

The effect of Min dialect and speech genre on the realization of retroflex fricatives in Taiwan Mandarin

Janice Fon  
Graduate Institute of Linguistics  
National Taiwan University

Abstract:

Taiwan Mandarin is the official language of Taiwan. It has two retroflex fricatives, /ʂ/ and /ʐ/, but only the former has a dental counterpart /s/. As most Taiwan Mandarin speakers also have at least some passive knowledge of Min, a local substrate language which has no retroflex in its inventory, but has either /s/ and /z/ (the [Z] dialect), or /s/ and /l/ (the [L] dialect), many speakers are inclined to apply deretroflexion to their Mandarin retroflexes due to negative Min transfer, including /ʂ/→[s], and /ʐ/→[z, l, n], especially in spontaneous speech. This study thus intends to investigate how Min dialect and speech genre affect the realization of Mandarin /ʂ/ and /ʐ/. Twenty gender-balanced, Mandarin-Min bilinguals were recruited to perform two experiments. The Mandarin experiment had two subparts, read and spontaneous, each including the same five /ʂ/- and five /ʐ/-initial words as stimuli, along with five /s/- and four /l/-initial words serving as controls. For read speech, subjects read from printed Chinese characters as is. For spontaneous speech, the experimenter asked subjects questions to elicit simultaneous responses of the stimuli. The Min experiment was a short story with twelve /ʐ/-initial words embedded. Subjects were required to read the story fluently. Preliminary results showed a prominent Min dialect effect for Mandarin /ʐ/ realization. [z] was more likely to occur among [Z] Min dialect males, while [l] realization was more likely among [L] Min dialect speakers for both genders. For the genre effect, there were more [z, ɿ] and fewer [z, l] realizations in read than spontaneous speech among males. For female, there was a dialectal split. With [Z] Min dialect females, there were more [ɿ] and fewer [z] in read than spontaneous speech, while for [L] dialect females, there were more [z] and fewer [ɿ, l] instead. As for /ʂ/, females showed more backing in read than spontaneous speech, while no such trend was found among males. The effect of Min dialect on /ʂ/ realization is still underway. In general, the results of this study seemed to imply that cross-linguistic influences in bilinguals are rather dynamic, and are speaker- and genre-dependent.

## Acquisition of Attributive Modification by Japanese Learners of English

Makiko Hirakawa, Chuo University

This paper explores what kind of input is necessary for successful acquisition of attributive modification in English by manipulating types of linguistic input Japanese learners are exposed to; i.e., explicit instruction, study abroad (natural exposure), and input flood. If there are two or more adjectives in English, the ordering of adjectives is rather strictly determined, as shown in the examples in (1); (1a) is acceptable, but (1b) is unacceptable. In contrast, there are no such restrictions on adjective ordering in Japanese. So the Japanese equivalents in (2) are both acceptable with no interpretive differences between them.

- (1) a. small square table            b. \*square small table            (Sproat & Shih, 1991, p. 565)
- (2) a. chiisana shikakui ie            b. shikakui chiisana ie  
*small square house            square small house* (Sproat & Shih, 1991, p. 582)

Sproat and Shih (1991) suggested two types of modification, direct and indirect. Briefly, English observes direct modification for prenominal adjectives, which exhibit rigid ordering, whereas Japanese observes indirect modification so that adjective ordering is free. Laenzlinger (2005) has proposed a hierarchical order of multiple adjectives in (3), which applies cross-linguistically to direct-modification languages: absolute (A) adjectives (in NON-SCALAR PHYSICAL PROPERTY) are closer to the head noun than non-absolute (NA) adjectives (in QUANTIFICATION to MEASURE).

- (3) [QUANTIF ordinal > cardinal] > [SPEAK-ORIENT subjective comment > evidential] > [SCALAR PHYSICAL PROPERTY size > length > height > speed > depth > width] > [MEASURE weight > temperature > wetness > age] > [NON-SCALAR PHYSICAL PROPERTY shape > color > nationality/origin > material] (Laenzlinger, 2005, p.650 (14))

Two experimental studies were administered to investigate whether learners of English whose first language (L1) has no strict adjective ordering ever come to acquire L2 adjective ordering in (3) (Hirakawa et al. 2019). In Study I, an explicit instruction (EI) group ( $n = 13$ ) and a natural exposure (NE) group ( $n = 12$ ) responded to a preference task with five types of adjective combinations (see Table 1). In Study II, an input flood (IF) group ( $n = 15$ ) and a NE group ( $n = 16$ ) were involved in the same task. The EI group received 90-minute EI across three weeks while the IF group received positive evidence with multiple adjectives over 15 weeks. The NE groups participated in three or five-week intensive study-abroad programs in North America. Results from the two studies showed that many of the participants failed to make correct choices at the pre-test (Test 1) indicating difficulty with adjective ordering restrictions and that only the EI group improved in their performance at the post-tests (Tests 2 & 3).

### Selected References:

- Hirakawa, M., Shibuya, M., and Endo, M. (2019). Explicit instruction, input flood, or study abroad: Which helps Japanese learners of English acquire adjective ordering? *Language Teaching Research*, 23 (2), 158–178.
- Laenzlinger, C. (2005). French adjective ordering: Perspectives on DP-internal movement types. *Lingua*, 115, 645–689.

**Table 1 Summary of test stimuli**

	Type	Example	# of items
<u>Binary Combination</u>	(i) A-A	<i>a round glass table</i>	5
	(ii) NA-NA	<i>a small light PC</i>	5
	(iii) NA-A	<i>short brown hair</i>	5
<u>Ternary Combination</u>	(iv) NA-A-A	<i>a nice round glass table</i>	5
	(v) NA-NA-A	<i>lovely new pink shoes</i>	5

**Table 2 Study 1 - Mean accuracy rates (%)**

Type	Explicit Instruction (n=13)			Natural Exposure (n=12)			NS (n=13)
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 1
(i) A-A	60	83	97	72	73	78	85
(ii) NA-NA	65	81	79	58	73	65	79
(iii) NA-A	75	97	92	63	73	77	97
(iv) NA-A-A	40	85	98	58	68	60	82
(v) NA-NA-A	52	87	90	52	29	58	83
Mean (All)	59	86	91	61	63	68	85

**Table 3 Study 2 - Mean accuracy rates (%)**

Type	Input Flood (n=15)		Natural Exposure (n=16)		NS (n=12)
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1
(i) A-A	75	60	69	64	88
(ii) NA-NA	53	60	59	55	78
(iii) NA-A	63	71	75	65	93
(iv) NA-A-A	60	60	68	59	72
(v) NA-NA-A	40	47	36	49	68
Mean (All)	58	60	61	58	80

## Topic in Nuclear Scope

Takeo Kurafuji (Ritsumeikan University)

The Japanese topic marker *-wa* is multifaced and its functions have been investigated from several perspectives. One of the well-known restrictions on topic-marked nominals is referentiality/specificity: only referential/specific nominals can be followed by *-wa*. It follows from this restriction that the topic marker cannot be attached to wh-indefinites or QPs. There is a case in which a nominal with *-wa* is not interpreted as being referential or specific, however, as given in (1).

- (1) Wakategeinin-ga          yakuzaeiga-ni          syutuensuru-to  
 young.comedian-nom   Japanese.mafia.movie-in   appear-cond  
 taitei   soitu-**wa**    sugu                  koros-are-ru.  
 mostly   that.guy-**top**   immediately   kill-pass-pre  
 ‘If a young comedian appears in a Japanese mafia movie, mostly he is immediately killed (in that movie).’

This is a donkey sentence, where *soitu* ‘that guy/he’ in the consequent clause is interpreted as being bound by the quantificational adverb (Q-adv) *taitei* ‘mostly’. So (1) is paraphrased as “most young comedians who appear in a Japanese mafia movie are killed immediately (in that movie).” The point is that *soitu* is topic marked but it is neither referential nor specific.

Closely related is the notion of aboutness, which can be nicely captured by a dynamic approach such as Portner and Yabushita (1998) or by a speech act theory advocated by Krika (2001), as long as referential/specific nominals are concerned. Putting aside the question of whether (1) is a statement about *soitu*, the truth conditions of (1) seem to be able to be represented with the assertion operator à la Krifka (2001) as in (2).

- (2) MOST( $\lambda x$ [young-comedian'(x) &  $\exists y$ [movie'(y) & appear-in'(x, y)]]]  
 (<x,  $\lambda z$ [ASSERT[be-killed-immediately'(z)]]>)

Topic-comment structure is represented as a pair <A,  $\lambda z$ [B]>, where A a topic, B a comment, and  $\lambda z$ [B](A) is a statement about A. ASSERT[p] means something like the speaker believes that p updates a context. So roughly speaking, the consequent clause in (2) means “as for x, I assert that x is killed immediately,” which seems correct. However, a representation like (2) is ruled out for an independent reason. Krifka (2001) argues that speech act operators can be in the scope of “conjunctive” operators like *every* but not in the scope of “disjunctive” operators like *no* and *most*, based on the discussion of wh-questions with quantifiers. In (2) MOST outscopes ASSERT, which makes the representation uninterpretable.

The correct truth conditions of (1) thus should be something like (3), where the topic is the antecedent of the conditional, and the comment is the consequent including the Q-adv.

- (3) < $\lambda x$ [young-comedian'(x) &  $\exists y$ [movie'(y) & appear-in'(x, y)]]],  
 $\lambda P$ [ASSERT[MOST( $\lambda x$ [P(x)])( $\lambda x$ [be-killed-immediately'(x)]])]>

(3) is read: “As for the set of young comedians who appear in a Japanese mafia movie, I

assert that most members of that set are killed immediately (in that movie).”

Now the question is: What is the contribution of *-wa* in (2)? I would like to suggest that XP-*wa* is located in a designated syntactic position, which is assumed to be above  $\nu$ P and below ASSERTION, is interpreted as a member of the contextually salient set; i.e.  $\lambda x[x \in S_i \ \& \ \text{salient}'(S_i)]$ . This is plugged in as part of the first argument of MOST since it is the place that corresponds to the surface syntactic position of the subject.

- (4)  $\langle \lambda x[\text{young-comedian}'(x) \ \& \ \exists y[\text{movie}'(y) \ \& \ \text{appear-in}'(x, y)]]$ ,  
 $\lambda P[\text{ASSERT}[\text{MOST}(\lambda x[x \in S_i \ \& \ \text{salient}'(S_i)] \ \& \ P(x))](\lambda x[\text{be-killed-immediately}'(x)])] \rangle$

The salient set  $S_i$  refers to the set interpreted as topic, with which P is eventually replaced. So the proposed semantics of *-wa* seems vacuous truth-conditionally, but actually plays a very crucial role when we consider topic sensitivity of Q-advs as follows.

As is well known, Q-advs are topic-sensitive (cf. Chierchia (1995)).

- (5) a. Dolphins are truly remarkable. When a trainer trains a dolphin, she usually makes it do incredible things.  
 b. Trainers from here are absolutely remarkable with all sorts of animals. If a trainer from here trains a dolphin, she usually makes it do incredible things.

In the case of Japanese donkey sentences, the asymmetric quantification by Q-advs is affected by the position/topic-marking of donkey anaphora, as shown in (6).

- (6) Gakuzyutusyo-ga      ote syuppansya-kara    de-ru-to,  
 academic.book-nom    big publisher-from    come-pres-cond  
 taitee    {soko-**wa**/-ga      sore-o}/{sore-**wa**/-o    soko-ga}  
 mostly    that.place-top/-nom    it-acc    it-top/-acc    that.place-nom  
 gakkai-de      tenzisu-ru.  
 conference-at    exhibit-pres

‘If an academic book appears from a big publishers, usually it exhibits it at a conference.’

When *soko-wa* is used in (6), clearly the Q-adv asymmetrically quantifies over the domain of publishers that have published an academic book, not the domain of academic books that appear from a big publisher. On the contrary, when *sore-wa* is used, the latter set is targeted by the Q-adv. At the point of interpreting the antecedent clause, it is unknown which set is salient. But when *sore/soko-wa* is interpreted, the salient set is indicated and it provides the target of Q-advs. This effect is caused by the set saliency given by  $\text{salient}'(S_i)$ .

## References

- Chierchia, Gennaro (1995) *Dynamics of meaning*, University of Chicago Press.  
 Krifka, Manfred (2001) Quantifying into question acts. *Natural Language Semantics* 9: 1-40.  
 Portner, Paul and Katsuhiko Yabushita (1998) The semantics and pragmatics of topic phrases. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 21: 117-157.

## Metaphor is a speech act: In comparison with what you may call “simile.”

KJ Nabeshima (Kansai University)

This paper is composed of three sections. In Section 1, I will discuss “what’s hidden” in metaphor. Metaphor is called “隠喩” in Japanese and there seems to be something hidden. The same intuition is expressed by Donald Davidson as “the hidden meaning of the metaphor” (Davidson 1978: 39). I will argue that metaphor involves make-believe and what is hidden is that the metaphor is treating the make-believe real.

In Section 2, I will take what is normally called simile and introduce some of the recent studies on metaphor makers. Metaphor markers are expressions such as *as* and *like*, which distinguish simile from metaphor. However, recent studies such as Goalty (1997) demonstrate that there are a number of metaphor markers. Accordingly, I will argue that a “simile” is a half-baked metaphor that makes what’s hidden in metaphor explicit.

In Section 3, I will argue that metaphor has stronger speech act characteristics than “simile.” In Searle’s classification, “simile” falls under the category of assertives, whereas metaphor has the characteristics of directives. Metaphorical expressions direct the listener to see that the make-believe as real. Furthermore, metaphor is also an invitation to joint make-believe such as playing house. This further adds stronger speech act characteristics to the metaphor.