

Language Transfer as a Cause of Translation and Interlanguage Errors Between L1 Japanese and L2 English

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ABSTRACT

Japanese and English are linguistically dissimilar. This differences between the two languages are often cited by learners and teachers as one reason that Japanese seem to struggle with learning English more than speakers of other languages. Also, this makes translation between the two languages complicated. In this presentation I will discuss instances of negative language transfer that can cause translation errors and impede Japanese L1 learners' acquisition of English L2 with grammatical and lexical examples, based on the *contrastive analysis (CA)* approach. When approaching the theme of “errors” in the language produced by second language learners, concepts and approaches such as *common developmental sequences* and *error analysis* have become more commonplace starting points than CA. One of the reasons that CA, which posits that the majority of language errors can be attributed to differences between the L1 and L2 language systems, fell from favour was that it was linked to and based in *behaviourist* views of language acquisition that have also been largely abandoned by researchers. However, there is no doubt that our first language, or other previously learned languages, combined with cultural factors do indeed exert influence on our acquisition and use of additional languages. Furthermore, understanding structural linguistic differences is vital for increasing the ease and accuracy of translation.

Keywords: contrastive analysis, language transfer, translation errors, interlanguage errors