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The Intermediate Stages in the Grammar Acquisition: A View from Japanese

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1. Introduction

Japanese is a head-final, agglutinative language, whose basic word order is SOV. For example, the locative adjunct, *Nagoya-de* in (1a), is headed by postposition, not by preposition. This language allows scrambling as in (1b), has discourse *pro* for subject, object, and the arguments in general as in (1c), and the right dislocation is also possible even if the dislocated NP is not heavy, as exemplified in (1d).

(1) a. Hayato-wa miso katu -o Nagoya-de tabeta
-Top miso-cutlet -Acc -in ate
(Hayato ate the miso cutlet (pork cutlet with soybean paste) in Nagoya.)

b. Scrambling :

Misokatu$_i$-o Hayato-wa t_i Nagoya-de tabeta
-Acc -Top -in ate

c. Discourse *pro*:
(i) *pro* misokatu-o tabeta
((Hayato) ate the miso cutlet.)
(ii) Hayato-wa *pro* tabeta
(Hayato ate (the miso cutlet).)
(iii) *pro pro* tabeta
((Hayato) ate (the miso cutlet).)

d. Right Dislocation:
(i) [*gap*] misokatu tabeta, Hayato-ga.
((with surprise, for example,) HAYATO ate the miso cutlet.)
(ii) Hayoto-ga [*gap*] tabeta, misokatu-o.
((with surprise, for example,) Hayato ate the MISO CUTLET.)
(iii) [*gap*][*gap*] tabeta, Hayato-ga misokatu-o.
((It is surprising that) (he) ate (it), i.e., HAYATO (ate) the MISO CUTLET.)

e. tabe*(ru)
eat- (*eat*)

f. tabe-rare-nak-atta
eat-able (potential)-not-Past was not able to eat)

Like other agglutinative languages, in Japanese, the bare verb stems are impossible as shown in (1e), but the verb stems must be supported by the bound morphemes of tense, aspect, negative, mood, and so on, as shown in (1f).

In the course of Japanese acquisition, the basic word order is "acquired" very early even at the two-word stage, and discourse *pro*, the operations such as scrambling, the right dislocation, and the UG (Universal Grammar) principles (e.g., the constraints on the operations) have been attested to be acquired quite early in 2- to 3-years of age. The principles UG are, by definition, innately given, and are reflected in any adult grammar of any language. Since learning from experience is not involved to acquire these principles, the simplest possibility for their emergence is that they constrain language acquisition from the beginning of life: Their effects should be observed just at the time when the child becomes able to use relevant lexical items and structures.

Languages, however, in fact, vary. Despite the fact that human beings are genetically equipped with UG, the languages in the world are not exactly the same. In fact, the target grammar is not attained from the beginning

of life. Given the UG, then, we face an orthodox question from the new perspectives: How come the languages are so different from each other, and why does the mother tongue take a certain time to be acquired? Why do children produce the "erroneous strings" in the course of language acquisition? Under the principles-and-parameters approach to UG (Chomsky 1981), UG consists of (i) a number of principles that specify the properties to be satisfied by any language, and (ii) a small number of parameters that sharply restrict the range of possible cross-linguistic variation. The major task for modern linguistic theory, then, is to find out the exact nature of such principles and parameters.

In this paper, we will discuss two case studies of my own on the Japanese-speaking children's intermediate stages of language acquisition. The case studies aim to provide some supportive evidence for the proposal that the "errors" found in the intermediate stage of language acquisition are not the accidental errors, but reflect a parametric value different from their target mother language's, i.e., the parametric value that the adult grammar in other languages chooses. The conclusion drawn here would support the innateness of parameters restricted by UG. The young children making "errors" are in fact applying a parametric value that they have never actually heard in their linguistic circumstances. Without being directly taught by their caretakers, children naturally try out a possible parametric value that is innately endowed in his/her mind, and produce the ungrammatical string in their mother tongue at an intermediate stage of language acquisition.

2. Case Studies on the Intermediate Stages in Japanese Acquisition

2.1. The Acquisition of Complex Predicates and the Implications for Linguistic Theory

How do children start producing the verbal forms? It is well known that very young children produce the Root Infinitives, i.e., the infinitive verb forms in root clauses. For example, English-speaking children produce the bare verb *fall* instead of the past-tensed form *fell* in (2a), and *play* instead of *plays* in (2b).

(2) a. Child: He *fall down.
Mother: He did?
b. Mother: What's she doing with the tiger now?
Child: *Play # *play ball with him (Hyams 2007)

Kim and Phillips (1998) discuss the overuse of the default mood-

inflection, *-e*, in the earliest speech of one Korean two–year and argues that the overuse of *-e* parallels root infinitive forms observed in other languages. Based on the adult Korean syntax, they first show that in Korean, just like Japanese, bare verb stems are not possible as shown in (3), and that *-e* functions as a default mood marker in the respect that it is in free alternation with more specific mood markers such as *-ta*, *-ni*, and *-ia*, as shown in (4).

(3) a. *mek- 'eat' b. *anc- 'sit'

(4) Mood Morphemes in adult Korean (Kim and Phillips 1998)

Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Propositive
-ta	*-ni*	*-ia*	*-ca*
-e			

And Jiyoung, a Korean-speaking child at age 2, employed the default mood marker *-e* in the full range of environments where it is possible in adult Korean, such as declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences as in (5),as well as in the ungrammatical context as in (6).

(5) a. mwv cwu-e
water give-Imperative (give water)
b. i tak-e
teeth brush-Declarative ((I'm) brushing the teeth.)
c. enni ka-(a)
sister go-Question (Did sister go?) (Kim and Phillips 1998)

(6) a. *mek-e emma (adult form: mek-ca (propos))
eat-Decl mommy (Let's eat, Mommy.)
b. ayki pwo-*a (adult form: pwo-l-kkeya (presumption)
baby look-Decl (Baby (I) will look at it) (Kim and Phillips 1998)

Similarly, Murasugi, Fuji and Hashimoto (2007) show that Japanese-speaking children go through the Root Infinitive analogue stage as well. Sumihare (Noji 1974-77), for example, produces "infinite verbs" in the root clause with *ta*-form for the irrealis and realis meaning from around 1;6 through 1;10.

(7) a. Buu it-ta. Atti it-**ta** (1;5) (past)
onomatopoeia go-PAST there go-PAST (A car (Buu) went there.)
b. Amai amai ti **-ta** (=otita) (1;7) (perfect)
sweet sweet drop-PAST (A sweet been is dropped.)
c. Atti **i-ta** (=it-ta) (1;7) (present)
there go-PAST (I want to go there.)
d. Tii si-**ta** (1;7) (present)
onomatopoeia (pee) do PAST (I want go to take a pee.)
e. Atti **i-ta** (=it-ta) (1;7) (imperative)
there go-PAST (Go there!)
f. Meen **-ta** (1;7) (future)
onomatopoeia-PAST
((Mommy) will say "Meen."
(Mommy will get angry and would say "Meen.")

The child employs the default marker *-ta* in the full range of environments where it is possible in adult Japanese as in (7a) and (7b), as well as in the inappropriate contexts as in (7c)-(7f). We do not discuss this topic in more detail, but the "Root Infinitives" in the agglutinative languages have been found to be associated with certain default marker, i.e., *-e* in Korean, and *-ta* in Japanese, as the surrogate infinitive verb form. Whether or not the language has Infinitive forms, children start producing their first verbs with infinite (default) forms.

After the stage of Root Infinitives analogues is over, children start producing the conjugated forms of the verbs. Then, the interesting agglutinative property is observed in the children's erroneous lexical realization of the bound morphemes in the complex predicates. It has been widely observed that Japanese-speaking children, at around 2 to 4 years of age, "erroneously" produce intransitive/(di)transitive forms instead of causative forms as shown in (9), and intransitive forms instead of (di)transitive forms as shown in (9).

(8) Child (2;2): Papa fuusen fukuran-de.
Daddy balloon swell-Request
(Intended meaning: Daddy, please blow up the balloon.)
Father: Fukuran-de zyanai desyo <u>fukuramas-ite</u> desyo.
swell-Request not isn't it blow up-Request isn't it
(It is not "fukuran-de" (swell). It should be "fukuramas-ite" (blow up).)
Child: Fukuran-de.
Swell (Intended meaning: Blow up (the balloon).)

Father: Fukuramas-ite.
blow up ((You should say) blow up (the balloon).)
Child: Fukuran-de. Fukuran-de.
swell swell
(Intended meaning: Blow up (the balloon)! Blow up (the balloon)!) (Suzuki, 1987: 172 [our translation])

(9) Child (3;11): Otootyan, mado *ai-te*.
daddy window is open-Request
(Intended meaning: 'Daddy, please open the window.')

Father: Mado ake-te, daro.
Window open-Request, isn't it?
(You mean, open the window.)
Child: Un, mado *ai-te* yo.
yeah window is open-Request please
(Intended meaning: 'Yeah, Daddy, please open the window.')
Father: Mado <u>ake-te,</u> dayo.
window open-Request, it should be
(It should be "Open the window".)
Child: Iikara, mado *ai-te* yo, otootyan.
Anyway window is open-Request please daddy
(Intended meaning: 'Anyway, please open the window, Daddy.')
(Otsu, 2002: 185 [our translation])

In (8), the child asks his father to blow up the balloon. The farther provides the child with the correct lexical causative form *fukuramas-ite* (blow up), but it is never successful. The child continues producing the "erroneous" intransitive imperative form *fukuran-de* (swell). Similarly, in (9), the Japanese-speaking child incorrectly uses the intransitive form for the transitive verbs. In order to ask his father to open the window, the child produces the "erroneous" intransitive imperative form *ai-te* (be open), instead of the "correct" transitive form *ake-te* (open). In (8) and (9), the child keeps making an erroneous verb form based on his own grammar despite the direct correction (or direct negative evidence) from the subject's father.

Murasugi and Hashimoto (2004b) report that their subject, Akkun, also often produced transitive sentences with unaccusative verbs in his 2 years through 5 years of age, as exemplified in (10) through (12).

(10) Nee, ati-o *hirogat-te*
Intensifier legs-Acc spread (unaccusative)-Request
(Please stretch your legs.)

(11) Kore *ai*-toku kara saa
this open(unaccusative)-keep as Intensifier
((I will) open this and keep it open.)

(12) *Todok*-ok-ka ano hito-ni *todok*-oo *todok*-oo
arrive-shall we that person-to arrive-let's arrive-let's
(Shall we send (it)? Let's send (it) to that person.)

In each example, Akkun uses the unaccusative form of the verb in place of the transitive form. The intended meaning of (10), for example, is *hirog-e-te* 'stretch-request' (transitive) and not *hirog-at-te* 'spread-request' (unaccusative). In adult Japanese, (11) and (12) would literally mean 'I will remain open' and 'let's be delivered to that person,' respectively. Furthermore, Murasugi, Hashimoto and Fuji (2008), based on corpus analysis of Sumihare (Noji 1974-77) from the CHILDES database (MacWhinney 2000), report that Sumihare goes through exactly the same stages as Akkun in the acquisition process of Japanese verbs. Note here that Sumihare, as shown in (13), sometimes used transitives (*dasu*) for unaccusatives (*deru*), while Akkun consistently used unaccusatives for transitives.

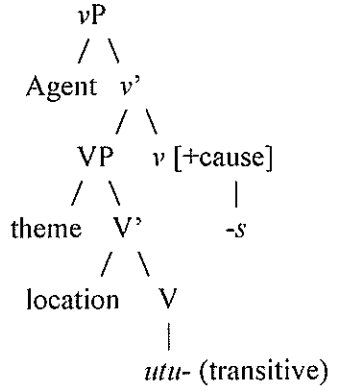
(13) Koko-kara hi-ga das-u- nze (2;6)
here- from sun-Nom take out-Particle (The sun comes out from here.)

Then, why is it the case that the Japanese-speaking children drop such bound morphemes as *-(s)ase*, *-se*, or -e in the intermediate stage of grammar acquisition? In adult Japanese, transitivity and unaccusativity are often marked by distinct suffixes, as illustrated in (14).

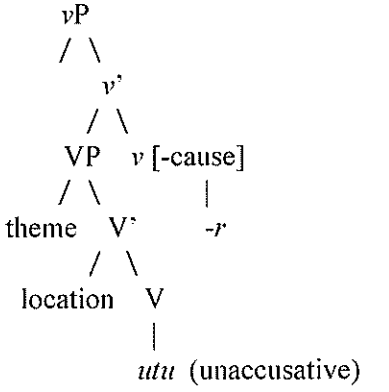
(14) a. utu-s-(r)u (= copy-pres.) / utu-r-(r)u (= be copied-pres.)
b. todok-e-ru (= deliver-pres.) / todok-(r)u (= be delivered-pres.)
c. os-ie-ru (= teach-pres.) / os-owar-(r)u (= be taught)

These examples show that the forms of the suffixes are idiosyncratic and probably have to be learned one by one. These suffixes plausibly occupy the *v* position. For example, [+cause] *v* is realized as *-s* and [-cause] *v* as *-r*, in the case of (14b).

(15) a.



b.



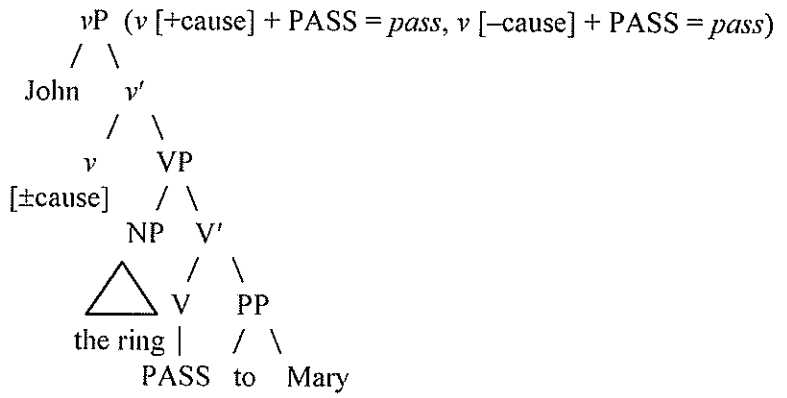
Murasugi and Hashimoto (2004b) propose that children "errors" reflect their initial assumption that the pronounced verbs are V's and that [±cause] *v* is phonetically empty. Accordingly, to those children, unaccusatives and their transitive counterparts should be homophonous, as in English. They only later realize that the surface forms of the verbs are derived by suffixing *v* to the verbal root. As the actual realization of [±cause] *v* is idiosyncratic and sometimes even null, the acquisition of verbs requires complex morphological analysis. In other words, the intermediate stage found in Japanese discussed above corresponds to adult English *pass*-type verbs where the same lexical item is used as a transitive and as an unaccusative.

In English, the same lexical item is often used as a transitive and as an unaccusative. For example, we have alternations as in (16).

(16) a. John passed the ring to Mary. b. The ring passed to Mary.

If the argument structures of these sentences are realized as in (17), then *v* is a "zero morpheme" without phonetic content whether it is [+cause] as in the case of (16a) or [-cause] as in the case of (16b).

(17) *v*P (*v* [+cause] + PASS = *pass*, *v* [–cause] + PASS = *pass*)



Consequently, '*v* [+cause] + PASS' and '*v* [–cause] + PASS' are both realized as 'pass'.

Based on the analysis shown above, Murasugi & Hashimoto (2004b) argues that Japanese-speaking children, and probably other agglutinative-language-speaking children such as Korean as well, are equipped with the *v*-VP frame from the early stage of acquisition, but it requires them some time to discover the morphological make-up of the actual verbs, which are formed by combining V and *v*. Thus, the erroneous strings the Japanese-speaking children produce in fact show the property of English adult grammar. Although this is the issue regarding the level of lexicon, there can in principle be a situation in which the acquisition of the target language takes certain amount of time and the shift from the non-target value to the target value gives rise to observable developmental effects.

2.2. The Acquisition of Complex NPs and the Implications for the Linguistic Theory

In many languages, the complementizer *that* in the presuppositional phrase in cleft sentences, the relative clause, and the pure complex in (18a), (18b) and (18c), respectively, are homophonous. This phenomenon is considered not to be accidental (see, for example, Schacter 1973 for the relevant discussion).

(18) a. It is in the park [$_{CP}$ [$_{C}$that] Ayako ate the ginger cookie for the first time]
b. the ginger cookie [$_{CP}$ [$_{C}$that] Ayako ate in the garden]]
c. the fact *(that) Ayako is smart

The parallel paradigm, however, somehow cannot be obtained in Japanese and Korean. (19a) through (19c) are the relevant examples from Japanese.

(19) a. [Hayato-ga misokatu -o tabeta no]-wa Nagoya-de da
-Nom miso-cutlet-Acc ate C -Top in Copula
(It is in Nagoya that Hayato ate the miso-cutlet for the first time.)
b. [Hayato-ga tabeta] misokatu
-Nom ate miso-cutlet (the miso-cutlet that Hayato ate)
c. [misokatu -o tukutteiru] nioi
miso-cultlet-Acc is-making smell
(*Lit.* the smell that comes from the making of miso-cutlet)

No as C is obligatory in the cleft sentences, but *no* as C must <u>not</u> be there in complex NPs in adult Japanese, as the contrast between (19a) and (19b) indicates. However, Japanese-speaking children, at around 2 to 4 of age, overgenerate *no* immediately after prenominal sentential modifiers as observed by Nagano (1960), Yokoyama (1982), Murasugi (1991), Murasugi and Hashimoto (2004b), among others.[46]

(20) a. kiiroi no ohana (2;1)
yellow-is flower (the yellow flower)
b. tigau no outi (Emi, 3;0)
differ house (the different house)
c. Emi-tyan-ga kaita no sinderera (Emi, 2;11)
Emi -Nom drew Cinderella (Cinderella that Emi drew)

The overgeneration of *no* has attracted much attention in the acquisition research on Japanese over 40 years. Regarding the syntactic status of the overgenerated *no*, three hypotheses have been proposed: (i) *no* as a noun (Nagano 1960), (ii) *no* as the genitive Case marker (Iwabuchi and Muraishi 1968, Clancy 1985, Yokoyama 1990, among many others), and (iii) *no* as a Complementizer (Murasugi 1991, Murasugi and Hashimoto 2004a).

Nagano (1960) and Yokoyama (1990) point out that the overgeneration is found with very young children around the age of early two. Nagano observes that those children overgenerating *no* had not fully acquired tense and Case-marking (including genitive Case). Yokoyama notes that the overgeneration occurred only with a limited number of adjectives (those

[46](15a) is from Nagano (1960) and (15b,c) are from Murasugi (1991).

indicating, for example, color or size). On the other hand, Murasugi (1991), based on the longitudinal and experimental studies with children of late 2 to 5 years of age, show that those children who overgenerate *no* can produce complex NPs and can insert genitive Case marker between NP and head N. And those subjects overgenerated *no* productively on a number of pronominal modifiers with adjectives and relative clauses.

Murasugi and Hashimoto (2004a), based on six-year longitudinal study with Akkun, report that he, in fact, overgenerated *no* in two distinct periods., and hence, Noun hypothesis and Complementizer hypothesis are both correct. In the first period, starting at age 2;4 through early 2;6, he showed exactly those patterns discovered by Nagano and Yokoyama. Then, the "ungrammatical" *no* "reemerged" at age 2;7 when the nominative Case markers came to be productively produced. This coincides with the period at the degree 2 stage when embedding ("complex NPs") started to show up in his spontaneous production. The overgeneration of *no/ga* that is analyzed in the text is the one in this second stage.

Although we cannot discuss two types of "overgenerated" *no* in detail in this paper (see Murasugi and Hashimoto 2004a), the issue relevant here is the second-period overgeneration of *no*. Through her investigation of the syntax and acquisition of Japanese complex NPs, Murasugi (1991) argues that Japanese- (and Korean-) speaking children at one point of language acquisition overgenerate complementizer *no* (and *ke (kes)* in Korean) because they then assume CP for the structure of the pronominal modifiers in the complex NPs (i.e., English-type complex NPs), but not TP modifier (i.e., Japanese- and Korean-type complex NPs), thereby providing evidence for the later parameter-setting in the language acquisition.

One piece of evidence that the *no* in question is not the genitive Case marker can be found in the utterances of children speaking the Toyama dialect (a dialect spoken in the middle-north part of Japan) and Korean. In standard Japanese, *no* could be the genitive Case marker, a pronoun (corresponding to *one* in English) or a complementizer (corresponding to *that* in English), as they are all homophonous.

(21) a. [John]-no hon
John -Gen book (John's book)
b. [akai no]
red-is one (the red one)
c. [hasitteiru no]
running-is one (the one that is running)

d. [robusutaa-o tabeta no]-wa Bosuton-de da
lobster -Acc ate C -Top Boston-in is
(It is in Boston that (I) ate Lobster.)

In Toyama Dialect, the genitive Case is realized as *no* as in the Tokyo dialect, but the other two *no*'s (the pronoun, the nominalizer, and the complementizer) are realized as *ga*, as illustrated in (22) through (24).[47]

(22) Genitive Case Marker
a. Emi-no hon
Emi-Gen book
(Emi's book)
b. heya-no okatazuke
room-Gen cleaning-up
(the cleaning up of the room)

(23) Pronoun
a. akai ga
red-is one (the red one)
b. hasitteiru ga
running-is one (the one that is running)

(24) Complementizer
[robusutaa-o tabeta ga]-wa Bosuton-de da
lobster-Acc ate C -Top Boston-in is
(It is in Boston that (I) ate Lobster.)

The same type of overgeneration given in (20) is observed also with children speaking the Toyama dialect. And interestingly, they overgenerate *ga* and not the genitive Case marker *no*. The following instances are reported in Murasugi (1991).[48]

(25) a. akai ga boosi
Red cap (a red cap) (Ken, 2;11)
b. anpanman tuitoru ga koppu
(a character) being associated with cup
(a cup which is pictured with "anpanman") (Ken, 2;11)

The parallel example is found in Korean as well. In adult Korean, genitive Case marker is realized with *uy*; the pronoun, nominalizer, and com-

[47]Similarly, in Korean, the genitive Case marker is realized as *–uy*, but the pronoun and the complementizer are realized as *-ke (kes)*.

[48]Similar patterns are found in the Kumamoto dialect (Murasugi 1998) and in Korean (Kim 1987 and Lee 1991) as well.

plementizer are realized with *ke (kes)*. And Korean-speaking children (mean age of children: 34.0 months), overgenerate *ke (kes)*, not *uy,* in the complex NPs as shown in (26).

(26)a. appa ssu -nun ke ankyeng-un
Dad wear-pre C glasses-top (the glasses that daddy wears)
b. uri cip -ey iss-nun ke koki
we house-at be -pre C fish (the fish that is at our house))
(Lee 1991)

The data in (25) constitute evidence that the overgenerated element is not a pronoun, either. Murasugi (1991) argues that those Japanese-speaking children who showed the overgeneration of *no* illustrated in (20) and (25) had already acquired the rule of genitive *no*-insertion between the NP and the head N in the noun phrases, applying it properly in the position after prenominal NPs. Therefore, if those children overgenerating *no* assume that the *ga* in question is a pronoun or N, then they should have inserted the genitive *no* after the NP headed by this pronoun N, as in (27a). However, this prediction is not in fact borne out. The subjects never inserted Genitive Case marker *no* in this context. That is, they never produced such ungrammatical noun phrases as those in (27b-c).

(27) a. $[_{NP}\ [_{NP}\ [_{Modifier}\ \ldots]\ [_{N}ga]]$-*no* head noun]
b. akai *ga-no* boosi
red-is N-Gen cap (the red cap)
c. anpanman tuitoru *ga-no* koppu
(a character's name) attaching(drawn)-is N-Gen cup
(the cup which is pictured with Anpanman)

Hence, Murasugi (1991) draws the conclusion that the overgenerated *no* and *ga* in (20) and (25) are not pronouns, but complementizers.

Building on this finding and independent syntactic analysis, Murasugi (1991) proposes that sentential modifiers in Japanese complex NPs are TPs (IPs) while those in English are CPs.[49] Under this hypothesis, the overgeneration of *no/ga* can be construed as follows. Children at one point of language acquisition take the CP value of the "relative-clause" parameter, and realize the C head of the relative clause by inserting an overt morpheme. Positive evidence that C can be lexically realized as *no/ga* is provided, for

[49]See Murasugi (2000) for further discussion on the syntax of Japanese relative clauses.

example, by cleft sentences such as (21c). This implies that the unmarked setting for the CP/TP parameter for relative clauses is CP. The Japanese-speaking children later reset the value as TP, based on the positive evidence available, and consequently retreat from the overgeneration of *no/ga* in the position of C.

The account above raises the question of why the TP value of the relative clause parameter is set at a later stage of acquisition. One possibility would be in the asymmetry between the structure of complex NP and the cleft sentences in Japanese. As noted before, languages, like English, complementizer, the head of the embedded CP in the cleft sentences, and the head C of the relative clauses are homophonous. However, this parallelism is not found in Japanese and Korean adult grammar: There is CP projection in the cleft sentences, but there isn't any in the prenominal sentential modifiers. But children hypothesize that it is unmarked to assume CP for both structures, and naturally realize the phonetic form of C in the cleft, i.e., *no* in Tokyo dialect, *ga* in Toyama dialect, and *ke (kes)* in Korean, for the C in the hypothesized CP complex NPs structure as well. Note here that Japanese- and Korean-speaking children have never received the CP complex NPs from their input available. They do not make the overgeneration because they learned it, but they make the "errors" based on the parameter-setting of their own, i.e., based on the innate knowledge of UG.

Another reason for the later acquisition of TP structure would be in that the required positive evidence is not so easily available in the input. The complementizer *that* is optional in English relative clauses. Hence, the mere absence of *no/ga* in adult Japanese relatives cannot serve as evidence that they are TPs. On the other hand, the complementizer is obligatory in English pure complex NPs, as shown in (28a).

(28) a. the fact *(that) John was fired
b. John-ga kubi-ni natta (*no) zizitu
John-Nom fired was C fact

If this property of (28a) follows from a principle dictating the distribution of empty C heads, as argued in Stowell (1981), then the absence of *no* in its Japanese counterpart in (28b) would serve as positive evidence that prenominal sentential modifiers lack the C-projection in Japanese (and Korean). But then, Japanese- (and Korean-) speaking children must be exposed to pure complex NPs and must analyze them in order to reset the value of the "relative-clause" parameter (or more generally, the parameter that dictates the categorical status of pronominal sentential modifiers) to TP. The

acquisition of Japanese complex NPs, thus, indicates that the process of parameter-setting constitutes one important developmental factor, and that intermediate acquisition stage found in a language reflects the parameter value of another possible adult grammar.

3. Conclusion

Despite the fact that human beings are endowed of innate knowledge of Universal Grammar, why do languages vary, and why does language acquisition take certain amount of time? The gradual language development and the "erroneous" strings children produce in the process of language acquisition would provide important data for the research on Universal Grammar. Given the Principles-and-Parameter theory, it is not surprising if some of those errors reflect the unmarked settings of the parameters and Universal Grammar.

In this paper, we presented two case studies that pursue this possibility. The first case concerned the errors Japanese-speaking children make with respect to the phonetic realization of small *v*. The second, also observed with Japanese-speaking children, had to do with the overgeneration of complementizer in complex NPs. We argued that these two cases offer strong evidence for Universal Grammar and the markedness associated with its parameter.

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