Research Paper

Mastery in Japanese Conjunctions among Indonesian Learners of Japanese

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ABSTRACT: *This study is an analysis of usages of Japanese conjunctions ~ tekara (after), ~ toki (when) and ~ tara (if / when) which were tested to the students at USU's and UNAND's Japanese Literature Departments which have applied the Japanese learning phase in the levels of N5 ~ N3. The students were requested to identify the differences among the three conjunctions. The research was both quantitative and qualitative. The research data were taken from the Pre-Test, which was shaped to choose one correct answer between (~tekara/tare) and (~toki/~tara) and the Post-Test, which was provided to complete a sentence with ~tekara, ~toki and ~tara. The results showed that there was a tendency that students translated the questions during Pre-Test into Indonesian and ignored the Japanese grammar. As a result, they made errors. It was concluded that there were lacks of understanding and training in these conjunctions.*
Keywords: Mastery, Japanese conjunctions, ~tekara, ~toki, ~tara, Indonesian learners.

I. INTRODUCTION

Some researches show that the differences between first language (FL or mother-tongue) and second language (SL) make learners difficult to understand the SL (Fries 1945[1]. Lado mentions two factors affecting the process of SL learning, for example, there are found any differences and similarities between the FL and SL. As a result, learners tend to translate the SL's forms, meanings, and culture into their FL's forms, meanings and culture. In short, he has proved that learners' FL and culture can affect the SL learning. However, some argue that differences between two languages do not become a major cause in learners' second language learning (SLL) but they are caused by teaching method (Hama (2005),[2] Aramaki (2003))[3] as well as by imperfect mastery in SLL (Yosuko (2005),[4] Roswati (2002)).[5]

Our current research found that Indonesian learners of Japanese (ILoJ) face difficulty in the mastery in Japanese conjunctions, especially when they have same meanings in Indonesian translation. Sentence (1) is an example of an error in the usage of Japanese conjunction ~ tekara 'after' by learners here.

(1) （＜ うちに帰ってから，｛母がいません。｝（？）＞）
　　　*Uchi - ni kaet - **tekara**, haha – ga imasen.*
　　　house - particle go home - after, mom my – particle not available
　　　'<u>After</u> I came back home, mom is not seen'.

Based on Japanese grammatical rules on the use of ~ tekara, ILoJ should complete the sentence (1) with another sentence that shows action or subsequent activities undertaken as seen in sentence (1a).

(1.a) （ちょっと休んで、料理を作りました）。
　　　Chotto yasunde, ryoori o tsukurimashita.
　　　'Being relax for a moment (I) then cook a meal'.

The ILoJ writing Haha ga Imasen {母 が い ま せ ん} 'her absence' shows a situation encountered by the subject of the sentence when going home but he/she did not find his/her mom. Although the sentence (1) is commonly used by the ILoJ, however, it is not normally used by Japanese native-speakers because it does not comply with the grammatical rules of ~ tekara. The sentence (1) can, however, be accepted in Japanese by substituting the ~ tekara with ~tara, as displayed in sentence (1b).

(1.b) ＜ うちに帰ったら，母がいませんでした。（✓）＞
　　　*Uchi - ni kaet - **tara**, haha – ga imasendeshita.*
　　　Home - particle go home - when, mother my – particle not available
　　　'<u>When</u> I go home, my mom is not there'.

The grammatical rules of how to use the conjunctions ~ tekara 'after', ~ toki 'when', and ~ tare 'if' in Japanese do not have the same rules as in Indonesian conjunctions setelah 'after', ketika 'when', and jika 'if'. Those three Japanese conjunctions are influenced by conditions in their uses. In some situations, the tekara ~ and ~ tara can interchange each other although their nuances can become different (Ichikawa (1997)[6], Iori and Takanashi (2000)).[7] In his research on ~ tekara, toki ~, and ~tara Ichikawa (2005) argued that Japanese students usually got easily confused when using them. There were cases when they chose to use ~toki while ~ tara was more appropriate and to use ~ tekara when ~ tara is more applicable. This confucion was primarily caused by different meanings and rules of the conjunctions tekara ~ and ~ tara.

In its application the ~tara is conditional which is always understood by ILoJ as ketika 'when' but when translated into Japanese the ketika is same as ~toki. However, the conjunction ~toki was not always found in all sentences during the research. The ~tara can be said to have the same intent with the ~toki 'when' when they are used in acceptable sentences. Moreover, as being used in conditional the ~tara can occupy the same as the ~tekara 'after'. Because f having the similarity in meaning and the differences in rules the ~tekara, toki ~, and ~tara create confucion among the ILoJ.

With regard to the problems as explained in the previous paragraphs this research is aimed at identifying the ILoJ's ability of USU's Department of Japanese (MSJUSU) and of UNAND's Department of Japanese (MSJUNAND) in understanding the uses of the conjunctions ~tekara, toki~, and ~tara and at recognizing the causes of errors and mistakes made by the ILoJ at MSJUSU and MSJUNAND.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

With regard to second language acquisition Gass and Selinker (2008:7) argued that students learn and develop new language systems with their limited experience.[8] One problem that occurs when learning a second language is not meant that this second language is difficult, but it is due to the habits of students who have previously learned their mother tongue. Error analysis is one approach to determine the phenomenon of disruption in learning and to identify mistakes made by students when learning a second language (Corder 1981).[9]

Studies ever conducted on the error analysis of Japanese students showed that the common mistake is that when a student can not understand the meaning that is true of two synonyms or more, and when they failed to understand the differences in grammar between the mother tongue and the second language (see Aramaki 2003).

The errors made by Japanese students are perfectly smooth / not striking, like a sentence that sounds a bit strange when heard or read by a native Japanese speaker. Furthermore, Yoshikawa believed that the main obstacles for students to learn Japanese language is related to mother tongue interference which was studied previously and to the influence of Japanese grammar itself that is learned later. Therefore, he recommends to make a comparative analysis between the mother tongue and the second language to certify the characteristics of second language that does not exist in the native language. Results from these studies are very useful to improve the quality and method of teaching a second language. Meanwhile, the mistakes made by ILoJ through essay and conclud that the mistakes occured not only due to the interference of mother tongue but due to the teaching technique s in the class.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of Research

This reserach was carried out with mixed methods involving qualitative and quantitative ones. Quantitative method is applied to show the errors which are then described qualitatively (Brown, J. D and Rodgers, T.S, 2002).[10] This research involved third year students from the Department of Japanese Literature, Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Sumatera Utara (USU) and University of Andalas (UNAND). The students were chosen since they have completely finished all materials in relation to the conjunctions ~ tekara, toki ~ and ~ tara.

3.2 Location and time of research

This research was held at the Department of Japanese, Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Sumatera Utara (USU) and University of Andalas (UNAND) and carried out in March to November 2016.

3.3 Research procedures and data source

Implementation of the Pre-test was conducted after students attended a seminar on the use of ~tekara, toki~ and ~tara. The duration of the Pre-test was held within 25 minutes and all instructions were written in Bahasa Indonesia. Each answer was distinguished on the principle of sentence category as proposed by Ichikawa (2005), namely: i) appropriate sentence, ii) less precise sentence. Data source covers the errors including the ones in particle selection, in choice of words, in verb forms, and in Hiragana and Katakana writings and these errors were considered primary source.

3.4 Data collection
Data collection was carried through pre- and post-test techniques (Brown and Rodgers, 2002).

3.5 Research Instruments
The research instruments included 20 questions written in Japanese (see Table 1) and answer sheets. Students were asked to cross one correct answer between (~tekara /~tara) and (toki~/~tara). Each correct answer was given a value of 1 point.

Tabel 1. A list of questions during Pre-Test

No	List of questions
1	電話を（かけてから、かけたら）、友達のうちへ行ったほうがいいです。 Denwa o kakeru te kara kakeru tara tomodachi no uchi e iku ta hou ga ii desu Phone, Particle, use, after, use, if, friend, Particle, house, (Particle), go, whenever "It is better to go to friend's house after making a call'.
2	日本へ（きてから、きたら）、日本語の勉強を始めました。 Nihon e (kite kara, kitara) nihongo o benkyou o hajimemashita. Japanese, Particle, come, after, come, if, Japanese, Particle, lesson, Particle, lesson, Particle, begin 'Begin to learn Japanese after arriving in Japan'.
3	このボタンを（押してから、押したら）お湯が出ます。 Kono botan o (oshite kara, oshitara) oyu ga demasu. This, button, Particle, press, after, pres, if, Particle, out 'After pressing the button, the water splashes out'.
4	今とった写真が（できてから、できたら）、わたしにも１まいください。 Ima totta shashin ga (dekitekara, dekitara), watasi ni mo ichi mai kudasai. Now, take, Past, photo, Particle, Particle, able, after, able, if, 1SG, Particle, Particle, one, a piece, help 'After taking photography, give me one'.
5	10時に（なってから、なったら）、出かけましょう。 Juu ni naru te kara naru tara dekakeru mashou. 10, Particle, become, after, become, if, able, come on 'At ten o'clock, let's go out'.
6	わたしが日本(にほん)に（きてから、きたら）、１年(ねん)になります。 Watashi ga nihon ni (kitekara, kitara) ichi nen ni narimasu. 1SG, Particle, Japan, Particle, come, after, come, if, one year, Particle, become 'I came to Japan one year ago'.
7	朝、（起きてから、起きたら）、雨が降っていた。 Asa okiru te kara okiru tara ame ga furu te ita. Morning, wake up, after, wake up. If, rain, rain, lamp 'When (I) wake up in the morning, rain fell'.
8	空港へ両親を迎えに（行ってから、行ったら）、先生に会った。 Kuukou e ryoushin o mukae ni (ittekara, ittara), sensei ni au ta Airport, Particle, parents, Particle, pick up, Particle, go, go, if, teacher, Particle, meet, lamp 'When (I) pick up my parents in the airport, (I) meet my teacher'.
9	先週風邪を（ひいてから、ひいたら）、ずっと体調が悪い。 Senshuu kaze o hiku te kara hiku tara zutto choushi ga warui Last week, wind, Particle, enter, after, enter, if, continuously, health condition, Particle, bad 'After (I) got cold last week, I feel bad all the time'.
10	ドアを（開けてから、開けたら）目の前にネコがいた。 Doa o akeru te kara akeru tara me no mae ni neko ga iru ta. Door, Particle, open, when, if, eye, Particle, front, Particle, cat, particle, available, lamp 'When (I) open the door, there is a cat inside'.
11	風邪を（ひくとき、ひいたら）、薬を飲んで、早くねます。 Kaze, o, hiku, toki, hiku,tara, kusuri, o, nonde, hayaku, nemasu. Wind Particle enter when enter drug Particle drink soon sleep 'When (you) have cold, take drug and then sleep as soon as possible'.
12	きのう、（寝るとき、寝たら）、窓を閉めました。 Kinou neru toki neru tara mado o shimeru mashita. Yesterday, sleep, when, sleep, if, windows, particle, close, lamp 'Yesterday, when (I) slept, (I) closed the door'.
13	ルンさんは、きのう加藤さんと（話しているとき、話していたら）、 敬語を使っていました。 Ren san wa kinou kanou san to (hanashite iru toki, hanashite itara) keigo o tsukatte imashita. Sister Ren, Particle, yesterday, brother Kanou, Particle, speaking, when, speaking, if, polite, Particle, using, Pst 'Ren, when he talked to Kanou yesterday, was using polite language'.
14	雨が（降ったとき、降ったら）、行きません。 Ame ga furu ta toki furu tara ikimasen.

	Rain, Particle, when, fall, if, not go, if, rain, fall, not go 'When it rains, I will not go'.
15	かばんを（あけるとき、あけたら）、教科書がなかった。 Kaban o akeru toki akeru tara kyoukashou ga nakatta. Bag, Particle, open, when, open, if, book, Particle, not available 'When open the bag, the book is not inside'.
16	東京へ（行ったとき、行ったら）、ホテルに泊まりました。 Toukyou e iku ta toki iku tara hoteru ni tomaru mashita Tokyo, Particle, Past, when, go, if, hotel, Particle, stay, lamp 'When going to Tokyo, stay at a hotel'.
17	京都駅に（着いたとき、着いたら）、わたしに電話をください。 すぐ迎えに行きます。 Kyouto eki ni(tsuita toki,tsuitara),watashi ni denwa o kudasai.sugu mukaeni ikimasu. Kyoto, station, Particle, up to, Past, when, up to, if, I, call, Particle, help. Soon, pick, Particle, go 'When arriving at Kyoto station, please call me. I will pick you up soon'.
18	このシャツはデパートへ（行ったとき、行ったら）買いました。 Kono shatsu wa depaato e iku ta toki iku tara kau mashita. This, shirt, Particle, department store, Particle, go, Past, when, go, buy, Past 'This shirt is purcahsed when (I) went to the department store'.
19	毎日水を（やったとき、やったら）、花が咲きました。 Mainichi, mizu, o, yaru, ta, toki, yaru, tara, hana, ga, saku, mashita Everyday, water, Particle, do, Past, when, do, if, flower, Particle, develop, Past 'If (you) water flowers everyday, they bloom'.
20	ニューヨークで（働いていたとき、働いたら）、彼女と会いました。 Newyork de (hataraite ita toki,hataraitara), kanojou to aimashita. New York, Particle, work, Perfect, when, work, if, he, Particle, meet, Past 'When working in New York, I met him'.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis was primarily done with MS-Excel by following the scoring scale to classify students' answers by category and interpretation scale.

Tabel 2. Scoring scale

Score	Quality of Test Mastery
86-100	Very effective / very good
71-85	Effective / good
56-70	Effective enough / medium
41-55	Not effective / low quality
20-40	Not very effective/not fulfil the minimum requirement

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 shows the overall results of correct answers during Pre-Test and displays that the lowest percentage (28%) of correct answers at MSJUSU is related to Question 11 and this percentage is considered the lowest level in the scoring scale, meaning that the ability of MSJUSU to understand and answer this question is not very effective or this level does not meet the minimum requirements. However, for the same question, the MSJUNAND got 38% which is also considered as not very effective in giving correct answers.

Table 3. Percentage of correct answers during Pre-Test

Question	Answer key	Percentage of correct answers		Question	Answer key	Percentage of correct answers	
		MSJUSU	MSJUNAND			MSJUSU	MSJUNAND
1	~tekara	30%	69%	11	~tara	28%	38%
2	~tekara	58%	45%	12	~toki	78%	72%
3	~tara	80%	79%	13		83%	59%
4	~tara	50%	59%	14	~tara	78%	79%
5	~tekara	80%	62%	15		35%	41%
6		60%	69%	16		75%	79%
7	~tara	35%	62%	17	~toki	80%	31%
8	~tara	38%	55%	18		47%	79%
9	~tekara	55%	55%	19	~tara	63%	93%
10	~tara	35%	72%	20	~toki	88%	79%

To get the correct answers for question 11, students should choose ~tara where it is appropriate for the next statement, namely 'to take medicine and go to bed'. However, it is likely the majority of students did not

choose properly. Basically, the present tense of the verb 'masu' (<ま す>) indicates that the action/state of this verb has not been yet done; therefore, the sentence kaze o hikimasu is interpreted as 'will be cold'. The changes of form of the sentence kaze o hikimasu after the existence of the conjunction ~toki should be kaze o hiku (<風邪 を ひ く>). Therefore, most students predicted the sentence kaze o hikutoki (<風邪 を ひ く と き>) became the correct answer.

The past form of the verb hikimashita (<ひ き ま し た>) shows a situation that has happened. So, the sentence kaze o hikimashita (<風邪 を ひ き ま し た>) was changed into kaze o hiita (<風邪 を ひ い た>) and this sentence is more natural and precise with the conjunctions ~tara. The lowest percentage of the correct answers from MSJUNAND for the question 17 amounts to 31%. This percentage indicated that the ability of students to understand and answer question 17 is not very effective or does not meet the minimal requirements.

About 30% of the students at MSJUSU chose the ~*tekara* and this shows the lowest perecentage of the correct answers, which is meant as very ineffective or fails to meet the minimal requirements. Perhaps the past form of the verb kaketa 'had called' appearing before ~tara had influenced the students for question 1. Moreover, the sentence pattern ~ta hooga iidesu (preferably ~) which is meant to 'provide advice to act' might influence students to choose ~tara. With regard to question 2, about 45% of students at MSJUNAND chose ~tekara and this percentage became the lowest of all correct answers and indicated low quality. If translated into Bahasa Indonesia, the question 2 would be 'since/after coming to Japan, I began to learn Japanese'. The existance of the past form of the verb *hajimemashita* 'has started' created misconception among them.

4.1 Pre-Test Result at MSJUSU and MSJUNAND

Table 4 displays that the correct answers for ~tekara and ~tare given by MSJUSU in Question 2 reaches 31% and 45% so the total is 76%. This percentage is the the highest and indicates the 'effective or good' remarks of students' ability. From this Table, it is also known that there were 11% of students choosing conjunctions ~tekara and 3% ~tare; their mistakes were related to the ways they wrote hiragana and katakana particles although this percentage was small. On the contrary, at MSJUNAND, the percentage of total correct answers (79%) was the highest with 17% taking ~tekara as their choices and 62% ~tare. This total is indicated as 'effective or better'. However, a small number of students (20%) did not comply with the Japanese rules of grammar. On the other hand, it is also shown in the Table 4 that 26% and 37% of students at MSJUSU chose ~tekara and ~tare respectively.

The percentage of correct answers to Question 5 at MSJUNAND became the lowest (31%) indicating 'not very effective' or this percentage did not meet the minimum requirements since only 17% at MSJUNAND completed this question using the conjunction ~tekara and their phrases were are less precise; however, they used the ~tara because it was close to their daily lives. Unfortunately, they were also confused and mistaken with the rules to use ~tara.

With regard to Question 7, students at MSJUSU obtained low percentage of correct answers, namely 37% for sentences using ~toki and 5% ~ tara. The total was 42% indicating the 'ineffective or low quality'. What needs to know is that Question 7 describes the activities of the subject before bedtime. Students desired to complete these questions with a sentence that showed activity when going to sleep or conditions / circumstances that occurred while he was sleeping (something that happens unexpectedly).

Table 4. Percentage of Answers in Pre-Test at MSJUSU and MSJUNAND

No	Questions		Percentage at MSJUSU			Percentage at MSJUNAND		
			Correct	Incorrect	No answers	Correct	Incorrect	No answers
1	大学を	出てから,	39%	26%	5%	36%	14%	
		出たら,	3%	26%		36%	14%	
2	うちへ	帰ってから,	31%	8%	13%	17%	3%	
		帰ったら,	45%	3%		62%	17%	
3	薬を	飲んでから,	37%	18%	3%	28%	28%	3%
		飲んだら,	21%	21%		24%	17%	
4	朝、	起きてから,	47%	11%	8%	34%	24%	
		起きたら,	13%	21%		28%	14%	
5	たくさん	食べてから,	13%	26%	3%	0%	17%	

	ご飯を	食べたら,	21%	37%			31%	52%	
6	東京へ	行ったとき,	47%	21%	11%		62%	24%	
		行ったら,	16%	5%			7%	7%	
7	きのう	寝るとき,	37%	26%	18%		31%	24%	
		寝たら,	5%	13%			28%	10%	

The sentences produced by students to complete Question 7 were categorized as 'less appropriate' because they were ungrammatical in Japanese. Students used <友達が来た> tomodachi ga kita (friends come) in Question 7; although this sentence is grammatical correct sentence, but it is not appropriate to be used as a complement for Question 7. However, the sentences can be appropriate if the form of nerutoki (going to bed) is replaced by neyoutoshitara (when it intends to go to sleep), as shown in sentences (2). The senetence (3) is less appropriate and most students chose the conjunctions ~toki versus ~tara.

(2)　　＜きのう、寝ようとしたら、友達が来た。　（✓）＞
　　　Kinou, neyoutoshi - tara, tomodachi- ga kita.
　　　'Yesterday, <u>when</u> I intended to sleep, (my) friend came'.
(3)　　＜きのう、寝るとき、{ 悪い夢を見た。}　（？）＞
　　　Kinou, neru - toki, warui yume- o mita.
　　　'Yesterday, <u>when</u> I am going to sleep, (I) get nightmare'.

In case of sentence (4), allegedly, students did not pay attention to the present tense verb neru (going to sleep) appearing before ~toki, which described the activities/actions 'not yet done'. Students only translated the verb neru as (to sleep) and produced the sentence warui yume o mita (nightmares). Nevertheless, the sentence can be appropriate if the conjunction ~toki is changed to ~tara, and the verb neru is replaced by neteita (was sleeping) as shown in (4).

(4)　　＜きのう、寝ていたら、 悪い夢を見た。　（✓）＞
　　　Kinou, netei - tara, warui yume- o mita.
　　　'Yesterday, <u>when</u> I slept, I had a nightmare'.

4.2　Post-Test Results at MSJUSU and MSJUNAND

Based on pre-test data analysis, students at MSJUSU and MSJUNAND tend to face problems of how to use the conjunctions ~tekara, toki~ and ~tara appropriately. They chose the ~tekara when the ~tara was appropriate. In case of ~ toki, students at both universities felt confused and failed to determine the correct answer between toki~ and ~tara. Students tend to translate the questions during Pre-Test into Indonesian and ignore the verb forms before the conjunctions ~tekara, ~toki, and ~tara; as a result, all this greatly affected the meaning of the sentences.

After a seminar on the use of ~tekara, ~toki, and ~tara was held, there appeared a good understanding on these three conjunctions. Students at MSJUSU began to be careful in reading and answering questions and this was proved by less 'unappropriate answers'. However, the errors students made about writing hiragana, katakana as well as particles were still found as shown in sentence (5); students should choose the underlined word.

(5)　　たくさんご飯を食べてから、 <u>ぎゅんにゅう</u>を飲みます。
　　　takusan gohan o tabetekara, gyunnyuu o nomimasu.

Based on the analysis of data in the Pre-test exam, it is known that MSJUNAND also face problems in using conjunctions ~ tekara, toki ~ and ~ tara appropriately. Students tend to translate the questions on the exam Pre-Test into Indonesian to less attention to the form of the verb before conjunctions. As with MSJUSU, MSJUNAND known also facing difficulty to choose one right answer when answering S.11. Also, on the question of S.15, the translation of conjunctions ~ toki into Indonesian are reasonable sememangnya used to trigger an increase in the percentage of incorrect answers. However, if students pay more attention to the form of the verb before the conjunction, of course, the percentage of this error may be reduced.

V.　CONCLUSION

It is concluded that students at MSJUNAND as well as MSJUSU faced problems in using the conjunctions ~tekara, toki~, and ~tara appropriately. They translated the questions into Indonesian and paid less attention to the verb forms which were available before the conjunctions. In the Pre-Test, they were difficult to

identify the three conjunctions. The tendency to translate the questions was caused by a problem that they did not understand the questions wholly. Mistakes made by students at MSJUSU and MSJUNAND was when they should write the hiragana, katakana as well as the particles. Lack of training in making Japanese sentences was thought to be the cause of all these errors.

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