JFL Learners' Referential-Form Choice in First-through Third-Person Narratives

YANAGIMACHI Tomoharu*

This study investigates the selection of one referential form, a full noun phrase (NP), pronoun, or zero pronoun, over another in oral narratives by English-speaking learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL). First-, second-, and third-person narrative data were collected through film-retelling and role-play tasks from 36 learners of Japanese at three proficiency levles as well as from 15 native Japanese speakers.

While the use of zero pronoun in subject position for first- and second-person reference was frequent and close to target-language (TL) norms for all three proficiency groups, in third-person contexts, the learners supplied more frequent overt reference than their TL counterparts. It is argued that this variation was caused by the different discourse functions the referential forms performed (deictic vs. anaphoric reference) and by the different narrative types in which the forms were used (context-embedded vs. context-displaced narrative).

The findings have theoretical implications for SLA research in general in that they illustrate the importance of functional conditions in the JFL learners' acquisition of referential-form use.

INTRODUCTION

This study will investigate Japanese-as-a-foreign-language (JFL) learners' selection of one referential form, a full noun phrase (NP), pronoun, or zero pronoun, over another in their oral discourse production.[1] In attempting to analyze and explain why JFL learners choose referential forms in the target

---

* 柳町智治: Assistant Professor, International Student Center, Hokkaido University.
[1] In this study no distinction is made between unmodified and modified full NPs. Both are treated in the same category of 'full NPs', in contrast to pronouns.

language (TL) in the way in which they do, the present study situates itself along with other SLA studies in the functional tradition. Functional approaches to second-language (L2) studies assume that linguistic forms reflect and derive from linguistic functions (e.g., Pfaff 1987; Tomlin 1990; Klein 1990). If this assumption is applied to the present topic, it is hypothesized that referential forms will be realized in L2 narratives according to the forms' functions in discourse and the speakers' communicative needs, rather than the grammatical properties of the forms or structural differences between the native language (NL) and TL. The differing, and often contradictory, results in previous studies on learners' acquisition of referential forms, which will be reviewed below, may indeed have been induced by the nature of the different tasks given to the learners and the communicative function of the particular feature elicited by the tasks. A step-by-step, either-or view of the development of the L2 learners' referential system, i.e. as moving from the stage of oversupplying unnecessary overt forms to that of learning to drop them, or vice versa, is apt to fail to capture the complex nature of its development. The present study tries to explain variability in learners' selection of referential forms by considering the type of reference linguistic tasks called for as well as the type of context where the forms are employed.

Background of the Present Study

1 Previous Studies on L2 Speakers' Referential Form Choice

In the past decade, many research studies, mostly in the ESL context, have examined how and why L2 learners select one referential form over another at a given moment in narrative discourse, but the results from these studies are mixed and far from conclusive. These studies can roughly be divided into three major groups depending on their findings and claims. The first group consists of studies which found that L2 discourse tends to contain a larger percentage of zero pronouns than its TL counterpart (e.g., Huebner 1983; Fuller and Gundel 1987; Gundel and Tarone 1983; Williams 1988, 1989; Sato 1999). In contrast, the second set of studies (Tarone and Yule 1987; Fakhri 1989; Tomlin 1990; Kumpf 1992; Jin 1994; Polio 1995) argues that it is more difficult for learners to use more attenuated referential forms than to use explicit ones; they tend to choose full NPs over lexical pronouns or choose lexical pronouns over zero pronouns.[2] Some of the studies in this group (Fakhri 1989; Jin 1994; Polio 1995) also argue that the selection of referential options by learners changes over time according to the learners' proficiency levels, moving from less attenuated to more attenuated discourse. The findings from the third set of studies (Klein 1986; Klein and Perdue 1992;

---

[2] Gullberg (1996, 1998) discusses videotaped narratives of three learners of French and three learners of Swedish, and reports that these learners showed frequent linguistic over-marking not only in speech but also in gesture.

Hartford 1995; Yanagimachi 1996, 1997), however, suggest greater complexity in interlanguage (IL) reference development. Their data suggest that learners do not develop their reference-maintenance system in a unidirectional, or linear fashion, moving from a less attenuated form to a more attenuated one, or vice versa. Rather, learner data display deviation from the TL norm in both directions, being too attenuated on one occasion but too overt on another.

2 First- and Second-Person Reference vs. Third-Person Reference

Littlewood (1981) proposes that variability in IL should be examined from three perspectives: (a) the communicative function of a feature; (b) the linguistic environment of the feature; and (c) social and situational factors (such as pressure or need to speak according to social norms). Tarone and Parrish (1988) cite these three criteria in their study on the task-related variation of ESL speakers' use of grammatical articles, and make the point that earlier works on SLA did not pay much attention to Littlewood's first criterion, the communicative function of the feature under investigation.

Among studies which investigated L2 learners' acts of reference, closely related to the issue of the communicative function of referential forms is Klein's (1986, 1990) distinction between first- and second-person deictic reference and third-person anaphoric reference. Klein argues that while both first-/second- and third-person reference belong to a uniform syntactic class (e.g., they can be subjects if used in that position), they serve different communicative functions. According to Klein (1984, 1986, 1990) and Klein and Perdue (1992), it has been shown in a number of studies including their own that first- and second-person pronouns are always acquired earlier than third-person pronouns in both first-language (L1) and L2 development. Klein argues this is because first-/second-person pronouns and third-person pronouns have different functional properties and because, in contrast with the pro-drop parameter hypothesis (e.g., White 1985, 1989), learners acquire the pronouns according to their function.

He explains that first- and second-person *deictic* reference maintains reference to the present speaker, listener, or groups containing these, while third-person *anaphoric* reference maintains reference to a person or object mentioned before. He further explains that, on the one hand, deictic first-/second-person reference is a fundamental mechanism found in all natural languages, and that learners can understand the basic principles of deixis in their TL with little difficulty. Moreover, the meaning of deictic reference can be inferred from the immediate context. Third-person anaphoric reference, on the other hand, involves "a highly complex mechanism of referential choice and movement" (1990: 229), and preceding information is also subject to continuous change with time, which results in higher memory load. These factors make it difficult for the speaker to keep track of previously introduced entities and to keep reference to the participants straight in

anaphoric reference. A summary of Klein's distinction of first-/second-person deictic reference and third-person anaphoric reference is given in Table 1:

Table 1   First-/Second-Person Reference vs. Third-Person Reference

First- / second-person reference	Third-person reference
· Deictic reference	· Anaphoric reference
· Refers to present speaker / listener	· Refers to entity previously introduced
· Immediate contextual support	· Little contextual support
· Works similarly in all languages	· Complex and has to be learned
· Low memory load	· High memory load
· Acquired early	· Acquired later

(Klein 1986, 1990).

Another study that looks at a closely related issue from the perspective of the relationship between the task type and elicited discourse production is Robinson (1995). He collected oral narrative data from 12 intermediate-level ESL learners in two different task conditions, Here-and-Now and There-and-Then, and compared the data with respect to target-like use of articles, propositional and syntactic complexity, lexical load, pausing, and utterance length. He argues that the Here-and-Now task condition requires present tense and context-embedded reference, while the There-and-Then task involves displaced reference, and that displaced reference is more cognitively demanding and therefore more difficult for L2 speakers than context-supported reference. He writes:

> Consequently, talk about the Here-and-Now, which is context-supported, may well tempt L2 learners to stay within, or revert to, the structurally simple pragmatic mode, requiring the interlocutor to fill in large quantities of linguistically uncoded information from the context. However, where context support is not available, as in the case of displaced reference, the language user had to ensure that all the necessary presuppositions are coded within the message. (p. 104)

His data confirm this hypothesis. The more complex There-and-Then condition elicited shorter and less fluent but more accurate and complex oral production than the Here-and-Now condition. A summary of Robinson's distinction of Here-and-Now and There-and-Then conditions is given in Table 2.

Although Robinson's study does not specifically look at learners' selection of referential forms in discourse production and does not mention Klein's works, it provides significant insights into the present topic. His distinction of the Here-and-Now vs. the There-and-Then seems to bear some resemblance to Klein's distinction of deictic and anaphoric reference. The Here-

Table 2   Here-and-Now vs. There-and-Then Conditions

Here-and-Now	There-and-Then
· Context-supported reference	· Displaced reference
· Needs less linguistic coding	· Needs more linguistic coding
· Cognitively less demanding	· Cognitively more demanding
· Longer and more fluent production	· Shorter and less fluent production
· Less complex and accurate	· More complex and accurate

(Robinson 1995).

and-Now condition and first- / second-person deictic reference share similar features such as the existence of contextual support, and lower demand and cognitive load on the speaker; similarly, opposite features are shared by There-and-Then and third-person anaphoric reference.   Of particular interest to the present study is that Robinson's model implies that the There-and-Then, displaced reference condition would produce explicit and redundant referential forms, as opposed to implicit and ambiguous ones, more frequently than its Here-and-Now, context-embedded counterpart.   This will be tested and discussed in the following sections.

   Most studies on L2 speakers' acts of reference have dealt only with third-person narratives due to the nature of the data collection materials employed; generally, procedures involving picture or film retelling tasks were used. Questions as to how differently or similarly referential patterning is realized in first- and second-person versus third-person contexts have been for the most part unaddressed.   Therefore, as Polio (1995) admits, the findings from such studies cannot necessarily be generalized to first- and second-person contexts before we actually look at the latter.   If the frameworks which Klein (1986, 1990) and Robinson (1995) propose hold true, first-/second-person narratives and third-person narratives should elicit different patterns in referential form selection by L2 speakers.

The Present Study

Most of the previous studies that investigated L2 speakers' selection of referential forms involved speakers of various L1 backgrounds learning English; i.e., an ESL context (Huebner 1983; Gundel and Tarone 1983; Fuller and Gundel 1987; Tarone and Yule 1987; Williams 1988, 1989; Tomlin 1990; Kumpf 1992; Hartford 1995).   One of the problems with this imbalance in the subject group pool is that when these learners produce zero pronouns in their utterances, we cannot know if non-overt forms have been actually internalized in the learners' IL system, if they are just transferring a referential strategy from their often more deletion-inclined native language (NL) into their IL, or if the use of non-overt forms is a manifestation of the Topic-prominent nature of early stages of ILs as claimed in some previous

studies (e.g., Fuller and Gundel 1987; Jin 1994). Studies have yet to be done
with L2 learners of Japanese, which utilizes zero pronouns frequently, in
order to check whether or not we will get similar results with L2 Japanese
data.

Another advantage of using L2 Japanese data to explore this topic lies in a
particular characteristic of reference in Japanese. Ellipsis is abundant in
Japanese (e.g., Clancy 1980; Makino and Tsutsui 1986; Maynard 1985, 1990,
1998; Shibatani 1990), and its first- through third-person pronouns are often
not legitimate referential options and are not employed as frequently as in
English, which leaves learners with two extreme referential options, full NPs
or zero pronouns. It thus provides an interesting research question: how do
English-speaking learners of Japanese, facing the task of learning a language
which does not have their most common referential-form option, the lexical
pronoun, manage reference in the new language? Will they rely on explicit
referential forms, full NPs? Or will they resort to the other referential
option, zero pronouns? Or will they still stick to pronominal forms, even
though the forms are rarely used among TL speakers and have to be used very
cautiously? We can investigate these research questions only when we have
JFL or JSL (Japanese as a second language) learners as subjects. Cross-
linguistic inquiries which deal with two languages as different as English and
Japanese are thus particularly necessary and meaningful.

The present study should be able to provide valuable insights into the issue
of how similarly or differently JFL learners select referential forms in first-
through third-person narratives. Previous studies (Huebner 1983; Klein
1984, 1986, 1990; Klein and Perdue 1992) have suggested that L2 learners
seem to develop their system of first- and second-person reference earlier than
third person-reference. Robinson's (1995) study on the relationship of narra-
tive types (Here-and-Now vs. There-and-Then) and learner production also
suggests that first- and second-person reference should be easier than third-
person reference because in the former the task is 'context-embedded', while
it is 'displaced' in the latter. The first- through third-person data of the
present study come from the same subject groups, and this makes the
comparison of referential patterning among these different contexts possible.
It is hoped that looking at JFL learners' referential-form choice from this
perspective will give us a clearer picture of why L2 speakers choose one
referential form over another in the way they do.

The following questions are asked in the present study:

Question 1: How can the referential-form selection of English-speaking
    JFL learners be characterized? More specifically, how will learners use
    the two extreme referential options in Japanese, full NPs and zero
    pronouns, when they create narrative stories, and how will their referen-
    tial-form selection compare to that of native speakers of Japanese? And
    more importantly:

Question 2:   How will differences in the type and context of narratives
(first- vs. second- vs. third-person) affect the speakers' selection of refer-
ential forms?   If there is any difference found among these conditions,
what does this imply for the study of L2 reference in general?

Methodology

1   Research Participants

The L2 Japanese (hereafter, L2 Jpn) data of the present study were collected
at two summer intensive Japanese language institutes in Japan and at a
university in the U.S.   The research patricipants, undergraduate or graduate
students at universities in the U.S. or Canada, were all native speakers of
English, a total of 36 learners at these three sites.[3]   As for the assessment of
the learners' proficiency levels, in-house oral placement test scores at the two
summer intensive programs and institutional status at the U.S. university
were used as a proxy for proficiency, with a five-to-seven-minute informal
conversation to collect demographic information at the beginning of each
interview being employed as a common yardstick to compare learners from
the three different programs.[4]   When the data from the learners from the
three sites were combined, learners who fell on the borderline of any two
groups were excluded so that the participants in the present study would
represent distinctive groups of three proficiency-levels: novice, intermediate,
and advanced groups.

During the interviews with the learners, English baseline data (NL data)
were also collected from all of the 36 learners for later comparison between
Japanese and English narratives, as well as for checking the learners' intended
meaning in their sometimes unclear Japanese narratives.   Twelve sets of
samples of English narratives were selected from the data base.   In addition
to the L2 Jpn data, Japanese baseline data (TL data) were also collected.
Fifteen undergraduate and graduate students of a university in Hakodate,
Japan were recruited.[5]   The TL group was interviewed with the same proce-

---

[3]   Although the data for this study were collected in Japan, and some of the learners had
studied Japanese in Japan for some time at the time of the data collection (JSL
context), we still call them JFL learners because: (a) all first started taking Japanese
lessons in their English-speaking home countries; and (b) the majority spent most of
their Japanese language study time in their home universities in the U.S., and thus in a
foreign-language-learning environment.

[4]   The proficiency levels of the learners in the Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced
groups of the present study roughly correspond to the respective levels in ACTFL's
Proficiency Guidelines, since the ACTFL rating scale was partially employed for place-
ment purposes in two of the three institutions where the learner data were collected.

[5]   Like most university students in Japan, the volunteers had had minimal or no contact
with non-native speakers of Japanese in Japan prior to the interview, and the majority
of them, nine out of 15, had never been abroad.

Table 3　Profile of Participants

	Eng L1 (NL)	Jpn L2 (Nov)	Jpn L2 (IntM)	Jpn L2 (Adv)	Jpn L1 (TL)
N	12	16	12	8	15
Female/Male	4/8	9/7	4/8	3/5	8/7
Average age	23.3	21.8	23.8	26.5	21.1
Average years of formal Japan study in US or Canada	—	1.7	2.1	2.7	—
Avg. years in Japan	—	0.0	0.2	2.2	—
Total years of Japan study	—	1.7	2.3	4.9	—
Avg. years abroad	—	—	—	—	0.1

dures as the ones used for the L2 Jpn group, except that the TL group did the four retelling tasks only in Japanese.　A summary of the research participants is given in Table 3 above.

2　Data Collection and Analysis

Four narrative tasks were given to each participant, as summarized in Table 4.　The first task was a role play here called the 'Suspect' story.　In this role play the participants had to prove their alibi given that there had been a murder in the neighborhood and they were under suspicion of the crime. The researcher asked the participants to tell what they had done the day before to a police officer, who was played by the Japanese assistant.　This task was designed to elicit the speakers' use of first-person reference.　In the second task, the 'Picnic' story, the researcher showed the participants a ten-frame line-drawing cartoon in which a girl went on a picnic with a sandwich, which she lost on the way to the park.　The participants were then asked to retell the story of the cartoon as if it had happened to them when they

Table 4　Four Tasks

	Task name	Target	Speaker task	Listener
Task #1	'Suspect'	1st-person reference	To retell what they did the day before	A Japanese person [information gap]
Task #2	'Picnic'	1st-person reference	To retell story from a cartoon strip	A Japanese person [information gap]
Task #3	'Diet'	2nd-person reference	To retell story from a short video clip	The researcher
Task #4	'Baby'	3rd-person reference	To retell story from a shot video clip	A Japanese person [information gap]

were a child.   This task was also designed to elicit the speakers' use of first-person reference.   The third task was the 'Diet' story.   The researcher showed each speaker a two-minute silent video clip in which the researcher, the protagonist of the story, had gained weight and gone on a crash exercise program a month previously.   After watching the video clip, the participants were asked to remind the researcher of what had happened the month before and to persuade the researcher to join a sports club.   This task was designed to elicit the speakers' use of second-person reference.   In the last task, the 'Baby' story, the participants were asked to watch a two-minute silent animation,[6] and to retell the story to the Japanese assistant in as much detail as possible.   This task was used to elicit the use of third-person reference.

As suggested in the previous literature regarding the technique of eliciting oral production data based on task-based procedures (Brown and Yule 1983; Tarone and Parrish 1988; Tarone and Yule 1989; Yule and Tarone 1990, 1997; Yule 1997), a native Japanese-speaking assistant was present at the first, second, and fourth tasks so that an information gap would be created between the story teller, who was the research participant, and the listener, who was the Japanese assistant.   All transcribed narratives were first divided into clauses; all main and subordinate clauses were counted as such,[7] except for direct quotation verbs such as *iu* 'to say' and *omou* 'to think', following the procedures adopted in such studies as Hinds (1983), Clancy (1980), Clancy and Downing (1987), and Kumpf (1992).   Slips, false starts, abandoned utterances, and meta-cognitive remarks were not counted toward the statistics.

Results

Table 5 shows the frequencies and proportions of full NP, pronoun, and zero pronoun use in the subject position for the three learner and TL and NL groups in the four tasks combined.   Every learner group used pronouns only 5 to 9% of the time; this was very close to the TL level of 4%.   This low frequency of pronominal use by the learner groups makes a striking contrast

---

[6] The video clip shows the first two minutes of an animation film titled "Every Child." The story starts with a middle-aged man working in an office.   He finds a baby sitting on the doorstep, and brings it into his office.   He finds himself too busy to take care of it, and puts it on the doorstep of a neighbor's house, where an old couple are living with their dog.   The couple find the baby and start taking care of it.   Their dog becomes jealous and decides to leave the house.   The old couple finally find him lying outside the house, pick him up, and become a happy family again.

[7] Sato (1999), which also deals with data from English-speaking learners of Japanese, excludes subject of subordinate clauses from its quantitative analyses.   Sato argues that one of the reasons for his low-proficiency level learners' greater use of null subjects than that of the counterparts in Yanagimachi (1997), on whose data the present paper is based, is due to the difference in the handling of the data in the two studies.

Table 5   Frequencies of Forms Used in Subject Position in the Four Tasks Combined

	NL (N=12)	Nov (N=16)	IntM (N=12)	Adv (N=8)	TL (N=15)
	%(N)	%(N)	%(N)	%(N)	%(N)
Full NP	9 (94)	26 (199)	16 (148)	14 (111)	11 (154)
Pronoun	63 (663)	7 (56)	9 (76)	5 (43)	4 (48)
ø	28 (300)	67 (508)	75 (671)	81 (641)	85 (1163)
Total	100 (1057)	100 (763)	100 (895)	100 (795)	100 (1365)

(NL=English native speaker (English L1); Nov=Novice (Japanese L2); IntM=Intermediate (Jpn L2); Adv= Advanced (Jpn L2); TL=Target language speakers (Jpn L1)).

with the English data (NL) where pronouns were used 63% of the time.   As for the frequencies of zero pronouns, the learner groups used them 67 to 81% of the time, again much closer to the TL group's 85% than to the English group's 28%.[8]   Though the frequency of full NPs used by the three learner groups seems to gradually approximate that of the TL group over time, even the Novice group employed them only 26% of the time, much less frequently than they used zero pronouns.

Table 6 shows the proportions of zero pronouns in the subject position for each of the four tasks.   The results for the Japanese narratives are represented graphically in Figure 1.   For the first three tasks, which elicited first- and second-person reference, the learners used zero pronouns 74 to 95% of the time.   These high frequencies of zero pronouns make a striking contrast with the English (NL) data, where the omission of subject pronouns occurred only 12-25% of the time.   This high frequency of zero pronouns in learners' Japanese narratives seems to provide evidence, at least in first- and second-person reference, against those previous studies which found that it was difficult for L2 learners to learn to use zero pronouns.   The present data show that even learners with a non-deletion-inclined L1 like English were able to employ non-overt forms from the earlier stages of their IL development.   Such non-overt reference by the learners appeared even in environments where it is not allowed in English, as in the following example:

(1) "ø (=watashi) hirugohan o tabeta ato de, uhh, nijikan, nijikanhan, uhh, ø (=watashi) moo ichido kurasu ga, aru kara, uhh, ø (=watashi) sono aida ni, kurasu ni imashita."

'After ø (=I) ate lunch, uhh, for two hours, two and half hours, uhh,

---

[8] According to Williams (1988, 1989), in English the omission of subject pronouns is allowed only in the second clause of coordinated constructions where the subject NPs are co-referential and the structure of the two clauses is parallel, as in the following example:

(7) He ran into the house and ø bolted the door.

Table 6   Proportions of Zero Pronouns (%) in Subject Position for the Suspect, Picnic, Diet, and Baby Tasks

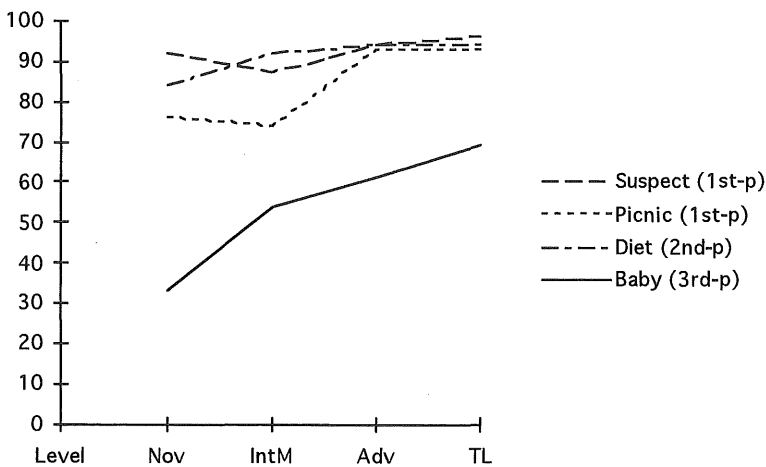|	NL (%)	Nov (%)	IntM (%)	Adv (%)	TL (%)
Suspect (1st-person)	25	91	87	95	96
Picnic (1 st-person)	12	76	74	93	93
Diet (2nd-person)	14	84	92	94	94
Baby (3rd-person)	38	33	54	61	68

Figure 1   Proportions of Zero Pronouns (%) in Subject Position for the Four Retelling Tasks

since $\emptyset$ ($=$I) had another class, uhh, $\emptyset$ ($=$I) was in class during that time.'   (Intermediate-07-S)

If we look at the results from the third-person narratives in Table 6 and Figure 1, however, we find that the learners shifted their referential choice to a less attenuated pattern and omitted subject pronouns as little as 33% of the time.   The percentage point gap between the learners and the TL speakers, who omitted subject pronouns 68% of the time, was never approached in the first-/second-person narratives.   There also seemed to be a developmental trend across the groups.   The learners' use of zero pronouns appeared to gradually approximate the TL level over time.   The learners, especially the lower-proficiency learners, had a more difficult time operating in the TL referential system in the third-person context than in the first- and second-person contexts.

Discussion

If the difference in discourse structure between non-deletion-inclined English and deletion-rich Japanese had been a major factor, the learners in the present study would have produced fewer zero pronouns. This simply did not occur in their first- and second-person narratives as shown in Table 6. Rather, even the lowest proficiency-level learners utilized non-overt forms frequently in their stories. In Japanese, learners do not have a strong pronominal option and have to choose between the two extreme options of full NPs and zero pronouns, which may be responsible for increased use of zero pronouns in the present data. It is, nevertheless, still worth noting that whenever the JFL learners had to make a choice, they chose zero pronouns over full NPs in these narratives most of the time. The TL-like performance by the learners may be surprising if we consider the fact that the learners would have had few opportunities to talk in extended discourse in Japanese inside and outside of the classroom in the manner required in the present tasks. Despite the lack of practice and experience in this respect, the learners still performed well. It seems safe to say that using zero pronouns in the subject position was not particularly difficult for JFL learners in first- and second-person narratives in the present study.[9]

As shown in Table 6 and Figure 1, however, the learners, especially the lower-proficiency learners, clearly had a more difficult time operating in the TL referential system in the third-person context than in the first- and second-person contexts. Why did this happen? It may have been caused partly by the type of act of reference the retelling tasks called for. In the first- and second-person Suspect, Picnic, and Diet narratives, most cases of reference were made to the main protagonist of the stories, the speaker in the Suspect and Picnic stories, or the listener in the Diet story, both of whom were present at the interview. This immediacy in the narrative situations and contexts made it quite obvious to the interlocutors who the story was about, even before the speakers actually started their narratives. Even when new third-person referents were introduced in these stories, the already established first- and second-person topics continued to receive the status of default referent with inexplicit reference. The following example illustrates the point:

(2) [First-person narrative, Novice-level learner]

---

[9] However, two learners in each of the Novice and Intermediate groups used first- and second-person pronouns much more frequently than the rest of the group members. Yanagimachi (1999) provides a more detailed discussion of individual differences in JFL learners' referential-form selection.

"... *ee, uhh,* ø (=*watashi*) *aruite, gakkoo ni kimashita.   Uhm, asa,
uhm,* ø (=*watashi*) *nihongo no kurasu ga arimashita,* <u>*Tanaka-sensee no*</u>
<u>*nihongo no kurasu,*</u> <u>*takusan hito,*</u> *ga a, ga, arimashita.   Uhm, ato de,
uhm,* ø (=*watashi*) <u>*Yamada-sensee no,*</u> *uhh, no hanashi o, kikimashita,
uhh, sorede, uhm,* ø (=*watashi*) *kimono no kurasu ni ikimashita.*"
'... er, uhh, ø (=I) came to school on foot.   Uhm, in the morning,
uhm, ø (=I) had a Japanese class, in <u>Professor Tanaka's</u> Japanese
class, there were <u>a lot of people.</u>   Uhm after that, uhm, ø (=I)
listened to, uhh, <u>Professor Yamada's</u> talk, uhh, then, uhm, ø (=I)
went to a kimono lesson.'

(Novice-09-S)

Despite the appearance of other story participants such as <u>Tanaka-sensee</u>
'Professor Tanaka', <u>takusan hito</u> 'a lot of people', and <u>Yamada-sensee</u> 'Pro-
fessor Yamada' in the excerpt, the speaker never removes herself from the
topic role, as manifested in the fact that reference to the subject of the last
sentence, the speaker herself, is made by a zero pronoun.   As exemplified in
this excerpt, the learner narrator and listener had a tacit understanding from
the onset of the narrative who the stories were about.   Because of this highly
anchored nature of the main protagonist of the stories, discourse topics in
these stories were easily recoverable from the immediate context, and most of
the time did not result in frequent subject switches and consequent overt
linguistic coding.   The nature and context of first- and second-person narra-
tives thus provided a thematically dominant and stable topic, which made it
easy for learners to fix discourse topic and create narratives from one particu-
lar story participant's viewpoint.   As a result, these first- and second-person
stories did not incur overt subject reference as frequently as the third-person
narratives did.

  In the third-person 'Baby' narratives, on the other hand, there was no such
designated discourse topic, and it was the speaker's responsibility to decide
which human or animal characters got the role of the main protagonist
vis-à-vis the other characters.   This point is illustrated in example (3) by a
Novice-group learner and example (4) by an Intermediate-group learner
below, describing a scene in which an old couple's dog became jealous and
tried to do many things in order to get their attention back when a baby was
brought into their house:

(3)   [Third-person narrative, Novice-level learner]
  "... *anoo,* <u>*obaasan, ga,*</u> *anoo, inu, anoo, akachan ga, daisuki, kedo,
  soshite, anoo, anoo,* <u>*inu ga,*</u> *anoo, uchi, uchi, e, ano, anoo, anoo, inu ga,
  sayonara deshita* (*laugh*), *kedo, kedo, soshite, anoo, anoo, o,* <u>*obaasan, ga,*</u>
  anoo, anoo, inu ga [*o*], *anoo, mm, anoo, mimasen, mimasen deshita,
  soshite, anoo,* <u>*inu ga,*</u> *anoo, kaerimasu.*"
  '... uhm, <u>the grandma,</u> uhm, loves, the dog, uhm, the baby, but,
  and, uhm, uhm, <u>the dog,</u> uhm, uh, uhm, the dog said good-by

(laugh), but, but, and, uhm, uhm, <u>the grandma</u>, uhm, uhm, not see, did not see the dog, and, uhm, <u>the dog</u>, uhm, goes back to [leaves] the house.'

<div align="right">(Novice-08-B)</div>

(4) [Third-person narrative, Intermediate-level learner]
"... *uchi no, <u>inu wa</u>, uhhm, akachan o miru to, uhm, ø (=inu) kawashi [kanashi] soo, ni, narimasu. Uhh, <u>obaasan to o, ojiisan wa</u>, m, tsk akachan to, uhh, tsk asonde, anoo, <u>inu wa, sooji suru</u>, anoo, uhhm, m, sooji nado shiteimasu. Uhm, <u>ojiisan to, obaasan wa</u>, m, inu o, mimasen, anoo, <u>inu wa</u> uchi o, demasu...*"
'... when <u>the dog</u> in the house, uhhm, sees the baby, uhm, ø (=dog) feels lonely. Uhh, <u>the grandma and grandpa</u>, m, tsk, play, uhh, tsk, with the baby, and uhm, <u>the dog</u>, vacuums, uhhm, m, is vacuuming and so on. Uhm, <u>the grandpa, and grandma</u>, m, do not see the dog, uhm, <u>the dog</u> leaves, the house...'

<div align="right">(IntM-09-B)</div>

These are typical learner narratives in that they lack viewpoint fixation.   The thematic subjects in these excerpts go back and forth incessantly between *obaasan* and *ojiisan* 'grandmother and grandfather' and *inu* 'dog,' which in turn necessitates the use of the overt referential forms each time.

On the contrary, many TL speakers described the same scene from the same cartoon story using so-called auxiliary verbs of giving and receiving in Japanese to fix their viewpoint.   See example (5) below:

(5) "*ø (=inu) samishii omoi o shite, ø (=inu) sooji toka, ato shokki arai toka hajimeru n desu kedo, <u>ø (=huuhu) amarinimo ø (=inu) kamatte kurenai mon dakara</u>, ø (=inu) katteni iede o, shite shimatte...*"
'ø (=dog) felt lonely, and ø (=dog) started vacuuming and washing the dishes and so on, but, <u>ø (=couple) did not pay attention to ø (= dog) at all</u>, so ø (=dog) left the house of his own will, and...'

<div align="right">(TL-12-B)</div>

In (5), the whole excerpt is told from the dog's perspective, even during the underlined sentence, which describes the scene in which the couple did not pay attention to the dog.   In this sentence, the couple is the agent, but because of the use of the auxiliary verb <u>-te kureru</u> 'to do for the benefit of x,' which requires the viewpoint of the receiver of the action, the scene is being described from the viewpoint of the dog, the topic of the whole excerpt. Therefore, no topic shift occurs, and the dog continues to be referred to by a zero pronoun in the last clause.

In another scene from the video in which a baby is introduced and picked up by a businessman, zero pronouns were continuously used for the subsequent reference to the businessman 60% of the time in the TL narratives, as opposed to 25%, 27%, and 25% in the Advanced-, Intermediate-, and Novice-

group narratives, respectively.   It can be said that the TL narratives were more consistent and stable in that the discourse topic of their narratives was deeply anchored and not vulnerable to the occurrence of other competing referents.   First- and second-person referential forms have only one possible referent, the speaker, the listener, or their group, as opposed to third-person reference where the speaker has to identify the intended referent among competing referents.   To make the task more complex, in the third-person Baby stories, this assignment of main and subordinate roles changed as the story unfolded, and the speaker was constantly under pressure to make on-going decisions as to which character got foregrounded and which got backgrounded.   It is understandable that this lack of immediate context support and of fixed roles of story characters in the third-person Baby task put extra pressure on the learners, whose lexical and grammatical resources were already limited.[10]

Another viewpoint-related expression often used by the TL speakers was the passive voice.   Most TL speakers used passive voice, as with giving and receiving verbs, as a viewpoint fixation device.   See example (6) below where the passive constructions are underlined:

(6)   " . . . *sono inu wa, yappari chotto sabishiku omou no ka, anoo, <u>jibun ni</u>* <u>*kamawarenaku natte shimau node,*</u> *ø (=inu) sooji o hajimetari (. . .) ø* *(=inu) chotto chuui o hikoo to suru no desu ga, ø (=inu) ikkoo ni,* <u>*chuui, sarezu,*</u> *sorede, eeto, sono inu wa, detette shimaimasu.* "

'. . . the dog, after all seems to feel a little lonely, uhm, <u>self (=he) is</u> <u>not cared about any more</u>, so, ø (=dog) starts vacuuming, and (. . .) ø (=dog) tries to attract (the couple's) attention a little bit, but, <u>ø (=</u> <u>dog) is still, not paid attention to</u>, so, well, the dog, leaves.'

(TL-09-B)

Of the 22 utterances in which the TL speakers depicted this particular scene of the dog trying to get the couple's attention back, a total of 20 cases (91%) featured the dog remaining in a continuous topic role as in (6) above.

---

[10] One might argue that the fact that the Baby story had four story characters led the learners to rely on more frequent subject switches and overt reference than in the first-/second-person narratives.   While this might partially explain the decrease in the proportions of zero pronouns in the Baby narratives, it should be noted that many of the Suspect and Picnic stories also included story participants other than the speaker; e.g., members of the host-family, classmates, and teachers in the former as seen in (2), and the sandwich and dogs in the latter.   Nevertheless, those stories did not incur overt subject reference as frequently as the Baby stories did.   In fact, despite its different theoretical framework and methodological procedures from the present study, Sato (1999) reports a similar result: beginning- and intermediate-level JFL learners in his conversational data omitted subjects more often in first- and second-person contexts (88 % and 89% for the former group and 76% and 89% for the latter, respectively) than in third-person contexts (54% for the former and 38% for the latter).

Table 7　Frequencies of Auxiliary Verbs of Giving and Receiving in the Third-Person 'Baby' Stories

	Nov	IntM	Adv	TL
-te ageru (N)	0	0	0	4
-te kureru (N)	0	0	5	8
-te morau (N)	0	0	0	13
Total (N)	0	0	5	25
N/100 clauses	0	0	1.3	3.8

Table 8　Frequencies of Passive Construction in the Third-Person 'Baby' Stories

	Nov	IntM	Adv	TL
Passive construction (N)	0	0	0	13
Passive (N/100 clauses)	0	0	0	2.0

As shown in Tables 7 and 8 above, auxiliary verbs of giving and receiving and the passive construction were almost non-existent in the learners' third-person narratives.　The high frequency of subject shifts and resultant overt referential form choice in third-person narratives by the learners occurred because they were focusing only on local problems of telling stories; i.e., keeping reference to the story participants straight by marking any subject shifts with overt reference.　What was lacking in the learners' repertoire was the ability to tell stories using a more global story-telling technique: fixing the viewpoint of third-person narration and telling stories from a particular story-participant's perspective.　The topic of the learners' narrative was less deeply anchored and more vulnerable to the occurrence of other competing referents than that of the TL speakers'.　This tendency was more prominent among the lower-proficiency speakers, which was probably because these learners had not yet fully incorporated viewpoint-related expressions into their IL system.[11]　Rather, it was often easier for these learners to tell the story from the perspective of whoever was put in subject position, thus avoiding the situation where employing syntactically challenging viewpoint-related expressions was imperative.[12]　This could be one of the factors which

---

[11] In a pair of recent studies, Tanaka (1996, 1997) looked at JSL and JFL learners' use of viewpoint-related items and reported similar results, suggesting that acquiring these items is not an easy task for learners and occurs over considerable time.

[12] Although Japanese language textbooks and reference grammars give generic descriptions of the giving and receiving verbs as devices to describe the transaction of things or favor between two parties, and of passive voice as a state or action which cannot be controlled, the TL speakers in the present data were apparently using them with discourse-pragmatic purposes in mind, skillfully fixing their viewpoint and preventing frequent topic/subject switches and full NPs from occurring.

worked to widen the difference in the frequencies of full NP and ø use between the learner and TL groups.

The first- and second-person and third-person narratives in the present study asked the speakers to handle different types and degrees of communicative demands, which in turn worked to produce different referential-choice patterns. Since the anaphoric, displaced third-person condition provided more pressure for clarity on the learners, they produced more pragmatically redundant and less ambiguous referential patterning in that condition than in the deictic, context-embedded first- and second-person conditions.

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that, in certain high communication-pressure situations, JFL learners, especially lower-proficiency ones, tended to oversupply overt referential forms while TL speakers continued to employ non-overt forms. It seems that the learners were forced into a position where they had no choice but to use explicit forms due to their limited communicative ability, whereas the TL speakers were able to avoid switching to overt forms by utilizing lexical and grammatical resources in their language repertoire. The discrepancy between native and non-native use seemed to be linked to the speaker's proficiency and the nature and difficulty level of the retelling task.

The present data have shown that operating in a third-person reference situation is more difficult and demanding for learners, especially for those at lower-proficiency levels, than in a first- and second-person situation. Klein's (1986, 1990) distinction of first-/second-person deictic reference vs. third-person anaphoric reference, and Robinson's (1995) distinction of 'Here-and-Now' vs. 'There-and-Then' conditions predict that referential choice should be easier in first-/second-person narratives than in third-person narratives, and the results from the present data have confirmed these hypotheses. By examining the present data in light of these frameworks, we have seen that the JFL learners' referential choice was influenced by the discourse functions of the referential forms in question (deictic vs. anaphoric) and by the narrative conditions (context-embedded vs. displaced) in which the forms were used.

Previous studies of L2 referential choice have presupposed that the development of L2 referential systems is a step-by-step process of approximating to the TL model, shifting gradually either from the stage of oversupplying zero forms to that of filling in overt forms when necessary, or from the stage of oversupplying overt forms to that of learning to drop them. With this kind of step-by-step, either-or view of the acquisition of the referential system, we cannot account for the variable degrees of TL-likeness and appropriateness observed across the different tasks and linguistic environments in the present study. Few studies have attempted to examine the problem from this perspective. Rather, most previous studies on the topic employed only one task to elicit learner data. The results from the present study suggest that

the impact of different tasks and contexts influences the referential choice in L2 discourse and that the acquisition of acts of reference by L2 learners cannot be properly discussed without considering the referential forms' functional properties and the discourse contexts where they are used.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, G. and G. Yule. 1983. *Teaching the spoken language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clancy, P. 1980. Referential choice in English and Japanese narrative discourse. In Chafe, W. (ed.) *The pear stories.* (pp. 127–202). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Clancy, P. and P. Downing. 1987. The use of *wa* as a cohesion marker in Japanese oral narratives. In Hinds, J., S. Maynard., and S. Iwasaki. (eds.) *Perspectives on topicalization: The case of Japanese wa.* (pp. 3–56). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Fakhri, A. 1989. Variation in the use of referential forms within the context of foreign language loss. In Gass, S., C. Madden, D. Perston, and L. Selinker. (eds.) *Variation in second language acquisition, volume II: Psycholinguistic issues.* (pp. 189–201). Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

Fuller, J. and J. Gundel. 1987. Topic-prominence in interlanguage. *Language Learning,* 37: 1–18.

Gullberg, M. 1996. Deictic gesture and strategy in second language narrative. In Messing, L. S. (ed.) *Proceedings of the workshop on the integration of gesture in language and speech* (pp. 155–164). Newark and Wilmington, DA: Applied science and engineering laboratories, University of Delaware.

————. 1998. *Gesture as a communication strategy in second language discourse: A study of learners of French and Swedish.* Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press.

Gundel, J. and E. Tarone. 1983. "Language transfer" and the acquisition of pronominal anaphora. In Gass, S. and L. Selinker. (eds.) *Language transfer in language learning.* (pp. 281–296). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Hartford, B. 1995. Zero anaphora in nonnative texts: Null-object anaphora in Nepali English. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 17: 245–261.

Hinds, J. 1983. Topic continuity in Japanese. In Givón, T. (ed.) *Topic continuity in discourse: A quantitative cross-language study.* (pp. 43–93). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Huebner, T. 1983. *A longitudinal analysis of the acquisition of English.* Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers.

Jin, H. 1994. Topic-prominence and subject-prominence in L2 acquisition: Evidence of English-to-Chinese typological transfer. *Language Learning,* 44: 101–122.

Klein, W. 1984. Reference to people, space and time. In Perdue, C. (ed.) *Second language acquisition by adult immigrants: A field manual.* (pp. 138–173). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

————. 1986. *Second language acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

————. 1990. A theory of language acquisition is not easy. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 12: 219–231.

Klein, W. and C. Perdue. 1992. *Utterance structure: Developing grammar again.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kumpf, L. 1992. Preferred argument in second language discourse: A preliminary study. *Studies in Language*, 16: 369–403.

Littlewood, W. 1981. Language variation and second language acquisition theory. *Applied Linguistics*, 2: 150–158.

Makino, S. and M. Tsutsui. 1986. *A dictionary of basic Japanese grammar*. Tokyo: The Japan Times.

Maynard, S. 1985. Contrast between Japanese and English participant identification: Its implications for language teaching. *IRAL*, 23: 217–229.

———. 1990. *An introduction to Japanese grammar and communication strategies*. Tokyo: The Japan Times.

———. 1998. *Principles of Japanese discourse: A handbook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pfaff, C. 1987. Functional approaches to interlanguage. In Pfaff, C. (ed.) *First and second language acquisition processes*. (pp. 81–102). Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Polio, C. 1995. Acquiring nothing? The use of zero pronouns by nonnative speakers of Chinese and the implications for the acquisition of nominal reference. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 17: 353–377.

Robinson, P. 1995. Task complexity and second language narrative discourse. *Language Learning*, 45: 99–140.

Shibatani, M. 1990. *The languages of Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarone, E. and B. Parrish. 1988. Task-related variation in interlanguage: The case of articles. *Language Learning*, 38: 21–44.

Tarone, E. and G. Yule. 1987. Communication strategies in East-West interactions. In Smith, L. (ed.) *Discourse across cultures: Strategies in world Englishes*. (pp. 49–65). Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Tarone, E. and G. Yule. 1989. *Focus on the language learner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tomlin, R. 1990. Functionalism in second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12: 155–177.

White, L. 1985. The "pro-drop" parameter in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 35: 47–62.

———. 1989. *Universal grammar and second language acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Williams, J. 1988. Zero anaphora in second language acquisition: A comparison among three varieties of English. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 10: 371–395.

———. 1989. Pronoun copies, pronominal anaphora, and zero anaphora in second language production. In Gass, S. et al. (eds.) *Variation in second language acquisition*: Vol. 1. (pp. 153–189). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Yanagimachi, T. 1996. Referential form choice in the oral narrative discourse of native and non-native speakers of Japanese. In Fujimura, T. et al. (eds.) *The proceedings of the 7th conference on second language research in Japan*. (pp. 59–79). Niigata, Japan: International University of Japan.

———. 1997. The acquisition of referential form use in L2 oral narrative discourse by adult English-speaking learners of Japanese. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota.

———. 1999. Individual differences in the development of communicative skills: JFL learners' overuse of first- and second-person pronouns. In Yamada, K. and

M. Nosaka. (eds.) *Language and Culture Studies Series*, 36. (pp. 261–282).   Sapporo, Japan: Institute of Language and Culture Studies, Hokkaido University.

Yule, G. 1997. *Referential communication tasks*.   Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Yule. G. and E. Tarone. 1990.   Eliciting the performance of strategic competence. In Scarcella, R., E. Anderson, and S. Krashen (eds.) *Developing communicative competence in a second language*.   New York: Newbury House.

————. 1997.   Investigating communication strategies in L2 reference: Pros and cons.   In Kasper, G. and E. Kellerman. (eds.) *Communication strategies: Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives*.   (pp. 17–30).   London: Longman.

[日本語文献]

佐藤　豊 (1999)「日本語の中間言語における空項とレベルの関係」，平成 8 年度〜平成 10 年度科研費研究成果報告書『第 2 言語としての日本語の習得に関する総合研究』(課題番号 08308019).

田中真理 (1996)「視点・ボイスの習得—文生成テストにおける横断的および縦断的研究—」，『日本語教育』88 号，日本語教育学会.

————(1997)「視点・ボイス・複文の習得要因」，『日本語教育』92 号，日本語教育学会.