"He Offered To Driving": A Study of Japanese Students' Strengths and Weaknesses with Verb Complements

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INTRODUCTION

One of the hardest areas in learning English as a second language is the usage of verbs and their complements: it is hard to know which complement a particular verb should take. There are verbs which take only one type of complement, such as Infinitives, Gerunds, *that*-clauses, etc. There are also verbs which take more than one type of complement. The variety of the usage of verbs, and the kinds of complements the verbs take, often throw students of ESL into confusion. Attempts have been made to clarify the verb system better (Huddeleston, 1971; Fred, 1979; Andersson, 1985). Juhani Rudanko was one of the researchers who dealt with this issue and tried to identify verbs syntactically, to list and distinguish them semantically, and to classify them.

However, that is not the goal of my study here. Instead, the goal of this study is simply to find out which verbs and verb complements are hard (or easy) for Japanese college students of ESL. I will particularly focus on eight structures: *that*-clause, Gerund, Prepositional Gerund, Infinitive NP, Infinitive-Equi, Tense, and Surface Structure Subject.

BACKGROUND

Whether or not there is a certain order of acquisition of English structures has been one of the most discussed issues in applied linguistics. Roger Brown (1973) started the research in the area of first language acquisition. He conducted a longitudinal study of the acquisition of English morphemes by children. His study showed a common order among the children. DeVilliers and de

Villers (1973) followed Brown and conducted a cross-sectional study of children. Their results supported Brown's.

Dulay and Burt (1974 & 1979) did a cross-sectional study of children learning ESL and examined morpheme acquisition. The results showed a common order of acquisition, although it was slightly different from that of the first language acquisition. Bailey, Madden, and Krashen (1974) did their research on adults who were students of ESL, and confirmed the result found in the Dulay and Burt study. Krashen, Butler, Birmbaum and Robertson (1978) studied seventy university students from four different language backgrounds and found an acquisition order of morphemes similar to that gathered by other studies.

Anderson (1978) was one of the first researchers who started researching a common order of acquisition of the structures larger than grammatical morphemes. She conducted the research in the production of sentential complements and found a common order of difficulty among Spanish speaking university students. My previous study (Yoshii, 1990) was an attempt to see if that order also applied to Japanese university students. The result showed both similarities and differences. There was a need of further study to look into, in more detail, which verbs and complements are hard to use and which ones are less difficult for Japanese students.

I hope that this study, with the improvement of the testing measure, will be able to collect more accurate data and to give us a better understanding of the acquisition status of verb complements by Japanese college students. First, we will look at the order of difficulty of the eight structures: which ones are harder than others, and vice versa. Then, I will show you what types of mistakes the students will likely to make dealing with verb complements.

CASE STUDY

1 . Subject

The subjects of this study were Japanese college students

from two colleges in Shimonoseki city. The test was administered to 254 students, mostly sophomores, during regular class periods. The number of the subjects more than doubled the one in the previous study, which had only 104 students. I hope that the increase in the number of the subjects will be helpful for gathering more sufficient and accurate data for this research.

2. Contents of the Test & Its Procedure

I made some substantial changes in the test and its procedure. My previous study examined ten structures, including Infinitives, Gerunds, *that*-clause, and others which were closely related to verb complements such as sequence of Tense rules, the obligatory choice of Gerund after a Preposition, *to*-deletion (infinitive complement that has gone through *to*-deletion), Surface Structure Subject, Infinitive-NP (infinitive complement whose subject remains in surface), Possessive-*ing* complement, and Perfect tenses. For the test in this study I excluded two structures which appeared in the earlier study, Possessive-*ing* and Perfect tense. Both Anderson's study and my study showed they were the most difficult structures to learn: these structures came in 9th and 10th in the order of difficulty in both studies. Among other structures in the test, these structures seem to be the least commonly used in actual English; the students have probably not been exposed to these structures as often as the others, and have certainly not used them as often, either. Therefore, it is logical that they would be the most difficult structures in this study as well, and thus they were dropped as not being likely to reveal any new information.

The test contains two parts: multiple choice section and a modified cloze test (fill-in-the-blank) section; both of which were given to the students separately. I did not allow the students to refer back and forth between the two parts. The first part, the multiple choice section has the same format as the previous one, but the number of questions is different. In the previous study there were only 25 questions and the number of questions for testing the acquisition of a structure was not equally distributed. For example, there were seven test items for *to*-deletion, but there

were only three for Infinitive-Equi. In order to collect more fair, accurate data, it seemed necessary to balance the number of the test items. For this test each structure received five test items equally. *

The translation section in the previous study was modified to a cloze test: the students were asked to fill in the blanks with appropriate verb complements. I used this section to test students' more active level (production level) of understanding the verb complements in comparison to a simpler, more passive level (recognition level) in the multiple choice section. A cloze test was preferred to a translation section in order to avoid the ambiguity and misunderstanding some of the questions in the previous study had and to simplify the scoring process.

For selecting the verbs for the test, I used Anderson's and Inada's examples (1989). For her study Anderson used a variety of verbs which required the different types of verb complements. These verbs were quite appropriate for this test as well, but the increase of the number of the questions for the test demanded a greater number of the verbs. Inada's book was helpful for supplementing them; he systematically listed the verbs according to the kinds of complement they would take. Before this test, an early draft was given to several individuals including both English teachers and students to see if the test items would be valid and lead them in the expected direction.

The test example of this study can be seen in the Appendix. Table 1 also shows the structures the test examined and the test items for each structure. For the test items, I italicized those numbers in Part 2 (the cloze test) to distinguish them from those in Part 1 (the multiple choice).

Table 1. Structures Included in Test

Structures	Explanation	Example	Test items
1. *that*	*that* complement	We think *that we have enough time.*	1 23 28 31 32 39 *3 8 15 27 29*
2. Gerund	Possessive-*ing* complement that has undergone Equi-NP deletion	I finished *studying English.*	2 6 13 27 *2 9 16 26 31*
3. Prep-Gerund (P-Ger)	Gerund which is preceded by a preposition.	The pilot thought *of flying*	10 14 18 21 34 *1 7 10 17 25*
4. Inf-NP	Infinitive complement whose subject remains in surface	John wants *me to go.* My father ordered *me to study.*	3 5 8 20 29 *6 11 18 24 28*
5. *to*-deletion	Inf. comp. that has undergone *to*-deletion	We heard *the birds sing.*	12 17 26 35 38 *12 14 19 23 32*
6. Inf-Equi	Inf. comp. that has undergone Equi-Noun Phrase deletion.	I want *to see it.*	4 11 22 33 36 *4 13 20 22 30*
7. Tense	Sequence of Tenses	He thought that he *would leave* on Monday.	9 16 19 25 40 *3 5 15 21 27*
8. Surface Structure Subject	Subject of the complement is obligatorily present in Surface Structure	I want *you* to help them. John hoped that *it* wouldn't rain.	7 15 24 30 37 *6 21 23 24 32*

3. Data Analysis

The scoring procedure for the test is as follows. The multiple choice section responses were scored either right or wrong. In the previous study, the latter half of the test, the translation section, used a partial point system from 0 point to 3 points. But this complicated the scoring procedure and made it hard to score objectively. The cloze test style in this study made the procedure simpler and much less subjective in scoring: it scored either right or wrong, and in a few occasions, scored "non applicable" when the students did not respond the way expected, yet were not wrong.

In order to test which structures are easier than others, I needed to compare which structures have already been acquired

by the student and which ones have not been acquired. This required the creation of a method by which I could compare the acquisition, or lack thereof, of each structure, juxtaposed against each of the others. I decided that the "Ordering-Theoretic Method" (Bart & Krus, 1973) fit the requirements. This method identifies groups of structures that were acquired at roughly the same time and describes the hierarchical order of the groups. This method was used in this study as follows: each structure in the test has a binary score of either 1 or 0. A score of 1 indicated acquisition of the structure and a score of 0 indicated "not acquired." The criteria for determining whether or not the structure was acquired by a student was set at 80% correct answer percentage. An example of the procedure can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample of the Procedure of the Data Analysis

student (#abc)

Structures	Test items	Percentage score	Binary score
that	1 23 28 31 32 39 *3 8 15 27 29*	82% (9 correct)	1
Prep-Gerund	10 14 18 21 34 *1 7 10 17 25*	70% (7 correct)	0
to-deletion	12 17 26 35 38 *12 14 19 23 32*	60% (6 correct)	0
Inf-Equi	4 11 22 33 36 *4 13 20 22 30*	100% (10 correct)	1

Table 2 shows that the student (#abc) scored 9 correct answers out of 11 questions on *that*-clause. This amounts to 82%, which exceeded the set level of 80%. Therefore a binary score of 1 was given to the structure. But this student answered only 7 items correctly out of 10 questions on Prep-Gerund. This amounts to 70 %, which did not exceed the set level, and a binary score 0 was given to this structure.

For the next step, I tabulated combinations of every pair of structures with the binary scores. Table 3 shows the method of tabulating response patterns using only one pair (Inf-Equi & Inf-NP) as an example. This example tested whether or not Inf-Equi was acquired before Inf-NP.

Table 3. Example of Tabulating

Inf-Equi → Inf-NP (hypothesis tested)		
student	Inf-Equi	Inf-NP
#001	0	1
#002	1	1
#003	1	0
○	○	○
○	○	○
○	○	○

There are four possible patterns of the scores for a pair of structures. For example, the part above (Inf-Equi & Inf-NP) has the patterns as follows :

1, 1   Both Inf-Equi and Inf-NP have been acquired.

1, 0   Inf-Equi has been acquired ; Inf-NP has not.

0, 1   Inf-Equi has not been acquired ; Inf-NP has.

0, 0   Neither Inf-Equi nor Inf-NP has been acquired.

The response pattern (1, 0) for the individual #003 in the above indicates that Inf-Equi was ordered first, and it is called "confirmatory," because it confirms the idea that the first structure was acquired before the second structure (although it does not prove it, it merely indicates the possibility). The response pattern (0, 1) for the student #001 indicates that Inf-NP was ordered first, and it is called "disconfirmatory" because it disproves the idea that the first structure was acquired before the second. In other words, if the disconfirmatory percentage is low enough, it means that the first structure was in fact acquired before the second one, which is why the Ordering-Theoretic Method only counts those particular response patterns. If the percentage of the disconfirmatory responses was higher than the tolerance level of 5%, the hypothesis (Inf-Equi was acquired before Inf-NP) would be rejected, otherwise it would be confirmed.

RESULTS

The results are found in the form of the disconfirmatory matrix as seen in Tables 4—6. The matrix shows the percentages of disconfirmatory reponses of all the pairs of the structures. The

structures are being listed in order at the very left column, from the easiest one on the top down to the most difficult one at the very bottom, using disconfirmatory figures as the criteria. Each structure in the column was compared to all the other structures listed on the top row to examine in each pair of the structures which one was acquired first (or, in other words, was easier than the other). For example, in Table 4, the figure 1.6% appears on the top row at the very right side. This shows that there were 1.6% of disconfirmatory responses for testing whether or not Gerund was acquired before S.S.S. Since the figure was below the set level of 5%, this premise of Gerund being acquired before S.S.S. was approved. There were 5 other figures in the same row which were under 5%, which meant that Gerund was acquired before (or easier than) 5 other structures. Gerund had the highest number of the under-5% figures, and the lowest average of the disconfirmatory figures compared to other structures, which showed that Gerund was the easiest structure in Part 1. Likewise, other structures were also investigated to see how many disconfirmatory figures are under 5% and what is the average percentage of the figures.

There were several differences between the orders of difficulty of Part 1, and Part 2. In Part 1, in the multiple choice section, Gerund was the easiest one; Inf-NP came in second, followed by Inf-Equi, Prep-Ger., Tense, *to*-deletion, *that*-clause, and S.S.S. (see Table 4). Please note that the following three tables have each item listed in ascending order of difficulty. The first item was the easiest down to the last, which was the hardest. The numbers that were disconfirmatory have been bolded and put in boxes to make them easier to spot. The numbers that were considered transitional, greater than 5.0% but less than 6.0%, have been bolded and underlined. Since the acquisition order came out differently in each part of the test, the ranking in each table is different.

<div align="center">**Table 4. The Acquisition Order of Part 1**</div>

	Gerund	Inf-NP	Inf-E	Prep-G	Tense	*that*	*to*-del	S.S.S.
Gerund		9.5%	7.9%	4.7%	3.9%	4.3%	0.8%	1.6%
Inf-NP	20.1%		12.6%	14.2%	11.4%	7.1%	7.1%	4.3%
Inf-E	27.2%	21.3%		18.5%	11.0%	11.4%	8.3%	5.5%
Prep-G	28.7%	27.6%	23.2%		14.6%	11.0%	7.1%	5.5%
Tense	41.7%	38.6%	29.5%	28.4%		13.8%	15.0%	9.1%
that	50.8%	42.9%	38.6%	33.5%	22.4%		17.3%	11.8%
to-del	52.4%	48.0%	40.6%	34.7%	28.7%	22.4%		10.6%
S.S.S.	65.0%	57.1%	49.6%	44.9%	34.7%	28.7%	22.4%	

In spite of the fact that it came in last in Part 1, in Part 2, S. S. S appeared on the top of the order as being the easiest structure to acquire overall. The second easiest structure was *that*-clause; Inf-Equi came in third as it did in Part 1, Inf-NP was the fourth, followed by Gerund which dropped from the top spot in Part 1. The rest were, in order, *to*-deletion, Prep-Ger., and Tense (see Table 5).

<div align="center">**Table 5. The Acquisition Order of Part 2**</div>

	S.S.S.	*that*	Inf-E	Inf-NP	Gerund	*to*-del	Prep-G	Tense
S.S.S.		3.5%	4.7%	2.4%	4.3%	2.0%	1.2%	1.2%
that	22.1%		17.3%	13.4%	14.8%	6.7%	2.8%	2.7%
Inf-E	22.8%	16.9%		15.8%	15.0%	5.5%	5.5%	3.9%
Inf-NP	22.1%	14.6%	17.3%		15.8%	9.1%	3.9%	5.1%
Gerund	27.2%	18.9%	19.7%	18.9%		7.5%	2.4%	6.7%
to-del	56.3%	42.5%	41.7%	43.7%	39.0%		11.4%	13.8%
Prep-G	65.4%	48.4%	51.6%	48.4%	43.7%	21.3%		16.5%
Tense	65.4%	48.0%	50.0%	49.6%	48.0%	23.6%	16.5%	

As for the result of the two parts combined (the total), Gerund came back into the first place and Inf-NP moved up to the second. Inf-Equi stayed in third place, and the fourth was *that*-clause. S. S. S. dropped down to fifth from first in Part 2, and Prep-Ger. came in sixth. Tense came in seventh and the last one on the list is *to*-deletion (see Table 6).

Table 6. The Acquisition Order of the Combined Results

	Gerund	Inf-NP	Inf-E	*that*	S.S.S.	Prep-G	Tense	*to*-del
Gerund		14.2%	13.8%	11.6%	14.4%	3.5%	5.3%	4.1%
Inf-NP	17.9%		15.0%	10.8%	13.2%	9.1%	8.3%	8.1%
Inf-E	21.1%	18.5%		14.2%	14.2%	12.0%	7.5%	6.9%
that	32.7%	28.2%	28.0%		16.9%	18.1%	12.4%	12.0%
S.S.S.	34.7%	29.7%	27.2%	16.1%		23.0%	17.9%	12.2%
Prep-G	36.2%	38.0%	37.4%	29.7%	35.4%		15.6%	14.2%
Tense	44.9%	44.1%	39.8%	30.9%	37.2%	22.4%		19.3%
to-del	45.7%	45.9%	41.1%	32.5%	33.5%	23.0%	21.3%	

To summarize the information so far, I have discussed the most likely ranking of which structures have been acquired before which, using the "Ordering-Theoretic Method." However, this method is different from merely listing the overall percentages of which structures have and which have not been adequately acquired. The "Ordering-Theoretic Method" has its advantages, but it is not quickly or easily understood, nor does it show the level of raw skill the students have achieved with each individual structure. Thus, Table 7 shows the actual percentage of acquisition for each structure in each test. It shows which structures the students were good at using (or recognizing) and which structures they were not good at. The results from all students have been averaged together in order to present a composite, representing the group of students as a whole. You can most easily read this chart by treating the numbers as scores on a test; therefore, the percentages on the left side indicate the average answer percentage of all the students. The results show some of the bigger differences that certain results had, for instance, notice the dramatic jump S. S. S. made from the first test to the second and the almost as dramatic drop in Prep-Ger from the first to the second test. The third line in each set, each of the striped columns, is simply an average of the results of the first two, the gray and the black columns.

Note that while the results from this chart parallel, they do not always match exactly the results of the disconfirmatory matrixes. Thus, students found Inf-NP overall to be the easiest

**Table 7. Acquisition Percentage of Each Structure**
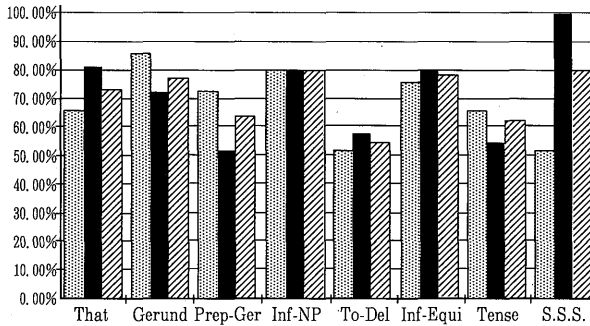
and *to*-deletion to be the most difficult structure. Using 80% as the cut-off number for determining whether or not the students have acquired a structure indicates that the only one the students as a whole have mastered is, again, Inf-NP. All the others fall below the 80% threshold in the combined scores. I will discuss possible implications of these numbers later, in the discussion section.

In order to see the results from a different angle, I added Table 8; it shows how many students (here, in terms of percentage) have actually acquired each structure. I counted the number of the students who acquired each one and described it in percentage.

As the table shows, you can clearly see the order of difficulty. Gerund was the easiest structure since the percentage of the students who acquired it was the highest of the structures. The

Table 8. Students' Acquisition Percentage
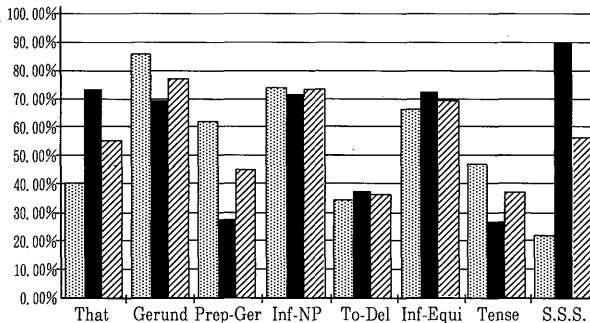
second highest structure was Inf-NP, and the third one was Inf-Equi. The most difficult one was to-deletion. The difference of perfomance between Part 1 and Part 2 also became more noticeable in the table. For example, in S.S.S., Part 2 was 4 times as large as that of Part 1. For *that*-clause, Table 7 showed 15% difference between two parts, but in Table 8 this grew to about 30% difference.

DISCUSSION

When I looked at the data, I decided the most obvious thing I needed to discuss was the reason for the jumps in acquisition levels some of the structures made. While a person might expect the cloze section to be the more difficult of the two, it was not always the case (see Table 7). For certain of the structures (notably *that, to*-del, Inf-Equi, and S.S.S.), the cloze section was actually easier for the students, and for S.S.S., it was dramatically so. As you can see, only three of the structures become more difficult in Part 2, and one, Inf-NP, was so close that there was no significant difference in levels of acquisition between the two parts. Obviously, several factors are at work here. In order to figure out what the students chief problems (weaknesses) were, I added up the occurrence of each answer and calculated the percentage for each. Also, I looked at and compared the corresponding questions of Part 1 and Part 2, looking for patterns. I'll now discuss each structure separately.

1. *That*

The *that*-clause (about mid-range in acquisition difficulty) was interesting because it ran somewhat counter to expectations in that Part 1 seemed more difficult to the students than Part 2 did. Exactly why this is the case, I'm not exactly sure, primarily because, in looking at the actual questions themselves, I cannot see a significant difference in difficulty between the two sections. For example, in #1 in Part 1, the correct answer was "He said he was hungry." Part 2 #3, follows the exact same pattern ("He said he was right."), yet, the percentage of error rate for the

problem in Part 1 was notably higher—60% as opposed to 78%. I can only speculate that the reason it was easier for the students to actually write the sentences in English rather than merely recognize the correct parts of speech is the part that the Japanese language itself may play. Functionally, the Japanese particle "と" is equivalent to the usage of "that" which occurs in *that*-clauses in English. Since, in the fill-in-the-blank section the students had a Japanese equivalent for each sentence, each of the problems testing for *that*-clause used the particle "と," a feature lacking in the straightforward multiple choice section.

2 . Gerund

Gerund deserves comment as the easiest structure for the students to acquire. As such, there is little that needs to be pointed out. However, one verb in particular the students did very poorly with: avoid. The students commonly tried to use the Infinitive as the verbal complement to "avoid" rather than the correct Gerund—58. 3% said "to answer" as opposed to 26. 4% who said "answering." I would suggest that, since this verb does occur in actual English usage with relative frequency, it might perhaps be better if teachers of ESL were to make certain that students understand this particular verb and the way it takes gerund complements, e. g., "avoided walking."

3. Prep-Ger

In the overall results, Prep-Ger came in third from the last, meaning that it was the third most difficult structure to acquire. Its difficulty seems to lie in the fact that there were some difficult prepositional phrases involved. There was a clear difference in the level of understanding phrasal verbs. There were, in total, 9 different phrasal verbs that I tested : think of (#10), plan on (#14), give up (#18), talk about (#21 & #17), be used to (#34), look forward to (#1), be good at (#7), succeed in (#10), and insist on (#25). They can be divided into two groups according to the correct answer percentage: low (tough) and high (easily acquired). I removed two verbs from the table since they ranked in the medium range; "look forward to" in Part 2 scored 63. 8%

and "talk about" in Part 1 scored 65. 7%.

Table 9. Verb Difficulty

[A] Low (tough)		[B] High (easy)	
(Part 1) be used to	49.6%	(Part 1) think of	90.6%
(Part 2) succeed in	19.3%	(Part 1) plan on	70.5%
(Part 2) insist on	35.4%	(Part 1) give up	78.7%
		(Part 1) talk about	81.1%
		(Part 2) be good at	78.7%

The result of the difference in acquisition percentage between Part 1 & Part 2 can be explained by simply how many easy (or tough) questions each part contained.

4. Infinitive-NP

The students were fairly comfortable with this structure. The highest percentage of students successfully acquired it, and it came in second in terms of how easily it was acquired (remember, that the acquisition charts are comparative and thus will differ slightly from the raw percentages). Because of the high percentage of acquisition this structure has, there is little to say about it, except in one case. For some reason, the students did much better in Part 2 with the verb "tell" than they did in Part 1, which is strange since the two sentences were structurally parallel. In Part 1, only 66% of the students recognized the correct version of #29, which reads, "The teacher always tells me to come to class early," while 81. 9% of the students were successful with #18 of Part 2, which reads, "My father told me to study."

5. *To*-deletion

This structure deserves note as the most difficult structure to acquire, and, correspondingly, the lowest percentage of students had acquired it. They seemed to be very unsure as to what structure to actually use, whether to use the infinitive or to delete the "to," which would have been correct. I can only conclude that the students are, overall, weak in verbs of perception and causative structures, both of which very commonly use *to*-deletion. There was also the unusual factor that the students seemed to do

better in Part 2 than in Part 1, but since the difficulty levels seem
to be about the same, I cannot conjecture as to why they did better.

6. Inf-Equi

This structure scored third easiest to acquire and second most
acquired (by a narrow percentage). The only thing I found
noteworthy was the fact that students tended to use some variation
of Gerund when they made mistakes, for example, "to studying"
instead of "to study" and "of borrowing" instead of "to borrow."
Perhaps this is a result of the fact that the students are fairly
comfortable with Gerunds, and thus tried to use them whenever in
doubt, a sort of learner's overcompensation effect.

7. Tense

This was one of the more difficult structres, and the students
had a hard time maintaining tense continuity, and they did this in
both parts. For example, the question #16 read "Bill hopes that
Carol will play tennis tomorrow." About 65% of the students
were able to answer correctly, but approximately 26% of them
chose "would" instead of the correct tense "will." In Part 2 the
question #3 went, "He said that he was right." Although 69%
of the students answered correctly, there were still about 22% of
the students who used the present tense "is" instead. They also
showed a definite weakness using subjunctive mood, which, since
it doesn't exist as a separate grammar form in Japanese, is
understandable. For instance, #9 in Part 1 was supposed to be,
"I wish I had a car." 65% of the students chose the right verb
form "had," but the choice of 21% of the students was "have."
They do not seem to know exactly when or in what circumstances
to use the subjunctive. This uncertainty of the usage of subjunctive
might be one of the reasons why the students had a tendency to
use "would" in place of "will" in a couple of sentences. For the
question #16 in Part 1, 65% of the students supplied the form
"will" in the sentence, "Bill hopes that Carol will play tennis."
But 26% of them chose "would." For #40 in the same Part, 74%
of the students did answer with "will" for the sentence,
"Rudolph hopes that Terri will play tennis tomorrow." But 19%

still chose "would." There is a difinite need to clarify the meaning and the usage of subjunctive for the students.

8. S.S.S.

There was quite a change in the order of S.S.S. from Part 1 to Part 2. In Part 1, it came in last in order as most difficult, yet in Part 2, it jumped up to the top as the easiest structure to acquire. This drastic change can readily be seen in Table 7. In Part 1 the average correct answer percentage was only 52.3%. In Part 2, the percentage went up to 90%.

One of the main reasons for this phenomenon lies perhaps in the balance of the difficulty of the questions of the two parts. In Part 1, as you see below, the questions turned out to be very difficult and confusing. Many students seemed to get confused with the usage of "that" which appeared in several questions. For example, in #7 "that" was the indicator of a *that*-clause, but many students took it as the subject of the complement and attached other alternative phrases such as "should have" and "should had," filling the verb complement position. The same thing can be seen in other questions: #15 " 'that' wouldn't be," #30 " 'that' might be." In both cases, the students thought that *that* functioned as a subject. Another thing that confused the students was the fact that they tried to use the structures they were most familiar with, rather than the ones that were correct. For instance, in #24, 80% of the students chose "of being there," apparently because of the influence of the word just before, "afraid." Thus, the students were grasping for "afraid of" rather than contemplating the actual usage of the term "afraid" in that sentence.

On the other hand, Part 2 contained a rather straightforward format of testing S.S.S. as you see below (see sample test). If the students were able to insert the appropriate S.S.S. such as "him" in #6, "they" in #21, etc., in their composition of verb complements, it was considered that they had acquired the structure.

This happened in the process of making the test. In order to

minimize the number of the questions in Part 2 (there was a need to make the test concise so that the students could go through the test in a regular class period), I decided to use the sentences used for testing other structures, which overlapped the checking process. For example, #6 tested both S. S. S. and Inf-NP, #21 was used for both S. S. S. and Tense, #23 for S. S. S. and *to*-deletion, etc. As a result, Part 2 tended more toward the simpler options as we have seen, and Part 1 tended to use difficult questions specifically made for testing the structure. Another note needs to be added here. I overlapped the checking process for Tense as well (except the question #5 which was used solely for testing Tense), the difference of performance between Part 1 and Part 2 was not that obvious like it showed in the case of S. S. S. Therefore, the big difference in S. S. S. does not seem to rely on the overlapping nature of the questions alone.

CONCLUSION

First, in this conclusion, I would like to summarize what this test has accomplished. Three verb complement structures seemed easiest for the Japanese students to acquire : Gerund, Inf-NP, and Inf-Equi. Whether this ease comes from similarity to first language structure or from heavy exposure, I cannot tell at this time. Two structures I would classify as moderately difficult for the students to acquire. Those are *that*-clause and S. S. S., but I make this statement with the qualification that for both structures the students did better in the translation/modified cloze than they did in the multiple choice section, dramatically so with S. S. S. While there is the possiblity that the two parts were unevenly weighted in terms of difficulty for S. S. S., I can find no significant reason for the much smaller jump the students made with *that*-clause. The three most difficult structures for the students to acquire are *to*-del, Tense, and Prep-Ger. I feel that perhaps the difficulty of these structures (as well as the two I did not include in the test because of extreme difficulty in the results from last year) warrants teachers spending a bit more time with students in

practice to insure that the Japanese students of ESL are comfortable with these structures.

In addition, I found that certain verbs in particular, while they occur normally in standard English, are very difficult for the average student : afraid; avoid; insist on; succeed in; be used to; causative and perception verbs like see, hear, let, make, have; and wish. I feel that these also should be particularly stressed in drills and practices with the students to help compensate for a disproportionate weakness the students showed with these words.

In addition to all of this, I learned a couple of things about the style of the tests themselves. In trying to test for more active usage I finally came upon the method of combined translation／ fill-in-the-blank, and it seems to have worked very well for indicating whether students could actually use particular structures. However, this style stood out in (sometimes great) contrast to the results of the multiple choice section, probably because of the inherent differences in the nature of the two sections, one of which gave the students information in the form of a Japanese translation, and the other of which tended at times to confuse the students with a variety of choices. This is a point we need to keep in mind when we design tests—it is usually assumed that translation tests are harder than multiple choice (perhaps because they are harder to grade), but that is not necessarily the case. In some circumstances, they may actually be easier ! This is neither good nor bad, but if the designers of tests fail to keep this in mind, they may wind up unintentionally skewing the results slightly in one direction or another, hardly a desired posibility.

Finally, what areas does this test leave open for further research ? One obvious area would, of course, be to test different verb forms other than just complements, a task staggering in its potential size. Also, there is considerable range for study in why the two sections occasionally brought different results, but in one case showed very nearly the same percentages of acquisition (Inf-NP) ; however, this type of study seems to move more into the

area of test psychology and perhaps falls more into the realm of statisticians and/or psychologists. A valid potential third part of this study could also be some variation of a spoken/conversation test, if such could be designed, that would evaluate the students' ability to use and understand the different complements in speaking level (more active level than previous ones). Last, perhaps a greater demographic range of students would reveal slightly different results, since the subjects of this test were all college students and thus of a much more homogenous social level than is represented by society. I hope that this test will be helpful for teachers in organizing their material, focusing on those areas students have not fully acquired.

* This holds true with the exception of two structures—*that*-clause and Gerund. In the process of making a couple of drafts of the test, a mistake was made: one test item for Gerund was accidently replaced by an item for *that*-clause. As a result, there are six test items for *that*-clause while there are four for Gerund. This will not affect the overall result, however, since there are sufficient number of items from the cloze test as well; five items for each structure. In total, *that* clause has 11 test items, a difference slight enough as to have little statistical significance.

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Appendix

Test: Part 1

Please circle the letter of the most correct choice for each sentence.

1. He said_____hungry.
   a. will be
   b. being
   c. to be
   d. he was

2. I finished_____my homework.
   a. to studying
   b. study
   c. studying
   d. to study

3. John want_____.
   a. that I go
   b. my going
   c. me to go

d. I go

4. She offered_____the child's books.
    a. carried
    b. to carry
    c. carry
    d. carrying

5. My father ordered_____.
    a. me to study
    b. me studying
    c. my studying
    d. I study

6. Mary stopped_____last year.
    a. to smoke
    b. smoking
    c. smoke
    d. smoked

7. Stella thought that_____.
    a. she should
    b. should she
    c. should have
    d. should had

8. Elizabeth wanted_____.
    a. their playing
    b. that they play
    c. they played
    d. them to play

9. I wish_____a car.
    a. for having
    b. having
    c. I had
    d. I have

10. The pilot thought of_____to Mexico.
    a. to fly
    b. flying
    c. flied
    d. fly

11. He decided_____his car.
    a. to be selling
    b. selling
    c. to sell

    d. sell

12. We heard the birds_____.

    a. to sing

    b. sing

    c. to singing

    d. sings

13. John enjoys_____football.

    a. playing

    b. to play

    c. play

    d. to be playing

14. We plan on_____this today.

    a. to have finished

    b. finish

    c. finishing

    d. to finish

15. John hoped that_____rain.

    a. it wouldn't

    b. wouldn't

    c. wouldn't it

    d. wouldn't be

16. Bill hopes that Carol_____play tennis tomorrow.

    a. would

    b. will

    c. will to

    d. would have

17. I saw him_____the book.

    a. to taking

    b. to take

    c. taken

    d. take

18. You should give up_____.

    a. drinking

    b. to drink

    c. drink

    d. to drinking

19. Ernie thought that he_____Japanese very well.

    a. speak

    b. spoken

    c. spoke

d. speaking

20. She asked_____it.
    a. for him to eating
    b. him to eat
    c. his eating
    d. he ate

21. The man talked about_____in Chicago.
    a. live
    b. to live
    c. living
    d. lived

22. Suzy hopes_____an actress.
    a. becoming
    b. to become
    c. to be becoming
    d. to becoming

23. He thought_____.
    a. she was very pretty
    b. of her to be pretty
    c. her being pretty
    d. her very prettiness

24. John was afraid_____an explosion.
    a. to be
    b. would be
    c. of being there
    d. there would be

25. He thought Maria_____ok about the issue.
    a. is being felt
    b. will be feeling
    c. was felt
    d. felt

26. The teacher let the students_____class early.
    a. leaving
    b. left
    c. leave
    d. to leave

27. Keep_____your English !
    a. practice
    b. practicing
    c. to practice

    d. having practiced

28. Phonda thought Bert_____on Monday.

    a. will leave

    b. would leave

    c. of leaving

    d. to leave

29. The teacher always tells_____to class early.

    a. me to come

    b. my coming

    c. of leaving

    d. to leave

30. I am afraid that_____an accident.

    a. might be

    b. there might be

    c. there to be

    d. might to be

31. They say they_____it.

    a. will do

    b. doing

    c. to do

    d. having done

32. I hope_____tomorrow.

    a. his coming

    b. he'll come

    c. for him to come

    d. him to come

33. John has never asked_____money.

    a. borrowing

    b. borrowed

    c. to borrow

    d. of borrowing

34. We are used to_____on weekends.

    a. study

    b. studying

    c. studied

    d. have studied

35. My father made me_____.

    a. work

    b. to work

    c. to be working

d． worked
36． They prefer_____English in the U.S.
    a． of studying
    b． be studying
    c． to study
    d． to studying
37． Bernadette concluded_____it.
    a． can't have done
    b． she couldn't have done
    c． to have done
    d． she can't have done
38． I'll have him_____the car.
    a． washed
    b． to wash
    c． washing
    d． wash
39． We think_____enough time.
    a． of having
    b． we have
    c． having
    d． to be having
40． Rudolph hopes that Terri_____tennis tomorrow.
    a． will play
    b． will to play
    c． would play
    d． playing

Test: Part 2
下の例文のように、日本語にあうように英文を完成させなさい。
  （例）He is fond of studying mathematics.
        彼は数学を勉強するのが好きだ。
      She says that her analysis is correct.
        彼女は自分の分析が正しいと言う。＊間接話法で答えるように！
     They allowed him to go.
        彼らは彼が行く事を許した。

  1． I'm looking forward_____
     彼女に会えることを楽しみにしている。
  2． He finished_____

彼はケーキを食べおわった。

3. He said _____

彼は自分が正しいと言った。

4. Mary never fails _____

メアリーは必ず手紙を書く。

5. John told me _____

ジョンはその店に行くと言った。

6. Mary encouraged _____

メアリーは彼に英語を勉強するようすすめた。

7. Mary is good _____

メアリーはピアノを弾くのがうまい。

8. John thinks _____

ジョンは日本語をうまく話すと思っている。

9. John avoided _____

ジョンは質問に答えることを避けた。

10. She succeeded _____

彼女は仕事を見つけるのに成功した。

11. They advised _____

彼らは私に大学に行くようにすすめた。

12. I saw _____

彼がその本を買うのを見た。

13. I wanted _____

テレビ（ＴＶ）を見たかった。

14. My mother doesn't let _____

母は私にテレビを見せてくれない。

15. He said _____

彼はメアリーがその金を取ったと言った。

16. I enjoy _____

音楽を聞くのは楽しい。

17. John often talks _____

ジョンは日本に行く事についてよく話す。

18. My father told _____

父は私に勉強するように言った。

19. We heard _____

鳥が鳴くのを聞いた。

20. He tried _____

彼は木に登ってみようとした。

21. I hope _____

明日彼らが勝てばいいと思う。

22. He offered _____

彼は運転することを申し出た。

23. The teacher made _____
先生は彼女に勉強させた。

24. I want _____
あなたにこの本を読んでほしい。

25. He insisted _____
彼はそこに行くと言いはった。

26. I finished _____
その本を読みおわった。

27. He thought _____
彼はその本を読もうと思った。

28. He wanted _____
彼はメアリーにその本を読んでほしかった。

29. I think _____
彼はアメリカ人だったと思う。

30. We decided _____
カナダに行く事にした。

31. She stopped _____
彼女はタバコを吸うのを止めた。

32. John let _____
ジョンは私に車を運転させてくれた。

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