

It's fun, and actually useful, to know the power of the human language faculty

～ with special reference to Japanese and English ～

言語学の観点から見た人間の言語能力の魅力～日英比較を中心に

Oku, Satoshi

奥 聡

Hokkaido University
satoshio@imc.hokudai.ac.jp

1. Introduction

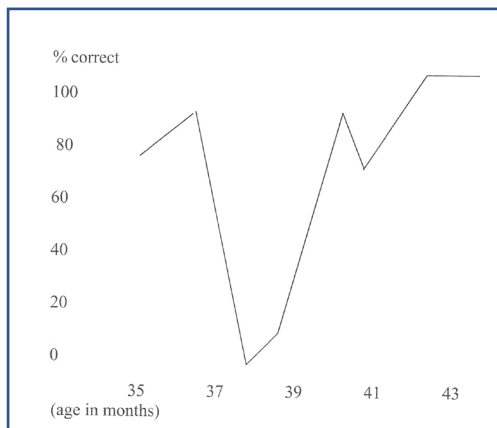
- (1) Student Questions: “Tell me, sensee (先生、英語はどうして ... なの?)”
 - a. Why do we pronounce *have to* [hæf tə], not [hæv tə]? (どうして「ハフトゥ」?)
 - b. Why does English have irregular verbs such as *break-broke, go-went, etc?* (不規則動詞?)
 - c. What is 3rd person singular present *-s*? (三単現の s って何もの?)
- (2) Your answer to a first year junior high school student:
- (3) You answer to a high school student:
- (4) Today's main theme:
Knowing what it actually is → a foundation for how to teach it.

2. Morphology: irregular forms in English and in Japanese¹

- (5) Whose utterance? (a Japanese junior high schooler?)
Adult: Where is Mommy?
Child: Mommy goed to the store.
- (6) About ____ % of English native children (age two to five) make this “overgeneralization”.
walk – walked
play – played
laugh – laughed
go – _____
- (7) **Good news for Japanese students (i)**
 - a. English native children do the same thing.
 - b. “Overgeneralization” is a good sign because you start learning language actively and creatively. (Not just blindly mimicking what is given)

¹ See O'Grady (2005: 18 - 26).

(8) *made* → *maked* → *made*



U-shaped development of the correct past tense for irregular verbs (O’Grady 2006:22)

(9) go – went – gone: why *went*?

Student complaint:

- a. “Why does English have *went*, a completely different shape from *go*?”
- b. (“Japanese does not have such a strange irregular inflection”) ← _____

(10) What is actually happening in English:

Suppletion (補充法)

the use of an unrelated word to supply inflected forms otherwise lacking

- a. go - went (*goed)²
- b. good - better - best (*gooder - *goodest)

(11) What is actually happening in Japanese:

Quiz 1

Potential forms (「-eru」 「-(r)areru」) in Japanese

- | | -rare-ru/ -e-ru | -rare-ta/ -e-ta |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| a. 食べる | 食べられる | 食べられた |
| b. 読む | 読める | 読めた |
| c. _____ | _____ | _____ |

(12) It’s interesting to learn something unfamiliar in foreign language learning and it’s a lot of fun to find something similar actually happening in Japanese!

3. Pronunciation

3.1 Phonological Alternation

(13) Voicing alternation: regular past tense marker in English³

- a. laughed, walked, jumped, pushed, danced: [t] (voiceless) (no vocal cords vibration)
- b. believed, begged, robbed, gazed: [d] (voiced) (with vocal cords vibration)

(14) Sometimes voiceless [t], sometimes voiced [d]: why? (random? You have to learn word by word?)

(15) voicing _____

When the last sound of the word is voiced, the past tense marker is pronounced voiced [d].

When the last sound of the word is voiceless, the past tense marker is pronounced voiceless [t].

² See 朝尾 (2019: 67)

³ There is a third pattern as in *landed, stated*, etc where the past tense marker is pronounced as [ɪd]. I put them aside in this talk for ease of presentation.

(16) The voicing quality of a sound segment affects the voicing quality of the following segment:

_____ **assimilation**
 (_____ 同化現象)

(17) Is there any case in which the voicing quality of a sound segment affects the preceding segment?

regressive assimilation
 (逆行同化現象)

Yes!

- (18) a. *have to*
 [hæv tə] → [hæf tə] (voiceless [t] affects/makes the preceding voiced [v] voiceless [f])
 b. *of course*
 [əv kɔ:rs] → [əf kɔ:rs] (voiceless [k] affects/makes the preceding voiced [v] voiceless [f])

(19) Student complaint:

- a. “Why does English have phonological changes; -ed is sometimes [t] and sometimes [d]?”
 b. (“Japanese does not have such a strange thing”) ← _____

(20) Japanese past tense marker is 「た」 [ta] or 「だ」 [da]

- a. mi-ta (見た) c. shin-da (死んだ)
 b. tabe-ta (食べた) d. ason-da (遊んだ)

(21) Sometimes voiceless [t], sometimes voiced [d]. Why? (random? You have to learn word by word?)

(22) Same

- a. Both in English and Japanese, the [t]/[d] alternation in a verbal inflection is governed by a voicing assimilation rule. (Japanese and English are the same language in this respect)

Similar

- b. English: when the last sound is voiced, the past tense marker is voiced [d]; otherwise it is voiceless [t]
 c. Japanese: when the last sound is a voiced consonant, the past tense marker is voiced [da]; otherwise it is voiceless [ta].⁴
 (Japanese and English are similar in this respect)

(23) **Good news for Japanese students (ii)**

Don't worry too much about voicing alternation in English. You can do it if you practice, because you are naturally dealing with instances of voicing alternation in Japanese as well.

3.2 *Difficult Consonants (?)*

(24) English speaking children's consonant development⁵
typical consonant inventory at age two

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| p | b | m | f | w |
| t | d | n | s | |
| k | g | | | |

⁴ The Japanese situation is a slightly more complicated but I put that aspect aside here. For the interested readers, consider the following paradigm: 「掃いた (hai-ta)」 vs 「剥いた (hai-da)」。Hint: The preceding forms at surface are the same (i.e., *hai-*); but the underlying dictionary forms are ...?

⁵ See O'Grady (2006: 151 - 153).

- (25) By age four, English speaking children acquire all English consonants *except two*.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|
| p | b | m | f | v | ʃ | j | w | y |
| t | d | n | s | z | (dʒ) | | l | r |
| k | g | ŋ | ʃ | | | | | |

- (26) A Buzzer Quiz

- (27) **Good news for Japanese students (iii)**

[] is the least and the last

- a. [] is a rare consonant among world languages:

not in Chinese, Korean, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Finnish, etc.

- b. [] is the last consonant that English speaking children acquire.

Don't worry too much about [] sound. It can be the last consonant to acquire.

- (28) Japanese students do not have to worry too much about the pronunciation of English speech sound segments that do not exist in Japanese. Prosody would be more important. (バニラ? コーヒー?)
「発音は、ハチャメチャと完璧の間を目指せ」(鳥飼玖美子)

<A role model for Japanese students>

not “like a native speaker”; rather, try to be clear and intelligible as a non-native speaker:

- a. 山中伸弥ノーベルスピーチ



- b. Malala Yousfzai UN Speech



4. So many ways to say the “same” thing/action?

- (29) Student complaint:

“There are many English words for a simple/single Japanese word. Which one should I use?”

- (30) 見る: *see, look at, watch, observe, examine*, etc.

The definition or usage of the word (not just Japanese translation) sometimes helps.

- (31) a. When you **see** something, you notice it by using your eyes.
b. When you **look at** something, you examine it closely, or view/consider it in a particular way.
c. When you **watch** something, you look at it for a period of time, and pay attention to what is happening. (COBUILD / Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

- (32) Student (who is an English speaker learning Japanese) complaint:

“There are many Japanese words/phrases for a simple/single English phrase. Which one should I use?”

- a. put on the hat 帽子を_____
- b. put on the shoes 靴を_____
- c. put on the gloves 手袋を_____
- d. put on the shirt シヤツを_____
- e. put on the glasses メガネを_____
- f. put on the ring 指輪を_____
- g. put on the necklace ネックレスを_____

...

- (33) **Language Myth** among Japanese students learning English:
There are many English words for a simple/single Japanese word and **the opposite situation does not exist.**
- (34) **Truth**
There are many Japanese words for a simple/single English word as well.
- (35) It's interesting to learn that there are many English words for a simple/single Japanese word, and **it's fun** to find that the opposite situation does exist: there are many Japanese words/phrases for a single English word/phrases.

5. What is 3rd person singular present –s? (三単元の S って何?)

- (36) In “X ... Y,” the form of Y is governed by the nature of X (or vice versa).
- (37) **John likes** apples. **X = John, Y = likes**
- (38) a. I am ... b. You are ...
c. Mary is ... (X = subject, Y = be verbs)
- (39) Subject-Verb Dependency (or Subject-Verb Agreement)
The form of the verb (Y) is (partly) governed by the nature of the subject (X).
- (40) Student complaint
a. Why is there such dependency in English?
b. **(Japanese does not have such a strange thing)? ← _____**
- (41) Subject-Verb Agreement system in Present Day English is the simplest among Endo-European languages.
- (42) There are a lot of dependency relations in Japanese as well.
Dependency is a common character of human languages.

- (43) conjugation of *sing*
Present Day English
a. 原形 sing
b. 三人称単数現在 _____
c. 過去 _____
d. 現在分詞 _____
e. 過去分詞 _____

Old English (A.D. 700 – 1150) (See also (Modern) German, French, Italian, Spanish, etc.)

| | | |
|------|------------|---------------------|
| 不定形 | singan | |
| 直説法 | 現在 | 過去 |
| 単数 | 1人称 | singe sang |
| | 2人称 | singest sunge |
| | 3人称 | singeþ sang |
| 複数 | singap | sungon |
| 現在分詞 | singende | |
| 過去分詞 | (ge)sungen | |

(See 朝尾 2019, pp. 60-61)

<Dependency Relations in Japanese>

- (44) The form of the verb is governed by the nature of the adverb.
 - a. 花子は決してあきらめなかった。 *花子は決してあきらめた
 - b. 智子は全く食べなかった *智子は全く食べた
- (45) The form of the verb is governed by the nature of the subject. See also (32).
 - a. 誰も教室に来なかった。 *誰も教室に来た
 - cf. 全員が教室に来なかった。 全員が教室に来た
 - b. ろくな先生がそこにななかった *ろくな先生がそこにいた

- (46) The interpretation of 「何」「誰」「いつ」 etc. must be dependent on a particle.
- a. * 太郎は、[花子が何を食べたと]思っている
 b. 太郎は、[花子が何かを食べたと]思っている 「何」 + 「か」 = something
 c. 太郎は、[花子が何を食べたか]尋ねた 「何」 + ... 「か」 = what
 d. 花子は、[誰が来るか] 知らない 「誰」 + ... 「か」 = who
 (*[誰が来ると] 知らない)
 e. きっといつか できるようになるよ 「いつ」 + 「か」 = sometime
 (*きっといつ できるようになるよ)

- (47) The form of numeral classifiers is dependent on the nature of the noun to be modified.
- a. りんごが3個、車が3台 (*3個)、ボトルが3本 (*3個)、生徒が3人 (*3個)
 本が3冊 (*3個、*3本)、答案用紙3枚 (*3個)、映画が3本 (*3個)
 b. 新しい車を、田中さんは去年 3台買った

- (48) Some cases of dependency are long distant.
 (43)(44)(45)(46c-d)(47b)

(49) **Good news for Japanese students (iv)**

Don't worry too much about dependency in English such as 3rd person singular present *-s*. Subject-Verb Agreement system in Present Day English is one of the simplest among languages. And you can do it if you practice, because you are naturally dealing with various types of (more) sophisticated dependency relations in Japanese.

6. Numbers: English speakers are stricter than Japanese speakers?

- (50) The English language is sensitive to singular/plural distinction.
- (51) a. りんごが1こあります We have an apple.
 b. りんごが2こあります We have two apples. / *We have two apple.
- (52) Student complaint:
 What is this plural *-(e)s* for? We know the number of the apple by the numeral *two*. *-(e)s* is just redundant.
- (53) **Quiz 2**
 How to translate the following question sentence into Japanese?

Which would you like?

- (54) **Situation A**
 I have **three** beautiful post cards from South Africa, and I can give you one of them you like.
 Pick one. *Which would you like?* 好きなの1枚選んで。_____がいいですか?

- (55) **Situation B**
 I have **two** beautiful post cards from South Africa, and I can give you one of them you like.
 Pick one. *Which would you like?* 好きなの1枚選んで。_____がいいですか?

- (56) When there are more than two candidates to choose, you use *dore* in Japanese.
 When there are just two candidates to choose, you use *docchi* in Japanese.
 (In English, you use *which* in both cases)

- (57) The Japanese language is more sensitive to the two or more-than-two distinction than English.
- (58) The Finnish language also behaves in the same way as Japanese.
- a. minkä = dore どれ・どの
 b. kumpi = docchi どっち・どっちの

(59) **Quiz 3**

How to translate?

Joe Biden はアメリカ合衆国の第何代大統領ですか？

_____ president of the U.S. is Joe Biden?

(60) It is easy to ask ordinal numbers in Japanese.

- a. あの店の主人、何代目？
- b. 図書館の建物は角から何軒目ですか？
- c. 開いていたのは、左から何番目の窓ですか？

(61) Sometimes, English does not have the corresponding wh-question words to ask ordinal numbers.

* Wh-th president of the U.S. is Joe Biden?

(62) **Good news for Japanese students (v)**

Don't worry too much about the singular-plural distinction in English. You can do it if you practice, because you are naturally dealing with various types of (more) sophisticated number distinction system in Japanese.

7. Conclusion

(63) How to teach heavily depends on the situation (e.g., who are your students, what is the purpose of the class).

(64) Knowing (and keep learning) what it actually is is a foundation for a good teacher.

- (65)
- a. History of English
 - b. Japanese grammar
 - c. Linguistics (study of the human language faculty)
- etc.

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