認識するだけでなく、皆さんが他の人も
彼らの感じも要る物の存在も認識するべきだ。(CRO36)

Tsugi ni, hitobito wa jibun jishin o kojīn toshite ninshiki suru dake de naku,
minasan ga hoka no hito mo karera no kanji mo iru mono no sonzai mo
ninshiki suru beki da.

‘people to be conscious of themselves as individuals’

In the analyzed compositions of Japanese students, the word 個人 *kojin* does not appear at all, but 他者 *tasha* or 他人 *tanin* ‘another person; others’ do. One of them appears in the same sentence as the only occurrence of 人達 *hitotachi*, where その人たち *sono hitotachi* refers to others (他者 *tasha*) and later to 自分たち *jibuntachi* ‘themselves,’ not to an individual person. See example (20):

- (20) 住みやすい国の社会は他者を受け入れ、その人たちが自分たちのコミュニティを形成するだけでなく、一般のメインストリーム社会にも参加できる様々なサポートを提供する主体だと留学生として思う。 (JAP01)

Sumiyasui kuni no shakai wa tasha o ukeire, sono hitotachi ga jibun-tachi no komyuniti o keisei suru dake de naku, ippan no meinsutorīmu shakai ni mo sankā dekiru samazama na sapōto o teikyō suru shutai da to ryūgakusei toshite omou.

‘society to accept others, so that others can form community of their own’

On the other hand, the word 他者 *tasha* does not appear in the foreign students’ compositions, but 他の人 *hokano hito* appears 10 times. Interestingly, among them, three times it is explicitly mentioned in the context of helping another person (helping another person is not limited to these examples), as shown in (21) and (22).

- (21) 皆は道を掃除して、仕事をして、他の人に手伝って、いいことをして、そんなことは本当に大切だと思います。 (SER30)

Minna wa michi o sōji shite, shigoto o shite, hoka no hito ni tetsudatte, ii koto o shite, sonna koto wa hontō ni taisetsu da to omoimasu.

‘to help other person’

- (22) そうなれば、悩みがあるとき、他の人が手伝えられます。 (SLO08)

Sō nareba, nayami ga aru toki, hoka no hito ga tetsudaeraremasu.

‘other person/people can help’

The need to express the relationship between one person and another is perhaps most visible in the following example, where we see that the word 人 *hito* is used to indicate both sides, but it is still emphasized by the adverb お互いに *otagai ni*:

- (23) 人がお互いに手伝うと生活が簡単になります。 (SLO01)

Hito ga otagai ni tetsudau to seikatsu ga kantan ni narimasu.

‘If people help each other ...’

Without emphasizing the existence of two sides, the idea of helping others is expressed in a slightly different way in the compositions of Japanese people:

- (24) しかし、もっと広く言えば、困っている人に手を差し伸べる国はすなわち暮らしやすい国となる。(JAP01)

Shikashi, motto hiroku ieba, komatte iru hito ni te o sashinoberu kuni wa sunawachi sumiyasui kuni to naru.

'to offer a helping hand to someone in need'

- (25) その中でも他者を尊重し、共に共生することや、困っている人を助けることが実践できる人々が多い国では不快な経験も少なくすむと考える。(JAP07)

Sono naka demo tasha o sonchō shi, tomo ni kyōsei suru koto ya, komatte iru hito o tasukeru koto ga jissen dekiru hitobito ga ōi kuni de wa fukai na keiken mo sukunaku sumu to kangaeru.

'to help a man in trouble'

In the above examples, we can see that under 困っている人 *komatteiru hito*, both the speaker and everyone around them can be designated. The term 困っている人 *komatteiru hito* can be interpreted as a general designation for a group of human beings and thus can be understood as both singular and plural (a person in trouble/people in trouble/anyone who is in trouble), or as a specified collective (sub)category. These examples reflect the tendency to separate individuals, which is possible in the students' native languages. This is in contrast with the nature of Japanese, which does not place an emphasis on 'us' vs. 'others' but on 'a person/humankind', 'anyone' belonging to the group 'in trouble'.

Similarly, the designation of species, which in languages with both singular and plural noun forms can be expressed through the use of the non-referential singular and the plural form alike, can also be found in the following examples produced by both analyzed groups. See examples (26)-(34):

- (26) 人が生きていく上で常に必要となる食料や水が手に入りやすいということは、人が社会において生活していくための最低限の需要が満たされていることであるといえる。(JAP05)

Hito ga ikite iku ue de tsuneni hitsuyō to naru shokuryō ya mizu ga te ni hairi yasui to iu koto wa, hito ga shakai ni oite seikatsu shite iku tame no saiteigen no jūyō ga mitasarete iru koto de aru to ieru.

'A person/people to live always need(s) ~';

'for a person/people to live in a society'

- (27) そのため、人の移動をスムーズかつ安全に行えるよう、交通インフラが整っている必要があると思う。 (JAP18)

Sono tame, hito no idō o sumūzu katsu anzen ni okonaeru yō, kōtsū infura ga totonotte iru hitsuyō ga aru to omou.

'for transport of a person/people to take place smoothly and safely'

- (28) 雪が降らない国に生まれた人は、日本の冬に初めは大興奮するかもしれない (JAP17)

Yuki ga furanai kuni ni umareta hito wa, Nihon no fuyu ni hajime wa daikōfun suru kamoshirenai.

'A person/people born in a country where it doesn't snow'

- (29) そして、となりの人に手伝ってくださいと聞くことができます。 (GER09)

Soshite, tonari no hito ni tetsudatte kudasai to kiku koto ga dekimasu.

'one can ask for help from the person/people next to you'

- (30) 権力がある人は法律を乱用すれば意味がありません。 (SER23)

Kenryoku ga aru hito wa hōritsu o ran'yō sureba imi ga arimasen.

'a person/people with authority'

- (31) 住みやすいの国では人が家屋を購入の可能性はある。 (CRO33)

Sumiyasui no kuni de wa hito ga kaoku o kōnyū no kanōsei ga aru.

'a person/people can buy a house'

- (32) しかし、何でも買うことができるだけで人は自己実現はできません。 (GER65)

Shikashi, nan demo kau koto ga dekiru dake de hito wa jiko jitsugen wa dekimasen.

'a person/people not to be able to achieve self-actualization'

- (33) 保険証を持っていない人は医者で高い代金をしなければなりません。 (GER56)

Hokenshō o motte inai hito wa isha de takai daikin o shinakereba narimasen.

'a person/people who do(es) not have health insurance'

- (34) たくさんの利点があるけど、金がある人にとってどんな国も住みやすい国だと思う。また、金がない人にとってどんな国も住みにくい国だと思う。
(CRO06)

Takusan no riten ga aru kedo, kane ga aru hito ni totte donna kuni mo sumiyasui kuni da to omou. Mata, kane ga nai hito ni totte donna kuni mo suminikui kuni da to omou.

'for a person/people with/without money'

A larger number of the aforementioned and other examples with this meaning, according to the sample test, could be replaced with the word 人々 *hitobito* (but not with the word 人達 *hitotachi*), thus demonstrating the possibility of a plural interpretation of the originally used word 人 *hito*, as shown in (35)-(38).

- (35) つまり、住むとは人／人達／人々が一つの場所を決めて、そこに留まり、日々を過ごすことなのだ。(JAP06)

Tsumari, sumu to wa hito / hitotachi / hitobito ga hitotsu no basho o kimete, soko ni todomari, hibi o sugosu koto na no da.

'a person/people decides/decide on one place'

- (36) 人／人達／人々が移住し、旅行し、留学します。(SLO03)

Hito / hitotachi / hitobito ga ijū shi, ryokō shi, ryūgaku shimasu.

'a person/people migrate(s)'

- (37) 公園や湖などで人／人達／人々は休むことができますから。(GER09)

Kōen ya mizuumi nado de hito / hitotachi / hitobito wa yasumu koto ga dekimasu kara.

'a person/people can rest'

- (38) 私の意見では、人／人達／人々がいい生活できるための国に必要なことが三つあります。(SER11)

Watashi no iken de wa, hito / hitotachi / hitobito ga ii seikatsu dekiru tame no kuni ni hitsuyō na koto ga mittsu arimasu.

'for a person/people to have a good life'

Although we noticed that the students' usage demonstrates the same conceptualization of the word 人 *hito* when it refers to the human species without numerical specification, there are also examples like this one, which we would initially interpret in the same way, as a numerically indefinite

expression of the species. However, this is incorrect usage and 人々 *hitobito* would be more appropriate.

- (39) その結果、住みやすい国は政府が人／人達／人々の世話をする国だと思います。(CRO14)

Sono kekka, sumiyasui kuni wa seifu ga hito / hitotachi / hitobito no sewa o suru kuni da to omoimasu.

‘the government takes care of a person/people’

This kind of example suggests that the word 人 *hito* cannot independently carry an explicit meaning of plurality, as would be required here.¹⁴

In the majority of the analyzed examples, where 人 *hito* referred to multiple people, thus, implying a plural meaning that cannot be interpreted as singular, this meaning was signaled either logically or syntactically. Logical clarity that it refers to a plurality was related, for example, to words like 日本人 *nihonjin* ‘Japanese (person)’ or 現地の人 *genchino hito* ‘local person’, which, unless referring to a specific individual, always imply a group of people defined by some common characteristic, such as living or originating from the same geographical area (Japanese people, locals, etc.). Syntactic indicators included phrases such as 大勢 *ōzei* ‘many people; a great number of people’, or adjectives like 多い *ōi* ‘many; a lot(s) of’, 少ない *sukunai* ‘few; little’, and so on; and instances where the word 人 *hito* is adnominally modified to designate a group. See examples (40)-(45):

- (40) 二つ目に、アジア人を見慣れていて、外国人に対して広い心を持って接してくれる人が多いことだ。(JAP07)

Futatsume ni, Ajiajin o minarete ite, gaikokujin ni taishite hiroi kokoro o motte sesshite kureru hito ga ōi koto da.

‘there are many people’

¹⁴ On the other hand, if 人々 *hitobito* is used here because understanding of plurality is necessitated, we wonder if there is a specific number beyond which this becomes obligatory, such as two or more in English, or over four in Serbian. However, we did not find studies on which we could rely for interpreting the necessity of this particular plurality specification.

- (41) 万国共通語で英語はもちろん、中国語やマレー語が行き交う国では、公共交通機関でも複数の言語アナウンスが流れ、現地の人のみならず、観光客にとってもわかりやすい環境が整っている。(JAP11)

Bankoku kyōtsūgo de Eigo wa mochiron, Chūgokugo ya Marēgo ga ikikau kuni de wa, kōkyō kōtsū kikan demo fukusū no gengo anaunsu ga nagare, genchi no hito nominarazu, kankōkyaku ni totte mo wakariyasui kankyō ga totonotte iru.

‘easy to understand not only for local people’

- (42) このように、徹底してルールを決めて、国民を従わせる力がある国は住みやすい国として海外の人にも認知されるのではないかと考える。(JAP11)

Kono yō ni, tettei shite rūru o kimete, kokumin o shitagawaseru chikara ga aru kuni wa sumiyasui kuni toshite kaigai no hito ni mo ninchi sareru no dewa nai ka to kangaeru.

‘recognized even by people from overseas’

- (43) また、日本から新しい国で生活する際、新しい国の国民、居住者、近隣住民がどのような人かは、重要である。(JAP12)

Mata, Nihon kara atarashii kuni de seikatsu suru sai, atarashii kuni no kokumin, kyojūsha, kinrin jūmin ga dono yōna hito ka wa, jūyō de aru.

‘what kind of people the neighbors are’

- (44) 3つ目だが、私は家以外に人が属するコミュニティがなければならないと考える。(JAP18)

Mittsume da ga, watashi wa ie igai ni hito ga zokusuru komyuniti ga nakereba naranai to kangaeru.

‘communities other than home where people belong’

- (45) 二つ目は、その国の人との関係が良好であればあるほど住みやすいと感じると思います。(JAP03)

Futatsume wa, sono kuni no hito to no kankei ga ryōkō de areba aru hodo sumiyasui to kanjiru to omoimasu.

‘the relationship with the people of that country’

In all the above examples, there is little ambiguity regarding whether the sentence refers to one person or multiple people, but the plurality of individuals is collectively determined, based on the associated group indicated and which can be numerically specified. Among foreign students,

we observe the usage with the same intended meaning of the word 人 *hito*. See examples (46)-(51):

- (46) 若い人はそのチャンスを受けられるのもいけない。 (SER27)

Wakai hito wa sono chansu o ukerareru no mo ikenai.
'young people'

- (47) 給料が高い人も給料が低い人もご飯を多少に与えることができるように。
(SER28)

Kyūryō ga takai hito mo kyūryō ga hikui hito mo gohan o tashō ni ataeru koto ga dekiru yō ni.
'people with high income and people with low income alike'

- (48) そして、大学の後で、おぜいの人は仕事がありません。 (SER32)

Soshite, daigaku no ato de, ozei no hito wa shigoto ga arimasen.
'a lot of people'

- (49) 多くの人なら、たくさんお金を稼ぐことは命の目的ですが、生活に成功するために、お金は必要じゃないと思いますから、スペインへ行ったほうがいいです。 (CRO07)

Ōku no hito nara, takusan okane o kasegu koto wa inochi no mokuteki desu ga, seikatsu ni seikō suru tame ni, okane wa hitsuyō janai to omoimasu kara, Supein e itta hō ga ii desu.
'many people'

- (50) さまざまな研究によると、福祉の良い国に住んでいる人は、幸福感を感じることが非常に多いそうだ。 (CRO03)

Samazama na kenkyū ni yoru to, fukushi no yoi kuni ni sunde iru hito wa, kōfukukan o kanjiru koto ga hijō ni ōi sō da.
'people living in ~ country feel a sense of well-being very often'

- (51) 住みやすい国の中はいい人が多いです。 (SLO09)

Sumiyasui kuni no naka wa ii hito ga ōi desu.
'many good people'

A considerable number of examples from this group of meaning with the originally used word 人 *hito* are indeed interchangeable with 人達 *hitotachi* or 人々 *hitobito*, as shown in (52)-(55):

- (52) 良い国は良い人!／人達／人々!があると思います。(CRO34)

Yoi kuni wa yoi hito! / hitotachi / hitobito! ga aru to omoimasu.

'a good country has good people'

- (53) 国の人!／人達／人々!と話せなかったら、その国に住んでいることは無理だ
と思います。(GER16)

Kuni no hito! / hitotachi / hitobito! to hanasenakattara, sono kuni ni sunde
iru koto wa muri da to omoimasu.

'if you can't talk to people of a country'

- (54) 教育を受けた人!／人達／人々が少ない国は発展できません。(BOS05)

Kyōiku o uketa hito! / hitotachi / hitobito ga sukunai kuni wa hatten
dekimasen.

'a country with a few uneducated people'

- (55) 貧しい人!／人達／人々!もいないし、病気の人!／人達／人々!もいない国は理
想的な国に違いありませんが、それはありえないことです。(SER11)

Mazushii hito! / hitotachi / hitobito! mo inai shi, byōki no hito / hitotachi /
hitobito mo inai kuni wa risōteki na kuni ni chigai arimasen ga, sore wa
arienai koto desu.

'country without poor people and sick people'

Based on the above, we conclude that in our analyzed corpus, both Japanese and foreign students use the term 人 *hito* as a generic term, which can be understood as both singular and plural. Foreign students intend to specify the singular or mutual relationship between two individuals. Furthermore, the term appears solely in its plural sense when, with the help of modification or some specification, it signals that it refers to a particular group of people with same characteristics (for example, living in the same place). In other words, it suggests that there are multiple individuals who meet the same conditions, suggesting the possibility of numerical segmentation. In these cases, it appears that the words 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi* are often interchangeable though it is not clear whether this interchangeability is conditioned by any factor, such as a specific number of people, for example. How familiar foreign students are with this interchangeability we will attempt to elucidate in the following section.

4.3 The noun 人々 *hitobito*

The noun 人々 *hitobito* is formed by duplicating the same root word, 人 *hito*. Words created in this manner are called 疊語 *jōgo* in Japanese, and this morphological process is unproductive (Sudo, 2017, p. 27), meaning there are few similarly formed words.¹⁵ “These nouns are plural and incompatible with singular reference” (Sudo, 2017, p. 27), and they differ from 達 *tachi* in that they cannot have an associative meaning (Nakanishi & Tomioka, 2004), “and can only refer to homogeneous groups, each member of which is described by the noun” (Sudo, 2017, p. 27). The literature further highlights that they are not used simultaneously with a numerical classifier or plural suffix (Yasutake, 1989, p. 17). It is also stated that, even though they can originate from different parts of speech, once formed, they tend to refer to *statefulness* (jap. 状態性 *jōtaisei*) and to behave as adverbs (Matsumura, 1971, p. 325).

In the case of 人々 *hitobito*, there are a total of 69 instances of its usage in compositions by Japanese learners, and 17 instances in those by native speakers. At first glance, it is noticeable that some Japanese language learners use only 人 *hito*, others use primarily or exclusively 人々 *hitobito*, while the third group employs both forms in their compositions.¹⁶ Specifically, in 12 compositions, there is either exclusive or predominant use of the noun 人々 *hitobito*, and generally an overuse of words with plural or even collective meaning.¹⁷

¹⁵ To list just a few others: 山々 *yamayama* ‘mountains’, but also ‘very much’; ‘have a great desire (to do)’ etc.; 国々 *kuniguni* ‘nations’; ‘every nation [country]’; 日々 *hibi* ‘every day’; ‘daily’; ‘from day to day’, etc. (KKSD).

¹⁶ Among Japanese compositions, there are only four compositions where only 人 *hito* appears, and three where 人々 *hitobito* is predominantly used, with only one out of 20 compositions using the word 人達 *hitotachi*.

¹⁷ In one composition, the word 人口 *jinkō* ‘population’ is used six times, seemingly to emphasize the collective aspect of the people within the context discussed. Example:

さらに国の住んでいる人口は親切で面白くなければなりません。天気は良うなると、人口が満足しているでしょう? 例えばミュンヘンはとても大きな町です。人口がぜんぜん時間がありませんから町の気は忙しです。Sarani *kuni no sundeiru jinkō wa shinsetsu de omoshiroku nakereba narimasen. Tenki wa you nara to, jinkō ga manzoku shiteiru deshō? Tatoeba Myunhen wa totemo ookina machi desu. jinkō ga zenzen jikan ga arimasen kara machi no ki ha isogashi desu.* (GER62 ‘the population living in the country’...‘the population will be satisfied’...‘the population has no time at all’.)

Regarding the dichotomy of “it doesn't matter how many there are (species meaning)” versus “it does matter how many there are (singular or plural),” for the word 人々 *hitobito* in the compositions of both analyzed groups, we observed a gradation of meanings from (1) an indefinite multitude in the sense of species meaning to (2) the meaning of a specific group of people as a potentially countable set, with the possibility of the existence of multiple identical or different groups. There are also transitional cases, so the boundaries among these meanings are not strict.¹⁸

Here are translations and interpretations of the examples provided, showing instances of the use of 人々 *hitobito* in the meaning of an indefinite multitude of people as a kind (species meaning), as in (56)-(59):

(56) 人々は、生活のためにお金が必要であるので、労働を欲します。(JAP10)

Hitobito wa, seikatsu no tame ni okane ga hitsuyō de aru node, rōdō o hoshimasu.

‘people need money to live’

(57) 人々は生活のために十分な給料が要ります。(SER08)

Hitobito wa seikatsu no tame ni jūbun na kyūryō ga irimasu.

‘people need a sufficient salary for living.’

¹⁸ The division of nouns into countable and mass nouns, which include collective nouns, in the Serbian language, for example, involves a third form for some countable nouns. This third form denotes an indefinite, uncountable multitude. According to the criterion of animacy, these nouns are divided into collective nouns—representing multiple beings as one group (such as *deca* ‘children’, *braća* ‘brothers’, *gospoda* ‘gentlemen’)—and aggregate nouns, which represent ‘multiple non-living concepts as a collection of an indefinite number’ (like *cveće* ‘flowers’, *lišće* ‘leaves’ (Mrazović, 2009, p. 229)). These exist alongside plural forms that are countable. Thus, there are *cvet* (singular) ‘a flower’, *cvetovi* (countable plural) ‘flowers’, and *cveće* (uncountable plural) ‘flowers’; or *list* (singular) ‘a leaf’, *listovi* (countable plural) ‘leaves’, and *lišće* (uncountable plural) ‘leaves’; and *stanovnik* (singular) ‘a citizen’, *stanovnici* (countable plural) ‘citizens’, *stanovništvo* (uncountable plural) ‘citizens’, etc. Similar divisions are also present in other South Slavic languages (including Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian). These languages are the mother tongues of two-thirds of the authors of the compositions from the analyzed corpus. Therefore, it is not surprising that the concept of the same form for both countable and uncountable plurality was familiar to the students as they display it in the sentences with 人 *hito* and 人々 *hitobito*.

- (58) いい経済状態があるので、人々の状態もだんだん良くなります。(GER15)
li keizai jōtai ga aru node, hitobito no jōtai mo dandan yoku narimasu.
'the condition of the people gradually gets better.'

- (59) たくさんビーチがあって、いつも天気良くて、人々も気安いですね。
(CRO07)
Takusan bīchi ga atte, itsumo tenki ga yokute, hitobito mo kiyasui desu ne.
'the people are friendly.'

These examples demonstrate how 人々 *hitobito* is used to refer to people in a general, broad sense, highlighting the collective or uncountable multitude aspect, as previously discussed.

Following are the examples showing instances of 人々 *hitobito* referring to specific groups of people, which highlights the plural sense in terms of a set or a group:

- (60) 周りと違う見た目の人が自分だけでない。そして母国の文化を共有していたり、理解してくれたり興味持ってくれたりする人がある。そのような人々との出会いで驚くほど暮らしやすくなるものだ。(JAP01)

Mawari to chigau mitame no hito ga jibun dake de nai. Soshite bokoku no bunka o kyōyū shite itari, rikai shite kuretarī kyōmi motte kuretarī suru hito ga iru. Sonoyōna hitobito to no deai de odoroku hodo kurashiyasuku naru mono da.

'meeting such people'

- (61) シンガポールは中国の華僑やマレーシアの人々が多く移り住んで成り立つ異国民国である。(JAP11)

Shingapōru wa Chūgoku no kakyō ya Marēshia no hitobito ga ōku utsuri sunde naritatsu iminkoku de aru.

'many Chinese expatriates and Malaysian people moved and live'

- (62) 人々が一緒に食べ物を作って、飲み物を飲んで、気を楽しんで、休暇を過ごしている。(CRO10)

Hitobito ga issho ni tabemono o tsukutte, nomimono o nonde, ki o raku ni shite, kyūka o sugoshite iru.

'people are making food together'

- (63) より教育を受けた有能な人々とともに、国は繁栄し、生活水準は向上するでしょう。 (SER20)

Yori kyōiku o uketa yūnō na hitobito to tomo ni, kuni wa han'ei shi, seikatsu suijun wa kōjō suru deshō.

'with educated and competent people'

- (64) 特に都市の人々が外国人に声をかけるに早いし、友達をできます。 (SLO14)

Tokuni toshi no hitobito ga gaikokujin ni koe o kakeru ni hayai shi, tomodachi o dekimasu.

'people from the city'

- (65) 住みやすい国はあらゆる種類の人々がうけ入れるべきです。 (BOS08)

Sumiyasui kuni wa arayuru shurui no hitobito ga ukeireru beki desu.

'~ should welcome all kinds of people.'

These examples show that 人々 *hitobito* was used to refer to groups defined by shared characteristics, nationality, or other specific traits, emphasizing the set-based meaning of plurality.

It is notable that among the examples with 人々 *hitobito*, unlike the use of 人達 *hitotachi*, a higher number of errors is not observed in student compositions. However, the meanings associated with 人々 *hitobito* are also seen with the word 人 *hito*. In the substitution test, 人々 *hitobito* is more frequently replaceable with 人 *hito* than with 人達 *hitotachi*. Out of 23 sentences originally using the word 人々 *hitobito* in the test, over 15 times it was possible or even preferable to replace it with 人 *hito*. Examples thereof include (66)-(69):

- (66) それらが手に入りやすいほど、人／人達／人々は容易に社会生活を送ることが出来る。 (JAP05)

Sorera ga te ni hairiyasui hodo, hito / ~~hitotachi~~ / hitobito wa yōi ni shakai seikatsu o okuru koto ga dekiru.

'people can lead a social life more easily.'

- (67) また、田舎の人! / 人達 / 人々は外国人に自分の文化、習慣などを紹介するのが嬉しくて、地元の料理をおごるも多いです。(SLO14)

Mata, inaka no hito! / hitotachi / hitobito wa gaikokujin ni jibun no bunka, shūkan nado o shōkai suru no ga ureshikute, jimoto no ryōri o ogoru mo ōi desu.

‘countryside people’

- (68) 人! / 人達 / 人々は家族や自分自身のために仕事をする必要があります。人! / 人達 / 人々は幸せになるために健康である必要があります。(SER15)

hito! / hitotachi / hitobito wa kazoku ya jibun jishin no tame ni shigoto o suru hitsuyō ga arimasu. hito! / hitotachi / hitobito wa shiawase ni naru tame ni kenkō de aru hitsuyō ga arimasu.

‘people need to work ... for people to be happy’

- (69) 逆に、差別が強い国や社会で、差別された人! / 人達 / 人々は一生懸命頑張っても、承認されていない場合もあると思いますので、そういう国は全然住みやすくないと思います。(CRO14)

Gyaku ni, sabetsu ga tsuyoi kuni ya shakai de, sabetsu sareta hito! / hitotachi / hitobito wa isshōkenmei ganbatte mo, shōnin sarete inai baai mo aru to omoimasu node, sō iu kuni wa zenzen sumiyasukunai to omoimasu.

‘discriminated people’

These examples illustrate the flexible use of 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi*, highlighting that while 人々 *hitobito* often conveys a more defined set or group, it is often replaced by the more general 人 *hito* without loss of meaning.

On the other hand, although 人達 *hitotachi* is a noun that, like 人々 *hitobito*, is intended to denote plurality, it could not replace 人々 *hitobito* in 16 to 19 cases (out of 23 in the test sample). This is a very suggestive result that warrants further exploration. See examples (70)-(73) below:

- (70) これらは言うまでもなく、生きることに直接関わる必要不可欠なものであり、これらが人／人達／人々にとって高価すぎたり人口に対して量が少なすぎたりすると、その社会に住みづらくなる原因となってしまう。(JAP05)

Korera wa iu made mo naku, ikiru koto ni chokusetsu kakawaru hitsuyō fukaketsu na mono deari, korera ga hito / hitotachi / hitobito ni totte kōka sugitari jinkō ni taishite ryō ga sukunasugitari suru to, sono shakai ni sumizuraku naru gen'in to natte shimau.

'they become too expensive for people'

- (71) もちろん、大事なことは人／人達／人々だと思います。(SER30)

Mochiron, daiji na koto wa hito / hitotachi / hitobito da to omoimasu.

'what is important is people'

- (72) まず、人／人達／人々は親切だと思うので、いいポイントです。(SLO01)

Mazu, hito / hitotachi / hitobito wa shinsetsu da to omou node, ii pointo desu.

'people are kind'

- (73) 住みやすい状況は人！／人達／人々にとってそれぞれ違うと思いますが大切な点は安全性だと思います。(GER68)

Sumiyasui jōkyō wa hito! / hitotachi / hitobito ni totte sorezore chigau to omoimasu ga, taisetsu na ten wa anzen sei da to omoimasu.

'the conditions for livability differ for each person/people'

The above examples highlight that 人々 *hitobito* is favored over 人達 *hitotachi* because it more clearly signifies a general group in the context of our examined sentences. It is also noteworthy that 人々 *hitobito* may not necessarily require adnominal modification, as demonstrated in examples (70)-(73). However, the distinction in usage between 人々 *hitobito* and 人達 *hitotachi* underscores the subtle differences in how these plural meaning words engage with the concept of collectivity in Japanese.

4.4 The noun 人達 *hitotachi*

The semantic representation of human collectivity has found lexical expression in the Japanese language, giving rise to terms such as 人達 *hitotachi* with a plural suffix, and 人々 *hitobito*, resulting from noun reduplication, which was discussed in the previous chapter. Literature suggests that the plural suffix does not merely denote plurality but imparts

a collective meaning to the head noun,¹⁹ which must represent a living entity and be appropriately socially stratified. For instance, 先生達 *sensei-tachi* does not always equate to ‘teachers’ as it may include individuals who are not teachers but are associated with a school environment (Yasutake, 1989, pp. 24-25). In other words, plural suffixes can have both additive (same set members) and associative (a group represented by the noun) meanings (Tatsumi, 2017, p. 233; Nakanishi & Tomioka, 2004).

In corpus compositions, 人達 *hitotachi* is much less frequently used (eight instances among foreign students and one among Japanese). Student essays typically use it only with an additive meaning, thereby conveying a sense of plurality; it is characteristic that some students feel the need to emphasize the plural sense, hence repeating it multiple times in a composition. Moreover, a number of participants exclusively use words with plural meaning, with a preference for 人々 *hitobito* over 人達 *hitotachi*. Although this analysis will not delve deeper into error analysis, it is evident that there is often either incorrect (over)usage of 人達 *hitotachi* or usage that would be identical to that of 人 *hito* or 人々 *hitobito*. The following two examples include the original use of the word 人達 *hitotachi* in student compositions.

- (74) 選挙があると自分の意見で政治に影響をできて、政治家に人／人達／人々は大事だと思える可能性があります。それで、選挙された議会はかんりょうしゅぎのことを確立して、人／人達／人々は毎日の予定を立てることができます。(GER65)

Senkyo ga aru to jibun no iken de seiji ni eikyō o dekite, seijika ni hito / hitotachi / hitobito wa daiji da to omou koto ga arawareru kanōsei ga arimasu. Sore de, senkyo sareta gikai wa kanryōshugi no koto o kakuritsu shite, hito / hitotachi / hitobito wa mainichi no yotei o tateru koto ga dekimasu.

‘people are important for politicians’ ... ‘people can plan their daily schedules’

¹⁹ “Plurality suffixes in Japanese do not mark simple plurality in the sense of two or more single entities, but rather they function semantically as a collective noun formative” (Yasutake, 1989, p. 24).

- (75) まず最初に、人／人達／人々はみんなそれぞれ違うので、誰もが自分にとって住みやすいと思うような完璧な国はない。...一方で、忙しい都市を好む人／人達／人々もいるので、先進国の方が住みやすい。...そうすれば、自分の境遇に不満を持つ人／人達／人々が少なくなり、犯罪を犯す必要性も少なくなるだろう。(CRO11)

Mazu saisho ni, hito / hitotachi / hitobito wa minna sorezore chigau node, daremo ga jibun ni totte sumiyasui to omouyō na kanpeki na kuni wa nai. ... Ippō de, isogashii toshi o konomu hito / hitotachi / hitobito mo iru node, senshinkoku no hō ga sumiyasui. ... Sō sureba, jibun no kyōgū ni fuman o motsu hito / hitotachi / hitobito ga sukunaku nari, hanzai o okasu hitsuyōsei mo sukunaku naru darō.

‘since everyone is different’ ... ‘people who prefer bustling cities’ ... ‘fewer people being dissatisfied’

The use of these suffixes is limited²⁰ and marked²¹, as can be observed from the fact that in a test sample of 78 utterances, 人達 *hitotachi* was rejected or questioned as a possible replacement in 45 cases by one tester and 54 by another. In all instances where 人達 *hitotachi* was deemed acceptable, the use of both 人 *hito* and 人々 *hitobito*, or just one of these, was also acceptable. In no examples was 人達 *hitotachi* prescribed but, rather, only offered as acceptable. Additionally, as observed in examples (52), (53), (54), (55), (67), and (69), and in contrast with examples (66), (68), (70), (71), (72), and (73), it appears that 人達 *hitotachi* is more commonly associated with a known, specific group of people, i.e., it is more referential. This is syntactically indicated by a preceding modifying phrase. These observations underscore the need for further examination of the nuanced differences in the plural meanings and syntactic behavior of these terms.

5 Conclusion and final remarks

While seemingly sharing common characteristics, it is evident that the noun 人 *hito* ‘a person/people’ differs significantly from 林檎 *ringo* ‘an apple/apples’

²⁰ “[...] four basic conditions on their usage, i.e. the animacy constraint, the applicability to proper names, the politeness scale and the overall infrequency” (Yasutake, 1989, p. 17).

²¹ “Plurality suffixes are used in Japanese only when the speaker/writer is particularly conscious of the plurality of the referent or there is a contextual need” (Yasutake, 1989, p. 20).

in its importance to speakers, as reflected by its status as a hypernym for a number of words, some of which relate to community forms. Some of these community-relevant words denote countable groups (such as 家族 *kazoku* 'family,' 両親 *ryōshin* 'parents,' 兄弟 *kyōdai* 'siblings,' but also 外国人 *gaikokujin* 'foreigners,' 人口 *jinkō* 'population'), while others are perceived more like mass nouns (such as 人間 *ningen* 'humanity,' 人類 *jinrui* 'mankind'). Given the importance of the individual-society relationship, it is unsurprising that the language has so many words defining this relationship. This relationship with other words distinguishes 人 *hito* from most other Japanese nouns.

The significance of 人 *hito* is also highlighted by the extensive derivational network formed around it, which includes the two plural-signifying words analyzed here, 人達 *hitotachi* and 人々 *hitobito*, as well as the word 個人 *kojin* 'individual', which conveys a singular meaning. The analysis of lexical meanings is often featured in cognitive studies, which have also served as a model here.

While other nouns may not be able to express plural meaning without the aid of numbers or adverbs, the word for person has two, but this fact has not received much attention in textbooks or linguistic studies. Moreover, as we have seen, plurality in Japanese is not a focal point in teaching Japanese as a foreign language, except at the lexical level. Discussions about the number category in Japanese typically occur in the field of general linguistics and semantics, primarily in comparison with English. These studies have shown that the dichotomy singular vs. plural present in European languages shifts in Japanese to number irrelevant (stating kind) vs. number relevant, where the latter category is marked and includes both singular and plural.

This study analyzed a SUMIYASUIKUNI-corpus of compositions by Japanese language students, alongside compositions by Japanese students on the topic of "A Country That Is Easy to Live in" to see whether the concepts and meanings associated with 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi* align among students of Japanese, even though they are usually not specifically told about them in the educational process. We hoped this comparison would highlight some aspects of the Japanese language that remain unnoticed if viewed in isolation.

The corpus analysis showed that 人 *hito* is used among both Japanese and Japanese language students with the following meanings: non-referential singular (species), countable plural (referring to a specified

group), and uncountable plural (referring to a species). It can be assumed that this alignment results from similar capabilities of common nouns in the native languages of the students. However, it is evident that there are uncertainties in using terms that would signal singular or plural, which was expected since, as we have demonstrated, its usage is marked in Japanese. In particular, the singular in the sense of an individual separated from society or set against it, as well as the relationship implying two parties, two persons (e.g., someone helping someone), proved challenging for the students. Additionally, the plural meaning of the word 人 *hito* has proven to be limited to cases where it takes on a collective meaning, whether it is in non-referential use generally referring to a species, in syntactic or adnominal modification (for example, with 多い *ōi* 'many'), or in a lexical manner (alongside names of countries, locations, etc.).

The corpus analysis regarding the word 人々 *hitobito* revealed the expected meanings of plurality, ranging from the general meaning of a species to the meaning of a group with (countable) members of the same characteristics. In many cases, 人々 *hitobito* proved interchangeable with 人 *hito*, but not with 人達 *hitotachi*. On the other hand, there are examples where the only acceptable solution was 人々 *hitobito*, leaving it unclear whether the implied or assumed number of people is what influences the necessary choice of 人々 *hitobito* or if some other factor plays a role.

The results concerning the noun 人達 *hitotachi* are particularly intriguing. In the analyzed corpus, this noun was rarely a possible alternative to 人 *hito* and 人々 *hitobito*, and it was often the most incorrect choice among students. It was also evident from the substitution test that 人達 *hitotachi* and 人々 *hitobito* are much less interchangeable than 人々 *hitobito* and 人 *hito*, which was an unexpected result since both 人達 *hitotachi* and 人々 *hitobito* denote only a plurality of people. The nature of the difference in the plurality conveyed by these two nouns requires further examination.

It can generally be stated that all the meanings observed among native speakers were also present in the students' examples. However, although error analysis was not conducted, there was a noticeable overuse of words with plural meanings by some students. This overuse indicates that some students could not precisely express their intended ideas due to an insufficient understanding of the relationship between the individual and society in the language.

Furthermore, this study has opened new questions about the meaning of singular and plural in Japanese, particularly with nouns related to human beings. These questions warrant separate analysis from other instances of number distinction (e.g., different groups of words used to name human beings and their communities).

We also believe it is necessary to conduct further investigations of the interchangeability of the three words analyzed here, 人 *hito*, 人々 *hitobito*, and 人達 *hitotachi*, using a specially designed questionnaire that would reveal much more about the expressed meaning of plurality and the boundaries and overlaps of these words as synonyms. In particular, it is essential to explore further how the plural meaning words such as 人達 *hitotachi* and 人々 *hitobito* differ and what conditions necessitate the choice of 人々 *hitobito* (such that it cannot be replaced by 人 *hito*) and vice versa.

The question of the number category in the Japanese language might also be well examined in comparison with other systems, not just those manifested in the English language. Further research in this area could provide deeper insights into the cognitive and social aspects of language usage in different linguistic communities.

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- KGJT Morioka, K. et al. (Eds.). (2000). *Kokugo jiten* 『国語辞典』 .
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- KKSC Collick, M., & Dutcher, D. P. (Eds.). (2002). *Kenkyūsha's New College Japanese-English Dictionary* 『新和英中辞典』 (5th edition). Tokyo: Kenkyūsha
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The Effect of Lexical Accent on Perceived Japanese Vowel Length: Evidence from Croatian

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Abstract

The present paper examines the effect of Japanese lexical accent on the perception of Japanese vowel length in Croatian listeners. Lexical accent patterns of the two languages, both having phonologically distinctive length and pitch, are contrasted. A three-alternative choice identification test was conducted involving all combinations of three pitch patterns and two positions of a long vowel in bisyllabic words. Two groups of participants were Croatian students of Japanese and those without any prior knowledge. The results showed not only the effects of pitch pattern but also of the position of the long vowel (initial or final) and group. Participants had the highest error rates for pitch pattern LHL, followed by HLL, regardless of the group and position of the long vowel.

Keywords: vowel length, lexical accent, perception of long vowels, Croatian, Japanese

Povzetek

Prispevek preučuje vpliv japonskega besednega naglasa na zaznavanje dolžine japonskih samoglasnikov pri hrvaških naravnih govornikih. Primerjani so vzorci besednega naglasa obeh jezikov, katerih fonološka razlika je v trajanju in višini tona. Izveden je bil identifikacijski test s tremi izbori, ki je vključeval vse kombinacije med vzorci tonske višine in položaji dolgega samoglasnika na primeru dvozložnih besed. Sodelovali sta dve skupini udeležencev, hrvaški študenti japonščine in tisti brez predhodnega znanja japonščine. Rezultati so pokazali, da na pravilnost zaznavanja ne vpliva le tonski vzorec besede, ampak tudi položaj dolgega samoglasnika (na začetku ali na koncu) ter predznanje japonščine. Udeleženci so imeli najvišje stopnje napak pri višinskem vzorcu LHL, sledil je HLL in sicer ne glede na skupino in položaj dolgega samoglasnika.

Ključne besede: trajanje samoglasnika, besedni naglas, zaznava dolgih samoglasnikov, hrvaščina, japonščina

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1 Introduction

This paper investigates how the lexical accent of the Japanese language influences the perception of Japanese long vowels in bisyllabic words by Croatian listeners. Both Croatian¹ and Japanese belong to pitch-accent languages² and have phonologically distinctive vowel length.

Japanese vowel length often poses difficulty to foreign learners: they do not always make a distinction between long and short vowels in their production, nor do they always notice the difference between them in the spoken language (Toda, 2003, p. 70) and references therein (Hirata, 2015, p. 726).³ Some Croatian students of Japanese also make errors in their production articulating a long vowel instead of short, e.g. 従業 #*juugyoo* 'performing duties' instead of 授業 *jogyoo* 'class'. Also, length is sometimes omitted, e.g. ビル #*biru* 'building' instead of ビール *biiru* 'beer', or pronounced on the wrong vowel, e.g. #*yootē* instead of 予定 *yotee* 'plan'. It is well known that L2 production is closely related to perception (Toda, 2003, p. 71), so this may be one of the reasons for the errors in production.

In the area of L2 acquisition and cross-linguistic speech perception, there are studies investigating the perception of length contrast in foreign learners of Japanese e.g. native speakers of Modern Standard Arabic (Tsukada, 2012), Thai, English, Italian (Tsukada et al., 2014). Importantly, previous research has established that the perception of Japanese vowel length in foreign learners may be influenced, among other factors, by lexical accent of the Japanese word. Specifically, Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002) investigated the effects of Japanese lexical accent on the perception of vowel length in Korean and English learners of Japanese. As far as we are aware, there has not been any research concerning the effects of lexical accent on the perception of Japanese vowel length, or perception of Japanese vowel

¹ Standard Croatian, the official language of Croatia, is a South Slavic language, belonging to the Indo-European group of languages. It is a variety of Standard Štokavian which is also used in the neighboring countries of Bosnia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Croatian is unrelated to Japanese, which is classified as belonging to the Japonic language family.

² Pitch-accent languages are languages where each accented word includes a distinctive high tone (Mandić, 2007, p. 88). In Croatian, a high tone can be associated with only one mora, whereas in Japanese, a high tone can be spread to multiple morae (Mandić, 2007, p. 88).

³ For the pronunciation of moraic nasal /N/ by Croatian students, see Špica (2021).

length contrast in Croatian learners (or any other variety of Standard Štokavian), or contrastive studies into pitch-accent systems⁴ of the two languages (Srdanović & Špica, 2022, pp. 114-121). Hence, the present paper aims to shed some light on these problems. The findings can be relevant not only for Japanese language acquisition, but also for contrastive linguistics, cross-linguistic speech perception, and broader area of phonetics.

The following section of the present paper briefly describes the lexical prosody of Japanese and Croatian focusing on vowel length and pitch accent and offers a contrastive account of the two languages. Section 3 introduces the relevant previous research after which Section 4 lists the research questions regarding the expected error rates in identifying vowel length and research method. Analysis and discussion are presented in Section 5, while Section 6 offers a conclusion.

2 Lexical accent in Japanese and Croatian

In this chapter, we offer a contrastive analysis of the Japanese and Croatian lexical accent patterns, with a focus on monosyllabic and bisyllabic words. It will help us draw inferences on the error rates, i.e. extent of difficulty the Croatian students face in identifying a long vowel.

2.1 Prosodic units and phonological length

Mora is a basic unit of Japanese prosody. Importantly, it is different from syllable since a syllable may contain one or two morae: e.g., 琴 *koto* ‘koto, type of a music instrument’ has two syllables *ko-to* and two morae *ko.to*, whereas 孤島 *kotoo* ‘isolated island’ also has two syllables *ko-too* but three morae *ko.to.o*.⁵

In Croatian, the basic unit of prosody is a syllable. A long vowel is assumed to include two morae (Inkelas & Zec, 1988; Mandić, 2005). Thus, the accented syllable in *more* /môre/ [mô:re] ‘sea’ or *soda* /soda/ [sô:da] ‘soda’ is considered to have 2 morae. A major difference between the two languages is that Japanese is a mora-timed language (Otake, 2015, p. 493),

⁴ As for literature in Japanese, Hattori (1981) discusses the 4 prosodemes in Serbo-Croatian.

⁵ A dot is used to mark a boundary between morae, and a dash between syllables.

whereas Croatian is considered to be a syllable-timed language (Josipović, 1994, p. 35).

In Japanese, vowel length is contrastive, as shown in the minimal pair 琴 *koto* 'koto, music instrument' and 孤島 *kotoo* 'isolated island'. Vowel length is contrastive in Croatian as well, 1-syllable words, e.g. *tek* /tèk/ [têk] 'only' vs. *tek* /têk/ [tê:k] 'appetite'; bisyllabic words, e.g. *duga* /dùga/ [dûga] 'barrel stave' vs. *duga* /dúga/ [dũ:ga] 'rainbow'; trisyllabic words, e.g. *kupiti* /kùpiti/ [kûpiti] 'collect' vs. *kupiti* /kúpiti/ [kũ:piti] 'buy'.

Notably, the functional load of the vowel length contrast in Standard Croatian is lower than in Japanese – there are only a handful of examples where only length is contrastive in Croatian between different lexical words. However, there are many cases where the accent plays a role in morphology. Such words may include a distinctive length which is often combined with another prosodic feature, i.e. different pitch and/or post-tonic length (see Section 2.3 below). For example, *žena* /žèna/ [žěna] 'woman (nom. sg.)' involves short-rising accent (see Section 2.3 below) on the initial, stressed, syllable while *žena* /žénā/ 'women [žě:na:] (gen. pl.)' involves long-rising accent on the initial, stressed syllable and post-tonic length on the final syllable; *sjedi* /sjèdī/ '(s)he sits' has short-rising accent with post-tonic length whereas *sjedi* /sjèdi/ 'sit (imperative)' has short-falling accent; *zelen* /zèlen/ [zělen] (SR) 'green' adjective, nom. sg. masc., contrasts with *zelen* /zèlēn/ [zêle:n] 'vegetables (for soup)' noun.

2.2 Lexical accent in Japanese

Word accent is free. Every mora in a word has either high (H) or low (L) pitch. Accent is placed on the high mora after which the pitch falls, i.e. H the sequence H¹L. Accented ones include accent nucleus, i.e. the sequence HL. Once the pitch falls, it does not rise again in the same word. Words in which the pitch does not fall are unaccented or flat. Unaccented words are sometimes marked by a small circle at the end of a word (see Labrune, 2012) and such notation will be followed here to avoid ambiguity, e.g. 飴 *a.me*[°] 'candy' LH. For accented words, ¹ marks the last high mora in a word, e.g. 雨 *a¹.me* 'rain' HL. The first two morae putatively have a different pitch – either HL, when the accent is on the first mora, or LH (the latter characteristic is called the initial lowering rule (Haraguchi, 1977, cited in Tsujimura, 2014, p. 30)). Hence, it follows from the above that patterns *LLH, *HHL, *HLH cannot be found in Japanese (i.e. Tokyo dialect).

The difference between the pitch of the first low and second high mora (LH) is not prominent and can be clearly perceived only if a word is pronounced in isolation. Furthermore, this difference in pitch is virtually inexistent when the first two morae comprise a long vowel, i.e. have the form (C)V+V. Kawahara (2015, p. 449) states that when the initial syllables contain a long vowel e.g., 東京 *To.o.kyo.o°* LHH ‘Tokyo’, they can be pronounced with HH without initial lowering (Tsujiura, 2014, p. 86; Kubozono, 2018, p. 157). Description of the same effect is found in the prescriptive dictionary of Japanese accent (NHK, 2016, p. 9). Hence, a word-initial LH with a long vowel can be considered as equivalent to HH.

As for the nouns, McCawley (1968, p. 138) (quoted in Kawahara, 2015, p. 448) points out that the number of their accent patterns is $n+1$, where n is the number of morae in the word. For example, the monomoraic word *ha* has two meanings depending on the pitch: 葉 *ha°* L ‘leaves’ vs. 歯 *ha¹* H ‘teeth’. The pitch of a monomoraic word (generally speaking) cannot be determined unless e.g. a nominative particle *ga* is added: 葉が *ha.ga°* LH (flat) ‘leaves-NOM’, unaccented, vs. 歯が *ha.¹ga* HL ‘teeth-NOM’, accented. The following bimoraic bisyllabic words have 3 different pitch patterns: 牡蠣 *ka.ki°* LH ‘oyster’ vs. 柿 *ka.¹ki* HL ‘kaki-fruit’, vs. 垣 *ka.ki¹* LH ‘fence’ (cf. *ka.ki¹-ga* LHL ‘fence-NOM’). Three-moraic words have 4 types of pitch accent: unaccented 空手 *ka.ra.te°* ‘karate’ accent on the first mora 花火 *ha¹nabi* HLL ‘fireworks’, accent on the second mora 心 *ko.ko.¹ro* LHL ‘soul’, and accent on the third mora 頭 *a.ta.ma¹* LHH ‘head’ (cf. *a.ta.ma¹ga* ‘head-NOM’). As for verbs and adjectives, pitch patterns are more restricted, and will not be of concern here.

2.3 Lexical accent in Croatian

Croatian lexical accent is basically free, although it is rarely found in the final position. It is closely related to high pitch. A high pitch can be on the accented syllable, toward its beginning, in which case it is realized as a falling accent. Alternatively, if the pitch on the first syllable after the accented one is high, the accented syllable is rising. The four prosodemes combine the rising or falling tone pattern with the length (short or long). They are traditionally called short-falling (SF), long-falling (LF), short-rising (SR), and long-rising (LR). Apart from the four prosodemes, traditionally described as four accents on the stressed syllable, there is post-tonic or post-accentual length.

There is extensive body of research on the accent system of Standard Štokavian, including phonetic measurements (Lehiste & Ivić, 1963; Lehiste & Ivić, 1986; Ivić, 1994; Langston, 1997; Pletikos, 2003, 2008; Škarić, 2007; Kapović, 2015; Pletikos Olof & Bradford, 2019b; Martinović, 2020; Rajle et al., 2020; Martinović et al., 2021; Pletikos Olof et al., 2023; Kapović, 2023). Some studies also provide an account of Croatian accent from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics (Kapović, 2018).

The four prosodemes are shown in Table 1 below, including examples, traditional diacritics, and IPA notation.

Table 1: The four Croatian prosodemes

SF (short-falling)	LF (long-falling)	SR (short-rising)	LR (long-rising)
koma	more	kasa	soda
kòma	môre	kàsa	sóda
[kôma]	[mô:re]	[kăsa]	[sǝ:da]
'coma'	'sea'	'register'	'soda'

Phonologically, short-falling accent *koma* /kòma/ [kôma] 'coma' is H.L, while long-falling *more* /more/ [mô:re] 'sea' is HL.L. On the other hand, however, researchers do not necessarily agree on what the most suitable phonological representation would be for the rising accents. Some approaches contend that the accent is a rising accent when the high tone is on the first syllable after the accented one, i.e. in rising accents, a high tone comes only after the low one. For example, a word including a long-rising accent *glava* /gláva/ [glă:va] 'head' is analyzed as LL.H (Mandić, 2007, p. 79). The same approach would analyze a bisyllabic word involving a short-rising accent *kasa* /kàsa/ [kăsa] 'register' as L.H. Other approaches contend that the high tone spreads from the syllable under the rising accent to the next one (e.g. Kapović, 2023, p. 244).⁶ Thus, the two approaches would represent a long-rising accent, e.g. *soda* /soda/ [sǝ:da] 'soda' (LR), as LL.H and HH.H respectively. For the purpose of this paper, the latter stance provides a somewhat more convenient viewpoint.

⁶ There are also approaches according to which rising tones are characterized by the fact that post-tonic syllables have a higher tone than post-tonic syllables in the falling tones (see Pletikos, 2003).

Another remark regarding the phonetic properties of the rising accents is in order. Words with SR or LR accent pronounced in isolation or at the end of a sentence often have the final tone lowered. Inkelas and Zec (1988, p. 240), introduce the Final Lowering rule which neutralizes the difference between short-falling and short-rising, e.g. *vatra* /vàtra/ 'fire' and *voda* /vòda/ 'water', when the latter is in citation form. As the pitch on the second syllable in such case can be considered to be lower than the one on the previous syllable, it would be more accurately represented as H.L, e.g. *kasa* /kàsa/ 'register' than H.H. Similarly, the long-rising accent, e.g. *soda* /soda/ [sõ:da] 'soda' in isolation would be, arguably, more accurately represented as HH.L than HH.H⁷. As will be discussed in Subsection 2.5, the long-rising pattern HH.L may bear resemblance to one of the patterns of Japanese test words used here.

As mentioned above, the distinction in quantity is reflected not only in a stressed syllable but also in syllable(s) that follow. Distinctive post-tonic length (or post-accentual length) is marked by macron in dictionaries: *idem* /idēm/ [idě:m] 'I go', *kolač* /kòlāč/ [kõla:č] 'cake'. A word can have multiple post-tonic lengths, e.g. *beskrajnost* /bèskraĵnōst/ [bêskra:jno:st] 'infinity'. If enclitics are counted, there can be as many as five (Kapović, 2023, p. 244). There is no length before the stressed syllable in the Standard Štokavian.

The four accents and post-tonic length can occur on any of the five vowels /a e i o u/ and syllabic /r/. The accent is basically free, but rising accents cannot occur in the final position.

Many speakers of Croatian (especially in urban areas such as Zagreb or Rijeka) do not use Standard Croatian pitch accent described above, but dynamic stress accent instead. It does not involve tone, and it is often even without length contrast. Even though the stress accent does not conform to the accent norm of Standard Croatian, it has higher prestige. Reportedly (Pletikos Olof & Bradfield, 2019b, p. 1), it is assessed that 40-50% of speakers use a pitch accent system with four accents, e.g., in the regions of Slavonia and Dalmatia.

⁷ The rising pitch in SR words is seen e.g. when they are inflected, e.g. in *kasama* /kàsama/ 'register' (dat. pl.) H.H.L, but trisyllabic contexts are out of the scope of this paper.

2.4 Phonetic measurements of long vowel duration

Regarding phonetic measurements of the duration of each of the four Croatian accents and post-tonic length, Pletikos (2003, p. 321) reports that a stressed vowel with SF accent lasts from 80 to 140 ms (115 ms on average), whereas SR lasts around 109%, LF 234%, and LR 243% of the duration of SF.⁸ As for bisyllabic words, the boundary for the category of short-falling accent is reported to be at 118 ms, whereby durations of up to 108 ms are perceived as belonging to the correct SF category, and durations of 128 ms as too long (Pletikos Olof et al., 2023, pp. 361-362, quoting Bakran, 1988).

More recent studies show different measurements. Regarding the duration of each of the prosodemes in the pitch-accent (tone) system as opposed to the dynamic system, it is reported (Pletikos Olof & Bradfield, 2019b, p. 3) that the speakers who use tones have the greatest length contrast, averaging 161 ms for LF and 150 ms for LR compared to 110 ms for SF/SR. It follows that, according to this study, long-falling is 1.46 longer than short-falling or short-rising, while long-rising is 1.36 times longer. The same research reports that dynamic speakers with length have significantly shorter long vowels than speakers with tones.⁹ This fact is important because it indicates that, in Croatian, the presence or absence of the tone has an effect on vowel duration.

As for Japanese, the duration ratio between phonemically long and phonemically short vowels in the corpus is said to be smaller than in laboratory experiments (Shaw & Kawahara, 2017). Laboratory speech recordings claim that this ratio is between 2.4 and 3.2 (Han, 1962; Hirata, 2004; Tsukada, 1999; quoted in Shaw & Kawahara, 2017). However, the corpus study discovered that long vowels are just between 1.6 (for /a, e, u/) and 1.9 times longer (for /i, o/).¹⁰

⁸ A phonological post-tonic short vowel lasts around 40-80% of the duration of a stressed vowel, and a long post-tonic vowel lasts 80-180% of the duration of a stressed vowel (Pletikos, 2003, p. 321).

⁹ As for the boundary between LF and SF, it occurs at 147 ms, whereas in bisyllabic words, the boundary is at 118 ms (Pletikos Olof et al., 2023, p. 1, citing Mildner & Lisker, 1987, and Bakran, 1988).

¹⁰ For a more detailed overview of research in Japanese phonetics and phonology, the reader may refer to Labruno (2012), Kubozono (2018), Kubozono (2015), and others.

Compared to the ratio of short and long vowels in Japanese, i.e., 1.6 for /a, e, u/ and 1.9 for /i, o/ mentioned above, it is observed that according to the reference above (Pletikos Olof & Bradfield, 2019b, p. 3), the highest ratio of long and short in Croatian (1.46) is lower than the lowest in Japanese (1.6).

2.5 Pitch patterns of the two languages contrasted

In this subsection, we will consider lexical prosodic properties of Croatian bisyllabic words and contrast them with lexical accent patterns in Japanese.

Short-falling accent (SF): can be found on the initial syllable of bisyllabic words as in *koma* /kôma/ [kôma] 'coma'. Words with such lexical accents are perceptually quite similar to the Japanese, as they have a pitch pattern H.L, e.g. 独楽 *ko.¹ma* 'top (children's toy)'. SF in monomoraic words involves a falling contour, unlike Japanese monomoraic words which are rather flat. In bi- or multimoraic words, the stressed syllable has high tone. Hence the similarity to H.L in Japanese. As for distribution, SF rarely occurs occur in the word-final position.

The following example has post-tonic length on the second syllable: *vidi* /vîdi/ [vîdi:] '(s)he sees' (3rd person present) H.LL.¹¹ It has a tone pattern resembling that of the Japanese 技能 *gi.¹no.o* H.LL 'skill', with two morae in a low tone.

Long-falling accent (LF): In bisyllabic words such as *more* /môre/ 'sea' HL.L we find a long-falling accent on the first syllable. Japanese words such as 経費 *ke.¹e.hi* HL.L 'expenses' have a similar prosodic structure. LF is not common at the final position of a word, i.e. on the second syllable of bisyllabic words, but nonetheless there exist some, especially among loanwords – e.g. *tablo* /tablô/ L.HL 'tableaux'. Its contour has similarities to Japanese 化粧 *ke.sho¹.o* L.HL 'makeup'.

Short-rising accent (SR): In a non-isolated bisyllabic word with SR, e.g. *voda* /vôda/ 'water', high tone spreads from the first to the next syllable so the pitch is H.H, especially in the context of a sentence. However, the acoustic impression of this pattern is quite different from the unaccented pattern in Japanese (また *mata^o* 'again' L.H) due to the effect of other factors, such as stress.

¹¹ According to Kapović (2023, p. 246), such length after SF is preserved in Osijek, Split, Zadar, and Šibenik, but in many other urban areas it is mainly lost.

Long-rising accent (LR): We will consider Croatian bisyllabic words with LR, such as *duga* /dúga/ [dǔ:ga] (LR) ‘rainbow’, *ruka* /rúka/ [rǔ:ka] (LR) ‘hand’ in the context where their final syllable is lowered, i.e. HH.L. It is contended that this pattern is phonetically similar to the Japanese pattern LH.L with a long vowel in the first syllable due to the fact that the initial long vowel in accentless is also flat, and can thus be represented as HH.L as well. Incidentally, bisyllabic words with a long vowel on the initial syllable and with a pitch pattern LH.L do not exist in Japanese. Thus, in the present research, pseudo words are used instead, as did Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002).

Table 2 shows lexical accent patterns of Japanese bimoraic bisyllabic words (i.e. without length) contrasted with Croatian.

Table 2: bisyllabic words with 2 morae

Pitch pattern	Japanese	Croatian
1 L.H	また ma.ta° / ‘again’	
2 H.L	独楽 ko¹.ma ‘top’	<i>koma</i> /kò.ma/ [kôma] ‘coma’

Table 3 shows the lexical accent patterns of Japanese bisyllabic words with the long vowel in the word-initial position (long vowel initial: LVI) compared to Croatian. The underlined part of the pattern indicates the position of a long vowel in a word (LH.H means that the long vowel is in the initial syllable).

Table 3: bisyllabic trimoraic words with the long vowel in the word-initial position (LVI)

Pitch pattern (LVI)	Tone type	Japanese	Croatian
1 <u>LH</u> .H	flat	氷 ko.o.ri° ‘ice’	/
2 <u>HL</u> .L	contour	賞美 sho¹.o.bi ‘prize’	<i>more</i> /mô.re/ [môre] ‘sea’
3 <u>LH</u> .L	flat	そうだ* so.o¹.da* ‘soda’	<i>soda</i> /só.da/ [sô:da] ‘soda’

*pseudo-word, used to fill the gap

Next, Table 4 shows the lexical accent types of Japanese bisyllabic words with the long vowel in the word-final position (long vowel final: LVF) compared to Croatian.

Table 4: bisyllabic words with the long vowel in the word-final position (LVF)

Pitch pattern (LVF)	Tone type	Japanese	Croatian
1 <u>L.HH</u>	flat	多幸 ta.ko.o° 'fortunate'	/
2 <u>H.LL</u>	flat	理性 ri.¹se.e 'ratio'	<i>vidi</i> /vidi/ [vidi:] 'she sees'
3 <u>L.HL</u>	contour	化粧 ke.sho¹.o 'makeup'	<i>tablo</i> /tablô/ [tablô:] 'tableaux'

Of the six patterns presented in Table 3 and Table 4 above, two with flat accent (LH.H and L.HH) do not exist in Croatian and one (LHL) does not exist in Japanese.

Pitch patterns of monosyllabic words in Japanese and their possible counterparts in Croatian are of relevance, too. Monomoraic words in Japanese have only a flat tone, either high or low, e.g. 葉 *ha*° L 'leaves' or 歯 *ha*¹ H 'teeth'. On the other hand, Croatian monomoraic words necessarily involve a short-falling accent i.e. a falling contour, e.g. *pas* /pàs/ 'dog' (SF). Notably, a short-falling accent placed on monomoraic words is different from SF on bisyllabic bimoraic words such as *kuća* /kùća/ 'house' HL, where two distinct syllables have different pitch and neither of them separately involves a contour, much as it is the case in Japanese, e.g. 独楽 *ko.¹ma* 'top (children's toy)' HL. Japanese bimoraic words with a long vowel may be accentless as 能 *no.o*° 'Noh drama' LH, or accented as 党 *to.¹o* 'political party' HL. As 1-syllable words in Croatian involve only falling accents, when the vowel is long, the accent is long-falling, e.g. *to* *tô* [tô:] 'it, that' (LF). The pitch pattern of Japanese 党 *to.¹o* 'political party' is virtually the same as *to* *tô* [tô:] 'it, that' (LF) in Croatian. These facts may play a role in the perception of Japanese vowels by Croatian listeners. Namely, in Japanese monosyllabic words, a falling contour HL implies the presence of two morae, whereas in Croatian this is not necessarily the case. Accents patterns of 1-syllable words are presented in Table 5 below, showing that three Japanese flat patterns do not have their counterparts in Croatian, whereas Croatian SF does not have its counterpart in Japanese.

Table 5: 1-syllable words contrasted

No. of morae	Tone type	Japanese	Croatian
1	Flat, L	ha ^o 葉 'leaves'	/
1	Flat, H	ha ¹ 歯 'teeth'	/
1	Contour, HL	/	pàs [pàs] 'dog' (SF)
2	Flat, LH	no.o ^o 能 'Noh drama'	/
2	Contour, HL	to ¹ .o 党 'political party'	tô [tô:] 'that' (LF)

In fast speech though, there seems to exist a context, where the accent pattern of a Japanese mora is perceived as quite similar to Croatian SF. An example is *pa* in the loanword *suru¹upasu* スルーパス [suru:pasu] LHLL 'through pass (a type of a passing technique in soccer)'. The example is presented from a Youtube video.¹²

3 Previous research

Findings from the previous research show that Japanese lexical accent of Japanese words influences the perception of words. Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002) investigated Japanese language learners whose native language was English or Korean and revealed that both groups of students showed similar effects of pitch and syllable position. Namely, when the long vowel was in the final position, the error rates were the highest for pattern HLL, followed by LHL, while LHH had the least errors in both groups. On the other hand, when the long vowel was in the initial position, the error rates were highest for pattern LHH, while rates for HLL and LHL were quite similar. The major finding was that HLL with length at the end of the word had the most errors by far, more than 40% for Korean and Almost 50% for English listeners,

¹² The relevant word is found in Panda bros. (2022, December 31) at 3:25-3:27 minutes in the sentence: こういう風に滑らしてスルーパスとか出したりとか。 *Kō iu fū ni suberashite, surū pasu toka dashitari toka*. 'You make (the football) roll like this and shoot a through pass'.

whereby in all other pitch patterns combined with the two positions, the error rates did not exceed about 20%. This is shown in Figure 1 below.

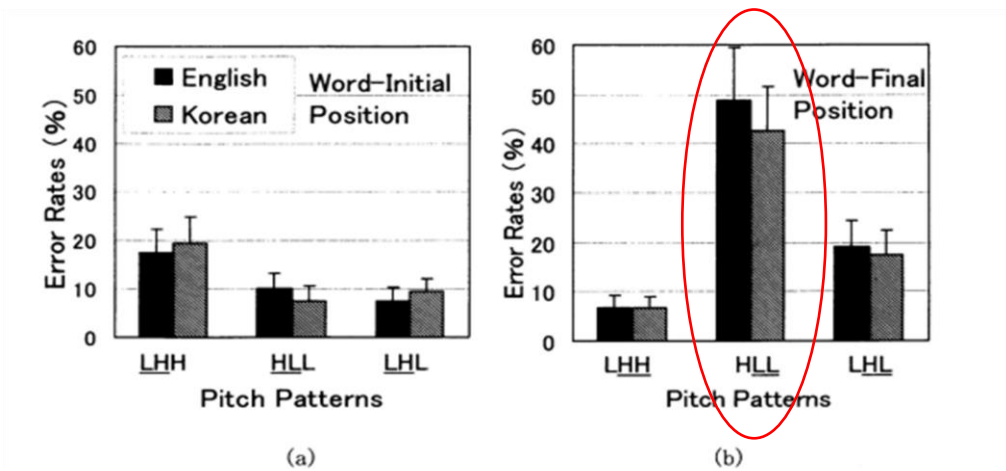


Figure 1: Korean and English JPL (Minagawa-Kawai et al., 2002, p. 89)

There is an important difference in the methodology used in the present experiment, and the one conducted by Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002). Namely, in Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002), the test words were pronounced by actual speakers, whereas in the present research they were artificially synthesized, which arguably made them more difficult to perceive and identify the long vowel. As for the present study, the values for long vowels in the initial position were 190–230 ms, and 230–310 ms in the word-final position.

Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002) used thirty-six test words, thirty of them including a long vowel (five words for each of the six combinations) and six without. Out of thirty-six words, thirteen were pseudo-words, eight of which were used to check if the familiarity of a test word would influence the result. As for the measurements, the test words had a duration of about 210–240ms in word-initial long vowels, and about 250–300 ms in word-final long vowels.

4 Outline of the experiment

4.1 Research questions

We will now formulate the hypotheses about the Croatian listeners' perception of long vowels in Japanese to be tested.

1. Pitch pattern HLL will have the highest error rates compared to all five remaining patterns because the length is on the low pitch.
2. A flat long vowel in the initial position e.g. *そうだ *so.o¹.da* (LHL=HHL), will have higher error rates than one that involves a contour e.g. 経費 *ke¹.e.hi* (HLL) 'expense', will be easier to identify compared to a flat long vowel, due to general perceptual bias which causes the listener to perceive contour longer than a flat tone.
3. A long vowel in the final position will be easier to identify if it involves a contour e.g. 化粧 *ke.sho¹.o* (LHL) 'makeup' than if it involves a flat long vowel with a low tone as in 技能 *gi.¹no.o* (HLL) 'skill' due to general perceptual bias which causes a listener to perceive contour longer than a flat tone, especially when it is low.
4. Regardless of the pitch pattern, a long vowel in the initial position will generally have higher error rates because, in Japanese, a long vowel is usually articulated with longer duration compared to non-final long vowels (in case hypothesis 1 above regarding HLL is true, it would be an exception).
5. Error rates of a long vowel in a final position will be higher when the vowel is realized in a low pitch (HLL) compared to the one in a high pitch (LHH).
6. A group with experience in learning Japanese is expected to have fewer errors than one with no prior knowledge of this language, regardless of the pitch pattern and syllable position.
7. Table 3 and Table 4 in Section 2 above showed that flat pitch patterns LHH and LHH, found in Japanese, are not found in Croatian. A prediction could be made that these patterns would be difficult for Croatian listeners to identify.

4.2 Method

The aim of the experiment was to investigate the perception of bisyllabic Japanese vowel length in Croatian native speakers – students (i.e. learners) of Japanese (JPL) and students without any prior knowledge of this language (NonJPL), thirty in each group. The factors observed were pitch pattern, the position of a long vowel in a word, having experience of learning Japanese, and whether participants' speech involves a tone or a dynamic accent system.

The experiment was conducted following the methodology used in Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002). It was paper-based and administered during the class. JPL participants involved students of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year. For analysis, thirty answer sheets were chosen randomly, eighteen from the 1st year and six from the 2nd and 3rd year respectively. As a bisyllabic word long vowel can be in the initial or in the final syllable and can thus execute three different pitch patterns, it follows that there are altogether six possibilities (morae including the long vowel are underlined): LHH, HLL, LHL; LHH, HLL, LHL.

Participants were presented with a paper that included thirty-six bisyllabic test words: thirty with a long vowel and six without. For each pitch pattern with a long vowel, five words were used. Stimuli involving only short vowels were the only two possibilities, LH and LH, three of each pattern. For some of the pitch patterns, there are no actual bisyllabic words in Japanese (for pitch patterns LHL, and LHH when the long vowel is *i*). Pseudo-words were used to fill in the gap.

As for the choice of lexical items, attention was paid to choosing words that include two different vowels in each syllable. The general intention was to use items unknown to the students, although words 政治 *seeji* 'politics', 自由 *jiyuu* 'free(dom)' from the JLPT level 4 were included in the 2nd 3rd year curricula. Other words belonged to higher levels. Words of JLPT level N2-3 and not covered yet by the 3rd year students at the time of the investigation were: (氷 *koori* 'ice', 化粧 *keshoo* 'makeup', 通過 *tsuuka* 'passage', 始終 *shijuu* 'incessantly', 序数 *josuu* 'ordinal number'), JLPT level N1 (火星 *kasee* 'Mars', 経費 *keehi* 'expense', 理性 *risee* 'ratio, intellect', ムード *muudo* 'mood', 野党 *yatoo* 'opposition', 技能 *ginoo* 'skill', グレー *guree* 'gray') or not ranked by JLPT (左党 *satoo* 'left wing party', 多幸 *takoo* 'fortunate', 賞美 *shoobi* 'prize', カーゴ *kaago* 'cargo', ニート *niito* 'NEET, i.e. not in education, employment or training', 風化 *fuuka* 'banalize', 履修 *rishuu* 'enrol', 処遇 *shoguu* 'treatment', 五パー *gopaa* 'five percent'). In addition, there were 6 pseudo words (*みいご *miigo* LHH, *そうだ *sooda* LHL, *じいさ *jiisa* LHL, *ケール *keeru* LHL, *ナーギ *naagi* LHL, *ハート *haato* LHL). The reason why the focus was not on choosing unknown words exclusively was the fact reported in the previous research (Minagawa-Kawai et al., 2002, p. 90) that there was no difference whatsoever in the error rates between the words and non-words in the same type of test they conducted. As will be seen in the results, the effect of the group, i.e. experience in learning Japanese, has considerably lower statistical significance than the effect of pitch pattern and syllable position, implying

that students' familiarity with Japanese words and their meanings is not crucial for students' judgment.

At the beginning, the participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire including their year of study of the Japanese language, and their native variety, and to choose from the list the urban area to which they consider their native dialect is closest. Assessing the effect of the participants' dialect to their perception was not the main goal of this paper but the data were collected, nevertheless. The following cities were listed: 1.Bjelovar 2.Dubrovnik 3.Karlovac 4.Metković 5.Osijek 6.Pula 7.Rijeka 8.Sisak 9.Slavonski Brod 10.Split 11.Šibenik 12.Varaždin 13.Vinkovci 14.Vukovar 15.Zadar 16.Zagreb 17. Other (to be filled in). Before starting the test, the participants heard three pseudo words: with a long vowel on the initial and final position, and with no long vowel: *maa-ma*, *ma-maa*, and *ma-ma*. After that, they were given correct answers and were explained what to circle on the sheet.

Test words were generated by the Online Japanese Accent Dictionary (OJAD) with the permission of the authors.¹³ Each of the thirty-six mp3 files was played to the students twice. There was a five-second pause between each test word to allow the time to answer. Prior to the experiment, the test was administered to two native speakers of Japanese from Kyoto, students of Japanese language education who resided in Pula temporarily. They answered without any errors. The experiment was held in the classroom, and the answers were submitted on a sheet of paper.

The two syllables of each word on the test sheet were written in capital letters, and, as the third possibility, *nema* 'none' was included. They were asked to circle the syllable they thought included a long vowel, or, in case they thought there was no long vowel, to choose 'none'. Figure 2 shows a part of the paper. For example, for the third test word below, *ke.sho*¹.o LHL 'makeup', they were supposed to circle SHO.

¹³ For details about this resource, see Nakamura et al. (2013).

1	GI	NO	nema
2	Jl	SA	nema
3	KE	SHO	nema
4	KA	SE	nema

Figure 2: Part of the test paper for participants of the experiment

As the test had three alternatives, there were two possible types of errors regarding long vowel perception: (1) when the length is not perceived and the participant chose ‘none’ and (2) when the length is perceived, but the wrong syllable is chosen. Only the first type of error, whereby the length was not identified in a word, was considered, after Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2002). The list of test words is in Tables 6, 7, and 8 below.

Table 6: Test words LVI (Long vowel in the initial position)

<u>LHH</u>	<u>HLL</u>	<u>LHL</u>
氷 ko.o.ri° ‘ice’	経費 ke¹. e.hi ‘expense’	*そうだ so.o¹.da
* みいご mi.i.go°	賞美 sho¹.o.bi ‘praise’	*じいさ ji.i¹.sa
風化 fu.u.ka° ‘banalize’	ニート ni¹.i.to ‘NEET’	*ケール ke.e¹.ru
通過 tsu.u.ka° ‘passage’	ムード mu¹.u.do ‘mood’	*ナーギ na.a¹.gi
政治 se.e.ji° ‘politics’	カーゴ ka¹.a.go ‘cargo’	*ハート ha.a¹.to
*pseudo-word		

Table 7: LVF test words (Long vowel in the final position)

<u>LHH</u>	<u>HLL</u>	<u>LHL</u>
火星 kasee° ‘Mars’	始終 shi¹.ju.u ‘incessantly’	五パー go.pa¹.a ‘5 percent’
多幸 takoo° ‘fortunate’	野党 ya¹.to.o ‘opposition’	化粧 ke.sho¹.o ‘makeup’
履修 rishuu° ‘enrol’	理性 ri¹.se.e ‘ratio’	序数 jo.su¹.u ‘ordinal numeral’
左党 satoo° ‘left-wing party’	サマー sa¹.ma.a ‘summer’	自由 ji.yu¹.u ‘freedom’
処遇 shoguu° ‘treatment’	技能 gi¹.no.o ‘skill’	グレー gu.re¹.e ‘gray’

Table 8: Test words with short vowels only

LH	HL
籠 ka.go° 'basket'	火事 ka ¹ .ji 'fire'
宅 ta.ku° 'home'	蛇 he ¹ .bi 'snake'
杉 su.gi° 'cedrus'	文字 mo ¹ .ji 'letter'

5 Analysis and discussion

Figure 3 below shows the results of the experiment for all six combinations of pitch and syllable position. Blue color shows JPL, and orange NonJPL.

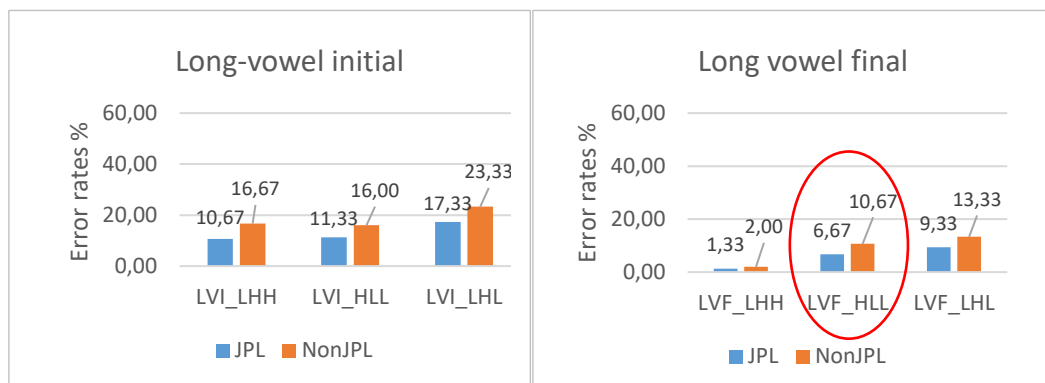


Figure 3: Errors rates of Croatian listeners

As for Hypothesis 1, that HLL will have the highest error rates, we can see it does not hold true. Figure 3 above shows that error rates for HLL were 6.67% for JPL and 10.67% for NonJPL, which is lower than error rates for LHL, which were 9.33% and 13.33% for both groups respectively. Further, error rates for HLL were even lower than rates for LHL, which amounted to 17.3% and 23.33%. Hence, the highest error rates were for pitch pattern LHL, for both positions of a long vowel, which is a striking difference from the previous research. A reason for this result could well be the presence of post-tonic length in Croatian, making it easier to identify the length of vowels with low tone.

As for Hypothesis 2, that a long vowel in the initial position would involve higher error rates when its pitch is flat than when it has a contour, the experiment showed that it holds true. Results have shown that JPL and

NonJPL had error rates of 11.33% and 16% respectively in words involving a contour HLL e.g. 経費 *ke.ʔe.hi* (HLL), whereas the two groups had error rates of 17.33% and 23.33% when the long vowel was flat * そうだ *so.ʔo.da* (LHL=HHL).

As for Hypothesis 3, in the final position, a long vowel will be easier to identify when it has a contour e.g. 化粧 *ke.sho.ʔ.o* (LHL) ‘makeup’ than when it is flat and low 技能 *gi.ʔno.o* (HLL), it does not hold true. As mentioned in the discussion about Hypothesis 1 above, one reason for faring well with pattern HLL is the presence of post-tonal quantity in Croatian. Interestingly, the error rates were higher for LHL than for HLL for both positions of the long vowel. This fact calls for an explanation. It could be the case that the HL sequence was confused with the short-falling accent in Croatian because it has a falling contour and because Japanese short vowels often sound shorter than short vowels in Croatian. Thus, a sequence of two Japanese short vowels might well sound like one short vowel to Croatian listeners with a dynamic accent, who is also shown to lack the length distinction (see Subsection 2.4. above).

Further, Hypothesis 4 is true: no matter the pitch pattern, a long vowel in the initial position has higher error rates than a long vowel in the final position. Figure 4 below shows that the error rates were higher in both groups when the long vowel was in the initial position for all three pitch patterns (LHH, HLL, LHL): JPL had 13.11% errors in LVI while NonJPL had 18.67%. In LVF, JPL had 5.78% and NonJPL 8.67, indicating that LVI was more difficult for both groups than LVF.

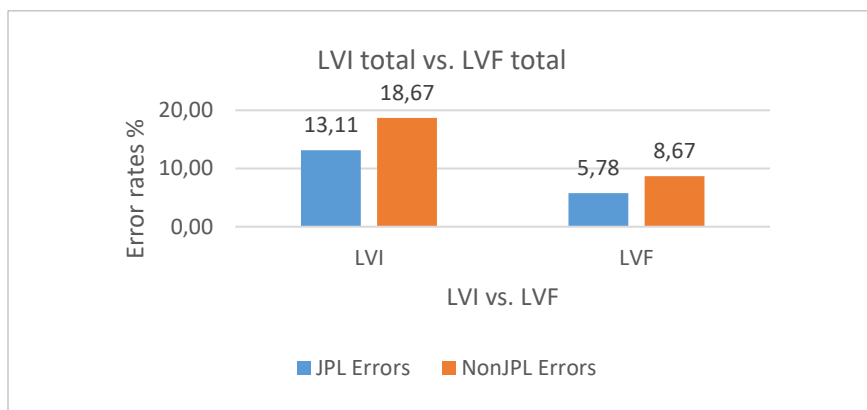


Figure 4: Total errors with respect to syllable position

Next, Hypothesis 5 has also proved to be true - error rates were higher for a long vowel in the final position with a low pitch (HLL) than a high pitch (LHH). One of the reasons would be the general perceptual bias which causes the listener to perceive high pitch as longer than low pitch of the same duration) i.e. 火星 *kasee* LHH 'Mars' is easier than 技能 *ginoo* HLL 'skill'.

Hypothesis 6, that learners of Japanese will fare better than those without experience, is true as well. Interestingly, the p-value, i.e. statistical significance of the group of < 0.05 is much lower than the significance of pitch and syllable position, both < 0.001. This means that, despite the fact that the two groups have quite different learning experiences, they have rather similar tendencies regarding error rates.

Finally, Hypothesis 7 proved not to be true. The patterns that do not exist in Croatian involving LHH and LHH were not the ones with the highest error rates. On the contrary, LHH had the least errors. The reason for this might be that other factors are at work. Notably, the above-mentioned general bias is that high-pitch vowels are perceived to last longer compared to low-pitch ones with the same duration. Both of these patterns involve high vowels, so the latter factor would presumably have a stronger effect on perception than unfamiliarity to the listeners. This is particularly clear from the fact that even those who never learned Japanese had a very small number of errors with LHH. This is shown in Figure 5 below. The error rates of words with pitch pattern LHH in both syllable positions. JPL has 10.67% in LVI position vs. NonJPL with 16.67%. LVF had low rates, below 2% for both groups, which means that LHH was the easiest pattern of all.

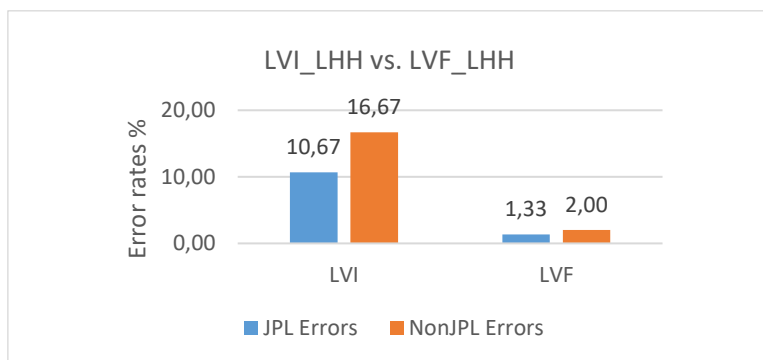


Figure 5: Errors for LHH in 2 syllable positions

Let us look at the data in more detail. Figure 6 below shows error rates of pitch pattern HLL in each syllable position. JPLs have 11.33% in the LVI position vs. NonJPLs with 16%. LVF had lower rates, 6% and 10.67%, for the two groups respectively, showing again that LVI was harder to identify.

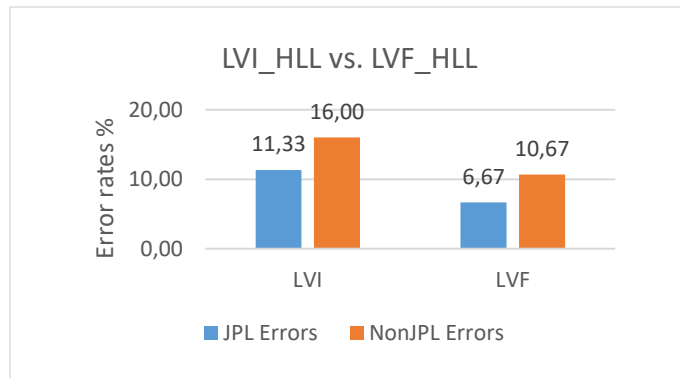


Figure 6: Errors for HLL in 2 syllable positions

Figure 7 below shows the error rates of words with pitch pattern LHL in both syllable positions. In the LVI position, JPLs have 11.33% vs. NonJPL with 16%. LVF had lower rates, 6.67% in JPL, and 10.67% in NonJPL, indicating the same tendency as in the cases above.

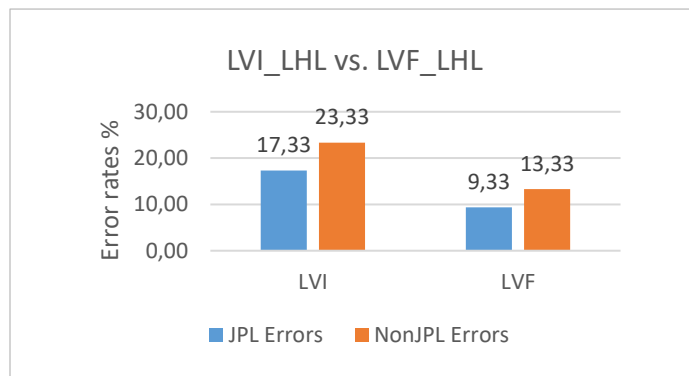


Figure 7: Errors for LHL in 2 syllable positions

Table 9 gives an overview of the total errors and error rates by groups. Expectedly, JPL had less incorrect answers than NonJPL. Out of 900 tokens, 85 were erroneously identified in JPL whereas the same number for NonJPL is 123, with a standard deviation of 2.9 for JPL, and 2.7 for NonJPL.

Table 9: Error rates by student groups

Total answers	900	Errors %	St.dev.
JPL errors	85	9.4%	2.9
NonJPL errors	123	13.6%	2.7

The results of the 4-way ANOVA test showed that syllable position has a highly significant effect on the score with $p < 0.001$, indicating a strong association. The statistical analysis showed that pitch is significant with $p < 0.001$. Also, the effect of group, i.e. JPL vs. NonJPL, is significant with a p -value less than 0.05. This suggests that the group variable has a significant main effect on the score, but not as significant as the pitch and position in a word. Students without any prior experience in Japanese had a very similar pattern of errors as Japanese language students.

As the fourth variable, the influence of the vernacular of the Croatian participants was observed. The differences in accent patterns in Croatia were not the major concern of this paper¹⁴. However, it might have been the case that the participants with a pitch accent (as opposed to a stress accent) in their native dialect identified Japanese vowel length better¹⁵. The analysis revealed, however, that with a p -value > 0.55 (0.6819), the presence of the pitch accent in one's native dialect or its absence did not have a significant main effect on the score. A more detailed investigation on this point should be conducted in the future though.

¹⁴ Recent research shows that these two groups of Croatian listeners exhibit differences in the perception of Croatian words (Pletikos et al., 2023). It is assessed that more than half of the people in Croatia have a dynamic accent. However, in terms of the areal distribution, the majority of Croatia does have a pitch accent, as can be seen in the map showing the accent system distribution (Kapović, 2015, p. 50).

¹⁵ It has also been established in the literature that apart from tone and dynamic, there is also a transitional accent system (without a short-rising accent) (Pletikos Olof & Bradfield, 2019a). However, in this research, the transitional type was not considered separately, one of the reasons being that the absence of an SR accent still leaves the speaker with tones and distinctive length.

6 Conclusion

This research offered an account of the perception of Japanese long vowels and the effects of lexical accents on perception. In the first part, the paper offered a contrastive analysis of lexical accents in the two languages with a focus on bisyllabic words. It was established that for the six possible patterns of bisyllabic words with length, five are found in Japanese (six if pseudo-words are included), and four in Croatian as it does not have unaccented prosodic words.

In contrast to the previous research, the present paper revealed that the pattern HLL did not pose the highest degree of difficulty for the Croatian listeners. The considerably lower error rates, both in Croatian JPL and NonJPL, are probably related to the existence of the post-tonal length. Even though it is disappearing, especially from urban centers, it is still perceived and as such presents an important factor in the research in sociophonetics and sociolinguistics in general.

Further, one of the most striking findings is that it was more difficult for both groups of Croatian listeners, in all three pitch patterns, to identify a long vowel in the word-initial position than in the final. The most difficult pattern, regardless of the length position, for both groups was LHL. The difficulty in identifying long vowels in the initial position, especially for LHL, can be explained by two factors. First, the long vowel in the initial position measured a shorter duration than the ones in the final position. Second, the contour has different meanings in the two languages. In Japanese, the falling contour (HL) implies a long vowel, whereas in Croatian, it can be found both in short and long vowels. This might have affected the Croatian listeners' perception. The findings related to JPL are relevant not only for L2 acquisition but also for studies in cross-language speech perception.

The results also suggested that there was no statistically significant difference between the students who have pitch accents and those who do not. However, given a relatively small number of participants, this result needs to be taken with caution. In addition, whether the accent for each student was tonic or dynamic was determined solely based on their self-report in the questionnaire, hence, a more detailed investigation into this question needs to be performed in the future. Also, the patterns involving trisyllabic and other multisyllabic words should be investigated.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the experiment might have yielded different results if the test words were not synthesized but pronounced by

actual speakers, and if a larger number of words with more variations in vowel combinations had been used for priming the participants before the main part of the experiment. Further research may shed some light on these issues.

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Abbreviations

H	high
L	low
SF	short-falling
LF	long-falling
SR	short-rising
LR	long-rising
LV	long vowel
LVI	long vowel initial
LVF	long vowel final
JPL	Japanese language learners
NonJPL	Non- Japanese language learners

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Refusals in Japanese and Spanish: Pragmatic Transfer in L2

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Abstract

The article presents a heuristic approach to studying the strategies of refusal employed by advanced Japanese learners of Spanish as a foreign language when compared with those of native speakers of Spanish and of Japanese. It examines responses of refusal to requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions while observing the linguistic phenomena of pragmatic transfer used by the speakers. We administered a discourse completion to elicit refusal strategies from participants. The data include 1101 strategies employed in 432 responses formulated by 54 participants comprising advanced Japanese learners of Spanish, native speakers of Spanish, and native speakers of Japanese. We found that linguistic ability among Japanese learners correlated positively with pragmatic transfer. The findings demonstrate how cultural priming and the degree of freedom with which learners prompt their responses are interrelated within their mental pragmatic interface in given situations.

Keywords: interlanguage pragmatics, politeness, pragmatic transfer, speech acts, refusals

Povzetek

Članek predstavlja hevristični pristop k preučevanju strategij zavračanja, ki jih uporabljajo japonski učenci španščine kot tujega jezika, v primerjavi s strategijami naravnih govorcev španščine in japonščine. Preučuje odzive zavračanja na prošnje, povabila, ponudbe in predloge, pri čemer opazuje jezikovne pojave pragmatičnega prenosa, ki jih uporabljajo govorci. Izvedli smo nalogo dokončanja diskurza, da bi pridobili strategije zavračanja od udeležencev. Podatki vključujejo 1101 strategij, uporabljenih v 432 odzivih in oblikovanih s strani 54 udeležencev, vključujoč napredne japonske učence španščine, naravne govorce španščine in naravne govorce japonščine. Ugotovili smo, da je jezikovna sposobnost med japonskimi učenci pozitivno korelirala s pragmatičnim prenosom. Ugotovitve kažejo, kako sta kulturna usmeritev in stopnja svobode, s katero učenci podajo svoje odgovore, v določenih situacijah medsebojno povezana v njihovem miselnem pragmatičnem vmesniku.

Gljučne besede: medjezikovna raba, vljudnost, pragmatični prenos, govorna dejanja, zavrnitve



1 Introduction

1.1 The study of interlanguage pragmatics

As its name suggests, the study of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) arises from the union of two other fields of knowledge: interlanguage and pragmatics. Each of these fields is itself interdisciplinary. Initially, the field of pragmatics examined language from the perspective of the speaker—particularly in terms of the choices the speaker makes, the sociocultural constraints encountered when communicating, and the effects of the language itself on the interlocutor (Crystal, 1997). Likewise, interlanguage is the production of a particular type of language by foreign language learners during the learning process (Selinker, 1992). This means that ILP studies how non-native speakers acquire pragmatic knowledge of the second language (L2) and its use (Rose & Kasper, 2001). Beyond this, research in L2 pragmatics focuses mainly on the study of speech acts, as well as on implicatures and conversational structures.

Within the scope of interlanguage research, the study of pragmatics includes transfer at the pragmatic level as an important component of communicative competence. Today, the nature of pragmatic transfer and its influence on L2 acquisition is a substantial area of ILP research. This estimation is established around two assumptions about the comprehension and linguistic production of language learners: that their interlanguage is influenced by pragmatic knowledge of the first language (L1) as well as by pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983), which is often caused by the reversal of L1 pragmatic conventions (Kasper, 1992; Takahashi, 1996; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014).

Each culture has different interpretations and understandings of what constitutes politeness and appropriate behaviour. Many ILP studies thus show that even when the communicative behaviour of foreign language learners is advanced in terms of knowledge of speech acts, these learners often differ from the semantic conventions of the target language. This results in cultural misunderstandings and communication gaps. It can also lead to detrimental consequences, as the speaker may come to feel that the interlocutor has evaluated them as impolite (Bardovi-Harling, 1999; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Wolfson, 1989).

1.2 Pragmatic transfer across linguistic contexts

Pragmatic transfer occurs when a foreign language speaker uses the speech rules of their native linguistic community when interacting with individuals from another host community. Coined by Kasper (1992), pragmatic transfer refers to the influence of the speaker's pragmatic knowledge of their L1 on the comprehension, production, and learning of pragmatic information of their L2. It is thus considered a major factor shaping the pragmatic knowledge of non-native speakers.

In this framework, Kasper distinguishes between positive and negative pragmatic transfer. Positive pragmatic transfer facilitates language acquisition in such a way that "language-specific conventions of use are demonstrably non-universal but shared between L1 and L2" (Kasper, 1992, p. 212). Negative pragmatic transfer is when L1-based pragmatic conventions are projected into L2 contexts but differ from the pragmatic perceptions and behaviours of the target community, often leading to miscommunication. Speakers in cross-cultural contexts may draw on their cultural repertoires of the L1, but these repertoires blend with elements emerging in the new context to become new norms—ones that are multicultural and hybrid, such as translanguaging (Garcia & Kano, 2014; MacSwan, 2017).

Given the inseparable relationship between language and culture, it is worth mentioning the sociopragmatic facet of discussion on pragmatic transfer. Sociopragmatic transfer occurs when L2 learners perceive and interpret contexts in the target language similarly to L1 contexts. These contexts may actually differ across the two cultural communities, which can result in the transfer of perceptions and interpretations about how to act in a given situation from the L1 context to that of the L2 (Kasper, 1992, pp. 209–213). In Japanese culture, for instance, the figure of the teacher occupies a higher social status than in Spain. In a Spanish context, this leads the Japanese speaker to behave toward a teacher in a way that is more respectful than normally expected and thus commit a sociopragmatic error. The error occurs when Japanese learners of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) use semantic conventions and value judgements specific to the L1 in intercultural communication.

For all these reasons, teaching about sociopragmatic elements of language is a delicate matter and should be treated carefully. On the one hand, foreign language learners should never be encouraged to neglect

their value system when communicating in their L2. On the other, social reality argues for a linguistic identification closer to the native community of the speakers of a language. This requires the learner to be pragmatically skilled to avoid miscommunication.

In light of this, previous studies have shown that some learners can transfer their pragmatic patterns and indirect semantic formulas from one language to another (Blum-Kulka, 1982; House & Kasper, 1987; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989). Several studies have indicated that speech acts of refusal are affected by the level of L2 proficiency; the evidence suggests that learners with higher language proficiency are more likely than lower-level learners to transfer sociocultural norms from their L1 to L2, because they have an L2 command sufficient to express their feelings (Beebe et al., 1990). Other research has revealed that compared with learners at lower levels of proficiency, higher-level learners rarely used L1 pragmatic formulas and thus showed no signs of pragmatic transfer (Maeshiba et al., 1996; Robinson, 1992; Takahashi & DuFon, 1989).

Beebe et al. (1990) undertook a compelling study that reflected on the idea of L1 transfer as a sociolinguistic phenomenon—often as cultural reaffirmation. They argued that sociolinguistic transfer normally occurs to fulfil a given language function that one does not know how to express in the L2. Another study that emphasised interference in the elaboration of refusals, which involved nine Japanese learners of American English, examined the influence of time in the target environment over pragmatic transfer and the impact of metapragmatic instruction on students (Yamagashira, 2001).

Other researchers have observed the production of refusals and transfer in advanced English learners of different nationalities. Wannaruk (2008) examined the speech act of refusal by Thai learners of English, for instance, elucidating the advantages of explicit instruction of language functions. Abed (2011) investigated pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English to classify the refusal strategies used to perform this speech act, among which he included nonverbal language. Kwon (2014) centred the role of language competence in the pragmatic transfer of refusal by Korean learners of English in various situations with different variables, such as degree of familiarity and social position or status. Similarly, Jiang (2015) studied the speech act of refusal produced by Chinese high school students through written data collected from a discourse completion task (DCT) that

contemplated four situations with four stimuli: a request, an offer, an invitation, and a suggestion.

In line with such work, this study also aims to contribute to our understanding of the linguistic phenomena of pragmatic transfer across two different cultures. In this case, we examine transfer involving Peninsular Spanish and Japanese learners employing a speech act of refusal.

1.3 The relationship between refusal and culture

Research on ILP suggests that the inappropriate use of speech acts can lead to pragmatic error as different cultures use different formulation strategies (Thomas, 1983; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). In the case of refusals, the speaker must deny someone in response to their request, invitation, offer, or suggestion. Given that refusals are a face threatening act involving a certain level of offence to the person extending the request, initiation, offer, or suggestion, the application of inappropriate refusal strategies can make L2 learners appear disrespectful and impolite in some situations (Félix-Brasdefer, 2004, 2008).

In addition, many cultures attach more importance to how “no” is evoked than to the response itself. The speaker must know when to use the appropriate form and the function served by the speech act, considering its sociopragmatic elements. Okazaki (1993) and Hasegawa (2014) point out that when faced with a discursive negotiation, Japanese speakers use communicative strategies such as *enryo-sasshi* (遠慮・察し). This strategy is characterised by avoiding the use of expressions provoked directly by thoughts and feelings (*enryo*; “modesty”) and the listener’s susceptibility to the message (*sasshi*; “consideration” or “anticipation”).

The Japanese approach to refusal differs from that of Western cultures (such as Peninsular Spanish) whose social factors determine linguistic uses, conditioning content more strongly and clearly (Bravo, 2005; Briz, 2007). When refusing, native Spanish speakers employ politeness strategies classified as supportive and deferential (Pedrosa García, 2020). Solidarity politeness stimulates the reinforcement of affinity, establishing bonds of camaraderie in relationships of less social distance and more familiarity. Deferential politeness strategies serve to maintain distance, formality, and respect between interlocutors (Escandell et al., 2020).

In contrast, native Japanese speakers use words of apology, expressions of regret, and self-deprecating comments as mitigating mechanisms. Owing to the damage that a refusal can cause to interpersonal relationships, it may even be considered acceptable to present a fictitious reason for non-commitment. If native Japanese speakers employ such a strategy in a different cultural context, however, this could lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication (Osuka, 2021; Haristiani et al., 2023). In cross-cultural conversations, the situation is complex even when interlocutors speak the same language simply because they do not share the same communication norms.

Refusal has a threatening nature that can, if not properly formulated, offend the interlocutor. Within the context of intercultural communication, pragmatic failure produces more serious consequences than grammatical errors because these latter types of errors simply reveal that the speaker is less competent in the language (Morkus, 2021). Given that refusals are part of pragmatics and that the teaching of pragmatic and socio-cultural aspects in the classroom is an inseparable part of language teaching, we consider research in this regard to be essential.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research questions

Research into the phenomenon of pragmatic transfer in the context of speech acts of refusal is in its infancy. As such, the relationship between pragmatic transfer and L2 proficiency requires additional investigation. Moreover, there has been only limited research undertaken on how L1 conventions affect L2 learners' refusal performance (pragmatic transfer). The purpose of this study is thus to examine the degree of pragmatic transfer in refusals by Japanese learners of Spanish, and to assess the extent to which such transfer is influenced by learners' L2 proficiency. The research questions include:

1. What L1 pragmatic strategies do Japanese learners of Spanish as a foreign language (JLSFL) use?
2. How does social status influence the refusal responses of native speakers of Spanish (NSS) and JLSFL?
3. How do the pragmatic strategies used by NSS and JLSFL differ?

The first research question analyses the L1 pragmatic strategies used by JLSFL in response to a speech act of refusal in their L2 (Spanish); a description of each refusal strategy is provided in Appendix 1. The second research question examines whether social status affects how the speaker responds. To answer the third research question, we analysed and compared the strategies used by NSS and native speakers of Japanese (NSJ) with that of JLSFL in relation to the speech act of refusal.

2.2 Profile of study participants

Our study participants consisted of 18 JLSFL at the University of International Studies of Kanda. This group of Japanese students comprised 10 females (55%) and 8 males (45%) between the ages of 20 and 30 years ($AV = 21.66$, $SD = 2.82$, median = 22.5). All students were at an advanced stage of their Spanish language learning; specifically, they were at reference level C1 (CEFR; [Council of Europe, 2001](#)). Only 4 students (22%) had been in Spain for a period of 3 or more months. The choice to include only students at an advanced stage of study was based on our assumption that the higher the level of L2 proficiency, the greater the likelihood that the speaker would employ pragmatic strategies of speech in the target language. In such cases, the incidence of pragmatic transfer should be lower.

At the same time, we also included another group of NSJ. This group comprised 18 other students at the same centre: 9 males (50%) and 9 females (50%) between the ages of 20 and 30 years ($AV = 20.33$, $SD = 2.98$, median = 21.5), all of whom volunteered to participate. Participants in both groups were speakers of other languages, including Spanish.

For comparison, we included a third group of 18 NSS who were former students of Nebrija University. This group comprised 9 males (50%) and 9 females (50%) between the ages of 20 to 30 years ($AV = 24.75$, $SD = 3.49$, median = 24) who were born or raised in Spain and shared a general profile. This third group served to compare the pragmatic formulas bounded by JLSFL and NSJ with respect to the speech act of refusal.

2.3 Research design

To initially quantify and compare the frequency of use of each type of refusal strategy, we used a mixed methodology that promotes a focused descriptive qualitative and quantitative study. We aimed to observe the linguistic

phenomenon of pragmatic transfer made by JLSFL through an inductive process. Based on our observations, we then aimed to classify, describe, and contrast the types of pragmatic formulas used by both cultures in different situations requiring a speech act of refusal in written form.

Our process involved the following steps:

1. Given the absence of an existing classification system for refusals in Japanese and Peninsular Spanish, we created our own based on previous research ([Beebe et al., 1990](#); [Félix-Brasdefer, 2008](#); [Salazar Campillo et al., 2009](#)). This involved establishing the categories that we considered necessary for qualitative analysis of the corpus. The categories are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Classification of refusals ([Pedrosa García, 2020](#))

REFUSAL	
Direct strategies	
A. Explicit refusal	
B. Negation of the proposition	
Indirect strategies	
A. Excuse/explanation	
B. Regret/apology	
C. Wish	
D. Dissuasion/disagreement	
E. Promise of future acceptance	
F. Avoidance	1. Verbal
	2. Non-verbal
G. Refusal on principle/belief	
H. Conditioning of future/past acceptance	
Adjuncts to refusal	
1. Positive opinion/feeling or agreement	
2. Solidarity/empathy	
3. Gratitude/appreciation	

2. Using these categories, we identified refusal strategies in the written examples from our corpus and processed the results in Microsoft Excel and Jamovi ([2024](#)).
3. We contrasted the pragmatic strategies employed in both cultures and in their respective languages (L1).

4. We classified the specific refusal strategies used by participants and counted them according to the respective social status of the participants in the written interaction.
5. We generally identified, counted, and classified refusal strategies as direct, indirect, or adjunct.
6. We analysed the results to determine whether participants performed pragmatic transfer when using these types of strategies.

2.4 Corpus analysis and compilation

To elicit a (written) speech act of refusal from our participants, we administered two DCTs in Japanese and Spanish to each group. The DCTs consisted of situational descriptions specifying a communicative context. Each situation was followed by a blank space in which participants were asked to provide the appropriate linguistic formulas for effecting the refusal to the best of their ability and as if they were speakers in a real-life interaction. The DCTs used in our study were originally used by Beebe et al. (1990), who configured them around 12 situations and four stimuli designed to elicit a refusal speech act: three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions (for more detail, see Appendix 2).

Across each group of speech acts serving as a stimulus, participants needed to articulate a refusal within three different situations: a request from a person of higher social position or status, a request from a person of equal social status, and a request from a person of lower social status. In this way, the social positioning of the refused and the refuser was based on the disparity of social status between the two interlocutors in the communication.

3 Results

We found evidence for all of the refusal strategies included in this study (for examples, see Appendix 3). All of the research questions formulated above could be answered through analysis of the data collected from the available samples.

3.1 The pragmatic strategies of Japanese learners of Spanish

Direct refusals were used more often by the NSS and JLSFL groups than by the NSJ group. On average, native speakers of Spanish used substantially more direct refusal strategies and a greater number of adjuncts than native speakers of Japanese. A *t*-test showed this difference to be statistically significant (direct refusal strategies: $t = 0.67$, $p < 0.05$). (see Table 2).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of refusal strategies by group

Strategies		Group			Group		
		NSS	NSJ	<i>t</i> Value	NSS	JLSFL	<i>t</i> Value
Direct	Mean	45	16	0.67*	45	37.5	0.14
	SD	56.56	22.62		56.56	50.20	
Indirect	Mean	24	29.22	-0.38	24	23	0.08
	SD	22.84	33.68		22.84	27.57	
Adjuncts	Mean	22	26.33	-0.34	22	24.33	-0.27
	SD	9.53	19.65		9.53	11.23	

* $p < 0.05$.

The data show varying degrees of clarity when it comes to the use of bounded strategies by each participant group. The NSS group was more direct in refusing a proposition, whereas the NSJ group was the most indirect. The data on the JLSFL show an intermediate variability between the two reference groups that falls closer to the pragmatic performance of the NSS group. In terms of the frequency and content of the refusal, Table 3 shows a general tendency among JLSFL to use indirect communicative strategies in Spanish (such as excuse/explanation or avoidance, along with adjuncts to refusal such as positive opinion) homologous to their native-speaking reference group (NSS).

This means that despite an advanced level of proficiency in the L2, the influence of the L1 on the JLSFL group was palpable. Holistically, however, their performance was similar to that of the NSS group and they adapted on a sociopragmatic level to each situation detailed in the questionnaire using a similar range of semantic formulas.

Table 3: Distribution of strategy use across total number of responses

Codified categories	Group							
	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	5	1.34	2	0.56	0	0	7	0.64
Negation of the proposition	85	22.85	73	20.56	32	8.56	190	17.26
Subtotal – Direct	90	24.19	75	21.13	32	8.56	197	17.89
Excuse/explanation	64	17.2	89	25.07	107	28.61	260	23.61
Regret/apology	27	7.26	33	9.3	54	14.44	114	10.35
Wish	9	2.42	12	3.38	10	2.67	31	2.82
Alternative	8	2.15	7	1.97	3	0.8	18	1.63
Dissuasion/disagreement	61	16.4	34	9.58	37	9.89	132	11.99
Promise of future acceptance	12	3.23	1	0.28	10	2.67	23	2.09
Avoidance	10	2.69	20	5.63	26	6.95	56	5.09
Refusal on principle/belief	20	5.38	9	2.54	11	2.94	40	3.63
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	5	1.34	2	0.56	5	1.34	12	1.09
Subtotal – Indirect	216	58.06	207	58.31	263	70.32	686	62.31
Positive opinion	16	4.3	27	7.61	41	10.96	84	7.63
Solidarity/empathy	17	4.57	12	3.38	4	1.07	33	3
Gratitude/appreciation	33	8.87	34	9.58	34	9.09	101	9.17
Subtotal – Adjuncts	66	17.74	73	20.56	79	21.12	218	19.8
Total Results	372	100	355	100	374	100	1101	100

The JLSFL group also used a range of pragmatic formulations similar to that of the NSS group, especially in terms of direct refusals ($n = 75$) and adjuncts such as solidarity/empathy ($n = 12$). No unique preferences in terms of strategy use were observed for this group. Still, the JLSFL strategy use appears to be a sort of hybrid compared with the other two reference groups, with a notable use of dissuasion/disagreement ($n = 34$) and avoidance ($n = 20$) strategies.

3.2 The impact of social status on refusal responses

For both groups, direct refusals were more frequent when both interlocutors occupied the same social position. Although the use of indirect strategies was predominant regardless of the presence or absence of social power, the JLSFL group used direct strategies in a manner similar to that of the NSS group. However, the latter used the same proportion of adjuncts to

refusal when they occupied a higher social status. In contrast, Japanese learners used more adjuncts to help maintain a positive image of themselves in the eyes of the interlocutor.

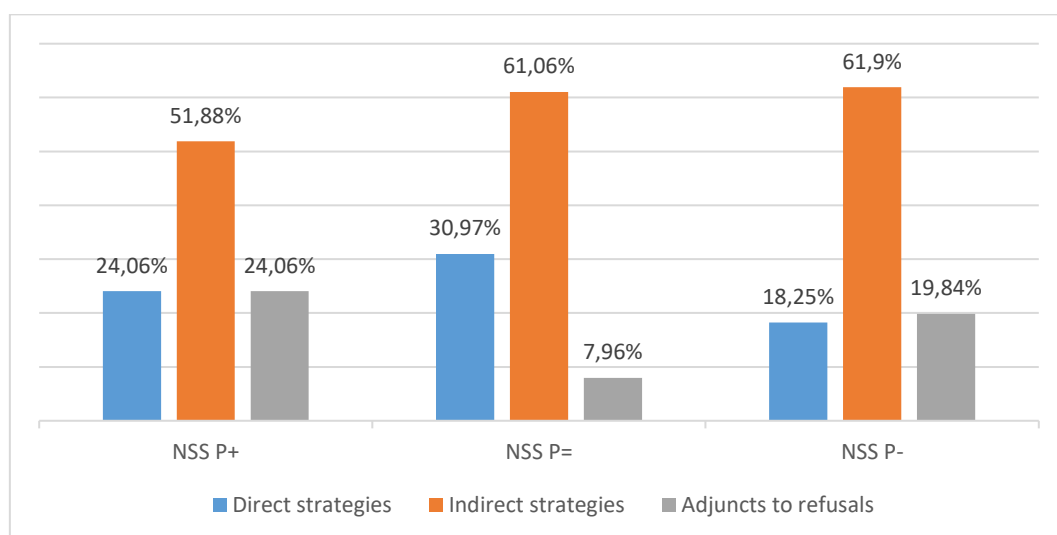


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of refusals among NSS according to social status

The use of direct strategies and adjuncts to refusal among participants who occupied a higher social position stands out at 24.06% compared with 18.25% and 19.84%, respectively, when the participant occupied a lower position. However, NSS were more direct, with a percentage of 30.97 when there was no disparity in social status across among interlocutors.

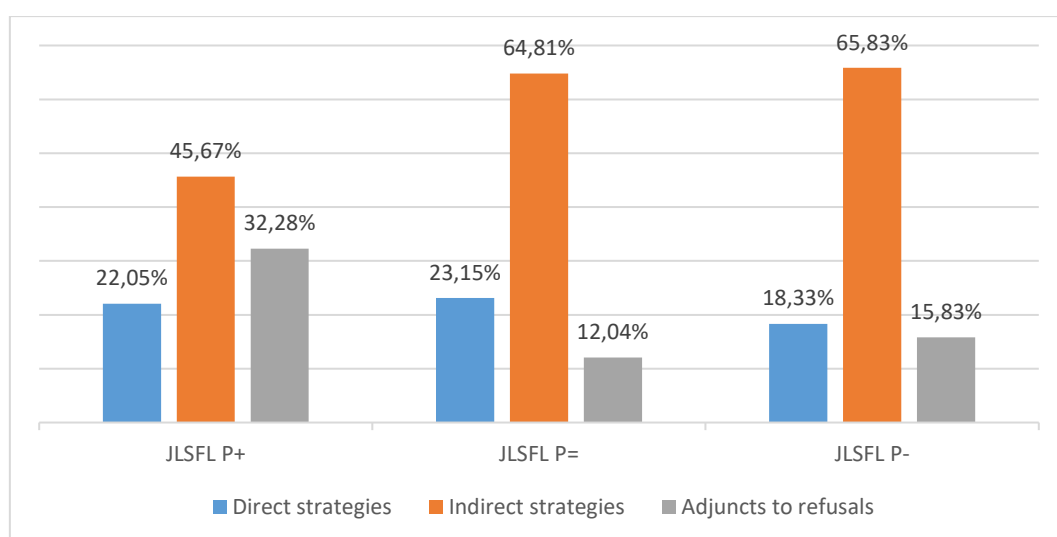


Figure 2: Percentage distribution of refusals among JLSFL according to social position

The JLSFL group also exploited indirect strategies to a greater extent when refusing the interlocutor, regardless of the social position in which they found themselves. But their use of adjuncts to refusal stands out at 32.28% when occupying a higher social position than the interlocutor (compared with 22.05% of direct refusals). As with the NSS group, the data reveal that the JLSFL participants were more inclined to use direct strategies than adjuncts for refusal when they occupied a social position equal to that of the interlocutor. The same pattern occurred when the social status of the participant was lower than that of the interlocutor, with a slight decrease in the use of direct strategies (18.33%) and an increase in the use of adjuncts when refusing (15.83%).

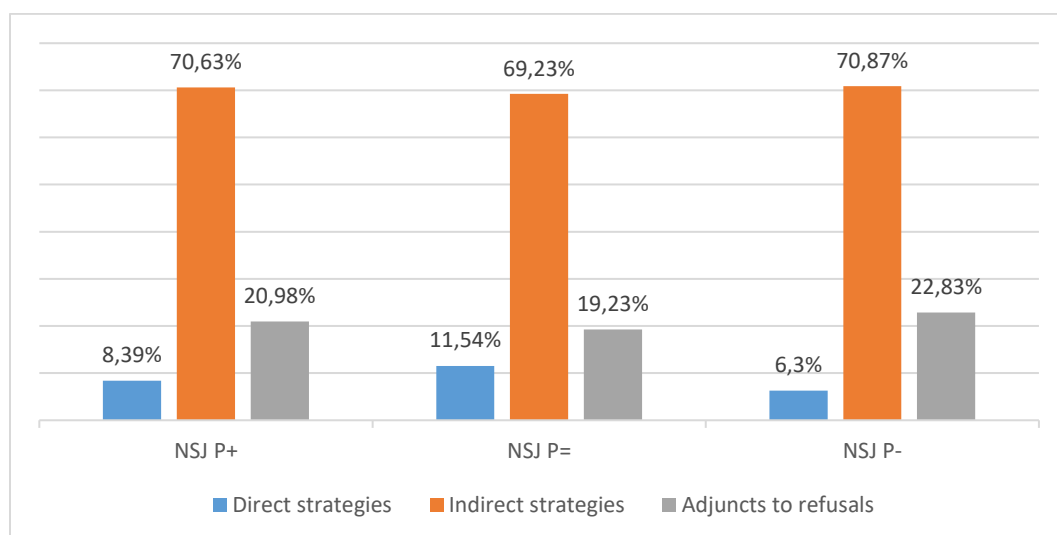


Figure 3: Percentage distribution of refusals among NSJ according to social position

In contrast to NSS and JLSFL groups, the NSJ group used more indirect refusals as a percentage of all other strategies, regardless of their social power. The NSJ group consistently utilised adjuncts to refusals as a strategy in all contexts, regardless of their social status. This group minimally employed direct refusals, using them only 8.39% of the time when they held higher social status and 11.54% when the social positions of the interlocutors were equal.

3.3 Types of refusal strategies across language speakers

The typology of strategies varied in accordance with the pragmatic antecedent to which our participants were responding. In response to

requests (see Table 4), the NSS group formulated more direct strategies that were accompanied by a range of indirect strategies and adjuncts to refusal. The JLSFL group behaved similarly; however, they employed more indirect strategies alongside their counterpart group of native speakers (NSJ).

Table 4: Distribution of refusal strategies used in response to requests

Stimulus Group	Request					
	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ	
Strategies	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	1	0.98	1	0.99	0	0
Negation of the proposition	28	27.45	19	18.81	9	8.49
Excuse/explanation	18	17.65	26	25.74	32	30.19
Regret/apology	8	7.84	17	16.83	25	23.58
Wish	4	3.92	3	2.97	5	4.72
Alternative	2	1.96	2	1.98	3	2.83
Dissuasion/disagreement	19	18.63	11	10.89	13	12.26
Promise of future acceptance	5	4.9	1	0.99	2	1.89
Avoidance	2	1.96	6	5.94	5	4.72
Refusal on principle/belief	2	1.96	2	1.98	0	0
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	1	0.98	1	0.99	0	0
Positive opinion	3	2.94	6	5.94	9	8.49
Solidarity/empathy	4	3.92	1	0.99	0	0
Gratitude/appreciation	5	4.9	5	4.95	3	2.83
Total	102	100	101	100	106	100

In the case of invitations (Table 5), this etiquette is repeated in the same fashion. The NSJ group resorted with a higher percentage to indirect semantic formulas such as excuse/explanation, followed by the JLSFL group with a close percentage and less by the counterpart group of NSS. It can be observed that the NSS used a varied range of semantic formulae in comparison to the JLSFL group and the NSJ, who showed a predilection for certain strategies in particular such as regret/apologies and adjuncts to refusals in order to maintain their positive self-image.

Table 5: Distribution of refusal strategies used in response to invitations

Stimulus	Invitation					
Group	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ	
Strategies	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	2	2.22	0	0	0	0
Negation of the proposition	21	23.33	10	11.76	6	6.06
Excuse/explanation	18	20	31	36.47	33	33.33
Regret/apology	17	18.89	12	14.12	25	25.25
Wish	5	5.56	7	8.24	2	2.02
Alternative	4	4.44	3	3.53	0	0
Dissuasion/disagreement	6	6.67	3	3.53	1	1.01
Promise of future acceptance	2	2.22	0	0	2	2.02
Avoidance	2	2.22	2	2.35	7	7.07
Refusal on principle/belief	2	2.22	0	0	0	0
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	3	3.33	0	0	4	4.04
Positive opinion	1	1.1	4	4.71	7	7.07
Solidarity/empathy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gratitude/appreciation	7	7.78	13	15.29	12	12.12
Total	90	100	85	100	99	100

The same pattern emerged in the case of offerings but once the eliciting stimulus occurred, there were divergences in the formulation of strategies across participants (see Table 6). Compared with the other two reference groups, the JLSFL group employed a greater proportion of direct strategies (such as negation of the proposition). Although the NSS group was also sufficiently direct, they exhibited a noticeable preference for adjuncts such as solidarity/empathy.

Table 6: Distribution of refusal strategies used in response to offerings

Stimulus	Offering					
Group	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ	
Strategies	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	2	2.04	1	1.08	0	0
Negation of the proposition	27	27.55	36	38.71	16	17.02
Excuse/explanation	19	19.39	14	15.05	26	27.66
Regret/apology	1	1.02	1	1.08	4	4.26
Wish	0	0	2	2.15	1	1.06
Alternative	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dissuasion/disagreement	13	13.27	11	11.83	14	14.89

Promise of future acceptance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avoidance	2	2.04	1	1.08	1	1.06
Refusal on principle/belief	2	2.04	0	0	5	5.32
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Positive opinion	7	7.14	7	7.53	10	10.64
Solidarity/empathy	11	11.22	9	9.68	4	4.26
Gratitude/appreciation	14	14.29	11	11.83	13	13.83
Total	98	100	93	100	94	100

With regard to the refusal of suggestions, the NSS and JLSFL groups used direct strategies in a similar fashion (see Table 7). However, the JLSFL group used the same indirect strategies as the NSJ group, such as avoidance to divert the focus of the interlocutor's attention. The JLSFL and NSJ groups also used the same adjuncts, such as positive opinion to avoid devaluing the interlocutor's suggestion or damaging their image in the event of the next refusal.

Table 7: Distribution of refusal strategies used in response to suggestions

Stimulus	Suggestion					
Group	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ	
Strategies	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Negation of the proposition	9	10.98	8	10.53	1	1.33
Excuse/explanation	9	10.98	18	23.68	16	21.33
Regret/apology	1	1.22	3	3.95	0	0
Wish	0	0	0	0	2	2.67
Alternative	2	2.44	2	2.63	0	0
Dissuasion/disagreement	23	28.05	9	11.84	9	12
Promise of future acceptance	5	6.1	0	0	6	8
Avoidance	4	4.88	11	14.47	13	17.33
Refusal on principle/belief	14	17.07	7	9.21	6	8
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	1	1.22	1	1.32	1	1.33
Positive opinion	5	6.1	10	13.16	15	20
Solidarity/empathy	2	2.44	2	2.63	0	0
Gratitude/appreciation	7	8.54	5	6.58	6	8
Total	82	100	76	100	75	100

Overall, the NSS group used strategies such as explicit refusal and negation of the proposition (see Table 3) to express themselves more directly and assertively in their responses to the interlocutor. They focused more on their autonomy by exhibiting feelings and thoughts with a greater degree of clarity. In the same context, the NSJ group considered whether their refusal would wreak havoc on their image or that of the interlocutor.

4 Discussion

Our study appears to indicate that the use of specific language conventions is not universal, but shared across L1 and L2 (Kasper, 1992). Japanese learners of Spanish transfer pragmatic patterns and indirect strategies from their L1 when articulating a refusal, facilitating communicative expression and avoiding pragmatic error (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989). Their approach thus translates as positive transfer, as indicated in preceding studies by Abed (2011) and Jiang (2015).

These results address Maeshiba et al.'s (1996) hypothesis of negative correlation between language proficiency and pragmatic transfer as there are no signs of L1 transfer in obvious proportions for advanced-level Japanese learners. This finding contradicts the work of previous research such as Yamagashira (2001) or Kwon (2014), which found that Japanese and Korean learners at an advanced proficiency level in American English transferred more operational norms from their L1 as they had more control over expressing their feelings in their L2 (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). Our results also contradict those of Beebe et al. (1990), who found that Japanese learners with advanced proficiency in English transferred more pragmatic refusal strategies from their L1.

Our native Spanish speakers were less sensitised to social status, whether it fell positively to the respondent or the interlocutor. This could be because Spanish culture is characterised by closeness, creating an appeal to reduce the social distance between interlocutors (Bravo, 2005; Briz, 2007). The data also revealed that when it came to refusing the proposal of an interlocutor with higher social status (such as a boss), the NSS participants seemed to choose their excuses carefully: "No creo que pueda aceptarlo, aunque el componente salarial es muy importante para mi vida, desplazar mi vida entera a otro pueblo y con mi edad, no creo que pueda con tanta

carga emocional”).¹ This provided a more urgent reason than the strategy itself to be able to refuse it. Through such explanations, NSS were able to mitigate the face threatening act of refusal.

For our native Japanese speakers, mentioning family matters was one of the best reasons they could use to avoid damaging their image. This influence on the choice of content for excuses/explanations could stem from the Confucian moral standard dictated by Japanese society. Whether consciously or unconsciously, both the NSJ and JLSFL groups attributed family-related issues in their reasons for refusal to save face for both interlocutors in the dialogue: “Nos hubiera gustado participar, pero ese día tenemos una junta de familia”;² “Tengo una cita con mi hija este domingo, por lo que no podré asistir (*konshū nichiyōbi wa musume to no yakusoku ga aru node, o ukagai dekimasen* 今週日曜日は娘との約束があるので、お伺いできません)”.³

Although the NSS group also offered alternative refusals, these differed from the alternative reasons of the NSJ. This is because the alternatives of the NSS group revealed an unwillingness to help the interlocutor, resulting in criticism of their proposition through the use of strategies such as dissuasion/disagreement: “Llevamos mucho tiempo quedándonos de manera sistemática en la oficina más de la cuenta sin retribución ni agradecimiento. Nos iremos si no tenemos, al menos, tres días libres”.⁴ In contrast, the Japanese respondents (both NSJ and JLSFL groups) showed a willingness to assist the interlocutor: “Estoy muy contento con su trabajo diario y le subiría el sueldo ahora mismo, pero siento decirle que eso sería imposible.”;⁵ “Si quieres hablar de negocios, te veré en mi oficina (*bijinesu no ohanashideshitara ofisu de ukagaimasu yo* ビジネスのお話でしたらオフィスで伺いますよ)”.⁶ The distinction in these responses can again be partly

¹ “I don't think I can accept it, even though the salary component is very important for my life, moving my entire life to another town and at my age, I don't think I can handle so much emotional burden.”

² “We would have liked to participate, but that day we have a family gathering.”

³ “I have plans with my daughter this Sunday, so I won't be able to attend.”

⁴ “We have been systematically staying late at the office for a long time without any compensation or appreciation. We will leave if we do not get at least three days off.”

⁵ “I am very pleased with your daily work and would give you a raise right now, but I regret to say that it is impossible.”

⁶ “If you want to talk business, I'll see you in my office.”

explained by the cultural roots of Japanese society, which is generally accepted as collectivist in that group interests are considered to be more important than individual ones and high value is attached to the perseverance of balance and harmony among group members (Beebe et al., 1990; Yamagashira, 2001). Through the use of strategies such as principle/belief refusal, the NSJ and JLSFL groups manifested their intention to be polite and thus maintain the positive image of the interlocutor and equanimity among dialogue participants: “¿No tienes herida, estás bien? No te preocupes. Tal vez al jarrón le ha llegado su fin de vida. Las cosas son cosas y todo tiene su fin.”;⁷ “No creo en este tipo de cosas (*shinjinai yo kō iu no wa* 信じないよこういうのは).”⁸

5 Conclusions

In terms of L1 influence on the formulation of refusals by the JLSFL group, no tacit interference was observed at the level of frequency and content that would impair their discourse and induce pragmatic error. Although Japanese learners of Spanish used pragmatic formulas contiguous to those of the NSS group, such as avoidance and positive opinion or a higher percentage of excuse/explanation strategies, these formulas were appropriate within the context of communication and thus resulted in positive transfer.

In light of this, our study reveals that linguistic competence appears to facilitate pragmatic transfer within a context of limited exposure to the L2 (Spanish) for Japanese learners. With sufficient knowledge, advanced learners have the means to transfer their preferred pragmatic conventions from L1 to mitigate the impact of the communicative act of refusal in various L2 situations. While target sociocultural contexts generally offer more opportunities for pragmatic development to learners than home settings, the dynamic relationships between context, intention, and pragmatic transfer indicate that individual differences play a more significant role than exposure to the target community. This is why theory, research, and—most importantly—language pedagogy must evolve to address the complexity and difficulty of developing and assessing pragmatic competence.

⁷ “You’re not hurt, are you? Are you okay? Don’t worry. Maybe the vase has reached the end of its life. Things are just things, and everything has an end.”

⁸ “I don’t believe in this kind of things.”

Abbreviations

DCT	discourse completion task
ILP	interlanguage pragmatics
JLSFL	japanese learner(s) of Spanish as a foreign language
L1	first language(s)
L2	second language(s)
NSJ	native speaker(s) of Japanese
NSS	native speaker(s) of Spanish
SFL	Spanish as a foreign language

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Additional material

Appendix 1: Refusal strategies included in the study: Categories and definitions

Refusal strategies	Definition
Direct	
Explicit refusal	An evoked utterance accompanied by a linguistic feature that intensifies the perlocutionary act of refusal.
Negation of the proposition	Includes expressions containing negations constructed simply by “not” or with verbs negating the proposition.
Indirect	
Excuse/explanation	A stated intention to accept were it not for some reason, excuse, or witty explanation. This strategy is used to attenuate the illocutionary force of the refusal.
Regret/apology	An expression of regret for the speaker's inability to comply with the interlocutor's request.
Wish	An expression of intention to help the interlocutor, as well as an inability to do so, in order to reduce the likelihood of causing the interlocutor to lose face.
Alternative	The offering of other options to the interlocutor to attenuate the illocutionary force of the refusal. This strategy attempts to negotiate the request to lessen the likelihood of damaging the speaker's own image.
Dissuasion/disagreement	A request for consideration and understanding for the speaker's inability to comply with the request. This approach serves to argue with criticism, assign blame, or defend the speaker. It is used to divert the focus of the interlocutor from the illocutionary force of the refusal.
Promise of future acceptance	A commitment to accept a similar request at some point in the future. This approach aims to mitigate the illocutionary force of the refusal and help the speaker save face.
Avoidance	The use of verbal mechanisms such as repeating part of the proposition, joking, changing topics, or evasion. Non-

	verbally, an expression of hesitation or uncertainty about what to say. This strategy buys the speaker time and prepares the listener for the impending refusal.
Refusal on belief/principle	An explanation that the refusal stems from certain beliefs or principles, not because the speaker does not want to comply with the request. This strategy is used to mitigate the illocutionary force of the refusal.
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	The expression of conditions for accepting the request. The speaker shows a willingness to accept if the situation were different, distracting the interlocutor from the negative impact of the refusal.
Adjuncts	
Positive opinion/feeling or agreement	The use of semantic units that antedate refusals and express good opinions, feelings, or agreements towards the interlocutor's proposal.
Solidarity/empathy	The expression of concern and empathy for the interlocutor, which is intended to convey a positive attitude towards the interlocutor.
Gratitude/appreciation	The use of semantic units that express gratitude to diminish the illocutionary force of refusal.

Appendix 2: Description of the internal structure of the DCT

Stimulus	Social position of the refuser	Item in the DCT	Situation
Request	Lower	#12	Staying up late at night
Request	Equal	#2	Lending class notes
Request	Higher	#1	Asking for a pay rise
Invitation	Lower	#4	Party hosted by a boss
Invitation	Equal	#10	Dinner at a friend's house
Invitation	Higher	#3	Going to a fancy restaurant
Offer	Lower	#11	Promotion with a move to a new location
Offer	Equal	#9	A slice of cake
Offer	Higher	#7	Paying for a broken vase
Suggestion	Lower	#6	Writing small reminder notes
Suggestion	Equal	#5	Trying a new diet
Suggestion	Higher	#8	More conversation in language class

Appendix 3: Refusal strategies included in the study: Categories and examples

Refusal strategies	Example
Direct	
Explicit refusal	1. NSS: "Ni de coña." ⁹ ("Not a chance.") 2. NSS: "Ufff, no, de verdad." ("Ufff, no, really.")
Negation of the proposition	1. JLSFL: "Pues no puedo en este momento." ("Well, I can't right now.") 2. NSJ: 「意向に沿うことが出来ないのです。」 Ikō ni sou koto ga dekinai nodesu. ("I cannot comply with the intention.")
Indirect	
Excuse/explanation	1. NSS: "Es que no me los he traído." ("It's just that I didn't bring them with me.") 2. JLSFL: "Es que el próximo domingo es la boda de mi sobrina." ("The thing is, next Sunday is my niece's wedding.") 3. NSJ: 「家族旅行が入っております。」 Kazoku ryokō ga haitte orimashite. ("I am on a family trip.")
Regret/apology	1. NSJ: 「申し訳ない。」 Mōshiwakenai. ("Excuse me.") 2. NSS: "Sintiéndolo mucho..." ("Unfortunately...")
Wish	1. NSS: "Me encantaría poder pagarte más, pero..." ("I would love to pay you more, but...") 2. JLSFL: "Por supuesto que me encantaría." ("Of course, I would love to.") 3. NSJ: 「お手伝いしたいのは山々ですが。」 Otetsudai shitai no wa yamayamadesuga. ("I would love to help you a lot.")
Alternative	1. NSS: "Como alternativa, puedo venir más temprano mañana o quedarme alguna tarde la semana que viene." ("As an alternative, I can come in earlier tomorrow or stay late one afternoon next week.") 2. JLSFL: "¿No podéis esperar hasta entonces?" ("Can't you wait until then?") 3. NSJ: 「誰か他の人貸してくれないかな？」 Dare ka hokanohito kashite kurenai ka na. ("Could someone else lend them to you?")

⁹ The evoked pragmatic strategies are drawn from our corpus.

Dissuasion/disagreement	<p>1. NSS: "Esto de costumbre no me gusta nada." ("I really don't like this as a habit.")</p> <p>2. NSJ: 「もう一度考え直していただけないでしょうか。」 Mōichido kangaenaoshite itadakenaideshou ka. ("Could you reconsider it?")</p>
Promise of future acceptance	<p>1. NSJ: 「今度始めてみるよ。」 Kondo hajimete miru yo. ("I will try it soon.")</p> <p>2. NSS: "Ya en el segundo semestre hablaremos más." ("We will talk more in the second semester.")</p>
Avoidance	<p>Verbal</p> <p>1. NSS: "¿Ahora?" ("Right now?")</p> <p>2. NSJ: 「イメージしながらエアーケーキ食べるわ。」 Imēji shinagara eākēki taberu wa. ("I will imagine myself eating a mousse cake.")</p> <p>Nonverbal</p> <p>1. JLSFL: {Me quedo callado, con la cara triste como que estoy a punto de llorar} (I stay silent, with a sad expression as if I'm about to cry.)</p>
Refusal on belief/principle	<p>1. NSS: "Pienso que hay que comer de todo, pero con moderación." ("I think you should eat a little bit of everything, but in moderation.")</p> <p>2. NSS: "Creo que mi sistema es mejor, aunque puede fallar si tengo un mal día." ("I think my system is better, although it can fail if I have a bad day.")</p> <p>3. NSJ: 「モノはいつかは壊れるものです。」 Mono wa itsuka wa kowareru monodesu. ("Things will eventually break.")</p>
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	<p>1. NSS: "Si me hubiera avisado con tiempo no tendría ningún problema, pero ahora me resulta imposible cancelarlo." ("If you had informed me earlier, I wouldn't have any problem, but now it's impossible for me to cancel it.")</p> <p>2. NSS: "¡Tendrías que haberme avisado y habría tenido cuidado con lo que comía en esta semana!" ("You should have told me, and I would have been careful with what I ate this week!")</p> <p>3. NSJ: 「また次の機会にお誘いいただければ嬉しいです。」 Mata tsugi no kikai ni osaso i itadakereba ureshīdesu. ("I would be glad if you invited me next time.")</p>

Adjuncts	
Positive opinion/feeling or agreement	<p>1. JLSFL: "Sí, es verdad." ("Yes, that's true.")</p> <p>2. JLSFL: "Es una sugerencia muy buena." ("That's a very good suggestion.")</p> <p>3. NSJ: 「お気持ちは受け取りました。」 Okimochi wa uketorimashita. ("I understand your feelings.")</p>
Solidarity/empathy	<p>1. NSS: "Ha sido un accidente que nos puede pasar a cualquiera." ("It's been an accident that could happen to anyone.")</p> <p>2. JLSFL: "Te entiendo." ("I understand.")</p> <p>3. NSJ: 「しょうがないよ。」 Shōganai yo. ("What can we do?")</p>
Gratitude/appreciation	<p>1. NSJ: 「アドバイスありがとうございます。」 Adobaisu arigatōgozaimasu. ("Thank you for the advice.")</p> <p>2. JLSFL: "Agradezco su oferta." ("I appreciate your offer.")</p>

The Nature and Structure of Reflexive Verb Constructions

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Abstract

Based on a summary of the features of reflexive verb constructions (ReVCs), this paper proposes that the internal structure of reflexive verb constructions is [_{VP} Spec[_V V R]]. Whether it occurs overtly or covertly, the reflexive constituent is base-generated in the position of the complement of V. Its occurrence in other positions results from movement of the reflexive constituent. Due to the existence of the covert pronoun, the whole reflexive verb constructions cannot assign accusative case to other constituents. Therefore, reflexive verb constructions cannot be followed by an object. The reflexive pronoun introduces reflexive interpretation, as a consequence of which the verb is characterized by reflexivity. A reflexive verb construction operates in the syntax as a complete syntactic object and hence occupies a syntactic position. The whole reflexive verb construction can function as the object in the specifier position of VP and move to the position of the light verb to function as the predicate, followed by a tense or aspect marker.

Keywords: reflexive verb constructions, reflexives, unaccusativity

Povzetek

Na podlagi pregleda strukturnih značilnosti povratnih glagolov (ReVC) članek predlaga [_{VP} Spec[_V V R]] kot notranjo strukturo povratnih glagolskih zvez. Ne glede na to, ali se pojavlja odkrito ali prikrito, je povratni člen bazno generiran v položaju glagolskega dopolnila. Njegovo pojavljanje na drugih mestih je rezultat premika povratnega člena. Zaradi obstoja prikritega zaimka celotne povratne glagolske zveze ne morejo dodeliti tožilnika drugim členom in posledično povratni glagolski zvezi ne more slediti predmet. Povratni zaimek uvaja povratno interpretacijo, zaradi česar je glagol označen kot povraten. Povratna glagolska zveza v skladnji deluje kot popoln skladenjski predmet in zato zavzema skladenjski položaj. Celotna povratna glagolska zveza lahko deluje kot predmet v položaju določilnika glagolske zveze in se premakne v položaj lahkega glagola, da deluje kot povedek, ki mu sledi označevalec časa ali glagolskega vida.

Ključne besede: povratne glagolske zveze, povratni zaimek, netožilniškost



1 Introduction

Reflexive verb constructions (ReVCs) are phenomena that occur cross-linguistically in a number of the world's languages; they occur most frequently in European and Asian languages. They have been extensively discussed in the literature on European and Chinese linguistics. Since the 1970s more and more research has been conducted into ReVCs with regard to reflexive pronouns' features, binding conditions, semantic interpretation, conditions on argument blocking, change of syntactic structure, syntactic-semantic variation, interrelation between reflexive choices and tense and focus, relevance between case markers and the agent, the effects of syntactic alternatives and frequency types on the acquisition of reflexive verb constructions, verbs' constraints on reflexive pronouns' anaphora as well as the cause of bare reflexive pronouns' long-distance anaphora. (Prado, 1975; Naro, 1976; Levine, 1993; Déchaine & Manfredi, 1994; Tsujimura & Takako, 1999; Rivero & Sheppard, 2003; Labelle, 2008; Fehrmann et al., 2010, 2014; Schäfer, 2012; Kishida & Sato, 2012; Wood, 2014; Hendriks et al., 2015; Xu, 2016; Paykin & Peteghem, 2017; Jin, 2003; Zhu, 2009; Zhang, 2010; Tian, 2016) In general, the research on ReVCs is precise in the method and varied in the angle but remains descriptive. However, there are still some outstanding problems, regarding the types of reflexive verbs, the range of semantic notions that can be expressed by these verbs, and the positions of verbs and reflexives as complements. Specifically, the problems lie in the following respects: the internal structure of ReVCs, the arrangement of the verbs and their objects, the reason why the reflexive constituent always precedes the verb with respect to linear structure and the syntactic hierarchy with no regard to linguistic typology, constraints that the constituents are subject to, the generation mechanism of ReVCs, the underlying structure which licenses the covert reflexive constituent, and the reason for the missing arguments.

The goal of this paper is to provide a unified account of word order and constituency of ReVCs in the framework of generative grammar. By comparing ReVCs in various languages, a conclusion of universal significance will be reached based on the facts of languages and linguistic types.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents a criticism of some relevant explanations concerning the reflexive and ReVCs. Section 3 focuses on the main features of ReVCs. Section 4 addresses the internal structure of

ReVCs. Section 5 addresses the syntactic computation of ReVCs and section 6 is the conclusion.

2 Some relevant explanations and their problems

Since there are too many previous analyses of reflexives and ReVCs, it is impossible to cover all of them in this paper. Therefore, I will only discuss some previous studies that are relevant to motivate my own analysis of reflexives and ReVCs in Chinese, with a focus on those performed in the framework of generative grammar. Among them, Zhu (2009) sparked off an intense debate on the syntactic status of reflexives and ReVCs in the circle of Chinese linguistics.

According to Zhu (2009), the syntactic structure of ReVCs is the same as that of intransitive verb constructions, as shown in (1).

(1) [_{IP} Spec[_{I'} I [_{VP} Spec[_{V'} V]]]]

Following, the Chinese ReVC *Wo xizao* can be analyzed as (2).

(2) a. 我 洗澡

wo xizao

1SG bath¹

'I bath.'

b. [_{IP} Spec[_{I'} I [_{VP} Wo [_{V'} xizao]]]]

Given order typology, Chinese is a head-initial language. Hence the prefix must govern the subsequent root. If morphology is taken into consideration, then, the prefix (i.e. reflexive pronoun) is subject instead of object. In this case, the syntactic structure of the Chinese ReVC *Ta zisha* should be analyzed as (3).

¹ Abbreviations used in this article are as listed at the end of the paper.

- (3) a. 他 自杀
 ta zisha
 3SG-MASC self-kill
 ‘He kills himself.’
 b. [_{IP} Ta [_I· I [_{VP} zisha]]]

There are, however, problems with the above approach. First, it is ad hoc and is only true for the Chinese ReVCs. It is not applicable to the ReVCs in English, German, Haitian, French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, or Japanese. If the reflexive pronoun *zi* is considered to be the subject of the ReVC, then what is the relation of the personal pronoun *ta* to the reflexive pronoun *zi*? Cross-linguistically, the reflexive pronouns in German ReVCs either bear an accusative marker or a dative marker. They cannot bear a nominative marker. In the same vein, the reflexive pronouns in English, German, Haitian, French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, and Japanese ReVCs all bear accusative markers. This proves that the reflexive pronoun in ReVCs functions as the object of the verb. It is the theme of the verb instead of the subject that triggers the action or behavior of the verb, hence it is not a subject. Obviously, the theoretical attempt to analyze the reflexive pronoun as a subject cannot reveal the internal structure of ReVCs in Chinese. Neither can it account for ReVCs in German, Haitian, French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, or Japanese.

Second, the approach cannot account for the process of generation of ReVCs, the base-generation position of the reflexive pronoun and the way it enters into the syntactic surface, not for its syntactic properties. It is generally assumed that Chinese is a SVO language. The object follows the verb. In this case, the reflexive pronoun should be base-generated in the position behind the verb V. If it precedes V, it must be the result of a movement. If this is the case, then, the following questions must be answered. How does the reflexive pronoun move from the position following V to the position preceding V? What is the motivation of such a movement? The reflexive pronouns in English, German, Haitian, French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, and Japanese function as the object of V. With respect to surface structure, some of them precede V, whereas others follow it.

How do we account for the ReVCs in various languages in a unified theoretical framework and draw a convincing conclusion? This issue is certainly worth researching.

3 The main features of ReVCs

In this section, I attempt to develop a new approach to ReVCs by discussing their main features.

3.1 The co-index between the subject and the object of ReVCs

The constituents that precede and follow the verb of ReVCs have the same reference. To put it differently, they refer to the same person or thing. The constituent that precedes the verb is a trigger of action or behavior, whereas the constituent that follows the verb is a bearer of action or behavior. The action that the verb represents acts on the subject per se. The reflexive pronoun serves the function of the object of the verb. It always co-occurs with the verb. A ReVC is composed of a reflexive pronoun and a verb.

- (4) Du trocknest dich ab. German
 2SG-NOM dry-PRES-2SG self-ACC SVP
 'You dry yourself / your body.'
 (Wang, 2001, p. 17)

- (5) Jak benyen [kòl] de fwa pa jou. Haitian
 Jak bath body-3SG two times each day
 'Jak washes himself / bathes twice a day.'
 (Déchaine & Manfredi, 1994)

3.2 Covertness and overtness of reflexive pronouns

Reflexive pronouns can occur overtly or covertly. They can occur in the form of a clitic which is adjoined to the verb. If they occur overtly, they must precede the verb. They, together with the verb, form a ReVC, as illustrated below.

(6) a. 自嘲 Chinese

zichao

self-deride

'deride oneself; mock oneself; laugh at oneself'

b. 自爱

zi'ai

self-love

'love oneself'

c. 自怜

zilian

self-pity

'pity oneself'

(7) a. sich abzeichnen German

self-copy

'become apparent / something reveals itself'

b. sich auskennen

self-recognize

'know one's way around'

c. sich entsinnen

self-recall

'remind (oneself)'

d. sich gedulden

self-tolerate

'restrain oneself and wait'

When reflexive pronouns occur covertly, they can be considered to be part of ReVCs. To put it differently, in such cases, both the reflexive pronoun and the verb have been incorporated to be syntactic object. Therefore, if there is only one word in a ReVC, it must have implicit reflexive meaning, as shown in Chinese ReVCs *xizao* (bath) and *chuanyi* (dress), English ReVCs *bath*

and *dress*, and German ReVCs *baden* (bath) and *kleiden* (dress).² Reflexive pronouns can also be adjoined to the verb. They can occur in the form of a prefix or suffix, such as the French prefix *se*, Spanish prefix *se-*, Japanese prefix *zi-*, Polish suffix *-si*, Portuguese suffix *-se*, and Russian suffix *-sja* (cf. Prado, 1975; Naro, 1976; Levine, 1993; Tsujimura & Takako, 1999; Rivero & Sheppard, 2003; Zhu, 2009).

3.3 Occurrence or non-occurrence of the object of ReVCs

Under normal circumstances, whether ReVCs are composed of a single verb or a reflexive pronoun and a reflexive verb, they display intransitive features. Thus, ReVCs cannot be followed by an object, as shown in the above examples *zichao*, *xizao*, and *chuanyi*. Specifically, the ReVC *zichao* comprises a reflexive pronoun *zi* and a transitive verb *chao*. However, as a whole, it is characterized by intransitivity and cannot be followed by an object. As for the verbs *xizao* and *chuanyi*, they are intransitive intrinsically, and therefore, they cannot be followed by an object. Sometimes, however, ReVCs display

² The verbs of this type express the event of reflexivity concerning lexical semantics. They denote the act which acts on the body of the agentive subject, viz. the agentive subject per se. They are characterized by reflexivity because they entail a covert reflexive pronoun. The covert reflexive pronoun is a default patient which refers to the agentive subject. However, they can introduce an object that is not the agentive subject per se by means of syntactic forms. In view of Chinese, the object can be introduced by means of the prepositions *gei*, *wei*, or *ti*, as illustrated in (i). As for English, there is no need to resort to grammatical devices. In effect, the English reflexive verbs can be followed by a patient object directly, as illustrated in (ii). It follows that the verbs, such as Chinese *xizao* (bathe) and *chuanyi* (dress), English *bath* and *dress*, and German *baden* (bathe) and *kleiden* (dress), are characterized by reflexivity when they occur as intransitive. In contrast, they are characterized by non-reflexivity when they occur as transitive. It follows that they are reflexive in the lexicon.

- (i) a. 我 给/为 孩子 洗澡。
 wo gei/wei haizi xizao
 1SG for/for child bathe
 'I bathe my child.'
- b. 我 给/为 父亲 挠痒。
 1SG for/for father scratch
 'I scratch my father.'
- (ii) a. I shaved him.
 b. She bathed her children.

transitivity. The reflexive pronoun stresses that the action is triggered by the actor per se instead of being triggered by other external forces, as illustrated below.

(8) a. 自诩 Chinese

zixu

self-boast

'to boast oneself'

b. 自卑

zibei

self-blame

'to blame oneself'

c. 自筹

zichou

self-raise

'to raise (funds) by oneself'

d. 自建

zijian

self-construct

'to construct by oneself'

(9) a. 自爆する Japanese

jibaku suru

self-explode-SUF

'self-explode'

([Tsujimura & Takako, 1999](#))

b. 自認する

jinin suru

self-recognize-SUF

'self-recognize'

([Tsujimura & Takako, 1999](#))

The ReVCs in the above data show that the action is triggered by the subject though it does not act on the subject per se. The reflexive pronoun

does not denote the theme of the action of the verb but rather the manner of its action or behavior. . Furthermore, the reflexive verb can be assumed to have undergone the process of ergativization, in which the verb's property shifts from transitivity to intransitivity. After ergativization takes place, the accusative case which can be assigned by the verb has been absorbed and as such loses its capability to assign accusative case to the object which functions as the internal argument. In a strict sense, the term intransitivity means that the verb loses its capability to assign the accusative case. The verb in ReVCs, due to ergativization, cannot assign the accusative case to its original object. Hence it cannot be followed by an object. It follows that the reflexive verb is characterized by intransitivity when it is extracted from the lexicon. The reflexive verb is derived from its corresponding transitive verb, during which it undergoes a word-building rule, which absorbs the accusative case of the logical object. The reflexive verb projects all the arguments to the syntactic level. Moreover, in the whole process of derivation, no change happens to the argument structure of the reflexive verb. The reflexive verb carries the property of transitivity, which is obtained by means of absorbing the accusative case and subject θ -role. It is transitive in the lexicon, and has an internal argument. The internal argument of the reflexive verb occupies the external argument position but it is not the agent of the action or behavior made by the reflexive verb. This differs from unaccusatives. The reflexive verb is morphologically intransitive though it is semantically transitive. As a result, its categorial features differ from those of transitives and intransitives. The external argument of the reflexive verb is suppressed and hence becomes covert. Semantically, the action or behavior denoted by the reflexive verb has a certain degree of affectedness intensity. To put it differently, to what degree the action or behavior affects the patient or causes it to change, depends on the degree of reflexivization of the verb. It is the postverbal depictive modifier that causes the event to become stativized. The behavior of the reflexive verb is directly related to the agentive subject per se, which shows their strong connectivity (Yang, 2021a).

3.4 ReVCs functioning as a complete syntactic object

A ReVC is a complete syntactic object composed of a reflexive pronoun and a verb, which are inseparable. When a negative occurs in a sentence, the ReVC must be negated as a whole. To put it differently, the negative either precedes or follows the ReVC and cannot occur between the reflexive

pronoun and the verb. Neither the pronoun nor the verb can be negated alone. Take the Chinese negative *mei*, for example. It can only occur in front of the ReVC rather than intervene between the reflexive pronoun and the verb. In the same vein, the French negatives *ne* and *pas* can only occur in front of or after the ReVC, never inside it. If such constituents as the object or the adverbial occur in a sentence, they cannot occur between the reflexive pronoun and the verb, either. Instead, they can only follow the ReVC, as illustrated below.

- (10) a. 我 没 自我批评。 Chinese
wo mei ziwo piping
1SG NEG self-criticize
'I don't self-criticize.'

- b.* 我 自我 没 批评。
wo ziwo mei piping
1SG self NEG Criticize

- (11) a. Je ne me lève pas. French
1SG NEG self get-up NEG
'I don't get up.'
([Zhu, 2009](#))

- b. Tu ne te lève pas.
2SG NEG self get-up NEG
'You don't get up.'
([Zhu, 2009](#))

- c. Il ne se lève pas.
3SG NEG self get-up NEG
'He doesn't get up.'
([Zhu, 2009](#))

- (12) a. Ich ziehe mir den Anzug an. German
1SG-NOM dress-PRES-1SG self-1SG-DAT DEF-ACC suit-SG SVP
'I put on my suit.'
([Wang, 2001](#), p. 22)

b. Er Erkundigt sich bei mir nach dem
 3SG-NOM ask-PRES-3SG self-ACC at I-1SG-DAT about DEF-DAT
 Personalburo.
 personnel-department
 'He asks me about the personnel department.'
 (Wang, 2001, p. 21)

c. Er Hat sich einen guten Film angesehen.
 3SG-NOM AUX-PRES-3SG self-DAT IND-ACC good-ACC film watch-PERF
 'He watched a good film.'
 (Wang, 2001, p. 21)

4 The structure of ReVCs

Along with the line of the above argumentation, I argue that a ReVC is composed of two constituents, a reflexive pronoun and a verb. The reflexive pronoun can occur overtly or covertly and can be adjoined to the verb as a clitic. This suggests that even if the ReVC is composed of a single verb, it entails a reflexive pronoun. What matters is that the reflexive pronoun does not occur overtly. Moreover, a reflexive affix is also a form of the reflexive pronoun adjoined to the verb. Therefore, I argue that the basic structure of the ReVC is similar to the structure in (13).

(13) [_{VP} Spec[_V V R]]

If the ReVC is composed of a single verb, then, the reflexive pronoun or the reflexive affix is a default form. To put it differently, the reflexive pronoun or the reflexive affix has been incorporated together with the verb V to become a part of the V structure. In this way, the semantics of V has already included the semantics of the reflexive pronoun or the reflexive affix, as illustrated below.

(14) a. [_{VP} Spec [_V xizao]]

bath

b. [_{VP} Spec [_V xi ziji]]

wash self

wash oneself

As the data in (14) shows, *xizao* is tantamount to *xi ziji*. To put it differently, *xizao* is merely a contracted form of *xi ziji*. The reflexive pronoun *ziji* functions as the object of the verb *xi*. When the reflexive pronoun *ziji* is incorporated with the verb *xi* to become a syntactic object, the reflexive pronoun and the verb form an intransitive verb *xizao*. Hence *xizao* cannot be followed by an object. The reason lies in the fact that *xizao* is an intransitive verb entailing a reflexive pronoun which functions as its object. It follows that this is the reason why the ReVC composed of a single verb cannot be followed by an object or a reflexive pronoun. There are similar ReVCs in Chinese, such as *chuanyi* (dress), *tihuzi* (shave), *naoyang* (scratch), etc. They are identical to *xizao* with respect to structure. Furthermore, this approach can be applied to the ReVCs composed of a single verb in English, German, and Haitian. The ReVCs in the three languages have the same meaning, that of *to bathe*, which is tantamount to the Chinese ReVC *xizao*.

(15) a. [_{VP} Spec [_V bathe]]

English

bathe

b. [_{VP} Spec [_V bathe self]]

bathe oneself

(16) a. [_{VP} Spec [_V baden]]

German

bathe

b. [_{VP} Spec [_V baden sich]]

bathe Self

bathe oneself

(17) a. [_{VP} Spec [_V benyen]]

Haitian

bathe

b. [_{VP} Spec [_V benyen kòl]]

bathe Self

bathe oneself

As the data in (15)-(17) show, the ReVC which is composed of a single verb is semantically the same as the ReVC which is composed of a reflexive pronoun and a verb. The former can be assumed to be a contracted form of the latter. Therefore, it follows that *bathe* is tantamount to *bathe oneself*, *baden* is tantamount to *baden sich*, and *benyen* is tantamount to *benyen kòl*. The verbs in English, German, and Haitian are intransitive verbs intrinsically and hence they can be followed by an object. Once they are incorporated with the reflexive pronoun to become a syntactic object, they are transformed into intransitive verbs and hence they cannot be followed by an object. Moreover, they do not change with respect to their morphology. In effect, the Chinese verb *xi*, the English verb *bath*, the German verb *baden*, and the Haitian verb *benyen* are all transitive verbs. However, as ReVCs, they cannot be followed by an object. The reason lies in the fact that they have lost their capability to assign case to other constituents. Their incapability of case assignment is due to the fact that they entail an invisible reflexive pronoun which is their prototypical object. Since the verbs have assigned case to the invisible reflexive pronoun, they cannot assign cases to other constituents and hence they cannot be followed by an object. It follows that the ReVC composed of a single verb entails an invisible reflexive pronoun. It is due to the existence of the invisible reflexive pronoun that the whole construction cannot be followed by an object. The reflexive pronoun cannot only prevent the occurrence of the internal argument in syntax but also reduce the capability of accusative case assignment of the verb. Since the reflexive pronoun can eliminate the case features of the verb, it must be adjoined to the verb in the lexicon. It plays the role of absorbing case features of a verb instead of marking them as unaccusatives. This proves the lexical role of the reflexive pronoun, and the introduction of reflexive semantics causes the construction to be characterized by reflexivity.

As mentioned above, the reflexive marker can occur covertly or overtly, which results in different syntactic distributions. If it occurs covertly, it is base-generated in the position behind the verb and stays in situ. However, if it occurs overtly, it moves from its base-generation position to the position preceding the verb, as shown below.

(18) [_{VP} R[_V V t_R]]

(19) a. 自尊

zizun

'self-respect'

b. [_{VP} zi[_V· zun t_{zi}]]

(20) a. 自我批评

ziwo piping

self-criticize / self-criticism

b. [_{VP} ziwo[_V· piping t_{ziwo}]]

The reflexive pronoun R, which is base-generated in the position of the complement of the verb V, moves to the specifier position of the VP to give rise to the configuration R-V. Such movement takes place for feature checking and consequently assigning case because lexical items in lexicon have no case features. This suggests that the reflexive pronoun moves only if it occurs overtly. Specifically, it A-moves to the specifier position of VP and restrains the uninterpretable features of V and its capability of case assignment. This is not only in conformity with the Principle of Leftward Word-building but also in accordance with the Principle of Leftward Merger. Specifically, merger starts from establishing the most basic structural relation. The intrinsic relations such as the argument structure of the verb and the relation of modification are embodied by means of a merger. Other relations are fulfilled by means of movement or remerger and matching. The categories that establish the morphological relation always occur in the form of pairs. (cf. [Edmonds, 1976](#); [Dai, 2002](#); [2003](#)) In the derivation of the morphological structure, the reflexive marker is base-generated in the position of the complement of V. After the basic operations of a merger and movement take place, the reflexive marker moves leftward to the edge of the word to give rise to the surface structure. V assigns a theta-role and discharges its subcategorization features. It must be emphasized that the morphological relation is not the property of the representation produced by means of the morphological rules. Instead, it is the intrinsic property that is established by means of a merger and movement per se. Furthermore, movement of the reflexive marker takes place for the purpose of satisfying the need of the syntactic structure's entering into the morphological structure, viz. shifting the syntactic structure to the morphological structure. Insofar as O (i.e. object) moves to the specifier position preceding V, the configuration OV can be generated. Moreover, only a configuration of this

type can enter into the syntactic structure as a syntactic object and participate in the syntactic computation. If a sentence which takes the form of XVO or SVO transforms into a compound, it must occur in the form of OVX or OVS instead of the form of VOX or VOS. That is because a typical feature of the compound with an OV inversion takes a nominal modification instead of a verbal predication, which includes VO or VC configurations. Generation of OVX and OVS takes place for the purpose of satisfying the need for generation of modification nouns. In effect, not only the compounds in Chinese but also the compounds in English, German, French, and Spanish must transform the configurations SVO or XVO into the configurations OVS or OVX (Yang, 2006), as illustrated below.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| (21) a. self-respect | English |
| b. [_{VP} self[_V · respect t _{self}]] | |
| (22) a. sich erholen | German |
| self rest | |
| Rest | |
| b. [_{VP} sich[_V · erholen t _{sich}]] | |
| (23) a. se quemó | Spanish |
| self burn | |
| burn oneself / self-burn | |
| (Prado, 1975) | |
| b. [_{VP} se[_V · quemó t _{se}]] | |
| (24) a. se regarder | French |
| self watch | |
| watch oneself / look into the mirror | |
| b. [_{VP} se[_V · regarder t _{se}]] | |

The data in (21)-(24) show that the reflexive pronoun is a patient argument of the verb V. It is base-generated in the position of the complement of V and hence it is governed by V. When it moves to the specifier position of VP, it gives rise to the surface order R-V. Movement of the reflexive pronoun takes place for feature checking. It is noteworthy that reflexive pronouns in English and Spanish are adjoined to V as clitics and are characterized by dependence. In contrast, reflexive pronouns in German and French are not adjoined to V and are as such characterized by

independence. Differing from the theta-feature discharge of the lexical category, the head X of the functional category discharges the subcategorization feature to its specifier and complement by means of XP (Fukui, 2000). X determines the syntactic representation of YP and ZP and assigns the features of number or reference to YP and ZP, respectively (Yang, 2021b).

5 The syntactic computation of ReVCs

As a syntactic object, how does a ReVC participate in syntactic computation? What syntactic representations does it have? What syntactic constraints is it subject to? Based on a close investigation of the structures of ReVCs, it was found that ReVCs were generally characterized by nominal features. V has undergone the process of nominalization, in other words, verbs shifted to nouns, and syntactically, ReVCs function as objects of verbs, as illustrated below.

- (25) a. 我们 开展 了 自我批评。
 women Kaizhan le ziwo piping
 1PL Organize -PST self-criticize
 'We organized self-criticism.'
- b. [_{VP} Women[_V· kaizhanle[_{VP} ziwo[_V· piping t_{ziwo}]]]]

As shown in (25), the Chinese ReVC *ziwopiping* functions as the object of the verb *kaizhan*. The whole ReVC displays nominal features, which means that it has undergone the process of nominalization. As a consequence, it is tantamount to NP. The reason why it has undergone nominalization and is characterized by nominal features is that the reflexive pronoun has moved to the specifier position of VP to refer to an event. This implies that the reflexive pronoun has moved from its base-generation position to the specifier position of a VP. In this way, it restricts the connotation of V and causes V to become an event and forces a narrative conceptual structure to form. A narrative conceptual structure is also called a generalized framework of the event V. ReVCs can be considered the result of reference by means of the event framework of V in which the reflexive pronoun is extracted or given prominence and it is merged with V in accordance with a certain configuration to express a certain meaning and a referential object simultaneously. Furthermore, the event framework of V can denote the

relation of arguments, especially the relation of patients. (cf. Fu, 2004; Yang, 2006) If a sentence contains such constituents as modal verbs, the constituents occupy the position of a light verb *v*, as shown below.

- (26) a. 我们 应当 开展 自我批评。
 women Yingdang kaizhan ziwopiping
 1PL should organize self-criticism
 'We should organize self-criticism.'
- b. [_{VP} Women[_V yingdang[_{VP} Spec[_V kaizhan[_{VP} ziwo[_V piping t_{piping}]]]]]]]

It is suggested that when such constituents as modal verbs occur in a sentence, the major verb phrase VP undergoes the process of gerundization. If no modal verbs occur in the sentence, gerundization of the major verb phrase VP does not take place. In this case, the VP can move to the position of the light verb *v* (Yang, 2014).

This approach is also applicable to the data in English and German. Let's take an English ReVC example *take a bath*, which carries the same meaning as *bathe*. The former is the result of gerundization of the latter. The verb *take* is used to describe the action or event denoted by *bathe*. The verb *take* is base-generated in the head position of the outer VP and it moves to the position of the light verb *v* to be merged with the aspect marker. The reflexive verb *bath* is base-generated in the head position of the inner VP. Triggered by nominalization, it first moves to the specifier position of the inner VP and later on to the specifier position of the outer VP to get the case assigned and its accusative features checked, as shown in (27).

- (27) a. She takes a bath.
- b. [_{VP} She[_V takes[_{VP} a bath[_V t_{take}[_{VP} t_{a bath}[_V t_{bath}]]]]]]]

In the same vein, the German ReVC *nehmen ein Bad* is the same as *baden* with respect to semantics. The former results from gerundization of the latter. The verb *nehmen* is used to describe the action or event denoted by *baden*. The verb *nehmen* is base-generated in the head position of the outer VP and then it moves to the position of the light verb *v* to be merged with the aspect marker. The reflexive verb *baden* is base-generated in the head position of the inner VP. Triggered by nominalization, it first moves to the specifier position of the inner VP and then to the specifier position of the

outer VP, where it is assigned case and has its accusative features checked, as shown in (28).

- (28) a. Sie nimmt ein Bad.
 3SG-NOM-FEM take-PRES-3SG IND-ACC bath
 'She takes a bath.'
 b. [_{VP} Sie [_{V`} nimmt[_{VP} ein Bad[_{V`} t_{nehmen}[_{VP} t_{ein} Bad[_{V`} t_{Bad}]]]]]]]

If no light verb occurs in the syntactic structure, the ReVC can move upward to the position of the light verb *v* to be merged with the aspect marker which is base-generated, as shown below.

- (29) a. She bathes.
 b. [_{VP} She[_{V`} bathes[_{VP} Spec[_{V`} t_{bath}[_{VP} Spec[_{V`} t_{bath}]]]]]]]
 (30) a. 她 自杀了。
 Ta zisha le
 3SG-FEM self-kill-PST
 'She killed herself.'
 b. [_{VP} Ta[_{V`} zishale[_{VP} Spec[_{V`} t_{zisha}[_{VP} t_{zi}[_{V`} t_{sha} t_{zi}]]]]]]]

As in examples (29) and (30), the movement of the reflexive verb takes place in more than one stage. It first moves to the intermediate position [_{V V`}], and only then to the position of the light verb *v*. If the ReVC is composed of a reflexive pronoun and a verb, the reflexive pronoun and the verb are merged in the intermediate position [_{V V`}]. Then they continue to move to the terminal position as syntactic objects. The reason for this analysis lies in the fact that as a complete syntactic object, the ReVC must be pied-piped. It participates in the syntactic computation as a whole. Therefore, the reflexive pronoun and the verb are merged in the position of the head of the outer VP to form a syntactic object and then participate in the syntactic computation. I argue that this analysis is applicable to the ReVCs in French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, and Polish, as illustrated below.

- (31) a. Jacques Se regarde. French
 Jacques self watch
 'Jacques looks at himself. / Jacques looks into the mirror.'
 (Rivero & Sheppard, 2003)
 b. $[_{VP} \text{ Jacques}[_{V'} \text{ se regarde}[_{VP} \text{ Spec}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{se} \text{ regard}[_{VP} \text{ t}_{se}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{regard} \text{ t}_{se}]]]]]]]$
- (32) a. Mathilde se-quemó. Spanish
 Mathilde self-burn
 'Mathilde burns herself. / Mathilde self-burns.'
 (Prado, 1975)
 b. $[_{VP} \text{ Mathilde}[_{V'} \text{ se-quemó}[_{VP} \text{ Spec}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{se-quemó}[_{VP} \text{ t}_{se}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{quemó} \text{ t}_{se}]]]]]]]$
- (33) a. Natasha umlvat-sja Russian
 Natasha wash-self
 'Natasha washes herself. / Natasha takes a bath.'
 (Levine, 1993)
 b. $[_{VP} \text{ Natasha}[_{V'} \text{ umlvat-sja}[_{VP} \text{ Spec}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{umlvat-sja}[_{VP} \text{ t}_{sja}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{umlvat} \text{ t}_{sja}]]]]]]]$
- (34) a. A Mãe lavou-se Portuguese
 DEF Mother wash-self
 'Mother washes herself. / Mother takes a bath.'
 (Naro, 1976)
 b. $[_{VP} \text{ A mãe}[_{V'} \text{ lavou-se}[_{VP} \text{ Spec}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{lavou-se} [_{VP} \text{ t}_{se}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{lavou} \text{ t}_{se}]]]]]]]$
- (35) a. Te samochody prowadzą atwo Polish
 these auto-PL-NOM drive-3PL-self easy
 'These cars drive well.'
 (Rivero & Sheppard, 2003)
 b. $[_{VP} \text{ Te samochody}[_{V'} \text{ prowadzą}[_{VP} \text{ si}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{prowadzą}[_{VP} \text{ t}_{si}[_{V'} \text{ t}_{prowadzą} \text{ t}_{si}]]]]]] \text{ atwo}]]]]]$

It follows that when the overt reflexive pronoun enters into the morphological structure, it must move to the specifier position of VP to give rise to the configuration R-V. In contrast, when the covert reflexive pronoun enters into the morphological structure, it must stay in situ. Under the two circumstances, insofar as no light verb is present in the structure, the ReVCs do not undergo the process of nominalization. The RMC can move to the specifier position of the light verb v to check its relevant features. If a light verb v is present in the structure and takes the form of *take / have* (English light verb),

nehmen (German light verb), or *jinxing* (Chinese light verb), the ReVC undergoes the process of nominalization. As a consequence, VP transforms into NP or GP (i.e. gerund phrase). In this case, the reflexive verb does not move because there is neither reason for movement nor an empty syntactic position for it to fill in. The inflectional features in the structure are embodied by the light verb *v* and hence they are checked by it. The reflexive prefix and the reflexive suffix of the ReVC do not have any change with respect to person. Similarly, they do not change with person of the agentive subject. Only the overt reflexive pronoun changes with person. The ReVC occupies a syntactic position as a whole whether it is composed of a reflexive prefix and a covert reflexive pronoun, or it is composed of an overt reflexive pronoun and a verb. Moreover, they can move to the position of the light verb *v*. The verb is merged with the aspect marker which is base-generated in the position of the light verb *v*, as illustrated below.

- (36) a. Die Mutter wäscht sich. German
 DEF-FEM-NOM mother-NOM wash-PRES-3SG self-ACC
 'Mother washes herself. / Mother bathes.'
 (Wang, 2001, p. 18)

b. [_{VP} Die Mutter [_V wäscht sich [_{VP} Spec [_V t_{waschen} [_{VP} t_{sich} [_V t_{waschen} t_{sich}]]]]]]]

- (37) a. Die Schwester wäscht sich die Haare.
 DEF-FEM-NOM sister-NOM wash-PRES-3SG self-DAT DEF-ACC hair-PL
 'The sister is washing her hair.'
 (Wang, 2001, p. 18)

b. [_{VP} Die Schwester [_V wäscht sich [_{VP} die Haare [_V t_{waschen} [_{VP} t_{sich} [_V t_{waschen} t_{sich}]]]]]]]

As (36) shows, the reflexive pronoun *sich* functions as the object to the verb *waschen* and hence the whole construction has lost its capability to assign case. Consequently, no object can occur in the construction. As far as (37) is concerned, the reflexive pronoun *sich* is not the object of the reflexive verb *waschen*. Instead, it is the verb's adverbial, denoting that the actor does something by himself or herself. In this case, the ReVC still has the capability to assign case. Therefore, the whole construction can be followed by the object *die Haare*. The reflexive pronoun and the reflexive verb occupy the light verb position, whereas the object *die Haare* occupies the specifier position of VP, viz. the object position. Based on the further observation of the above data, it is found that if the German reflexive pronoun *sich* denotes

reflexivity, i.e. the object of the action of the verb, then, it occurs in the accusative form, viz. the form of the object. In contrast, if the reflexive pronoun *sich* denotes emphasis, viz. the manner of the action of the verb, then, it occurs in the dative form. It follows that the ReVC which dominates the accusative reflexive pronoun is characterized by intransitivity and hence can be followed by no object, whereas the ReVC which dominates the dative reflexive pronoun is characterized by transitivity and hence it can be followed by an object. The reflexive pronoun *sich* is the object of the action of the verb. Rather, it is the object that the verb acts on directly. In this case, the property of the ReVC is transformed from transitivity into intransitivity because the verb has assigned case to the reflexive pronoun and hence it cannot assign case to other constituents anymore. In contrast, the dative reflexive pronoun *sich* is not acted on by the verb directly. Instead, it denotes the manner of the action or behavior of the verb. In this case, the transitivity of the verb is preserved. Hence it can still assign case to other constituents. The whole ReVC is not merely characterized by transitivity but also characterized by emphatic semantics. It seems that *sich*, which is both the dative and the accusative of the third person reflexive pronoun, does not change overtly with respect to morphology. However, *mich* which is the accusative of the first person reflexive pronoun, and *mir* which is the dative of the first person reflexive pronoun constitute a striking contrast, as illustrated below.

(38) a. Ich wasche mich.

1SG-NOM wash-PRES-1SG self-ACC

'I wash myself. / I bath.'

(Wang, 2001, p. 22)

b. [_{VP} Ich [_V · wasche mich [_{VP} Spec [_V · t_{waschen} [_{VP} t_{mich} [_V · t_{waschen} t_{mich}]]]]]]]

(39) a. Ich wasche mir die Hände.

1SG-NOM wash-PRES-1SG self-DAT DEF-ACC hand-PL-ACC

'I wash my hands.'

(Wang, 2001, p. 22)

b. [_{VP} Ich [_V · wasche mir [_{VP} die Hände [_V · t_{waschen} [_{VP} t_{mich} [_V · t_{waschen} t_{mich}]]]]]]]

As the data in (39) and (40) show, the reflexive pronoun must be licensed with structural case in syntactic structure, whereas the reflexive marker must be licensed with inherent case. According to Reuland and Everaert

(2000), structural case is assigned under the agreement system, whereas inherent case is licensed under the government by a lexical projection. The reflexive marker bears no θ -features, including number and gender, while the reflexive pronoun bears θ -features, including number and gender. Since the reflexive pronoun is not a syntactic argument of the verb, it must move covertly to the position of the head of VP.

The discussion of the internal structure of ReVCs and the process of their syntactic computation suggests that the reflexive pronoun is base-generated in the position of the complement of V and ReVCs participate in the syntactic computation as a complete syntactic object. This analysis can provide a reasonable account of ReVCs in various languages. Nonetheless, a crucial issue persists that must be resolved: what syntactic constraints govern the distribution of reflexive elements, such as reflexive pronouns and affixes? I argue that their distribution is subject to linguistic typology. Reflexive pronouns and reflexive affixes in SOV languages need no case markers when they precede the verb. But when they follow the verb, they need case markers. In contrast, reflexive pronouns and reflexive affixes in SVO languages need case markers when they precede the verb, however, they need no case markers when they follow the verb. Therefore, SVO languages tend to choose pre-posed reflexive markers, whereas SOV languages tend to choose post-posed reflexive markers. It follows that pre-posed reflexive markers are in harmony with SVO languages while post-posed reflexive markers are in harmony with SOV languages.

6 Conclusion

ReVCs are a type of construction that is worthy of research. They are universally found in Chinese, English, German, Haitian, French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, and Japanese, which belong to different language families. How to account for the ReVCs in these languages in a unified theoretical framework and reach a convincing conclusion is an issue that is also worthy of research. Based on a summary of the features of ReVCs, the paper proposes that the internal structure of ReVCs is $[_{VP} \text{Spec}[_V \text{ V R}]]$. Whether it occurs overtly or covertly, the reflexive constituent is base-generated in the position of the complement of V. Its occurrence in other positions results from movement of the reflexive constituent. Though verbs in ReVCs are transitive, the whole ReVCs cannot assign accusative case to other constituents. The reason lies in the fact that the verb has assigned

case to the covert pronoun and hence it cannot assign case to other constituents. Therefore, ReVCs cannot be followed by an object. The reflexive pronoun introduces reflexive interpretation, as a consequence of which the verb is characterized by reflexivity. A ReVC operates in the syntax as a complete syntactic object and hence it occupies a syntactic position. The whole ReVC can function as the object in the specifier position of VP and move to the position of the light verb *v* to function as the predicate, followed by a tense or aspect marker.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations used in this article are as follows:

ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
DEF	definite article
FEM	feminine
IND	indefinite article
MASC	masculine
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
PERF	perfective aspect
PL	plural
PRES	present tense
PST	past tense
R	reflexive constituent
SG	singular
SUF	suffix
SVP	separable verb prefix
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person

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Direct Evidentials in Korean: From the Perspective of the Multi-Store Memory Model

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Abstract

This study clarifies the meaning of direct evidential markers in Korean and examines their semantic characteristics using a multi-store memory model. Korean direct evidential markers are categorized into those indicating either "present perception-based knowledge" or "past acquisition-based knowledge." The former are subdivided into "unaccepted present perception-based knowledge" (-네 *-ney*) and "accepted present perception-based knowledge" (-군 *-kwun*), and the latter into "knowledge derived from past perception" (-더라 *-tela*) and "knowledge integrated into personal or general understanding" (-지 *-ci*). Within the multi-store memory model, -네 *-ney* aligns with the indicator of the maintenance rehearsal process, while -군 *-kwun* serves as an indicator of elaborative rehearsal, and -더라 *-tela* and -지 *-ci* correspond to retrieval indicators from long-term memory.

Keywords: Korean, evidential markers, perception, acquisition, multi-store memory model

Povzetek

Študija razjasni pomen neposrednih evidenčnih označevalcev v korejščini in preuči njihove semantične značilnosti z uporabo modela večplastne shrambe spomina. Te razdelimo na tiste, ki nakazujejo "na sedanjosti temelječe znanje" in tiste, ki nakazujejo "na pretekli pridobitvi temelječe znanje." Prve nadalje razdelimo na "nep priznano na sedanjosti temelječe znanje" (-네 *-ney*) in "priznano na sedanjosti temelječe znanje" (-군 *-kwun*). Slednje razdelimo na "znanje pridobljeno iz preteklega zaznavanja" (-더라 *-tela*) in "znanje, integrirano v osebno ali splošno razumevanje" (-지 *-ci*). V okviru modela večplastne shrambe spomina -네 *-ney* ustreza kazalcu procesa vzdrževalnega ponavljanja. Nasprotno pa -군 *-kwun* služi kot kazalec elaborativnega ponavljanja. Medtem -더라 *-tela* in -지 *-ci* ustrezata kazalcema priklica iz dolgoročnega spomina.

Ključne besede: korejščina, evidenčni označevalci, dojetanje, izkustvenost, model večplastne shrambe spomina



1 Introduction

The theoretical concept of “evidentials” or “evidentiality” has been described as the linguistic encoding of the source of information (see [Aikhenvald, 2003, 2006](#); [Aikhenvald & Dixon, 1998, 2003, 2016](#); [Chafe & Nichols, 1986](#); [Comrie, 2000](#); [Lazard, 1999](#); [Palmer, 1998](#); [Plungian, 2001](#); [Willett, 1988](#)). While all languages provide ways to signal the source of information, not all include grammatical evidentiality; indeed, the existence of lexical resources that indicate the source of information is common. For example, English demonstrates this with phrases like ‘I think,’ ‘I feel,’ ‘I see,’ ‘I hear,’ ‘they say,’ and ‘reportedly’ (see [Chafe, 1986](#)).

- (1) a. I think it’s a spider. ([Chafe, 1986](#))
b. I feel something crawling up my leg. ([Chafe, 1986](#))
c. I see her coming down the hall. ([Chafe, 1986](#))
d. I hear her taking a shower. ([Chafe, 1986](#))
e. They say James is a fool. ([Boye, 2018](#))
f. She was reportedly suffering from depression.

The grammatical method for indicating the source of information is indicated by closed systems, which may be demonstrated through bound morphemes, affixes, and clitics. As described by Aikhenvald ([2006](#)), in Tariana, an Arawak language spoken in the multilingual area of the Vaupés in northwest Amazonia, conveying the message “José plays football” involves the indication of how the information was obtained through grammatical forms, as follows (here and elsewhere evidential morphemes in bold type).

- (2) a. Jusé irida di -manika **-ka**
José football 3sgnf play REC.P.VIS
‘José has played football (we saw it).’
b. Jusé irida di -manika **-mahka**
José football 3sgnf play REC.P.NONVIS
‘José has played football (we heard it).’
c. Jusé irida di -manika **-nihka**
José football 3sgnf play REC.P.INFR
‘José has played football (we infer it from visual evidence).’

- d. Jusé irida di -manika **-sika**
 José football 3sgnf play REC.P.ASSUM
 'José has played football (we assume this on the basis
 of what we already know).' (Aikhenvald, 2006)

The main emphasis of this study will be solely on the grammatical representation of evidentiality in Korean, akin to that in Tariana. Recently, several studies have commenced investigating evidentiality phenomena within the Korean language (see Chung, 2011; Chung, 2007, 2010; Kim, 2000; Kim, 2005, 2007; Kwon, 2011, 2013; Lee, 2011, 2012; Lee, 1991, 1993; Lim & Lee, 2015; Papafragou et al., 2007; Sohn, 2018; Strauss, 2005). It is generally agreed that the Korean evidential system comprises three grammatical subclasses within inflectional suffixes: direct (-네 *-ney*¹, -군 *-kwun*, -더라 *-tela*, etc.), inferential (-겠- *-keyss-*, -을 것아- *-ul kes-i-*, etc.), and quotative/reported (-대 *-tay*, -다면서 *-tamyense*, etc.).

(3) Direct evidential markers: -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, -더라 *-tela*

- a. 밖 -에 비 -가 오 -네!
 Pakk -ey pi -ka o **-ney!**
 outside -LOC rain -NOM come -EVI
 '[I see] it's raining outside!' (Sohn, 2018)
- b. 너 목소리 참 좋 -구나!²
 Ne moksoli cham coh **-kuwna!**
 you voice very good -EVI
 '[I hear] your voice is very good!' (Park, 2011)
- c. 철수 목소리 참 좋 -더라.
 Chelswu moksoli cham coh **-tela.**
 '[I heard] Chelswu's voice is very good.' (Park, 2011)

¹ The Yale transcription system is used for Korean transcription.

² -구나 *-kwuna*, along with "(noun+0)-로구나; (noun+i)-*lokwuna*" is a free variant form of -군 *-kwun* (see Han, 2004; Yoon, 2000).

(4) Inferential evidential markers; -겠- *-keyss-*, -을 것아- *-ul kes-i-*

a. (Seeing the sky full of dark clouds)

곧 비 -가 오 -겠 -다.
 Kot pi -ka o -**keyss** -ta.
 soon rain -NOM come -INFR -DECL
 '[I guess] it is going to rain soon.' (Park, 2011)

b. (Based on meteorological observation data)

내일 비 -가 오 -ㄹ 것이 -다.
 Nayil pi -ka o -**lkesi** -ta.
 tomorrow rain -NOM come -INFR -DECL
 '[I guess] it will rain tomorrow.' (Park, 2011)

(5) Quotative/reported evidential markers; -대 *-tay*, -다면서 *-tamyense*

a. 교수 -님 -은 파티 -에 오 -시 -겠 -대 -요.
 Kyoswu -nim -un phathi -ey o -si -keyss -**tay** -yo.
 professor -HON -TOP party -to come -HON -INTEN -QUO -POL
 'The professor said he would come to the party.' (Sohn, 2018)

b. 존 -은 아프 -다면서 -요.
 John -un aphu -**tamyense** -yo.
 John -TOP sick -REPO -POL
 'I heard that John is sick, is it true?' (Sohn, 2018)

This study examines direct evidential markers in Korean referring to directly acquired information from the perspective of a multi-store model of human memory. While little attention has been paid to analyzing Korean direct evidential markers from the standpoint of a multi-store memory model, this would enable a clearer elucidation of their characteristics.

2 Semantic characteristics of the direct evidential markers in Korean

2.1 The paradigmatic set of forms: -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, -지 *-ci*, -더라 *-tela*

This paper focuses on -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, -지 *-ci*, and -더라 *-tela*, which function as direct evidential markers in Korean. Previous research has analyzed -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, and -더라 *-tela* as evidential markers, whereas -지 *-ci* has not been considered as such (Sohn, 2018; Strauss, 2005). However, this study analyzes -지 *-ci* as an evidential because -지 *-ci* basically appears alongside

-네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, and -더라 *-tela* within one paradigmatic set of forms. The morphemes -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, -지 *-ci*, and -더라 *-tela* are mutually exclusive of the other morphemes that occupy the same slot in the predication structure (Moon, 2015a, 2015b). For example, -네 *-ney* cannot co-occur with -군 *-kwun*, -네 *-ney* with -지 *-ci*, or -더라 *-tela* with -네 *-ney*. However, it is worth noting that -더라 *-tela* and -군 *-kwun* can exceptionally combine into forms such as -더군 *-te-kwun*. Further discussion of this matter will be provided later.

- (6) a. ??비 -가 오 -네 -군.
 Pi -ka o **-ney** **-kwun**.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It is raining!'
- b. ??비 -가 오 -네 -지.
 Pi -ka o **-ney** **-ci**.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It is raining!'
- c. ??비 -가 오 -네 -더라.
 Pi -ka o **-ney** **-tela**.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It is raining!'
- d. ??비 -가 오 -군 -지.
 Pi -ka o **-kwun** **-ci**.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It is raining!'
- e. ??비 -가 오 -더 -네.
 Pi -ka o **-te** **-ney**.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It was raining!'
- f. ??비 -가 오 -더 -지.
 Pi -ka o **-te** **-ci**.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It was raining!'

- (7) 비 -가 오 -더 -군.
 Pi -ka o -te -kwun.
 rain -NOM come -EVI -EVI
 'It was raining!'

Moreover, considering the semantic interrelations and contrasts observed between -지 -*ci*, -네 -*ney*, -군 -*kwun*, and -더라 -*tela*, it is reasonable to regard -지 -*ci* as an evidential marker.

2.2 “Present perception-based knowledge” versus “past acquisition-based knowledge”

A contrasting linguistic relationship holds between -네 -*ney*, -군 -*kwun*, -지 -*ci*, and -더라 -*tela*.

- (8) (Seeing that Swumi is sleeping)
- a. 이제 보 -니 수미 -가 자 -고 있 -네!
 Icey po -ni Swumi -ka ca -ko iss -ney!
 now see -CONN Swumi -NOM sleep -PROG -EVI
 'Now I see, Swumi is sleeping.'
- b. 이제 보 -니 수미 -가 자 -고 있 -구나!
 Icey po -ni Swumi -ka ca -ko iss -kwuna!
 now see -CONN Swumi -NOM sleep -PROG -EVI
 'Now I see, Swumi is sleeping.'
- c. ??이제 보 -니 수미 -가 자 -고 있 -지!
 Icey po -ni Swumi -ka ca -ko iss -ci!
 now see -CONN Swumi -NOM sleep -PROG -EVI
 'Now I see, Swumi is sleeping.'
- d. ??이제 보 -니 수미 -가 자 -고 있 -더라!³
 Icey po -ni Swumi -ka ca -ko iss -tela!
 now see -CONN Swumi -NOM sleep -PROG -EVI
 'Now I see, Swumi is sleeping.'

³ The use of 지금 *cikum*, a synonym for 이제 *icey*, in (8d) and (9d) can also be accepted as natural. While 지금 *cikum* and 이제 *icey* are temporal adverbs that indicate the 'present moment', 이제 *icey*, unlike 지금 *cikum*, implies a 'break from the past', (see [Park, 2019](#); [Kwuklipkwukewen](#)). Additionally, since the time we perceive as the 'present'

(9) (Hearing that Swumi is singing in the next room)

- a. 이제 들 -으니 수미 목소리 -네!
 Icey tul -uni Swumi moksoli **-ney!**
 now listen -CONN Swumi voice -EVI
 'Now that I listen, it sounds like Sumi's voice.'
- b. 이제 들 -으니 수미 목소리 -군!
 Icey tul -uni Swumi moksoli **-kwun!**
 now listen -CONN Swumi voice -EVI
 'Now that I listen, it sounds like Sumi's voice.'
- c. ??이제 들 -으니 수미 목소리 -지!
 Icey tul -uni Swumi moksoli **-ci!**
 now listen -CONN Swumi voice -EVI
 'Now that I listen, it sounds like Sumi's voice.'
- d. ??이제 들 -으니 수미 목소리 -더라!
 Icey tul -uni Swumi moksoli **-tela!**
 now listen -CONN Swumi voice -EVI
 'Now that I listen, it sounds like Sumi's voice.'

In examples (8a, b) and (9a, b), the phrases 이제 보니 *Icey po-ni* 'Now I see' and 이제 들으니 *Icey tul-uni* 'Now that I listen' align smoothly with -네 *-ney* and -군 *-kwun*, respectively, as noted (Chang, 1985; Moon, 2014; Park, 2006; Shin, 2001). However, in examples (8c, d) and (9c, d), this alignment is not natural with -지 *-ci* and -더라 *-tela* (Moon, 2010, 2015b). The grammatically appropriate alignment of -네 *-ney* and -군 *-kwun* with the expression 이제 보니 *Icey po-ni* 'Now I see' and 이제 들으니 *Icey tul-uni* 'Now that I listen', which signify the meaning of knowledge acquired through sensory perception at speech time, suggests that -네 *-ney* and -군 *-kwun* represent the statement of knowledge acquired through present perception (Chang, 1985; Moon, 2013, 2015a, 2015c; Park, 2006). Below, we classify this knowledge as "present perception-based knowledge."

quickly becomes the past, adverbs denoting the 'present' can sometimes co-occur with past tense forms (see Son, 1995). As explained below, -더라 *-tela* in (8d) and (9d) represents 'past acquisition-based knowledge', and it is naturally incompatible with 이제 *icey*, which implies a 'break from the past'. Conversely, 지금 *cikum*, which can convey a sense of 'the past', can naturally co-occur with -더라 *-tela*, representing 'past acquisition-based knowledge'.

- (10) A: 지난주에 수미 가 무엇 하 -였 -는지 알 -아 -요?
 Cinancwuey Swumi -ka mwues ha -yess -nunci al -a -yo?
 last week Swumi -NOM waht do -PAST -NMLZ know -INTER -POL
 'Are you aware of what Swumi did last week?'
- a. B: ??응, 수미 는 지난주에 야구 하 -였 -네.
 Un, Swumi -nun cinancwuey yakwu ha -yess **-ney**.
 yes, Swumi -TOP last week baseball do -PAST -EVI
 'Yes, (I knew) Swumi played baseball last week.'
- b. B: ??응, 수미 는 지난주에 야구 하 -였 -구나.
 Un, Swumi -nun cinancwuey yakwu ha -yess **-kwuna**.
 yes, Swumi -TOP last week baseball do -PAST -EVI
 'Yes, (I knew) Swumi played baseball last week.'
- c. B: 응, 수미 는 지난주에 야구 하 -였 -지.
 Un, Swumi -nun cinancwuey yakwu ha -yess **-ci**.
 yes, Swumi -TOP last week baseball do -PAST -EVI
 'Yes, (I knew) Swumi played baseball last week.'
- d. B: 응, 수미 는 지난주에 야구 하 -더라.
 Un, Swumi -nun cinancwuey yakwu ha **-tela**.
 yes, Swumi -TOP last week baseball do -EVI
 'Yes, (I knew) Swumi played baseball last week.'

On the contrary, in examples (10a, b), the question *알아요? al-a-yo?* 'Do you know?' did not align smoothly with *-네 -ney* and *-군 -kwun*, respectively. However, in (10c, d) this alignment occurred naturally with *-지 -ci* and *-더라 -tela*. The grammatically appropriate correspondence of *-지 -ci* and *-더라 -tela* with *알아요? al-a-yo?* 'Do you know?' depends upon whether one already knew the fact, implying that *-지 -ci* and *-더라 -tela* signify statements of knowledge already acquired in the past. Below, we classify this knowledge as "past acquisition-based knowledge."

The observations above reveal that in Korean, *-네 -ney*, *-군 -kwun*, *-지 -ci*, and *-더라 -tela* function as direct evidential markers, differentiating between whether the source of information is derived from "present perception-based knowledge" or "past acquisition-based knowledge."

2.3 “Unaccepted present perception-based knowledge” versus “accepted present perception-based knowledge”

The observations above reveal that in Korean, -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, -지 *-ci*, and -더라 *-tela* function as direct evidential markers, differentiating between whether the source of information is derived from “present perception-based knowledge” or “past acquisition-based knowledge.” Although both -네 *-ney* and -군 *-kwun* commonly signify “present perception-based knowledge,” they demonstrate divergent linguistic phenomena, as outlined below.

(11) (Looking at the watch at work)

- a. 어머 벌써 한시 -가 넘 -었 -네.
 Eme pelsse hansi -ka nem -ess -**ney**.
 oh dear already one o'clock -NOM pass -PAST -EVI
 ‘Oh dear! (I see) it’s already past one.’
- b. ?어머 벌써 한시 -가 넘 -었 -구나⁴.
 Eme pelsse hansi -ka nem -ess -**kwuna**.
 oh dear already one o'clock -NOM pass -PAST -EVI
 ‘Oh dear! (I see) it’s already past one.’

- (12) a. 앓 벌써 영화 -가 시작되 -었 -네.
 As pelsse yenghwa -ka sicaktoy -ess -**ney**.
 wow already movie -NOM start -PAST -EVI
 ‘Wow! (I see) the movie has already started.’
- b. ?앓 벌써 영화 -가 시작되 -었 -구나.
 As pelsse yenghwa -ka sicaktoy -ess -**kwuna**.
 wow already movie -NOM start -PAST -EVI
 ‘Wow! (I see) the movie has already started.’

In examples (11a) and (12a), the astonishment-expressing discourse markers 어머 *eme* ‘oh dear!’ and 앓 *as* ‘wow!’ align smoothly with -네 *-ney*, as

⁴ 어머 *eme* ‘Oh dear!’ or 앓 *as* ‘wow!’ could possibly co-occur with -군 *-kwun* in (11b) and (12b), however, the occurrence is most likely when a pause follows 어머 *eme* ‘Oh dear!’ or 앓 *as* ‘wow!’. In this way, 어머 *eme* ‘Oh dear!’ or 앓 *as* ‘wow!’ are separated by a pause, and -군 *-kwun* co-occurs with the pause. The pause functions similarly to the understanding-expressing discourse marker 아아 *aa* ‘Ah-’. Thus, the grammaticality judgments for (11b) and (12b) assume no pause following 어머 *eme* ‘Oh dear!’ or 앓 *as* ‘wow!’, consistent with the assumptions for (11a) and (12a).

previously observed. However, in (11b) and (12b), this alignment is not natural with -군 *-kwun* (Moon, 2014). The grammatically appropriate alignment of -네 *-ney* with the discourse markers *어머* *eme* ‘oh dear!’ and *앗* *as* ‘wow!’, which indicate that “present perception-based knowledge” is not understood yet, suggests that -네 *-ney* indicates that the statement is not accepted as reliable knowledge. Below, we classify this knowledge as “unaccepted present perception-based knowledge.”

(13) (When someone is approaching without knowing who they are)

- a. ??아아 당신 -이 수미 씨 -이 -네 -요.
 Aa tangsin -i Swumi -ssi -i **-ney** -yo.
 ahaa you -NOM Swumi -HON -be -EVI -POL
 ‘Ahaa, (I realize) You are Swumi!’
- b. 아아 당신 이 수미 씨 -이 -군 -요.
 Aa tangsin -i Swumi -ssi -i **-kwun** -yo
 ahaa you -NOM Swumi -HON -be -EVI -POL
 ‘Ahaa, (I realize) You are Swumi!’

(14) (While viewing the artwork of the acclaimed artist at the art gallery)

- a. ??작품 -을 보 -니 소문 -에 들던 -대로
 Cakphwum -ul Po -ni somwun -ey tutten -taylo
 artwork -ACC See -CONN rumor -INST hear -CONN
- 이 사람 -은 과연 훌륭한 예술가 -이 -네⁵.
 i salam -un kwayen hwullyunghan yeyswulka -i **-ney**
 this person -TOP indeed good artist -be -EVI
- ‘After seeing his work, I must say, he indeed is as good an artist as they say!’

⁵ It is possible that *과연* *kwayen* ‘indeed’ and -네 *-ney* co-occur in (14a). If so, it would be due to the accompanying evaluative expression *훌륭하다* *hwulyunghata* ‘good’. In certain evaluative predicates, the evaluative meaning seems to neutralize the “unaccepted” meaning of -네 *-ney* and the “accepted” meaning of -군 *-kwun*. For example, *영화가 너무나 감동적이{네/군}*. *Yenghwa-ka cengmal kamtongcek-i-{ney/kwun}* ‘The movie is truly touching.’ However, as in (14b), the meaning of *과연* *kwayen* ‘indeed’ makes -군 *-kwun* more natural than -네 *-ney*.

b. 작품	-을	보	-니	소문	-에	듣던	-대로
Cakphwum	-ul	po	-ni	somwun	-ey	tutten	-taylo
artwork	-ACC	see	-CONN	rumor	-INST	hear	-CONN
이	사람	-은	과연	훌륭한		예술가	-로구나.
i	salam	-un	kwayen	hwullyunghan		yeyswulka	-lokwuna
this	person	-TOP	indeed	good		artist	-EVI

'After seeing his work, I must say, he indeed is as good an artist as they say!' ([Kwuklipkwukewen](#))

On the contrary, examples (13b) and (14b) show that the understanding-expressing discourse markers *아아* *aa-* 'Ah-' and *과연* *kwayen* 'indeed' align smoothly with *-군* *-kwun*. However, in (13a) and (14a), this alignment does not occur naturally with *-네* *-ney* ([Moon, 2014](#)). The grammatically-fitting correspondence of *-군* *-kwun* with the discourse markers *아아* *aa-* 'Ah-' and *과연* *kwayen* 'indeed' indicates that what is currently perceived matches with what was previously thought ([Choi, 2000](#); [Kwuklipkwukewen](#)), implying that *-군* *-kwun* denotes a statement that is accepted as reliable knowledge. Below, we categorize this knowledge as "accepted present perception-based knowledge."

The widely used evidential markers *-네* *-ney* and *-군* *-kwun*, which generally represent present perception-based knowledge, can be divided based on whether the conveyed information is "unaccepted present perception-based knowledge" or "accepted present perception-based knowledge."

2.4 "Knowledge derived from past perception" versus "knowledge integrated into personal or general understanding"

As confirmed in (10c, d), both *-지* *-ci* and *-더라* *-tela* generally indicate "past acquisition-based knowledge." However, *-지* *-ci* and *-더라* *-tela* exhibit contrasting linguistic phenomena, as discussed below.

(15) (Seeing that Swumi was sleeping yesterday)

- a. ??어제 보 -니 수미 -가 자 -고 있 -었 -지.
 Ecey po -ni Swumi -ka ca -ko iss -yess -ci
 yesterday see -CONN Swumi -NOM sleep -PROG -PAST -EVI
 'Yesterday I saw that Swumi was sleeping.'

- b. 어제 보 -니 수미 -가 자 -고 있 -더라.
 Ecey po -ni Swumi -ka ca -ko iss -tela
 yesterday see -CONN Swumi -NOM sleep -PROG -EVI
 'Yesterday I saw that Swumi was sleeping.'

(16) (Hearing that Swumi was singing in the next room yesterday)

- a. ??어제 들 -으니 수미 -가 노래 부르 -고 있 -었 -지.
 Ecey tul -ui Swumi -ka nolay pwulu -ko iss -yess -ci
 yesterday listen -CONN Swumi -NOM song sing -PROG -PAST -EVI
 'Yesterday I heard that Swumi was singing a song.'

- b. 어제 들 -으니 수미 -가 노래 부르 -고 있 -더라.
 Ecey tul -uni Swumi -ka nolay pwulu -ko iss -tela
 yesterday listen -CONN Swumi -NOM song sing -PROG -EVI
 'Yesterday I heard that Swumi was singing a song.'

In examples (15b) and (16b), the phrases 어제 보니 *ecey po-ni* 'Yesterday I saw' and 어제 들으니 *ecey tul-uni* 'Yesterday I heard' align smoothly with -더라 -*tela*, as noted. However, in (15a) and (16a), this alignment is not natural for -지 -*ci*.

In examples (15a, b) and (16a, b), only -더라 -*tela*, which aligns grammatically with the past perception and awareness expressed in 어제 보니 *ecey po-ni* 'Yesterday I saw' and 어제 들으니 *ecey tul-uni* 'Yesterday I heard', indicates knowledge acquired through sensory perception before speech time within the domain of "past acquisition-based knowledge." However, in example (10c), where expressions like 어제 보니 *ecey po-ni* 'Yesterday I saw' and 어제 들으니 *ecey tul-uni* 'Yesterday I heard' are absent, -지 -*ci* categorizes the information as past acquisition-based knowledge, regardless of whether it was perceptually acquired in the past, obtained from someone else, or inferred by oneself. Thus, -지 -*ci* does not merely signify knowledge perceived at a specific past moment but encompasses a broad range of knowledge acquired in the past, including personal comprehension and general understanding. Below, we categorize the knowledge indicated by -

더라 *-tela* as “knowledge derived from past perception” and the one indicated by -지 *-ci* as “knowledge integrated into personal or general understanding⁶.”

The details discussed above are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Semantic characteristics of the direct evidential markers in Korean

Meaning Affixes	Present perception based knowledge (PPBK)		Past acquisition based knowledge (PABK)	
	Unaccepted PPBK	Accepted PPBK	Knowledge derived from past perception	Knowledge integrated into personal or general understanding
-네 <i>-ney</i>	○	–	–	–
-군 <i>-kwun</i>	–	○	–	–
-더라 <i>-tela</i>	–	–	○	–
-지 <i>-ci</i>	–	–	–	○

3 The multi-store memory model

In this section, we present the theory proposed by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) to examine the meaning of evidential markers in Korean within the framework of the multi-store memory model, as discussed in Section 2. We opted for this approach because the theory outlined by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968), as a representative multi-store memory model, would appear to offer a comprehensive account of the features associated with evidential markers in Korean.

Human memory involves the organized gathering of information and experiences and the intention to retrieve them in the future. The multi-store memory model posited by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) elucidates human memory, postulating three distinct memory stores through which

⁶ Due to the characteristics of -지 *-ci* and -더라 *-tela*, -더라 *-tela* clearly conveys a past meaning, while -지 *-ci* tends to obscure the past meaning. Therefore, to explicitly indicate a past meaning, -더라 *-tela* does not require the past tense morpheme -었 *-ess-*, whereas -지 *-ci* needs to be accompanied by -었 *-ess-*. For this reason, -었 *-ess-* is used in (10c), (15a), (16a), and (18a), but not in (10d), (15b), (16b), and (18b).

information is sequentially transferred in a linear sequence. These three components of human memory are detailed as follows (Alsaeed, 2017; Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968, 1971; Braisby & Gellatly, 2012; Eysenck & Keane, 2020; Groome, 1999; Hitch, 2005).

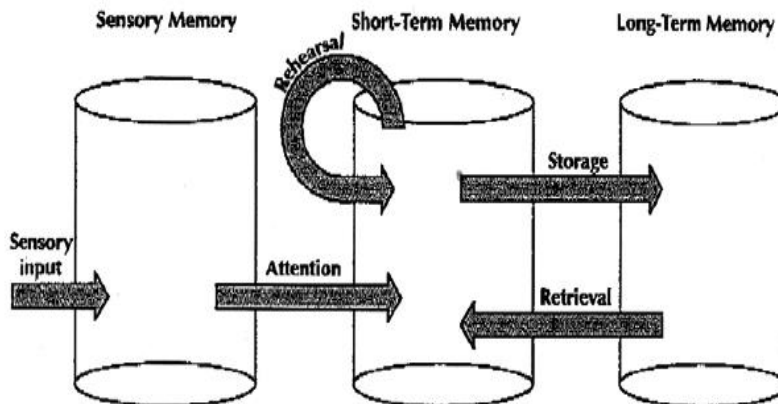


Figure 1: The multi-store memory model
(Adopted from Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Alsaeed, 2017)

The three primary stores are sensory memory, short-term memory (STM), and long-term memory (LTM), which differ in terms of information processing (encoding), storage capacity, and the duration for which information can be retained. Information flows sequentially from one store to another in a linear manner, resembling an information processing model consisting of the input, process, and output stages. Initially detected by sensory organs, information enters the sensory memory, where it is temporarily retained as sensory stimuli. Upon selective attention, information progresses to short-term memory (STM); through elaborative rehearsal, if endowed with meaning, it is transferred to long-term memory (LTM).

Sensory stores continuously receive a stream of information, yet the majority passes unnoticed and resides briefly in the sensory register. Within the sensory memory store, information is inputted from all five senses: sight (visual information), sound (auditory information), taste (gustatory information), smell (olfactory information), and touch (tactile information). Despite the expansive capacity of sensory memory stores, their durations are remarkably brief. It can encode information from any sensory modality, although much of this information dissipates through decay. Attention marks the initial stage of the remembering process. When an individual's

focus is directed toward one of the sensory stores, information is subsequently transferred to short-term memory (STM).

Short-term memory⁷ (STM) refers to the memories held in conscious awareness that are currently receiving attention. In short-term memory (STM), maintenance rehearsal refers to the verbal or mental repetition of information. This type of rehearsal typically involves the repetition of information without considering its meaning or linking it to other information. Through continual rehearsal, the information in the memory trace is “regenerated” or “renewed,” its strength enhanced as it is transferred to the long-term memory store. Without maintenance rehearsal, however, information is susceptible to being forgotten and lost from short-term memory through displacement or decay.

Long-term memory (LTM) denotes the memories not presently held in conscious awareness but stored and able to be recalled, specifically encompassing declarative knowledge associated with “knowing that” and procedural knowledge associated with “knowing how.” When information is endowed with meaning through elaborative rehearsal, it proceeds to long-term memory (LTM). Elaborative rehearsal involves associating new information with existing knowledge stored in long-term memory in a meaningful manner. Compared to maintenance rehearsal, elaborative rehearsal is more efficacious in the retention of new information by facilitating robust encoding. This process signifies a higher level of information processing. Retrieval failure occurs when information resides in the long-term memory but cannot be accessed. Such information is considered available (i.e., it remains stored) but inaccessible (i.e., it cannot be retrieved). The inability to access this information stems from the absence of retrieval cues.

This is clearly depicted in the scheme in Figure 2 proposed by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1971).

⁷ A concept closely associated with short-term memory is Baddeley's (1986, 2003) working memory model. Although working memory predominantly emphasizes cognitive task performance and control functions in the context of short-term information retention, it would not be unreasonable to regard it primarily as short-term memory, especially in the analysis of evidential markers in Korean.

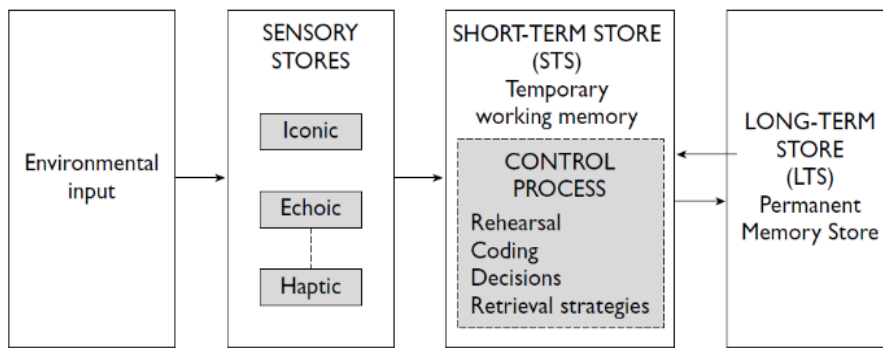


Figure 2: The multi-store memory model
(Adopted from [Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1971](#); [Hitch, 2005](#))

4 Korean direct evidential markers in the multi-store memory model

In this Section, we analyze the Korean direct evidential markers discussed in Section 2 through the lens of the multi-store memory model explored in Section 3.

As observed in (8a), (9a), (11a), and (12a), *-ney* signifies the unaccepted present perception-based knowledge accompanied by surprise, which is not understood yet.

The presence of the *-ney* suggests surprise because although the sensory organs receive environmental stimuli and attention is allocated, the individual is verbally rehearsing the information for retention without contemplating its meaning or linking it with other information. Therefore, it can be inferred that the information conveyed by *-ney* represents the transition from sensory memory to short-term memory, indicating the initiation of the “maintenance rehearsal” process.

As noted in (8b), (9b), (13b), and (14b), *-kwun* signifies “accepted present perception-based knowledge” accompanied by understanding, indicating that what is currently perceived matches what was previously thought.

The presence of *-kwun* indicates understanding; since the sensory organs receive environmental stimuli, attention is directed and individuals attribute meaning by linking it with existing knowledge. Thus, it can be deduced that the information signified by *-kwun* signifies the transfer from short-term to long-term memory, marking the onset of the “elaborative rehearsal” process.

As seen in (10c) and (10d), it was noted that -지 *-ci* and -더라 *-tela* signify “past acquisition based-knowledge.” A linguistic phenomenon demonstrates that the information represented by -지 *-ci* and -더라 *-tela* is closely related to the information stored in long-term memory (LTM).

(17) (While searching for Suwmi’s glasses, I cannot remember where Suwmi placed them.)

- a. 수미 -가 안경 -을 어디 -에 두 -었 -지?
 Swumi -ka ankyeng -ul eti -ey twu -yess -**ci**?
 Swumi -NOM glasses -ACC where -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 ‘Where did Suwmi put her glasses?’
- b. 수미 -가 안경 -을 어디 -에 두 -었 -더라?
 Swumi -ka ankyeng -ul eti -ey twu -yess -**tela**?
 Swumi -NOM glasses -ACC where -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 ‘Where did Suwmi put her glasses?’
- c. ??수미 -가 안경 -을 어디 -에 두 -었 -네?
 Swumi -ka ankyeng -ul eti -ey twu -yess -**ney**?
 Swumi -NOM glasses -ACC where -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 ‘Where did Suwmi put her glasses?’
- d. ??수미 -가 안경 -을 어디 -에 두 -었 -군?
 Swumi -ka ankyeng -ul eti -ey twu -yess -**kwun**?
 Swumi -NOM glasses -ACC where -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 ‘Where did Suwmi put her glasses?’

(18) (While searching for Suwmi’s glasses, I suddenly remember where she placed them.)

- a. 그래 맞 -아! 책상 위 -에 두 -었 -지.
 kulay mac -a! chaksang wi -ey twu -yess -**ci**.
 Yeah! right -DECL desk on -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 ‘Yeah! That’s right. Suwmi left her glasses on the desk.’
- b. 그래 맞 -아! 책상 위 -에 두 -더라.
 kulay mac -a! chaksang wi -ey twu -**tela**.
 Yeah! right -DECL desk on -LOC put -EVI
 ‘Yeah! That’s right. Suwmi left her glasses on the desk.’

- c. ??그래 맞 -아! 책상 위 -에 두 -었 -네.
 kulay mac -a! chaksang wi -ey twu -yess -**ney**.
 Yeah! right -DECL desk on -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 'Yeah! That's right. Suwmi left her glasses on the desk.'
- d. ??그래 맞 -아! 책상 위 -에 두 -었 -군.
 kulay mac -a! chaksang wi -ey twu -yess -**kwun**.
 Yeah! right -DECL desk on -LOC put -PAST -EVI
 'Yeah! That's right. Suwmi left her glasses on the desk.'

The suffixes -지 *-ci* and -더라 *-tela* in (17a) and (17b), where the syntactically matched *wh*-questions denote a partial lack of information, can suggest the partial forgetting of information. In contrast, -네 *-ney* and -군 *-kwun* in (17c) and (17d) cannot convey the partial forgetting of information as they are not compatible with *wh*-questions. This linguistic phenomenon can be regarded as directly reflecting the manifestation of retrieval failure, where information is retained in the long-term memory but remains inaccessible.

Furthermore, the suffixes -지 *-ci* and -더라 *-tela* in (18a) and (18b), when grammatically aligned with 그래 맞아! *kulay maca!* 'Yeah! That's right', signifying the recollection of something that was not well remembered, can indicate success in locating the information. In contrast, -네 *-ney* and -군 *-kwun* in (18c) and (18d) cannot convey success in locating information as they do not grammatically align with 그래 맞아! *kulay maca!* 'Yeah! That's right'. This linguistic phenomenon directly mirrors the occurrence of successful retrieval, in which the information stored in long-term memory remains accessible. Therefore, it can be inferred that the information conveyed by -더라 *-tela* and -지 *-ci* represents the transition from long-term memory to short-term memory, indicating the initiation of the "retrieval process."

Regarding (15a, b) and (16a, b), it -더라 *-tela* specifically represents "knowledge derived from past perception," in contrast to -지 *-ci*. Therefore, one might interpret the meaning of -더라 *-tela* as being exclusive to that of -지 *-ci*. However, a more accurate understanding suggests that the relationship between -더라 *-tela* and -지 *-ci* is not exclusive, but inclusive. In other words, while -지 *-ci* signifies comprehensive "past acquisition-based knowledge," including personal comprehension or general understanding, -더라 *-tela* specifically denotes "knowledge derived from past perception." Distinguishing knowledge obtained through past perception among other types of "past acquisition-based knowledge" likely indicates the more reliable information.

Here, we briefly examine the exceptional phenomenon in which, as seen in Example (7) in Section 2.1, *-더라* *-tela* and *-균* *-kwun* co-occur.

As observed above, *-더라* *-tela* denotes “knowledge derived from past perception,” representing the transition from long-term memory to short-term memory, thereby indicating the initiation of the retrieval process. Conversely, *-균* *-kwun* signifies “accepted present perception-based knowledge,” indicating a transfer from short-to long-term memory, thus marking the onset of the elaborative rehearsal process.

Based on this understanding, when considering the co-occurrence phenomenon of *-더(라)* *-te(la)* and *-균* *-kwun*, it can be interpreted that after “knowledge derived from past perception” is retrieved from long-term memory, it is brought into short-term memory for elaborative rehearsal. Thus, the co-occurrence of *-더라* *-tela* and *-균* *-kwun* more clearly demonstrates the elaborative rehearsal associated with existing knowledge in short-term memory.

The content provided above can be concisely illustrated in the subsequent diagram.

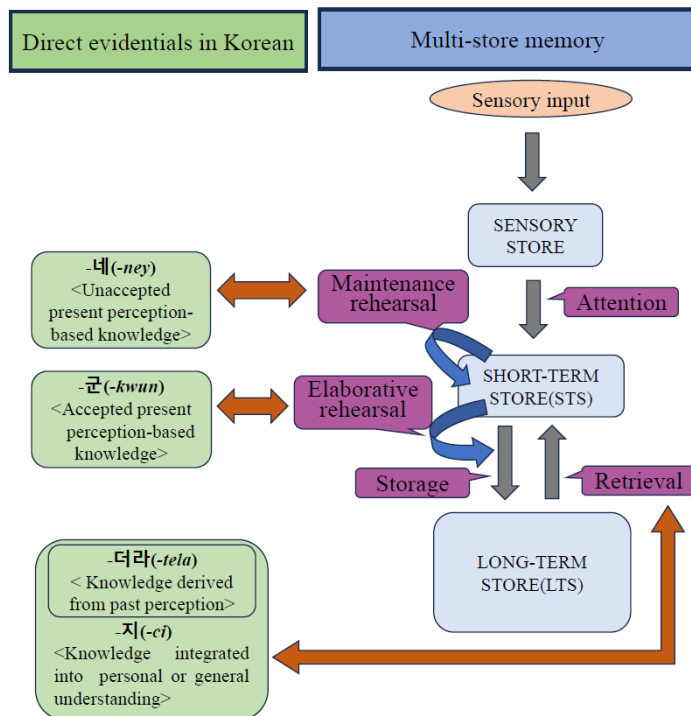


Figure 3: The correspondence between direct evidential markers in Korean and multi-store memory

5 Conclusion

This study examined the semantic characteristics of direct evidential markers in Korean, namely -네 *-ney*, -군 *-kwun*, -더라 *-tela*, and -지 *-ci*, using a multi-store memory model framework.

In summary, -네 *-ney* signifies “unaccepted present perception-based knowledge,” aligning with the “maintenance rehearsal” process during the transition from sensory memory to short-term memory; -군 *-kwun* indicates “accepted present perception-based knowledge,” corresponding to the “elaborative rehearsal” process during the transfer from short-term memory to long-term memory; -지 *-ci* represents “knowledge integrated into personal or general understanding,” reflecting stable settlement in long-term memory for retrieval and recall; and finally, -더라 *-tela* specifically denotes “knowledge derived from past perception” within long-term memory. In this study, we elucidated the characteristics of evidential markers in Korean more clearly by explaining their meaning within the framework of Atkinson and Shiffrin’s (1968) multi-store memory model. In the future, we aim to empirically validate these analytical findings through cognitive psychological experiments.

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Abbreviations

3	Third person
ACC	Accusative
ASSUM	Assumed
CONN	Connectives
DECL	Declarative
EVI	Evidentials
HON	Honorifics
INFR	Inferential
INTER	Interrogative
LOC	Locative
nf	Non-feminine
NMLZ	Nominalizer

NONVIS	Non-visual
P	Past
PAST	Past tense
PROG	Progressive
QUO	Quotative
REC	Reciprocal
REPO	Reported
sg	Singular
TOP	Topic
VIS	visual

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BOOK REVIEWS

Presentation of the Monograph *Introduction to Korean Language and Korean Linguistics*

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Abstract

Introduction to the Korean Language and Korean Linguistics goes beyond the usual grammatical approaches to presenting the structures of a language. The presentation of the Korean language does not rely only on traditional Korean grammar but also reflects and applies the latest findings of linguistic research in interpreting Korean linguistic phenomena. In addition to an insight into the title theme, it gives a glimpse into general linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena. It is particularly valued by its theoretical and comparative approach, which helps the reader to gain a deeper understanding of linguistic phenomena in the Korean language and to deal with similar phenomena in their own and other languages. (an excerpt from the review)

Keywords: Korean language, Korean linguistics, East Asia, book review

Povzetek

Uvod v korejski jezik in korejsko jezikoslovje presega običajne slovnične pristope k predstavljanju jezikovnih struktur. Predstavitev korejščine se ne zanaša zgolj na tradicionalno korejsko slovnico, temveč pri razlagi korejskih jezikovnih pojavov upošteva in uporablja tudi najnovejša spoznanja jezikoslovnega raziskovanja. Poleg osrednje teme knjiga ponuja tudi vpogled v splošne jezikovne in sociolingvistične pojave. Posebej jo odlikujeta teoretični in primerjalni pristop, ki bralca popelje do globljega razumevanja jezikovnih pojavov v korejščini in soočanja s podobnimi pojavi v svojem in drugih jezikih. (odsek iz recenzije)

Ključne besede: korejski jezik, korejsko jezikoslovje, Vzhodna Azija, ocena knjige



1 Introduction

Less than 10 years have passed since the Centre for Korean Studies was established at the Department of Asian Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana (2015) and the comprehensive monograph *Uvod v korejski jezik in korejsko jezikoslovje* [Introduction to Korean Language and Korean Linguistics] is already available to the Slovenian readership.

In order to contribute to the development of Korean studies in Slovenia, the authors consciously went beyond the usual content of linguistic manuals, which focus primarily on the linguistic structure of a particular language. The linguistic analysis in this book is based on a thorough professional presentation of the past and contemporary social, cultural, and linguistic circumstances that guided the development of the Korean language and influenced its use.

Due to this concept, the work not only addresses students of Korean Studies in Slovenia but also provides researchers of various humanities and social sciences with useful information about the linguistic reality of the Korean nation divided into two countries that have been in constant conflict since the end of World War II.

The work is presented in a transparent structure, even within the chapters: After the preface (pp. 13-18), fourteen chapters (pp. 19-341) follow with three appendices (pp. 343-347). The list of used literature (pp. 349-357) is followed by a vocabulary of technical terms in Slovenian and Korean, in Roman script and with notation in Chinese characters (pp. 359-368), an index (pp. 369-378), and a presentation of authors and editors (pp. 379-380).

2 Contents

Tentatively, the content of the monograph could be divided into three parts: the conceptual sociolinguistic part (I), the grammar part (II), and the textual part (III).

Introductory **Part I** (Chapters I to VI) highlights selected linguistic concepts and explores the sociolinguistic image of Korean reality from a past and contemporary perspective. It is aimed to refresh the general knowledge of the language phenomena and select basic concepts to broaden the theoretical bases for understanding the Korean language structures. It discusses the origin and development of the Korean language

and its distribution, genetic ties, and contacts with other Trans-Eurasian languages. Over time and comparatively, the Korean script is presented. The language policy of the two Koreas is briefly confronted. Characteristics of the Korean lexicon are explored and variation in Korean is touched upon. This part concludes with a chapter on expressing respect, a delicate feature in the Korean language where the interaction between the language forms and the social code is strongly expressed.

Chapter I “Buildup: Basic concepts related to language” (author Andrej Bekeš) is designed as a theoretical framework for understanding linguistic phenomena that shed light on linguistic structures specific to Korean and are discussed in more detail in later chapters on specific grammatical topics. Given the extremely diverse expression of modal meanings in the Korean language, the author dwells on the analyses of aspects and functions of the language and the fundamental types of meanings (according to Halliday (1978)). By presenting linguistic functions and highlighting the interaction between language and the context of communication, a theoretical framework is drawn for exploring the features of the rich system of addressing and expressing respect in the Korean language. Particular attention is paid to the interpretation of concepts such as the language sign (the connection between the vocal presentation and the mental presentation of a named entity) and double articulation (also the duality of patterning and double segmentation: according to Martinet (1960) a mechanism that allows the formation of any number of sentences from a finite number of basic units of a language, phonemes, or words). Both are relevant to understanding the process of development of the Korean Hangeul script (from the adaptation of Chinese characters to the introduction of alphabetic script), which is discussed in detail in Chapter III.

Chapter II “About Korea and Korean” (by Andrej Bekeš) tells of the prevalence of Korean as a first language of about 85,500,000 speakers, of which 26,000,000 in the North, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and 52,000,000 in the South, Republic of Korea (RK), and about 7,500,000 speakers worldwide, with the largest diasporas in China and the United States each with 2,500,000 speakers, and Japan with 8,250,000 speakers. The origin and development of the Korean language are discussed extensively. Its beginnings can be placed in the 1st millennium BC, its development being influenced by two language-contact situations, the contact of Korean with related Altai languages on the one hand, and the long-standing, close

contact with speakers of otherwise genetically unrelated Chinese on the other hand, which is particularly evident in the similarity of vocabulary.

The first contact with related languages, including Japanese, is evidenced by a series of common features that the Korean language shares with the Altai branch of the Trans-Eurasian¹ languages. Among the basics are agglutination, vowel harmony, characteristic word order (SOV and GAN), and non-appearance of the phonemes [l] and [r] at the beginning of a word. However, knowledge of the origin of the Korean language and its related ties, especially to the Japanese language, is still incomplete. The dilemma is caused by the deficiency of linguistic material from the early period of the development of the Korean language on the one hand and Japan's colonial policy, which attributed the same origin to both languages, Korean and Japanese, despite the objections of Korean linguists on the other. With a brief presentation of the outcomes of interdisciplinary archaeological, genetic, and linguistic studies, the author highlights the difficulties in identifying kinship relationships between Korean and other languages, pointing to the latest findings in this field.

Another linguistic contact that influenced the development of the Korean language – that is, contact with Chinese – is better documented. The intertwined historical development with China and the close cultural contacts between the two peoples have been reflected in the development of the Korean language, particularly in the process of forming the Korean script.

Chapter III (author Andrej Bekeš) reveals the path to the origin of the Korean Hangeul script. In the introduction, the definition of a script as a system of signs that “encodes another system of signs – a language” is given (p. 43), and a presentation of the criteria for classifying scripts according to the language units they record. The reader learns about two basic types of scripts and their subspecies: the earlier pleremic scripts, when the units of language encoded by script signs generate meaning (morphemes, words), and the later cenemic scripts, when the units encoded by script signs do not generate meaning (phonetic or phonological units). The Korean Hangeul script is classified as a cenemic script. It is an alphabetic script that, like Cyrillic and Roman, registers the sounds and phonemes.

¹ Instead of an earlier classification into the Altai family of related languages, which “considers Korean and Japanese as a kind of external companion” (p. 30), the author is closer to a more recent classification into the broader Trans-Eurasian family of languages (according to the linguist Martine Robbeets (2017)).

The narrative of the development of the Hangeul, its internal structure and its secondary structure is placed in the general information about the development of the scripts. Historically, writing has only appeared on a few occasions as an independent invention. One of the four areas of the original, independent writing system is China, where script was invented about 3,500 years ago. Due to the colonial influence of China, it began to spread into Korea before the end of the first millennium BC. Despite adapting to the needs of the Korean language, Classical Chinese remained a prestigious written language in Korea until the 15th century, when a new alphabetic script, Hangeul, intended for the people, was introduced by proclamation. At the same time, Classical Chinese remained the official language of Korea until the late 19th century, when it was gradually replaced by “the Korean language written in a mixed style, with Chinese characters and Hangeul” (p. 59). Hangeul did not fully dominate public communication until after World War II. Nevertheless, especially in professional writings, it is still possible to find a bracketed entry in Chinese characters.

The significance of the unification of written and spoken Korean with the introduction of the Hangeul is evidenced by the fact that the Annunciation Day of the New Alphabet (supposedly October 9, 1446) is celebrated today in both Koreas. In the south, RK, it is named “Hangeul Day” and in the north, the DPRK, “Joseongeul Day”.²

Although **Chapter IV** (authored by Kang Byoung Yoong) is entitled “Language and language policy in North Korea”, it is a comparative study of language planning also in South Korea.

After the establishment of the two Korean states (1948), the previously unified language policy began to split in two directions and two standard languages emerged. South Korea maintained an established standard based on the language of the old Korean capital, Seoul, while North Korea proclaimed a new standard, the so-called 'cultivated language', based on the language of the North Korean capital, Pyongyang (in 1966). The language policies of the two countries differ mainly in terms of language ideology. In South Korea, a more liberal, permissive, model favoring borrowing from other languages and linguistic creativity is applied. North Korea, on the other hand, has established a conservative, authoritative model of language policy, which directs development toward the original “people’s” language, reluctant to adopt from other languages, and establishes a vocabulary

² Joseon Kingdom of Korea (1392–1897).

appropriate to North Korean ideology. As a result, the fairly uniform language of the two Koreas begins to differ. Especially in terms of vocabulary, there are many discrepancies in several areas that the speakers from both countries can no longer communicate with ease. The chapter ends with a call for the reconciliation of relations between the two countries and the striving for language and cultural unity.

Chapter V (authored by Kang Byoung Yoong) entitled “The vocabulary of the Korean language” presents the classification of Korean lexemes according to etymology, word class, and meaning. In the second part, the word change, dropping, and reappearing of Korean words is shown, through the time perspective, especially in the last century. Using examples from geographical and social varieties, the socially appropriate use of language is illustrated, the vocabulary of written and spoken language is compared, and factors that dictate the choice of words for respectful speech are pointed out. Korean slang, euphemisms, and jargon are introduced and standard and non-standard forms are confronted.

Chapter VI (by Kang Byoung Yoong) “Expressing respect” (usually related to as “honorific speech”) describes how the social hierarchy, characteristic of both Koreas, is reflected through language forms or through the use of language forms. In addition to establishing the proper relationship with the interlocutor, expressing respect requires a profound knowledge of social relationships and context that dictate the explicit use of a given language form (words, syntactic forms). Strict social etiquette dictates not only the use of appropriate language forms to indicate the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor but also the social position of others, even absent participants of a conversation. The effect of using these linguistic means can be positive (respect, distance, elevation of the status of the interlocutor), neutral, or negative (reduction of the status of the speaker, shyness, contempt). Even when the learner has mastered the Korean language as a means of expressing respect, choosing the appropriate forms remains a complicated task.

After presenting the basics and meaning of expressing respect, the work focuses on three types of respectful speech: expressing respect for the subject in a sentence, expressing respect for the object or recipient of the action (also called “humble speech” because it diminishes the importance of the speaker), and expressing respect for the interlocutor.

The first two types highlight differences in status, the first by elevating the status of a superior person, and the second by emphasizing the irrelevance of the inferior person (the speaker). Both kinds of respect can be expressed in a variety of language forms, from the addition of prefixes to a verbal or adjective base, through the use of particles to designate a subject or object, to various lexical means. At the same time, a respectful form may refer directly to the subject himself, and indirectly, respect can be expressed by using appropriate forms to denote “concrete and abstract things” that a person with a higher status possesses or expresses.

The third type of respectful speech, similar to the address systems (vi: ti) in many European languages, indicates a state of proximity or distance/formality between the speakers or politeness and respect towards the interlocutor. It is expressed with an appropriate verb or adjective ending.

The second part of the book, **Part II** (Chapters VII to XII) includes a presentation of the basic characteristics of Korean phonology, morphology, and syntax.

Chapter VII “Phonetics and phonology of the Korean language” (author Eva Vučkovič) concentrates on the presentation of sounds of the Korean language. This complex area is introduced by an explanation of general concepts and of the process of sound formation together with a description of the speech organs involved in this process. The focus is on the Korean phonological system, the vowel and consonant system, the peculiarities of pronunciation of individual sounds, and the building blocks of syllables. Phonological changes are highlighted, such as the replacement of phonemes and the vowel harmony of phonemes, which in Korean are closely related to both morphological and syntactic phenomena. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the main approaches to transliterating the Korean script into Roman. Of the more than 20 modes, applied today in Korea and elsewhere, three are presented in more detail: MR (by McCune and Reischauer), the oldest transliteration method dating back to 1939, the 1967 transliteration system created at Yale University, and the revised transliteration system, RR (Revised Romanization), introduced in South Korea in 2000. The latter converges and simplifies the MR and Yale systems.

Chapter VIII “Morphology” (author Maša Žbogar) presents the basic features of Korean morphology, starting with the definition of morpheme and the classification of morphemes in the Korean language. The diversity

of morphemes and their well-defined function is underlined, especially in grammatical morphemes that express specific meanings such as time, respectability, etc. Follows the definition of the word and the categorization of the word classes according to form, function, and meaning. At the same time, attention is drawn to the specific difficulties in distinguishing word classes in the Korean language, which originate from its agglutination nature and are also known by other agglutination languages. The dilemma of delimitation of certain adjectives and verbs is highlighted; attention is drawn to the inconsistent definition of endings, which in addition to particles, some authors treat as a special word type, while others do not. In the description of Korean word formation, two processes are presented, either from a root, which can be linked to another root for this purpose – the process of composition – or by affixes (prefixes and suffixes) – the process of derivation.

Chapter IX “A brief overview of the main features of Korean syntax” (author Andrej Bekeš) outlines the basic features of this linguistic field, starting with the basic features of the word order. The richness and role of particles and endings at all levels of the sentence are particularly highlighted. The absence of numbers, gender, and persons in Korean is pointed out and an explanation is given as to how the meanings expressed by these non-existent Korean grammatical categories are framed. The chapter dwells on sentence elements, the so-called clause building blocks, and describes the properties of the fundamental elements, subject, object, and predicate.

The following chapters, Chapter X “The structure of the dictum – predicate, arguments, supplements” (author Andrej Bekeš) and Chapter XI “The structure of the modus” (author Andrej Bekeš) deal with the key components in the semantic-syntactic structure of the sentence directly related to the process of communication, and through the act of speech intellectual and emotional spheres of life. Dictus represents a factual or imaginary non-linguistic condition or event; it refers to the speaker’s knowledge or prediction of the situation. Modus, on the other hand, expresses a subjective attitude towards what is being said and thus indicates how strongly the speaker trusts or believes in the representation of non-linguistic reality.

Chapter X on dictum first outlines the structure of the dictum of a simple sentence and explains the role of individual sentence elements, starting with the predicate, which plays a fundamental role here together with the sentence elements that stand in front of it. Chapter describes the types of predicates and presents the joining of sentence

elements/participant roles to the predicate. Proceeding from Tesnière's (1959/2015) definition of the structure of the sentence, such as actant vs. circumstant, modern linguistic approach and terminology, based on analogy with logic is applied (argument vs adjunct). Actants (arguments) are necessary to complete the meaning of a given full verb, whereas circumstants (adjuncts) represent additional optional information, that is, information that is not essential to completing the meaning of the verb. This is followed by an analytical presentation of the subject, where in Korean an unambiguous definition is not quite simple. In an extensive description, the peculiarities of the passive and the causative in the Korean language are given, and various ways of expanding the fundamental building blocks of the sentence are presented. In the conclusion are given the basic types of simple sentences and the specifics of constructions with a double-nominative (NOM_NOM), which many linguists consider a unique feature of Korean and Japanese. The author bases his claims on the recent research, views, and definitions of various Korean authors and also sheds critical light on their findings, thus going far beyond the approaches of traditional Korean grammars.

Chapter XI describes the structure of the modus. It is introduced by the explanation that the modus is expressed primarily by the elements that stand behind the predicate basis and refer to the certainty of the speaker about what is said and to his attitude toward the interlocutor. The categories of time and aspect are highlighted, which the author places somewhere between dictum and modus. The linguistic forms that express time and aspect are described and their placement in a sentence is explained. The described Korean present, past and future and their meanings are confronted with the time categories in Slovene. Aspect indicates the duration or type of temporal activity; the chapter deals with the progressive/imperfective aspect (when the activity is still in progress, it is not completed) and perfect aspect (when the form used says the action is completed). While the progressive/imperfective aspect in Korean is expressed by a suffix added to the verb base, perfection is expressed indirectly, it is understood from the context.

The chapter closes with a presentation of the core of the modus, with a discussion of the category of mood, its most typical meanings, and the linguistic forms that express these meanings (e. g. guess, wonder, desire, initiative, question, etc.). Modality is a very branched category in Korean, expressed by modal endings and modal adverbs.

Chapter XII “Multi-clause sentence” (author Maša Žbogar) expands the story of the basic structure of the sentence by presenting multi-clause sentences, which the Korean grammar divides into sentences with dependent clauses and conjunctive sentences. Ways of sentence extension with dependent clauses and with coordinate and subordinate clauses are presented.

The final part of the book, **Part III** (chapters XIII and XIV) is a textual set that reflects the author’s belief that the study of language does not end with syntax and “the primary aspect of language is speech or discourse” (p. 18).

Chapter XIII “The role of discourse particles in Korean from the point of view of the text” (author Andrej Bekeš) defines the role of text particles from the point of view of “connecting phenomena at the sentence level with the co-text and also with the broader context of communication” (p. 325). The basic characteristics of text particles and their role in text structuring are highlighted. In particular, the discourse particle *eun/neun* is highlighted, which “marks the whole unit beside which it stands as a theme or a contrasting element” (p. 316). This is illustrated in **Chapter XIV** “Case study – Theme in narrative and dialogue” (author Andrej Bekeš) by demonstration of the use of the text particle *eun/neun*. The importance of researching the textual role of individual aspects of grammatical phenomena in Korean is underlined, not only for an in-depth understanding of these phenomena but also from the perspective of the developments in the area of didactics of the Korean language.

In addition to the explanations already richly furnished with examples, the reader finds in the section **Appendices** a series of examples of short passive and causative forms, which illuminate the chapter on the structure of the dictum (Chapter X), and the original text of the narrative Sun and Moon, transcribed into Roman script and translated into Slovenian, which was previously analyzed in the chapter on the theme in narrative and dialogue (Chapter XIV).

Further information on the presented topic offers a list of explored literature and a glossary of used terms. The latter contains mainly linguistic terms in Slovene and Korean with notation in Hangeul, in Roman alphabet, and, according to their frequent use in professional texts, also in Chinese characters. Thus, the consistent approach of bringing the reader closer to Korean through the narrative “from the general to the specific”, which is applied throughout the monograph, is meaningfully rounded up. The

transparency of the material is supported by a subject index; at the end, the authors and editors of the monograph are briefly introduced, who, individually as well as a team, contributed to the presentation of the complex topic of the Korean language and linguistics to the Slovenian reader.

3 Conclusion

Introduction to the Korean Language and Korean Linguistics goes beyond the usual grammatical approaches to presenting the structures of a language. The presentation of the Korean language does not rely only on traditional Korean grammar but also reflects and applies the latest findings of linguistic research in the interpretation of Korean linguistic phenomena. In addition to an insight into the title theme, it opens up a glimpse into general linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena. It is particularly valued by its theoretical and comparative approach, which helps the reader to gain a deeper understanding of linguistic phenomena in the Korean language and to deal with similar phenomena in their own and other languages. In the spirit of the saying "You can never understand one language until you understand at least two"³, the work on Korean language structures relies on the general linguistic essence and illuminates linguistic phenomena in Korean with comparable or completely different phenomena in other languages. For the Slovenian reader, comparative examples from the Slovenian language are particularly valuable. Given the inspiring atmosphere that springs from the contributions, minor flaws (typing errors, occasional syntax slips) are easily overlooked.

My first contact with the Korean language dates back to 1989, when my husband and I spent 14 days in North Korea at the invitation of the Juche Academy (Nećak, 1992). About ten years later, I (again with my husband) visited South Korea, this time at the invitation of the Samsung Dog Rescue Center. I got a Korean dictionary in North Korea and a Korean grammar in South Korea. In both countries, I was struck by the high awareness of the importance of their own language and the pride in its historicity. With such attitudes prevailing, the widespread literacy and high level of education of the population in both Koreas do not come as a surprise. They can be considered a natural consequence of a well-defined and consistent

³ Herbert Geoffrey Willans.

language policy that promotes respect for one's own language and the self-confidence of its speakers.

A quarter of a century after my first contact with the Korean language, I received an invitation from the head of the Korean Centre, Prof. Shigemori Bučar, to present a monograph on Korean language and linguistics, it seemed like a strange coincidence, a small joke of fate. I was asked to report on a highly professional work, which by providing information about the Korean language, so distant and different from Slovenian and many other languages in general, not only promotes Korean in Slovenia; by illuminating Korean linguistic realities and language structures from a broader theoretical and comparative perspective, it calls attention of professional readers from both sides, Slovenian and Korean, inviting them to further discussion. Translating the monograph into one of the languages with a wider range of communication could also stimulate broader professional considerations.

I am grateful for this opportunity to meet with the Korean language again. I wish the Center for Korean Studies at the Department of Asian Studies at the Faculty of Arts UL every success in spreading knowledge about Korean history, society, culture, and language, and in its endeavors for a constructive dialogue between the two Koreas.

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