A STUDY INTO THE ACQUISITION OF "NODA" AMONG JAPANESE LANGUAGE LEARNER

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Abstract

The "noda" form is one of the most important modality forms of the Japanese language in the context of real communication, not only for Japanese native speakers but also for learners of Japanese as a second language. Though both types of Japanese speakers use this form, a significant difference has been observed when it comes to the comparison of "noda" usage under certain conditions (Takei & Akabori, 2005). In this study, "noda" is investigated by analyzing its use within learner speech (ACTFL OPI data). More specifically, we propose a method based on analysis of variance and multiple comparisons using the frequency of "noda" usage, foreign Japanese learners' proficiency level and several types of "noda" usage. According to our analysis, the following conclusions can be made: 1. "noda" frequency is highly dependent on Japanese proficiency. 2. "noda" frequency significantly increases from the intermediate to advanced proficiency level, when compared with other levels. 3. There is a trend among higher-level learners to prefer the use of the reporting sense of "noda" to its explanative sense, suggesting that when "noda" is used as a dialogue promoter, it has the effect of putting the conversation participant into the context assumed by the conversation promoter.

1 Introduction

It seems that although a foreigner's speaking Japanese is very fluent, he/she is not a native Japanese can be often heard from my Japanese friend. It appears that the acquisition of native Japanese is rather difficult for advanced Japanese learners. The utterance of "noda" form is one of them. While the use of "noda" is very common in the speech of native speakers, a significant difference has been observed between native speakers and Japanese learners in certain usages. (Takei & Akabori, 2005).

Although the utterance of "noda" form is taught in beginner's level, only the "explanation" usage and the "introduction" usage are taught in many cases. It is notable that the native speakers make a self-context using the confession usage of "noda" in conversation.

Example: 1 ashita kekkon shimasu.
        2 ashita kekkon suru ndesu.

Although the statement of example 2 is the same as example 1, a "noda" form is attached to the sentence end.

In example 2, there is a feeling that the speaker not only tells the fact by the utterance of "noda" form, but also wants to talk about the topic further. However, it is hardly to say whether the L2 learners can distinguish the usage of "noda" correctly, and whether can use it in this way or not.

First of all, it is very important to grasp the process of the L2 Learners how to master Japanese. By grasping the process, what is necessary for the learners and what is difficult for acquisition can be clarified. So, in this research, the modality of "noda" is taken up as an example and shown clearly how the Japanese students are using it.

2 Previous work

There are many researches concerning the modality of "noda". Teramura (1984), Yoshida (1988), Noda (1997) and etc., discussed the function of "noda". And Oozone (1997), Najima (2003), Kondo (2007), and etc. studied the acquisition of "noda".

Moreover, Kondo (2007) categorized the usage of "noda" into 7 groups, "explanation", "introduction", "confession", "cautions and "command", "paraphrasing", "pledge of the determination", and "noticing". In this research, the use of "noda" follows Kondo's classification

3 Research task

Subject 1: Is there any difference in use of "noda" by the Japanese Language learners with different levels.
Subject 2: Do learners have variation according to the usage of "noda"?
Subject 3: What kind of difference is there according to learners' level?

4 Investigation object

In this study, a set of OPI data in spoken language was used. The data consisted of 97-interview conversations from testers and Japanese students.

One set of interview was within 30 minutes. And, the objects' Japanese level was divided into with the novice level, the intermediate level, the advanced level, and the superior level.

However, because the use of "noda" was not seen in the novice level, it was removed from the statistical analysis. Table 1 shows the details according to the level. (*SN: Novice level; SL: Intermediate level; SA: Advanced level; SS: Superior level).

Table 1

L	N
SN	22
SL	30
SA	30
SS	15

5 Survey

First, the sentence containing "noda" was extracted from the student's conversation in the set. It was recorded for the number of the places where modality might come, and the frequency of "noda" in appearance per 100 words. Each student's frequency in use was obtained. In order to show clearly whether there are any differences in the use of "noda" to student's Japanese level, the average value of the frequency according to language level was calculated (Fig. 1).
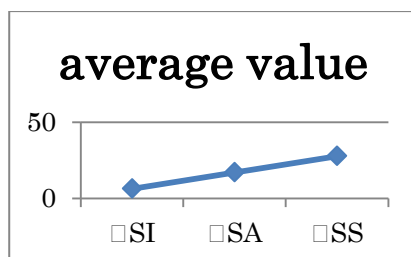
average value

Fig. 1. The average value of the usage frequency in each level

Referred to Figure 1, it turned out that the frequency in use of "noda" went up gradually with the Japanese level. However, it could not be stated that there was differences in the usage of "noda" solely by the level. Therefore, it was necessary to examine whether there was any significant difference between the average frequencies of "noda" from different levels of Japanese learners by analysis of variance (Table 2).

Table 2. Analysis-of-variance result of frequency in use in each level

変動因	自由度	偏差平方和	不偏分散	分散比	p値	判定
全体(T)	71	16921.79462				
因子(A)	2	4949.659285	2474.829643	14.26339083	6.53912E-06	[**]
誤差(E)	69	11972.13534	173.5092078			

As a result, the P value is 6.54E-06, which is less than 0.01. There was a significant difference between levels. Furthermore, in order to show clearly the significant difference among these three-levels, it was analyzed with Turkey based multiple comparisons (Table 3).

Table 3

Group1	Group2	Mean1	Mean2	Statistic	0.05	0.01	
SI	SA	6.264	17.067	3.930	3.399	4.282	[*]
SI	SS	6.264	27.812	7.534	3.399	4.282	[**]
SA	SS	17.067	27.812	4.180	3.399	4.282	[*]

The use of "noda" was not seen in the novice level, but learners from the intermediate level used it. It could be said that the use of "noda" by learners started from intermediate level. But, at the intermediate level, the frequency of use was low, and the operational capability of "noda" started to extend from the advanced level. According to Kondo (2007), there are mainly seven kinds of usages in "noda", whether it is used equally or not remained a question. In order to clarify it, the use of "noda" by learners was divided (Table 4). The frequency in the usage of "command / cautions" " notice" "paraphrasing" were very low; as it was not statistically significant they were combined into one usage.

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Table 4

	Sm	Mo	Kh	Hk
SI	4.018829717	1.151048697	2.309684672	1.233598295
SA	8.651662943	3.33227489	5.626643149	2.789340233
SS	14.95225484	2.934377061	7.101363238	3.681832837
total	27.6227475	7.417700648	15.03769106	7.704771365

※Sm：Explanation；　Mo: Introduction；　Kh：Confession；　Hk：The others

Table 4 shows the average frequency in each usage according to learner's level. The usage of "noda" varies in each group. Sm shows the highest frequency in use and the following is Kh. About Mo and Hk, there is no significant difference, with comparatively low frequency in 4 classifications. Moreover, it turned out that, from the Japanese level of learners, the frequency of use of each usage is different. Based on the total data, one-way analysis of variance was used, and it was confirmed there would be a significant difference in each usage according to the level. ([**]: a<0.01; [*]:0.01<a<0.05)

Table 5

factor	df	SS	MS	variance ratio	p-value	
Treatment	66	4583.112418				
A	2	1207.452365	603.7261824	11.44619869	5.62785E-05	[**]
Error	64	3375.660054	52.74468834			

In the usage of explanation, the variance ratio of the frequency is 11.446. And the p-value is 5.62785E-05, since it is less than the significance level of 0.01; there is significant difference among levels.

Table 6

factor	df	SS	MS	variance ratio	p-value	
Treatment	52	247.8218771				
A	2	31.10101348	15.55050674	3.587681057	0.034996693	[*]
Error	50	216.7208636	4.334417272			

In the usage of introduction, the variance ratio of the frequency is 3.588. And, the p-value is larger than 0.01, but less than 0.05. Therefore, the frequency in introduction usage is also significant difference between levels.

Table 7

factor	df	SS	MS	variance ratio	p-value	
Treatment	63	962.6525838				
A	2	223.3475762	111.6737881	9.214195772	0.000318639	[**]
Error	61	739.3050075	12.11975422			

In the usage of confession, the variance ratio of the frequency is 9.214. Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.01, there is significant difference among levels.

Table 8

factor	df	SS	MS	variance ratio	p-value	
Treatment	44	279.7210666				
A	2	28.84148007	14.42074003	2.414190369	0.101752044	[ ]
Error	42	250.8795865	5.973323488			

In the usage of the others, the variance ratio of the frequency is 2.414. Since the p-value is larger than 0.05, there is no significant difference between levels. Although from the above conducted analysis of variance according to usage we can know whether there is any difference of frequency among the different levels and different usages, it not known whether there is any difference between specific two levels. Then, in order to clarify it, the multiple comparison of Turkey method was used.

Fig. 2 shows an average frequency in use of each usage according to level. Results including analysis of variance were summarized in Table 9.
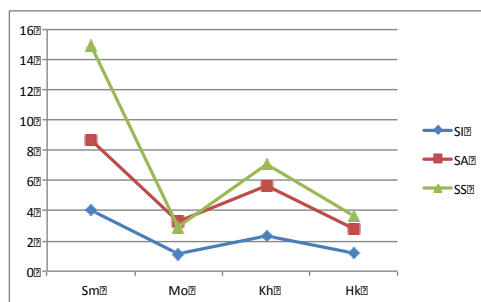

Fig. 2

Table 9

		Sm	Mo	Kh	Hk
	SI	4.018829717	1.151048697	2.309684672	1.233598295
	SA	8.651662943	3.33227489	5.626643149	2.789340233
	SS	14.95225484	2.934377061	7.101363238	3.681832837
	variance ratio	11.44619869	3.588	9.214	2.414
	P	5.628E−05	3.500E−02	3.186E−04	1.02E−01
	ANOVA	**	*	**	—
multcompare	SI：SA	—	*	*	—
	SI：SS	**	—	**	—
	SA：SS	**	—	—	—

6 Analysis

From the accumulated data we got the following results.

6.1 Result

According to Fig.2, the average frequency in use in each usage follows an order Superior level > Advanced level > Intermediate level >Novice level.

The fluctuation of frequency in explanation usage and confession usage is the largest in respect to the level,

6.2 Result 2

In Sm, although there isn't any difference between Intermediate level and Advanced level, but there was a significant difference between Intermediate level and Superior level, and also between Advanced level and Superior level.

In Mo, a significant difference is seen between Intermediate level and Advanced level, but among other levels, there is no significant difference.

In Kh, there is a difference between Intermediate level and Advanced level. In particular, there is a clear significant difference between Intermediate level and Superior level. However, a significant difference is not seen between Advanced level and Superior level. Although Hk is also used in all levels, unlike Sm, Mo, and Kh, a significant difference is not seen.

7 Discussion

From result 1, it turns out that the average frequency in use on the four classifications increases from novice level, intermediate level, and advanced level, to superior level. In Japanese language education, the explanation usage and introduction usage are almost taught from the second half of beginners' level. The learners who go up to intermediate level, not the beginners, only use it.

In Takahashi (2006), it is indicated that "In OPI, "the model of a text" controllable like a "simple sentence -> sentence -> paragraph -> double paragraph" becomes large gradually as it becomes the beginners' class, a middle class, an upper class, and super level is indicated.

Although the beginners' class teaches the "noda", the learners do not use it immediately. It is because the linguistic competence, which uses "noda" in conversation, still not takes place. Therefore, it can be said that use of "noda" is dependent on Japanese performance.

Moreover, although the use of "noda" begins from intermediate level, the operational capability of "noda" is extended to different level with the differed usage.

The explanation usage is the most frequently used in intermediate level, When it goes up from intermediate level to advanced level, the operational capability of the introduction usage and the confession usage are the most extended, while the explanation usage and the other usages are not.

However, there is no significant difference in the introduction usage and the confession usage while the competence goes up from advanced level to superior level. Since there is a clear difference in the explanation usage, the most extended operational capability is the explanation usage.

The operational capability of the introduction usage is the most extended from intermediate level to advanced level.

As the average of frequency in use seldom changes, and a significant difference was not seen either, it cannot be said that the operational capability has extended.
Furthermore, the difference of the intermediate level and the superior level is more significant than the difference of the intermediate level and the advanced level in confession usage,

The performance of this usage is extended mostly in the stage of going up from intermediate level to advanced level, and it can be said that capability is being extended little by little to the advanced level.

7 About treatment of "noda" in Japanese language education

The learner's operational capability of "noda" is extended differently according to the different usage, and all the usages acquisition is not mastered at the same pace. Therefore, in Japanese language education, all the "noda" usages are not treated all at once. It can be said that it is necessary to treat and divide the usage by the level.

And except confession usage only the explanation usage and introduction usage of "noda" are introduced in Japanese textbook. However, according to conversation situation by the learner, it turns out that although the frequency in use of confession usage is slightly lower than explanation usage, it is higher than introduction usage. Therefore, it will be necessary to take consideration not only introducing explanation usage and introduction usage but also confession usage, when teaching "noda" in Japanese language education.

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