

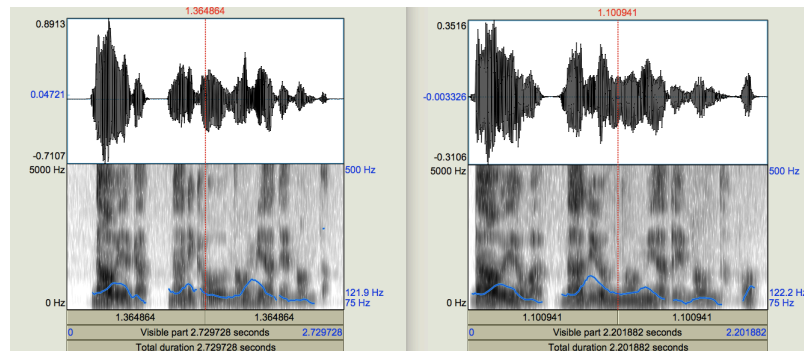
Phonetic Compression of Minor Phonological Phrases as a Licensor of WH *in situ* in L2 Japanese: Contiguity Theory in SLA

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There is a rich literature on how second language learners from a variety of languages acquire the WH properties of various target languages. Most of this work has been done within a framework which assumed that the difference between languages like English (+WH movement) and Japanese (-WH movement) was in the domain of syntactic features. English was thought to have [strong] features while Japanese [weak]. A more recent claim by Richards (2010; in press) suggests that it is phonology which determines whether WH phrases need to move. Following the tradition of language learnability research, we adopt a model of what the native speaker knows, and look to see whether the non-native speaker acquires it. While other interfaces have been central to the field of SLA (White, 2011; Montrul, 2011; Sorace, 2012; Goad & White, 2004), the phonology/syntax interface has received less attention. In this poster, I report on the results of a pilot study to see if proficient non-native speakers of Japanese have acquired the target phonetic properties of Japanese WH questions. WH questions can be formed in two ways across languages. Languages like English move the WH word to the left edge of the sentence, while in Japanese the WH word does not have to move. Richards (2010) postulates that these are two strategies to achieve the same goal of having the WH word and the question particle as close together as possible. Overt movement (English), of course, achieves linear adjacency. Richards notes that Japanese achieves proximity via a phonetic property of pitch compression of the phrases between the WH word and the question particle. I want to see if non-native speakers have acquired this property of Japanese. I recorded 5 self-identified, advanced, non-native speakers of Japanese reading sentences of the following type out loud.

a) Naoya ga nanika o nomiya de nonda. ナオヤが、何かを飲み屋で飲んだ。 Naoya drank something at the bar.	b) Naoya wa nani o nomiya de nonda no? ナオヤは、何を飲み屋で飲んだの？ What did Naoya drink at the bar?
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They were allowed to rehearse the sentences and each sentence was recorded using Audacity. Using, PRAAT, the pitch profiles of the sentences were extracted to see whether there was a lower pitch on a phrase like “nomiya de nonda “ in interrogative sentences compared with declarative sentences.



Preliminary results suggest that the advanced non-native speakers *do*, like native speakers, show this phonetic pattern. While this does not localize the grammatical property responsible for this contiguity effect, it shows that L2 learners *can* acquire such interface phenomena and achieve contiguity via minor phrase pitch compression.

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