Acquisition of Japanese Tense and Aspect in Natural Utterance
--Focusing on the Recognition of the Reference Time--

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Research of the acquisition of aspect in Japanese mostly focuses on "-teiru" in present tense. Results clearly show that it is easier for learners to acquire the progressive meaning than the resultative meaning (Kurono1995 ; Kyo 1997, 2000 ; Koyama 2004 ; Sugaya 2003, etc.). However, it seems that, when learning Japanese, "-teita" in past tense and "-teiru" in future tense are more difficult to acquire than "-teiru" in present tense (Kyo 2002 ;Koyama 1999). For instance, Koyama's (1999) research with grammaticality judgment tests shows that the accuracy rate of the progressive meaning is 89.7% in present tense, 65.3% in past tense and 39.1% in future tense.

Thus, the acquisition of Japanese aspect has significant relation with tense. This study analyzes the acquisition of Japanese tense and aspect, according to Reichenbach's SRE theory. The data are from Chinese, Korean, English learners of Japanese in KY corpus. The major findings are as follows:

The learners with different mother tongues have the same developmental sequence. At first, learners identify the time relationship only depending on the Speech Time (ST). Along with the development of their acquisition, they can indentify the time relationship depending on ST and the Event Time (ET). Together with further development, they understand the Reference Time (RT), and identify the time relationship in connection with ST, ET and RT.

The results of this study are basically consistent with those of child first language acquisition research and those of Cui (2009). However, it is also found that the learners may be influenced by their

native languages.　Chinese, Korean, and English learners have slightly different understanding of RT.

It is necessary to verify the results of this study by using the tests with specific contexts with various tenses since "-teita" in past tense and "-teiru" in future tense rarely appear in KY corpus.

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