Reanalysis of Definiteness Acquisition

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1. Introduction

It is well known that obligatory classifier languages such as Japanese and Mandarin lack definite articles. Instead, such languages use bare nouns or other nominal expressions in definite contexts. It has been argued by Jenks (2015, 2018) that the different instantiations of definiteness, namely bare nouns or demonstratives, reflect the different characterizations of definiteness. In this paper, we put our central focus on L2 English learners’ acquisition status with regard to these different characterizations of definiteness.

As some major previous analyses on English L2 learners’ acquisition of definiteness, we can refer to Ionin (2003) and Ionin et.al (2004, 2005). These analyses have approached L2 learners’ acquisition of definiteness on the basis of dichotomy of definiteness and specificity. However, interestingly, Gillon (2015) notes that cross-linguistically, the semantics of articles are not...
necessarily dichotomous because they do not necessarily encode either definiteness or specificity. It varies cross-linguistically: they encode definiteness (English and many other languages), deictic information (most Salish languages) or specificity (Samoan).¹

In this paper, we will analyze L2 learners’ definiteness acquisition from another perspective. It seems appropriate to assume that the English definite article encodes two semantic primitives: uniqueness and familiarity. These two semantic primitives are core components for definite articles, considering the fact that article-less languages have different linguistic forms for uniqueness and familiarity, respectively. Investigating many article-less languages, Jenks (2015, 2018) show that some languages, including Japanese and Mandarin, reflect the distinction in definiteness marking between uniqueness and familiarity: Unique definites are realized with a bare noun, and anaphoric definites are realized with a demonstrative, except in subject position. That anaphoric definites appear with a demonstrative has been reported in the studies of other article-less languages such as Japanese (Kurafuji 2004) and Thai (Piriyawiboon 2010).

With this cross-linguistic background of definiteness, we would like to shed light on Japanese English learners’ definiteness marking patterns. Definiteness is one of the most intensively discussed issues in the second language acquisition study. However, to the best of my knowledge, there is no full-fledged analysis to investigate L2 learners’ definiteness marking in terms of the distinction between those two semantic primitives. In Japanese, too, anaphoric definites are explicitly marked with a demonstrative, whereas unique definites are expressed by bare nouns. In other words, the latter has no linguistic clue from the learners’ native language but the former has a

(2)
realized linguistic clue, which can be a ‘positive’ transfer from their native language. In our experiment we need to pay special attention to the following questions: are there any discernible differences in definiteness acquisition in accordance with proficiency level; Have the participants in our experiment properly acquired the two semantic primitives encoded in the definite article? Does the presence of a demonstrative in L1 encourage learners to use the English definite article? Or, otherwise, does it impede learners from acquiring the proper usage of definiteness? In this paper, we first look over English definite environments and their Japanese counterparts, namely, definite nouns marked by a demonstrative and those without it, and then investigate how L2 English learners will respond to the sentences underlying two types of definiteness.

2. Definiteness Environments

There are still longstanding debates going on in the literature: how definiteness can be characterized, i.e., uniqueness, or familiarity, and how it can be realized in classifier languages. It is true that the two semantic primitives for definiteness have been advocated by two theorists: Kadman (1990) and Hawkins (1991) for the uniqueness approach, on one hand, and Kamp (1981), Heim (1982), and Chierchia (1995) for the familiarity approach, on the other hand. More recently, the blended view that makes these primitives no longer distinguishable has been advocated in some analyses including Roberts (2003). Also, while maintaining the aspect of familiarity, Schwarz (2009) argues that uniqueness should be satisfied relative to a relevant minimalized context, that is, minimal situations in the sense of Kratzer (2007).
From recent cross-linguistic analyses, it turns out that English is a kind of language whose definite article encodes both familiarity and uniqueness. For example, in German, the contrast between uniqueness and familiarity can be morphologically detected in whether the definite articles contract with prepositions. The former is described as a ‘weak’ definite article, and the latter, as a ‘strong’ definite article, respectively, in Schwarz (2009). Weak definite articles, which occur in unique definite contexts, must be contracted, while strong definite articles, which occur in familiar definite contexts, cannot be contracted.

(1) Weak vs. strong articles in German

a. In her Kabinettssitzung heute wird ein neuer Vorschlag vom Kanzler erwartet.
   In the cabinet meeting today is a new proposal by the weak chancellor expected
   ‘In today’s cabinet meeting, a new proposal by the chancellor is expected.’

b. In der Kabinettssitzung heute wird ein neuer Vorschlag vom/ von dem Minister
   In the cabinet meeting today is a new proposal by the weak/ by the strong minister erwartet.
   expected
   ‘In today’s cabinet meeting, new proposal by the minister is expected.’

(Schwarz 2009: 41)

It is not only German that shows morphosyntactic distinctions between
uniqueness and familiarity. According to Schwarz (2013), some languages including Creole and Akan explicitly mark definiteness with articles when their nouns occur in anaphoric definite environments.

Also, it seems plausible to say that classifier languages, including Japanese, show analogous morphosyntactic patterns in definiteness marking. As mentioned above, in Mandarin and Japanese, unique definites are realized with a bare noun, and anaphoric definites are realized with a demonstrative, except in subject position (Jenks 2018: 501).

2.1 Definiteness in Japanese

Let us look over several definite environments to see whether demonstrative descriptions in Japanese hold true of anaphoric environments, and uniqueness definites require nouns to appear bare. Based on the observations by Schwarz (2009, 2013) and Jenks (2015, 2018), first we present three ‘uniqueness’ environments in which definiteness is not licensed by a prior-mentioned discourse antecedent: large-situation definites [A], immediate-situation definites [B], and association/ inference definites [C]. These environments require weak definites in German, and bare nouns in classifier languages. Furthermore, at the end of this section, we will deal with the ‘anaphoric/ familiar’ definite environment [D] that requires an explicitly prior-mentioned antecedent.

[A] Large-situation definites

A first definite environment is the one called large-situation definites. The use of the definite determiner here is due to cultural or social uniqueness. This uniqueness is not licensed by a specific context, but judged

(5)
based on general world knowledge, as follows:

(2) **The prime** minister made a speech.
(3) **The sun** sets at 6:00 PM.

(4) Taiyoo-wa gogo 6-ji-ni sizumu.

sun-Top PM 6-time-Dat set

‘The sun sets at 6:00 PM.

This type of definiteness does not have an explicitly prior-mentioned antecedent, so it is expected that nouns in Japanese appear bare. In fact they appear without a demonstrative.

[B] **Immediate-situation definites**

The next definite environment is the case in which definiteness is licensed on the knowledge shared commonly by speaker and hearer, as shown below:

(5) A: I am dead tired.

B: I'll prepare **the meal**.

Let us say that this conversation goes on between wife and husband, and the first remark is made by the husband who has come back from a long day's work. Then, his wife kindly offers cooking for their meal. The meal she refers to is obviously the one the two are going to eat for dinner. Thus, the uniqueness is licensed in a specific small situation shared 'immediately' by
speaker and hearer. Under the same situation, the Japanese counterpart to the remark by B is translated with the bare noun, as follows:

(6) Watasi-ga shokuji-o tukuru-yo.
    I-Top meal-Acc prepare-Part
    'I will prepare the meal.'

This definite environment, too, shows that bare nouns are unique definites. In other words, demonstratives cannot be used to express immediate-situation definites.

[C] Association/Inference definites

A third definite environment is an instance in which definiteness is licensed in association with some other entity mentioned in the discourse.

(7) I was invited to a wedding last Saturday. The bride was very beautiful.

The bride is identified as a definite referent, despite the lack of its prior-mentioned antecedent. In this environment, definiteness is licensed as uniqueness because the bride is usually a uniquely identified referent in the wedding context. This type of definiteness, however, is more precisely segmented into two subcategories (Schwartz 2009, 2013): Part-whole bridging as in (8) and Producer-product bridging as in (9).

(8) I was called into John’s office. The ceiling was very high.
(9) I was inspired by the novel. The author must be talented.
These two kinds of bridging definites, though apparently difficult to distinguish, reflect the choices of articles in German. The former is expressed with the weak article, and the latter, with the strong article. Analogously, the investigations by Jenks (2018) have revealed that Mandarin native speakers prefer bare descriptions in the case of part-whole bridging, and also prefer demonstrative descriptions in the case of producer-producing bridging. It thus follows that the part-whole bridging definites are identified as unique referents, and the producer-product bridging definites are treated as anaphoric definites. As noted in Schwart (2009, 2013) and Jenks (2018), the part-whole bridging is associated with uniqueness because the antecedent of the bridged definite is presupposed by virtue of a ‘containment’ relation. That is, an office contains the existence of its ceiling under a normal common knowledge. On the other hand, no such containment relationship holds in the case of the producer-product bridging. Jenks claims that the producer-product bridging is a case of anaphoric definite, with an analysis of appealing to its ‘concealed’ antecedent. Due to lack of space, however, we will not touch upon the technical details.

Aside from whether Jenks’s technical details are on the right track, the presence of an anaphoric link satisfies the producer-product bridging. The following examples are the Japanese counterparts to (8) and (9):

    I-Top John-Gen office-Dat was.called ceiling-Nom very was.high
    ‘I was called into John’s office. The ceiling was very high.’

(11) Watasi-wa sono shoosetu-ni kandoo-sita. (Sono) sakka-wa tensai-ni
The informants I consulted were in fact divided for their preference for the presence of the demonstrative in (11). It is certainly true that more informants preferred the demonstrative description, but the bare noun does not seem to degrade the acceptability. On the other hand, in the example below, the producer-product definite appears in the non-subject position, where the demonstrative description is more preferable.

(12) Watasi-wa # (sono) sakka-ni zehi aitai.

I-Top (that) author-Dat for.sure want.to see

‘I want to see the author.’

I dared to attach # to the bracket, but the judgement was not clear to all the informants. The demonstrative description seems more felicitous and the presence of the demonstrative may have made the relation between a producer and her product clearer. Obviously, it is necessary to investigate whether the marginal difference observed in Japanese is reflected in the other classifier languages including Mandarin. However, here I will not delve into this marginal issue and the inter-linguistic differences.

[D] Anaphoric Definites

Finally, we would like to deal with anaphoric or familiar definites, which
have explicit linguistic antecedents. It has already been reported in Jenks (2015, 2018) that in Mandarin anaphoric definites must include a demonstrative determiner. This section will see whether Japanese goes hand in hand with Mandarin. The most orthodox case of anaphoric definite is the one in which the definite noun appears with an explicitly-mentioned antecedent in the previous sentence, as exemplified below:

(13) a. Kyositu-ni kyoju-to koosi-ga haittekita.
    classrrom-Dat professor-Con lecturer-Nom entered
    ‘A professor and a lecturer entered the classroom.’
b. Watashi-wa # (sono) koosi-ni kinoo aimasita.
    I-Top that lecturer-Dat yesterday met
    ‘I met the lecturer yesterday.’
c. Watashi-wa # (sono) kyoju-ni gengogaku-o naratta.
    I-Top that professor-Dat linguistics-Acc was.taught
    ‘I was taught linguistics by the professor.’

In this dialogue, bare nouns would appear infelicitous and instead, the demonstrative descriptions occur as definite expressions. This corroborates the fact that bare nouns are prohibited in anaphoric definite environments. Interestingly, though not exemplified here, in both Mandarin and Japanese, their anaphoric bare nouns are only allowed in ‘subject’ positions. Jenks (2018) claims that the definite noun in subject position is associated with ‘topic’, which can help the description without a demonstrative identified with its explicit antecedent.

In addition to this dialogue, it has been reported that in donkey
sentences, demonstrative descriptions are mandatory in Mandarin. Cheng and Huang (1996) observe that in two types of donkey sentences, namely, bare conditionals and *ruguo-* and *dou-* conditionals, what serve as donkey anaphora are demonstrative descriptions. Analogously, what serve as Japanese donkey anaphora are demonstrative descriptions, as shown below:

(14) Noofu-ga roba-o katteire-ba, noohu-wa #(sono) roba-o tataku.

  farmer-Nom donkey-Acc beat-Con, farmer-Top that donkey-Acc beat

  'If a farmer has a donkey, he beats the donkey.'

3. Tests

In the previous section we confirmed that the observations by Schwarz (2009, 2013) and Jenks (2015, 2018) hold true of the definite descriptions in Japanese as well. As a result, Japanese goes hand in hand with Mandarin, and the definite descriptions in those languages can be summarized, as follows:

(15) a. Unique definites are realized as bare nouns.

    b. Familiar definites are realized as demonstratives or overt pronouns.

In a nutshell, only the familiar definite requires an explicit description with a demonstrative. This 'explicitness' may be expected to prompt learners to the proper article usage. Furthermore, with several questions listed in Introduction in mind, we will carry out our experiment.
3.1 Our Tests and their Results

The participants in our experiment are 72 L1 Japanese L2 English learners. They are divided into two groups depending on their TOEIC score. We in fact drew a line at 500 points between the higher and lower groups. We call the high group Group A, and the lower group Group B, respectively, for convenience sake. The test participants were randomly presented 16 questions, most of which are categorized to one of the four types that I classified in the previous section and the remaining ones are totally irrelevant to this experiment for the purpose of eliminating the so-called ‘carry over’ effect or diverting their attentions.

3.1.1 Large-situation Definites

We have presented the two sentences below, (16) and (17), with a blank space and had the participants fill in that blank with the expression they judge appropriate. We classified the collected responses into definite and non-definite expressions, and calculated the percentages of the responses — the numbers in the brackets are the actual ones of the respondents. The non-definites here consists of use of a and bare nouns. The definite environment we treat here is the one underlying the large-situation definites. Recall that this type of definiteness is associated with cultural or social uniqueness. Put differently, this uniqueness is not licensed by a specific context, but judged based on general world knowledge.

(16) (          ) minister made a speech.
総理大臣（prime minister）が昨日、スピーチをした。
(17) (          ) sets at 6:00 PM.
太陽は6時に沈む。

(12)
Unlike the remaining questions below, the questions here do not have possessives or demonstratives as the answers from participants, so we have eliminated the cell for them. The table below reports the percentages of two classified results:

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(16) Definite</th>
<th>Non-definite</th>
<th>(17) Definite</th>
<th>Non-definite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>73.8% (31)</td>
<td>26.2% (11)</td>
<td>81.0% (34)</td>
<td>19.0% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>33.3% (10)</td>
<td>66.7% (20)</td>
<td>56.7% (17)</td>
<td>43.3% (13)</td>
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</table>

The participants in Group A performed better, responding more positively to the definite expressions, which range from 73.8% to 81.0%. In contrast, the participants in Group B do not exhibit such a pattern: non-definites are more predominant in the question (16), and note also that in (17), the percentage of definites, 56.7%, is relatively low in comparison with the responses from Group A.

### 3.1.2 Immediate-situation definites

The next definite environment is the case in which definiteness is licensed on the knowledge shared commonly by speaker and hearer, as shown below:

(18) 夫婦の会話

Man: I am dead tired. 今日は疲れたよ。

Woman: I'll prepare (         ). なら、今夜は私が食事（meal）を作るわ。
Daughter: Where did you park ( )? 車どこに駐車したの?
Mother: In Kita Tenjin. 北天神よ。

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite (the)</th>
<th>Possessive (your/our)</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A (N=42)</td>
<td>35.7% (15)</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
<td>61.9% (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B (N=30)</td>
<td>16.7% (5)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>83.3% (25)</td>
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</table>

In this case, any of the possible answers, namely, the definite, the possessive, or the indefinite, would be fine. Unlike the meal to the married couple in (18), it seems that the car and a family member can be viewed more likely as establishing an ownership relation. The relatively high answer of the possessive for both groups is attributable to this reason. Furthermore, what should be more noteworthy for this environment is that the responses of definites for both groups are obviously lower than those in any other cases, irrespective of their proficiency levels. We will return to this point after scrutinizing the rest of the questions.

### 3.1.3 Association/Inference definites

A third definite environment is an instance in which definiteness is licensed in association with some other entity mentioned in the discourse.

（20）I was invited to a wedding last Saturday. ( ) was very beautiful.

先週の日曜、結婚式に招待してもらった。花嫁さん（bride）、本当に綺麗だった。
(21) I was called into John’s office. ( ) was very high.

ジョンのオフィスに呼ばれたんだが、天井（ceiling）がすごく高かった。

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<th>Definite (the)</th>
<th>Possessive (his)</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A  (N=42)</td>
<td>90.5% (38)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>9.5% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B  (N=30)</td>
<td>50.0% (15)</td>
<td>13.3% (4)</td>
<td>36.7% (11)</td>
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</table>

(22) I was inspired by the novel. ( ) must be talented.

その小説に触発されたよ。作家（author）は、才能あるよね。

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<th>Definite (the)</th>
<th>Possessive (its)</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A  (N=42)</td>
<td>83.3% (35)</td>
<td>7.1% (3)</td>
<td>9.5% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B  (N=30)</td>
<td>60.0% (18)</td>
<td>3.3% (1)</td>
<td>36.7% (11)</td>
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</table>

(23) The painting on the wall is fantastic. ( ) is talented.

壁にかかっている絵、素晴らしいね。その画家さん（painter）、才能あるね。

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<th>Definite (the)</th>
<th>Possessive/demo (that/its)</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A  (N=42)</td>
<td>90.5% (38)</td>
<td>7.1% (3)</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B  (N=30)</td>
<td>80.0% (24)</td>
<td>10.0% (3)</td>
<td>10.0% (3)</td>
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</table>

Under the association/ inference definite environments, participants reacted more positively to use of *the*. More precisely, the four questions classified here are further divided into the first two questions and the other two in accordance with Schwarz’ (2009) classification. The Japanese counterpart to each answer in the brackets is expressed as a bare noun as in (20) to (22), or with a demonstrative as in (23). The relationships between the associative noun in an antecedent sentence and the definite noun in the following sentence in (20) and (21) are classified as *Part-whole bridging*, and those
that in (22) and (23), *Producer-product bridging*. Recall that this distinction is echoed in the uses of articles in German. The former relationship prefers the weak article and the latter prefers the strong article. In Japanese, it seems that the former is more appropriately expressed as a bare noun, whereas the latter prefer the demonstrative, but the bare noun is acceptable, as shown in (22), too. For the questions underlying the product-producer bridging, (22) and (23), we dared to add different Japanese translations, namely the bare noun as in (22) and the noun with a demonstrative as in (23) to confirm if the existence of the demonstrative can be a trigger for the use of *the*.

As a consequence, the use of the definite article is relatively high for both groups. What is noteworthy here is that the participants in Group A have reacted more positively to the use of *the* with respect to the questions underlying the part-whole relationship.

(24)

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<th></th>
<th>(20)</th>
<th>(21)</th>
<th>(22)</th>
<th>(23)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P&lt;.000</td>
<td>P&lt;.019</td>
<td>P=.103</td>
<td>P=.329</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to the obtained $\chi^2$ test, the difference between the two groups turns out to be significant: p<.000 for (20) and p<.019 for (21). On the other hand, when it comes to the questions with the producer-product bridging, no significant difference is observed between the two groups. More interestingly, (23), in which the corresponding Japanese is expressed with the demonstrative, shows no significant difference between the two groups irrespective of their proficiency level, but for the participants of Group B, (23) shows a clearly higher reaction to the definite expression than (22).
### 3.1.4 Anaphoric Definites

Finally, we would like to deal with anaphoric or familiar definites, which have explicit linguistic antecedents. It has already been reported in Jenks (2015, 2018) that in Mandarin anaphoric definites must include a demonstrative determiner. In this respect, Japanese goes hand in hand with Mandarin. The most orthodox cases of anaphoric definite are the one in which the definite noun appears with an explicitly-mentioned antecedent in the previous sentence, as in (25) and the donkey sentence as in (26):

(25) Student A: A professor and his student entered the classroom.

教室に教授と彼の助手が入ってきた。

Student B: I was taught linguistics by ( ).

その教授に言語学を以前習ったよ。

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<th>Definite (the)</th>
<th>Possessive/demo (its)</th>
<th>Others</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A (N=42)</td>
<td>83.3% (35)</td>
<td>14.3% (6)</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B (N=30)</td>
<td>53.3% (16)</td>
<td>23.3% (7)</td>
<td>23.3% (7)</td>
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</table>

(26) If a farmer has a donkey, he beats ( ).

農夫がロバを飼っていれば、農夫はそのロバを叩く。

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<th></th>
<th>Definite (the)</th>
<th>Pronoun/ possessive/ demonstrative</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A (N=42)</td>
<td>57.1% (24)</td>
<td>40.5% (17)</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B (N=30)</td>
<td>26.7% (8)</td>
<td>40.0% (12)</td>
<td>33.3% (10)</td>
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</table>

It remains unclear that the Japanese demonstrative could help the participants lead to the response to the use of the definite article. In fact, the participants in the two groups have reacted more positively to the pronoun or demonstrative, which presumably has led to the significant reduction of...
the values on the definite.

As for the statistical comparisons between the two groups, a significant difference is observed via the obtained $\chi^2$ test result: $p>.007$ for (25) and $p>.001$ for (26). Here again, the higher proficiency group responded more positively to the use of the definite article. Also, it was initially predicted that the anaphoric environment would be the most likely case in which a positive L-1 transfer came into effect, because the definite expression is usually expressed with the Japanese demonstrative. However, as statistically shown in the tables above, the value on the reaction to the use of the definite article was not so high. This is presumably due to the fact that the participants also responded to the demonstrative or the pronouns. Instead, if we had worked out the questions that could eliminate the pronoun as a possible answer, we might have obtained a different consequence.

4. Final Remarks

In the first half of this paper, we have looked over the Japanese definite environments in terms of the two semantic primitives, anaphoricity/familiarity and uniqueness. As a consequence, it has turned out that only the former requires (or prefers) an explicit description with a demonstrative, just as shown in Mandarin definite environments. We divided our participants into Group A (with higher proficiency level) and Group B (with lower proficiency level), and implemented our experiment, through which we attempted to examine if we could see any clearly distinguished responses in accordance to proficiency levels between the two groups. Since the test material we provided was insufficient in some respects, we have to admit that the obtained results need further scrutiny. Thus, we sum up below only
intriguing or clearly distinguished results obtained via our tests.

(27) a. The participants in Group A (the higher proficiency group) responded more positively to definites across all the definite environments.

b. In particular, the questions underlying association/ inference definites showed higher statistical results.

c. In the environment underlying anaphoricity/ familiarity, fluctuation between the definites and the pronoun/ demonstrative occurred.

d. Among the questions with association/ inference definites, the participants in Group A have responded more positively to the use of the with respect to the questions relating to the part-whole bridging. On the other hand, when it comes to the questions with the producer-product bridging, no significant difference was observed between the two groups.

From the description in (27a), it follows that fluctuation decreases as proficiency increases. It was also observed that the participants in the lower proficiency group did not resort to the use of the, but instead, used a bare nominal, which led to the relatively high reposes to ‘others’. The answers classified in ‘others’ are mostly indefinite expressions, in particular, bare nominals. This poor performance is obviously treated as a negative L1 transfer effect from Japanese.

As described in (27b), the participants’ positive responses to association/ inference definites were as high as we had initially expected. In fact, unlike larger-situation definites and immediate situation definites,
association/ inference definites could more likely allow the participants to narrow the relevant situation and specify a target noun as definite. Further, interestingly, the questions (20) and (21) underlying the part-whole association showed significant difference between the two groups, whereas those underlying the producer-product association (22) and (23) did not exhibit different patterns. In actuality, the participants in both groups performed well on (22) and (23). As mentioned above, in German the producer-product association prefers the strong article, and in Mandarin it prefers a demonstrative description. In Japanese, as exemplified in (11) and (12), the demonstrative can appear, but not obligatorily. From this typological view it is suggested that the definites underlying the producer-product association are familiar definites, though they lack their explicit antecedents in the previous context. If this is the case, it follows then that Japanese English learners performed well on familiar definites irrespective of their proficiency level. However, it remains still unclear whether the (optionally appearing) Japanese demonstrative may help them respond positively to the definiteness marking, or otherwise, familiarity may be the first semantic primitive that they learn for the characterization of the. Either way, it would be indispensable to make the questions in the familiar definite environment classified in [D] more sophisticated. Put differently, we need to examine English learners’ performance on both the producer-product definite and (purely) familiar definite with an explicit antecedent. We will leave it to the next paper.
Note

1 Ionin (2003) and Ionin et.al (2004, 2005) commonly focused upon the semantics of articles. Particularly, Ionin et.al (2004, 2008) claim that L2 learners whose L1 lack an article system (L2 English learners of Russian and Korean) show more fluctuations over the usage of articles because they cannot transfer the linguistic source of their L1 to the L2 acquisition.

2 It is well known in the literature that L2 learners can rely on three sources of linguistic knowledges: L2-input, L1-transfer and UG-based knowledge. The existence of L2-input is almost self-evident, because it is nearly impossible to acquire a target language without L2 exposure. Also, L2 acquisition is mediated by both positive and negative L1-transfers. For instance, it has been reported that English learners whose L1 have no articles show more patters of article misuses than those with articles in their L1 (cf. Ionin 2003 and Ionin et al. 2008). The former case can be treated as a typical one induced by ‘positive’ L1-transfer, and the latter, the case induced by ‘negative’ L1-transfer. In contrast, what has been highly contentious is the issue of UG-based knowledge: To what extent L2 acquisition can proceed with the help of UG-based knowledge, and can L2 learners access to UG in the process of acquisition? However, the UG relevant issues are beyond the scope of my paper to pursue.

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