

表語言語の言語喪失：日本の中国語話者のケース

Attrition in Logographic Language: Case of Chinese Speaker in Japan

MILAYI AHEMAITI ¹⁾, HASHIMOTO Takashi ¹⁾
milayi@jaist.ac.jp, hash@jaist.ac.jp

1) Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

Keyword: First language attrition, Written language, Orthographic skill

1. Background and purpose of study

'Language attrition' describes the loss of grammatical and other features of a language as a result of declining use by speakers who have changed their linguistic environment and language habits. (Schmid 2011). Researches on language attrition try to explain the reason how people lose the language knowledge once they have acquired and the interaction between L2 acquisition development and the process of L1 attrition. Although most researches of language attrition show that adults' L1 seems to be less vulnerable than children, adults may also experience some difficulties in the use of their mother tongue after spend long period in second language environment.

As fundamental components of language, spoken and written languages have different validities of their own. Sentence structures in written language tend to be more complex and longer than spoken language. The ability to handle written language, including complex and long sentences, is undoubtedly necessary for achieving advanced proficiency levels in a language (Meara and Milton 2001). It is a need to investigate if there come at the cost of reduced L1 ability in advanced proficiency levels of written language after long-term exposure in second language environment.

Orthography as a medium of written language is the capacity to understand and recognize writing conventions as well as recognizing when words contain correct and incorrect spellings. While attrition of orthography skills in phonogram system, alphabetic symbols as its representative, recently has been found (Ntim 2016) the orthography skill in logogram system is still not clear. In the current research, we focus on the attrition in the first language ability to handle complex sentence structures and the accuracy of basic orthographic skill in written language with a logogram system.

2. Research content

Chinese and Japanese languages belong to the logographic writing system that uses kanji ideograms. Although most of the kanji characters in both languages are used to express the same or similar meanings, there are still many variations in the writing structures due to different modification histories in the both languages. Further, there are significant differences in grammatical structures.

We hypothesize that Chinese speakers who live in Japan after long-term of use Japanese as a language output may fail to write accurately in Chinese characters, and the ability to handle complex sentence structures in Chinses written language. We can confirm this hypothesis by a grammaticality judgment task, investigating reading and writing abilities of the complex structure in long sentences, and a writing task, assessing the orthographic skill when their write Chinese characters.