

Cross-linguistic Influence in the L2 Acquisition of Korean Case Particles by Japanese-Speaking and English-Speaking Learners: L1-L2 Proximity and Learner Perceptions

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Abstract

This study employs longitudinal data collected from multiple sources to investigate the acquisition of Korean case particles by 6 learners, 3 with an L1 that has case particles (Japanese) and 3 with an L1 without such a system (English), focusing both on group and individual factors. The findings show that L1-L2 proximity was only an advantage for the Japanese learners in some areas of particle acquisition, namely the use of delimiters (particles marking nominative, accusative, genitive, topic). In the use of postpositions (particles marking dative, locative, comitative, instrumental), the English learners were just as accurate. Also, the Japanese learners produced errors that appeared to result from L1 influence. Notably, they were less consistent than the L1 English learners in supplying particles in obligatory contexts. By interviewing the participants, we found that individual perceptions of proximity (on grammatical, phonological and lexical levels) and associated language use strategies were crucial in explaining the use of Korean particles by these learners. These results draw attention to the importance of individual learner perceptions and strategies in cross-linguistic influence.

1 Introduction

In second language (L2) acquisition, the learners' first language (L1) plays both an impeding and facilitative role, rather than primarily being an impediment (cause of errors). Its role has been acknowledged as "a major factor in L2 acquisition" (Ellis, 2008, p. 343), "an essential goal of SLA theory" (Kellerman, 1995, p. 125), "pervasive in all areas of learning" (Gass, Behney, & Plonsky, 2013, p. 154), and "a key aspect of language use and processing in bilinguals and L2 users" (Treffers-Daller & Sakel, 2012, p. 3). Although cross-linguistic influence¹ has been researched extensively (see Odlin, 1989; Ringbom, 1987; Selinker, 1992), three major areas have not been sufficiently addressed.

Firstly, few studies have employed longitudinal comparisons of learners with different L1s. Without such comparisons, it becomes difficult to verify whether non-native like patterns in the L2 are due to cross-linguistic influence or simply intralingual developmental processes. In addition, the potential facilitative roles of the L1 do not tend to surface. Although Odlin (1989) identified

comparisons of L1s of variable distances from the L2 as an area for future research, it has yet to be sufficiently addressed.

Secondly, as also noted by Odlin (1989), research into the acquisition of non-European languages is needed in order to gain a better understanding of cross-linguistic influence. Studies on the role of the L1 are still predominantly limited to English as L2. Consequently, the structural aspects that have been most actively studied are bound to the characteristics of English (e.g. indefinite and definite articles). Clearly, more research on languages typologically different from English is needed in order to advance our knowledge of cross-linguistic influence.

Thirdly, previous research has relied heavily on quantitative data at the expense of qualitative perspectives. As a result, the experiences and perceptions of individual learners have been obscured. Given the growing recognition of individual differences in second language acquisition (see Dörnyei, 2005) and the increasing interest in research that probes individual learner perceptions (see Green, 1994), it is time that the literature on cross-linguistic influence began to focus on the experiences of individual learners. This is particularly important because learner perceptions with regard to the similarity between the L1 (or other previously learned language) and L2 are believed to be crucial to cross-linguistic influence.

Hence, we conducted a longitudinal study, primarily qualitative in nature, of L2 Korean case particles among L1 English and L1 Japanese speakers with a focus on individual learners and their perceptions. Specifically, the current study set out to determine the extent to which having Japanese as L1 (i.e. the language which is understood to be the most proximate grammatically to Korean²) was an advantage in comparison to having English (i.e. a language grammatically distant). Previous research establishes a strong language distance effect in the manifestation of cross-linguistic influence in SLA. Namely, when languages are grammatically proximate (or are perceived as such by the learners, see below), learners are more likely and more willing to make use of grammatical knowledge from the L1 (or other previously learned languages) onto the L2 (De Angelis 2005; Kellerman, 1977; Ringbom, 2007; Rothman & Cabrelli Amaro, 2010; Selinker & Lakshmanan, 1992; Sjöholm, 1976). This higher utilization of L1 knowledge facilitates and accelerates acquisition (see Odlin, 1989). However, previous research has shown that learners may overuse items that are present in their L1 (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008). Based on these observations, we first predicted that Japanese learners would use particles more accurately, with greater ease and at higher frequencies compared to their English-speaking counterparts.

Although linguistic proximity often assists L2 acquisition, it may also result in higher rates of overgeneralization from the L1. The reason for this is that learners are prone to judge the level of linguistic proximity (and decide whether to use L1 knowledge) based on their perceptions of surface typology – what Kellerman (1979) calls “psychotypology.” When learners perceive the L2 to be close to the L1, they may use their L1 knowledge indiscriminately, leading to error patterns that display clear L1 influence. On the other hand, when learners perceive the distance to be great, they may not rely on their L1 knowledge, even in cases where the target language and native/previous language happen to be similar. Relating this to the current study, although Japanese and Korean particles display high levels of surface similarity, these similarities belie a number of differences in the ways that particles are formed, used in context and dropped in conversation (see Section 2). We thus predicted that the Japanese speakers would (over-)rely on their L1 knowledge, resulting in L1-influenced error patterns, which would not be manifested in the English speakers’ data. An important goal of the study is to investigate the specific learner perceptions that underlie the decision to rely on L1 knowledge in using the L2.

First, we will describe Korean particles in comparison with Japanese particles and give an overview of previous studies looking into L2 Korean particle acquisition. We will then present the current study.

2 Korean particles

This section describes Korean particles and sketches the findings of previous studies that have looked into the influence of the L1 in their acquisition by L2 learners (Jeon, 1994; Kim, J.-E., 2004; Kim & Lee, 2008; Wu, 2003).

Korean, similarly to Japanese, is an agglutinative language in which particles can be suffixed to nouns. Cho and Sells (1995) differentiate between two groups of particles: postpositions/conjunctives and delimiters (Table 1). The division is pertinent to our study in that whereas postpositions/conjunctives tend to have equivalents in English prepositions, delimiters take on functions that are seldom explicitly stated in English (namely, the morphological marking of nominative, accusative and topic).

As seen in Table 1, the Japanese and Korean particle systems are largely equivalent, sharing many important contrasts. One contrast pertinent to the current study appears in the use of two locative markers, with one being used for “static location” (*ey* in Korean and *ni* in Japanese) and the other for “dynamic location” (*eyse* and *de*). Whereas the former is used when talking about something or somebody simply existing at a certain location (e.g. “I am at home”), the latter is used to refer to an action being performed at a certain location (e.g. “I study at home”). In addition, both *ey* and *ni* can be used to express movement towards a location.

Table 1. A summary of major Korean particles and their Japanese and English equivalents

Particle Groups	Particles	Korean	Japanese	English
Postpositions and Conjunctives	Dative (animate)	eykey, hanthey	ni	To
	Dative (inanimate)	ey		At
	Locative (static)		de	
	Locative (dynamic)	eyse		At
	Instrumental	ulo/lo		by, with
	Comitative	kwa/wa, hako	to	and, with
Delimiters	Nominative	i/ka	ga	-
	Accusative	ul, lul	o	-
	Genitive	uy	no	-’s, of
	Topic	un, nun	wa	-

However, a number of important differences exist between the two languages, which have been noted in the previous studies as potential areas of difficulty for Japanese learners of Korean³. Firstly, some Korean particles have two allomorphs (including topic particle *un/nun*, nominative *i/ka*, and accusative *ul/lul*), the selection of which depends on the phonological structure (syllable structure) of the preceding noun, namely whether it contains a final consonant. In contrast, Japanese particles are always single-allomorph and considerations of final consonants (the appearance of which is almost nonexistent) do not arise. Previous studies report that this difference causes difficulties for Japanese learners of Korean, who are prone to use the incorrect allomorph of two-allomorph particles (Jeon, 1994; Kim, J.-E., 2004; Wu, 2003). The nominative particle is said to cause particular difficulty, due to the fact that the Japanese nominative particle *ga* is phonologically similar to one allomorph of the Korean nominative marker, namely *ka*.⁴ With sound similarity being recognized as a factor that promotes cross-linguistic influence (Andersen, 1983), it may be problematic for Japanese learners of Korean to delimit their use of *ka* to instances where the preceding syllable contains a final consonant.

Secondly, although both languages sometimes allow for particles to be omitted, the propensity for different individual particles to be dropped differs. In Japanese, the locative *ni* may drop after some time expressions (e.g. “on weekends”). Indeed, since *ni* deletion after certain time expressions can occur in all genres and styles of Japanese, it is classified by some as an “optional” parti-

cle (see Fry, 2003). However, deletion of the corresponding Korean particle *ey* is more restricted and is not permitted in formal written language.

In Korean, on the other hand, the genitive particle *uy* is often deleted when the possessive relationship of the two nouns in question is obvious from the context – a pattern of ellipsis not prevalent in Japanese. Thus, sequences such as *chinkwu-ø cip*, “friend(s) house,” with *no* overt genitive marking are common. In Japanese, genitive *no* is not commonly omitted in such sequences. In addition, Japanese *no* takes on several functions that are not commonly shared by Korean *uy*. Of most significance, *no* can frequently be heard in two-noun combinations where the first noun modifies the second such as *kawa-no kaban*, “leather bag (lit. bag of leather).” However, in Korean the use of *uy* in such combinations sounds unnatural and particle-free combinations (*kacwuk kapang*, “leather bag”) are preferred. Previous studies show that Japanese learners of Korean overuse the genitive particle (Wu, 2003) due to the influence from Japanese. This overuse is said to contrast with its underuse by learners from other linguistic backgrounds, particularly English speakers (Wu, 2003).

Thirdly, a number of individual lexical-level differences (i.e. the particles associated with specific verbs) exist between Korean and Japanese. All of these differences are said to have a negative influence on the acquisition of Korean particles by Japanese learners:

(1) Lexical differences

- a. “meet someone” – accusative in Korean; locative in Japanese (Wu, 2003);
- b. “become something” – nominative in Korean; locative in Japanese (Kim & Lee, 2008; Wu, 2003); and
- c. “know something” – accusative in Korean; in Japanese, one verb of knowing/understanding – *wakaru* – takes nominative (Kim & Lee, 2008; Wu, 2003)

Another cause of difficulty for Japanese learners of Korean is the fact that the locative marker *ey* can only be used with non-animate nouns in Korean, whereas the corresponding Japanese *ni* has no such restriction (Kim, J.-E., 2004).

In addition to the patterns of L1 influence described above, Wu (2003) identifies a general pattern for Japanese learners to be faithful users of particles and not to make the omission errors that are said to characterize acquisition by other learners, including English speakers. Indeed, Japanese learners tend to include too many particles. This finding appears to correspond with the wider observation that learners may be apt to overuse/underuse L2 items depending on their presence/absence in the L1 (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008).

The previous studies on cross-linguistic influence in the use of Korean particles mentioned in this section provide useful pointers as to common error patterns in the use of particles by learners with Japanese L1. However, the research comes with crucial limitations and, ultimately, fails to properly substantiate claims of L1 influence. In order for the role of L1 to be established as the cause, the possibility that these errors represent common developmental patterns has to be properly eliminated, principally through systematic comparison with learners of other L1s. This is a step not taken by Kim and Lee (2008) or Kim J.-E. (2004), who only look into learners with Japanese L1 in isolation. Although Wu (2003) does compare Japanese L1 with English L1 and Jeon (1994) compares Japanese L1 more generally with learners whose L1 does not contain case particles, neither study contains quantitative data to confirm that the patterns that are said to characterize the Japanese group (e.g., over use of the nominal *ka*) are limited to or more frequent in this group. More broadly, there is a lack of discussion of error patterns that are not connectable to L1 influence. This leaves the reader wondering whether this is because such patterns are absent, or whether the authors simply do not include them in the analysis. We can assume that the researchers have concluded in advance what patterns should exist and limit their analysis to the identification of these patterns. The studies also have limitations in that they are one-off rather than longitudinal and do not consider contextual factors that influence patterns of acquisition.

3 Current study

The current study examines the role of L1 in the acquisition of Korean particles by learners with Japanese L1 and English L1 (“Japanese learners” and “English learners” herein). The study is longitudinal and uses multiple data sources (primarily qualitative) to provide detailed analysis of both group and individual factors.

Our research sets out to explore how speakers who have an L1 that is linguistically proximate (i.e. Japanese) differ from those who have an L1 that is linguistically distant in the L2 acquisition of Korean particles. Would Japanese learners supply particles (especially delimiters) more consistently and more accurately than English learners? In particular, we look into how individual perceptions of linguistic proximity (or the lack of it) will influence the way that L2 learners from these two different L1 backgrounds use and acquire Korean particles.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Participants

The participants comprised of 6 female *ab initio* learners attending evening classes at two different institutions in London: 3 L1 Japanese speakers (Mieko, Mayumi, Fujiko) and 3 L1 English speakers (Linda, Annabelle, Amy), with all names given here being pseudonyms. Mieko, Linda and Annabelle were all classmates at one institution, whereas Mayumi, Fujiko and Amy were classmates at the other. Four of the participants (Linda, Annabelle, Amy and Mayumi) had professional careers, whereas Mieko and Fujiko were homemakers. The classes were all taught by the same instructor (the first author), using the same textbook⁵. As noted in Table 2, all of the Japanese learners were also proficient in English as L2, and one of the English learners (Annabelle) had studied Japanese to advanced level, which is taken into account in the analysis below.

From this brief description, three important aspects of the research context require further comment. Firstly, the instructor was evidently knowledgeable about the goals of the study. This might be seen as a factor potentially influencing the research, but it also lends an important depth to the analysis since the researcher gained extended access to the participants’ Korean language learning by being present during all class sessions and personally grading all written work.

Secondly, the fact that all of the Japanese learners spoke English and one of the English learners spoke Japanese renders this study different from a traditional L1-L2 study of “transfer” or “interference.” However, the fact that we thus had to recognize both L2 and L3 influences makes the study compatible with more recent research on the role of previously known languages (see De Angelis, 2005; Ringbom, 2007; Rothman, 2011; Treffers-Daller & Sakel, 2012). We were particularly watchful for L2→L3 influence in the data collected from Annabelle, given the grammatical similarities shared by her L2 (Japanese) and L3 (Korean). This is because typological proximity has been recognized as an important factor in determining whether L3 learners make use of L1 or L2 knowledge (Rothman, 2011). One potential advantage of having learners who share first and second languages in this way is that it may give some indication of the comparative strengths of different sources of influence. If Annabelle’s performance shows more influence from her L1 (English), this may signal to us that L1 knowledge is particularly robust in this area of the language, despite potential influence from her L2 (Japanese). Alternatively, if her performance shows the influence of L2 Japanese, then this indicates that L2 knowledge is superseding L1 knowledge.

Table 2. Biographic data

Pseudonym	Native Language	Other Languages	Age
Mieko	Japanese	English	32
Mayumi	Japanese	English	25
Fujiko	Japanese	English	42
Linda	English	None	29
Annabelle	English	Chinese, Japanese	26
Amy	English	None	23

Thirdly, the number of participants in our study is small, but this also comes with important advantages. We were able to collect multiple types of data on a longitudinal basis and analyze the data for individual error patterns and perceptions of Korean particles, giving our data analysis a depth rarely seen in purely quantitative studies.

3.1.2 Procedure

The data were collected over a 9-month period comprising three terms of study. Typical of evening classes in the UK, each term lasted 10 or 11 weeks, with classes meeting for 2 hours per week. Learners were expected to study and use the language regularly outside of class.

Four types of data were collected. The largest body of data were written data collected from in-class writing activities, classified into three categories depending on the level of form-focus:

(2) Written data

- a. Particle-focused activities – activities focused on accurate production of particles (for example, fill-in-the-blank style activities where learners are asked to supply particles);
- b. Structure-focused activities – activities based on grammatical accuracy at the sentence level, but the focus was not on particles; and
- c. Free-writing activities – activities focused on fluency rather than grammatical accuracy and typically involving longer texts.

Dividing the data in this way allowed us to monitor the influence of different activity types (and different levels of attention to particles).

The second source of data was the recording of a spoken activity. All participants performed this spoken activity at the end of the second and third terms (this was not done at the end of the first term due to the low level of the learners). The spoken activity consisted of: (1) a warm-up segment of general questions (such as “what did you do last weekend?”); (2) three short role-plays based on dialogues encountered in class; and (3) a story-telling activity based on a series of pictures. The audio-recordings of this spoken activity were transcribed and the use of particles was analyzed qualitatively (see below).

For the third source of data, at the end of the third term, the researchers carried out retrospective interviews with each of the participants. During these interviews, learners were shown transcripts of their own erroneous use of particles and were asked to provide verbal reports as to what they were thinking about when they produced these errors. The interviewer (the first author) then quizzed learners more specifically about the reasons for common or repeated error patterns. In the course of analyzing the transcriptions of these interviews, rather than treating these verbal reports as veridical accounts of the reasons for particle errors, the reports were considered to represent situated and contested accounts. However, as argued by Block (2000), despite its situated and contested nature, interview data remains a valid and important source of data. When understood in context, interview data can be seen as “symptomatic” (Kvale, 1996) of the experiences and emotions of the participants towards the phenomenon under analysis, here the use of case particles. When triangulated with the other data sets, this information provides one (of several) windows on how learners perceive and use Korean particles.

For the fourth and final dataset, the instructor kept a diary at the end of each session noting any incidents related to particle use. The diary was written weekly from the midway point of term 1,

giving a total of 26 entries and approximately 2,300 words. Analysis of the diary allows for insights into how the learners performed in class and how classroom instruction may have influenced their knowledge of particles.

3.1.2 Analysis

The datasets were analyzed primarily using qualitative techniques; however, we also performed an initial quantitative analysis of the written data to establish an overall picture of accuracy rates and error types. For this quantitative analysis, instances of correct and erroneous use of particles were coded and counted, with the assessment of errors being checked with two native-speaker informants. Errors were then classified into four types, based on Lee, Jang and Seo (2009):

(3) Error types

- a. Omission (“O” in subsequent tables) – absence of a particle where its inclusion is expected;
- b. Addition (A) – inclusion of a particle where one is not normally required;
- c. Replacement (R) – a correct particle “replaced” by an incorrect particle; and
- d. Malformation (M) – a particle is used in the incorrect allomorph.

Due to the small number of participants, our quantitative analysis utilized descriptive statistics only.

For the qualitative analysis of all four datasets, we adopted a coding method known as “template organizing style” (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). In line with this method, we began the analysis by identifying the four major categories that we wanted to focus on and which reflected our research hypotheses: (1) Japanese/Korean similarity; (2) Japanese/Korean differences, (3) influences of differences; and (4) influences of similarities. The transcribed data were systematically coded for the appearance of these categories, allowing for the major themes of our research to be triangulated across the different datasets. It should be pointed out, however, that the purpose of this coding was not to quantify the data, but to provide a structure to the analysis and, ultimately, to reveal the presence of other emergent categories.

3.2 Results

This section begins with an overview of patterns of correct/erroneous particle use, employing quantitative analysis of the written data. We then provide a detailed quantitative analysis in relation to the goals of the research, examining frequency of particle use in obligatory contexts, accuracy and perception. In addition to discussing general patterns for English and Japanese learners respectively, we highlight the performances of individual learners.

3.2.1 Overview of results

The quantitative analysis shows that accuracy rates of the two L1 groups were approximately the same, with a slightly unexpected trend for the English learners to be more accurate (89.8% opposed to 88.1, see Table 3). Looking at individual participants (Table 4), we see that the accuracy rates of the three Japanese learners were quite similar (87.7%, 89.4%, and 86.8%). For the English learners, however, whereas Linda and Amy produced remarkably high accuracy rates (92.8%, and 92.3%), Annabelle was considerably less accurate (85.5%). Annabelle’s lower accuracy rate was perhaps surprising since, as previously noted, she spoke Japanese as L2, which may be expected to aid her acquisition of L3 Korean. These findings contradict to some extent the perception that learners with L1 (or L2) Japanese may find Korean particles “easier” due to the existence of a similar system in their L1 (or L2).

Table 3. Particles in written data

Term	Japanese Group		English Group	
	Correct	Error	Correct	Error
1	362 (87.7%)	51 (12.3%)	194 (87.0%)	29 (13.0%)
2	333 (87.4%)	48 (12.6%)	314 (91.0%)	31 (9.0%)
3	186 (90.3%)	20 (9.7%)	48 (94.1%)	3 (5.9%)
Total	881 (88.1%)	119 (11.9%)	556 (89.8%)	63 (10.2%)

Table 4. Error rates for individual participants

	Mieko	Mayumi	Fujiko	Linda	Annabelle	Amy
Correct	279 (87.7%)	354 (89.4%)	248 (86.8%)	194 (92.8%)	207 (85.5%)	155 (92.3%)
Error	39 (12.3%)	42 (10.6%)	38 (13.2%)	15 (7.2%)	35 (14.5%)	13 (7.7%)
Total	318 (100%)	396 (100%)	286 (100%)	209 (100%)	242 (100%)	168 (100%)

The accuracy rates generally increased from one term to the next, with the final term producing the highest rate for all learners. Regarding the effects of activity type, Table 5 shows that for all learners, structure-focused activities (i.e. sentence-level activities for structures other than particles) produced the highest frequency of errors, followed by free-writing activities and particle-focused activities in turn. This finding perhaps contradicts the expectation that fluency-focused activities (i.e. free-writing) will result in the highest frequency of errors. Two possible factors may explain this. Firstly, since structure-focused activities tested grammatical accuracy on structures other than particle use, this may have worked to decrease learner attention to particle accuracy. Secondly, a tendency was noted for learners to avoid unfamiliar or “difficult” constructions in free-writing activities. These avoidance strategies may have included the non-use of NPs occurring in unfamiliar grammatical roles and thus a reduction in particle errors.

Table 5. Error rates for different activity types

		Japanese	English
Particle-focused activities	Error	13 (9.0%)	13 (7.4%)
	Correct	132 (91.0%)	163 (92.6%)
Structure-focused activities	Error	59 (15.5%)	36 (15.8%)
	Correct	322 (84.5%)	192 (84.2%)
Free-writing activities	Error	47 (9.9%)	14 (7.0%)
	Correct	427 (90.1%)	201 (93.0%)
Total	Error	119 (11.9%)	63 (10.2%)
	Correct	881 (88.1%)	556 (89.8%)

The total number of particles analyzed was considerably smaller for the English learners. This was because all three of them attended class less faithfully⁶ and were slower writers who provided shorter compositions. In total, the data collected from the English learners contained 4578 Hangul syllable blocks⁷ (not including spaces), whereas the Japanese learners’ data contained 6892. This indicates another dimension of the role of the L1 – that writing in an L2 (i.e. Korean) that is more typologically distant from the L1 (English) was more effortful.

As mentioned in the previous section, errors were then classified according to whether they constituted omission (O), addition (A), replacement (R) or malformation (M). As shown in Table 6, the types of errors that the two L1 groups made were distinct. Although replacement was the most common type of error for both, the rate for the Japanese learners was almost half that for the English learners (44.5%; 81.0%). On the other hand, the Japanese learners made more omission (19.3%; 9.5%), malformation (28.6%; 9.5%) and addition errors (7.6%; 0%).

Table 6. Classification of errors in written data

Term	Japanese Group				English Group			
	O	A	R	M	O	A	R	M
1	18 (35.3%)	0 (0%)	14 (27.5%)	19 (37.3%)	1 (3.4%)	0 (0%)	24 (82.8%)	4 (13.8%)
2	5 (10.4%)	3 (6.3%)	29 (60.4%)	11 (22.9%)	3 (9.7%)	0 (0%)	26 (83.9%)	2 (6.5%)
3	0 (0%)	6 (30%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
Total	23 (19.3%)	9 (7.6%)	53 (44.5%)	34 (28.6%)	6 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	51 (81.0%)	6 (9.5%)

3.2.2 Supplying particles in obligatory contexts

The finding that Japanese learners omitted particles more frequently than their English-speaking counterparts (19.3% opposed to 9.5%) was particularly noteworthy.

Before analyzing the patterns of the particle supply and omission, some notes are required regarding how we classified “omissions.” Previous researchers (Kim & Lee, 2008; Lee, Jang & Seo, 2009) have classified all particle omissions as “errors,” justifying this by the fact that they are employing written data and that particle dropping is more restricted in formal writing (Lee, Jang & Seo, 2009). Besides, Lee, Jang and Seo point out that identification of omission “errors” is desirable since dropping too many particles may sound “like baby talk” (2009, p. 533).

However, in the current study, we chose to judge the grammaticality of case particle omissions on a case-by-case basis. This approach was motivated by three observations. Firstly, we believe it to be misleading to label all L2 particle omissions as errors when native speakers also frequently delete particles. Indeed, both Korean and Japanese linguists recognize the absence of particles, at least in some instances, not simply as being a matter of omission, but as the manifestation of a non-phonetically realized “zero particle” that has its own grammatical functions (Lee, H., 2007; Niwa, 1989). Although dropping too many particles can sound “like baby talk,” including too many can sound forced and mechanical, particularly in more informal registers. Secondly, although we used primarily written data, learner compositions at beginner level rarely constitute the kind of formal writing where the inclusion of particles is strictly enforced. Indeed, many of the activities involved writing dialogues, in other words, representing spoken language. Third and finally, the teaching materials frequently exhibited particle omissions. Thus, learner particle omissions may well represent conscious attempts to follow the language use shown in the teaching materials rather than careless errors. Thus, we only coded omission errors that we judged as erroneous, unnatural or leading to ambiguity in “casual written Korean.”

The analysis of which particles were deleted in error shows that the two L1 groups were quite distinct (Table 7). The vast majority of the particle deletions by Mieko, Mayumi and Fujiko (19 out of 23) involved the dative/locative particle *ey*, with 15 of these deletions involving time expressions (i.e. what would translate as “on weekends,” etc.) – a pattern attested by all three learners. The remaining four errors all involved marking of the subject noun, either with the nominative (2 cases) or the topic particle (2 cases). For the English learners, although the deletion of *ey* and

un/nun was also detected in the data collected from Linda and Amy, there was no distinct pattern, largely due to the small number of particle deletions. Notably, Annabelle (the participant with L2 Japanese) made no omission errors.

Table 7. Classification of particle omissions

Group	Nominative (<i>i/ka</i>)	Topic (<i>un/nun</i>)	Dative/ Locative (<i>ey</i>)	Comitative (<i>hako</i>)	Total
Japanese group	2	2	19	0	23
English group	0	2	3	1	6

Both of the Japanese omission patterns show potential L1 influence. In the case of dative/locative omissions, 10 of the 19 omissions were judged as potentially grammatical in the corresponding Japanese sentence. This included deletions after some time expressions, where the corresponding Japanese particle *ni* may be omitted. However, our native speaker informants judged this usage in Korean to be marginal, although we understand that this pattern may occasionally be heard in spoken language.

As for bare subject nouns, this pattern may also display differences between zero particle usage in Japanese and Korean. In both languages, besides the nominative particle, a sentence subject may be marked with the topic particle or simply by the zero particle. As pointed out by Lee, D. (2002) as well as Kuno (1973), the use of the nominative and topic particles in Japanese both provide specific readings regarding the relationship of an item “A” being talked about in relation to other items – a property not shared by the zero particle. The nominative particle may specify that the state of affairs appearing in the predicate applies to A and only to A – an “exhaustive listing” reading. The topic particle implies a contrast between the state of affairs pertaining to A and that pertaining to B, C or D – a “contrastive reading.” The zero particle, however, specifies A without referring to a relationship with other items – “neutral description” (Lee, D., 2002). This “neutral” reading may, however, be shared by the nominative marker in some contexts. What our data suggests is that a “neutral” reading for the nominative marker is more readily available in Korean, whereas in Japanese the use of the nominative is more likely to be understood in the exhaustive sense. Zero particle use thus becomes more common in Japanese, whereas omitting the nominative particle is more marked in Korean. Particularly in writing (even in informal registers), our native speaker informants repeatedly scored deletion of the nominative particle as unnatural (whereas they were more accepting of accusative marker deletion).

The higher propensity for Japanese learners to omit the dative/locative *ey* and nominative *i/ka* or topic particle *un/nun* also emerged in the quantitative analysis. In the spoken data, we found long passages of speech from Mieko, Mayumi and Fujiko that were (virtually) free of particles – a phenomenon not found in any of the data collected from Linda, Annabelle and Amy. In Example (4) below, an extract from the story-telling activity, Mieko utters three consecutive utterance units that are particle-free except for one locative particle in the final segment. Positions where particles could be included are marked with “ \emptyset ”:

(4) **Spoken: Mieko (Term 2)**

- 1 *achim yetelp si- \emptyset anna ssi- \emptyset achim siksa- \emptyset ha-yss-eyo*
morning eight o'clock Anna TI morning meal have-PAST-POL
“Anna had her morning meal at eight o'clock in the morning”
- 2 *kuliko anna ssi- \emptyset seyswu- \emptyset ha-yss-eyo*
and Anna TI wash have-PAST-POL
“And Anna had a wash”
- 3 *ahop si- \emptyset heylsu khulep-ey iss-ess-eyo*
nine o'clock health club-LOC exist-PAST-POL

“At nine o’clock she was at the health club”

In contrast to this, the English learners were less fluent, but they devoted much effort to supplying particles (although the results were not always accurate). In (5), Linda paused for 3 seconds (values in square brackets show the length of pauses) after *swukcey*, “homework,” before incorrectly supplying the nominative particle (in the incorrect allomorph) – the accusative particle (or zero particle) would be correct. After a longer pause, she then self-repaired and supplied an appropriate zero particle. In the very next utterance, she again incorrectly marked the grammatical object with the nominative particle after two lengthy pauses and a recast.

(5) **Spoken: Linda (Term 2)**

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | <i>kuliko</i> [3] <i>sukcey</i> [3] <i>i</i> [9]
and homework NOM no
“and I did - did my homework” | <i>aniyo swukcey-ø ha-yss-eyo</i>
homework do-PAST-POL |
| 2 | <i>cemsim</i> [3] <i>um</i> [3]
lunch-um
“I ate um ate lunch” | <i>cemsim-i</i> [3] <i>siksaha-yss-eyo</i>
lunch-NOM eat-meal-PAST-POL |

When these spoken data are triangulated with the analysis of the interview and diary data, two different strategies of particle use are found to be at play. Whereas the Japanese learners pay low attention to particle use and focus on fluency, the English learners sacrifice fluency for attempts at accuracy. We see this as being connected to the way that the learners perceive Korean particles, a point we return to below.

In addition to being less consistent in supplying particles in obligatory contexts, the Japanese learners were also more susceptible to supplying particles in situations where none were required – “addition” errors. Such errors in the written data only numbered nine in total, with all tokens belonging to the Japanese learners (spread across all three participants). Seven such errors featured unnecessary use of the genitive particle *uy*, which, as noted previously, is an error pattern widely attested in the previous research and has been explained through L1 influence. In Example (6) from Mieko, whereas Japanese would mark the modifying “leather” with a genitive particle, Korean speakers prefer zero-particle. Note that in the corresponding English construction no genitive is used, which seems to explain why the English learners never produced this pattern.

(6) **Written: Mieko (Term 2)**

- (?) *CD phulleyie-ka theylleyipicen-hako kacwuk-uy hama sai-ey isseyo*
CD player-NOM television-COM leather-GEN hippo between-LOC exist-POL
“The CD player is between the television and the leather hippo”

Although this pattern seems to show L1 influence, it should be reiterated that its frequency was low. It tended to occur in novel noun-noun combinations using vocabulary not taught in class (such as “leather hippo” in (6)). It did not occur in taught constructions; for example, in the combination country+person (appearing in the data from all three Japanese learners), the pattern “country-GEN person” never occurred⁸. Consider the following sentence produced by Mayumi from an activity where students had to write “pretend” self-introductions (which explains why Mayumi is describing herself as being Korean).

(7) **Written: Mayumi (Term 1)**

- | |
|--|
| <i>ce-nun</i> <i>hankwuk-ø</i> <i>salam-i-eyyo</i>
I-TOP Korea person-COP-POL
“I am a Korean person” |
|--|

3.2.3 Accuracy in using particles

Although the previous section shows that Japanese learners were more prone to omit particles when they were needed or to include them when they were not, their particle use was in other ways

more accurate than the English learners. As shown in Table 8, the Japanese learners were more accurate in selecting target-like particles and thus produced a lower frequency (5.3%; 8.2%) of replacement errors (i.e. supplying a particle different from what is target-like). However, as shall be discussed below, this improved accuracy did not extend to all areas of particle use.

Table 8. Replacement errors

	Japanese group	English group
postpositions/conjunctives	24 (3.5%) †	11 (2.7%) †
Delimiters	29 (8.7%) ‡	40 (18.4%) ‡
TOT	53 (5.3%) §	51 (8.2%) §

† The percentage in () indicates the number of total postposition/conjunctive usages.

‡ The percentage in () indicates the number of total delimiter usages.

§ The percentage in () indicates the number of total particle usages.

As can be seen in Table 8, the area where the learners with L1 Japanese performed notably better than the learners with English L1 (error rate = 8.7%; 18.4%) was the use of delimiters (i.e. particles that do *not* have equivalents in English prepositions), whereas the replacement error rates for postpositions/conjunctives (i.e. particles that do have equivalents in English prepositions) were more similar (3.5%; 2.7%). One particular area where Mieko, Mayumi and Fujiko performed better was accurate selection of nominative and accusative markers. The Japanese learners seldom made the error of marking the sentence subject with accusative case or vice versa (5 tokens; 0.7% of all subject/object nouns in database), while these errors were relatively more frequent in the English learners' data (11 tokens; 2.4%). Interestingly, only two of these errors appeared in Annabelle's data, whereas Amy produced six such errors and Linda four. In (8), Amy "replaced" the nominative with the accusative:

(8) Written: Amy (Term 2)

- (*) *myech* *myeng-ul* *o-ayo?*
 how many people-ACC come-POL
 "How many people are coming?"

However, even in the use of delimiters, the Japanese-speaking learners were not always more accurate. At times, they showed patterns which are difficult to explain in relation to knowledge of either Japanese or English. For example, there was a tendency for all learners to overuse the accusative particle to mark all non-subject constituents, typically at the expense of the comitative (or at times the locative). The accusative was introduced during the second term where much emphasis was placed on producing simplex subject-object verb pattern sentences. Seemingly as a side effect of this, learners began to overgeneralize the accusative to other sentence constituents. Replacement of the accusative particle by the comitative particle occurred 6 times in the Japanese learners' data (4 times by Mayumi, once by Mieko, once by Fujiko) and 4 times in the English learners' data (2 times by Linda, 2 times by Annabelle) during the second term (28.6% and 33.3% respectively of total cases in which the comitative would be expected), but was not attested by any learners in term 3. The following examples demonstrate these errors in the data from Mayumi (9) and Annabelle (10).

(9) Written: Mavumi (Term 2)

- (*) *nwukwu-lul* *mekeyo?*
 who-ACC eat-POL
 "Who are you eating with?" [intended meaning; actual meaning is "who are you eating?"]

(10) Written: Annabelle (Term 2)

- (*) *ecey* *mina-ka* *aynti-lul* *yenghwa-lul* *po-ass-eyo*
 yesterday Mina-NOM Andy-ACC movie-ACC watch-PAST-POL
 "Yesterday Andy watched a movie with Mina" [intended meaning]

If L1-L2 similarity is seen as facilitative, we would not predict errors such as (9) due to the fact that Japanese would also apply comitative case. This shows that L1 knowledge is not always utilized and that common developmental patterns can override it.

This point is made more evident when we consider another common developmental pattern that occurred in the use of postpositions: replacement errors between the locative markers *ey* and *eyse*. Learners were taught *ey* in Term 1 and, at this stage, used it correctly in its “static” location and movement “towards” functions. However, after the introduction of “dynamic” *eyse* in the second and third terms, the grammars of all six learners became unstable and they began to “replace” *ey* with *eyse* (in other words, producing incorrect sentences where they had been producing correct sentences before) and also *eyse* with *ey*. The error frequencies were similar for both L1 backgrounds (12 tokens or 4.2% of all locative nouns in the Japanese data; 7 tokens or 4.8% in the English data), with all learners attesting this pattern. The following examples are from Fujiko and Amy:

(11) **Written: Fujiko (Term 3)**

- (*) *cip-eyse* _____ *haksayng-i* *iss-eyo*
 house-LOC student- NOM exist-POL
 “There is a student in the house”

(12) **Written: Amy (Term 2)**

- (*) *khephisyop-ey* *hongcha-lul* *masi-ess-eyo*
 coffee shop-LOC tea-ACC drink-PAST-POL
 “I am drinking tea in the coffee shop”

The existence of these errors in the second and third terms represents evidence of a potential “U-shape” developmental pattern. Choi (1993) notes similar patterns in Korean L1 acquisition, where *ey* is acquired first and then, after *eyse* appears, “replacement” errors occur. What is remarkable here is that the same errors occur in the interlanguage of Japanese-speaking learners, who have presumably already acquired the “static”/“dynamic” contrast for their L1, where the particles *ni* and *de* display a similar contrast. The learners are seemingly not always able to apply their L1 knowledge to their L2 Korean.

Despite the overall advantage enjoyed by the Japanese learners, there were areas where English speakers outperformed Japanese speakers. In such cases, L1-L2 similarities contributed to errors for the Japanese learners. First of all, the data showed some (albeit limited) evidence of L1-induced errors in the Japanese learners’ data resulting from lexical-level differences between Korean and Japanese. For example, Mieko (13) and Fujiko each produced one instance of incorrect use of the particle *ey* with animate dative constructions.

(13) **Written: Mieko (Term 1)**

- (*) *maikhul ssi-ka* *anna* *ssi-ey* *iyakihaysseyo*
 Michael TIT-NOM Anna tit-**DAT** speak-PAST-POL
 “Michael spoke to Anna”

We now turn to consider frequencies of malformation errors (i.e. selecting the incorrect form of twin-allomorph particles, particularly the nominative *i/ka*). The malformation of *i/ka* was mainly an error pattern particular to the Japanese learners, who provided 18 tokens (1.8%) compared to the 4 (0.6%) occurring in the English learners’ data. The error pattern was attested in the data from all three Japanese learners, but only from Annabelle amongst the English learners. The fact that Annabelle (with L2 Japanese) produced the same error as the Japanese learners suggests that this pattern was influenced by her knowledge of Japanese; however, as we shall see below, other factors were also at work.

Of these *i/ka* malformations, 11 of the 18 supplied by the Japanese learners and 3 of the 4 supplied by Annabelle involved overgeneralization of the *ka* allomorph to contexts in which the preceding noun contained a final consonant. This represents the expected error pattern since, as previously noted, *ka* is phonologically similar to Japanese *ga*.

(14) Written: Mavumi (Term 3)

- (*) *kwa-il-ka* *masiss-supnita*
 fruit-NOM delicious-DEF
 “The fruit tastes good”

Although L1 influence is the most immediate explanation for this error pattern, other factors also appear to be at play. Firstly, it should be noted that malformation – including the preference for *ka* – is not an error pattern unique to Japanese-speaking learners. Indeed, in L1 acquisition, *ka* is actually acquired 7-8 months earlier than *i* (Kim, Y., 1997). Reasons for this include the lower frequency of *i* in the input (the majority of Korean nouns have no final coda and thus take *ka*), lower acoustic saliency (*i* is quieter and shorter than *ka*), difficulty of segmenting *i* from the coda of the preceding noun and homonymy of *i* with the copula and a suffix that attaches to personal names (Kim, Y., 1997).⁹ These general developmental factors may apply to L2 acquisition as well.

Secondly, we believe that *i/ka* usage is influenced to a significant extent by learner intuitions regarding how easily L1 knowledge could be applied to the L2 and the way the Japanese learners perceive Korean from a phonological standpoint. These are two questions we pursue in the following section.

3.2.4 Perceptions of proximity

By examining the retrospective interviews and instructor diaries, we assessed the role of learner perceptions in the ways that they used Korean particles. Here, we use the term “perception” in a general sense to talk about how learners understand the use of linguistic features in the target language and how they develop awareness of the mechanics of the language. We are particularly interested in how linguistic proximity of the L1 (or other L2s) may influence the way that the L2 is perceived. We wanted to find out whether surface similarities between Japanese and Korean contributed to Japanese learners perceiving that the languages were proximate and thus selecting to utilize L1 knowledge, at times inappropriately. Did this contribute to the tendency for these learners to produce malformation errors and to drop particles at a higher frequency than the English learners?

Concerning malformation errors, the retrospective interview and diary data revealed, first of all, that perceptions of Korean phonology may contribute to the high frequency of these errors amongst the Japanese learners. Interestingly, support for this point of view only appeared consistently in the data from one speaker, Mieko, so it may be that this pattern of perception is specific to certain learners. Nonetheless, these individual perceptions are interesting as they represent the very issues that previous quantitative studies have not shed light upon.

For Mieko, malformation was sometimes not a simple result of utilizing single-allomorph particle use from Japanese, but due to different perceptions as to what constituted a final consonant, underlined by this incident from the instructor diary:

(15) Instructor diary: Mieko (Term 2)

During an in-class writing activity, Mieko asked me if *yak-lul* [medicine-ACC] was correct. When I pointed out to her that it should be “*yak-ul*” because there was a final consonant, her response was to ask whether “k” was really a final consonant.¹⁰

Mieko’s perception of “k” as not “really” being a final consonant can be explained in relation to L1 Japanese phonology. Whereas Korean allows the pronunciation of seven different final consonants including /k/, Japanese allows only one (moraic /n/). Thus, when Korean words (or other foreign words) that contain a final consonant (other than /n/) are loaned into Japanese, an epenthetic vowel is added. Seemingly influenced by this, Mieko appears to perceive Korean words containing final consonants (other than /n/) as being followed by a vowel. Her decision to select the allomorph required when no coda is present is thus logical. Since Mieko’s L2 (i.e. English) allows syllable-final /k/, it is evident that L1 influence here is quite robust.

What is particularly interesting about Example (15) is that Mieko's confusion over the status of /k/ as a final consonant is occurring in a writing activity. Since the Korean letter representing /k/ is written in syllable-final position, its status as a final consonant should be more obvious. Here, differences between Japanese and Korean orthography are key. Whereas the Korean script Hangul is an "alphabetic syllabary" (Taylor, 1980) that combines alphabetic symbols into syllable blocks, Japanese writing systems (Kanji, Kana) are purely syllabic. Previous research on phonological awareness shows that the size of the unit represented in L1 orthography affects the size of segments that readers are aware of (Ben-Dror, Frost, & Bentin, 1995; Mann, 1986). In particular, Mann (1986) found that Japanese children performed more poorly than American counterparts on tests assessing awareness of phonemes, but not of syllables. The example of Mieko shows evidence for this same lack of awareness of the status of individual phonemes, in this case syllable-final /k/.

The difficulty Mieko experiences in identifying final consonants may be reinforced by another factor – (false) cognates. The Sino-Korean lexical item *yak*, "medicine," featured above corresponds to the Sino-Japanese morpheme *yaku*, "medicine." The challenge that such phonologically false cognates pose was confirmed in the interview data. In this episode, the researcher asked Mieko what particle could be applied after the noun *yaksok*, "appointment." In her answer in line 3 where she provides the incorrect allomorph *ka*, it is noticeable that she produces a Japanized pronunciation of the noun as *ya-ku-so-ku*:

(16) **Retrospective interview: Mieko (Term 3)**

- 1 LB Sometimes with particles, like for example *yaksok isseyo* ("I have an appointment"). So what particle can we put there?
- 2 Mieko *ya-ku-so-ku-ka*
- 3 LB Yes, that's your mistake. It should be [yaksok-i]
- 4 Mieko [yaksok-i]
- 5 Oh cool, so [yaksok-i]
- 6 LB [yeah]
- 7 Mieko Because it's a consonant
- 8 LB [...] Is there any reason you make mistakes like this?
- 9 Mieko Yeah, it's confusing because in Japanese we always use *ga*

Mieko's pronunciation of this lexical item is seemingly influenced by the fact that *yaksok* is a Sino-Korean item that corresponds to *yakusoku* in Japanese, where it is rendered according to the pronunciation Mieko supplies (and would be followed by *ga*). The perception of proximity that this creates contributes to Mieko's tendency to produce such errors.

Perceptions of similarity between Korean and Japanese also appeared to contribute to the higher frequency of particle dropping in the Japanese learners' data. Whereas all of the English learners sacrificed fluency in their attempts to supply particles, all of the Japanese learners preferred to drop particles and thus, speed up their oral production. The availability of this particle dropping strategy for the Japanese learners appears to be influenced by perceptions of L1-L2 proximity, namely, the perception that since particle dropping may occur in Japanese, the same strategy is available in Korean. In the interviews, Fujiko reported, "If I have time, I would use the right one [particle], but using nothing is quicker." She also remarked that "using these words is not so difficult [...] we have the same in Japanese and I know we can miss it out when talking." Similarly, Mieko reported that she dropped particles at a high frequency during oral activities "because I don't have time to think about it." In contrast to this, for the English learners, the lack of perceived similarity with their native language meant that the strategy of "not thinking" about particle use was not available. Linda commented, "I really want to get it right whether it is *ka* [the nominative particle] or *lul* [the accusative particle] [...] but I know I got mixed up." In addition, they had a lower awareness that particles may sometimes be dropped in oral production and, even if they were aware of this, they were less accepting of it. "I remember you [the researcher/instructor] said in class that you can drop them out," added Linda, "but I don't know... I feel when I do this like I am making a mistake." Thus, it was the English learners rather than the Japanese learners who

focused more attention on supplying accurate particles. Although this came at the cost of fluency, they ultimately were more consistent in supplying particles in obligatory contexts.

4 Discussion

The analysis in the previous section reveals that the level of L1-L2 proximity is not a simple predictor of accuracy in the use of Korean particles. The Japanese learners possessed an advantage in some areas, particularly accurate use of delimiters. Here, the fact that their native language also overtly marks categories such as nominative and accusative case appears to provide them with a conceptual head-start in determining the grammatical role of sentence constituents.

However, in the use of postpositions (such as the comitative, instrumental, locative and dative particles), the English speakers performed just as well as the Japanese speakers. Here, Japanese-Korean surface similarity (i.e. use of postpositions) turned out to be no more of an advantage than having an L1 (i.e. English) where the same grammatical relationships are marked in a different way (i.e. with prepositions). Despite superficial differences, English learners appear to make use of L1 knowledge in their use of Korean postpositions.

The imperfect “fit” between the Japanese and Korean particle systems also resulted in error patterns specific to these three Japanese learners that were not shared by Linda and Amy. Quite tellingly, they were at times shared by the English learner with L2 Japanese, Annabelle, including tendencies to select the incorrect allomorph of two-shape particles. These error patterns were shown to be at least in part attributable to the influence of L1 (or L2) Japanese.

In addition, both the Japanese and English learners were shown to share developmental error patterns, such as overgeneralization of the accusative particle and replacement errors involving locative markers. The identification of these common error patterns was significant in that they represent the kind of developmental errors ignored in previous studies where only errors attributed to differences between L1 and L2 are analyzed. Differentiating between these common error patterns and those that resulted from L1 influence was made possible by the comparison of different L1 groups, underlining the importance of comparing groups of L1s whose distances from the L2 greatly differ.

Of some significance, the analysis showed that the Japanese learners were less consistent than the English learners in supplying particles in obligatory contexts. This finding contrasts with previous claims that learners at early stages of L2 acquisition may overuse/omit features of the L2 depending on whether the feature is present/absent in their L1 (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008) and also previous studies of learners with L1 Japanese acquiring Korean particles (Wu, 2003). Importantly, one reason that emerged for this was specific to the languages under analysis, namely, that particles in Korean and Japanese are both susceptible to deletion and that the contexts in which this occurs are different in each language. This illustrates the need for studies on the role of the L1 to be conducted on a wider range of languages, particularly those typologically different from English.

The way that learners perceived the proximity of Korean to their L1 was vital in understanding their use of particles. For Japanese learners (particularly Mieko), the perception that Korean was “close” to Japanese not only facilitated the use of L1 knowledge, but also worked to decrease the attention that learners attributed to particle usage. This decrease in attention improved fluency for all three Japanese learners, an aspect of L1 influence less often reported than accuracy, but also resulted in inappropriate particle omissions. On the other hand, the English speakers paid more attention to particles and were reluctant to omit them. Perception of distance thus led to distinct language use strategies between Japanese and English learners.

The analysis also provided important findings regarding subsystem interaction in cross-linguistic influence, which has rarely been studied before (see Odlin, 1989). Regarding malformation errors, it was found that, at least in the case of Mieko, such “grammatical” errors are influenced by phonological perceptions (i.e. L1-influenced perceptions as to what constitutes a final consonant), orthographic factors and lexical similarities (i.e. [false] cognates). The cross-linguistic

influence of cognates is often reported in contexts in which both L1 and L2 are European languages (see Odlin, 1989), but our study illustrates an influence in L1 Japanese and L2 Korean.

5 Conclusion

This study has shown that linguistic proximity (and learner perceptions of it) plays an important role in the acquisition of Korean case particles by Japanese and English learners. Thanks to L1-L2 proximity, the Japanese learners supplied particles more fluently and were less likely to mark a noun in the wrong grammatical case. However, they also produced error patterns that showed clear evidence of L1 influence. The English learners were more attentive to particle use and supplied particles more consistently in obligatory contexts, but were prone to confuse grammatical cases that are not marked explicitly in their L1. Qualitative analysis shows how subsystem interaction (phonology, orthography, false cognates) is key to understanding some of the error patterns.

These findings have some important implications for our understanding of cross-linguistic influence in the use of particles by L2 Korean learners and the way that particles are taught in the classroom. Regarding the implications for cross-linguistic influence first of all, the study adds extra evidence for the importance of linguistic proximity (and learners' perceptions of it) in learners' decisions to utilize (or not to utilize) L1 knowledge. To this line of research, the study makes two important contributions. Firstly, through researching less studied language pairs (Japanese-Korean, English-Korean, with the target language in the same context), the paper expands the portfolio of evidence for the pervasiveness of L1 influence. Secondly, the use of primarily qualitative methodology allowed for rare and important insights into the workings of learner perceptions regarding "transferability" (Kellerman, 1983) to the L2 and how this influences the selection of language use strategies. The data reveals the complexity of these perceptions and insights into subsystem interaction, which are often obscured by large scale quantitative studies.

Regarding the implications for our understanding of the use of Korean case particles by L2 learners, the study has highlighted some important limitations of previous research and has produced counterevidence to some previous assumptions regarding how Japanese and English learners use Korean particles. We are critical of the ways that previous studies on L2 particle acquisition have focused only on L1-induced errors and have ignored possibilities that some L2 errors may be due to common developmental patterns. Although our results show that L1 influence plays a central role, common developmental errors (such as overgeneralization of the accusative particle) are also important in understanding the L2 acquisition of case particles. In addition we have revealed that previous accounts of L1 influence are too simplex. For example, the assumption that Japanese learners' tendency to overgeneralize the *ka* allomorph of the nominative particle is simply influenced by the corresponding Japanese form *ga* belies important influences of phonological, orthographic and lexical influences (not to mention similarities with L1 Korean acquisition). Finally, the paper has demonstrated the importance of adopting a more flexible approach to the treatment of particle omissions in the analysis of L2 Korean grammar. As discussed above, previous studies have tended to judge all omissions as errors, despite the fact that particle ellipsis is common in L1 grammar and widely recognized in linguistics research. Through judging particle omissions on a case-by-case basis and only coding the omission of those that were deemed obligatory, new patterns of L1 influence in the Japanese learner's data emerged. Moreover, the results contradicted the findings of previous research (such as Wu, 2003) in that the Japanese learners were shown to be less faithful users of particles, at least when only obligatory contexts were analyzed.

Finally, the findings of our research have a number of implications for the way that particles are taught in the language classroom, of which we briefly describe three. First, the finding that subsystem interaction is important in malformation errors by Japanese learners calls for a more holistic approach to the teaching of two-allomorph particles. Simply instructing Japanese learners that selection depends on the presence/absence of a final consonant may have limited utility if the learners have low awareness of individual phonemes. Learners may therefore benefit from explicit training in recognizing the presence/absence of final consonants, particularly focusing on phono-

logically false cognates. Second, in the case of English learners, the comparative problems that these learners encountered with selecting the correct delimiter should send a message to Korean language teachers. When teaching the use of delimiters to English learners, teachers should include activities that explicitly train learners in identifying grammatical cases and therefore heighten learner awareness of categories such as nominative and accusative. Third and finally, the findings of the paper make a strong case for explicit teaching of case particle omission in Korean language classrooms. Brown (2012) showed that particle ellipsis is underrepresented in Korean textbooks and rarely explicitly taught. In addition, when descriptions of ellipsis do appear in textbooks, they correlate only partially with the findings of empirical research. Omission is a common feature of authentic Korean discourse and one which causes difficulty for language learners, as demonstrated in the current study. It should thus be included in the treatment of particles in the Korean classroom.

We conclude by recognizing that contextual factors specific to the current study may have influenced the results. Learning in an English-speaking environment alongside English speakers may in some way have rendered the Japanese learners less attentive to the use of particles though the results undoubtedly show the persistent influence of L1. These context-specific factors illustrate the need for more small-scale qualitative studies in the area of cross-linguistic influence to complement the generalizable findings of large-scale quantitative studies.

Notes

¹ In this paper, we adopt “crosslinguistic influence” from Kellerman and Sharwood Smith (1986) as a broad term to refer to the role of previously known languages in second language acquisition. When specifically discussing the role of the L1, we use “L1 influence.” We specifically avoid terms such as “transfer” and “interference” due to connections that such terms hold with particular theories of learning to which this study does not belong.

² Lee and Ramsey (2000, p. 7) note that “the general characteristics of Japanese are almost identical to those of Korean.”

³ The description here of differences between Japanese and Korean particles focusses on those that are pertinent to beginner-level learners. Other important differences, notably differences in the use of the topic particle, are not discussed here.

⁴ Although the initial sound of *ka* is phonemically /k/, it is always phonetically rendered as a voiced [g], making *ka* even more similar to Japanese *ga*.

⁵ During the three terms of study, all of the case particles listed in Table 1 were taught. In addition, the following grammar points were covered: verb conjugation into polite *-eyo* form, short negation, past tense, *-(u)le ka-* “going somewhere to do something,” subject honorific *-si-*, negative commands with *-ci masi-*, *-ko siph-* “want to ...,” future tense *-(ul) ke-*, expressing abilities with *-(u)l swu iss-*, *-e po-* “try...,” modifiers, long negation, past tense honorifics, *-(u)l cwul al-* “know how to do something,” *-kena* “or” and *-eya ha-* “have to ...”

⁶ The total number of absences for L1 English learners was 11 (12.2%) over the course of three terms, whereas it was only 4 (4.4%) for the L1 Japanese learners.

⁷ Korean is written in syllables composed of two, three or four individual letter shapes. For example, 말 “horse” is composed of three letter shapes 마, 알 and ㅅ, which can be Romanized as “m,” “a,” and “l” respectively – *mal*.

⁸ An additional reason why learners may not have relied on L1 knowledge here is that whereas the Korean sentence employs the pure Korean term *salam* for “person,” the corresponding Japanese sentence would more naturally feature the Sino-Korean bound morpheme *jin*. With *jin* attaching directly to the nationality word, no genitive marker is needed.

⁹ Rather than overgeneralizing *ka*, L1 children more commonly produce the form *ika* (Kim, Y., 1997, p. 357).

¹⁰ It is probable that Mieko pronounced yak according to Japanese phonological structure as *yaku*, although this is not confirmed in the instructor’s diary.

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