

日本人学生に対する英作文における接続詞の用法習得へ向けた 「気づき」の喚起に関する一試行

Leading Japanese Learners to Notice Logical Connector Use in English Writing

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Connecting simple sentences is a step of maturity in writing that university English students need to develop (Ishikawa, 2008). Logical connectors are words that connect segments of discourse in order to develop logic and cohesiveness, including coordinating conjunctions, adverbial subordinators and conjunctive adverbials (Celce-Murcia & Larson-Freeman, 1999)¹.

Logical Connector use by Japanese EFL Learners

Logical connector use is a challenge for Japanese EFL learners. English education leading up to university is comprised of grammatical structures, vocabulary and phrases for basic conversation (Hirayanagi, 1998, Takagi, 2001). Although learners have been introduced to logical connectors, very few learners have written more than one paragraph in English (Abe, 2001, Takagi, Fujisaku, 1999). Therefore Japanese learners are not experienced in English writing nor are they aware of the differences between Japanese and English writing (Hirayanagi). As a result, student essays in university writing classes often overuse and misuse logical connectors (Kusuyama, 2009).

Misuse of Logical Connectors

Mistakes in use of logical connectors have been related to a misunderstanding of how to use them (Abe) and to a lack of writing experience (Fujisaku). Japanese overuse of logical connectors, particularly expressions of the idea ‘because,’ has been associated to the influence of Japanese (Celce-Murcia & Larson-Freeman). Kusuyama’s research has shown L1 transfer to be an influence on Japanese overuse and misuse of logical connectors. An analysis of Japanese ESL essays and native English speaker (NES) essays showed that Japanese use of conjunctions was greater than NES use. When Abe compared Japanese second-grade high school learners’ essays to a corpus of NES use of sentence-initial ‘and’ she found that the frequency was 16% as opposed to 2.9% with NES. She also reports that an analysis of a Japanese university learners’ corpus arrived at the same high percentages of sentence-initial ‘and’ usage.

Noticing

The challenge before teachers of English writing to Japanese learners is how to assist learners in acquiring the meaning and usage of logical connectors. Kusuyama suggests that research findings of differences in Japanese and NES use of grammar features can be used in an “awareness raising tool” (2008, 26). Although there are various perspectives on the process of grammar learning, there is wide acceptance among SLA researchers that noticing is a part of the process of acquisition (Schmitt, 2002, Izumi, S. & Bigelow, M. 2000). Noticing helps the learner “to recognize differences between forms they are using and targetlike forms” (Richards, J. & Renandya, W. 2002, 159). Noticing has been defined as being consciously aware of something, and this is “a necessary condition for one step in the language learning process” (Schmidt, 1999, 131). This definition has been expanded by Robinson to define noticing as “detection with awareness and rehearsal in short-term memory” (1995, 318). Many studies suggest that when a learners’ attention is “deliberately drawn to the targeted elements via external input or task manipulation” they tend to use the form with greater accuracy (Izumi, 243).

所属

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1 Common logical connectors: coordinating conjunctions such as *and, but, or, nor, so*; adverbial subordinators such as *because, since, although* and conjunctive adverbials such as *first, also, however, and additionally*.

Applying this understanding of the role of noticing in language acquisition, this study set out to examine if noticing tasks about logical connectors could be effective in teaching Japanese learners. The following study reports on the use of prints that draw learners' attention to the differences in Japanese and English use of logical connectors in writing.

Methods

Participants

The participants in the study were forty-four Japanese ESL (aged 18–22) learners enrolled a two-year college in Japan. Forty-two are Japanese and two are multi-cultural/multi-lingual. They were first year students in the British & American Culture and Language major. The participants were in a required writing class that met once a week for a fifteen week term. The class was taught by the author and required participants to write eleven one-page essays on familiar topics.

Noticing Tasks and Procedure

Three handouts with noticing tasks were administered in week 4, 10, and 13 of the term. The objective of the handouts was to provide opportunities for learners to notice the misuse and overuse of logical connectors.

1. Noticing handout A: Connecting Ideas

Noticing handout A employs inductive learning. The handout has five examples from former student's writing that display misuse and overuse of logical connectors. The students searched for the errors and attempted to correct them. The teacher pointed out the error and the way to correct it. In the middle of the handout is a box used to have students think of Japanese words that connect ideas and the position of these words in a sentence. Student answers were elicited by the teacher and written on the board. Emphasis was made on the sentence-initial position of many Japanese connectors and the mid-sentence position of many English connectors. At the end of the task the learners were asked to reflect on what they had learned.

2. Noticing handout B: Writing Style Differences

Noticing handout B employs inductive learning. The handout illustrates writing style differences in Japanese and English through multiple translations of a paragraph. Learners first read a paragraph (1) written by a NES. Then they read a foreigners' translation (2) of this into Japanese and notice unnatural Japanese usage. Next, learners read a paragraph (3) translated by a native Japanese speaker and then a translation (4) of this into English. Learners circle sentence-initial connectors in paragraph 4 and 1, and see the difference in style.

3. Noticing handout C: Are Connectors Always in the Middle?

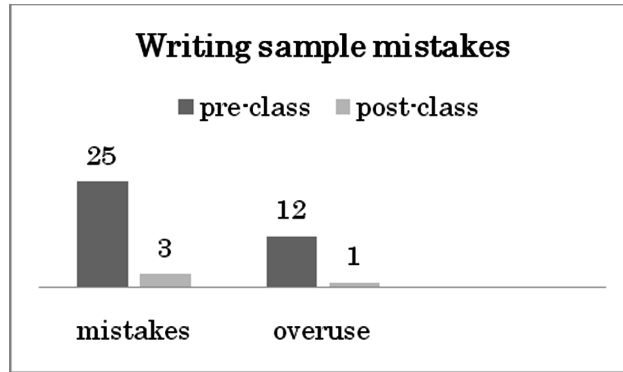
Noticing handout C employs observation, completion and communicative use of the target form. The handout uses one sentence to demonstrate incorrect and correct use of sentence-initial 'and'. Then the same process is repeated with sentence-initial 'but'. At the end of the handout the learners apply the target form to their own situation and then use the form in a communicative way with their partner.

Results

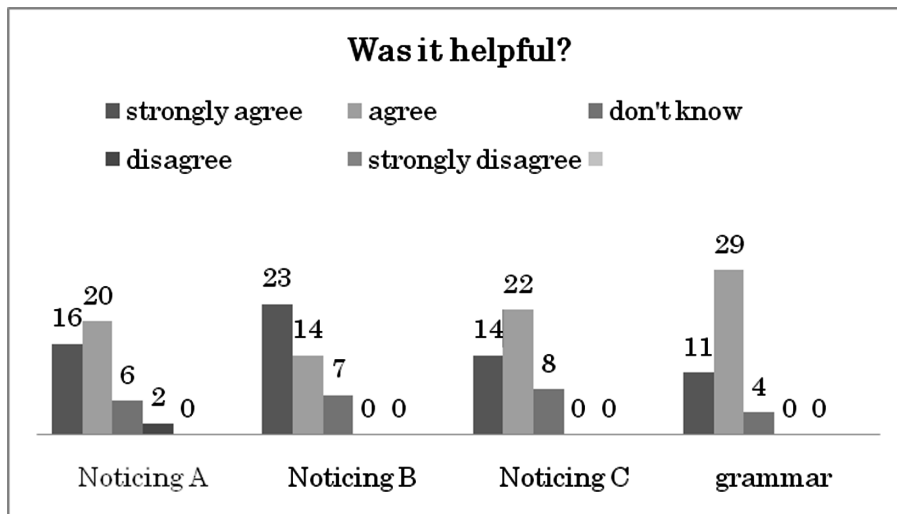
A writing sample was administered in class 1 and 14. The participants were asked to support their opinion of a music group (class 1) or a movie or TV program (class 14). They were given nine minutes to write. They were told the sample was for research purposes and would not influence their grade in the class. Permission to use the samples was requested and received. Forty-four pre-class samples were collected and forty-three post-class samples were collected.

The writing samples were analyzed for misuse and overuse of logical connectors. In the pre-class sample twenty-seven students made 25 grammatical mistakes and 12 instances of stylistic overuse. In the post-class sample four students made three grammatical mistakes and one instance of overuse.

A questionnaire was administered with the objective of measuring the participants' perception of the helpfulness of the noticing handouts. The eight questions on the questionnaire asked the participants to



evaluate handouts used in the class. Besides the three noticing handouts, there were three handouts explaining the grammar and use of logical connectors. Evaluation was done on a five-point scale of ‘strongly agree’ (5) to ‘strongly disagree’ (1) that was written in English and Japanese. Each question was also followed by a line for students to write comments. The questionnaire was completed by forty-four students in class 15.



The participants perceived the handouts as helpful (Noticing A 81%, Noticing B 84%, Noticing C 81%, grammar 90%). Twenty-three students ‘strongly agreed’ that Noticing B was helpful. The Noticing B handout led learners to uncover differences in logical connector use in English and Japanese writing style. Comments on the Noticing B handout included the following,

“It was quickly easy-to-understand. I could quickly apply it to my paper.”

“I thought I will reevaluate how I use connectors.”

“I understood the difference between English thinking and Japanese thinking.”

“I understood the difference between Japanese and English. I was able to begin writing in English style.”

Limitation of Study

Although the results above show improvement in the participants use of the target form and evidence that the participants perceived the noticing tasks to be helpful, there were limitations to this study and other influences on the participants’ language development. Limitations of this study include the small number of participants and the lack of a control group. The participants were simultaneously enrolled in other English classes during the term of this writing class. Naturally their understanding of English was developed in these classes also. In addition to the noticing tasks there were three handouts of

grammar explanations of logical connectors that also helped the participants to deepen their understanding.

Conclusions

Considering the limitation of this study and the many influences on the language development of the participants during the study, conclusions can only be tentative and possible directions for further investigation. Although Japanese university students have learned logical connectors and been exposed to their use repeatedly they are unaware of how to use them correctly. This weakness detracts from their ability to communicate their ideas in English writing. Noticing tasks that draw learners' attention to the target form and its different usage in English and Japanese can be said to have played a role in the improvement in usage seen in the writing samples. The participants agreed that the noticing handouts were helpful.

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(Noticing A)

Connecting Ideas

The sentences below are from students' papers. Can you find the mistakes and correct them?

1. Many people think separation of smoking and non-smoking areas is a good idea. Because tobacco smoke pollution is a severe problem.
2. We should increase the number of day care centers where mothers can leave children in the daytime. And, women can work peacefully during the day.
3. There are not enough people to care for old people. But the number of old people who need help is increasing.

What Japanese words connect ideas?

Where are these words in the sentence?

In English _____

The examples below have more than one place that needs to be corrected. Try to improve 4 and 5.

4. I think people should dry laundry outside. Because it is good action to protect the environment. And laundry which is dried outside gets a lot of sunshine.
5. I will analyze the causes and results of global warming. There are many causes. Pollution from carbon dioxide and exhaust is a big cause. Because we use cars and incinerators every day. And also deforestation is bad for global warming because it decreases oxygen which is needed for the earth.

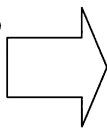
What did you learn? (Writing in Japanese is okay.)

(Noticing B)

Notice Writing Style Differences

Native English speaker's writing

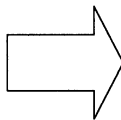
1. 'Onabe' is one of my favorite Japanese dishes. On a cold winter evening there is nothing better than a bubbling pot full of seafood, meat and vegetables. The hot soup makes my body so warm that I forget its cold outside. 'Onabe' is an easy dish to make, because the only preparation is washing and cutting the ingredients. There is a wide variety of things that can be put into the pot which makes 'Onabe' different every time. It is a very healthy dish and an easy way to eat many vegetables. Lastly, 'Onabe' is fun to eat! People sit around the hot pot and eat and chat as the food cooks. (natural English)



2. 私の好きな日本料理はお鍋です。寒い冬の夜にぐつぐつしている鍋よりよいものはありません。あたたかいスープが私の体をあたたためて外の寒さを忘れます。お鍋の準備は、材料を洗ったり切ったりするだけなのでとても作り易いです。多くの材料を鍋に入れることができるのでお鍋は毎回違います。お鍋は健康的な料理であり、たくさんの野菜を食べる方法です。最後にお鍋を食べるのは楽しいです。人々は鍋の周りに座っておしゃべりしながら食べます。(unnatural Japanese)

Native Japanese speaker's writing

3. 私の好きな日本料理は鍋物です。寒い冬の夜などには、ぐつぐつ煮立っている鍋は最高です。あたたかい汁が体をあたたためるので、外の寒さも忘れられます。そして、鍋物の準備は材料を洗ったり切ったりするだけなので、とても作り易いです。いろいろな材料を入れられるので、鍋物にはいろいろな変化をつけられます。これはたくさん野菜を食べられるので、健康的でもあります。最後に、鍋物は楽しいものです。鍋を囲んでおしゃべりしながら食べるものだからです。(natural Japanese)



4. I like Nabe in Japanese dishes. There is nothing better than Nabe in cold winter nights. Because its hot soup makes our bodies warm, we can forget the coldness outside. And, the preparation of Nabe is easy, since it is just washing and cutting of ingredients. Because, we can put in various ingredients, there are a wide variety of Nabe. Moreover, this is a healthy menu, because it is an easy way to eat a lot of vegetables. Finally, it is fun, because we can chat while eating Nabe. (unnatural English)

(Noticing C)

Are Connectors Always in the Middle?

The words 'and' and 'but' are used to connect two independent clauses and usually are in the middle of a sentence. But there are exceptions.

1. (Incorrect) We cleaned the desks and swept the floors. And washed the windows.
2. (Correct) We cleaned the desks and swept the floors, and we washed the windows.
3. (Correct) We cleaned the desks and swept the floors. And we washed the windows. The writer wants to show that to wash windows is not a normal part of cleaning a classroom.

Most American children were taught that starting a sentence with 'and' is wrong, but the way language is used is changing. People do begin sentences with 'and' in casual writing and in literature. When a writer begins a sentence with 'and' they want the reader to pause and look carefully at what follows. The same situation applies to using the word 'but'.

4. (Incorrect) The soccer team has lost many times and now with the new players it still might lose some games. But might win next week.
5. (Correct) The soccer team has lost many times and now with the new players it still might lose some games, but might win next week.
6. (Correct) The soccer team has lost many times and now with the new players _____
_____. But _____.

What do you want to do during summer vacation? Write at least three things. Write the thing you want to emphasize in a new sentence starting with 'and'.

This summer I want to _____
_____. And _____.