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# First Language Influence on Adverbial Clauses of Reason: Focusing on Japanese English Learners' Use of *Because*-Clauses\*

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the nature of sentence fragmentations with a subordinator *because* found in the writings of Japanese learners of English and their relations with L1 knowledge. We will explore the possibility that the different ways of encoding complex propositional contents in English and Japanese and the (un)availability of insubordination constructions in these two languages are the L1 knowledge sources that influence Japanese EFL learners' production of *because*-clause fragments. We will also consider some of the predictions our proposal makes about the ways in which *because*-clauses are syntactically realized in Japanese translations and the length of fragment *because*-clauses produced by Japanese EFL learners.

## 1. Introduction

English has two types of syntactic structures at its disposal that allow its users to express complex thoughts: compound and complex sentences. The former joins two or more independent clauses together by coordinating conjunctions, placing them informationally

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in equal status. On the other hand, complex sentences are formed by conjoining a main clause with one or more subordinate clauses of various kinds, which furnish speakers/writers with a toolkit for expressing complex semantic relationships between clauses such as cause and effect, contrast, and time relationships. Thus, complex sentence structure is a springboard for the expressive variety of language use, and a failure to use the structure is likely to hinder speakers/writers from communicating complex thoughts.

This paper focuses on the use of fragment *because*-clauses by Japanese EFL learners in their writings and its relations with the L1 knowledge. Complex sentences, being comprised of a main and subordinate clause, the omission of the former stranding a subordinate clause inevitably leads to ungrammaticality, as in (1).

- (1) \*(By nightfall his amazement turned to alarm,) *because there were points of light in the distance, obvious signs that the valley was populated.*

(Pinker 1994: 12)

The two clauses in (1) can be placed in a sequence either in a compound or parataxis structure:

- (2) By nightfall his amazement turned to alarm, and there were points of light in the distance, obvious signs that the valley was populated.
- (3) By nightfall his amazement turned to alarm. There were points of light in the distance, obvious signs that the valley was populated.

Since a compound sentence and parataxis set two (or more) independent clauses informationally in equal status, (2) and (3) are not synonymous with the complex sentence in (1). The significant parts of meanings that complex sentences convey are abstract in nature. Thus, a set of complex sentences is the basis for encoding complex contents in English. By contrast, Japanese has a different preference for encoding the propositional contents intended in English.

This paper investigates how the two languages diverge in terms of syntactic

realizations of complex propositional contents, hoping to locate a knowledge source that Japanese EFL learners tend to resort to in the production of fragment *because*-clauses.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the *because*-clause fragments that are typically found in the writings of Japanese EFL learners. The core data and findings about them are drawn from Inoue (2022). We will show that the fragment errors made by Japanese EFL learners exhibit some intriguing properties that have not received much attention. Section 3 explores how complex contents are syntactically manifested in English and Japanese. We argue that these two languages have different preferences for encoding complex propositions, and we suggest that Japanese EFL learners' production of fragment *because*-clauses has to do with this divergence in the two languages. Section 4 discusses some of the predictions that our proposal makes and an issue related to them. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## **2. *Because*-Clause Fragments**

One of the salient features of errors with a subordinator *because* is a sentence fragmentation. The use of a *because*-clause fragment has been extensively observed at the early stages in the writings of Japanese learners at junior and senior high schools. As observed by several authors (Izzo, 1994; Kobayashi, 2009; Ito & Misumi, 2016; Tatsukawa, 2020), although learners in general over time use *because*-clause fragments less frequently, it remains a persistent problem faced by the upper intermediate level students.

This section provides a brief description of the use of fragment *because*-clauses by Japanese EFL learners discussed in Inoue (2022). The previous studies have mainly focused on the distribution of sentence fragmentations with a subordinator *because*, but they have neglected to investigate what modification relation it has with a sentence immediately preceding or following it. Inoue (2022) examined 544 essays written by 70 Japanese university freshmen, focusing on the use of *because*-clauses. As illustrated in

Table 1, 554 instances of *because*-clauses were retrieved from the corpus, and he found that 451 sentences (81.4%) were correct usages, whereas improper usages occurred on 103 (18.6%) occasion. Of the improper usage, 96 sentences (93.2%) were errors involving sentence fragmentation<sup>3</sup>, which is in line with Ito and Misumi’s (2016) findings.

**Table 1 Frequency of proper and improper uses of *because*-clauses**

Types	Number of Occurrence
<i>Because</i> -clause	554
Proper <i>because</i> -clause	451 / 554 (81.4%)
Improper <i>because</i> -clause	103 / 554 (18.6%)
<i>Because</i> -clause fragment	96 / 103 (93.2%)

Inoue (2022) further investigated what modification relation a *because*-clause fragment has with a sentence immediately preceding or following it. It turned out that not a single instance of a *because*-clause fragment was found that modified the sentence immediately following it. That is, all the cases of fragment *because*-clauses had a modification relation with a sentence immediately preceding it. Inoue (2022) has also identified the two types of usages for *because*-clause fragments that are attested in the grammar of English, which are illustrated in (4).

(4) a. He’s not coming to class *because he’s sick*.

b. He’s not coming to class, *because he just called from San Diego*.

(Rutherford 1970: 97)

The *because*-clause in (4a) is a reason for his not coming to class, whereas it is a reason for saying the proposition described in the main clause.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> We did not take into account the rest of 7 (6.8%) improper usages of *because*-clauses, for they were incomprehensible.

<sup>4</sup> Based on this and other types of evidence, Ross (1970) argued that a declarative sentence like (4b) occurs as a complement clause of a phonetically unrealized superordinate structure which contains a performative verb

Similarly, the *because*-clause fragment in (5a) describes a reason for the proposition expressed in the immediately preceding sentence, whereas the fragment *because*-clause in (5b) is a reason for saying the immediately preceding proposition.

- (5) a. I experienced volunteer activities when I was an elementary school student.  
 \*Because a friend of mine asked me to join it.
- b. If you like to travel, you will love that place. \*Because Okinawa has a beautiful sea, rich nature and a great traditional culture.

As shown in Table 2, of 96 *because*-clause fragments, 62 (64.6%) instances were of the first type that modifies the proposition described in the main clause, whereas 34 (35.4%) were of the second type that modifies a performative verb in the underlying structure.

**Table 2 Frequency of types of modifyees for *because*-clause fragments**

Types of Modifyees	Number of Occurrence
Immediately preceding sentence	62 (64.6%)
Covert performative verb	34 (35.4%)
Immediately following sentence	0 (0%)

One question arises from the findings about the use of fragment *because*-clauses adumbrated above. It has to do with a question of how Japanese EFL learners come to acquire the knowledge about a modification relation between a *because*-clause and its main clause. In particular, the second usage we noted in (5b) seems to present the poverty of the stimulus problem (Chomsky, 1980, 1986). The second usage requires that Japanese learners postulate a phonetically unrealized superordinate structure. It seems unlikely

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together with the representation of the speaker and the addressee, as in (i).  
 (i) [I say to you] he's not coming to class, because he just called from San Diego.

that the evidence is available in their input for Japanese EFL learners to infer this syntactic knowledge about a modification relation associated with *because*-clauses. A reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that Japanese EFL learners have access to the L1 knowledge regarding a modification relation between a main and subordinate clause in their learning processes.

### 3. A Link Between the *Because*-Clause Fragments and L1 Knowledge

This section explores the ways in which complex sentences in English are structurally realized in Japanese translations in an attempt to clarify what aspects of L1 knowledge influence the learners' interlanguage production errors discussed in Section 2. We will focus attention on the English complex sentences whose subordinate clauses occur at the end of a sentence and their syntactic counterparts in Japanese. It turns out that in many cases the relevant structures in English do not straightforwardly correspond to their Japanese structural counterparts; idiomatic Japanese translations of the propositional content intended in English are often formulated in a compound sentence structure, in which two or more independent clauses are conjoined by the *te/continuative*-form of a verb, as in (6a) and (6b) (Fukuchi, 2012; Kuwabara, 2019).<sup>5, 6</sup>

- (6) a. Okasan-wa sakana-o *katte* osusi-o tukutta.  
           mother-Top fish-Acc bought osusi-Acc made  
           ‘My mother bought fish and made sushi.’
- b. Okasan-wa sakana-o *kai* osusi-o tukutta.  
           mother-Top fish-Acc bought osusi-Acc made

As shown in the English translation, the verb in *te/continuative*-form has a function

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<sup>5</sup> The following abbreviations are used in the glosses in this paper: Acc=Accusative, C=Complementizer, DAT=Dative, Gen=Genitive, Nom=Nominative, Q=Question Particle, SFP=Sentence Final Particle, and Top=Topic.

<sup>6</sup> The examples in (6) can also be translated into a complex sentence in which an infinitival clause is embedded, as in (i).  
 (i) My mother bought fish to make sushi.





hairetsusiteiru.

arrange.

‘(Lit.) However, behind such “simple” sentences like ‘Where did you go?’ and ‘The guy I met killed himself.’ that any English speaker would say, are many processes at work, and they arrange words to express the meaning accurately.,

Likewise, the example in (9) contains a relative clause, but unlike (8), the main and subordinate clauses in the original English sentence are placed in juxtaposition in the Japanese translation.

(9) The brain must contain a recipe or program *that can build an unlimited set of sentences out of a finite list of words.*

(10) Nootyuu-ni syohoosen-nari puroguramu-nari-ga aru  
inside-brain-in recipe-something-like program-something-like-Nom is  
nitigainai. Sonotame yuugenko-no tango-kara mugen-no  
must for that reason finite-Gen word-from infinite-Gen  
bun-o tsukuridasu koto-ga dekiru no dearu.  
sentence-Acc produce C-Nom possible-is C is

‘(Lit.) It must be the case that there is something like a recipe or program in the brain. Therefore, you can make an infinite number of sentences out a finite list of words.’

It is possible to translate (9) along the lines of (11) with a noun modification structure, keeping the original English structure intact, but (10) is far more idiomatic and sounds much better to Japanese ears.

(11) Yuugenko-no tango-kara bun-o tsukuridasu koto-ga dekiru  
finite-Gen word-from sentence-Acc produce C-Nom possible-is  
syohoosen-nari puroguramu-nari-ga nootyuu-ni aru  
recipe-something-like program-something-like-Nom inside-brain-in is

nitigainai.

must

‘(Lit.) It must be the case that there is something like a recipe or program in the brain that can produce an infinite number of sentences out of a finite list of words.’

There is a reason to prefer (10) over (11): the former encodes more accurately the semantic relation between the main and subordinate clause in (9). Furthermore, in (9), the subordinate clause conveys more important information than the main clause. This is effectively expressed by attaching a copula verb *dearu* to the end of the second sentence, thereby marking the second sentence as focus.<sup>8</sup> This is made possible by juxtaposing the main and subordinate clauses in a sequence of simple sentences.

The following example instantiates a case of complex sentences in which an infinitival clause is embedded:

- (12) Early on, Chomsky’s work encouraged other scientists, among them Eric Lenneberg, George Miller, Roger Brown, Morris Halle, and Alvin Liberman, *to open up whole new areas of language study, from child development and speech perception to neurology and genetics.* (Pinker 1994: 10)

(12) has a long infinitival clause embedded in the matrix VP and conveys more important information than the main clause. As expected, in the corresponding Japanese translation the main and subordinate clauses in (12) are rearranged in the sequence of independent

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<sup>8</sup> *Dearu* is a form used in formal writing, whereas *desu* can be used both in spoken and written Japanese. The pre-copula position is a slot for focus/new information in Japanese, as shown (i) and (ii).

(i) Inoue-sensei-ga kaita no-wa kono hon desu.

-Prof-Nom wrote C-Top this book is

‘It is this book that Prof. Inoue wrote.’

(ii) A: Nani-ga atta no?

what-Nom happened Q

‘What happened?’

B: Totsuzen hamono-o motta otoko-ga haittekita no desu.

suddenly knife-Acc had man-Nom came-in C is

‘Suddenly a man with a knife came in.’

(i) is a cleft construction and *kono hon* ‘this book’ occurs in the pre-copula focus position. In (ii), the entire sentence conveys new information and is immediately followed by the copula verb.

clauses by using the continuative form of a verb, as in (13).<sup>9</sup>

- (13) Tyomusukii-no sisei-wa hayakukara Erikku Renebaagu, Zyoози  
Chomsky-Gen position-Top early-on Eric Lenneberg George  
Miraa, Rozyaa Buraun, Morisu Hare, Arubin Ribaman nado,  
Miller Roger Brown Morris Halle Alvin Liberman and-so-on  
hoka-no ookuno gakusya-o sigekisi, zidoo-no hattatsu ya  
other-Gen many scholars-Acc stimulated child-Gen development and  
gengo ninti-kara sinkeigaku, idengaku-ni itarumade  
language perception-from neurology genetics-to leading-to  
gengokenkyuu-ni kazukazu-no sin bunnya-o hiraita.  
language study-to many-Gen new area-Acc opened  
'(Lit.) Early on, Chomsky stimulated Eric Lenneberg, George Miller, Roger Brown,  
Morris Halle, Alvin Liberman and other scholars, and they opened up new areas of  
language study, from child development and speech perception to neurology and  
genetics.'

The final example has to do with a complex sentence that accompanies a participle clause.

- (14) The babies must have been keeping track of how many dolls were behind the screen,  
*updating their counts as dolls were added or subtracted.* (Pinker 1994: 59)  
The comparison between (14) and its idiomatic Japanese translation points to the same  
conclusion. The propositional content formulated in a complex sentence structure in (14)  
has a significantly different shaping in the Japanese translation, as in (15).

- (15) Akanbootati-wa sukuriin-no mukoo-ni ikutsu ningyoo-ga aru  
babys-Top screen-Gen behind-to how-many dolls-Nom is

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<sup>9</sup> We have already noted an instance of this mismatch with respect to an infinitival clause in footnote 6.

ka-o oboeteite, ningyoo-ga tasaretari toridasaretari sure tabi-ni  
Q-Acc remember doll-Nom added-is subtract-is do time-at  
kazu-o atarasiku-siteita nitigainai.  
number-Acc update-did must

‘(Lit.) It must be the case that babies remembered how many dolls were behind the screen, and they updated the number of dolls every time when new ones were added or subtracted.’

Given these considerations, it seems plausible that the longer a subordinate clause in English is, the more likely it is that the same propositional content is realized either in a compound structure consisting of independent clauses or in a sequence of simple sentences in Japanese.<sup>10</sup> We suggest that the preference for encoding the complex thoughts in Japanese discussed above is a source leading Japanese learners of English to the production of fragment *because*-clauses.

#### 4. Predictions about *Because*-Clauses

The different preferences for encoding complex contents in the two languages bring a number of issues about *because*-clauses. For one thing, the considerations in Section 3 lead us to expect that the *because*-clauses translated into Japanese should pattern like other subordinate clauses in terms of structural realization. For another, if the use of fragment *because*-clauses found in the writings of Japanese EFL learners has to do with the different ways of encoding complex propositions in the two languages, it is to be predicted that fragment *because*-clauses tend to be longer than the ones that correctly occur with main clauses. We will delve into these issues below.

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<sup>10</sup> For a more thorough investigation based on extensive data, see Kuwabara (2019).

#### 4.1 *Because*-Clauses and Their Equivalentents in Japanese Translations

To examine how complex sentences with a *because*-clause are encoded in Japanese translations, we have selected Steven Pinker’s *Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, which accompanies the Japanese translation (Pinker, 1995) created by a professional translator.<sup>11</sup> 169 complex sentences with a *because*-clause were retrieved from the main text consisting of 448 pages,<sup>12</sup> and we examined the ways in which they are syntactically realized in Japanese translations. We found that 53 sentences translated into Japanese agreed with their English counterparts in terms of their structure, whereas 116 sentences translated into Japanese did not. That is, of all the English complex sentences with a *because*-clause that were translated into Japanese, approximately 31% maintained their original syntactic structure, whereas approximately 68% switched it. This is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Occurrence of matched and unmatched syntactic structures between English and Japanese**

Types	Number of Occurrences
	169 (100%)
Matched (Complex sentence)	53 (31.4)
Unmatched (Others)	116 (68.6%)

(17) illustrates a case where the original English clause structure in (16) is straightforwardly translated into Japanese.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The decision on choosing this particular parallel text corpus is based on the assumption that scientific/academic writing is a genre in which considerations of factual information and logical clarity are required so that we can minimize the effect of different cultural nuances. Furthermore, the translator specializes in translation of scientific writings and has also translated another book by Steven Pinker, and is considered to be reflective of idiomatic Japanese in this genre of writings.

<sup>12</sup> In total, there were 198 complex sentences with a *because*-clause in the English main text. 29 instances were either not translated at all or translated into significantly different constructions. We did not count those cases.

<sup>13</sup> Since Japanese is a strictly right-headed language, the straightforward translation of the English clause structure

(16) Until recently there were no sign languages at all in Nicaragua, *because its deaf people remained isolated from one another.* (Pinker 1994: 24)

(17) Nikaragua-de-wa saikin-made, tyookaku syoogaisya-ga tagaini  
 Nicaragua-in-Top recent-until hearing imparitment-Nom each other  
 koritsusiteita node, syuwa-wa mattaku sonzaisinakatta.  
 isolated because sign language-Top entirely existed-not  
 ‘(Lit.) Until recently because people with hearing impairment were isolated from one another, there were no sign languages in Nicaragua.’

As shown in Table 4, of the 116 unmatched pairs, 71 English complex sentences were translated into a sequence of independent clauses in Japanese. In contrast, 45 sentences translated into Japanese maintained a complex sentence structure but did not agree with the original structure in English: they were syntactically realized as a pseudo-cleft sentence.

**Table 4** Types of syntactic structures in unmatched pairs in Japanese translations

Types	Number of Occurrences
Independent clause	71 (61.2%)
Pseudo-cleft sentence	45 (25.7%)

The following pair illustrates a case in which the complex sentence is encoded as a sequence of independent clauses:

(18) The verb ‘to be’ is a particular source of illogic, *because it identifies individuals with abstractions, as in ‘Mary is a woman,’ and licenses evasion of responsibility, like Ronald Regan’s famous nonconfession ‘Mistakes were made.’*

(Pinker 1994: 46)

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results in the order in which the subordinate clause precedes the main clause, as in (17).

- (19) *Be doosi-wa tokuni tsumi-ga omoi. 'Mary-wa zyosei da' noyouni*  
 be verb-Top especially sin-Nom serious Mary-Top woman is such-as  
*kozin to tyuusyo gainen-o ikooru-ni oitari, Reegan*  
 individual and abstract concept-Acc equal-in place, Regan  
*daitoryoo-no yuumeina nige koozyou-no 'iroiro ayamati-ga*  
 president-Nom famous excuse-Gen various mistakes-Nom  
*okasarete' noyouni sekinin nogare-o suru kara da.*  
 made-was such-as responsibility evasion-Acc do because is  
 '(Lit.) The verb *be* is especially to be blamed. It is because it identifies an  
 individual with an abstract concept, as in 'Mary is a woman,' and it allows evasion  
 of the responsibility as in the President's Regan's famous excuse, 'Mistakes were  
 made.'

The sentences in (20) and (21) also illustrate a case of an unmatched pair. In this case, the Japanese translation maintains the complex sentence structure but it is switched to a significantly different shaping:

- (20) That is, we can recognize 'colorless green ideas' *because it has the same order of adjectives and nouns that we learned from more familiar sequences like 'strapless black dresses.'* (Pinker 1994: 85)
- (21) 'Irono nai midori-no gainen'-ga eigo da to omoeru no-wa  
 color without green-Gen ideas-Nom English is C understand C-Top  
 'Katahimo-no nai kuroi doresu' nado-no heibonna  
 strap-Gen without black dress such-as-Gen ordinary  
*tangoretsu-kara mananda keiyooosi, meisi-no gozyun to onazi*  
 string-of-words-from learned adjective noun-Gen word-order as same  
*zyunzyo-de tango-ga narandeiru kara nanoda.*  
 order-in word-Nom placed because is

‘(Lit.) The reason that we understand ‘colorless green ideas.’ is because the words are placed in the same order of adjectives and nouns that we learned from an ordinary example like ‘strapless black dresses.’

This is reminiscent of the observation made in Section 3; we have seen with (10) that the subordinate clause in English is translated into an independent clause in Japanese, being placed in a pre-copula focus position, which effectively encodes the information structure of the English sentence in (9). In (21), the pseudo-cleft construction is employed to serve the same purpose. In (20), while the main clause conveys given information, the *because*-clause conveys new information. This information packaging is well represented in (21) by placing the main clause in the presupposition clause and a *because*-clause in a pre-copula focus position. Furthermore, it is quite instructive to note that since the presupposition clause of a pseudo-cleft represents given information, it can often be elided. This gives rise to constructions like (22B), in which a subordinate clause is stranded without a main clause, a phenomenon dubbed “insubordination” in the linguistic literature.<sup>14</sup>

(22) A: Kyoooo-wa totemo hayaku kimasita ne.

today-Top very early came SFP

‘You came very early today.’

B. (Hayaku kita no-wa) Inoue-sensei to apointmento-ga aru kara

early came C-Top -Prof with appointment-Nom is because  
desu.

is

‘(Lit.) (The reason that I came early is) because there is an appointment with Prof.

Inoue.’

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<sup>14</sup> Insubordination constructions are widely observed in spoken Japanese, and sentence fragments with various subordinators are possible. For the descriptions of the phenomena, see Ohori (1995), Shirakawa (2009), and Kato (2013) among others.



At first glance, the unmatched pairs described in Table 4 consist of what looks like distinct types. Given that a pseudo-cleft construction is an underlying source of a fragment *because*-clause, it is plausible that the two types of unmatched pairs are not unrelated.

The discussion so far indicates that the production of fragment *because*-clauses has to do with the different preference for encoding complex contents in Japanese as well as the availability of insubordination constructions like (22B), in which a reason subordinate clause is stranded.

#### 4.2 Length of Fragment *Because*-Clauses

Another prediction has to do with the length of *because*-clause fragments. Given the considerations in Section 3, it is to be predicted that *because*-clause fragments tend to be longer than those occurring with a main clause. To test this prediction, out of 451 proper uses of *because*-clauses, 100 examples were retrieved at random and were compared with all the instances (96 examples) of fragment *because*-clauses. An independent-sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the two types of *because*-clauses in terms of the number of words they contained. As Table 5 shows, there was a statistically significant difference in the number of words in proper usage *because*-clauses ( $M = 8.42$ ,  $SD = 3.36$ ) and fragment *because*-clauses ( $M = 11.74$ ,  $SD = 4.91$ ) conditions;  $t(194) = -5.54$ ,  $p < .001$ . The results show that the prediction is borne out, lending support to the proposal that it is a different way of encoding complex thoughts in Japanese that its EFL learners can access in learning the syntactic structures of subordinate clauses.

**Table 5 Independent sample *t*-test output**

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Proper <i>because</i> -clause	100	8.42	3.36
<i>Because</i> -clause fragment	96	11.74	4.91

Before we leave this section, we would like to discuss a case that appears to pose a problem for our proposed. If it is a syntactically different way of encoding complex propositions and the availability of insubordination constructions with a variety of subordinators in Japanese that are responsible for the production of fragment *because*-clauses, we would expect that Japanese learners also fragment sentences when other subordinators are involved. Since the subordinator *since* can be used to give a reason for the proposition described in a main clause as in (23), we expect that *since*-clause fragments can also be detected in the writings of Japanese EFL learners.

(23) They couldn't deliver the parcel *since no one was there to answer the door*.

We have found surprisingly fewer cases of a *since*-clause that expresses a reason, in comparison to the cases of *because*-clauses. Out of 544 essays, there were only 29 instances of *since*-clauses that describe reasons, and not a single instance of a *since*-clause fragment was attested. That is, all the instances of *since*-clauses correctly accompanied the main clauses. This raises a question as to why Japanese EFL learners make use of their L1 syntactic knowledge selectively in the production of *because*-clauses. That is, why is the relevant L1 knowledge not extended to the production of a *since*-clause? A possible line of explanation is to assume that EFL learners need sufficient evidence in L2 input that facilitates the transfer of the L1 syntactic knowledge to their production in English. While a *because*-clause without the main clause can be used as an answer to a *why*-question in speaking and informal writing, a *since*-clause cannot, as illustrated in (24).

(24) A: Why did John leave?

B: {Because/\*Since} Harry came.

As Japanese EFL learners are exposed to what looks like a fragment *because*-clause like (24B) in L2 input, they might assume that a sentence fragmentation is possible with a subordinator *because* on a par with Japanese, but not with the subordinator *since*. Clearly more work is needed on this issue, which we leave to future investigation.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined the nature of a sentence fragmentation with a subordinator *because* found in the writings of Japanese EFL learners. We have argued that the different preferences for encoding complex propositions between English and Japanese and the (un)availability of insubordination constructions in the two languages are the knowledge sources that influence the interlanguage production of *because*-clause fragments. We have also discussed some of the predictions our proposal makes. We saw that English *because*-clauses, when translated into Japanese, pattern like other subordinate clauses in that the main and subordinate clauses are rearranged in the sequence of two independent clauses. We have also examined the length of *because*-clause fragments and demonstrated that they are significantly longer than those that occur with a main clause, which is in line with our proposal.

Furthermore, we have briefly discussed a problem concerning a *since*-clause that falls short of our expectation. Japanese EFL learners do not produce a sentence fragmentation with the subordinator *since*. We explored a possibility that this disparity stems from the unavailability of positive evidence in L2 input in a case of a *since*-clause. Unlike a *because*-clause, because a *since*-clause cannot stand on its own without the main clause as an answer to a *why*-question, Japanese EFL learners may assume that a sentence fragmentation is licit only with the subordinator *because*.

Many issues remain to be considered. English has a variety of subordinators that express complex semantic relations. A natural question that arises is: Do Japanese EFL learners use a sentence fragmentation when other subordinators are involved. If they do, what positive evidence is available in L2 input that triggers the transfer of L1 knowledge? We leave these issues to future research.

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